

The Wonder of Worship

Let's pray:

Lord, it is with a humble heart that we come bowing down before Your throne. Lord, we want to worship You, and continue in the Spirit of worship and praise to You. Lord, unless You open our ears and our hearts we cannot hear or see. Unless You speak today there is nothing to say. So Lord, all of us just come with a humble heart before You today. Bless Your name, Lord Jesus. Amen.

I was talking to the Lord during worship and saying, "There is no need for me to share today because the worship time itself was the sharing time." It was great. I wanted to share on the wonder of worship, and what a wonderful time of worship we have already had.

First of all, I want to start with a 'thank You' to the Lord for worship, but also I want to thank each one of you for agreeing together with me and with the Lord that we are going to come and meet together in worship. Jim spoke of agreement. Unless there is agreement you cannot walk together. When I was meditating about what was on my heart to share, how grateful I am for you guys to come in this way to worship. It has meant so much to me in my life, my wife's life, our lives together in marriage, and in my family. I have never said 'thank you' to the whole group. So thank you to the music guys who play with such sensitivity, and thank each one of you who decide with all of us to come and worship every Sunday. Without each other coming together to worship, how could we worship? Do you realize the preciousness of it? I know you do, especially this last year or so. We have still gotten together to praise our Lord, and it has been together. Isn't that a wonderful thing?! My heart is so thankful and grateful to the Lord for the unique way in which we worship and what God has done with us here. He has done it in different places all over the world, and He has His places of different ways to worship. God is great, but I want to thank each one of you.

As a way of introduction there are four verses I would like to read.

Psalm 27:4—"One thing I have desired of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple."

Psalm 26:8—"Lord, I have loved the habitation of Thy house and the place where Your glory dwells."

Psalm 122:1—"I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'"

Psalm 23:6—"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Doesn't that speak of the wonder of us being together, coming to the house of God to worship Him? I feel like we could just stop and praise the Lord for it. It is something to treasure, isn't it? Treasure it in your heart and in your life. It is something worth defending, to say I will not let anything keep me from worshipping with my brothers and sisters, worshipping together the God that we love. Treasure it and defend it.

Worship is a wonderful thing. It is much bigger than you or I, and today I would like to share about the grandeur, the scope of worship, some simple thoughts on that because it is so big, so broad, so grand that it is impossible to grasp it, but we will look at three things on the grandeur of worship. We will look at creation, at heavenly worship, and the holiness of the honoring of the Father and the Son and Spirit, and how we are involved with that.

What is Worship

First of all, the simple definition of worship in the Hebrew language means ‘to bow down,’ ‘to prostrate oneself.’ It is a humility, and that alone really describes how we come to the Lord. That is one reason I wanted to sing that song, “With bended knee I come.” How needful humility is in worship. There is no pride in worship, no self-promotion; it is all the Lord and none of us, isn’t it? One of the great things of coming together to worship is that we come with humility before the Lord as we praise Him. We do not come with a proud heart, with nothing of our own; it is all of Him, and it is so wonderful to do that.

In the Greek it means ‘to do reverence,’ ‘an act of homage,’ ‘to kiss the hand of the Sovereign.’ It is exalting the Lord. So we have in worship the basic of coming with humility and exalting the Lord, and we have done that today. It is such a wonderful thing to get away from the world, all the problems and troubles, the difficulties that we have in our lives, and humble ourselves and say, “Lord, I just want to worship You and exalt You.” That is an amazing thing, and I know that each one of you treasures it and values it. It is a great privilege to come as God’s children. I was so pleased with what we worshipped the Lord about. We are His children, and we have a special, wonderful privilege to come and worship.

I like Psalm 96:1-10 because it speaks of worship in a way that I would like to share this morning. We come with humble hearts and we come to exalt the Lord.

“O Sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth. Sing to the Lord all the earth. Sing to the Lord, bless His name; proclaim the good tidings of His salvation from day to day. Declare His glory among the nations, His wonders among all peoples. For the Lord is great and greatly to be praised; He is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the people are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name. Bring an offering and come into His courts. Oh, worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness! Tremble before Him, all the earth. Say among the nations, ‘The Lord reigns.’”

Worship is not just a humility of silence. When we come, (verse 1) we are to sing to the Lord. Verse 2, we are to proclaim good tidings. Verse 3, we are to tell of His glory. We are to ascribe to the Lord glory that is due His name. You all know this; it is very simple, very straightforward. But worship by its very nature in expression, in speaking, proclaiming the Lord’s worth and His glory. And that is what we have the great privilege and honor to do. To ascribe means that while we are worshipping we may see one of the attributes of the One we are worshipping and we give praise to Him. What qualities does He have that I am lifting up? As we look at the Lord we see so many wonderful attributes, so many things to acknowledge and to say, “Lord, praise Your name

for that attribute. I proclaim it. Not only do I believe it, but I proclaim it, and I say it out loud in worship. That is the great privilege that we have as children of God to ascribe to our Lord glory and honor.

The Worship of God in Creation

One thing I would like to do today, which is impossible, is for us all to have this great sense of the privilege that we have. We do it every Sunday. Some have done it all of our Christian lives, but what an awesome privilege it is to come with God's children and speak in the assembly the praises of our God with a group of saints who love the Lord and want to praise Him. And we can all agree together to worship Him and to ascribe to His name glory and honor. It is an amazing thing!, It is such a great privilege. May it never become common to any of us. May it always be special.

Of course, all over the world believers are doing the same, but I am not going to speak of that. But do you know that there is another great choir of worship that has been going on, not only with God's people but with His creation. When I began to look at this, I thought it would be just a few little things and I would go on, but the more I dug into it, the more excited I got. So I hope you will be as excited as I am about it.

Psalm 19:1-4—"The heavens declare the glory of God; and their firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge." There is no speech nor are there words the voice is not heard but their line has gone out through all the earth and their utterances to the end of the world."

The heavens are telling the glory of God. Their expanse is declaring the work of His hands. And he mentions speech which the Hebrew word means pouring forth like a fountain that is always flowing out. The beginning of the river is that fountain which continues to pour out and it is forceful. It is not a little stream like a little spring, but it is a forceful gushing forth of speech that is going out over all the world. It is the pouring out of speech as water is poured forth from a fountain. Each day bears its testimony to the next, and so the stream goes on in a flow that is never broken. Creation declares and testifies and proclaims our Lord Jesus, but it is often ignored even by believers. Nevertheless, it is an amazing testimony of God. It is a continual loud worship to the Lord. Not only the trees and the fields and the flowers, but the heavens themselves—the stars, the sun, the galaxies—all of them have ever since creation praised and worshipped God in a voice that the Bible says should be heard by all. As a matter of fact, the message is so strong and so powerful that Paul says, "All men are without excuse."

Romans 1:20: "For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, (His eternal power and divine nature) are clearly seen."

Brothers and sisters, as in anything when the Lord is presented, when the Lord is described, when the Lord is made known, we should agree and give assent to it, and thereby worship as well. We join in with this great stream of worship and praise to our God. This is a mighty chorus which we can join in throughout the day as the Holy Spirit says, "You see that sun, and He points to the Lord Jesus as the One who rises in our hearts. Do you see how I take care of that bird?"

We have a bird feeder, and we love to sit there and watch the birds. It makes me think how God cares for the sparrows and how it should lead us as believers to worship and to praise our God. It is such a simple wonderful thing that we take for granted, but it is not to be taken for granted. The world has twisted it and turned it into worship of the created thing and not worship of God. But we as believers can worship our God. I believe that thunder and the hurricane and the lightening and the terrible storms testify of God's judgment. Our God is powerful. There is a divine attribute of ownership of the world which He is in control of, not man, not even in the buying fewer cars can we change what is going on. God is in control, and this world is under His control. And it is so interesting to me that the very first judgment which was a flood, He used His creation for judgment, and I believe in the very end He is going to use the fire of His creation for judgment. Creation speaks of the power of God, one of His divine attributes, and day after day as we go out and walk, we can praise God for what we see. It is just a powerful thing of worship and praise.

I have some verses and this is how creation praises.

Psalm 65:8—"You make the sun rise and the sun set shout for joy."

Every time you see the sun rise and the sun set, shout for joy with creation. This is not hyperbole or just poetry. Otherwise, Paul would not have said, "All are subject to judgment because of their ignorance of this."

Psalm 65:11-13—"The hills gird themselves with rejoicing, the meadows are clothed with flocks. The valleys are covered with grain. They shout for joy. Yes, they sing. Tabor and Harmon shout for joy at your name.

Psalm 96:11—"Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice."

Psalm 96:11-12—"let the sea roar and all it contains, let the field exalt and all that is in it. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy.

Psalm 98:8—"Let the sea roar and all it contains. Let the rivers clap their hands; let the mountains sing together for joy."

Saints, we are to clap our hands, sing and shout for joy. And the creation sings and claps with joy and proclaims Jesus, proclaims the Lord in a language that we are suppose to hear. Praise the Lord for that! There is a continual declaration of the glory of God in creation. Just as Psalm 96:8 says, "Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name." Psalm 19:1 says, "The heavens are telling the glory of God." We have a hymn that says, "Great is Thy faithfulness," and there is a line in there that says, "Join with all nature and manifold witness to Thy great mercy and love." Brothers and sisters, that is a great way to worship and to praise and exalt His name.

Ever since God created until the time He brings it to the end, there is going to be a continuing praise and worship from His creation. Bless the Lord.

The Worship of Heavenly Beings

Not only is earth praising Him but heaven also is praising Him. There is a greatness and grandeur of the worship of creation to the Lord, but there is a scope and a majesty of praise in heaven which is amazing, and we are part of that also.

Revelation 4:8: "The four living creatures, each one of them having six wings, full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was, and is and is to come."

Notice they praised day and night. How can it be day and night in heaven? The point is just like in creation day and night they are worshipping and praising God. Ever since these four living creatures were created, they do not cease to praise and worship Him and say, "Holy, Holy, Holy." We also can ascribe to the Lord the same thing, and we give witness and testimony to the fact that Holy, Holy, Holy is our God. When you say that, you are agreeing with these four living creatures in heaven who have been doing it since the day they were created and are still doing it unceasingly day and night. What an amazing thing!

Verse 10: "The twenty-four elders fall down before Him who sits on the throne and worship Him who lives forever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 'You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and by Your will they exist and were created.'"

There is a great chorus of worship and praise in creation, and here the twenty-four elders are saying, "Worthy is our Lord. You are our God; You created everything." And we also can ascribe and give testimony to the same thing with the twenty-four elders. I am not going to say who they are; I do not know, but when you and I agree and say these things in worship, we are agreeing with the twenty-four elders who are around the throne. Not only do we agree with the four creatures there, but we also agree with the twenty-four elders. We have the privilege of doing that as God's children.

Revelation 5:8: "When He had taken the book, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, each having a harp, and golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song, saying:

"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 out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth."

What a blessed praise that is! Brothers and sisters, we can join into that praise as well.

Verse 11 is the angels who are exalting the Lamb. Thousands upon thousands, perhaps millions of angels surround the throne and they are saying with a loud voice: "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain."

Brothers and sisters, we join with all the angels of heaven who surround the throne in proclaiming the name of the Lord Jesus.

Verse 13: "Every created thing which is in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all things that are in them, I heard saying, 'To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.'"

Did you think when you came this morning and we had our little time of worship, and it was just us who were worshipping the Lord, it is dependent upon us to praise Him. It is wonderful that we do, but I just want you to get the sense of how big and how grand and how continuous and how marvelous is the worship that is always going up to our God. It is beyond us, and what a privilege for you and I to be able to lift our voice in the assembly and to join in the praise of One such as this, with all creation, with all the angels, with all the ones who surround the throne. We get to join into that. What an amazing privilege!

The Worship of the Church

Now we come to something that is so holy that it is hard to say, but I want to look at some verses here. As I was studying this it was so intimate, so personal. This is the high priestly prayer.

John 17:4-5: "I have glorified You on the earth. I have accomplished the work which You have given Me to do." I glorified You, Father, on the earth. "Now Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory with which I had with You before the world was."

Philippians 2:6-8: "Although He existed in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

The Son says, "Father, I have honored You, I have glorified You by doing what You told Me to do." Then the Father says, "Son, I will honor and glorify You."

"For this reason God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name, which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth."

Brothers and sisters, the point I am trying to come to is that in worship we are intimately involved in the very relationship of the Father and the Son. We can testify and say, "When Jesus did all that, we say, 'Lord Jesus, yes, You did obey Your Father. We honor You as You have honored the Father. We lift Your name up as You obeyed Your Father, and when He was seated at the right hand of the Majesty on high by the Father, we assent to that and we say, 'Oh, Father, You are right. All honor and blessing go to the Lord Jesus for what He did for us.'" And in worship we enter into this fellowship of the Godhead in a wonderful mighty way. It is so amazing, and if I am saying it wrong, forgive me. But it seems like our worship before God is elevated way beyond what creation can do, even beyond what they do in heaven because we are the redeemed children of God and we can attest, "Oh, yes, our Lord Jesus redeemed me. He did everything necessary to bring me into being a child. Father, You are exactly right to raise Him up and to seat Him at Your right hand."

But what an honor and a privilege it is for us to do that, and we did that this morning. We praised and blessed His name. We said, "Lord Jesus, You are worthy, You are worthy." We are

agreeing with what God has done. Do you know that the Spirit of God testifies of the Son and testifies of the Father, and we also testify. We also proclaim that this is what God wants to do. The Spirit of God within us in worship testifies of what God has done just by His presence. And I think that is an amazing, wonderful privilege that we have, isn't it?

In reading Dana's book on the Holy Spirit, he talks about the talking back and forth between the Godhead. And we also in worship enter into that fellowship that we have as His children. It is an amazing thing!

John 15:26—"When the Helper comes whom I will send to you from the Father, that is the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father. He will testify of me." It is the Spirit who testifies because the Spirit is truth.

Hebrews 10:15—"The Holy Spirit testifies to us."

Philippians 3:3—"We worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus."

We worship in the Spirit; the Spirit testifies of Jesus and we by the Spirit also testify of Jesus. What a wonderful thing that is!

Brother Stephen in his book on worship says, "We come to enjoy the Lord together. What a way to describe worship—enjoying the Lord together. Our worship should be full of joy, full of exuberant joy. I know I tend to be a very inward calm, not a very exuberant person. The Spirit is love and joy. In Romans 14:17, "The kingdom of God is righteousness and peace and joy in the Spirit." We are to have a joy in the Spirit during worship that goes beyond our emotions with a deep joy because the Spirit of God loves to testify of the Son. He loves to testify of the Father, and He is within us and through us in worship testifying to the greatness of the Son and of the Father.

Psalm 32:11 says, "Be glad in the Lord and rejoice; shout for joy all ye who are upright in heart.

Psalm 35:22 says, "May those shout for joy and rejoice. May they say continually, "The Lord be exalted."

Psalm 47:1 says, "Clap your hands all you people, shout to the Lord with the voice of joy."

Psalm 63:7 says, "In the shadow of Your wings I will sing for joy."

Psalm 71:23—"My lips shall shout for joy when I sing praises to You and my soul which You have redeemed. My soul longed and even yearned for the court of the Lord. My Heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God."

Let's be joyful in praise and worship. Let's have a spirit of joy. I think we did this morning. I was so thankful for it.

Psalm 40:10—"I have not hidden Your righteousness within my heart. I have spoken of Your faithfulness in Your salvation. I have not concealed Your lovingkindness and Your truth from the great congregation."

Worship is the one thing that is not to be concealed in our hearts. We are to hide the Word of God in our hearts. The Lord hides His face from us sometimes when there is sin in our lives. "Please do not look at me, I am a sinner." He hides us in Himself, but worship by its very nature is not to be hidden. It is to be spoken.

Brothers and sisters, for years that I have been coming I have hidden worship in my heart, and worship does not stay worship long; it kind of dissipates. But when you open your mouth and speak, uttering praises to God and not hiding worship in your heart, it is a wonderful thing. It is a wonderful thing to speak and utter praises to God. My encouragement to all of us is, let us not hide worship. When we come into the worship time, let's say, "Lord, I do not want to hide what You have given me to share. I want to speak it out. I would encourage you, brothers and sisters; it is wonderful to sing, but it seems like it is even more to speak and praise the Lord in the assembly, to declare in the assembly. I hope this has been encouraging. I have enjoyed studying this, and I am going to look even more about the Father, the Son, the Spirit and us, and how that wonderful interaction is.

Let's pray:

Lord, we want to thank You and praise You that You have by Your own doing make us Your children. And You have invited us and desired us to come as Your children to worship, to adore You, to humbly come on bended knee and to exalt You. I do thank You for this place, this house of worship. Lord, may we be full of joy. May there be a joy in our midst in the coming weeks and months, a joy inexpressible because it comes from the Spirit of God. Fill us with that, I pray. Bless the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.