

Come and Worship: Lift Your Hands
August 26, 2018
Lynn Haven UMC

Introduction

You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you, my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land where there is no water.
I have seen you in the sanctuary
and beheld your power and your glory.
Because your love is better than life,
my lips will glorify you.
I will praise you as long as I live,
and in your name I will lift up my hands.
I will be fully satisfied as with the richest of foods;
with singing lips my mouth will praise you.
(Psalm 63:1-5 NIV)

In our current sermon series, *Come and Worship*, we've been talking about a few of the ways in which we are called to present ourselves to the Lord in order to express our devotion and adoration. We've learned that by singing, bringing our gifts and bowing our knees we are putting ourselves in a proper position to show God that our worship is more than just a song. In true worship we bring every broken piece of who we are and immerse ourselves in an exchange of emotions that can only be born through our ability to push aside our insecurities about the world around us and just be free in that time with Him. To be fully found you must get lost in those moments where it is just God, and it is just you. This week we will talk about a few reasons why lifting our hands is another way to surrender ourselves to the One who deserves the entirety of who we are.

Digging Deeper

We worship the Lord when we lift our hands in...

Praise.

- Have you ever felt that gentle tug at your heart to throw up your hands in praise? That is the Holy Spirit working inside of you. Did you subsequently experience an inner dialogue like this: "What will people around me think? I've never done this before. Maybe I will just sit here and ignore that urge. God knows what I'm feeling inside. I don't need to raise my hands to show Him." Of course God knows but He is also glorified when we praise Him anyway! Raising your hands is physical way of saying, "God, I love you and I don't care who knows it (or how foolish I may feel at first for doing this!)" Who are you hiding your hands from anyway? He gave us eyes to see and hands to do His work. What if your example encouraged someone else to be free in that way? Have you considered the impact of your worship for those worshipping beside you?

Prayer.

- Read 1 Timothy 2:8 (NLT). The raising of hands is mentioned over and over throughout scripture. It's interesting that raised hands are the physical extension of our prayerful, needy hearts as well as mechanisms for reaching out to grab what we need. And we all need some Jesus! How do you use your hands? Jesus used His hands to serve, heal, bless and ultimately to be nailed to a cross as payment for our sins. Lifting hands to seek Him in prayer is a sign of respect for who He is and what He has done. Have you ever thought of your hands in this way when praying?
- Hands help get the job done but they don't work well for anyone when clinched in disobedience or anger. (Unless you're Wreck it Ralph!) Have you ever been so frustrated that you threw up your hands in the air and shouted "Help!" Or maybe, "Calgon, take me away!?" When we lift our exasperated hands in prayer we are saying to God, "I need your help, but more than anything, I need You!" When you lift (or fold) your hands in prayer do you think of it as a form of crying out in need of Jesus?

Surrender.

- Romans 12:1 (NLT) says, "And so, dear brothers and sisters, I plead with you to give your bodies to God because of all he has done for you. Let them be a living and holy sacrifice—the kind he will find acceptable. This is truly the way to worship him." Paul is pleading, not suggesting or encouraging, but *pleading* that we surrender all we have to God because that is true worship. He gets how very important this is and that worshiping in this way is surely a reasonable request, all things considered. Worshiping hands that are lifted in surrender recognize God's authority and are stretched out as if to say, "I get it God. I'm all in. Whatever. Whenever. Wherever. I'm Yours!" Do you know anyone who is truly living this way? Is it hard to imagine surrendering every aspect of your life to God? Are you afraid of what He might ask?

Victory.

- "Thank God! He gives us victory over sin and death through our Lord Jesus Christ." (1 Corinthians 15:57 NLT) Sin and death are the devil's playground and he spends most of his leisure time prowling around in our heads. Many people walk around in defeat believing all the lies he tells them about who they really are, or how other people see them. However, when we lift our hands in victory through Christ we recognize those lies for what they are: Satan's mudslinging attempts to gain control of our minds. If we keep our eyes fixed on Jesus, His strength and truth are more than enough to conquer that slanderous viper. And thank God Almighty we have the privilege of knowing how the story ends! Because greater is the One who is living in you than He who is living in the world! Have you ever lifted your hands in victory during worship? Why don't we experience more victory in the Christian life? What things are happening in your life that have been causing you to lose a right perspective? What have you been doing to stop that from happening in the future?

Conclusion

This week we encourage, no we *plead* with you, to lift your hands to Your Maker. And in doing so you will be coming to worship fully armed with the knowledge that you are offering Him your full praise and prayer while surrendering all your brokenness in order to emerge with an attitude of victory in Jesus Christ!