

Our Captivated Hearts

LET US WORSHIP THE LORD IN SPIRIT & IN TRUTH

“The true worshipers shall worship the Father in Spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” John 4:23

“Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when **the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth**, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

John 4:23,24



August 15 “Songs in the Night”

“WORSHIP in Spirit and in truth does not apply simply to prayer, praise, supplication, and thanksgiving.

“It goes deeper than all these and takes hold upon the affections, upon the heart, and hence signifies not an ‘act of worship’ **but rather a life of worship**--a life in which, through the begetting of the Spirit and the knowledge of the divine plan, the individual becomes so at one with God and so in unison with the law of God and all the features of the plan of God that it is, in the words of our Lord, his meat and his drink to do the Father's will.

“This is worship in Spirit and in truth. It will find its expression in bended knee and in

orderly and reverential demeanor in approach to God in personal prayer, in family prayer and in company with the household of faith, and it will find its expression also in all the acts and words of life.

“The captivated heart will seek to bring every talent of the body into complete subjection to the will of God and of Christ. The whole of this is the worship which God seeketh; and, surely, only those who are thus captivated to the Lord in heart, and who serve him in Spirit and in truth and endeavor to have his will done in their hearts, words, and conduct are in the full sense the true worshipers whom the Lord seeketh; the ‘little flock,’ the faithful ‘royal priesthood.’”

R 2071

“Vain Worship”

In R2709, “Worship The Lord In The Beauty Of Holiness,” No. 2, we read that that kind of behavior has not changed amongst the “**vain worship**” of the religiously pious nominal believers.

“...It is but reasonable to suppose that similarly all down through this Gospel age many, very many, have been hindered from proper development as true worshipers of God, worshipers in spirit, worshipers in every act and word and deed of life, by the same baneful influences; namely, false doctrines, human creeds and traditions accepted and held to as instead of the Word of God, the true bread which comes down from heaven.”

“Every error hides some truth; every misunderstanding of the character of God or of the fundamental features of his plan of salvation is so much to hinder men from becoming to the fullest extent possible worshipers of God in spirit and in truth.”

Avoiding “Formalistic Piety”

Pastor Russell also called our attention to the need to balance our approaches to the throne of grace in such a way that we would neither be too formalistic (as in his cautions on how the nominal churches often dwell on “formalistic piety” which leads the worshiper to empty ritualism—all or much form and little or no substance.

“Give Me to Drink.” R 4131

“During past times he [the LORD] did indeed prescribe forms of worship and times and places, but now all that come unto the Father ‘in spirit and in truth’ through Christ are accepted.

“While it is most absolutely true that forms and ceremonies are not commanded, but the true worship of the heart, nevertheless we feel that some still maintain too much of a relationship to forms and ceremonies, and thus lose much of the spiritual blessing of prayer and communion.”

But brethren, now notice the direction the Pastor takes here:

“But, on the other hand, we seem to see a danger into which some of the Lord's dear people fall, through ignoring all regularity in prayer, and sometimes through too little formality in approaching the throne of heavenly grace, without a sufficiency of humility and reverence for him who has granted us so great a favor as to receive us into his presence and to hearken to our petitions.

“While thankful that we can call upon the Lord in every place and at any time, let us approach his courts with reverence, with an awe of heart befitting to us in our humble, lowly condition, and to him in his great exaltation. Thus we enter into the real spirit of prayer, which should recognize our complete dependence and the greatness of the Almighty.”

R 4131

Search me O God

Search me, O God, and know this heart of mine;
Try me, O Lord, may all my thoughts, be thine.

See if in me any wicked ways do hide;
Cleanse all sin, that with thee I may abide.

I praise Thee, Lord, for the refining fire;
Fulfill Thy Promises, purge from me all ire.

Purge with hyssop, both flesh and spirit;
That my worship of Thee may have no limit.

Lord, take my life, and make it wholly Thine;
Fill my poor heart with Thy great love divine.
Take all self will, my passion, and my pride;
With my surrendered flesh now crucified.

