

I had the opportunity this week to see a local theatre production which featured music made famous by "Elvis". (There aren't too many people famous enough that you can identify them with one name, but this is certainly one. Go figure...) Anyway, while I am not an "Elvis" music fan, Jill is; and one of our Pilgrim Community of Hope young ladies had a role in the show. So, for two very good reasons, off we went to the theatre.

I had the most fun watching a performance as I have had in a long, long time. Maybe my mood was just right; or maybe the mix of events and people struck me in a special way that night; or maybe it was just really good, but, boy, did we have fun. In thinking about that performance over the last few days I tried to analyze what made it so special. I believe it comes down to this: the actors and musicians played with "abandon." They abandoned themselves and their inhibitions so that they could become their characters and so that they could "be" the music. The plot lines are as predictable and old as ancient Greek play-writing, but that made it even more fun. The young lady from Hope was in a plot line which leads her to her first "true love", and this plot line reaches its peak when the young couple shares their "first kiss." It was a precious and special moment because the actors made it so, so real. I *believed* it was real. (And maybe it was!)

King David (another one of those "one name only" guys) played life with abandon too. Sometimes it got him into serious trouble, with people and with God. But, sometimes David hit the notes just right. When David was bringing the Ark back to "The City of David" he led the procession wearing nothing but "a linen ephod" and he danced, sang, and played musical instruments with abandon. He was "leaping and dancing before the LORD". When he was confronted by Saul's daughter for his "wild" behavior, "disrobing in the sight of the slave girls", he gave a reply for the ages:

"It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel-I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes." *2 Samuel 6: 21-22*

As we prepare to come before the LORD in our houses of worship and in our daily walk this week, I encourage us to celebrate before the LORD. Don't be an "actor" going through the motions and mumbling the words. Rather, live the part God has assigned you; make it real. The only audience that matters is the God who called you and appointed you for this time and this place. Honor God by praising God with abandon. The world may think you are a "fool", but being a "fool for Christ" is a time-honored role.

May your life be one of "leaping and dancing before the LORD", and while the "audience" of this world may despise you, the "Audience of One" will bless you with a rousing ovation: "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

Shalom,

Bill