

EASTER SUNDAY - DISCIPLINE OF WORSHIP - MARK 16.1-8

What comes to mind when you hear the word worship?

Perhaps you think about coming to church on Sunday's. Perhaps you think of a church choir – maybe people praying – maybe getting really excited and dancing or waving their hands

I grew up in churches like this – my Grandmother called us happy clappy's - my grandfather said we were wiggle bottoms – how have you grown up (if at all) worshipping God?

Luke 1:46, 47 says - My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

Imagine life if our attitude was *rejoicing in God* each day and you shared this with others – all too often we probably have more days like the women from today's reading:

So they went out and fled - terror and amazement seized them - they said nothing to anyone, for they were afraid

Today I want to give you reasons to rejoice in God that if you receive – will change your life

Some years back a young friend from our Anglican Church attended a Baptist church - it involved a girl – doesn't it always

Much like my grandparents, he took issue with their expressive nature

I encouraged him to ask better questions like – *why* were they so expressive?

He went back and enquired – eventually he understood why they worshipped as they did

He didn't begin to do the same – he simply learnt it was ok to be more expressive

The more important step he took was asking better questions of his own walk with Jesus

What were his reasons for the way he expressed (or didn't express) worship for God

Worship of God is something the Psalms encourage time and again to offer

We think worship is something we do to or for God – I believe it's something God does *through us*, for himself – what we receive is the *overflow* of God working through us

On Thursday night I talked about the discipline of serving

On a basic level – Jesus left an example of serving others – but there's so much more

Jesus showed a *way of serving* that is utterly holy and acceptable to God

The reason it's holy and acceptable to God is it revealed God serving himself

Jesus didn't serve the disciples – he showed them God was serving them – through Jesus

Jesus wanted the disciples to understand when they serve others – it wouldn't be that they served people – it would be they were serving God, *in others* – those Jesus would die for

Jesus death upon the cross would be the ultimate service - the ultimate lowliest position

God could not have taken a more self-defacing death to show his love for us left

He left no room for pride, self-worship or glorification – no room for power or control

All was abandoned at the cross – all that is left is for us to choose to receive his service

When someone serves – we either have to accept or refuse that service

Kerry tells the story that as kids – if she received bad service, she left money under a glass of water that was flipped upside down so when it was moved water would go everywhere

I remember when I was a kid that people would come out to your car to pump fuel

It was so nice when they did this – but you had to say whether you wanted them to or not

If they were courteous – you'd tell other people to go there – and you'd keep going back

If this were a parable of Jesus – he'd be telling us he's the fuel pump that never runs dry – the lithium-ion battery that never loses its charge – come to me all who are weary and heavy laden – and I'll give you a free 150 point comprehensive check and service

As those who receive his service – we play a part in what he's doing

You see - without allowing Jesus to serve us in his death – we can't receive his gift

As he humbled himself to serve - we must humble ourselves to receive his gift of eternal life

Maybe you've followed Jesus for years – maybe you've helped others know of this gift

Maybe this is something completely new and you're wondering if it's for you

It all begins with how you receive this gift – Jesus death – and today – his resurrection

As we walk with Jesus – we find we engage God in various ways - Archbishop William Temple gives this insight into the discipline of worship:

*To worship is to quicken the **conscience** by the holiness of God, to feed the **mind** with the truth of God, to purge the **imagination** by the beauty of God, to open the **heart** to the love of God, to devote the **will** to the purpose of God*

Here's a diagram of how God interacts with us and we respond – something my young friend and grandparents judged on a surface level without asking deeper questions

God wishes to engage us holistically: OUR *conscience – mind – imagination – heart - will*

Jesus pointed to this in Matthew 22 - worship of God which overflows onto others

In turn we respond to God – *or worship* – in ways we “like” however these don't always develop a deeper relationship with God

Worship in music is easy for me – fasting – reading – prayer – are not as easy – I have to work at developing these – when I do – I find my walk with God deepens – I grow closer

Think about how we invest in relationships – what if we only gave time to texting?

How many parents are looking at their kids? Or their spouses?

What if you ONLY communicated – physically – or with gifts – or talking – or grunting

We have ways we prefer to communicate – and we also develop ways to communicate – especially if we know it benefits a relationship that's important to us

This goes the same for worshipping God – how we worship isn't important – *why we do* is!

Once we receive the gift of Christ's death - we receive his gift of resurrection

As we walk with him – we worship in ways we naturally respond with – we develop others

1 Corinthians 10:31: "Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God."

A monk named Brother Laurence had letters collected and made into the little book called – PRACTISING THE PRESENCE OF GOD

His daily life – whether praying or peeling spuds - was an ongoing engagement with God

The more he engaged God that affected his *conscience – mind – imagination – heart – will* – the more we found himself naturally engaging in *worship of God*

Here's the truth – worship can be something we can learn to *love* – rather than something we feel *forced to do* – *if we learn to pursue pleasing God, we won't be disappointed*

Like any relationship this comes with time - it comes the more we engage in it

Like any relationship, sometimes this means giving up things we enjoy – but we will find a greater value in the time we give up for God.

God wants us to take time in serving, giving generously to those in need, offering an ear to someone hurting. Worship will come and God will be seen in these small sacrifices.

Like any relationship there should be joy, fun and laughter as well

God wants us to take time to give praise or thanks for things he's done for us.

Worship happens when we share with others - to encourage them that God is present.

Like any relationship, we grow closer by time spent with the person alone - and with others.

God is jealous for time with us alone - but he wants his family to worship together as well.

Jesus of Nazareth - crucified – whose death was the ultimate act of love to serve us all.

If you haven't received his gift – do want to today – if so I'll pray for you

Are you practising his presence – is your life worship – I'll pray that it would be for us all

God's Spirit is in us – it seeks to serve others – to let everyone know of an amazing gift – that Jesus was raised so one day - all God's people may worship him together – let's pray...