

## WORSHIP...THE CHURCH'S ULTIMATE PRIORITY

### The Master's Plan For His Church

Psalm 100 and John 4:19-24

#### I. THE PRIORITY OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP:

Praise...mentioned *303 times* in Scripture.

Worship...mentioned *189 times* in Scripture.

And *two* words *directly associated* with *worship* are...

Joy...mentioned *211 times* in Scripture.

Thanksgiving...mentioned *136 times* in Scripture.

- In the OT...*kings* would assign the *specific task* for *giving praise* and *thanks* to the Lord...making sure that they *didn't fail* to *bless* God and *thank* Him.

*“He (David) appointed some of the Levites as ministers before the ark of the Lord, even to celebrate and to thank and praise the Lord God of Israel.”*

~I Chronicles 16:4

*“And Hezekiah appointed the divisions of the priests and the Levites by their divisions, each according to his service, both the priests and the Levites, for burnt offerings and for peace offerings, to minister and to give thanks and to praise in the gates of the camp of the Lord.”*

~II Chronicles 31:2

- In the NT...the example of *extravagance* in *worship*...  
Mary and Martha

*“Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village; and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word. But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up to Him and said, ‘Lord, do You not care*

*that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.’ But the Lord answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about so many things; but only one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.’”*

~Luke 10:38-42

#### II. THE PRINCIPLE OF PRAISE AND WORSHIP:

*Worship* is not a *spectator event*! *Worship* requires *participation*. Why? Because He is worthy. He has given us *victory*...*victory* over *death*...*victory* over *sin*.

- **Worship is about WHO He is...GOD...Messiah...Christ...Lord (Luke 2:11)!**

*“But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumph in Christ, and manifests through us the sweet aroma of the knowledge of Him in every place.”*

~II Corinthians 2:14

- **Worship is about WHERE He is...He's on His *throne* in *heaven*!**

*“...A throne was standing in heaven, and One sitting on the throne...and the twenty-four elders (the church) will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne...”*

~Revelation 4:2, 10

- **Worship is about WHAT He has done...He *shed* His *blood* for the *forgiveness* of our *sin*!**

*“The next day he (John the Baptist) saw Jesus coming to him and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!... and he looked at Jesus as He walked, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God!”*

~John 1:29, 36

***“But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”***

~I Corinthians 15:57

### **III. THE PERSPECTIVE IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP:**

- **From the perspective of gratitude and thanksgiving...**

***“Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart; for consider what great things He has done for you.”***

~I Samuel 12:24

*What has God given greater than salvation? ...Money? Possessions? Physical appearance? Position? Prominence?*

- **From the perspective of whatever situation or circumstance we find ourselves in...**

With everything that **Paul** had gone through in his life...

#### **II Corinthians 11...**

- Beaten times without number.
- Often in danger of death.
- Five times, received from the Jews, 39 lashes.
- Three times, beaten with rods.
- Once stoned.
- Three times shipwrecked.
- Spent a night and a day in deep water.
- While on frequent journeys...in danger from rivers, dangers from robbers, dangers from Gentiles, dangers from Jews (his own countrymen), dangers in the cities, dangers in the wilderness, dangers on the sea, dangers among false brethren.
- Been in labor and hardship.

- Many sleepless nights.
- Hungry and thirsty.
- Often without food.
- Cold and exposure.

...yet, he still was grateful!

***“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice!”***

~Philippians 4:4

- **From the perspective of the persecuted believer...**

**Nik Ripken...persecution is normal** in the Bible.

- **Dmitri...17 years in prison...later 1500 inmates standing at attention** facing the *East* singing **Dmitri’s heart song**.
- **Tavian...years in a Russian prison...singing and writing**. Wrote over **600 Praise and Worship songs**.
- The **toughest man Nik ever met** or has **known**.
- **Chinese house church pastors...at least 3 years in prison**. Given **one book** of the Bible to take home.

- **From the perspective of the rejected believer.**

**Karl Landranoux...Baton Rouge.**

**Lon Solomon...when his mom died, after the graveside service, he was not welcomed back at the home of his Aunt.**

Several of the **young men** that we have **recently baptized**.

### **IV. THE PREPARATION FOR WORSHIP:**

***“Therefore, brethren, since we have confidence to enter the holy place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He inaugurated for us through the veil, that is, His flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkles clean***

*from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful; and let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”*

~Hebrews 10:19-25

- **Hear**...ears to hear...what the Spirit has to say.
- **Eyes**...to see God...see truth.
- **Heart**...a heart to receive and obey.
- **Faith**...believing that He is who He says that He is.
- **Humility**...a clear conscience.
- **Holiness**...Purity...clean hands and a pure heart.

## V. THE PARTICIPATION IN PRAISE AND WORSHIP:

- **When are we to worship and praise God...continually.**

- Begin every *morning* and end every *evening* with praise. The **Psalmist** would give *praise*...

*“It is good to give thanks to the Lord and to sing praises to Your name, O Most High; to declare Your lovingkindness in the morning and Your faithfulness by night.”*

~Psalm 92:1-2

In the morning, is it...“*Good morning, Lord*” or is it “*Good lord, it’s morning!*”

- Even at *midnight* give praise...

*“At midnight I shall rise to give thanks to you because of Your righteous ordinances.”*

~Psalm 119:62

- Praise and Worship at *meals*...and through *fasting*.

*“He who observes the day, observes it for the Lord, and he who eats, does so for the Lord, for he gives thanks to God; and he who eats not, for the Lord he does not eat, and gives thanks to God.”*

~Romans 14:6

*“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”*

~I Corinthians 10:31

- We are to Praise and Worship *in everything...every deed and every action.*

*“Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.”*

~Colossians 3:17

You *can’t* be *grateful* and *bitter* in the *same breath* ...you *can’t* *worship* and *not be thankful* at the *same time*.

## VI. THE POSTURE IN WORSHIP:

**William Hendrickson**, a prominent Biblical scholar, once *carefully analyzed* the *response* to worship in the Old Testament...the *bodily response* to *worship*. He found...

- 4 instances of bowing heads.
- 6 references to standing with reverence.
- 9 examples of lifting eyes towards God who is the source of blessing.
- 12 instances of kneeling in adoration.
- 14 descriptions of hands lifted toward God.
- 28 references to people lying prostrate before the Lord.

If the *frequency* with which these things are *mentioned* in the Old Testament is in any sense *related* to their *importance*, our *current worship practice* is exactly the *opposite* of what Scripture says is *important*. What do we *do most*? **Bow our heads!** What do we *do least*? Well, we *don't see many instances* where Christians are *prostrating* themselves before God.

**Worship...Body Language:**

- **Kneeling...Ephesians 3:14; Philippians 2:10-11**
- **Bowing...Revelation 5:14**
- **Clapping...Psalm 47:1; Isaiah 55:12**
- **Raising hands...(1) The *universal sign of surrender*. (2) A *sign of trust*. (3) A *sign of seeking*. Raising hands is a *real struggle* for many Christians, yet there is significant *support for it in Scripture*.**

***“Lift up your hands to the sanctuary and bless the Lord.”***  
~Psalm 134:2

## **VII. THE PREEMINENCE FROM PRAISE AND WORSHIP:**

***“I will sing of the lovingkindness of the Lord forever; to all generations I will make known Your faithfulness with my mouth.”***

~Psalm 89:1

***“And the twenty-four elders (the church) who sit on their thrones before God, fell on their faces and worshiped God, saying, ‘We give You thanks, O Lord God, the Almighty, who are and who were, because You have taken Your great power and have begun to reign.’”***

~Revelation 11:16-17

There is more *praise* and *worship* in the book of **Revelation** than in any other book in the Bible...with the *exception* of the **Psalms**.

**Paul** is a *great example* of one who...*praised, worshiped*, was *grateful*, and had a *heart of thanksgiving*...not because of *what was behind him*...but because of *what lied ahead!*

He *didn't worship* just because of what God had done *for* him...he *worshiped* because of the *hope* that *lied within* him.

### **THE RESULT OF WORSHIP:**

- God is **GLORIFIED**
- Christians are **SANCTIFIED**
- The Church is **EDIFIED**
- The Lost are **EVANGELIZED**

***“Through Him then, let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that give thanks to His name.”***

~Hebrews 13:15