*“Since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe” Hebrews 12:28*

It’s life, Jim, but not as we knew it (you Trekkie fans will understand that strange reference!). So much is different right now, and perhaps much will never be the same again. Thanks to Covid-19, we are having to re-evaluate life on many levels. What is important to us, as individuals and as a society, has changed dramatically these past few weeks – and perhaps that’s just as well …

In church life too we face a similar upheaval. How we meet, how we finance our on-going existence as a faith community, where we direct our mission, etc. And, amongst that, we have been forced into a re-evaluation of what worship actually is.

These past couple of months, we have (re)discovered that worship is much more than what we do on a Sunday in church (or, presently, at home!). As Glenn put it succinctly in Week 1 “Worship is 100% about our response to God’s astounding love and amazing grace” and that response was perfectly encapsulated by Graham last week: “the whole of our life becomes an act of worship and devotion”. You might naturally think “I’m not Godly enough for that”, but John (in week 3) has shown that even the mundane things of life can be acts of worship, and Debs has reminded us in week 6 that God delights in us simply being His children. How true all that is – but there’s another most important aspect to worship that we mustn’t overlook …

**Meekness and Majesty**

If we are going to get to the heart of it, we ought really to examine the root meaning of the word ‘worship’. Now I’m no Biblical scholar but I’ve asked Google to help me out here ☺. The Old Testament (OT) was written in Hebrew, and I’ve discovered that the most common Hebrew word translated as worship is ‘shachah’, which means ‘to bow down’. So when the OT references worship of the Lord it means, literally, to bow down before God. (In case you’re thinking, oh, that all changed in the New Testament the great majority of instances there also speak of worship as the act of stooping in homage).

The picture this brings to my mind is that of the Magi finding Christ as a baby in the manger: Matthew 2:11 says that “they bowed down and worshipped him”. They recognised this child as ‘the King of the Jews’ and their response was one of reverence and awe – even though their initial reaction on finding the manger was that “they were overjoyed”. They saw, in this tiny human, someone (and something) much greater than themselves, and they could do nothing but fall on their knees in worship before him, and make offerings to him of costly treasures.

What is it in our God that should prompt such a reaction from us today? Well, in his hymn ‘Meekness and Majesty’, Graham Kendrick has brilliantly summed it up in just a few words: “O what a mystery, meekness and majesty; Bow down and worship, for this is your God”. **The amazing truth that Almighty God, Creator of the Universe and Time itself, Ineffably Sublime, became a mere mortal to bear our pain and take away our sin on the Cross – to see this in all its wonder, and that it applies to ME! – surely our only response can be to fall to our knees in humble adoration of this unspeakably perfect, love-filled God!** Hallelujah!

**Entering the Holy Place**

So, here’s the challenge: you can find God in the everyday, and let those mundane tasks be an act of worship to Him; you can worship God in exuberant praise as we sing hymns and songs of joy to Him together – can you now seek what I believe is an even deeper expression of worship in falling on your knees (perhaps metaphorically for some!) in reverence and awe before him, in contemplating what an utterly incredible Being he is, our holy, magnificent, Father God? There isn’t the space here to start exploring the nature of this wonderful God, but **I encourage you to take time this week to reflect on what your picture of God really is and start to see that, however clear and breathtaking that picture is, He is so much more than that!!** Perhaps we might develop this further in the coming weeks …

In the meantime, let me leave you with the verse of a well-known hymn which might help take you to that most holy place:

“O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness;
bow down before him, his glory proclaim;
with gold of obedience, and incense of lowliness,
kneel and adore him: the Lord is his name.” *J.S.B. Monsell (1811-1875)*

God bless and protect you, and those you love, as you worship your wonderful Lord.

*Produced by Martyn Read on behalf of the Bents Green Holy Habits Planning Group (Debs Barnett, Glenn Evans, Martyn Read, Graham Wassell, Daphne and John Wilkins).  Holy Habits is "an adventure in Christian discipleship", based on Luke's picture of the early church in Acts 2:42-47.  Find out more* [*here*](https://www.brfonline.org.uk/collections/holy-habits)*.*