

The Oak Grove Oracle

(Family News & Views of the Oak Grove Church of Christ)

Meeting Weekly At Our Building Located At:

14 CR 3240, at the intersection of FM 1402 N. (Mailing Address: P.O. Box 523), Mt. Pleasant, Texas 75455, (903) 572-0859

Church Website: www.churchofchristoakgrove.com or, www.ogcoc.net

David A. McCain, Gospel Preacher & Bulletin Editor, (903) 577-1540 (H), 285-1756 (M)

Volume VI Sunday, February 25, 2018 Number 8

The Beauty of Holiness

Three times the Old Testament Scriptures invite us to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness (1 Chron. 16:29, Ps. 29:2 & 96:9). Consider the rendition of the passage as recorded in First Chronicles, "Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness" (16:29). This must be talking about offering God pure and uncorrupted worship. Since God is Holy, we must strive to offer Him only holy worship.

Holy worship deserves our very best efforts at promoting an atmosphere of reverence, respect, and honor to Almighty God. Logic dictates that God deserves "at least" as much honor and respect as we would show at a funeral, a wedding, a symphony concert, or a speech by an important political figure. In fact, a careful study of the Scriptures clearly shows us that God deserves, and in fact demands much more reverence than any earthly figure or event, and that our worship should be carried out in the most decent, orderly, and reverential manner that we are capable of offering to Him.

Consider the following Scriptural admonitions. "Be still and know that I am God" (Ps. 46:10). "Ye shall keep my sabbaths, and reverence my sanctuary: I *am* the Lord" (Lev. 19:30). "God is greatly to be feared in the assembly of the saints, and to be had in reverence of all..." (Ps. 89:7). "For God is not *the author* of confusion, but of peace..., Let all things be done decently and in order" (1 Cor. 14:33, 40). "Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected *us*, and we gave *them* reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?" (Heb. 12:9).

The Bible is filled with instructions which teach us that worship is a most sacred and serious matter, and is to be offered to God only with great reverence. In 1 Corinthians 11:17 - 14:40, we find 102 consecutive verses of Holy Writ on the subject of public worship. The Corinthians had cheapened holy worship by not giving God the respect He deserved. In writing to correct their abuse, Paul noted that worship must be conducted in an atmosphere of decency and order, not flippantly or frenetically, if we desire it to be acceptable in God's sight. How can we make our worship holy? First, we should remember our primary purpose is to honor and worship Almighty God (Jn. 4:24). A secondary purpose of corporate worship is to edify and exhort one another in faithful Christian living (Col. 3:16, Heb. 10:25). God is the audience for our worship. The participants are not present to be entertained.

Secondly, we should remember that every part of our assembly is worship to God, and is to be participated in reverently by all present. We should all be just as respectful and reverent during the sermon, the singing, the collection, the closing song, and the closing prayer, as we are during the Lord's Supper. There may be times when the elderly or infirm need to make their way towards the exits before the service concludes for obvious health considerations, but those who rush out the door before the service is even over, because they have a more pressing appointment elsewhere, need to reevaluate their priorities and reconsider their commitment to put God first (Mt. 6:33).

Finally, remember that your attitude will to a great degree determine whether or not you will get anything of value out of worship. If worship is important to you, and if you believe God cares about how you participate in it, then you will strive to offer God the very best you are capable of producing. You will be a participant, not a spectator, to the ultimate glory of God, and to your own personal benefit. Let us worship God acceptably with reverence and with godly fear, for indeed our God is a consuming fire (Heb. 12:28-29)

David A. McCain