

I will bless the Lord at all times;
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul will make its boast in the Lord;
The humble will hear it and rejoice.
O magnify the Lord with me,
And let us exalt His name together.

Psalms 34:1-3

The Symphony of Common Love

EVANGELICALS THE WORLD OVER have been raised to associate worship of God with the traditional Sunday morning service. Indeed, we typically refer to it as a “worship service.” Any discussion of corporate worship, however, should not overshadow the fundamental need for every individual to be a consistent worshiper of God in his or her daily life.

Humans are creatures of habit, and the best habit to establish is the one that keeps us in constant, adoring communion with our affectionate Father. Sunday worship should not be a solitary nodule, an isolated hill in the desert of our self-centeredness, but rather the crowning peak of an ever-ascending mountain of praise. Daily praise is the rehearsal that energizes the formal performance of our Sunday worship.

Does the word “performance” offend? It shouldn’t.

The audience for Sunday morning worship is not the congregation, but God. Does the choir (or worship team) rehearse on Wednesday or Thursday to impress the pastor, the deacons, or the membership in the pews? If so, it is wasted time. Does the pastor rehearse his sermon in his study so that

the parishioners will be suitably impressed by his elocution? If so, it is an effort that will ultimately be consumed.

Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man’s work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

1 Corinthians 3:12-15



Over the centuries the metaphor of church worship has become distorted. The narcissism of the corporate body has created a theatre-like setting, in which those on the stage or platform are performing for (that is, attempting to please and impress) the audience in the pews. The soloist sings to produce applause, the choir sings to produce approval and praise, and the preacher crescendos into his three points to produce a rousing chorus of “Amen!”

This is nothing more than hay and straw.

Instead of the cloying, cloistered worship of ourselves, God desires to hear the symphony of disparate voices—voices united by our common love for Him—raised heavenward as a pleasing sacrifice of adoration. In this we *all* join, for that is why we are there. Those on the stage are not there to perform for the crowd, but to *lead* the crowd into more effective worship-performance for the Father. The gold and silver of worship are the thoughts and words that flow upward to Him, unimpeded by our more selfish considerations. Everything worth doing goes up.



These moments of corporate, sometimes orchestrated, praise have their beginning in the quiet solitude of the prayer closet, the intimate familiarity of the dinner table, the extravagant joy of an overflowing heart.

We love Him on Sunday because we are in the *habit* of loving Him every other day of the week.

