

As many of you know, I started a course of study program through Wesley Biblical Seminary over the summer. It has been a challenge to say the least. Having never taken a “Bible class” in my undergraduate studies, my Bible knowledge to this point has been based on Sunday School in my elementary years, Youth Group in my teens, and my own reading and study as an adult. Well, this program has thrust me into the major leagues of Master’s degree level theology rather quickly. During many of our lectures, I find myself wishing that the professor could teach me the content on a kindergarten level. However, I don’t think that’s going to happen. And that’s ok because it is forcing me to really consider what and why we believe what we claim to believe.

I am currently taking PM620 - Worship in the Church. Which is really interesting as it steps back to the days of the early church and portrays how they worshiped. I am sure that as the semester plays on, we will begin to compare that to what worship has become. In fact, we have already identified that some of what we do in “worship” is not worship at all. This is the state of the entire Christian church across all denominations. With that, I thought I would share a few points that have really made me think lately.

One question that is continually brought to focus in this course has been “Does this action of worship bear the weight of the glory of God?” For me, that’s a pretty sobering thought, as nothing that we can give to God is ever going to be good enough. However, we should put ourselves in a humble state of vulnerability to give what we have to Him and be ready to receive what he has for us. God offers himself to us through the life of Jesus and the Holy Spirit so that we can respond to Him. The question is, are we responding or just going through the motions?

The **entire** service is worship, not just the songs that we sing at the beginning. Within the past century or so, the structure of worship changed and made “praise and worship” synonymous with the songs and music during the service. While everyone has their own preferences about music (both secular and in the church), when it comes to music and songs that we sing on Sunday’s, we should really be asking “Is the music focusing on who God is or who we are?” I had a music minister at a previous church tell me that it’s not about the style of music, rather it should be about the words that are being sung. So, as we sing a contemporary selection or a hymn, pay attention to the words more than the music that goes along with them.

Finally, rather than saying, I want God to be #1 in my life, we should be asking where do I fit into what God is doing?” When we say I want Him to be #1 in **my** life, it’s still about **my** life when the focus of worship should be about God, not me. The intent of worship is to make a **declaration** of who God is. Worship is about more than how we feel, it’s about offering our lives back to God.

So, as you enter into worship this Sunday and every Sunday in the future, ask yourself these 3 questions:

1. Why am I really here today?
2. What are the deepest burdens that I have brought with me?
3. Is there anything that is keeping me from surrendering completely over to God?

I pray that considering these questions will help all of us to shift our focus to God as we enter into worship and to be intentional in our consideration of what God wants to do in and through us individually and as a church.

Your Youth Director,  
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