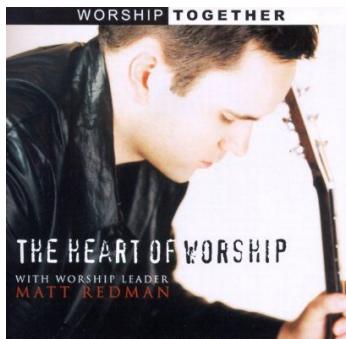


# Heart of Worship: Story behind the song

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Here's something I recently learned about Matt Redman's song "Heart of Worship". It's a very moving and powerful song but the story behind it is even more amazing. You can read more about in an article [here](#).

To summarize, the pastor of Matt Redman's church decided the praise and worship time's were losing their meaning and decided to remove the instruments and sounds system. They spent a period of time where the praise was purely voices, no band, no sound, just acapella. Though different and uncomfortable at first, it actually became a much more worshipful experience as the congregation no longer became distracted by the music, instruments, and sound but focused purely on the words.

This has been something I've always tried to do when I sing praise and one of the main things I preached to my band in Acts2fellowship Gold. What makes our worship times on Fridays and Sundays different from any other "rock" band out there are the words that we sing. Our words have meaning, they define who we are, who our God is and that should be our goal during times of praise. It's not to sing nice rockin' songs but the focus should be the words and letting that be tied to our desire to praise and worship God.

Dont' get me wrong now, I'm not saying we lose our band because I love having praise! My prayer is that as a praise leader I'm able to help lead the congregation in a time of worship where the words we sing can connect with our hearts.

I'll just end this post with some lyrics from the song...

*When the music fades, all is stripped away, and I simply come*

*Longing just to bring something that's of worth that will bless your heart...*

*I'm coming back to the heart of worship, and it's all about You, Jesus*

The song dates back to the late 1990s, born from a period of apathy within Matt's home church, Soul Survivor, in Watford, England. Despite the country's overall contribution to the current worship revival, Redman's congregation was struggling to find meaning in its musical outpouring at the time.

"There was a dynamic missing, so the pastor did a pretty brave thing," he recalls. "He decided to get rid of the sound system and band for a season, and we gathered together with just our voices. His point was that we'd lost our way in worship, and the way to get back to the heart would be to strip everything away."

Reminding his church **family** to be producers in worship, not just consumers, the pastor, Mike Pilavachi, asked, "When you come through the doors on a Sunday, what are you bringing as your offering to God?"

Matt says the question initially led to some embarrassing silence, but eventually people broke into a cappella songs and heartfelt prayers, encountering God in a fresh way.

"Before long, we reintroduced the musicians and sound system, as we'd gained a new perspective that worship is all about Jesus, and He commands a response in the depths of our souls no matter what the circumstance and setting. 'The Heart of Worship' simply describes what occurred."

*When the music fades, all is stripped away, and I simply come / Longing just to bring something that's of worth that will bless your heart... / I'm coming back to the heart of worship, and it's all about You, Jesus*

Redman remembers writing the song quickly in his bedroom soon after the church's journey together, with no grand intentions, by any means, for it to become an international anthem. He viewed the words simply as his personal, subjective response to what he was learning about worship.

But when Matt shared "The Heart of Worship" with Pilavachi, the pastor suggested making a few small adjustments to the lyrics so any member of the church could relate to it as well.

Amazed by how God has since taken the song around the world for His purposes, the songwriter smiles in regard to his own lack of foresight. "It nearly didn't go any further than my bedroom. But I love that..."

The trademark tune soon became the title track for Matt Redman's 1999 album, *The Heart of Worship*. The recording process was consistent with the artist's sensitive approach to being in the studio.

"We decided to not get all complicated, and just let the song 'breathe.' We're always trying to create more of a church atmosphere in the studio rather than just a technical musical gathering. Something happens when the people of God gather together and play out the praises of God in the presence of God. Hopefully something of that passion and purpose transcends beyond that studio room onto the recordings themselves."

Following Matt's original release, which featured a guest vocal appearance by Martin Smith, lead singer of Delirious, "The Heart of Worship" became a new standard of the modern worship music movement, sung by fellow artists, choirs, and church families alike. Among the ever-rising number of reinterpretations, Redman is especially fond of Michael W. Smith's from his 2001 classic, *Worship*.

"I honestly like them all," he admits. "It's a great encouragement when people take the songs and run with them. Perhaps my favorite is Michael's— maybe because it's a live version and therefore really captures and conveys the heart of the song's theme."

Even more encouraging, he says, is when other **pastors** get in touch to let Matt know how God has used the song to take their congregations through a situation similar to the one his church experienced.

As teachable as "The Heart of Worship" has become, Matt Redman continues to learn about true worship and will journey further into that heart in summer 2004 with a new album, *Facedown*.

"It's such a biblical posture in worship that speaks of reverence. If you look through the Bible, there's a whole host of people who faced up to the glory of God and found themselves facedown in worship. So the album weaves through a theme of reverence, wonder, and mystery in worship, things I feel we really need to grasp more of in our worship expressions. I know that I do!"