

AND THE PEOPLE CAME...

- Week of May 17, 2026 -

Sunday School	26
Sunday Morning Service	46
Sunday Eve. Service	16
Wednesday Eve. Service	13

AND THE PEOPLE GAVE...

- Week of May 17, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 2,782.20
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund	\$ 145.35
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 05/17/26:	\$ 2,927.55

- Week of May 10, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 851.00
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund	\$ 145.35
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 05/10/26:	\$ 996.35

- Week of May 3, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,760.28
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund	\$ 145.35
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 05/03/26:	\$ 1,905.63

- Week of April 26, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,526.03
Auditorium A/C Replacement Fund	\$ 145.35
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 04/26/26:	\$ 1,671.38

- Week of April 19, 2026 -

Undesignated Tithes & Offerings	\$ 1,187.08
TOTAL RECEIVED FOR WEEK OF 04/19/26:	\$ 1,187.08

Average amount of **Undesignated Offerings** needed for church operating expenses **EACH WEEK**, as a **minimum** = \$ **1,800.00**



WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SAVED

1. Admit that you are a sinner.
2. Admit that God says all sins must be paid for.
3. Accept the fact that Christ took upon Himself the suffering necessary to pay for all your sins.
4. You must change your mind about sin and sinning (God calls this repentance).
5. By an act of your will, accept by faith the Lord Jesus Christ, Who can save you from the penalty of sin. Then, tell God about this in a simple prayer. Believe that God keeps His promise to save you, and thank Him for His salvation.

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SCHEDULE OF ACTIVITIES:

Sundays -

- 9:45 a.m. Sunday School
- 10:50 a.m. Morning Service
- 6:30 p.m. Evening Service

Wednesdays -

- 7:00 p.m. Evening Service

Bi-Monthly -

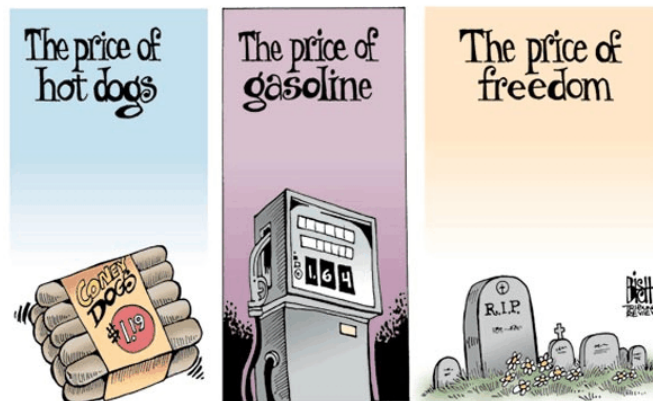
- 11:00 a.m. or 3:30 p.m. Ladies Bible Study
 - 1st & 3rd Thursday of each month

Church Directory

Todd W. White Pastor
 Debra Carlton, Mickie Shatwell Pianists
 Derek Quinnelly Greeter
 Shirley White; Berdena Bergman/Debra Carlton; Daniel Avery/GiGi Avery; Derek Quinnelly/Larry Byars Teachers
 Larry & Mary Byars Outreach
 GinaMarie Shufelt Ladies Bible Study
 Hannah Dietrich Flowers
 Seth White Sound/Video
 Larry Byars, Derek Quinnelly, Daniel Avery Trustees

REMINDER

LEST WE FORGET -



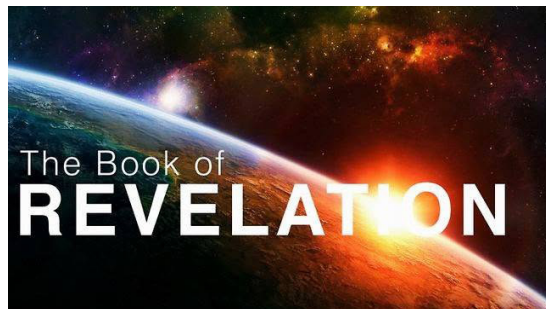
THINGS TO REMEMBER ON MEMORIAL DAY



To the men and women who died for our freedom:

We Thank You

DON'T FORGET TO BE HERE TONIGHT
AS WE CONTINUE TO STUDY -





3 Spiritual Benefits of Singing in Church

Singing in Church Matters

When I was a kid, singing hymns was not an option. The Baptist church we attended had hymns so thoroughly woven into our common life together. From the age of five, I was required to attend adult church services, clad in suit and tie, three times a week. And every service began with at least three, sometimes four hymns. And on Sunday nights, half the service consisted of people picking their favorite hymns. As a child, you really don't understand what's happening when you are singing hymns. I mean sure, you understand *"Jesus loves me, this I know, for the Bible tells me so."* But others are hard to get your head around. What's an Ebenezer, for instance?

But in my adulthood I've come to treasure, so deeply, the way our singing together burrowed God's truth into the deepest recesses of my heart. And now, those words I sang as a seven-year old on a hot summer night in Chicago or around campfires in northern Minnesota or in Vacation Bible school now speak to me, **every day**. In fact, I can hardly finish singing a hymn without my lips quivering and my heart full of emotion. When I hear *"Jesus keep me near the cross, there a precious fountain, free to all a healing stream, flows from Calvary's Mountain,"* I'm transporting to that dining hall at camp where I first committed my life to Christ. When I'm struggling to see God's goodness in a difficult season, Fanny Crosby's words, *"Summer, winter, springtime and harvest, sun, moon and stars in their courses above, join with all nature in manifold witness, to thy great faithfulness, mercy and love."* When I'm enduring a trial, I always go back to the lyric, *"When darkness veils his lovely face, I rest on his unchanging grace. In every high and stormy gale, my anchor holds, within the vale."*

Our singing matters, which is why the Bible is full of rich examples and powerful instruction to the people of God to not only recite and read and study God's truth but to sing it, over and over again, to each other. The Old Testament contains a rich treasure of hymns in the Psalms and in the New Testament, contains the hymns we read in Colossians and Philippians, contained in letters written by Paul to the church while both church and he were under duress and the great hymns of praise in Revelation, a vision of that great eternal worship in the New Jerusalem.

Singing, then, is not an accessory to our worship every week. Singing is not filler in a service. Congregational singing is essential to our life with Christ. To the Ephesians, Paul urged

them, based on their identity as the new and redeemed people of God, to **"Speaking"** [IOW, singing] **"to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord"** (Eph. 5:19). There are really three important spiritual benefits to congregational singing.

1. Congregational singing teaches our hearts -

Humans are created in such a way that repetition and rhythms help cement ideas in our minds. This is why certain song lyrics bring you back to moments in your life or can stir the soul so powerfully. This is why hard facts are often set to music. Educators use song to teach math and science and history. And so it is with our singing. You don't always have to feel good when you are singing congregationally. Sometimes life is so hard you can barely mouth the words. But something is happening when you sing rich truths about God. It burrows these truths deep into your soul so they can be retrieved when the Spirit knows you need them. God has done this for me so often in the last several years, when I've encountered difficult and trying seasons or seasons of doubt and discouragement. A lyric, a line, a hymn just brings back the heart prone to wander.

2. Congregational singing helps us disciple others -

When we sing we are not just singing to ourselves, but we are joining with our new family, the body of Christ, to each and declare to others the truth. And we are declaring to the world what we believe so strongly. Our singing is a witness. This is why our music shouldn't be so watered down that it is immediately understandable to those who don't know Christ. There should be a kind of gospel language that is both different and appealing to those God is pursuing through the Spirit of God.

I've attended college football games with friends and have watched the unique rituals each school engages in as part of this shared communal bond. As an outsider, their rituals are foreign to me and yet I'm not offended. I'm intrigued. Similarly when I'm at Wrigley Field with tens of thousands of Cub fans, singing "Go, Cubs, Go" after a thrilling win, I get goose bumps. *There is something human about it all.*

And so much for our corporate worship practices. This is why I'm often brought to tears singing a familiar hymn in church. **We share something**. When we sing about this glorious gospel, we are teaching ourselves, we are teaching our fellow believers and we are witnessing to outsiders.

3. Congregational singing offers praise and worship to the Lord -

"Singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord", Paul urges. We are offering back praise to the One who is worthy. In the new covenant, we don't bring animals to the altar, but we bring ourselves as a sacrifice of praise, rejoicing in our reconciliation to God through Christ. This is why it is imperative for us to always sing in church - regardless of our voice sounds or if it makes us uncomfortable to sing with others. God is not interested in the quality of our voices. Some of us are extraordinarily gifted, gifted enough to be on stage leading with excellence. But most people in the congregation are not great singers, but their heartfelt worship comes to God as a sweet and special music, the sounds of his children abandoning themselves in praise to him.

So, next time you are in church, don't stand there and stare. Sing, praise, let God move in you. The One who gave Himself for us is worth embracing the awkwardness of worship.

When you do this—faithfully attending church and singing with brothers and sisters in Christ over a lifetime—you will see how much God uses this to sanctify your heart and draw you into intimacy with Him. You will experience a grace greater than your sin.

- Daniel Darling



What Is the Importance of Hymns in Worship?

by Dr. Ligon Duncan

What is the importance of hymns in worship? Dr. Ligon Duncan reflects on the importance of congregational singing in worship, explaining how hymns help us understand and articulate biblical truth.

I love hymns. But more than simply loving hymns, I realize how edifying hymns are for us as we sing praise to God in the public gathering of the saints. The singing of the saints in the congregation is designed to do several things at the same time.

The Corporate Importance of Hymns -

Number one, it's designed for us together to praise God with the same lips and voices, lifting up words of true Scriptural praise to the one true and living God. And, in so doing, it actually pulls us together as a congregation. Another thing that hymns do is they exhort one another. I think how often hymns actually address our brothers and sisters in Christ. When they say things like *"Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation,"* that sentence is actually addressed to one another. We're saying, *"Hey, let's praise the Lord, the Almighty, the King of creation, together"*, and I need that exhortation from my brothers and sisters in Christ.

In times of trial, when we can't think of words to say, things that we have sung come to mind.

Sometimes I come to church, and the last thing that I am truly prepared for is to give myself in glorifying God in the public worship of God. It is then that I need the exhortation of my brothers and sisters saying, *"Let us praise the Lord together. Let us come into his courts with praise and with thanksgiving."* And so, so often in what we sing, we're actually exhorting one another to praise God.

The Personal Importance of Hymns -

Another thing that hymns do is that they unite our heads and our hearts—what we believe, our convictions about the truth of God's Word, and our devotion to God, and they are expressed together with our voices, and in a mysterious way - it actually mingles our convictions and our devotion and impresses deeply on us what we are singing as true. That's why so often, in the hour of death, we remember songs that we sang years and years ago, and those words come to mind. Or, in times of trial, when we can't think of words to say, things that we have sung come to mind.

Of course, singing hymns helps us memorize Scripture and other sound biblical theological truth, but it especially mingles conviction and devotion and thus presses those truths deeper into our hearts.



Sing
Sing....
SING!

Sing! Make a joyful sound!
Sing! Life in Christ is found!
Wages of sin and death -
He paid it all!
Sing! Make a joyful sound!
Sing! Life in Christ is found!
Now, in my heart He reigns!

Sing Sing.... **SING!!!**



THE AWAKENED CHURCH

by Dr. W. A. Criswell
Jan. 31, 1965

You who listen on the radio are sharing the services of the First Baptist Church in Dallas. This is the pastor bringing

the message from God's Word entitled *The Quickened Church: The Awakened Church*. You can easily follow the message, if you would so like, by turning to the second chapter of the Book of Acts. The text is verse 42. I shall read the few verses that precede it. After Simon Peter had delivered his message at Pentecost, the story continues:

“Now when they heard this. . . they said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do? Then Peter said unto them, Repent, turn, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ because of the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call. And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation. Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto the church about three thousand souls. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and in fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in the prayers (Acts 2:37-42).

And that forty-second verse is our passage - *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching, and in the fellowship, and in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers” (Acts 2:42).*

There was a brilliant professor in one of our seminaries, and I copied out of his book twenty-seven things that characterized the church before Pentecost; the church before Acts Chapter 2.:

Christian believers before Pentecost had the gospel, they were converted; they were baptized after conversion. They had Christ as their head, they were instructed in church truths, they were called to obey Christ. They were ordained, they were commissioned; they were organized for their needs. They had a missionary program. They had a teaching program. They had a healing program. They were promised a continuing church. They had church discipline, they had divine authority. They had the essentials of church life. They had a true democracy. They had qualified pastors. They had the Lord's Supper. They had the Holy Spirit; they had divine power to do Christ's work. They sang in the midst of the church. They had prayer meetings. They had business meetings. They had a membership roll; they were united

and added unto, and Christ was their cornerstone; twenty-seven things that he has written here about the church before Pentecost.

Now to me, Pentecost was the quickening, the empowering, the infilling of the church that the Lord organized while He was here in the earth. It is the same thing as you find in the creation of Adam and Eve: God made Adam out of the dust of the ground; and there he was, as God had created him out of the earth - *“Then the Lord breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and Adam became a quickened, living soul” (Genesis 2:7).*

The second Adam - Jesus our Lord - was like that: dead and inert, killed, murdered, crucified. He lay in the tomb, and the Holy Spirit of God raised Him up, quickened Him, raised Him from the sepulcher and from the dead.

Eve was taken out of the side of Adam. Why they wanted to put a rib there, I'll never understand. The Book says Eve was taken out of the riven side of Adam: And the Lord made her bone of his bones, and flesh of His flesh, and she also was quickened and became a living soul. So the church, Paul says, is taken out of the side of our Lord, and she - beloved of the Saviour, gave His life for her, and she also became quickened and living, bone of His bones, and flesh of his flesh, heart of His heart, soul of His soul.

Now - that happened at Pentecost. As the Holy Spirit raised the Lord Jesus, the second Adam, from the dead and quickened Him into life, so the Holy Spirit at Pentecost took the church, the bride of Christ, and breathed into her the breath of life, and she became a living soul, a resurrected body like our Lord: bone of His bones, and flesh of His flesh.

Now, you have a picture of that resurrected, and in-filled, and divinely-inspired, quickened church. You have a description of that primeval church here in the second chapter of the Book of Acts, and especially in this forty-second verse. Luke describes it as in mind's eye he saw it, the church in its splendid prime, when the memory of Jesus was vivid and when the Holy Spirit was new.

And he says four things about it, first: *“They continued steadfastly in the apostles' didache.”* Didache - your word, “didactic,” comes from that: didasko: teaching, *“in the apostles' teaching” (Acts 2:42).* This is the carrying out of the Great Commission of our Lord in the twenty-eighth chapter and the last verses of Matthew, “Go into all the world, make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the triune God,” *didaskontes, didasko* - the participial form of didasko, *“teaching them”* (Matthew 28:19-20). That's the word here, **didache** - *“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching.”* The people never wearied of hearing, and the apostles never wearied of telling all the things about Jesus; and they knew more about Him than anybody in the world.

When you turn over here two pages, you will find it said of these apostles, they looked at them after they had interviewed them and found that they were unlearned and ignorant men. *“But they took knowledge of them, that they had been with Jesus” (Acts 4:13).* Unlearned, ignorant men - *agrammatoi eisin kai idiotes* - unlearned, not graduated from the academic schools - *kai idiotes*, private men, not professional seminarians - but they

remembered they had been with Jesus. That's where they saw them. That's how come them to know them.

So, in that first primitive church the disciples talked to the people about Jesus. And the people never tired of hearing the apostles tell about Jesus. We have a song in our book I wished you'd sing sometime:

*More, more about Jesus,
More of His saving fullness see,
More of His love who died for me.*

In my own imagination, I can just see that primitive first church in Jerusalem gathering around the apostles and asking them, “Now Andrew, tell the story again. How was it, when you and John were on the banks of the Jordan River and the Messiah came by, and John said, ‘Behold, look, the Lamb of God’? And you and John went to spend the day with Him. And it was 10:00 o'clock in the morning, you said? Now, tell us again, Andrew, what did the Lord say? Tell us all about the first time you ever saw Jesus.” And I can just see Andrew as he tells the story again of that first day that he ever looked upon the face of our blessed Lord.

Then, I can just see them gathering around James; “James, you were one of the three, up there on the Mount of Transfiguration. James, what did He look like when His raiment became whiter than snow, and His face shined above the brilliance of the sun, and you heard the voice of God the Father? James, tell it to us again.”

And I can just see the disciples as they gather around John, and they say, “John, you leaned on His breast at the Last Supper. John, how was it when He girded Himself with a towel and washed your feet? John, how'd you feel? How'd you feel when the Master came and bathed your feet, and dried your feet with the towel with which He was girded? How was it, John, when you broke bread together at that Last Supper, and the Lord talked to you in the upper room? Tell it to us again, John. How was it?”

I can see them gather around Thomas - “Thomas, you say you did not believe in the resurrection of the dead, and you said you would not believe until you put your finger in the scars in His hands, and thrust your hand into the great open, riven scar in His side. Thomas, how did you feel when you heard your words of denial and challenge repeated by the risen Lord Himself? Thomas, how did you feel? How did you feel?”

I can also see them gather around Simon Peter, and as they talk to Simon Peter they say, “Simon, you say the Lord called you to be a shepherd of the flock up there in Galilee by the side of the seashore when He said, ‘Feed My lambs and take care of My sheep’. Tell us about that, Simon. Does the Lord love us, and does He care for us? Does He appoint pastors and shepherds to look after us?”

Well, can't you see that? That as they continued steadfastly in the apostles' teaching they never tired of hearing, and the apostles never wearied of telling all about Jesus (Acts 2:42). Can you imagine? Can you imagine? Can you imagine that first church coming up to the apostles and saying, “Now brethren, now you apostles, we think you ought to broaden your field of interest. We are tired of hearing about Jesus. Now let us have a few first-class

book reviews. Now let us have a few lectures on the amelioration of the economic situation of our country. Don't you know anything about Philo, your contemporary down there in Alexandria, and this latest theological fad that he is expounded, neo-paganism? Let's hear about those things! We are tired of hearing about Jesus.” Can you conceive of that? *Yet, that is the modern pulpit, almost to the last one.*

Or can you imagine people coming up to those apostles and saying, “Now listen, you hush your mouth! You hush your mouth! You be still! This is no time to hear about Jesus, or the delivery of a sermon, or a message from the Word of God. We have come to adore, and we have come to worship, and we don't want any sermon, and we don't want any message from you! We don't want any exposition of the Word of God, and we don't want to hear anything from you about Jesus!” Can you imagine that?

My brethren, don't forget, according to the Word of God, according to the Book, the highest worship in this earth is when we open our hearts and our souls; and in contrition, and in confession, and in repentance, and in self-dedication, we hear the story of the precious and blessed Lord Jesus.

Lee Roy, I went through the songbook last night; I went through the songbook last night. I wanted to find - I want you to notice something about that songbook: these hymns are all arranged according to subjects, and you see the subject always at the top, on the right and the left, all of these hymns are arranged according to those subjects. I want to read you a hymn, a lyric, under the subject of repentance and confession. All of you listen to it. This is one of the hymns in that wonderful hymnbook under the caption of repentance and confession, listen to it:

*Tell me the story of Jesus,
Write on my heart every word.
Tell me the story most precious,
Sweetest that ever was heard.
Tell of the years of His labor,
Tell of the sorrow He bore.
How He was despised and afflicted,
Homeless, rejected and poor.
Tell of the cross where they nailed Him,
Writhing in anguish and pain.
Tell of the grave where they laid Him,
Tell how He liveth again.
Love in that story so tender,
Clearer than ever I see.
Stay, let me weep while you whisper,
Love paid the ransom for me.*

That is worship. We are so taught that this is worship - all kinds of genuflection, incense; all kinds of robes, and incantations, and genuflections - that's worship. Not so, not according to the Word of God! **This** is worship at its highest, listening to the Word of God and the story of Jesus in contrition, and in confession, and in self-dedication, letting God speak to our souls through the holy revelation of His love and grace in Christ Jesus.

And oh, the marvelous steadfastness of the worshipers of the

members of that primitive church! The marvelous steadfastness in that teaching, they gave their lives for it – Stephen, the first martyr; James, the first apostle to die; Paul – and, finally, all of them, all of them.

Today, in this day, today there have been uncounted thousands of our brethren who have been beheaded and shot down and martyred by the Chinese communists. All it would have taken to have spared and saved their lives was to say, “Wait - I’ll renounce the faith! I’ll renounce the story. I renounce my commitment to Jesus.” That is all it would have taken - “I refuse to believe any longer.”

Wonder what WE would have done? So many of our nominal Christians, when they were lead to the execution would have said, “Wait a minute! Wait a minute! I can clear up the matter, I don’t want to be narrow or final. I can make a statement broad enough to be satisfactory to all.” ***How like modern, insipid, nominal Christianity!***

They continued steadfastly in that faith, and in that love, and in that commitment, even unto martyrdom and unto death. ***“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine, teaching the story of Jesus” (Acts 2:42).***

“And in the koinonia,” I love that word - ***“And in the koinonia,”*** you read it this morning but you didn’t realize you were reading it – in the first chapter of First John, after John says: ***“That which we have seen from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which our hands have handled, even Jesus, the Word incarnate of God, That we have declared unto you, that ye may have koinonia with us: and truly, our koinonia,”***

There it is again, and he is going to speak of it later - and I will in this message as I follow it:

“And truly our koinonia is with the Father and with His Son, the blessed, precious, holy Lord Jesus (I John 1:1-3).

The koinonia: the fellowship of God’s people, His church, His church. The koinonia: the fellowship, the community, the koinonia, ***“And they continued steadfastly in the koinonia” (Acts 2:42).*** And that’s the first reaction of a convert, a child of God. When you are moved, when the Holy Spirit reveals Jesus to you as a Saviour, that is your first reaction, to be a member of the koinonia - of the fellowship. I read it in the context:

“And when they heard Simon Peter’s sermon at Pentecost, they said to the men and brethren, What shall we do? What shall we do? God has touched my heart. What shall we do? And Peter said, Turn, repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ” – and the King James Version translates it – ***“for the remission of sins”***.

You know, we have a double meaning of that word, ***“for”*** in English, as you could have a double meaning for it there in Greek. ***“For,”*** and there are some people who translate it, ***“in order to,”*** the remission of sins - be baptized “in order to” for the washing away of your sins. Well now, “for” can be used, ***“because of,”*** and we do it all the time like that.

There is an old Texas cowpoke walking by, out there in one of those towns, and he saw a big caption up there: “Man wanted for

a robbery”, and he went in and applied for the job. Do you see that “for”? “Man wanted for a robbery.” **He** translated it, ***“in order to”*** - ***“Man wanted in order to commit a robbery”***, so he asked for the job.

No! “For,” meant there, “Man wanted ***because of*** robbery.” It’s the ame way here, and that is the way it is used here in this Greek:

“Repent” - turn - ***“every one of you, and be baptized - BECAUSE OF - the remission of your sins”... “And they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there was added to that koinonia, to the fellowship, about three thousand souls (Acts2:38, 41).***

Why, you – that’s just normal, that’s just natural – you can’t help being that way. “Where are God’s people? Where is the house of the Lord? Where is the congregation of the faithful? I’ve been saved! The Lord has touched my soul; Jesus has forgiven my sins. Brethren, here I am! I want to be baptized, and I want to belong to the congregation, the *koinonia*, the fellowship.” Oh! How sweet.

Like that Ethiopian eunuch driving down the highway and Philip the evangelist by his side: “And as he preached to him Jesus...” See that same thing again? It is the pattern of the whole Word and message of God:

“And as he preached to him Jesus” – told him about Jesus; that’s the heart of the faith, Jesus – ***“And as he preached to him Jesus they came to a certain water: and the eunuch said, Look, there is water; I want to be baptized – What doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believe with all your heart, you may. And he said I believe that Jesus is the Lord” (Acts 8:35-37).***

The Christ who came into the world to die for my sins, raised for my justification, coming again, if I believe, ***“And he baptized him” (Acts 8:38).*** Well, that’s so natural. And if God touched your heart, that is what you will want to do, and you cannot help it. “Where are God’s people? Where’s the fellowship of the saints? Where is the koinonia? God has spoken to my soul, and here I am. Here I am.”

Old, rough General Grant – drunken, despised and outcast, rough – always thought that was the reason for this: after he was elected sixteenth president of the United States and after all the honors that American could bestow upon him, time came for him to face God. On his dying bed he said this: he said, “Preacher,” talking to a man of God, he said, “Preacher, I have always believed in God. I have always believed in Jesus, I have never been a doubter.” He said, “Preacher, I would give all the honors that have ever come to me if I could have just one more year of life and make a public confession of that faith that I have had in my soul all the years of my life.”

I have always thought the reason he had not done it was because of those years when he was refused by the Army, and turned down by the military, and had lived such a rough and drunken life. But that’s the sign of a real believer and a genuine convert: “I want to identify myself with the koinonia, the people

of God.”

“For the Lord loved the church” – the koinonia, the fellowship – ***“for the Lord loved the church, and gave Himself for it” (Eph. 5:25).*** He said, “My church!” in Matthew 16:18. In the Revelation, in the twenty-first chapter, “The angel said to John, ‘Come here – Come hither’”, and John was taken up unto a high mountain, and the angel said, “And I will show you the bride, the Lamb’s wife” (Revelation 21:9). And then he saw the holy community, the koinonia, the fellowship – God’s people – he saw them, like a bride adorned for her husband (Revelation 21:2).

A preacher joined himself to a company who were talking together, and they were talking about the church. When he had joined the group they said, “Preacher, do you think a fellow has to be a member of the church in order to go to heaven?”

He quickly replied, “Why, certainly not!”, and they patted him on the back and said, “You are a good fellow, that’s right. How broad-minded you are! Don’t have to be a member of church to go to heaven; that’s right.”

Then the preacher said, “May I ask you a question, and you answer me as quickly? Why would you want to go to heaven that way? Just exactly why? Can you tell me why? Why would you want to go to heaven that way because that’s all that’s going to be up there; not going to be any fraternities up there; not going to be any lodges as such up there; not going to be any civic organizations as such up there; not going to be any societies you belong to up there; not going to be anything except the bride, the Lamb’s wife - the church. Can you tell me why you’d like to go to heaven like that? Why, I can’t conceive of it, nor can you; nor can you.”

The koinonia, the fellowship, has been entrusted with the heavenliest and most divine of all of the commissions in the earth: telling the world about Jesus, the evangelization of the world. Yesterday, they had Winston Churchill’s funeral. General Eisenhower was there, who represented us as the head of the armed forces that stormed the bastions of Normandy. A chaplain was walking in the furor of that terrible war, when our men on D-day hit those beaches in Europe, and factitiously he said to an infantryman as he walked by, he said, “Infantryman, are you building a new world?”

Quickly the infantryman replied, he said, “Chaplain, no. I’m just tearing down the old. Building the new is your job.” And it is, and it is: the heavenly assignment; a new creation in us, a new hope, a new life, a new faith – God in us (Colossians 1:27).

“And they continued steadfastly in the didache,” in the teaching, in the story of Jesus, ***“and in the koinonia,”*** and in the fellowship – in the brotherhood, in the precious and blessed church – and in the breaking of bread, ***“and in the breaking of bread” (Acts 2:42).*** They gathered around the table of the Lord: the bread, His body; and this fruit of the vine - His blood - and they had one tremendous thing in common – all of them, one thing in common. They might not all be rich, they might not all be poor, they might not all be learned, they might not all be uneducated. They had one thing in common: no one reproached the one next

to him as though he were any better. They were all confessed, repentant sinners alike, gathering around the table of the Lord. ***“This is the blood that washes our sins away” (I John 1:7-9).*** My brethren, all of us ought to come off of the false, high pinnacles upon which we sometimes live, and get down at the feet of Jesus, at the blood that pours over and cleanses our souls.Jst remember, we’re all alike, sinners before the Lord.

When that Carl Steel painted his canvas here; made this picture here of the serpent raised in the wilderness, all those people, bitten, gathered around. They had one thing in common: they were all dying and they were all looking to God for salvation, and healing, and life. That is the *koinonia*: all of us bitten alike, all of us sinners alike, all of us dying alike, looking to the blessed Lord Jesus.

The church is not a gallery for exhibiting the portraits of perfect sinless people, but the koinonia is a gathering of God’s people, how they can love Jesus more, and believe in Him more, and grow more like Him, educated in the things of the Lord; ***“No merit in us, our righteousness is as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6).*** But oh, the ableness of God to save, and to forgive, and to heal, and to help! That’s it.

The only basis of communion that I have with God is my sins. I cannot stand before Him in my own merit, or strength, or righteousness. I cannot talk to God face-to-face as an equal. The only basis of communion I have with God is this, “Lord, I am a lost sinner, and I plead Your grace and Your mercy,” then I touch the very heart of heaven.

As it says in the fourth chapter of the Book of Romans, the second verse: ***“If Abraham were justified by works, he had whereof to glory; but not before God”***. He might boast before his fellow men about how good he was. He might brag of his righteousness to his brethren, about how fine and noble he was; but he couldn’t do it before God, because God knew him. He couldn’t boast before God about his works, or his righteousness, or his holiness, or his purity, or his sanctity, or his sinlessness. He could not do it before God.

So the next verse says, ***“Therefore, the Scriptures say, Abraham believed in God, and God counted it for righteousness” (Romans 4:3).*** He could not boast of his goodness before the Lord, and he could not justify himself before God; but he trusted in the Lord, in the love, and grace, and promise of God and God counted his faith for righteousness. That is the communion we have with the Lord.

I have so much more to say in that; we hasten to the last.

“And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ didache, in the koinonia, and in the breaking of bread, and in the prayers - tais proseuchais, tais proseuchais - the prayers. You see, there is private prayer, private intercession before God – but there is also public prayer, and stated prayers when the koinonia, when the fellowship is together and we all pour out our souls in common intercession and appeal before God.

The breaking of bread is His death; the sharing of the cup is His death (Matthew 26:26-28). The praying is His living presence,

His resurrection from the dead, His mediation in heaven, His intercession for us in glory (Hebrews 7:25). And in the prayers, in the prayers – why, it is natural on the part of a saint of God to talk to Jesus as it is to eat when you are hungry, or to drink when you are thirsty, or to breathe! They talked to Jesus in the days of His ministry. They talked to Jesus in the forty days after He was raised from the dead, and they kept on talking to Jesus, after He had ascended up into heaven.

It is as natural for a child of God – talking to the Lord, and that is our strength. We rise by falling, kneeling; we advance by that retreat before the Lord. We are strengthened by yielding and submitting - **“When I am weak,”** said Paul, **“then am I strong” (II Corinthians 12:10).** Our victory lies in the praying, in the beseeching, in the looking to heaven, in the talking to Jesus. That is our strength.

I read this week of the president of one of our colleges of the days gone by, not today – of the days gone by - and he overheard the doctor, and he asked, “Doctor, what did you say?” And, the doctor replied, “I said, ‘You have about half an hour to live.’” Then the president of one of our schools said, “Will you take me off of this bed and put me down on my knees? Like David Livingstone; died on his knees, praying; will you take me off of this bed and put me down on my knees?”

They lifted him from the bed and put him down on his knees, and he prayed for his students by word until his voice failed. Then he whispered the prayer, until he could form the words no longer. Then he thought them in his soul. And then, when they picked him up, he was gone. But every student found Christ, and every attendant in that school was saved.

That’s what we need - **that’s our strength.** That’s our power to pull down principalities, and thrones, and high places of darkness and evil. It is in God, and God’s power is mediated to us down on our knees, on our faces in supplication, in prayer. Oh! What a marvelous picture of the awakened and the quickened church, in its splendid prime, when the memory of Jesus was vivid, and when the power of the Spirit was new!

And, while we sing this hymn of appeal, our time is beyond, somebody you, on the first note of that first stanza, come. “Pastor, today I give my heart in trust to Jesus. Today, I put my life in the fellowship, in the koinonia, of God’s church.”

A family - you, a couple - you, or one somebody - you, while we sing this hymn of appeal, on the first note of the first stanza, come. Make it now. Do it now, while we stand and while we sing. ■

NEWS OF INTEREST TO CHRISTIANS

❑ **GLOBAL EXTREME CLIMATE CHANGE MODEL REJECTED BY THE UN** - In a major development, the United Nations has rejected its climate change model that predicted catastrophic scenarios, that was used to brainwash generations of children, and upon which governments enforced draconian laws to “save the earth.”

The following is excerpted from “Global Extreme,” Western

Standard News, May 13, 2026:

“A new scientific paper has debunked one of the most widely used predicted climate change scenarios. The recently published paper in Geoscientific Model Development, says the ‘RCP 8.5’ (or SSP5-8.5) climate scenario, a globally used model for predicting climate warming, contains extreme outcomes which are ‘implausible,’ based on climate trends already observed [beginning in 2020]. The international committee of climate scientists will now refer to the new model, used as the basis for assessment by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the United Nations’ body for assessing climate change. ... Dr. Sylvain Charlebois highlights some of the world’s leading climate scientists are now acknowledging ‘humanity is unlikely to follow the catastrophic path that dominated climate communication for much of the last decade.’”

❑ **MINECRAFT AND “END POEM”** - Video gaming is sucking the spiritual life from large numbers of young people in fundamental Baptist churches, or we could say that video gaming is merely a reflection of their **lack of** spiritual life.

Take **Minecraft**, for example, the best-selling video game of all time, “with over 350 million copies sold.” It can be played solo or as an online multiplayer game. **There is a very dark side to Minecraft.** We were recently informed about the “End Poem” associated with the game.

“Given that your warnings on various matters have been quite useful to me and others, I wanted to suggest an important topic if you ever revisit your article on video games. I believe it would be very profitable to make a warning on the ‘End Poem’ from the game **Minecraft**.

Many children in Baptist churches (as in many others) play this game with the parents having no knowledge of what is in it. The impact of this poem has been sizable and has been quite commented on. It is held in high esteem among the playerbase.” “End Poem” is presented to the player who defeats Minecraft’s final boss, the Ender Dragon.

The poem has been in the public domain since 2022. **It is utterly demonic.** Claiming to be the mind of the universe, it says thoughts come from the universe and can create reality. **“Sometimes when they are deep in dreams, I want to tell them, they are building true worlds in reality.” It says the truth should be told “safely, in a cage of words. Not the naked truth.”** It promotes pantheism (“we are the universe”), warlocks, witches, Father sun, mother moon, ancestral spirits, animal spirits, demons, poltergeists, aliens, and extraterrestrials. The poem ends with these lies:

“the universe says everything you need is within you ... the universe says the light you seek is within you ... the universe said you are the universe tasting itself, talking to itself, reading its own code ... the universe said I love you because you are love.” Minecraft is permeated with the demonic, potentially carrying the gamer ever deeper into the occult.

“Minecraft is composed of three worlds: The Overworld, The Nether, and The End. Players must first gather resources in the Overworld by gathering wood, farming, mining, crafting

equipment, enchanting their gear, and trading/robbing villagers so that they are prepared to enter the Nether and End. The Nether is Minecraft’s version of hell, but it is made childish and not overt. There are mobs that are analogous to evil spirits and the dead, such as blazes, ghaists, and wither skeletons. There the player must slay several blazes to craft an ‘eye of ender’ to lead them to a portal where they will go into The End. There they will defeat the Ender Dragon and the game ends.”

❑ **U.S. CATHOLIC BISHOPS CONSECRATE AMERICA TO THE SACRED HEART OF JESUS** - The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has voted to consecrate the United States to the Sacred Heart of Jesus on the nation’s 250th anniversary in July 2026. The decision was made at the fall plenary assembly on Nov. 11, 2025.

The Sacred Heart of Jesus is an image of a wounded, fiery heart crowned with thorns and topped with a crucifix. A heretical practice with **no** support in Scripture, it is founded on 17th century visions of the nun Margaret Mary Alacoque at a convent in France. In these alleged visions Christ promised great blessings for those who pay homage to the image, including having their names written on his heart, being “their secure refuge during life, and, above all, in death,” and “blessing every place where a picture of my Heart shall be set up and honored.”

For those who participate in the mass on the first Friday of nine consecutive months, the Sacred Heart Jesus promised “the grace of final repentance.” This was obviously a demon masquerading as Christ, for the true Christ has already promised in Scripture full eternal salvation to those who trust Him (John 3:16, 18, 36). The Sacred Heart of Jesus preaches Rome’s false works gospel. Further, God’s Word forbids the veneration of images pertaining to God (Ex. 20:4-5). There is no support in the entire New Testament for candles, incense, bells, images, icons, rosaries, scapulars, holy water, and other such things that supposedly aid in faith but actually turn the pure faith of Jesus Christ into an idolatrous false religion. **“... for whatsoever is not of faith is sin” (Romans 14:23).**

❑ **ROME SAYS CAPITAL PUNISHMENT “INADMISSIBLE”** - In another example of Rome’s audacity to put its own thinking above God’s Word, Pope Francis revised the Catholic Catechism to oppose capital punishment. In 2018, he called the death penalty “inadmissible because it is an attack on the inviolability and dignity of the person.”

In April of this year, Pope Leo XIV said, “I condemn capital punishment. I believe that human life is to be respected and that all people--from conception to natural [death]--their lives should be respected and protected” (*EWTN News, Eternal Word Television Network, May 15, 2026*).

After Noah’s Flood, God commanded the death penalty for murder: **“And surely your blood of your lives will I require; at the hand of every beast will I require it, and at the hand of man; at the hand of every man’s brother will I require the life of man. Whoso sheddeth man’s blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man” (Genesis 9:5-6).**

That has never been rescinded. It was confirmed in the law of

Moses (Exodus 21:12; Leviticus 24:17). The New Testament grants civil government the right to bear the sword against evil doers (Romans 13:4).

❑ **NETWORK OF FAKE “AI RABBIS” ON TIKTOK** - The following is excerpted from *“New Report Exposes,” Israel365News, May 8, 2026:*

“The Combat Antisemitism Movement (CAM) has released a major new report uncovering a coordinated network of fake, AI-generated ‘rabbis’ flooding TikTok with antisemitic content, in what experts warn is a dangerous escalation in the weaponization of artificial intelligence to spread hate. The study, conducted by CAM’s Antisemitism Research Center (ARC), identified at least 49 TikTok accounts posing as Jewish religious figures while disseminating conspiracy theories and classic antisemitic narratives to a vast global audience. Collectively, these accounts have amassed more than 950,000 followers and generated over 10 million likes, demonstrating both the scale and effectiveness of the operation.

... Among the accounts identified were profiles such as @rabbirothstein and @rabbi_silverstein, which presented themselves as authentic rabbis while promoting harmful and misleading claims about Jews.

... The findings also underscore the vulnerability of TikTok, particularly given its predominantly young user base.”

❑ **SIXTIES LEFTIST MENTALITY CAPTURED THE UNIVERSITIES** - “Leftist” refers to Marxist, revolutionary, atheistic, agnostic, anti-American, anti-Bible, anti-nuclear family thinking. The following is excerpted from ***Destructive Generation: Second Thoughts about the Sixties*** by Peter Collier and David Horowitz, 2005 edition, Preface:

“But nowhere is the entrenchment of the Sixties mentality more complete or more destructive than in the university. That the Left should now dominate the academy involves a savage irony, of course. It was only after failing in their intent to burn down the university in the Sixties that radicals decided to get on the tenure track in the Seventies. Unimpeded in their long march through these institutions by fair-minded centrists of the sort they themselves now refuse to hire, these Leftists have brought a postmodern Dark Age to higher education--‘deconstructing’ objective truths to pave the way for chic academic nihilism; creating a curriculum of contempt for America history and culture; and transforming many classrooms into chambers of inquisition and indoctrination.”

The Worship Service: A Hindrance Or A Highway For Revival?

by Ron Owens

The uniting of God’s people in corporate worship is of crucial importance to the life of the church. What takes place during this time should prepare the way for God to visit His people in revival. It is possible, however, for what occurs in the “worship service” of the church to actually be a hindrance to revival. How can this be true? Let’s look at some of the ways revival may be hindered

by what we do, or don't do, in our services.

I. A Misunderstanding of What It Means To Worship -

The word “worship” has numerous connotations in today’s churches. This in itself has resulted in many of the problems we face. In order to truly worship God as He desires to be worshiped, we must understand what worship is from His perspective. We must allow His Word to give us a true definition of worship.

The primary word used in the Old Testament for worship is the Hebrew word *shachah*. In each of its 170 uses, it has the same meaning: ***to prostrate oneself, to bow down or stoop***. In the New Testament, the Greek word for worship, *proskuneo*, has virtually the same meaning: ***to crouch, prostrate oneself, to kiss the hand, do reverence, to adore***. True worship, therefore, must begin with a heart attitude of bowing or prostrating oneself in adoration and reverence before the One Who is being worshiped. In many instances there may be a physical expression of worship as well.

“...and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground” (Neh. 8:6b).

“And the four and twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.” (Rev. 5:14b)

Today, we see very little of this attitude of stooping, of humbling oneself in worship. Instead, it seems the church is spending an inordinate amount of time ***standing and celebrating***. Although both worship and celebration should be part of the life of the church, there is a significant difference between the two. In worship, there is a sense of awe and reverence for who God is. He is the focus of worship. In celebration, we rejoice and enjoy what God does, or has done. In actuality, the truest celebration springs from a worshiping heart. There is obviously a place for celebration in the life of the church, but it ought never to replace worshiping God!

In today’s church climate, with its focus on celebration rather than worship, an unbeliever or backsliding Christian can actually feel “at home” and enjoy himself in many of our services. In true worship, however, when the focus is on God, a sinner will not feel “at home.” In God’s presence, sin is revealed. A sinner will be faced with his sin and his need to bow before a holy God in repentance.

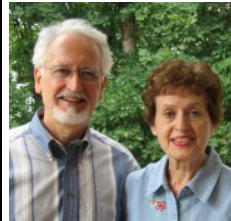
There is no record of revival beginning among a people who were always celebrating, but never worshiping. The record, however, is full of those times God came in revival blessing while His children were on their faces before Him. God’s requirements have not changed: ***“if My people . . . will humble themselves” (II Chron. 7:14).***

II. Seeing Worship As A Means to An End, Rather Than An End in Itself -

Our drive to evangelize and our desire to grow numerically have led us to “use” worship as a tool to reach the lost. We have gone so far as to turn our worship services, as opposed to evangelistic services, into “seeker-friendly” meetings, so the world will feel at home when they come into the house of God. We should always be sensitive to the unsaved, but nowhere in Scripture are we told to accommodate the world in what God calls

the believer to offer to Him.

Worship, as we find it in Scripture, is the exclusive right, privilege, and responsibility of the child of God. It is spiritually impossible for an unbeliever to worship. The prevailing idea that the church needs to sound like the world in order to win the world demonstrates a serious misunderstanding of what church really is. It demonstrates more concern with what the world thinks than with what God thinks.



Ron & Patricia Owens

There is one fundamental reason why the living God wants His people to assemble in worship: that is, to ascribe to Him the worth and value that are His, individually and as a body, and to present their bodies as living sacrifices. Worshiping God is not a means to an end; it is an end in itself!

III. Missing Ingredients in Worship -

In some churches, the vital elements of worship are being omitted from the service because so much time is being taken for other things. What are these “vital elements” of worship? One of them is prayer. Jesus said, ***“My house shall be called a house of prayer” (Mark 11:17)***, yet prayer is not central in so many of our modern day services.

In our travels, I have sometimes checked the amount of time churches actually spend praying in their worship services. At one point, four out of five spent more time welcoming the visitors than all their praying combined. Two out of those five spent more time making the announcements than in prayer. Recently, in one of the largest churches in our land, a total of ***forty-five seconds*** was actually spent in prayer, while ten minutes were given to a humorous Sunday School promotion.

Another vital element of worship missing from our services is ***the reading of Scripture***. How often have you heard an entire chapter of God’s Word read in a worship service? The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to give attention to the public reading of Scripture (I Tim. 4:13). We, too, need to heed this instruction.

IV. When Man Sees the Pulpit as “His” Stage -

We live in a society that craves entertainment. Sadly, this desire to be entertained has gained more than a foothold in the church. By design, many of our church buildings have become theaters. What was once called the “pulpit area” has now become known as the “stage” for “*religious performing*.” This is true both in preaching and in music.

There is no place in a worship service for entertainment. The people are not in need of seeing how clever man is, but how holy God is. They need an encounter with Him. Yet, so often, a congregation leaves more impressed with the singer than with the Saviour; more impressed with the personality of the preacher than with the power of the Holy Spirit. In entertainment the focus is on man, while in worship the focus is always on God. Today it seems that, especially in the world of “Christian music,” ***God is often being used to display man’s talent, rather than man’s talent***

being used to display God. We must strive with all our being to keep the congregation’s focus where it needs to be. God, after all, is our “audience” in worship. It is His approval that we are to seek. We must continually remind ourselves of this:

It matters not if the world has heard, or approves, or understands;

The only applause we’re meant to seek is the applause of nail-scarred hands.

V. Insensitivity to What the Holy Spirit is Doing in a Service -

It is extremely important that those of us involved in worship leadership remain open and sensitive to the working of the Holy Spirit when we are leading the church in worship. The pushing of our own agenda can quickly hinder what God is doing at a particular moment in a service. Let’s look at some specific examples involving different areas of leadership.

Imagine a point in a service when something has taken place that has unquestionably led the congregation to a serious evaluation of their lives in light of God’s holiness. The people’s hearts have been deeply moved. The choir is scheduled to sing next, but they have planned to sing a rhythmic, upbeat version of “Blessed Assurance.” There is nothing wrong with the song, but the timing is not right. Music Director - what do you do? Do you just go ahead and do what you have planned, or do you adjust and have the congregation sing a hymn or chorus that is in the flow of what is happening? How often I have seen the Spirit of God quenched by the wrong music. A soloist or choir may be scheduled to sing, but if what is planned would turn the people’s focus away from what **God** is doing, it would be better not to do anything. There are times when the best thing that could happen is silence.

Organists, pianists, and musicians must also be sensitive to what is going on in a service. If, for instance, the service has closed with a deep sense of conviction, they must be careful what they play for a postlude. The focus can so quickly be turned away from God and what He has been doing, and turned toward themselves and their music by playing some boisterous number. Sometimes it may be best to just continue quietly playing the commitment hymn.

Many times I’ve seen the Holy Spirit grieved by a pastor who, after God has spoken deeply through special music or in the corporate worship of the congregation, gets up and tells a funny story in order to “get his audience.” What has really happened is that the pastor has drawn the focus away from God and toward himself. Worship has been hindered.

We must remember that those who are part of the worship leadership will either help or hinder what God wants to accomplish in the service. We must be careful not to quench or grieve the Holy Spirit by being “out of the Spirit.”

VI. Substituting “Adrenalin Highs” for the Holy Spirit -

Many in the Christian world seem unaware of the powerful effect music can have on the emotions. The secular world and the New-Age community are **well aware** of the adrenalin rush that can be produced by the continuous repetition of words and musical

phrases.

In his book, *Adrenalin and Stress*, Dr. Archibald Hart points out that adrenalin addiction is *just as real* as an addiction to drugs. He shows how this happens within the context of some worship styles. ***In many of our churches today we have mistaken “adrenalin highs” produced by constant musical repetition for the presence of the Holy Spirit.***

In our day, when so much emphasis is placed on “having an experience,” people are open to deception. The “feeling” one may get from the constant mantra-like repetition of choruses is not the Holy Spirit. When it becomes necessary for people to get a certain “feeling” when they worship, they may very well have become addicted to what the music does to them. The tragedy is that in such situations, the Lord’s “manifest presence” has departed, yet no one realizes it. That is exactly what was happening in Jeremiah two, when not even the leaders were asking, “where is the Lord?”

VII. Offering What is Unacceptable to God -

The presenting of offerings which are unacceptable to God is, and always has been, the fundamental hindrance to God’s blessing of His people. Numerous Scriptures record God’s dealing with His children because they were offering Him worship He could not accept.

One example of this is in the book of Isaiah. In chapter one, we find Israel going through the motions of worship. Even though the people had all the outward appearances of “doing it right,” God turned His back on their sacrifices and prayers because their hearts were not His. The words He spoke to them should make us pause and think: ***“Bring no more vain oblations. . . when ye spread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you: yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear: . . . Wash you, make you clean” (vs. 13-16).***

It is not the outward excellence of the offering God looks for; it is the excellence of the heart. The sight and the sound of our offerings make no impression on heaven unless they are being lifted up with holy hands. No matter how beautiful they may be, the voices of unregenerate or backsliding church members are unacceptable to God.

Yet our loving God still says to us, ***“Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.” (Isa. 1:18).*** His words still call out to us as His people: ***“Return unto me, and I will return unto you” (Mal. 3:7).***

Dr. Martyn Lloyd-Jones once said that the most important and highest activity any company of God’s people could ever engage in was to offer Almighty God acceptable worship. Jesus said that the Father was looking for a people who would worship Him in spirit and in truth (John 4:24). Such a people prepare the way for revival.

Lord, may our worship services be a highway for Your presence, and not a hindrance. ■