

# **Worship Must Be a Priority**

**II Chronicles 7:1-3**

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Today is sermon #2 in a series of messages titled “Priorities for the New Year.” Last week we examined the fact that “Love Must Be A Priority.”

Without love, nothing else that we consider will be profitable. We saw that we must First “Love the Lord with all of our heart, soul mind & strength” Secondly we examined the fact that we are to “Love our neighbor as we love ourselves” Today we will see the fact that “Worship Must Be A Priority.”

I’m going to take a guess here: Some of you may already thinking about what you are going to do this afternoon or are dreading the return to work tomorrow morning. I think there are times we have lost sight of why we are here. It is not about us. We are here to worship God! The problem is that most people are asking the question “What can God do for me? Instead of what can I do for God? I can tell you what you can do for Him, give Him what he deserves, Worship!

Before our first reading today we find Solomon’s sermon and his prayer of dedication. In chapter 7 we find God’s response. We find in these 3 verses some elements that we must have in our church. Without these essentials we might as well close the doors and go to the house. Verse 1 gives us the most important aspect of any church, The Presence of the Lord.

## **I. The Presence Of The Lord**

This temple was not built with the intentions of becoming a hangout for the people of Israel .It was not a place to gather to have a good time or so that Jerusalem could have the best softball team in the church league. This was a place built for the Glory of the Lord. This was a place for his people to make supplication to him and to worship and praise him throughout the ages. That should be the goal of every local church in our day as well. It is unbelievable how far we have gone from the original intent of the local church. Solomon requested the presence of the Lord and God showed up. We have the same power and opportunity today.

Just because Solomon requested the presence of the Lord was not a guarantee that He would come. We can’t just assume that every time we come into this building that God is here.

It is sad to say but I believe this has happened to many of our churches today. I have visited some churches where I wonder why the people even got out of bed- “if some people really had an encounter with God it would scare them to death”

How did these people experience the power of the Lord? Not because the temple was extravagant and beautiful (and it was both) God appeared because of the fact that it was their intention to glorify God. God is not going to be with us because we have a large number of people, not because we have a beautiful building, not because we give to missions, not because we have an outreach program or any other thing that we do. God will bless us with his presence because we are a church centered on Christ and because we are a people ready to worship Him!

When Solomon ended his prayer, “fire came down from heaven, and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and the glory of the LORD filled the house” This proved the LORD heard the prayers of Solomon and the people and He accepted the temple. He came in his glory, and filled it.

God will do the same for our church. When we are here with the right heart and the right motives he will reveal his presence in a mighty way. Many people talk about the heroes of the faith and what power they had in their lives. Adrian Rogers once said “God was with Noah, God was with Moses, God was with Elijah, God was with King David. We have it better than they did, GOD IS IN US!

Why is it that we don’t hear of spirit filled, life changing, and barn burner services anymore. It is because we have changed because God doesn’t. - Malachi 3:6 For I am the LORD, I change not; ...Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Once we enter the presence of the Lord we will experience the power of the Lord.

II. The Power Of The Lord - v2 And the priests could not enter into the house of the LORD, because the glory of the LORD had filled the LORD'S house. Notice that even the priests could not even minister as a result of their awe and reverence to the glory of the Lord. We can’t begin to imagine the things we will experience in our lives as a result of the power of God.

**Luke 10:38-42** – the story of Mary & Martha in the tiny village of Bethany on the eastern slope of the Mount of Olives. Martha takes the lead and invites Jesus to their home and begins busily attending to many things. Mary goes right to Jesus and sits at His feet – Mary is taking the lead here. To Martha, Mary was shirking her duties. Jesus speaks of Martha’s distractions rather than her hospitality. Jesus certainly welcomes food, but He welcomes discipleship and worship more.

III. The Purpose of worship – Jesus reminds Martha and us that there will be ample time for action and service. The first priority is to learn from our Lord and Master and then action can follow.

In his book “Developing the Leader Within You,” John Maxwell cites William Hinson who tells us why animal trainers carry a stool when they go into a cage of lions. They have whips, pistols – most time they carry a stool. Hinson said it was the most important tool of trainer – points 4 legs at lion – tries to focus on all 4 – temp. paralysis – becomes tame, weak, and disabled because its attention is fragmented.

Jesus contrasts Martha’s distractedness over many things, with Mary’s focus on one thing. The thing that drew her focus was bread, but the word of her Lord.

There are too many things today which can distract us, almost paralyze us and keep us from the receiving the important thing, the one thing that was necessary – sitting at the feet of Jesus – listening – to worship Him.

### III. The Praise Of The Lord

There is something about being in His presence that brings us to our knees. Mercy is defined as not receiving a punishment or consequence that is deserved. Praise God for his mercy! Oh how we should praise Him for His mercy!!

Worship – {H} (shâchâh - shaw-khaw') - to depress, that is, prostrate: - bow (self) down, crouch, fall down (flat), humbly beseech, do (make) obeisance, do reverence

Praise – {H} (yâdâh - yaw-daw') To hold out the hand; revere with extended hands;

I am not here to tell you HOW to worship, but I am here to say that you MUST worship! There are many ways that people express their worship... But I will say that if you are going to truly worship God it must be done with Him as your only focus.

Some go to church to take a walk. Some go to church to laugh and talk. Some go to church to meet a friend. Some go to church, their time to spend. Some go to church to meet a lover. Some go to church, a fault to cover. Some go to church for speculation. Some go to church for observation. Some go to church to doze and nod. The wise go there to worship God.—Author Unknown

Conclusion: Do you desire to enter into the presence of God every time you come to church? Do you seek the power of God in your life and in our church? Do you have a yearning to praise God for all that he has done? As we begin this New Year, we have to realize that like love, “Worship Must Be A Priority”