

Worship part 3, 6-25-00

(Doug Goin's, at PBC, messages on *The Now of Worship* inspired many of the thoughts in this message)

Not so very long ago the major divisions on Sunday morning used to be around denominational lines. Doctrine separated one group from another, conviction as to the understanding of God's word. That is not necessarily a bad thing when it comes down to the fundamentals of our faith. But too often it was division over disputable matters as mentioned in Romans 14. From there it went down hill as most man made systems do, into, "my way is the right way because I grew up in it" – rather than a personal conviction about God's word.

But today we have a whole new sectarianism within the body of Christ. It has developed around worship style or music preference. The problem is, "we know what we like; we like what we know; and we want what we like and know." If our most gifted musician was into hymns we would probably sing mostly hymns and I would encourage them to work on choruses. Since Janet is our gifted musician and personally worships with contemporary music, I will encourage her to work in some hymns so we have a variety and prefer including everyone's style. Someone may object to a country western Christian song, but if we have some cowboys, lets include those too and learn we can worship Jesus with any style, if the eyes of our heart are focussed on Him.

We have discussed this at length and seen that worship is not about style but about the Lord Jesus. (Cain and Able were the first in this whole war over acceptable worship)

It is about a revelation of Him and a wholehearted response to that revelation. We looked at the worship around the heavenly throne and how that should be our new definition of worship. We looked at Jesus' description of worship to the woman at the well and saw it was not about external places or styles but about the heart when it is fixed upon the only object of true worship – Jesus. Then we looked at the two types of worship, the bended knee before God and the life style of worship.

I understand you had a good message last week on being judgmental about worship. There we are up to today – and today the burden on my heart is to focus on what it means to be a worshipper – and that in two parts. The first is the purpose of being a worshipper, and secondly, the qualifications for this high calling.

The only purpose in being a *proskunetes*, a worshipper, is to honor and glorify God! It is not to meet your emotional need although that may happen. It is not to get in your quota of obedience, although worship is an obedient act. It is not about you at all. As I have said several times in earlier messages, worship is not about you or me at all, it is about God. Get a hold of that and we will let go of most of our hang-ups in worship. What kind of hang-ups? Hang-ups like style, like expressional differences, locational, size, quality in music, any external thing and as the song says – the things of the world will grow strangely dim in the light of His glory and grace. O come let us adore Him! I have hang ups in corporate worship, like worrying who is offended by style or content. Just to name one of many. But that has no place in real worship. I just need to focus on Jesus and worship Him. I think we all have hang-ups in worship but the solution to them all is to focus on Jesus.

How do we honor and glorify God? We honor and glorify God when we acknowledge who He is and what He does. We acknowledge the revelation of Himself to us. In Ps 27:4 David says that is his only desire. "One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple." David was a worshipper. The Psalms are mostly about who God is and what He does. That is worship. We do that in song, but we also do it in our testimony time, our sharing of what God is showing us, doing in our lives. We also experience it in the message. Any good message should be about Jesus and what He is doing, or the contrast of where we are not like Him in character and action. Am I over simplifying things? Or is everything truly about the Son of God? Our only purpose in being a worshipper is to honor and glorify God.

Now how can mortal man do that? How can man be qualified to worship God. The greater your revelation of God the more that question appears impossible. David asked the same question in Ps 24:3,4, "Who may ascend the hill of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?⁴ He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to an idol or swear by what is false." NIV

This is the one thing David wanted to do in Ps 27. Who can do this, he asks? Who has totally clean hands, never committed wrong, whose heart is ever pure, who has never lusted after some shape or physical object? You know his name! Jesus!

Now we see He is the only One qualified to truly bring honor and glory to God. No wonder God says, "With Him I am pleased!" Now if you are in Him you are qualified to be a worshipper. His clean hands are yours, his thought life is yours, his purity is yours, when you are in Him.

¹⁹ Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,²⁰ by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,²¹ and since we have a great priest over the house of God,²² let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

²³ Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.

²⁴ And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.

²⁵ Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

Heb 10:19-25 (NIV)

Why do we have confidence? Because what He did for us was accepted by God. So we can stand before God and bring him glory and honor. Or as David said, we can behold the beauty of the Lord and inquire in his Temple. The way to become a worshipper was through the body of Christ, given for your redemption. Now we can have a sincere heart, we can worship in full assurance of faith. Our hearts have been cleansed for we have been made pure by the blood of Christ. Confidence is in what He did for us being sufficient to make us right with God. Standing in that purity we can be worshippers totally focussed on Him, bringing Him glory and honor.

¹¹ But when Christ appeared *as* a high priest of the good things to come, *He entered* through the greater and more perfect tabernacle, not made with hands, that is to say, not of this creation;¹² and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.

Heb 9:11-12 (NASB)

The picture here is looking back to the High Priest who once a year would enter with the blood of the atonement sacrifice into the Holy of Holies and sprinkle on the mercy seat the blood. Here Jesus is seen doing that once for all. Eternal mercy is there for those who will receive it. And because of it we can walk into that Holy of Holies and worship. His life in us expresses that fountain of worship that Jesus told the woman at the well would spring out of her.

Look back to 10:21 – We have a worship leader – the great priest – Christ Jesus. He is the head of the church. He is over this family, this household, as He himself leads us in our worship. King David used to assign a man to lead the music and there was a priest to lead in the sacrifice but now that man is the God man – the eternal worship leader, Christ Jesus. And when we come together, He lays on our hearts the songs, the testimony, the revelation, and they all flow together to bring glory and honor to God.

See how He has made us worshippers in spirit and truth when we are in Him? We must be careful that we do not take the job away from Him. For He does his job perfectly and we would only make a mess of it, promoting ourselves instead of God who alone is worthy. That guiding Presence in worship should be an awareness that takes us past personalities and style. It should really free us to know that behind whoever is sharing or singing –Jesus is orchestrating and leading. It sure frees me up! I often get really burdened about what to bring each week as I know it is tremendously important. But then I remind myself it is not really my job but Jesus'. And He will guide me as I begin preparing. He will help me as I present it. He will emphasize on your heart what you need to hear. I am co-laboring with Him, but He is definitely the leader and the One who sees you get the message. The same One led worship last week when Rafael spoke. The same One leads in the sharing time, in the music time.

¹ Now the main point in what has been said *is* this: we have such a high priest, who has taken His seat at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens,
² a minister in the sanctuary, and in the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, not man.
Heb 8:1-2 (NASB) In verse one the high priest is in Greek the *leitourgia*, or the liturgist. He is the One who structures our worship.

We are made worshippers of God through the leadership of Christ. His sacrifice makes us acceptable, able to walk right in, and his intercession and mediation make what we ask and pray the right things. He makes it possible for us to bring glory and honor to God, in our assembling and with our lives. Are we worshippers? By his grace and leadership we certainly are. Continue to bring Him glory and honor in all you do. Amen?

Finally 10:24,25 reminds us that our worship includes encouraging each other for Christ is in your brother and sister. Consider – 'approach thoughtfully' how to spur your brothers and sisters on toward love and good deeds. Encourage each other! We need each other in this world that constantly tries to get us to conform to its godless standard of man as God. We need encouragement of the body to press on in Christ. That also glorifies and honors God. Let us continue to do that. And let us remember what our worship is about. We should come not with a selfish expectation of receiving, but of bringing glory and honor to God, and encouragement to his people. I encourage you again, or spur you on again, to consider each week what the Lord may have you share of his work and revelation in your life. God is building us into a Temple of worship!