

Our Gift of Love to Jesus: Refusing Spiritual Showmanship (Mt. 6)

I. THE LORD WILL CLEANSE THE BODY OF CHRIST OF SPIRITUAL SHOWMANSHIP

- A. I had a powerful prophetic dream on **January 10, 2022**. I woke up with joy. The Lord showed me that He is going to confront and cleanse the body of Christ of the spiritual showmanship starting with what happens on ministry platforms from preachers, worship teams, and ministry leaders. (What happens on the platform is sown and multiplied in the body of Christ at large).
- B. I had another dream about refusing spiritual showmanship on June 28, 2022. For about 3 hours, I heard the phrase many times, *“Tell them to learn from Me for I am humble in heart”* (Mt. 11:29) and *“as the Father loved Me, I have loved you, abide in My love”* (Jn. 15:9). I awoke filled with awe at the privilege of being among people *who could offer our gift of love to Jesus* which includes contending for a *culture of humility that exalts Him* without drawing undue attention to ourselves.
²⁹Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, I am gentle and humble in heart... (Mt. 11:29, NAS)
- C. Jesus is returning for a mature Bride who loves Him and His ways, including humility, holiness with great kindness, and more. Thus, I am so glad to boldly say that *“Jesus will cleanse the Church of spiritual showmanship.”* He is returning for a Church that looks like Him—that loves humility.
- D. ***Premise:*** The largest, most broken, self-centered, narcissistic *“Me-generation”* of young people will be so transformed that they may be God’s vessels that will experience more power with more public visibility (social media) than any generation in history, resulting in the billion-soul harvest, yet they will be the most humble, Christ-exalting generation that refuses to draw attention to self.
¹¹“In that day...¹²I will leave in your midst a meek and humble people.” (Zeph. 3:11-12)

II. A VISION OF JOSEPH’S DUNGEON: A PROPHETIC PARABLE ABOUT HUMILITY

- A. In April 1984, I heard God’s audible voice say, ***“I have a message for you. Call Bob Jones!”*** The fear of the Lord came upon me. Later that day, Bob told me, “I had a visitation from the Lord today that I am to share with you.” In an open vision—he saw a parable similar to the cupbearer and baker in a dungeon with Joseph (Gen. 40:2-19). Bob saw two men who were accused of having “poison” in their service to the king’s family. They represented two types of ministry today.
***²Pharaoh was angry with his two officers, the chief butler [cupbearer; NIV] and the chief baker.
³So he put them in...in the prison, the place where Joseph was...²¹Then he [Pharaoh] restored the chief butler...so he placed the cup in Pharaoh’s hand. ²²But he hanged the chief baker. (Gen. 40:2-3, 21-22)***
- B. In Bob’s parabolic vision (which had similarities to Genesis 40), the baker was killed, but the cupbearer or butler was restored and went on to serve wine to the king’s family. The Lord said that the ***poison in the baker’s bread spoke of ministries that did not promote humility in God’s family.***

- C. The bread speaks of what is presented in context to public ministry—their teaching, singing, ministry style, etc. A ministry may grow in popularity, but if it does not inspire humility eventually it will lose its voice in the kingdom of God in the end-time shifts that will **surely** take place.
- D. The Lord is dropping a plumbline in the midst of the body of Christ on the issue of humility. He demands that it be modeled. God told Bob that in His timing that He would *remove the ministries* represented by the baker with “poisoned bread” which *did not promote humility* in others.
- E. The way ministries go forth: **what** they teach or impart, **how** they do it (their platform ministry style), and **why** they do what they do (to bring more attention to Jesus and not to themselves). Their ministry must flow from humility and must produce humility in the people to whom they minister.
- F. ***I have a message for you. Call Bob Jones:*** Each word is significant. **“I”**—it is a divine message. **“Have”**—it is already in God’s heart. **“A message”**—it an key assignment to call others to it. **“For you”**—I must obey it even if others do not. (I am accountable to God to insist on this).
- G. The Lord showed Bob that He would use “the wine” of the Spirit to reveal many hearts in the Body of Christ. God was going to both *bless and test* the Church in humility by releasing the “wine of the Spirit,” and He would exalt His “cupbearers” who embrace humility when serving His “wine.” to serve His “wine.” ‘However, they must minister rightly before the King’s presence and not “serve the wine” in a way that promoted themselves and their ministries. The Lord told Bob that this *blessing and testing* was to **“begin in 10 years.”**
- H. ***The 10-year period has at least two applications to us.*** The release of the “wine of the Spirit” internationally began in Toronto in January 1994—using John and Carol Arnott, Randy Clark, and others—10 years after Bob received this vision in April 1984. A local release of “the Spirit’s wine” was released in our midst to *test and bless* many soon after our 10-year anniversary in 2009.
- I. Some would **reject** the ministry of the Spirit that looked like “wine”, but others would **exaggerate** it. Both come from a root of pride. Some seek their **identity in knowledge** of the Bible, and so they reject the Spirit’s ministry by claiming deep loyalty to the Word. Some seek their **identity in power** and in being known for their **spiritual intensity** and in **being sensitive to the Spirit**.
- J. There are lessons to be learned from that season that are important for future waves of the Spirit. The subject of the Spirit’s manifestations **tests God’s people with humility** in at least four ways:
Group 1: those who **resist** manifestations *because of unfamiliarity* with them must be teachable.
Group 2: those who **accept** manifestations *bear reproach* for it and must persevere with humility.
Group 3: those who **exaggerate** manifestations to *draw attention to self* must humble themselves.
Group 4: those who **manipulate** others to “manifest” so *their ministry looks anointed* must repent.
- K. The Spirit releases power to exalt Jesus, not to draw attention to those that He uses (Jn. 16:14). The vision Paul Cain saw most often was of “nameless and faceless people” leading with humility.
¹⁴“He will **glorify Me**, for He will take of what is Mine and declare it to you.” (Jn. 16:14)
²¹They came to Philip...and asked him, saying, “Sir, **we wish to see Jesus.**” (Jn. 12:21)
- L. A culture of humility is one way God “changes the expression of Christianity”—the new wineskin.

III. JESUS WARNED HIS PEOPLE NOT TO SHOWCASE THEIR SPIRITUAL INTENSITY (MT. 6)

- A. In the Sermon on the Mount, the principle that Jesus emphasized most is found in Matthew 6. It is to overcome one of the strongest urges in the heart—a desire to appear to others as passionate for God and anointed by the Spirit—to showcase our spirituality and even exaggerate it.
- B. In Matthew 6, Jesus spoke of 4 activities that men are tempted to do to showcase their spirituality when **servicing**, **giving** (charitable deeds; 6:1-4, 19-21), **praying** (6:5-13), and **fasting** (6:16-18).
⁴*Your charitable deed...and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Mt. 6:4)*
⁶*When you pray...and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Mt. 6:6)*
¹⁸*Fasting...and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. (Mt. 6:18)*
- C. Jesus called us to avoid *sounding a trumpet* or drawing attention to our spiritual intensity. Jesus was addressing our natural temptation to sound a trumpet in order to draw attention to how devoted, passionate, anointed, smart, diligent, and generous we are. Today this is called “virtue signaling.”
“Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds [\$, service] before men, to be seen by them...do not sound a trumpet before you...³your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly. ⁵And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites...[who seek to] be seen by men...¹⁷When you fast...wash your face, ¹⁸so you do not appear to men to be fasting... (Mt. 6:1-18)
- D. Paul contrasted living before God’s eyes with living before man’s eyes, i.e., to live seeking the applause of God or of men. This speaks of serving and ministering in a way that seeks to gain the recognition of people by intentionally showcasing (even exaggerating) how passionate, diligent, devoted, or anointed we are—specifically when people are watching.
⁶Not with eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as bondservants of Christ...⁷doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men, ⁸knowing that...he will receive the same from the Lord... (Eph. 6:6-8)
- E. Paul was zealous to “preach Jesus” and not “preach himself” by drawing attention to himself.
⁵We do not preach ourselves, but Christ...and ourselves your bondservants. (2 Cor. 4:5)
- F. Paul connects the idea of excellence with love and edification of one another.
³¹*But earnestly desire the best gifts. And yet I show you a more excellent way. (1 Cor. 12:31)*
¹²*You are zealous for spiritual gifts; let it be for the edification of [others]...that you seek to excel. (1 Cor. 14:12)*
⁹*I pray that your love may abound...that you approve the things that are excellent... (Phil. 1:9)*
- G. We are to be *childlike in faith* (Mt. 18:3) by freely receiving from God, but we are not to be *childish in perspective* (1 Cor. 14:20) by drawing attention to ourselves as children naturally do.
³*“...unless you...become as little children...you will by no means enter the kingdom.” (Mt. 18:3)*
²⁰*Do not be children in understanding...in understanding be mature... (1 Cor. 14:20)*

IV. SHOWMANSHIP: HEALING REVIVALISTS, ELVIS, & THE SECULAR MUSIC INDUSTRY

- A. Some preachers in the “healing revival” (1950s) brought spiritual showmanship to a new level. It is reported that Elvis imitated their flamboyant styles and platform antics. Because of Elvis’ great popularity, the secular music industry imitated his flamboyant “aerobic stage culture.”
- B. Maybe 20 years ago, a few prominent worship leaders started imitating the flamboyant secular music industry with its “aerobic stage culture”—I refer to it as “stage culture” because once off the stage they rarely engaged in the same body language unless practicing for an upcoming concert.
- C. Now many Christian teenagers today think they are supposed to showcase their passion and anointing to be popular like prominent worship leaders with flamboyant stage antics like Elvis.
- D. Some have said that some of the worship culture is more influenced by Nashville than by King David. For some young worship leaders, success is being signed to a label and making money. The progression—they get signed, make a hit, get famous, get loose in their convictions, and start engaging in a secret sinful lifestyle as a celebrity who can’t be touched or corrected by anyone.
- E. I speak as a shepherd who is contending for the greatness and spiritual safety of young people. Often, after a few years of “popularity,” they increase the antics and flamboyance on the stage even when God’s power is not being discernibly manifest—since they have established their identity in being known for being passionate and powerful, they resort to using heightened body language and exuberance to prove that they still have power. This is ***taking God’s name in vain*** because they claim that the Spirit is moving—when fact they are manufacturing it in the flesh.
- F. Some worship movements are taking their cues from the secular music industry. It is best to take our cue from the worship around the throne (Rev. 4) where none seek to draw attention to themselves. ***Many houses of prayer take their cues from us***. Thus, we want to serve as an encouragement to those groups to maintain a spirit of humility and excellence in this area.
- G. We are making a prophetic statement when ***we do not change what we do*** when on a stage with a big crowd. We do the same things when there is a big crowd that we do when there are only a few in the room. We do not change because we focus on ministering to Jesus. In large gatherings when the lights are bright, ***we lead on the stage in the same way that we lead in our prayer room***.
- H. Our paradigm of liberty determines our view of yielding to the fullness of the Spirit.
“Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. (2 Cor. 3:17)
 - 1. ***Liberty from a defiled conscience***: Liberated into shame-free confidence in God’s affection. God’s desire is that we feel clean and confident before Him because of what Jesus did on the cross. Our confidence is in the cross instead of our maturity level.
 - 2. ***Liberty from sinful behavior and darkened emotions***: Liberated from emotional bondage to having a heart filled with love for God and others. Thus, we are liberated to love difficult people and to be set free from sin, dark emotions, spiritual dullness, unbelief, selfishness, etc.

V. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SELF-EXPRESSION: TWO CONFLICTING VIEWS

- A. To some, self-expression is their top priority. However, it must be subject to other priorities such as glorifying Jesus, honoring the Scripture, serving other people, and more. Self-expression is most helpful as it flows from those living in agreement with Jesus in their thoughts and emotions.
- B. Self-expression can take a wide variety of forms. People use their words, facial expressions, body language, clothing, and actions. There are conflicting theories of self-expression that have recently emerged in pop psychology. The value placed on self-expression varies widely across cultures.
1. Western culture values individualism with full self-expression plus a sense of entitlement to act in the way that benefits them, makes them feel good, and helps them to be noticed more. The Western psychology sees self-expression as healthy and necessary for fulfillment.
 2. Eastern culture is less prone to individualistic views and highly values what benefits the community. They interpret too much self-expression as “indicative of egoism and weak social capital.” Eastern cultures place little importance on individual self-expression and may even see it as a deviant behavior! Many see this over focus on self-expression as selfish.
- C. The spirit of excellence of worship teams involves many values operating together:
1. To glorify Jesus by drawing people to Jesus (Jn. 16:13-14);
 2. To honor God’s Word by all that happens on the platform (Jn. 16:13-14);
 3. To edify people who are in the prayer room or at the worship service (1 Cor. 14:4-6, 12, 26, 28);
 4. To flow in team ministry which requires individual restraint to honor others on the team;
 5. To develop skillful singers and musician who can flow together skillfully;
 6. To train up younger singers and musicians by modeling and teaching our values;.
 7. Personal expression is a value, but expressing Christ and blessing others is a higher value.
- D. Jesus taught His disciples to deny themselves. Many freely admit that they struggle with dark thoughts and emotions—without connecting their struggle to the fact that their personal full self-expression may not express Christ or help others. Some of my relationships are hindered when I freely and fully express myself without embracing various restraints.

²⁴*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross...(Mt. 16:24)*

- E. David Hadden’s blog expresses some of what we are committed to. He is considered to be one of the main pioneers of the worship movement in the UK. He wrote: *Worship leaders, we must identify and kill performance-ism while we can. It’s not rocket science. Sing songs people know (or can learn easily). Sing them in congregational keys. Sing and celebrate the power, glory, and salvation of God. Serve your congregation. Saturate them with the Word of God. Get your face off the big screen. Use your original songs in extreme moderation. Err on the side of including as many people as possible in what’s going on. Stop talking so much (when leading worship). Don’t let loops or lights to visuals become your outlet for creativity at the expense of the centrality of the gospel. Point to Jesus. Don’t draw attention to yourself. Don’t sing songs with bad lyrics or weak theology. Lead pastorally. David Hadden*

VI. SEEKING TO WALK IN EXCELLENCE: OUR GIFT OF LOVE TO JESUS

- A. We ask our teams to be “genuine” in how they express themselves *by not doing publicly* what they do not *regularly do in their private devotion to Jesus*. Some express their spirituality on stage differently than they do when the room is near empty or when they are alone with Jesus.
- B. Those who are new to these idea may need time to learn how to navigate these values. Jesus is worth the struggle that it may take to sort it out personally. When in doubt, lean toward humility.
- C. We ask our teachers, ministry leaders, singers, and musicians to avoid being *overly* animated in their body language, to avoid *imitating* manifestations of the Spirit that are not genuine, or to avoid other *heightened* vocal or physical expressions that unnecessarily draw undue attention to them.
- D. Overly animated public ministry styles can be counterproductive to making Jesus the center of attention in our corporate gatherings. Some develop their own personal “signature self-expressions” that distinguish them from others. This is common in the entertainment world.
- E. Some wave their hands and arms as they climb Jacob’s ladder to heaven, some chop with their hands to break the chains of spiritual darkness, others swing the sword of the Spirit against Satan, some make the swimming motion to symbolize swimming in the river of God, others scoop more of the Spirit on to others, others knock on heaven’s door in the Spirit, still others flap their arms as they fly in the spiritual realm with Jesus. Some wag their head back and forth to express the ecstasy of the Holy Spirit as a way of showing how passionate they are for Jesus and the Spirit.
- F. I have no jurisdiction in the Spirit nor any opinion on the motives or methods of other ministries. I am only accountable for what happens on the ministry platforms under my spiritual jurisdiction – our prayer room, weekend services, conferences, classrooms, ministry trips, social media etc.
 - 1. I am not responsible for what people do when they leave IHOPKC. That is between them and Jesus. But I happy to have had the opportunity to mark their heart with the beauty of humility.
 - 2. By the grace of God, I want us to offer this gift to Jesus on the last day—that together we helped raise up a community of people who were steadfast in seeking to embrace a culture of humility that drew the attention of the people only to Jesus and not to themselves.
- G. I feel His pleasure when I contend for this spirit of humility and excellence in platform ministry.
- H. John the Baptist described himself as “friend of the Bridegroom” who sought to decrease in drawing attention to himself so that Jesus might increase as the one being highlighted. A friend of the Bridegroom parallels the best man in a wedding ceremony who wants the bride to focus on her bridegroom. The best man does not seek to win the affections of the bride to himself.

²⁹“...the friend of the bridegroom...rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom’s voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. ³⁰He must increase, but I must decrease.” (Jn. 3:29-30)