



“And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also.” 1 John 4: 21

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**Sunday – August 19, 2018**

## **Heart to Heart...**

People ask why we don't use instruments in our worship to God. Do you know? When speaking of instrumental music, you can add into that mix 'praise teams' and special singing groups. When addressing these questions and thoughts, we need to be asking what God deems as acceptable worship. We are taught: ***“Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe.”*** (Hebrews 12:28) Did you read that carefully? ***“Offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe!”*** That's the key!

What is worship? Who is central in worship? God or man? In John chapter four, Jesus encounters a woman of Samaria. This is before His death, burial, and resurrection. In discussion with this woman, Jesus gives her insight about genuine acceptable worship. She thinks it is location saying they (Samaritans) ***“worshiped in this mountain and you people (Jews) say that in Jerusalem is the place where men out to worship.”*** (John 4:20) Jesus assures her that a change is coming and worship will not be confined to location, but true worshipers will worship in spirit and truth. (John 4:23-24) Spirit and truth is the location under the new covenant. The spirit and truth teachings are the elements for acceptable worship before God. To worship in spirit is to worship from the depth of your being, from the heart and it must be bound with truth otherwise it is unacceptable. Jesus said ***“must”!*** It is emphatic in the Greek.

In order for worship to God to be acceptable with reverence and awe from within our beings tied to truth means it must be God and Christ centered. What does that mean? Paul expressed it this way: ***“For we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ and put no confidence in the flesh.”*** (Philippians 3:3) To worship from within the heart and knowing God and Christ are Spirit that should eliminate man's personal interests and fleshliness. To cater to man's desires, feelings, and musical talents easily makes man the center.

A musical piece is offered and people applaud just as they would listening to an orchestra or band. The way we approach God is His world, (God is Spirit), worship is from the spiritual side of our being combined with truth. Leave out any one of these and it's unacceptable. Our new birth was spiritual. Our new birth came from within, not external. Yes, we were immersed into Christ in water but everything was happening within as nothing changed us physically. Many are turning worship into emotions and personal desires by focusing on the externals. People cater to things that make us feel good; so worship becomes a production that moves people emotionally (that becomes the focus) and the spirit side is left untouched. Many cannot distinguish the difference between emotion and faith. Emotions can be stirred in true worship toward God but they are stirred by God and being God centered, not man-made things to move us!

Peter speaks of proclaiming the excellencies of God because we have been brought out of darkness into His light (I Peter 2:9). Worship is proclaiming His excellencies, not ours! Where does all this leave us today? What does all this teach us about instrumental music, praise teams, and special singing groups? It might be an enjoyment to listen to but that makes worship about us. God is 'dethroned' in the heart. God's name is spoken but what about acceptable service to Him? The instruments, praise teams, and anything else are for us. Be honest. They have no appeal to God. Again, God is Spirit. Those who worship must worship in spirit and truth and God seeks these for His worshipers (John 4:23). Think about it!!!

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