

WORSHIP

The Christian's Highest Occupation

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CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

X. THE RESULTS OF WORSHIP

Having discussed the meaning, the importance, the authority, the Object, the ground, the power, the manner, and the hindrances, and the place of worship; it may be appropriate to conclude the study of this subject with a consideration of the results of worship. These results will be seen to be far reaching, affecting both God, the believer, the assembly and the unsaved.

1. God Shall Be Glorified

Worship gives to God His rightful place of absolute pre-eminence in everything.

It presents to Him the praise, honor and glory that is His rightful due, by virtue of what He is and what He has done.

It has been well said that: "Man's chief end is to enjoy God and glorify Him forever."

As the Christian concentrates his attention upon the triune God, and the exceeding greatness of the Divine attributes, as displayed in creation, redemption and regeneration; he will be lost in wonder, awe, adoration and worship. Thus he displays the excellencies (or glorifies) of the One who has made it all possible.

As Robert Hall has finely said:

"Were we capable of comprehending the Deity, devotion would not be the sublimest employment to which we can attain. In the contemplation of such a Being, we are in no danger of going beyond our subject: we are conversing with an infinite Object, in the depths of Whose essence and purposes, we are forever lost. This will probably give all the emotions of freshness and astonishment to the raptures of the beatific vision, and add a delightful zest to the devotions of eternity. This will enable the Divine Being to pour in continually fresh accessions of light; to unfold new views of His character, disclose new parts of His perfection, open new mansions in Himself, in which the mind will find ample room to expatiate. Thus we shall learn, to all eternity that, so far from exhausting His infinite fulness, there will remain infinite recesses of His nature unexplored; scenes in His counsels never brought before the view of His creatures; that we know but 'parts of His ways,' and that, instead of exhausting our theme, we are not even approaching nearer to the comprehension of the eternal ALL."

God's purpose, behind all the display of His attributes, has been revealed. Mark carefully the Divine utterance: "**I will be sanctified in them that come nigh me, and before all the people, I will be glorified**" (Leviticus 10:3).

There can therefore be no greater occupation for man than the glorification of God, and this is what worship does.

We have already seen that God desires the worship of man, His creature.

At infinite cost He has provided a way by which man may be redeemed by Him, accepted before Him, approach to Him, be blessed by Him and become a worshipper of Him.

When His blood-redeemed people fall down before Him in worship, the purpose of the triune God is thus fulfilled and He is thereby glorified.

- The Father will be glorified in the revelation He has given of Himself in the Son of His love.
- The Son will be glorified in the work He accomplished by the sacrifice of Himself.
- The Holy Spirit will be glorified, for it was through Him the written revelation came, and His indwelling presence makes possible the worship of the believer.

Thus worship redounds to the glory of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2. The Believer Will Be Blest

No one loses by giving to God, for God will be no man's Debtor.

He will pour multiplied joy into the heart of the worshipper, in "good measure, pressed down, and shaken together and running over" (Luke 6:38).

God delights to give, and reveals Himself as possessing both the ability and willingness to "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20).

God is described as "the blessed God." Consequently, all who bless Him in worship are blessed by Him in return.

Luke's Gospel concludes in a very beautiful way. After describing the ascension of our Lord we read: "And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy; and were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God" (Luke 24:52-53).

Notice the close connection between their worship of Christ, and the resultant great joy of their own hearts!

The worship of God ever results in the great joy of man.

The worshipping believer is a joyous believer, for joy comes through obedience.

Christ said: **“If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them”** (John 13:17).

Worship enables the believer to know God better, and to appreciate Him more; and this knowledge causes God to become his “exceeding joy” (Psalm 43:4).

He who fulfils God’s desire for worship, shall have his own desire fulfilled for joy.

There is no joy so exquisite as that which comes from the contemplation of God, as He has revealed Himself in the Person of His beloved Son. While the believer does not worship God in order to obtain this resultant joy; yet the fact remains that this **“joy of the Lord”** is but one of the many by-products of worship.

Thus the adoration that ascends to God from the believer, to delight God’s heart, will be more than recompensed by the blessing descending from God to the believer, which will rejoice his heart. God’s definite promise is: **“Them that honor me, I will honor”** (I Samuel 2:30).

Not only does worship minister joy to the worshipper, but it results in his deep soul-satisfaction.

This is the very antithesis of self satisfaction, which is the result of favorable occupation with oneself.

This is exemplified in the Pharisee’s so-called prayer (Luke 18:11-12).

Worship occupies the soul with God, and the believer who spends time in the presence of God proves the truth of David’s statement: “They shall be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of thy house; and thou shalt make them to drink of the river of thy pleasures. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light” (Psalm 36:8-9).

The “broken cisterns” of this earth can never satisfy the one who has experienced the regenerating grace of God. With the hymn writer he sings:

“Jesus, Thou joy of loving hearts,
Thou Fount of life, Thou Light of men;
From the best bliss that earth imparts,
We turn, unfilled, to Thee again.”

We might mention other blessings which the believer is caused to experience as a result of worshipping God; but enough has been written to prove that all those who bless God shall be blessed by God. He who from his heart exclaims:

“Bless the Lord, O my soul: and all that is within me, bless his holy name!” shall also prove, with David, that: “Blessed is the man whom thou chooseth, and causeth to approach unto thee, that he may dwell in thy courts: we shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, even of thy holy temple” (Psalm 103:1; 65:4).

3. The Assembly Will Be Edified

Not only does worship glorify God and bring blessing to the worshipper himself; but a company of believers, who give worship its proper place, is blessed and edified thereby; for it is fulfilling its God-given function.

It will be recalled that God, in the tabernacle and, later, in the temple, responded to the worship of His people by filling the place with His glory: **“For the cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day, and fire was on it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel, throughout all their journeys”** (Exodus 40:30) and **“So that the priests could not stand to minister because of the cloud: for the glory of the Lord had filled the house of the Lord”** (I Kings 8:11).

Wherever believers gather together for worship today and, with one heart and voice, join to worship God spiritually, sincerely, and intelligently, they too shall be made to experience what it means for the place to become redolent with the glory of the Lord.

There is no spot nearer Heaven than when the united worship of an assembly of Christians ascend, like fragrant incense, before the face of God.

We have already seen that this calls for spiritual preparation of the highest order, but such an exercise of heart is not in vain.

The Divine purpose in constituting each believer a priest will be fulfilled when such, audibly or inaudibly, join as an assembly to present their appreciation to God all He is and has done.

When an assembly of believers thus puts “first things first,” the saints are thereby built up in their most holy faith. This, in turn, fits and enables them to fulfil the other purposes God has in mind for His gathered people.

An assembly that allows its service for the Lord to crowd out its worship to the Lord, not only comes short of God’s purpose for it, but the effectiveness of its service is curtailed thereby. Both the desire and ability for true service flows from spiritual worship.

It was after Isaiah had seen the glory of the Lord, and been impressed with the majesty of His presence, that the call and commission for service came, and to which he gladly responded: “Here am I; send me” (Isaiah 6:8).

4. The Unsaved Will Be Reached

As the worshipping Christian moves amongst his fellow men, he will unconsciously carry with him something of God.

We are told that Moses, when he returned from the interview he had with God upon the mount, **“Wist not that . . . his face shone”** (Exodus 34:29).

The Bible points out that **“None of us liveth to himself”** (Romans 14:7). Each life touches some other life, either for good or evil. Each Christian, by the impact of his personality makes an impression upon others. Only as God, through worship, impresses the believer with Himself, can the believer impress others with God. It is this unconscious influence that counts for so much in one’s contact with the world.

It was when the Lord turned the captivity of His people, and their mouth was **“filled with laughter,”** and their **“tongue with singing,”** that the heathen were moved to testify: **“The Lord had done great things for them”** (Psalm 126:2).

The world is looking for reality, and rightly holds in contempt all religious sham, humbug and pretence. An ostentatious display of sanctimoniousness only awakens its ridicule.

The believer, who knows what it means to worship the true and living God, is best fitted to present the gospel to the unsaved, both by commending it in his life and proclaiming it with his lips.

It is not an uncommon thing for the worship of an assembled company of God’s people to be used by the Lord to impress unsaved people who happened to be present, of the reality of eternal things, so that they were led to trust the Saviour.

Such certainly are prepared to fall upon their faces, **“worship God, and report that God is in you of a truth”** (I Corinthians 14:23-25).

Thus worship is seen to have far reaching and blessed effects, beginning with God Himself, and flowing out to His own people and, through them, to a world that sits in darkness and the shadow of death.

CONCLUSION

May the Lord be pleased to use this study of worship to both the awakening, encouragement and edification of His people; so that from each believer individually, and from each assembly collectively, there may flow up, to the triune God, a constant volume of adoring worship which shall bring delight to His heart and glory to His name!

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