

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

“THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF WORSHIP”

By Gary Colley

Many times, we have heard someone say there is one action of worship which is “the most important part.” Please know that this article proclaims the great importance of this part and every part of our worship, and we always seek to uphold reverence for it.

The only way we can know if we are pleasing to God is to hear His word and follow it (Heb. 11:6; 1 Pet. 3:15). But, are these individuals actually saying this is the only part “we just cannot miss... the rest is unimportant?” Is the Lord’s Supper the most important part of worship? Well, at least this is what seemingly is thought and shown by their words and actions!

We have heard of some families in Missouri who, a few years ago, would stop just long enough at the church building to partake of the Lord’s Supper at the beginning of the services and then immediately leave for their fishing trip. The preacher arose one Sunday to say, “If you people who only want to partake of the Lord’s Supper, and not participate in the other important parts of this worship service will just line up outside, stop at the curb and blow your horn, we will give you curb service!” By this means, he began to help these souls to think of their ways being wrong, and he stopped this ungodly practice!

Prayers At The Table

When prayer is offered at the Lord’s Table some say, “Now we come to the most important part of our worship service.” Hence our question, “Is this the most important part of our worship?” This is especially true and of importance for our thinking when one considers the Lord’s Supper. None should ever suggest, or in any way deny, that the partaking of this memorial meal, commanded by our Lord and observed by Christians since the beginning of the church of Christ (Acts 2:42), is of any little or less importance than any other part of worship! But our question is, “Is this the most, or even the only, really important part of our worship?”

What About Singing?

What could be more important than uniting our voices in the cadence of singing “*spiritual songs*” (songs containing the Holy Spirit’s teaching), bringing our hearts together in worship with the many voices singing as one voice given by God, coupled with our affection or hearts (Eph. 5:19-20; Col. 3:16-17)? This is certainly another important part of every true worship service. But it is not “the most important” part since the Bible does not speak of the “most important part” of our worship service. Some failed in the past to see the singing as an important part of worship, saying as they remained outside the assembly, “Well, the singing is about over; it is time for the worship to begin.”

“Preach The Word” (?)

A highly important part of our worship is seen in faithfully preaching the Gospel (2 Tim. 4:1-4). Its importance is mentioned by the Lord in every account of the Great Commission, and by every inspired writer of the New Testament (Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-16; Lk. 24:46-47; Jn. 20:21-23). Yet we never notice any one of them saying that this is “the most important part” of our worship services.

The Blessed Hour Of Prayer (?)

We should never overlook the great importance of prayer! No worship service is complete without speaking to

our Heavenly Father through His Son Jesus in prayer. Prayer was commanded on Pentecost (Acts 2:42), commanded and practiced by Paul (1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 10:1-3); and employed by Peter (1 Pet. 2:17-19). Yet, again, we do not find these inspired men saying, "Prayer is the most important part of our worship service."

The Great Privilege Of Giving

This is the place where some think preachers stop preaching and start meddling! Some do not view the privilege of giving in worship as a spiritual blessing (Eph. 1:3). We suggest that all read Job 38-42 often when they think for a moment that they know more than God. We need to ask ourselves some serious questions! Who created all things? How much did we bring into the world at birth? Where do all of our blessings come from for our existence in this life? Who is the one to which we look for life, breath, strength, health, and the blessing of our money? How many of these blessings will we be able to take into the next life or eternal life? Ah yes! The answer is very clear, "***We brought nothing into this world, and it is certain that we will carry nothing out***" (1 Tim. 6:7-10). Is this not just as much "a most important part" as any other part of the five actions Jehovah has asked of us to render in today's worship?

Come now, let us reason together. ■

WORSHIP OR ENTERTAINMENT?

By Bob Prichard

In our entertainment-oriented culture, many churches find themselves trying to "out do" themselves with more and more elaborate additions to worship. What began as special music by a choir becomes a full orchestra with professional soloists. A dramatic reading necessitates a full Broadway stage production. And as long as those who come to worship enjoy what is offered, anything goes. The expectation is that sermons will be shorter, wittier, and more uplifting. Anything in worship that cannot be "jazzed up" must be abandoned as boring – and there is nothing worse than being boring, we are led to believe.

The problem with this entertainment orientation is that the very object of worship is forgotten. God is the "audience" in worship. Jesus told the Samaritan woman that ignorant worship was unacceptable to God, even though it may have been sincere or enjoyable. "***God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth***" (John 4:24). To worship God in spirit and truth means that worship must be from the heart, not just outward acts, and that it must be done in exact obedience to God's commands. The worship must be directed to Him, not to the whims of the worshipers.

God's regulations for worship as set out in the New Testament are neither boring nor out of date. They are God-centered, while entertainment is man-centered.

There is nothing wrong with the worshiper enjoying worship. God intended worship to bless His children. But when worship is merely window dressing for an entertainment performance, it cannot please God. The apostle warned, "***Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God***" (2 Jn. 9). Paul condemned things that "***have indeed a show of wisdom in will worship***" (Col. 2:23). "***Will worship***" is that worship fashioned after man's desires. ■

"...I write so that you may know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth" (1 Tim 3:15, NKJV).

"Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear. For our God is a consuming fire" (Heb. 12:28-29, NKJV).

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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