

# Thrilling the Heart of God

## The Heart of Worship

Psalm 96: 1-13

June 11, 2016

### Today

The worship service has just ended. The congregation is filing out or lingering to chat with a friend.

- How good it is to see you, someone says.
- Wasn't that special music inspiring, another gushes.
- The children's story made me laugh, we over hear.

OR

- That visitor sat in MY pew.
- Those kids sure could use a "Come to Jesus" moment.
- I sure hope Suzie doesn't make her "famous" loaf again. That stuff is terrible.

This scene is typical in every church, a little more positive or negative, but none the less typical.

We have come to view the church service on a scale of 1 to 10:

- 1 being – I should have stayed in bed
- 10 being – WOW that was awesome

Books have been written and seminars put on in the hopes of finding new and better ways to attract the masses to our churches. Maybe if we have a praise band or a light show for the children's story. Maybe if we take out all the pews and put in comfy chairs or install a snack bar in the fellowship hall.....

**While humans debate what constitutes worship. God leaves us no doubt:**

**Psalm 96:1-13** - Sing to the LORD a new song; Sing to the LORD, all the earth. <sup>2</sup> Sing to the LORD, bless His name; Proclaim good tidings of His salvation from day to day. <sup>3</sup> Tell of His glory among the nations, His wonderful deeds among all the peoples. <sup>4</sup> For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. <sup>5</sup> For all the gods of the peoples are idols, But the LORD made the heavens. <sup>6</sup> Splendor and majesty are before Him, Strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. <sup>7</sup> Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, Ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. <sup>8</sup> Ascribe to the LORD the glory of His name; Bring an offering, and come into His courts. <sup>9</sup> Worship the LORD in holy attire; Tremble before Him, all the earth. <sup>10</sup> Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns; Indeed, the world is firmly established, it will not be moved; He will judge the peoples with equity." <sup>11</sup> Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice; Let the sea roar, and all it contains; <sup>12</sup> Let the field exult, and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy <sup>13</sup> Before the LORD, for He is coming; For He is coming to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness, And the peoples in His faithfulness.

**Psalm 19:1-4** - The heavens are telling of the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. <sup>2</sup> Day to day pours forth speech, And night to night reveals knowledge. <sup>3</sup> There is no speech, nor are there words; Their voice is not heard. <sup>4</sup> Their line has gone out through all the earth, And their utterances to the end of the world. In them He has placed a tent for the sun,

Perhaps the best definition for worship encapsulates the priority we should place on worship..... **"Worship is to honor with extravagant love and extreme submission"**.

**True worship is defined, then, by the priority we place on who God is in our lives and where God is on our list of priorities.**

**So, what is the heart of worship – what thrills the heart of God?**

### 1 – Worship starts with humility

Often, we come before God with an attitude of "prove it". He has to prove to us that He is worthy of our praise and worship:

- If my house sells
- If I get that job
- If I don't get cancer.

We want God to show up in BIG ways. We like the Earthquake and the Fire and the Wind. Those things grab our attention, gets the adrenaline flowing, and proves to us that our God is BIG and worthy of our devotion. That's what the Jews were looking for – A BIG BAD JESUS who was going to strike down the Romans and restore Israel to its previous glory. They were looking for a savior who would work **for them** not **in them**.

- **Worship recognizes God for WHO He is – not what He does.** Our worship must be toward the One who is worthy simply because of His identity not just because He is able to meet our needs or answer our prayers.

THINK ABOUT THIS: Would you continue to worship God if all miraculous signs and wonders were not as evident in your life? Would God still be worthy of your worship or is your worship completely dependent upon the blessings you receive? Do you only worship God for what He can do for you?

**Psalm 8:1-4: O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth! You have set your glory above the heavens. <sup>2</sup> From the lips of children and infants you have ordained praise because of your enemies, to silence the foe and the avenger. <sup>3</sup> When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, <sup>4</sup> what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?**

- Worship is response to the reality that God loved us FIRST.
- Worship reminds us that God is God and we are not (Job 38-41)
- Worship is something we GIVE.
- Worship lifts us above our present reality to see things as God sees them.
- When we consider Who God is – the Creator of EVERYTHING, we cannot help but be humbled.
- When we realize that same God knows our names and is intensely interested in us, we cannot help but be in awe.

Praise and worship are a thank you note to God. It is an expression of extravagant appreciation and gratitude.

## **2 – Worship focuses on what God gets out it.**

We are consumer Christians – the focus is on our personal experience. If we don't like one preacher or service in one church, there is always another church down the road. That is no more evident than right here in Silicon Valley - there are over 30 Seventh-day Adventist churches in the Bay Area.

We assume that personal fulfillment is the goal of the church service: How will the service fill MY needs, fit MY style, lift MY soul?

- Move ME
- Thrill ME
- Bless ME

We hold other people responsible for our worship experience.

We have an attitude of "What can I get out of it", instead of, "What can I bring to it".

### **Perhaps even more alarming is what we have decided worship IS:**

- Music style
- Order of service
- Certain hours of the week – mostly 930-1230 every Sabbath morning.

Worship is not about what we get out of it. It is about what God gets out of it. God is the true audience and He bends low in eager anticipation to receive our worship. Worship starts with us and goes up to the throne of God.

- Does HIS heart soar?
- Does HE raise his hands?
- Is HE thrilled with what we bring to HIM?
- Is our worship the highlight of HIS week?

When we come into the presence of God our single focus should be on HIM. Our delight should be in knowing that we gave our very best to the God of the universe.

### 3 – Worship engages the heart AND the head.

Some churches specialize in generating emotion. The worship leaders and presenters are experts at moving the congregation to laughter or to tears. Attenders learn to evaluate the service in terms of the emotions they feel. Such worship is shallow, sometimes artificial, and rarely reflective. Little attention is given to worshipping with the mind. It produces people who have little depth or rootedness. They become worship junkies, searching for which ever church can supply the best rush.

On the other hand, some churches focus on cognitive correctness. They recite great creeds, distribute reams of theological information, and craft careful prayers. Yet, the heart is not seized with wonder and passion. The congregation is not moved to fall on their faces before the Living God. Those who attend such services may be able to spot theological error, but the truth is they are also a little bored (Maybe God is a little too). Their worship is dry – it does not connect with their deepest hurts and desires. Rarely does it generate awe or healing, and never raucous joy.

- **John 4:23** - "But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

Worship engages both the heart and mind - "When our hearts are tuned to praise our Maker, not only in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs but also in our lives, we shall live in communion with Heaven. . . . There will be gratitude in the heart and in the home, in private as well as in public devotion. This constitutes the true worship of God." {TMK 322.4}

### 4 – Worship is costly

- **Samuel 24:18-24:** "On that day Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and build an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." <sup>19</sup> So David went up, as the LORD had commanded through Gad. <sup>20</sup> When Araunah looked and saw the king and his men coming toward him, he went out and bowed down before the king with his face to the ground. <sup>21</sup> Araunah said, "Why has my lord the king come to his servant?" "To buy your threshing floor," David answered, "so I can build an altar to the LORD, that the plague on the people may be stopped." <sup>22</sup> Araunah said to David, "Let my lord the king take whatever pleases him and offer it up. Here are oxen for the burnt offering, and here are threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. <sup>23</sup> O king, Araunah gives all this to the king." Araunah also said to him, "May the LORD your God accept you." <sup>24</sup> But the king replied to Araunah, "No, I insist on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."

Worship:

- Will demand something from you
- Will change you
- Will move you
- It might even scare you

... Because it is an encounter with an Awesome, Infinite and Almighty God who:

- Fills us with wonder
- And trembling
- And awe
- And hope

Everything we do in worship should kill us:

- Our sins
- Our self-centeredness
- Our self-absorption
- Our self-sufficiency
- Our self-satisfaction

Worship should crucify us and challenge us, and convict us, and change us.

When we encounter God in worship:

- It changes how we live Sunday thru Friday
- It changes how we relate to others
- It changes how we serve our church and community
- It changes how we treat our children and parents
- It changes how we give
- It changes how we think

Worship becomes a part of who we are – our lifestyle, not just what we DO once a week.