

Right Worship – Acts 2.42-47 Pt. 1

⁴² And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. ⁴³ And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. ⁴⁴ And all who believed were together and had all things in common. ⁴⁵ And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.

⁴⁶ And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, ⁴⁷ praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved (Acts 2.42-47, ESV).¹

Memory Verse – And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. – Acts 2.42

Worship, what is it, why must we do it, and to who should we give our worship? These questions on the service might seem simple enough to answer, yet as we look at the church (outside of this Covid-19 year), we will find, declining attendances in both worship services and Sunday schools. Mark Clifton states, "study after study indicates that 70 to 80 percent of evangelical churches in North America are either plateaued or declining."² As a direct result of these churches inactivity there has been a decline in memberships and baptisms within the Southern Baptist Convention for the last eight years.³

Of course, to say a church in decline is not worshipping with be unethical, as we are not there and cannot attest to how they are worshipping. However, a church, who's focus is on God will produce fruit. We all must remember we are the church, it is not the building, grounds, or even the people of the past who constructed whatever

Thus, Christ said,

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinegrower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing (John 15.1-5, NRSV).⁴

Therefore, we are, as the church, called to, commanded to produce fruit. This fruit will come in various sizes, shapes and colors, but nevertheless, we are called to bear fruit. If we are not then we are not being obedient to Christ's command and therefore, sinning before Almighty God.

Yes, Paul said, some plants, and some waters, but it is God who gives the increase (I Corinthians 3.6-7). But, somewhere along the way we all will see some fruit, otherwise Christ would not have said, "Abide in Me and I in you and you will bear much fruit..." (vs.5).

How does worship, fruit, church growth or decline all fit together? John Piper cited Psalm 92.1 and Psalm 67.3-4 as he wrote:

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Mission exists because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces, before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever. Worship, therefore, is the fuel and goal of missions. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white how enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the

¹ *The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*. (2016). (Ac 2:42–47). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.

² Clifton, Mark. (2016). *Reclaiming Glory*. (pp. xv). Nashville: B&H Publishing Group.

³ <https://factsand Trends.net/2018/06/01/worship-attendance-rises-baptisms-decline-in-sbc/>

⁴ *The Holy Bible: New Revised Standard Version*. (1989). (Jn 15:1–5). Nashville: Thomas Nelson Publishers.

greatness of God.⁵

Piper has nailed it, if our worship is right, our focus is right, our object is right, our attitude is right, then those around us will want to be part of what we are doing. We will not need any fancy music, or great named preacher. No flashy light show, or animals or dare we say it, comfortable seats.

No people will come because of our genuine, true worship of God. As Jesus told the women at the well, “Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth” (John 4.23-34, NIV).⁶

It is an attitude, it is about our heart, soul and mind. We must come before God with pure and sincere hearts. Humble in a way to recognize who God is and who we are. When we come any other way, we are tainting God’s worship and our focus (Psalm 51.10-17)

We must come with changed minds. This is hard to do, because we think everything is about us. “I want this kind of music”, “I want this kind of message”, “The message must only be so long”, “If the preacher goes over an hour...”, “We must get out before the other churches to get to the diners.”

We should listen to ourselves, what are we coming into the House of God for? Are we coming to check off a box, to say we have done our Sunday duty and the Lord should be pleased? Really? True worship will happen even if the very stones have to worship Him (Luke 19.39-40).

We must renew our minds, change them to think differently (Romans 12.1-2), to understand who we are worshipping and what our priorities must be. When we start putting God first and other things under His authority, we will find worship more enjoyable, eventful and uplifting. Because it is no longer about us and is now focused on the right object.

Finally, deep down we need to give up control of our lives to the Lord of Lords and King of Kings. Christ died on the cross to set us free. But, this freedom we have does not give us the right to do anything we want. It might seem like we can, however, we are still bound to the One who set us free.

We must remember His sacrifice, His mindset, and humility which allowed Him to come to this earth and stand, hang, lay, and raise in our place. If it was not for Him, we would have nothing worthy of worship. We owe Him our very soul; He must be fully in-control of our lives; and when He is we will worship Him in a whole new light (Galatians 2.20).

Application

1. What do you feel is an acceptable number of times to come to church to worship? Please explain why you feel that way. (I might share your answer but not your name, please be honest).
2. How do you feel when you come to corporate worship? Please Explain as above.
3. Deeper Thinking: Read Acts 2.42-47 – Why do you think the early church had such a great explosion? List at least two reason and explain. You can use scripture or other illustrations to back up your discussion.
4. Commit to learning Acts 2.42 and find one person to share the Biblical Christmas Story with.

Prayer

Lord, Almighty God, Creator of the Heavens and Earth, Hallowed be Thy Name. You are worthy of all worship, honor and praise and I know I do not spend enough time doing any of those things, Lord please forgive me for not elevating You to Your proper place, for not holding You in the place of honor as I should, for giving You praise for all You do in my life, and for spending time worshipping You in a variety of ways. Today on the day we celebrate Your Birth; I want to, I Will Worship God Almighty without reservation, and with others, by His power. Help me Lord to trust You, to worship You so others can see Your gospel in me. I pray all this in Jesus Christ’s Name, Amen.

⁵ Piper, John. (2003). *Let The Nations Be Glad! 2nd ed.* (pp. 17). Grand Rapids: Baker Academic.

⁶ *The New International Version*. (2011). (Jn 4:23–24). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.