

# [ARM Prison Outreach International](#)

**"Ministers' Minute" Volume 9 Number 5**

## [Getting with God's Program of Worship](#)

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Editor's Note: This "MM" is the fifth email message of 2010 in a series that ARM is sending as an encouragement to preachers, chaplains, and Christian workers around the world. This issue is the 101st "MM" sent!!! All are archived -- just [click here](#) to see links to all messages sent since January of 2002.

This month's message is by Steve Shepherd, evangelist in Jonesboro, ARK; we heard it in person and are thankful he has allowed us to share it here. I especially like point #2; it is SORELY needed in our day! It is my prayer that this message will encourage you and those you teach and lead.

May God bless your labors! -- Rod Farthing, Development Director

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## **GETTING WITH GOD'S PROGRAM OF WORSHIP**

### **INTRO**

**One day God was looking down at Earth and saw all of the evil that was going on. He decided to send an angel down to Earth to check it out. So He called one of His best angels and sent the angel to Earth for a while. When he returned he told God, yes it is bad on Earth, 95% is bad and 5% is good.**

**Well, He thought for a moment and thought maybe He'd better send down a second angel to get another point of view. So God called another angel and sent him to Earth for a time too. When the angel returned he went to God and told him "Yes, the Earth is in decline. 95% is bad and 5% is good." God said this was not good.**

**So He decided to send e-mail to the 5% that were good. He wanted to encourage them, give them a little something to help them keep going.**

**Do you know what that e-mail said? Oh, you didn't get one either, huh? What a bummer.**

**You're bad and I'm bad. No, it's probably worse than that. We've all sinned and come short of the glory of God. (Romans 3:23). And sometimes, the old man of sin still plagues us, still haunts us, and still hogs our lives. Of course, most of us don't like to admit that we struggle, BUT WE DO!**

**Jesus is alive! What does this mean? It means we have victory in Jesus! Since He rose from the dead He is who He claimed to be! And He can do what He says He can do! He bore our sins in His body on the tree!**

**Because of Jesus we will have no sins to account for! JESUS PAID THE PRICE FOR OUR SINS!**

**What's your agenda for today? For the rest of your life? Have you considered God's agenda for your life? Because Jesus conquered the grave, He also should have conquered our hearts and lives!**

**ILLUSTRATION: Generally, I work every day of the week. Sound like fun? I often work until around noon on Saturday and then I go home to rest. But sometimes I don't get to rest. Elaine may have something she wants to do or wants me to do or wants me to go with her or something like that. And I think, "What happened to my program or my agenda?" It got lost in the shuffle of Elaine's agenda.**

**IS THAT THE WAY THINGS ARE SUPPOSED TO WORK? That's what the way it's supposed when it comes to God's program for our lives. HE SHOULD BE RUNNING THE SHOW AND NOT US!**

**ILLUSTRATION: Former American Idol and now Country Music star (and Entertainer of the Year), Carrie Underwood, made the song, "Jesus, Take the Wheel" a very popular song. BUT IT'S NOT JUST A SONG. Or it shouldn't be just a song to sing. It should be the theme of our lives! JESUS, TAKE THE WHEEL OF MY LIFE AND STEER ME IN ANY DIRECTION YOU WANT!**

**I think the hardest struggle that we have to deal with is our own independence. We are stubbornly independent and don't want anybody to run or rule our lives and yet the Lord deserves this place in our lives.**

**John the Baptizer, however, had the right attitude when he said of Jesus in John 3:30, "He must increase, but I must decrease."**

**We must allow Jesus to increase in our lives! He must become King, Lord, and Master, because of who He is and what He did for us!**

**Matthew 28:8-9 "So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy, and ran to tell his disciples. 9 Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him." After the resurrection they worshiped.**

**Have you fallen at the feet of Jesus and worshiped Him? Because of Easter, we need to get with God's program of worship. We need to get more into worship,**

**because when we get to heaven WE WILL WORSHIP THE LORD!**

**Let's consider three great truths of God's program of worship for here and now.**

**1- Worship Him only**

**2- Worship Him everywhere**

**3- Worship Him sincerely**

### **I. WORSHIP HIM ONLY**

**Matthew 4:10 Jesus said to him, "Away from me, Satan! For it is written: 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"**

**After Jesus' fasted 40 days and nights Satan hit Jesus with three very strong temptations but Jesus slapped Satan in the face with the truth of God! Jesus plainly told Satan there is only one true God and He alone is to be worshiped.**

**ILLUSTRATION: There was a minister who sneaked off early one Sunday morning to play golf. Looking down from heaven, the angel Michael spotted the lone golfer on the course and pointed him out to Peter.**

**"I'll fix him" Peter said. The golfer drove, and his ball headed for the woods. Then it bounced against a tree, struck a bridge, flew into the woods behind the sixth hole and rebounded again to the land in the cup 520 yards away.**

**"You call that fixing him?" exclaimed the angel. "Certainly," said Peter, "who's he going to tell?"**

**That preacher had no business playing golf on Sunday morning when he should have been in church, worshiping the Lord. NOR SHOULD ANYONE ELSE! That's idol worship.**

**Romans 1:21-25 "21 For although they knew God, they neither glorified him as God nor gave thanks to him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles. 24 Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served created things rather than the Creator—who is forever praised. Amen.**

**Creation is never to be worshiped or praised, only the CREATOR! We are never to worship the gifts but rather the GIVER of every good and perfect gift!**

**ILLUSTRATION: Some years ago Donald Grey Barnhouse was talking to a young woman on the sidewalk in front of Tenth Presbyterian Church following an evening service. She said she was a Christian and that she wanted to follow Christ. But she wanted to be famous too. She wanted to pursue a stage career in New York. "After I have made it in the theater, I'll follow Christ completely," she said.**

**Barnhouse took a key out of his pocket and scratched a mark on a postal box standing on the corner. "That is what God will let you do," he said. "God will let you scratch the surface of success. He will let you get close enough to the top to know what it is, but He will never let you have it, because He will never let one of His children have anything rather than Himself."**

**Years later he met the girl again, and she confessed that this had indeed been her life story. She had dabbled in the stage. Once her picture had been in a national magazine. But she had never quite made it.**

**She told Barnhouse, "I can't tell you how many times in my discouragement I have closed my eyes and seen you scratching on that postal box with your key. God let me scratch the edges, but He gave me nothing in place of Himself."**

**That's the way it should be, but some, sad to say, forsake Jesus for other things, for lesser things. They have a substitute Savior and it's never to their satisfaction. NEVER. We are to worship Him only.**

## **II. WORSHIP HIM EVERYWHERE**

**Matthew 14:22-33**

**Matthew 14:33 Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."**

**ILLUSTRATION: Jim had an awful day fishing on the lake, sitting in the blazing sun all day without catching a single fish. On his way home, he stopped at the supermarket and ordered four catfish. He told the fish salesman, "Pick four large ones out and throw them at me, will you?" "Why do you want me to throw them at you?" "Because I want to tell my wife that I caught them."**

**"Okay, but I suggest that you take the trout." "Why's that?" "Because your wife came in earlier today and said that if you came by, I should tell you to take the trout. That's what she'd like for supper tonight."**

**Have you worshiped Jesus in your boat lately? Or how about your car? Or your home/your house? Or while mowing the grass? Or doing the dishes? Or doing your homework? Or walking down the street?**

**How do we worship Jesus while doing these things and in these places? WE WHISPER WORDS OF PRAISE! "Thank you, Lord, for giving me the strength to push this lawnmower. Thank you for this lawnmower. Thank you for this lawn that you've given me. Thank you for this house and lawn. I praise you! I bless you!"**

**And we can perform this worship almost anywhere, any time.**

**ILLUSTRATION: My son Shane has told me that the first time he ever shot a turkey or perhaps a deer that he paused to praise the Lord, to thank the Lord! DO YOU KNOW HOW THAT MADE ME FEEL? I could not have been more pleased and more excited.**

**I would much rather him give thanks to the Lord for allowing him to shoot that game instead of thinking he did it all by himself. Because that's the problem that most of us have. We don't stop and think. We don't stop and give thanks!**

**We need to worship the Lord by giving Him thanks wherever we are! Day in and day out. At home, at work, on the road, etc. Worship is "in" thing to do. Giving thanks to God is a course from which we should never graduate!**

**ILLUSTRATION: Preacher Harry Ironside was in a crowded restaurant and just as he was about to begin his meal, a man approached and asked if he could join him. Ironside invited his to have a seat. Then, as was his custom, Ironside bowed his head in prayer. When he opened his eyes, the other man asked, "Do you have a headache?" Ironside replied, "No, I don't." The other man asked, "Well, is there something wrong with your food?" Ironside replied, "No, I was simply thanking God as I always do before I eat."**

**The man said, "Oh, you're one of those, are you? Well, I want you to know I never give thanks. I earn my money by the sweat of my brow and I don't have to give thanks to anybody when I eat. I just start right in!" Ironside said, "Yes, you're just like my dog. That's what he does too!"**

**We need to pray everywhere and praise the Lord everywhere. Every chance we get. Every good gift is from Him and He deserves praise all the time.**

**Ps. 150:1 "Praise the LORD. Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens." In other words, praise Him everywhere! Start at home and let it spread everywhere!**

### **III. WORSHIP HIM SINCERELY**

**ILLUSTRATION: A cartoon showed a little boy sitting beside his father and mother at church. The little boy said to his father: "Mom wants to cook the dinner, you want to play golf, I want to play football. Why are we here?"**

**Why are we here? Are we here because we really want to worship the Lord? Or are we here because we feel pressured to come?**

**When I was a small child I had to go to church because mother took us, but it wasn't a bad experience for me. In fact, I loved Sunday School. That was the best part of going to church. The church service seemed long and boring to me and I couldn't understand the preacher's sermon. Of course, preaching back in the 1950's was completely different than it is today.**

**As I got older and accepted Christ no one had to make me go to church. I looked forward to going to church. I enjoyed the Christian fellowship and I always hoped to learn something from the Sunday School class and the preaching of God's Word. I had a hunger for God's Word.**

**WHY ARE YOU HERE? WHY DO YOU COME TO CHURCH?**

**Are you here to worship? Are you here because you really want to be here? Or are you here because of family pressure, etc.?**

**ILLUSTRATION: "I always make it a rule," said the preacher at the close of the sermon during which there had been some misbehavior in the audience, "to thank my audience for their attention; and I now thank you for your attention."**

**"It is true," he added, "there has been some disturbance, nevertheless I want to thank you for behaving as well as you knew how."**

**Do you behave in church as well as you know how?**

**I Tim. 3:14-15 "These things write I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly: But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest to behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth."**

**NIV "If I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household..."**

**What kind of behavior should take place in church? Prayer, praise, worship, sharing, fellowship, listening, listening intently, etc.**

**Matthew 15:8-9 "These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men."**

**We all need to examine our own hearts when it comes to worship. DO WE WORSHIP IN VAIN? Or are we totally serious and sincere?**

**Do you come to draw near to the Lord and grow in your relationship to Him? Or is it all outward show and no inward glow?**

**ILLUSTRATION: Someone said: "When I worship, I would rather my heart be without words than my words be without heart."**

**II Cor. 13:5 "Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves. Do you not realize that Christ Jesus is in you—unless, of course, you fail the test?"**

## **CONCLUSION**

**Psalm 95:6-8 "Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts..." It should be obvious to us why we need to get with God's program of worship. HE IS OUR MAKER. HE IS OUR GOD. WE BELONG TO HIM. He cares for us.**

**God's program is that we are to worship Him. We are to worship Him only. We are to worship Him anywhere and everywhere and in complete sincerity.**

**C.S. Lewis - "It is in the process of being worshiped that God communicates His presence to men."**

**It is through worship that we come to know Him and knowing Him is what life should be for us who are in Christ.**

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**Remain faithful unto death .." Rev. 2:10B**

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In 2009, ARM donated almost 32,000 FREE Bible courses to prisoners -- 88 per day!**