

RESTORING WORSHIP IN THE HOUSE OF GOD

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Text: 2 Chronicles 29

Daniel Baumann wrote, “Worship is a stairway on which there is movement in two directions: God comes to man, and man goes to God.”

-- Daniel Baumann, Leadership, Vol. 2, no. 3.

Unfortunately, too often we fail to make the effort of climbing those heavenly stairs into the presence of God—content merely to look to the top of the stairway for a friendly face. Such a nonchalant and careless attitude toward worship is certainly the result of neglecting **true** worship. It is the result of being unable or unwilling to make any movement toward a holy God. Sadly to say, too often, when this has been our attitude we find that we have neglected true worship for far too long and we will find that more has been lost than we ever imagined.

However, all is not lost if we are willing to move toward God once again. True worship can be restored. Note the **steps** that we must take in order to restore true worship.

I. BEGIN BY DOING WHAT IS RIGHT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD (vv. 1-28).

A. We must take care of the neglect at the house of God (vv. 1-10).

Hezekiah was twenty-five years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem twenty-nine years. His mother's name was Abijah daughter of Zechariah. He did what was right in the eyes of the LORD, just as his father David had done.

In the first month of the first year of his reign, he opened the doors of the temple of the LORD and repaired them. He brought in the priests and the Levites, assembled them in the square on the east side and said: "Listen to me, Levites! Consecrate yourselves now and consecrate the temple of the LORD, the God of your fathers. Remove all defilement from the sanctuary. Our fathers were unfaithful; they did evil in the eyes of the LORD our God and forsook him. They turned their faces away from the LORD's dwelling place and turned their backs on him. They also shut the doors of the portico and put out the lamps. They did not burn incense or present any burnt offerings at the sanctuary to the God of Israel. Therefore, the anger of the LORD has fallen on Judah and Jerusalem; he has made them an object of dread and horror and scorn, as you can see with your own eyes. This is why our fathers have fallen by the sword and why our sons and daughters and our wives are in captivity. Now I intend to make a covenant with the LORD, the God of Israel, so that his fierce anger will turn away from us. NIV

Note: “After this initial act the king's cleansing of the temple proceeded through four stages:

- (1) reconsecrating the Levitical personnel (vv. 4-14);
- (2) directing them to purify the temple itself (vv. 15-19);
- (3) rededicating the sanctuary and altar (vv. 20-30); and
- (4) encouraging the populace to renew their presentation of sacrifices (vv. 31-36). To institute the first stage, he assembled the priests and Levites "in the square on the east side," presumably in the wide space in front of the temple (Ezra 10:9).” EBC

B. We must take care of the neglect in our own heart (v. 11, 20-24).

“My sons, do not be negligent now, for the LORD has chosen you to stand before him and serve him, to minister before him and to burn incense.” (v. 11) NIV

Roger Palms in Living Under the Smile of God writes, “Worship is not just personal introspection, or we would worship our feelings. Worship is not even a warm glow, or we would worship that. We worship One outside ourselves. We concentrate on him, we praise him, we adore him, we hear his Word for he is announcing it to us. We listen in holy awe to the word of God, for it is a part of that "all" of Scripture which is given by the outbreathing of God and is personally necessary for "my" correction and "my" instruction in righteousness.”

-- Roger Palms in Living Under the Smile of God. Christianity Today, Vol. 34, no. 14.

II. COME TO GOD WITH CONSECRATED WORSHIP (vv. 29-31).

A. Consecration should always lead us into praise and worship (vv. 29-30).

“When the offerings were finished, the king and everyone present with him knelt down and worshiped. King Hezekiah and his officials ordered the Levites to praise the LORD with the words of David and of Asaph the seer. So they sang praises with gladness and bowed their heads and worshiped.” NIV

B. Consecration, praise and worship should always lead us to offer up a sacrifice pleasing to the Lord (v. 31).

“Then Hezekiah said, ‘You have now dedicated yourselves to the LORD. Come and bring sacrifices and thank offerings to the temple of the LORD.’ So

the assembly brought sacrifices and thank offerings, and all whose hearts were willing brought burnt offerings.” NIV

Paul tells us in Romans 12:1-2, “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” NIV

III. BE PREPARED TO PARTICIPATE IN WORSHIP (vv. 33-36).

A. We must be prepared to minister to God (vv. 33-34).

“The animals consecrated as sacrifices amounted to six hundred bulls and three thousand sheep and goats. The priests, however, were too few to skin all the burnt offerings; so their kinsmen the Levites helped them until the task was finished and until other priests had been consecrated, for the Levites had been more conscientious in consecrating themselves than the priests had been.” NIV

A lack of consecration is never more evident than when we come before the Lord in our worship and spiritual service.

Note: The lower-ranked Levites, somewhat surprisingly (cf. [24:5](#) comment; [Ezek 48:11](#)), now showed themselves "more conscientious ... than the priests" (but cf. [30:3](#) and the lack of principle evinced by the high priest Uriaah only nine years before this, [2 Kings 16:10-11](#)). For the truest faith is often found among the humble; and throughout history "professional" religious leaders have too often been among those least willing to submit to Christ and to the Word (cf. [John 7:48](#)). EBC

B. We must understand that the entire process of worship has its origins in God's grace (vv. 35-36).

“There were burnt offerings in abundance, together with the fat of the fellowship offerings and the drink offerings that accompanied the burnt offerings. So the service of the temple of the LORD was reestablished. **Hezekiah and all the people rejoiced at what God had brought about for his people, because it was done so quickly.**” NIV Bold added

CONCLUSION

In his book Good Morning Merry Sunshine, Chicago Tribune columnist Bob Greene chronicles his infant daughter's first year of life. When little Amanda began crawling, he records: "This is something I'm having trouble getting used to. I will be in bed reading a book or watching TV. And I will look down at the foot of the bed and there will be Amanda's head staring back at me.

"Apparently I've become one of the objects that fascinate her. ... It's so strange. After months of having to go to her, now she is choosing to come to me. I don't know quite how to react. All I can figure is that she likes the idea of coming in and looking at me. She doesn't expect anything in return. I'll return her gaze and in a few minutes she'll decide she wants to be back in the living room and off she'll crawl again." The simple pleasure of looking at the one you love--what Bob and his daughter enjoyed--is what we enjoy each time we worship God and bask in his presence.

-- Greg Asimakoupoulos, Concord, California. Leadership, Vol. 15, no. 1.

We will know when we have restored true worship in the house of God as well as in our hearts. True worship will be evident when we have taken the necessary *steps* to restore what has been lost. Worship will take place when our greatest pleasure is found in just coming into His presence.