

Isaiah 66:1-4

Getting Worship Right by Getting God and Ourselves Right

Wednesday, September 4, 2024 • Read Isaiah 66:1-4

Questions from the Scripture text: Whose speech is this (v1a)? What is heaven to him (v1b)? What is earth (v1c)? What rhetorical questions does He ask in v1d-e? What is the implied answer? Why would even heaven, earth, and temple not be worthy gifts for Him (v2a-c)? What are two characteristics of the one upon whom God does look with favor (v2d-e)? What is another (v2f)? In what manner have Israelites carried out the worship/religious commandments that God had given (v3a-d)? To what are their "authorized" worship practices spiritually equivalent (v3e-f)? What had they chosen (v3e), and what does God now choose to begin upon them (v4a)? What will He bring upon them (v4b)? Why—what had God done, and what didn't they do (v4c-d)? What did they do (v4e)? What did they choose (v4f)?

When is worship offensive to God? Isaiah 66:1-4 looks forward to the first serial reading in morning public worship on the coming Lord's Day. In these four verses of Holy Scripture, the Holy Spirit teaches us that **any worship that man chooses for himself is offensive to the God Who should have been our choice.**

Rejecting the idea of worship as bringing other things to God. This word from the Lord shows how ridiculous is the idea that God needs or desires anything from us. This applies to worship. Just like He didn't need a temple (v1d-e), or even heaven and earth (v1b-c), He doesn't need reading, singing, praying, preaching, or hearing. We must not think of our worship or religion as something that God needs or wants from us (v2a-c). As we recently learned throughout the book of Leviticus, the language of "offering" with respect to God is the language of drawing near. It isn't other things that we are to bring to God, so much as we are to bring Him ourselves.

Coming to God as those who have nothing to offer. We owe God our whole self, but we are not a worthy gift to give Him. We have corrupted ourselves. He Himself is the ever-blessed God Who made us in His image—to know Him and make Him known, to be loved by Him and to love Him. But what we have done in Adam is to reject all of this and bankrupt ourselves spiritually. So, God looks with favor (v2d) upon those who recognize this: they are poor; they have a contrite spirit; they don't think they have anything worthy of bringing to God (v2e). Instead, they tremble at the words of the God Who is still willing to bring them near (v2f).

Oh, dear reader, do you not see this about the worship of God? He needs nothing, and we owe Him everything—but we are unable to give Him anything. And yet, for even such as we are, God has given a way of drawing near to Him! And not, ultimately, bulls, lambs, grain offerings, or incense, but Himself in His own dear Son, through faith worked by His almighty Spirit. How great is His grace in worship!

Rejecting worship that is according to our desires rather than his. Do we do the things in worship because we have chosen them or because God has? The worshiper in v3a-d is doing actions that God has commanded for worship, but he's doing them because they are his own choice (v3e). "Right" worship done because we like that worship, rather than because God does, is as bad as if we worshiped by the actions in the second part of each of those lines (slaying a man, breaking a dog's neck, offering swine's blood, blessing an idol). One sure way to know that we are guilty of this is if we are willing to add to God's worship anything that feels worshipful to us, or that we enjoy, or that we think will provide some benefit, or for any other reason than that God has mercifully provided it as His authorized way for the poor in spirit to draw near to Him.

God's rejection of those who choose their own worship. If we choose to worship in a way for any other reason than God's delight in it (v4f), we do evil before His eyes (v4e). God has called us to Himself and spoken to us (v4c-d). Worshiping our own way rejects His favorable call to draw near. Whether we come in a self-serving way, and He judges us by giving our delusion (v4a); or, whether we come in a legalistic way, as if God is an offended deity whom we must placate with presents (v4b); it is a visitation of punishment to be given over to false worship. How grievous it would be to have anything in worship other than God Himself!

How do you come to God with poverty of spirit and contrite spirit for worship? What do you want to do in worship and why? What do you hope to get out of worship?

Sample prayer: Lord, forgive us for bringing You worship as if You needed it from us. How merciful You are to bring sinners near to You through Christ! But still, we have valued worship according to what delights us, rather than choosing it because it has delighted You to bring us near in Christ. Here is Your greatest mercy to us, and yet it is a place where we have sinned greatly against You. O, forgive us! How thankful we are that You that You bring sinners near to You through Your Son and by Your Spirit! So cleanse us by Christ's blood, and conform us to Him by the work of Your Spirit, we ask through Christ, AMEN!

Suggested songs: ARP51B "From My Sins, O Hide Your Face" or TPH163 "Open Now Thy Gates of Beauty"

"(The following is a machine-generated transcription. PLEASE BE AWARE of—and patient with—transcribing errors. If there is something confusing or obviously erroneous, you are invited to listen to the audio recording via hopewellarp.org)

Isaiah 66, verses 1 through 4, these are God's words. That says, Yahweh Heaven is my throne and Earth is my footstool. Where is the house that you will build me? Where is the place of my rest? For all those things, my hand has made. And all those things exist.

Says y'all. But on this one, Will I look on him? Who is poor? And of a contrite spirit and who trembles? My word. He who kills a bull is as if he slays a man, he who sacrifices a lamb as if he breaks the dog's neck. He who offers a grain offering as if he offers swine's blood.

Who burns incense as if he blesses an idol. Trust, as they have chosen. Their own ways. And their soul Delights in their Abominations. So, will I choose their delusions? And bring their fears on them. Because when I called no one answered, When I spoke, they did not hear. But they did evil.

Before my eyes. And chose that. In which I did not Delight. So far, the reading of gods inspired. And Aaron tort

This is a passage in which the Offers on the one hand or speaks on the one hand. About looking with favor upon people. In verse 2. This one, I will look. The implications look with favor. but on the other hand, Giving people over to their delusions. And bringing their fear on them.

Verse 4. So, will I choose their delusions? I'd bring. Fears on. And the difference between the two in these verses is not That the one. attending worship and offering worship participating. In the worship services that God has given Israel, and the other is not the difference is in the purpose in the heart, the manner.

In which they are attending upon the worship. So, For you. This is a good reminder. That there were those who sacrificing a bowl or all I am or offering a grain offering or burning. The incense. Are offering the incense to burn. Verse 3, all of these things that the Lord had commanded But it was just outwardly.

It was the same as if they were slaying a man or breaking a dog's neck. Are offering swine's blood or blessing. An idol. And the big difference was, they were worshiping the way they were worshiping because it pleased them. Because they chose it. Then this meant that. First of all, the things that they were offering that were supposed to be from God were not really.

From God. It was according to their own desires, their own ideas. And, That's the case, of course you don't stop. At what God has commanded, you add to it. And so, It's not just that the things that they added were man-made, religion, When they came with man-made religion, as well, when they added to the worship of God or the religion of God, They?

That. Even when they were offering worship, that was outwardly according to God's word. It was according to their choice. Just as they have chosen verse 3. They chose that in which I do not Delight. Verse 4. And so God rejects their worship and he rejects their worship. Not just because Therefore they have a wrong idea idea of worship.

That's true. They're retreating worship as the bringing of whatever they thought to bring whatever they chose to bring. But the wrong idea of worship was due to a wrong idea of God and a wrong idea of themselves. Wrong idea of God as God was needy or greedy or One of these false Idol gods that is unreasonably upset and needs to be placated.

And you find out what this irritable God wants that. You can calm him down. Any one of these? Ideas. Of course, is Blasphemous wicked. But we can fall into thinking this. As if we are bringing reading or praying or singing, or preaching, or the Lord's Supper Because that's the stuff that makes God feel better or that's the stuff that God really needs.

Or that's the stuff that increases God's glory. God has no needs. His glory is never diminished never increased. And there is This wrong idea of offering. In fact, the way people think of the word offering. Was largely affected by the inclusion of the money collection. in worship Services as well.

But the way people think of the word offering is Supplying or providing or performing or or giving to God that which Needs locks or at least requires. But what we've seen. In the origin of that word, offering the idea of Karam Sorry. Karov or Corban, Corban is The word that the Pharisees were using, That he Reverb as karov to draw near.

That worship and even in these different offerings. Were a way that the loving and generous God who needs nothing was giving even to Sinners to be able to draw near to him. And not because those things could atone for sin or those things could bring us near or those things could make us safe and coming near but because he was atoning for ourselves in the Lord Jesus.

And the Lord Jesus could bring us near and the Lord Jesus. Could bring us near in Grace and safety. rather than as those with are still sins, still on us to be consumed by the wrath of God. So, they had this wrong view of God. And they had this wrong view of God, even to the point, where they thought they had built him, this amazing house.

Exactly the opposite of what Solomon actually said that the dedication of the temple. When the temple had been built, and he's dedicating and he's saying Heaven in the highest Heaven cannot continue how much less this little house that I have built. But the wrong view of God, which is impressed with us and not with him.

Thanks. Oh isn't our God blessed to have us. That he could get such a big nice Temple as this one. And that's where he comes in. First one. He's like, Heaven is my throne in Earth. Is my footstool. And I actually don't have a place of rest. I stooped down to make my glory known in heaven and in Earth.

Let alone in this little house. Where is that? Where's the house? That you will build me. And so wrong view of God and a wrong view of self. Right. View of self is the That he brings us to and he's looking upon us favorably. It says on him, who is poor?

And of a contrite spirit. And it trembles up my word. In other words, when we realize that We deserve only wrath from him. We have nothing. We have nothing that we can do, that's that's good enough or that could make up for. what we have been in Adam and in ourselves and what we have done, From our original sin from ourselves.

We are. Impoverished penniless before him spiritually. We cannot make up for Yeah, our sinfulness or our guilt. And so we tremble, at his word, not only. Because we know, What we are before? We tremble also at the greatness not of what we have done for him, but of what he has done for us.

That he has brought us near in Christ. And so, the the Dreadful thing. About drawing near with our lips and our hearts being from him and teaching. Doctrines the Commandments of men. The man-made worship or coming according to our own ideas instead of according to his ideas. Isn't just that the worship itself is offensive and deserves Wrath.

That's pretty Dreadful. But that it exposes that we have a wrong view of God. We have a wrong view of ourselves. And, God responds to that in Fury. Whereas, when he brings us to a right view of him, And a right view of ourselves. And therefore to be amazed that he mercifully brings us near and coming only in the way that he has chosen.

Because what could we add to that? Except that, which would defile it. We had a when he brings us to a right view of him and a right view of ourselves. He looks upon us with favor. How great is his Mercy. And true worship. So when you come to the public worship Services especially and you're getting ready.

And we're going to read and pray and sing and hear preaching take the Lord's Supper. Which ought to be? Remembering before him preparing your hearts and don't just use the few seconds you can use. The entire time, we're doing all of the Non-Worship stuff right before the worship service.

and remember before him who we are and how poor we are and how he's given to us Christ in whom to draw near to him. Remember before him how great he is. And that Heaven and Earth. Cannot contain him much less a worship service. At the Hopewell Ep in Kalyoka.

But the he of this glory and Holiness, is bringing us near to Christ. Remember those things before him and as you think of each part of the worship service in advance, and as you go through each part of the worship Services as we are worshipping, Marvel tremble. Be amazed That the Living God is bringing you near through this.

In his son. That Jesus is leading it to the Living. God is bringing you near. in his son in the Lord, Jesus. And receive the favor of God, be amazed. Okay, here you are a sinner, but The holy God is bringing you near and safety for blessing. And to worship him.

Worship really is. The great gospel exercise. Drawing near to God in Christ. So let's pray that God would help us. Our Father in Heaven. We know that we have. Within us the potential and have even Sinned in these ways. Just doing. Outwardly. The parts of worship as if it was because we had chosen it, not because you had chosen.

And so we thank you for your mercy and we ask for your forgiveness. And we thank you for Christ who has atoned even for that. And we pray that your spirit would remind us. Of who you are, and who we are. And therefore what your worship must be? For we ask all these things through Christ.

Amen.