

Get Ready – To Worship . . . Heb 12:28-29

We've come to the last message in our Get Ready series having covered a lot of ground these past weeks in order to get ready for the upcoming ministry year, and all that God has for us

Before we just plow into this final message, I want to take a few minutes, back off the accelerator, and review where we've been
Otherwise, we risk so much of this going in one ear and out the other
And failing to apply it in our lives

So back in July (about 10 years ago), we started with . . .

Get Ready to Reach Out – Nu 16

Start by taking notice; Plead for God's mercy; Prepare to take risks
Expect to make sacrifices; Respond with urgency; Stand to be blessed

Get Ready to Go – Ps 96 and 3 John

Missions exists because worship doesn't; Missions is for everyone
Some are called to go and the rest are called to send

Get Ready to Grow – Eph 4

Forever known as the bicycle message
In your work of ministry; Pursuit of unity
Quest for maturity (discipline, experience, time, community)
Powers of discernment

Get Ready to Love – Lev 19

There's no chance of relationship apart from grace
5 Reasons to forgive; Remember w/out resentment
There's no depth of relationship apart from truth
Grace alone makes for a shallow relationship; Truth alone makes for an abusive one
But grace *with* truth makes for a deep one
There's no desire for relationship apart from respect
There's no genuine relationship apart from justice
We can have a genuine relationship with God only because justice was served in the death of Christ for our sins
There's no enduring relationship apart from love
To love your neighbor as your self is to want the same things to the same degree for others, as you do yourself

Get Ready to Serve – Neh 1-4

We made some ministry commitments together
I will not ignore the need to serve; I will do whatever it takes to serve
Changing attitude and priorities; Overcoming obstacles, Flexible; Work hard
I will always fulfill my role in serving
Ministry is for team players, not lone rangers or prima donnas
I will not quit in the face of opposition

Having covered all of that, there's one more thing we need to do as we get ready for our ministry year kick-off next week . . . Get Ready for Worship – **Heb 12:28-29**

Find throughout Scripture that *worship* is both the obligation and the privilege of honoring God because you love him

The expression of your love for, and adoration of God

It's an obligation because he *deserves* it; Privilege because we *don't* deserve to worship
This passage is telling us that . . .

God is worthy of our worship because he's going to preserve his kingdom (his benevolent rule and reign over those who are saved) while all else is destroyed

With that in mind, vs28-29 help us understand what our worship should be like; Starts with your heart, your attitude

GET READY TO WORSHIP . . .

With an attitude of gratitude

28 – *let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken*

We come to worship with a lot of things on our hearts and minds, but one thing that we routinely leave out is gratitude for our salvation

Especially if you've been walking with Christ for some time

We forget that it's our salvation – the fact that God saves us from the consequences of our sin, to a life forever with him through faith in the death of Christ on our behalf – that allows us to enter the throne of grace with confidence, and worship in the first place

I love that chorus – Thank you Lord, for saving my soul . . .

It re-centers my heart and mind on what's most important – my salvation

But my/your gratitude shouldn't stop there

Gratitude should define your worship at all times – good *and* bad

That's why Job could say – *The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord* (Job 1:21)

Does an attitude of gratitude describe your worship these days?

Some of you might say – yes; absolutely; God is so good

If that's you, let it overflow! Let your praises ring

Others of you might be thinking – “Absolutely not. My life is falling apart and frankly, I don't really care about anything anymore, let alone being thankful in worship.”

Listen, loved one, if that's you, hear me – healing and peace and rest for your soul *starts* by expressing thanks to God for saving you

If you have nothing else to thank God for – thank him for your salvation

“God, it's pretty bad right now in my life; I know you know that; And I don't have much else to say except thank you for saving me. That's it.”

At the end of our service today you're going to have a chance to do exactly that at the Lord's Table – so get ready to worship with an attitude of gratitude

That's where worship starts, but that's not where it stops

28 – *let us be grateful . . . and thus* (i.e. with this attitude of gratitude) . . . *let us offer to God acceptable worship*

Acceptable worship holds nothing back – God is looking for you to worship him . . .

With everything you have

All your time, all your talent, all your treasure . . . your whole life and everything about it should be a continuous expression of worship to God

Does that mean we all have to quit our jobs and live in a monastery? Not at all!

Worshipping with everything you have means . . .

Always using your *talent* to accomplish good, while acknowledging that God gave it to you in the first place – that's an act of worship

Faithfully and regularly giving a tithe (a tenth) of your income to your local church – that's an act of worship
Managing *all* that God has entrusted to you (time, talent, *and* treasure) for *his* purposes
Giving sacrificially at times, over and above your regular giving, as God prompts you
Whether time, talent, treasure, or praise – your whole life should be one great big worship service; One unbroken, continuous act of worship

Sometimes that's exclusive of everything else – like your personal time in prayer, or our corporate worship times on Sunday mornings
We focus everything we have (praise, time, attention, hearts), exclusively, on God, and God alone

Does that mean you've stopped worshipping if your attention is not exclusively devoted to God like on Sunday mornings? No

Most of the time, worship is the underlying motive of your heart *while* you give your attention to the things of life – work, family, relationships, etc.

To the extent you desire to honor and glorify God with all you do in life, it's worship
That's how your whole life can and should be one great big continuous act of worship
That's how you worship with everything you have

It's not about how much time, talent, treasure you have to give

It's *that* you give, and give it *all*, without hesitation; Holding *nothing* back

What you have to offer may be a trickle, or a flood

You may come in here on Sunday morning, your cup running over with God's goodness in your life – and flood him in songs of praise with all your being

Or, you may come in empty as can be with barely of drop of emotional strength, spiritual fervor, or praise – and let it trickle out

Point is – it doesn't matter what you have to give; It's *that* you give it, and give it *all*
That's acceptable worship with everything you have

Get ready to worship with an attitude of gratitude, with everything you have, and . . .

With the utmost respect

28-29 – *let us offer acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire*

One of the risks in our day and age is approaching God too casually in worship

Too often we treat corporate worship on Sunday mornings like it's an easy come, easy go sort of thing; Take it or leave it; Come or not; No big deal

We're too casual when . . .

We walk in having thought nothing about worship until the music starts

We've done little in the way of preparing our hearts to enter into the presence of God

Purifying our hearts is the furthest thing from our minds

We've lost sight of the truth that God is – overwhelming in his holiness; awesome in his majesty; consuming in his character

We need to re-gain a measure of the perspective the ancient Israelites had

Listen to their experience at the base of Mt Sinai – **Ex 19:9, 12, 16-19; Heb 12:18-21**

They had no problem approaching God with the utmost respect – they were scared to death of him, and rightfully so

His *presence* on that mountain was literally a consuming fire

But for the blood of Jesus, it still is for us!

Our worship has become so casual because we've made God so *common*

I have news for you – a consuming fire is *not* common

A holiness that demanded the life of even an innocent beast, is not common

A power that preserves our life when everything else is shaken/removed, is not common

A love that lays down its life for others who don't deserve it, is not common

We need to worship with the utmost respect

That doesn't mean all stuffy and funeral like

It means *joyfully* offering all that we have with an attitude of gratitude

What better place to start or re-start than at the Lord's Table

The Lord's Table/Communion

1 Cor. 11:23-32

If you've accepted Jesus as your Savior

If he lives within you as Lord of your life

You have much to be thankful for, and this table is for you

Whether you've come this morning with your cup (life) running over, or down to the last drop, come to the Lord's Table

Remember his death for your sake

Worship him with an attitude of gratitude for the salvation he bought with his blood

Give him everything you have, and fill up on his grace and goodness

Whether you're empty or overflowing, come if Jesus is Lord of your life

But whatever you do, don't come casually – worship with the utmost respect

That means if you've committed your life to Christ, examine yourself and come with a clean/pure heart (1 Cor 11:28)

If *haven't* given your life to Christ . . .

Haven't confessed your sin and invited him into your life forever . . .

Let the bread and cup pass; Or get right with him now, where you sit

Admit you're a sinner

Believe that Jesus died for your sins

Commit to live for him forever

After we **pray** . . .

Break bread and distribute both the elements

When you're ready, take the bread individually – thankful for the salvation God has given you personally

Hang on to the cup and we'll drink it together – remembering that he gave everything he had, including his life, so we could too

Cup — 1 Cor 11:23-25

This cup is the new covenant in my blood . . .

This cup and what it contains is symbolic of the promise of salvation that Christ's blood bought/guaranteed

Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me

Readings – Rev 15:3b-4; Ps 135:1-3; 1 Chron 16:27-29; Rev 5:11-13

Close – DG's; Ministry year kick-off next week