

Ancient Truths for Modern Times – Wholehearted Worship
Malachi 1:6-14

Read humorous story from the Kansas City Star newspaper (p 542, 1001 Quotes)

Heart-throbs certainly make our heart throb, but I wonder . . .

Does the thought of God make your heart tremble, or has he become just another thing in your life?

Has worship become just another activity like soccer or work or exercise?

I fear for many of us, our pulse hasn't quickened due to the presence of God for some time

I fear that our worship of God, might be more *half-hearted* like the Israelites of Mal's day, than wholehearted like God desires, then and now

Read Mal 1:6-14

Ancient Truth # 5 – God expects wholehearted worship

Unreserved, enthusiastic, heartfelt worship

Having assured them of his unconditional love, he now turns to their behavior

The first thing he addresses is their half-hearted worship

Worship is ascribing (attributing, crediting) worth to God

To a hoops player – Dude, you've got the goods, you've got what it takes

To God – you're awesome

With God we worship him by . . .

Focusing our mind's attention, our heart's affection, and our will's submission on God
in every aspect of your life

Mind's attention – keeping God first and foremost in all you do

Heart's affection – loving God more than anything/anyone else in life

Will's Submission – committing to live according to God's guidelines and desires as found in his Word

Quote – *Most middle-class Americans tend to worship their work, work at their play, and play at their worship.* Gordon Dahl (p 184, 1001 Quotes)

God is not our on-demand Genie

He expects exclusive, focused, wholehearted worship that pervades your whole life

• Wholehearted worship starts with honor and respect (v 6-7)

6 – *Honor* means “weight”

Example – he threw his weight around . . . he exercised his authority

When we honor the Lord, we acknowledge his importance, his authority

Where is the acknowledgement of my importance and authority?

Where's the respect and reverence that is due me as your *Father* and *Master*

O priests – representatives of the people

Who despise my name – diminish my character, look down on me

How have we despised your name? – made you seem less than what you are

7 – *By offering polluted food upon my altar* – offering animals unfit for sacrifice according to the law (instructions)

How have we polluted you? – How have we soiled and stained your name?

By saying that the Lord's table may be despised – that God's instructions for worship don't matter; by treating me like Rodney Dangerfield (no respect!)

Point is – Wholehearted worship starts with consistently acknowledging God's worth and greatness as far above any thing, or anyone else – that's honor and respect

• Wholehearted worship requires our best (v 8-9, 12-14a)

o You despise or show no respect for my worship by offering less than the best (8a, 13b)

God required the best animals under the sacrificial system of worship in the OT

Anything less profaned his name (12) – treated him irreverently, brought shame to him

We don't live under the sacrificial system of the law, but the requirement is no different

Wholehearted worship requires your best . . .

Best time – Do you give the best time of your day to God?

When you're thinking the clearest?; When you're least likely to be interrupted?

Or is that reserved for your favorite sport or TV show?

Best effort – Do you give your best effort to God?

Or is God's work “sluff off” work; It doesn't matter if it's sub-par

Best treasure – Do you give regularly and consistently from the first of your income? Or

do you give God the leftovers at the end of the month?

Wholehearted worship requires your best

God doesn't bless anything less than that

8 – Why don't you try offering your defective gifts and sacrifices to your earthly boss, and see if he accepts them? Obviously he won't

Yet you try to offer them to me, your *heavenly* Father, while withholding your best (14)

Then turn around and seek my favor and approval (9)

I'm here for the “Bless Me Club”

I don't think so; In fact, it will result in punishment – *Cursed be the cheat* (14)

We are susceptible to God's discipline, punishment, and withholding of blessing

o Not only did they give less than the best, but worship was a miserable obligation

What a weariness this is, and you snort at it (13)

The routine had become a miserable drudgery that they hate . . .

Because they no longer respected and honored God, and disregarded his commands

We're susceptible to the same attitude, the same check off mentality re worship, and the way to guard against it is to . . .

Make worship the focus of your life

If worship is just one thing we do, everything becomes mundane. If worship is the one thing we do, everything takes on eternal significance.

Timothy Christenson (p 186, 1001 Quotes)

Mix up your times of personal worship

CD one week; Solitude the next; Scripture meditation the next; Read a book

Whatever the case, giving God your best in wholehearted worship doesn't have to be complicated – **Read story** (Bob Greene, p 410, 1001 Quotes)

It's not complicated, but it does require our best

• Wholehearted worship often involves drastic measures (v 10)

Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors . . .

Oh that just one of you would have the guts to take drastic measures to ensure that I am exalted; that I am truly worshipped

Just one who is so passionate about ascribing worth to me and exalting me, that you're willing to take *drastic measures* to crack the façade of false, half-hearted worship

Drastic measures are often what is necessary to bust out of our fake, complacent, lazy rut of worshipping God

To break the grip of sin in our everyday lives, and return to wholehearted worship

What kind of drastic measures do you need to take to worship God wholeheartedly?

Lust for sex – You don't have any desire to worship God because you're consumed with focusing your mind's attention on someone's body

Drastic measure – Cutting out TV or movies for a time, or maybe forever

Giving your computer away for a time

Desire for convenience – It's all about convenience; If worship isn't convenient, I'm not doing it; If devotions take more than 5 minutes, I don't have time

Drastic measure – Commit to read the Bible/pray for 1 hour each day for 3 months

Love of money – Money's everything; Making it, getting it, investing it, keeping it

Every now and then you throw God a bone to satisfy your conscience

But wholehearted worship – there's no time to think about anything other than \$

Drastic measure – give it away; let someone manage it; don't look at for 6 months

Be the *one* willing to take drastic measures in your life to worship God wholeheartedly

• **Wholehearted worship brings fame to God's name (v11, 14b)**

o I'm not going to accept your offering and settle for something that diminishes and shames me, when the time is coming where I will be worshipped to an *extent* that far exceeds your little nation, and in a way that brings far more fame to my name

The extent is indicated by the phrases . . .

From the rising of the sun to its setting – something far more comprehensive in scope than the Israel of Mal's day

Among the nations (11-2x's, and 14b) – God would come to be known and worshipped among *all* people groups and nations, not just ethnic Israel

In every place incense will be offered to my name

Incense was a part of the OT system of worship

The extent of God's worship would far exceed what the Israelites of Mal's day knew

The new way of worship that will bring fame to God's name is indicated by . . .

Offering – sense of drawing near

Pure – (“tahor” in Heb, not “tamim”)

“Tamim” (normally used) means ceremonially fit/pure

“Tahor” means *morally* pure

The sacrifices under the OT system were never described as *morally* pure

Doesn't even make sense to talk about a morally pure animal

Something *new* was coming – people are going to draw near to God in moral purity

That's the new way of worship

Jesus affirmed that in John 4:23 –

True worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth [from your heart, apart from any geographical constraints], *for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.*

Paul affirmed the moral nature of our worship in Rom 12:1 –

Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

John gives us a glimpse of the extent of God's worship in Rev 7:9 –

In a vision of heaven he saw a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb [Jesus]

o From Mal to Rev, these texts are the assurance that when we worship God like we should, he *will* be famous (known, looked up to, exalted), among more & more people Right here in the QC, and all over the world

That means that our worship is *witness* – our whole-life, wholehearted allegiance to God 24/7, proclaims him as Lord

Worship is a witness! Unbelievers can observe the joy that we feel. They can see how we value God's Word and how we respond to it. They can sense when God is supernaturally moving, although they won't be able to explain it. - Rick Warren

Whether it's Sunday morning, or Monday morning, or any part of any day, our worship is witness

That's why it needs to be wholehearted

It's not just our holiness/obedience at stake, but the fame of God's name as well

Summary

Take drastic measures if necessary; Give God your best; Start with honor and respect God not only deserves your wholehearted worship, but expects it

Let's make **1 Chron 16:29** our commitment and desire as we come to the Lord's Table

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

The Lord's Table

If you've embraced Jesus as your Savior, if he is Lord of your life – this is for you

Examine your life/heart for sin

Remember the price of life that Jesus paid for you

Commit to wholehearted worship all day every day

If you don't have a personal relationship with Jesus

If you haven't experienced the forgiveness he offers – you can pray now

To forgive you, come into your life, commit to following him as Lord

If you're not there yet, let the bread and cup pass

There's no shame in that – the Bible says you avoid judgment by doing so

HOW

After we pray, ushers will distribute the bread and cup

Hang on to them; Spend some time before the Lord

We'll take them together as part of our commitment to wholehearted worship

Luke 22:14, 19-20

This cup is the new covenant in my blood . . .

Cup is symbolic of Christ's shed blood that bought/guaranteed our salvation

Sing about bringing fame to God's name

Final Thoughts

Ordination service for us as a church – special time

Father's Day