

Faithfulness In Worship

by Kyle Pope

Luke chapter four, verse sixteen gives us a beautiful insight into the religious life of Jesus during His earthly ministry. It reads, **“So He came to Nazareth, where He had been brought up. And AS HIS CUSTOM WAS, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and stood up to read”** (NKJV, emphasis mine). At the time of the event described Jesus was about thirty years of age (Luke 3:23). That tells us that during the years of His early adulthood He had already established the **“custom”** of regular worship. This should be no surprise to us for even as a boy Jesus had told His parents when they found Him discussing Scripture with the teachers of the Law, **“...Did you not know that I MUST be about My Father’s business?”** (Luke 2:49, emphasis mine).

This is far different from the image that our culture often tries to paint of Jesus. Today He is characterized as one who rebelled against established religion and rejected formal worship. While it is true that Jesus rebuked and criticized the religious leaders of His day, at the same time He accepted His personal responsibility to worship God. In the life of the Master, we see Him always taking the time to observe both the regular occasions of group worship and private times of prayer and meditation.

If there was ever a soul who could have considered Himself exempt from any of the obligations of regular religious service it would have been Jesus Christ. As God in the flesh (1 Tim. 3:16) Jesus was in constant communion with Deity. The Lord could have easily rationalized that worship to God was simply worship of a part of Himself and thus unnecessary for Him. Yet, we never see Him employing such a rationale.

Consider the record: The gospels record the three-year ministry of Jesus, which began in His thirtieth year. We know it lasted three years primarily because of the Jewish feasts that are recorded. **Passover Number One – John 2:23** – **“Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover...”** **Passover Number Two – John 6:4** – **“Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near.”** **Passover Number Three – Luke 22:1, 8** – **“Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew near, which is called Passover... And He sent Peter and John saying, ‘Go and prepare the Passover for us, that we may eat.’”** So for these three years Jesus made the eighty-mile journey from Galilee to Jerusalem (on foot) to worship God. Was this a reflection of His early upbringing? **“His parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover”** (Luke 2:41).

We are not under the Law of Moses, so our obligations in worship to God are different than Christ’s, yet we would do well to learn from Him a little something about setting our priorities right:

- 1. Jesus put worship to God ahead of personal convenience.** Can we imagine for a moment Jesus accepting a job that would hinder Him from worship? Or neglecting the assembly on occasions when it was inconvenient?
- 2. Jesus didn’t allow the hypocrisy of religious leaders to hinder His service.** How often do people reject religion because of the hypocrisy they witness? Jesus saw the problems and yet tried to help them through His involvement.
- 3. The faithfulness of parents affects the faithfulness of Children.** Would Jesus have been as faithful in worship if His parents hadn’t taught Him by their example? Probably, because He was God in the flesh, but their example set the pattern He followed as an adult. Would God have chosen a family to raise the Messiah who was lukewarm in their faithfulness? Not likely!
- 4. Jesus sought occasions to worship rather than exemptions from worship.** I wonder if Jesus would have stayed at home on Wednesday nights thinking to Himself “only Sunday is required”? If He wouldn’t should we?
- 5. If Deity has given us an example of faithfulness in worship we should imitate it.** There are a few reasons that Jesus worshipped faithfully: 1) Because it is the right thing to do, 2) because it kept Him in closer contact with God, and, 3) to set an example for us. Will we heed this example or not?

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