

“Worship”
 1 Chronicles 16
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^{1CH 16:4} (King David) appointed some of the Levites to minister before the ark of the LORD, to make petition, to give thanks, and to praise the LORD, the God of Israel: ⁵ Asaph was the chief, Zechariah second, then Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-Edom and Jeiel. They were to play the lyres and harps, Asaph was to sound the cymbals, ⁶ and Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests were to blow the trumpets regularly before the ark of the covenant of God. ^{1CH 16:7} That day David first committed to Asaph and his associates this psalm of thanks to the LORD:

^{1CH 16:8} Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name;
 make known among the nations what he has done.

^{1CH 16:9} Sing to him, sing praise to him;
 tell of all his wonderful acts.

^{1CH 16:10} Glory in his holy name;
 let the hearts of those who seek the LORD rejoice.

^{1CH 16:11} Look to the LORD and his strength;
 seek his face always.

^{1CH 16:12} Remember the wonders he has done,
 his miracles, and the judgments he pronounced,

Review of some of their and our history with God.

^{1CH 16:23} Sing to the LORD, all the earth;
 proclaim his salvation day after day.

^{1CH 16:24} Declare his glory among the nations,
 his marvelous deeds among all peoples.

^{1CH 16:25} For great is the LORD and most worthy of praise;
 he is to be feared above all gods.

^{1CH 16:26} For all the gods of the nations are idols,
 but the LORD made the heavens.

^{1CH 16:27} Splendor and majesty are before him;
 strength and joy in his dwelling place.

^{1CH 16:28} Ascribe to the LORD, O families of nations,
 ascribe to the LORD glory and strength,

^{1CH 16:29} ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name.

Bring an offering and come before him;
 worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

We often refer to our gathering on Sunday mornings as a worship services.

Most of us have some expectations of what a worship service is about and why we do it.

We expect music, prayers, Scripture reading, and teaching.

If given time to think about an answer most of us would say the worship service is obviously for the purpose of worshipping God.

But either because we are unfamiliar with church and worship or because we are overly familiar with them, we can too easily come to a worship service with little awareness of what it is really about.

I don't pretend that the text just read is a manual on worship.

But I do think it helps us understand what worship is so that as we worship we do so in the ways that honor our God and accomplish his purposes in our lives.

I realize that a lesson on worship doesn't sound very scintillating this morning.

But many of us spend a fair amount of time over the course of a year in what we call worship.

We also spend quite a bit of money having a place to worship and hiring and/or resourcing those who aid us in our worship.

And even a casual reading of the Bible will convince us that worship is a significant activity for those who belong to God.

I want to try to give us a biblical description of worship.

I want to do so for those who are newer to us and as a reminder to the rest of us.

We're going to look at the 29th verse of 1 Chronicles 16 more closely.

1 Chronicles 16:29 "Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; Bring an offering and come before him;

worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

This includes at least four things:

Worship is about the Lord and for the Lord

Worship engages the whole person

Worship reflects the glory of our Lord

Worship expresses the unity of the people of the Lord

1. So first of all, Worship is about the Lord and to the Lord.

We are reminded of this in the verse: “Ascribe to **THE LORD** the glory due his name.”

That may seem so obvious that we think it unnecessary to repeat.

But I’m trying to say two things in this; worship is **about** the Lord and worship is **for** the Lord.

Have you ever visited another church or even come to this one and left thinking or even saying:

“I didn’t get a thing out of that.” “The music was terrible, I didn’t know the songs, it just didn’t do a thing for me”?

(Notice I picked on the music not the preaching!)

You are not alone; apparently many people have had those thoughts.

Some people still think of a worship service as primarily a teaching/preaching event with some warm-up music.

Others think of worship, as a feeling they get - “My, wasn’t that worshipful this morning”.

Music, especially, has the power to evoke emotions but too often we think in terms of how the music made **us** feel something such as happy, glad, sad, triumphant, guilty, etc.

Too often we judge a worship service as “good” or not, based on how the service made us feel – as if the worship was maybe **about** God but it was **for** us.

Someone wrote,

“To be spectators,
 that’s what we like,
 isn’t it?
 No involvement,
 no participation,
 not too close,
 just sit back and watch.
 Be a critic.
 If it isn’t professional enough,
 or isn’t popular,
 it’s the performers!
 I won’t come back.
 I want my money’s worth –
 at church.” *(from Christiansen Don’t waste your time in worship)*

Worship is not something done for us or to us.
 Instead, worship is something we **do**.
 Worship has an object alright but it is not us.

We get worship all wrong when we become the audience instead of God.

Mark Horst wrote, “As soon as we come to worship looking for and expecting an experience, we have violated the most basic principle of (worship). We easily become religious aesthetes capable of judging the entertainment value of a church service while remaining unaware of the reality it can open us to. Unfortunately for us, when our worship becomes self-conscious rather than God-conscious, it points not to God’s reality but (only to) our own.” *(Mark Horst as quoted in Anderson p76)*

John Kinzer wrote, “Worship is directed toward Someone... In order to know how to worship (God), we need to... understand who he is - his holiness, his greatness, his glory, his steadfast love and compassion... In scripture worship is **something** expressed, given, or shown.” It is something quite specific expressed to a very specific God. *(Kinzer: (in October 87 Pastoral Renewal)*

We want ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.
 So we try to make certain the songs we sing are primarily about God not about us.

And we want the audience of our worship to be God not ourselves or others.

That's why we sang the song we did earlier:

O for a thousand tongues to sing
 My great Redeemer's praise,
 The glories of my God and King,
 The triumphs of His grace!
 He breaks the power of canceled sin,
 He sets the prisoner free;
 His blood can make the foulest clean,
 His blood availed for me.

We made a decision over a year ago to change the focus of how we plan our worship of God.

In our worship, we will not target any audience but God himself.

For several years there has been a trend to tailor worship to meet the expectations of various age groups.

But when you tailor the worship to Builders, Boomers, Busters or Millenials, the message sent is that the worship is ultimately about them and what they like, what fits them.

The worship becomes about us not God.

But our worship must be about God – he is the subject of our worship.

And our worship must be to him – he is the object of our worship.

I want you to hear both aspects of this in the contemporary song "Above All."

Above all powers, above all kings,
 Above all nature and all created things;
 Above all wisdom and all the ways of man
 You were here before the world began
 Above all kingdoms, above all thrones,
 Above all wonders the world has ever known;
 Above all wealth and treasures of the earth,
 There's no way to measure what You're worth.

Hear it also in the historic hymn, “Come, Thou Fount of every blessing.”

Come, Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing Your
grace;
Streams of mercy,
never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise!

We want be a people who intentionally think **about GOD** in our worship *and* engage **Him** in singing, praying, listening to His word, and interacting with Him through the testimonies of others.

Our worship is **about** the Lord and **for** the Lord.

1 Chronicles 16:29 “Ascribe **to the LORD** the glory due his name.
Bring an offering and come before him;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.

2. The second idea I want us to explore is from that word “Ascribe.”

The word means “to credit” – credit the Lord with the glory due his name.

In 1 Chronicles 16:29, the poetic parallel and synonym is obviously the word “worship.”

Most of you know that the word “worship” comes from two old English words meaning to show respect or reverence for a worthy one.

We worship what is worthy.

One Hebrew word translated “worship” is the word “to bow down, to do homage”.

One Greek word translated “worship” is a word that means “to kiss toward” – “to show reverence.”

Another Greek word means, “to serve”.

Notice the words, “ascribe, bring and worship,” convey something about three things: knowledge, attitude and action.

Said differently, true worship engages the head, the heart and the response.

It includes what we think, what we feel and what we do.

True worship can’t possibly be routine; it is too engaging and interactive to be boring.

Some of the controversy about worship in the past few years has been about substance versus style.

Some will argue that the old hymns are stuffy and lifeless.

Others will argue that the new songs are trite and shallow.

Some want content while others want emotion.

Almost every Psalm in the Old Testament, maybe every one of them, combines passion with content.

The Psalmist uses emotive words of excitement or reverence to express specific things about the Lord.

He wrote, “My heart yearns for you” (emotion) because you are shelter and you are strength (content).

Knowledge without emotion is sterile.

And emotion without substance is silly.

William Willimon wrote, “A young man falls in love with a young woman.

He begins to whistle a tune as he walks down the sidewalk.

Then he sings.

He believes that he has never seen a day more beautiful than today - the sky, the trees, the people.

Now he is skipping, almost dancing down the sidewalk.

“Young man, do you know what you are doing?” someone asks rather critically. “

What a silly question to ask of someone who is in love.

Of course he doesn’t know what he is doing, and that’s just the fun of it...

If it is **only** thought, it isn't good worship...

Worship is a way of being in love, of glorifying and enjoying the One of whom we can say, "We love, because he first loved us."

(Willimon p63)

On the other hand imagine the young man saying to his girlfriend, "I love you, I love you, I love you."

And then she asks him what it is he loves about her.

He responds, "I don't know, I just love you!"

She would have every right to say, "Go away – that is nonsense."

Some people fear emotionalism, others fear deadness.

But of the two deficiencies, Bishop Moule of England was supposed to have said he finds it easier to tone down a fanatic than to resurrect a corpse.

Do you know why we sing so much in church?

Because music expresses a range of emotions better than almost any other activity.

Or as one man said it, "Prose is usually too confining for the joyful business" of worship. (With Glad and Generous Hearts p60)

We are able to take our thoughts (content) and express them to God from our hearts (emotion).

But we also notice that worship is not just thought and feeling, it is action.

"Ascribe," "Bring," "Worship!" - **Do** something!

When we come together it is not enough for us to worship vicariously through others.

We are to engage our God – all of us, each of us.

I'm going to chastise a little but I do it because I want God to be honored and I want you to learn the great benefit of worship.

There are some who don't sing when the congregation sings.
 Don't tell me you are ascribing to the Lord the glory due
 his name by just thinking it in your heads.

I know from personal experience that when we engage not only our
 minds but our mouths and our bodies we are much more able to
 actually do what we claim we are doing.

That's why we sometimes stand, it's why we kneel, it's why we
 ask you to read with us and it is why we ask you to sing.

God's people have always been a singing people.

Your singing ability is totally irrelevant.

C.S. Lewis wrote, "Delight is incomplete until it is expressed...
 (Reflections on the Psalms p 93-95)

Engage your head and your heart and your body – **Ascribe,**
bring, worship

3. The third idea I want us to explore briefly is this:

1 Chronicles 16:29 "Ascribe to the Lord **the GLORY** due his name...
 worship the LORD in the **splendor** of his holiness."

Worship is to reflect the glory and splendor of our Lord.

The word "glory" is understood with such additional words as
 weightiness, importance, fullness, beauty, and depth.

Then when I see that word "splendor," I think of brightness,
 brilliance, color and variety.

Our God is so original and so infinite!

When I think of the variety God has given his universe, when I
 think of the colors, textures, sounds, creatures, and all else God
 has created, I begin to capture something of the infinity of our
 God.

Such a God calls forth creativity in our worship to reflect the glory, the
 splendor, of our God.

No **one** of us is capable of expressing the worship that is due
 our God.

No one of us has had all the experiences that reflect his goodness.

Not any one age group or any other group of us can adequately remember and adequately express with sufficient creativity the worship our God deserves.

But we forget that too easily.

We tend to think God can only be adequately worshipped in the ways we find comfortable.

Opposition to the way others express their worship is not new to the church.

One group saw fit to express their disapproval of the new music entering the church in these words:

“There are several reasons for opposing it: It’s too new. It’s too worldly, even blasphemous. The new Christian music is not as pleasant as the more established style and because there are so many new songs you can’t learn them all. It puts too much emphasis on instrumental music rather than on godly lyrics. This new music creates disturbances, making people act disorderly. The preceding generation got along without it.”

Those comments were made in 1723 and they were made in criticism of Isaac Watts who wrote “Joy to the World” and “I sing the Mighty Power of God.”

They were made because Watts was encouraging congregations to sing hymns instead of just the biblical Psalms in the church. (from David Hocking [The Joy of Worship](#) –23-24)

These are the people who have forgotten that the infinity of our God deserves an ever-changing, ever-creative expression of worship.

No one music style and not even several music styles, can possibly express all the glory, the splendor, of our God.

Is God more pleased with hymns than choruses, more pleased with Charles Wesley than Michael W. Smith or Matt Redmon?

When I look 1 Chronicles 16 I see great variety:

16:4 “to make petition, to give thanks, and to praise the LORD

16:5-7 “play the lyres and harps...sound the cymbals... blow the trumpets...”

16:8-11 “Give thanks to the LORD, call on his name... Sing to him... tell of all his wonderful acts...Glory in his holy name...Look to the LORD...”

We call it a blended style at Southern Gables.

The best way to describe that “blended style” of worship and music is to say it is anchored in the church’s historic worship and seasoned with the fresh winds of the Spirit’s movement in the present.

It’s why we use historic and contemporary music, organ and drums, and creeds and testimonies.

1 Chronicles 16:29 “Ascribe to the LORD **the GLORY** due his name... worship the LORD in **the SPLENDOR** of his holiness.

4. The fourth and final issue I want to address is **implied** in the biblical text before us: **WE** “ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.”

The emphasis is on us together – the church gathered for worship.

Private worship is certainly appropriate but there is very little in the Bible about private worship.

The Psalms are written for public, corporate worship.

The instruction in the Bible about worship is in the context of the people gathered at the Tabernacle, the Temple or together as the church.

Worship reflects the unity of the people of God.

Unity amidst diversity is one of the results of God’s grace.

Unity amidst diversity is one of the marks of a biblical church.

In the Corinthian church that was splintering into factions, Paul camped on their need to experience and express unity.

1 Corinthians 12:12-14 “For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many.”

Worshipping together is one of the primary ways to **experience** and **express** our unity as the people of God.

It is why we changed last year from multiple styles of worship, which tended to segregate people based on age or musical preferences, to what we call unified worship where we encourage the diversity of the church.

There are many places in the life of a church where groups based on age or life experience are both appropriate and necessary.

We think there is value in young people congregating for the purpose of study and fellowship that is unique to their age and place in life.

Likewise, there are times when men meeting with men or women meeting with women are helpful ways to minister.

But where do we meet together as the diverse yet unified people we are by God’s grace?

Where do we experience the young and the old, men and women, married and singles, new believers and mature believers coming together?

Where do our children see us parents kneeling together before our God?

When do we adults see our young people bringing a freshness and creativity to worship?

When the people of God are seen worshipping in both the Old and New Testaments, it is not by age grouping, marital status, spiritual maturity, or any other division – it is all of God’s people, regardless of differences, coming together to worship the Lord.

When you read of the worship that will happen at the throne when Christ comes again, it is quite apparent there will be unified worship focused on who God is.

Bill Bright wrote of that worship that is yet to come in heaven: “Enthralled in the presence of the living Lord and Savior, we can expect to engage in the most glorious worship service of all time. No one has any sense of an “order of service.” No one is conscious of any worship “style.” The Father has set matters in order. The Son is the focus of all eyes. The Spirit prompts the singing of songs. From the lips of sinners saved by amazing grace come Hosannas to the King of kings and Lord of lords...” (p155 [The Journey Home](#) Bill Bright)

Psalm 148:12-13 “Young men and maidens, old men and children. Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted”

Together, we “ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name.”

Worship is about the Lord and to the Lord
Worship engages the mind, heart and body.
Worship is blended to reflect the glory of the Lord
Worship is unified to reflect the oneness of the people of the Lord

Come next Sunday, the following Sundays, and worship with us.

“Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name.
Bring an offering and come before him;
worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness.”