

THEY THAT WORSHIP GOD (I)

Jhn 4:19-24

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Florence, AL newspaper had several articles about First Assembly of God engaging in what they called the "Fear Factor" ministry, based on TV show in which people are required to do all kinds of disgusting things. As a part of "Fear Factor" ministry young people were swallowing live goldfish!
- B. The "People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals" (PETA) put pressure on church and soon the headline in the paper read: "Church agrees to stop practice of swallowing live goldfish."
- C. We are witnessing more and more foolishness in churches with attempts to tickle the senses and especially to "tickle ears" of members and prospects, it makes me wonder if the concept of worship today is that worship is something directed toward and for men, rather than toward and for God.
- D. Many churches today magnify man (men and women) as they perform and dazzle the audience. I wonder if God feels left out in all of this.
- E. Churches are now having a "Contemporary Worship" alternative?
 1. A worship service that deviates from a solemn honoring of God, and attempts to make those present feel good about being there.
 2. Churches tell people "come as you are", "put some excitement in your worship", and "we will accept anybody."
 3. Emphasis is placed on the "Praise Team", swaying in rhythm with the songs, clapping hands, and cheering the preacher when he says something humorous or with that which they agree.
- F. Churches are magnifying man and minimizing God. What God wants has to take a back seat to what men want in their worship to God.
- G. Commanded to worship God and him alone Matt 4:10
- H. In some faithful churches worship seems cold, "matter of fact" - just a "form" - what is wrong or is there anything wrong?
- I. In others, worship service is treated in a light hearted flippant sort of way, with seemingly no seriousness
- J. Parents, at times, are not conveying to their children the sense of reverence we should exhibit in our worship services.
- K. Must understand what constitutes worship. When do we worship and when do we not, does conduct determine whether I worship or not?

DISCUSSION:

I. WHAT CONSTITUTES WORSHIP

- A. W.E. Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words gives the following terms about worship used in the New Testament.
 1. **Proskuneo**- (pros- toward + kuneo- to kiss) most frequent word rendered worship, an act of homage or reverence toward God. Matt 2:2, 8, 11; 4:10; 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; 15:25; 20:20; 28:9, 17.
 2. **Sebomai**- To revere, the feeling of awe or devotion of worship Matt 15:9
 3. **Sebazomai**- To honor religiously. Rom 1:25
 4. **Latreuo**- To serve or render religious service Phil 3:3
 5. **Eusebeo**- To act piously (deeply religious) towards... Acts 17:23
- B. Vine also comments: "A consideration of the above verbs shows that it is not confined to praise; broadly it may be regarded as the direct acknowledgement to God, of His nature, attributes, ways and claims, whether by the outgoing of the heart in praise and thanksgiving or by deed done in such acknowledgement."

- C. **Thayer's**: definition: To kiss the hand to (towards) one, in token of reverence -- by kneeling or prostration to do homage (to one) or make obeisance
- D. **Webster**: Extravagant respect or admiration for or devotion to an object of esteem.
- E. Definition of terms: **Reverence**: profound adoring - awed respect - a gesture of respect; **Homage**: ceremony by which one acknowledges himself the vassal (a person under the protection of another) of a Lord; **Obeisance**: movement of the body made in token of respect or submission - to bow (Acts 10:25,26)
- F. Worship, then, is a feeling of respect or reverence (see Lk 14:10, a frame of heart or mind, an attitude that is expressed in acts or movements of body. An act proceeding from or the result of the condition of a person's heart!).

II. ACTS ENGAGED IN WHILE ASSEMBLED ARE NOT IN AND OF THEMSELVES NECESSARILY WORSHIP!

- A. The acts engaged in are only expressions of worship
 1. Eating unleavened bread and drinking grape juice is not worship, in and of itself. Yet it is when done in response and according to instructions of our Lord
 2. Singing songs is not worship of itself. Yet when done as a show of reverence and respect for God, it is
 3. Giving to a cause not of itself worship, it becomes such when done in response to God's will
- B. All overt or observable worship has some form
 1. The feeling of awe, reverence, thanksgiving, or praise is expressed in some way
 2. Form of expression will necessarily take some pattern - orderly or haphazard
- C. Paul taught: "decently and in order" 1Cor 14:40 All overt worship must take some form or order
- D. However, our form may simply become ritualistic.
 1. Our service may be without heart Prov 4:23; 23:7; Jhn 4:23,24
 2. It may be without any real sacrifice - yet Jesus demands sacrifice Rom 12:1,2; Matt 16:24-26
 3. We may not have the proper respect for authority of God Mk 7:9; Matt 23:3,4
 4. We may be following form out of habit Isa 1:10-15
- E. As we follow the form we must have our heart in acts we perform: singing; Praying 1Cor 14:15,16; ("spirit" here = the sentient element in man, that by which he perceives, reflects, feels, desires Vines); Giving 2Cor 9:6-8 - Lord's Supper 1Cor 11:23-26

CONCLUSION:

- A. In our next study I plan to look at various kinds of worship, our attitudes toward worship and some efforts to improve our worship
- B. Think about our attempts to worship God. Are we truly worshipping or are we just going through the motions.