

Moving In – The Throne of God
The Heart of Worship Series
March 17, 2024

Good morning church. We are wrapping up our series on worship today. We've been looking at the Old Testament system of worship and trying to learn from them how we can worship God better – so that our worship is pleasing to Him and fruitful for us as well.

From the beginning of the Bible, we see that God wanted to have a relationship with His people. Originally God had a perfect relationship with Adam and Eve, and they had a perfect relationship with one another. There was no sin, shame, or sickness. Adam and Eve ran around naked in the garden and regularly communed with God. There was nothing to hide, nothing to be ashamed of, no sense of inferiority. Things were perfect. Until sin showed up!

Sin changed everything! Paradise was lost. When Adam & Eve exchanged the truth of God for the lies of the enemy – everything went south from there.

Genesis 3:7-10 says: “Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they realized they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the Lord God as he was walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and they hid from the Lord God among the trees of the garden. But the Lord God called to the man, “Where are you?” He answered, ‘I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid; so I hid.’”

Fear, shame, guilt, - hiding, covering up, blaming, - separation began to happen. That's what sin does – it separates – it divides. We sew clothes to cover up – we build walls to protect – when we sin - there are consequences. Out of love - God removed Adam and Eve from the garden – so they wouldn't eat of the Tree of Life and live forever in these fallen bodies. You see when they sinned – a curse was put on the earth. The snake had to crawl on his belly and eat dust - and there would be enmity between us and them. The woman would experience pain in childbirth and relationships between husbands and wives would be more difficult. The ground was cursed and providing for our families became much more taxing – and death was now the end result for all living things. Originally we were made to live forever – but sin changed all of that.

Despite the curse – God still loved them! Out of love – He removed Adam and Eve from the garden – but before He did – HE COVERED THEM! He didn't want

them to live the rest of their lives in shame and fear – and at a distance. So God sacrificed an animal – shed its blood - so that Adam and Eve could have clothing to cover their sin and shame. And God has been working to restore our relationships with Him and one another ever since.

God doesn't want us to live separately from Him. He is our maker and creator and desires that we would be in close relationship and proximity to Him and one another. The problem is – God is holy and we are not. As we said earlier – sin separates us from God. So God developed a plan – so that we could live in closer proximity to Him. You have to understand that God is a Holy God – but He is also a loving God - and He doesn't want anyone to perish.

Psalm 103 describes God like this: He is a God “who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle's....The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbor his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us. As a father has compassion on his children, so the Lord has compassion on those who fear him.”

Even though we messed up paradise - God still loves us – and He developed a plan where we could co-exist with Him. At first the relationships were mostly in the form of dreams and visions – angel's appearing periodically to deliver a message - heavenly stairways and wrestling matches – and providential provision's – all to get the attention of God's people.

By the time we get to the book of Exodus – God uses a burning bush to get Moses's attention – and like most people at that time – when God showed up it was freaky! God said to Moses: “Do not come any closer, take off your sandals, for the place you are standing is holy ground. Then he said, ‘I am the God of your father Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob’ at this Moses **hid his face, because he was afraid to look at God.**”

Fear, trembling, and hiding their faces was still happening – but **God is getting closer and more personal.** He is working things for the good of His people. At Passover – once more blood was shed – and those who trusted in the Lord – put

blood on the door of their houses. (Do you see this theme of blood “covering God’s people and saving them?) The “death angel” passed over and their first-born sons were saved. God miraculously delivered Israel from Pharoah’s hand and Exodus 13 tells us that “By day the Lord went ahead of them in a pillar of cloud to guide them on their way – and by night in a pillar of fire to give them light, so they could travel by day or night. Neither the pillar of cloud by day nor the pillar of fire by night left its place in front of the people. GOD WAS GETTING CLOSER!

The people were getting to know their God and what was required for having a relationship with Him. But as we see in **Exodus 19:9-20** – things were still a little freaky!

- Consecrate themselves
- Wash their clothes
- Prepare to meet with their God
- Thunder and lightning
- Clouds and smoke
- The whole mountain shook
- A loud trumpet blasted
- God descended to the top of the mountain

That was Old Testament. God was getting closer – more personal. It was still scary, but they were understanding more about God as he revealed himself to them. God actually decided to “**Move In With Them.**” He set us a tabernacle with a courtyard – that we’ve been studying about for the past number of weeks. It was **a holy place** – with a **gate** – that had to be entered into. **An Altar** – where blood was shed, and sacrifices were made to pay the penalty for sin. Then the bronze **laver** – a place for washing – getting clean so they could prepare to come near to God. As the entered the **Holy Place** there was the **Table of Showbread**, the **Golden Lampstand**, and the **Altar of Incense** – which were all representative of Christ – who would become the “BREAD OF LIFE”, THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD, and who would eventually be the great interceder on our behalf!

Then there was the Holy of Holies – where God’s presence lived.

All of those things in the Old Testament pointed to Jesus! They were foreshadowing the great news of the New Testament! Real quickly – we are going to work our way through the highlights of the book of Hebrews.

Hebrews 1:1-4

- IN the past God spoke in various ways – now He speaks to us thru his Son!
- The Son is the Radiance of God's glory
- Exact Representation of His Father
- He's sustaining all things
- After he provided purification for sins
- He sat down at the right hand of His Father in Heaven! IT IS FINISHED!!!

Hebrews 2:14-3:2

- Jesus took the place of the Old Testament priest
- He paid the penalty for our sin with His blood
- He defeated death and the grave and sets us from our fear of death
- He is our Holy Helper
- We need to keep our eyes fixed on Him.

Hebrews 4:14-16

- It is by faith that we believe that Jesus is the New High Priest
- He become one of us – so He can sympathize with us.
- He enables us to approach the throne of grace with confidence – so that we can receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 9:1-28

- The Old Testament Tabernacle was a foreshadowing of God's desire to come closer to His people.
- Jesus came to give His life as an offering.
- To set us free from sin and death
- And to restore us to a right relationship with His Father
- Just as He “moved in” with Israel - God wants to “Move In” to our hearts, lives, and homes.

Hebrews 12:18-24

- Because of what Jesus did on Easter weekend – we no longer come to a mountain that is filled with smoke, fire, and fear.
- But we come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the Living God. We come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men...
- He's no longer distant – He's come close! And He desires to walk with us and live inside of us!

- Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful and **so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe...**

I hope and pray that through this series – you've grown in your understanding of worship – not just head knowledge – but your heart has been moved to truly take steps that will honor God with the way you live the rest of your life.

As we've said throughout this series – worship is much more than a song. It's a life that is lived in appreciation for all that God does for us. It manifest it's self in many different ways: humbly bowing, singing songs of praise and worship, confessing our sins, raising our hands, loving our neighbors, sharing our possessions, sitting in silence, adoring our Maker as we walk through His creation, and a myriad of other ways of expressing our thanks and gratitude for God's kindness and mercy to us.

Our jobs as pastors and worship leaders is to prepare you for heaven. Introducing you to Jesus is the most important thing we will ever do – but teaching you to worship is also important – because WE WILL BE DOING A LOT OF THAT WHEN WE GET TO HEAVEN!

READ REVELATION 4

WORSHIP TEAM – I CAN ONLY IMAGINE.