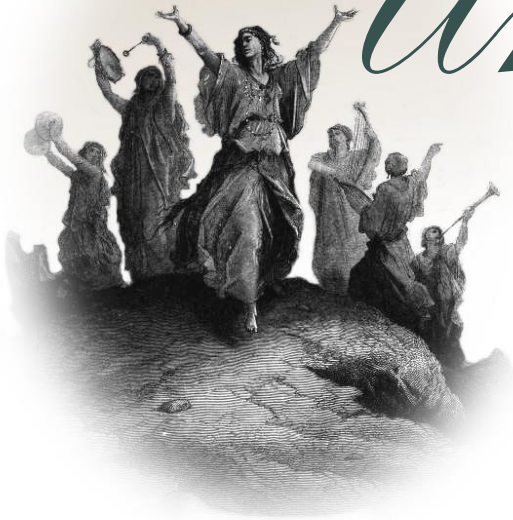


In Unison



The trumpeters and
singers joined in unison,
as with one voice, to
give praise and thanks
to the Lord.
2 Chronicles 5:13

Honesty

And finally...

*There is no one, correct way to
worship except to worship
honestly.*

In John 4, Jesus tells the Samaritan woman at the well that the Father seeks those who will worship Him in Spirit and truth.

"Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth." John 4:23-24

It is a sorrowful thing to lie to God—and where worse than during His worship?

There are those who restrain the outpouring of the Spirit, because to do else would be to cut against the traditions of the local assembly. Then there

are those who manufacture ecstasies, because to fail to produce in that regard would be an admission that a spirit was not in residence. Both transgress against the instructions of Jesus. Both are dishonest.

What does it profit us to lie to God—and if the untruth is not directed to God, then what is the motive for our actions in worship? To whom is the worship being directed if not to Him?

Should we be so casual with a God so holy? Proper reverence does not forget His nearness to us—especially through His Son—our brother, Jesus Christ. The very purpose for which God sacrificed His Son was so that we would be able to draw near to Him, intimately.

But He is still God, a most holy God, and, to paraphrase Tozer, when we fail to worship Him honestly, we are most certainly worshipping ourselves.

During the course of this series, we have spoken much of both honesty and excellence in worship, and there are two points that, in conclusion, need to be made clear:

Honesty in worship is not optional.

The two cannot be separated.

Worship *without* honesty is blasphemy.

Excellence is not synonymous with perfection.

Here is where many get sidetracked; they think that because they are incapable of perfection, they may as well not try for excellence.

In true worship, excellence is not the goal, but the result. The goal in worship is to approach God to adore Him. To do this, we must empty ourselves of self, come to Him with open hands and open hearts—nothing hidden. No hypocrisy. Only truth.

This honesty in worship results in excellence. God accepts our adoration because it is honest; then, for the good of the Church, He permits our honest worship to be an example for others. In this, we attain—without seeking it as an end—excellence in worship.

When you approach your God to worship, whether in public or in private, do it honestly or don't do it at all. Mean what you say to Him. And in your honesty, *He* will be praised.

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!
Psalm 150:6 nasb

W

e all live in a world that is fast becoming homogenized into a soft, syrupy mass of tasteless pabulum. Every one of us, no matter our heritage or postal address, lives in a community that dearly wishes for everything to become socialized to the point of insipidness. This is a world-wide epidemic; the individual communities differ only in degree.

The journey toward excellence in our worship relationship with God is never-ending. We could continue on this path of discovery until The Day, for the world will always wish to pull us off the path of this journey. Because the foe is always alive and active, we could spend the rest of our earth-bound days addressing both old and new ways to combat his oily methods.

But at some point we must leave behind the theoretical and dwell solidly in the practical. At some point we must admit that we now know enough to move from the page to the heart, from concept to a spirit uplifted with joy and expectation.

Worship is personal—very personal. Some of us are called to lead others in public worship, and the very nature of that process will color the condition of our heart. Authentic public worship does not occur without some sacri-

fice on the part of the leaders: one cannot always worship honestly when bound to the responsibility of leading others on a timely basis.

So the worship leader—whether pastor, music minister, song leader or choir member—more than any other member of the local congregation, must go out of his or her way to spend private time alone with God. But because worship—like our relationship with Christ—is personal and unique, this intimacy can take many forms.

Whatever form it takes for you, I challenge you to be salt to an insipid world. Dare to worship the Lord your God faithfully, honestly, authentically, and with rising excellence and sincerity. We never dwell permanently atop the heights; every life lives as often in the ‘slough of despond’ as the mountain top. But our worship can be just as faithful and true in the valleys as it is during those moments of soaring victory.

Stand firm with the clarity and purpose of a holy God, while you stand

against the milquetoast religion of a world that has lost its way. Be courageous against those even within the church who would wish you to compromise, to temper your enthusiasm for authentic worship. We serve a holy and righteous God who deserves our very best—and never more so than when knelt before His throne.

And when the living creatures give glory and honor and thanks to Him who sits on the throne, to Him who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for You created all things, and because of Your will they existed, and were created.”
Revelation 4:9-11 nasbu



*Draw me to Thee, till far within Thy rest,
In stillness of Thy peace, Thy voice I hear—
For ever quieted upon Thy breast,
So loved, so near.*

*By mystery of Thy touch my spirit thrilled,
O Magnet all Divine;
The hunger of my soul for ever stilled,
For Thou art mine.*

*For me, O Lord, the world is all too small,
For I have seen Thy face,
Where Thine eternal love irradiates all
Within Thy secret place.
And therefore from all others, from all else,
Draw Thou my soul to Thee...
...Yea—Thou hast broken the enchanter's spells,
And I am free.*

*Now in the haven of untroubled rest
I land at last,
The hunger and the thirst, and weary quest
For ever past.
There, Lord, to lose, in bliss of Thine embrace
The recreant will;
There, in the radiance of Thy blessed Face,
Be hushed and still;
There, speechless at Thy pierced Feet
See none and nought beside,
And know but this—that Thou art sweet,
That I am satisfied.*

Frederick William Faber

“Vocabularies are formed by many minds over long periods and are capable of expressing whatever the mind is capable of entertaining. But when the heart, on its knees, moves into the awesome Presence and hears with fear and wonder things not lawful to utter, then the mind falls flat, and words, previously its faithful servants, become weak and incapable of telling what the heart hears and sees. In that awful moment the worshipper can only cry ‘Oh!’ and that simple exclamation becomes more eloquent than learned speech and, I have no doubt, is dearer to God than any oratory.

“We Christians should watch lest we lose the ‘Oh!’ from our hearts. There is real danger these days that we shall fall victims to the prophets of poise and the purveyors of tranquility, and our Christianity be reduced to a mere evangelical humanism that is never disturbed about anything nor overcome by any ‘trances of thought and mountings of the mind.’ When we become too glib in prayer we are most certainly talking to ourselves.” (A.W. Tozer, *Born After Midnight*, Christian Publications, Inc; 1959)

Back Issues

This 22nd issue of *In Unison* brings the series to a close. Send your e-mail requests for any missed issues to DLAMPEL@AOL.COM.

In Unison

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