

ANSWERS TO BASIC QUESTIONS: WHY DO WORSHIP AND SING?

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I. INTRODUCTION

- A. Last week we talked about why we love the Bible to the point that we place our total confidence in it without hesitation and we dedicate ourselves to meditate on it, study it, memorize it and value it as a jewel that never loses its shine. Today we are going to talk about Why Do We Worship and Sing? Studying the Bible and worshipping God is something we do every time we meet as a church and it is essential to give a clear answer to this fundamental question.
- B. We can worship by habit; It is something that is done on Sundays and that everyone does in the church. You can worship because someone else tells us to do it and we have no other option; others may worship by superstition, they think: If I adore it is good luck, and the list of motivations continues. Today we are going to see some of the reasons God gives us in His Word to worship and sing to Him.

II. WHAT IS WORSHIP?

- A. We could define in a simple way the adoration as the response of the human being to a reality that impresses him provoking physical and emotional expressions such as singing, raising hands, crying, etc. The Greek word for worship is *proscuneo* and literally means to prostrate. **According to what Jesus taught, genuine worship is a response to the revelation and the encounter with God's glory.**

Juan 4:21-24 "Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem. 22 You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship... 23 But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. 24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

- B. In this passage Jesus mentions at least 5 basic aspects about worship:
 - 1. ***"the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem"*** The physical place is not what determines whether worship is genuine. It is not a temple, a cathedral, a mountain or a tradition that makes you worship but a real person: the Father (He is not only God, He is Father).
 - 2. ***"You Samaritans know very little about the one you worship"*** People may not know anything about what they worship and only do it by custom or mysticism which, by implication, is false worship because it is not born of revelation and encounter with God but of the ideas of man and his attempts to do things in their own way. **The glory of God is what makes worship in heaven and on earth true (Rev. 4). The encounter with the beauty and glory of the Father and the Son has an impact on the human spirit that cannot be contained only in the mind; there is its external expression in the body like prostrating in a deep surrender expressed with songs inspired by the glorious reality of the person of God.**

3. ***“true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth”*** True worshipers have two characteristics:
 - a) ***worship in spirit*** that is to say with the deepest part of their heart because that is the part that God impacts with His glory and that is where true worship arises; not only in following a liturgy or singing accompanied by a certain type of music in the company of other believers as something superficial.
 - b) ***worship in truth***, that is according to the Word and with a genuine and sincere heart. We cannot invent our own conceptions of worship according to ideas born in the mind or in the flesh.

Is. 29:13 “And so the Lord says, “These people say they are mine. They honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. And their worship of me is nothing but man-made rules learned by rote.”

4. ***“The Father looks for people who love him that way”*** This kind of worship is so precious to God that He seeks these worshipers who worship Him with the deepest of his spirit and according to the truth of the Word and meets them. No doubt there is much adoration in the world but very little is true. **We could answer then that we worship God because He deserves it and wants to meet with us in a personal and intimate way.**
5. ***“God is Spirit; and those who worship him, in spirit and in truth it is necessary that they worship.”*** The nature of God demands that worship be consistent with His nature; He is Spirit, He is not an image, nor a motionless statue (**Ps. 115**) and does not respond to the impulses of the flesh but of the human spirit touched by the reality of who He is; God is Holy and only has fellowship with what aligns with His nature. On the other hand, worshipping Him is necessary for all of us..

Rom. 8:8 “So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Ps. 100:4 “Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, And into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name.”

III. WHY DO WE SING AS A CHURCH?

- A. The heart of God for putting words in melodies is evident in the Psalms.

Ps. 96:1-2 “Oh, sing to the Lord a new song! Sing to the Lord, all the earth. ² Sing to the Lord, bless His name; Proclaim the good news of His salvation from day to day.”

Ps. 47:6-7 “Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! ⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; Sing praises with understanding.”
- B. The Bible contains more than 400 references to singing and 50 direct orders to sing. In the New Testament we are also commanded to sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs when we meet (**Eph. 5:19; Col. 3:16**).
- C. Why does God tell us so often not only to praise him, but to sing His praises when we meet? Why not just pray and preach? Why does the people of God throughout history always sing? **One reason is that God himself sings. We worship a God who sings, and He wants us to be like Him.**

Zeph. 3:17 *"The Lord your God in your midst, The Mighty One, will save; He will rejoice over you with gladness, He will quiet you with His love, He will rejoice over you with singing."*

- D. On the eve of his crucifixion, Jesus sang hymns with His disciples (**Matt. 26:30**). Music combined with singing has tremendous potential not only in our minds and emotions but also to help us remember words: we must sing words that God wants us to remember. **Not only does it matter that we sing; It matters what we sing.** The words we sing have a much greater impact on us than most of us are aware of. New Testament scholar Gordon Fee once said: **"Show me the songs of a church and I will show you its theology."** And it's true. Or as Mark Noll says: **"We are what we sing"**
- E. **Singing can help us emotionally engage with words. Singing must be an emotional event:** Music can come along with words and increase their emotional impact in a way that we could not have perceived only with words. **Music serves as an additional influence that guides and deepens our emotional responses to the words we are singing.** In other words, music must affect us.
- F. **Singing can help us use words to demonstrate and express our unity as a church and families.** God is honored when we sing alone but the Scriptures talk a lot about congregational singing, **the point is that every voice in the church matters. We are not simply called to listen to others sing,** as we are prone to do more and more in our culture of Internet downloads. We are called to sing with others, especially in the context of our local church.
- Ps. 22:22** *"I will declare Your name to My brethren; In the midst of the assembly I will praise You."*
- G. **The question is not: do you have a voice? The question is, do you have a song? If you turned away from your sins and trusted the finished work of Christ, if you are forgiven and reconciled with God, then you have a song.** It is a song of the redeemed, of those who have been rescued from the righteous wrath of God through the cross of Jesus Christ and are now called their friends (**Rev. 14: 3-4**). **Before we were not a people, but now we are the people of God, and our singing together, each voice contributing, is a way of expressing that truth.**

IV. WORSHIP, PRAISE OR THANKSGIVING?

- A. Someone has said that praise is to recognize all that God does and worship is to admire and respond to all that God is. In the Bible, praise is closely linked to worship and thanksgiving. Through all three we honor God and rejoice in Him.
- B. Through Scripture people have expressed their worship in several ways: they have prostrated themselves before God, often with a sense of fear, to honor Him and show Him devotion. **They offered gifts, being themselves the most important gift they deliver (Ro. 12:1).**
- C. **Worship includes consecrating ourselves to God as our Lord and Master; prostrating ourselves before the most merciful, trustworthy and wonderful of all beings and we crown Him as Lord of all that we have.** Thus we have access to His transforming and kind work in our lives; **We agree that He can work in us to be willing and able to do His will. In other words, we choose to let it be God in our lives. This is our greatest privilege.**

- D. **Worship also includes praising God, admiring Him, appreciating Him and showing Him how grateful we are for His powerful works and the blessings He pours on us.** Worship includes praise and thanksgiving; these coincide when we glorify and rejoice in God. **Sometimes we do it when speaking, other times when singing and always in reverent obedience.**

Ps. 71:7, 8 y 14 ***"My life is an example to many, because you have been my strength and protection. 8 That is why I can never stop praising you; I declare your glory all day long... 14 But I will keep on hoping for your help; I will praise you more and more."***

V. WHAT HAPPENS IF I FEEL NOTHING?

- A. In the first place, the Bible does not tell us to simply make positive feelings for ourselves; instead it commands us to praise and give thanks (**1 Thess. 5:18**). Dr. John Mitchell said: *"Giving thanks when you do not feel the desire to do so is not hypocrisy is obedience."* **This does not mean that you should eliminate your thoughts, negative feelings, by placing them in a hidden place in your heart.** It's not about simply trying to repress them again and again because they can reappear in your mind and pressure you to do the wrong things to evade them by polluting your emotional atmosphere.
- B. **David and the other psalmists were sincere about their feelings, confronting them and talking to God about them.** They knew how to open their hearts before God (anyway He knows everything that happens to us). They often expressed their emotions, perplexities and even complaints, did not deny their feelings but also did not allow them to sink into depression or indifference; what they did after expressing their struggle was to proceed to praise God.

Ps. 62:8 ***"Trust in Him at all times, you people; Pour out your heart before Him; God is a refuge for us."***

Ps. 42:5 ***"Why am I discouraged? Why is my heart so sad? I will put my hope in God! I will praise him again— my Savior and 6 my God!"***

- C. They mixed a sincere expression of their trust in God and their determination to praise Him for what He is regardless of their emotions.

VI. REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. **What has been your overall experience regarding praise and worship?**
2. **How can you grow as a worshiper in spirit and truth?**
3. **What happens when we praise God together as a church?**