

Is Worship an experience or a sacrifice?

These days wherever I turn I hear people say that the worship experience in that particular church was awesome or it was a great experience etc.. Somehow the word worship has become so synonymous to the word experience, that we address it as the worship experience.

Let us go down to the root of the matter. It is always good to compare our contemporary religious practices and fashions with the Word of God. Mass opinion about worship may not necessarily be biblical opinion.

Why do I object the word experience?

I have nothing against the word experience. In fact without a personal experience with God, I could never believe Him as real. Experience forms the core of anybody's relationship with Jesus Christ. But my question is whether worship can be considered as a personal experience.

Do I worship so that I come out with that good feeling or is my worship God directed?

This is where I would like to draw the line of difference. When I speak about worship experience, it has to do with me, what I experience, how I feel etc, etc.. Or do I worship the Most Holy God with the sense of awe, so that I know from the depths of my heart whether my worship is pleasing to Him or not?

Sadly today worship has come to mean good music, slow songs fully laden with pathos making one cry or laugh. But the real question is whether God has accepted my worship? Worship is foremost an offering , a sacrifice. It is all about God and that I worship Him with something that is of value in my life.

Early worship always began with an altar.

Then Noah built an altar to the LORD, and took of every clean animal and of every clean bird, and offered burnt offerings on the altar. ²¹And when the LORD smelled the pleasing odor, the LORD said in his heart, "I will never again curse the

ground because of humankind, for the inclination of the human heart is evil from youth; nor will I ever again destroy every living creature as I have done. Genesis 5,20-21.

True worship ends with the approval of God. God rejected the offering of Cain, for the attitude of his heart was not as right as Abel's. Time and again I am surprised at people who lead worship on the stage and yet keep living on such decayed lifestyles of porn watching. Will such worship ever go over the roof? I know this is a very sensitive issue, but from the word of God we should know clearly that God abhors sinful living. Yes we are washed by the precious Blood of the Lamb, but that does not give us the licence to go on living in daring sinfulness.

Please read the following passage carefully. Yes this is from the Word of God, written by Amos the prophet.

I hate, I despise your festivals,
and I take no delight in your solemn assemblies.
²² Even though you offer me your burnt offerings and grain offerings,
I will not accept them;
and the offerings of well-being of your fatted animals
I will not look upon.
²³ Take away from me the noise of your songs;
I will not listen to the melody of your harps.
²⁴ But let justice roll down like waters,
and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream. (5 : 21-24)

This is the Lord speaking to His own people, who think they are doing a service to Him, by singing beautifully. But God commands them to take away the noise of your songs.

My friend, my question to you is this, "What does God think about your worship?" He expects that every person worships Him in Spirit and Truth. What about the truth of our hearts? Do we dare to lift up our hands and sing praises to the Lord and yet persist in the double life of continuing sin? Jesus made it

very clear that we cannot enter heaven if we continue to live in sin. He even goes to the extent of asking us to cut off the body part which makes us sin. My brother, my sister if computer or the beauty parlour is your source of sin, cut it off mercilessly. It is better to reach heaven without a computer than to sit in hell with one.

If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell^o of fire. Mathew 18 : 8-9.

The very words of Jesus has to sober us. Jesus speaks about a real and literal hell, the eternal fire. So do not play with holy God. Worship is not entertainment nor experience. It is to magnify and exalt the God of Heaven and earth.