

Worship Foundations, Part 4: His GLORY, My Joy

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We're making our way through a worship series called "Worship Foundations."
We've spent the past 3 weeks digging deeper and deeper, trying to establish a Biblical foundation for our worship.
We've considered God's WORTH, we've considered God's HOLINESS, and we've considered God's GLORY.
And, at the GLORY of God, we hit bedrock. We *reached* the foundation.

This morning, I want us to prepare to *build* on this foundation, by first clearing away some "debris."
By making sure this foundation is swept clean of any obstructions or obstacles, anything that could interfere with the "house of worship" we want to build.

I'm convinced we're at a significant point right here.
I think we're facing a huge potential obstacle that, if we don't clear it out of the way now, it's going to undermine this foundation. (it could *ruin* this foundation.)
And if we start off with a poor foundation, whatever we build won't be properly grounded, it won't be firm and stable, and then "life" will happen, and things will get start getting shaky, and our worship won't be solid enough to stand up in a storm. (maybe not even solid enough to stand up to a tough day, or a bad mood!)

Ok, so what's the big potential "obstacle" I'm talking about?
It has to do with the "God-centeredness" of God.
God is *very* God-centered. He is powerfully committed to His own fame and glory.

We talked about this last week, but...
just to make it really clear that I'm not attributing something to God that's *un-true* of Him, I want you to hear it straight from His mouth:

Isaiah 42:8

"I am YHWH, that is My name;
I will not give My glory to another, nor share My praise with idols."

God is saying, "all glory belongs to **ME**, I don't share it with anybody else."

Numbers 14:21

"Indeed, as I live, all the earth will be filled with the glory of the LORD."
That's God's purpose, and He's fiercely committed to it!

Exodus 34:14

"You shall not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God."

Malachi 1:11

"From the rising of the sun to its setting,
My name – (which means "My renown, My reputation, My fame")
My name will be great among the nations."

Ezekiel 38:23

“I will magnify Myself, display My holiness,
and make Myself known in the sight of many nations.”

And, not only is *GOD* focused on His own glory, but He commands *US* to be as well!

1 Corinthians 10:31

Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do **all** to the **glory** of God.

“Do everything you do to glorify ME!”

Jesus teaches us to *pray* for this:

Matthew 6:9-10

“Pray, then, in this way:

‘Our Father who is in Heaven, hallowed be Your name.

“Honored and revered be Your reputation and renown.”

Your kingdom come, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven.”

And how are things done in Heaven?

GOD is seated on the throne, everything centers on Him, and every created thing sings:

Revelation 5:13

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and power forever and ever!”

That’s God’s idea of “perfect!” – His praises, ringing out forever and ever!

Clearly God is intently focused on His name, His renown... His glory.

God is God-centered.

Which means that, **God is self-centered!**

“WHOA... hold on now, Phillip, you’ve gone too far. That *can’t* be right!

God is *NOT* ‘self-centered!’ God is *loving!* The Bible says that – ‘God is love!’

I mean, I *get* that God is committed to His glory, ok?

But all this “ME, ME, ME” stuff doesn’t sound *loving* at all!

How am I supposed to reconcile all of this with God’s *love*??!

OK – here we are! Do you *feel* this incredible tension??

THIS is the obstacle I’m talking about – right here!

THIS is what will tempt you to set aside all the truth we’ve seen about God’s commitment to His own glory, because you’re not sure what to *do* with it!

It feels like it *contradicts* the love of God.

Because it seems impossible that God could be *both* powerfully self-centered *and* deeply loving, and I’ve *gotta* believe that God is loving, so I’m just going to have to push this “glory of God” stuff off to the side...

And *that’s* where we start to slide off the foundation.

Understand me - I'm not trying to minimize the love of God.
(where would we be – where would *I* be - without His love?!)
(remember: “Not to us, but to Your name be the glory, *because of* Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness!” His love is a *reason* to give Him glory!
So, I'm definitely NOT trying to contradict the love of God in any way!)

I'm trying to *convince* you that God's love and God's commitment to His own glory are NOT conflicting ideas!
Because they are NOT! They are actually *complimentary* ideas!

What feels at first like an *obstacle* to worship can actually become a *springboard* for worship. This can become the fuel for your worship, if you can just *see* this...

So here's the question - how do I reconcile God's supreme commitment to His own glory with His love for me?

Let me ask you *another* question - How do you want God to love you?
In what “way” would you want God to express His love for you?
Here's what I mean by that...

We like to be praised and “made much of,” don't we?
We like to be complimented and appreciated – by friends, parents, spouse, whomever.
That's a “way” that we like to be “loved” – by being told we're smart and beautiful and talented and wonderful.
It feels good. But it doesn't last, does it?
Soon it's gone, and then you need *another* “stroke,” *another* compliment.
It's not big enough. It's not truly satisfying.

Is *that* the way you want *GOD* to love you?
By pretending that He's impressed with your smarts? With you great abilities?
That's not real, and we know it.

Let me describe *another* kind of love to you...
What if God means to love you in a much deeper and more lasting way than giving you praise? (by acting like *you're* the greatest thing ever?)
What if God means to love you by not letting you *settle* for lesser, temporary pleasures, but instead by truly satisfying your soul?!
What if God means to love you by bringing you deep and lasting joy?!
Would that not be better than some fleeting compliment?

How would God *go about* loving us like that?
Where would He *send* us to find satisfaction and joy?
To HIMSELF! He would *have* to send us to Himself!
Because deep satisfaction and lasting joy are *only* found in HIM!
God's Word says:

Psalm 37:4

Delight yourself **in the LORD**, and He will give you the desires of your heart.

Philippians 4:4

Rejoice **in the Lord** always; again I will say, rejoice!

“In the LORD” is where joy is found;
“in the LORD” is where *delight* is found, where *satisfaction* is found. God says:

Psalm 81:10, 16

“Open your mouth wide, and **I will fill it.** (I’m the Source!!)
I will feed you with the finest of the wheat,
and with honey from the rock **I will satisfy you.**” (That’s His *promise!*)

Jeremiah 31:14

”My people will be **satisfied** with My goodness,” declares the LORD.

John 6:35

Jesus said to them, “**I am** the bread of life;
he who comes to **Me** will *not* hunger,
and he who believes in **Me** will *never* thirst.”

And His worshippers respond:

Psalm 36:7-9

O God, how *precious* is Your unfailing **love!**
How eager we are to run under Your wings,
to be **satisfied** with the abundance of Your house,
to drink from the river of Your delights.

This is how God loves us – by satisfying us with Himself!

Just listen to King David worship:

Psalm 63:1-5

O God, **You** are my God, earnestly I **seek** You,
my soul **thirsts** for you, ...as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.
I have seen You in the sanctuary and gazed upon Your power and your glory.
Because Your steadfast **love** is better than life, my lips will praise You.
I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name.
My soul is satisfied... and my mouth will **praise** You with joyful lips,

This is what being loved by God looks like – God satisfying us with Himself!

Which means, for God to be loving, **He MUST glorify Himself!**

He must point us towards Himself!

If He were to send us *away* from Himself, to find joy & satisfaction somewhere *else*, that wouldn’t be an act of *humility* on God’s part - that would be *hateful & unloving!*

For God to love us, He **MUST** point us to Himself!

Now, *people* who promote their own honor and glory... that’s *not* loving.

It’s selfish and destructive – which is why we find it so unappealing.

If I exalt myself, I’m just *distracting* others from anything good.

But when GOD exalts Himself, He is *directing* everyone to the only Source of true and lasting joy – Himself!

The most loving thing God can do for anyone is to point them to HIMSELF,
to glorify Himself!

So, God's commitment to His own glory, to making Himself known, is VERY loving. It's the *ultimate* love!

He's our only hope! Without a relationship with Him, we're doomed. For God to love us, He MUST be self-centered and exalt Himself & His glory alone. (What else is He gonna exalt??)

One last illustration, that might help you "feel" this...

People love to go on trips to the ocean or to the mountains, don't we? We love to see majestic sights – to look at the Grand Canyon, or look up at the starry sky on a clear night. We're *drawn* to huge and awe-inspiring vistas. Why? It's NOT to build up our self-esteem, that's for sure. In fact, we kind of "forget ourselves" in those moments, don't we? We don't feel big or important or praise-worthy... we feel *small* in those places. And yet we're *drawn* to those places. Why?

Because, in the presence of majesty and immensity and greatness, you're *moved*. Looking out over a vast ocean or a great mountain range, something deep inside of you says, "yes." There's something *right*, something *true*, something about such places and such moments that just *resonates* in your spirit.

And sometimes, a very similar thing takes place in times of **worship**. You're *moved*; maybe even find yourself in *tears*, and you don't know why. But something deep inside of you knows this is *right* and *true*, and says "yes."

Do you feel "un-loved" in such moments? NO!
You feel *very* loved! You feel *right*, and *good*, and *whole*..

Because, in those moments, we're touching what we were *made* for. We're getting just a *taste*, just a *glimpse* of the truth that is written on our hearts. The truth that you were not made to be the center of the universe. (That's not you.) That *you* were made to delight in Someone far greater and more glorious than you. Someone you *desperately* need, Someone you're secretly *searching* for with all your heart. God says:

Isaiah 45:21-22

"There is no other God besides Me, a righteous God and a Savior...
Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth;
for I am God, and there is no other."

And the heart of a worshipper responds:

Isaiah 26:8

Yes, LORD, as Your judgments unfold, we wait eagerly for You;
for **Your name** and **Your renown**... they are the **desire** of our souls!

As the Message Bible puts it:

Who You are and what You've done are all we'll ever want.

Can you *see* it?! Can you *feel* it?!
This is what it means to be loved by God!

