



# Church of Christ

July 6, 2003

204 Dix Road Jefferson City, MO 65109

## Heart to Heart...

We need to see God in a greater way. One way of doing that, is taking a look at how God dealt with the Israelites and what He expected. God had them build a tabernacle for one purpose, "...*that I may dwell among them.*" (Ex. 25:8) God wants to be among His people. Not just be with them, but the very center of their being! The tabernacle was placed in the center of the nation, with every tribe camped around in tents, facing the tabernacle. It was God and His dwelling! Every thing that went on was centered around God's dwelling and presence. The Lord gave His commandments as a reminder that they were a redeemed people, brought out of slavery by His mighty hand. (Ex. 20:1-17) Their lives were the result of the Almighty Jehovah!

What do we learn? That God must be at the center of His people. He must come to have first place in every thing they do. He's not a side thought, and will not accept second to anyone or anything. He has our highest good in His interest, but He knows that will only come about as one makes Him the center of their lives. Jesus made that perfectly clear in Matt. 22:37-38, "And He said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the great and foremost commandment."

When God is the center of your being, He will directly affect your thoughts and actions, out of which will arise true worship. True worship will be a joy and pleasure within us, but it won't be entertaining or a carnival – it will be worship! When God is truly at the center of our lives, worship will be our desire and our worship will stress the holiness and majesty of His being. It becomes your way of daily living!

For Israel, facing the tabernacle and every thing centered around it, kept Israel's eyes focused on God rather than on themselves. True worship kept them from falling into habits of selfishness and self-reliance. The God who redeemed them (and us) desired them to center on Him and not other gods. Within that tabernacle were the Holy of Holies and the Ark of the Covenant. They were daily reminded of His holiness and the covenant He made with them, which He would never violate, and which they were a part of. How they responded to His holiness and this covenant in their daily lives led to true worship.

It is the same with us. We are reminded each week in the Supper of the covenant we entered into with God. We are His holy temple. Without a sincere faith toward our redeemed life and His holiness, worship can become a "*Let's hurry and get through it, I have other things to do*" attitude. Haven't you heard some say, "*I get nothing from worship!*"? Even worse is having no desire to worship. The other extreme is where worship can easily become an element of entertainment, which becomes a god and makes our worship useless. It can be self centered, taking on the form of what moves us and makes us feel good. In either case, lives become empty with little fulfillment. Maybe it's time we look at our lives and attitudes, to see if "*all to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give.*" Think about it!!!

Brent