



Worship and Obedience

by Spencer Chapman

My first experience of worship was in a catholic church as I had been raised in a catholic school. We sang mostly hymns and some chorus songs. The atmosphere that was created was one of holiness and reverence, a still quietness, and a feeling of being in awe of the God who was crucified. That was the place where I found Jesus. Later on I found the freedom of worship by being born again which led to the whole spectrum of worship.

It is very interesting to find over the years that people prefer this way to worship rather than that way? I didn't think that Jesus ever mentioned the correct form of act of worship? Jesus loves people, he loves us so much and he is interested in us, men and women. His desire is to transform us into becoming like Him; to break the boundaries we put up and to renew our mind to have a mind like God's.

Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God-this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is-his good, pleasing and perfect will. Romans 12:1-2

In the first Matrix movie there is a scene where Morpheus is trying to teach Neo about the boundaries of the matrix. Neo has to jump from one building to another! In real terms it is impossible, but in the matrix it is possible as the boundaries can be moved. Morpheus's line before he jumps is "Free your mind"...then jumps the huge gap from one building to another. Jesus is trying to free our minds from the system of this world to transform us into the likeness of Him.

One of the most interesting things I have found about worship is obedience, to worship when you don't feel you can. Some of the most played worship songs have come from people in the darkest, saddest time in their lives and have somehow dug deep down into their soul to write songs of praise to our Lord.

The first time the word worship is used in the bible is when Abraham is obeying the Lord to sacrifice his son Isaac. In the midst of the best thing that had happened to Abraham, his son from the Lord, he is asked to kill him? What a time to worship the Lord? Yet Abraham obeys and through that the Lord blesses Abraham. In our time of grief, when we seek the Lord's face we will find comfort. The Lord will bless us, and we shall find peace and joy.

A favorite scripture of mine that explains this further is Acts 16:22-34.

22The crowd joined in the attack against Paul and Silas, and the magistrates ordered them to be stripped and beaten. 23After they had been severely flogged, they were thrown into prison, and the jailer was commanded to guard them carefully. 24Upon receiving such orders, he put them in the inner cell and fastened their feet in the stocks. 25About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them. 26Suddenly there was such a violent earthquake that the foundations of the prison were shaken. At once all the prison doors flew open, and everybody's chains came loose. 27The jailer woke up, and when he saw the prison doors open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself because he thought the prisoners had escaped. 28But Paul shouted, "Don't harm yourself! We are all here!" 29The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. 30He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31They replied, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved-you and your household." 32Then they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all the others in his house. 33At that hour of the night the jailer took them and washed their wounds; then immediately he and all his family were baptized. 34The jailer brought them into his house and set a meal before them; he was filled with joy because he had come to believe in God-he and his whole family.

Imagine that in a cold jail in the dead of night, feeling cold and in pain after being flogged...they

sang songs of praise and worshiped God, and then the Lord worked His wonders and released them only to save the jailer and his family!!!! Truly amazing stuff, but that is our God and that is why we worship him. He is amazing, and all glory and honor goes to him. He sets the captives free and restores the broken hearted. The Lord waits to see our response (obedience) to him, and then he acts. Did you notice that it wasn't until after Paul and Silas started singing that the Lord worked His miracle.

I reckon we have it backwards...so often we expect God to work before we offer ourselves to Him. Rather we should be offering praise and worship to him in response to what he has already done regardless of our situation. These are hard words yet the Lord has said straight and narrow is the road that leads to salvation and few travel it. I have stumbled in the past and have fallen where it is hard, but thanks be to our Lord and Savior that He is slow to anger and quick to forgive us. His Grace and Mercy's know no end, as he promises to forgive us our sins.

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