

Get Serious. About Worship. – 2 Sam 6

In his book SD's for the Christian Life, Donald Whitney tells the story of his 10th birthday
Where he showed his friends a great time – ice cream, cake, games, cookout
And best of all – buying them 25 cent tickets to the local HS basketball game so they
could go as a group
He imagined himself being the center of attention the whole night – popcorn, pop, fun,
great game, and 4 of his friends on each side of him in the bleachers

Only one problem – that's not how his friends imagined it
As soon as they were in the door, they split without so much as a thank you, a happy
birthday, or a good-bye
And so spent the entire miserable game by himself, in his words, “growing old alone”

His point is – that's the way we often treat God in worship
We come to church, sing a few obligatory songs, listen with one ear, and then split
without giving God a 2nd thought, thinking we've fulfilled our obligation to worship
Then, adding insult to injury, we *throw* ourselves into other pursuits of far lesser value

Describing that tendency, somebody said it this way . . .

Quote – *We worship our work, work at our play, and play at our worship*
We tend to be far too casual in our worship – anything but serious

Opposite of King David in 2 Sam 6

I hope, if nothing else, that this will be a reminder of the importance of worship in your
life, as you train yourself for godliness

With that in mind, turn to **2 Sam 6** and Get Serious About Worship
Year is ~1000 BC; Saul, David's predecessor, has just died and the nation is split for
about 7 years with a small civil war
But by ch 6, King David has managed to bring the nation back together
The Philistines, for the moment, are subdued
This is very close to the highpoint of David's 40 year reign as king

Read v1-4 – Baale-judah was the small area (probably a city), about 8 miles E of Jer.
Any effort to get serious about worship, starts with seeing God

It starts with seeing God (various)

For David and the Israelites, the *ark* was the focal point of their worship
It contained the 2 tablets of the 10 Commandments, the rod of Aaron, pot of manna, and
portions of the written law
But most importantly it was the focal point of God's power and presence at that time –
the place where he *sat enthroned on the cherubim* (2b; golden angels on top of ark)
Where the ark was, God was; Where God is, worship is – if you see him . . .
If you acknowledge him – worship *starts* with seeing God

For David, that started long before this event

Back in 1 Sam 16:13 when David was still a boy it says – *Then Samuel took the horn of
oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the Spirit of the Lord rushed
upon David from that day forward.*

That's where seeing God started for David – when Samuel anointed him king over Israel
From that point forward, he couldn't *help* but see the power and presence of God at
work in him – he couldn't miss it

That's the same power and presence you and I have as believers when we receive Christ
The HS takes up residence in our heart, never to leave us or forsake us
That's when we begin to *see* God
Having seen him, we yearn to see him more – **Is 26:9a**
Having known him, we long to know him more
Having experienced his presence, we earnestly seek him more – **Ps 63:1**

Worship starts with seeing God, and yearning for him, longing to know him more
Because where feelings for God are dead, worship is dead
But once you see him, worship is the only thing you'll want to do
You'll never be satisfied with anything else

Which is a good thing, because worship is also a requirement

It's a requirement (v1-4)

When David gathered the men of Israel, *he gathered all the chosen men of Israel* (1)
There were no exceptions
He *arose and went with all the people who were with him* (2)

Worship was a requirement, and not just on special occasions like this one, but regularly
Week in and week out on the Sabbath, and throughout the year with periodic feasts . . .

It's still a requirement now, especially with the teaching in **Heb 10** where it says –
*Let us draw near [to God] (that's worship) . . . not neglecting to meet together, as is the
habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day
drawing near.* (Heb 10:22,24-25)

It's a requirement; God *tells* us to come together for worship
It's the inescapable command in Heb, and the crystal clear example in 2 Sam
Week in/week out, rain/shine, we are to come together for worship

- And when you do, give it your best
Did you notice in v3 that a *new* cart was used
Not some broken down, second rate, out-of-date hand me down left over from
somebody's garage sale

Why is it that when some people have junk to give away, they call the church?
Why is it that leftovers are considered good enough for the house of God, but not good
enough for our homes or workplaces?

God doesn't deserve, nor want, your leftovers – he wants your best
He wants the best of your time, talent, treasure, effort, energy
Most importantly, he wants the best of your worship
It's a requirement

But it's definitely not a duty of drudgery, in fact it's duty of delight . . .

It's a celebration (v5,12,14-15)

Remember that song by Kool and the Gang – It's a Celebration?

Here's about 30 seconds to take you back 25 years and refresh your memory (**play**)
Who says the secular can't be reclaimed for the sacred?
If remember nothing else from this message, remember that worship is a celebration

Had that song been around in David's day, it would have been pumping from the boom boxes, because it was a party
Read v5 – (castanets – little rhythm instruments used to make clicking sounds)
They *made merry* as in they were having a great time of happiness, joy, cheer
Why? Because worship is a celebration

A party of great rejoicing – 12b; It even included dancing – 14a
Doesn't mean we have to dance every time we come together for worship
But it also means there's nothing wrong with it
It's not what I would choose as your pastor – for myself *or* our church
But on that particular occasion, that's exactly what David chose in order to celebrate and worship God

You can't manufacture that, but when it happens, it's pure joy
Some of you remember the announcement of the money that was given to first purchase this property
There was laughing, crying, and people jumping up and down in the aisles while hugging one another
That's the closest thing to dancing we've ever come, and it was entirely appropriate

- Worship is a celebration of great rejoicing – as you might expect, sometimes it's *loud*
They used all kinds of instruments (5), with shouting and the sound of the horn – 15
Not only that, but **1 Chron 15:16, 28** (parallel account) refers explicitly to the volume of the worship – *David also commanded the chiefs of the Levites . . .*
They sang and played *loudly on musical instruments* (16)
And they *made loud music on harps and lyres* (28) . . . *to raise sounds of joy*

Which means that some of you need to seriously *lighten up*
It's not a funeral; There's nothing sad, dull, or straight-faced about it
Reflective sometimes, yes – see that in the Psalms
That's one of the reasons we strive for a mix each Sunday of celebration/reflection
But a funeral dirge? Never

Worship is the joyful response of my heart when I focus on the awesome glory of God (on his awesome power and presence)
How could it ever be a funeral dirge when I'm reflecting back the radiance and glory of God, like the moon reflects the sun?
When I'm responding to such power, beauty, majesty, mystery, love
Worship is a celebration – God forgive us for making it anything less

What's more . . .

It's not about me (v16,20-23)

It's not about you; Read v16, 20
Michal was mad, and in her anger and jealousy she hurled an exaggerated accusation of indecency at David
Something the authors of 2 Sam and 1 Chron make it a point to refute (read 14b)
An ephod was a garment that supported and was underneath a heavy vest that bore 2 large stones with the names of the 12 tribes of Israel engraved on them
More than likely, the vest came off and the ephod stayed on
1 Chron 15 describes it as a *robe* of fine linen

So between the robe of linen and the linen ephod, it's not likely that David was indecently exposed as Michal suggests

We know for sure that wasn't the case, because she's the one who was punished (rd 23)
What *was* the case, is that she made it all about her
Instead of entering into worship like everybody else, she chose to stand by, critique it

- Time and time again, the strongest criticism about worship comes from those who, like Michal, don't enter in – those who are spectators instead of participants
Even though she was there, she wasn't there to worship
There's nothing like a lack of worship that brings out the criticism in people

If you come in here looking for things wrong, instead of worshipping w/ all your might, you'll find them
But you'll also miss out on worship because you're making it all about you
Can I encourage you to stop evaluating and start participating?
To stop critiquing and start worshipping?
You'll be glad you did

- David responds in v21-22 (read them)

21 – God put me in this role; God entrusted this privilege to me
There's no way I'm going to be constrained in my worship, because it's all about you
I will celebrate before the Lord all I *want*; And worship him no matter what you say

22 – I don't care what you think, I'll make myself even more shameful and disgraceful (contemptible) in my worship if I have to
I will be abased – I'll belittle myself in your eyes even more for the sake of worshipping my Lord
Why? Because it's not about *me* and how good I look – it's about *him*
And I'm confident that those who are worshipping *with* me will understand
In fact, they'll honor me for setting aside my pride and worshipping the Lord

- Worship is not about you – it's about God
Saving face has no place in worship – that's the point here
If you're worried about what others think when you worship – you've got it all wrong
You're saying to God that he's not worth the humiliation/embarrassment you might endure on his behalf

If you want to raise your hands, raise your hands
If you want to sit down, sit down; If you want to get on your knees, get on your knees
If you want to bow your head, bow your head
There's freedom in worship, because it's not about you

But whatever you do in *your* freedom, be mindful of others so you don't inhibit *theirs*
So that you're not a distraction to them
The point of this passage is not give us license to do whatever we want in worship
To see how many aisles we can roll down; How many rafters we can hang from
How many flags we can wave or tambourines we can tap or dances we can dance

It's not a license to worship any way you please without regard for your brother or sister in Christ or the culture of our church

To the extent you do, you're a potential distraction –

Making *your* worship all about you; And making *their* worship all about you

Because instead of seeing God, all they see is you

- Having said that, the vast majority of you have *nothing* to worry about in that respect
But many of you *do* need to stop worrying so much about what other people think, and
lighten up – it's a celebration after all
Who cares if you sing badly, or raise your hands, or close your eyes, or kneel down?
I don't, and neither should you – because it's not about you, it's about the Lord

Finally, get serious about worship because . . .

It's serious stuff (v6-13, 17-19)

Read v6-7 – in Numbers 4 God gave instructions to Moses and Aaron re the tabernacle
which housed the ark, saying that those responsible for moving it *must not touch the
holy things, lest they die* (15)

You didn't just reach out and touch the ark; even if it looked like it was going to fall

Read v8-11 – we worship on God's terms, or we don't worship at all; It's serious stuff

Oh, there's more mercy now on this side of cross, than there was then . . .

But worship is just as serious

Think about Ananias and Sapphira in Acts 5, and the death they died for lying about
their gift to the church, their act of worship

No matter when it is, worship is serious stuff, on God's terms

- And God's terms require order – even in the midst of celebration [worship team]
That's why after doing it poorly, David took 3 months to collect his wits, and properly
prepare a place, food, sacrifices, and the priests necessary for such an event . . .
Eventually bringing it into Jer. the *right* way – the way God wanted it done, w/ order
Read v13 – there was order in it

Read v17-19 (undoubtedly the source of church potlucks☺)

David got the point – and so must we . . .

That you don't just enter into worship any old way

It's serious stuff – not to be taken lightly

Yes, we can enter into God's presence *boldly*, through Christ – but never *lightly*

We can enter into his gates with thanksgiving in our hearts, and into his courts with
praise – but we can't enter with a careless, cavalier attitude

It's a celebration, but it's also serious business . . .

Requiring much preparation *behind* the scenes – that's our part

And much preparation *on* the scene, in your heart – that's your part

So you can add a 4th step to your plan for godliness . . . Get serious about worship

My Plan for Godliness

1. **Get serious about it** (godliness)
2. **Commit to a plan** (discipleship)
3. **Establish a consistent time and place to meet with the Lord**
4. **Get serious about worship**

Summary

It's both a duty (requirement) *and* a delight (celebration)

A responsibility *and* a privilege

The joyful response of our heart when we focus on the awesome glory of God

Serious stuff, no matter how you look at it

And it all starts with *seeing* God