

Worship in the Dictionary

Scripture: 2 Chronicles 29:25 – 30

Feb. 4th, 2024

A young minister was preparing for his third message at the church he was just called at. He decided to look up the definition of ‘WORSHIP’ in the dictionary. He wanted to research the meaning of ‘WORSHIP’. He took out the dictionary from the book rack in the church’s office to find the exact meaning of ‘WORSHIP’. Here is what he found –

WORSHIP has a Greek origin and means:

As a noun –

*the feeling or expression of reverence and adoration for a deity

*the acts or rites that make up a formal expression of reverence for a deity

*adoration or devotion comparable to religious homage shown toward a person or principle

As a verb -

*show reverence and adoration for a deity

*honor with religious rites

*value highly

The young minister began to realize that he had a difficult task ahead of him. Even a simple word like ‘WORSHIP’ was going to be hard to do! Often words we all know so well and use every day take on a broader meaning when we read the actual dictionary definition.

With a big sigh, the young pastor started working on his message. But what really took his attention were the guide words on the dictionary page with ‘WORSHIP’ on it. What really struck him were the guide words where he found ‘WORSHIP’. The guide words are the first word on the page and the last word on the page.

The page with 'WORSHIP' on it had these guide words - the page began with 'WORRY' and ended with 'WRAP'. 'WORSHIP' was between WORRY and WRAP!

Worshipping allows us to forget about our selves and concentrate fully on God. Worshipping allows us to stop worrying and start believing. Worship comes after worry. Worship comes after we forget about ourselves and concentrate on God.

Finding 'WORSHIP' after 'WORRY' in a dictionary illustrates to us that we have that same choice when we sit in the church pew. We can choose worry and sit there or we can choose worship and praise God.

Choosing 'WORRY', we remove ourselves from the presence of God. But choosing 'WORSHIP', we center ourselves on God.

The guide word after 'WORSHIP' on the page containing 'WORSHIP' in the dictionary was 'WRAP'. We can choose 'WRAP' and bask in God's love. We can choose 'WRAP' and joyfully offer praise to God.

Choosing 'WRAP' within our worship, we feel God's welcoming arms wrapping around us. We can change unrest into love. Choosing 'WRAP' within our worship, we can change confusion to awe. Choosing 'WRAP' within our worship, we can change worry into security. And choosing 'WRAP' within our worship, we can change fear into trust.

True worship is found between the two guide words, WORRY and WRAP; both in the dictionary as well as in the pew!

In our scripture reading from the Old Testament – 2 Chronicles 29:25 – 30 we find the Israelites in worship. It is a joyful celebration of cymbals, harps, lyres, and trumpets. They are making a burnt offering to God. The whole assembly worshipped with singers singing and trumpets playing. And when the worship service was over, they continued praising God.

Boy, wouldn't it be nice to be part of such a worship service. Have you ever been part of such a worship service where the people were playing musical instruments and singing aloud?

Today, the Christian Church (DOC) is a group of people who like to sit on their hands. We are not considered the most charismatic of churches. In our early history on Cane Ridge in Kentucky we were such a group. We had people running around barking like dogs, we had people falling on the ground with their bodies jerking about and we had people fainting full of the Holy Spirit. Oh yes, we worshipped like the Israelites in our scripture passage. Can I get an AMEN from you?

Maybe this message has inspired you to get up and dance? Or maybe you want to raise your hands and wave them about. All I want you to do is to leave your worry at the door and fully focus on God. Let this worship allow us to wrap ourselves in God's love and joy. Let this time together make you feel God's welcoming arms wrapping around you.

So today I have shared these words with you just before our communion time so that you can leave your worries at this table and fully focus on God. Let this time of communion end by wrapping ourselves in God's love and joy which is expressed in the bread and the cup. Let this time of communion make you feel God's welcoming arms wrapping around you.

Let us pray:

Holy God, may we not tarnish our worship time with you with worry, but rather let us wrap ourselves in your glorious presence.

Blessed Jesus, may we not tarnish our communion time with you with worry, but rather let us wrap ourselves in your glorious presence on this table of your holy body and blessed blood.

AMEN.