

Consecrated Worship
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Last week we began a new sermon series called High Praise / Deep Worship. It's based on a prophetic word we gave on March 21 when then Lord said He wants to take us into a higher dimension of praise and a deeper dimension of worship in our church and our everyday lives. God said that experiencing this deeper dimension of praise and worship requires four things:

- Consecration – to be set apart to God, totally devoted to God
- Concentration – to be focused on God
- Consideration – Considering what God wants in worship and considering each other as we worship in unity.
- Courage – when we press in the enemy fights it, but high praise overcomes the enemy every time!

Today I am speaking on Consecrated Worship. Let me define consecration for you. In the Bible, consecration means to pronounce as clean. It also means to be set apart from the world and sin – set apart to God. Consecration means to be dedicated to God and committed to God. Consecration means to be sanctified and purified. Consecration means to be holy. Not holy as in perfect – but holy as in totally dedicated and devoted to God and His purposes.

In the Old Testament, when something was devoted to God – it could be used for no other purpose. Numbers 3:5-12 says:

The Lord said to Moses, “Bring the tribe of Levi and present them to Aaron the priest to assist him. They are to perform duties for Him and for the whole community at the Tent of Meeting by doing the work of the tabernacle... The Levites shall be Mine.”

God wanted the Levites to be dedicated to His service – nothing else. The Levites were already part of the family of God – this was not a salvation issue.

My children are my children no matter how they behave. But their behavior affects our relationship and their closeness to me. It's the same way with God. When we are born again we become God's children. God loves and accepts us right where we are, but He loves us too much to leave us that way. So, He puts us in the process of being made holy. This is called sanctification. Holiness is becoming like Christ, where we are set apart from worldly, sinful, fleshly things.

This can only happen when we are totally surrendered to God's will. Romans 12:1 in the Amplified Version really emphasizes this:

I appeal to you therefore, brethren, in view of all the mercies of God, to make a

decisive dedication of your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service and spiritual worship. This passage shows us that consecrated worship is based on the mercy of God.

It is not something we can do on our own apart from Him. Religious worship is worship where people try to approach God by their own good works. But consecrated worship is based on the finished work of Christ on the cross.

Consecrated worship is not legalism where we think we can approach God because we have kept a list of rules. Consecrated worship is based on a deep love for God because of His grace and mercy that results in a holy desire to please Him by being a living sacrifice. Being a living sacrifice means that consecrated worship requires us to die to ourselves – die to the belief that we can be good enough on our own – dies to our own pride and our own accomplishments.

Consecration occurs when we are empowered by the mercy of God to die to ourselves and devote ourselves totally and sacrificially to God. That results in consecrated worship. The higher the holiness – the higher the praise! The deeper the devotion – the deeper the worship!

The first place in the Bible where we see consecration and worship together is when God told Moses to consecrate the priests who would minister to Him in the tabernacle. Exodus 29:1-21 shows us what God required for His Levitical priests to be consecrated.

This is what you are to do to consecrate them, so they may serve Me as priests: ... bring Aaron and his sons to the entrance to the Tent of Meeting and wash them with water. Take the garments and dress Aaron with the tunic, the robe of the ephod, the ephod itself and the breastpiece. ... Take the anointing oil and anoint him by pouring it on his head.

The next verses give instructions for the burnt offering.

Take the other ram, and Aaron and his sons shall lay their hands on its head. Slaughter it, take some of its blood and put it on the lobes of the right ears of Aaron and his sons, on the thumbs of their right hands, and on the big toes of their right feet.

Then sprinkle blood against the altar on all sides. And take some of the blood on the altar and some of the anointing oil and sprinkle it on Aaron and his garments and on his sons and their garments. Then he and his sons and their garments will be consecrated.

Here we see the 4 elements of consecration: Blood sacrifice - Washing in water - Putting on special clothes – Anointing.

What does this mean for us?

In the new covenant, we are all priests called to minister to the Lord.

1 Peter 2:9 says:

But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light.

Like the Levitical priests – we offer God consecrated worship – and to do that, we need the blood, the water, anointing and a change of clothes.

1- Consecrated Worship requires Blood Sacrifice

Under the Old Covenant a blood sacrifice was required for consecration. The good news is that in the New Covenant, Jesus is that sacrifice!

Consecration is NOT about doing good works. It is NOT based on our performance. Consecration is not trying to be perfect because we are not. Consecration is about the sacrifice of Jesus making us perfect.

Obviously – every blood sacrifice in the Old Testament pointed to the death of Christ on the cross to atone for our sins. Not only are we saved by the blood, we are also sanctified by the blood. Hebrews 9 talks about how the Old Testament sacrifices made people outwardly clean. Verse 14 says:

How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!

The blood of Christ cleanses us from all sin – outward and inward.

The blood had to be applied to the priest's:
 Ear Which represented their Words
 Thumb Which represented their Work
 Toe Which represented their Walk

The blood needs to be applied to what we allow ourselves to hear and see – what we take in from the outside. The blood need to be applied to our works – the things we do. The blood needs to be applied to our walk – the places we go.

What we hear and see – what we do – where we go – all these things can defile us. You see – as we walk through life we will be exposed to things unintentionally that need to be cleansed.

Jesus dealt with this when He washed His disciples' feet. Remember Peter said – "Hey – if you're gonna do that – wash all of me." But Jesus said in John 13:10

A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean.

In other words – “I made you totally clean when you believed in Me – but as you walk through this world – your feet get dirty – you pick up dirt from your surroundings.”

And Jesus wants to cleanse that. So, we need to apply his blood to our ears, hands and feet when we are defiled – and we do that by confessing our sins.

1 John 1:9 says:

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Don't fall into the trap of believing you've got to get saved again every time you sin. But don't fall into the opposite error of thinking you can live in sin and still be consecrated to God. To offer consecrated worship – we need to understand approaching God by the blood of Jesus and we need to live a lifestyle of repentance.

We need forgiveness and we need cleansing. Christ gives us that through His blood – but also through washing.

2- Consecrated Worship Requires Washing –

This obviously speaks of water baptism – and we all need to be baptized - but it also speaks of the word of God. Ephesians talks about how marriage represents Christ and His bride. Ephesians 5:25-27 says:

Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to Himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

Christ cleanses us by washing us with His word. John 17:17 says:

Sanctify them by the truth; Your word is truth.

We don't have to sit around wondering if we've sinned. The Lord will convict us and when He does - we need to be cleansed by the blood, washed by the word.

3- Consecrated Worship Requires Anointing –

This speaks of the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. We usually think of the anointing as what a preacher or a healer have. But the anointing is for all of us. The anointing of the Holy Spirit is what empowers us to live for Christ.

The disciples walked and talked with Jesus – but he told them in Acts 2 not to leave Jerusalem until they were baptized in the Holy Spirit. You see – it's not enough to know Jesus – we need the power of the Holy Spirit. Acts 1:8 says:

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.

We need that power – anointing – baptism and filling with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit imparts power and holiness to us. We will never be holy apart from the Holy Spirit!

And in fact, consecrated worship is a result of being filled with the Spirit. Ephesians 5:18-20 says:

Do not get drunk on wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Spirit. Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Bible says we need to be filled with the Spirit for power to witness and to flow in the gifts of the Spirit. But being filled with the Spirit also results in consecrated worship!

We need to be cleansed by the blood – washed by the word – anointed by the Spirit and:

4- Consecrated Worship Requires Changing Clothes

Obviously, God cared about what the Old Testament priests wore when they approached Him. Psalm 132:7-9 says:

Let us go to His dwelling place; let us worship at His footstool. Arise, O Lord, and come to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your strength. May Your priests be clothed with righteousness; may Your saints sing for joy.

Remember – we are all priests called to minister to the Lord. As priests unto God, we need to be clothed with righteousness so that we can proclaim God’s praise through our consecrated worship. To do this, we need to understand the difference between righteousness and holiness.

Righteousness is the state of being right with God. When we are born again we are made right with God by the sacrifice of Christ – our sins are forgiven, our past is over, the old person we were is dead and we are new creations with a new future. This is not something we can attain in our own strength or works. In fact, Isaiah 64:6 says:

All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like a filthy garment.

The best we can do apart from Christ is filthy in God’s sight. That’s why we need a change of clothes! Christ changed clothes so that we can change clothes. What do I mean by that? 2 Corinthians 5:21 says:

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

Christ – who is righteous – clothed himself in sin – our sin – so that we might clothe ourselves in His righteousness.

When we are born again we become as righteous as Christ. We need to get so firmly established in our righteousness that nothing can move us off it. However, that does not mean we can still live any way we want without regard to what God wants for us. And what does God want for us? 1 Peter 1:15-16 says:

But just as He who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."

What God wants for us is holiness. When you confuse righteousness and holiness – you get into 1 of 2 errors – legalism or license. Legalism comes from the misbelief that we can earn righteousness by what we do. But true righteousness only comes through faith in Jesus Christ.

Romans 6 talks about how before we were saved, we were slaves to sin. Verse 19 says:

Just as you used to offer the parts of your body in slavery to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer them in slavery to righteousness leading to holiness.

Notice that righteousness leads to holiness. People mess up when they reverse this order, thinking that holiness leads to righteousness. Thinking that legalistically keeping a list of rules will make you right with God. Wrong! Righteousness is being made right with God and that only comes through faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Romans 3:21-22 says:

But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe.

When we get grounded in who we are in Christ – when we truly understand righteousness – being right with God based on faith in Jesus – then we can focus on becoming holy. Hebrews 10:14 says:

By one sacrifice He has made perfect forever those who are being made holy.

We are already righteous – we are becoming holy. A misunderstanding of righteousness can also lead to license. People fall into this when they start thinking – I'm right with God so it doesn't matter what I do – how I live. It does matter to God what we do and how we live.

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24 says:

May God Himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and He will do it.

The Lord promises to sanctify us – but as in anything else we receive from God – we must cooperate fully with Him. 2 Corinthians 7:1 says:

Since we have these promises, dear friends, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God.

Some verses say God purifies us – some say purify yourselves. This shows us that human cooperation is included in God's completed work. There is a saving work which God only can do for us; but there is also a work which we must do for ourselves.

Before we were born again – we were dedicated to living for ourselves. Now we must be dedicated to living for God. But the old man's ways are ingrained in us, we have habits and ways of doing things that must be put off and new habits to put on. God wants to give us a new wardrobe, but we must change our clothes!

Romans 13:12-14 tells us to put away sinful attitudes and actions and to *Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the sinful nature.*

So, Change your clothes! All of us must put off those things which hinder consecrated worship in us and then clothe ourselves in Christ. Christ – who is righteous – clothed Himself in our sin – so that we might clothe ourselves in His righteousness. What a deal! When we put on Christ:

We put off the old and put on the new!
 We give Him our sin – He gives us His righteousness!
 We give Him our death – He gives us His life!
 We give Him hate – He gives us His love!
 We give Him our depression – He gives us His joy!
 We give Him our fears – He gives us His peace!

So change your clothes and put on Christ!
 When you are lost – put on Christ – who is your salvation.
 When you are empty – put on Christ – who fills you with the Holy Spirit.
 When you are sick – put on Christ – who is your Healer.

When you don't know where to start or when to stop – put on Christ – who is your Alpha and Omega – the beginning and the end.
 When you need answers – put on Christ – who is your Wisdom.
 When you need strength – put on Christ – who is the Lord Almighty.
 When you need freedom – put on Christ – who is your Deliverer.

When you are in turmoil – put on Christ – who is the Prince of Peace.

Whatever you need – put on Christ – because my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory BY CHRIST JESUS!

When you are forgiven by the blood, washed by the Word, anointed by the Spirit and clothed in Christ, then you can give Him consecrated worship!