**A Call to Worship** (Part II)

***Psalm 66:13-20***

Pastor Michael Lynn / West Hampden Baptist Church

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Introduction: We saw last week that this psalm involves both a national & a universal call to worship.

It is likely that Hezekiah is the author & that the occasion of writing is following the Southern Kingdom’s deliverance from the Assyrians. The first 12 verses are the “choral” section, sung by the nation as a whole. While recounting their miraculous crossing of the Red Sea & the River Jordan, they also recall their trials & afflictions. Such sufferings were intended by God to purify them, even as silver is purified of dross. The parallel for us is the process by which God conforms us to the image of His Son. Consider the illustration of the “carved horse.” Is this process of sanctification taking place in your life? Are you growing in Christ-likeness? Is there evidence of the fruit of the Spirit in your life? Could you sing with George Young, “God Leads Us Along,” having just experienced what he & his wife had suffered?

 The “solo” section appears to be that of Hezekiah, speaking for the nation, but singularly offering sacrifice & paying vows in light of his prayer to God on behalf of the nation (see Isaiah 36 & 37:1-4; 15-20).

 {I. Worship is the **rejoicing** in God (:1-4)

 A. The command to worship (:1-2).

 B. The contrasts in worship (:3-4).

 II. Worship is the **reminding** by God (:5-7)

 A. Israel’s deliverance by God (:6).

 B. The nation’s observance by God (:7).

III. Worship is the **responding** to God (:8-15)

 A. BlessingGod for past deliverances (:8-12)

 1. The trials (:10-12a).

 2. The triumph (:8-9, 12b) – (from last week).}

 B. Worshipping God by present dedications (:13-15)

 Setting > The leader of Judah, Hezekiah, now enters the Temple to pay vows made in the hour

 of the nation’s distress.

 1. Presenting sacrifices (compare & contrast the N.T. sacrifice of Romans 12:1-2).

 a. *“Burnt offerings”* - those wholly consumed on the altar.

 b. *“Fatlings”* – the best of the animals (cf. Isa. 25:6) [Giving God our best? I Cor. 10:31].

 c. *“Incense of rams”* – fat of the ram (pictures prayer arising to the throne of God – Christ’s

 intercession & our supplication).

 d. *“Bullocks of goats”* – a liberal offering, more than required [for us today? Heb. 13:15-16].

 2. Paying vows (making promises??).

 a. Promises made in a time of adversity, asking for God’s deliverance.

 b. “The vows which we made when we were in trouble must not be forgotten when the trouble

 is over, but be carefully performed, for better it is not to vow than to vow & not pay”

 (Henry). – see Ecc. 5:4-5 & Deut. 23:21-23.

 Application?? – N.T. example > Acts 5:1-11; Today? – see song, “O Jesus I Have Promised.”

 IV. Worship is the **receiving** from God (:16-20)

 A. There is adoration for past mercies (:16-17)

 1. Past experiences:

 a. “He has never been greatly blessed who can refrain from blazing it abroad. A full heart will

 not allow of locked lips” (Scroggie).

 b. Absence of praise? Lack of salvation? See II Peter 1:8-10 [What has He done for you?].

 2. Present exaltation:

 a. *“Extolled”* – high praise; see Psalm 149:6, *“Let the high praises of God be in their mouth.”*

 b. As if the psalmist was saying: “…I was considering in my mind how I might exalt & mag-

 nify His name. When prayers are in our mouths praises must be in our hearts” (Henry).

 Summary: “God’s people should communicate their experiences to each other. We should take

 all occasions to tell one another of the great & kind things which God has done for us, especially

 which He has done for our souls. The spiritual blessings with which He has blessed us in

 heavenly things, these we should be most affected with ourselves, & therefore with these we

 should be desirous to affect others” (Henry).

 B. There is anticipation of future mercies (:18-20)

 1. The danger of broken communion (:18).

 a. “Heart sins”? – cf. Matthew 5:21-22; 27-28.

 (1) *“Regard”* – “cherish” in ESV; the idea of enjoying; look forward to or aim for.

 (2) “Hypocritical prayers while loving sin in the heart can expect no answer from God”

 (Reformation Study Bible).

 b. Consider Job 27:8-9, *“For what is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when*

 *God taketh away his soul? Will God hear his cry when trouble cometh upon him?*

 See also Proverbs 15:29, 28:9; Isaiah 1:15; John 9:31.

 (1) If there is no relationship to God, there can be no expectation from God.

 (2) “There are a number of reasons why our prayers may seem to go unanswered, & the

 presence of unconfessed & unforsaken sin in one’s life is often the cause. At any

 event, this possibility must always be considered with all honesty before seeking another reason” (Henry Morris).

 2. The delight of blessed communion (:19-20)

 a. The psalmist is so sure that God would answer he gives thanks before the answer comes

 [Do you & I trust God like that? See Philippians 4:6, *“Be careful for nothing; but in*

 *everything by prayer & supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known*

 *unto God”*.].

 b. “Prayer & mercy stand in the relation to one another of call & echo. When God turns away

 from his prayer & his mercy, He commands him to be silent & refuses him a favorable an-

 swer. The poet, however, praises God that He has deprived him neither of the joyfulness of

 prayer nor the proof of His favor” (Keil) [*“mercy”* is *“hesed”* – God’s covenant loyalty &

 love].

Conclusion: True worship includes a **revelation** from God & our **response** to God. It involves acknowledging God for Who He is (:2). It includes blessing God for past deliverances & praising Him by present declarations (cf. :3-4). We no longer bring animal sacrifices to be slain upon an altar, but we present our body to be surrendered for His service. Promises made to God should not be spoken lightly, but offered seriously. Worship is indicated as well by an adoration of Him for past mercies – forgetting not to render praise & thanksgiving. Worship entails our anticipation of future mercies – reminding us of the danger of broken communion & yet the delight of blessed communion. Could you conclude with the psalmist, *“But verily God hath heard me; He hath attended to the voice of my prayer. Blessed be God, which hath not turned away my prayer nor His mercy from me”*? What has God done for your soul?