

Sunday, July 20, 2025-Humility at the Heart of Worship-Pastor John Henry Raskin

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility in true worship. True humility is described as making everything about God, putting Him at the center, and responding to the Spirit with the Mind of Christ in every circumstance.

Worship is defined as reverence and honor given to God, encompassing both internal attitudes and external actions that express love and adoration for Him.

1. **Daily Solitude and Prayer:** Start each day with a quiet time alone with God. This practice helps you focus on Him and receive direction for the day. It's a way to worship God and hear from Him, ensuring that your day is aligned with His will
2. **Humility in Prayer:** Approach your prayer time with a humble heart. Instead of making demands or focusing on your desires, ask God to reveal His will to you. This helps you align your prayers with His purposes rather than your own
3. **Contentment with God's Will:** Learn to be content with what God has given you and trust in His plan for your life. This means accepting both the good and the challenging times as part of His will. The apostle Paul's example of contentment in all circumstances is a powerful reminder of this principle
4. **Whole-Life Worship:** Worship God with every aspect of your life, not just during church services. This means that everything you think, say, and do should be an act of worship, reflecting your love and adoration for God
5. **Letting Go of Ego:** True worship requires letting go of your ego and approaching God with humility. This means recognizing that God is the Potter and you are the clay, and being willing to submit to His authority and guidance
6. **Seeking God's Presence:** Like Moses, seek God's presence in your life and recognize that you cannot go on without Him. This involves a deep desire to know God and experience His presence in a personal and intimate way
7. **Revival through Humility:** If you desire revival in your life or community, approach God with a true heart of worship and humility. This means crying out for God and asking for the eyes to see His work, rather than demanding a specific outcome

By applying these principles, you can cultivate a heart of humility and worship that honors God and aligns with His will for your life.

HUMILITY AT THE HEART OF WORSHIP

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

We talked about humility last week and what true humility looks like in God's eyes.

We discovered that true humility is simply making everything... Repeat everything about God.

True humility is putting Him in the center where He belongs and putting our free will to good use by responding to the Spirit with the Mind of Christ in absolutely every circumstance we encounter.

Everything you think. Everything you say. Everything you do.

If it isn't for God's glory, His Will, His Way, then it isn't humility.

It's simply pride and the self-centered way of the world.

Today we are going to talk about how humility is at the heart of true worship.

The Bible Dictionary defines worship as...

Reverence and honor given to God which He deserves because He is worthy.

It goes on to say...

Worship encompasses both internal attitudes and external actions that express love and adoration for God.

The Heart of Worship is humbly bowing down before God, acknowledging His supreme authority and greatness.

We've talked extensively about starting every day in solitude and prayer and meditating upon the Word of God.

Getting quietly alone with your Creator is a great way to worship Him and the best way to hear from Him

When you become still intentionally and focus on God you will receive your direction for the things you will encounter during the day to come.

Things that He already knows because He has planned them.

But what is solitude with God without humility?

Is it even possible to worship God from a heart of pride?

Without humility even our alone time in prayer might be about our ego and not about worshipping God.

Then it will be about wanting our will to be done even while saying God's will be done.

After all, you might be thinking, haven't I sacrificed my time, my pleasures, my Sundays for God?

Many of God's chosen people and their leaders made a relationship with God about getting Him to do things based on their sacrifices.

But this is what King David said...

Psalms 51:17

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,

A broken and a contrite heart—

These, O God, You will not despise.

Without a humble, penitent heart we can't truly worship God.

We will start seeing our will as God's will.

We will make demands, as though God has an obligation to do what we want.

Without humility, our prayer will be about asking for things from the mind of John, or Mike or Carl rather than being the obedient vessel of Spirit-led prayer that we were created to be.

It is most important when we worship Him in our solitude to worship God as God, seeing ourselves as the clay and not the Potter.

If we become focused on the things we want rather than the Source of those things, the Source of Life itself, and what HE wants for us, we can lose the perspective we need to examine why we want these things and whether what we want is good for us or good at all.

I often find myself asking for things that I want to see change in my life or in our society or in our ministry but then I remember to question the Lord why I want these things...

If I am truly in a state of humility, then I will turn it over to God in prayer...

That is why Jesus gave us the Template prayer we call the Lord's prayer and showed us how to be truly humble when He said to His Father / Our Father...

"Your Kingdom come, Your Will be done on earth, as it is in Heaven.

True humility will lead us into asking the right questions rather than simply asking for the result that we desire.

A good question to ask the Lord might be...

If it is something that is good, or helpful, then is there something that I need to do or change in my life or attitudes to achieve or even be able to see the outcome I want?

If God reveals to me, now that I have asked for His Will to be done, that what I want is not good in His eyes, should I then ask God to help me let it go?

It is crucial for all of us to realize what it means to bless the name of the Lord when the Lord gives and also when He takes away.

To not see God as the cosmic vending machine and our prayers as the currencies of this machine.

To know that God is God in our good times and our bad times, to feel blessed whether you are having YOUR way or not.

That after all, takes a true heart of worship.

The goal should always be to be content with God's will for us and not be discontent with what we have or have not.

The apostle Paul said...

Philippians 4:11-12

1 Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: 12 I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.

And how was Paul able to say that he could be content when he was suffering need as well as grateful when he had all that he wanted...?

He answers in the next verse...

Philippians 4:13

13 I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.

Whatever we have been blessed with, it is the love of God, which is freely given because of His grace.

But what does contentment have to do with worship?

First of all, true worship is a whole life event. We worship God with everything that we are, everything we have and everything we DON'T have when we turn our lives over to His Will in Christ Jesus.

Everything we think, everything we say and everything we do becomes worship to the God of glory who made us for His purposes when we agree with Him through the Mind of Christ.

Now, let's talk about what we call worship in our church service...

Too often we're so focused on how we feel during our Sunday worship that we forget that it's not about how we feel.

We say that we are not connected to the service be it the worship, the prayer or the sermon.

But is that true worship?

Has our consumerist culture become so ingrained in us that our worship and the way we do church becomes all about our experience?

I'm not saying that the experience is not important- after all all of us here, the worship team, the prayer team, the welcome team spends time and energy trying to make the experience of worship at Abundant Life Church to be a good one.

But really what is the heart of worship?

As your pastor it's my desire to make your worship, meaning your relationship with God in Christ to be a whole life event that is solidified each Sunday here but which you take with you throughout your daily life.

It's about knowing that God is God.

It's about accepting God as God.

In the heart of worship there has to be the letting go of our ego.

There has to be humility so that we can encounter God.

Moses was told to take off his sandals because he was on Holy ground.

God welcomes those into His presence who want to worship Him.

Their quest may be one of desperation or of delight, of frantic need or a loving hunger for fellowship, but their motivation is clearly focused on Him and so is His pleasure with it.

In Exodus 33 and 34, a tender and powerful exchange takes place between God and Moses, spanning the range of actions from an intimate face-to-face encounter to a dramatic declaration by the Almighty at the time the second set of tablets containing the Law are given to Moses.

Central to this scene is the heart-cry Moses utters,

Exodus 33:13-15

“Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in

Your sight...And He said, ‘My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.’ Then he said to Him, ‘If your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here.’”

Moses knew that he could not, would not go on without the very Presence of God.

That was how Moses displayed his heart of worship.

Moses worship was what made him a “friend of God”.

Such worship will be awed by His Presence and “fall in love” with His Person.

Shortly following this, God displays His glory to Moses, as sure a sign of His pleasure and presence as He ever gives.

Exodus 33:18-19

18 And he said, “Please, show me Your glory.”

19 Then He said, “I will make all My goodness pass before you, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord before you. I will be gracious to whom I will be gracious, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.”

In our modern day we Christians often complain that there is no Revival.

But to be honest, are we even able to see a revival in our midst if we are not approaching God from a true heart of worship?

It is the heart of worship that cries out for God and asks Him for the eyes to see rather than demanding to see something that we consider revival.

After all, the Pharisees who were very religious, were unable to see the revival of Israel as the appearance of Jesus Messiah in their midst.

If we are so satisfied with ourselves because we have received this great salvation so that we no longer cry out for Him, we no longer have a crushing need for His Presence... are we any different than the Pharisees?

Let us humble ourselves and ask for the Spirit's guidance in every aspect of our lives.

When we ask, humbly, as the true cry of our heart, for His Presence, the Holy Spirit will show the way, drawing us back to our “first love”, back to when we knew the absolute need for a Savior, and He revealed Himself.

Do you need a renewed hunger and thirst for the Living God today?

May I suggest that what we all need is to stop thinking about God as our ticket to heaven and start relating to God as Lord of our life and worthy of our very best.

The all-knowing, all-powerful, timeless Creator who entered His Creation to offer us the only way to have a restored relationship with Him.

Jesus told the woman at the well that God was looking for worshippers who would worship him in spirit and in truth.

He told her why when He said...

John 4:24

24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

We in the church do have a tendency to intellectualize what is truly spiritual as if we could conceive it and understand it completely.

May I suggest that He is greater than our human minds can conceive.

A true heart of Worship will recognize and embrace what is truly spiritual.

A true heart of worship will not succumb to the notion that anyone's generic interpretation of the truth is the same as truth discerned spiritually, revealed by the Spirit of God, which is always personal and specific.

Another memorable encounter in the Bible between God and man is the occasion of Isaiah's call to ministry by God.

Isaiah 6:1-8

In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, high and lifted up, and the train of His robe filled the temple. 2 Above it stood seraphim; each one had six wings: with two he covered his face, with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. 3 And one cried to another and said:

**“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
The whole earth is full of His glory!”**

4 And the posts of the door were shaken by the voice of him who cried out, and the house was filled with smoke.

5 So I said:

**“Woe is me, for I am undone!
Because I am a man of unclean lips,
And I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips;**

**For my eyes have seen the King,
The Lord of hosts.”**

6 Then one of the seraphim flew to me, having in his hand a live coal which he had taken with the tongs from the altar. 7 And he touched my mouth with it, and said:

**“Behold, this has touched your lips;
Your iniquity is taken away,
And your sin purged.”**

8 Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying:

**“Whom shall I send,
And who will go for Us?”**

Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.”

The cry of a sinful man, **“Woe is me, for I am undone,”** was not an achievement of intellectual analysis, but of a self-discovery faced upon entering God’s presence with unabashed passion, childlike openness and true humility.

“I saw the Lord...,” he says with neither apology or arrogance, as a breakthrough of grace produces a breakup of pride, a viewpoint even more deeply affirmed later in the same book when the Lord says...

Isaiah 57:15

**For thus says the High and Lofty One
Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy:
“I dwell in the high and holy place,
With him who has a contrite and humble spirit,
To revive the spirit of the humble,
And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.**

The starting place for confronting pride is in how we approach a life of worship.

Isaiah, who is known to be from the cultural, educated elite of Judah during His time, describes a childlike humility and teachability, which can only attend an unpretentious entry into God's presence.

His cry revealed an unreserved availability to God's revelation of Himself and is the very thing to which Jesus calls us all:

Matthew 18:2-4

2 Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, 3 and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. 4 Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

One of my mentors, a true faith hero and a humble man of God if I ever met one, is Jack Hayford.

He wrote some great worship songs and was known for being actively involved in the way his church approached worship service as a worship leader.

His words about worship and humility resonate with me and so I will end this message with them.

These are his words...

I have learned that careful teaching and pastoral modeling can help a congregation past self-consciousness and release a childlike liberty in expression, which challenges our adult preoccupation with our own self-importance.

I think the motive was sincere, but it was misguided when one of our members suggested that I temper my pastoral practice in leading worship.

“Pastor, if you didn’t teach and invite people to lift their hands in worship, I think our church would grow faster;” adding, “I think you might injure some people’s pride.”

Without previous thought, my candid answer cut to the point as I see it: “Injure pride?” I said gently. “Why, I was hoping to kill it altogether.”

I hold no disdain for the propriety of respecting human dignity. But there is a disposition, in the Church as surely as in the world, that equates dignity and pride.

It’s a false equation. The worth of each individual in my congregation requires that I teach, help and model a pathway for all of us to “come as children before the Father.”

The deceptiveness of pride, and its insistence on finding a way to justify its preservation, even in Church, calls me to find a means to help hearts toward a humility like Isaiah’s. That will give place to a fresh view of God and pave the way to deeply felt confession and purification in His Presence.

That is what Jack Hayford had to say.

As I said last week, here at Abundant Life, we aspire to be a church where humility is part of our DNA.

A place where the true Heart of Worship is humbly displayed. Where we can all come to Him as little children.

Let's Pray...