

If You Worship on Sunday, What Happens on Monday?

from *Whatever Happened to Worship?* by A. W. Tozer

Do you quietly bow your head in reverence when you step into the average gospel church?

I am not surprised if your answer is no.

There is grief in my spirit when I go into the average church, for we have become a generation rapidly losing all sense of divine sacredness in our worship. Many whom we have raised in our churches no longer think in terms of reverence—which seems to indicate they doubt that God's Presence is there.

In too many of our churches, you can detect the attitude that anything goes. It is my assessment that losing the awareness of God in our midst is a loss too terrible ever to be appraised.

Much of the blame must be placed on the growing acceptance of a worldly secularism that seems much more appealing in our church circles than any hungering or thirsting for the spiritual life that pleases God. We secularize God, we secularize the gospel of Christ and we secularize worship.

No great and spiritually powerful man of God is going to come out of such a church. No great spiritual movement of believing prayer and revival is going to come out of such a church. If God is to be honored and revered and truly worshiped, He may have to sweep us away and start somewhere else.

There is a necessity for true worship among us. If God is who He says He is and if we are the believing people of God we claim to be, we must worship Him. I do not believe that we will ever truly delight in the adoring worship of God if we have never met Him in personal, spiritual experience through the new birth from above, wrought by the Holy Spirit of God Himself!

We have such smooth, almost secularized ways of talking people into the kingdom of God that we can no longer find men and women willing to seek God through the crisis of encounter. When we bring them into our churches, they have no idea of what it means to love and worship God because, in the route through which we have brought them, there has been no personal encounter, no personal crisis, no need of repentance—only a Bible verse with a promise of forgiveness.

Oh, how I wish I could adequately set forth the glory of that One who is worthy to be the object of our worship! I do believe that if our new converts—the babes in Christ—could be made to see His thousand attributes and even partially comprehend His being, they would become faint with a yearning desire to worship and honor and acknowledge Him, now and forever.

I know that many discouraged Christians do not truly believe in God's sovereignty. In that case we are not filling our role as the humble and trusting followers of God and His Christ.

And yet, that is why Christ Jesus came into our world. The old theologians called it theanthropism—the union of the divine and human natures in Christ. This is a great mystery and I stand in awe before it. I take off my shoes and kneel before this burning bush, this mystery I do not understand.

The theanthropy is the mystery of God and man united in one Person—not two persons, but two natures.

So, the nature of God and the nature of man are united in this One who is our Lord Jesus Christ. All that is God and all that is man are in Christ fused eternally and inextricably.

Consider the experience of Moses in the desert as he beheld the fire that burned in the bush without consuming it. Moses had no hesitation in kneeling before the bush and worshiping God. Moses was not worshiping a bush; it was God and His glory dwelling in the bush that Moses worshiped.

That is an imperfect illustration, for when the fire departed from that bush it was a bush again.

But this Man, Christ Jesus, is eternally the Son. In the fullness of this mystery there has never been any departure, except for that awful moment when Jesus cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46). The Father turned His back for a moment when the Son took on Himself that petrifying mass of our sin and guilt, dying on the cross not for His own sin, but for ours.

The deity and the humanity never parted. And to this day they remain united in that one Man. When we kneel before Him and say, "My Lord and my God, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever," we are talking to God.

I think the prophets of God saw farther into the centuries and into the mysteries of God than we can with our great modern telescopes and electronic means of measuring light years and planets and galaxies.

The prophets saw the Lord our God. They saw Him in His beauty, and they tried to describe Him.

They described Him as radiantly beautiful and fair, a winsome being. They said that He was royal and that He was gracious. They described Him as a majestic being; and yet they noted His meekness. They saw Him as righteous and filled with truth. They tried to describe the manner of His love, with its gladness and joy and fragrance.

When the prophets try to describe for me the attributes, the graces, the worthiness of the God who appeared to them and dealt with them, I feel that I can kneel down and follow their admonition: "He is thy Lord—worship thou Him."

He is fair and He is kingly, yet He is gracious in a sense that takes nothing away from His majesty.

He is meek, but it is the kind of meekness that likewise takes nothing away from His majesty.

The meekness and the majesty of Jesus. I wish I could write a hymn about that or compose music about it. Where else can you find majesty and meekness united?

The meekness was His humanity. The majesty was His deity. You find them everlastingly united in Him. So meek that he nursed at His mother's breast, cried like any baby and needed all the human care that every child needs.

But He was also God, and in His majesty He stood before Herod and before Pilate. When He returns, coming down from the sky, it will be in His majesty, the majesty of God. Yet it will also

be in the majesty of the Man who is God.

This is our Lord Jesus Christ. Before His foes, He stands in majesty. Before His friends, He comes in meekness.

It is given to men and women to choose—a person may have either side. If he does not want the meek side of Jesus, he will come to know the majestic side.

On earth, the children came to Him. The sick and the sinful came to Him. The devil-possessed man came to Him. Those who knew their needs came from everywhere and touched Him, finding Him so meek that His power went out to them and healed them.

When He appears to men again, it will be in majesty. In His kingly majesty He will deal with the pride and conceit and self-sufficiency of mankind, for the Bible says that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that He is Lord and King.

To really know Him is to love and worship Him.

As God's people, we are so often confused that we could be known as God's poor, stumbling, bumbling people. That must be true of a great number of us for we always think of worship as something we do when we go to church.

We call it God's house. We have dedicated it to Him. So we continue with the confused idea that it must be the only place where we can worship Him.

We come to the Lord's house, made out of brick and wood and lined with carpeting. We are used to hearing a call to worship: "The Lord is in His holy temple—let us all kneel before Him."

That is on Sunday and that is in church. Very nice!

But Monday morning comes soon. The Christian layman goes to his office. The Christian school teacher goes to the classroom. The Christian mother is busy with duties in the home.

On Monday, as we go about our different duties and tasks, are we aware of the Presence of God? The Lord desires still to be in His holy temple, wherever we are. He wants the continuing love and delight and worship of His children, wherever we work.

Is it not a beautiful thing for a businessman to enter his office on Monday morning with an inner call to worship: "The Lord is in my office—let all the world be silent before Him."

If you cannot worship the Lord in the midst of your responsibilities on Monday, it is not very likely that you were worshiping on Sunday!

Actually, none of us has the ability to fool God. Therefore, if we are so engaged in our Saturday pursuits that we are far from His presence and far from a sense of worship on Saturday, we are not in very good shape to worship Him on Sunday.

I guess many people have an idea that they have God in a box. He is just in the church sanctuary, and when we leave and drive toward home, we have a rather faint, homesick feeling that we are leaving God in the big box.

You know that it is not true, but what are you doing about it?

God is not confined to a building any more than He is confined to your car or your home or the office where you work.

Paul's earnest exhortation to the Corinthian Christians is just as valid for our lives today as it was when he expressed it:

Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are
(1 Corinthians 3:16-17).

If you do not know the presence of God in your office, your factory, your home, then God is not in the church when you attend.

I became a Christian when I was a young man working in one of the tire factories in Akron, Ohio. I remember my work there. I remember my worship there, too. I had plenty of worshipful tears in my eyes. No one ever asked me about them, but I would not have hesitated to explain them.

You can learn to use certain skills until they are automatic. I became so skillful that I could do my work, and then I could worship God even while my hands were busy.

I have come to believe that when we are worshiping—and it could be right at the drill in the factory—if the love of God is in us and the Spirit of God is breathing praise within us, all the musical instruments in heaven are suddenly playing in full support.

Well, it is my experience that our total lives, our entire attitude as persons, must be toward the worship of God.

What is there in you that strives to worship God? Faith, love, obedience, loyalty, conduct of life—all of these strive in you to worship God. If there is anything within you that refuses to worship, there is nothing within you, then, that worships God very well.

You are not worshipping God as you should if you have departmentalized your life so that some areas worship and other parts do not worship.

This can be a great delusion—that worship only happens in church or in the midst of a dangerous storm or in the presence of some unusual and sublime beauty of nature around us. I have been with some fellows who became very spiritual when they stood on the breathtaking curve of a steep mountain cliff!

Occasionally we are in some situation like that and a person begins to yell, “Hooray for Jesus!” or some other corny expression.

My brother or sister, if we are believing children of God in whom the Holy Spirit nurtures continual joy, delight and wonder, we will not need a storm on the mountain to show us how glorious our Lord really is.

It is a delusion to think that because we suddenly feel expansive and poetic in the presence of the storm or stars or space that we are spiritual. I need only remind you that drunkards or tyrants or criminals can have those “sublime” feelings, too. Let us not imagine that they constitute worship.

I can offer no worship wholly pleasing to God if I know that I am harboring elements in my life that are displeasing to Him. I cannot truly and joyfully worship God on Sunday and not worship Him on Monday. I cannot worship God with a glad song on Sunday and then knowingly displease Him in my business dealings on Monday and Tuesday.

I repeat my view of worship—*no worship is wholly pleasing to God until there is nothing in me displeasing to God.*

Is that a view that seems very discouraging to you?

Let me say that if you listen to me long enough you will receive some encouragement in the Spirit, but I have never had an inclination within me to encourage people in the flesh.

I have never had very much faith in people—as people. I do respect the good intentions that people have. I know they mean well. But in the flesh they cannot fulfill their good intentions. That is because we are sinners and we are all in a predicament—until we find the source of victory and joy and blessing in Jesus Christ.

There is nothing in either of us that can be made good until Jesus Christ comes and changes us—until He lives in us and unites our nature with God, the Father Almighty. Not until then can we call ourselves good.

That is why I say that your worship must be total. It must involve the whole you. That is why you must prepare to worship God, and that preparation is not always pleasant. There may be revolutionary changes which must take place in your life.

If there is to be true and blessed worship, some things in your life must be destroyed, eliminated. The gospel of Jesus Christ is certainly positive and constructive. But it must be *destructive* in some areas, dealing with and destroying certain elements that cannot remain in a life pleasing to God.

There have always been professing Christians who argue: “I worship in the name of Jesus.” They seem to believe that worship of God is a formula. They seem to think there is a kind of magic in saying the name of Jesus.

Study the Bible carefully with the help of the Holy Spirit and you will find that the name and the nature of Jesus are one. It is not enough to know how to spell Jesus’ name. If we have come to be like Him in nature, if we have come to the place of being able to ask in accordance with His will, He will give us the good things we desire and need. We do not worship in name only. We worship God as the result of a birth from

above in which God has been pleased to give us more than a name. He has given us a nature transformed.

Peter expressed that truth this way:

Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust (2 Peter 1:4).

Why should we delude ourselves about pleasing God in worship? If I live like a worldly and carnal tramp all day and then find myself in a time of crisis at midnight, how do I pray to a God who is holy? How do I address the One who has asked me to worship Him in spirit and in truth? Do I get on my knees and call on the name of Jesus because I believe there is some magic in that name?

If I am still the same worldly, carnal tramp, I will be disappointed and disillusioned. If I am not living in the true meaning of His name and His nature, I cannot properly pray in that name. If I am not living in His nature, I cannot rightly pray in that nature.

How can we hope to worship God acceptably when these evil elements remain in our natures undisciplined, uncorrected, unpurged, unpurified? Even granted that a man with evil ingredients in his nature might manage through some part of himself to worship God half-acceptably. But what kind of a way is that in which to live and continue?

“I want to dwell in your thoughts,” God has been saying. “Make your thoughts a sanctuary in which I can dwell.”

I do not have to do something wrong to feel blistering conviction and repent. I can lose fellowship with God, lose the keen sense of His presence and lose the blessing of spiritual victory by thinking wrong.

I have found that God will not dwell in spiteful and polluted thoughts. He will not dwell in lustful and covetous thoughts. He will not dwell in proud and selfish thoughts.

God tells us to make a sanctuary of our thoughts in which He can dwell. He treasures our pure and loving thoughts, our meek and charitable and kindly thoughts. These are the thoughts like His own.

As God dwells in your thoughts, you will be worshiping and God will be accepting. He will be smelling the incense of your high intention even when the cares of life are intense and activity is all around you.

If God knows that your intention is to worship Him with every part of your being, He has promised to cooperate with you. On His side is the love and grace, the promises and the atonement, the constant help and the presence of the Holy Spirit.

On your side there is determination, seeking, yielding, believing. Your heart becomes a chamber, a sanctuary, a shrine in which there may be continuous, unbroken fellowship and communion with God. Your worship rises to God moment by moment.

Two of Spurgeon’s greatest sermons were “God in The Silence” and “God in The Storm.” The heart that knows God can find God anywhere. I surely join with Spurgeon in the truth that a person filled with the Spirit of God, a person who has met God in a living encounter, can know the joy of worshipping Him, whether in the silences of life or in the storms of life.

There really is no argument. We know what God wants us to be. He wants us to be worshipers!