

**Pastor Kyle Mercer**  
David: The Worshiper

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Series: David  
2 Samuel 6:1-23

**BIG IDEA – OUR WORSHIP NEEDS TO BE FULL OF PASSION AND TRUTH, GRAVITY AND GLADNESS**

Good morning. If my voice sounds a little bit different, it's because I lost my voice yesterday. Isn't that weird? You're like, "I wasn't expecting this." Me either. I was gone for July 4 and flew in and taught at the Weekender, and at the end of the Weekender session, I stepped outside and talked with some people, and I was like, "I can't talk. This is weird."

I thought, "Well, I'll go to sleep, and I'll wake up and feel better." My voice was worse yesterday. I barely got through last night, but then many people prayed for me, and I woke up feeling pretty good today. So, if you think *this* sounds bad, you should have heard what I sounded like last night. Most of you are going to be trying to clear your throat the whole morning for me. "Kyle, it's time to clear your throat."

Guys, a couple of updates, and then we're going to start 2 Samuel, chapter 6. I'll meet you there in a few minutes. Just two updates. We're not trying to talk about the building all the time, because the building is just a means to an end, but there are moments and milestones we want to celebrate. If you go to our property, which is on Patterson, we have about 13 acres there. Some of you have heard us talk about this.

We've already fenced about three of it and cleaned it up, and we're excited about that area. Then, Lord willing, they've told us this week they're going to start moving dirt and getting machinery on that property. We are really excited about that. Guys, we're excited about our neighborhood. If you don't know this, we want you to know this. We want you to know where we're moving.

You can Google "Industry Hill." That's the neighborhood we're moving into. *Forbes* magazine last year said it's one of the neighborhoods to watch, not in North Carolina but in the nation. Again, I know it's an accident. We're the Forrest Gump of churches. I went to the White House again, and I ate with the president again. That's how we feel. So, we're really, really humbled by that, and thank you again for your generosity.

We're going to continue to give you updates. Maybe we'll put a hard hat on and put a shovel in and smile. We'll see. Shoot some videos... Anyway, we're going to have a whole plan to tell you guys more about the building as it starts. We're still hoping for it to be done in 14 months and to be in there September of 2023.

So, that's the first thing. Second, behind me are a couple of pictures from the Weekender. The Weekender was this last weekend. I can't believe this, guys. This is really amazing. We do the Weekender nine times a year, and every time, people respond to our Weekender the way people respond to *Hamilton* tickets. I mean, they just sell out. We had 80 people.

Guys, I can't tell you what it does. It encourages our students. It encourages our volunteers. It helps our families. It strengthens all of our ministries. I met a lot of new people, you know, new medical students who were coming in and new residents and new fellows and new grad students and you other families who are moving in here.

If you visited us, let me encourage you to go to the Weekender. The Weekender is how you move from saying, "I go to that church" to "I'm a part of that church." Some of you may not want that. Some of you show up, and you're wearing a baseball hat. You're wearing sunglasses. You come late. You leave early. Fair enough. We can't do anything about that.

But if you want to go from anonymous to actively involved, let me encourage you to come to this next Weekender before it gets too busy. August 12 and 13 is going to be our last one of the summer. Then we're going to hit the fall. We have a lot of exciting things we're going to be doing, and we would love to take as many people as possible with us. So, let me pray for us real quick. Then we're going to dive into 2 Samuel 6.

Lord, I thank you. I love this church. I love the people here. I love the opportunity each week to just look at your Word together, to take it seriously but not take ourselves seriously, Lord; to laugh at ourselves but to take your Word very seriously. Lord, we thank you for what you continue to do. We are unbelievably humbled at the opportunity to have a home and hub downtown. We pray it would be an ark and a lighthouse for our city. We just thank you.

Every time a Weekender opens up, dozens and dozens and dozens of people say, "I want to be all in. I want to be all in with my time, talent, and treasure." It deepens and develops every area of our church, Lord, and we thank you. It's all grace. We receive it from you. We ask that you would open our minds and our hearts as we look at your Word together. In Jesus' name, amen.

All right. Second Samuel 6. You can type to or turn to that. We're in a series on King David. If you don't know who David is, that's okay. He's one of the most famous people in the Bible. Jesus would be number one, and David is probably close second in the sense of he's mentioned over 1,000 times in 66 different chapters. I told you guys all that.

We've spent the last few weeks looking at him. Remember that story of he's a shepherd boy, and he's overlooked by his family, but God sees who no one else sees, and God remembers who everyone else forgets. That was the first week. Then the second week was David, the warrior, the man who fights the giants in his life by faith, and we said we need to do the same thing.

Then the third week... Pastor Nate did a great job last week talking about friendship. We know this. You know this for your kids. Friends determine the quality and direction of your life. They say one of the greatest miracles Jesus ever did that we don't consider a miracle is to be over 30 and have 12 close guy friends. Jesus did that.

Today, we're going to look at David, the worshiper. That's 2 Samuel 6. Now, there are a couple of things I need to say about this as we turn there. The first thing I need to say is that this is actually the first thing... Before we're told about David the king and David this great man and David the warrior and David the father... The first time David is mentioned is in 1 Samuel 13.

We started our series in 1 Samuel 16, but in 1 Samuel 13, God, for the first time, talks about David. We don't get his name yet, but we get a description. We're told, "There's this guy, and he's going to be a man after my own heart." I can't think of a better thing to be said about your life than that.

Think about your funeral, which is a helpful thing to think about every once in a while. You're going to die, and think about this: Who would speak at your funeral, and what would they say? It's a really emotional, spiritual exercise to do that. Just imagine. What kind of person would you need to be for them to say, "You know what? I loved Mom. There were a lot of great things about Mom, but what was awesome about Mom is that she was a woman after God's own heart."

"Dad was a great guy, and there were so many great things about him. I love that he played with me, but what defined his life was he was a man after God's own heart." What kind of person...? Are you that? Have you ever met anybody like that? "I care about God, and I care about what God cares about."

What we're going to see today, if you'll turn with me to 2 Samuel, chapter 6, is we're going to see David after he just became king. He's publicly made king in 2 Samuel 5 in front of everyone. In fact, there are a lot of things, unfortunately, we've had to skip over in this series.

Nate preached on 1 Samuel 20, which is David and his friendship with Jonathan. We're skipping 10 or 15 chapters, which we don't normally do, but this series isn't just going through 1 and 2 Samuel; it's hitting the milestones and the moments and the mountaintops in the life of David.

What we missed is about a 20-year battle between Saul and David. Saul tries to kill David many times, and David has two opportunities to kill Saul, but he doesn't. Then we also have three funerals that happen since what Nate taught about in 1 Samuel 20.

Samuel dies. The whole book is named after him. Then Jonathan and Saul die at the end of 1 Samuel, and David finds out about the death of Jonathan and Saul at the beginning of 2 Samuel. So, all that has happened. Now David is king, and let's see the first thing David does as king. Look here.

***"David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah 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."***

This is why we called him *David, the worshiper*. Yes, he was a man after God's own heart, and we see the very first thing David does when he becomes king is he desires to bring the ark, which we'll talk about, that represented the power and presence of God... He wanted to bring the ark back to Jerusalem.

Here's what he wanted to do. He said, "Guys, we forgot about God. We can't forget about God. I want to make worship central in my family, and I want to make worship central in my nation, and I want to make worship central among the people of God." We're going to see he's going to make a mistake (we'll talk about it in a minute), but what he gets right is worship.

I want to talk about worship for a minute, because *worship* is one of those words Christians say, like, "I worship" or "I listen to worship music." Well, what does it mean to worship? It's a long answer, but the short answer is worship is me responding with all that I am to all that God has said. That's probably the best definition, if you had to simplify it all.

What is worship? It's me responding. How might I respond? I might raise my hands. I might serve somebody else. I might give generously. I might tell someone else about Christ because I'm so overwhelmed. I might confess a sin I need help with to somebody. Who knows? It's me responding with all that I am to all that God has said.

That's why the Bible says, "Whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all to the glory of God." All your life is worship. You can personally worship the Lord. You can read your Bible. You can pray. What we're seeing here is he's talking about corporate worship, worshipping together, responding together.

There are a couple of things I want to say. First, he has a good desire to worship, but he gets something wrong. I don't want to ruin the whole story. I'm going to read it in a minute. Basically, what's going to happen is he's going to be very, very excited about bringing the ark back, but he's going to not have carefully read God's Word. If you don't know this story, you're going to be really surprised, and if you know this story, I hope you won't be desensitized to it and can still be shocked in a good way by it.

This is the story where they're bringing back the ark, and Uzzah touches the ark and is killed immediately. He falls dead, and David is like, "What's going on?" He puts the ark in a Philistine's home for a while. It's because David didn't understand that you need passion and truth in worship.

This is the big idea: we need to worship according to the Word. We need passion and truth. We need gravity and gladness. The temptation in the Christian life is to just do one of those two things. Right? Who has ever been to the passionate church with no truth or very little truth? We call that "Lots of heat; little bit of light."

What happens with that? That's camp Christianity. That's retreat Christianity. That's recommit Christianity. That's "My faith is my feelings" Christianity. That's "I'm up and down, and I'm always recommitting my life, and there's a lot of emotion." It's very seasonal. We like passion. I'm all about passion. We're emotional creatures, but it needs to be passion *and* truth.

Now, what if you're just truth? Have you ever been to *that* church...the dead orthodoxy church, the church that knows all of the right answers, the church that's high on intellectualism and religiosity, but there's no heart? What's powerful is when

you have a mind for truth and a heart for God and those two things come together. We're going to see that David has passion. He really wants to honor the Lord, but he's not doing it according to truth.

The second thing is we need gravity and gladness. Now, most people just want gladness. I mean, most Americans, especially American men... Get an American male to feel negative emotion. He won't want to do that for about two seconds. He doesn't know what to do with negative emotion. Most guys don't. It's sophisticated. You have to think about it. We just want to feel happy emotions.

Listen. We're the church full of gladness and joy and celebration, and we'll sing joyful songs, but we also need to be aware. In a church our size or, really, a church *any* size, there are always people who are hurting. Every week, probably, I'm guessing, someone found out they got cancer or someone they love got cancer or they can't have kids or their boyfriend broke their heart or their marriage is on the rocks or their kids *this* or their finances *that*.

The question we have to ask is...*What can sad Christians sing?* Some of you in here are sad today. What could you sing? If you only do gladness (here's a big phrase), it's what's called an *over-realized eschatology*. You're like, "What does that mean?" You're acting like heaven is here. It's not. You're acting like you're in heaven right now. You're too triumphant. That's not Christianity.

We're ultimately triumphant, but there are a lot of trials before we get to the triumph in the end. We all have to die before we get to heaven. There's this weightiness. So, that's the whole message. I'm going to unpack it now, but that's it. David wants to worship. He makes a mistake. He doesn't worship according to the Word. He has passion and no truth. He has gladness and no gravity, but by the end he gets all of it.

## **01 WHAT WAS THE ARK OF GOD?**

Okay. Let's look at this. I'm going to read you the whole nine verses to set the story. *"David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah 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."*

This is an important detail: *"And they carried the ark of God on a new cart..."* We'll look into that. *"...and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio..."* You may go, "Who's Ahio?" He's the brother of Ohio. I'm

kidding! Terrible, terrible joke. *"...the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD..."*

You can see this. He has passion. We're going to see he's missing some truth. He's celebrating, but he's not very serious. By the way, the literal definition of *serious* is I'm very careful. I carefully consider things. That's what it means to be serious. That's the definition of *serious*. David does not carefully consider what he's doing.

*"And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the LORD, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled."* The oxen stumble. The ark is about to fall and hit the ground, so Uzzah steadies it.

*"And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. And David was angry because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, 'How can the ark of the LORD come to me?'"*

Let's first talk positively and then negatively about what David did. Positively, he's passionate about the Lord. I mean, what are *you* passionate about? You don't have to say it out loud, but honestly, what are you excited about? Let me say it this way. Whatever you're most passionate about is the exact same thing you worship.

It's easy for us to say, "I worship the Lord. I love the Lord with all my heart. I worship the Lord." Well, it's probably part of your life, but what are you really, really, really passionate about? David was really passionate about worshiping the Lord. Some of you worship the Lord, but what you really worship, what you're really passionate about, is your hobbies.

Some of you are really passionate about sports. For some of you, it's embarrassing if you had to admit it. Passion is kind of a weird thing, because you're like, "I don't know why I care so much." For some of you, it's Netflix shows and series you get into. For some of you, it's housing projects. For some of you, it's a little more discretionary income and discretionary time. It's your next vacation.

Sometimes it's something you don't even want to admit. You're like, "Dude, I hate it, but where my heart really indulges..." That's what you worship: what you indulge in. It's like, "When no one is home or when it's late or when I travel or when I get to choose what I get to choose, this is what I do," and it's not normally to worship the

Lord. What would it look like in your life if you were most passionate about God? I don't know if you've ever even had a season of your life... I don't know if you've ever known someone in your life... You're like, "They're most passionate about that."

The second thing he does right (we'll talk about what he does wrong) is he wants to worship God, and he wants to worship God with other people. Do you see that? He gathers 30,000 people. If you've ever heard of The Summit Church in Raleigh-Durham, that's like gathering three of the Summit Churches and saying, "Let's all go worship together."

What he understands is worship is three things. Worship is everything you do in your life, whether you eat, drink, or whatever you do. Worship is personal. "Lord, I love you. I'm praying to you. I'm seeking you." Then worship is corporate. Worship is what we do together. There's something special... This is why we say all the time, "We don't create downloadable experiences."

Here's how we know this. We saw this during COVID. I don't want to talk about COVID, but just for one minute I will. We were shut down for 15 weeks, which is a very little amount of time. Still a lot for us. About eight weeks in, Pastor David and I were trying to figure out how to come back. We got back as soon as we could. It took us about 15 weeks.

We started with a Thursday night service. Some of you came based on how afraid you were, and that's fine. You came at different times, and that's fine. The same thing happened every time people would come. Every time people would come, almost everybody who came cried, and not during my message. Well, sometimes during my message. "Lord, is it almost over?"

They cried during the worship songs. They all said the same thing afterward. "I forgot." It was like, "It has only been three months, but I forgot too." We need to see each other worship. I know it's kind of weird. Certain churches will hit all of the lights, and everybody just closes their eyes in worship. Fair enough. But actually, in worship, you should, at one level, kind of look around every once in a while.

I know it's a little awkward, but here's the whole point of it: I need to see the person who's going through something... It's like, "You just lost your husband. It's actually good for my soul to see you worshipping. You're a single mom, and I know what you're going through right now, and you're trusting the Lord."

Some of the teenagers... They're loving the Lord, and they're singing to the Lord, and some of the older people in the room, including myself, are like, "I needed to see that, because sometimes I can be discouraged." So, we need each other. It's powerful.



Think about it. When we sing together, we sing the same words at the same time to the same God. It's this powerful, unifying experience.

Okay. So, that's what David does well. Now let's look at what happens. Look with me at verse 3. **"And they carried the ark of God on a new cart..."** We have to talk about a couple of things. What is the ark? Well, this is not Noah's ark. Have you thought that? It would be very hard to carry that. This was not Noah's ark. But let's take a moment and do a little bit of "archaeology." (That was another terrible joke. I'm seeing if you're paying attention.)

The ark was two feet high by two feet wide by roughly five feet long. It could hold your golf clubs. Think of it that way. It was gold-plated, and it was symbolic. It represented the power and presence of God. If you didn't know this, inside the ark were three things. There was the jar of manna (that represented God's provision), there was Aaron's staff (that represented God's power, where the miracles were done), and there was the Ten Commandments, the two tablets (God's priorities, or God's Word).

So, it was very symbolic. What's interesting is sometimes we have what C.S. Lewis calls *chronological snobbery*. We look back at these old generations and our ancestors, and we're like, "Weren't they so foolish? They had all of these symbols they thought were so important." You think just our ancestors thought symbols were important? What is the logo on your tee shirt? It's a symbol you think is fairly important, and it usually represents status or experience.

Or how about...? We're in a massive battle in our nation among symbols. Is it the MAGA hat? Don't think *that's* not a symbol. Is it the Black Lives fist? Is it the transgender flag? I'm convinced the transgender flag is the modern-day Passover. What happened at Passover? You put something over your doorpost so the spirit of the age would pass over you and would not judge you.

We know the Nazi swastika is a powerful symbol. Symbols can be for good or bad. The cross is the symbol for Christianity. So, you have this ark, and it symbolizes God and his presence and his power. It was forgotten for 75 years. It's hard to believe, but have you ever forgotten about God for a season of your life? Some of you call that *college*. Other people call that *high school*. Sometimes people call that *being single*.

Strangely, sometimes it's in getting married and having kids people forget about God. They move from the Christ-centered home to the child-centered home. "Johnny needs to take four naps a day. Johnny can't make it to any of the church services, even though you have four that go across two days." I'm not bitter about any of this.

You know, "Johnny can't make it to Community Group, because it just doesn't work for Johnny, because Johnny needs to go to bed at 6:30." It's like, "Okay. You may not know this. It looks like you have a child-centered home instead of a Christ-centered home." We're not saying it's easy to figure all this out. So, they had forgotten the ark. David says, "I'm going to bring it back," but he does... I think this is the key point here: David wants to do the right thing, but he goes about it the wrong way.

What do I mean by that? He wants to do the right thing. What is the right thing? "I want to bring worship back to the center of the life of my people." But he goes about it the wrong way. What's that? That's where he puts it on a cart instead of putting it on the shoulders of a group of men. God said in Numbers 4:4 it needs to go with *this* group of men, and it needs to be carried this certain way.

How many of us...? Think about *that* for an hour if you have time today. What are you saying, "Okay. God, I want to do the right thing..." I think if you're a Christian, that's what you want. You're like, "I want to do the right thing." But if you're honest, you're more like David. You're not looking at God's Word closely enough to follow it, to do the right thing and get there the right way.

In other words, often, we want the right end, but we don't want to use the right means. It's so easy. If we took an exam right now, everyone would be like, "Yes, I want to have godly kids." Okay. Great. You want the right thing. I have a verse for you. Malachi, chapter 2, says, "What does God want from a marriage? Godly offspring."

That's exactly the right goal, but why are you spending so much time with athletics and academics and amusement and activities with your kids, and why have you never prioritized getting them connected to the student ministry? Why do you not understand authority? You're not your kids' friend. If you have young kids, why are you putting a screen in front of them all the time just so you can get a break?

When you put a screen in front of them, you say, "Here. I won't have to sacrifice. In the future, you'll suffer for doing this, but right now I don't have to sacrifice." It's hard. I have three kids. I know this is hard. I'm speaking to myself too on all this. How many of us say we want great, godly relationships? There are a lot of verses for that. But then we don't want to do it. The Bible also commands us to "one another" one another, to forgive one another, to love one another.

How about *this*? To practice hospitality. That's a biblical command. Or to have margin in your life. How many of you want financial freedom or financial stability, whatever you call it, but don't actually do what God's Word says? You overspend. You under-save. You barely give. Then people wonder, "Why am I not where I need to be? I have

the right desires. This is where I want to go, but I don't know God's Word well enough."

Now, we have to ask *this...Why?* You think about this. You don't have the answer, so we have to... A good Bible reader is a confused Bible reader. So, you might go, "Okay. Why didn't they just put the cart on the shoulders and just go? It's an eleven-mile journey. It's long, but come on."

There are three reasons, I think, as I thought about it. The first reason is maybe they forgot what God had said. Have you ever forgotten what God said? You probably did. We all do. It's like, "Well, God said a lot of things. It's hard for me to remember them all." Fair enough. We forget certain things God has said.

You might forget because you're so informed by culture instead of Scripture. You may forget because for a season of your life you start hanging out with a certain group of people. One of the reasons we're going... We do this thing called *gospel projects* with our kids' ministry. Even if you don't have kids, we want you to know about this.

We take the kids through the Bible. Every three to five years, they're getting through the whole Bible. By the time they're in fifth grade, they've gotten through the Bible at least twice. It's really neat. Why are we doing that? We want to give them as much Bible as possible so that even if they rebel at some point...

Think about some girl. She rebels, and she's in her second year of college. She's struggling. She wakes up, and her conscience is condemning her at 3:00 in the morning, and she starts thinking about the story of the prodigal son. It's like, "You forgot. It's okay."

Or she starts thinking, "I'm Jonah." "You *are* Jonah. It's time to come back." Or "I remember. My parents told me whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Or "Mom and Dad always told me that if I would confess with my mouth and believe in my heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, I would be saved."

Or "If I confess my sins, God will forgive me and cleanse me from all unrighteousness." We're just trying to give people, lovingly, age appropriately, as much Scripture, so that they may forget for a season, but we pray by the power of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit would remind them.

The second thing is they may have just not known. Here's the scary thing: ignorance is not an excuse. Could you imagine if not knowing the Bible gave you an excuse? "Then I'm not reading it. Don't tell me what it says." No. Unfortunately, it seems,

according to *this* passage, even if you don't know, you're still responsible. This is why we say it takes the whole Bible to make the whole Christian.

This is why we do what we do here. If you think about it, what we do is kind of strange. Everybody comes in here. We sing a few songs. You guys sit fairly quietly for 45 to 50 minutes every week, and one of us is up here talking about a 2,000-year-old book for 40 to 45 minutes. We normally just start at the beginning of that book and go to the end of that book. We call that *expositional preaching*. The reason we do that...

I've been doing this here for six years, and I think we've gone through somewhere between 15 to 20 books. We haven't made it all the way through every book. We got to, like, chapter 20 in Exodus. The whole point is, if you came around for a long time, we're going to deal with a lot of different issues, even hard issues.

I mean, who wants to preach on...? Could you imagine if this happened yesterday? Who wants to preach on Uzzah and the ark? If the *New York Times* wrote this story... "Nice guy, trying to do his best. Mean God kills him." That would be the title for this story. Who wants to talk about this stuff? Well, we talk about it because it comes up in Scripture.

Here's the third reason. I think this is often the reason we don't obey God. They knew what God had said but thought they knew better. Have you ever thought that before? They're probably sitting around going, "Okay. Look. I know it says guys are supposed to carry this, but God probably didn't know there were going to be carts. God probably didn't know there would be a cart, and God probably never thought we could do this with a cart, so he just probably doesn't care."

Have you ever heard this argument? Somebody reads Scripture. Maybe it's you. Maybe it's your friend. They read Scripture. They find something they don't like, normally having to do with sexuality or their narcissism, and then they say something like this: "This is so primitive. This is so archaic. Who carries an ark on their shoulders when you have a cart?"

Or they say something like, "God probably had no real purpose for this." You hear these kinds of debates. You know, the apostle Paul condemns all sex outside of heterosexual marriage in Romans, chapter 1, among also homosexuality. There are people who read that passage and literally say things like, "Well, you know what? The apostle Paul did not know about same-sex attraction."

Basically, their argument is, "Paul was uninformed. If Paul knew what we know, then he would do what we do. Where the Bible disagrees with me, I'm right, and the Bible

is wrong. I need to drag the Bible, kicking and screaming, into the twenty-first century." That's often the mentality.

## **02 THE HOLINESS OF GOD**

So, David wants to do the right thing, but he goes about it the wrong way. Is it because he didn't know, because he forgot, or because he thought he knew better? That we don't know, but you need to see what happens. Look at verse 6.

*"And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. And the anger of the LORD was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. And David was angry..."*

Don't you love the honesty of the Bible? David gets angry at God and says, "God, I'm done with you for three months." He takes the ark and puts it with the Philistines. *"And David was angry because the LORD had broken out against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the LORD that day, and he said, 'How can the ark of the LORD come to me?'"*

This passage offends us. Right? It offends us so much there are some commentators who try to say, "Here's what happened here. Uzzah is a godly man, and when the ark stumbles and is about to fall on to the ground, he grabs it, but he's so godly and fears the Lord so much he has a mini heart attack when he touches the ark, and that's how he dies." That's actually one of the interpretations of this passage. Why? Because, well, people don't like the supernatural, and people don't like the justice of God.

Listen. What happened with Uzzah is unique. It says in the text he broke out. We don't have a lot of examples of this in Scripture. There's this guy named Achan in Joshua 7 who God makes an example of, but what did he do? Well, he coveted a few things, and then he lied and hid some things in his life. Who here would be alive if God killed everyone who did that?

Or how about Ananias and Sapphira? Ananias and Sapphira were a good Christian couple, a little bit hypocritical, and they wanted to appear to other people more generous than they were. Anyone ever struggle with that? If God killed everybody who was a hypocrite and wanted to look more generous than they were, we wouldn't be having a church service right now.

God will occasionally make an example of somebody for it to be a lesson for us. I believe the lesson of Uzzah... There are a couple of lessons of Uzzah, but the lesson

with Uzzah is do not take grace for granted. I think, so often, we assume and presume upon God's grace in our lives. We presume and assume upon God's mercy in our lives, because he has just been so merciful to us. Justice is when God gives us what we deserve.

So, when Uzzah touches the ark, because he's sinful and God is holy, and he immediately dies, that is justice. All of the times God doesn't give us what we deserve... That's grace and mercy. That's why, if you ever talk with someone who's like, "I just want God to give me what I deserve..." Whenever they say that, I'm like, "In case lightning strikes, I'm going to move two or three steps over to the other side."

Really, at the end of the day, it's God's holiness and our sinfulness we need to think about. You'll hear this. If you read the Bible, you have to put together God's holiness and your sinfulness. Here's what *holiness* means: God is separate. Literally, the word *holiness* means cut off. God is separate and set apart from us.

That's why the ark was in the Holy of Holies behind a veil, separated from everybody and everything else in the temple. It's this picture of God is separate. He's not a bigger, smarter, taller version of you. That's often how we think of God in our minds. "God kind of thinks like me but better. He kind of acts like me but just better." No, no, no. He's completely different than you.

Then we have to think about our own sinfulness, which we don't want to think about. You don't want to admit that you're a sinner. Like, you don't sin; you're sick. You don't need theology; you need therapy. You don't sin; you have a lapse of judgment, indiscretions, and mistakes.

Here's what Uzzah thinks. Uzzah thinks in his mind, "I don't want to let the ark fall, because then the ark will hit mud, and mud will make the ark unholy, dirty." Actually, no. The ground never rebelled against God. If the ark would fall on the ground, the ark would be fine, and the ground would be fine. It's that sinful, rebellious humanity came in contact with the holiness of God. That's why Uzzah immediately died.

So, David gets angry. I want you to see what happens here. Look at verse 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. And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite..."*** We know by the designation *Gittite* that he was a Philistine. ***"And the ark of the LORD remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the LORD blessed Obed-edom and all his household."***

So, here's what happens. We don't know all that is going on in David's heart (we're trying to read the story), but David is a mixture of angry and afraid. Sometimes you're

angry because you're afraid. It's hard to tell that all the time. But he's angry and afraid, so for three months (that's a long time; that's 90 days), he decides, "God, I need a break" or maybe "I'm done with you" or "If you're going to kill people, then, here, go live with..."

"Here. You want a present, Obed-edom? You should touch the ark." We don't know. But he sees God bless Obed-edom. The same God who judges is the same God who blesses. Oftentimes, we just want the God who blesses, but we don't want the God who judges. We want a God made in our own image. We want a domesticated form of God.

We want to say, "I really like love, I really like mercy, and I love forgiveness, but I don't really love justice, and I don't love wrath, and I don't love anger." But here's the thing. If you look at the cross of Christ, what you see is blessing and judgment. At the cross of Christ, God judges Jesus Christ in our place so he can bless everybody who would ever believe in him.

### **03 WORSHIP AND SACRIFICE**

So, David gets it, but he has this realization that I want us to realize. He goes from celebration to also seriousness. We might even say he goes from celebration to understanding sacrifice. David begins to understand something that I want us to understand. I hope we do understand. It's that the only way we relate to God is through sacrifice. Watch. I'll show you this. Look at verse 12. Here's what it says.

*"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.' So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. And when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal."*

Now, it was an 11-mile journey. Some people think they sacrificed every six steps. That would be a lot. Or they may have just sacrificed the first six steps. The whole point is we need to understand David understands sacrifice. Now, we use *sacrifice* today in kind of a metaphorical way.

You might say something like, "I'm sacrificing right now. I'm not eating a lot of carbs." Those of us who love carbs know that *is* a sacrifice. But why would you do that? You might say, "I'm not eating a lot of carbs because I want to be healthy" or "I want to lose weight" or "I want to have a beach body," whatever it is.

The way we use *sacrifice*, which is good... Here's what we mean: "I give up something I love for something I love even more." That's the definition of maturity, and that's the discovering of the future, and all that's good, but for a moment here, I want to talk about real sacrifice. That's what we have in this passage. I don't think you can understand Christianity if you don't understand sacrifice. In fact, I am convinced you can't.

God is the first to sacrifice. Let's talk about that. I mean, that's a deep thought. Who's the first person who ever sacrifices? God. Adam and Eve sin. They rebel. They try to cover themselves with fig leaves, and God says, "This isn't going to work." He kills an animal (this is the end of Genesis 3) and covers them with the animal skins. So, you have God making the first sacrifice and using that sacrifice to cover sin.

What's the second story of the Bible? Well, Cain and Abel and the story of sacrifice. Without understanding sacrifice, first, it's going to be hard for us, as twenty-first century Westerners who get our food at Trader Joe's, to understand what happens to an animal and to understand the reality that, both biologically and biblically, something must die for you to live.

Is it hard for you to take your sin seriously? I think for most people it is. I don't know. Say you did something terrible. You drank too much, and someone wasn't home, and you stayed up late. Who knows what you did? You wake up the next day, and you feel kind of like, "What did I do?" What you want to immediately do is get over it.

You immediately want to avoid it. You immediately want to entertain yourself. You immediately want to go hang out with someone. You immediately want to go buy something. You just want to forget about it. Sacrifice was to show you how serious your sin was. Let me just tell you what would happen. There were five things that would happen during a sacrifice, and I want you to understand these.

First, if you read the Old Testament, the sacrificial language, it would say, "Draw near and pick your sacrifice." Here's what this meant. For the average family... These people were not rich. In fact, it's hard for us to understand how poor people were. This isn't someone who has a farm and has 700 sheep and grabs a sheep for the sacrifice. Think more a poor family that has three animals.

They go, "We're going to sacrifice to the Lord. I guess it'll be the goat." It's like, "The goat has lived with us for three years, and our daughter loves the goat. Our daughter nicknamed the goat." So, we're going to get the goat. Well, that's emotional. We're grabbing something we know.



The second thing you would do is then you, or sometimes your family, would put your hand on the goat and confess your sins over that goat. Often, the father would confess (you see this in the book of Job) *his sins and* the sins of his family. Could you imagine? "I'm sorry. We just love money way too much. We have been so materialistic. I'm sorry. We've been fighting with each other. We've been so selfish and inward focused, and we've been bitter and resentful."

You just confessed that over this animal. It's like, "This animal is going to receive, symbolically, my sins." Then you would go to the temple, but it was a requirement that the worshiper killed the animal. The priest didn't do that for you. *You* did that. The priest helped you with the blood, but you had to kill your own sacrifice. Imagine what that does to you psychologically and spiritually to say, "I had to kill something because of what I've done."

Then the priest gets involved, and they take the blood and put it on the altar. The blood represented the life of the animal. It represented substitution, which is the main teaching of the gospel: Jesus in my place for my sins. The animals were foreshadowing that. "This animal in my place for my sin."

Then they would take part of the animal and put it on the altar and burn it. That was symbolically saying, as it would burn... At the end of it, it's gone. "I give it up to the Lord." That's what it was saying. So, it's hard for us to understand the seriousness or the gravity of worship. The closest thing we have today is the Lord's Supper in our services, or Communion.

We don't do it each week. You guys don't know when we're doing it, but I always know when we're doing it, and I'm always a little nervous, because I know what the Bible says about the Lord's Supper: not to eat it in an unworthy manner. When it's the Lord's Supper, if you're sitting there, if you're playing with some sin, now would be the time to repent.

If you have something against somebody, now would be the time to text them and tell them you need to call them after service. If you're struggling with your wife, now would be the time to grab her hand and say you're sorry. This is serious. We come up front. We remember what Christ did for us.

#### **04 WORSHIP AND GLADNESS (AND GRATITUDE)**

So, there's a seriousness to worship, but then there's a great joy. I want you to see this. It's both. Look at verse 14. "*And David danced before the LORD with all his*

*might.*" So, you have sacrifice *and* celebration. You have gravity *and* gladness. **"And David was wearing a linen ephod."** Basically, that was just a normal garment. Basically, David is saying, "When I worship, I'm just like you."

We'll see that, by the way. Every once in a while, a new person will come here, and they'll go, "My boss' boss is here in this church." You'll be aware of some of the other hierarchies you're a part of. You're like, "This person is the head of such-and-such at the hospital" or "This person is the head of such-and-such over there. I'm brand new, and they're my boss' boss' boss."

Don't even worry about that, because when we're all coming together, we're not worried about any of that. We're here today because we're all created by God. We're all equal before God. We're all saved by the same grace and the same cross. The ground is level at the cross of Christ. That's what David is communicating. "I am a king. I didn't forget I'm a king, but when I'm before God, I'm just like you." That's what he's communicating.

**"So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting and with the sound of the horn."** I want to talk for a minute about joyful expression and emotion in worship, which I would say many of us probably need to grow in. If I were to go watch you watch your favorite sports team, you would probably be a lot more emotional than you are worshiping the living God of the universe.

We would never do this, but imagine that we brought out the cameras and filmed everybody during the four worship services, and then we gathered the staff together afterward and said, "Okay. Let's watch the game film. Put it on." We could say, "Guys, first we're going to do *this*. We're going to pick out the former Lutherans, the former Catholics, the former Presbyterians, and the former Episcopalians."

"How will we know?"

"Well, they'll look bored. Their arms will be crossed like *this*, most likely, and if they get really excited, they'll put their hands in their pockets and start flapping their arms. That's how we know we've found the Episcopalians and the Catholics." Remember, we take God's Word seriously, not ourselves seriously. Then we'd say, "How do we know who the Baptists are and who the nondenominational folks are and who the excited Methodists are?"

"Well, they're all different. You have to look for them. Okay? It depends on how much experience they have with this. They may do one hand in the pocket, one hand in the air. Others of them, if they get really passionate, may do heartburn back to one hand

in the air. Some people, if they get excited, will put both hands up, and we know our charismatics because they do the Simba." We love all of you.

I joke about it, but this is why this is important. What we do with our body does communicate something to our soul. I don't quite know how it works, but here's what I do know. For example, the Bible says, "Raise your hands." Now, why would you raise your hands? There are at least three reasons.

You might raise your hands just to say... It's celebratory. Right? If somebody scored a game-winning goal, you might involuntarily almost watch yourself do it, like, "Yes!" Part of it's like, "Lord, what we were just saying, that truth... Yes!" That's what you're saying. But also, you might put your hands up in the air because you might say, "I surrender." You'll see that's another reason.

Just so you know, people can do the same thing for different reasons. Some people put their hands in the air and say, "Lord, I surrender. My life is really hard right now. I'm really struggling with something. I'm surrendering to this truth." I had one person tell me they lift their hands up because it's like, "Pick me up." It's like what a little kid does. If your kid is under 5 years old, they'll do it all the time. They'll walk up to you and just go... It's the international sign for "All right. Here we go."

There's something about that. When I was in college ministry, there was a college... Because there are a lot of commands... kneel and clap and shout. We were finishing up the summer. We were about to head back to the college campus, about 40 of us, let's say. There were a lot of non-Christians who were on our campuses. We were all at these schools.

We did this every year. "Hey, let's pray for our dorms, and let's pray for our roommates, and let's pray for our classmates, and let's pray for the incoming freshmen class." We did that every year. What they did different was they said, "Hey, guys..." One leader said, "Hey, guys, if you don't mind, if it's not too awkward for you, before we pray, would it be okay if we all got on our knees?"

We're in an elementary school classroom. The floor is hard, and the lights are all bright around here, and everybody is getting off their chair and getting on their knees. It changed the way the whole room felt. It was like, "Okay. I thought I was praying for my roommate. Now I'm *really* praying for my roommate. I thought I was praying for my mom. Now I'm *really* praying for my mom."

Something I did with my body... I don't even know how it works. It communicated something to my soul. That's what we're seeing here. Look at David. Verse 16: ***"As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul..."*** By the

way, even though she's the wife of David, she will only be called the *daughter of Saul*, because she's acting more like Saul than David.

*"...looked out of the window and saw King David..."* It's interesting. Charles Spurgeon, a famous preacher, said she looks out the window of superiority down on David to judge him. Look at what it says. *"...looked out of the window and saw King David leaping..."* When was the last time you leapt? I'm not sure if I have ever leapt.

*"...King David leaping and dancing before the LORD..."* That will be a key phrase: *before the Lord*. *"...and she despised him in her heart."* That's the religious spirit. It's very easy to despise things we don't understand, because they're scary and intimidating, and they call out questions in our own hearts, so it would just be easier to judge them.

*"And they brought in the ark of the LORD and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered..."* Here's more sacrifice. *"...burnt offerings and peace offerings before the LORD."* So, you see sacrifice and celebration again and again, gravity and gladness.

*"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 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."*

The raisins represented being fruitful and having children. So, basically, he's like, "Listen. We brought worship back to the center of this city and of this nation. Let's have a lot of babies." That's what he's saying, which is interesting, because when you're worshipping the Lord, you're going to be spiritually healthy, and when you're spiritually healthy, you're going to multiply. That's the picture we see here.

## **05 THOSE WHO WON'T WORSHIP**

Look here. *"And David returned to bless his household."* I love this. He's not just someone publicly that he's not also privately. He's leading in worship in church, and he's leading in worship at home. *"But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, 'How the king of Israel honored himself today...'"* She's obviously being sarcastic.

*"...uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' female servants..."* That would be the lowest of the low, status-wise. *"...as one of the vulgar fellows"*

*shamelessly uncovers himself!' And David said to Michal, 'It was before the Lord...'"*

That's a key phrase.

*"...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 celebrate before the LORD. I will make myself yet more contemptible 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.' And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death."*

That kind of shows us the end of the line of Saul. What's interesting is everybody in this story is worshipping except David's wife. She comes, and she has the religious spirit. I've quoted this a couple of times, but C.S. Lewis in his great book *The Screwtape Letters*... It's fictional. It's an uncle demon writing to a nephew demon on how to tempt Christians, or people.

One story... The nephew tells the uncle, "I've got this guy, and he keeps going to church." His uncle writes back, "I know what to do. I know how to deal with churchgoing people." He says, "Here's what you need to do: make him a connoisseur of churches. Make him a taster of churches. At every church he goes to, make sure he's a spectator and never a participant." That's the religious spirit.

Michal sees God as useful. That's what religious people do. "God is useful. God is the way my family will go straight. God is the way my marriage will stay healthy. God is the way my finances will be okay. God will help me get out of my addictions. God is useful."

The Christian sees God as beautiful and lovely and to be worshiped. David basically says again and again, "I'm worshipping the Lord because of what he has done for me," and he mentions some things. When we think about worshipping the Lord, we worship the Lord because of what Jesus Christ has done for us.

When you read the story of Uzzah touching the ark... Uzzah is probably a good guy. I mean, Uzzah is probably in heaven. He's a believer. He just made a mistake. Well, not just a mistake; he sinned. He did something. Unholiness and sinfulness came in contact with holiness and could not stand in his presence. How much more are we not going to be able to stand in the presence of the living God?

When I think about all of our futures... God is a part of all of our futures. One day, all of us are going to stand alone and naked before the living God at the end of our lives. You go, "How do you get ready for that?" It reminds me of Chernobyl. Have you ever heard of Chernobyl? It happened in the Soviet Union in 1986. There's an HBO show about it. It's a really interesting story.

I'm not a historian, but basically, what happens at Chernobyl is a nuclear reactor...I don't know what the right word is...breaks or implodes or explodes. It's horrible. In a really powerful scene, they send in this head scientist, and he's with this head politician of the day. The two of them go over to this area, and there's a group of guys going to go in the building to deal with the nuclear reactor.

It's an overwhelming scene, because they put one layer of clothing on. You're watching them, and they're terrified. How would you like *that* job? Your job is to go and stand and try to figure out the nuclear reactor. They go, "Okay. Let's put this layer on." The scientist goes, "That's not going to be enough." Then they put another layer on. "That's not going to be enough either." They put a third layer on.

They can barely walk, and they're heading into this building. The politician says to the scientist, "They're going to be okay. Right?" The scientist says, "They're not going to be okay." He said, "I put all that on them. I gave them five years of life." He said, "It's impossible to stand in front of a nuclear reactor and be okay."

Then what do we need to do to stand in front of the living God? This is why Paul's favorite phrase is "I am in Christ." In fact, I'm not just in Christ; I'm sealed with the Holy Spirit. I am hidden somehow. I'm hidden with God in Christ. So, my great hope is when I die... It's not that I say, "I was a good person, and I tried." I say, "The only way I can stand before the living God and have a relationship with him is because of what Christ has done for me."

For others of you, I just want to talk for a moment, because some of you may... This is very common. People find themselves in addictions all the time. Do you know that the Latin word we get the word *addiction* from is the word meaning religious devotion? How do you get into addiction? You worship your way into an addiction.

Recently, I was talking to a wife of an alcoholic. It's just hard. People who have family members who are alcoholics... What their family members do does not make sense. It's like, "Well, why would he drink in the morning? Why doesn't he care about his health? Why doesn't he care about his job? I don't get it." We need different language. Here's the language: he's worshipping alcohol. We know that because of what he's willing to sacrifice.

The good news, if you find yourself in some type of addiction... There are many types of addictions. You worshiped your way into sin, and here's the good news: you worship your way out. That's our answer. Our answer is not "Try harder and do better and get stronger." It's actually "I need a bigger vision of Jesus. I need to be more overwhelmed with who he is and what he has done for me."

When Jesus Christ is what I worship, when he's the sun and the solar system of my life, all of the other planets in my life go in place. The hope of our church is to be a church that worships according to the Word with passion and truth, with gravity and gladness. Let's pray.

Lord, this is a weighty message. It's a weighty text. We just ask to be a weighty people. Lord, we ask to be a people who are serious and also unbelievably celebratory, who are unbelievably joyful, who are full of gladness and also gravity, who are full of passion and truth, who are confusing to the world because of both how passionate we are and how committed we are to the truth.

Lord, I pray that our worship, whether it's personal or with our families or here together, would be a witness to the world that you have done something in us. We pray that you would change the Michals we have in our lives, the people who look on us... Maybe it's our coworkers. Maybe it's our classmates. Maybe it's our friends.

Maybe even, for some of us, it's our spouse or, for others of us, it's our kids. They look out the window of their lives and think what we're doing is foolish. Lord, we ask that they would come to know you and come to love you. We pray this in Christ's name, amen.