

Worshiping in the Spirit

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John 4:23

But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him.

Question

How Necessary is the Holy Spirit to
Christian Worship?

An Ancient Prayer

Almighty God, to You all hearts are open, all desires known, and from You no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Prayer's Content

Asking for one thing: the cleansing of the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

The Necessity of the Spirit...

...To Know the Things of God

Our Ability to Worship

Begins with the Spirit's Reworking of
the Thoughts of Our Hearts.

The Holy Spirit

- Necessary for the Ability to Worship
- Necessary for the Ends of Worship:
To Perfectly Love God and Worthily
Magnify His Name

The Necessity of the Spirit: Often Forgotten?

Fear of the Holy Spirit

A Strong Wind May Not Only Refresh,
It Can Frighten, Too.

Discussion Time

Please gather in your discussion groups. Take a look at the prayer which I will project on the screen. Based on what you see in the prayer, fill in the following sentence: With respect to the Holy Spirit, blessed and wise is the worshiper who _____ . Be ready to report on some answers in 5 minutes.

Answer: With respect to the Holy Spirit, blessed and wise is the worshiper who _____.

Almighty God, to You all hearts are open, all desires known, and from You no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Questions

What are the Marks of the Spirit's Presence and Activity in Worship?

Commonly Assumed Marks

- Spontaneity
- Zeal
- Passion
- Intensity
- Power
- Certain Gifts of the Spirit
- Some Sense of the Anointing

The Limits of Spontaneity

- It doesn't fit the Spirit's inspiration of the Bible.
- Example: Psalm 119, a Carefully Crafted Acrostic from the 22 Letters of the Hebrew Alphabet

Classic, Scriptural Marks of the Spirit in Worship

- The First Mark: Love of God and Love for Each Other
- Love is First in the Fruit of the Spirit.
- Love Dominates I Corinthians 13, Which is a Chapter About Fighting Over Worship.

Cultivating Love in the Worship Assembly

- What Are You Doing to Allow the Spirit to Cultivate Love in your Worshiping Fellowship?
- A Loving Worshiping Fellowship=“A Little Heaven Below”

Classic, Scriptural Marks of the Spirit in Worship

- The Second Mark: The Spirit Grants and Empowers Gifts Across the Whole Church For the Whole Church
- As the Persons in the Godhead Consider Each Other So We Ought to Consider Others First, Too.

Why Do We Lead Worship?

- For Our Own Sake?
- Or For the Sake of Others?

Classic, Scriptural Marks of the Spirit in Worship

- The Third Mark: Fullness of Witness to the Gospel in the Content of Our Worship
- A Harmony Between the Content of Worship and the Content of Scriptures, Which the Spirit Has Inspired.
- Beyond Avoiding Error to Fullness of Witness

The Spirit Inspires Worship That Tells God's Story

- The Story of God's Decisive Activity From Creation Forward, With Emphasis upon God through Christ
- Examples of Biblical Worship Material Emphasizing God's Activity
 - Zechariah's Prophecy (Luke 1:67-79)
 - The Day of Pentecost: The Megaleia (mighty deeds) of God (Acts 2:11)
 - The Disciples' Prayer (Acts 4:24-30)

Jesus Gives Us the Ability to Interpret Scriptures by the Spirit

Luke 24:44-49

Why Hymns and Prayers Telling God's Story Important

Some Acts of Worship Should Remember God's Activity

- Hymns are Not Automatically Better or Preferable Over Choruses
- But the Structure of Hymns Allow Them to be Story-Telling Songs

We Need

- Story-Telling Songs AND
- Response Songs

Example: Placing A Response Song Within a Biblical Story

- Open the eyes of my heart, Lord / Open the eyes of my heart / I want to see you / I want to see you / to see you high and lifted up / shining in the light of your glory/ pour out your power and love / as we sing holy, holy, holy.



Discussion Time

Please return to your discussion groups. Think of your favorite worship song. Now imagine which character in the Bible could have sung this song. Share in your groups. In five minutes be willing to describe briefly one example coming from your group.

Do Not Be Fooled By Lots of Words

Verse 1: O happy day that fixed my choice
On Thee, my Savior and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

Chorus:

Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away!
He taught me how to watch and pray,
And live rejoicing ev'ry day;
Happy day, happy day,
When Jesus washed my sins away.

If Your Church Doesn't Sing Hymns

- Use Opportunities in the Rest of the Service to Speak of God's Decisive Activity:
 - Prayer
 - Exhortation
 - Calls to Worship
 - Readings
 - Other Acts of Worship

Reasonable Goals

- Not Every Act of Worship Needs to Tell the Whole Biblical Story.
- Some Acts in Every Service Should Contribute to a Sense That There is Such a Story.
- Every Service Does Not Need to Tell Every Aspect of the Whole Biblical Story.
- Over a Period of Time, a Congregation's Worship Should Give a Sense of the Fullness of God's Activity From Creation Onward to the Return of Christ.

WWPP Revisited

- What Would Paul, as a Worship Leader Filled with the Holy Spirit, Plan with Respect to the Content of Worship Services?
- Why Should Our Worship Be Any Different?

Classic, Scriptural Marks of the Spirit in Worship

Having Perspective and Discernment
Beyond Our Own Abilities

Discernment by the Spirit

- Being Able to Tell Who Jesus Really Was

Discernment by the Spirit

- Being Able to Tell Who Jesus Really Was
- Being Able to Tell Who the Worshiping Church Really Is
- Being Able to Tell What Baptism and the Lord's Supper Really Are

Discernment Kept Me Going

A Story: Why Should I Even Continue My Sermon?

If You Are At a Crossroads

Let Us Ask for the Spirit:

Almighty God, to You all hearts are open, all desires known, and from You no secrets are hid: Cleanse the thoughts of our hearts by the inspiration of Your Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy Name; through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Resources for Worshiping in the Spirit

Notes: Powerpoints and handouts are available at
sites.duke.edu/lruth



Question and Answer Time