
Words of Truth

Worship Is Not For Our Entertainment

By: Brian A. Yeager

There have been many times wherein we have heard, or even may have said ourselves, statements that suggest the idea that worship is for our entertainment. When someone says, "I really like this song", "this is my favorite song", "I like hard preaching", "that was a beautiful prayer", etc.; there is a possible implication that we might be thinking incorrectly about worship.

When you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs; do you think about whether you like them or not? When you hear sermons, do you think about whether you like them or not? When public prayers are led, do you think about whether you like them or not? When you pray to God do you think about what He wants to hear or only about what you want to say?

A woman said this to Jesus: "Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship" (John 4:20). His response was this: *"Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father. Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth"* (John 4:21-24).

If you paid attention to the quote above, you noticed that God is seeking people that are true worshippers. He is seeking people to worship Him in spirit and in truth. What He is not seeking is people that worship Him according to their desires or their sources of truth. If we were to worship God according to our own desires, publicly or privately, that worship would be in vain (Mark 7:7-9 and Colossians 2:18-23). We have to realize that worship is about God, not us.

Worship Is About What Is Pleasing To God

Understanding that we are not under the Old Testament (Romans 7:1-6, Ephesians 2:11-17, Colossians 2:14, and Hebrews 9:15-17), there are many lessons to be learned from the Old Testament (Romans 15:4 and I Corinthians 10:1-12). In two cases, Israel was in sin and their worship was unacceptable to God. Notice what the Lord said to them: *"To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto me? saith the Lord: I am full of the burnt offerings of rams, and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he goats. When ye come to appear before me, who hath required this at your hand, to tread my courts? Bring no more vain oblations; incense is an abomination unto me; the new moons and sabbaths, the calling of assemblies, I cannot away with; it is*

iniquity, even the solemn meeting. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hateth: they are a trouble unto me; I am weary to bear them. And when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: your hands are full of blood. Wash you, make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; cease to do evil... I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies. Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them: neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts. Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream” (Isaiah 1:11-16 and Amos 5:21-24).

While what we do in worship to God has changed under the New Testament, the fact that He will not hear it if it is wrong has not changed (Matthew 15:7-9, John 9:31, and I Peter 3:12). When you think about God possibly despising your worship, hating it, calling it noise; what does that do to you?

It is good that we approach God with reverence (Psalms 89:7 and Hebrews 12:28-29). It is good that we understand that He does not want worshipped with mechanical instruments of music (Matthew 26:30, Acts 16:25, Romans 15:9, I Corinthians 14:15, Ephesians 5:19, Colossians 3:16, and James 5:13). It is good that we understand that we are to pray to God the Father through Jesus Christ (Ephesians 5:20). It is good that we remember the Lord's death correctly (Acts 20:7 and I Corinthians 11:23-33). However, these things can become ritualistic. We can get into the habit of singing and praying. We can get into the habit of listening to a sermon. We can get into the habit of dropping money into a tray on the first day of the week (I Corinthians 16:1-2). We can even get to a point wherein we enjoy doing these things. The question is, are we doing these things only according to the letter of the law or are we also invested in spirit? Are we doing them FOR HIS PLEASURE?

For The Pleasure Of Whom?

John, by inspiration, wrote this: *“Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created”* (Revelation 4:11). We have to continually be sure that God is pleased with our actions in worship as well as our focus. We have to worship Him not just in the flesh, but in the spirit (Philippians 3:3). In so doing, we will never find ourselves worshipping for or according to carnal pleasure.

Conclusion

Our place in life is to the service of God (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14). When we are worshipping God, we have to remember that we are before our Maker (Psalms 95:6). We should worship Him according to the beauty of His holiness (Psalms 96:9). Our worship should exalt Him, not us (Psalms 99:5). When you sing or pray alone, be sure it is right to Him. When we assemble for prayer, song, giving, remembrance of the Lord's death, and preaching; let's be sure the glory, honor, and praise is to Him (I Timothy 1:17 and I Peter 4:11). If our worship to God is for our pleasure, our worship is facing the wrong person!