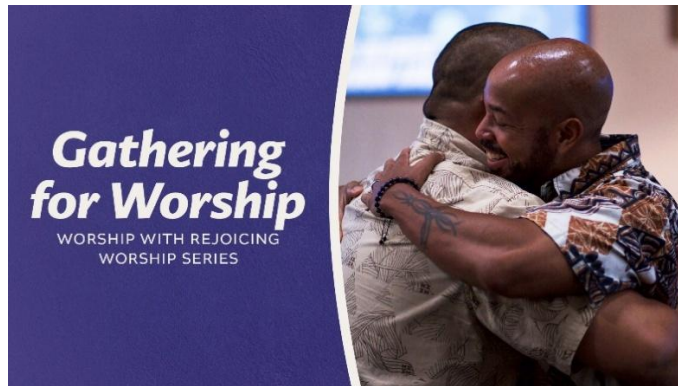


**Let's begin with prayer...**

*Holy God, you are the author and perfecter of our Faith. You save us and sustain us. Help us to trust in you as we worship you today. May our praise bring you glory and remind us of your promises. We seek your presence with us today as we worship you alone. In Your name we pray. Amen.*



Throughout the next several weeks, we are going to talk about worship with a new worship series called “Worship with Rejoicing” from Discipleship Ministries and our sermon for this week is titled “Gathering for Worship”. A worship series about worship: that feels kind of strange, I know. But over the years we’ve found that people really do need regular reminders about what it means for us to gather for worship week in and week out.

Some folks have never really been taught about the flow and purpose of worship, while others knew at one time but have become distracted by the routine of it all. And don’t get me wrong—there’s something beautiful about routine, about knowing the liturgy and the hymns and the rhythms so well that they feel as close to you as your own heartbeat. But routine is a double-edged sword, because how often do we notice our own heartbeat with wonder, gratitude, and a desire to go deeper?

We are going to be looking at our scripture from 2 Samuel 6:1-7, and then verse 12b thru 18. Beginning with verses 1-7 (International Children’s Bible) it says:

*<sup>1</sup> David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel. There were 30,000 of them. <sup>2</sup> Then David and all his people went to Baalah in Judah. They took the Ark of the Covenant of God from Baalah in Judah and moved it to Jerusalem.*

*The Ark of the Covenant is called by the Name, the name of the Lord of heaven’s armies. His throne is between the gold creatures with wings that are on the Ark of the Covenant. <sup>3</sup> David’s men put the Ark of the Covenant of God on a new cart. Then they brought the Ark of the Covenant out of Abinadab’s house on the hill.*

*Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, led the new cart. <sup>4</sup> This cart had the Ark of the Covenant of God on it. Ahio was walking in front of it. <sup>5</sup> David and all the Israelites were playing all kinds of musical instruments before the Lord. They were made of pine wood. There were lyres, harps, tambourines, rattles and cymbals.*

*<sup>6</sup> When David’s men came to the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled. The Ark of the Covenant of God began to fall off the cart. So Uzzah reached out and took hold of it. <sup>7</sup> The Lord was angry with Uzzah and killed him. Uzzah had not honored God when he touched the Ark of the Covenant. So Uzzah died there beside it.*

Skipping over to verses 12-18 (International Children's Bible) it says:

*<sup>12</sup> The people told David, "The Lord has blessed the family of Obed-Edom. And all his things are blessed. This is because the Ark of the Covenant of God is there." So David went and brought it up from Obed-Edom's house to Jerusalem with joy. <sup>13</sup> When the men carrying the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord had walked six steps, David sacrificed a bull and a fat calf.*

*<sup>14</sup> Then David danced with all his might before the Lord. He had on a holy linen vest. <sup>15</sup> David and all the Israelites shouted with joy. They blew the trumpets as they brought the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord to the city. <sup>16</sup> Saul's daughter Michal was looking out the window. She watched as the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord came into the city. When she saw David jumping and dancing before the Lord, she hated him.*

*<sup>17</sup> David put up a tent for the Ark of the Covenant. Then the Israelites put it in its place inside the tent. David offered whole burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord. <sup>18</sup> When David finished offering the whole burnt offerings and the fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of heaven's armies.*

Recently we've experienced massive flooding in Texas. There are many stories of the loss and devastation that has occurred from the flooding. One of the most covered stories is the one about Camp Mystic where there were over 500 girls at the camp when the flooding began. Camp Mystic is a century-old all-girls Christian summer camp where young girls, camp employees and vacationers are among the at least 120 people who died when the Texas' Guadalupe River flooded.

These young girls were at a camp to learn more about God and his love. How is that fair? How is that just? As we gathered for worship after that incident, no one has directly said to me that I should explain the goodness of God to them. But I feel the questions and doubts swirling around and I'm afraid to say that I don't have words that would explain such an event.

The story in the Bible tells us that David intended to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem, a key part of his plan to establish the city as the religious and political center of Israel. But then during the procession, the oxen pulling the cart carrying the Ark stumbled, and Uzzah, one of the drivers, reached out to steady it. God struck him dead for this act of irreverence. David, fearing the same fate, abandoned his plan and instead placed the Ark in the house of Obed-Edom and walked away for three months.

But then our scripture tells us that David comes back. And the parade starts again and goes six steps and stops. David brings it all to a halt and throws in an act of worship. Sometimes when there aren't explanations, worship is the best response.



Then he went on and brought the Ark, brought God back home to Jerusalem. And he danced. Stripped down, in his grief and in his joy, David danced in worship. Mixed motives aside, he danced. Wholeheartedly, he danced. He danced, and sometimes he was alone; and other times, the city danced with him in worship.

When someone asks you, "What are you doing on Sunday?" do you say, "I'm going to church" – or do you say, "I'm going to worship"? Is there a difference between the two?

The definition of the word church is - a building used for public Christian worship. While often associated with a physical building, we also believe the church is primarily understood as the people, the "Body of Christ", rather than a structure.

The Bible tells us the church is the community of believers who confess Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. In fact, the word “church” comes from the Greek word *ecclesia* which means “an assembly of people.” *“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them”* (Matthew 18:20, ESV).

The definition of *worship* is – **to give praise, honor, hope, and glory to God**. Using this definition, worship is not something to be done, but rather a lifestyle to be lived – 24/7.

The Bible teaches that the primary purpose of worship is to glorify God, express gratitude, and foster a deeper relationship with Him. Worship is not just a Sunday activity, but a lifestyle that permeates all aspects of life, reflecting a heart that loves and serves God.

Worship is a declaration that God is in the midst of all that is happening in our world today, a powerful weapon against any lie that says God is not in control or that he is not able. Worshiping together teaches us to submit and surrender all our cares to God – our priorities, plans, hopes, dreams, and even our fears

Our scripture for today is about King David. For David, worship was life. Worship wasn’t something David did, rather, worship was who he was. David lived and breathed worship. Yes, sometimes he got it wrong; sometimes he followed impulses that led him astray. And sometimes he got confused about who was the object of this worship and got in the way of the God he loved. But through it all, he just kept dancing, David lived as though his life was an offering to God.



True worship comes from the heart. The more time you spend with God in His word and prayer, the more your heart will be filled with worship for God. Throughout the day, your heart will be “tuned” to God, and you will honor God with both your words and deeds.

Worship reminds us of what we already believe, it softens our hearts towards God and towards others. It affirms our participation in something larger than ourselves and it opens up non-believers to the truth of the Gospel.

When we worship God, we receive his peace, comfort, and strength. Our eyes get redirected away from ourselves and onto the only one who will never fail us. We gain perspective on our problems, our temptations, and our struggles.

When we worship, we engage in activities that express love, reverence, and devotion to God, which can lead to a variety of positive outcomes. Worship can deepen our relationship with God, bring us closer to Him, and provide comfort, strength, and peace. It can also change our perspective, realign our focus, and even bring about physical and emotional healing.

Worship is a way to draw near to God, fostering a deeper connection and intimacy with Him. Many believe that worship invites God's presence, creating a sense of awe and wonder.

It can be a pathway to experiencing forgiveness for past mistakes and finding healing for emotional or spiritual wounds. It can break strongholds, release us from negative patterns, and bring about blessings in our lives.

Worship can refresh our spirits, restore our strength, and give us a renewed sense of purpose. It can remind us of our true identity in Christ and help us to rest in His love and acceptance.

Research even suggests that worship, particularly through music, can have a calming effect, reducing stress, anxiety, and even feelings of depression. It can bring a sense of peace and joy, even in difficult circumstances.

Worship can strengthen the bonds within a community of believers, uniting them in a shared experience of faith. Worship can spill over into other areas of life, impacting our attitudes, actions, and priorities. In essence, worship is a powerful act of devotion that can bring about positive transformation in our lives, both individually and collectively, as we express our love and reverence for God.

You see, worship is not about us. It is not about what I want or what makes me happy. Worship is about my coming into this building, called a church, so I can respond to God's character and presence in my life. In other words, I come here and thank God for who He is. I look at the characteristics of God . . . and I believe He is filled with love, grace, joy, peace, patience, mercy, compassion and many more of what we might call character traits.

I come here and I thank God and recognize his grace in forgiving my sins, for sending Christ to love me and die for me, I come ready to say thank you to God for His compassionate and never ending love, His promise never to abandon me, no matter how bad I become, I come wanting to thank Him for His acts of mercy, for His creativity, for so many different ways I have been blessed because of who God is.

I also come here because I recognize how God is present in my life. Even in those moments when I pull away from God, when I become rebellious, I know that God is present with me. He has promised to be with us forever. To do that He sent His Holy Spirit, so that when Christ ascended and went to heaven, the Holy Spirit could be with each one of us, all at the same time. It is something we cannot explain, I take it on faith, and I thank and praise God for being with me and my family, and with you every second of everyday.

Worshiping God in church is great, but God is also interested in what we do during the rest of the week. Imagine if you worship God in church on Sunday, but the rest of the week, you treat people unfairly. Imagine if you worship God in church on Sunday, but during the week, you don't help those who need help. Imagine if you worship God in church on Sunday but ignore people who need a friend or someone to pray for them. Do you think God will be pleased with you just because you worship on Sunday?

Remember what *worship* means? Say it with me, ***“Worship – to give honor, hope, praise, and glory to God.”*** I know I want to live that life. That life will be pleasing to God, and it is so worth it.

We need to show our faith in God all week in the way we treat others. Going to church and worship shouldn't be enough for us or God. I believe God wants to see our faith on every day of the week! What about you? Do you want to live a life that worships God each and every day?



Here is a video link of the song, “Here I am to Worship”

<https://youtu.be/8fdk0oKMmfg?si=ifyPzvh4DHdWChb4>

**Let us pray...**

*Gracious God, we thank you for the joy and reverence David showed in worshipping you. Help us embody that same spirit of wholehearted worship in our daily lives. Guide us to remove things that distract us from you. Lead us to live and breathe and worship you. Amen.*