

ARE THERE ANY GOOD WORSHIP CHURCHES LEFT OUT THERE?

I was reflecting on Lazarus, you know, the friend of Yeshua. Lazarus was brought up well to do, a man of wealth. There is another Lazarus mentioned in scripture, a man who was sort of the antithesis of the man that Yeshua brought back from the dead. I was also reflecting on the rich man who expressed a desire to follow Yeshua; the man who when challenged by Yeshua about giving up his wealth to follow Him, walked away disappointed. I have always wondered if the rich Lazarus and the rich man were the same person; maybe yes, maybe no. Maybe the rich Lazarus was the rich man which Yeshua addressed earlier and he saw a compromise in using his money for the poor but still retaining wealth. Again, who knows?

I've known a few people who were brought up privileged. When brought up in such a lifestyle a person becomes accustomed to living that way. They expect the better cars, the better food and the better of everything. I think that the first rich man that Yeshua talked to was that way. For those of us who were brought up on hamburgers, hotdogs and French fries; eating a fine steak, baked potato with baked Alaska for dessert; well, we would certainly like those things, but we can do without them. However, to those who have grown up with the latter, eating lesser foods could be difficult. I'll never forget my older nephew who grew up in a neighborhood that was marginal in nature. It wasn't a high classed neighborhood, but it wasn't the slums either. It was populated by normal, everyday blue-collar workers. Yes, sometimes undesirables did move into the neighborhood, but they never lasted there. My nephew however, thought that he was being brought up in a slum. He was the type that looked for things to complain about and always seemed to find them. He thought that he got a bad deal in life and although he had more than we did when we grew up, he was never satisfied. He's changed over the years, but there were times that I wished I could have laid him out on the floor or, to put it like my mom used to say, "I'll give you something to really cry about." Mom, you're awesome.

As the case is with all of us who are true disciples of Yeshua, we have had two lives. We had the one before we came to faith in Yeshua, and we've had the one since we came to faith in Yeshua. However, we fared before our conversion might have impacted us when we were first saved by faith, but IF we let Yahweh take control, He changed us, humbled us and we developed a contrite heart. Before I came to faith in Yeshua, I was poor in spirit, but middle class in social status. We had food in our stomach, new clothes on our bodies and we did fairly well during the holidays. The problem is, that after I came to faith in Yeshua, I became rich in the things of the Spirit, especially where church is concerned. I know, you've heard me complain about some of

my past churches and about pastors who were wolves rather than shepherds, but I did submit to Yeshua and because of that the negative things didn't affect my growth in the Ruach Ha Kodesh. In fact, those difficult things helped me to grow in the Ruach, sort of like a crash course in faith.

When I was first saved, I attended the perfect church for anyone new in the faith. The church was named Trinity Christian Center, and the pastor, Bill Hausler was adept in teaching the rudiments of our Faith. My friend Ed Farmer was the person that discipled me and I cannot think of a person better suited for the task. Yahweh placed me in the hands of a gentle man who was long-suffering and loved Yeshua with all of his heart. Ed was the antithesis of what I was before my conversion and he was what I needed to teach me the ways of Yahweh.

There came a time when I felt that I had advanced enough in the faith to trek out and find a church that could give me more solid food. I had outgrown the milk and needed meat and potatoes. I'd heard that great things were happening at a place called Vaca Valley Christian Life Center; a church that was a little larger and one that was part of a denomination called Assemblies of God. Here I received more of the spiritual things. I learned about the gifts of the Ruach Ha Kodesh and how to practice them. It was Yahweh's perfect timing. This was also the time when Yahweh gave my office of Watchman (or Prophet), and He taught me what to look for and how to address things. The place was the perfect training place. The pastor was corrupt and he had corrupted some of the leadership and I was somehow privy to all of the information on the corrupt things that were being done. I asked the pastor questions about character, truth and other such things, and it was too much for him. Because I wanted to serve in the church, I was given tasks and they were always pulled away from me right when things started to take off. It was the enemy's way to discourage me, but these things only made me stronger. Yahweh also led me to the company of others who were given the same office and together we were all excommunicated from ever fellowshipping in any church of that denomination. There is a price to pay for this office.

I've been led to many corrupt churches; just about every church has been corrupt, except for a couple that were shepherded by righteous men. The one thing that most of the churches had was awesome worship. It is almost as if Yahweh takes the anointing from the pastor and places it on the worshipers so that they can bring Him glory. I've been given the richness of being involved in great worship and praise, and it has ruined me, like the rich man in the biblical account. I can remember going to the Vineyard Church in Placerville back in the 1980's and experiencing hour upon hour of praise and worship where I felt like we were bowing before Yahweh's throne in Heaven. I can remember having awesome worship in Last Days Harvest

Ministry, pastored by Tom Mooney, down in Sacramento where we would praise and worship. I actually had visions during worship where angels joined with us in adoration of Yahweh. The Vineyard and LDHM were wonderful places where I was fed spiritually by the Ruach in both singing and in Bible study and pastoral messages. Other churches had wonderful worship times, but the pastors were less than adequate, and I'm being nice by saying even that.

So, what am I saying here? I'm saying that it seems like good churches and good churching are going away at an alarming rate. I know that there is a great number of people who have been hurt in church by those who label themselves as Christians. I can understand why they never want to go back to church. I was hurt, probably more than most of the people whom I've talked to, but I have always (except for a period during the 1990's when I didn't attend church) tried to find another group of people where I can worship with and learn with as well as teach. I'm having a hard time finding anything anymore.

I call myself a "bapticostal," meaning that I like the steadfastness of the Baptists and I like the freedom of Pentecostalism. I used to be able to find churches that met both criteria for the most part, but now I just can't. Those who are into good worship seem to be into strange doctrine and those with good doctrine lack good worship.

Notice that I didn't say praise/worship. I don't think that people nowadays know that there is a difference between praise and worship. I've always understood praise to be a bold proclaiming of the wonders and works of Yahweh Yeshua. In praise, you sing, dance, beat drums, clang cymbals, play tambourines and you let the world know about Yeshua through your singing. On the flipside, worship to me is adoration. It is how you cling to Yahweh's feet and tell him how much you love Him. You know those quiet times when you and your spouse talk intimately about how much you love each other, how you are devoted to each other and how you would die for each other; that is worship to me. It is a one on one, or a corporate one on one that is supposed to be conducted with light music (if any) when the person or congregation enters into acapella singing about love and devotion.

I really believe that worship should be a quieter time; not a time with drums beating, bass guitars blasting and the guitarist trying to be Jimmy Hendrix. Imagine if you will, sitting in a quiet setting, both you and your wife or husband. You love them so much and you just want to whisper in their ear how much you love them, adore being with them and couldn't live without them. That is such a wonderful setting. Now, imagine that while you're doing that, some guy is in the room beating on a drum, or snaring a drum and/or beating on the bass drum. That would

be so annoying and you'd probably kick him out of your house. But he's accompanied by a guy who wants to play his bass guitar, and another who wants to play his electric guitar and another playing acoustic guitar and yet another on the keyboard. Now add a soundboard that can turn up the sound so that when you whisper in your loved one's ear, they cannot even hear you.

So, what about talking to Yahweh in terms of adoration? I know that He can hear our thoughts and he can see what is on our hearts. But, what about when during times of adoration He is trying to talk to you. Yahweh cannot be distracted by anything, but the littlest of things can distract us. Is there a reason why we're told to go into a closet to pray? Could it be because it is quiet in a closet and it is more intimate? Could it be that there are no distractions in a closet; it's just you and Yahweh?

I was talking with a good friend the other day and telling him about my angst about not being able to find a church that has appropriate worship and/or appropriate teaching; meaning both of them together. He came to faith in Yeshua about ten years before I did, and he remembered how the worship was back then. He described it perfectly, saying that the Ruach Ha Kodesh brought worship and praise in "waves" and how people got into the spirit of worship like they were before the throne. He too said that this sort of adoration has all but disappeared and that it frustrates him.

While we were talking, we agreed that there is no such thing as a perfect church and that nowadays there is nothing even approaching what we're accustomed to or prefer. We both came to the conclusion that we could go to a church where there is good teaching and leave the worship time for when we are at home and we will not be interrupted by annoying instruments or improper worship. I know from personal experience that music from men like Keith Green are great worship songs. I've spent many hours in the quiet of my office singing along with Green's worship songs and found myself coming into the presence of Yahweh like used to happen corporately in the past. It might be lost at the church building, but our bodies are Temples of the Ruach Ha Kodesh and we can worship Him within ourselves or with groups of close people and loved ones, which hopefully all fall into the same categories.

Yahweh always seems to make a way when there seems to be no way, and perhaps this is the way for people like me and those of you who believe like I do, to have our times of adoration with Yahweh. I will miss the corporate worship times and I doubt that anyone of the younger generations will ever understand how it used to be so as to be able to effect a change of what is currently going on. Perhaps, maybe, someday when the Church has to meet in secret and when

Yahweh works miracles in our midst and preserves our lives on a daily basis; and we can't have all of the distractions and it won't matter if one is Jimmy Hendrix, or Keith Richards, or Gene Krupa, perhaps then we can get back to real adoration during our times of supposed "worship." I really hope and pray that some worship leaders will seek Yahweh in this matter and they will listen to His heart. Perhaps all is not lost and before I go to be with Yeshua in Heaven I'll get to attend a congregation where they are serious about genuine worship/adoration so that they (we) can have true times of intimacy with Yahweh, all together as one body. We should get our voices ready to do just that because we'll be singing before His throne forever.