

WORSHIP IN SPIRIT AND TRUTH

COREY STARK

Worship in Spirit and Truth (John 4:23-24)

I. WORSHIP IN SPIRIT & TRUTH

A. It's unthinkable that the eternal, infinite and uncreated God would actually seek something (Jn. 4:23-24).

Jn. 4:23 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. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

B. Throughout the nations the Holy Spirit is raising up the most powerful prayer and worship movement in human history (Mal. 1:11). The LORD gave me a vision and an invitation into this movement in 1998.

Mal. 1:11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be [seen as] great among the Gentiles; in every place incense [prayer] shall be offered to My name, and a pure offering [worship]; for My name shall be [seen as] great among the nations," says the LORD of hosts.

II. THE HEART OF WORSHIP

A. Although the Hebrew and Greek definitions of the word "worship" express the idea of prostrating oneself before God in reverence, whether bowing, kneeling down or kissing the hand, the old English transliteration of the word, spelled 'weorthscipe' highlights the truth that we *express homage to God, because He is "worthy" of it*. Hence the modern term "worship" or better "worth-ship".

B. *Worship* is much more than a simple outward expression, but is first and foremost an *inward reality* that flows from a revelation of who God is by seeing His *great worth* or "worthiness", which is then expressed and *reflected outwardly* in the life (Mt. 26:6-13; Mk. 14:3-9; Lk. 7:36-50; Jn. 12:1-8).

Rev. 5:8 The 24 elders fell down before the Lamb... 9 And they sang a new song, "You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood..."

C. True worship of the heart (attributing worth) will always be evidenced by *outward reflections* and *effortless expressions* of that worship in the life of any person (Song 1:12; Ezek. 44:16-18). Think of the internal revelation of God's worth being like "precious oil" and the response of worship (bowing, singing, clapping, dancing, etc.) like a sweet smelling "fragrance" that proceeds from it. In other words, fragrance (outward expression) *only exists*, because there is *substance* (revelation). The fragrance is not the oil, even as outward expression alone isn't worship, but rather an expression of it.

Song 1:12 While the King [revelation] is at His table, my [oil of] spikenard sends forth its fragrance.

D. Therefore, merely playing or singing "worship songs" *may* have nothing to do with *authentic worship* at all, if we aren't honoring God from the heart. *Outward expression alone does not equal authentic worship*, but rather, *true worship is a reality of the heart that is hopelessly uncontainable*. Cain's offering was rejected, not because the sacrifice wasn't permissible, but due to the position of his heart (Gen. 4:3-7).

Mt. 15:7 Hypocrites! ...8 'These people draw near to Me with their mouth, and honor Me with their lips, but their heart is far from Me. 9 And in vain they worship Me...'

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E. Both Cain and Abel brought a permissible offering to the Lord (Lev. 2:12). However, only Abel's internal worship was accepted and thus his external offering as well, whereas Cain's worship was rejected.

Gen. 4:3 And in the process of time it came to pass that Cain brought an offering of the fruit of the ground to the LORD. 4 Abel also brought of the firstborn of his flock and of their fat. And the LORD respected Abel and his offering, 5 but He did not respect Cain and his offering. And Cain was very angry, and his countenance fell. 6 So the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted?"

F. Matt Redman expressed this eloquently in his song "*The Heart of Worship*".

1. The story behind this song is equally enlightening and inspiring. Matt's pastor, after recognizing an apathy during worship times, restrained Matt and his team from leading worship with any instruments for quite some time. It seemed as though the congregation had grown accustomed to leaning upon Matt's worship leading abilities and his team, and they took on the subtle, but crippling position, of coming to *passively receive for themselves*, rather than the biblical concept of worship, meaning to come before the Lord ready to *actively and sacrificially give to Him*, because of His great worth.

2. During the first service, Matt recalls that they pushed all of the chairs to the outside of the room, so everyone had to stand in the center together. He couldn't lead with instruments, so they began to sing familiar hymns to the Lord "*a-cappella*". It was noticeably the most difficult time of worship that their congregation had experienced thus far, but after a few weeks, they got quite accustomed to it and actually began experiencing some of the most profound encounters with the Lord that they ever had previously during their corporate worship times together, even with Matt's full team leading them.

3. The reason is quite simple, they had gotten away from what "*authentic worship*" of the heart is all about; not the greatness of the worship leader or even the team that is leading them and certainly not about coming with a passive heart position of "*receiving*", but rather coming before the Lord with *an active heart position of giving unto Him the glory due His name!*

Psalms 29:1 Give unto the LORD, O you mighty ones, give unto the LORD glory and strength. 2 Give unto the LORD the glory due to His name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

4. *The Heart of Worship* - <http://www.theheartofworship.org/stories.shtml>
Matt Redman ©1999 Thankyou Music (Admin. By EMI Christian Music Publishing)

*When the music fades, all is stripped away, and I simply come
Longing just to bring, something that's of worth, that will bless Your heart*

*King of endless worth, no one could express, how much You deserve
Though I'm weak and poor, all I have is Yours, every single breath*

*I'm coming back to the heart of worship and it's all about You, all about You Jesus
I'm sorry Lord, for the thing I've made it, when it's all about You, all about You Jesus*

*I'll bring You more than a song, for a song in itself, is not what You have required
You search much deeper within, through the way things appear, You're looking into my heart*

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III. TRUE WORSHIP INVOLVES TRUE SACRIFICE

A. 30th birthday story “*Dying to Live*”. Little did I know then, but the LORD wasn’t inviting me to die, but rather to live! Death isn’t the end, but merely the means into a greater reality of eternal life!

Ps. 116:15 Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Jn. 12:24 Most assuredly I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone, but if it dies, it produces much grain. 25 He who loves his life will lose it, and he who hates his life in this world will keep it for life eternal. (Rom. 6:1-14)

B. *First Mention Principle* – This principle of interpretation states that the first time something is mentioned in Scripture, it carries with it a meaning that is *consistent* throughout the whole of Scripture and contains within it the “seed truths” that won’t disappear, but will *progressively* grow and unfold unto fullness.

Gen. 22:1 Now it came to pass ...that God tested Abraham, and said ...Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering... 5 And Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here... the lad and I will go yonder and worship, and we will come back to you.” 6 So Abraham took the wood of the burnt offering and laid it on Isaac his son...”

C. You see, *the foundation of true biblical worship involves “sacrifice”*; they are inseparable. David understood this when he desired to erect an altar and worship the Lord. As King, he was offered the land for free, as well as, the animals to sacrifice to God, but David refused it all and demanded to pay the full price. He said that he would “*not offer God offerings with that which cost him nothing*” (2 Sam. 24:24). He knew that “*acceptable worship*” to God wasn’t cheap, but *required something costly - a sacrifice*. This was the foundation of the House of Prayer; which God later referred to as a “*House of Sacrifice*” (2 Chr. 7:12).

2 Sam. 24:21 Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come?” And David said, “To buy the threshing floor from you, to build an altar to the Lord...” 22 Now Araunah said... Look, here are oxen for burnt sacrifice, and... wood. 23 All these... Araunah has given to the king... May the Lord your God accept you.” 24 Then the king said to Araunah, “No, but I will surely buy it from you for a price; nor will I offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God with that which costs me nothing.”

D. True biblical worship requires something of *real value* to be given to God based upon His great worth, which is infinite. Therefore, our worship is more *qualitative* than *quantitative* (Mk. 12:41-44; Lk. 21:1-4).

Lk. 21:1 He saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury, 2 and... a certain poor widow putting in two mites... 3 “This poor widow has put in more than all [worth]; 4 for all these out of their abundance have put in offerings for God, but she out of her poverty put in all the livelihood that she had.” (Mk. 12:41-44)

E. The reality of “*worship*” is found symbolically in the holy anointing oil given to Moses (Ex. 30:22-25).

Ex. 30:22 Moreover the Lord spoke to Moses, saying: 23 “Also take for yourself quality spices--five hundred shekels of liquid myrrh, half as much sweet-smelling cinnamon (two hundred and fifty shekels), two hundred and fifty shekels of sweet-smelling cane, 24 five hundred shekels of cassia, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, and a hin of olive oil. 25 And you shall make from these ...an ointment compounded according to the art of the perfumer. It shall be a holy anointing oil.”

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1. We see the symbolic truths of worship. First, we see that this “*holy anointing oil*” is an art that is crafted by a skilled Perfumer, namely God. It takes God Himself to produce a fragrant worship in us that is holy, authentic and worthy of His great person (Esth. 2:12; Song 4:10, 13-14, 16, John 15:4-5).

Jn. 13:37 Peter said... “I will lay down my life for Your sake.” 38 Jesus... “Will you lay down your life for My sake? I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times”

2. Secondly, the “*olive oil*” is necessary to blend all of the “*quality spices*” together, to unify them and present them in a useful way. What does this olive oil symbolize? Scripture declares we have this “*holy anointing oil*” dwelling within us (1 Jn. 2:27), who is the Holy Spirit, poured out due to Jesus’ sacrifice (Jn. 7:39; 12:23-25). Jesus’ will was “*crushed*” in full submission to the Father in Gethsemane, actually meaning, “*oil press*”. It is because of Jesus’ “*sacrifice of worship*” in the Garden of Gethsemane (Lk. 22:41-44), that we now have the Holy Spirit, by which we may worship “*in Spirit and in truth*”!

Heb. 10:5 “Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. 6 In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin You had no pleasure. 7 Then I said, ‘Behold, I have come – In the volume of the book it is written of Me – [I delight Psa. 40:6-8] To do Your will, O God.’ ”

3. “*What are the quality spices?*” These spices had to be broken, crushed and ground to release the *qualities* and *fragrance* contained within that the perfumer was looking for. For us, they are the “*Divine virtues*” and the “*fruit of the Spirit*” that our Great Perfumer is bringing forth in us, using the rare, costly opportunities and precious, sacrificial experiences in our lives to break, crush and grind our wills into surrendering to His, thus producing that same quality and fragrance of authentic worship in us that was found in His Son (Song 4:13-14, 16; 2 Cor. 2:14-15; Eph. 5:2). Whether the *trials of difficulty* or the *pressures of blessing*, it is the pleasing fragrance of a heart fully surrendered that He is after.

Eph. 5:1 Therefore be imitators of God... 2 And walk in love, as Christ also has loved us and given Himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling aroma. (2 Cor. 2:14-15)

Rom. 12:1 I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual (reasonable NKJV) service of worship. - NASB

4. It is in the “*authentic sacrifice*” of laying down our own wills for the sake of the Father’s will, that the fragrant offering of worship is released (Song 1:3; 2 Cor. 2:14-15; Eph. 5:2; Rom. 12:1; Phil. 4:18).

F. Living out a lifestyle of true worship, which demands the sacrifice of self to be authentic, is the very means by which Christ is formed in us, diffusing His beautiful fragrance to God and the world around us.

Gal. 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me (2 Cor. 2:14)

G. Unconditionally doing the will of God from the heart is the *pinnacle of worship* (Eph. 6:6). It is learned and exercised like a muscle through the deliberate daily choosing of the Father’s will above our own desires.

Heb. 5:8 though He was a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered. 9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him... (Heb 2:10)

H. Perfecting Obedience (3 Stages) - 1) When it’s easy and we want to, 2) When it’s difficult and we want to, 3) When it’s difficult and we don’t want to. We desire another option, but still obey from the heart. When we become “*worship*”, the whole of our life becomes “*worship*” as well (Gen. 4:3-7; Jn. 4:23-24)!