

Worship

By Elder D. Todd Christofferson
Of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles

Kuabudu

Na Mzee D. Todd Christofferson
Wa Akidi ya Mitume Kumi na Wawili

April 2025 general conference

What does worshipping God mean for you and me?

“Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem,

“Saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him.”

The Magi, as they are sometimes called, were wise in seeking to find and worship the Messiah. For them, worshipping meant falling down before Him and offering Him gifts of gold and precious, fragrant spices.

What does worshipping God mean for you and me?

When we think of worship, our thoughts typically turn to the ways we show religious devotion both privately and in Church services. As I have considered the matter of worshipping our Heavenly Father and His Beloved Son, our Savior, four concepts have come to mind: first, the actions that constitute our worship; second, the attitudes and feelings that figure into our worship; third, the exclusivity of our worship; and fourth, the need to emulate the Holy Beings that we worship.

First, the Actions That Constitute Our Worship

One of the most common and important forms of worship is to gather in a consecrated space to perform acts of devotion. The Lord says,

Kwa hivyo kumsujudia Mungu inamaanisha nini kwako wewe na mimi?

“Sasa Yesu alipozaliwa huko Bethlehemu ya Yudea katika siku za Herode mfalme, tazama, walikuja watu wenye hekima kutoka mashariki ya Yerusalemu,

“Wakisema, Yuko wapi yeye aliyezaliwa Mfalme wa Wayahudi? Kwani tumeiona nyota yake mashariki, nasi tumekujakumsujudia.”

Mamajusi, kama wakati mwingine wana- vyoitwa, walikuwa na hekima katika kutafuta na kumsujudia Masiya. Kwao, kusujudu ilimaan- isha kuanguka chini mbele Zake na kumpatia Yeye zawadi za dhahabu na vito vya thamani na uvumba.

Kwa hivyo kumsujudia Mungu inamaanisha nini kwako wewe na mimi?

Tunapofikiria kuabudu, mawazo yetu kwa kawaida hugeukia kwenye njia ambazo tuna- onyesha kujitolea kwetu kidini vyote kibinafsi na katika ibada za Kanisani. Kama nilivyozingatia suala la kumwabudu Baba yetu wa Mbinguni na Mwanawe Mpendwa, Mwokozi wetu, vipengele vinne vimekuja akilini mwangu: kwanza, viten- do ambavyo vinajumuisha kuabudu kwetu; pili, mitazamo na hisia ambazo zinaonyeshwa katika kuabudu kwetu; tatu, upekee wa kuabudu kwetu; nanne, haja ya kufuata mfano wa Viumbe Wa- takatifu ambao tunawaabudu.

Kwanza, Vitendo Ambavyo Vinachangia Kuabudu Kwetu

Moja ya aina za kawaida na muhimu zaidi za kuabudu ni kukusanyika katika sehemu zilizo- takaswa ili kufanya matendo ya kiibada. Bwana

“And that thou mayest more fully keep thyself unspotted from the world, thou shalt go to the house of prayer and offer up thy sacraments upon my holy day.” This is, of course, our primary motivation in building chapels. But, if necessary, a non-dedicated space will do if we can invest it with some degree of sanctity.

Most important is what we do when we gather on the Lord’s day. Of course, we dress as best we can according to our means—not extravagantly but modestly in a way to signal our respect and reverence for Deity. Our conduct is similarly reverent and respectful. We worship by joining in prayer; we worship by singing hymns (not just listening to but singing the hymns); we worship by instructing and learning from one another. Jesus says, “Remember that on this, the Lord’s day, thou shalt offer thine oblations [meaning thine ‘offerings ... of time, talents, or means, in service of God and fellowman’] and thy sacraments unto the Most High, confessing thy sins unto thy brethren, and before the Lord.” We come together not to entertain or be entertained—as by a band, for instance—but to remember Him and be “instructed more perfectly” in His gospel.

At the most recent general conference, Elder Patrick Kearon reminded us that “we do not gather on the Sabbath simply to attend sacrament meeting and check it off the list. We come together to worship. There is a significant difference between the two. To attend means to be present at. But to worship is to intentionally praise and adore our God in a way that transforms us!”

Devoting our Sabbaths to the Lord and His purposes is itself an act of worship. Some years ago, then-Elder Russell M. Nelson observed: “How do we hallow the Sabbath day? In my much younger years, I studied the work of others who had compiled lists of things to do and things not to do on the Sabbath. It wasn’t until later that I learned from the scriptures that my conduct and my attitude on the Sabbath constituted assign between me and my Heavenly Father [see Exodus 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20]. With that understanding, I no longer needed lists of dos and don’ts. When I had to make a decision whether or not an activity was appropriate for the Sabbath, I

anasema, “Na ili ujilinde na dunia pasipo mawaa, utakwenda kwenye nyumba ya sala na kutoa sakramenti zako katika siku yangu takatifu.” Hii, kweli ndio, motisha yetu ya msingi katika ujenzi wa majengo ya kanisa. Lakini, kama ni lazima, sehemu isiyowekwa wakfu itafaa kama tutawekeza kwa kiwango fulani cha utakatifu.

Muhimu zaidi ni tunafanya nini tunapokutana katika siku ya Bwana. Ndiyo, tunavaa vizuri kadiri tuwezavyo kulingana na uwezo wetu—siyo kwa kupita kiasi bali kuvaa kimaadili katika njia inayoonyesha heshima yetu na unyenyekevu kwa Mungu. Mwenendo wetu vile vile ni wa staha na wa heshima. Tunaabudu kwa kuungana katika sala; tunaabudu kwa kuimba nyimbo za dini (siyo tu kusikiliza bali kuimba nyimbo hizo za dini); tunaabudu kwa kufundishana na kujifunza sisi kwa sisi. Yesu anasema, “Kumbuka kwamba kwenye siku hii, siku ya Bwana, utatoa dhabihu zako [ikimaanisha ‘matoleo yako ... ya muda, vipaji, au rasilimali, katika kumtumika Mungu na wanadamu wenzako’] na sakramenti zako kwa Aliye Juu Sana, ukiziungama dhambi zako kwa ndugu zako, na mbele za Bwana.” Hatuji pamoja ili kuburudisha au kuburudishwa—kama kwa bendi, kwa mfano—bali kumkumbuka Yeye na “kuelekezwa kwa ukamilifu zaidi” katika injili Yake.

Katika mkutano mkuu wa hivi karibuni zaidi, Mzee Patrick Kearon alitukumbusha kwamba “hatukusanyiki kwenye Sabato ili tu kuhudhuria mkutano wa sakramenti na kuweka alama ya vema kwenye orodha ya mambo ya kufanya. Tunakuja pamoja ili kuabudu. Kuna tofauti yenye umuhimu kati ya haya mawili. Kuhudhuriainamaanisha kuwepo pale. Lakini kuabuduni kwa makusudi kabisa kumsifu na kumsujudia Mungu wetu katika njia ambayo hutubadilisha!”

Kutoa Sabato yetu kwa Bwana na madhumuni Yake, hiyo yenyewe ni kitendo cha kuabudu. Miaka kadhaa iliyopita, wakati huo Mzee Russell M. Nelson aliuliza: “Ni kwa jinsi gani tunawezakuitukuzasiku ya Sabato? Nikiwa katika miaka ya ujana wangu, nilijifunza kazi za wengine ambazo ziliorodhesha vitu vya kufanya na vyakutofanyasiku ya Sabato. Haikuwa hadi badaaye ndipo nikajifunza kutoka katika maandiko kwamba mwenendo wangu na mtazamo wangu juu ya Sabato vilikuwaisharakati yangu mimi na Baba yangu wa Mbinguni [ona Kutoka 31:13; Ezekiel 20:12, 20]. Kwa uelewa huo, sikuhitaji tena orodha ya vya kufanya na kutofanya. Nilipohi-

simply asked myself, ‘Whatsigndo I want to give to God?’”

Worship on the Lord’s day is marked by a particular focus on the great atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ. We appropriately and specially celebrate His Resurrection at Easter but also every week as we partake of the sacramental emblems of His Atonement, including His Resurrection. For the penitent, partaking of the sacrament is the highlight of Sabbath worship.

Worshipping together as “the body of Christ” has unique power and benefits as we teach, serve, and sustain one another. Interestingly, one recent study found that those who view their spiritual lives as entirely private are less likely to prioritize spiritual growth, or to say their faith is very important, or to have regular devotional time with God. As a community of Saints, we strengthen each other in worship and in faith.

Even so, we cannot forget the daily acts of worship that we engage in individually and at home. The Savior reminds us, “Nevertheless thy vows shall be offered up in righteousness on all days and at all times.” One sister wisely observed, “I cannot think of a more profound way to worship God than to welcome His little ones into our lives and care for them and teach them His plan for them.”

Alma and Amulek taught the Zoramites who had been banned from their synagogues to worship God not merely once a week but always and “in whatsoever place ye may be in.” They spoke about prayer as worship:

“Ye must pour out your souls in your closets, and your secret places, and in your wilderness.

“Yea, and when you do not cry unto the Lord, let your hearts be full, drawn out in prayer unto him continually.”

They also spoke of searching the scriptures, bearing testimony of Christ, performing charitable acts and service, receiving the Holy Ghost, and living in thanksgiving daily. Consider that thought: “living in thanksgiving daily.” It speaks

taji kufanya uamuzi kama shughuli ilikuwa ya kufaa au kutofaa kwa ajili ya Sabato, nilijiuliza mwenyewe, ‘Niisharagani ninataka kumwonyesha Mungu?’”

Kuabudu katika siku ya Bwana huonyeshwa na fokasi maalumu juu ya dhabihu ya Yesu Kristo ya kulipia dhambi. Sisi kwa usahihi kabisa na mahususi tunasherehekea Ufufuko Wake siku ya Pasaka lakini piakilawiki tunapopokea ishara za sakramenti ya Upatanisho Wake, ikijumuisha Ufufuko Wake. Kwa mwenye kutubu, kupokea sakramenti ni onyesho kuu la kuabudu siku ya Sabato.

Kuabudu pamoja kama “mwili wa Kristo” kuna nguvu ya kipekee na faida tunapofundishana, kuhudumiana na kusaidiana sisi kwa sisi. Cha kupendeza, utafiti mmoja wa hivi karibuni uligundua kwamba kwa wale wanaoyatazama maisha yao kiroho kamani yao tuyawezekana wakashindwa kuweka kipaumbele cha ukuaji wa kiroho au kusema kwamba imani yao ni muhimu sana, au kuwa na muda wa mara kwa mara wa ibada na Mungu. Kama jumuiya ya Watakatifu, tunaimarishana sisi kwa sisi katika kuabudu na katika imani.

Hata hivyo, hatuwezi kusahau matendo ya kila siku ya kuabudu ambayo tunayafanya binafsi na nyumbani. Mwokozi anatukumbusha, “Hata hivyo nadhiri zako zitatolewa katika haki siku zote na kwa nyakati zote.” Dada mmoja kwa hekima alisema, “Siwezi kufikiria njia nzuri zaidi ya kumwabudu Mungu kuliko kuwakaribisha watoto Wake wadogo katika maisha yetu na kuwatunza na kuwafundisha mpango Wake kwa ajili yao.”

Alma na Amuleki waliwafundisha Wazoramu ambao walikuwa wamezuiliwa kuingia katika masinagogi kumwabudu Mungu siyo tu mara moja kwa wiki lakini siku zote, “na mahali popote wanapoweza kuwa.” Walisema kuhusu sala ni kama kuabudu:

“Mfungue roho zenu ndani ya vijumba vyenu, na mahali penu pa siri, na kwenye nyika zenu.

“Ndiyo, na wakati hamumlilii Bwana, hebu mioyo yenu ijae, mdumu katika sala kwake siku zote.”

Pia walizungumzia juu ya kupekua maandiko, kutoa ushuhuda juu ya Kristo, matendo ya hisani na huduma, kupokea Roho Mtakatifu, na kuishi kwa shukrani kila siku. Zingatia wazo hilo: “kuishi kwa shukrani kila siku.” Huzungumzia

to my second concept:

The Attitudes and Feelings Inherent in Worship

Feeling and expressing gratitude to God are, in fact, what infuses worship with a sense of joyful renewal as opposed to seeing it as just one more duty.

True worship means loving God and yielding our will to Him—the most precious gift we can offer. When asked which was the great commandment in all the law, Jesus replied, “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” He also called this the first commandment.

This was the pattern of Jesus’s own worship of the Father. His life and His atoning sacrifice were dedicated to the glory of the Father. Poignantly we remember Jesus’s heartrending plea in the midst of unimaginable suffering and anguish: “O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me,” but then His submissive “nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.”

Worship is striving to follow this perfect example. We will not attain perfection in this course overnight, but if each day we “offer for a sacrifice unto [Him] a broken heart and a contrite spirit,” He will again baptize us with His Spirit and fill us with His grace.

Third, the Exclusivity of Our Worship

In the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord pronounces this indictment of the world:

“They have strayed from mine ordinances, and have broken mine everlasting covenant;

“They seek not the Lord to establish his righteousness, but every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own god, whose image is in the likeness of the world.”

It is good for us to remember the example of the three Jewish young men Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, carried captive to Babylon not long after Lehi and his family left Jerusalem. A Babylonian officer renamed them Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego. Later, when these three refused to worship an image set up by King Nebuchadnezzar, he commanded that they be thrown into

dhana yangu ya pili:

Mitazamo na Hisia Zinazopatikana kati-ka Kuabudu

Kuhisi na kuelezea shukrani kwa Mungu, kwa kweli, ndicho kinacholeta kuabudu pamoja na hisia za kufanywa upya kwa shangwe kinyume na kuona kama ni jambo moja zaidi la wajibu.

Ibada ya kweli inamaanisha kumpenda Mungu na kuyaweka mapenzi yetu Kwake—ni zawadi ya thamani tunayoweza kutoa Alipoulizwa amri ya kwanza ni ipi katika sheria yote, Yesu alijibu, “Mpende Bwana Mungu wako kwa moyo wako wote, na kwa roho yako yote, na kwa akili zako zote.” Yeye pia ameiita hii ni amri kuu.

Huu ulikuwa mpangilio wa kuabudu Kwake mwenyewe kwa Baba. Maisha Yake na dhabihu Yake ya kulipia dhambi viliwekwa wakfu kwa utukufu wa Baba. Kwa uchungu sisi tunakumbuka maombi ya Yesu yanayogusa moyo katikati ya mateso na uchungu usiyofikirika: “Baba yangu, ikiwezekana kikombe hiki kiniepuka,” lakini kisha utiifu Wake, “walakini si kama nitakavyo mimi, bali utakavyo wewe.”

Kuabudu ni kujitahidi kufuata mfano huu mkamilifu. Sisi hatutafikia ukamilifu katika jambo hili kwa usiku mmoja, lakini ikiwa kila siku “tutatoa dhabihu [Kwake] moyo uliovunjika na roho iliyopondeka,” Yeye atatubatiza tena kwa Roho Wake na kutujaza neema Yake.

Tatu, Upekee wa Kuabudu Kwetu

Katika sehemu ya kwanza ya Mafundisho na Maagano, Bwana anatangaza mashtaka haya ya ulimwengu:

“Kwani wamepotoka kutoka kwenye ibada zangu, na wamevunja agano langu lisilo na mwisho;

“Hawamtakii Bwana kuendeleza haki zake, bali kila mtu huenenda katika njia zake mwenyewe, na akifuata mfano wa mungu wake mwenyewe, ambaye ni mfano wa kitu cha duni-ani.”

Ni vyema kwetu sisi kukumbuka mfano wa Wayahudi watatu vijana Hanania, Mishaeli na Azaria, waliochukuliwa mateka Babeli muda mfupi baada ya Lehi na familia yake kuondoka Yerusalemu. Ofisa wa Kibabeli aliwapa majina mapya ya Shadraka, Meshaki na Abednego. Baadaye, watatu hawa walipokataa kusujudia sanamu iliyowekwa na Mfalme Nebukadreza, aliamuru

a burning fiery furnace, saying to them, “And who is that God that shall deliver you out of my hands?”

You will recall their bold answer:

“Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of thine hand, O king.

“But if not, be it known unto thee ... that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship the golden image which thou hast set up.”

The furnace was so hot that it killed those who threw them into it, but Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego were unharmed. “Then Nebuchadnezzar spake, and said, Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abed-nego, who hath ... delivered his servants that trusted in him, ... and yielded their bodies, that they might not serve nor worship any god, except their own God.” They trusted in Jehovah for deliverance, “but if not,” that is, even if God in His wisdom did not prevent their death, yet they would remain true to Him.

Whatever takes precedence over worship of the Father and the Son becomes an idol. Those who reject God as the source of truth, or disavow any accountability to Him, in effect substitute themselves as their god. One who places loyalty to a party or cause ahead of divine direction worships a false god. Even those who purport to worship God but do not keep His commandments are walking in their own way: “They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” The object of our worship is exclusively “the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom [He] hast sent.”

Finally, the Need to Emulate the Father and the Son

Ultimately, how we live may be the best, most genuine form of worship. Showing our devotion means emulating the Father and the Son—cultivating Their attributes and character in ourselves. If, as the saying goes, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, then we might say with respect to Deity, emulation is the sincerest form of veneration. This suggests an active, sustained effort on our part to seek holiness. But becoming more Christlike is also the natural outcome of our acts of worship. Elder Kearon’s phrase cited earlier

kwamba watupwe ndani ya tanuru la moto, akiwaambia, “Naye ni nani Mungu yule atakayewa-oko na ninyi na mikono yangu?”

Unaweza kukumbuka jibu lao la ujasiri:

“Mungu wetu tunayemtumikia aweza kutuo-koa na tanuru ile iwakayo moto, naye atatuoko na mkono wako, Ee Mfalme.

“Lakini kama si hivyo, ijulikane kwako ... ya kuwa sisi hatukubali kuitumikia miungu yako, wala kuisujudia hiyo sanamu ya dhahabu uliyoi-simamisha.”

Tanuri lilikuwa na moto mkali uliowaua wale waliowatupa mle ndani, lakini Shadraka, Meshaki na Abed-nego walikuwa hawajadhurika. “Kisha Nebukadreza alizungumza, na kusema, Na ahidimiwe Mungu wa Shadraka, Meshaki, na Abed-nego, ambaye ... amewakomboa watumishi wake ambao walimwamini, ... na kutoa miili yao, ili wasipate kumtumikia wala kumwabudu mungu ye yote isipokuwa Mungu wao wenyewe.” Walimtumaini Yehova kwa ajili ya ukombozi, “lakini kama siyo,” ambayo ni, hata kama Mungu katika hekima Yake asingezuia vifo vyao, bado wangebaki wakweli kwake Yeye.

Chochote kinachochukua kipaumbele juu ya kumwabudu Baba na Mwana” kinakuwa ni sanamu. Wale wanaomkataa Mungu kama chanzo cha ukweli au kukataa uwajibikaji wowote kwake Yeye, kwa hakika waowenyewewanakuwa kama mungu wao. Mtu anayeweka uaminifu kwa kikundi au sababu mbele ya uelekeo wa kiungu anaabudu mungu wa uongo. Hata wale wanaokusudia kumwabudu Mungu lakini hawashiki amri Zake wanatembea katika njia zao wenyewe: “Wanajongea karibu nami kwa midomo yao, lakini mioyo yao iko mbali nami.” Lengo la kuabudu kwetu ni la kipekee kwa “Mungu pekee wa kweli, na Yesu Kristo, ambaye [Yeye] amemtuma.”

Mwisho, Haja ya Kufuata mfano wa Baba na Mwana

Mwishowe, jinsi tunavyoishi yawezekana kuwa ndiyo bora, aina halisi zaidi ya kuabudu. Kuonyesha mapenzi yetu inamaanisha kufuata mfano wa Baba na Mwana—tukikuza sifa na tabia zao ndani yetu. Ikiwa, kama inavyosemwa, kuiga ni namna ya kujipendekeza kwa dhati kabisa, basi tunaweza kusema kwa heshima kwa Mungu, kufuata mfano ni aina ya heshima zaidi. Hii inapendekeza jitihada kamili, inayokubalika kwa upande wetu ya kutafuta utakatifu. Lakini kuwa zaidi kama Kristo pia ni matokeo ya

about worshipping “in a way that transforms us” is significant. True worship is transformative.

This is the beauty of the covenant path—the path of worship, love, and loyalty to God. We enter that path by baptism, pledging to take upon us the name of Christ and to keep His commandments. We receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, the messenger of the Savior’s grace that redeems and cleanses us from sin as we repent. We could even say that in repenting we are worshipping Him.

There follow additional priesthood ordinances and covenants made in the house of the Lord that further sanctify us. The ceremonies and ordinances of the temple constitute an elevated form of worship.

President Russell M. Nelson has emphasized that “every man and every woman who participates in priesthood ordinances and who makes and keeps covenants with God has direct access to the power of God.” This is not only a power we draw upon to serve and to bless. It is also the divine power that works in us to refine and purify us. As we walk the covenant path, the sanctifying “power of godliness is manifest” in us.

May we, as the ancient Nephites and Lamanites, “fall down at the feet of Jesus, and ... worship him.” May we, as commanded by Jesus, “fall down and worship the Father in [the] name [of the Son].” May we receive the Holy Spirit and yield our hearts to God, have no other gods before Him, and as disciples of Jesus Christ, emulate His character in our own lives. I testify that as we do, we will experience joy in worship. In the name of Jesus Christ, amen.

kiasili kabisa ya matendo yetu ya kuabudu. Kirai cha Mzee Kearon alichokitoa mapema kuhusu kuabudu, “katika njia ambayo inatubadilisha” ni cha kipekee. Kuabudu kiukweli ni ya kubadilisha.

Huu ndio uzuri wa njia ya agano—njia ya kuabudu, upendo na uaminifu kwa Mungu. Tunaingia njia hiyo kwa ubatizo, tukiahidi kujichukulia juu yetu jina la Kristo na kushika amri Zake. Tunapokea kipawa cha Roho Mtakatifu, mjumbe wa neema za Mwokozi ambazo zina-komboa na kutuoshia kutokana na dhambi pale tunapotubu. Tungeweza hata kusema kwamba katika kutubu tunamwabudu Yeye.

Kisha hufuata ibada za ukuhani za ziada na maagano yanayofanyika katika nyumba ya Bwana ambayo yanatutakasa zaidi sisi. Sherehe hizi na ibada za hekaluni zinaunda aina ya juu zaidi ya kuabudu.

Rais Russell M. Nelson amesisitiza kwamba “kila mwanaume na kila mwanamke ambaye anashiriki katika ibada za ukuhani na ambaye anafanya na kushika maagano na Mungu anao ufikiaji wa moja kwa moja wa nguvu za Mungu.” Hii siyo tu ile nguvu tunayoichota ili kuhudumu na kubariki. Pia ni nguvu ya kiungu ambayo inatenda kazi ndani yetu ili kutuoshia na kututakasa. Tunapotembea katika njia ya agano, ile “nguvu itakasayo ya uchamungu inadhihirika” ndani yetu.

Basi sisi, kama Wanefi na Walamani wa kale, ‘tuanguke chini miguuni mwa Yesu ... kumwabudu.’ Sisi, kama ilivyoamriwa na Yesu, “tuanguke chini na kumwabudu Baba katika jina la [Mwana].” Na tupokee Roho Mtakatifu na kufungua mioyo yetu kwa Mungu, tusiwe na miungu wengine mbele yake Yeye, na kama wanafunzi wa Yesu Kristo tuige tabia Zake katika maisha yetu wenyewe. Ninashuhudia kwamba tufanyapo haya, tutapata uzoefu wa shangwe katika kuabudu. Katika jina la Yesu Kristo, amina.