

Let's continue with our tension of last night. How do we reconcile the need and command for skill with the need and command for passion?

Let's continue to think about this as we pursue the lyrics of our song. Here are the first 2 lines.

We are an altar of broken stones But You delight in the offering

This is taken off of Ex 20:25 **If you make me an altar of stone, you shall not build it of hewn stones, for if you wield your tool on it you profane it.**

To "improve it" is to destroy it!! To "improve it" is to profane it!! We talked about the 3 year old's drawings last night. As soon as the parent takes the drawing and "fixes" anything, it ceases to be about the simplicity of the gift and now becomes about the parent.

It is not the parent's drawing. It is the child's drawing and to fix the drawing is to tell the child, "Your's is not good enough. I can make it BETTER!!"

And isn't that what we are doing when we take the focus off the SACRIFICE and make it about the beauty of the VESSEL of the sacrifice?

As soon as it is "hewn" we are saying what WAS done is not good enough. Whatever GOD has done, WE can improve upon it.

And when we make it about US, what happens to the sacrifice?!?! AND WHERE DOES GOD ABIDE?!?! HE IS IN THE SACRIFICE!! And to make it about US, is to lose HIM!!

To chisel the stones is to tell God, "How we think it LOOKS is of greater importance than where YOU ABIDE!!"

From a biblical perspective, to use only hewn stones, worked stones, is a sign of egotism, elitism and self-sufficiency.

Isa 9:9-10 all the people will know,. . . who say in pride and in arrogance of heart: 10 "The bricks have fallen, but we will build with dressed stones;

God said, "build it out of unworked stones!!!" And by looking at God and insisting on using "worked stone," we are telling Him we actually know better what is best and what He REALLY wants!!

We are an altar of broken stones But You delight in the offering

I would submit to you that in the 1st 2 lines of our theme song we have both excellence and passion.

What is the item of greatest worth in those 2 lines? What is the most important noun in those 2 lines? (Offering).

If "the offering" is of greatest value, how does the altar find IT'S value?!?!? ONLY IN ITS RELATION TO THE OFFERING!!!

The altar is built QUICKLY, FOR THE EXPRESS PURPOSE OF!!!. . . providing a place for the OFFERING to be made.

This is what Paul was talking about when he said, **2 Tim 4:2 be ready in season and out of season;**

You can't be good if you are not practiced!! But you can't be USED if it is all about you!!

When you are plinking around on a guitar or piano trying to find Eb, YOU ARE A DISTRACTION TO THE GENUINELY IMPORTANT THING WHICH IS THE WORSHIP!!!

But when all you can focus on is the performance on the stage, then we have taken the heart of the people away from the only thing which truly matters.

Went to see Eugene Fodor. People asked for an encore and he gave one. Then he gave 2nd. Then he gave 3rd. And by the 4th ovation he did not even realize, PEOPLE WERE WALKING OUT!!! THEY HAD STOPPED ASKING FOR OVATIONS!!! Now it was about HIM, and the people were done.

Have a church where the worship leader “head bangs.” That doesn’t minister to me. So I should sit back and judge him? Accuse him of having a bad heart? Accuse him of trying to draw the attention to himself?

NO!!! That is not my place!! And the style of that guys worship might be a genuine blessing to him and to all kinds of people (because they have a lot who go to church there!!) but worship is not about him being forced to wear the armor of my style, or me having to wear the armor of his style!

I am not allowed to judge him!! But I CAN determine to find a place where I am not distracted either by the “performance” or by the “quality” because the purpose of the ALTAR is NOT to draw attention to the altar, EITHER BY ITS PERFORMANCE **OR** ITS OWN TERRIBLE QUALITY!! but to create an environment for the sacrifice!!

And here is the tension: everyone has to have their 1st place where they learn to play. Jeff had to have the church that was okay with him only playing 2 hashtags!!

How do we identify the ones who get to stay. . . They are the ones most determined and working the hardest to improve at their craft. Their diligence to be excellent will help prove their determination to not have the focus on them!!

The altar is the skill level. The passion is the offering. And our skill level is not about drawing attention to us. It is about being excellent without showing off and being good enough without making the dogs howl!!

The altar is not the item of value!!! The OFFERING, the SACRIFICE is the item of value because it is in the SACRIFICE where **Ps 22:3 . . . enthroned on the praises of Israel.**

Do you ever eat at McDonald’s? (I’m so sorry!) When you are really hungry and someone has gone to get your food for you and bring it to you on a tray, what are you MOST interested in?!?

And all they can do is talk about the wrapper!!! “IDON’T CARE ABOUT THE WRAPPER!!! GIVE ME WHAT I CAME HERE FOR!!!! ME WANT FOOD!!!!”

To get distracted with the stones is to lose the focus of the purpose.

The building of the Taj Mahal. To build a monument and forget why! To lead in worship, AND FORGET WHY!!

It is not about us. It is about providing, as we talked about last year, a place for God to be at rest! To be enthroned. Word for Ottoman, as in with His feet up and covered by a blanket.

Nothing to rush about. No emergencies. No place He has to be. He is HOME! And at peace!!

And there will be people who will accuse you of all sorts of things. THEY ARE NOT THE JUDGES OF YOUR HEART OR MOTIVATION!! Have people around you who are going to help check your motivation!!! But those people are no more qualified to judge your motivation than I am to judge the headbanger!!!

The altar, OUR SKILL LEVEL, does not need to be a distraction IN EITHER DIRECTION!!!

James Ryle's vision. Don't know how that works with your theology, that's your problem, but he had a vision and in the vision he saw a billboard with a pig at the bottom.

If the goal is the "Offering," to worry about the stones takes our minds away from. . . what? (The offering).

We are now distracted from the very thing we are trying to give greatest honor to!!

**We are an altar of broken stones But You delight in the offering
You have the heavens to call Your home But You abide in the song we sing**

I have been to beautiful places all over the world. I have seen icebergs in Newfoundland, I have seen a sunset over Amsterdam that took our breath away, I have kayaked across a lake and stood inside a huge hole in a glacier.

I have stood on top of 4,000 meter mountains and seen for hundreds of miles. . . but I live in SLC, UT.

Now SLC has some really amazing things about it!! It has mountains on 2 sides and it is a beautiful place to live. But it is home to the GREAT SALT LAKE!!! And it cannot compare with some of the places I have seen . . . and yet, I live there.

And in the winter they get an inversion (explain). Amsterdam doesn't get inversions!! That glacier in Alaska doesn't get inversions!! But I live in SLC.

Why? "Because that is where God has called you!!" Okay, that's the spiritual answer (and the eternally true answer). But, from a human perspective, why do I live in SLC?

Because. . . that's my HOME. That is where my FAMILY lives!! That is my HOME!!

And while God has . . . **the heavens to call Your home** why in the world does He **abide in the song we sing**?!?!?

**Ten thousand angels surround Your throne To bring You praise that will never cease
But hallelujah from here below Is still Your favourite melody**

There is PLENTY of worship in heaven!!! The angels NEVER stop praising Him!! If all He wants is praise, WHY ISN'T HEAVEN GOOD ENOUGH?!?!?

Why do the angels praise?

Why do YOU praise?

Which would you rather have, the forced "love" of an arranged marriage or the reciprocal love of the bride seeing the groom, who sees the bride, who sees the groom who. . . ?!?!?? Which would you rather have?!?

And God "abides in the song we sing" because, as we looked at last year, 1/3 of the created order of the angels He created for the express purpose of providing a place for Him to be at rest decided to make it about themselves and their leader said, **Isa 14:13-14 'I will ascend to heaven; . . . I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly . . . ; 14 I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.'**

And God could EASILY stay in a heaven full of angels who worship Him out of necessity, but wouldn't you rather be around people who ENJOY being around you?!? Who work WITH you to make it a place of beauty?!?

It is EASY to be around the angels, but which is easier to build with, 10 blocks or 10 people?

I can stack the blocks!! Put a little mortar between them and glue them together!! I can FORCE the blocks to do what I want them to do!!

But getting 10 PEOPLE to stack together?!?!? THAT is going to be a project!!! BUT HOW MUCH MORE FUN WILL WE HAVE ALONG THE WAY?!?!? And how much more combined creativity will their involvement bring to the finished product?!?!?

Which is easier to build with, me by myself or me with other people?

Why? Because the 10 blocks just do what I tell them to do and me by myself get to make my own decisions.

Atheist friend who builds houses. "If the house fails, it is not the houses fault, it is my fault."

But God is not building this house with lifeless brick and mortar.

Eph 2:22 In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.

1 Peter 2:5 you yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

the object in the building is not the stones. . . it is the sacrifice. When we make it about the stones, we miss the heart of what is intended to be offered.

When we make it about US, the sacrifice has ceased to exist.

And the goal of worship is NOT to make it sound "JUST LIKE THEM"!!! THEY are not the standard for HERE!! What happens if the altar in Israel can only be made out of sandstone and all you have here is granite?!?!?

If it has to be just like THEIR altar. . . yours will NEVER be the same. . . UNLESS YOU GO SOMEWHERE ELSE AND BRING IN SOME SANDSTONE!!!

But then it is no longer an altar FROM HERE!!

Run the risk of CREATIVITY!! And some will walk by the picture you have hung on your refrigerator and laugh at it. How long will they stay over for a visit?!?!?

But those who love your CHILDREN, who love your children's CREATIVITY, are LOVED BY YOU!!

The goal is not the sound. . . The goal is the environment. A place where He can be enthroned.

One of the wonderful aspects of excellence in music is how effortless it can appear on the part of those who are skilled.

Herb Alpert was just so very effortless. He made it sound like ANYONE could do it!!! Only person in history to ever make it to #1 on the charts in the U.S. for both a vocal AS WELL AS an instrumental.

He made it sound so easy!!! And then I picked up a trumpet and realized, "Oh, this takes WORK!!!"

As worship leaders it is our responsibility, not to reproduce precision.

It is our responsibility to create an environment that will facilitate the expression of relationship in worship in our context!

As worship leaders we help make Jesus comfortable.

(ACM) What is going on in your country that makes you nervous? What is going on in your job or school that you would like to have a breakthrough? How many of you have something going on right now that makes your life a little unsettled and uncomfortable?

How many of you came here to this place this weekend, to come to a place where you could be refreshed, be encouraged, around others who care?

How many of you are thankful for this camp because of the rest, peace and refreshment it provides?

How many of you are being refreshed? How many of you are hearing God's voice this weekend? How many of you are thankful and joyful about what God is doing in you this weekend?

The gratitude you have, the joy this place brings you, is just a fraction of the joy our worship brings to God.

Our passage last night tells us that as the bride **CONSIDERS, LISTENS AND FORGETS ALL THE DISTRACTIONS OF HER FATHER'S HOUSE Ps 45:11 and the king will desire your beauty.**

Ps 45:11 The king is enthralled by your beauty NIV