

The Ministry of Worship – Part 2 – The role of worship at Reality/ The Worship Leader

The word “Worship” – In Bible doesn’t relate to music. “Hallel” (“Praise”) does. When I say “Worship” in this class I’m talking about musical worship.

Reminder: Why you? Why do those of you who don’t lead worship, and don’t want to lead worship need to take a worship class?

- I said it last week but in the American Church our “Worship” takes up at least 1/3 of our Church Service (1/2 at Reality) and yet if you asked most Pastors, Church leadership or Church Staff what the role of worship was, they wouldn’t have a sufficient answer.
- Weather you’re a worship leader, a pastor, a preacher, or any other kind of leader in the Church, chances are you will, at some point, be doing ministry with a Worship Leader (Teaching a camp, Youth Pastor, Lead Pastor, etc...)
- **If it’s important enough for Reality to give a solid hour to it every Sunday, then we had better know why.**

Last week we talked about:

- What worship is to God
 - Reverence, Sacrifice, and Intimacy
- Worship is not about us. It’s about God and it’s for God
 - **It is a sacrifice unto God and it is an offering for God . It is not something that is done for us, nor is about us. We may enjoy it, but it is for God.**
- In our church gatherings, it is the deepest way we can express our love to God.

Martin Luther gives his testimony like this:

“Music is a fair and lovely gift of God which has often wakened and moved me to the joy of preaching . . . Music drives away the Devil and makes people gay . . . Next after theology I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor. I would not change what little I know of music for something great. Experience proves that next to the Word of God only music deserves to be extolled as the mistress and governess of the feelings of the human heart. We know that to the devils music is distasteful and insufferable. My heart bubbles up and overflows in response to music, which has so often refreshed me and delivered me from dire plagues.”

- **The role of worship at Reality**

- Plays a huge part. It's as important as the teaching ministry. (*Asking to get involved is like asking me if you can preach from the pulpit on Sundays*)
- **2 Sets:**
- **1st Set:**
 - Historically the American church would sing a hymn or a few hymns, receive the tithes and offerings, preach the sermon, sing another hymn, speak a benediction, and excuse the church.
 - The model was taken from the gospels where we see Jesus and the disciples gathering and singing a hymn during Passover.
 - Then Chorus' were introduced in the middle of the 20th Century and it seemed that the music began to play a little bit more of an important role.
 - We see people like Chuck Smith in the 70's saying things like "The music (worship) prepared the peoples' hearts to receive the word of God"
 - And so it does.
 - Joey Buran "Full Back making a whole for the tailback"
 - **We strive to accomplish a few things in the first set:**
 - 1) We want to **bring the Church** from the outer courts (fighting with their spouse, drama at work, etc...) and bring them into the inner courts)
 - 2) The worship team sometimes needs to **battle** on their behalf because they've been rocked by the enemy.
 - 3) We want to help them prepare their hearts to receive the implanted word of God.
- **2nd Set**
 - **It is true that worship prepares you to receive the Word of God. But it is just as true that the Word of God prepares you to worship.**
 - So often we see God speaking powerfully then the preacher prays, we play a happy - clappy song then every leaves, gets a cookie and forgets what God had spoken to them.
 - **The 2nd set of worship is one of the most important parts of what we do at our Services. We won't do church without it.**
 - The 2nd set provides a platform for the people to take what God has spoken to them and do something about it.
 - Maybe they just need to **Respond to God's goodness**
 - We want to provide a platform for them to thank the Lord. To get on their face to stand up and dance. To respond to God's goodness.

- Hopefully things like having **the lights low**, the **music loud**, the **communion available** will help them to be able to do that.
- Or maybe they need to **Repent where God is convicting**
 - Convicting of sin, convicting of Righteousness. Normally it would be so easy to be convicted, then the sermon ends and the flesh or the devil says, “Just go get a cookie in the foyer and forget about it.”
 - **We don’t want to let the church forget about it.**
 - **Britt Preaches his heart out and then... WHAT? That’s it.** All that work and maybe 1/10 of the people go home and remember what the Lord spoke. NO WAY.
 - **It’s crazy in my mind for the preacher to so diligently prepare his sermon, to preach it with his all his might, to beckon the Spirit of God to show up and move in hearts, and then to not provide a platform for the people to actually respond to what God has spoken by His holy Word through His holy Spirit.**
- **Leonard Ravenhill** “Good seed sown on bad ground will produce an indifferent harvest. Good preaching on ground ill prepared by prayer an aborted thing.
- **It’s like the ground that Jesus spoke of in **Mark 4:5-6** “Some fell on stony ground, where it did not have much earth; and immediately it sprang up because it had no depth of or earth. But when the sun was up it was scorched and withered away.”**
- And it is just as much of an error on our part to prepare hearts through prayer and the 1st set, beg God to show up and move powerfully, preach the sermon, and then sing a song and the people walk out the back doors only to forget what God had just spoken to them.
- **Same parable **Mark 4:4** “And it happened as he sowed that some seed fell by the wayside; and the birds of the air came and devoured it.”**
 - *(That verse is one of the reasons why Britt decided to start doing the 2nd set. He saw that happening in the College ministry.)*
- Maybe they need to **Reflect on what God has spoken**
 - He’s saying “quit your job”, or “go apologize to that person” or “I’m calling you to Africa” or whatever. Usually you hear the call during the sermon, the Lord speaks, then the sermon ends, and you leave without dealing with it.
 - OR... what often happens with me is during the sermon I know God is wanting to speak to me about something specific, but He doesn’t even tell me until the 2nd set when I get on my face before Him.

- It's so CRUCIAL.
- We need to view worship and the sermon as being intimately related to each other
 - Without worship (and prayer for that matter) the preacher is preaching to hearts ill-prepared.
 - But without the preaching of the Word, the 2nd set of worship would still be time spent striving to prepare the hearts of the people instead of a time where they can respond to God and do business with him.

I think there's 3 main roles that worship and/or the worship leader should play in the church.

- One of them is: Providing **An atmosphere for them to enter in**
 - Remember, worship to God is intimacy. (If you want to create an intimate vibe with your wife, you don't turn on the florescent lights put on a Red Hot Chili Peppers album.
 - So it is with the Lord. We want to create an atmosphere of worship.
 - I believe the Lord did the same thing in the temple.
 - So we do stuff like turn the lights off during worship.
 - *How this came about. (Britt one day said, "Let's do it." Angelo bought a purple light, etc... = people started pressing in a little harder.)*
 - But honestly, I think it's right to create an atmosphere that lends itself to worship and intimacy.
 - **People say**, "But isn't that kind of manipulating the mood?" Whatever man.
 - **Whatever man.** You think there was florescent lights hanging in the temple? No. It was beautiful to behold.
 - The temple (as well as the tabernacle) stimulated every sense...
 - **Smell:** Incense burning
 - **Touch:** The softness of the fabrics, the smoothness of metals, not to mention the handling of the sacrifice outside and the heat from the fire of the altar.
 - **Hear:** You heard the bleating of the animals, you heard the praise of the congregation, the blowing of the trumpets (in tune no doubt), the music.
 - How fun is this: (When the brought the ark into the temple):
 - **2 Chron. 5:11-6:2**
 - **Taste:** Showbread that the priest partook of.
 - **Sight:** Looked beautiful: Golden lamstands, bronze doors with gold hinges, beautiful linens (tabernacle), smoke rising from the incense, the fire from the lamps.

- **1 Verse: Ex. 26:1** “Moreover, you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen, and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them.”
 - **I think the Lord is into the way things look. Period.**
- So we want to create an atmosphere that lends itself to worship.
 - Sound Mix to be nice.
 - Stage lights low, beautiful colors on the scrim, fake clouds in the back.
 - Obviously a fine line between creating a really nice vibe that enhances worship and creating a really killer vibe that distracts from worship. Hopefully we don’t cross the line.
- **That being said, just because you make provision for a people to worship, does not mean that they will actually worship.** (*It was years of intercession and prayer before Reality ever saw people engage like we do now*)

The Worship Leader

- **First of all:** It is a false assumption the worship leader is just a dude with an instrument who has a good voice. (*Hey you play guitar right? Can you lead worship at our homegroup?*) (He should be able to sing and play. Obviously the Lord will gift those who he calls.)
 - But we see that it is a calling. Just as God called and anoints preachers, so he does with those who would lead in music.
 - Like **1 Chron. 15:22** The Levites appointed... “Cheniah, leader of the Levites; as instructor in charge of the music, because he was skillfull.”
 - **2 Chron. 23:13** a reference to “The singers with musical instruments who led in praise.”
 - So these men were appointed, and, I would think, anointed by God to lead the music and the praise.
- **So he is not just a guy who has some musical talent.**
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- **He is also: Not a performer**
 - Lazo to his old worship leader: “Why does everything seem like a performance?” “It is a performance, but it’s a performance for an audience of ONE.” **Nope.**
 - Our worship is unto an audience of one in the sense that the worship team doesn’t play and sing to entertain the congregation and the congregation

doesn't sing and lift their hands to entertain each other. But it is not a performance unto God.

- I seriously doubt that God is entertained by our guitar riffs, drums beats, four octave vocal range, or our three part harmonies.
- The all sufficient God does not need our music and is not entertained by our songs. He wants our worship.
- Not a performance for men and not a performance for God
 - You want to give God a private little concert, that's fine, but do it on your own time at your own house.
 - The church is already tempted enough to view worship as a performance. They don't need our help.

- **The Worship Leader is a Minister. He is a Minister of music.**

- **He is a "Minister". Not an entertainer. Not just a guy holds a guitar and sings good, but a "Minister".**

○ **A "Minister" is a servant of the people.**

▪ *Lady use to refer to me as a "Minstrel" – Never knew why.*

- "Minstrel" was a man (or woman) who would travel around sharing songs for anyone from the general public on the streets to Kings and Queens in Palaces.

○ The word "Minstrel" is in French "Menestrel" and in Latin "Minister" (attendant, servant, or "less")

- **Leading worship is about giving not getting**

○ *Me sharing with Jobey about not being able to "Worship" when I led worship. Him telling me my offering when I'm leading is different then my offering when I'm not leading.*

○ **Later the Lord showed me: Leviticus:** The priests (the Levites) worked while the people worshipped.

- Granted, the *people* had to kill the animal first (and so it is that the congregation has to choose to offer a sacrifice of praise first. We can't make them worship) but it was the priest who was dirty, bloody, and sweaty. So the minister, most of the time, must work, so the people can worship.

○ **Our offering as a minister is not the same as our offering as a congregant.**

- Our offering as a minister is that of obedience to God and of service to the people, not of adoration and sitting at the feet of Jesus.
 - *Struggle with this being "less holy". But it is MORE holy.*

One of the other roles that the worship leader should play in the church is:

- - Shepherding

- It has been said that job of the worship leader is to be the *lead worshipper*.
 - While there may be somewhat true. There are many false implications assumptions, and mis-leading about a statement like this.
 - Equivalent of the Preacher standing up at the pulpit and having his “quiet time” with the Lord in the presence of the congregation.
- It is also not the primary job of the worship leader to *model* worship (although this may happen) But rather, to **lead** the church into worship.
 - The **leaders** in the church should be modeling worship. As they should be modeling such things as listening to a sermon and taking notes (or whatever)
 - *We don't expect preacher to model receiving a sermon. We expect him to deliver the sermon.*
 - It is not the worship leader's job to simply worship God.
 - However, it is also not his job to simply encourage the congregation to worship God and shepherd them in that. **They are both his job.**
 - **“Those who led in praise” 2 Chron. 23:13** (What does that mean)? **I think it means that they were the lead worshipper AND the worship leader.**
 - We then have a dilemma, because if you've ever led worship, you know that you kind of have to do one or the other
 - *Again, the equivalent of the Preacher trying to preach the sermon and receive the sermon at the same time.*
 - **But again, his primary job and goal is not to have a great worship experience of his own, but to see to it that the congregation has a worship experience of their own.**
 - Now, if our job is primarily to shepherd and not just worship then how do we still be the “Lead Worshipper”.
 - Because, you cannot take them somewhere you are not...
 - **Preparing before hand.** (*Explain being in the presence of God before I get on stage*)
 - **Shepherding**
 - Grabbing by the hand
 - *Don't leave them outside*
 - And when you get inside the throne room, you don't just lay down with the congregation and worship. You're watching, your listening, your encouraging.
 - Part of that: **Gauging the congregation**

- *Matt Redman not usually closing his eyes.*
 - Leading and gauging 600 people is hard (Do I change the set? Do I pray here? Do I say something? Etc...)
 - **Before I go out: Surrender to his leading.**
 - *“Just surrender to the leading of the Spirit. That’s all you can do” (Explain)*
- **But this does beg the questions: “So does the minister ever just sit at the feet of Jesus?**
 - Absolutely. Without intimacy, there is no effective ministry. True ministry flows from intimacy. **AND**, you cannot take the congregation somewhere that you’ve have not yet been.
- We’ve got to **Learn to practice the presence of God.**
 - We’ve got to learn how to be able to slip into God’s presence. We’ve got to be so familiar with his courts, that when it’s time to go in, we know the way.
 - **“How do we get to that point?” PRACTICE.**
 - It’s like anything. The more you practice the easier it becomes.
 - There are sometimes when I need to change rolls in the middle of a worship set. Maybe the Lord is calling me to fight on behalf of the congregation. That’s requires me to praise God on their behalf. At that moment I need to slip into the presence of God so to speak. To go from being the servant to the saint. From the shepherd to the worshipper. **But if I haven’t been practicing the presence of God, then I won’t know how to get there.**
 - *Tim Hughes Here I am to worship page 20-21*
 - **Worship must become a lifestyle.**
 - Whether you’re on your face crying. On your feet shouting, or at the microphone singing. Whether you’re working in the office, or sitting in the pew, you can do all things as unto the Lord. It can all be praise unto God.
 - **We’ve got to cultivate intimacy with the Lord in our own lives, everyday.**
 - The church’s most intimate time of communion with the Lord may be during our worship time on Sundays. That’s not my most intimate time with the Lord. Nor should it be.
 - So, does he ever just sit and be with Jesus? Absolutely. You can’t serve God’s bride if you don’t know God’s heart.

- But by the time you stand up on that stage, you had better already know God's heart. You better have already been with Jesus.
- If you roll up on that stage. If you strap on that guitar without having already been in the presence of God, then you're doomed. Don't even show up. For real.
- **When we roll up to that microphone, we are showing up along side the Holy Spirit to usher His people, by the blood of Jesus into the presence of God.**
- It is time to serve.
- **That being said, it is ok to sometimes get distracted from the service so we can sit at the feet of Jesus.**
 - *(LUKE 17-The leper who came back to Jesus. He got distracted from doing what He was supposed to do (go to the temple). He got distracted by Jesus and came back to be with Him.*
 - **It's ok and sometimes even good to get distracted by Jesus.**
- **Historically the Levites were called to be servants of the people.** (Musicians are to serve. Even being in a band that's more entertaining than anything, we should try to make that our aim instead of making it about "us")
 - The Levites were to serve the people. (Hands dirty, blood, sweat, etc...)
- We are serving the people
 - Providing them a platform to worship. Waging war for them sometimes, pushing them to praise.

