



Scriptures and Doctrine :: On Dandelions and Worship

On Dandelions and Worship - posted by roadsign (), on: 2014/7/26 12:44

Matthew 13:28b-30a "The servants asked him, "Do you want us to go and pull them up?" "No," he answered, "because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest." (NIV)

Recently, some Facebook friends posted pictures of their garden flowers. They were all lovely pictures, but only one got a "like" from me: the dandelions. I liked these flowers because I saw a glint of mischief in them. They were obviously unwelcome in this garden, yet their plush, yellow blooms glowing in the sun delighted my eye and, I suspect, the gardener's eye, too. How can a weed be so delightful? How can anything that is so unwelcome be so welcoming?

Dandelions remind me of the various worship expressions found in our churches: The loveliest forms of worship can also be resolutely unwelcome. For example, applause after a sacred solo can be as refreshing as a vibrant bloom and as disturbing as a weed. Likewise, the doxology can be exuberant praise, yet like an overgrown weed. This is true of almost anything related to worship. They mischievously capture our attention through their controversial potential: What some folk are eager to preserve, others fight to eliminate. Like dandelions, worship traditions possess power to stir worshippers both to adore God and to deploy "weedkiller" even at the same time. How do we handle this unending quandary of paradox in worship?

The solution lies in our ability to accept that worship itself is paradoxical. We worship God with both grief and joy: grief over our utter sinfulness and joy over God's relentless love for sinners and His marvellous gift of salvation.

In truth, we worship a Lord Who is paradoxical by nature. God is both just and merciful often in ways that unsettle us: The unholy becomes a context for praise, while the disfavoured is blessed by God.

We simply cannot expunge the impure from the pure without the risk of injury to fellow worshippers. Jesus advised us to let "weeds" grow with the "wheat". Did you notice that this command is paradoxical in itself? It's bad farming; yet it depicts God's good purposes.

We can easily become derailed when we focus on eradicating the "impure" be that "impure" music, attire, language (e.g. politically incorrect terms), or the questionable worship practices of the "other camp". Preoccupation with these things will cause the gifts of grace and love to be eclipsed, and legalism will take root.

If we cannot accept the paradoxical nature of worship, we cannot truly love the unlovely. If we cannot accept a paradoxical God, we cannot worship and adore Him for Who He truly is. We would be like Jonah, who disdained God's mercy toward a violent city. And we would sneer at hypocrites without seeing our own hypocrisy.

Love alone empowers us to embrace the paradoxical. Love enables us to worship among fallen people with a posture of empathy rejoicing with those who rejoice even while weeping with those who weep. Real love is radically paradoxical. And love, in actuality, is our ultimate expression of worship.

Prayer: Dear Lord, we cannot thank You enough for Your longsuffering love and Your relentless passion to forgive and to give us second chances even when there is nothing about us that earns such favour. Inspire us to grasp and to know the depth of Your holy love for us, so that we can reflect that love and find praiseworthiness in all of life's "dandelions". Amen.

Re: On Dandelions and Worship - posted by roadsign (), on: 2014/7/27 7:25

Quote:

-----... worship traditions possess power to stir worshippers both to adore God and to deploy "weedkiller"

Who would deny that worship wars have caused untold damage in the church - down the ages. It is attributed to a "hogweed" type of spirituality. The zeal to eradicate what's considered "impure" has killed off potential growth.

"Hogweed" spirituality was around in Jesus's day. Some relied on their power advantages rather than divine grace to force change (rather, conformity).
It doesn't work. It kills.

In what ways do we see hogweed spirituality operating today?

We could ask ourselves this question: In what way am I relying on the hogweed style to influence change?

Is relying on God's grace a form of passivity?

Diane