

# What God desires

August 2, 2011

When we came into the one-room church, we quietly took our seats on yard chairs placed in rows. Not an overwhelming crowd, just a steady 25 or so Filipinos. Yet at that moment, as we stood to sing, I would rather have been nowhere else.

The praise band asked our team to lead worship, so on Saturday night, Thomas and I went to the church for practice, picking out songs for the next morning. I would sing, and he would play the electric guitar that would not stay in tune.

Before we came up to lead in praise, the church had its customary opening song and call to worship. There was nothing majestic about the instruments, and nothing magical about the voices. But here, in the most humble of places, we sang "A Pure Heart" by Rusty Nelson:

"A heart that hides your word/So that sin may not come in/A heart that's undivided/But one you rule, you reign/A heart that beats compassion,/That pleases you my Lord/A sweet aroma of worship/That rises to your throne."This is the unspeakable beauty of the gospel.

For the past few weeks, I've been reading though the book of Exodus. In the past few days, I came to the passages where God instructs Moses about the ark and the tabernacle the Jews were to build for the Lord. The list included gold, silver, jewels and acacia wood—the most costly of items. But even with the sacrifices and the glory of the tabernacle, and later the temple, God did not want their sacrifices. He wanted their hearts.

Here in the Philippines, in an old, shabby building of concrete and plywood, the God of heaven and earth was meeting with us. We do not need beautiful buildings ornamented with gold. You see, God does not care about the

venue. He does not take delight in guitars or correctly colored carpet. He only wants our heart.

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