

THE HEART OF WORSHIP



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History has revealed that every fresh moving of God's Spirit in the Church has its own sound. With the ministry of the Word comes also the ministry of worship. A great example is that of the Wesley brothers during the "Great Awakening" of the 1730s and 1740s. With John Wesley's great ministry of the Word, Charles Wesley wrote over 6,500 hymns expressing the wonder of who God is and what Jesus has done for us. Songs like (2 of 6 verses) ...

*"O for a thousand tongues to sing
My great Redeemer's praise,
The glories of my God and King,
The triumphs of His grace.....*

*He breaks the power of cancelled sin,
He sets the prisoner free;
His blood can make the foulest clean;
His blood availed for me".....*

Among the many times the Lord has moved in the Church through history, another example was during the wonderful ministry of the Holy Spirit in the 1970s and 1980s, which became known as "The Charismatic Renewal". The presence of the Lord was so real and true worship was gloriously expressed. New songs of the Spirit constantly were expressed in the gatherings together.

Music is the Expression of the Heart

Praise and worship to the Lord comes from the depth of our love and thankfulness to Him. Two scriptures reveal there are three expressions of true praise and worship...

*"Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom;
teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns
and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the
Lord" Colossians 3:16 (KJV).*



“...be filled with the Spirit; speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things unto God and the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” Ephesians 5:18-19 (KJV).

It is important to notice the introduction to each of these verses. Colossians emphasises the importance of the *WORD* as the foundation of worship, and Ephesians emphasises that true worship comes from being *FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT*. The Word of God and the Spirit of God are the two vital ingredients to bring true praise and worship to the Lord - our hearts filled with the truth of God’s Word and inspired and led by the Holy Spirit.

Three Expressions of Worship

Both these scriptures in Colossians and Ephesians also speak of three expressions of praise and worship that come from the Holy Spirit’s leading.

PSALMS

The book of Psalms in the Scriptures indicates a special expression of worship. Each Psalm comes from the very heart of the psalmist. They are prayers with music. Some express a call to the Lord because of a need at a particular time, ending with a declaration of who the Lord is in the midst of their situation. David is the perfect example...

“Hear my cry, O God; attend unto my prayer. From the end of the earth will I cry unto thee, when my heart is overwhelmed: lead me to the rock that is higher than I” Psalm 61:2 (KJV).

Other psalms express how He is involved in their experience in life, His Presence making all the difference for them. Psalm 23 is a great example...

“The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest

a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever" Psalm 23:1-6 (KJV)

As we worship the Lord in this our day, we can bring a psalm to Him, expressing from our heart what we are experiencing and how He is our hope and deliverer.

HYMNS

Hymns are the declaration of Who God is and what He has done for us. They are based on the truth in the Word of God. Again, Charles Wesley's hymns are a great example (2 of 5 verses)...

*“ And can it be that I should gain
An int'rest in the Savior's blood?
Died He for me, who caused His pain?
For me, who Him to death pursued?
Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, should die for me?
Refrain: Amazing love! how can it be
That Thou, my God, should die for me!
He left His Father's throne above,
So free, so infinite His grace;
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam's helpless race;
'Tis mercy all, immense and free;
For, O my God, it found out me.*

SPIRITUAL SONGS

Spiritual Songs are spontaneous songs in response to the Holy Spirit's revelation of the Word to our hearts. This was what was experienced during the move of the Holy Spirit in the 1970-80s when the Lord was restoring spiritual songs to the Church. Worship in song came spontaneously in meetings. It was as Psalm 149:1 describes...

“Praise the Lord! Sing a new song to the Lord, and His praise in the congregation of the godly ones” (NASB).

In the midst of the gathering, someone would break into singing a scripture. It was greatly anointed and everyone would begin to join in. The scripture songs went all over the world. Psalm 30:11-12 is an example...

*“Thou hast turned my mourning into dancing for me:
Thou hast put off my sackcloth
Thou hast turned my mourning into dancing for me
and girded me with gladness;
To the end my glory may sing praise unto thee,
and not be silent.
O Lord my God, I will give thanks unto thee for ever.”*

Responding in Worship

True praise and worship cannot be stirred up, or commanded by a leader from a platform. It is an automatic response to a revelation of the Lord - the Spirit revealing to us the wonder of His glory, His love, and all He has done for us (Eph.1:15-23). As we follow the leading of the Holy Spirit it can be expressed in psalms, hymns, or spiritual songs.

*“Praise the Lord.
Praise God in his sanctuary;
praise him in his mighty heavens.
Praise him for his acts of power;
praise him for his surpassing greatness.
Praise him with the sounding of the trumpet,
praise him with the harp and lyre,
praise him with timbrel and dancing,
praise him with the strings and pipe,
praise him with the clash of cymbals,
praise him with resounding cymbals.
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.
Praise the Lord” Psalm 150.*

“Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness” Psalm 29:2 (KJV).