

The Importance of Worship

By BL Jenkins

One summer, while I was in Spain with some friends, we stumbled upon a fireworks show. Although the fireworks were small and unimpressive at first, they became awesome and magnificent as the show progressed. In response to one particularly amazing explosion, we instinctively proclaimed in unison, "Wow!", as hands came together in applause and heads turned to ask in excitement, "Did you see that?!"

This was worship – an automatic response of the heart to the reality of seeing and enjoying the value of something wonderful and surprising and amazing.

Worship is both an inner reality, and an outward expression. Worship is not complete unless expressed.

Similarly, Christian worship is fundamentally an affair of the heart, not an event. All of the rituals that we have created (e.g., sermons, catechisms, songs) are merely outward forms intended to express inward realities. They are the applause and exclamations at the fireworks display, not the inward enjoyment of its beauty. That inward feeling is the essence of worship and, without it, outward expressions are vain and hypocritical.

Even Jesus rejected the idea of worship as an event and embraced it as a changed and moved heart. When a Samaritan woman asked Him about *where* to worship, He told her to be more concerned about *how* to worship: "[A] time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem ... Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth."

The inner reality of worship is cherishing Christ.

Worship is important because it is our highest calling. Human beings were made to worship God – to see His beauty and worth and value and, in response, to applaud and exclaim it. Since He is the most beautiful and worthy and valuable thing that we could ever know, the heart that worships God is one that counts Christ as gain above all else.

This means that all of life is worship because all of life is an external demonstration of what we value. How we spend our money, how we speak to others, how we treat the poor and marginalized, how we live and how we die – all of these are expressions of our inward hearts. There is a holiness of life that

demonstrates how we value the worth of God in our spirits and hearts. This is true and proper worship.

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