

WORSHIP SERIES

SEEING THROUGH THE EYES OF GOD

Tonight we want to see how praise, worship and thanksgiving affect our inner most life. If there is the most precious commodity on this earth besides winning souls that we could invest in while upon this earth before we go home to be with the Lord, it is our character. It is not what we possess, not what we can gather, it is not even our works that we do for Him and through Him because all those things are from Him anyway. But the most precious commodity or treasure that we bring back is the formation of our character while on this planet earth. You cannot bring your gold and silver into heaven. But you bring your character, the formation of your soul as you are. Some people think that the moment they die they will instantly have a perfect character in heaven. But it wouldn't be that way. We will be in a spiritual condition and character in which we die. If you didn't know the Lord that well, that's the state you will be in when you die. If we know the Lord partially that will be the state we are in. Thus, we need to progress into the depths of God. So that's the greatest treasure we bring to heaven.

As a side digression, I must tell you about a heavenly visit made by a church member. The occasion was a festival in heaven where all the saints were invited to this great banquet hall. The angel told this Christian that heaven observes two festivals a year, and each festival can last for five to seven days. One year in heaven is equivalent to two years on earth. On arriving at the great banquet hall, this Christian saw many tables and chairs and he wondered how the angel escorting him could know where his seat would be. That was not a problem for the angel simply led him to a seat in a place reserved for him. While seated there, he noticed that those chairs that were closest to the throne of God were the most beautiful and sparkling beyond description whereas those furthest from the throne were made of hard wood. The angel told him that the saints who were closest to God while on earth were given those special beautiful seats, according

to the state of their spiritual life and intimacy with God when they died. Those whose seats were ordinary had led ordinary lives on earth and were not that close to God. So in the great banquet hall, you get to fellowship with saints of like spirituality with you. This should give us an incentive to develop great intimacy with God while we are still living on earth.

This is where praise and worship comes in. Praise and worship not only affect God and bring glory and pleasure to our God but praise, worship and thanksgiving affect our inner most being. We do know that tribulation works out perseverance and perseverance works out character. But there is another force that works character as powerful as tribulation, as powerful as the experiences of life, as powerful as what we call the school of hard knocks. We know that experience and tribulation does work some strength in a person. But yet, there is another force that is as powerful in the formation of our being. That is being in God's presence. Isn't the Word clear enough to tell us in II Cor. 4 that as we behold Him so are we transformed into His image and glory? That tells us the inherent power of being in the presence of God. And in fact, it changes our character as much as being in tribulation. And we always think that only tribulation changes character. So most people end up saying, "O God give me my tribulation." This is the most unscriptural prayer you can ever pray. The bible never teaches you to pray that way. The bible does say to count it all joy when you are in diverse tribulations but you don't have to pray for tribulation to come. But there is the other force which is more powerful than tribulation in the formation of our character and that is being in the presence of God. And the only way to enter into the depths of His presence is worship. We need a bible example here and I would like to take the life of the Psalmist David.

Lets look at I Chronicles and see a statement that God made about David when He forbade him from building the temple. I Chron.28:3 *But God said to me, "You shall not build a house for My name, because you have been a man of war and have shed blood,"* That's the summary of David's life. Just ponder for a moment that he is a man of war and he had shed much blood.

For what I know from life experience if you are someone who constantly

confronts war, blood or hardship, it would normally harden you. I have seen with tears in my eyes Christian friends my age launching out into the world. They were very good people, especially even more when they knew the Lord. I see some of them starting out as employees but later they launch out into the business world. And they get into the depths of the hard things of this world. Then I began to see how they take on a different character. Formerly they were not sneaky but now they have become sneaky. Formerly they were very kind but now they have become cruel. Outside there in the secular world, they have learned to be sneaky because it is a matter of surviving the rat race. They are cruel and have even resorted to fighting eye for eye, tooth for tooth. That's the world outside there.

But after having business dealings with the world, they become worldly and carnal. And sometimes after ten or twenty years, they have lost their kindness. They have lost their simplicity. They have lost their noble and good values. They have gathered a lot of riches and wealth. But if you look at the graph of their character, you would find that it is going down all the way, although their riches are going up. But the world proclaims them as success stories because the world places a premium on riches and not on character. So as long as the graph goes up like the stock market going up everybody is happy. But their character looks just nice for a down hill ski.

The sad thing is the closer they go to their grave and towards eternity, the greatest treasure they can bring to heaven is diminishing. By the time they realize it, it is too late. For we know one thing the formation of character doesn't happen overnight. By the time they realize it they could be having one foot in the grave. When they realize they are close to death, they begin to think of really doing something. Before they could be restored back to the simplicity of their youth, their moral character could have died and they are now possibly in a worse state of character. They have not even improved. Even though thousands of people may be attending his funeral, and saying what a great success he was, in the eyes of God, that person is a failure. He was not even able to preserve that childlikeness of simplicity, that kindness, the laughter that God has put in him when he was a little innocent child. How sad.

I have sometimes talked to those who handle a lot of hard situations. There was a particular nurse from a war torn country who constantly saw blood and all kinds of suffering. All of us have different reactions. Sometimes a full-grown man sees blood and faint. Some of us can get used to it but some of us could not. As this nurse works in an emergency section, she saw blood, violence, murder, accidents and the result of all kinds of evil happenings in the world. Every time she saw blood, she wanted to vomit. She says, "I don't know how long I can keep this job." She felt that something has to happen. She may have to leave her job that she cannot stand it. But strangely, something began to happen. In her little biography she writes that slowly she began to harden her heart. She said that is the only way she could handle the situation. That was the only way she knew but there was another way, which we are going to teach in this message. Slowly sub-consciously, her heart hardened until she saw all these evil happenings as normal. She hardened her emotions in order to keep that job. That person forgot that there is another way to do it. Praise God that soon she realized what was happening inside her and she started changing on her inside.

It is the same way with those who go out to war. Many soldiers who went out to the Vietnam war and the Gulf war came home with a war syndrome. They developed psychological problems of thinking of death, experiencing the war, of having the trauma of seeing their comrades dying and losing their close friends. How are they going to handle these traumatic experiences?

King David fought with the lions and the bears and was used to killing people. As a little boy, he slew Goliath. When Goliath fell down, he took Goliath's sword and chopped off his massive head. When the main arteries passing through his neck were severed, you could imagine the blood shooting out in a stream. So, when David cut Goliath's head there was a fountain of blood gushing out. Since then, he kept up with a warlike lifestyle. And for his bride he had to kill two hundred Philistines in order to marry Saul's daughter. Under normal circumstances, he would be a very hard man.

I am sure in your lifetime you have met some successful people. For some people, the more successful they are the harder they become. It's not always true

but there are many. And the more hardships a person has been through the harder they become. It's very rare to find a combination of great gentleness combined with toughness. You either find the toughness of steel with its coldness, or you find the opposite - the softness with its fragility. You find that it's very rare to have a combination of both. Where there is no toughness there is no success in a person's life. But in nature, the spider's web is a combination of both. The spider web is tougher than steel but soft as silk. That's why the scientists today are trying to uncover the molecular structure of the spider web. They believe they have found the ability to produce the same chemical that the spider web had. But even in nature, you can find the softness of silk with the toughness of steel. In fact its tougher than steel. It is even better than man made bulletproof clothing. But it's so hard to get enough of that material to make one that's why its not commercialized.

So here is king David on the outward side you would have think that he is a tough person. But yet, he was a very gentle and kind person with great emotional feeling for people. He is a man with a great compassion for people. There are many times that you see him demonstrate his great softness and compassion. You can see his great love and compassion for king Saul. You can see his great love and compassion for Jonathan. When Saul and Jonathan died, king David cried. Very seldom do you see a tough person crying. He had a tenderness of heart combined with the toughness of steel. We see this in the book of II Sam. 1:17 *Then David lamented with this lamentation over Saul and over Jonathan his son.* And you find over and over how David was a great singer, a great warrior, but he had a very soft spot. He knew how to weep, he knew how to cry. He showed great gentleness in spite of his toughness. The one key that enabled him to do that was praise and worship. Praise and worship in his life sustained him in situations that caused his character to change into steel. Praise and worship gave him the softness of a spider web with the toughness of steel.

At his highest points, he composed a song and he sang unto God. I could think of no higher point in David's life than the time the ark came into the city of David. That's in the book of II Sam. 6. When the ark was brought into the city of David, David danced unto the Lord and offered offerings in verse 17 *So they brought the ark of the Lord, and set it in its place in the midst of the tabernacle that David had erected for it. Then David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the*

Lord. Notice in the book of I Chron.16:7 in the same incident recorded *On that day David first delivered his psalm into the hand of Asaph and his brethren to thank the Lord.* So David sang psalm and worshipped God at his highest point.

David was at one of his lowest points when he sinned against God in the incident with Bathsheba. Psalms 51 tells us that after he committed sin with Bathsheba he sang unto God. And there was another lowest point at Ziklag in I Sam. 30 when the Amalekites invaded the South and Ziklag, attacked Ziklag and burned it with fire. Verse 6 says, *But David strengthened himself in the Lord his God.* If you study the Greek word *strengthened*, it points back to the other times that David sang songs to strengthen and encourage himself. You can see many of his psalms started with great discouragement. By the time he finished the psalm, he was greatly encouraged. So that was the type of person David was. He was not only a warrior he was a worshipper too. And because he was a worshipper, he believed God and sang songs of deliverance. Such songs of deliverance so encompassed him that whatever he faced in the natural never came and stayed in his heart. Because God stayed in his heart the things of the world and the hardness of life could not get him. But if your heart is empty and God is not filling every room then the things of the world will enter into your heart and you will have a heart that is hardened. So praise and worship is powerful in a formation of a person's character. Paul said in 2 Cor 3: 18, *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.* As we behold His glory, we are transformed into His glory. David constantly worshipped the Lord and as he beheld God's glory, he too was transformed into His glory. Though he faced severe trials, the constant worship he rendered to God cause God's glory to flood him and conquer great tribulations in his life.

Now lets look at two New Testament passages. The first one is in the book of I Timothy 2:1-2 *Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for all men, for kings and all who are in authority, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.* Did you notice that he talks about prayers, intercessions and supplications? Did you notice the fourth thing mentioned, *"and giving of thanks be made for all men"*? He did not say giving of thanks be made for some men. We can understand the first three, supplicate, pray and intercede for all men and also

for all the rulers in verse two. But it is very hard to understand giving thanks for all men because not all men are good. Try thanking God for bad men. You rather shoot that man.

But there is a difference here. He is not saying give thanks for all things. The bible is very precise in its theology. In the book of I Thes. 5:18 *In everything give thanks* Now here he is not talking about men. He is talking about things. *In everything give thanks not for everything give thanks*. There are a lot of things that are not designed by God. There is much evil in the world and you do not give thanks to God for the evil.

But the contrast of it is in I Tim. 2:1 *giving thanks for all men*. The word *in* and the word *for* make a lot of difference. The phrase *for all men* includes everyone, both good and bad men. See there is a teaching going on that tells us to praise God for everything. Paul however says praise God in everything. But if you say praise God for *everyone*, you are scriptural. But if you say praise God for *everything*, you are unscriptural. Just a difference of that little preposition and your theology is either in or out.

What makes the difference? As I meditate over it, this is the thing that God began to show me. It says that the love of God reaches to all men. No matter how wicked and how evil men may be, it is written, "For God so loved the world." "While we were yet sinners, while we were yet enemies of God He loved us." It is easy to give thanks for those you love. It is difficult to give thanks for those you don't love. You look at that verse that says *give thanks for all men* and you start doing it. Your emotion will struggle within you wherever it is for a person you don't like. Why because we cannot feel love for them. Those whom you don't know personally you already find very difficult. And those you know and lost your love for them you will also find difficult. Perhaps something has come between you and them. You find it very hard to give thanks. Why because its much more easier to give judgment and pray for fire and brimstone to fall on them than to give thanks for them.

But here is a peculiarity. God doesn't struggle with His love. The love of God reaches out to each and everyone of us equally, powerfully. No hell, no demon, nothing can separate us from the love of God. Even the sinners who have died and are in the gates of Hades God still love them. But God cannot do anything for them any more. But His love is still there for them. God's loves never ceases. Every time He looks down His eyes are filled with love. Even in His anger, His love is still present. Such is the love and the compassion of God.

But we don't have His abiding love in us. We have measures of His love. And here is the key to move into that love that God has for people. God is telling us, "I want you to be able to thank Me for the people I have made and given life, no matter what you see them to be. No matter what the world and others tell you that they are." If you are able to look at them and say this is God's creation. He is not asking you to do that through circumstances. He never say to give thanks for circumstances but He says give thanks for all men. So He is asking you to give thanks for all men. Why because all men were created by God. And everyone created by God, God has a plan and purpose written for them whether they have fulfilled it or not. And God could look at them and desired them and loved them that they come into the fullness of His plan. And God is telling us to give thanks. And we know thanksgiving is the first part of praise and worship.

Thanksgiving can only be released when we are in the presence of God. When we enter His gates with thanksgiving, enter into His courts with praise and come before His throne with worship, we will be abiding in God's presence. It is in that presence of God that our spiritual capacity to see through the eyes of God opens up.

We usually see people through our own eyes, through our own mind, through our own intellect, through our own experience or through other's experience. When someone tells you about a particular person and you believe him or her, you are seeing that person through his or her eyes and mind. But God always wants us to see people with His eyes. How wonderful if we can just put on God's eyes and look at each other. I tell you, you will look at each other differently. But most of the time, we are putting on our own eyes. Or sometimes we borrow somebody's eyes to look at another person. We borrow their judgment, we

borrow their mind, we borrow their evaluation and we look at all the others through other people's mind. But rare are the individuals who can get into the heavenly seat and get Jesus in them and them in Jesus and look out through Jesus' eyes at people. My friend your view would be different. I can guarantee you that your view of human beings will never be the same again when you start looking at people through God's eyes. And the key to that is thanksgiving.

What happens when you begin to look at people and things through the eyes of God? You become like God. Just as it is said, "That God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son," it can be said of you, "For you so loved the world that you gave everything you could to win the world." But where are those whom we can write a book and say, "For they so loved the world that they gave themselves to save the world?" You ask, "Is it possible?" Jesus said, "The works that I do you will do also," implying, "With the same love I love so you must love." If you want to move into the capacity of His hand, which is His power you have to move into the same capacity of His heart. Before Jesus worked a miracle, He loved us. You always find Jesus had compassion and then He works miracles. Before Jesus came down, He loved. If you ask which comes first: love or power? Love came first then power. And so, if love comes into your life for people my friend you have such power to set them free.

Kathryn Kuhlman in her book, "A Glimpse of Glory," talks about how when she stood in the presence of the great auditorium she felt a supernatural love coming out of her. And this is the exact statement. She said that she felt such love that she wish that she could take her life and give it to the child so that the child could live. Can you imagine such love? And people who were in her meetings always say they don't know why but they felt that love. And there is a dear lady who listened to her radio program and wrote to her with the help of somebody. She doesn't understand English but said that every time she turns to her program tears would start flowing from her eyes. She doesn't understand the language but she understood the language of love. And because of the great love and intensity of love she felt for the people in her meetings, she could move into the gift of the Spirit and demonstrate the power of God to set them free.

The power by which God allows you to demonstrate to set people free is proportional to the compassion and love you could feel for them. That is why some times you could have a professional preacher, a professional theologian or a professional bible scholar go up the pulpit and do everything theologically correct but the power is very little because there is not much love. The knowledge is there but the love is not there. You could learn everything you can through tapes and books, and you understand every principle but if you don't catch the love that Kathryn Khulman felt for people, you could never move into the same capacity that she moved into. It is not just the knowledge. It is something else that we cannot impart with the mind. It can only be imparted through our life and through our heart. The love you can have for people is the foundational key to God's work. You could copy some great pastor and build another church somewhere else. You could study every church growth principle like a bookworm and give the best sermons but if you cannot have that love for people, there will be failure. My friend, it is that love that cannot be duplicated. It can only be born from God. When that happens, your tolerance level for people will be tremendous.

When you understand this principle and you go back to king David, the psalmist and the warrior who shed blood, you could understand how he could have both toughness and softness at the same time. His constant worship to God placed him in a position where he could look at people with eyes of love. That's how he maintained the softness of the spider's silky web but the toughness of steel in his life. So, praise and worship is vitally important to develop that character of love in our life that will result in power in our lives. For it gives us new capacity to see people. We see people differently. You will have the capacity to see persons and love them without touching them no matter how wicked they are. I could still feel God's love for people that others have given up on them. Others are screaming for judgment, for action, but they only know the ways of the world but they do not understand love especially God's love. And sometimes they mistake meekness, gentleness and kindness for weakness. That's why they never could demonstrate the power to set others free.

The other thing about praise and worship is that not only will it give you spiritual eyes to see through God's eyes to see others through but it will also give you spiritual eyes to always see God in every situation. Look at Acts 2:25 now

these are the two reasons why David remained gentle in spite of the blood and wars that he fought for God. *For David says concerning Him. I foresaw the Lord always before my face. For He is at my right hand that I may not be shaken.* Now the ability in order to be immovable and not to be shaken is the ability to be strong as steel, tough as diamond. But it came forth from the ability to see God. He says, *I foresaw the Lord always before my face.* In prophetic typology, it points to Jesus. You could say these words were not from David's speaking but it was from Jesus speaking through David's mouth. Even if it is Jesus speaking it still applies to us. But the fact is its not only Jesus speaking its also David speaking and prophetically speaking it belongs to Jesus. Why because Psalms 22 tells us, *My God, My God why has You forsaken Me?* Do you think David was just prophesying or was it real in his life? I can assure you that it was his experience. He has experienced being forsaken, being rejected and in his Psalms he cried onto God, "My God, my God why has Thou forsaken me?" It is taken from the book of Psalms 16.

You notice that those who don't have the toughness of steel are those who also have a poor vision of God. They are shakable, fragile and movable. Instead of being strong, they are weak. They cannot remain steadfast. When a strong wind comes, they are the first to fall. Circumstances or imprisonment threaten them. People threaten you with death. My friend if you have not been threatened in those things you have not understood what serving God is like. I have been threatened with those things my friend. You can say like Paul, "I am not afraid to die for Jesus." As long as you know that, you are walking in what God wants you to do. I know that if I live my life for Jesus and my blood is shed in righteousness it will explode and multiply even greater in its impact than the life I am living now. Personally, I despise people who try to influence me or others with fear because anything born of the spirit of fear is not of God. I know my Father God well enough to know that He never moves people by fear. But if you move by reason and wisdom from God, revelation from God with a spirit of gentleness, the softness of a spider web and the same toughness of steel then you can discern that is the hand of the Holy Spirit.

Here is David in the book of Psalms 16:8 *I have set the Lord always before me.* How did he do that? In verse 7, *I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel.* He is talking about praise and worship. He is continually worshipping and praising

God. I could see how every time David went out to battle, shed a lot of blood and when he comes back, he kneels before God and say, "O God I thank you that You helped me." He never took credit for himself. But others who go out and take credit for their victories will begin to harden up in their hearts. But if you never take credit but you give back credit to God, you remain soft. You acknowledge that it was God's grace working in you all the time. You remain soft and pliable. That is a strength you develop when you are always in the state of praise and worship to God.

If you take the normal spider web, you could easily break it. But yet, scientists have experimented with the spider web. When the spider web is formed into little tread and spun into a piece of cloth and they shoot a bullet, they found it to be bulletproof. They found it tougher than the artificially man made bulletproof fiber. It is even tougher than steel. It is soft but tough.

How was it possible for David to develop toughness and softness at the same time? He sees the Lord constantly. He never lost his vision in God and for God. And that's the same kind of eyes that we must have. The book of Acts tells us that he continually sees the Lord sitting at the right hand. He never loses his vision of God. If God is still on the throne what does it mean? Things are still in His control. When God reigns, nothing can prevent Him. The only way for us not to lose that vision is praise and worship. We understand what David says when he says he is encompassed with songs of deliverance. The day you find you cannot worship God is the day that you have been clouded in your eyes. Your eyes cannot see God. Your eyes cannot see people the way God sees. You became hurt and you begin to have the root of bitterness in you. It destroys you more than it destroys any others. You destroy yourself too but you destroy others even more. It is important for us to retain that gentleness of God and the love of God.

So tonight as we worship in the presence of God and behold His glory, let us see Jesus seated on the right hand of God the Father on high. Let us enter into His presence to worship Him. And let those inner eyes of ours be polished and sharpened so

**that the image of God stays impressed forever in our hearts.
And when we see others through eyes of God, we will never be
the same when we leave this place.**