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April 2021 "WORSHIP 2: PRESENCE AND REVIVAL"

Dear Friend,

Last month I began a teaching on worship that will continue each month until the Lord instructs otherwise. If you did not receive part one, please let me know and a copy will be sent.

Several years ago the Lord pointed out to me four specific things a Christian can do to mature spiritually. They are:

- Prayer (primarily praying in tongues)
- Fasting (scripturally, fasting is about food and drink)
- The Word/Bible (reading, meditating, confessing)
- Worship (congregational and private)

I refer to these as the Four Pillars of Spiritual Growth. To date, I have found nothing else in the Bible which directly impacts a Believer on a spiritual level in the same way as these four. Three of these are, or should be, a part of every church service: prayer, the Word and worship. Prayer is, for the most part, a Christian communicating to God; the sermon involves the Word and is information about God; but worship is interaction with God. In fact, whether alone or in a congregation, the most efficient way for a Believer to experience the presence of God is to worship Him. Consider what David wrote in Psalm 22:3,

But thou art holy, O thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel.

The word "inhabitest" comes from the Hebrew word "yāshav" and it means, "to sit, to dwell, to establish a place of residence or dwelling, to inhabit (as in a house)." The word "praises" comes from the Hebrew word "t^ehillāh" which is a derivative of the word hālāl, and in this verse it means, "a song of praise, adoration and thanksgiving unto God; rendering unto God the praise His character deserves."

The imagery in this verse is staggering. It portrays people praising and worshiping God without reservation or hesitation, being totally unconcerned about anyone else around them. Their determined focus is exclusively on God to give Him the worship He deserves. As they are pouring out their love to God, they become a "spiritual construction crew," as though their worship is building a house or dwelling place. In response, God arises, turns and picks up His throne, descends to the place where the people are worshiping, places His throne in the middle of the room and sits down to inhabit the dwelling place they have built for Him.

We see this incredible revelation again in Isaiah 12:1-6,

¹And in that day thou shalt say, O LORD, I will praise thee: though thou wast angry with me, thine anger is turned away, and thou comfortedst me. ²Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid: for the LORD JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also is become my salvation. ³Therefore with joy shall ye

draw water out of the wells of salvation. ⁴And in that day shall ye say, Praise the LORD, call upon his name, declare his doings among the people, make mention that his name is exalted. ⁵Sing unto the LORD; for he hath done excellent things: this is known in all the earth. ⁶Cry out and shout, thou inhabitant of Zion: for great is the Holy One of Israel in the midst of thee.

The first five verses in this passage are focused on praising God. The result of the praise is in verse six: God, the Holy One of Israel, is now in the midst of those worshiping. Visualizing this can help us understand why God's presence can seem stronger during worship than at any other time.

When God first helped me grasp the truth depicted in Psalm 22, He went on to explain that if He is in our presence, then everything He is, everything He has to offer, and everything He can do is there with Him. Signs, wonders, healings, miracles, deliverance, peace, glory, and more. It's all there and readily available to everyone.

Isaiah 12:3 tells us that with joy we shall draw water out of the wells of salvation. This means we have total access to every blessing and benefit that comes with our salvation, a truth confirmed in Romans 8:32,

He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?

But note that Isaiah said it is with **JOY** we would draw water out of the wells of salvation. Why is that significant? Because Psalm 16:11 declares, *in Thy presence is fulness of joy*. And what is it that ushers in the presence of God? Praise and worship.

Several years ago I had a unique vision on a Sunday morning during worship in one of our church services. As we were worshipping, Jesus appeared at the front of our sanctuary. He stood for a moment, looking over the congregation. Then He began walking slowly down the center aisle. He stopped at the pew on His right, began walking in front of the people in that pew, laying His hands on them to minister to their needs. Then He went to the pew on His left and did the same. Eventually, He had walked the length of our sanctuary, repeating this process through each pew.

However, as He moved through each row, I noticed He did not lay His hands on every person. As I wondered why He skipped certain individuals, the Holy Spirit began explaining that only those who were truly worshipping from their hearts had opened a door to their lives to receive what Jesus was ministering to them. Those who were refusing to worship or who were simply going through the motions had essentially closed themselves off to what He was willing to do.

This is one reason why so many Christians can attend church services where God's presence is so very strong, yet leave those services feeling like it was no big deal and wondering why other people talk with excitement over what had just taken place. It's why some Christians can be in a service where God's presence has ushered in the fulness of joy, yet leave just as sour, depressed, discouraged and filled with anxiety as when they first arrived.

I'm telling you, worship from the heart results in an encounter with God's presence...this is a **guaranteed** promise from God! The problem is that too many Christians are looking for worship

to always produce some kind of “something” that will result in a level of ecstatic emotions. In other words, they judge the effectiveness of a worship service and the magnitude of God’s presence on what they feel, not on what God has promised. They don’t seem to realize that worship and God’s presence are **not** about emotions. Yes, emotions can be impacted, but worship is about our born-again spirit fellowshiping with the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

If I enter a time of worship with a predetermined expectation to experience some kind of emotional transformation, I am not much different from people who take drugs expecting to get high. Worship demands faith. God has promised He will be in my midst and inhabit my praises. Both the Old and New Testaments record accounts of this happening when people began praising and worshiping Him. Therefore, if I expect to receive as much as possible from God during worship, my attitude must be, “God, I am not looking for an emotional experience with you during worship. You have promised to inhabit my praises and be in my midst. You are not a man that you can lie; therefore, when I praise You, I know You will be here, and we will fellowship together.”

The truth is, worship is an excellent way to bring the emotions into subjection to our born-again spirit. Emotions tend to get bored during worship. They want to influence the mind to drift away to a beach somewhere, start planning the next meal, think about the chores needed at home and so on. But when we force our emotions to yield to what is pouring forth from our spirit, the emotions **must** surrender. Yes, it may be a battle at first, but the more we exercise our authority, the more we become aware of God’s presence. God confirms this in His Word,

¹If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. ²Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. (Colossians 3:1-2)

Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee. (Isaiah 26:3)

And ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart. (Jeremiah 29:33)

Revival demands God’s presence, and worship produces the presence of God. Therefore, worship absolutely **must** be a part of seeking God if we want revival.

Every church I have ever attended – whether for one service or many – has had some kind of music and singing. But not every church I’ve attended has truly sought to worship. It’s as though they are the image of what Isaiah prophesied,

Wherefore the Lord said, Forasmuch as this people draw near me with their mouth, and with their lips do honor me, but have removed their heart far from me, and their fear toward me is taught by the precept of men (Isaiah 29:13)

Worshiping God from our hearts first requires an attitude of **wanting** to give Him what He seeks, not just sing songs because “it’s what we’re supposed to do in church.” When we sing with genuine purpose of heart, our experience during worship takes on a completely different quality. God isn’t seeking for those who have superior voices, can stay on pitch, or know all the words to every song sung; He’s seeking for those with a heart that is after His.

If you would like more teaching on this subject, please use the form on the next page to order a free CD of my sermon, *God's Presence, God's Glory and Worship*. God takes worship seriously. We need to believe everything He has said in His Word about praise and worship. Do you want a personal revival? Do you want to see revival in your church? Then press beyond the emotions that would hold you back and worship the Lord with all your heart, soul and strength.

In His Grace,

Jim

OPEN YOUR HEART AND WORSHIP (Prophecy)

I have made My best available unto you and I have held nothing back. I have never held anything back from you. I have always made My best available to you. And the deeper you go into My glory, the more that you are transformed from glory to glory, is the more you will experience those things that I have already laid aside for you. I have given you My best. And the best that you can give to Me is your worship.

For you see, you can pray in tongues, you can speak My Word and meditate My Word and you can fast; but your worship, your worship is the best that you can give unto Me. Because, you see, it is those who worship Me in spirit and truth, they are the ones that I seek. Yes I want you to pray, yes I want you to meditate on My Word and yes I want you to fast; but I *seek* for those who worship in spirit and truth, because that is the one thing that you can give unto Me. And when it pours forth from your heart it is the best that you can give Me.

There is nothing greater that you can give to Me beyond your worship. For it is your worship which will usher you into realms of My presence in the special places. It is your worship that will take you deeper into Me. It is your worship that will help accelerate your spiritual growth and maturity. When you worship and you focus your mind on Me, you're giving Me the best you can give Me. And I want you to know I honor that, I honor that.

The Old Testament saints longed for the day that they could worship Me like this; but in all of their lives on earth they could never do what you have done here tonight. Only now are they able to do that as they are in My presence. But you, you have the ability to do this now. You have the ability to worship Me as they never worshiped Me, and you can do it while you are still on the earth.

And I say unto you there is a dimension of worship that could never be experienced under the law. A dimension of worship that could never be experienced until My Son was crucified and risen again. And now, now there is a realm of Me that all mankind can experience. There is a realm of Me that you can know. And your worship will take you there. I am God. I love you. I love you and I want you to know My love. Therefore, worship Me, worship Me. Open your heart and worship Me.

WORSHIP AND THOUGHTS (Prophecy)

If you would only learn to praise Me, if you would only learn to worship Me, you would find out how that your worship will have a purging and cleansing effect in your thought life. There are too many people, too many Christians, who are going through a lot of junk in their minds, that if they would just worship, all of that could change, all of it could change, all of it would change.

WORSHIP: GOD'S DWELLING Prophecy)

I said in my Word that I inhabit your praises. The reason I've said that is because your praise constructs a place of habitation for Me. There are many things that you can do; you can pray in the Spirit, you can meditate and confess My Word, you can fast, but worship is the one thing that builds a dwelling place for Me.

It's as though through your worship you have taken a hammer and nails and wood and built a place that I can move into, a place where I can live with you. In the realm of the spirit, the more that you worship Me, the more it enables Me to fellowship with you. When your heart and your mind are fixed upon Me and you are worshipping Me, if the only words that cross your lips are, *I love you, I praise you, I worship you*, and that is all you say to Me over and over, over again, but it is coming from a diligent heart and a diligent mind, you *must know* that I am pleased with that. Because when you pour your heart out to Me in your worship it creates a place for Me to come and fellowship with you.

I would say to you, if you truly want to know My presence in an ever-increasing way then learn to worship Me, learn to worship Me, learn to worship Me; and in the middle of your worship you will find Me.

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Please send me a CD of the sermon, *God's Presence, God's Glory and Worship*.

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