Worship: Fact or Feeling



As I travel around to churches and conferences, occasionally people come to me with a comment such as "I didn't get much out of the worship today" or a similar statement. My usual response tends to be humorous, such as "Oh, I didn't realize that we were worshiping you" thus trying to make them realize what they are saying.

At one level, I do understand what they are trying to say. Namely, that they could not, or did not, enter into the worship experience. Perhaps this is because it was not a very accessible worship time, or maybe it was due to where they were emotionally. Either way, it does highlight what I think is a much deeper issue – that worship is an act of our wills and is not primarily about our feelings. It is about us being created to worship God, Who alone is worthy of our worship.

Some years ago, I was struck by Job 1, verse 20: *"At this, Job got up and tore his robe and shaved his head. Then he fell to the ground in worship"(NIV).* This verse follows a narrative where Job discovers that he has just lost all of his livestock, servants and children. It is hard to imagine such a situation where you receive news that your wealth, livelihood and children are all gone – and the whole process has taken just a few minutes! It is inconceivable to consider what pain Job felt, or what thoughts went through his mind in the turmoil of that moment. Often, we find it hard to follow God when we have just had a bad day or things have gone wrong at work. Let's look at Job's reaction.

Firstly, he responds by tearing his clothes and shaving his head, which was the typical Jewish response to such calamity. Then, almost as a throw-away comment, the verse finishes with the phrase *"Then he fell to the ground in worship."* What an amazing response! Despite his emotions in that moment, he instinctively knew that he must seek God and worship Him.

Job knew that God was his only hope, and that worship was the only fitting response. He knew that God was the only One who must be worshiped, and was the only One worthy of worship. Despite Job's circumstances, God would never be found wanting, unjust or unrighteous. That does not mean that Job understood his circumstances (namely that he was undergoing a severe testing from God), but He did understand that worship was his only appropriate response. Job survived his tests, as I am sure God knew he would, and the book of Job finishes with God speaking to him words that are, in my view, some of the most beautiful and worshipful in the Old Testament.

As you consider your responses to God in the midst of your difficulty, consider Job's response of worship. You were made to worship, and to respond to God with worship. May God continue to bless you as you pursue Him.

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