

**UNBRIDLED WORSHIP****2 Samuel 6**

**Intro:** Do you have a most memorable worship experience? One where you palpably felt the Lord's presence? Does anyone want to briefly share about it?

I've had a number of them. As I thought about it I thought about the majesty of Oak Creek Canyon which Kathy and I drove through a week ago today. Such beauty takes my breath away and brings a certain sense of worship for the Creator who made it happen. It can happen with a sunflower field like the one we passed on the way to MCC on Wednesday evening – the beauty of God's creation is all around us.

I've also had corporate worship experiences such as Promise Keepers gatherings where I was with thousands and thousands of men of every race and singing God's praises. It is an awesome experience. I've had those kinds of "Can I take this home with me?!" worship times here at ABC when you get a glimpse of Eternity with the host of heaven worshipping forever, and you want to make it stay. Worship is when you give everything to God and in turn he fills you to the brim.

David was a man of worship. You can see it here in 2 Samuel 6, which is our text for today, and you can see it in his Psalms when he sings,

*O Lord, our Lord,*

*how majestic is your name in all the earth!*

*You have set your glory above the heavens.* Psalm 8:1

or

*I waited patiently for the Lord;*

*he inclined to me and heard my cry.*

*He drew me up from the pit of destruction,*

*out of the miry bog,*

*and set my feet upon a rock,*

*making my steps secure.*

*He put a new song in my mouth,*

*a song of praise to our God.*

*Many will see and fear,*

*and put their trust in the Lord.* Psalm 40:1-3

or

*I will extol you, my God and King,*

*and bless your name forever and ever.*

*Every day I will bless you*

*and praise your name forever and ever.*

*Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised,*

*and his greatness is unsearchable. . .*

*My mouth will speak the praise of the Lord,*

*and let all flesh bless his holy name forever and ever.* Psalm 145:1-3, 21

And these are just a small sampling.

It should go without saying since David was a man after God's own heart. Even though he was the anointed king of Israel he knew he was just an ordinary man and the servant of an extraordinary God AND he wanted to lead his people into the kind of deeper worship or God and relationship with God he knew was possible. That is why he was driven to bring the Ark of the Covenant to Jerusalem.

Let me read a few verses (Read 2 Samuel 6:1-5)

The Ark had been in the house of Abinadab for many years. In 1 Samuel 4 - 7 you can read how this holy chest had been captured by the Philistines and taken to the town of Ashdod. This was horrific for the Israelites, the enemy was in possession of their holiest possession! But it was even worse for the Philistines – their god Dagon – a mere idol – constantly fell to the ground before the Ark because the Ark was the very presence of the one true God. In addition there was a plague that attacked the Philistines. So they sent it to another town and that town was assailed until finally, you can read in 1 Samuel 6, they pleaded with the Israelites to please come and get the Ark! And the Israelites did and it was taken to the home of Abinadab. Now, 20+ years later

David was intent on getting God's glory and presence, which the Ark represented, back into the center of God's people in Jerusalem.

From what I read in our text you know that David paid attention to, and made elaborate preparation for, worship. Yes . . .

### **Worship takes preparation**

- In David's case he had thirty divisions of his army escorting the procession as they transported the Ark toward Jerusalem and he and all the people were with him. Was it really EVERYONE in Israel? No, but when you read "all the people" you can assume there were a lot of worshippers accompanying the caravan and they would later tell their friends, "You would have loved it! EVERYBODY WAS THERE!"
- The Ark was placed on a new cart. Nothing but the best for the presence of the Lord! We'll see what God thought of that in a bit.
- And, Ooooooh the music. David was a man of music. He would have given Ron Sprunger a run for his money. There were instruments of every kind as the happy, joyous, worshipful procession traveled along. It was making a joyful noise for sure.
- And then an oxen stumbled. Listen (Read 2 Samuel 6:6-11)

### **A new cart was not what God required**

- The oxen stumbled and the cart lurched and the Ark slid, and Uzzah reached out to steady the Ark, AND UZZAH DIED. Why?!!!!
- You were not to touch the Ark! There were specific instructions in Numbers 4 for how the Ark was to be handled and transported. First and foremost, you were not to touch it unless you were from a branch of the Levite tribe known as the Kohathites and it was to be transported by them using poles that went through the rings specifically provided and attached to the Ark for that purpose. A new cart might have been nice, but it was not what God had specifically directed.
- Uzzah died on the spot. David was worshipping, then he was horrified, then he was angry and then he was terrified and then he was hopeless. Why God?! Isn't that a little over the top?! Couldn't you just have burned the poor guy's fingertips?
- Well, I asked the same question. In fact in my scripture printout I wrote in big red letters WHY?! So I did some digging. David Guzik puts it this way, "*To put it simply, God's severity was in reaction to the flippancy with which David chose to transport the Ark. God had commanded in Numbers 4:6 that the Ark should be moved with poles—not on a cart. God was very clear on his stipulations for carrying the Ark and warned the priests in Numbers 4:15, "They will not touch the holy objects [or they will] die"* David did what he thought was right with a new cart, but it's not what God had clearly laid down. Walter Kaiser writes, "*Surely this passage warns that it is not enough to have a worthy purpose and a proper spirit when we enter into the service of God; God's work must also be performed in God's way. Pursuing the right end does not automatically imply using the right means.*" That's a tough truth.
- Good intentions aren't good enough. For David this was true. For Uzzah it was fatally true. This Ark had been in his home his entire life – but that was still not reason enough to go against what God commanded.
- So the Ark stayed in the home of Obed-Edom and he was blessed because of it. Listen (Read 2 Samuel 6:12-19)

### **Real worship is that which pleases God**

- David had things set up to his own standards with a huge company of worshippers, a new cart and wonderful music. All this is fine – if it's aimed at God. But if it is what stirs the "right feelings" or says the "right things" or is from an outline in a Five Steps to Great Worship article that you read online – you're missing the point.
- King David saw the blessing that Obed-Edom and his family were getting by having the Ark in their home and he knew it was time to finish what he had started – but this time the worship would be directed at the One who's presence and glory the Ark actually represented. So they began again but this time with the proper conveyance and with Kohathites carrying it. They took their time – taking a few steps, making a sacrifice to God, and then proceeding – toward Jerusalem and finally into the tent intended for it. It was all about doing it God's way.

- And as they did it God's way, the worship was focused on God and it was better than ever before. David might have been King but he was dressed like a priest instead of in his royal robes. He was just one of the people – because that was actually what he was. He was a child of God, just like every other Israelite because. worship levels the ground before a Holy God. Our text tells us *And David danced before the Lord with all his might.* 2 Samuel 6:14. Or as Peterson puts it, *David... danced with great abandon before God.* 2 Samuel 6:14 (The Message).
- It was unbridled worship. Guzik writes, “*David didn't hold back anything in his own expression of worship. He didn't dance out of obligation but out of heartfelt worship.*” It was worship that only worried about what God thought so David and his countrymen were caught up in the glory and presence of Almighty God. It didn't matter what people thought – it wasn't about them or anyone who might be looking down their noses at them – it was all about God.
- But haters gonna hate! David's wife, Michal, the daughter of King Saul, of all people . . . *looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart.* 2 Samuel 6:16. Michal missed the memo – it wasn't about her. It wasn't about. “What will people think?” Or “Is that any way for a king to act? It was about God and his glory. And God does get the glory. David and his people partied before the Lord and had a love feast of bread, meat, and raisins as they left to go home.
- And David went home . . . to his wife who despised him. Listen (Read 2 Samuel 6:20-23)
- David's reply to Michal's contempt . . .

**I'll gladly look like a fool if it's for God's glory**

- Michal's harsh words are often interpreted to indicate that David was dancing lewdly in what was essentially his underwear – but as I pointed out a bit ago – David was dressed like a common priest. Michal was looking down her arrogant nose at him and his response was, “*Think what you will but I did it for God, not for you.*”
- That's what unbridled worship is – reckless abandon to the glory of God and for the glory of God.
- A quick comment on that final verse, *And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.* 2 Samuel 6:23 (ESV). Did God cause her to be so? Maybe. He's God and he can and will do what he wants. Uzzah died because he forgot or ignored an ancient warning and touched the Ark. But the text doesn't say that about Michal. I think that with the kind of contempt she had for David that maybe the feeling was mutual. Guzik writes this, “*Michal's barrenness was not necessarily the result of Divine judgment. It may be that David never had marital relations with her again. Nevertheless, the principle stands: there is often barrenness in the life and ministry of the overly critical.*”

**Conclusion:** Regardless of what the correct answer is, let's be known for our worship rather than our critical spirit. In fact a critical spirit indicates that our eyes are not on Jesus. Instead a spirit of unbridled worship means we have forgotten ourselves and we are focused on the one worthy of all our attention. Let's honor and glorify the Lord with all that we are and all that we possess. As we do that the concerns of this world will fade because we know the one who holds this world in the palm of his hand. Amen.