

Breaking Free to Worship

II Corinthians 3:17-18

Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.

God is doing some exciting things in our day:

- He is pouring out His Spirit.
- He is building His Church.
- He is preparing His Bride.
- He is raising up a spiritual army to step on the devil.
- He is assembling His body to be an accurate expression of Him in the earth.

He is calling us to be a part of one of the greatest times of all of history. What a challenge!

God wants this generation to go beyond every other generation in experiencing truth and entering into His purposes.

What does that mean for us today?

1. It means that we must not accept the limitations of the past.
2. It means that we must be earnest in our desire for truth.
3. It means that we must desire to know the Lord more intimately.
4. It means that we must be especially responsive to the voice of the Lord.
5. It means that we must be willing to change. If the church is to become what it is to become, it must change.

The Christian life is not a static life. It is a life of change...

- From glory to glory.
- From faith to faith.
- Line upon line, precept upon precept.
- We are coming to a perfect man.
- We are on the path of the just.
- We are to increase more and more.

One area in which God wants change is in **our expression of worship**. He wants us to come up to a more biblical expression of our worship of Him.

There are two great hindrances to change.

1. **A love for tradition** or the way we have always done it (A good memory). There is something nice about the comfortable, even if it is less than it should be. Lovers of tradition say, "We never did it that way before."

2. **A love of the status quo** or a loss of vision for the next mountain. We often want to settle down a bit short of the goal. What we have is better than what we had before. But it is still a bit short of where we could be. We want to be settlers rather than pioneers.

Do you know what a fossil is? An animal or plant that did not make the transition. It got frozen in its place in time. Mature Christians ought not to fossilize. Christians should never fear change. In fact, the Christian life is continual change. Change that is initiated by God can only bring prosperity into our lives.

Jesus indicated that by our traditions we can make the Word of God of no effect (Mt. 15:1-6). What do we do when our traditions say one thing but the Word of God says another?

Example:

1. If our tradition says that silent worship is reverent and pleasing to God...But the Word of God says sing, shout, dance and clap your hands, what do we do?

Psalm 95:1-3

Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the LORD is the great God, and the great King above all gods.

Psalm 98:4-8

Shout joyfully to the LORD, all the earth; break forth in song, rejoice, and sing praises. Sing to the LORD with the harp, with the harp and the sound of a psalm, with trumpets and the sound of a horn; shout joyfully before the LORD, the King. Let the sea roar, and all its fullness, the world and those who dwell in it; let the rivers clap their hands; let the hills be joyful together before the LORD...

2. If our tradition says that we must be very serious in the house of God and be careful not to get too excited, but the Word of God says to rejoice and make a joyful noise to the Lord, what do we do?

Psalm 100:1-2

Make a joyful shout to the LORD, all you lands! Serve the LORD with gladness; come before His presence with singing.

Psalm 9:2

I will be glad and rejoice in You; I will sing praise to Your name, O Most High.

Psalm 32:11

Be glad in the LORD and rejoice, you righteous; and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!

Part of our problem is that we do not understand why God wants us to worship the way worship is described in the Bible. Psalm 47 tells us that we are to sing praises to God with understanding. Perhaps we need some understanding.

Psalm 47:6-7

Sing praises to God, sing praises! Sing praises to our King, sing praises! For God is the King of all the earth; sing praises with understanding.

While we do not have time to do thorough studies of all of these areas, each of these God-ordained expressions of worship have spiritual meaning.

Clapping

Psalm 47:1

Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph!

Clapping is a universal sign of appreciation and thanksgiving.

Lifting our Hands (Ps. 63:4; 119:48; Neh. 8:6)

Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, my lips shall praise You. Thus I will bless You while I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. Psalm 63:4

Lifting Hands is:

- A universal sign of surrender.
- A sign of covenant relationship with God (Gen. 14:21-23) and being sold out to Him.

Now the king of Sodom said to Abram, "Give me the persons, and take the goods for yourself." But Abram said to the king of Sodom, "I have raised my hand to the LORD, God Most High, the Possessor of heaven and earth, that I will take nothing, from a thread to a sandal strap, and that I will not take anything that is yours, lest you should say, "I have made Abram rich'" Genesis 14:21-23

- Lifting of hands is used in blessing someone (Lev. 9:22; Luke 24:50-51). If we are going to bless the Lord, How do we do it?

And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them.
Luke 24:50

Then Aaron lifted his hand toward the people, blessed them... Lev. 9:22a

- It is a prayer posture (I Tim. 2:8; I Kgs. 8:22; Ps. 28:2; 88:9)

I desire therefore that the men pray everywhere, lifting up holy hands, without wrath and doubting... I Timothy 2:8

It is like reaching out to God for His assistance.

LORD, I have called daily upon You; I have stretched out my hands to You.
Psalm 88:9b

- It is as the evening sacrifice (Ps. 141:2).

Let my prayer be set before You as incense, the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Shouting (Ps. 32:11; 35:27; 71:23; 81:1; 95:1-2; 132:9, 16)

Let them shout for joy and be glad, who favor my righteous cause; and let them say continually, "Let the LORD be magnified, Who has pleasure in the prosperity of His servant." Psalm 35:27

My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing to You, and my soul, which You have redeemed.
Psalm 71:23

My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you... --NIV

You have rescued me! I will celebrate and shout, singing praises to you with all my heart.
--CEV

Be happy and shout to God who makes us strong! Shout praises to the God of Jacob.
Psalm 81:1, CEV

Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Your saints shout for joy.
Psalm 132:9

Shouting is:

- **The voice of victory and deliverance**
- **The homage paid to a king (Num. 23:21; Mt. 21:9, 15)**

The crowds that went ahead of him and those that followed shouted, 'Hosanna to the Son of David! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!' Matthew 21:9

- **Shouting in faith makes walls fall down (Josh. 6:5, 20).**
- **Symbolic of making a firm oath to the Lord (II Chr. 15:14,15)**

Then they took an oath before the LORD with a loud voice, with shouting and trumpets and rams' horns. And all Judah rejoiced at the oath, for they had sworn with all their heart and sought Him with all their soul; and He was found by them, and the LORD gave them rest all around.

Believe it or not there will be shouting in heaven (Rev. 5:12-13; 7:10)

After this, I saw a large crowd with more people than could be counted. They were from every race, tribe, nation, and language, and they stood before the throne and before the Lamb. They wore white robes and held palm branches in their hands, as they shouted, "Our God, who sits upon the throne, has the power to save his people, and so does the Lamb." Revelation 7:9-10, CEV

Dancing (Ps. 149:3; 150:4)

Let Israel rejoice in their Maker; let the children of Zion be joyful in their King. Let them praise His name with the dance; let them sing praises to Him with the timbrel and harp. For the LORD takes pleasure in His people; He will beautify the humble with salvation.

Psalm 149:2-4

Dancing is:

It is a sign of deliverance from mourning (Ps. 30:11)

You have turned for me my mourning into dancing; You have put off my sackcloth and clothed me with gladness, to the end that my glory may sing praise to You and not be silent. O LORD my God, I will give thanks to You forever. Psalm 30:11-12

Many different words are used for dancing in the Bible. They mean different things.

They mean things like...

- Spring about in a circle (II Sam. 6:14).
- To spin around (Ps. 51:8; 96:11; 118:24) Often translated “rejoice”
- To twist or whirl about (Ps. 54:1; 66:7-9).
- To dance in a chorus line (Jer. 31:4, 13; Ex. 15:20).

An expression of joy when the presence of God was restored (II Chr. 13:5)

We started with the question, “What do you do when the Word of God says one thing but your tradition says another?”

The answer is, “You change. You conform your life and experience to the Word of God.”

If you knew that when you lifted your hands you were actually blessing God....

If you knew that when you shouted unto the Lord your personal walls would fall down and your mountains would melt away...

How would you do it?