

# Seeker-Friendly Worship

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1 Cor 14:20-25

## I. INTRODUCTION.

A. About a decade ago, Rick Warren published his *The Purpose Driven Church*.

1. Warren went to Lake Forest, California and began Saddleback Church. The membership is now over 22,000.
2. One of the principles Warren advocates in the book is "Seeker Worship," which has become a "buzz word" in church growth circles.
  - a. The basic thesis of "Seeker Worship" is that we do whatever draws a crowd.
    - We have to have the most dynamic speaker we can possibly find—it doesn't matter what he says, as long as he draws people to the pew.
    - We go and find the most talented band and chorus and allow them to perform each service & tell everyone else to shut up.
    - We don't take up a collection, but we might give some money in a basket on the way out.
    - We might want to go ahead and have the Lord's Supper, but we have got to pass out coffee & doughnuts.
  - b. I hope you don't need me to tell you how I view such practices.
    - It is not worship; it does not honor God; it does not bring people to Jesus; and it is far from Scripture.
    - The best way to draw people to Jesus is to preach Jesus: "I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (Jn 12:32).
    - Furthermore, God doesn't just want worship, he wants worship that honors him: "The hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth" (Jn 4:23-24).

B. That does not mean, however, that worship can play no role in conversion.

1. Many of you started worshiping here with friends or family, heard the truth, and came to be clothed with Christ.
2. In the passage, we're studying this morning, Paul speaks of evangelism as a by-product of worship. As he does so, he speaks of three kinds of Christians. He speaks of CHILDISH CHRISTIANS, CRAZY CHRISTIANS, & CONVERTING CHRISTIANS.

## II. CHILDISH CHRISTIANS, v 20.

A. "Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature."

B. The fighting the Corinthians were doing over their spiritual gifts was so very childish.

1. As we have mentioned before, fighting and bickering is especially typical of children as every parent knows. Once when I was a kid, the fighting between me & my brothers was so intense that Mom & Dad locked us in a room and let us duke it out.
2. Fighting & bickering are far from mature Christian activities: 1 Cor 3:1-3.
3. What about us? Are we childish because we bicker & fight?
  - a. When our wife is ten minutes late with dinner, guys do we bicker like a little child?
  - b. When your husband forgets to put his clothes in the hamper, ladies do you bicker and fight?
  - c. When things don't go our way at work, do we bicker and fight like little kids?

C. The Corinthians were not to be childish in their thinking.

1. There comes a time when we have to grow up.
  - a. "When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways" (13:11).
  - b. Someone has said, "A child is someone who can wash his hands without getting the soap wet."

- You parents know how hard it is to get children to clean themselves—We have a hard time getting the boys to wash their hair.
  - But, you don't expect an adult to have the same problem. You see, that's putting away childish things.
2. If we aren't to be childish in our thinking, we must grow.
    - a. "Let us leave the elementary doctrine of Christ and go on to maturity" (Heb 6:1).
    - b. "Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation—if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good" (1 Pt 2:2-3).
  3. Are we maturing in our thinking, or are we childish Christians?
- D. There is a very real sense in which we are to be childish Christians: "Be infants in evil."
1. The idea is that we are to be as innocent as little children when it comes to evil.
  2. When RJ was in first grade, his teacher pulled me aside when I went to pick him up.
    - a. She told me that she had to step out of the room for a minute or two that day, and when she returned RJ had told her that someone was cussing up a storm.
    - b. Her heart fell at the thought of these first-graders hearing words that no adult should hear, and she asked him what someone had said.
    - c. RJ wouldn't say for the longest time, but he finally told her that someone in the class had told someone to shut up.
  3. Are we innocent when it comes to evil?
    - a. Do we expose ourselves to evil through the media we allow in our homes?
    - b. Do we seek to live as far from evil as we possibly can?
- E. Are we CHILDISH CHRISTIANS? Are we childish because we bicker and fight, or do we have a child-like innocence when it comes to evil?

### III. CRAZY CHRISTIANS, vv 21-23.

- A. "In the Law it is written, 'By people of strange tongues and by lips of foreigners will I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to me, says the Lord.' Thus tongues are a sign not for believers but for unbelievers, while prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers but for believers. If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?"
- B. Paul quotes from Isaiah 28:11-12.
  1. The context of Isaiah 28 is judgment upon the nation of Judah.
    - a. Isaiah prophesies about the coming Babylonian Captivity; thus, the strange lips and the foreign tongue was the Chaldean language.
    - b. God is saying, "I'm going to teach my people a lesson by sending them to Babylon for 70 years."
    - c. The fact that this is judgment becomes quite obvious as one adds verse 13 to the two verses Paul has quoted: READ TEXT.
  2. Thus, tongues are a sign for unbelievers, not to confirm the word (in this context), but a sign to condemn and judge.
    - a. How would first-century tongues condemn and judge?
      - It was clear evidence that God was upon these people.
        - Tongues were a clear sign to those at Pentecost that the apostles were speaking for God.
          - Sure, some mocked and said the apostles were drunk, but we also read, "All were amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'What does this mean?'" (Acts 2:12).
          - The assembled crowd would soon learn what that sign meant.
        - You recall that it was only after the Spirit fell on Cornelius and the Jews heard them speaking in tongues that Peter said, "Can anyone withhold water for baptizing these people, who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (Acts 10:47).
      - Imagine what it would have been like to have been a pagan in Corinth.

- You had heard strange things about these Christians. You had even heard that they claimed a man had died and been brought back to life. You know far better than to believe such “fables.”
  - Your spouse keeps nagging you about going to the catacombs after your slave master lets you free on Sunday.
    - You walk and see a lot of people you perceive as lunatics.
    - Yet, as they worship, you begin to hear them speak in tongues they had never studied, never heard, and that you had never heard.
- b. What would you think? You’d probably think that you were right; these folks are a bunch of idiots who live in a fantasy world.
- Paul says as much: “If, therefore, the whole church comes together and all speak in tongues, and outsiders or unbelievers enter, will they not say that you are out of your minds?” (v 23).
    - The word for “out of your mind” (ESV) or “mad” (KJV) occurs only 4 other times in the NT.
      - In Jn 10:20, Jews believe that Jesus is insane, for he has just declared that he will die and rise again.
      - In Acts 12:15, Rhoda reports to the church that Peter is outside and has been rescued from prison; they believe she’s insane.
      - In Acts 26:24-25, the word is used twice in an exchange between Paul and Festus. Festus, as he hears that Jesus has been raised from the dead declares to Paul that the apostle is crazy, a charge Paul denies.
    - The idea here is that if someone comes in and hears everyone speaking in tongues, he’s going to be driven away because he’s going to think you’re crazy.
      - Have you ever been around someone whom you knew you couldn’t trust because he or she did not have full mental capacities?
      - In the last years of my grandmother’s life, she began to hallucinate wildly.
        - She would claim that a woman would come and knock on her door all hours of the night. Once, Tammy & I had slept in the bed right next to the door, never heard a thing, and the next morning, Mammaw swore up and down that woman had kept her up all night.
        - Another time, she called the police on her neighbors in the middle of the night. The neighbors were selling illegal drugs and all sorts of people were going in and out of the house. Trouble was: the neighbors were in bed asleep. Fortunately, they were kind and were good to her as long as she lived there.
  - How was that judgment on unbelievers?
    - It demonstrated to the believers that God was with them & he wasn’t with the unbelievers.
    - For the unbelievers, it hardened their hearts.
      - Notice the end of the quotation Paul uses from Isaiah: “even then they will not listen to me.”
      - If you went into a church and thought everyone there was crazy, would you go back?
- c. Paul’s point is: “Look, the gift you desire so much is going to drive others away from the church. Don’t use your gift in such a way.”
- C. Do we sometimes act in such a way that people might think we’re crazy and want nothing to do with the church?
1. Brethren, I will freely admit that some of what we do as Christians many will see as crazy, but I couldn’t care less. If it’s the will of God, we act regardless of what others think or do.
  2. While we do not deviate from the Word of God one iota, we dare not needlessly drive others away.
    - a. I know a preacher who once went to visit a lady about coming to church.
      - In the middle of their discussion, things got rather heated.
      - As he was leaving, he looked back at her & yelled loud enough for the entire neighborhood to hear, “If you don’t go to the church of Christ, you’re going to hell!”
      - What impression do you think he left?

- b. That same preacher was preaching away one Sunday & it was time for a six-week old baby to nurse.
  - The sermon was about over & the mommy really wanted to hear the conclusion of the sermon, and she was trying to pacify her baby.
  - The baby started to cry, and the preacher stopped in the middle of his sermon, pointed his finger at the mother, and yelled, "Would you please get that baby out of here?!"
  - How many times do you think that young mother came back?
- 3. Brethren, let us adhere to the truth of God. But, at the same time, let us not seek to be offensive, crazy Christians!

#### IV. CONVERTING CHRISTIANS, vv 24-25.

- A. "But if all prophesy, and an unbeliever or outsider enters, he is convicted by all, he is called to account by all, the secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so, falling on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you."
- B. The idea of "prophesy" was never that one would predict the future.
  - 1. Biblical prophets often did so, and we've come to associate "prophesy" with "future-telling."
  - 2. Biblically, prophesy is simply speaking for God.
    - a. As we all know, Aaron was Moses' mouthpiece, for Moses claimed he couldn't speak clearly.
      - We read: "The LORD said to Moses, 'See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall tell Pharaoh to let the people of Israel go out of his land" (Ex 7:1-2).
      - Moses told Aaron what the Lord had said, and Aaron, as Moses' prophet, went and told Pharaoh.
    - b. The idea of prophesy is well illustrated in the case of Jeremiah: "The LORD put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the LORD said to me, 'Behold, I have put my words in your mouth" (Jer 1:9).
  - 3. Thus, those who prophesied spoke for God.
- C. When an unbeliever or outsider heard prophesy, he would be convicted, be called to account, have the secrets of his heart disclosed, and he would fall on his face to worship.
  - 1. Paul here speaks of the power of God's Word, whether that word be spoken directly as in the day of Paul or spoken indirectly through Scripture as in our day.
  - 2. The word has great power to convict.
    - a. The night before his crucifixion, Jesus informed the apostles that the Spirit would convict: Jn 16:7-11.
    - b. The word of God has long convicted:
      - When Jonah went and proclaimed that Nineveh would soon be destroyed, "the people of Nineveh believed God. They called a fast and put on sackcloth, from the greatest of them to the least of them" (Jon 3:5).
      - After Peter's sermon at Pentecost, the people there "were cut to the heart" (Acts 2:37).
    - c. How many times have we been convicted by Scripture?
      - I can't tell you how many times people will go out and say something to the effect, "Justin, you really stepped on my toes this morning."
      - I don't know that I've ever stepped before you to preach that I haven't been deeply convicted in the previous week as I've studied. Scripture will take hold of us & not let us go, won't it?
  - 3. The word of God has power to call men to account.
    - a. Honestly, "called to account by all" is a far better translation than "judged of all" (KJV).
      - The term means to examine carefully or to scrutinize.
      - It often is used in a judicial sense as in a cross-examination: Pilate says to the Jewish leaders: "You brought me this man [Jesus] as one who was misleading the people. And after examining him before you, behold, I did not find this man guilty of any of your charges against him" (Lk 23:14).
    - b. The idea is that the person is being cross-examined by the Word of God; that a person is standing before God's judgment seat to give an account.
    - c. How many times have we been called to account by Scripture? How many times have our sinful actions been judged in light of the truth of Scripture?

4. The word of God has great power to disclose the secrets of men's hearts.
  - a. "The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Heb 4:12-3).
  - b. Are we not often naked and exposed in front of the word of God?
    - Adam was—he said the woman God had given him had caused him to eat the fruit; Eve was—she blamed everything on the serpent. They were naked, so they covered up with excuses.
    - David was; after Nathan had rebuked him for committing adultery and killing Uriah, David replied, "I have sinned against the LORD" (2 Sm 12:13). David knew there wasn't any hiding of his sin.
5. When one gets to David's realization, he will "fall on his face, he will worship God and declare that God is really among you."
  - a. Falling was a common way to worship in antiquity; the posture demonstrated humility.
  - b. The unbeliever will come to worship God—he'll understand that all his preconceptions about God were incorrect, and he will seek to honor God through worship.
- D. Paul here describes for us "Seeker-Friendly Worship."
  1. It's not worship based on men's desires; it's worship based on the truth of God.
  2. Anytime people come face to face with God's truth with an honest heart, they'll obey Jesus.
    - a. Everyday we live, we have an opportunity to help people know the truth of God—whether it be in a classroom, in our neighbor's living room, or over a cup of coffee in the breakroom.
    - b. Are we sharing the truth of God? Are we obeying the truth of God?