

Let everything that has breath
praise the Lord. Praise the Lord!

Psalm 150:6

Praise Points

with Karen Holland

Delight in the Beauty of His Holiness

And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the LORD, and that should praise the beauty of holiness, as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the LORD; for his mercy endureth for ever.

2 Chronicles 20:21

Give unto the LORD the glory due unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

1 Chronicles 16:29, Psalm 29:2

One thing I ask of the LORD, this is what I seek: that I may dwell in the house of the LORD all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the LORD and to seek him in his temple. One thing I have desired of the LORD, That will I seek: 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 inquire in His temple. For in the time of trouble He shall hide me in His pavilion; In the secret place of His tabernacle He shall hide me; He shall set me high upon a rock. And now my head shall be lifted up above my enemies all around me; Therefore I will offer sacrifices of joy in His tabernacle; I will sing, yes, I will sing praises to the LORD.

Psalm 27:4-6

The following statements have been bothering me for quite a while. "You should worship the Lord even if He doesn't show up, even if you don't sense His tangible presence. He is worthy of our praise no matter what. Feeling His presence during worship is not what is important. Anointed worship is not the point; that only happens once in a while anyway. Worship is for the Lord, it's not about us and what we get out of it."

The problem I seem to have with these statements center around beholding the Lord's beauty and worshipping Him in the beauty of His holiness. How can you really do this if you don't enter His presence—if you don't sense His tangible presence somehow—if He doesn't 'show up'—or if you don't know that He has 'shown up'? You see power is in the LORD's right hand and mercy is in His unfailing love. His reign is eternal, but holiness is the Lord's beauty. The Lord is majestic, glorious, awesome, and all powerful. He is holy.

6 Your right hand, O LORD, was majestic in power. Your right hand, O LORD, shattered the enemy. 11 Who among the gods is like you, O LORD ? Who is like you— majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders ... 13 In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed. In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling. 18 The LORD will reign for ever and ever.

Exodus 15

The LORD is to be praised for the beauty of His holiness. You must know the Lord to praise him in the beauty of His holiness and to behold His beauty. Paul says nothing compares to this.

What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish,

that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ—the righteousness that comes from God and is by faith.

Philippians 3:8-9

The following Matt Redman song links knowing the Lord with beholding His beauty and intimacy.

Intimacy

Matt Redman

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Album: The Heart Of Worship

One thing my heart is set upon
One thing that I would ask
To know You, Lord, as close as one
Could hope to on this earth

Intimacy

O Jesus, intimacy

My treasure will be, O Jesus

Your intimacy

To look upon Your beauty, Lord
Your glory and Your heart
To know You close, and closer still
Each day upon this earth

Lord, since the day I saw You first,
My soul was satisfied;
And yet, because I see in part,
I'm searching, more to find.

Isn't this what worship is all about; knowing the Lord Jesus Christ, exalting Him and beholding His beauty? Can we really do this without His presence—His Person? Shouldn't we be more like the Shulamite woman in the Song of Solomon chapter 3? This woman desperately seeks her lover, and won't stop until He is found. To be in the presence of her lover is top priority; she will not rest until she finds Him again. There will be great joy when the woman and her lover are reunited; there is pleasure in spending time together. There is pleasure in the Lord's presence, in beholding the beauty of His holiness.

Shouldn't there be pleasure when we worship? Shouldn't there be joy in beholding the beauty of the Lord? Is it wrong to want this? Is it wrong to desperately seek this, to desperately seek it until it is found? My first thought to the statements above is this: if you don't sense His presence in worship doesn't this just mean to press in deeper, harder?

This is what really was bothering me in the opening statements -- they made me feel guilty for wanting the joy that comes with the Lord's presence, His beauty in worship. Somehow because I wanted the joy of His presence, because I was desperately pressing in for more, I was made to feel selfish. Not until I read the following did I see that this was what was really bothering me.

Sam Storms, former professor of theology at Wheaton College, wrote this in his book "Pleasures Evermore." "How do you measure or assess the value of something you cherish? How do you determine the worth of a prize? Is it not by the depth of pleasure you derive from it? Is it not by the intensity and quality of your delight in what it is? Is it not by how excited and enthralled you are in the manifold display of its attributes, characteristics, and properties? In other words, your satisfaction in what the treasure is and does for you is the standard or gauge

by which its glory (worth and value) is revealed. Hence, your pleasure is the measure of your treasure. Or again, the treasure, which is God, is most glorified in and by you when your pleasure in Him is maximal and optimal.”

Here is a simple example that demonstrates this point: A father returns home after a business trip. Upon his arrival, his young children drop everything they are doing and eagerly run to see their dad. All they could think about at that moment was satisfying the desire of their heart to see their dad and to enjoy his company. How would a father react to this? Would he rebuke his children for being self-centered? Or would seeing their excitement and joy at His presence warm His heart and bring Him pleasure? This father would undoubtedly feel honored and thrilled at such a display of affection.

Isn't the heavenly father glorified by the joy and delight his children take in his presence?

Put a different spin on the above example. How would the father feel if the children instead quietly, without feeling, walked over and greeted him out of a sense of duty? Which honors or glorifies the Father more—the greeting out of pure joy at His presence or the greeting out of duty?

I believe David (a man after God's own heart) understood this relationship between beholding God's beauty, displaying his delight in the Lord's presence and the glorification of God. Take another look at Psalm 27. The one thing David asks of the Lord is to gaze upon His beauty. Notice that this is done in the temple; the Lord's dwelling. The temple is where the Lord's presence presides.

What follows beholding the Lord's beauty in His dwelling? One thing is protection, the protection that comes from being hidden in the Lord's presence, in the secret place of the Lord's tabernacle. Joy and delight also follow. It's interesting to note the language of Psalm 27:6 specifies this joy as a sacrifice, an offering made by David. The more joy that is expressed, the more the Lord is glorified. Viewing joy or delight in the Lord's presence as a sacrifice or offering certainly opened my eyes. I don't feel guilty about my joy anymore or my desire to press in for more.

Shout for joy to the LORD, all the earth. Worship the LORD with gladness; come before him with joyful songs.

Psalm 100:1-2

You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.

Psalm 16:11

How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from Your river of delight (pleasures). For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

Psalm 36:7-9

Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings.

Psalm 63:7

And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Hebrews 11:6

Let all who take refuge in you be glad; let them ever sing for joy. Spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may rejoice in you.

Psalm 5:11