

Three Things You Should Bring To Worship God

Introduction:

- I. In Heb. 10:24-25, the Hebrews writer wrote,

"And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works: Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another: and so much more, as ye see the day approaching."

The clear teaching of God's Word is that Christians assemble themselves together upon the first day of the week. This is a time when Christians can forget about the drudgery of everyday life and spend some quality time with others of like precious faith. It is a time when we can set aside our cares and concerns and experience a spiritual stimulus that properly arms us for the rest of the week. It is a time when Christians can exhort each other and provoke one another unto love and good works by engaging in spiritual exercise for the soul.

But most importantly, when we assemble ourselves together as members of the body of Christ, it is not only for our own benefit, but it is first and foremost to give God the respect and reverence that He so richly deserves. On the first day of the week, we assemble ourselves together to partake of the Lord's Supper (**Acts 20:7**) and lay by in store as God has prospered us (**1 Cor. 16:2**).

It is a time when prayers are offered, songs are sung and the Word of God is examined. It is a time, ladies and gentlemen, that we gather ourselves together for the express purpose of worshipping God.

- II. In this lesson, I want to raise the question, "what should we bring to worship God?" Some people bring some things to worship God that they ought to leave at home, while others leave at home some things that they ought to bring with them when they come to worship God. So then, what should we bring with us when we come to worship services? I want to make mention of three things we should to bring when we come to the Lord's house to worship God.

Lesson:

- I. **We Must Bring A Proper Spirit.**

By "spirit" I mean a proper attitude and mind-set. The word spirit is used in that capacity in the several passages in the New Testament. The Greek word for "spirit" is pneuma (πνευμα) and Strong says that when it is used in

that way it refers to one's mental disposition. Now what does Jesus say about worship?

John 4:23-25

23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. 24 God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." ESV

Notice that Jesus refers here to true worshippers. If there is such a thing as true worshippers, then there is such a thing as false worshippers as well. Let it be noted that those who attempt to worship God in an unscriptural, unauthorized way are false worshippers (**E.g. Cain {Gen. 4:4-5}; Nadab & Abihu {Lev. 10:1-2}; Pharisees {Matt. 15:9}**).

All of these examples remind us that we can't just worship God any way that we want to. Our worship, Jesus said, must be according to truth, i.e., it must be in harmony with the Word of God.

But now, most members of faithful local churches of Christ get this. We don't have a problem with worshipping God in truth. But it behooves us to understand that worshipping God according to truth is not the only criterion for true worship. We can worship God accurately so far as truth is concerned, yet still be false worshippers because Jesus said that true worship is based, not only on truth, but on having the proper spirit. So then, the first thing we need to bring to any worship service is a proper spirit. Let's look at three things that are involved with having a proper spirit.

A) We must bring a willing mind.

When it comes to worshipping God, don't leave home without it. We should all be here because this is exactly where we want to be. It should be a delightful occasion every time we get into our cars and begin that trip to the meeting house to worship God. We should not be here just for appearance. We should not be here just to please someone else. We should not be here because we have been forced into it. We should not be here because we have been talked or tricked into it. We should be here because we want to be here. We should be here with a willing mind. David had a willing mind when he went to worship God.

Ps 122:1

I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the Lord.

In the Old Testament the house of the Lord was the temple. It was a place of public worship where Israelites would go to serve God. And when someone said to David, "Let's go to the house of the Lord," David didn't say "Oh no not again." David didn't say, "Why do we always have

to go to that place and worship God." No, instead he met that invitation with gladness and glee and readiness of heart. You see, when it came to worshipping God David did so with a willing mind.

Ps 42:4

When I remember these things, I pour out my soul in me: for I had gone with the multitude, I went with them to the house of God, with the voice of joy and praise, with a multitude that kept holyday.

Ps 84:2

My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh crieth out for the living God.

Ps 84:10

For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Is it not clear from these passages that David looked forward with great anticipation to the time when he could go to the house of God and worship his Creator? Should we feel anything less than David? And if so, please tell me why? Why should we not want to go to a place of worship and serve God every bit as much as David did? Is God not our Creator and Sustainer even as He was for David? Has God been less kind to us than He was to David? Has God demonstrated His love, His grace, and His mercy less to us than He did to David? I don't think so! Listen to me: we can't worship God thinking that it is a burden instead of a blessing and expect God to accept our feeble attempt. He won't do it. So then, we should not only worship God, we should, no we must, do so with a willing mind.

B) We must bring a ready mind.

We ought to come to service ready to get something out of it. Listen to me: make up your mind that you are going to get something out of every service you attend. Some Christians make up their minds before they get to services that they aren't going to get anything out of it (**e.g. Wednesday night Bible study, singing, preaching, etc.**). It is a disgrace before God to bring that kind of mentality to any worship service. That kind of thinking needs to be left at home. It doesn't matter who the teacher is, who the preacher may be, or who is leading the singing, we should all be able to get something good out of every service. It's simply a matter of having a receptive and ready mind.

How can we not get something out of singing praises to God, approaching His throne in prayer and studying His Word? How can we not benefit from giving of our means to God with a cheerful heart on the Lord's Day? I ask you tonight, how can we not get anything out of

remembering and reflecting upon the sacrifice that our Savior made on our behalf? Let me tell you how that is possible—it's by thinking that worship is something that is done to you instead of something that you do. This is one reason why denominations have these big productions where the majority of people just sit back and enjoy the show and think that they have worshipped God. But if we are not careful, brethren, we can develop the same spirit. I have had some say to me before I preach, "preach good tonight because I've had a long day." Pay attention to me: I am not the entertainment for tonight. I'm worshipping God right now and you should be worshipping God too. Worship is an active response to God whereby we declare His worth. Worship is not passive; it's participative. Worship is not simply a mood; it is a response. Worship is not just a feeling; it's a declaration of our love and respect for God. And every time we come to a worship service it should be with the mind set that we are going to get something out of it because we are ready to participate (e.g., Alice Beard).

C) We must bring a reverent mind.

We sometimes allow our worship services to become too casual. Let's remember what worship is. The Greek word for worship is *proskuneo* προσκυνεο (pros-koo-neh'-o) and Vine says it literally means to *kiss towards, denoting an act of homage*. Strong says it means to *"prostrate oneself in homage; to do reverence to or to adore."* What are we doing here? What do we do each and every time we come to a worship service like this? Well I'll tell you what we are supposed to be doing. We are supposed to be bowing down before God, figuratively speaking, and paying Him homage with reverent adoration.

Now let me ask you, "How do you behave in a typical worship service like this? Do you show God respect? Do you prostrate yourself before the living God with godly fear and respect? There is not a few in our assemblies that don't do that. You would be surprised at what preachers see when they preach. So far as seeing what is going on and how people are behaving during services, I have the best seat in the house, don't I? And what do I see? I see some people talking. I see notes being passed around. I see people getting up and down, going in and out of the auditorium. I see people playing with babies. And yes, I see people sleeping. Do you know why these things go on during worship service? It's because some of us left home without the proper spirit. What should we bring to worship service? We must bring a proper spirit and a part of that is a reverent mind. When you come to an assembly like this, you should plan, once the service begins, to stop talking, stop playing with the babies, stop passing notes and start worshipping God with the proper mental disposition.

And I have to say one more thing about worshipping God with reverence. A part of doing this is giving God our absolute best. Anything less than our best is disrespectful (**Mal. 1:6-13**).

II. We Must Bring A Holy Life.

Bringing a holy life to worship is absolutely essential. Sin a barrier to true worship.

Prov 21:27

The sacrifice of the wicked is abomination: how much more, when he bringeth it with a wicked mind?

We can't live wrong and worship right. We may go through the motions and everything we do from a physical standpoint may be right; but if our life is not pure before God, He will turn His face from us.

Prov 28:9

He that turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayer shall be abomination.

Jer 6:20

To what purpose cometh there to me incense from Sheba, and the sweet cane from a far country? Your burnt offerings are not acceptable, nor your sacrifices sweet unto me.

1 Sam 15:22

And Samuel said, Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams.

Yes, God wants us to offer sacrifices to Him. God wants to be worshipped. But what God wants more than all of the sacrifices in the world is an obedient heart. We must worship God with holy hands or not at all. God said, "**Be ye holy for I am holy**" (**1 Pet. 1:16**). And Paul declared, "**For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness**" (**1 Thess. 4:7**). To be holy is to live apart from the unrighteousness of the world. It is to live a sanctified life, devoted and dedicated to the God of heaven. And the graciousness of it all is seen in the fact that God has revealed to us exactly how we can do that.

Titus 2:11-12

For the grace of God that brings salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world.

Tit. 2:12 is a synopsis of what the New Testament teaches us on how to live our lives. Paul teaches us here how to live in respect to ourselves, in respect to others, and in respect God. And we must live right in all these

areas in order to come to a place of worship and offer to God acceptable sacrifices. Let's look at what Paul says.

A) In respect to ourselves we must live soberly.

To live soberly is to live a life of self-control and temperance. The Devil just can't wait to find a weak child of God who is not sober-minded. That's someone he knows he can manipulate and persuade to do evil with a little temptation. To be sober is the opposite of being drunk. (Describe how a drunken person acts.)

1 Thess 5:6

Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.

1 Peter 1:13

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

1 Peter 5:8

Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.

B) In respect to others we must live righteously.

We must treat others fairly and in a just fashion. We must not ever mistreat our neighbor or defraud our fellow man. We must, if we want to be acceptable to our God, rise above this dog eat dog society and resist the temptation to put self first all of the time.

Matt 7:12

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Phil 2:3

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Jer 22:3

Thus saith the Lord; Execute ye judgment and righteousness, and deliver the spoiled out of the hand of the oppressor: and do no wrong, do no violence to the stranger, the fatherless, nor the widow, neither shed innocent blood in this place.

C) In respect to God we must be godly.

Vine says that godliness ***"denotes that piety which is characterized by a Godward attitude, and does that which is well pleasing to Him."***

So then, godliness begins with the heart. It has to do with having the right attitude towards God, i.e., giving God the respect and reverence He deserves. But then true godliness always ends with action. The person who maintains godliness might make some mistakes in life, even to the point of transgressing God's law, but he will not live and dwell in sin. Instead, when he falls short, he will repent of his sin and get back on track. His life will be characterized by doing that which is pleasing to God (**Jn. 8:29**).

Now here is the point so far as this lesson is concerned. If you are not living soberly, righteously and godly in this present world, your attempts at worshipping God will be futile. Why? Because the absence of any of these things results in the presence of sin in your life and please be advised that God and sin don't get along. We must know how to worship God and what God expects when we come together in our divinely arranged assemblies, but if we are living with sin in our life when we assemble ourselves together, God will not have respect unto our offering.

III. We Must Bring A Reconcilable Heart.

One of the saddest things to witness in the body of Christ is division between brethren in a local church. When Christians don't get along, it is the sorriest sight that one can behold in a local church. Churches can overcome not having the most organized worship services in the world. Churches can overcome minor differences of opinion in the area of judgment between brethren. Churches can even overcome deficiencies in the area of talent amongst its membership. But I'll tell you what a local church can never overcome—infighting among brethren. A local church that has members that don't love one another is a local church that is doomed to fail.

Matt 12:25

Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every city or house divided against itself shall not stand.

The Psalmist put it like this:

Ps 133:1

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

And Paul, attempting to correct one of the major problems at Corinth, that is, the fact that they were a divided church, wrote these familiar words:

1 Cor 1:10

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

This is what God wants for each one of us in Christ. What we have been called to be—brothers and sisters in Christ—we ought to be in feeling and in fact. Abraham once said to his nephew Lot, ***“Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between my herdsmen and thy herdsmen; for we be brethren”*** (**Gen. 13:8**). Listen to me: every member of every local church should be at peace one with another. There is no place in a local church that is thriving and striving to reach their full potential for grudge-holding, nit-picking, ultra-sensitive and hyper-critical brethren. We must learn to get along. And when trouble among brethren raises its ugly head; when brethren have some kind of falling out, the issue needs to be resolved and it needs to be resolved before you attempt to worship God. And what is needed for that to happen is a heart of reconciliation. And if you haven't, for some reason, been able to straighten things out before you come to the house of God to worship Him, you better bring that spirit of reconciliation with you to worship (**Matt. 5:21-24; Matt. 18:15**).

Conclusion:

What have you brought to worship service, even tonight. Did you come here tonight with the proper spirit? Did you come here tonight with a holy life? And if necessary, did you come with a heart of reconciliation? What you bring to worship, and what you leave at home, can go a long way in determining whether or not your sacrifice is acceptable to God.