

Celebration

Today is the next part of the Discipleship Way course and we are focussing on Celebration!

To 'celebrate' means to assemble to honour or to praise publicly

This is what we are doing when we worship God.

What is worship? Often worship can be thought of as synonymous to singing, singing praise and worship songs.

But Worship is much greater than this:

We are encouraged to give ourselves as a living sacrifice in [Romans 12:1](#)

Romans 12:1 NIV ¹ Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.

In the English language the word worship stems from worth ship - giving someone or something their worth.

So to worship we first need to encounter something or someone who has great value and worth. The truth is all of us have an innate desire to worship something or someone, there is a God sized hole that we may try to fill but nothing ever truly satisfies.

For many this may be a person they idolise, or a football team, or maybe money wealth, possessions.

But we all know these things fail, don't live up to our expectations and let us down -

The only one who will never let us down and is unchangeable is God Himself! The problem is we often can try to bring God down to our level as we want to stay in control.

“Left to ourselves we **tend immediately** to reduce God to manageable terms. We want to get Him where we can use Him, or at least know where He is when we need Him. We want a God we can in some measure control.” AW Tozer

The problem is our worship of God reflects our view of God

“Worship thrives on wonder... For worship to be worship, it must contain something of the otherness of God.” Matt Redman

In the Hebrew of the OT the word for worship means to bow down, to be weighed down or cause to bow

There is a sense here of not just a voluntary response and acknowledgement of who God is but also an involuntary response, being weighed down, cause to bow.

As a person experience a revelation of who God is, His awesome presence, there is an involuntary response of bowing, to recognising who we are before an amazing God.

2 Chronicles 7:1-3 NIV ¹ When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the LORD filled the temple. ² The priests could not enter the temple of the LORD because the glory of the LORD filled it. ³ When all the Israelites saw the fire coming down and the glory of the LORD above the temple, they knelt on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and they worshiped and gave thanks to the LORD, saying, “He is good; his love endures forever.”

It is as we encounter God and His glory is revealed that our response is worship.

The glory of the Lord is everything that makes God, God. All His characteristics, authority, power, wisdom - literally the immeasurable weight and magnitude of God - are contained within God's glory. Nothing is hidden or held back. John Bevere

The word glory in the Hebrew is Kabod, it can be translated as: heaviness, burden, riches, reputation, importance, glory, splendour, distinction, abundance, honour.

To give God glory in worship, is to recognise who He actually is!

It is to give thanks and praise to Him because of who He is - perfect in love, perfect in mercy, perfect in His wisdom, perfect in His guidance, we also give Him thanks and praise because of what He does - He is perfect in all He says, He is perfect in all He does, He is perfect in all His ways. AMEN

In the NT the word used for worship is προσκυνέω it is from this word we get prostrate as in to bow the knee, it can also mean to kiss, to serve, to show reverence towards, to offer ourselves,

We are told in the Bible that Jesus is God and radiates God's glory

Hebrews 1:3 NIV³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven.

When John encountered the risen and glorified Jesus his response was to fall down on his face:

Revelation 1:17-18 NIV¹⁷ When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last.

We are told in Philipians

Philippians 2:10-11 NIV¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

It is also through God the Holy Spirit that we bring our worship

John 4:24 NIV²⁴ God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

So we are to worship God Father Son and Spirit.

Worship starts with an encounter with the living God. As we encounter who He is, with nothing between us and Him, no pretence from our side, no barrier or veil from His side because Jesus made a clear way possible through paying the price for our sins on the cross, we ourselves have a greater experience of who He is, His perfection, His love for us, His desire to share life with us, we ourselves are changed.

2 Corinthians 3:18 NIV¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

So as we respond to encountering Jesus in worship we ourselves are changed.

In the Bible there are multiple accounts of people encountering the living God. This leads to a better understanding of who God really is and the response to this is worship.

As they worship they lift their eyes to God, they declare the truth of who He is, His glory, both in declarations in songs but also in their actions. This then changes both them as people, but also the situations they are facing as it brings God into the situations. AMEN

2 Chronicles 20:21-22 NIV²¹ After consulting the people, Jehoshaphat appointed men to sing to the LORD and to praise him for the splendor of his holiness as they went out at the head of the army, saying: "Give thanks to the LORD, for his love endures forever."²² As they began to sing and praise, the LORD set ambushes against the men of Ammon and Moab and Mount Seir who were invading Judah, and they were defeated.

In [Acts 16](#) we can read of how Paul and Silas, followers of Jesus were imprisoned and from their prison cell whilst facing possible death having met Jesus, and knowing who He is chose to face their difficulties with worship.

Acts 16:25 TPT²⁵ Paul and Silas, undaunted, prayed in the middle of the night and sang songs of praise to God, while all the other prisoners listened to their worship.

The result was God responding supernaturally bringing not only their freedom but also the prison guard and his whole family into a relationship with Jesus.

Ending

I want to ask the question today - have you truly encountered the awesomeness of the living God or have you tried to stay in control with your image of God?

Has your response been worship?

When you face life's challenges are you facing these with worship, are you battling with declaring the goodness and might of God?

If we want to see breakthrough and transformation both in our own lives and in the lives of others we start from the place of worship AMEN