



VICTORIOUS CHRISTIAN MINISTRY

Weekly Bible Study - 25:01:2012

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Study 26: PRIORITY OF WORSHIP

Nehemiah 7:1

After completion of the wall, Nehemiah's first priority was the restoration of true worship. There are many things that could have occupied his attention such as economic recovery, security arrangements, celebration of victory and political administration to mention but a few. His priorities reveal the importance he attached to worship, and it is a reflection of his deep personal knowledge of God and deep believe in His word that **"Righteousness exalteth a nation: but sin is a reproach to any people"** (Proverbs 14:34). Nothing but deep personal relationship with God can motivate a believer to **"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"** as well as **"Trust in the Lord with all his heart and not to lean on his own understanding"** (Matthew 6:33; Proverbs 3:5). Until we give God his rightful place in our lives, we will be limiting the manifestation of his power and blessings in our situations.

1. PRIMACY OF WORSHIP: *Nehemiah 7:1; Ezra 2:1,2,68; 5:1,2; 6:14, Haggai 1:1-12; Zechariah 1:16,17; 2:3-5; 3:7; Exodus 19:1-7; 3:12*

The first batch of Jews that returned from exile before the time of Nehemiah first started with the rebuilding of the temple despite the dangers of the broken walls. Commonsense could have prompted them to start with the wall as a means of security against possible onslaught of the enemy but divine wisdom led them to commence with the building of the temple first. **They recognised that God is a stronger security than towers and walls; and that when a man's way pleases the Lord, he makes even his enemies to be at peace with him** (Proverbs 16:7). Today, many first search for provision, pleasure, protection, partner, profession, progress and prosperity before ever seeking God (Matthew 6:33). Often, in their pursuits, they end up forgetting God **"...days without number"** (Jeremiah 2:32). God always places priority on worship. Shortly after their deliverance from Egypt, God called Israel to worship Him at the mount of God for several days despite adverse conditions in the wilderness and the need for them to make progress in their journey to the Promised Land that could have afforded them a settled life. Many are too busy today to find time for God. They are too preoccupied with their personal goals and ambitions to give God the quality time He truly deserves for worship and service.

God made man a worshipping being. He deserves our worship. When man does not render to God the worship He (God, the Creator) deserves, he end up giving that worship to created things such as self, satan, idols, money, career, etc. Our lives ought to be centred in His word. Our plans, career, business, holidays, education, etc ought to be regulated by the priority we give to worship. **When the centre holds, the circumference takes care of itself. When a bag is full of matter, it can stand upright on its own. Similarly, a person saturated with proper worship of God**

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can stand upright in any situation! The blessings of godliness can only be experienced and retained through seeking first the kingdom of God and his righteousness. If true worship is our priority (John 4:20-24) then we also need to recognise that divine presence rather than designated places is the most important criteria in worship (Hosea 8:14, Acts 2:41-47).

2. PROGRESS THROUGH WORSHIP: Nehemiah 7:1; Zephaniah 3:17; 2 Kings 6:15-17; Proverbs 16:7, Deuteronomy 8:3, Hebrew 11:8-10, 13-19; Psalm 105:13-15; 2 Chronicles 16:9.

The history of Israel (a model of the church) reveals that they enjoyed great progress, peace and prosperity when the knowledge of God increased and they served Him well. When they turned away from godliness God also turned His special favours away from them. God preserves, protects, prospers and provides for those who worship Him in spirit and in truth. Bible characters that were mightily used of God esteemed worship above:

1. treasure (Psalms 119:127),
2. food (Job 23:12),
3. marriage (Genesis 24:3-8), and
4. security (Hebrews 11:9,10), etc.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Elijah, David, Jesus and Paul all gave God unrivalled priority in their lives. Circumstances, trials, temptations, disappointments, sorrows, pains, tears, life or death could never separate them from the love of God (Romans 8:35-39). No wonder God bestowed grace, power and glory abundantly upon them. He provided for all their needs, protected them in danger, guided their steps through the darkest times, preserved their ways and prospered their work. **In this dark world of sin God needs men like Elijah, John the Baptist and Paul who will hate sin with all their heart and will be willing to go to any length to know God and make him known. Some things are not compatible!** Lukewarmness is not compatible with zealousness. Worldliness is not compatible with holiness. Frivolity is not compatible with worship. “How long halt ye between two opinions? If the Lord be God, follow him ...” (1 Kings 18:21; Revelations 3:14-22).