

## Worship Part 3 – Welcoming God’s Glory

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We are in the midst of what we are calling “The Summer of Worship” here at The Bridge.

We have elected to place special emphasis on the subject of worship over the summer because I have found that unless we are reminded of *why* we do what we do – then *what* we do fails to hold true significance in our lives.

We can find ourselves going through the motions of something without being truly impacted by what we are doing.

This can be especially true in the area of worship because worship is a rather mystical, even a mysterious thing.

Even though we know worship is important – for instance, the single largest book in the Bible is Psalms, which is a collection of 150 songs or writings in praise of God - it is not readily apparent why worship is so featured so prominently in Scripture.

We know that God is worthy of our praise – but few of us can articulate the benefits that accrue to us, the worshipper, or what actually takes place when we take the time to extol and magnify God.

That is what I am going to attempt to do today.

This is a pretty tall order, so I want to ask you join me in praying for God’s help as we delve into this important topic.

Let’s pray.

I mentioned a few weeks ago when we kicked-off this series that I was first introduced to worship when I walked into FGBMFI meeting on the campus of U.C. in January of 1976.

I had just turned twenty years old and had not been in church since I was a kid.

About 400 people had gathered in a banquet hall to eat dinner and hear a Southern Baptist pastor by the name of Howard Conatser talk about his experience in the Holy Spirit.

Before the speaker was introduced, we were led in a time of worship to God.

For the first time in my life I witnessed people truly engaged in worshipping God.

Some were lifting their hands, some were singing with their eyes closed – all apparently in deep communion with God.

There was nothing excessively boisterous about this time of worship, but for the first time I was witnessing people expressing true, heartfelt praise to God.

In this atmosphere of worship there was a tangible sense of God's presence.

At this time I did not know the Scripture that says:

***“God inhabits (literally: is enthroned upon) the praises of Israel.” – Psalm 22:3***

But that is what was happening.

As we exalted God in worship and praise, His presence seemed to settle upon us.

I have since learned that one need not “feel” the presence of God to know that He is present.

Jesus said, ***“Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in the midst of them.”***

– Matthew 18:20

God is omnipresent – so there is nowhere we can go where His presence is not.

But while God is everywhere – His presence is not everywhere manifest, or made known.

As Paul Billheimer writes in his classic little book, *Destined for the Throne*:

*“Although God is omnipresent, He is not everywhere present in benign influence. Where there is joyful praise, there He is dynamically and benevolently active.”* – Paul Billheimer (*Destined for the Throne*)

That describes what I experienced on that Friday night at the FGBMFI meeting.

It was this tangible sense of God’s presence that started me on the road to surrendering my life to Christ – which I did a few months later.

Eighteen months later I found myself enrolled in Bible College at CFNI in Dallas.

There I was exposed to worship on a whole different level.

There is something special about 1200, enthusiastic, mostly young and recently converted followers of Christ coming together to worship the One who had brought them out of darkness, delivered many from drug addiction, immorality, and every kind of bondage.

I was in the balcony when the song service began on that very first Sunday afternoon service at CFNI.

From the moment the first note was struck the whole first floor erupted with exuberant praise.

Some 700-800 young people were on their feet clapping, singing, some were even dancing in the aisles.

It was incredible.

It didn't take me long to move from the balcony down onto the main floor and jump right in the middle of this mob of exuberant worshippers.

I was soon to discover that this exuberant praise and worship was not limited to the Sunday afternoon service.

The same kind of worship service would be repeated every morning at our 8:30 chapel service, as well as in the Tuesday evening service.

Worship became for me a daily experience.

Although I enjoyed starting every day worshipping God, I still didn't truly understand the significance of what was taking place when we worshipped.

All I knew is that God was worthy of all the praise, glory and honor I could give Him – and that something good happened inside of me when I worshipped Him.

Some time within that first year of Bible College we had as a guest lecturer, **Pastor Jack Hayford**.

In one of his teaching sessions Pastor Jack, as he was called, told of an experience that he had in the church he served in

California that would give me a greater understanding of what happens when we worship.

**p. 13ff from *Glory On Your House*, by Jack Hayford.**

There are references to the “glory” of God throughout the Bible, in both the Old and New Testaments.

What is meant by the *“glory of God?”*

The word for **“glory”** in the Old Testament is the Hebrew word *kabowd*.

The word kabowd is variously translated:

glory  
honor  
splendor  
riches  
reputation  
weight or weightiness

These words speak of the out-raying splendor and greatness of God’s manifest presence.

It could be said that the glory of God is the revealing of God’s power and greatness.

But it is the last of these descriptive words, **weight**, or **weightiness** that let’s us know that the glory of God is not something flimsy or ethereal, not just something pretty to look at but is actually something very real and substantive.

Some Bible scholars have postulated that the splendor of God’s presence was essentially what clothed Adam and Eve before the Fall; that they were shrouded in the glory of God.

It was not until sin entered the human race that Adam and Eve became aware of their nakedness, perhaps as a result of having lost the glory of God.

If this is so, it can be said that we were created to live in God's manifest presence, much like a fish was created to live in water and a bird was created for the sky.

But sadly, the absence of God's glory characterizes fallen man.

We seem to know instinctively that something is missing in our life.

We do all kinds of things to add weight, or substance or significance to our life.

Some do this through the achievement of success and the building of a great reputation.

Some seek to add weight to their life through the accumulation of wealth, or material things.

There is nothing wrong with working hard and enjoying the fruits of your labor.

But money or material things, or fame for fame's sake make poor substitutes for the satisfying weight of God's presence in one's life.

Many resort to illicit drugs, or the abuse of alcohol in search of a sense of satisfaction in their life.

But none of these things suffice.

We were created to live in and be satisfied by the weight, the splendor, the glory of God's presence.

The Bible records not only the loss of God's glory, but the restoration of His glory to His people, as well.

We'll look at two such examples today.

These have to do with the dedication of **the tabernacle** in the wilderness and the dedication of **the temple**.



After God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt and before he brought them into the Promised Land, He instructed Moses to construct a tabernacle, which was a tent, a sort of portable church.

God gave Moses all kinds of detailed instructions about the various furnishings that were to be placed in the tabernacle.

There was the **Brazen Altar** for the offering of burnt sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people.

There was **the Ark of the Covenant** inside the Holy of Holies, the innermost part of the tabernacle.

This was a wooden box made of acacia wood and overlaid with gold and with a lid of pure gold.

There were other furnishings, as well, and each was to be made according to very precise instructions God gave to Moses.

Once all the furnishings and all the curtains for the tabernacle were made, the time came for it to all come together.

We read of this in **Exodus 40**.

<sup>1</sup> Then the LORD spoke to Moses, saying: <sup>2</sup> "On the first day of the first month you shall set up the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. <sup>3</sup> You shall put in it the ark of the Testimony, and partition off the ark with the veil.

<sup>4</sup> You shall bring in the table and arrange the things that are to be set in order on it; and you shall bring in the lampstand and light its lamps. <sup>5</sup> You shall also set the altar of gold for the incense before the ark of the Testimony, and put up the screen for the door of the tabernacle.

<sup>6</sup> Then you shall set the altar of the burnt offering before the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting. <sup>7</sup> And you shall set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water in it. <sup>8</sup> You shall set up the court all around, and hang up the screen at the court gate.

<sup>9</sup> "And you shall take the anointing oil, and anoint the tabernacle and all that *is* in it; and you shall hallow it and all its utensils, and it shall be holy. <sup>10</sup> You shall anoint the altar of the burnt offering and all its utensils, and consecrate the altar. The altar shall be most holy.

<sup>11</sup> And you shall anoint the laver and its base, and consecrate it.

<sup>12</sup> "Then you shall bring Aaron and his sons to the door of the tabernacle of meeting and wash them with water. <sup>13</sup> You shall put the holy garments on Aaron, and anoint him and consecrate him, that he may minister to Me as priest. <sup>14</sup> And you shall bring his sons and clothe them with tunics.

<sup>15</sup> You shall anoint them, as you anointed their father, that they may minister to Me as priests; for their anointing shall surely be an everlasting priesthood throughout their generations."

<sup>16</sup> Thus Moses did; according to all that the LORD had commanded him, so he did.

The phrase, "*...as the Lord commanded Moses.*" appears no less than seven times in the rest of the chapter.

<sup>19</sup> And he spread out the tent over the tabernacle and put the covering of the tent on top of it, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

<sup>21</sup> And he brought the ark into the tabernacle, hung up the veil of the covering, and partitioned off the ark of the Testimony, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

<sup>23</sup> and he set the bread in order upon it before the LORD, **as the LORD had commanded Moses**

<sup>25</sup> and he lit the lamps before the LORD, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

<sup>29</sup> And he put the altar of burnt offering *before* the door of the tabernacle of the tent of meeting, and offered

upon it the burnt offering and the grain offering, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

<sup>30</sup> He set the laver between the tabernacle of meeting and the altar, and put water there for washing; <sup>31</sup> and Moses, Aaron, and his sons would wash their hands and their feet *with water* from it. <sup>32</sup> Whenever they went into the tabernacle of meeting, and when they came near the altar, they washed, **as the LORD had commanded Moses.**

Once Moses did everything the Lord commanded him to do, exactly as the Lord had commanded him to do it, something very dramatic happened.

<sup>34</sup> Then the cloud covered the tabernacle of meeting, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle. <sup>35</sup> And Moses was not able to enter the tabernacle of meeting, because the cloud rested above it, and the glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.

After Moses did all that the Lord commanded him to do; and the instructions was almost wearying in their detail, then God's glory came down and filled the tabernacle to the point Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting.

This is a picture of how God wants us to live our lives.

He wants us to live lives of complete submission and obedience to Him.

This, in itself is worship.

In the Old Testament the word that used more than any other for *worship* is the Hebrew word **shachah**.

It occurs **172** times in the 39 books of the OT.

At its root ***shachah*** means:

**to bow down, make obeisance, to fall down or to prostrate oneself**

While worship may not always necessitate the physical bowing, or the prostrating of oneself before God, it most certainly involves the bowing of one's heart in submission to God.

I think it goes without saying that had Moses been indifferent to God's instruction with regard to how the tabernacle was to be constructed and all the furnishings were arranged that there would have been no cloud of glory, no presence of the Lord in the camp of the Israelites.

### **What did God's presence mean to the children of Israel?**

In a word: everything!

- **God's presence meant guidance**

When God wanted the people to move out – the cloud of His glory would simply lift from above the tabernacle.

Wherever God's presence went – that's where the Israelites would go.

When the cloud of God's glory would stop they would stop.

When the cloud descended and rested upon the tabernacle, then the Israelites would stop and set up camp.

They might be there a day, they might be there a week or a month or a year.

Whatever the case, they had the good sense to go when God went and to stop when God stopped.

God's presence meant guidance.

- **God's presence meant provision**

For the forty years the Israelites were in the Wilderness God made provision for them by raining down manna from heaven every morning and every evening.

All they had to do was go outside and gather breakfast and supper every day.

This was because God was in their midst.

God's presence meant provision.

- **God's presence meant protection**

When the Israelites were attacked by other nations, God would go with them into to battle, thus, insuring victory.

How many of you want to have God on your side in the battles of life?

We would be crazy not to!

The tabernacle in the wilderness is a picture of God desire to be with His people.

God has always wanted to be with His people.

We were created to know and be known by Him.

We were created to love and be loved by Him.

Sin messed things up – but God set about to restore His presence to His creation.

The tabernacle portrays part of that process.

- **God's presence provided covering for sin**

The tabernacle services provided covering for sin by the offering of a lamb, or a goat as a sin offering.

But a person had to follow explicit instructions in what and how to offer a sacrifice for sin.

There were clean and unclean animals and only a clean animal could be offered to God.

You dare not show up with a pig or a donkey.

It had to be a bull, or a lamb, or a goat, or some other clean animal.

And the animal had to be prepared just so in order for it to be accepted by God.

This attention to all of the detailed instruction for the offering of a sacrifice, just as Moses obedience to God's instruction for how the tabernacle was to be constructed, demonstrated a heart of submission and obedience to God.

This is received as worship to God.

Worship is not just the songs we sing.

Worship is the life we live before God.

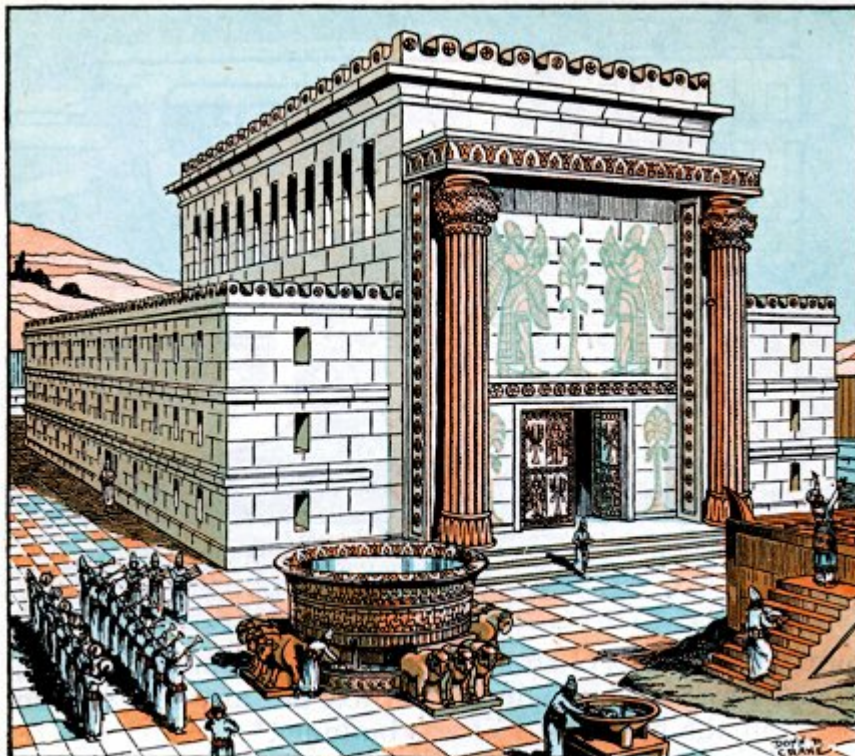
As **Romans 12:1-2** says in **the New Living Translation**:

<sup>1</sup> And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him.

<sup>2</sup> Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect. – Romans 12:1-2 TNLT

**Right worship, which involves the bowing of one's life in submission to God, invites the glory and presence of God into your life in a very real and tangible way.**

The other place where we see God manifesting His glory in a similar fashion is at the **dedication of Solomon's temple**.



Once God had given Israel possession of the Promised Land He instructed David to prepare to build for Him a permanent place in which to place His presence.

David was not to build the temple, but Solomon, his son, would do that.

In **2 Chronicles 5** we see the dedication of the temple.

<sup>7</sup> Then the priests brought in the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place, into the inner sanctuary of the temple, to the Most Holy *Place*, under the wings of the cherubim.

<sup>11</sup> And it came to pass when the priests came out of the *Most Holy Place* (for all the priests who *were* present had sanctified themselves... <sup>12</sup> and the Levites *who were* the singers... stood at the east end of the altar, clothed in white linen, having cymbals, stringed instruments and harps, and with them one hundred and twenty priests sounding with trumpets—

<sup>13</sup> indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers *were* as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the LORD, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the LORD, *saying:*

*"For He is good,  
For His mercy endures forever,"*

that the house, the house of the LORD, was filled with a cloud, <sup>14</sup> so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the LORD filled the house of God.

In the construction and dedication of the tabernacle it was the obedience of Moses and the children of Israel that paved the way for the glory of God to fill the tabernacle.

**Here, at the dedication of the temple, it would appear that it was the unified praise and worship that welcomed the presence of God.**

**See verses 13-14.**

And so it is with us.

When we offer to God our bodies as living sacrifices, holy and acceptable to Him, we are worshipping Him and when we worship Him we welcome His manifest presence, His very glory into our lives, into our homes, into our church.

When we add to that the lifting of our voices in praise to Him we welcome His glory and presence into our lives, as well.

What did the glory of God mean to Solomon and the children of Israel in their day?

- **God's presence meant wealth beyond belief**

"Bo, are you telling me that if I worship God with my life and with my lips that God is going to make me rich?"

My answer to that is, "yes."

Perhaps not rich in money, necessarily, but rich in what truly counts.

If you offer your life and your praise to God and you live with Him at the center of your life – just as Israel kept the tabernacle at the center of their camp – God will bless you with an abundance of peace, joy, contentment and yes, He

even promises to meet all your needs according to His riches in "glory" by Christ Jesus (Philippians 4:19).

The key to an abundant life is to live a God-centered and a Christ-glorifying life in the way you live and in the words you speak in praise to God.

As a result of the glory of God in Israel, the people of God experienced:

- **God's presence meant great peace**

The name Solomon means "peace" and in Solomon's life Israel lived in great peace.

The life that is centered on worshipping God is a life lived in peace.

*You will keep *him* in perfect peace,  
Whose mind is stayed on You,  
Because he trusts in You.*  
- Isaiah 26:3

**Illus. When I was a student at Bible College we were permitted to pay our tuition, room and board by the month.**

**I was working to put myself through school but there were times when I was running short for the next month's school bill and I would worry about being able to stay in school.**

I would go to chapel, not feeling much like worshipping God.

It's hard to worship when you are full of fear and anxiety, but I would "stay my mind on God" and worship Him, because whether I had the money to pay my school bill, or not, God was still God and worthy of my praise.

You know what would happen?

I would leave chapel with my faith strong and my spirit soaring.

I didn't know how, but I knew God was going to take care of me.

And He did.

Worship keeps you in perfect peace.

There's one more benefit I want to mention that accrues to us when we worship God.

- **God's presence means transformation**

For this we must move to the New Testament.

John chapter one and verse fourteen, speaking of Jesus says:

*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. – John 1:14*

Jesus is the perfect presentation of the beauty, the splendor and the glory of God.

Once we come to faith in Jesus and He comes to dwell in us – we see Him by the Spirit.

It is not a physical, visible revelation of Jesus, but an inward revelation.

The more we see Him, the more we are transformed by Him.

Paul speaks of this in 2 Corinthians chapter 3.

<sup>17</sup> Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord *is*, there *is* liberty. <sup>18</sup> But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord. – 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

God is not just about forgiving us of our sins; He is about transforming us into the image of His Son.

When we come to Jesus we are generally pretty messed up.

Is this not true?

When we trust Christ as Savior He saves us, He forgives us, He makes us His son or His daughter, but we're often still pretty messed up.

Two things that God uses to change us are His Word and His Spirit.

We renew our minds in His Word and we embrace His Spirit in worship.

Worship invites the presence and the glory of God into our lives and by the revealing of His glory we are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

**Illus. I had an instructor at Bible College by the name of Carroll Thompson who started getting a steady stream of students to his office seeking counsel.**

He discovered that although these kids had had profound experiences with God and had come to know Him as Savior and Lord, many of them were extremely broken, either from

abuse they had suffered, or from the sinful lives they had lived.

God began showing Brother Thompson how to help these students release their hurts through forgiveness and began seeing tremendous freedom coming to these troubled students.

But when one girl came to him and began telling him of the life of abuse she had suffered, Brother Thompson wondered if there was hope for this girl.

He said to God; *"Lord, I've seen you do a lot of amazing things in the lives of so many, but I have never seen anything like what this poor girl has experienced."*

*"Can you heal even her?"*

The Lord spoke to him saying; *"If you will teach her to worship me, I can heal anyone who learns to worship."*

And so, in addition to helping this young lady release through forgiveness the people who had so hurt her, Brother Thompson also taught her to worship the Lord – and God did a wonderful, even a miraculous work of healing in her life.

He can do that for you.

He can do that for anyone who learns to worship Him.

God wants us to be a people of His presence.

He wants us to build a throne for His glory – right where we live.

He wants us to worship Him, not just because He is worthy of all praise, glory and honor, but for the things it will do in and for us.

