

# Moments *for* You

Volume 60, Number 1

Theme: Worship

*Come, let us worship and bow down:  
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.*

*Psalm 95:6*



## QUESTION & ANSWER

**QUESTION:** “What is the difference between praise and worship?”

**ANSWER:** Understanding the difference between praise and worship can bring a new depth to the way we honor the Lord.

Throughout the Bible, the commands to “praise the Lord” are too numerous to mention. Angels and the heavenly hosts are commanded to praise the Lord (Psalm 89:5; 148:2). All inhabitants of the earth are instructed to praise the Lord (Psalm 138:4; Romans 15:11). We can praise Him with singing (Isaiah 12:5; Psalm 9:11), with shouting (Psalm 98:4), with dance (Psalm 150:4), and with musical instruments (1 Chronicles 13:8; Psalm 150:3-5).

Praise is the joyful recounting of all God has done for us. It is closely intertwined with thanksgiving as we offer back to God appreciation for His mighty works on our behalf. Praise is universal and can be applied to other relationships as well. We can praise our family, friends, or co-workers.

Worship, however, should be reserved for God alone (Luke 4:8). Worship is the art of losing self in the adoration of another. Praise can be a part of worship, but worship goes beyond praise. To truly worship God, we must adore Him for who He is, not just what He has done.

In Scripture, praise is usually presented as boisterous, joyful, and uninhibited. When the Bible mentions worship, however, the tone changes. We read verses like, “Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” (Psalm 96:9). And, “Come, let us worship and bow down” (Psalm 95:6). Often,

worship is coupled with the act of bowing or kneeling (2 Chronicles 29:28-29; Revelation 19:10).

Worship requires a proper attitude of heart. A person can go through the outward motions and not be worshipping (Psalm 51:16-17; Matthew 6:5-6). God sees the heart, and He desires and deserves sincere, heartfelt praise and worship. —GotQuestions.org

## BE A WORSHIPER

We were made to worship God. The Father seeks worshipers who will pay homage to Him in spirit and truth (John 4:24).

Preaching is not worship. It may inspire worship in the hearts of listeners, but preaching is the conveying of a message to an audience. Giving a testimony is not worship although, once again, it may stir up worship. Worship is addressing God directly. Worship is directed to the Father and the Son in the Bible, but for some reason it is never addressed to the Holy Spirit.

David and the other writers of the Psalms were worshipers. They had great thoughts of God. The marvels of His creation swept them away in rapturous song. When they considered His greatness, goodness, and grace, their minds strained to take it all in. They thought of Him as the Upholder and Controller and were confounded.

Yet these Psalmists did not know how the Son of God would come down to earth and be born in a cattle shed, His crib an animal’s feed box. They did not know that the Architect and Maker of the universe would one day wear a carpenter’s apron in a place called Nazareth. Or that He

would wander as a stranger in the world His hands had made. They would have gasped at the thought of God having no place to lay His head, or that He would sometimes sleep under stars while His followers went to their homes.

Did they realize that God would actually come to earth and heal the sick, give sight to the blind, restore limbs to the maimed, cast out demons, and raise the dead? Or that in spite of all His kindness, He would be insulted, ridiculed, and driven out of town?

It would have been incredible to them that He, the Judge of all, would be betrayed by one of His own, arrested, and put on trial. Then civil authorities would find Him innocent, but He would be scourged until His back was like a furrowed field and He was no longer recognizable as a man.

The psalmists did not know in great detail what we now know. At a place called Calvary, men would nail their God to a cross of wood. It would be unimaginable to these Old Testament poets. They would have shaken their heads to think that the brightness of God's glory, the express image of His person, the Maker and Upholder of the universe, would be there on a cross, purging man's sins (Hebrews 1:1-3). Frail creatures would take the One who is high and lifted up in glory, and lift Him on a cross of shame. The heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, yet He was bound by nails. It was the Immortal who was dying.

Imagine the torrent of heavenly harmony that the psalmists would have raised if they could have sung in the words of Charles Wesley: "Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, should die for me?"

They saw through a glass darkly. At times they had brief glimpses of

what would happen, but the full revelation was not for them to know. The thought is this: if they, with the limited knowledge they had, poured out such torrents of praise, worship, adoration and thanksgiving to the Lord, how much more should we with what we know about Calvary and the One who died there for us?

Once we grasp the truth of what our God has done for us, of the sacrifice He made to save us, we will be spontaneous and compulsive worshipers. Our tongues will be the pen of a ready writer. Our lives will be one unending psalm of praise to Him. In the words of Charles Wesley, we will "dissolve our hearts in thankfulness and melt our eyes in tears." We will be "lost in wonder, love, and praise," and like the psalmist (Psalm 148) we will call on all creation to join us in singing the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into His marvelous light.

—Condensed from *The Disciple's Manual* by William MacDonald

## FROM BLINDNESS AND BEGGING TO WORSHIP

*"Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" (John 9:35).*

John 9 gives us the history of a soul passing from poverty and darkness into being a worshiper of the Son of God. Being a worshiper is one of the highest aspects of blessing any soul can know. It means you are more than satisfied, and are delighting in One outside yourself. Being forgiven of your sins is a wonderful blessing (1 Timothy 2:4), but that is not the end of God's desires for you. God's ultimate path of blessing for you is that you may be found a worshiper in His presence for evermore.

*"As Jesus passed by, He saw a man which was blind from his birth" (John*



9:1). There is not a soul that has a longing, a want, or a desire, that Jesus does not see. Jesus knows, Jesus sees, and more, He feels. The One who could call worlds into existence at the bidding of His word, had time to address Himself to the necessity of this poor beggar!

Oh, what a glorious Savior! If you cannot see any glory in the Son of God occupying Himself with the necessities of a poor beggar, you must be more blind than this poor man was. You may say you are not a poor, blind beggar—that you are rich, and can have anything you want. Friend, if your soul is not saved, if you do not know Jesus, you are nothing but a poor, blind beggar.

*Jesus “said unto him, Go, wash in the pool of Siloam ... he went his way therefore, and washed, and came seeing” (John 9:7).* Notice the extreme simplicity of it all. Satan tries to deprive souls of the simplicity of the Gospel. Here it was just one statement on the Savior’s part, and one action on the sinner’s part. The word spoken by Jesus went right down into the very depths of his soul, and he acted on the word of the Lord. Isn’t that simple? If you take Christ at His word, your soul will be brought into blessing. “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life” (John 3:36).

*“The Jews had agreed already, that if any man did confess that [Jesus] was Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue” (John 9:22).* Now the enmity of the Pharisees is seen. What a picture of the heart of man in his natural state! Nothing so hinders and withers up God’s work in the soul, as does our bondage to other people’s opinions. You may be afraid of what your friends and family will say if you decide to follow Christ. But no one else will stand for you in the day of

judgment; you will be alone before God. If He has spoken to your heart, you must let nothing hinder you from following Him!

*“Jesus ... said unto him, Dost thou believe on the Son of God?” (John 9:35).* What was the man’s answer? “Lord, I believe. And he worshiped Him” (John 9:38). He had found an Object on which his heart could rest forever. What then was the only thing he could do? Worship! Have you ever reached such a state? Do you know what it is to be at the feet of Jesus, not being able to ask for anything, but only delighting yourself in the sense of who He is, and saying, “Thou art worthy” (Revelation 4:11)? May God in His mercy bless His word, and make Christ precious to you, for His name’s sake.

—Adapted from *The Remembrancer*

## WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

Worship no longer consists of the offering of bulls and goats, made by priests of the Levitical order. Rather, it consists of spiritual sacrifices, offered up by priests of the new order—the individuals who make up the Church (1 Peter 2:5). Thus, worship is no longer a mechanical process; rather, it is carried out in spirit, by the Spirit. That is to say, the Spirit of God generates in the heart of the believer notes of worship of the Lord Jesus Christ and of God the Father.

Worship is offered up through the Spirit in any geographic location at any time, because the way into the holy presence of God has now been manifest (Hebrews 9:8). When Jesus said, “It is finished” (John 19:30), the veil that separated the holiest of all from the outer chamber of the Temple was torn in two from top to bottom (Mark 15:38). The believer, therefore, does not have to wait for

a “worship service” to be bowed in worship and adoration. The Spirit, by whom the Christian worships, is not limited by geography, time, or other constraints.

When we examine the New Testament, we discover that worship is entirely independent of our words or activity, but is totally dependent upon the Holy Spirit’s work. To illustrate this point, let’s examine what I have come to savor as the most compelling picture of worship in the Old Testament. Read the account of the Queen of Sheba and her introduction to Solomon’s glory in 1 Kings 10:1-10.

In this passage we first find the queen making a concerted effort to see King Solomon. She had heard about him and deemed it worthy of her effort to see him with her own eyes. This is also the first step for all who would be worshipers of the Lord Jesus Christ and of God the Father. We have to make a diligent effort to see God—the Father and the Son—as revealed in the Word of God, and commune with Him.

Having seen and communed with the King, the queen is left to ponder all the glory she beheld in him. “When the queen of Sheba had seen all Solomon’s wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel, and his cupbearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord; there was no more spirit in her” (1 Kings 10:4-5). In view of his glory, she was breathless.

How deeply moving is this picture to the soul of the Christian worshiper! How it should inspire us to be in the place where we are able to gaze and reflect upon the glories of our Lord Jesus Christ and God the Father! Worship takes place when the of-

ferer’s heart and soul are completely lost in wonder and amazement as he gazes upon the Object of his deep admiration.

—Condensed from *Prayer and Worship in the Holy Spirit* by Humphrey Duncanson

## WORSHIP JESUS?

We know that we should worship God the Father. But may we also address our worship directly to the Son? Yes, we may! The Father Himself has desired that, “All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5:23).

For further verification of this, we are given a view of heaven in Revelation 5, where both the Father and the Son are joint objects of worship. “Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever” (Revelation 5:13). The Lamb, who was slain, shares the worship due only to God, because He is God—God the Son.

—From *Worship & Remembrance* by Daniel Smith

## WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE TO GOD’S PRESENCE?

We need to recover the sense of reverence that ought to characterize those who gather in the holy presence of the living God. In many churches the fellowship is warm and the Bible teaching is faithful. But each week the people file in and out of what is labeled a “worship service” without ever coming close to sensing the holy presence of God. It’s easy to fall into the disease of “playing church,” of going through the motions of worship without encountering God.

Worship should be a reverent response to God’s holy presence. When we gather as God’s people, we gather unto the Lord Jesus who

is in our midst. It is because of who He is, God in human flesh, and His work on the cross which satisfied the divine penalty for our sins, that we can draw near unto God.

The ark of the covenant was the symbol of God's meeting with His people on the basis of atonement. The Lord told Moses, "there I will meet with thee" (Exodus 25:22). It was a type (or picture) of the Lord Jesus Christ. The materials of the ark, gold and wood, typified the person of Christ as both God and man. The function of the ark as the mercy-seat typified the work of Christ as the sacrificial lamb of God.

Since the ark was the visible symbol of the presence of God in the midst of His people, you would think that there would have been a uniform response of reverence on the part of all who were in the presence of the ark. But if you trace the history of the ark, you find quite different and instructive responses to its presence.

**The Israelites: "A good luck charm" (1 Samuel 4).** The worship of God was a dead ritual for most of Israel at this time. When they encountered difficulties with the Philistines, someone got the idea, "Let's get the ark and carry it into battle" (1 Samuel 4:3,5-11). They were using it as a good luck charm. God allowed them to be defeated, and the ark was captured by the Philistines.

There are churchgoers in our day who are having problems in their lives, so they think, "I'll go to church and maybe God will solve my problems." But for them, worship is nothing more than a good luck charm to try to get God on their side. They know nothing of God's holy presence.

**The Philistines: "A plague" (1 Samuel 5).** The Philistines set

up the ark next to their god, Dagon, but the Lord caused their idol to fall down and break into pieces. Next, God struck them all with tumors and with mice (1 Samuel 5:6; 6:4-5). As you can imagine, the Philistines wanted to get rid of the ark as quickly as possible.

Even so, there are some who feel a plague of guilt when they come near a church where God's presence is known. They are uncomfortable around those who manifest the presence of the Lord.

**Abinadab: "Ho hum!" (1 Samuel 7:1-2; 2 Samuel 6:3).** The Philistines sent the ark back to Israel on a cart, and it wound up in the house of Abinadab. It had been there for almost 70 years by David's time. It is significant that we do not read of any results in Abinadab's household for having the ark there all those years.

Some churchgoers are like that. They can come for years into a church where God is present, but it has no appreciable effect on their lives. You can be in the very presence of God and have it glance right off, if your heart isn't seeking after Him.

**Uzzah: "What's the big deal?" (2 Samuel 6:6-7).** As David and company moved the ark toward Jerusalem on an oxcart, the oxen stumbled and the ark almost fell to the dirt. Uzzah reached out his hand to steady it and God struck him dead on the spot. Some folks think that God was a bit touchy and harsh for doing this. What was so bad about what Uzzah did? Any wagon driver would have done the same with any valuable piece of furniture under his care, wouldn't he?

Yes, and that was precisely Uzzah's problem. He saw no difference between the ark and any other valuable article. He was overly familiar

with that which was utterly sacred. Uzzah was the son (or grandson) of Abinadab. He had grown up with the ark in his home. It was commonplace to him: “What’s the big deal?” But he should have known that even the Levitical priests who carried the ark were not permitted to touch it, but carried it on poles inserted through rings attached to it.

Some in our day—often they are people who have grown up in the church—trifle with the things of God. God is commonplace to them. We need to gain the Bible’s perspective on God’s absolute holiness and man’s utter sinfulness. As R.C. Sproul points out, what Uzzah did was an act of arrogance. He “assumed that his hand was less polluted than the earth. But it wasn’t the ground or the mud that would desecrate the ark; it was the touch of man.” We need to take God seriously!

**David: “Angry at God” (2 Samuel 6:8-10).** David got angry at God and then he grew afraid—not a healthy fear of the Lord, but an unhealthy fear that caused him to draw back and ask, “How shall the ark of the Lord come to me?” There was some pride behind David’s anger. God had not done things David’s way.

But the problem was that David hadn’t done things God’s way. Where had they gotten the idea of an oxcart? From the Philistines (1 Samuel 6:7)! Any time the church starts imitating the world in its worship, they can’t expect the Lord to give His blessing. What they ought to do is not get mad, but rather get on their faces and figure out why God’s blessing is not on their lives or on their church.

**David’s wife Michal: “Don’t get fanatical!” (2 Samuel 6:16,20).** Notice her relationship to the worship celebration: she was a spectator. Why

wasn’t she a participant? She should have been down in the streets, rejoicing in the celebration. But instead she peeked out the window and got embarrassed by what she saw as David’s fanaticism.

The critics of true worshipers are always proud spectators, not humble participants. They’re concerned about what others may think. It doesn’t occur to them to be concerned about what God thinks.

**Obededom: “Delighted in God” (2 Samuel 6:10-11).** We’re not sure who Obededom was. But he had no problem bringing the ark to his house right after Uzzah was struck dead for touching it! Here was a man whose heart was right before the Lord.

How could it be that the same ark could be one man’s delight and another man’s death? How could the same ark be one man’s pleasure and another man’s plague? How could the same ark result in seven different responses from these various people?

The difference must not lie with the ark of God’s presence, but with the hearts of the people who were in contact with it. If that is so, where is your heart? Do you come on Sundays expecting to meet with God? One way to answer that question is to ask another question: How carefully do you prepare your heart for that meeting?

If you were granted an audience with the president, would you prepare yourself before you went, or would you just go into his office in your work clothes? If you’re going to meet with the holy God, should you not at least spend a few minutes beforehand preparing your heart? The Hebrews didn’t have a bad idea in beginning their Sabbath at sundown the night before. That way, they were ready for worship the following day. I find

it helpful to spend a portion of Saturday night getting my heart ready for meeting with the Lord corporately on Sunday morning.

Would you worship any differently if Christ were watching you? Would you sing any differently if Christ were listening? Would you listen to His Word being preached more attentively if He were in the chair next to you? He is present, of course. The question is, are you aware of His presence? Do you come expecting Him to be present, expecting to meet with Him as we gather in His name?

—Adapted from “David,” Copyright 1993 by Steven J. Cole, All rights reserved

## AT HIS FEET

Of all the disciples of Christ that pass before us in the Gospel story, perhaps none are marked by single-hearted devotedness to Christ more than Mary of Bethany. On the three occasions that she comes before us in the Scriptures, she is found at the feet of Jesus.

We see her first in her sister’s home at Bethany, when Mary sat at His feet as a learner (Luke 10:39). Later, when her brother Lazarus had died, she is found at His feet as a mourner (John 11:32). Lastly, she is found at His feet as a worshiper (John 12:3).

On this third occasion, Mary is found at the feet of the Lord, no longer to receive His words and His sympathy, but to give to Him the worship of a heart that loved Him. In this lovely scene, Mary’s gifts, acts, and attitude all breathe the spirit of worship.

Moved by love for Christ, she does the right thing at the right moment. She might have left the ointment in the alabaster box and presented it to Christ as a gift, but this would not have put the same honor upon Him. Instead, she pours it out upon His

feet, and the Lord defends her against those who criticize her act of worship.

Christ was everything to Mary. Christ was her life, and she bows at His feet as a worshiper because of all that He is. She forgets herself, and her blessings, and thinks only of Him. How blessed if, when we come to worship, we could each one lose sight of ourselves and see nothing except Jesus and His glory.

How blessed, too, was the effect of her act of devotion to Christ, for we read, “the house was filled with the odor of the ointment” (John 12:3). Mary’s act of worship was precious to the heart of Christ, and also a sweet fragrance to all who were in the house. That which gives honor to Christ will also bring blessing to others.

—Hamilton Smith, adapted

## WORSHIP VS. SERVICE

Many Christians put the emphasis of their lives on service for God, to the exclusion of worshiping Him. Others swing to the other extreme, and so stress the importance of worship, that service for the Lord is viewed as being of little or no consequence.

We must beware of lopsidedness, or of seeking to push one truth of Scripture to an extreme the Bible does not warrant. The believer must seek to maintain the truth of God in its proper perspective and correct balance. The words of our Lord Jesus Christ give the proper order of precedence. In His reply to Satan’s temptation, He said: “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve” (Matthew 4:10).

The Divine ideal is that our worship of the Lord will inspire us to serve, and that our service for Him will flow naturally from worship.

—Adapted from *Worship: The Christian’s Highest Occupation* by Alfred P. Gibbs