**How Do You “Feel” About Worship? (*Whom* do you really *worship?*)**

Introductory text: John 4:20-24

Ask someone how *they feel* and you might get a complete medical history report from some, and others would say they were “Fine” even if they actually needed to be in ICU at the moment. But recently, “How do you feel?” has become a completely different kind of question. It is used to determine *gender.* It is used to determine the *rightness* or *wrongness* of another’s words and deeds. It is used to find or follow one’s *purpose* in life. Indeed, how one *feels* has been given the supreme status of being the preeminent governor and determining factor of humanity. It has replaced *evidence, truth,* and *reality.* The psychologist’s stereotypical question, “And how does this/that make you feel?” has become the ruling principle of life for much of society. Virtually every course or purpose pursued, every relationship sustained, and every action taken (*personally* or *by others*) is judged by how it makes you *feel.*  Even *spiritual concerns* and *religion* (both its beliefs and practices)have not escaped the gravitational attraction of being judged, and thus to some degree, *molded,* by the subjective *feelings* of its congregants.

So, I’d like you to consider how you *feel* about worship*.*

**How do you *feel* about worship here at Southport?**

* *Bored-*  I wish it could be more inspiring, motivational, entertaining, or fun?
* *Impatient-* I don’t understand why it has to take so long, especially given how *boring* it is? I have other things to do (or that I want to do) today.
* *Old-fashioned-* I think it needs updating with modern lightand sound effects and conveniences (maybe a coffee bar with really good coffees and a barista).

**Or, are your *feelings* about worship here (or wherever) more like…**

* Matt.2:11, Being in the *presence of Jesus* and *presenting gifts of worship* took precedence over the *temperature, lighting, comfort,* and *overall ambience* of the *house*.
* Matt.28:16-17, *Seeing Jesus* prompted true and immediate *worship,* but *doubt* prevented the same. (*Doubt* is the absence or lack of faith necessary for *belief.*)
* 1Cor.14:25, Having the *secrets of his heart* (and even *wrong feelings?*) *disclosed,* should cause one to *worship God* rather than going away vowing never to return because “My feelings were hurt!”
* Phil.3:2-3, *True worshippers* put *no confidence in the flesh* or in *fleshly things-* of course this is talking about *circumcision* and the *fleshly emphasis* of Judaism, but is having “our feelings” dictate worship essentially any different?
* Heb.9:1 implies that the *second covenant* also has *“regulations of divine worship”* that are specified, meaning that we are not at liberty to worship however *our feelings/desires* dictate, or *how we feel,* but must instead worship as pleases God, cf. Eph.5:10.
* Rev.4:9-11, *Now* and *here on earth* as it will be *then* and *in heaven,* it is a great *privilege* to be *in the presence of* and to *worship Him who created all things* and *who lives forever!*

**But,**

* Rev.11:1 struck me when the *temple of God, the altar,* ***and those who worship in it*** were to be *“measured”* with *“a measuring rod”!*  Surely we can see the implications toward our worship and its purposes in both *form* and *function,* cf. John 4:23!
* Overall, Revelation depicts a sharp contrast between those who *worship the beast* and those who *worship Him who made heaven, earth,* and *sea,* cf. Rev.14:7-10. Have we, or will we, become *worshippers of* *the beast* through emphasis on *self* and *our feelings* rather than God?
* 2Thess.2:4; Phil.3:19 both emphasize a simple truth: We can worship *God,* Rom.12:1*,* or worship *ourselves,* Rom.1:25*,* including our “feelings” about worship!
* But note one final passage, Luke 24:52. After seeing and being in the presence of Jesus, the disciples went away *“with great joy”* and *“were continually in the temple, praising God.”* Perhaps here is the real issue with and chief inhibiting factor to truly experiencing the *joy* of *worship:* they *saw* and were *in the presence of* Jesus.

**So please, *think* about your worship and how you “feel” about it!**

In tonight’s companion lesson, “The Proper Place of and for Emotion in Worship,” we will (Lord willing, of course) take consider somewhat of the “flipside”- the proper part *emotion/feelings* play in true worship.