

God Has Not Changed

One of the greatest biblical and theological minds, as well as one of the godliest men who ever came out of old Princeton Seminary, was B.B. Warfield. Just over 110 years ago in the Fall of 1911, Warfield gave an address to a group of theological students gathered at Princeton. In this address, Warfield spoke of a great danger of losing our awe of the majesty, beauty, and the greatness of God, which is inclusive of losing our joy in God. Listen to these words spoken that day. “We are frequently told...that the great danger of the theological student lies precisely in his constant contact with divine things. They may come to seem common to him because they are customary. As the average man breathes the air and basks in the sunshine without ever a thought that it is God in his goodness who makes the sun to rise on him though he is evil, and sends rain to him though he is unjust; so you may come to...[think of] the words which tell you of God’s terrible majesty or of his glorious goodness....to be mere words to you.”

Warfield goes on to speak of the great privilege that all Christians have to be surrounded by the truths of the goodness of God versus those who struggle in all areas of life with no biblical knowledge of God. Warfield continues: “Other men, oppressed by the hard conditions of life, sunk in the daily struggle for bread perhaps, distracted at any rate by the dreadful drag of the world upon them and the awful rush of the world’s work, find it hard to get time and opportunity so much as to pause to consider whether there be such things as God, and religion, and salvation from the sin that [surrounds] them about and holds them captive....But the very atmosphere of your life is these things; you breathe them in at every pore: they surround you, encompass you, press in upon you from every side. It is all in danger of becoming common to you! God forgive you. You are in danger of becoming weary of God!”

In this series on Psalm 147, we’ve seen that we’re to joyfully worship God for his *wisdom*, his *works*, and his *word*. In addition to this, I want to remind us of the importance of never “becoming weary” of the things of God but rather, *finding joy* in the majesty, beauty, greatness, and worship of God.

—Joyful worship takes place when we have a saving relationship with Jesus Christ by grace through faith. No true Christian should ever want to regularly miss gathering with the people of God for corporate worship (Hebrews 10:25).

—Lack of joyful worship may be connected to a lack of believing and embracing, from the heart, the proper biblical teaching on worship. God has commanded our worship; God promises to be with us in a way like no other time when we gather on the Lord’s Day for public worship. Worship is a foretaste of heaven and in worship God is at work in our lives through the ordinary means of grace, i.e., the word, sacraments, and prayer. How can we lack joy if we truly believe and embrace these truths?

—Not only is it important that we have a proper, biblical understanding of what God is doing in our lives when we gather for corporate worship, we need to have a proper biblical understanding of *the work of God in everything that comes into our lives!* Things can get difficult and yet, for Christians, nothing comes into our lives apart from the loving hand of God. If we fail to truly believe this when things are difficult in our lives, we'll very often lack joy. There are times when we're sinned against by others, or *we perceive* that we've been sinned against by others. When this happens, it becomes easy for us to blame others for our lack of joy. But no matter what others have done, our lack of joy comes, ultimately, from our own hearts and can't honestly be blamed on others (Luke 6:43-45).

—Lack of joy in worship and in life can also be connected to our lack of ongoing confession and repentance of personal sin. Since we're made to "glorify God and enjoy him forever," it shouldn't surprise us that when we've lost our *joy in and desire for* worship, something is wrong. David wrote Psalm 51 connected to his sin with Bathsheba. A portion of David's prayer in Psalm 51 reads: "Restore to me the joy of your salvation." Our sin may be quite different from David's sin, but the principle is the same.

In summary, we don't want to be wrong about how God ordinarily works in our lives and the lives of our children for salvation and spiritual growth. We don't want to chase after the "trinkets" that are offered to us by the world or even, "The Next Big Thing." Christians have every reason to be joyful people and joyful in worship. We've received grace upon grace, and we rest in God's grace in Jesus Christ. It's not the fault of others if we've lost our joy in corporate worship or in life. God has not changed!

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