

The World is a Stage

Shakespeare once observed, “All the world’s a stage,” picturing life as a grand performance in which every person plays a part. It’s a vivid metaphor and it explains a lot about the state of our culture. Stages, lights, and applause are the language of our age. But when it comes to the Lord’s church, we must remember that God did not design worship to be theater, and He did not call His people to be an audience entertained by performers. He calls us to be worshipers.

Scripture sets the tone plainly in 1 Corinthians 14:40. “*Let all things be done decently and in order.*” That is the heart of congregational worship with reverence, purpose, and order under the authority of Christ. Worship is not a showcase of talent but a sacrifice of praise. Paul urges Christians, “*Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.*” Romans 12:1. A sacrifice is offered to God and not to ourselves. The moment our assemblies aim first to gratify self, to be impressed, or to be dazzled, or to be entertained, we’ve stepped off holy ground and onto a stage the Lord never asked us to stand on.

Jesus also describes what God desires when His people gather, “*True worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.*” John 4:23. Worship “in spirit” is sincere, thoughtful, and heartfelt, no pretense, and no performance. Worship “in truth” is guided by the Word of God with no additions, no substitutions, and no gimmicks. Our goal is not to keep pace with the world’s stagecraft but to walk in the Lord’s way.

Self-gratification is not a Christian value, but self-denial is. The Lord said, “*If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.*” Luke 9:23. Entertainment trains us to ask, “What do I like?” Jesus teaches us to ask, “What does God want?” The first question centers on preference. The second centers on obedience and love. That is why the greatest command is not “Enjoy the show,” but “*You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*” Matthew 22:37. Loving God with our whole being anchors worship in adoration and praise to God, not in stage productions to entertain, dazzle or amuse.

Of course, excellence matters. Doing things “decent and in order” means we prepare, we participate, and we pursue clarity in all we do together. But excellence in worship is measured by staying true to God’s Word, not by production or entertainment value. A simple prayer, a scripture read well, a song sung from sincere hearts, the Lord’s supper observed with mindful gratitude, and a message that rightly handles God’s Word. 2 Timothy 2:15. All these honor and praise God without a single production spotlight.

So, what should we do when the world is a stage? We remember that the church is not a production stage. We come not to be entertained but to praise and exalt God. We gather not as spectators but as saints. We ask, “Is God pleased?” rather than, “Was I entertained?” And we commit ourselves again to the pattern God has given, worship that is spiritual, truthful, orderly, and wholly centered on Him.

~Ron Josselet (Assisted by ChatGPT)