

The Battle for Truth?

Part 12 – Worship

1

INTRODUCTION

There is a lot of talk in churches today about “worship.” Yet I feel that the true meaning of the word is being lost. We, like many churches have a “worship team” that leads the congregation in worship. As a result of having “worship teams”, many churches have a designated part of the service as the worship “portion” of their service. Talking to some of my students, they are incorporating a “worship time” into their daily devotions.

We need to stop and ask ourselves, “What is worship?”

2

TWO ASPECTS OF WORSHIP!

We need to designate between two forms of worship. There is inner-worship of the heart and emotions, and outer-worship which we do with the body. These are connected.

Romans 12:1

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.

The ESV captures the essence and translates “reasonable service” as “spiritual worship”. Yielding our ourselves to God is reasonable since He sacrificed Himself for us, but this act of surrender is also worship!

3

TWO ASPECTS OF WORSHIP!

Yet Jesus warns that the “outward” form of worship can be negated if the heart is not engaged.

Matthew 15:8-9

“These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. ⁹And in vain they worship Me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.”

Jesus was speaking of the religious leaders who outwardly said they were worshipping God, but in reality, were looking for the praise and respect of others. Notice that Jesus states that this worship is “vain” meaning “empty and worthless”.

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TWO ASPECTS OF WORSHIP!

Listen to Jesus' warning in Matthew 6:1-5

Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. ² Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. ³ But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ that your charitable deed may be in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly. ⁵ "And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.

Take a moment to reflect: What is the object of their worship?

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TWO ASPECTS OF WORSHIP!

The other side of this argument can be found in the life of David. David had a heart desire to know and please God. When you read through the Psalms that he wrote you see his love and desire to follow God.

Scripture also contains David's failures – adultery and murder. Scripture also records how David was broken and repented.

David's failures (like ours) broke the bond of fellowship between him and God. That sense of loss, drove David to repentance and restoration. Despite David's shortcomings, God still refers to him as a "man after God's own heart."

Do not let Satan throw up your failures to make you feel unworthy of worship. Confess – Repent – and be Restored. Then worship God for His Love, Grace, and Forgiveness!

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THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP

Let's stop a moment and evaluate an important aspect of worship. All people and religions worship something. Every religion performs "acts of worship" to their gods. Though worship, it was not worship of the God of the Bible.

I fear that much of the "worship" that has consumed the church today is driven by entertainment. People enjoy the music and may even sing along, but we must always be aware of our heart. Am I contemplating the word of the song and allowing myself to be drawn up before the throne of God to praise Him for Who He is and What He has done? Or am I simply enjoying a good song, or some catchy phrase.

I worry when I see churches have "bands" that perform "covers" of music in a concert setting with spotlights.... I have to ask myself, "What is the object of the worship?" Are they worshipping a band, a person, themselves, a church, or are they worshipping God?

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THE OBJECT OF WORSHIP

I do not want this to come across as a blanket statement. I am sure that in every True Church there are those who are worshipping God from the heart, and it rises up to God as a sweet acceptable sacrifice.

I am also sure that in every True Church there are those going through the motions and need to be reminded of the "battle for the heart." Our "flesh" is always fighting to be the center and in control.

In honesty and transparency, there are times that I have to stop singing, set aside all the things that are distracting my heart, close my eyes and place myself before the throne of the God who sees my heart, and then focus the words that I am singing as praise in worship to the One Who is Worthy!

The object of Worship must be our God!

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RIGHT WORSHIP COMES FROM RIGHT THINKING

What is this inner, authentic, godward experience of the heart that we call the essence of worship? Where does real “spiritual worship” come from?

Again, listen to Jesus’ words...

John 4:23-24

“But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. ²⁴God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Notice that worshipping in spirit is not contrasted with worshipping in the body or with the body. Instead, it is put alongside worshipping in truth.

What does this mean?

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RIGHT WORSHIP COMES FROM RIGHT THINKING

So what would that mean, that we are to be spirit-worshippers, worshipping from the spirit, and truth, driven by truth? I think the point is that when we worship — right worship, good worship, pleasing worship — depends on a right mental grasp of the way God really is, in truth.

When we worship something other than God, then it is idolatry. We must make sure that we have a Biblical based view of God (TRUTH), and not one constructed in our minds that we are “comfortable” with.

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RIGHT WORSHIP COMES FROM RIGHT THINKING

So that I am not taken out of context. I am not saying every song we sing and listen to at home must be about God. However, the message of that music should be in keeping with Biblical Truth.

I can sing a patriotic song like the *Star Spangled Banner* which is about our nation, with the understanding that our freedom as a nation is built upon our freedom in God.

I should not be listening to music that glorifies sin and seeks to tear down the things God has ordained.

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RIGHT WORSHIP AFFIRMS GOD'S WORTH

The English word "worship" comes from worth ship. That is, worship is showing, displaying the worth of God. Proper worship depends on our hearts grasping a right spiritual, emotional, and affectional understanding of God's Infinite value. True worship is a valuing or a treasuring of God above all things. It results in seeing our relationship with God as the most precious and valuable essence that we have.

Matthew 13:44-46 talks about the Kingdom of God as a treasure so great that a person is willing to go and sell all that he has in order to possess it.

True Worship comes from a heart that acknowledges the infinite worth of God and our relationship with Him!

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WHAT DOES RIGHT WORSHIP LOOK LIKE?

Worship has two aspects. True worship begins in our heart. It is seeing God in Truth and seeing God (Who He is and What He has done) as precious and valuable. That view of God will overflow into our lives and how we live.

Hebrews 13:15-16

Therefore, by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of *our* lips, giving thanks to His name. ¹⁶ But do not forget to do good and to share, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.

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WHAT DOES RIGHT WORSHIP LOOK LIKE?

This morning we celebrated who God is and our relationship with Him. We did this together as Corporate Worship. There is something special about praising God together.

God designed us to worship, and worship was also designed for us. I cannot sing praises to my King without being encouraged and blessed by His presence.

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WHAT DOES RIGHT WORSHIP LOOK LIKE?

However, worship is more than singing a song. In fact, I believe that worship is everything we do. This sermon is my sacrifice of worship to God. Your learning is a celebration of God's truth. Your giving is a sacrifice of worship to further the ministry. Sharing the gospel is worship as it proclaims the love, grace, and mercy of God. Caring for the orphan and widow and those in need is an act of worship as we place the same value on them as God does.

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MISCONCEPTIONS IN WORSHIP

It is easy to confuse culture and worship. Our prejudice to certain music styles can cause us to reject them as worship.

We must remember that we want Jesus to transform culture so that it glorifies Him, not so that it conforms to our tastes or desires.

There is music my students listen to that is not enjoyable to me – it is not my culture. It is theirs but when I get into conversations, they share the words (often which I cannot understand) and how it has impacted their lives for Christ. It would be wrong to force me to conform to their culture but is also wrong for me to expect them to conform to mine.

Rather their culture and mine must be transformed by the power of Christ to glorify Him!

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MISCONCEPTIONS IN WORSHIP

Culture is always changing. There is a spiritual battle, and this is especially true in music. I am personally thankful that we did not sing three songs of Gregorian Chant this morning.

As a church, we must try to be culturally relevant. We reach out and minister to many different cultures. You may not always find every song ministering to you but be aware that very song may be ministering deeply in the life of someone else.

Let's not put our focus on music or style, but in the message. We sing in worship to God. Like the disciples we can become offended that "others" were casting out demons in Jesus' name. Jesus' response – He was thankful that the name of Jesus was being proclaimed!

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HEBREW WORDS FOR WORSHIP

Here are seven Old Testament words that are translated as worship.

- Yâdâh, yaw-daw': To revere or worship with extended hands. To hold out the hands. To throw a stone or arrow.
 - Hâlâl, haw-lal': To boast. To rave. To shine. To celebrate. To be clamorously foolish.
- Zâmar, zaw-mar': To make music. To celebrate in song and music. To touch the strings or parts of a musical instrument.
- Tôwdâh, to-daw': An extension of the hand. Thanksgiving. A confession. A sacrifice of praise. Thanksgiving for things not yet received. A choir of worshippers.
- Bârak, baw-rak': To kneel. To bless God (as an act of adoration). To praise. To salute. To thank.
- Tehillâh, teh-hil-law': Laudation. A hymn. A song of praise. A new song. A spontaneous song.
- Shâbach, shaw-bakh': To address in a loud tone. To shout. To commend, glory, and triumph.

Taken from "Holy Roar"

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WORSHIP DEMONSTRATED

Heaven is all about worship.

Revelation 4

After these things I looked, and behold, a door *standing* open in heaven. And the first voice which I heard *was* like a trumpet speaking with me, saying, “Come up here, and I will show you things which must take place after this.”

² Immediately I was in the Spirit; and behold, a throne set in heaven, and *One* sat on the throne. ³ And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance; and *there was* a rainbow around the throne, in appearance like an emerald. ⁴ Around the throne *were* twenty-four thrones, and on the thrones I saw twenty-four elders sitting, clothed in white robes; and they had crowns of gold on their heads. ⁵ And from the throne proceeded lightnings, thunderings, and voices. Seven lamps of fire *were* burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

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WORSHIP DEMONSTRATED

Revelation 4

⁶ Before the throne *there was* a sea of glass, like crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and around the throne, *were* four living creatures full of eyes in front and in back. ⁷ The first living creature *was* like a lion, the second living creature like a calf, the third living creature had a face like a man, and the fourth living creature *was* like a flying eagle. ⁸ *The* four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying:

“Holy, holy, holy,
Lord God Almighty,
Who was and is and is to come!”

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WORSHIP DEMONSTRATED

Revelation 4

⁹ Whenever the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰ the twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying:

¹¹ “You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created.”

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SO WHAT ...

To truly worship we need to make Jesus the Lord of our lives. We need to be studying Scripture and seeking out what He would have us do. We need to take our sin seriously and surrender these areas to His control.

When it comes to corporate worship it is ok to close your eyes and imagine yourself singing the words to God. It is ok to lift your hands in surrender to God.

Our God is so awesome. His grace is so abundant, and His mercy is so deep. We have so much to praise and worship Him for!

As we celebrate communion and sing a closing song, think about what you are doing and singing. Let's worship Jesus together!

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