

“Get Undignified” // 2 Samuel 6:1–23 // *The Life of David #12a*¹

Announcement: 21DOPF + SOL (Vamp throughout)

Absolutely love hearing from the Diana’s--the Summit Church’s resident Rocky Balboa. Our Godfather. The kind of pastor you want at your bedside if you’re sick and to have your back if you’re jumped in a dark alley. And Ina his wife whom he would call his rock and strength. So thankful for them.

We share their testimony because this Monday starts one of the most important seasons of our church--our annual 21DOPF. I say “annual,” it’s the 3rd time we’ve done it. This is so important, y’all--a time yearly where we can still ourselves to hear, both individually and as a church, from the Lord.

You’ve been hearing about it for a few weeks now, but **beginning tomorrow, on Monday**, we’ll officially begin our 21DOPF. Now, there are different ways and things to fast from, and you can find out all about that on our website. I want to encourage you to go to our website today because throughout these 21 days we’re going to have a **guide with daily prayer prompts**, and you can sign up there for those.

In addition, each Monday night we’ll pray together via Zoom from 8:30-9 p.m. And then on **Friday, Feb. 10** at 7 p.m. we’ll be gathering in person at a number of our permanent campuses for a **Regional Prayer Night**.

On your way in you should’ve received one of [these cards](#). The questions on here are meant to help set you up for success for these 21 days, asking you to identify some things you might focus on during this season and to identify what to fast from. All the information for everything--**ideas for fasting**

¹ Works consulted: Timothy Keller, [“The Lost Ark,”](#) sermon preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, Feb 22, 2004; Tim Chester, *2 Samuel For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God’s Word for You)*, The Good Book Company; Jen Wilkin, JT English, Kyle Worley, Jamin Roller, [“An Ark](#)

(especially if you have a family)’ **sign-ups for the daily prayer prompts; and a link for Zoom calls**--all that is right there on the front page of our website, summitchurch.com.

I want us to begin this message in prayer, because Summit, this is a very appropriate day for us to start this season of prayer and fasting, because this is national Sanctity of Life Sunday--a day in which we lament the greatest moral tragedy of our time--the evil of abortion. We praise God that we’ve seen some of those prayers answered--namely last year when the Supreme Court acknowledged that there is no fundamental right to end someone else’s life embedded in our Constitution.

There’s a lot more work to be done... more work to be done in our own state, and, of course, that all important work of caring for the unwed mother and vulnerable child, which is maybe our most important work.

Listen, for some of you, you should consider serving with one of our partners on the front lines of this, or maybe God is calling you to consider adoption or foster care, or to financially support those who do. If so, go to the middle of our home page and **click the box that says “SOL Sunday”** and it will give you instructions about how to get involved.

But, again, nothing is more important right now than to pray. So will you join me as I pray?

2 Samuel 6:1–23...

As you’re making your way there, I wanna give a special shoutout to our **West Cary Campus** who is launching their first official services this morning AND our CHC celebrates their 10th year anniversary, so, let’s celebrate both of those, can we?

[and a Covenant,](#)” a podcast posed by The Village Church (Flower Mound), April 1, 2018; John Sailhammer, *NIV Compact Bible Commentary*, Zondervan, 1994. And others as noted.

This has always been one of my favorite Bible stories. **When I was a teenager** the subtitle heading over this section of my King James version of the Bible was, “David dances naked before the Lord.” What’s not intriguing for a 7th grader about that? (Have y’all noticed, btw, that the author of 1 and 2 Samuel seems to have a flair for the macabre and the risqué? We’ve had stories of people getting hacked to pieces; stories of David getting trapped in a cave with Saul while Saul... pooped; stories about Samuel’s ghost coming back from the dead and telling Saul that he’s going to be beheaded & eaten by vultures.

Well, today is no exception--this is an amazing story, very colorful, and it teaches us some really important things about worship.

Before I begin, let me acknowledge: Worship is a strangely controversial subject in churches. I get more “constructive criticism” on this subject than any other. Some people come to our church because they love the worship; others leave our church because they don’t like the worship. Strangely, the question of “Do I like the worship style?” is for some people the most decisive factor in where they choose to go to church--more important than belief system, preaching content, mission or community.

Let me say right from the outset: One of the things I LOVE about The Summit Church is that you guys come from all kinds of different backgrounds. We have people that grew up in church contexts where worship was solemn and reflective. You grew up frequently being told “Shhhhh!” in church. Others of you came from backgrounds where quiet was never a word you would associate with church. For a lot of my Pentecostal friends, worship wasn’t really good unless somebody passed out. You can tell who the Pentecostals are here--they are the ones out in the lobby stretching before worship starts because they don’t want to pull a hammy.

Weirdly, worship style is a big deal even for those who don’t consider themselves Christians at all. I know lots of people here who were drawn to Christ through our worship. A friend of mine who became a Christian here last year; she was brand new to church and she said our worship service was like she was getting a LOUD HUG each week. Isn’t that a great description? God said it should be like that. In 1 Cor 14:25 Paul says that unbelievers should come into our worship services, experience the presence of God in our midst, fall on their faces and say, “Surely God is among you!” A lot of people I know point to worship as instrumental in their conversion. (no pun...)

On the other hand, I know non-Christians for whom our worship has been an obstacle. I know of another spiritually curious man--who was not a believer--who came here regularly but always timed his visits so he got here right when the message started (BTW, I saw a couple of you slip in just a minute ago!). Eventually the guy accepted Christ, but for a while our worship was a real obstacle to him.

All that to say, there’s a lot for us to think about here, so let’s dive in. What’s going to happen here is we’re going to walk through this story, and that will set us up for a couple of important worship principles at the end. First, let’s just go through the story...

2 Samuel 6, verse [2] And David arose and went... to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the LORD of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim.--The Ark of the Covenant, of Raiders of the Lost Ark fame (pic), that hosted the presence of God. It had 3 things in it...

David goes down to retrieve it. You say, “Where’s it been?” Well, if you recall from our study of 1 Samuel 5, Israel had lost the Ark in a battle against the Philistines. They’d taken it into battle thinking that it would guarantee them victory against the Philistines, even though they weren’t really walking with God at the time. But God, of course, will not be manipulated by anybody, and so they lost not only the

battle but the Ark itself. The Philistines captured it and carried it to the temple of their god, Dagon. The next morning, however, the city was overrun with mice, all the leaders woke up with tumors, and the statue of Dagon had fallen on his face with his hands chopped off.

That seemed like an... **odd** coincidence, so just to be on the safe side they took the Ark to a different Philistine city, and the same exact thing happened there. This happened a few times, and eventually they concluded, “We don’t want this thing” and they put it on a new cart pulled by a couple of young cows with an “I’m sorry” gift of golden images of the tumors accompanying it (which is a really weird I’m sorry gift, if you ask me). Well, the young cows pulling the new cart miraculously turn in the exact direction of the Jewish tabernacle and start to walk the Ark home. When the cows lumber across the border into Israel, a guy named Shemesh recognizes the Ark and takes it to his house. I mean, free Ark, right? But then, some of the people in his house get curious about the Ark and so they look inside it, just like the Germans did in the *Raiders* movie, and they die instantly, also like the Germans did in the *Raiders* movie--although there is no indication that their faces melted off. That said, it doesn't say their faces DIDN'T melt off, either. So, it's possible. **Bottom line, Shemesh says, “This thing is dangerous. I don’t want it in my house”** and he sends for some Israelite priests from the next city over to come get it, and they take it to the house of a guy named Abinadab. Abinadab puts it in one of his guest rooms, where it sits undisturbed for 20 years. (Visitors were like, “What’s in that room?” and he’s like, “I wouldn’t go in there.”)

That was all from 1 Samuel 5. Please **tell me you remember this**. At least nod your head and pretend. Now, here we are, **20 years later**, and David says, “the Ark belongs at the tabernacle,” which brings us to 2 Sam 6:3 **And (so) they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab... And Uzzah, the son of Abinadab (he’d lived in the house where the Ark had been for 20 years), was driving the new cart.** [5] **And David and all the house of**

Israel were making merry before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals, and the Hammond B-3 organ and the electric guitars and the kazoo. They were having flat-out praise-palooza.

[6] (But) **And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, the oxen stumbled, and Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God to steady it. He didn’t want it to fall to the ground!** [7] **And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error** (the Hebrew word here implies ‘irreverence’--a casualness; and the Lord struck him down because of his irreverence), **and he died (right) there beside the ark of God.**

Now, watch this next verse: [8] **And David was angry because the LORD had burst forth against Uzzah...** One of the things I love about the Bible is how honest it is. David was offended by God. David was like, “COME ON, God! He was trying to do you a favor!”

Listen, and I want to say this gently but clearly: **We are not the first generation in history to be offended by the Bible.** I say that because people sometimes assume we are, now that we’re all enlightened. Listen: the Bible has been offending people for centuries--even some of its writers, like David. Listen--if the requirement for belief is that nothing in the Bible offends you, I wouldn’t be a Christian. Like David, there are things in this book that, honestly, bother me and sometimes make me mad. But see, like David, I’ve learned to trust God despite those things. I figure if God is God and I am not, there’s a lot of things about my thinking that are going to have to shift over the years.

Look at this next verse: [9] **And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, “How can the ark of the LORD come to me?”** [10] **So David was not willing to take the ark of the LORD into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite.** (David left the ark of God in the home of a man who was not even a Hebrew!).

If you're taking notes, here's what we're going to see: **1. The Problem of God's Presence; 2. The Ark (as) = God's Answer; 3. The Only Logical Response**

1. The Problem of God's Presence

Let's talk for a minute about what happened to Uzzah. You say, "I don't get it. What was Uzzah supposed to do, just watch it tumble onto the ground? He was trying to do God a favor and keep the Ark from getting dirty! At the very least, you say, **the punishment feels way more severe than the crime.**"² If I asked you to raise your hands if you think this punishment is more severe than the crime, I bet 99.8% of you would put your hand up.

And I get that. But here's the thing (and this is going to be hard for some of you): ***The whole point of this story is that the punishment was not more severe than the crime.*** Here's why:

First: God had given specific instructions in Exodus 25 about how the Ark was to be carried.³ It had been constructed with little loops on the side so that you could run poles through it and carry it that way; and a little special covering to go over it so that no one would accidentally touch it. The Israelites chose to ignore those biblical instructions and do it their way. In fact, did you notice that they were transporting it on a "new cart?" Where did they learn that? From the Philistines. They just decided the Philistine way was easier. Listen: you don't get to decide the way to worship God. God decides that. We have to heed his word.

The second (and bigger) issue: Uzzah was unaware of his own sinfulness. Uzzah sees the Ark about to touch the ground and he thinks, "I should keep the Ark from touching the ground, because the

ground is dirty." But Uzzah doesn't realize that his hand is far more filthy than the dirt is. As the late RC Sproul said: The dirt had never rebelled against the authority of God; only sinful man had done that. It wasn't the dirt on the ground that would defile the ark; *it was the touch of man that would.*

You see, our sin makes us infinitely more offensive to the holiness of God than their filthiest dirt on the planet. You say, "Well, I'm not that sinful. I'm not perfect, but compared to others I'm a pretty good person." But that's because you're not thinking about how holy God is.

- **Imagine** you were drinking a glass of milk and I told you that a few droplets of a lethal virus were mixed into it. You don't say, "Well, at least it's 99% pure." No, at that point the whole thing is defiled. Multiply that emotion times a billion and you are getting close to God's revulsion at our sin. The prophet Haggai says that God is of "such pure eyes that he cannot even behold evil or look upon wickedness." Coming into God's presence with sin on you would be like a tissue paper trying to land on the surface of the sun.

We sometimes, like Uzzah, seem blissfully unaware of this: We glibly sing songs like, "Lord, I want to see your face..." You realize that if God suddenly answered that prayer and ripped the roof off of this place and looked down on us, a bunch of us might die, right?

But that brings up a question: **Uzzah touched the Ark, and he died.** Question: How many of you are holding a Bible? Should be all of you, btw! You are touching the Word of God. Why are you still alive? Why am I? Great question. That's #2...

2. The Ark = God's Answer

² See R. C. Sproul, "Holy Justice," in *The Holiness of God*

³ Exodus 25:10–22

If the Ark presents us with the problem of God's presence, it also gives us God's answer.

[11] And (so) the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months (they left it there for 3 months because they were afraid of it), and (now, watch this--) the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household. [12] And it was told King David, "The LORD has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." It's like God is sending a message to David that his intention is to bless. David's faith is rekindled and he sends for the Ark. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing.

[13] And when *those who bore the ark* of the LORD... Do you see that? "Those who bore"? Don't miss this: the ark is now being carried by people, like Exodus commanded. When Uzzah was carrying it, he was doing it in the Philistine way; they had ignored God's instruction. Now, they are doing it his way.

Vs 13 "And when *those who bore the ark* of the LORD had gone six steps, he (David) sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal." Every 6 steps, they made a sacrifice. God had provided a way for his people to be in his presence with safety--through sacrifice—like I said, the most important feature of the Ark was a "Mercy Seat" on the top where the high priest, once a year, would sprinkle the blood of a sacrifice. You know, in our sanitized world, we tend to think of animal sacrifices like this as traditional and quaint. I've seen one—they are bloody and difficult to watch. In fact, they are pretty horrible. But it was supposed to be like that. The lamb was dying for their sin. A death like Uzzah's is being re-enacted in each one.

And that's the gospel. Jesus, one day, would come like one of these lambs and die the death of Uzzah once for all in our place. He was

struck down for our irreverence. On the cross, all the wrath of God directed at our sin was absorbed into his body.

Tony Evans tells the story--true story--of a man out hiking with his wife one afternoon in the middle of an open field when they got caught in a terrible hailstorm. Now, this was a massive hailstorm; one of those rare storms where the hail was as large as baseballs. The man realized that if he didn't do something quickly, his wife would be severely hurt. So, he draped himself over his wife, covering her with his own body so that the hailstones hit him instead of her. He thought the hailstorm would only last a few seconds, but the hailstones seemed to just get bigger and bigger and come down harder and harder. After a couple of minutes, his ears were bleeding, along with several spots on his head and arms. He tried to get to cover, but he was so weakened by the onslaught that he finally collapsed over his wife, only able to shield her from the danger as she lay beneath him. After a few minutes, the storm finally ceased, but the hailstones had taken their toll. They both survived, but he was left with scars from where the balls had battered away at him, scars that remain to this day. He carries around with him visible reminders of the day he saved his wife.

On the local newscast, the man's wife was asked how she felt about their experience. She said, "Well, every time I see the scars, I love him more."

Did you know, according to the book of Revelation, that there will be only one person in heaven with scars? You and I will have perfected bodies, but Jesus will permanently have holes in his hands and his feet and one in his side. Those scars will be our eternal reminder that the only reason we are there is because he stood between the wrath of God and the judgment headed our way. He covered us with his love and kept the hailstones of judgment from hitting us. And when we see the scars, it will make us love him more.

And that leads me to...

Number 3. Our Only Logical Response

[14] And David danced before the LORD with all his might. (What else do you do before a God who has saved your life like this?) And David was wearing a linen ephod. (Some translations say “naked” here, but Hebrew scholars tell us the phrase here really means David had stripped down to his underwear, which for a Jewish man consisted of a linen ephod that they wore under their robes—it’s the Hebrew version of adult underoos...I’m actually wearing one right now; it’s quite comfortable. Just kidding.

[15] So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn. [16] (But) Michal (the daughter of Saul) looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD, and she despised him in her heart...

[18] And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts [19] and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house. (We’ll come back to that! But first, let me finish the story) [20] And David returned to bless his household. But Michal *the daughter of Saul* came out to meet David and said, “*How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants’ female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!*” IOW, “you looked like a fool, David. Your behavior doesn’t befit a King, you were acting like someone from the peasant class.”

[21] And David said to Michal, “It was before the LORD, who chose me above your father, and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD—and I *will* make merry before the LORD. [22] (Indeed,) I will make myself yet more contemptible (some translations say “undignified” here. “I will make myself even more *undignified*) than this, and I will be abased in your eyes. But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor.”

Let me translate all that for you: David said, “Michal, God chose me when I was nothing. And now that I am something I am going to show everybody that it’s not because of something special about me; it’s because of something special God has done for me.” Y’all remember, Michal was King Saul’s daughter. Her dad’s problem, if you recall, was that he always cared about what people thought of him, and Michal sadly has taken on that trait from her daddy. She is only thinking about what everyone else was thinking about her and David. It’s all about appearances.

David says, “I don’t care what people think about me, in fact, I don’t want them to think about me at all; I want them to think about *him*... And by the way (he says to Michal) “as for those female servants in whose eyes you seem to be so worried about my reputation, when they see my exuberance before the Lord, that I’m nothing before the Lord and that he’s my everything, then they will see that there is really no difference in them and me--they’ll forget that I’m a king and they are peasants--and they will learn that they have the same access to God that I do, and that will bring them the same joy I have. Then they will thank God for me.”

In his words to Michal, David gives us the essence of worship. Here’s my favorite short definition of worship. **worship = putting the worthiness of God on display.** In fact, that’s where we get the word worship from: ‘Worship’ = **Worth + ship**. When you worship, you are declaring its worth to others.

So here's my question for you: **What does your worship tell others about the value of God to you?**

- **Do they see your joy in him? Can they see how valuable he is to you?**
- I'm not trying to judge you, but if *when we are in here singing about him, you come in late and then stand there with a bored look on your face and a coffee cup in your hands, mumbling through the words and looking down every few minutes to check your phone, what does that say to others about the worthiness of God to you?* I'll just let that set there for a second.

Now, I know what you're saying, "Pastor, I'm just not that expressive of a person. I'm not like those people on stage." I understand. And of course, *you should not, not be yourself in worship*. And I'll buy that **as long as it would be true that if I walked up to you and handed you an envelope with \$1 million dollars in it that your response would be (looking down), "Well, praise God and thank you."** If that would be your response to getting a million dollars, then I suppose it might be appropriate for you to respond that way in worship. But, if not, then maybe you need to ask yourself if getting a million dollars would feel more significant to you than your salvation.

Jesus once had a woman who came in to him while he was eating and began to weep and wash Jesus' feet with her hair. A lot of religious bystanders objected that this was inappropriate--undignified. Do you remember Jesus' response? **"Those who are forgiven much, love much." (Luke 7:47)** Is it possible that the reason you are not more expressive in worship is that the extent of God's forgiveness of you and the value of your possession of him hasn't really captured you?

Now, I get it--you say, "Pastor, I love my kids even more than I'd love a million dollars but I don't spontaneously scream every time someone mentions their name." When someone says my daughter

"Allie's" name I don't scream, "Hallelujah! Isn't she good?" I get it. Our deep passion and emotion for our kids has a huge range of expressions, and our worship can be like that, too. But don't you think sometimes, in some places—like David is doing—if you really love something we'll see that exuberance on display? That's what David is saying.

Let me give you twin worship principles to hold in tension (chances are, if you like one, you won't like the other)

A. Different cultures (and different personalities) have different ways of expressing emotion.

Different cultures and different traditions have distinct ways of expressing emotion and reverence and worship, and that's ok.

I've learned this most as we've tried to make strides in becoming a multi-ethnic church. As you know, pursuing ethnic unity is much bigger than just worship style. But worship is one area where our church has learned a ton from various cultures being involved.

- **For example, we have a lot of traditional Southern Baptists in our church.** When they are really into it in church, they tend to sing with a lot of gusto. There's not a lot of movement in their worship, and many of them can't even clap on beat, but there's plenty of volume, especially when we bring out those old hymns. If they get totally into it, they may even lift one arm for a moment like they are trying to ask a question. And if they are experiencing full-on revival, they'll sway back and forth with both arms bent 90 degrees at the elbows, as if they're carrying a giant, invisible microwave oven. And when I preach, they'll let out punctuated, staccato "Amens" when I say something they think is powerful, especially if I alliterate it.
- **Mixed in among them is a sizable number of people who grew up in churches that were a bit more, shall we say... loquacious**

with their sermon feedback. I remember Chuck and Yolanda Reed—they were on staff for several years before they left to go church plant. They loved to “help me out” when I was preaching. If I said something she liked, Yolanda wouldn’t let out a quick Amen, she’d talk back to me in complete sentences—with verbs and adverbs and sometimes questions I wasn’t sure if I’m supposed to answer. **(STORY: I was preaching in this little church years ago and a Pentecostal woman about halfway back kept raising her hand and I kept thinking--that’s weird.** And so finally I asked her, “Do you have a question?” And she turned white as a sheet. That was just her way of saying ‘Amen.’). During worship, a lot of these former Pentecostals add in some rhythmic clapping, shouting, and jumping that I don’t typically see from our members who grew up at First Baptist.

- **Our Latino members combine this sanctified enthusiasm with what can only be called a supernatural endurance.** For them, anything less than two hours of singing cannot legitimately be called “worship.” I’m serious: the first time I attended a service at our Summit en Español campus, I missed lunch with my family. And I think dinner, too.
- **When it comes to boisterous worship, though, I have yet to find a group that puts more body and soul into singing** than a group of Duke college students that came to our church who had grown up in South Korea. They always sat on the second row at the Brier Creek worship. The first time I saw them worshipping I honestly thought someone was going to get hurt. They weren’t “singing” the songs; they were yelling them. Sometimes stomping with the beat. And several of them looked like they were trying to give God up in heaven a high five while they worshiped. But then, get this, when I got up to preach, it was like someone flipped a switch. These passionate worshipers became stone-silent the entire time I preached, even during the good parts. The alliterated parts. I

⁴ The Bible says: “Man looks on the outside; God looks on the heart.” We all have **cultural preferences**. They become sin when we put too

honestly was a little discouraged; I thought maybe I just wasn’t connecting with them, so I finally asked one of them: “Y’all are so fun to watch when we’re singing. But during the sermons you just sit there with no response. Am I just not connecting with you?”

And one of them looked back at me and said, “Oh no, pastor, we love your preaching as much as we love the music. But in our culture, it is impolite to talk when the pastor’s speaking. Sitting silently is how we show respect for the Word of God you’re preaching.” **I know a missionary in TOKYO who says about Japanese Christians:** if you look at their faces, they are extremely expressive, but everything they do is in a whisper. They say, “We want to express our hearts to God by our emotions, but we also want not distract others from doing the same.”

So here’s the question: Which of these is the correct, biblical way to worship? Amen.

- **What is wrong is when we elevate our preferences and make them normative.**⁴ Remember what God told Samuel earlier in 1 Samuel? Don’t judge the outside, Samuel “Man looks on the outside, but I look on the heart.”
- **I grew up in a church with some of the godliest people I’ve ever known**—many lived the most sacrificial lives; they were people of integrity; they were people of deep prayer, people who brought others to Jesus consistently—they were just quieter and less expressive. But I know people who would look at them self-righteously and say, “They are not filled with the Spirit.” Y’all, SINCE WHEN DID BEING FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT BECOME SYNONYMOUS WITH A WORSHIP STYLE? Man looks on the outside, but God looks on the heart.

much value on them. Now, if you’re hearing this as a justification of a cool, detached posture in worship... that’s not a style, that’s sin.

So, that's one of the two worship principles. Here's the other one, you have to hold these in tension, because they are both true...

B. All Worship Should have Elements of Passion and Self-Forgetfulness

Remember, "undignified" is the word David used in 2 Sam 6:22. He said to Michal, "And I will make myself even more undignified than this when I worship..." The word here implies self-forgetfulness. What David said is, 'When I worship, I'm not going to think about what people are thinking about me; I'm going to think about what they are thinking about God.'

It is true we all do things differently, but the corresponding truth is that all worship should contain elements of passion and self-forgetful expressiveness.

- We can see that displayed in the one praise book we have in the Bible--the Psalms. Now, warning: this is about to make some of you uncomfortable!
- **More than 20x in Scripture** we are encouraged, even commanded, to raise our hands in worship. Here's just a few examples:⁵

Psalm 88:9, "I call for you every day, O Lord; I spread out my hands like a child toward you." **Psalm 143:6**, "I spread out my hands to you. My soul thirsts for you like a man in a parched land." **Psalm 28:2**, "Hear my cry for mercy as I call to You for help; as I lift my hands..." **Psalm 134:2**, "Lift your hands in the sanctuary and bless the Lord."

In another 14 places in the OT we see this posture modeled (Interestingly, archaeological studies have found depictions of OT worshippers with their hands raised. It was so commonly associated with worship that when an artist wanted to depict worship, that's what they drew). We also see that posture modeled in the New Testament: **1 Timothy 2:8**, "I desire that in every place the men should pray, lifting up holy hands..."

In the same way, we have multiple instances of commands to shout loud and clap your hands in worship. For example:

Psalm 32:11 – "Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, O righteous, and shout for joy, all you upright in heart!" **Psalm 35:27** – "Let those who delight in my salvation shout for joy..." **Psalm 47:1** – "Clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with a voice of triumph..." **Psalm 81:1** – "Sing aloud to God our strength; shout for joy to the God of Jacob!" **Isaiah 12:6** – "Shout, and sing for joy, O Zion, for great in your midst is the Holy One of Israel." **Zephaniah 3:14** – "Sing aloud, O Zion; shout, O Israel! Rejoice and exult with all your heart, O Jerusalem!"

Now, class, in English grammar, what kinds of sentences are those? **Declarative? Interrogative? Imperative?** They are *imperative*. And what does imperative mean? It means they are COMMANDS.

Now, you say, "But if I don't feel like it, I shouldn't do it." Since when does how you feel become a condition of whether or not you obey? No sincere Christian says, "I don't feel like praying, so I just won't."

⁵ Exodus 9:33; 1 Kings 8:22, 38, 54; 2 Chron. 6:12, 13, 29; Ezra 9:5; Nehemiah 8:6; Job 11:13; Psalms 28:2; 63:4; 88:9; 119:48; 134:2; 141:2; 143:6; Lamentations 2:19, 3:41; 1 Timothy 2:8.

You say, “But isn’t it hypocritical to do something I don’t feel in my heart?”

- No. Here’s how obedience works: sometimes as you are obeying, when you don’t feel like it, God changes your heart to desire what you are doing. In some ways, your obedience is like a cry to God to change your heart.
- In fact, here’s a little secret: **the posture of our bodies actually guides the emotions of your heart.** That’s how God designed us. Psychologists tell us that we are psychosomatic creatures, which means our souls and bodies are intertwined.⁶ So, when I get into a posture of surrender (KNEEL), I feel emotions of surrender. When I adopt a posture of reverence, it helps guide my heart to feel reverence.
- A lot of times we think that the posture of our body is a *reflection* of our heart; but often the posture of our body serves as the *guide, the catalyst* for our heart. **Try it:** raise your hands, and you will probably feel more adoring.

Furthermore, and this is important to remember: **The central question in worship is not what we feel like, but what he is worthy of.** One of my pet peeves is when worship leaders open a worship service by saying, “How you guys *feeling* this morning?” How do I feel? I feel like a lousy, self-centered, unbelieving sinner. I feel defeated. The point is not “What do I feel like right now?” the point is, “What is God worthy of?” I worship based off his promises, not my feelings. Remember: **Worship is putting his worth-ship, not my emotional disposition, on display.**

- I want my unbelieving friends to see my worship and think, “*Now this must be a God worth knowing.*”

⁶ Justin Earley, *The Common Rule*. Earley talks about enhancing his prayer life by kneeling: “Often one of the only ways to take hold of the mind is to take hold of the body.” If he can’t kneel in a given context, he will substitute some other physical posture because, “I need something physical to mark

- I want fellow believers to see my worship, who know when I’m going through a hard time, and they see my hands raised and joy on my face and tears in my eyes, when they know everything is going wrong in my life, and they say, “Now, this must be a God worth trusting! This God must be so amazing that he gives you joy even when everything is not going your way!”

Listen, I’m not trying to contradict what I said earlier about different cultures and different personalities having different ways of expressing emotion, no one necessarily better than the others. I’m just saying that in all worship we ought to see expressiveness and passion and, sometimes, we ought to look undignified. And yes, **Certainly, there are times** to stand silently or kneel reverently and quietly before God. (After a huge display of God’s glory in the book of Revelation, it says everyone “stood quiet for half an hour.” So yes, that’s often appropriate.) But we also need to take these commands to raise our hands and shout and clap and sing aloud seriously.

So--we go forward with these twin, complementary truths: **A. Different cultures (and different personalities) have different ways of expressing emotion. (and you’re not the judge of anybody else).** **B. All (gospel-based) Worship Should have Elements of Passion and Self-Forgetfulness.** These don’t contradict each other, but they are tension points that complement each other.

Let me just cut to the chase and put this bluntly--I’m talking to you as your pastor right now. I’m not talking to the Christian world. I’m talking to you, Summit Church--**Some of you need to repent of the dignity you carry yourself with in church.** Like Saul, you care too much about what other people are going to think.

the moment for my slippery mind.” Cf. Catherine Bell (an anthropologist): “Kneeling does not merely communicate subordination ... For all intents and purposes, kneeling produces a subordinated kneeler in and through the act itself.” <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/themelios/article/brains-bodies-and-the-task-of-discipleship-re-aligning-anthropology-and-ministry/>

Let me share with you a story, by permission, about a **discussion** that took place between **two of our campus pastors**--one whose name I won't use, though he told me I could use this story. We'll just call him, "Pastor D." **The other one is Raudel**, our *Summit en Espanol* pastor. Pastor D came from a Presbyterian background, and by his own admission, he tends to sit through worship subdued and that's what he's most comfortable with. Pastor Raudel said to him, "Well, first, my background is Pentecostal, and second, I'm Hispanic, which means I have a great Latin love of emotion. That's a double whammy." So, when Pastor D said, "I just don't get that passionate in worship, that's not my style," Raudel said to him: "OK, but what kind of emotion do you show in other areas of your life?" And so this first campus pastor watched himself for 2 weeks. Watching how he responded to his kids, how he responded to seeing his wife after traveling, after watching his favorite football team win a victory. After observing himself for 2 weeks, he came back to Raudel and said that his relationship with God was the only area in his life that he really cared about in which he was not expressive and joyful! He said, "I think I've got some repenting to do in the way I've been approaching worship."

I'm not trying to judge you or make you someone else or say that you need to worship in a certain style to be a good Christian. I'm just saying, Summit, let's worship God like David did. Not by stripping down to our skivvies each time the band plays--nobody wants to see that--but by, at times, putting the worthiness of God and our gratefulness for our salvation on display. SHOUT UNTO GOD WITH THE VOICE OF TRIUMPH; Make known his salvation among THE NATIONS!

Let me bring this story to a conclusion. Go back to vs. 19--these are the verses I told you we'd come back to: **[19] and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a**

cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house.

- **OK, raisin cakes were well known in Israel as an aphrodisiac.** If you don't know that word, each campus pastor will be standing down front after the service ready to explain it to you. That's not how I think about them, but that's why it says they all went home after David gave them to him. So that when the time was right, they were.
- **The point? Worshiping through the gospel makes you fruitful.** Spiritually fertile. This is a little parable being given to us. How do you produce spiritual fruit? Not by focusing on it... think about it, how do a man and woman produce biological fruit...?
- Intimate worship with Jesus makes you spiritually fruitful. So, look at:

Verse [23] And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

- Now, this isn't a universal statement about infertility--of course not, as if infertility is a punishment. No. What the author is pointing out here is that God put an end to the spiritually infertile, self-aware, non-God-focused lineage of Saul.
- God's King, he said, was going to come through a lineage that understood the purpose of worship, who was not afraid to get undignified to put the glory of God on display; to a lineage who understood that God was the most valuable thing in the universe and who was not afraid to declare that in their worship.

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So, bow your heads, if you will. So, here's my question: It's not, "**How do you worship?**"; it's "**how valuable is God to you?**" That's the real question.

Have you received the forgiveness of Jesus, and if so, are you in touch with it enough that it fills your heart with spontaneous shouts of

praise and songs of gladness? Does it create as much joy in you as getting an unexpected bonus check, or hearing some good news, or watching your team win? If not, do you need to look into your heart and figure out what you're missing? Maybe you just need to pray, 'Lord, open my eyes, so that this would come more naturally to me.

Let me ask a more basic question, for all of you: Have you ever received his forgiveness as your own? See, the holiness of God is such that no sinner can stand in his presence and survive. But there is good news: Jesus died in your place so you wouldn't have to. You can receive him, right here, right now, today, if you never have. Just say, right where there where you are sitting, with your head bowed-- *"Jesus, I know that I am a sinner who needs to be forgiven. And I receive your offer right now to save me. I surrender my life to you."* (If you did that, come up afterward and tell one of the lovely folks standing at the front at any of our campuses, or tell the person who invited you. Or, you can text the word **"ready" to 33933.**)

Let's linger for a moment as our worship teams come back up here to lead us...