

Worship... At the Mountain of the Lord

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Watermark. How are you guys doing? Okay, so we are going to try something totally different today, which is a neat thing about what I like about being here, is that we try different things all the time.

And so we're going to enter into a time of worship. Okay, we're going to talk about worship today. And when I say the word worship, I realize that a lot of people have many, many different ideas of what worship means.

We're going to set down some groundwork. We're going to say basically worship is our response to what we value the most. Can you repeat that? Worship is our response to what we value the most. Now, I don't know what you value the most. It might be a person. It might be a thing. It might be an experience. But whatever you value the most, worship is how you react to that.

You go to concerts, you see people worshipping. You go to offices every day in Central, you're going to see people worshipping. Worship is our response to what we value the most.

[1 : 01] The second ground rule we want to lay down is that we were made to worship. The Bible says that you and I were created by God and for God, that we were made to worship.

It's in our DNA that we cannot not worship. But everything we do as we walk throughout our day, we worship. We worship people. We worship things.

We worship titles. We worship stuff. I don't know what you're worshipping today. If you want to find out what you worship today, all you need to do is look at your time. Look at your thoughts.

Look at where your energy goes to. Look at where you spend your money. Look at what you think about when you have free time.

Now, you might say, well, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait. That's not, yeah, that's, this is abnormal. And that's, well, no, that's, that's just, that's just because I'm here. But the Bible says that whatever is the focus of those things, that's what you worship.

[2 : 07] The people of God had to relearn that in the passage we're going to look at today. God sends a deliverer, Moses, into Egypt, and he delivers them from bondage. And they see how great God is, and they see how much they need him.

But they still don't understand worship. And so he takes them to a mountain. And this mountain, he meets them. He blows this horn, this ram's horn, this shofar.

And he calls all the people to worship him. Sometimes we get it wrong. We think we're calling God to come and worship us.

But the passage says that God calls us to worship him. Amen. Amen.

Hey, you know, the passage we're looking at today is a passage that I've gone to many times in my life, and I want to keep coming back to it as a church.

[3 : 42] I think it has a lot to teach us about worship and what does that mean in our journey with God. The people of God were in bondage for 400 years, and they forgot what it meant to worship God.

And so God had to show them his greatness and his power, and that only he could save them and free them from bondage. And only then, as they saw him as he truly is, in their great need for him, could they worship him.

Because before that, if they didn't know who he was, they couldn't worship him fully or truly. They were just worshipping an idea or a thought or a good feeling.

And the passage you have today, I think, is both topics of Old and New Testament, of people coming to the mountain to worship God. And the God is the same in both passages, Old and New Testament.

And the people are the same in both passages, Old and New Testament. Our problems are the same in both passages, Old and New Testament. The difference is, is now we have a mediator who goes before us.

[4 : 53] And that mediator is Jesus Christ. In the Old Testament passage, Moses went before the people, and he tried to represent God and tried to show them what God wanted. And the people trembled with fear, as you look at the bulletin.

Most Hebrew rabbis would say that it is God who blew the trumpet. But God was the one announcing it. And when the people heard the sound, they didn't even want to come close to God. Because they knew what was going on inside of their hearts. They knew their need. And this was the first time in 400 years that they met a God who is holy. And just.

And righteous. And good. And gentle. And they had never experienced any of those things in Egypt. And there's just a couple, two points I want to share with us.

Two points I want to lay down again as a foundation for our journey. Because we're on a journey. At the end of these sermons, I hope you don't hear, okay, that's great. Okay, I need to do this. I hope you never hear, I have to do anything.

[5 : 59] And except for worship the Lord and surrender my life to him and have him change me. But in this journey and foundation, we need to lay down two things.

And we're talking about a journey. We're taking this next step. And as a church, we're taking this next step in worship. And we're asking God to meet us and for us to see him as he truly is. And the first thing that I want us to understand, the first stone I want to lay down in this bridge or this walkway of worship, is that it is God who initiates worship. It's God who calls the people out of bondage.

It's God who seeks you out as you're on this journey and you don't care anything about him. It's God who comes and he initiates all these things.

And it's very specific in this passage. He doesn't give them the law and say, okay, here's the Ten Commandments. Get all these rules and laws really good. And if you get them like 85% correct, then I'm going to come and I'm going to free you.

[7 : 00] But you've got to prove yourself to me first. He doesn't say that. God comes to the people in bondage. And he frees them.

There's nothing that we have to do. There's nothing way we have to be. But he just comes and he rescues us. And in this Exodus passage, he takes us to a mountain to meet him.

But in the New Testament passage, he takes us to a cross to meet him. In the very first stone, you have to get down.

You cannot forget this when you leave here. You have to understand that God is the one who initiates worship with you. He's the one who's called you here.

He's the one who's speaking to you through the worship and through the friends and through the community and through all of his creation. And if we forget that, we forget how great he is and we forget our need for him.

[8 : 02] But he wants to bring us to the cross. He wants to meet us every moment of every day. Not just Sunday. The second stone I want to lay down in this worship pathway is just this.

And it's really simple. Our worship matters to God. How we worship God matters. I mean, you read in the passage that the people, they prepared for three days, cleaning and cleansing and cleaning and cleansing, because they knew that they were about to approach a holy and just and righteous God.

How we worship God matters. I think sometimes I forget that.

I think sometimes I think, well, he's just my homeboy. He's okay. He'll take whatever I give him. But the scripture says no. I mean, the scripture says that he wants us to come to worship him.

And he says be careful. Because he says whatever you worship, you're going to become like. You have a choice today.

[9 : 16] Here is God. He's blowing the trumpet. He wants you to come to worship him. But you have a choice. You don't have to come to him. You don't have to worship him. You don't have to spend time with him. But whatever you spend time with today, that's what you're going to become like.

Because whatever you worship, you imitate. And whatever you imitate, you become like. I mean, you guys know that, right?

You're working with people every day who worship money and power and sex and relationships. And it's not too long to stand back and look at their life. And their life becomes money and power and sex and relationships. And it's all they talk about. One of my favorite stories is the Lord of the Rings. And in that story, you have this ring of power. And this hobbit or pre-hobbit who worships the ring. What happens to that hobbit? He changes. [10:29] And becomes something disfigured and ugly. And the only thing he can say, the only thing that's on his mind, the only thing he thinks about in his free time is what? My precious. My precious. And the question we have to ask ourselves is when we come to worship God today is, what is our precious? What is it that we hold on to? What is it that we seek to? What is it that we risk everything to get? What? Because worship is our response to that thing which we value the most. And God is saying, I want that to be me. I made you. I know you. And your worship matters to me. So God is always initiating. God is always pursuing. God is speaking to you even as you walk through your day. Sometimes we just don't hear because we're so busy and we're just so hardened. But the trumpet continues to blow and he continues to speak out to us. [11:36] And how you respond to that call, how you worship him, is important. It makes a difference.

I've been praying about this a lot on my own journey. And I think that if I understood this, if I understood God's holiness, if I understood God initiating, if I understood my need for him, I wonder if I would worship him differently today. I wonder if I understood who he is and what he does and what he holds in his hands and he contains everything and maintains everything and he continues to pursue me. I wonder if I would prepare for worship differently. The people in the chapter says they prepared for three days and sometimes I have a hard time preparing for five minutes before I come to church. I wonder if I understood God and his desire, if I would think about community differently. You know, in the scripture, worship always centers around community and the people of God coming together. [13:04] Because worship matters to God and it's important and he wants his people to come together to worship him. I wonder if I understood God's character in him pursuing me, if I would think about serving differently every day, serving the people around me and caring for them and being nice to them and loving them.

I wonder if that would really affect and change me as I looked at his character and what he wants for us. I wonder if I'm on this journey, if I would love better and differently the people around me. Realizing that it's a holy God who's called me to worship him and that in that, it changes everything. Our prayer is in this first step in this worship process for us as a church that we begin to see God differently and that we would leave this time asking questions like, okay, I realize that I probably am not doing too well in this area.

What's the next baby step you want me to take? What's the next step towards you, God? What do you want me to do? What do you want me to surrender to you? But what's the next thing you want me to do?

How does my worship change when I leave here today? How does knowing that you're pursuing me continually and that how I respond to that makes a difference?

[14:48] What do you want me to do? What do you want me to do? What do you want me to do? What do you want me to do? What do you want me to do? What do you want me to do? Would we worship God differently if we truly understood these things?

Every day, God is calling us as a church. Every day, God is calling you as his children. He's crying out, worship me.

It's what I made you for. It's the only way you're going to have success. It's the only way you're going to feel my pleasure. It's the only way you're going to feel joy. It's the only way that you're going to be the person that I've called you to be.

Worship me. All these other things, all these other idols, they're going to turn you. They're going to change you. They're going to make you think differently. They're going to pervert how I made you. Worship me, God, at the mountain. Father, we just thank you for this day. We thank you for this passage. We thank you that we can look back 3,500 years and we realize that you are the same.

[15 : 59] Father, we thank you that we can look back and we see your greatness and your power and that you're the one who initiates. You're the one that frees us from our bondage, from our addictions, from our hurts, and from our pain.

Only you can do that. We can try to do self-help things, but we realize that we were created for you. Father, I realize there's some of us in here right now that never even thought of worshiping you.

We just think of worshiping us. I pray, Lord, that you would speak to us in this time. Help us to surrender these idols, these precious things we hold on to, these things that turn us and change us. And help us to trust you. Father, I realize there's some of us in here who have been worshiping you for a while, but it's been 400 years or 40 years or four days or four hours or four minutes that we've forgotten why we even are here and who you are.

Lord, we know you're the God of second chances. You're the God of do-overs. And we come to you and we just surrender our lives and we just confess and repent of our self-sufficiency and our desire to worship something else.

[17 : 22] And we know that you hear us and so we just give these things to you and pray that you would show us what it means to worship you. Help us to be different.

Father, don't let us come to the mountain and meet you and walk away with the hearts the same way that they were when we came. Lord, change our hearts help us to fall more in love with you and to seek you and to worship you.

We love you. Amen.