

Worship That Matters!

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INTRODUCTION

(Sermon starts with a video on the qualities of earthly fathers and perspectives on God as Father... “man on the streets” style of video.)

While next week is Father’s day, this week we are continuing our discipleship series focusing on our heavenly father. The qualities of earthly fathers in the video were pretty typical don’t you think? Many of the qualities sounded like the kinds of things I want people to say about my style of fathering. What did you think of the descriptions of God as Father? (allow for answers)

I find this style of video quite eye-opening from time to time. I’ve seen a few of these types of videos. They are kind of “man on any street” video, where they ask strangers questions. They kind of give you a perspective on the views of the common “man” of today.

As we continue our series today, we’re looking at a different piece of the wheel. So far we have spent 3 entire weeks looking at the hub of the wheel: our life in Christ. We’ve talked about:

- Our Assurance of Salvation
- Our Identity in Christ
- Our life as a Disciple

Today we are making our first move to the spokes. Look at the diagram on the screen. The spokes of the wheel are labeled deliberately. Those that are on top are called the inner disciplines of a disciple, while those on the bottom are the outer disciplines of the disciple. Basically the inner disciplines are related to our vertical relationship with God. They are between us and Him and have very little, if anything, to do with other people. The outer disciplines are just the opposite. They are horizontal and have to do with our relationships with other people.

Today we are looking at the inner-discipline of worship. The video started us off right. Worship is about pointing us towards God the Father and expressing reverence to Him. Contrary to the beliefs of many in society, knowing God is critical to our living our lives. Without God, people stumble through life with no sense of direction and no understanding of spiritual things. Knowing God, on the other hand, gives us clear direction and clearer understanding of spiritual things.

“Those who know your name will trust in you, for you, Lord, have never forsaken those who seek you.” Psalm 9:10

A person's amount of trust in God is only as big as the smallest thing that upsets us. Through worship our trust in God grows and deepens so that we can learn to trust Him more. Worship that matters must make a difference. I'm going to borrow two themes from Richard Foster this morning to assist us with this idea.

WORSHIP THAT DOES NOT CHANGE US, IT HAS NOT BEEN WORSHIP. Let's look at a passage of scripture in Isaiah to help us in our understanding. Turn Isaiah chapter 6.

In chapter 5 Isaiah shared God's judgment. Because of their wickedness they would suffer exile and be humbled. In Chapter 6 the whole tone changes.

Read Isaiah 6:1-4. In these verses we have a picture of God and the people's response to seeing God. "Holy is the Lord God almighty," is their exclamation. This is a picture of worship. It is one we try to emulate right here in this chapel every week. Sometimes we do better than other times. Part of our goal in worship is to get a glimpse of Jesus that encourages us to respond to him. But that is not enough.

Look at v. 5-7. Worship for Isaiah caused him to look inward and recognize his own sin and impurity. This recognition and admission of guilt brought cleansing and change within Isaiah.

A good example of this in the New Testament is Acts chapter 2. Peter, newly filled with the Holy Spirit after the first Pentecost shares the gospel with a large group of people. He tells them truth about God and what Jesus had done for them. He pointed them towards heaven. He brought them into worship and when Peter was done the people asked, "Brothers, what shall we do?" Having seen God through Peter, some of these listeners were no longer content with out Jesus in their lives.

Worship is not only about Sunday services. Worship is about pointing the way to Jesus. Worship may be sharing your faith with a friend or family member. Worship may be singing a song. Worship may be living a life of integrity and not being ashamed to tell people why. When people see Jesus in us and it leads them to repent before Him, that is worship. Worship that does not change us, has not been worship.

WORSHIP THAT DOES NOT PROPEL US INTO GREATER OBEDIENCE, HAS NOT BEEN WORSHIP. Let's go back to Isaiah 6. Let's read 6:8. Some people see worship has a sort of "religious" drug. We come to church, get our "fix" and leave fueled to endure another week in the rat race we have chosen to live in. When Isaiah worshipped he heard God calling and responded with, "I'm available." A desire to follow God's plan should result when we worship.

Think of the example of Saul in the New Testament. He had dramatic worship experience. Having been a persecutor of Christians, Saul had an encounter with God where God confronts him and calls him to repentance and then to obedience. Let's look at the story: Acts 9:1-9, 19b-20

Saul's experience with the living God caused him to rethink everything. He still had a choice of whether or not he was going to obey. Had he chosen to not obey, the worship experience with God would not have been complete.

CONCLUSION

Worship is our opportunity to come face to face with the creator of the universe. We often think of our worship as simply praising God. We recognize His greatness and proclaim it with our voices and our hearts. It is a circular event, however. The more we praise Him, the closer we get to Him. The closer we get to Him the more we want to praise Him.

From today's scriptures we see that worship has another purpose. The closer we get to God and the more we recognize His love and compassion the more we desire to live for Him. This results in a desire to please Him more by allowing Him to mold us more. This results in continued change in our lives and a greater desire to be obedient to His calling in our lives.

If worship doesn't change us, it hasn't been worship.

If worship doesn't call us to greater obedience, it hasn't been worship.