

A Radical Resolution

This morning I would like to talk to you all about the New Year. Isn't it amazing that another year has nearly come to pass, and I'm sure, as usual, we all have a million thoughts running through our heads, some of which probably sound like this. How am I possibly going to pull this New Years Eve party off? I'm going to loose 30 pounds this year. I'm going to shave 5 strokes off of my golf score. I'm going to spend more time with my family. I'm going to exercise 4 days a week. I'm going to get better grades. I'm going to really try to love my wife more actively this year. In our society we call these thoughts new years resolutions. A desire, and sometimes even a plan, to change the way we act, the things we say, the attitude we have, or even the way we think in the coming year. This morning I would like to propose to you a far more radical resolution. One which might just change not only what we do, but fully transform who we are as individuals as well as who we are as a body here in this place and throughout the world.

Prayer...

A radical resolution, one that can completely transform who we are... it must center on who we were created to be, it must get to the root of every fault, and permeate every moment of our existence. I am speaking of a resolution to be worshipers. To adequately address this issue it would be helpful to define the term worship. Luckily, God has done this for us in his word.

Romans 11:36-12:1

36For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

1 I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

*Spiritual or REASONABLE

Break down this definition into a few key words.

Glory: Something is in the position of Glory

-that which takes preeminence, it is that which guides decisions, that which is principle, which is treasured most.

Present: Dedicate, we dedicate ourselves to that thing which is in the position of Glory

Sacrifice: We must make sacrifices for this cause. We have limited resources, time, talents, money, and we expend these resources towards this end and choose not to expend our resources on other things. We make sacrifices in our dedication to that which is in the position of glory.

From this definition, we see that we are all worshipers, and this makes sense considering that we were made to worship. The issue is, what we place in the position of glory? Paul talks about this in his letter to the Romans...

Romans 1:21-25

21For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. **22** Claiming to be wise, they became fools, **23**and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonoring of their bodies among themselves, **25**because they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen.

So we either worship the creator, our reasonable worship, placing God in the position of Glory, or we worship the created, in essence, idolatry.

Thinking about making resolutions, I often think about the sin in our lives, a desire to turn from sin to righteousness. To be made more and more into the image and likeness of God. The bible calls this sanctification, and while our justification and our ultimate glorification are God's free gift to us, sanctification requires work, it isn't easy. To often though I think we get caught up in the fruit of the sin rather than the root issue of the sin. The sin itself isn't the issue. Worship is the issue. When we sin, we are worshiping a false god. Maybe just for a moment we allow someone or something other than the creator God to slip into the position of Glory. We align ourselves with it, and we make sacrifices for it, most notable our fellowship and intimacy with God. Take sexual immorality for example, probably the sin which most plagues our church today. We take the body, that which God created and called very good, we elevate this good thing to a God thing, and we worship the body. We allow it to become preeminent in our lives, we devote ourselves to it, and we sacrifice for it. We sacrifice our marriages, our families, our time, and again, our relationships with good. The root issue of our sin is always a worship issue, for if we were constantly worshiping the one true god and none other, we would not have the issue of sin in our lives.

So what is in the position of glory in your life? And what should be?

Back to our resolution to be Worshipers:

Paul tells us that intrinsic to worship, as opposed to idolatry, is a life focused on the Glory of God. To be worshipers our lives must be centered on the **glory** of God. But why...?

Two Reasons:

Our Purpose is for God's Glory

As believers we are called and created for His Glory

Isaiah 43:7 everyone who is called by my name,
whom I created for my glory,
whom I formed and made."

All things are from him, through him, and to his glory

Romans 11:36 For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him.

God's Purpose is for His own Glory

He works for and seeks after His own Glory

John 8:50 Yet I do not seek my own glory; there is One who seeks it, and he is the judge

Isaiah 63:14 in the context of leading the Israelites out of Egypt... like livestock that go down into the valley,
the Spirit of the LORD gave them rest.
So you led your people,
to make for yourself a glorious name.

Philippians 2:6-11 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

He alone is worthy of Glory and it is His alone to have

Isaiah 48:11 For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.

And from Romans 11:36 we know that in all things he will have his Glory!

Isn't that mean that God is selfish? No

Our god is living and active so he must have some purpose, if his purpose were for anything other than his own Glory his purpose would be sin and he would not be God.

Self is not sin in God

“Yet in God, self is not sin but the quintessence of all possible goodness, holiness and truth.” –A.W. Tozer

So though by God's grace we freely receive love, and joy, and happiness, and all blessing beyond measure... these things are byproducts, not the primeproduct which is God's Glory. As worshipers, that which is preeminent in our lives must not be the happiness of man, or the things we receive as a result of God's grace, but rather the glory of God.

The next characteristic of reasonable worship is that we present ourselves, or devote ourselves to the Glory of God. This means that worship is not just the singing of praise songs on Sunday mornings.

Colossians 3:16-17 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, Giving thanks to God the Father through him.

And further...

1 Corinthians 10:31 So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.

Worship is both our time here as a community praising God, hearing from his word, and encouraging one another, as well as the individuals resolve to live a lifestyle of worship. Put another way, in the words of A.W. Tozer, “If you will not worship God seven days a week, you will not worship him once a week.” All that we do should be in complete devotion to the glory of God, in other words, a desire to glorify God must be the worshipers' fuel for all that we do.

Finally, this resolution to be worshipers, this complete devotion to the glory of God will require **sacrifice**.

John 15:18-19 18 "If the world hates you, know that it has hated me before it hated you.
19 If you were of the world, the world would love you as its own; but because you are not of the world, but I chose you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.

How is it that the world so hated the most compassionate, loving, faithful servant, yet they so willingly love and accept me. And the question really arises, “how sold out am I really to the ends of worshiping my God, of living sacrificially for his Glory?”

As we have already discovered, worship requires the laying down of idols. It requires the rejection of passivity, as it seems that far too often we as a church find it more pressing to pacify our fears rather than glorify our God.

As our nation falls deeper and deeper into depression, suicide, and addictions, and as the church goes with it, it is abundantly clear that we must stand for the Gospel in the face of a society that ever increasingly denies the mere existence of capital “T” truth. Standing for the gospel entails proclaiming it to the glory of god. We can proclaim the gospel both in the way we live and the things we speak, and scripturally there are only three mandates as to how this should be done. Acts 5:20 exhorts us to proclaim “the whole message of this life.”

In Ephesians 6:18-20 Paul states, “and *pray on my behalf*, that utterance may be given to me in the *opening of my mouth*, to make known **with BOLDNESS the mystery of the gospel**, 20 for which I am an ambassador in chains; that in *proclaiming* it, I may speak **BOLDLY AS I SHOULD SPEAK**. Finally in Colossians 4:3-4 Paul writes, “**praying at the same time for us as well** that God will open up to us a door for the word, **so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ**, for which I have also been imprisoned; that **I may make it CLEAR** in the way **I SHOULD SPEAK**.”

So let us together live a lifestyle of worship, one in which we live fully devoted lives, as men and women willing to make sacrifices for our life focus of Glorifying the Creator rather than the created, that we would be transformed, this year, to the glory of God. Amen.

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