

Ministering to the Lord in Assembly

by H.J. Vine

The sermon emphasizes the importance of ministering to the Lord through worship in the assembly, highlighting its transformative power and significance in the life of believers.

Scripture: Malachi 3:10

Topics: "True Worship", "Corporate Ministry"

Description

H.J. Vine preaches on the importance of true worship and ministry to the Lord, drawing parallels between the Old Testament offerings at the God-appointed centre and the present time where Jesus Christ is the Centre and Head of the assembly. He emphasizes that as believers 'draw near' together and offer up what the Father seeks, there will be prosperity in the work of the Lord. Worship, including thanksgiving, praise, blessing, and adoration, is highlighted as a vital function of the assembly, ministering to God and reflecting the fullness of His glory.

Transcript

The first king of Israel fought with mistaken zeal for the freedom of God's people from their enemies and to establish their national supremacy, but he became himself an oppressor. The second king, David, fought from a different point of view altogether. He would not rest till the centre was established where offerings according to God's mind could ascend to Him. Long before, it had been revealed that the Lord desired this (see Deuteronomy 16 and elsewhere), but until David's day it was altogether neglected. He, however, succeeded in this, and prospered also in that which Saul failed with fleshly earnestness to accomplish.

The place of Jehovah's name became the centre of the nation where continual songs and sweet savour offerings arose in fragrant meaning to the Lord, for they foreshadowed the present time when worship in spirit and in truth should rise to the Father, who was seeking those who should thus worship Him (John 4:23), the new and "holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God by Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 2:5).

As long as the offerings were abundant at the God-appointed centre, Israel triumphed to the uttermost bounds of her kingdom; and whenever a revival took place, the doors of the Lord's house were opened for ministry to Him. The principle is the same now. A Person, the Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ, is the Centre as well as Head of the assembly, and as we 'draw near' together and 'offer up' that which the Father seeks, there will be prosperity in the work of the Lord around. "Bring in and I will pour out", said the Lord in days of great failure (Mal. 3:10), and such "a blessing that there shall not be room enough to

receive it"; others would therefore get the overflow!

That which typified worship was commanded in the Old Testament. The real worship and "the true worshippers" are found in the New Testament; but though the Father's heart desires this, it is not now commanded. Its precious and rare sweetness could not thus be produced. It rises responsively. We do not here seek to answer the oft-repeated question, What is worship? but only to indicate one of the highest, if not the highest, practical functions of the assembly.

Supplication, prayer and intercession seek from God, but worship ministers to Him. So do thanksgiving, praise, blessing and adoration. At the institution of His supper the Lord "gave thanks". Thanksgiving is, therefore, characteristic of the remembrance of Himself, also praise, blessing, worship and adoration as the power of the Holy Spirit is unhindered. What rich fullness would thus mark the worship of the assembly! It will be so in glory for ever when all things are centred in Christ. To further this now is surely the aim of every true servant of the Lord.

Some have esteemed it a waste of time and labour, but the thought betrays a lack of the true knowledge of our God and Father, and a serious disregard of that which He seeks. When Mary lavished upon the Lord the costly ointment which filled the house with its pleasant perfume, some one thought it waste and that it ought to have been sold and used for the relief of the needy (John 12:5)! To be found in the company of such an one is extremely undesirable. Surely the One who was thus ministered to was worthy of it! yea, of even more costly ointment still if it could be found! The best and most precious is His due. May we have grace and power by the Holy Spirit to give Him more as His love and glory fill our glad hearts.

Behold that glorious scene around the throne in heaven! The Lamb is seen there, and that "as it had been slain"! A new song concerning His worthiness and His redeeming blood sounds sweetly from the assembled throng. Innumerable multitudes then utter His praise, and the saints fall down and worship Him that lives for ever and ever (Rev. 5). The Spirit of Promise gives the earnest of this in the assembly now.

In closing, let it be noticed that it was when the Lord Himself was being ministered to, that the sending forth of blessing to the needy sinners of the Gentiles took place by the hand of a most extraordinary servant of Christ. In Acts 13 we are told that this took place in the assembly at Antioch--"They were ministering to the Lord". It was then that Paul was separated for the work to which he was already called of God. Who can measure the extent of the blessing which followed? or number up those who have been reached as the result of Paul's subsequent service? Yet he in his abundant labours ever afterwards sought to establish such in Christ Jesus, that there might be glory to God in the assembly in Him (Eph. 3:21).

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