

WORSHIP THAT IS JOYFUL

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INTRODUCTION

- A. Two Extremes.
 - 1. Make worship more appealing to the “unchurched”.
 - a. Use of strobe lighting, rock concert-style worship music, hand-raising, testimonials.
 - b. Entertainment, from beginning to end.
 - c. Thom Ranier, a church growth expert, “*What Worship Style Attracts the Millennials?*”, April 2014 – repeated findings:
 - i. Their true desire is for music with rich content [deep theological truth].
 - ii. Authenticity and quality in worship.
 - iii. Not just going through the motions.
 - 2. A cold, lifeless formalism in corporate worship.
 - a. Emphasis on exterior.
 - b. completely violating God’s will for our proper attitude in worship, John 4:24.
- B. Psalms – Joy in Worship.
 - 1. Psalm 84:1-2, Longing to connect with God – joyful praise.
 - 2. Psalm 27:6
 - 3. Psalm 33:1
 - 4. Psalm 92:4
 - 5. Psalm 107:22
 - 6. Psalm 122:1
- C. Psalm 42
 - 1. Psalmist is isolated and exiled from the temple, longing to meet God in worship.
 - a. He seems to be confronted by people who mock him for his faith.
 - 2. This psalm is a maskil – a teaching or instructing psalm.
 - a. Joined with Psalm 43:3-4, 5.
 - b. Teaches a proper spirit of worship.
 - 3. Three requirements for joyful worship.

I. REQUIRES A SOUL – “my whole being”, “total desire”.

- A. Requires a panting, thirsty soul, Ps. 42:1.
 - 1. A deep longing which cannot be satisfied any other way.
 - 2. It is craving the presence of God.
 - 3. It is an extinction of the bored body language, distracted and restless demeanors, and apathetic attitudes.
 - 4. No more, “When do we get out of here?”
- B. Requires a poured-out soul, Ps. 42:4.
 - 1. Remembering God in difficult times.
 - 2. It may be easy to worship when life is “easy”.
 - 3. But, nothing is more necessary for a faithful child of God, than worshipping when life is difficult.
 - 4. Psalm 51 is a psalm of repentance – worship language.
 - a. Convicts with broken and contrite heart, vs. 17.
 - b. Then a delight in sacrifices, vs. 19.
 - c. Reminiscent of the publican’s prayer in Lk. 18:13, “*Be merciful to me a sinner.*”
- C. Requires a revised soul, Ps. 42:5-6, 11.
 - 1. Must be over sadness and discouragement to come before God properly.

2. Hope in Romans:
 - a. In hope we believe, 4:18.
 - b. In hope we are saved, 8:24.
 - c. In hope we rejoice, 12:12.
 - d. In hope we abound, 15:13.
3. If hopeless – we cannot give to God what He wants.

II. REQUIRES A SEARCH.

- A. Questions from Psalm 42:
 1. Vs. 2, “*When shall I come and appear before God?*”
 2. Vs. 5, “*Why are you in despair, O my soul? And why have you become disturbed within me?*”
 3. Vs. 9, “*Why have you forgotten me? Why do I go mourning?*”
 4. The quest is to reclaim the opportunity to come with others into God’s presence with joy.
- B. Search fueled by anticipation, Ps. 42:2.
 1. “*When can I come before God?*”
 2. Based on a deeper relationship with God.
 3. We are filled with anticipation – early preparation.
 - a. “I get to go...” vs. “I have to go...”
- C. Search is fueled by faith, Ps. 42:3.
 1. Refusal to let the lack of faith of others dampen his belief, “*Where is your God?*”
 2. Reflection imparts joys and praise with brothers.
 3. As we seek God, we must approach Him in faith, Heb. 11:6.
- D. Search is fueled by prayer, Ps. 42:8-11.
 1. Central to his search for God in worship.
 - a. Petitions to God – plead for help.
 - b. Lean on hope and praise.
 2. Basic tie between joy and prayer, Philippians 1:3-4.
 3. Do you find joy from time spent in prayer?

III. REQUIRES SINCERITY.

- A. Sincerity of the psalmist.
 1. Tears, Ps. 42:3.
 2. Joy and praise, Ps. 42:4.
 3. God has always rejected insincere worship, Mt. 15:7-9.
- B. When we remove the hypocrisy and stop pretending in our worship.
- C. When we come into His presence as an open book.
- D. We are eager to gain as much from each act of worship.
- E. Genuine, true, deep down joy allows the walls to let down.

CLOSING

- A. The Psalmist values the Giver over the gifts – building spiritual passion.
- B. Our deep need in worship today is the same as back then.
 1. ***Change the worshiper!*** – NOT the object or instructions.
 2. Undergo daily spiritual change.
 - a. Revolutionize our individual worship.
 - b. Drawn into the presence and heart of God.
 3. The change needed is internal, not external.
 4. Building a life lived by His side.

Just a closer walk with Thee, Grant it, Jesus, this my plea.
Daily walking close to Thee. Let it be, dear Lord, let it be.