

WELCOME 2nd October 2022 – 17 Pentecost '22 C

Psalm 147:1-12 & 2 Timothy 4:1-5

Welcome! It's great to be together again today! We're continuing our worship/teaching series Spiritual Intelligence as a family of disciples... **Bible Study Qs** are there to equip you so God can lead you deeper into His word/work in your life, & so you can share that w/ someone else. We also use them for our **Zoom Bible Study Catch-ups** on Friday @ 1p.m.

As we move into this week... It was 1991...grunge band **Nirvana** released its biggest hit, *Smells like Teen Spirit*. Part of the chorus "Here we are now, entertain us!" became an anthem for a generation & the culture. **Robbie Williams** echoed that a few years later, "Let me entertain you" We like to be entertained, to be engaged passively or actively in some activity that holds our attention & interest and gives us pleasure & delight...makes us feel good! Entertainment saturates Western society...

That's nothing new. People flocked to Jesus saying over/over again, "Here we are now entertain us!" "Show us a sign." "Perform a miracle." "Prove you're the King." The Gospels tell us many were "amazed/awed/wowed" at his teaching/his miracles. But that amazement did not lead to transformed lives as followers/disciples...they were entertained but walked away.

Today we explore 'Worship in a world of entertainment' remembering that entertainment is a spiritually temporary act that briefly amuses us & distracts us from the reality of our lives. Worship however, is a spiritually powerful God-centred & God-directed lifestyle that draws us into the presence of the all-powerful God who transforms every part of our lives by his grace. So we give all we are with the Psalmist

Praise the Lord!

How good to sing praises to our God!

How delightful and how fitting!

The Lord's delight is in those who fear him,
those who put their hope in his unfailing love.

Spiritual Intelligence is **NOT** how much you know: SI is learning to discern right/wrong, good/evil, beautiful & true/horrendous & false...It's wisdom leading you to what is life-giving & God-honouring. It's walking the path of abundant life & impact in Jesus' Name. Spiritual Intelligence is celebrating & participating together in the transforming glory of God. Spiritual Intelligence is **you** maturing in likeness to Jesus Christ.

Let's pray...

PRAYER OF THE DAY

How good it is to be near you God!

Sovereign LORD you are our shelter;

We will tell everyone about the wonderful things you do.

- Ps 73:28

O Lord, our God, by the work of your Spirit alive in us, still our hearts...quiet our minds...slow our pace so all we hear is you. Break through the circumstances of our lives so that we are overwhelmed not with our issues struggles or fears, but with your presence & love alone.

Let us behold your glory & beauty...your majesty & greatness. Bring to nothing the trinkets & treasures of this world so we cling to the one thing needed...your Son who gave himself so we could boldly come to your throne of grace to receive the gifts you give abundantly & freely and then share those gifts with those around us in your world. Cause us to work wholeheartedly for your kingdom's expanse in the places we go each day. In Jesus' Name...Amen.

Let's sing...How Great is our God...

FAITH CHAT:

1. When I want to be entertained, I _____?
2. How does consistent worship make a difference in your life?
If it doesn't why do you think that is? If you're not consistent...why?

17 PENTECOST '22 C – SPIRITUAL INTELLIGENCE: WORSHIP IN A WORLD OF ENTERTAINMENT

Entertainment - to be engaged passively or actively in some activity that holds our attention & interest and gives us pleasure & delight. From sitting in front of the TV watching the Grand Final...to taking part in on-line gaming tournament involving people from around the world...to going to a concert, sports event or long walk w/ someone you love...We like to be entertained. Who remembers driving trips b/4 digital entertainment kept the kids from asking "Are we there yet?" every 50Ks?

We like to be entertained. But what happens when entertainment slips into the church & the pastor drives out onto the stage in a Bradley Armoured Fighting Vehicle & gives his message perched behind the 40mm cannon...or the musos/singers are recruited auditioned & vetted for their appearance/skill...guys like me need not apply. *Ok/Not ok?* But how many Xns say w/ a straight face, "I can't get my kids to come because they find worship boring...There's nothing for them there...Why don't we sing my favourite songs." Or we church shop just like we choose the grocery store w/ better prices or riper bananas...We like to be entertained...we choose that which holds our attraction & interests & gives us pleasure & delight...maybe momentarily distracts us from the reality of just how tough our lives are at any given moment.

Pastor/author AW Tozer who died the year after I was born saw this coming & wrote: "A church that can't worship must be entertained; & those who can't lead a church to worship must provide entertainment." When entertainment is pervasive & but a finger movement away...how much truer is that today than 60-70 years ago. Consider this: also Tozer: "Worship is no longer worship when it reflects the culture around us more than the Christ within us." Somebody talk to me...you hear that &... Psalm 19 offers a necessary corrective & points us in the direction of why it is so critical that, as apprentices to Jesus, we live from Spiritual Intelligence celebrating & participating together in the transforming glory of God – that we worship in a world of entertainment May *the words of my mouth & the meditation of my heart be acceptable (be pleasing) to you, O LORD, my rock & my redeemer.*

The Psalms were clear worship is HOW ALL OF ME (heart mind body) responds to ALL OF WHO GOD IS & ALL OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE. Ps 147 begins w/ a shout: "Praise the Lord!" in Heb: *Hallelujah!* In fact...the last 5 Psalms are called *Hallel* psalms because they all begin w/ the same Hallelujah...Throughout the Psalms there are laments, psalms of confidence, cries for help, kingly, travel, wisdom, thanksgiving...but they build to the final 5...crescendo of praise/worship. There are others among the 150 Psalms & these calls to worship are filled w/ appeals to sing, shout, clap your hands, dance, bow down, run to him, make a loud noise, tell of his might, meditate on his truth, throw away your idols...cybals trumpets harps...Worship is a verb not a noun...

Worship is HOW ALL OF ME (heart mind body) responds to ALL OF WHO GOD IS & ALL OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE.

Look back @ 147... "Praise the Lord! How good to sing praises to our God! How delightful & how fitting! (*why?*) The Lord is rebuilding Jerusalem & bringing the exiles back to Israel. He heals the broken-hearted & bandages their wounds...The Lord supports the humble, but he brings the wicked down into the dust." Worship, says the Psalmist, is fitting/appropriate the right response to God who gives life restores life gathers his people to himself climbs into our world close enough to comfort heal care to give back what has been damaged destroyed or wasted...grants justice & relief from oppression...sets all things right according to his standard & purpose...brings righteousness & justice into reality in our world...Worship is the fitting response to God who acts according to his character...Jesus said? *The thief comes to steal kill & destroy I came that you might have life to the full...abundantly...from which we receive grace upon grace...*

Worship is HOW ALL OF ME (heart mind body) responds to ALL OF WHO GOD IS & ALL OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE. We are not just spectators who receive...sit passively & allow God to just do his thing...We are not spectators who can compartmentalize or localize faith to our heads through a series of doctrinal statements & accurate Biblical interpretations memorized to the applause of the congregation. Too often I think the mainline traditions of Xn faith have (wrongly) boxed ourselves into a purely mental faith framework...that we can just say the right things it's enough & shy away from a whole-life/body/verb response to what we experience of God in Jesus Christ.

We are not just spectators who receive...We are participants who respond. Worship is a verb...it's HOW ALL OF ME responds to ALL OF WHO GOD IS & ALL OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE. In a world of entertainment, When I want to be entertained, I ____? I'm going to bet that has changed for you over time. Your answer 5 – 10 – 30 years ago? But the Psalmist notes that God's work of creating & sustaining our world...of reaching in to redeem & make right/good beautiful/true endures forever...Entertainment is fleeting temporary short-lived. God's work never fades or fails...*Jesus is the same yesterday today & forever.* So our worship allows us to take part in the eternally transforming purpose of the Father...to join in declaring his praise & his intention to redeem a broken sinful world through his own grace in Jesus crucified/risen/reigning. Worship is where God enters our lives (takes hold of every part) not to make us feel good but to assert his Lordship over us & claim our lives back for his joy & his purposes.

So, *dear brothers & sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living & holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is your true & proper worship. Don't copy the behaviour & customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know*

God's will for you, which is good & pleasing & perfect. – Rom 12:1-2 Worship is HOW ALL OF ME responds to ALL OF WHO GOD IS & ALL OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE.

Worship provides a foundation for life not a fleeting escape **from it** – emotional hit. One interesting post-pandemic experience in the wider church is that those ministries built on entertaining/amazing the congregations had a harder time rebounding from lockdowns...why? Perhaps because in the interim, a different amazement presented itself & the entertained moved on. Shouldn't be surprised...

We see the same thing in Jn 6. Jesus multiplies loaves/fish & feeds 5000+. He sends the 12 away because the crowds want to make him king & he ^{w/draws} to pray. He rescues the disciples from a storm (walks to them on the H₂O) & when they return the next day the crowds want more sandwiches...they clamour for more amazement. Jesus uses that opportunity to explain the nature of life ^{w/} & in him...the intimate nature of communion eating/drinking the gift of his body/blood & Jn notes, **From** that moment many of his disciples turned away & deserted him. When it was clear Jesus was more than a sideshow attraction...an entertaining magician...when transformation was the obvious next step...poof! They were gone. Worship allows us to take part in the eternally transforming purpose of the Father. Worship provides a foundation for life not just a fleeting escape from it – emotional hit.

Back to Ps 147 - **God** takes no pleasure in the strength of a horse or in human might. No, the Lord's delight is in those who fear him, those who put their hope in his unfailing love. If we get nothing else...God is not interested in your competence...stamina...strength wisdom...clever responses to life challenges...larrikin spirit...capacity for laughter in the face of danger...God is delighted when you simply call to him for help...when you're honest enough to admit you've made a mess & can't fix it...when every decision has been dodgy & the results are obvious & you finally come to the end of new approaches, new strategies & all the other things you've already tried & failed...

Worship establishes a center of gravity in the midst of life's **chaos**. Worship reorients your life away from your own wants/desires toward what the Father has purposed for you from the beginning. In a world where all things fail fade & die...when uncertainty & anxiety are the 2 most common experiences of living in 2022... Worship reorients you toward that which is life-giving hope-producing secure & eternal. Worship re-plants your roots in the soil love & grace peace & joy refuge & unfailing strength...so that **Now**, just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in him. Let your roots grow down into him, & your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, & you will overflow with thankfulness. – Col 2:6-7

A bit of Ps 147 we didn't read this morning...vss 12-14 **Glorify** the LORD, O Jerusalem! Praise your God, O Zion! For he has strengthened the bars of your gates & blessed your children within your walls. He sends peace across your nation & satisfies your hunger with the finest wheat. Look closely...Worship acknowledges it is God who grants **salvation** ...who bring wholeness & freedom...who provides exactly what is necessary for our lives to flourish & grow...Absent worship...outside of the gathered people of God... offering your life to some other highest good ultimate hope is only death & futility.

I came across a quote about worship from an unlikely source: Vladimir Lenin one of the founding fathers of communism...It's not hard to imagine an atheist/communist worldview producing these **words**, "There is nothing more abominable than religion & all worship of a divinity is necrophilia." He contends Xn worship is immersed in saturated by & leads to death. Yet it is communism that has left somewhere ^{b/t} 80-120 million bodies lying dead since 1918...Worship acknowledges that it is God who grants salvation...who bring wholeness & freedom...who provides exactly what is necessary for our lives to flourish & grow...Absent worship...outside of the gathered people of God...offering your life to some other highest good ultimate hope is only death & futility.

Entertainment is a spiritually temporary act that briefly amuses us & distracts us from the reality of our lives. Worship however, is a spiritually powerful God-centred & God-directed lifestyle that draws us into the presence of the all-powerful God who transforms every part of our lives by his grace. Worship is HOW ALL OF ME (heart mind body) responds to ALL OF WHO GOD IS & ALL OF WHAT GOD HAS DONE.

You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." - 1 Pet 2:9

Worship provides a foundation for life not a fleeting escape from it – emotional hit. Worship establishes a center of gravity in the midst of life's chaos. Worship acknowledges it is God who grants salvation...& because of that... Worship allows us to take part in the eternally transforming purpose of the Father...

Praise the Lord!

How good to sing praises to our God! How delightful and how fitting!

The Lord's delight is in those who fear him, those who put their hope in his unfailing love.

TAKE IT HOME –

Given all that God's gift of worship is...

What needs to change for you so that worship becomes more than a 1-day-a-week experience and you can share it with others?