



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

John 4:24

On Worship

with Pastor Steve

Brokenness in Worship

Most of us are familiar with the life of King David. God called him a man after His own heart yet, we know David made some big time mistakes that cost him and others a great deal of pain. One of those grave mistakes was his adultery with Bathsheba and the murder of her husband Uriah.

We don't know exactly how much time elapsed from the time David committed those sins until the prophet Nathan paid him a visit. I read in one commentary that it could have been as much as one year. Can you image the guilt David must have lived with for that year? After Nathan rebuked David and brought his sin into the open David penned the words to Psalm 51.

In this Psalm David acknowledges his sin and pleads for mercy. He asks God to create in him a clean heart and to restore the joy of his salvation. He writes in verses sixteen and seventeen, *For you do not desire sacrifice or else I would give it; you do not delight in burnt offerings. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart. These, O God, you will not despise.*

In speaking of a broken spirit David uses the Hebrew word shabar. Shabar means to burst, to break to pieces or to reduce. It is easy to see the brokenness in David's heart as he approaches God about his sin. When speaking of a contrite heart he uses the Hebrew word dakah. This word means to crumble, to beat to pieces, to bruise, to crush or to humble.

According to Judson Cornwall in his book *Let Us Worship*, contrite is a word that is used to describe the process of making talcum powder. Cans of talcum powder used to be labeled "This is stone that has been contrited." It means that what was once a part of a mountain has been ground and pounded so fine that it will float on water. It takes on a new form.

There is a popular prayer in many Christian circles today that says, "Lord break our hearts with the things that break yours." It's easy to look around us and see the things that break the Father's heart. Those things include injustices of all kinds; hunger, abortion, war, racism to name of few. However, we want to make sure we don't overlook the things inside of us that break his heart. The sin that so easily besets us should break our hearts as well.

Brokenness is essential when approaching God. Though we may approach him boldly (Hebrews 4:16), we should never go into his presence presumptuously as though we have earned the right to be there. We have nothing to offer God that he hasn't provided for us. We come to him with our will and self-sufficiency crushed, having taken on a new form. Its total dependency is on Christ and the sacrifice he gave. He earned the right for us to come into the Father's presence by shedding his blood (Hebrews 10:19).

I am not talking about self-pity. Self-pity prides itself in what it pities. Genuine brokenness realizes its dependency on Christ and humbles itself to repent and follow hard after God. The Amplified Bible renders Psalm 51:17 this way, *My sacrifice [the sacrifice acceptable] to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart [broken down with sorrow for sin and humbly and thoroughly penitent] such, O God, you will not despise.*

Isaiah wrote, *For thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is holy: I dwell in the high and holy place with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.* (Isaiah. 57:15)

Brokenness is where God dwells. Only where God dwells is worship possible.