



Title: The Power of Worship

Series: *Paths of Life*

Pastor Chad E. Billington

Palm Sunday, April 14, 2019 AM Services

Smythe Street Church

Our Series: Paths of Life

Series leading us up to Easter.

Jeremiah 6:16a (ESV)

“Thus says the LORD: ‘Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.’”

Taking time with ancient truths and practices that over generations of believers have guided us to the life.

Our goal in the series is to help each other to learn the truths and practices of those who have gone before us that have helped them to find the abundant life that is promised in Jesus.

Last Week: Woman at the Well

Pastor Verner has looked at this story in the past few weeks, with a focus last week on what it means to worship God in spirit and in truth from...

John 4:23-24 (ESV)

23 But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”

As we come into our message this week, I think we should draw our attention to a different section of the verse, one that honestly I’ve often overlooked with my focus on what Jesus said about spirit and truth.

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God seeks worshippers

When God is looking for his people, he looks for a people not just to obey him, but who will worship. You find this throughout the story of Scripture.

Moses, a famous leader who was called to lead God’s people out of captivity from the most powerful nation of the world. God speaks to him from a burning bush

that is not consumed by the flames. God tells him to go and set the people free and then says:

Exodus 3:12 (NIV)

12 And God said, "I will be with you. And this will be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you will worship God on this mountain."

God tells Moses he will deliver his people and before they get to their promised land, they will come and worship right where he is.

God has a desire to gather worshippers.

Another Story: David (1 Samuel 16)

When God was looking to find a new king for his people, he sent Samuel to the house of a man with several sons. Samuel looked at the oldest son and saw a strong, tall man and said, this must be it. But he wasn't. In the end God chose the youngest, often overlooked son named David. What made David stand out, among other things he was known as one who would worship God with his harp as he watched over his father's flocks in the fields.

Palm Sunday

Luke 19:39–40 (ESV)

And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

Why Is Worship Such a Big Deal?

There is an interesting Psalm, Psalm 115:4-8 that is fairly telling:

Psalm 115:4–8 (ESV)

Their idols are silver and gold, the work of human hands.
They have mouths, but do not speak; eyes, but do not see.
They have ears, but do not hear; noses, but do not smell.
They have hands, but do not feel; feet, but do not walk;
and they do not make a sound in their throat.

Those who make them become like them; so do all who trust in them.

There is truth that

WHAT WE CHOOSE TO WORSHIP CALIBRATES OUR HEARTS.

In those times they would fashion idols to look like animals, like the a golden calf. We might shrug at that as an ancient practice, but could these images simply been a reflection of the concerns of people in those times (the need of healthy flocks and crops). What are the things that we worship, they might not be images on the shelf but pictures in our wallets, activities that define whether we feel valued.

In the end God those can be the things we worship (we talk about, sacrifice for, are most concerned to have or please).

The one true God alone desires that worship because...

CHOOSING TO WORSHIP GOD ALIGNS US WITH GOD'S SOVERIGNTY

An Aside (what is worship)

Worship includes singing, but is bigger than singing. In Scripture we find worship entails singing and music (Psalm 150),¹ raising or extending hands (Psalm 28:2, 1 Timothy 2:8), clapping hands (Psalm 47:1), kneeling (Psalm 95:6), falling on one's face (Revelation 7:11), dancing (2 Samuel 6:14), speaking of what God has done (Psalm 71:24) as some examples.

I hesitated to mention the list, because they can easily turn into a religious list. 'If I do these things I'm worshipping'. That's not necessarily the case.

Example:

Kid saying I'm sorry, have they apologized.

Begrudging handshake, is it welcoming?

It is not just doing a religious action, but worship is a conscious act done to calibrate our hearts, and align them with God's sovereignty. It is not just an action, but neither is it an emotional response, as I can choose to surrender to God when I'm not getting the feelings.

But worship is powerful

- When I choose to sing a song, when things are not easy, or to kneel, or to extend my hands and begin to confess who God is really. It is powerful.

What Worship Does

Worship Opens Us to Hear from God

Acts 13:2–3 (ESV)

¹ I'm including passages as examples only , not as an exhaustive list.

2 While they were worshipping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.” 3 Then after fasting and praying they laid their hands on them and sent them off.

The act of worshipping (which aligns us with God’s sovereignty) opens us to hearing from God.

PERSONAL CONFESSION: WORSHIP TOGETHER IS A KEY TIME FOR ME HEARING FROM GOD. I’LL OFTEN HEAR SOMETHING IN MY HEART, AND I’LL BE SCRAMBLING FOR AN OFFERING ENVELOPE OR HELLO CARD TO WRITE A PRAYER NEED, SERMON SERIES, SERMON IDEA, SOMEONE TO CALL.

Worship Has the Power to Change Situations

Story of Jehoshaphat in 2 Chronicles 20. God’s people were in a desperate state against enemy armies. God led them to send the praise band (probably a choir) ahead of the army. As they worshipped the enemies turned on each other and the people were spared.

Odd story, and that presents complexity, but the principle is in worship God often gives us a glimpse at his reality and plans and protection for us.

RAISE A HALLELUJAH - JONATHAN AND MELISSA HELSER OF BETHEL MUSIC WROTE IT AS A POWERFUL DECLARATION OVER THE LIFE OF THEIR FRIEND’S SON, JAXON. HE HAD ECOLI IN HIS KIDNEYS AND HAD A VERY BAD PROGNOSIS ONE NIGHT.

*I raise a hallelujah, in the presence of my enemies
I raise a hallelujah, louder than the unbelief
I raise a hallelujah, my weapon is a melody
I raise a hallelujah, heaven comes to fight for me*

BY GOD’S GRACE JAXON SURVIVED.

I’ve seen people know miracles, and even when miracles didn’t come as we may hope, stare death down with peace as worshippers, knowing there is a bigger reality at play.

What would it be like if we practiced and learned to be worshippers?

God is looking for that, Jesus said it. Maybe you are here today and you need God’s help, we read in the New Testament that salvation begins by confessing that Jesus is Lord. Salvation begins with an act of worship.

We come here not for a band, not for a talk, but in worship to realign our hearts to God's reality, that he is sovereign and in worship we do that.

Whether in pain or in gratitude, today, I encourage you to join us in worship. If you're not a singer, express yourself to God.