

THE UNIVERSITY HEIGHTS MESSENGER

July 12, 2009

Is Emotional And Spiritual The Same Thing?

A few years ago a friend of mine decided that he and his wife were going to leave the Lord's church. I was no longer at that congregation but one of the preachers there, who is a very close friend, told me about his attempts to study with them about their issues. A real study never occurred and they did eventually leave, taking some with them. One thing that they kept saying to my preacher friend was that the worship at that congregation was very unemotional. They were looking for something more spiritual. It was not until I thought about it for some time that I realized my drifting friend was using the terms "emotional" and "spiritual" interchangeably. Since that time I have heard many use these words the same way. My friends, the words "emotional" and "spiritual" are *not* interchangeable words and they do *not* mean the same thing.

There has been a shift in the emphasis of worship for many of those who claim to worship Christ. At first, this shift was subtle. That is not always the case any longer. My wandering friend found himself enamored with the uplifting instrumental music at a particular denomination. He himself is a musician and decided that if listening to them play moved him as it did, if it spurred his emotions, than God *must* have been happy with it. This wandering friend is the one I mentioned in the two sermons on music in worship we just completed last Sunday evening. My question is always the same to folks like this: where does the Bible ever teach, Old Testament or New, that simply exciting the emotions is equivalent to honoring God or proof that the Spirit is present?

Members of the Lord's church are slowly being influenced by their denominational friends and their emotion based worship. Many Christians, enamored with the idea of change and the powerful stimulation of the emotions, are beginning to focus on what they and their friends *feel* is meaningful and spiritual. It sounds so strange to me to here those who have bought into this philosophy piously asserting that God is the only audience to their worship and their only concern is with pleasing Him. How can that be true? If it were, they would not start with considering how they can go about stimulating their emotions. Rather, they would simply do what God has told them to do in the Scriptures and be content with that. Many Christians are falling into the same thinking that our sectarian friends have had for years. It is this idea that we can restructure our worship to suit our "needs" and desires, restructure so we can "feel" our religion, say that we're doing it all for God, and expect Him to just accept it.

We mentioned earlier that being emotional and being spiritual are not the same things. How so? 1 Corinthians 2:12-13 says, "**Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God. And we impart this in words not taught by human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual truths to those who are spiritual.**" This may very well be the most powerful verse in asserting the Spirit's inspiration of the Scriptures. Thus, the Spirit is the author of the Scriptures. The spiritual person in the Bible is the one who earnestly seeks after the things taught in the Scriptures and does them to the best of his or her ability. Thus, the spiritual person is the one who obeys and does what has been revealed by the Spirit. As Peter said, in 1 Peter 2:2, "**Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation.**" What is this "pure spiritual milk"? Contextually, Peter had been discussing "the word of the Lord" (1:25). Therefore, the word of the Lord, the divine message revealed by the Holy Spirit, is the "pure spiritual milk" we are to desire. Desiring it, and imbibing its teachings, will make us spiritual people.

We are told today that our worship assemblies would be much more spiritual if we would just clap our hands a little, light a few candles, dim a few lights, allow a particularly beautiful singer to perform a solo or two, maybe even have a “love feast” during or before the Lord’s Supper. No, these things would not make our worship more spiritual. They may make it more *emotional*, but never more spiritual. This is the case for a very simple, yet very important, reason: they cannot honestly be labeled as “spiritual” because the Holy Spirit never authorized them in the New Testament. It takes a non spiritual person, or persons, to add things to their worship that they have no authority for. Can anyone give a scriptural reason for why that would not be the case?

Will our emotions play a role in our worship service? They truly ought to. A true Christian will always feel his emotions well up within when hearing the grace, mercy, and love of God discussed. A true Christian will have to fight to keep at least one tear from trickling down his or her cheek when reading about or discussing the events leading up to our Lord’s crucifixion and the execution itself. When songs such as “The Old Rugged Cross”, “Fount of Every Blessing”, “Amazing Grace”, “Mended and Whole”, “Night With Ebon Pinion”, “It is Well”, and countless others soar to the rafters of the building, a Christian has to *try* not to be moved. Emotion should be involved in our worship service, and it is certainly not wrong for it to exist. Truly, there is a problem if emotion is *not* there. Yet there is an even greater problem when firing up emotions becomes the entire *goal* of the worshipper or the service.

Remember something: Christianity, while faith based, is *rational*. Was it not the *facts* of the gospel that won us to Christ? Is it not diligent study of doctrine and the examples of Christians found in Scripture that causes us to grow as Christians? If a person comes to Christ for no other reason but that their emotions were stimulated, then they do not know enough to become Christians and have very little chance of overcoming temptation and hardship when they return to the world and are outside of their emotion drenched environment. It is the facts of the gospel, *knowing* what Christ has done and that He is there to help, that will allow them to overcome. It is submitting in all things to the will of Christ, as revealed in the Scriptures by the Holy Spirit, that will make them spiritual. Think about these things.

In Need of Prayers	General Information
<p>Sharon Tirey’s treatments are making her quite ill.</p> <p>Keep Will Markem in mind.</p> <p>Remember Kristy Kidd in her pregnancy.</p> <p>Remember Kristen Osterling’s unborn baby.</p> <p>Remember David Blakeman and his health concerns.</p> <p>Pamela Clayton has been sent home to spend her final days with her family.</p> <p>Rachel Knollman’s tests have been postponed for a month.</p>	<p>Remember the men’s meeting this afternoon at 4.</p> <p>The Bible Summer Series with Casey Head begins next Sunday. Please make your plans now to attend and to have your children attend as well.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">University Height Church of Christ 445 Columbia Avenue Lexington, Ky 40508 859-255-6257</p>

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