

Monday, March 2, 2009

This weekend we looked at the Magnificent Mystery of Response. Our big idea from Psalm 116 was that Recognition of God brings response--that response is worship! Please read Psalm 116. This week I would like to take us on a tour of worship and response. Let me explain.

If you have been around Calvary for a while you have heard us say that worship is not just what happens in the Worship Center when we come together. It is much, much more. For us to have incredible public worship, we must each be engaging in private worship. That is what Psalm 116 illustrates perfectly.

While it was written by a person who was praising God privately with intensity, it ended up being one of the most significant of the public Psalms! Private praise becoming public worship! This Psalm is one of the Psalms of praise--it is an Egyptian Hallel Psalm. These Psalms had a significant part in the praise of the Lord. 116 was one of the Psalms, along with 115, 117 and 118 that were spoken or sung after the observance of the Passover. It is very possible that this Psalm was sung by the Lord and His disciples on the night of the Last Supper (Mark 14:26).

How does your private worship of God affect the way we as a church worship as we come together? It may be just that you are more ready to praise God and as more and more of us are in that place; our public worship takes on new and powerful praise to God. Each of us worshipping from fresh encounters with God. Perhaps you have never thought about it this way.

This week we will be doing some things that may be just a little different than what you may be used to. We will be participating together in five different modes of worship--one each day. It may be that you are not able to do the exact thing suggested. If that is the case, come as close as you can. It may be that it is uncomfortable for you. Please try it anyway just to see how it makes you think about God. It is so great to think that our God loves to be worshipped with diversity.

Several passages of Scripture speak of lifting hands. Many of these times it is about lifting hands in prayer and praise. One of those was the prayer of dedication by Solomon in 1Kings 8:22ff.

For today let's close our time of devotion by lifting our hands in praise and prayer.

Turn to Psalm 150. Lift both of your hands as high as you can and pray that Psalm right out loud.

Praise the Lord
Hallelu Yah

Family Discussion Question:

How does my private worship affect my public worship?

Tuesday, March 3, 2009

Worship is the response of the heart toward what is valued. We each worship something. That is how we were and are designed. Initially of course, we worshipped our creator whole-heartedly. Sin changed that. Now we have this sin nature that spends all of it's time worshipping itself.

It takes a change of heart to begin worshipping the One we were designed to worship. That change of heart comes from Him.

Remember one of our theme verses from last year?

Psalm 51:10

A pure, a clean heart.

Notice verse 13. It is a clean heart that allows others to see what God is doing in your life. They will see the change that they have been longing for and they will see that it is God who can make their hard heart soft (Ezekiel 11:19).

Worship is worth ship.

What is God worth to you?
How do you respond to His love?
Do you take it for granted?
Is it of great value to you?
What do you value most?

Do you have a clean, pure, soft heart?

Another act of worship is humble confession. Walking humbly with your God. Read Micah 6:8 and Isaiah 57:15.

How's your heart? Pastor Doug asks me that at least once a week, usually more. I have grown to love that question. Do you?

How's your heart? Is it a heart of stone or a heart of flesh?
Is it pure? Is it focused on the only One of value?

Worship for today is worship of humble confession before our God. Today we will be on our knees before Him. Please turn to Psalm 51. Read this Psalm as a prayer to our Lord from your knees.

Family Discussion Question:

Am I refreshed by a pure heart?

Wednesday, March 4, 2009

I looked ahead at the ten day forecast for our area on the internet and it tells me that today is going to be a high of 35 degrees and partly cloudy. So what?

Today let's spend some time worshipping outside! Before you go, we will spend some time preparing.

Have you ever been on a prayer walk?

It is a blend between observation and celebration. There are many different ways to do prayer walks. You can offer up regular prayers for the things you normally talk to God about and just do that in a different environment. You can go to a certain place that God has burdened your heart for and offer prayers at that place for that place. You can walk around an area you do not know and offer prayers for things that you may not have full knowledge of. Or you can walk and just rejoice in the majesty and splendor of God as revealed in his creation. That is what we will prepare for today. If along the way you find yourself slipping into one of the other types of prayers--go for it!

You may need to wait for lunch to complete the process or when you come home from work, or maybe you will need to take the walk on Saturday (possible snow showers).

If you are not able to get outside or if weather.com was wrong, spend time inside praising Him for His creation. Maybe you could walk around the Walmart and pray for the people you see and thank God for the provision of all the things found there.

Now, to prepare. God's majesty is shown in His creation. Prepare yourself to see His hand in all that you will see.

Read Psalm 104.

Do you see the beauty of the truth found there?

As you walk, look past all the things man has built and see the simple and elegant beauty of all that God has made. Every good and perfect gift that has come from above.

Burst out in praise to the creator and maker, the lover of your soul. Worship Him.

Family Discussion Question:

Where did I notice God today that I had never seen Him before?

Thursday, March 5, 2009

I believe that God loves music.

Zephaniah 3:17 tells us that He sings over us.

Revelation appears to be full of songs of worship to the Lord that acknowledge His splendor and majesty and holiness.

Today I would like us to sing to His holiness. How many songs do you know that speak of the holiness of God?

God is holy.

What that means is that He is altogether other than us.

Tozer puts it like this:

We cannot grasp the true meaning of divine holiness by thinking of someone or something very pure and then raising the concept to the highest degree we are capable of.

God's holiness is not simply the best we know infinitely better.

We know nothing like the divine holiness. It stands apart, unique, unapproachable, incomprehensible and unattainable. The natural man is blind to it. He may fear God's power and admire His wisdom, but His holiness He cannot even imagine.

* The Knowledge of the Holy page 104 emphasis mine

There are two passages we will look at that speak of the holiness of God. In each of these holy is repeated three times. Each is in awe of His presence as He sits on His throne.

Isaiah 6:1-3

Revelation 4:8

We cannot begin to imagine just how holy God is or even what that holiness means. However, we do see from these passages that when we see God's holiness we will fall down understanding in much greater depth the fullness of its meaning.

Reginald Heber captured the words in one of the songs that we think of for this truth in 1826:

*Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty! Early in the morning
our song will rise to Thee. Holy, holy, holy! Merciful
and mighty! God in three Persons, blessed Trinity!*

Sing out loud a song of praise to God for His holiness. Maybe you feel compelled to fall on your face before Him. If you have a hymnal at home, look up some songs. Sing them in a place you normally would not. The front porch, the basement, the attic, wherever! Cry out to God and praise Him for His holiness!

Family Discussion Question:

Are we in awe of God's holiness?

Friday, March 6, 2009

It's been quite a week of response, hasn't it? Have you worshipped God in different ways this week?

I was given an assignment in one of my classes to find a different way to worship God each day for a month. This has been a snapshot of that assignment. If you have enjoyed it or found it interesting, I would encourage you to continue seeking new ways to worship the only One in your life worthy.

Today we will offer the worship that comes through sacrifice.

Psalm 51:17; Romans 12:1

What is sacrifice and what does it look like for you?

The truth is that we know very little about sacrifice of any kind. That is what causes so many of the problems around us (James 4:1-3). We are not very willing to give up what we want and what we think we are entitled to. That makes it really hard to worship.

It would be much easier if God were impressed with our giving from our excess. That seems to be something we are more willing to do. Our extra time, our extra thoughts, our extra efforts, our extra finances. It is like we give God our leftovers. We treat Him like a cosmic Goodwill store and wonder why He is not impressed. God spoke to the Israelites about that in Malachi.

He doesn't want your leftovers. He wants your best. He wants you to offer yourself and all that you have as a sacrifice to Him in response to understanding His love for you. He wants you to see that your best is more appreciated by Him than anything else to which you may be inclined to give it.

A living sacrifice, given willingly to Him because you trust Him with it. God knows what you are holding on to that is His. He knows that keeps you from experiencing the best in your life. He knows that when you come to the point where you are ready to really worship Him by sacrificially giving you will experience abundant life.

You will begin to really worship God and not the things you are not willing to sacrifice to Him.

Sacrifice of self-wants is worship and worship is sacrifice of self-wants.

Family Discussion Question:

Are we giving sacrificially or from our excess?



Pastor Chuck Cervenka

March 2 - 6, 2009

Living the . . .

*Magnificent
Mystery*

of Response

A Disciplemaking Tool of



Calvary
Community Church
Engaging With God

**DIGGING
DEEPER**

Highway 50 & Harris Road
P.O. Box 1200 • Williams Bay, WI 53191
(262) 245-6294
www.calvarycommunity.net