



God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

John 4:24

On Worship

with Pastor Steve

Rejoice and be Glad

Though it gives me much joy to see what my children have become now that they are grown, I must admit that there are times when I miss certain experiences of their childhood. Some of those “magical” moments would have to include birthdays and Christmas.

I will never forget watching the expressions on their faces when they blew out the candles on their birthday cake and afterwards as they ripped the wrapping paper from around their present. Many times at Christmas my wife and I would put their big presents under the tree unwrapped. The looks on their faces when they saw their present for the first time would light up a room. The excitement continued as they tore into the presents that were wrapped. Sometimes squealing and grinning from ear to ear, they would sling wrapping paper all over the living room floor. When the present was finally out of the box they would cling to it and jump up and down with excitement.

When I consider the words of Jesus in Matthew 18:3, *Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven*, I often wonder if I share the same excitement over the presents God has given me as my children did with the presents I gave to them. I must ask myself as the psalmist did, *What shall I render to the Lord for all His benefits toward me?* (Psalms 116:12) What are God’s benefits; his presents so to speak? King David unwrapped a few for us.

Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits: Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases, Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies, Who satisfies

your mouth with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s.

Psalms 103:2-5

The Amplified Bible reads it this way; *Bless— affectionately, gratefully praise—the Lord, O my soul, and forget not [one of] all His benefits, Who forgives [every one of] all your iniquities, Who heals [each of] all your diseases; Who redeems your life from the pit and corruption; Who beautifies, dignifies, and crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies; Who satisfies your mouth [your necessity and desire at your personal age] with good; so that your youth, renewed, is like the eagle’s [strong, overcoming, soaring]!*

To give the Father pleasure is the goal of our worship. If we as earthly parents receive an abundance of pleasure watching our children rejoice over the presents we give them, how much more pleasure does the heavenly Father receive when we rejoice over the presents he gives us? Maybe David had a glimpse when he wrote, *Let all those who seek You rejoice and be glad in You; And let those who love Your salvation say continually, Let God be magnified!* (Psalm 70:4) Or, as the English Standard Version reads, *May all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you! May those who love your salvation say evermore, God is great!*

It is not only “okay” for us to be glad in the Lord and with the presents he gives us, we are commanded to be glad and rejoice. Luke 12:32 tells us that it is the Father’s good pleasure to give us the kingdom. For us to fail to be glad with and rejoice in the things God gives us would be an insult to him and would be the epitome of ingratitude. When the scriptures speak of the Father giving us the kingdom, we understand the kingdom of God to be the rule and reign of God. However, Paul said the kingdom of God consists of

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righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit (Romans 14:17).

The Greek word for joy in Romans 14:17 means cheerfulness, calm delight, gladness, exceeding joy. This word is similar to the Hebrew words used in Psalm 70:4. The word rejoice means to be bright, cheerful, glad, make mirth. The word glad means to brighten up, be gleesome, cheer up, make merry. So, when David exhorts those who seek the Lord to rejoice and be glad in the Lord, he is saying to brighten up, be cheerful, make mirth (rejoicing or enjoyment, especially when expressed in merrymaking). Joy and gladness are presents that God takes pleasure in giving us.

Many authors, including myself, have written in the past few years that we are to seek the face of God and not his hands. We have written that Christians should seek the presence of God and not his presents. Even David said that we should rejoice and be glad "in God." I concur with these thoughts, however, I also believe that it is imperative that we rejoice and are glad in the presents God gives us.

The Prophet Isaiah wrote, *I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, As a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.* (Isaiah 61:10) Why did Isaiah rejoice? Why was he joyful? Because of God's presents of salvation and righteousness. The Psalmist wrote, *This is the day the LORD has made; We will rejoice and be glad in it.* (Psalm 118:24). To what day is "this" referring? It is the day that God made his son the chief cornerstone (Psalm 118:22). Jesus became for us salvation (Hebrews 5:9), righteousness (1 Corinthians 1:30), peace (Romans 5:1) and joy (John 15:11). God gave us these presents in his son. We should rejoice and be glad in it!! The Father also gave us presents (gifts) through the Holy Spirit (Romans 12 and 1 Corinthians 12) We should rejoice and be glad in them as well!

Again, David said for those who seek the Lord to rejoice and be glad in the Lord. To seek the Lord

means to search out by any method, specifically in worship and prayer; to strive after, to beg, desire, inquire, procure, request (Jeremiah 29:13). Psalm 105:3 says, *Glory in His holy name; Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!* (Psalms 105:3) Only those who seek the Lord are capable of rejoicing and being glad in him and what he gives. And only those who love his salvation can continually say, "Let God be magnified."

To magnify God is to make him larger. How can we make God larger? One way we make God larger is to rejoice and be glad over the presents he gives us. This works much like a telescope. A telescope takes a large object that is far away and brings it up close so that the viewer can see it more clearly. When we rejoice and are glad over the presents God gives us (especially salvation; Psalm 35:9), we bring him closer so that those who are far from him can see him better. So, the consequence of rejoicing and being glad in the Lord and loving his salvation is that God is magnified. Therefore, not only with our mouths do we profess "Let God be magnified" but our lifestyle of rejoicing and gladness magnifies God.

It's difficult to express the joy it gave mom and I as we watched our children pull their presents from the box. To know that we had given them something that brought them so much joy and gladness brought us an abundance of pleasure. However, maybe the best part was when they realized where the presents had come from and they laid them down long enough to jumped in my lap, put their arms around my neck and say, "Thank you so much; I love my presents. I love you, daddy"

Isn't our heavenly Father worth as much?

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