

WELCOME

Last week, we (finally) jumped back into our Kingdom Family series in the book of Ephesians.

- ▶ We focused on Chapter 5 verse 19, where Paul exhorts the Ephesian church to sing "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs *among yourselves*."
- ▶ We looked at how musical worship is a corporate synchronizes and calibrates our hearts to the heartbeat of God, bringing our emotions into alignment with the truth of what we sing, brings unity among the people of God, and supernaturally resonates the glory of God in the earth.
 - ▶ We are like the strings on an instrument who have been tensioned and tuned to the frequency of the Kingdom, in order that we might resonate in harmony with one another, creating a beautiful, powerful, and undeniable testimony of who God is, what He's done, and what he wants to do in the world.

This morning, we will be drilling down into the second half of verse 19.

- ▶ I'm going to read from v18-21, because this is one congruent thought that Paul is communicating.
 - ▶ Most translations punctuate it and divide it up into sentences, but it's really one fluid sentence.
- ▶ I'll be reading and teaching from the New Living Translation.
- ▶ TITLE: **From the Heart to the Heavens**

EPHESIANS 5:18-21 (NLT)

¹⁸ Don't be drunk with wine, because that will ruin your life. Instead, be filled with the Holy Spirit, ¹⁹ singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs *among yourselves*, and **making music to the Lord in your hearts. ²⁰ And give thanks for everything to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²¹ And further, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.**

PRAY

I want to start this morning with story of the first time that I experienced "penecostal worship"...

- ▶ I was raised in the Presbyterian Church.
- ▶ Presbyterians are sometimes referred to as the "frozen chosen"...

- Because musical worship in the Presbyterian Church, while often very beautiful and reverential and honoring to God, is not the most PHYSICALLY EXPRESSIVE kind of worship.
- If someone lifted their hands during worship, it was like..."oh..."
- So that's what I grew up with
- And then I met my wife Elaina...who grew up in a different, much more charismatic, church in Ventura.
- We started dating...
 - That awkward thing when You're dating...which Church do you go to?
 - We were both really involved in our respective churches...
- For a couple of years, we alternated...

And I'll NEVER forget the first time I attended church with my wife.

- Here I am this little Presby kid in a sea of fired-up, hand-raising, flag-waving, Pentecostal worshippers.
- The opening song was *Days of Elijah*...remember that one? "Theses are the days of Elijah...declaring the name of the Lord"
- And everyone around me is just going nuts. Hands in the air, shouting, all of it.
- At this point in my Christian experience, I had no idea what a shofar was.
 - If you don't know...**this is a shofar.**
 - It's basically a trumpet made out of a ram's horn.
 - It was used often in the old testament...and it's VERY LOUD.
- So here we are in worship...Days of Elijah...people are going for it.
- And we're about to hit the chorus..."Prepare Ye the way of the Lord...Behold He..."
- And then out of NOWHERE...straight into my ear canal...this cacophonous sound.
- The kind gentleman sitting directly behind me had brought his shofar to church, and was VERY excited to express himself in worship using it.
- After church, Elaina says, "oh yeah, I forgot to tell you about that guy." I'm like..."thanks for that"

I was baptized by shofar into the realm of Pentecostal worship.

- I don't share that story to knock Presbyterian or Pentecostal worship. But it does provoke an interesting question...one that people have been asking for thousands of years...

How do we worship God? (More specifically) How do we express ourselves to God in praise (musical worship)? What is musical worship supposed to look like?

- This question is best summarized by what the Samaritan woman asks Jesus in John 4
- We taught a whole sermon on this chapter a few weeks ago.

- ▶ Jesus has just revealed the deepest, most shameful part of her life...
- ▶ And then she asks Him this peculiar question about worship...
- ▶ **JOHN 4:19-20 (NLT)**
¹⁹ "Sir, you must be a prophet. Here's the question ²⁰ So tell me, why is it that you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place of worship, while we Samaritans claim it is here at Mount Gerizim, where our ancestors worshiped?"
- ▶ PARAPHRASE: "Your people say that worship looks *THIS* way, and my people say that it looks *THAT* way...so what is the right way to worship? What should worship look like?"
- ▶ Here's how Jesus responds...
- ▶ **JOHN 4:21, 23-24 (NLT)**
- ▶ ²¹ Jesus replied, "Believe me, dear woman, the time is coming when it will no longer matter whether you worship the Father on this mountain or in Jerusalem...²³ But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way. ²⁴ For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."
- ▶ Here's what Jesus is saying:
- ▶ What's important is not where worship takes place. What's important about worship is where it is directed and where it comes from.

And (I believe) this is the heart of our verse this morning.

- ▶ Paul's words to the Ephesian Church are akin to Jesus' words to the Samaritan woman.
- ▶ The first half of verse 19 (last Sunday) was focused on the horizontal nature of worship:
 - ▶ That worship is something that we do with one another...
 - ▶ Musical worship is meant to be a shared experience.
- ▶ The second half of verse 19 (today) is really all about the vertical nature of worship.

Paul says to the christian: Make music to the lord in your hearts.

- ▶ To the lord.

1. The lord is always the object of our worship.

- ▶ This is the first thing that I want us to see today.
- ▶ Even though we might be singing with (and sometimes to one another as an encouragement)...
- ▶ God is the focal point of our worship. He is both the object and the audience (subject) of our praise.

This can sound almost cliché...but it can so easily become inverted...especially in our day and age and culture.

- ▶ It can be so easy to be deceived into thinking that we are the audience of worship.
 - ▶ That worship exists primarily for us.
 - ▶ That worship is primarily about what we receive.
 - ▶ That worship is about our experience.
- ▶ When we entertain that idea that we are the audience, it leads us to a host of wrong beliefs about worship.
 - ▶ If we become the audience:
 - ▶ Worship becomes about the style of music that we like or dislike.
 - ▶ Worship becomes about the songs that we sing or don't sing.
 - ▶ "I Wish my church would play more Hillsong...I wish my church would play NO Hillsong."
 - ▶ "Why don't we sing more hymns..."
 - ▶ "The music is too emo...play some happy music."
 - ▶ Or how loud or quiet or good or bad the sound mix is.
 - ▶ When I used to run sound here, someone came up to me...and said, "hey, can you turn the reverb down..."
 - ▶ Worship becomes about which worship leader we think is our favorite.
 - ▶ We spiritualize it—we say things like "So and so is SO ANOINTED. When they lead worship, I just receive...I just respond better to the way they lead..."
 - ▶ But that is just CONSUMERISM cloaked in spirituality.
 - ▶ Often in American Christianity we treat our worship (and church) experience like a Subway sandwich.
 - ▶ "Here's what I like...Here's what I don't like...Here's the toppings that I want"
 - ▶ "I want a nicely balanced sound mix, overall peak decibel rating of 85-95db with a decent combination of hymns and contemporary worship..."
 - ▶ "Those 'spontaneous' moments kinda weird me out...not really my flavor"
 - ▶ "It would be great if the worship leader was like...late 20's, early 30's. You know. Not totally a pretentious hipster vibe but still kinda relevant. Somewhere in between skinny jeans and dad jeans."
 - ▶ I know that's funny, but isn't it a picture of where our hearts can go sometimes?

A few years ago I was in the church office...

- ▶ My wife was still on staff and I had brought her lunch.
- ▶ And the previous Sunday I had led worship with Katie Rios (one of our leaders)
- ▶ And this really sweet gentleman stopped by to meet with one of the elders. And while he was waiting he was chit-chatting with Jill, our former receptionist.
- ▶ And all of a sudden he starts talking about last weeks worship set.

- "Oh my Gosh, the girl that was singing, she just has the most amazing, beautiful voice. Wow! I was blow away!"
- In my head I'm like: "oh, that's awesome!"
- And then he says, "but I didn't really care for the guy that was singing..."
- I'M SITTING RIGHT THERE...trying to hold it together. HE HAD NO IDEA THAT I WAS IN THE ROOM!
- My wife is just giggling under her breath is texting me every emoji under the sun:
- It was top 3 most awkward moments of my life.

I fully believe that God used that horribly awkward moment to humble my heart, but it is a example of what can happen when we forget who the audience is.

- And if we are to worship the way that Paul is calling us to worship, we cannot be the audience.
- Worship involves us (we are participants, we are engaged, and it deeply benefits us), but worship is not primarily about us, and it is certainly not for us.
- **Worship is always to, for, and about Jesus.**

At Reality Ventura, we've tried to do our best to direct everything that we do in musical worship toward God.

- We really strive to choose music that is biblical, christ-centered, and christ-exalting
 - We will even change lyrics if they feel weird...
 - "Hey this line is unclear or confusing..."
- We intentionally backlight the worship team.
 - Sometimes people think our lights are broken.
 - "No we do that on purpose."
- Even our stage is designed with this in mind.
 - We don't put worship leaders in the center of the stage.
 - The backdrop...
 - Everything is configured to guide the eyes of the worshiper upward toward the lyrics.
 - Because that's what matters!

Worship isn't about who is on the stage. Worship is about who is on the throne.

- And everything that we do in worship should be directed toward His throne.
- Last week I read a passage from Revelation 7. But I want to read it again:
- John writes:

‣ **REVELATION 7:9-12**

⁹ After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing **before the throne** and before

the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, ¹⁰ and crying out with a loud voice, "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!" ¹¹ And all the angels **were standing around the throne** and around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces **before the throne** and worshiped God, ¹² saying, "Amen! Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might be to our God forever and ever! Amen."

- ▶ In the Apostle John's vision of heavenly, consummate worship, everything and everyone is centered around the throne.
 - ▶ And all of the attention and the affection and the praise is being directed toward Jesus.
 - ▶ There's no stage here. There's no band. There aren't even any worship leaders mentioned.
 - ▶ There's just Jesus, on His throne, with every tribe and tongue and angel gathered around Him in worship, and it is perfect.

God is always the object of our worship.

So we know where worship should go (direction of worship), but where should it come from? Where does worship originate?

- ▶ Paul exhorts the Christian to "[make] music to the Lord in your heart."

2. True worship must originate in the heart.

- ▶ This is the second thing I want us to see..
- ▶ Heart = kardia
- ▶ Where we get the physiological term "cardio" (A loathsome term for me)
- ▶ But in the ancient Greek, kardia had a much broader, more spiritual context to it.
- ▶ *Kardia* denotes the center of all physical and spiritual life.
- ▶ *Kardia* is the deep-end of your soul.
- ▶ Biblical scholars define *Kardia* as "*Kardia* = the soul or mind, as it is the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, purposes, endeavours."

I want to hang out on that picture of the heart for a moment. The heart is both the seat and the fountain of our souls.

- ▶ The heart is a seat. And like a throne, whatever sits on that throne governs our thoughts, our passions, our desires, our appetites and our affections.
 - ▶ Jesus = Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.
 - ▶ That thing rules over our life. It has power over us.
 - ▶ It could be sin: lust, addiction, greed.
 - ▶ It could be affliction: fear, anxiety, guilt.

- It even can be something good, like career, or family, or even physical healing.

And if we're going to truly worship God from our hearts, it has to start with the dethroning of anything or anyone who is not God.

- Because as long as something or someone other than Jesus sits upon our heart, we will never be able to worship Him honestly and openly.
 - We might even start worship God in order to serve the thing sitting on our heart!
 - I might start worshipping God because maybe if I give Him enough praise, He will come though with that promotion I so badly want.
 - Or maybe if I sing loud enough, or dance hard enough, God is going to bring that healing that I've been waiting for.
 - It's tricky, because a lot of times it can almost feel like faith-filled worship, but deep down it's actually performance-filled worship.
 - "Maybe if I worship hard enough, I will get the thing that my heart desires"
 - At which point God becomes a glorified butler, bringing us to our greatest desires instead of bringing us to Himself.

If Jesus is not at the center of us, then our worship will never be centered around Him.

- And so whatever is enthroned upon our hearts must be vacated.

Theres a problem though! We are utterly powerless to remove what needs to be removed from the seat of our heart.

- Scottish preacher Thomas Chalmers, said this about the heart.
- "Such is the grasping tendency of the human heart, that it must have a something to lay hold of and which, if wrested away without the substitution of another something in its place, would leave a void and a vacancy as painful to the mind, as hunger is to the natural system...the only way to dispossess the heart of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one." -Thomas Chalmers
- *The only way to dispossess the heart of an old affection is by the expulsive power of a new one.*
- In other words: our best efforts will fall short...we need the power of something (or someone) greater...

And the good news is that Jesus has the power to remove whatever is sitting on your heart a thousand times over...

- And when you invite Jesus to take His rightful place on the throne, He is always faithful to dropkick that lesser thing right off the seat of Your heart.

BIBLICAL DEFINITION: The heart is not only a seat, it's also a fountain.

- The heart flows and overflows with passion, desire, adoration, affection and praise for whatever or whoever is ruling it.

Last weekend our family went out to dinner at one of our favorite ramen places.

- I decided to try a different kind of ramen. It was a bit of a risky move.
 - If you know me, I'm kind of a ramen snob. I have a pretty high bar. I was anxious
- But it was SO GOOD. The broth was so balanced, the texture of the noodles was perfect, and the pork belly was juicy and bursting with flavor.
- And I COULD not stop talking about it. I'm pretty sure I was starting to annoy my wife by the end of the meal.
- I would not shut up about how good the ramen was.
- My heart was overflowing with praise for this ramen.

When we've tasted the goodness of God, when we have savored the sweetness of salvation, when we have drank deeply of His divine love, our hearts overflow with affection and praise.

- C.S. Lewis said it this way
- "I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment; it is its appointed consummation. It is not out of compliment that lovers keep on telling one another how beautiful they are; the delight is incomplete till it is expressed..." -C.S. Lewis
- Jesus said it even better:
- **LUKE 6:45**
- For out of the overflow of the heart (*kardia*) , the mouth speaks.
- It doesn't matter where your worship is, it's where it comes from.

Worship is the overflowing expression of adoration from the fountain of the heart.

- It's the outpouring of praise from the *kardia* – from the center of our being. From the deepest measure of our soul.
- It is allowing out of our mouths that which has flooded our hearts.
- It is allowing out of our physical bodies that which has captivated our being.
- This is why we sometimes take a physical posture of praise in worship!
- Because often words are just not enough to express the adoration of our hearts!
 - We lift our hands as an expression of surrender to God.
 - We bow on our faces before the lord as an expression of His holiness (just like that scene in revelation)
 - Some of us might even blow a shofar (caveat)

- Some of us even dance before the lord as an expression of the joy and freedom that we have in christ (like King David did in 2 Samuel)

But none of that matters if it doesn't come from the heart. Any true and honest expression of worship must originate in the heart.

- For some of us (especially those of us who have been christians for a long time) It can be so easy for us to show up, sing loud, and lift our hands...and yet not be worshiping from our hearts.
 - It can be really easy to fall into the trap of having an external worship experience only.
 - And that can be a dangerous place.
 - Because in our minds we THINK that we are somehow satisfying God, but in reality our hearts are not engaged.
 - Listen to the prophet Isaiah's words about this:
 - **ISAIAH 29:13**
 - These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught.
 - The prophet Joel echoed this same sentiment when he said:
 - **JOEL 2:13**
 - "Rend your hearts, not your garments..."
 - The tearing of garments was an OT expression of repentance and lament.
 - "Before you tear your clothes, before you give me some fake expression of worship, open up your heart before me."
 - King David, in examining His own heart, said this:
 - **PSALM 51:16-17**
 - You do not delight in sacrifice, or I would bring it; you do not take pleasure in burnt offerings. My sacrifice, O God, is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart you, God, will not despise.

God is not interested in your clean and polished acts of worship. He wants your messy, scuffed-up heart. That's what He's after. That's what he wants.

- So often we think that God wants our rituals.
- But rituals mean nothing unless the heart is responding.
- Rituals alone won't get you anywhere with God, but when you respond to God with an honest and open heart, radical things happen.
- God speaks.
- God moves.
- God convicts in the most kind beautiful way.

- God reveals Himself.
- In this place of open-hearted God calls people to vocation, location, and to the nations.
- Lomas: called to SF in worship – biggest church in SF exists because of a moment in worship.

What God does in a moment of worship can actually change the world.

- What God does with one anointed worship lyric can actually change the course of your entire life.
- What God does with one song can lead you from fear to faith.
- What God does with one melody can bring you from helplessness to hopefulness.
- What God does with one spontaneous moment of praise can carry you from captivity to freedom.

But that kind of transformation can't happen outside of the heart.

- It can't happen on the surface. It must happen in the depths of your being. Deep end.
- It doesn't happen because you sing loud or lift your hands or dance around.
- It doesn't happen because you've got the rituals down.
- Transformation happens because you let Jesus take the throne on your heart.
- Transformation happens because you open up your heart to God and let Him do what He wants to do.
 - When you let Him say what He wants to say.
 - When you let Him reveal what He wants to reveal.

When we allow Jesus to take the throne of our hearts, our hearts (and our lives) will inevitably become a fountain of praise and worship, pouring out for the Glory of God.

- So let's worship Him from the heart today.

PRAY - (May we experience this kind transformation as we open up our hearts to you)

During the second set, be present with and open with God.

- That can feel scary. Even terrifying. To fully open your heart. To be fully vulnerable and honest.
- But it's the best thing you can do today.

CONNECT WITH GOD

