

TRUE WORSHIP

PART 2

I am quite aware that recently, I wrote an essay on this very topic of “True Worship.” However, I feel an urgency to write on this topic again. So, please, indulge me on this as I share a few more thoughts again on the concept of “True Worship.”

I know that in most ministries the concept of worship is relegated to the beginning of the service when we sing songs onto the Lord. In some ministries they may include dance and banners or other similar aspects to be a part of this time of the service. However, we must grasp the main point when it comes to the concept of worship or to what Jesus referred to as “true worship” expressed by the “true worshipper.”

When I look around the Body of Christ today, I see many things changing within. I see things that have changed, not just over the past 40 or 50 years in which I have been involved in ministry, but over the past 2000 years since Jesus walked, ministered and taught while He was on this earth. When Jesus taught, He did not teach us any new thing. He taught and spoke from the scriptures. However, He taught them as they should be received and understood by the people and not what the religious leaders made it to become.

Unfortunately, we see the same thing has occurred over the years since Jesus was upon this earth. He came to set the record straight and to give us a new “starting point” in our relationship with God. We know that some rejected His teaching flat out from the start. Many had received it and entered into the life in which God had intended them to have.

As the church grew, however, there came many people who again, began to bring into the Body of Christ incorrect teachings concerning God and how to approach and come before Him. We see this in the New Testament. Paul, John and Peter continued and brought correction to the Body of Christ in trying to keep the Body on course and to not be led astray by these “false teachers.”

One aspect of false teaching that has been and is still going on, concerns the aspect of what “worship” truly is. We have seen and continue to see the concept of what worship has become through the aspect of television and radio, YouTube videos, and other similar aspects that are so big in today’s society. We really have made worship to be all about a time of singing and music. To many, even the concept of the dance or the use of banners is starting to disappear slowly but surely from the aspect of praise in these days.

We have made the concept and principle of “worship” into simply a time of singing and playing music onto the Lord. Now, I am not saying that these times of worship are incorrect. There is most certainly an aspect of praising the Lord in this manner which is totally correct and should be done. However, did you notice that I said, “There is most certainly an aspect of **praising the Lord...**” That is the point in which I am making.

You see there is a difference between the term “worship” and the term “praise.” Praise is actually a “part” or an “aspect” of worship. These two are not the same. We must grasp the understanding that “praise” is an aspect of worship – again, they are not the same. In some venues the understanding between the two has been established in the following way - “praise” is when we sing loud and the music is boisterous and upbeat and “worship” is when we sing softly and the music is low key.

My friends this may sound good to us, however, it is scripturally incorrect. I would like for us to take a quick look at what the scriptures tell us, as well as what Jesus Himself tells us, concerning what “true worship” really is. It may surprise some of us, but just to give you a heads up, the scriptures, as well as Jesus, do not say anything about music or singing when it comes to what “true worship” truly is.

I would like to begin with a very phrase that we have all heard and are familiar with – “Worship is for an audience of One.” That “One” is God. But is it? Or have we made it something else. I read a statement by Michael Card that he taught many years ago and it has stuck with me through all these years as a child of God and as I have led worship. He said, “The most important thing concerning the worship experience is that God has been worshipped. What I get out of it or how I feel about it is of a secondary issue.”

That statement changed my whole understanding of what worship truly is and how I was to now approach and lead others into worshipping the Lord. Worship is all about God and it truly has nothing to do with me except that I am to worship God. Yes, my worship is for an “audience of One” – God - in **everything** I do.

If the attitude of the worshipper’s heart is not to see **God alone** being worshipped every moment of their life, than he/she is not really being a true worshipper. Now, when we worship the Lord in every aspect of our lives in a way that is pleasing to Him, with the correct motives and attitude of the heart, He cannot help Himself but to pour out all that He is upon the true worshipper. That should never be the reason why we worship Him throughout our lives but it becomes a very good by-product of our lifestyle of true worship.

Please, try to get past the fact that I am not speaking about anything concerning song or music or any other actions as such. As we will see, “true worship” goes far beyond that way of thinking. It is so much more. It literally establishes and becomes a part of a true believers life and lifestyle. It is to be expressed everyday within the true believers life. So, what is “worship” according to the scriptures and according to Jesus?

The Hebrew word in the scriptures translated to the term “worship” is the word "shaw-chaw." It means to “lay down prostrate, in homage, to a deity, or someone or something. It means to bow down to a deity or a person or thing that is held in the highest regard.”

The Greek word used in the scriptures translated into the term “worship” in the New Testament is the word "proskyneō." This means to “turn towards in acknowledgement of a deity, person or thing for the purpose of paying homage to or giving reverence (respect) to them; to adore and to "kiss towards" a deity or a person or thing that is held in the highest regard. It infers that there must be an act of lying down prostrate or bowing down.” It also means to "draw near to" the one in which you desire to be with.

The Greek use of this word also has a “figurative understanding” of what this word “worship” implies to us. It refers to being, "Like a dog licking its master's hand." This may seem inappropriate and have nothing to do with our discussion concerning worship. However, it truly does. One of the great things about dogs is that no matter what happens they are still waiting for you at the door. They still love you and they know that you are their true source of life. You give them, and you are their source, of everything. This expresses, as it relates to the life of the believer, that it is acknowledging the true source of your life – God.

Therefore, true worship, as in our definitions, acknowledges the object of our worship – God. God is the absolute, supreme and final authority in our life. That is the definition of the term “Lord.” That is exactly who our God is to the true believer. He is our Lord. He is the true source of everything I have and all that I am. I now love Him because He is not hovering over us with a big stick but rather because He is the source of true life. All that I am and all that I have is found in Him and in Him - alone.

Let’s look at a scripture in the Old Testament concerning this aspect of true worship. We do not see the word “worship” used in this scripture but the whole concept of what true worship is can be found within this scripture. Let us look at Deuteronomy 10:12 – *“And now, Israel, what doth the LORD thy God require of thee, but to fear the LORD thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve the LORD thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul.”* Remember, this is what God **requires** of His people – His true believers.

The first part of this scripture tells us, "...to fear the Lord..." The first thing we must understand is that when the scriptures tell us "to fear the Lord" it is totally the opposite of being afraid of God because of what He will do to us. No, when the scriptures tell us to "fear God" it is referring to the fact that we are to give Him the utmost respect and honor because of who He is. We must believe that He truly is a Holy God and that He is the one and only true God.

Next, this scripture tells us that we are to, "...walk in **all** His ways..." How do we do this? Well, when this scripture was written, Moses had been given the Ten Commandments. From the Ten Commandments came all the Law. The Law was to show the people how they were to walk in the ways of the Lord. They were to walk in **all** of the Law. That would be the only way to get to the next aspect.

We know that this would be impossible for anyone to be able to accomplish. There is no one that could ever know or remember all of His ways never mind actually do and "walk in all His ways." It would seem like this would be the end of the road for anyone to truly enter into the worship of our God.

However, this aspect of being able to "walk in all His ways" is now accomplished within our lives through our God sending forth His only Son, Jesus. When we accept Jesus as our Lord and Savior, who is the fulfillment of the Word of God because He is the Word of God, we are now looked upon as if we have "walked in all His ways." The truth is that we all fall short in this. However, through the blood of Jesus, the Father now looks at all the true believers as if they are "walking in all His ways."

This leads us to the next aspect of our relationship with God which is, "...to love Him..." Through Jesus, we can now truly love God. No one can truly love God without first receiving and experiencing God's love for each of us through Jesus. To love God is to give of ourselves, **totally**, to Him - all that we are. We are to love Him with all our heart, with all our soul and with all our body. Now, because we love Him, we desire to please and bless Him through an attitude of heart that truly loves Him.

We express our love unto our God by doing the next thing this scripture tell us, which is, "...to serve Him..." Through Jesus, we are now able to serve God and do His will and purposes. Not because we have to, but rather because **we love Him**. Everything we do, our whole life is based on the desire to love on Him. Our lives become a living sacrifice – one big act of worship!!! We are to do this "with all thy heart and with all thy soul" which is what true worship truly is.

We also see another aspect of "true worship" as we look into Isaiah 6:1-8. We read, "... I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ² Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³ And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. ⁴ And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts. ⁶ Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: ⁷ And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. ⁸ Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me."

We see that Isaiah literally was able to see into the spirit realm as he was doing His service in the Temple of the Lord. He saw God show up in all of His glory with His angels declaring, "Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts." What else could Isaiah do but fall down before the Living God. We see that the first thing he realized when he was able to behold God was his own uncleanness.

This is difficult for many believers today. We tend to think that we are totally clean and pure. Well, that is absolutely correct as far as the way God “**chooses**” to now look at us when we are covered by the blood of Jesus. However, that is no excuse for any of us to stay the way we are. We all need to grow in the Lord and within our own life as a child of God. Isaiah recognized how far he was from the true holiness of God, yet God still came to him. That was the grace and mercy of God expressed and given to Isaiah.

God had “purged” Isaiah’s lips and took his iniquity from him. This was a God thing. It had nothing to do with anything Isaiah had done other than him being willing for God to do this. God had cleansed Isaiah, just as He does with each of us, from his sin. What was the very next thing God said? He asked, “*Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?*” Isaiah immediately replied, “*Here am I; send me.*” Is that the heart you and I have? Well, it should be if we are the children of God that we say we are. Yes, Lord, send me!!! That is the heart of true worship and of the true worshipper.

In this account we just read in Isaiah we see a few things that true worship truly is. The first thing we must grasp is that true worship is nothing less than sheer, unadulterated wonderment. We see that Isaiah was awestruck by the presence of God as God enters the Temple. The next thing we see revealed is that true worship is transformative. In God’s presence, Isaiah sees who he really was – a sinner. Yet we see Isaiah grasp this fact and instead of fleeing, he repents and is totally changed by the hand of God.

The very next thing we see is the evidence of the true heart change of an individual whose life has been truly changed by the living God. As mentioned, God asks, “*Who shall I send?*” We can tell that God is giving Isaiah the opportunity. Isaiah immediately takes God up on this and tells Him, “*Here am I; send me.*” That is what true worship is all about. It is having the attitude of heart that knows that it is not about me but rather it is all about serving God with all that I am – just as Deuteronomy 10:12 tell us. Hmmm....

We can turn to the New Testament to learn how the apostle Paul describes what true worship truly is. We read this in Roman 12:1-2 as he states, “*I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service.*”² *And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.*”

Romans 12:1-2 reveal to the New Testament believer all of the true elements of what true worship is to be today in the lives and hearts of the true believer in Christ. The motivation to now live my life as a life of true worship is revealed by Paul as he states, “*...by the mercies of God...*” God has bestowed His grace, His mercy and His peace upon my life. His mercy has given it all unto me now because I am His child through Jesus.

The manner of our worship is revealed to us as Paul writes that each of us must, “*...present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God...*” That is the essence of true worship. It is the only reasonable and rational thing that I can do because of all that God has done for me. How do I do this? Paul tells us that we are “*...not to be conformed to this world: but be ye **transformed** by the **renewing** of your mind...*”

That is the essence of the whole matter – we have been renewed and we have been now changed. I am no longer a “natural” being but rather now I am a “spirit” being. I am a totally new creature, in and through Jesus. I am a child of God. I must renew my mind in this. My spirit is alive to God but my mind must be renewed in how I am to act and behave every day of my life. That is true worship.

This leads us to John 4:23-24 where Jesus explains further what **true worship** really is - “*But the hour comes, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeks such to worship him. God [is] a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship [him] in spirit and in truth.*”

True worship is when we now worship the Father in “spirit and in truth.” Jesus calls for the true worshipper to come forward. What does He mean by the term “*true worshipper?*” The term “true” used in this scripture comes from the Greek word, “*alēthinos.*” It refers to the individual who not only has the name and resemblance of the one who the individual worships, but it also refers to having the real and “true” nature of the one they are worshipping - in every respect.

The “name” in this definition refers to God. It means to be the real and true genuine item. In other words “true worship” is the real and genuine worship that God accepts and delights in. It is the only type of worship that He will truly accept. We now take on His Name, as in a marriage, showing to others who we are now in “oneness” with.

Jesus goes on to say that “*the day will come and now is...*” This is because Jesus is the only way to the Father and through Him is the only way to the true worship and to the true relationship that pleases the Father. Those that receive Jesus and are led by Jesus to the Father are called God’s “true worshippers.”

The “true worshippers” are those who genuinely bow down, kiss towards and turn towards God. The true worshippers are those who worship in the way that God desires – “in spirit and truth.” Notice that Jesus does not mention anything here about music and song. It is simply all about the attitude of the individual’s heart. This is the primary aspect of what true worship is – **an attitude of the heart.**

This just doesn’t happen at the church service or at any worship service. No, it happens every day, every moment, in all that we do, in every second of our lives – both when we are here on this earth and forever in eternity when we are with Him - forever. It never ends.

True worship comes from a heart that loves and worships God for who He is, not for what you want or for what you can get out of it. It is to know that you do not earn God's approval or acceptance by worshipping Him. He simply loves you as His child and we worship Him simply because we are in love with Him.

There are times when we are to enter into the “great praise” of our God along with others who are doing the same – praising the One and only true and living God. Most importantly, we are to now worship our God as His true worshipper - everyday, 24 hours a day/ 7 days a week. We must have an attitude of heart that is totally centered and focused in on the one and only true and living God.

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