

The Beautiful Worship of God!

By Roelf L. Ruffner

“One thing have I desired of the LORD, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the LORD, and to enquire in his temple” (Psalm 27:4).

The inspired psalmist King David knew the importance of worshipping God. His “house of the Lord” was a court yard filled with the smoke of animal sacrifices and the burning of incense outside of a tent made of animal skins containing the Ark of the Covenant. Sometimes psalms which he had composed were sung or read aloud, such as Psalm 27. In this public worship of Jehovah dictated by the Law of Moses he found “the beauty of the Lord.”

Yet the New Testament Christian can also experience the same thing when they assemble with their brethren in the authorized worship of the church of Christ: prayer, singing, partaking of the Lord’s Supper, giving and hearing exhortation from God’s word. “And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42).

There is **the beauty of prayer** – direct access to our heavenly Father through His beloved Son, Jesus Christ. “And in that day ye shall ask me nothing. Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you. Hitherto have ye asked nothing in my name: ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full” (John 16:13-14). What a wonderful thing! We don’t have to direct our prayers through a black shirted cleric with a backward collar or the supposed image of a dead, un-resurrected “saint.” We don’t light candles, burn incense or ring bells so we may “center” our prayers by vain repetition or vain chanting (cf. Mat. 6:7; 1 Cor. 13:1). All we need do is offer simple prayers with sincerity to our Maker in Jesus’ name; like the early church did. “And now, Lord, behold their threatenings: and grant unto thy servants, that with all boldness they may speak thy word, By stretching forth thine hand to heal; and that signs and wonders may be done by the name of thy holy child Jesus” (Acts 4:29-30 – the church of Christ at Jerusalem).

There is **the beauty of unaccompanied, congregational singing**. According to the New Testament pattern of worship neither mechanical instrument of music nor the practiced, choreographed sounds of a man-made choir are allowed. The resonance of the psalms, hymns and spiritual songs may not be appealing to the fleshly, unspiritual ear but it is beautiful to the all-listening ear of the one worshipped – God. The words sung lifts up the human heart as well as praises to Him. “Speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and

making melody in your heart to the Lord” (Eph. 5:19). It may not be “contemporary” but neither is the Bible.

There is **the beauty of remembering our Savior’s death**. For almost 2,000 years the brethren of Christ have assembled each Lord’s day to remember His death by obeying His command (Acts 20:7). “This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). They don’t observe this act of worship once a year or once a quarter or on a Saturday night but EVERY SUNDAY as the New Testament Christians did (Acts 20:7). They don’t use leavened white bread and water as the Mormon’s do in this memorial or alcoholic wine and “holy” wafers as does the Roman Church. Rather they observe this act of worship using the simple elements the Lord Himself used on that terrible night – unleavened bread and “the fruit of the vine” (Mark 14:24-25)

There is **the beauty of giving back to the Lord** each week a portion of the bounty He has given to us. The beauty of this act of worship is that it is a sacrifice of the heart – a heart of gratitude. “And he called unto him his disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That this poor widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the treasury: For all they did cast in of their abundance; but she of her want did cast in all that she had, even all her living” (Mark 12:43-44). Everything we have in this world is God’s (1 Cor. 10:26). No “tithing” enforced by a man-made religious organization. The amount we contribute is between us and God. It is totally our decision (1 Cor. 16:1, 2; 2 Cor. 9:6, 7). Yet as we make that decision we should recall something. “For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich” (2 Cor. 8:9).

There is **the beauty of hearing the word of God** being expounded upon. There is soul cleansing, mind altering, and life transforming power in authoritative exhortation from the Scriptures or preaching. “And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mat. 7:28-29). It is the power of the Gospel (Rom. 1:16, 17). This is no room in Bible preaching for human opinion, sob stories, political tirades, after-dinner motivational speeches, and verbal theatrics; only a “thus saith the Lord” for all that is said. The beauty of it is that Gospel preaching shows us the “mind of Christ” (1 Cor. 2:12-16) rather than the sophistry of man. It turns us toward the wisdom of God and His word rather than our finite selves. “For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (1 Cor. 1:21).

Dear reader, do you find the worship of God wearisome and boring? You need to look for, find and appreciate the beauty of authorized worship. “Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name; worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness” (Psa. 29:2).