

Tim Miller - Gateway Fellowship - Feb 7, 2016

Intro Jokes

#1: An angry drill sergeant was giving a new recruit grief. “Johnson! I didn’t see you in camouflage training yesterday! Account for your actions! He *answered*, “I’m gettin’ pretty good, Sarge.”

#2: Two cannibals are eating a clown and one turns to the other and asks, “Does this taste funny to you?”

The ground might shake

“..true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.” (John 4:23)

True worshipers

God is seeking true worshipers, not just true worship. A certain kind of people, not just a certain kind of activity periodically. True Worshipers. True worshipers aren’t formed in 30 minutes on a Sunday morning through the skill and anointing of worship leaders. I’m not diminishing the holy privilege and high calling of that task, but “worship” is more than a time of songs and prayer. *Worship is a life lived.*

We make the worship team’s job way too hard. I’ve been one, and I’ve talked to folk who do it well. They feel like their job is to bring the people from the distraction and chaos and emotion and lack of Divine awareness they brought into the room...from that into focus, remembrance, clarity, and presence, and intimacy with God. And that’s admirable! But we make their job way too hard! The Father isn’t seeking worshipers who worship because the mood in the room is right and the team is lighting it up. In fact, *spirit and truth have literally zero to do with mood in the room.* The worship team could miss a few notes, botch a few words, knock their guitars out of tune, leave awkward silences in between songs while turning pages: but, with spirit and truth worshipers, none of it would diminish our worship, because our worship *wasn’t caused by* any of those things in the first place. Excellence in those Sunday

morning details *adorns* our worship. They *beautify* our worship. *But if they are what cause us to worship, then I think it's safe to say that we aren't the kind of worshipers the Father is seeking.*

So, no. The kind of worship God is seeking is not primarily cultivated by the worship team in a half hour on Sunday morning, **true worship is primarily cultivated by -- each of us -- in secret -- all week long.** This is similar to prayer, where our goal is not so much to develop a prayer life, as it is to live a life of prayer. A praying life.

Ideally, when we come to this gathering in order to give ourselves to the Lord, it is after doing so all week long, and ideally, we are already in the Spirit. If we gathered, already stirred up and strong in faith, hearts ablaze with tender love for Jesus, consciences clean in the sight of God, I think God would smile from ear to ear. I think it would be like an irresistible rain dance to heaven. ***The ground might shake.***

With all my heart

Consider **Psalm 9:1** for a moment:

“I will praise you, Lord, with all my heart.”

Simple, right? Basic! “ALL my heart.” Have you ever done that? Don't answer too quickly. Have you EVER done that? **Imagine yourself in that posture.** Every part of you is aligned in adoration toward the King, and the full intensity of your sincerity, your focus, and your passion is directed at HIM. Glorifying IN God. *Exulting* in him. There's a word to study out.

To “exalt” is to *lift something up* as valuable. But to “exult” is to *revel in your ecstatic delight in* something. Exulting is what the people do on The Price Is Right when they win a new car. Seriously. People freak out. They scream. Jump up and down. Hug strangers. Laugh. And they feel intense joy. They don't explain to others how great the car is, they exult in it.

Here's a question, *when's the last time you exulted in the Lord like you won a new car on the Price is Right?* I wonder if we understand what we've been given.

Worship that moves God

If we aren't moved much, I wonder if our worship moves God much. But if we gathered with this kind of voracious sincerity...***The ground might shake.***

Again, not just worship. Worshipers. A life lived, not just good church services.

“I have come to do your will, O God. Sacrifices and offerings you did not desire, but a body you have prepared for me.” (Psalm 40:6)

I think the Holy Spirit would find just a handful of folk like that irresistible. I remember **Dr. James Maloney talking about one night back in the 60's with a few hippy Jesus freaks.** After a sweet time of praying and singing, the Lord said that he was pleased with their worship and that in response he was going to send a wave of renewal across the nation. That group went out and for the next 40 or so years fulfilled that promise like it was a mandate. Many ended up as pastors and leaders in some of the most evangelistically active and missiologically innovative churches of their generation. **The spark that lit that forest on fire was worship that moved God's heart. He believed it. And He blessed it.**

At this point somebody might be thinking, “*Sounds like Tim wants to manipulate the machinery of the spirit realm to get results.*” No. That's not what I'm talking about. I'm talking about substance. Not style. Not sound. Not skill. Not even results. **I'm talking about giving God what he's after. Our very selves.**

Duty Worship vs. Delight Worship

David worshiped out of delight, not duty. God's beauty *moved him*. He was chasing the pleasures of God. And David's delight in God *moved God* so much that God couldn't resist it. He just had to bless it. Jesus is called the “Son of David” because David's worship moved God.

Delight worship wants to get near to God. Duty worship...not so much. **You pay your taxes to keep the government off your back.** Some go to church to keep God off their back. *Church attendance, then, can be a strategy to avoid God.* **But imagine a church where every single person came out of delight.** Not one person came in

order to placate their spouse, or friend, or even God. Imagine a church where everyone came simply longing to draw near to God. I'm going to venture a theory here. It might not surprise you at this point: ***The ground might shake, because delight worship delights God. Our being moved by God, moves God.***

The goal of worship

We aren't worshipping in order to get good feelings. Good feelings are a **byproduct** of genuine worship but they are **not the goal** of genuine worship. Our goal is to offer ourselves to God in reverent thanks for his gift of Jesus. Through Jesus we have been made ONE with God, and now nothing can ever separate us from His love. !!! So worship is deeply personal. Worship is love responding to love. Worship is deeply passionate. Worship is desire responding to desire. This Gospel invites us into a romance of the highest order; higher and more intense than the love between a man and a woman.

“For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.” This is a profound mystery—but I am talking about Christ and the church.
(Ephesians 5:31-32)

This is so many miles from the dry and formal ritual many people think of when they think of God and church and Sunday morning worship.

So, picture this with me...

The team hasn't struck a chord yet. They haven't done anything. They simply walked onto the stage and stood there, readying themselves to begin. And as they step forward to the microphones, before they even make a sound, something begins to happen. Over here I hear someone quietly whisper, “Jesus, You're amazing.” Over here hands are raised and a simple melody begins to rise. Over here there are closed eyes and a tender ache in the presence of Kingslove. Awe. Reverence. Gratefulness being held like a gift.

By simply stepping forward the team shot the starting gun for the eager horses. The church didn't need to be persuaded to worship. All they needed was permission. Permission to vent the passion, longing, and love they've been stewarding day after

day, discipline stoking the fires of desire. And now the room is pregnant with faith, hope, and love, and **the team isn't the reason; the preacher isn't the reason; the momentum of organized church life isn't the reason: the Gospel is the reason.**

Boy, I tell you what, that time of **singing** is gonna be heavenly. That time of **prayer** is going to be powerful and effective. That **sermon** time is going to be edifying. Some **sick** folk may get healed. Some folk who came **needing** mercy and grace are going to get it. I bet you that **somebody who came** at the invitation of a friend is going to go away marked by truth in a way that mere words could never accomplish, and in a way that skilled instrumentation could never accomplish.

Against the grain of circumstance

If our worship rises and falls based on how the church service went, we're sunk in real life. Real life isn't going to go like that. **Paul and Silas' were publicly stripped, tied to a pole, whipped** till their backs were bleeding, and thrown in a cold filthy jail cell with the worst of the worst. That's when they raised their voices in praise to God. They worshiped against the grain of the atmosphere in the room, but with the grain of God's presence and worth and goodness...**and, literally the ground shook.** The prison doors opened. And the jailor freaked. But not one prisoner ran out the open doors. Why? You tell me what kept those prisoners right there? The atmosphere shifted. Paul and Silas acted truth-first, not feelings-first, and it brought the kingdom to others. They gave a sacrifice for the fire to fall upon.

Contrast that with some of us who claim we have a hard time worshipping for all kinds of silly reasons. The lights were on. The lights were off. It was too loud. It wasn't loud enough. There were too many old songs. There were too many new songs. There weren't enough songs. There were way too many songs. There was no drummer. The drummer was too loud. There weren't enough hymns. They sang hymns but ruined them by adding a chorus. They told me to stand like I'm a mindless robot. They let people to sit down and that's just irreverent! So and so in front of me being off pitch and noisy and they were distracting. Everybody around me was too quiet so I was self-conscious...

What's really going on here? It's time to hear the voice of the Lord, *"What's that to you, you worship me."* He's worth my whole heart. And His worth has nothing to do with what's going on around me.

David leapt and danced like a drunken crazy person in public all the way to the temple as they transported the ark of the covenant to its resting place. His wife was so annoyed at his embarrassing display that she rebuked him over it. “You are acting like a fool, not a king!” And for that she was barren the rest of her days. But David said, “It was FOR THE LORD, BEFORE THE LORD that I was dancing. And I’ll become even more undignified than this and will be humiliated in MY OWN EYES! But in the eyes of these servant gals whose opinions you are so concerned about? I’ll be held in honor.” And he was. And is.

But back to us. This all comes down to each of us and what we choose. No matter where we are we can always throw our hearts with sincerity before Jesus in surrender and trust and worship. From every stage of the journey. From every emotional state. From every age bracket. From every stage of life. We can choose to worship with all our heart, and receive the full-hearted affection He yearns to pour out on us. He is so available. As my friend Anthony says, “He wants us real bad.”

Don't hold back; He's so worthy.

The ground just might shake. But more importantly, God would be pleased.