

Day One: The Heart of Worship

Author: Brent Colley

Soul Survivor Church in Watford, England, did a pretty revolutionary thing. Before I share with you what this thing was, I want to share a little about the church. Soul Survivor was a thriving church with dynamic preaching and lively music. If you were simply looking on, you would think that the church was leader of the pack for the worship revival that the entire country was experiencing; but the congregation was struggling to find meaning in the musical outpouring. So the pastor did a pretty brave thing. He decided to get rid of the sound system and band for a season and gathered with the people and just their voices. His point was that the church had lost its way in worship, and the way to get back to the heart would be to strip everything away. He wanted to remind the church family that they were producers in worship, not just consumers. Pastor Mike Pilavachi, asked, "When you come through the doors on a Sunday, what are you bringing as your offering to God?" The leaders admit that, initially, some moments of embarrassing silence occurred; however, people eventually broke into acapella songs and heartfelt prayers. It wasn't long before they reintroduced the musicians and sound system. This happened only after they said they had gained a new perspective of worship being all about Jesus and that HE commands a response in the depths of our souls, no matter what the circumstance and setting. It was in this situation that a young worship leader, Matt Readman, wrote a simple song that describes what occurred "The Heart of Worship."

*When the music fades, all is stripped away, and I simply come
Longing just to bring something that's of worth that will bless your heart..
I'm coming back to the heart of worship, and it's all about You, Jesus.*

Now I ask you, "When you come through the doors on Sundays and Wednesdays and to rehearsals, what are you bringing as your offering to God?"

Day Two: The Revelation Song Part II - Face Down Worship

Author: Shelly Hollis

Here go the goose bumps again! Our fearless choir director tells us all the time, "There is nothing more powerful than a song taken from scripture!" Let's continue to look at the powerful meaning behind "The Revelation Song." Here are the lyrics to the 2nd verse:

*Clothed in rainbows, of living color
Flashes of lightning, rolls of thunder
Blessing and honor, strength and glory and power be
To You the only wise King*

Now compare that verse with the actual scripture from Ezekiel 1:

"Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking." (Ezekiel 1:27-28)

What in the world are these verses describing? Ezekiel is getting a glimpse of God's glory before he delivers the message of judgment to an idolatrous nation. As the prophet stood by the Chebar River, he saw some terribly awesome things. Verse 26 explains that it is a description of the throne of God - the only wise King from the song - that Ezekiel is seeing here at the end of chapter one. Note the description of God as having "something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around." The "glowing metal" is such an underestimation of this scene. The meaning of glowing metal has a root meaning all the way back to "electrum," which is related to our English word electricity! So when the song talks about the "flashes of lightning," it is a reference back to the glowing metal.

Any time God's glory is present, there is always a glow that accompanies it. Remember how Moses' face would glow after coming down from Mt. Sinai? Child of God, your face can glow too just by spending time with God who is now accessible to us at anytime and in any place! Can people tell by looking at you that you have been in God's presence?

Now for the rainbow reference - we all know that a rainbow is a reminder of God's covenant of preservation. So, in the midst of all this electrified vision, Ezekiel is reminded that even though God is going to remove His Shekinah glory from the nation of Israel, He is still going to preserve His people and longs for a restored relationship.

God was about to do a fresh work through Ezekiel, and the vision was just what he needed to remind him of the all powerful God he served. Let's not forget that we serve this same powerful God today. He is worthy of our whole-hearted praise. Ezekiel dropped face down to the ground in worship. So did the elders and the living creatures that we discussed in in last week's devotion from Revelation 5 . What is your response to the vision of God's magnificent power?

Day Three: Worship Leadership

Author: Myra Carter

"Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God." (Colossians 3:16)

Have you ever heard the old saying, "You're preaching to the choir?" I asked 30 people what they thought that phrase meant, and I got lots of good answers; even a good response from a friend that is not even a Christian. She said, "You are preaching to a group of people that don't really need to hear it." With that in mind, I want to remind you of something that you already know...

You have a wonderful opportunity each week to be used by God to lead the church in worship. You are the ones who set up the service for worship. The choir is a part of the body of Christ responsible for leading the way into worship and preparing the people for the pastor's message, given by the Lord. That is pretty powerful stuff, and it literally takes everyone in the body to make it function as one.

What an honor and blessing singing in the choir must be for each of you! Please let me remind you that with that privilege comes a great responsibility. You are a leader, you are an example, and you are an encouragement to the entire congregation.

I pray that God will fill each of you up until you are overflowing in His love as you sing each week. Come ready and willing to be used by God, knowing the great impact you have on our worship service. Remember this responsibility is more than just a Sunday commitment. Your lifestyle is an overflow of what is in your heart, and if you expect your heart to be ready to lead others in worship, you need to live your life accordingly. I hope that each day you will commit to spend time alone with the Lord, and see the impact it has on your own life and worship with the Lord.

I thank God for all He has done for each of us, and I thank you for allowing God to use you and your talents for His glory!

Day Four: Sing a New Song

Author: Jason Moore

"Praise the Lord! Sing to the Lord a new song, and His praise in the assembly of the saints." (Psalm 149:1)

Hallelujah! When is the last time you uttered this word? Better yet, when was the last time you really meant it. The term literally means praise the Lord. But, it in no way refers to some half-hearted, going-through-the-motions ritual on a Sunday morning. It goes much deeper than that. The Psalmist is talking about singing a new song to the Lord. Are you with me?

Singing a new song means having a new experience. The incredibly wonderful thing about the Lord Jesus is that we can experience Him in a whole new way each day. Each morning His mercies are brand new. He never ceases to show Himself off in new ways with each passing day. It is a newness that Jesus continually offers His children. It is what allows our whole heart to sing a new song. However, if you nevertake the time to experience His mercies anew, then you can only sing the same old song.

When is the last time you counted your blessings? When is the last time you opened your eyes to God's new mercies in your life? When is the last time you sang a new song? When we experience God with our whole heart, then we begin to worship Him with our whole heart. Challenge yourself to have a brand new experience with your Lord and Savior this week. It is then that the hallelujahs and the new songs will pour out from the overflow of your praise. What begins as private praise eventually becomes public worship in the assembly of the saints. Just imagine the corporate praise if we all begin singing a new song privately!

Day Five: Praise with Psalms of Adoration

Author: Pamela Storz

I have a very dear friend who praises the Father with the most amazing prayers. When she prays, I am consumed with worship. I feel as though I've been transported directly into the Father's presence, and He's standing right there listening! What makes her prayers so meaningful is knowing she has lived trials you and I will never even remotely begin to comprehend.

Hearing this woman pray is an experience in unrelenting adoration of the Father. Her prayers and petitions to the Father are interspersed with perfectly appointed scripture quotes...how does she do it? She remembers the perfect scripture at exactly the right moment! I know my friend will not mind me telling you - she knows the scripture because she has come through the fire, using His word to praise Him in the midst of unspeakable hurt.

One night, out of curiosity, I googled some of the familiar scripture she used in a closing prayer. Guess what? They were all Psalms! Of course! Who knew better than David? He was "a man after God's own heart." A man who, despite his failures, trials, and sins, repented and kept his eyes on the Father.

Here is a small prayer sampling of my sweet sister in Christ:

Holy Father, I lift my eyes to You whose throne is in Heaven. Let everything that has breath praise you Lord! We give our thanks to you, our Heavenly Father, for You alone are good. Your love endures forever. Precious Lord, you have been our dwelling place throughout all generations. Before the mountains were born, or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting, You are our God! Oh Lord, you have searched us and you know us. We cry to you, O Lord; hear our voices. Let Your ears be attentive to our cries for mercy. You have granted us the desires of our hearts, and have not withheld our requests. Praise you, Lord! Praise you, Lord!

Now, doesn't that bring tears of joy and worship to your eyes? Yes, Lord, Yes, Lord, Yes, Yes, Lord, Amen!

God has richly blessed me with the opportunity to praise and worship with this lovely woman each week. She has taught me that when I feel inadequately expressive in praise to my Father, to simply open my Bible. Once I begin reading David's Psalms to the Father, praise begins to pour from my heart to His ear. And He hears.