

A Royal Priesthood
Heart of Worship Series
February 18, 2024

Good morning church family. I want to thank for praying for our Elders and Ministry Team as we were on a leadership retreat this weekend. We were reviewing our current church health – and also dreaming and praying about future ministry opportunities. We believe that there are many opportunities before us - and we are trying to discern which ones God would want us to focus on. It was a good weekend of team building and spending time with the Lord and one another.

We are really glad that all of you are all here today as we move into the 2nd week of our series called “The Heart of Worship.” Last week Pastor Roger started the series with a message entitled “Why Do We Worship?” The reality is that we are hard wired to worship something – the question is Who / What are we going to worship? The sun, moon, and stars, - animals, - wooden or stone statues carved into a specific image – money, celebrities, sports (speaking of sports – HOW ABOUT THEM CHIEFS!) – And did you see Caitlyn Clark set the all time scoring record for Division 1 Women’s Basketball with 3,569 points and she still has a few more games to play. SHE IS AMAZING! – BUT NOT WORTHY OF WORSHIP.

So as we head toward Easter – we are asking the questions: What is worship? Why do we worship? What should we worship? Where should we worship? How do we worship – and most importantly WHO DO WE WORSHIP?

This morning I want to start in the Old Testament and briefly look at how worship has developed over the years. At the end of Genesis 4 – after Adam & Eve’s 3rd son Seth - gives birth to a son named Enosh - it tells us **that men began to call on the name of the Lord.** (It doesn’t tell us any details – just that men began to call on the Lord.) Then things get really bad – Genesis 6 says: “The Lord saw how great man’s wickedness had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time. The Lord was grieved that He made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.” So God decided to start over with a man named Noah. Verses 8-9 say: “Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord... Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time and he walked with God. So God started over with Noah and his family. After spending years building a boat - that God had designed to save Noah and his family – they were saved when the world was flooded. At the end of chapter 8 it says: “Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and taking some of all the clean animals and clean

birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart ‘never again will I curse the ground because of man, even though every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures as I have done. As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease.’”

So that’s some of the early instances of worship – not a lot of detail – not a lot of instruction - but some examples of people worshipping God. Let’s jump ahead to the book of Exodus where God is going to give us some instruction on who and how we are to worship Him. **Exodus 19:3-6**

- God is looking for a **people** He can use to re-connect with the world
- God chooses the nation of Israel – His treasured possession.
- You will be for me – **A KINGDOM OF PRIEST** and a Holy Nation
- **PRIEST** - someone who is authorized to perform the sacred rites of a religion especially as a **mediatory agent between humans and God.**
- **HOLY NATION** – set apart for God’s Holy use – consecrate – sanctify.

Out of that nation – God chooses a **tribe** – who will become his **PRIESTS**. His mediators between Himself and His people. **Numbers 1:47-53**

- God chooses the **tribe of Levi** to be in charge of the tabernacle of the testimony – that is the meeting place – of God and His people.
- The Levites were to be in charge of all the furnishings and everything belonging to the Tabernacle. **The Tent of Meeting.**
- Carry it
- Take Care of it
- Encamp around it.
- Remember the physical presence of God is in the Holy of Holies
- There was a proper way to be near God.
- Priest were to steward the Tabernacle
- They were to set up, tear down, transport, guard, and attend to the ministry of the Tabernacle.
- They were to set up meeting places between God and people!
- What a cool job!

If you know the story of Israel – most of the people were happy to let Moses, Aaron, and the priest from the tribe of Israel meet with God. Most of them wanted to keep their distance where “it was safe” from the God of fire and smoke. I think many people today have that same idea. Dan, you and Roger, and the rest of “the

Ministers on staff can meet with God and let us know what we are supposed to do!
We will stay back here where it is safe.

But as Paul Harvey would say: NOW - THE REST OF THE STORY!

1 Peter 2:4-12

- Like living stones, we are being built into a spiritual house
- To be a holy priesthood
- Offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- You are a chosen people – just like the Levites and Aarons family in OT
- You are a royal priesthood
- A holy nation – set apart for God’s holy purposes
- A people belonging to God
- That you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light!
- Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God
- Once you had not received mercy, but now you have!
- This is not our home! We are strangers and aliens just passing through
- Resist sinful desires
- Live such good lives among the pagans – that they will see Jesus and be drawn unto Him! And He will be glorified!

In other words, since you are God’s priest’s – His mediators between Himself and the world around us – every place you go becomes a spot where people have an opportunity to meet with God!

Isn’t that mind blowing! If you are a follower of Christ, and you’ve invited Him into your heart and life – you are now a walking billboard for Christ!

2 Corinthians 5:14-21

- We are compelled by love – not fear or guilt
- We were once lost – we’ve been found!
- Jesus died and paid the price for our sins – so now we live for Him.
- We are now new creations – the old has gone the new has come!
- We were ugly worms who are turning into beautiful butterflies!
- All this is from God – **reconciled** – heavenly books – paid in full!
- God has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation
- **We are Christ’s Ambassadors!**

- He is making His appeal through us
- Our job is to share the good news and encourage others to be **reconciled** with God (MADE RIGHT WITH GOD)
- God made Him who had no sin – to be sin for us – so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. (WHAT AN AMAZING TRADE!)

PRACTICAL APPLICATION

Deuteronomy 10:8

At that time the Lord set apart the tribe of Levi to carry the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister and to pronounce blessings in His name, as they still do today.

Carry the Ark of the Covenant – Old Testament – Tabernacle – Tent of Meeting
 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 “Do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.

2 Corinthians 4:7 “We have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us.

Everywhere you go – you are taking Christ with you. Every place you go becomes a spot where people have an opportunity to meet with God!

Stand Before the Lord to Minister

Worship is not about us – it’s for God!

It’s not about my musical preferences and tastes.

Worship is for God. It is ministry for His pleasure, His heart, His opinion, His tastes, and His desires.

I'm comin' back to **the heart of worship**

And it's all about You

It's all about You, Jesus

I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it

When it's all about You

It's all about You, Jesus

Lord help us to give you the honor and worship YOU are due.

Pronounce **Blessing in His Name**

As priest we minister to God and to people.

We want to honor God and bless people!

Hopefully – you are learning that worship is much more than a song!

It's a great privilege and calling to be a child of God! We are God's Ambassadors!

As priests – we are laying down our lives – so that others can be won to Christ!

In Romans 12:1-2 we are encouraged with these words: "I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, **to offer your bodies as living sacrifices**, holy and pleasing to God – **this is your spiritual act of worship**. Do not conform any longer to the patterns of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Worship Team come up

If Christ is in you – You are a Priest – You are an Ambassador for the King of Kings!

Carry / Minister / Bless

If you haven't asked Christ into your life yet – You can do that today!

In Revelation 3:20 Jesus says: Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me."

God wants to have a relationship with us – and He wants to use us to win others to Himself! He wants us to be His Ambassadors and His priest's – connecting heaven and earth!

May the Lord bless you and keep you;

May the Lord make his face shine upon you – and be gracious to you;

May the Lord turn his face toward you and give you peace.