

Thoughts regarding personal worship

Worshipping God in the beauty of holiness is our greatest privilege as Christians. Intentional worship can take place through many different formats, at any time, and in any location, to express our reverential AWE of Yahweh (Hebrews 12:28). A personal desire for uncompromising integrity in worship fulfills the command of Exodus 34:14, *for you shall not worship any other god, for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.*

In Matthew 15:8-9, Jesus distinguished between heartless external worship and authentic heart worship when He spoke against the Pharisees and scribes. *This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.* Both forms are considered to be worship by people, but only one is valid and pleasing to the LORD.

External worship promotes man-centered doctrines or man-oriented thoughts of God. This style of worship places self and personal experience on an equal footing as proclaiming God. Often swept along by great excitement, the quality of worship is

determined by how emotionally high or self-satisfied the worshipper feels. This contrasts greatly with God-centred worship, where heart passions understand that *God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth* (John 4:24). Therefore, authentic spiritual worship may experience powerful emotions, yet they are led by truth. So, worship with a right attitude, through biblical truth, with passion directed at God is both essential and liberating.

Some attributes of worship:

1 Chronicles 16:29-31

²⁹ *Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the LORD in the splendour of holiness;*

³⁰ *tremble before him, all the earth; yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved.*

³¹ *Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!"*

Observations:

~ We are to direct our worship at the LORD by declaring His attributes and deeds which we

recognise as being glorious and worthy of worship.

- ~ Worship should always comprise of an offering to the LORD of some kind. Most of the time, this would be sacrificing our lives in greater devotion to Him (Romans 12:1). But there are times when we will offer to God our time, our energy, our money, our possessions, or something else as an act of worship.
- ~ Worship must be done with purity of heart, enabling the beauty of a Christlike holy life to make the worship acceptable through faith in Jesus (Romans 12:1). 1 Peter 2:5, *you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*
- ~ Worship is to be done with humility, acknowledging the greatness of our Creator God, and the smallness of ourselves. Acknowledging the differential between Yahweh and humanity elevates our affections for His grace shown to us in so many ways.
- ~ Worship confesses the reigning sovereignty of God as He rules over everything through all of time and eternity. This lifts our eyes from the

limitations of the here and now, to view God as reigning unchallenged from His throne room in heaven.

Psalm 98:4-6

⁴ Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises!

⁵ Sing praises to the LORD with the lyre, with the lyre and the sound of melody!

⁶ With trumpets and the sound of the horn make a joyful noise before the King, the LORD!

Observations:

- ~ Worship directed at Yahweh should be joyful and can be noisy and loud. Often worship is expressed through singing the many truths of God.
- ~ Songs of praise are those which proclaim God's attributes and deeds. If possible, much of the time, singing should be accompanied by musical instruments or backing music, or singers. This still leaves room for acapella singing as voices fulfil the roles of instruments. Whichever the case, the combination of instruments and voice is to form loud and satisfying melody, and not be chaotic.

- ~ A huge variety of instruments are permissible, which in and of themselves are worshipful, as they sound out the enormous variations of musical beauty. Again, for the most part, instrumentation and music is to be joyful and majestic in character as it is directed at the King of kings.
- ~ This enables a broad spectrum of genres to be employed as God's people proclaim the multifaceted nature of Yahweh.

Therefore, worship can equally be soft or bold, quiet, or loud, joyful, or reflective. Worship involves our adoration of God and our service for Him. Worship should have focus, a central point of attention, and a destination for our deepest emotions, and that destination is to be God through the Lord Jesus Christ (1 Peter 2:5).

Worship is to be biblically accurate in the truths sung or sung along to. If the lyrics are not biblically true and accurate, we forfeit truth and therefore we forfeit holiness in worship. While melody and tempo are important, they are secondary to truthfulness.

Common patterns of worship observed in the Bible are:

A – Adoration = Expressions of deep love and admiration for who God is and what He does.

C – Confession = Expressions of agreement with God. This can include anything which God states, including personal sin, national or cultural sin, acknowledging God's gracious response to mankind. Any agreement with God in any matter.

T – Thanksgiving = Expressions of gratitude, thanks, and appreciation.

S – Supplication = Expressions of humble requests of God which would fuel our further worship of Him.

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire (Hebrews 12:28–29).