

# Worshiping God Or Our Emotions?

Today's message may seem insignificant, at first, because of the myriad of very serious issues and assaults we're facing on our true Christian faith in America and around the world. Normally, we discuss these topics in detail here, which admittedly, are very concerning and require our immediate attention and action.

But today I would like to talk about something else, which has been a real concern with ME for a long time now. It has to do with REVERENCE, or perhaps better stated, the LACK of reverence we have in our churches for our Lord and Savior, and our Heavenly Father.

The "seeker friendly" movement crept into our churches a few decades ago, and it has continued that way, as more and more churches have followed the concept of "just give the people what they want." Pastors and Elders attend "church-building conferences," to learn how to get more numbers – more people in the seats. Seminaries now teach new ministers how to be non-offensive, politically correct, and to provide a "worship experience" that will appeal to the EMOTIONS of the people, make them "feel good," and at the end of the "service," leave with a feeling of satisfaction and comfort.

Part of this equation is music. Music has always been a part of worshiping God. Perhaps the most notable was David, who worshiped God through music and many of his Psalms were sung in worship to the Lord. In the "old days," as I was growing up, we sang the timeless hymns of the faith, so richly filled with biblical doctrine and reverence for God. I didn't really appreciate them at the time, at least not as much as I appreciate them now. I guess you don't know what you have until it's gone.

And those old hymns of the faith ARE all but GONE now, from MOST of our evangelical churches. They have been replaced by “praise and worship” choruses, most of which are comprised of very “shallow” lyrics, which are repeated over and over, ad nauseum. As a case in point, if I hear “Open The Eyes Of Our Heart, Lord,” one more time, I think I’m going to be sick. Indeed, that seems to be a “staple” of modern church “praise and worship time” in just about every church I’ve attended for the past decade, at least.

The song goes like this:

*“Open the eyes of my heart, Lord, Open the eyes of my heart. I want to see You. I want to see You. Open the eyes of my heart, Lord. Open the eyes of my heart. I want to see You. I want to see You.”*

*“To see You high and lifted up; Shinin’ in the light of Your glory. Pour out Your power and love as we sing ‘holy, holy, holy.’”*

That’s all there is. But the song is endless... the “worship team” repeats these verses over and over and over again. It almost seems as if they feel the longer they play and the more they repeat it, the more the “Holy Spirit” will descend upon the people and “move” among them. In reality, I fear a better analysis is that the music and words tend to do one of two things: 1) either lull people into an emotional “trance,” or 2) make people so bored they stop singing altogether. Neither one is true “worship.” And I believe neither one is truly honoring to the Lord.

You see, nowadays, “church” seems to be all about US... OUR feelings, OUR emotions, OUR needs, OUR wants, OUR desires. The words of this song, to me, have really become meaningless babble. Like the prayers Jesus warned about in Matthew 6 when He said, *“when you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do. For they think that they will*

*be heard for their many words..."*

To me, most of these modern day "praise and worship choruses" are really just vain repetitions designed to bring people into an emotional state of mindlessness. This is not biblical. In fact, it's heathen, in my opinion.

Now don't get me wrong: I DO appreciate and enjoy some of the modern Christian music. There are some very wonderful musical artists out there today who create beautiful, God-honoring songs of praise. But sadly, those are not what we're singing in most of our churches today.

Today, MOST of the churches have tossed the hymnals in the dumpster. In fact, at our Ministry Center in Marshfield, Wisconsin, we rescued some of those old hymnals from the dumpsters of several churches and we're glad to have them.

Let's compare, for a few minutes, what is sung today with what USED to be Christian worship music. *"Open the eyes of my heart, Lord; Open the eyes of my heart; I want to see You; I want to see You."* Now remember, you have to sing this AT LEAST six or seven times before the Spirit "moves!" Then you go on: *"To see You high and lifted up; Shinin' in the light of Your glory. Pour out Your power and love; As we sing 'holy, holy, holy...'"*

Then you sing the whole thing over again, six or seven more times, and HOPEFULLY the Spirit will fall upon the people.

I attended one church where most of the music consisted of these modern "praise and worship" choruses. But then they would include **ONE** of the old hymns in each service. As I looked around at the room, I noticed something. During the modern songs, about 10, maybe 20% of the people were actually singing. But when they did the old hymns of the Christian faith, the room literally SHOOK with the volume from the sheer number of EVERYONE singing in unison.

Let me make a few points here: if you're hoping to "mesmerize" people into a state of emotional bliss (one pastor explained it as: "giving time for people to 'ENTER IN' to worship,") and thereby bringing the "Holy Spirit" into your meeting, then WHATEVER it is that descends on your meeting is NOT the Holy Spirit – and those in attendance are not Spirit-filled to begin with. If you have to "call down" the Spirit" from the heavens, it seems to me that it ain't HIM! No, as Christians, the Holy Spirit resides INSIDE us. We don't need the vain ritual of endlessly repeating shallow choruses to "feel" the Spirit. The Spirit is with us always, guiding us into all truth.

Now let's look at some of the old hymns, those that have been tossed in the dumpsters of so many churches today. *"O Lord, my God, when I, in awesome wonder, Consider all the works Thy Hand hath made... I see the stars, I hear the mighty thunder, Thy power throughout the Universe displayed... Then sings my soul, my Savior, God, to Thee. How great Thou art! How great Thou art!"* THAT song begins with the wonder of God's creation, as described in Genesis. It goes on to talk about Christ's return, and how we will bow, in our humble adoration of Him. The problem is, we don't WANT to "bow" to ANYONE today, not even God, because we're so prideful. We love ourselves too much!

Another old hymn talks about contentment in Christ, in all circumstances. *"When peace like a river attendeth my way, When sorrows like sea billows roll. Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say, 'It is well, it is well with my soul!'"* THIS one goes on to talk about the buffeting of Satan that will surely come to the Christian's life; the blessed assurance we have in Jesus, how helpless we are without Him, and how He rescued us from sin (yes SIN – a novel topic today), through His blood, shed for us on the cross. And because of that, it is WELL with my soul!

Another that talks about our sin, our desperate situation and

our need for the Savior. It starts: *"Would you be free from the burden of sin? There's power in the blood, power in the blood. Would you, over evil, a victory win? There's wonderful power in the blood."* This song goes on to talk about the Lamb of God, the ability for us to be free from worldly passions and pride, and how to be cleansed, through Jesus.

How about *"Amazing Grace, that saved a wretch like me?!"* I wonder, how many seeker-friendly church-goers today consider themselves to be wretches? No, nowadays, we all think we're pretty special to God, just the way we are. But Amazing Grace declares the truth *that "I once was lost but now am found. Was blind, but now I see!"*

God calls us to a new life in Christ, upon our salvation. But modern day theology tends to teach that we are fine just the way we are, and we can just "add Jesus in" to the life we're already living. A "Get Out of Hell Free" card, if we just repeat a simple prayer. And the music we sing today in most churches reflects that ignorance. If we are not wretches, hopelessly lost in our sin and depravity, why then, did Jesus have to be the perfect sacrifice to rescue those who call upon His name? If we don't understand WHY we NEED a Savior, we will never truly come to know Him and we will never really honor Him as our Lord.

Once saved, we are then to GO OUT and do as Jesus commanded: to be salt and light in a dark and dying world. To fight evil, to do the Lord's work, to make disciples, teaching them to obey all Jesus commanded. We are to be "Christian Soldiers." And SOLDIERS don't just sit there once a week, or stand and raise their hands to look "holy" while repeating vain words that really, if we are honest, mean nothing to us. We're to go OUT. We're to move ONWARD. Now I'm going to give you the entirety of one song in particular, which describes the spiritual battle we are in. After all, if we are NOT truly in a spiritual battle, if we are not TRULY supposed to

be Christian soldiers in this battle, why then, do we have such an in-depth description of the Armor of God we are all supposed to be putting on? Are we supposed to be wearing our Armor of God to protect us as we go out to our favorite restaurant after the service? No. We are to engage the enemy in battle, and the gates of hell shall not prevail. So listen to THESE words:

*“Onward Christian soldiers! Marching as to war, with the cross of Jesus going on before. Christ, the royal Master, leads against the foe; Forward into battle, see His banners go! Onward, Christian soldiers! Marching as to war, With the cross of Jesus, going on before.*

*“At the name of Jesus, satan’s host doth flee; On then, Christian soldiers, on to victory! Hell’s foundations quiver at the shout of praise: Brothers, lift your voices, Loud your anthems raise!*

*“Crowns and thrones may perish, Kingdoms rise and wane; But the Church of Jesus constant will remain. Gates of hell can never ’Gainst the Church prevail; We have Christ’s own promise, Which can never fail.*

*“Onward, then, ye people! Join our happy throng; Blend with ours your voices in the triumph song. Glory, laud and honor unto Christ, the King; This through countless ages Men and angels sing.”*

THAT is a Church I want to belong to... God’s REMNANT believers, standing up for His righteousness amidst a world of death, decay and destruction; a world destined for damnation apart of Christ our King. I’d much rather be among those saints of God than the shallow, feel-good, seeker-sensitive emotionally-laden spiritual eunuchs that inhabit most of Evangelicalism today.

Let me close with these words of encouragement to you:

*“Stand up, stand up for Jesus, ye soldiers of the cross;  
lift high His royal banner, it must not suffer loss. From  
victory unto victory His army shall He lead, ‘til every foe  
is vanquished, and Christ is Lord indeed.*

*“Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the trumpet call obey;  
forth to the mighty conflict, in this His glorious day. Ye  
that are brave now serve Him against unnumbered foes; let  
courage rise with danger, and strength to strength oppose.*

*“Stand up, stand up for Jesus, stand in HIS strength alone;  
the arm of flesh will fail you, ye dare not trust your  
own. Put on the gospel armor, each piece put on with  
prayer; where duty calls or danger, be never wanting  
there.*

*“Stand up, stand up for Jesus, the strife will not be  
long; this day the noise of battle, the next the victor’s  
song. To those who vanquish evil a crown of life shall  
be; they with the King of Glory shall reign eternally.”*

What POWER when we KNOW biblical doctrine and celebrate it and sing it to our Lord in song. When we sing the words of Scripture, when we have the HOLY SPIRIT inside us, rather than waiting for it to magically “fall on us” because of our many empty words!” PLEASE, friends, don’t ask the Lord to “Open the eyes of your heart” if you’re not willing to see!

Audio CDs and transcripts of this message are available when you call me at Wisconsin Christian News, (715) 486-8066. Or email [Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com](mailto:Rob@WisconsinChristianNews.com). Ask for message number 232.

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