

## Worship That Pleases The Lord

### Psalm 134

**Introduction:** 1) Roland Allen writes, “The psalms are love songs to the living God.” (*Worship Leader*, 1994, 6). I think he is on to something. Written out of gratitude for His kindness and confidence in his providence, the psalms, in the context of worship, say to our God, we love you, we honor you, we bless you.

2) Jesus teaches us in John 4:24 to worship the Lord “in spirit and truth.”

3) Woodrow Kroll highlights 12 avenues or paths whereby we can truly worship the God who alone is worthy of our worship. They are:

- 1) Worship through reverence
- 2) Worship through confession
- 3) Worship through service
- 4) Worship through stewardship
- 5) Worship through prayer
- 6) Worship through praise
- 7) Worship through reading God’s Word
- 8) Worship through preaching God’s Word
- 9) Worship through believers baptism
- 10) Worship through the Lord’s Supper
- 11) Worship through music
- 12) Worship through community

4) Not surprisingly, several of these themes find their validation in this shortest of the psalms of ascent, Psalm 134. Only 3 verses and 42 words in the *New King James Version*, it is slightly longer than Psalm 117, the shortest psalm and chapter in the Bible.

5) James Boice notes, the pattern formed by these songs is not perfect, but generally speaking they have progressed from a distant land (Meshech and Kedar, Psalm 120), to the first sight of Jerusalem (Psalm 121), to standing within the city’s gates (Psalm 122), to various reflections on the grace, presence, and blessings of God on his people (Psalms 123-32), to delight in the unity that prevails among God’s people (Psalm 133), to the perpetual and joyful worship of God by those who are appointed to serve him day and night in his temple (Psalm 134). In one sense they are all about worship, but this concluding psalm is so exceptional. It is the climax.

6) W.T. Conner taught theology for almost 50 years at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He called worship “the first business of the church” (*The Gospel of Redemption*, 277). If this is true, what kind of business does Psalm 134 employ us to do?

#### **I. Worship the Lord with your service 134:1**

- The psalm begins as it ends with the word “bless.” It occurs 3 times, once in each verse.
- Notice also that “worship service” is rendered even at night. And, it is rightly focused on God and not on us!

##### **1) Know who you are**

- The servants here are probably the Levitical priest who would lead the people of God in worship.
- Now, as believer-priest in our Great High Priest, King Jesus, we jointly participate in this glorious worship of our great God.

## 2) **Know what you do**

- The priest in the temple would provide worship 24/7. Why? Because unlike pagan gods who grew tired and needed rest, Yahweh never sleeps (cf Ps. 121:3-4). Day or night God is there.
- Our service is not part-time. No temp-service for this God. All of us, all the time!
- (cf. Psalm 92:1-2)

## II. **Worship the Lord with your prayers**

**134:2**

- A proper focus on prayer, especially in corporate worship, can help us avoid the wrong emphasis and a corrupt theology. Why? Because prayer turns our eyes up not in. It rightly should focus on the Lord and not ourselves.

### 1) **Honor Him in your actions**

- Lifting up the hands was a common posture of prayer for the ancient worshippers of God (cf Ps. 28:2; 1 Tim 2:8). Clean hands and a pure heart are a pleasing combination of worship (Ps. 24:4; James 4:8) before our God.
- In the sanctuary of course was the place for corporate worship.

### 2) **Honor Him with your words**

- For a second time they are called to “bless the Lord.” They are called to worship the Lord.
- “True worship is that exercise of the human spirit that confronts us with the mystery and the marvel of God in whose presence the most appropriate and salutary response is adoring love” (Ralph Martin).
- “Christian worship is the glad response of Christians to the holy, redemptive love of God made known in Jesus Christ” (Horton Davies).
- “Worship, in all its grades and kinds, is the response of the creature to the Eternal” (Evelyn Underhill).
- “Worship quickens the conscience by the holiness of God, feeds the mind with the truth of God, purges the imagination by the beauty of God, opens the heart to the love of God, devotes the will to the purpose of God” (William Temple).

## III. **Worship the Lord with your humility**

**134:3**

- Who is this God we worship? Consult our confession of faith, the *Baptist Faith and Message 2000*.

### **God**

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

### **God the Father**

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who

become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

### **God the Son**

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

### **God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

- Psalm 134 closes by briefly, but clearly, highlighting two marvelous attributes of this Great God. Note, we bless Him in vs. 1-2. Now, He blesses us in vs. 3. Who is this God who blesses us?
  - 1) **Acknowledge Him as your Creator**
    - Here we are carried back to Genesis 1-2; Psalm 19; Psalm 139.
    - God is my maker. I am His to do with as He wishes.
  - 2) **Acknowledge Him as your King**
    - Here we are carried back to Psalm 2 (esp. v. 6)!
    - We are indeed blessed from Zion, for out of Zion comes Yahweh's King! His Son! This anticipates the New Testament revelation of what we will eternally experience.
    - (cf. Hebrews 12:22-24)

### **Conclusion**

#### *Bless His Holy Name*

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, Bless His holy name.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me, Bless His holy name.

He has done great things, he has done great things,  
He has done great things, Bless His holy Name.