

Glad Tidings

“And we bring you good tidings of the promise made unto the fathers...” (Acts 13:32)

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The Heart in Worship

(Jerry Fite)

The heart is the inward part of man where one thinks, reasons and feels. This heart of man is distinguished from the heart that pumps blood through the body, for it is the spiritual part of man, distinguished from a man's physical makeup. The spiritual heart must be engaged in pleasing worship unto God.

Paul writes, “*Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God*” (Colossians 3:16). Paul emphasizes the “spiritual source” for our worship. God's Word, which provides for us the wisdom of God, is to dwell in abundance in the Christian. For singing, psalms, hymns and spiritual songs provide the words for worshipful praise. The heart, full of knowledge, is filled with thanksgiving and gratitude toward God. It is expressed in singing. Your voice in singing must be accompanied by “plucking” or “...making melody with your heart to the Lord; giving thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God even the Father...” (Ephesians 5:19-20).

The heart, filled with thanksgiving, is also filled with

reverence and awe. Being thankful for being a saved citizen in God's kingdom, we “*offer service well-pleasing to God with reverence and awe*” (Hebrews 12:18). The worshipper not only stands in awe of the depth of the riches of God's wisdom in providing our salvation, but he or she is in awe of His power as our Creator. John reveals worship taking place before the throne by reporting the following of what is said: “*Worthy art thou, our Lord and our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power: for thou didst create all things, and because of thy will they were, and were created*” (Revelation 4:11). Praise for an awesome God overflows from a heart filled with knowledge and awe of Him as the Creator of all things.

Worship comes from a desire to make known all the great works of God. The cheerful heart is ready to break forth in song, speaking words of Truth that truly honors God and expresses sincere thanksgiving. As the Psalmist writes, “*Oh give thanks unto Jehovah, call upon His name; make known among the peoples His doings. Sing unto Him, sing praises unto Him; talk ye of all His marvelous works that He hath done, His wonders, and judgments of His mouth*” (Psalm 105:1-4).

When the true and honest heart is not engaged in worship, worship is vain before God. Jesus addressed people who did not obey the commandment of God to honor one's father and mother (Matthew 15:3-4). They had a “godly reason,” for what could have been given to help one's father and mother in their time of need was earmarked for and dedicated to God (Matthew 15:5).

Jesus saw a heart problem in these people. The dedicated heart toward God could have easily connected the dots of dedication to God and honoring one's father and mother in need. After all, it was God's will that taught such in His Law. Therefore, Jesus saw that such people were hypocrites. “*Ye hypocrites, well did Isaiah prophesy of you, saying, ‘This people honoreth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men’*” (Matthew 15:7-9). The lips can be mouthing praise, while the heart is far removed from God. Isaiah, the prophet to whom Jesus refers, indicated that their fear did not come from God's law, but “*is a commandment of men which hath been taught them*” (Isaiah 29:13). The heart disengaged from God's law will produce vain worship. Beware!