

An Experience of Worship **Isaiah 6:1-8**

Some time ago, I told a friend what a particular experience of worship at church meant to me. My friend's comment helped me to understand that different people have various concepts of what a true experience of worship should be. This led me to the realization that the Word of God records a number of experiences of worship which were meaningful to the people involved.

In my judgment, one of the greatest experiences of worship ever recorded is found in Isaiah 6:1-8. What an experience of worship! Years ago, an article which appeared in a religious publication of the Southern Baptist Convention points out that Isaiah's worship in the temple is characterized by three definite experiences.

I. THE UPWARD LOOK TO GOD

Worship begins with God. The Bible says that man was created in the "image of God." This certainly means that we are capable of having wonderful fellowship with Almighty God – our creator – through worship.

In Isaiah 6:1-4, Isaiah had a clear vision of God. And every time we worship we need to stand in reverence – as Isaiah did – before the holiness, majesty, and power of Almighty God. When we truly worship, our minds and hearts should be focused on God and His will for our lives.

The story is told of a preacher's small son who was brought for the first time into the sanctuary for the Sunday morning worship service. The little boy sat quite still until his daddy stepped from the choir room to the pulpit. With great pleasure, the little boy cried out: "Daddy! Daddy!" After the service the preacher's wife attempted to apologize to a woman sitting nearby, but the woman stopped her and said: "Would that we all saw but the face of our FATHER when we come into this place to worship."

Worship begins with God and regardless of where or when we worship we need to get a clear vision of God.

II. THE INWARD LOOK AT SELF

When we worship, we must also examine our own life. Worship begins with God but real worship also involves self. After Isaiah saw the greatness of God he became aware of the fact that he was a sinful, unclean man. In Isaiah 6:5, we hear the prophet declare: "Then said I, woe is me! For I am unclean, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts." Isaiah's vision of God made him realize the great gulf between God's holiness

and his own sinfulness. And when Isaiah acknowledged and confessed his sins God graciously forgave him. In Isaiah 6:6-7, we read: “Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: and he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.”

Every true experience of worship should help all of us to see that in the light of God’s holiness we are indeed sinful and unclean. And then we must look back to God’s power to forgive and trust Him to forgive us of our sins even as we repent of them before Him.

III. THE OUTWARD LOOK TO OTHERS

True worship always brings response. One major response which worship should evoke from every worshipper is a genuine concern for other people. Worship begins with God, but it is not complete until it involves self in reaching out to others. When we worship, we hear GOOD NEWS – the Gospel message. What is our response to Good News? It is to go and share it with other people.

In our scripture lesson it should be noted that Isaiah’s worship experience was not complete with his vision of God or with his own cleansing. After being forgiven of his sins, Isaiah was ready for whatever service God wanted him to render. In Isaiah 6:8 we read: “Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, “Whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I send me!”

In his book entitled Christ For The World, E. H. Westmoreland writes: “When we worship, a voice above us keeps saying ‘Go.’ A voice within us keeps saying, ‘I am a debtor.’ And a voice beyond us keeps saying, ‘Come.’” The natural outgrowth of worship is a life of service to others.

We all need true experiences of worship – not entertainment but real worship! Isaiah is a great example!

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