

Introduction:

What is victorious worship? In our last lesson, we examined “Vain Worship in 5 Easy Steps.” But we don’t just want to know what to avoid. We want to know what to pursue. What is victorious worship? What does it look like? What does it include? How do we pursue it? Please, don’t fall prey to the easy path of least resistance believing victorious worship equals emotional highs and roller coaster feelings that leave us breathless. In our feelings driven culture, we may think victorious worship means “feeling” like we’ve worshiped. Many, chasing that feeling, present worship as if it is a rock concert culture with driving beats, emotional devotionals, swaying audiences, and uncontrollable outbursts. Sadly, what this usually ends up being is a pursuit of novelty of outward expression. Some think if we rearrange the furniture, adjust the size, change the music, alter the lighting, mix up the order, and make a dozen external changes we’ll really worship. The problem is the great feeling those novel changes give are fleeting and quickly become the new norm that doesn’t seem to cut it anymore. The reality is true, victorious worship will not always leave us feeling great. In fact, true worship will take us through valleys before it will ever lead us to peaks. With that in mind, let’s examine **Isaiah 6:1-8**. As we do, discover “5 Keys of Victorious Worship.”

Discussion:

I. Be properly amazed

- A. Isaiah found himself in the middle of worship. The Lord was sitting on His throne amid the seraphim. The house was filled with the smoke of His glory. And the seraphim worshipped crying out the holiness of God. And do you see what his response was? His response was essentially, “Oh no! I shouldn’t be here! I don’t belong here!” Why didn’t he belong? “I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips” (**Isaiah 6:5**). He was in the presence of God and he was shocked.
- B. We need to grasp how truly amazing it is for us to gather with the saints to worship God or to walk into our prayer closets. What we are doing is cosmically significant. We are participating in the complete reversal of all that should be. We are taking part in a cosmic scandal. Imagine if the President of the United States were caught in the presence of a drug dealer, prostitute, treasonous spy. And here is something far more intense, the holy God of the universe is being caught in the presence of unclean sinners like us. Perhaps we can’t see Him on His throne as Isaiah could, but what we are doing is no less universally amazing. Why aren’t the heavens and earth crying out against this scandal? Why aren’t we zapped out of existence or ground to dust or swallowed up by the earth on which we stand for our presumption to walk into the holy throne room of God? The only reason we are able to do this is because God sent Jesus to die for us. His blood opens the path into God’s presence (**Hebrews 10:19-25**).
- C. Have you ever heard someone argue against a weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper because we may end up taking it for granted? Why doesn’t anyone argue against singing and praying regularly because I think we have clearly taken it for granted? We shouldn’t be here. We don’t belong here. Those songs and prayers shouldn’t be on our unclean lips. And yet, because of the blood of Jesus Christ, we are brought into the very presence of God. We can pray and sing praises. We can worship. We can cast down our golden crowns. Be amazed. Yes, be amazed at God, His power, His holiness, His benevolence, His judgment, His awesome nature. But be even more amazed that people with unclean lips like us are ushered into His presence. These are blood bought actions we are participating in. Be amazed!

II. Prostrate Yourself

- A. When we are properly amazed, we will not pursue worship, snapping our fingers under God’s nose, jovially acting like what we are doing is our natural right. Worship is not about making us feel great because of some amazing experience. Look at Isaiah and his worship experience. How did it make him feel? When he came into the presence of God, he was reminded of his own sinfulness, his unworthiness. How did worship make him feel? “Woe is me! For I am lost” (**Isaiah 6:5**). Worship did not lift Isaiah up until it first brought him low.
- B. Certainly, to worship God we can prostrate ourselves physically (which, by the way, is the only act in the Bible that is called worship). However, if we think this is merely about physical prostration, we are missing

it. Like Isaiah, we need to prostrate ourselves spiritually before God. Like the 24 elders of **Revelation 4:10**, we fall down before God, casting down our golden crowns, casting away our claims to be someone worthy.

- C. Far too often our attempts at worship are about attracting God's attention to us, whether in our private worship or in our congregational worship. "Lord, look at how well I sing for you. Lord, listen to what fantastic prayers I utter. Lord, do you remember what I did for you this week?"
- D. Victorious worship begins with recognizing we've got nothing to truly offer God, that we are nothing to look at or listen to. Consider **Psalm 50:7-15**. God rebukes Israel for their misguided worship. What was their problem? They thought they were offering God something He needed. God didn't need their sacrifices. In like manner, He doesn't need our singing and praying. God was there when the morning stars sang and all the Sons of God shouted for joy (cf. **Job 37:7**); do you think we are impressing him with our singing? No. Victorious worship is about lowering ourselves, not lifting ourselves up.

III. Lift God Up

- A. We are people of unclean lips, living in the midst of unclean people, but God is holy, holy, holy (**Isaiah 6:3**). His glory is displayed throughout the entire earth. Consider the passage based on this in **Revelation 4:8-11**. Worship is the proclamation of God's worthiness: "Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created" (ESV).
- B. Worship isn't about making us feel a certain way, pumping us up, or giving us an experience. Worship is about God, declaring His worthiness, His holiness, His power, His excellency. As **I Peter 2:9** explains, we are a royal priesthood appointed to proclaim the excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness into light.
- C. He is the Creator, the benefactor, the judge, the maintainer, the power behind all power, the King of kings, Lord of lords, God of gods. As Paul describes Him in **I Timothy 1:17**: "King of the ages, immortal, invisible, the only God" (ESV) and again in **I Timothy 6:15-16**: "the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone has immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see" (ESV). Therefore to Him belong honor, glory, and eternal dominion.
- D. Worship is not about lifting us up. It is about lifting God up.

IV. Be Changed

- A. Why worship, we may question. God doesn't need lifting up. Why does He command us to do something He doesn't need? We can't possibly give Him His due anyway. Why ask us to try? God hasn't commanded worship because He needs us to worship. God has commanded us to worship because we need what worship provides us. We need the change worship brings.
- B. In **Isaiah 6:5**, Isaiah proclaims he is a man of unclean lips, but by **Isaiah 6:8** Isaiah volunteers his lips to speak God's holy Word. Because of worship, Isaiah was changed. Of course, in this vision, Isaiah is atoned as an angel touches his unclean lips with a burning coal from the altar of sacrifice. I don't want us to get the idea that worship is some kind of sacrament we perform in order to get saved. Salvation comes through the blood of Jesus Christ. What I hope we recognize is Isaiah's change came as he was brought low by worship.
- C. Worship is supposed to change us. Consider the perspective David demonstrates because of worship in **I Chronicles 29:10-19**. Worship helps us see our place in the universe. It helps us see our needs. It helps us recognize what God has done for us and what we need from Him. It also helps us surrender to Him. We don't worship because God needs it. We worship because we need to be changed by it.

V. Tell Others

- A. Notice the greatest change worship produced in Isaiah. He went from a man of unclean lips, to a man willing to carry the message of God to others. That is what truly victorious worship accomplishes. It produces people who can't keep the message inside. It produces people who are so amazed by the God who allowed them into His presence, cleansing them and atoning for them that they want to get the message to others.
- B. They want to carry that message to others even if those others reject, refuse it, and will ultimately be judged by God for it (**Isaiah 6:9-13**). Worship is victorious when it motivates us provoke others to worship.

Conclusion:

Don't take for granted the amazing events that have happened in this building tonight. You have been able to have the name of God on your unclean lips because He atoned for your guilt and sins and cleansed your lips by the blood of Jesus Christ. The God of the universe did that. Be amazed. Be humbled. Be changed. Tell someone about it.