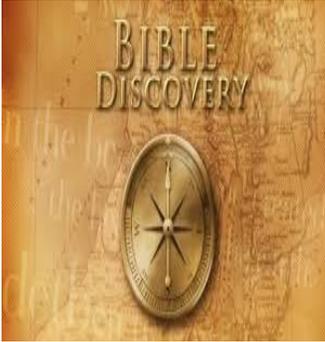


The Psalms in Our Worship



The world of worship has undergone significant changes as we've entered into the 21st century yet both age-old traditional & the latest in contemporary styles must center on one facet of our time gathered together. Therefore as we consider the theme, *Psalms in Our Worship*, as we consider singing with *joy to the Lord*, as we consider shouting aloud to *the Rock of our Salvation*, as we consider acknowledging that *"the Lord is the great God, the great King above all Gods"*, we're compelled to ask the question – "What does it mean to worship and glorify God?"

Attempts at explaining worship often end up leaving out more than they contribute to our understanding of worship. A definition of worship I appreciate for its simplicity and clarity is by Warren Wiersbe: "Worship is the believer's response of all that they are – mind, emotions, will, body – to what God is and says and does." In the OT glory to God brings with it the idea of His greatness, awe & fear. In the NT, "glory" denotes "dignity, honour, praise and worship." Putting the two together, glorifying God becomes acknowledging His greatness with awe and reverent fear, giving Him honour by praising and worshipping Him, primarily because He and He alone, deserves to be praised, honoured and worshipped.

If God has all the glory (He does) how do we "give" Him glory in our praise, in our worship? How do we give God something which is His in the first place? The key is found in 1 Chronicles 16:28-29 with one essential word repeated thrice for our instruction, "*Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength, ascribe to the LORD the glory due His name. Bring an offering and come before Him; worship the LORD in the splendor of His holiness.*" Long before a scribe had access to highlighters and underlining of words for emphasis, he brought attention to key thoughts through repetition such as we find in this verse. It serves us well to notice the emphasis for our own good. In this verse, we see two actions that make up our collective action of glorifying God.

- First, we "**ascribe**" to Him because glory is His to receive. No one else deserves the praise or worship we give to glorify our Heavenly Father. Isaiah records God's Word on this: "*I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.*" [Isaiah 42:8] If we would worship our Lord, if we would truly *come before Him with thanksgiving* and choose to *extol Him with music and song* from our hearts, we too must give glory to no other!
- Second, we're to "**bring an offering**" to God as our worship glorifying Him. What offering do we bring to God to glorify Him? In our service we take time to collect an "offering" of monetary gifts. This is necessary and good, but it's not the offering we bring. In fact as we bring the gifts to the table of our Lord we do so using them as an expression of our true offering. The offering we bring to God as we come before Him in the splendor, in the beauty of *His holiness* involves agreement, obedience, submission, it involves us rehearsing His attributes, extolling Him for His goodness, and it involves our *total*

The offering we bring to God involves agreement, obedience, submission; it involves our *total* surrender & sacrifice

surrender and sacrifice. The Apostle Paul explains, *“I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”* [Romans 12:1]

Worship begins with agreeing with *everything* God says about Himself as He declares, *“For the Lord is the great God, the great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth, and the mountain peaks belong to Him.”* [Vs. 3-4] Because God has fashioned all things, created all things, because all things belong to God, we can trust all He brings us is holy and perfect and true, and we glorify Him by listening to and agreeing with Him. Listening to and agreeing with Him, however, is not worship! Did you know the demons hear God, they even agree with Him as to the way all will end – but they do not follow Him. Knowledge will not cause us to glorify Him unless we also *fear Him, submit to Him - obey His commands.* *“But from everlasting to everlasting the LORD’s love is with those who fear Him, and His righteousness with their children’s children—with those who keep His covenant and remember to obey His precepts”* [Psalm 103:17-18]. God our Father calls out to us, *“today, if you hear my voice, do not harden your hearts”!* Jesus reiterated the idea that *obeying and loving God are one and the same* in John 14:15: *“If you love me, you will obey what I command.”*

**Worship is
the
submission of
all our nature
to God!**

William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury in Church of England during the 2nd WW, reminds us, *“Worship is the submission of all our nature to God. It is the quickening of conscience by His holiness; the nourishment of mind with His truth; the purifying of imagination by His beauty; the opening of the heart to His love; the surrender of will to His purpose – and all of this gathered up in adoration, the most selfless emotion of which our nature is capable and therefore the chief remedy for self-centeredness which is our original sin & the source of*

all actual sin”.

When we worship God in total submission we’re honest in our own assessment, we recognize that because God is holy and perfect and true, He’s correct in His judgment of us *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”* We don’t come to God trusting in our own righteousness but solely understanding that He, Jesus, *“bore our sins in His body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness”* so that *“by His wounds you have been healed”* [1 Peter 2:24] – set free, given life, made holy, given the right to be called children of God, invited to come & worship giving as a sacrifice of praise to God, our Heart! That’s the reality of our worth – *“we were all like sheep going astray”* – but the shepherd found you and *“now you have returned to the shepherd and Overseer of your souls.”* [1 Peter 2:25]

We worship our Heavenly Father by continually meditating on and remembering His goodness. Stephen, in his final sermon before being killed for his faith, retold the story of God’s dealings with Israel from the time of Abraham all the way to the coming of Christ, whom Israel betrayed and murdered. When we testify of God’s work in our lives, how He saved us from sin, the marvelous works He does in our lives every day, we too give Him glory remembering Him to others. Even though the crowd who heard Stephen hated what he said, covered their ears & rushed at him to stone him. *“But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, looked up to heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God”* [Acts 7:55], yet Stephen asked that God forgive them. Today many in our world are standing for their faith even though it brings them physical death. Oh, that should we be called, we would be found

Jesus...
Set us free,
gave us life,
& gives us
the right to
be called children
of God, invited to
come and worship!



Worship is everything we do, worship is everything we say, worship is everything we think!

worthy to stand with them, looking up to heaven and seeing the glory of God! Let us not think we only glorify God “*in worship*” by gathering in the sanctuary, cut off from the routines of daily duties, shutting out, during a brief pause, the world “*out there*”. Rather we glorify God daily; we *worship* throughout each day, we *worship* during every day of our lives. Just as Stephen was in the marketplace giving witness, so we too are a light to the world; we too must shine in the darkness. *Worship* is everything we do, *worship* is everything we say, *worship* is everything we think – even in our secret places – and it is the act of total surrender for all these things. We’re blasphemous to our God when what we do fails to bring Him glory.

To worship and glorify God is to bear witness to Him in our world – to the presence of *His* holiness, *His* faithfulness, *His* mercy, *His* grace, *His* love, *His* majesty, *His* sovereignty, and *His* power in our lives – acknowledging *His* presence in our hearts, and telling others about the singular nature of the salvation *only He* offers, *only He* provides, *only Christ* delivers; it’s living out the life *He’s* given us to live. Here’s a resounding call to *live* Christianity! Here’s the call to be all Christ has enabled you to be. Here’s the challenge to be real – engaged and serious about truly knowing *God* our Heavenly Father; to be real - passionate for and with Jesus and His gospel; to be real - indwelled with God’s presence through His Holy Spirit; and to be real - endeavoring through sacrificial acts of love for others. This is the challenge set before us – to reach our world which has rejected Christ - not with condemnation and judgment, but with compassion and grace and agape love – the same shown to each of us who’ve received salvation. The challenge is that today we not rise in anger, not shun our neighbour, not condemn our nation’s leaders – rather we kneel our spiritual hearts before the Lord our maker undergirding them with prayer, we submit ourselves to their rule, we willingly sacrifice ourselves on God’s altar of grace allowing them to use us and to hopefully find God in our midst. Consider Paul, *in chains for defending and confirming the gospel* – what was his prayer to the Philippians? “*That your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depths of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ – to the glory and praise of God.*” [Philippians 1:7; 9-11] There was no call to arms, no cry to overthrow Nero, no condemnation of the social order of a society just as decrepit as the current society in which we live. Rather there *was* a call to pray and to love, to pursue what was best, to stand blameless while waiting for Christ’s return. My prayer this morning is God will open my heart and enable my life to be not only a member of the flock under His care; but to be one who hears His voice carrying the message to all nations, praying for them, caring for their every need, forgiving them, loving them in Christ, welcoming them to join us as the people of His pasture. Will you join me? My prayer is our worship of God will give us strength to share our story of God to others in *all* we do and say.

Our Saviour Himself shows us our worship is comprised of mind and heart, eyes and ears, feet and hands, lips that go and tell God’s world - all as the whole. We’re to be His body and to go in His name. If we’re to bring Him praise in our lives, we *must* worship Him in this way. It begins by not hardening our hearts, It begins by humbling ourselves in a state of worship – bowing down to our Lord and maker; coming to Him with joy, shouting aloud to the Rock

Worship is comprised of mind and heart, eyes and ears, feet and hands, lips that go and tell God’s world - all as the whole.

of our Salvation. It begins by recognizing that He is our God, our great God and we are His people – won't you come with me to sing for joy to the Lord, to shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation, to come and bow down in worship?

Today, if you have thoughts about what it means to worship our God, what it means to be filled with God's Holy Spirit, what it means to be saved by Jesus Christ, God's Son who bore all sin upon the cross, do not hesitate to contact us at office.mbbc@xplornet.com.

Blessings!