

March 10th, 2024, The Heart of Worship – Intimacy with God

-Welcome

- (Ask the youth) You guys are in the dating years of your life. Why do you date? You date so you get to know the other person better - Adults will say that it is a part of finding your spouse. I'm sure that you bristle at that 😊, but it is true... So you are getting to know someone better and one of the best ways is to go on a romantic date where it is just the two of you and quality time can be spent together.

-What do you think are the necessary things for a romantic date?

-Setting is important – Space (Personal) -*Set up table and cloth/utensils* (Gold – nothing but the best – This includes your appearance as well), Sight (Lighting Soft & Warm) -*Set up candelabra*, Sound (Quiet – No distractions) -*Nothing to Set*, Smell (Aroma) -*Set up diffuser*, Taste (Food)

-All of this will help you to focus on the other person and you can get to know them better...

-In order to be helpful I made a list for you.

- **Space: Personal**
- **Sight: Lighting Soft & Warm**
- **Sound: Quiet**
- **Smell: Aroma – Relaxing**
- **Taste: Food – Pleasant**

-I will pause to let you take it in...

-We are continuing our Series on the Heart of Worship

Summary: Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker; for he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care (Ps 95: 6-7). God desires and deserves our worship, but how do we come before him? What are the ways to honor his name? Join us as we examine what worship is and how we can prepare our hearts, our lives to enter his gates with thanksgiving.

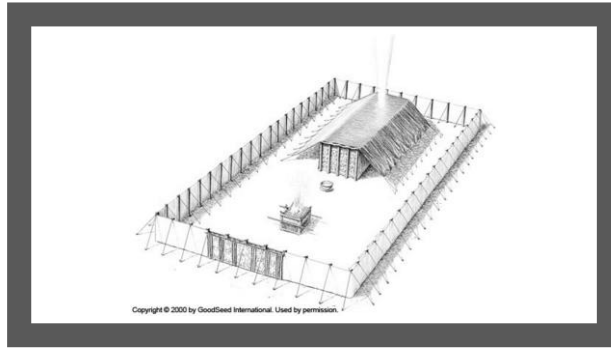
-I want us to live out our scripture text for today.

Psalm 100 Shout for joy to the Lord, all the earth. Worship the Lord with gladness; come before him with joyful songs. Know that the Lord is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name. For the Lord is good and his love endures forever; his faithfulness continues through all generations.

-Pray

-As we examined worship, we have been referring to the tabernacle in Old Testament (The original place that God designed to meet with His people). This is not some ancient, worthless system, no it is full of meaning if we truly investigate it.

-Last week Dan talked about the tabernacle courtyard.



-The first thing you would see was the Altar of Sacrifice. In order to meet with a Holy God a sacrifice was required. It was a bloody and disgusting – It showed the travesty of our sin. Thankfully for us the sacrifice was paid once as said in **Hebrews 7: 27** Unlike the other high priests, he does not need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for his own sins, and then for the sins of the people. He sacrificed for their sins once for all when he offered himself.

-This is where we see Jesus.

-After the altar you would see the Laver of Washing, a bowl where the priests would cleanse themselves before entering the tent/tabernacle – the holy place.

-Let me remind us of two passages...

1 Peter 2: 9 But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

Hebrews 10: 22 Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.

-Clearly, we are invited into this private setting (Pause).

-Now, I want us to sanctify our imagination and visualize ourselves in temple courtyard. The sacrifice has been made; the blood has been spilt. The smells of an animal being butchered, the stickiness of the blood, the flies, the sounds, it would have been overwhelming, but you press forward. You wash up and you pull back the curtain to enter...



-You find yourself in the Holy Place the space before the Holy of Holies. This is the first room or area inside the tabernacle or as it is sometimes called the Tent of Meeting.

-Again visualize stepping into that space. At first you eyes have to adjust because it is dark. Then you notice that the sounds, the smells of the busy courtyard fade away and you begin to notice three pieces of furniture. A Lampstand, a Table with bread and wine, and an Altar that was burning a beautiful incense.



-Everything is covered in gold - Nothing but the best, and the gold just gleamed in light of the oil from the burning lamp as you can imagine.

-These pieces of furniture the Israelites were instructed to build.

-The Lampstand, which was to be kept burning continually, giving light to the Holy Place.

-The Table for the bread of presence (or the table of showbread). The held 12 loaves that represented each tribe. This bread was baked fresh every week, and only the priests were allowed to eat.

-Altar of incense. Special incense was to be burned each morning and evening as an offering to the Lord.

-There is plenty of symbolism with the furniture in the Holy Place. The Lampstand - Jesus claimed to be the Light of the World (**John 8:12**) and the loaves on the Table – Jesus said He is the Bread of Life (**John 6:35**). The Table also, represents Communion. And the Altar of Incense signifies our prayers. Scripture often likens incense to the prayers of God’s people (**Ps. 141:2; Rev. 5:8**).

-But today I want us to consider something else. Perhaps this is the setting for a romantic date.

-Think about it for a moment: Space (Personal), Sight (Lighting Soft & Warm), Sound (Quiet – No distractions), Smell (Aroma), Taste (Food)

-I know for some this might be difficult, to think of dating or marrying Jesus, but let me remind us that there are plenty of scriptures that refer to Jesus in that way – most specifically as a groom coming for his bride [The church] (**Rev. 19: 7, 2 Cor. 2 11:2** and **Eph. 5: 25-27**)

-Again I ask: What is the purpose of dating? To really get to know the other person better, to grow in love.

-What is the best way to get to know someone better? It is to listen... to be silent...

-So often we think of worship as an act – singing, praising or praying, but what if the most profound expression of love/worship would be to be silent? To be still, to be attentive to everything the one you love is doing.

-Could this be Intimacy with God (Our sermon title this morning)? Intimacy in the Bible has many meanings a complete knowledge about something, a close family-like connection, or even physical intimacy. Sometimes the English translation in our Bibles uses the word to ‘Know’.

-Here is a reading that I came across that might be helpful:

He came to me with an expectant childlike look in his eyes and flashed a grin as he said, “Come and see what I made for you.”

So, hand in hand we strolled to his garden. “See the mighty towering trees. I planted them as tiny seeds. I watered and nurtured them. I did the same with the flowers and every blade of grass. I dug the trenches in which the streams and rivers flow. I raised and cared for the bear, the deer, and the robin. I did it for all the creatures that roam my garden. I ignited the sun to burn bright and to shower it’s life-giving light. I perfected every detail. I did this all for you so you will know that I live and begin to see my love. Because in the flowers you will smell my

sweet perfume, in the soft breezes you will feel my caress. In my sun you will feel the warmth of my touch that will bring forth a deep desire that can only be quenched from the waters of my never-ending streams.”

I looked into his face and saw that he was waiting to see if I would accept his gift. With tears starting to well in my eyes I said, “Yes, yes, I will receive your gift, but I am sad because all I can do in return is to say ‘I love you.’”

With tears in his eyes he said, “That is all I ask.”

-Maybe to know God, to worship God is just being aware, attentive to everything He is doing.

Benediction: **Philippians 3: 10-12** I want to know Christ—yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his sufferings, becoming like him in his death, and so, somehow, attaining to the resurrection from the dead. Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.