

REAL WORSHIP

- By Evangelist Sue Roseberry

(2nd Chronicles 5:13-14; St. John 4:23-24)

"... indeed it came to pass, when the trumpeters and singers were as one, to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking the Lord, and when they lifted up their voice with the trumpets and cymbals and instruments of music, and praised the Lord, saying: "For He is good, For His mercy endures forever," that the house, the house of the Lord, was filled with a cloud, so that the priests could not continue ministering because of the cloud; for the glory of the Lord filled the house of God."

"... But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

I was sitting around the other day and thinking about how many things we have that are counterfeit. My ability to list them was exhausted, but when you think about it, for every thing that exists in the world that is real or genuine – there is a copy or a counterfeit; a fake or a knock off.

There are some things that are not authentic that are still alright...can you say cubic zirconium, generic or kanekelon? For many of us – we boast in the fact that you can hardly tell whether it's real or not. There are some products that have built their entire advertising campaign on the premise that you can't tell the difference. Is it live or is it Memorex? I must honestly confess that there are some things that I truly cannot tell... and because I can't, it makes no real difference to me in my life in the final analysis.

But some years ago Marvin Gaye and Tammy Terrell recorded a song that has outlived its momentary top 10 placement on the charts, because it rings a chord of truth in the heart of every person alive. Whether we ascribe to it or not - whether we readily acknowledge it or not – **AIN'T NOTHING LIKE THE REAL THING BABY!!** Sometimes the fake item cannot stand up to the same rigors as the genuine thing.

While we may be reluctant to admit it, in many of our churches we have come to a point where we have counterfeit worship. I know that it

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exists because the bible says in John 4 that the “true worshippers would worship him in spirit and in truth”. That lets me know that there must be some false worshippers. How can that be? Well, they look pretty good, but it’s not genuine and it’s not from the heart. They’re doing all the right things, they are singing the right songs, they are swaying and moving right, but God is able to see our motives. He knows if we’re doing what we do to be seen and applauded by men.

As I was reading and studying it caused me to take a look at the church as it existed in the past and the way that we see it today. In Second Chronicles following Solomon’s completion of the house of the Lord it was a fit time for a celebration because the long, arduous task of completing the temple was over. It was not just the finalization of a building project, but it signified the completion of a task that had been originally assigned to Solomon’s father, David.

Solomon spared no pain and no expense. Talking about extravagant – only the finest and best would do. Only the most skilled craftsmen were assembled to work with the stone and

precious metals used in the temple. There was great respect and care given to every detail. I read where even the stone that was used had to be hewn and hammered away from the place that had been consecrated for the erection of the house of the Lord. Isn’t that a big change from how we sometimes consecrate or utilize the sacred place associated for worship today?

Once the ark of the covenant was situated beneath the golden cherubims, the ceremony got underway. The priests came out of the holy place. The singers and the musicians came forth and they began to give praise to God. I don’t know what the tune was that they all joined in on, but I do know that the lyrics were “For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever”.

In my understanding, it didn’t take much praising for the very presence of God to fill the room. I don’t read anything about any other song selections being rendered. I don’t see where they had to have a long exhortation from anyone about how they needed to focus on the Lord and begin to praise. No, they simply came into the house of the Lord with their minds already on praising him; their

hearts were already filled with praise; they were ready to lift their voices in singing the praise; the musicians came ready to play the songs of praise and that combination and singleness of purpose and intent brought on the result of God's presence.

Now inside the ark of the covenant was nothing much. All that was inside were the two tables which Moses put there at Horeb, where the Lord made a covenant with the people of Israel when they came out of Egypt. I don't know why we think we need so much to constitute true worship. When I just think of the goodness of Jesus... when I just think on what is written in his word I've already got enough to cause me to praise. Wouldn't it be wonderful if people today could just get excited about what God caused to be written in his word? Not much singing would be necessary; just the fact that we have his promise. No praise dancers needed...just his word. No special celebrities or cheerleaders... just his word!

The priests came out of the holy place where they had sanctified themselves without regard to their divisions. Nobody was worried about their position or what the denominational divisions were. They just knew it was

time to come together and celebrate because the house of the Lord was complete and the symbol (the ark) was in the house. I think God would be pleased today if he could get the priests – the preachers – to put aside personal agendas that are tied to who we are and what denomination we are affiliated with and just sanctify ourselves and come in to worship.

It would revolutionize the worship services in our churches. The cloud – the glory cloud – descended. Now Webster defines a cloud as a visible mass of particles of condensed vapor that is suspended in the atmosphere. It is something that obscures the visibility. I don't know what the remaining plans were that the priests had for the service. I don't know if the singers had a "B" selection planned or if the musicians were going to do an instrumental selection for the offering – whatever they had in mind was preempted because the bible says that the priests could not stand to minister or they were unable to continue by reason of the cloud.

God has a thing for clouds. Remember that when he led the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt that he led them by a pillar of fire by night and in the day he led them by a cloud.

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Clouds are mysterious. Even today, God uses clouds as a means of non-verbal communication with us. We see them in the heavens and can tell as they darken that a storm may be brewing. There are all kinds of clouds...there are rain clouds which hold the moisture that's needed to water the dry earth. There are storm clouds that hold the lightning and thunder and disastrous weather that we often witness in West Texas. But the cloud that the scripture speaks of is a glory cloud.

In my whimsical mind I can just picture that somebody who might not have been present would have asked one of the priests how the ceremony went. You know how we can be inquisitive about the service when we haven't been there. Someone may have asked..."Well, what happened? Did you all sing nice? How was the choir? How were the musicians? What was the message about...?"

The response may well have been, "Child – we didn't even get to that point." All they could offer as to why is "by reason of the cloud." The cloud contained the glory of the Lord. When he comes in, he is all that you need. We just want to get in his presence. We don't need another paper or

reading. We don't need to hear any more protocol or giving honor to's ... we don't need the sermonic solo at that point. We just need to do like our elders used to sing, "quit planning sometime and let God have his way."

For that to happen we need every heart to be attuned to true worship and undergo a change of mindset about why we come to church. Instead of focusing on what we come to receive – begin to focus on what you come to give. You come to give or offer your worship – from the depths of your heart to a God who has covered you, protected you, blessed you and only had your best interests at heart. There is power in that kind of worship and God will respond as he did in His word. The forecast? Anticipate that it will be "CLOUDY" with a strong possibility of "RAIN" as his anointing fills the atmosphere.

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