

Good News in the Heart of Worship

Thomas Robinson, *How the Gospel Works* 3, September 29, 2019

Hebrews 12:18-29 Translation TR

¹⁸ You haven't come to something that can be touched: blazing fire, darkness, a realm of gloom, a whirlwind, ¹⁹ a trumpet's blare, or a voice speaking in a way that made the hearers beg that not another word be added. [Ex. 20:18-19] ²⁰ For they couldn't endure the command that "*If even a wild animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned to death.*" [Ex. 19:12-13] ²¹ Indeed, what appeared was so terrifying that even Moses said, "*I tremble with fear.*" [Deut. 9:19].

²² But **you have come**

to **Zion**, mountain and city of a **living God**, **heavenly Jerusalem**,

to myriads of **angels** in festal gathering,

²³ to an assembly of **firstborn people**, enrolled in heaven,

to **God**, judge of all beings,

to spirits of **righteous people** brought to mature perfection,

²⁴ to **Jesus** as mediator of a **new covenant**,

to **blood** for sprinkling that says something better than Abel's.

²⁵ Make sure you don't beg not to hear the one speaking; for if they couldn't escape when they refused the one who warned on earth, how much less we, if we refuse the one from heaven!

²⁶ Back then, his voice shook the earth, but now he's made a promise in these words,

*"Yet once for all, I myself will **shake not only the earth but also the heaven.**"* [Haggai 2:6]

²⁷ That phrase, "*Yet once for all,*" indicates the removal of all that's shaken – things that have been made – in order that what's not shaken may remain. ²⁸ Since we're receiving a **kingdom that can never be shaken**, let's hold on to **thanksgiving**, through which **we offer worship** pleasing to God with **reverence** and **awe**. ²⁹ For indeed our "*God is a consuming fire*" [Deut. 4:24].

Colossians 3:12-17 Translation TR

¹² Since God has **chosen** all of you, **set you apart**, and **loved you**, then **dress** the part wearing hearts full of **tenderness**, wearing **kindness**, **humility**, **gentleness**, and **patience**.

¹³ Bear with each other and **give grace** to each other, if one has a complaint against another. Just as **the Lord gave grace to you**, so must you.

¹⁴ And over all these, **clothe yourselves with love**, which ties everything together for real maturity. ¹⁵ And let **the Messiah's peace** set the standard in the way your hearts think, since you were called into that peace in his one body. And be **thankful!**

¹⁶ Let the **message of the Messiah** dwell in all of you **richly**, as you **instruct** and **counsel** each other with real wisdom, by his grace singing **Spirit-empowered Psalms, Hymns, and Songs**, singing with your **whole being to God**. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, by word or action, do everything as **one who belongs to Lord Jesus**, giving thanks through him to **God the Father**.

Hebrews 10:23-25

²³ Let's hold firmly to our affirmation of hope without turning aside, for the one who made the promise is faithful. ²⁴ And let's think deeply about each other with the aim of stirring up love and excellent works, ²⁵ not neglecting our assembling with each other, as is a habit for some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day ever closer.

Luke 24:30-32 (Jesus with two disciples in Emmaus after his resurrection)

²⁴When Jesus was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it and gave it to them. ³¹But their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished from their sight. ³²They said to each other, "Didn't our heart burn within us as he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening to us the Scriptures?"

Acts 2:41-42

⁴¹Those who welcomed Peter's message were baptized, and about three thousand lives (*psyché*) were added that day. ⁴²They actively devoted themselves to the teaching of the apostles and to the shared life (*koinonia*), to the breaking of the bread and to the prayers.

Proclaiming the Gospel and Doing Worship

What's the relation between Gospel & worship? A "gospel sermon" moves people to decision: invitation song, coming forward. Worship is the music, various roles, meditative, stirring.

But the "Gospel" isn't a simple plan of salvation: sin, atonement, decision. It's the Great Announcement that an Event has happened that changes everything. God has come among us showing himself in the human life of Jesus, fulfilling all his purposes and promises since creation and through the life of Israel. In love, He's taken our sin and alienation on himself in Jesus' crucifixion, He's defeated the power of death and created resurrection life in Jesus. He's opened Israel's story and His grace to all the world, giving us humans his own Spirit as our first experience of his immortal, creative life.

Worship is the celebration of what God has done and is doing. It's plunging ourselves into that reality in music, prayer, communion, opening the scriptures, fellowship, etc.

Worship and Seeing Reality

Worship is enacted Gospel. A challenge because, like NT times, we live in a world that treats God as our pet philosophy, self-help, private opinion. Real power is in politics, science, entertainment, money. Worship was and is crucial to refocus life on a reality larger than our human structures. We're invited into a total makeover of life as we become disciples.

Hebrews: persecuted, discouraged believers. They're called to see beyond their limited community, across nations, time, heaven & earth. Mt Sinai was awesome and fearsome. The Gospel reaches beyond, in a community of heaven and earth, Jesus' blood gives grace.

Every time they/we worship we are in that vast assembly, on Zion, with angels, part of the assembly of God's firstborn, receiving the power of what Jesus has done. Don't miss it!

The Practice of Life in Worship

The whole of worship proclaims the Gospel: the announcement of what God has done. In Luke & Acts, look at Emmaus and Pentecost: breaking bread and opening Word lead to new vision, way of life, community, sharing life, prayer (Retreat).

Colossians is like Hebrews but different images. Realize what God has done and "dress" accordingly. All reflect what God shows us in Jesus. We even give grace. Let peace rule.

Worship works to let the Gospel "dwell" in us "richly"! The whole story, reality shapes life.

The Spirit especially uses our songs – poetry made powerful by music – to work into our whole being. Use psalms, sing new songs, chant traditional hymns. God uses them for us.

The whole worship of the church becomes a proclamation bringing God's Good News into life.