



# PathLights

*"Your word is a lamp to my feet  
and a light to my path"  
Psalm 119:104*

January 15, 2017

## Worship

by Frank Himmel

Old sermon outline books often have acrostics in them, lessons where the first letter of each point spells out the theme. This one about worship is a good reminder. Our worship must be...

**Willing.** If you go to worship just because you know you should or to please a family member or to keep the elders from calling you, that might satisfy others, but it does not please God. The Lord said of our giving, for example, "Each one must do just as he has purposed in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:7).

**Orderly.** "But all things must be done properly and in an orderly manner" (1 Corinthians 14:40). Orderliness is in large measure determined by worship leaders. Each needs to be prepared to fulfill his role at the proper time. All of us, however, affect orderliness. Those who come in late distract. So do those who wander in and out of the assembly, talk, play, or do not control their children.

**Reverent.** The book of Hebrews encourages us to draw near to God with confidence (4:16;10:19). It also urges reverence. "Therefore, since we receive a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us show gratitude, by which we may offer to God an acceptable service with reverence and awe" (12:25). Worship is not the time for clowning and entertainment.

**Sincere.** "Let us draw near with a sincere heart, in full assurance of faith" (Hebrews 10:22a). This requires a pure heart, not a pretentious or hypocritical one. It also requires concentration, which is the hard part of worship. We must stay focused on the words of the songs in order to make melody in our hearts (Ephesians 5:19). We must meditate on Jesus' death during the Lord's Supper, pay attention to the prayer in order to add a genuine amen, and so forth.

**Humble.** Worship is not a talent show. Preachers must preach Christ, not themselves (2 Corinthians 4:5). We must never sing to impress others with our voices, give to advertise our wealth or liberality, or pray to be seen by men (Matthew 6:5-6). God said, "... To this one I will look, to him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word" (Isaiah 66:2).

**Individual.** Worship instructions are directed to us all, not just a handful: speaking to one another in song (Ephesians 5:19), each one giving (1 Corinthians 16:2), all partaking of one bread (1 Corinthians 10:17), etc. Some activities necessitate one leading, but even then all others participate.

**Pure.** "God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). Purity in worship requires both sincerity of heart and accuracy of practice; in other words, keeping the who, what, when, where, why, and how of God's instructions. We have no business altering those directives to suit our own preferences. Worship is to honor God; let's do our best to do it His way. ■

# Then Came the Application

by Frank Himmel

Luke 4 relates Jesus teaching in the synagogue at Nazareth, His hometown. He read from Isaiah 61, a prophecy about Messiah preaching the gospel to the oppressed and ushering in the year of the Lord. Jesus closed the book and announced that the prophecy was being fulfilled that day.

The assembly was awed. “And all were speaking well of Him, and wondering at the gracious words which were falling from His lips” (v. 22a).

Then came the application. Jesus cited the proverb that “a prophet is not welcome in his hometown.” He then noted two Old Testament incidents: Elijah being sent to the widow at Zarephath and Elisha healing the Syrian leper Naaman. Both illustrated that God’s favor and mercy were for Gentiles as well as Jews. In fact, both examples were of mercy granted to Gentiles *instead* of Israelites, not just *in addition* to them. And both were from a time when Israel was unfaithful and disobedient, rejecting God’s prophets, whereas these foreigners accepted them. The implications of all this for Israel in Jesus’ day were obvious.

The same people who had just been speaking well of Jesus were now filled with rage. They drove Him out of the city and wanted to throw Him down a cliff (vv. 28-29)! Hmm.

Let’s all ask ourselves, what is my attitude when the application comes, especially when it strikes a prejudice and suggests I am wrong? ■

## The Blessed Man



by Frank Himmel

The New Testament frequently refers to the blessed man. *Blessed* translates a Greek word that comes from the same root as our English word *macro*; it means large or lengthy. Lexicons generally define it as meaning happy. Strong says, “Supremely blest; by extension, fortunate, well off.”

Kittel relates the term’s secular usage. “It is at first a poetic word and refers to the blessedness of the gods. Later it comes to be used for the freedom of the rich from normal cares and worries.”

The Bible paints a much different picture of what it means to be blessed. Its focus, of course, is on being well off spiritually, which is true blessedness.

In coming weeks we will take brief looks at the New Testament picture of the blessed man. I trust we will be blessed by doing so. ■

### Service Leaders for the Week

	Sunday Morning	Sunday Evening	Wednesday Evening
GREETER	Adam Gibson	John Baucom	David Gray
SONG LEADER	Bruce Williams	Carlos Garcia	John Baucom
OPENING PRAYER	Steven Turner	J B Williams	
LORD’S SUPPER			
BREAD	Mark Clifton	Mark Clifton	
CUP	Ron Cunningham	Ron Cunningham	
CONTRIBUTION PRAYER	David Gray		
SERMON/INVITATION	Frank Himmel	Frank Himmel	Brian Wilson
CLOSING PRAYER	Justin Candella	Adam Wilson	Albert Harrison Sr