



E-Worship 4:23

An online resource for officers and worship leaders in the 21st century

"A time is coming...when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." - John 4:23

When your best just isn't good enough



"I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted, but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go."

- John 21:18

Moses said to the Lord, "O Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor since you have spoken to your servant. I am slow of speech and tongue... please send someone else to do it."

- Exodus 4:10,13b

"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do, I do not do, but what I hate I do."

- Romans 7:15

"Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.'"

- 2 Corinthians 12:8,9a

I was frozen in a fragile world
Of make believe and empty lies,
Dressed in the rules of a virtuous game,
Captured by the thought of fear and loneliness.
Afraid to cry, suffocated for trying to scream,
And I want out now, to find myself,

Cause perfect only makes you crazy,
There is no way that it can save me;
I'm sick of feelin' like a traitor...
Is this the price for good behavior?

Don't do this, don't do that, and you'll be
Oh, so perfect, perfect, perfect...

"Good Behaviour", as recorded by Plumb,
on the 2005 CD "Chaotic Resolve".

Lately I've been winning battles left and right,
But even winners can get wounded in the fight.

People say that I'm amazing,
Strong beyond my years,
But they don't see inside of me,
I'm hiding all the tears.

They don't know that I go running home
when I fall down.

They don't know who picks me up
when no one is around.

I drop my sword and cry for just a while,
'Cause deep inside this armor,
The warrior is a child.

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I am tangled up in contradiction.
I am strangled by my own two hands.
I am hunted by the hounds of addiction,
Hosanna!

I have lied to everyone who trusts me.
I have tried to fall when I could stand.
I have only loved the ones who love me,
Hosanna!

I have struggled to remove this raiment,
tried to hide every shimmering strand.

I contend with these ghosts
and these hosts of bright angels, Hosanna!

I have cursed the man
that you have made me,
as I have nursed the beast
that bays for my blood.
Oh, I have run from the one
who would save me. Save me, Hosanna!

O Hosanna!
Hail the long awaited king,
come to set his people free.

We cry, O Hosanna!
Won't you tear this temple down,
Raise it up on holy ground? Hosanna!

"Hosanna", recorded by Andrew Peterson
on the 2008 CD "Resurrection Letters, Vol. 2".

Some people know that their calling is to leadership. But for many it has been thrust upon them, simply because there was no one else available to do it. You may have some training, but not as much as others you know. You are not the best in public speaking, or in public relations. You certainly don't have the confidence you need, and you are definitely flying by the seat of your pants.

- continued on page 2

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When your best isn't good enough

Continued from page one...

For many of us in platform ministry, this is indeed the situation in which we find ourselves. Whether we are officers who are now suddenly the worship team leader or the lone musician in a small corps; or the pianist with all of a grade 2 conservatory background and no ear training experience; or the worship leader who loves contemporary music but is not trained in conducting and engaging congregations; or the bandmaster or songster leader who feels somewhat comfortable conducting but not in personality conflict resolution --- we are doing the best we can, but privately struggling with feelings of being overwhelmed, insecure and inadequate.

We may be rarely thanked by the people we serve, and more often than not indirectly hear grumblings about how poorly we are doing. We sacrifice time to the church at the expense of family and personal freedom, yet no one knows or cares about our daily personal stresses and our ever-teetering juggling act between work and home life, family crisis and financial obligations. Outwardly we seem strong, but inward voices continually hammer away at our psyche: 'If only I had more charisma, more spiritual maturity, more people skills, more artistry, more ingenuity, more experience. *God, why have you called me here, to this position, when You can do so much better than me?*'

We live in a world, and a church world, that rewards "doing" over "being", accomplishments over motive and sincerity. The pressure is on as leaders, to continually meet expectations, to be excellent in our craft, to not falter or waver or fail at what we do. There is no respite or reprieve, even in crisis. The service must go on, every Sunday, rain or shine. We are always on duty, always called.

So the question begs, does God reward our best, even when we're not **the** best? Does He reward those who try, even if they don't succeed? When we can't meet the expectations of people around us, have we met His?

There are not easy answers... Jesus Himself, in His perfection, not only **not** pleased everyone, but created bitter enemies who ultimately had Him put to death. The Bible in its honesty teaches us to expect obstacles, persecution, trials, opposition. It's not an easy life. It never was.

Paul, in 2 Corinthians 12: 9-10, offers to us a most unusual solution to our ongoing dilemma: "*I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so*

that Christ's power may rest on me. That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong." Elsewhere he writes, "*We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us. We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed. We always carry around in our body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our body. For we who are alive are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that His life may be revealed in our mortal body.*" (2 Cor. 4:7-11)

This is what God asks of us – *to delight in our weaknesses!* Why? Because deep down we know then that any success must come from God and not ourselves. That in our weakness we are utterly dependent on Him to carry us through, to give us the wisdom and skill we need when we need it. We are forced to concede that it has to be all Him, because, heaven knows, it certainly isn't us.

So I raise my glass to all of you, who are second-best but faithful, flawed but tenacious, imperfect but sincere in your service of leadership! May God bless your ministry to Him and multiply it for His Kingdom. May His hand of grace be upon you and His divine wisdom guide you. And may you always know that you are valued, appreciated and loved for the heart with which you serve and the fortitude with which you faithfully obey your calling to ministry.

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder... be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not greedy for money, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away".

– 1 Peter 5:2-4

Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work.

– 1 Thess. 5:12,13a

"The only real training for leadership is leadership."

– Anthony Jay