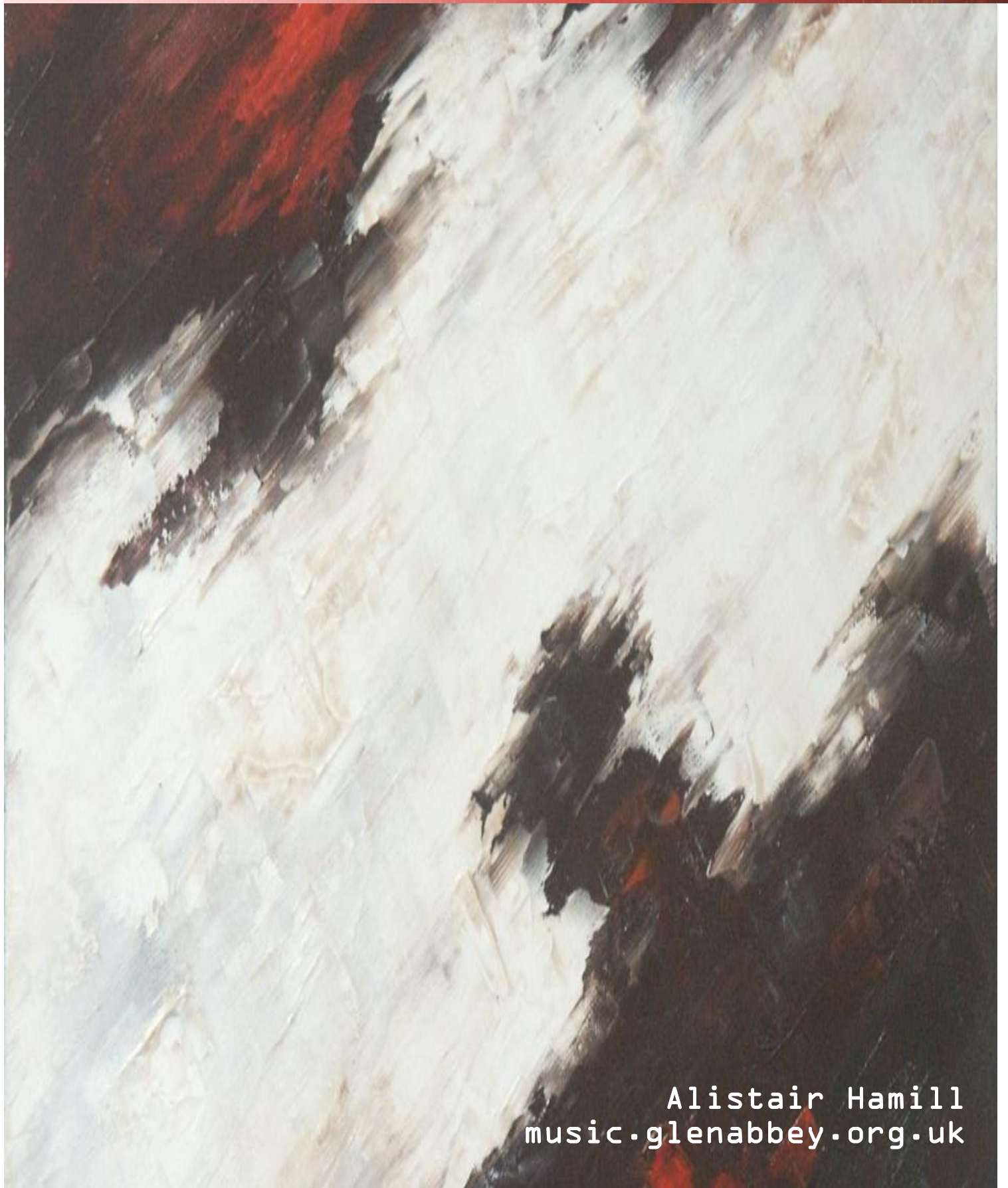


encounter

leading people as we worship God



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Course outline - Leading people as we worship God

- A theology of worship for worship leaders
- Understanding Glenabbey's philosophy of corporate worship
- The privilege and responsibility of being a leader
- Planning for and leading in corporate worship
- Leading people – cultivating a pastoral heart
- Music workshop – the role of music in corporate worship

Course aims

- To develop our understanding of the principles and practice of leading corporate worship in Glenabbey and beyond.
- To give opportunities to put the principles into practice to help develop your gifting and skills.
- To facilitate interactive learning from each others' experiences in leading worship.

This course is based on the premise that we can grow and develop in our gifting and effectiveness as worship leaders. There is **no formula** that will ensure success. But there are **principles** to follow that will help us lead the worship of God more effectively

- God is not hiding from us, waiting to see if we can find the right formula to unlock his blessing.
- He has revealed some attitudes and actions that he responds to

'A critical attitude will tend to quench the Spirit; praise invites his activity and involvement. It's the principle of sowing and reaping. If we sow to musical experiences, we'll reap a desire for better sounds, cooler progressions, and more creative arrangements. If we sow to feelings, we'll reap meetings driven by the pursuit of emotional highs. On the other hand, if we want people to glorify God, we must sow to His glory. We must paint a compelling, attractive, grand, biblical picture of our great God and Saviour.' Bob Kauflin

1. A theology of worship for worship leaders

- Why ideas matter
- What is worship?

i. We are all worshippers

- Everyone who comes to church each Sunday is a great worshipper!
- 'Worship is our response to what we value most'
- Acts 17

17:16 While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was greatly distressed to see that the city was full of idols ... 22 Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: "Men of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. 23 For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. Now **what you worship as something unknown I am going to proclaim to you.**

24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. 25 And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. 26 From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. 27 **God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us.** 28 'For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'

- As beings made by God, we've been created with an impulse to worship, to give ourselves wholly to something of infinite worth
- This impulse is meant to drive us to God, to grope for the One who is right beside us.

ii. Sin is the inversion of worship

- But as fallen people, we settle so quickly for lesser gods, for things other than the one true God. The problem is not that we don't worship, but that we worship the wrong things.
- Sin may be defined as an inversion of true worship
 - Romans 1 – Paul begins to outline God's case against humanity - God's wrath is being revealed, and Paul explains why

Rom 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honour him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and **exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images** resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

24 Therefore God gave them up in the lusts of their hearts to impurity, to the dishonouring of their bodies among themselves, 25 because **they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshipped and served the creature rather than the Creator**, who is blessed forever! Amen.

- The world is fallen yet still bears the mark of its Creator (v19-20) – 'beautiful shards of brokenness'
- If we don't worship God, we don't stop worshipping. We just transfer our worship onto something or someone else (v23 & 25)

'Sin leads us to believe that life can be found away from the Creator, and so we, in subtle and obvious ways, forget the Creator and deify the creation. Our behaviour is ruled not by worship and service of the Lord, but by a ravenous desire for something in the creation. As John Calvin said, "Our hearts are idol factories." ' Paul Tripp

The essence of sin is when...
The glory of God is not honoured.
The holiness of God is not revered.
The greatness of God is not admired.
The power of God is not praised.
The truth of God is not sought.
The wisdom of God is not esteemed.
The goodness of God is not savoured.
The faithfulness of God is not trusted.

The faithfulness of God is not trusted.
The beauty of God is not treasured.
The promises of God are not relied upon.
The commandments of God are not obeyed.
The justice of God is not respected.
The wrath of God is not feared.
The grace of God is not cherished.
The presence of God is not prized.
The person of God is not loved

The infinite, all-glorious Creator of the universe is disregarded, disbelieved, disobeyed, and dishonoured by everybody in the world. That is the ultimate outrage of the universe.

iii. Idolatry is our default setting

- This settling for 'less than' is deeply ingrained in us as worshippers – in fact, it's our default setting.

- Exodus 20

1 Then God gave the people all these words:

2 "I am the Lord your God, who rescued you from the land of Egypt, the place of your slavery.

3 "You must not have any other god but me.

4 "You must not make for yourself an idol of any kind or an image of anything in the heavens or on the earth or in the sea. 5 You must not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God who will not tolerate your affection for any other gods.

- The God who rescued us – how could we forget? And yet...?
- Again, the choice is not between worship and non-worship, but between true worship and idolatry

'Sin is fundamentally idolatrous. I do the wrong thing because my heart desires something more than the Lord ... Sin is much more than doing the wrong thing. It begins with loving, worshipping and serving the wrong thing.'
Paul Tripp

iv. Joining the ranks of true worshipers

- IF our problem is this horrendous exchange of worship, THEN our calling is to transfer our worship back onto the only one Object who is worthy of our worship.

'Should we not remind ourselves that worship is a *transitive* verb? We do not meet to worship (i.e. to experience worship); we aim to worship *God*. 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only': there is the heart of the matter. If you seek experiences in corporate worship, you will not find them; if you worship the living God, you will experience something of what is reflected in the psalms. Worship is a transitive verb, and the most important thing about it is the direct object.' DA Carson

- John 4

Jn 4:23 Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks.

- There is a category of worshipper called 'true worshipper'.
- The true worshipper is defined primarily by the object of worship: true worshippers worship God.

Worship is essentially an inner stirring of the heart to treasure God above all the treasures of the world:
a valuing of God above all else that is valuable;
a loving of God above all else that is lovely;
a savouring of God above all else that is sweet;
an admiring of God above all else that is admirable;
a fearing of God above all else that is fearful;
a respecting of God above all else that is respectable;
a prizing of God above all else that is precious.

v. 'Come see' - pointing to God

- **Everyone who comes to church each Sunday is already a great worshipper**
- **But God, the true object of worship, has been displaced by idolatry**
- **Our call as worship leaders is to refocus people onto God, to remind us of his worth and works, that we might be inspired to pour out our worship and passions for him.**

Jn 4:28 Then, leaving her water jar, the woman went back to the town and said to the people, 29 "Come, see a man who told me everything I ever did. Could this be the Christ?"

- To feed people with truths that shatter their shrunken view of the world, that lift their hearts to consider the incomparable greatness of our unrivalled God. To help them to grasp something of the unclipped beauty of the character of God.

- **To magnify God...**

Ps 34:3 Oh, magnify the LORD with me,
and let us exalt his name together!

'Many of those we lead on a Sunday morning are eager to join us and have been magnifying God's unsearchable greatness all week. Others are distracted. It could be anything from the superficial to the serious - deadlines, unpaid bills, a friend's unkind comment, a lab test for cancer, the *thump-thump* noise the car is making, a rebellious child, some besetting sin. Or a million other details of life. What size does God appear when our mind is preoccupied with all the cares, worries and concerns of life?' Bob Kauflin

- not as a microscope - takes something small and makes it appear more significant than it really is.
- as a telescope - takes something massive that appears small and helps us to see it for something of what it really is.

vi. Avoiding goldfish bowl worship

Ps 88:2 Sing the glories of his Name;
make his praise glorious. —

- Goldfish bowl or blue whale worship?

'Bruce Springsteen is famous for taking someone's everyday life and making it sound extraordinary. But we are all too often guilty of taking our extraordinary God and making him sound ordinary.' Matt Redman

- Regaining the mystery in worship – can you live with the tension?

'Today, vast stress is laid on the thought that God is *personal*, but this truth is so stated as to leave the impression that God is a person of the same sort we are – weak, inadequate, ineffective, a little pathetic. But this is not the God of the Bible! Our personal life is a finite thing: it is limited in every direction, in space, in time, in knowledge, in power. But God is not so limited. He is eternal, infinite, and almighty. He has us in his hands; we never have him in ours. Like us, he is personal; but unlike us, he is *great*.' J.I. Packer

He reveals and conceals
He invites and hides
He confronts and confounds
He terrifies and he befriends
He thunders and he whispers
He's the suffering servant who commands the universe
He's the God who rests, but never sleeps
He rebukes and he receives
He's the God whose anger lasts a moment but whose favour lasts a life time
He's the God of the infinite and the God of the intimate
He's the one who hung in agony on beams of wood he himself called into being
He's the King whose footstool is the earth and yet he knelt down and washed the earth off the feet of his disciples
God is imminent within human experience as the transcendent mystery that cannot be comprehended in spite of its absolute nearness