



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

John 4:24

On Worship
with Pastor Steve

Worship and Reverence

A few years ago I attended a worship conference with some friends. As we entered for the initial service I noticed above the sanctuary entrance a sign that read "Enter to Worship." That simple sign spoke volumes to me about the attitude and seriousness in which the church approached worship. First, it said that beyond those doors worship would be taking place. Secondly, it projected the idea that you were expected to worship if you came inside. Third, and maybe the most important, it conveyed to me that what was happening in that place of worship was holy and should be approached with reverence.

I have been leading worship for more than 20 years, and I must admit that it still grieves me to watch people casually and somewhat irreverently approach worship. Many times I have witnessed people mill around during worship services or talk to a neighbor or otherwise act disinterested. The seriousness of the moment eludes them and the fact that we are approaching the King of Kings, the Holy and One True God, is not enough incentive to warrant their attention. There appears to be a lack of respect for the presence and person of God and they fail to show honor and render him the glory due his name.

Every so often the President of the United States gives a State of the Union Address which is broadcast on television. Usually when the cameras first come on there is a lot of milling around and talking between members of congress and other dignitaries who are present. However, when the president enters the room and the band begins to play "Hail to the Chief" immediate attention is given to the president. Those in attendance stand to their feet and applaud as the president approaches the podium and their undivided attention is given as he addresses the assembly. Why is such respect given to this man? He holds a place of honor and such respect is due a person of his stature. Of how much more honor and respect should the God of the universe receive when we gather to worship him?

King David wrote, *But as for me, I will come into your house in the multitude of your mercy; in fear of you I will worship toward your holy temple.* (Psalm 5:7) The Hebrew word used here for fear means reverence. David knew the God he worshiped and understood that he should be approached with reverence and honor.

Have you ever wondered why God seems to hide his presence sometimes during our worship services? It could be that at times we fail to give him honor by neglecting to hold him in high esteem and render him our undivided attention. We disrespect him by not considering his presence as precious and failing to worship him in the manner he has commanded; his divine order.

Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu suffered grave consequences because they dishonored God. We pick the story up in Leviticus 10 after God manifests his glory above the tabernacle.

Then Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it, put incense on it, and offered profane fire before the Lord, which he had not commanded them. So fire went out from the Lord and devoured them, and they died before the Lord. And Moses said to Aaron, This is what the Lord spoke, saying: By those who come near me I must be regarded as holy; and before all the people I must be glorified. So Aaron held his peace.

Leviticus 10:1-3

We read that Nadab and Abihu offered profane fire before the Lord. Webster's dictionary defines profane as showing disrespect or contempt toward sacred things; irreverence. These two priests

attempted to enter God's presence with an offering made with their own hands; one which was not commanded by God. Their sin was approaching a holy God as though he were something common. Their offering was disrespectful and irreverent and did not honor God.

Jesus could not do many miracles (manifest all his glory) in his own country because the people did not honor him. As He taught in their synagogues the people were astonished and said, *Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary and his brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us? Where did this man get all these things?* (Matthew 13:55-56) The very people who were watching and waiting for the Messiah missed his presence because they were too familiar with him. Again God refused to manifest his presence among people who considered him as common.

Are we too familiar with God? Do we haphazardly approach him as if he were common? Should we expect God to manifest his glory if we do not give him the honor and reverence due his name? We cannot expect God to permit us to come into his presence with an attitude of disrespect.

I am not making a case here for a "solemn" assembly each time we meet. The psalmist wrote, *Serve the Lord with fear, and rejoice with trembling.* (Psalm 2:11) The Hebrew word used for rejoice is *gwl* which means to spin around under the influence of any violent emotion. When we come to God in worship, whether dancing or bowing, we should come in reverence; honoring his majesty and kingship. We should always approach God with seriousness and respect. I understand that he is our Father, and we are invited to crawl up in his lap for hugs and kisses. But, we must also understand that he is Almighty God and honor and glory are due his name.