

TOPIC : JOURNEY OF A WORSHIPPER

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SUMMARY OF MESSAGE

2 Chronicles 16:9

For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

God is looking at us, looking for hearts inclined towards Him. The moment we draw near to Him, James 4:8 kicks in, He draws near to us. It has to do with the posture of our hearts. When we posture to connect with Him, He will definitely meet with us.

Psalm 100:4-5

Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name. For the LORD is good; His mercy is everlasting, and His truth endures to all generations.

For purpose of teaching and expounding, we will go through 7 steps. Like the rainbow, we will move to and from across the colors.

I. Decide to worship God

Psalm 34:1

I will bless the LORD at all times; His praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Psalm 138:1-2

I will praise You with my whole heart; before the gods I will sing praises to You. I will worship toward Your holy temple, and praise Your name for Your lovingkindness and Your truth; for You have magnified Your word above all Your name.

God has magnified His Word above His name. He will bring His Word to pass (Jeremiah 1:12). He watches over His Word to perform it (Isaiah 55:11).

In 2 Samuel 6:16,23, we have the story of Michah. When she saw David dancing as the ark came into the City of David, she despised him and as a result, became barren until death. We can come into the house of the Lord yet fail to meet the Lord of the house. We need to come as participants, not as spectators. It's a dangerous position. Who is a spectator? He is someone who is cynical; someone coming to criticize, complain or correct. A spectator does not connect with God. Determine to worship the Lord and deliberately enter into relationship with God. Worship is not a religion or a ritual. It's a love relationship with God. Consequence of skepticism will be spiritual barrenness.

II. Be an intentional true worshipper

John 4:23-24

But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. The Father God is seeking for true worshippers, someone who worships in spirit and truth. Don't be a false worshipper. It is an injunction to worship in spirit and truth, not either spirit or truth.

1 Peter 2:5

You also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

'Acceptable to God' means that there are sacrifices that are unacceptable to God. Sacrifices that are acceptable come from true worshippers. What is a true worshipper?

1. A true worshipper is guided by the Word of truth.

True worshippers are guided by truth. John 17:17 says, "Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth." Who is the truth? The truth is Jesus. He is the way, the truth and the life. If we abide in Him, we will abide in the truth. God wants to see truth in our lives. If we bring sacrifices, be at peace with our brothers. As far as possible, be at peace with all men. (Romans 12:18, Matthew 5:23-24) If we apologize but the sister refuses to be reconciled, we have done our part. As believers, be at peace with all men.

2. A true worshipper is led by the Spirit of truth.

He will lead us into all truth.

John 16:13

However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come.

Although we have the best worship team, we put no confidence in the flesh.

Philippians 3:3

For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh ...

The worship team can only facilitate worship and praise. They cannot help us to worship because worship occurs in our spirit; in our heart when the spirit in us connects with the Spirit of God and where the deep in us connects with the Deep in God. True worship happens in the spirit where God dwells. That's where we know the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. When we come for service, pray for all involved. We lay no confidence in the flesh. We depend one hundred percent on the Holy Spirit. The confidence is not in the powerpoint presentation.

III. **Know we have right standing with God.**

Psalm 24:3-4

Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place?
He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully.

How do we come into the presence of God? We go with clean hands, right motivations, words, attitudes and behavior. The Lord is looking for clean hands and pure hearts. How? We have peace with God. How? By becoming sons of God. With peace, we are the righteousness of God.

Romans 5:1

Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ ...

2 Corinthians 5:21

For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him

The divine exchange is in the cross. We have our sins exchanged for the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus. It is received by faith. We cannot earn our way into the presence of God. We can never also do so by way of performance. It is only through the Blood of Jesus. Righteousness is right standing with God, a gift to be received, believed and to be acted upon.

Our sins, past, present and future ones are already forgiven. For illustration, let's say that the service ends late and we are hungry. At the restaurant, we lose our patience and temper and sin. Are we forgiven? Yes. How? We are not forgiven because we do or do not do something. We are forgiven because the price has been paid at Calvary. The issue is our conscience. What's the solution to an evil conscience? It is the Blood of Christ.

Hebrews 9:14

How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, cleanse your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?

Hebrews 10:19-23

Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled 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.

What must we do? Confess our sins.

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Don't fight over silly or wrong battles. Choose our battles. What do we do with regards to sins? We keep short accounts. There is no condemnation. Is this so for everybody? No, it is so for those in Christ Jesus (Romans 8:1). The devil may accuse us (Revelation 12:11) but we come to God by the Blood of the Lamb and through Jesus our High Priest.

Let's us Come to the Presence of God NOW!

IV. With freedom from the cares and anxieties of life.

We have worries and anxieties. We have a presentation to make, we are worried over our son or daughter. A doctor might have told us he didn't like what he saw with the biopsy; we may have bills to pay, etc. We have worries because we live in a fallen world. That's not the issue. The issue is what do we do with our anxieties, stress, fears and worries? Are we living in fear or in faith? 1 Peter 5:7 says to cast all our cares upon Him for He cares for us. The solution to stress, anxieties and fears is to bring them to God.

Philippians 4:6-7

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

Peter was a professional fisherman. He knew when it was to cast the nets. Likewise, we need to cast our cares to God. We are to do it deliberately till the peace of God calms our feelings. We may have mood swings. We worry about the obstacle course or the people we are about to meet. But we need to pray till we experience the peace of God. Would we intentionally and deliberately nail it to the cross? Why not take time now to do it?

I want to encourage you to grow your prayer life; to be in a cell group or subgroup where you can share. Share your struggles about drinking, work issues, stress, education related stress, etc. James 5:16 says to 'confess your faults one to another.' 'Faults' means a stress-point, a pressure-point, anxiety, etc. We need to find a brother or sister to whom we could pour our hearts to.

The other place to pray is the altar. Jesus said that His house is to be a house of prayer. Don't say 'No one prays for me.' There is the 'House of Blessings' every first week of the month and the House of Prayer groups as well as the altar on Sundays. It would be a tragedy if you have a problem and there is none to pray for us. In the world, there are troubles because we live in a fallen world. We pray until the burdens are lifted.

V. **With Thanksgiving.**

Now we bring our thanks to Him.

Psalm 50:14 (NIV)

Sacrifice thank offerings to God ...

Psalm 100:4 (NIV)

Enter his gates with thanksgiving ... give thanks to him and praise his name.

Psalm 103:1-5

Bless the LORD, O my soul ... and forget not all His benefits: Who forgives ... heals ... redeems ... crowns ... satisfies ... renew ...

We bless Him for our salvation, deliverance and healing. The bottom line of thanksgiving is gratefulness. Gratefulness is the beginning of wisdom. Romans 1:21 talks about people who were not thankful and became futile in the thoughts. God gave them over to a debased mind. They became foolish; foolishness is the absence of wisdom. We are to be a thankful people. I am thankful for the council of elders and for the pastoral staff. The opposite of a thankful heart is one that murmurs and complains. We are in this together; to be a thankful people. I thank God for the worship team, for the cell group leaders. I thank God that 99.9 percent of the people in BBTC are thankful people. Now, we give thanks for the Lord's Supper.

Give thanks for the Lord's Supper

For the Bread - the Body of Christ

1. He died for our salvation (1 Corinthians 15:2-4; Romans 10:9-10).
2. He died to include us in His Body - the Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-13).
3. He died for our bodily healing (Matthew 8:16-17).
4. He died to give us life (1 Corinthians 15:45).
5. Etc.

We need to do with understanding. We are not observing a ritual or making a physical transaction. We partake a spiritual transaction. The bread speaks of His death and salvation. In the Body, there is no fracture. He died for our bodily healing (Matthew 8:16,17, Isaiah 53). He died to give us life (1 Cor 15:45). Our mortal body can be strengthened (Rom 8:11). Jesus is the life giving Spirit.

For the Cup - the Blood of Christ

1. His Blood was shed for the atonement of our sins (Hebrews 9:22; Hebrews 10:19-22).
2. His Blood gives us life (Hebrews 9:14-15).
3. We overcome the evil one by His Blood (Revelation 12:11).
4. Basis for the New Covenant.

Jesus said, "This is my Blood shed for atonement of sins." It gives us life. Life is in the Blood. As we partake, we ask His life to flow within our soul, mind, emotions, physical body. (Heb 9:14-15) We overcome the evil one by the Blood. (Rev 12:11) The Blood of the Lamb is the basis for the new covenant. It behooves us to give thanks and not do it mechanically with the Lord's Supper. When we partake the Lord's Supper, it's the means to appropriate the grace of the Lord. There are two things to be observed in the church – the Lord's Supper and baptism. As for the rest, we hold loosely.

There are 4 things we give thanks and be praying for:

1. Anointed worship
Pray for worshippers, pray for ourselves. It's a very important segment.
2. Anointed word
Pray that we will hear words that build, encourage, comfort and exhort (1 Cor 14:3). Here, we preach the full gospel. The full gospel is that mentioned in Luke 4:18. Evangelism is one subset of the full gospel. Others are to heal, bind and to cast out demons. Jesus said that the Spirit of the LORD was upon Him to preach the gospel, to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, the recovery of sight to the blind and to set at liberty those who are oppressed. Doctrines are by theologians who helped to simplify things to men. All doctrines have their limitations. All truths must lead to the truth, i.e. Jesus. If any passage or doctrine appears to contradict, then we bring the entire scriptures to bear on it. Preaching is to be for life change. When we hear, we must respond as such at the altar.
3. Anointed altar
4. Anointed bodylife

VI. **With Praise**

Psalm 100:4 (NIV)

Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.

We praise God for who He is, i.e. His attributes and His name.

Hebrews 13:15 (NIV)

Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name.

Praise is different from thanksgiving. The bottom life of praise is knowing God. We praise Him that He is the love of our soul, the coming King and Lord of lords. We praise Him for He is our strength and we can do all things through Christ. We praise Him for He is our peace guarding our heart and mind. We praise Him for He is God who always works all things for good. Everything about us is written in Psalm 139. His plans are to give us a future and a hope (Jeremiah 29:11). His plans are thoughts of peace, shalom. I want to encourage you to know God, interact, encounter, experience Him. Praise Him for who He is. Some things about praise:

1. Praise is **vocal**. It is never silent e.g. shout, sing, proclaim or confess.

Psalm 95:1 (NIV)

Come, let us sing for joy to the LORD; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation.

2. Praise can be done with **bodily expressions**.
 - A. with **clapping of hands** - Psalm 47:1 says, "Clap your hands, all you nations; shout to God with cries of joy."
 - B. with **dancing** - Psalm 149:3, "Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with tambourine and harp."
 - C. with **lifting up of hands** - Psalm 141:2, "May my prayer be set before you like incense; may the lifting up of my hands be like the evening sacrifice." It is not about the height of the hands we raise. Don't judge. Don't get distracted by your neighbor. Don't compare, judge, stumble one another. But when we come corporately, let's do it together.

Let's us Praise the LORD!

VII. With **Worship**.

Worship is different from praise and thanksgiving

1. **Worship has got to do with the Holiness of God.**

Leviticus 10:3

And Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD spoke, saying: 'By those who come near ME I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified.'"

To be holy means to be set apart, to be special.

Isaiah 8:13 (NIV)

The LORD Almighty is the one you are to regard as holy, he is the one you are to fear, he is the one you are to dread.

Matthew 6:10

Hallowed be Your NAME

If I may submit, many believers know how to give thanks and praise but fail to enter into worship. Worship is realizing God is God and we are mere men; that we are people with unclean lips. Worship is realizing He is God and the fear of the Lord comes in. It is being still and knowing He is God. Worship occurs in our spirit. Sometimes it helps to close our eyes and to deliberately connect with God and to surrender.

2. Worship has to do with intimacy with God.

Matthew 22:37 (NIV)

Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.'

Every aspect and faculty is involved. It is not just cerebral. God wants nothing but our all, mind, emotions and strength. It is directing ourselves towards Him. We may experience all kinds of bodily reactions. This is not for everybody as each of us would respond differently. The bottom line of worship is surrender. It is coming to the place we see that He is infinite while we are finite; He is boundless while we are limited.

Spiritual songs

Ephesian 5:18-19

... be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord ...

Colossians 3:16

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Generally, we sing psalms. Psalms are praise songs. (Psalm 149:6) When we praise, we declare, we speak forth. Spiritual songs are from the Spirit. They are spontaneous expressions from the spirit, from the heart and which are unpremeditated. The spontaneous responses are done so in faith and in corporation with the Holy Spirit. These can include personal tongues to public tongues. As we live in the end times where there is so much revelation, there is less prophetic tongue. Most tongues are personal tongues. Tongues are no indication of our spirituality but in a corporate worship, use personal tongue to direct it to God.

As mentioned, the bottom line of worship is surrender. It has to do with the posture of the heart.

In Revelation 4:8, we see the four living creatures which worship God day and night. How can we be worshipping God for the whole of eternity? The key is in the eyes.

Revelation 4:8

The four living creatures, each having six wings, were full of eyes around and within. And they do not rest day or night, saying: "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, Who was and is and is to come!"

The creatures have eyes all about them. As they close and open their eyes, they see different dimensions of the goodness of God. Each time they do that, they see another dimension, perspective or paradigm of the goodness of God. We cannot do so until we taste and encounter the goodness of God. This has to be a journey.

Psalm 27:4

One thing I have desired of the LORD, that will I seek: That I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to inquire in His temple.

The psalmist says the one thing he desires is to see the beauty of the Lord. Would you give your life to God and ask for a fresh hunger for Him? It is when we see Him that other things will pale in comparison.

End

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1a) What is your understanding of praise and of worship?

1b) How is your experience like during the Worship Service? Are you able to connect, are you being ministered to and what are some ways you ministered unto the Lord?
Share for the purpose of allowing fellow believers to see how people engage God differently.
We are not here to measure who is more spiritual. It is about God.

- 2) With the many concerns and cares of life, what do we need to do so that we may be in a position to worship Him better?
- 3) Do you see this inconsistency happening, i.e. we can be happily worshipping God during a worship service but running our lives differently outside? No condemnation is suggested here but we want to be realistic about the situation and see how we can work at it. Share your thoughts on this and provide suggestions.

No condemnation, no comparison, no competition but only encouragement...