

Spiritual Disciplines: Worship

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Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0 : 00] Good morning and welcome to our service for Sunday, March 21st, 2021. My name is Kent Dixon and I'm the lead pastor of Braemar Baptist Church here in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

It's a joy to be with you this morning and welcome no matter how you're engaging with us, whether you're tuning in live right now, listening later in the week on Facebook, watching on Facebook, so many different ways for you to connect with us.

So if you'd like to be added to our regular weekly communication from the church, email communications, send a message to info at braemarbaptist.com and let us know you'd like to be added to that.

You can check us out on our website anytime at braemarbaptist.com. That's the great thing about the internet. It is 24-7. So we invite you to engage with us in that way.

So welcome here this morning to our church and welcome whether you're someone who is part of our church and you connect with us on a regular basis or you're just checking us out this morning.

[1 : 05] Welcome in whatever circumstances you're in. I also want to recognize that for many of us, today is a day of joy. We're doing okay in the midst of the pandemic.

Our health may be good and we're doing all right. You know, we're feeling blessed. We're feeling connected. We're feeling lots of good things. But we also want to recognize that there are people who are tuning in, who are maybe listening later in the week, who are struggling right now.

So they have perhaps health concerns or financial concerns or other things like that. So I just want to recognize that we come before God.

We gather together exactly where we're at. We're not called by God to be something that we're not. We're not called to pretty ourselves up before we come before Him.

But we're called to come as we are. So welcome to you this morning. Welcome into the presence of God and into community together. No matter where you're at and no matter what challenges you may be facing or the joy that you have in your life.

[2 : 12] So we recognize that life is a journey and we're all on it and we're on it together. And God is with us. So I want to encourage you this morning.

Let's open in prayer. Father God, we praise you for the confidence you give our hearts through the love of your Son. Father, we look forward to the day when we will not pass from this world into condemnation, but instead we'll enter into your presence of everlasting celebration.

Father, we confess that we're tired of living for ourselves. That can be so exhausting. We thank you for sending Jesus to die in our place to deliver us from the misery of a self-centered life.

Lord, no matter what struggles, temptations, or tragedies we face this week or in these days of our lives, please help us to not lose heart.

Lord, through the Holy Spirit, guard us from ever doubting your great love for us. Help us to remember the good news that you have made us your own and that you have forgiven our sins.

[3 : 22] Amen for that. Lord, lead us to lives, to live our lives, Lord, for Christ's sake, at our workplaces, with our friends and families, and wherever else we may go this week.

Lord, we pray all of these things in the name of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. Well, we're going to join in singing three worship songs this morning, and those songs are all glory, laud, and honor, and to God be the glory, and then holy, holy, holy.

And so you'll recognize the theme here, and that is the holiness of God and why he is worthy of our worship. So you'll be able to follow the lyrics on the screen as the leader leads us in singing.

So enjoy the music, and let these words fill your heart with encouragement this morning. God bless you as you sing. We match our tent of Jesus, and that you have on your journey together.

We pray in heaven. God bless you as you sing. Thou dear Lord's Son, Who in the Lord's name comes, The King and Blessed Lord.

[5 : 11] All glory, Lord and honor, To the Redeemer, King. To the lips of children, between hopes and dreams The company of angels are crazy beyond high And words open for me, created with me All glory, Lord, and honor to the Redeemer King To the mountains of children, between hopes and dreams To thee before thy passions, they sing the hymn of grace

To hear now I exalted a melody we raise To God be the glory, great things he hath done So loved he the world, that he gave us his Son Who yielded his life, atoned for sin And opened the life, let it all make your wind Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice O come to the Father, through Jesus his Son And give him the glory, great things he hath done O perfect redemption, the purchase of blood To every believer, promise of God Who was defender, who truly believes That moment from Jesus, that moment from Jesus That moment from Jesus, the pardon we see Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice O come to the Father, through Jesus his Son And give him the glory, great things he hath done Holy, holy, holy, holy Lord God almighty God almighty Early in the morning Our song shall rise to thee Holy, holy, holy

Merciful and mighty God in three persons God in three persons Blessed Trinity Holy, holy, holy Holy, holy Holy, holy Though the darkness hide Though the eye of sinful man Thy glory may not see Only thou art holy There is none beside thee Perfect in power Perfect in power Love in power

[10 : 21] Love in power Love in power And yours And yours And yours Holy, holy Holy, holy Lord God almighty God in three persons And yours Lord as his Son God in three persons All the light I see All the light I see All the light I see All the light I see All that worship Praise the Lord And my name And my name I see Lord as his Son I see My name My name Holy, holy He hurts that Blessed Trinity I hope you enjoyed those songs this morning as we reflect on the holiness of God that he is worthy of our worship.

And as we'll explore this morning, or together today, you'll get a sense of the depth and breadth of what it means to worship God.

We're continuing in our series on spiritual disciplines. It's entitled Spiritual Disciplines Exercise Your Faith. And we've been recognizing through our series that as followers of Jesus Christ, as his disciples, we can benefit from some tools and skills that will help us on our journey.

And these tools or skills are known as spiritual disciplines. They're intended. Spiritual disciplines are intended to help us put ourselves before God and in a state of heart, a state of mind, where we can best interact with him.

Last week, we began looking at the corporate disciplines. We started our series with the inward disciplines, then the outward disciplines, and now we find ourselves looking at the corporate ones.

[12 : 54] And these are viewed, the corporate disciplines are viewed as applying more to ourselves, more than just to ourselves as individuals, but all of us together as a unified group, as a corporate group, as a body together.

Today, we're going to look at spiritual disciplines, the corporate disciplines, as we focus on the discipline of worship. How important or central would you think that the concept of worship is, particularly the worship of God in Scripture?

Well, across all translations of Scripture in my exploration, worship, the word worship, is mentioned more than 380 times in the Old Testament and 118 times in the New Testament.

And friends, we could easily spend, not surprisingly, many weeks, not only digging into the many ways the Bible highlights worship, but also the many ways that the worship of God is expressed in Scripture.

So today, we're going to focus in on some highlights together. Worship. Over the course of our spiritual disciplines series, I've highlighted the fact that we tend to have a limited understanding of some of these concepts of the spiritual disciplines.

[14 : 24] And not surprisingly, worship is no different. It's another topic in the Christian life that's become more compartmentalized and misunderstood than almost any other, believe it or not.

So let's recognize something right up front before we dig too much deeper into this this morning. A correct view of biblical worship may actually require you to discard or at least revisit some of the conceptions or misconceptions that you've held about worship for many years, if not your entire life.

But I promise it will be okay. So let's explore some of that basic understanding. We hear phrases or use phrases like call to worship and heart of worship.

Churches have worship leaders and worship teams and worship times. Worship is even a specific genre of music or even more accurately, a sub-genre of Christian music.

And so you've already probably been thinking maybe, worship? Really? We're going to spend an entire sermon talking about worship. Well, and didn't we just cover off worship when we sang those songs a moment ago?

[15 : 49] Doesn't that check the worship box? Well, if any of those ideas have crossed your mind this morning, then you're probably recognizing how limited your perspective on worship may be.

But you're in good company. This is not an uncommon thing to have a limited view or a very specific view of what worship is. And I'd suggest that many Christians these days, for them the term worship relates primarily to the idea of singing in church, right?

We're singing in church. This is our worship time. And we're done that part. But worship is much more than just singing. It can include prayer and silence and reading and dancing and clapping and many other expressions of praise and adoration.

So the English word worship actually originated with a Saxon word, which I won't try and pronounce. But that word means essentially worth-ship or worthiness.

So that may be helpful in beginning to get a better understanding of what worship is. So while we've turned the idea of worship into a noun or something specific that we do during a specific time, most often in a gathering of people, we recognize that worship piece.

[17 : 19] It's something that relates more to an idea of recognizing value. And I hope that as followers of Jesus who recognize the Almighty God as our Father, our desire to worship Him isn't merely confined to a specific chunk of a Sunday morning service.

I hope not. To worship God doesn't simply mean singing the latest Hillsong tune or even our favorite song or our favorite hymn that we've heard on the radio or out of a hymn book that we know from when we were a child.

So that worshiping God does mean those things in some ways, but it also means much more. Christians, many Christians seem to have that sense that worshiping God is merely about singing. And it's singing to God or about God using the specific styles or songs that suit us best. While we may have a sense that worship, particularly in singing, is about us, our personal preferences, it's something to which we are called, absolutely.

It's not ultimately about us. Can you begin to recognize that? Have you ever attended a church service and complained about the music or singing?

[18 : 51] I'd love for this to be in person because I would get people to raise their hands. This is too fast, too slow, too loud, too quiet, too much guitar, too little guitar.

Why do we have drums in church? It's too twangy. It's too rocky. Does any of that sound familiar? I confess I've been guilty of variations of that.

But do you know what that means? It means we're kind of missing the point. You've likely heard me talk about consumerist Christianity before.

I've talked about it in the past. And it's been visible throughout the church, particularly in the Western church, for a long time. It's that sense that we come to church to be spoon-fed, to be catered to, to be entertained, to have our needs met.

And then we'll return to our previously scheduled lives already in progress. I will take time out of my week to go to church, but it's got to be for me.

[20 : 02] It's got to be tailored to what I need. Consumerist. We complain about service times and song choices and bulletin formats and sermon topics.

And the list probably goes on, doesn't it? And do you know where that stems from, friends? It stems from the wrong perspective. It stems from possibly even, I hesitate to say it, but the wrong heart.

When we come into the presence of God and his people, where is our heart at? So how do we reclaim what worship is intended to be?

Well, first, true biblical worship begins with recognizing who God is, what he has done, and what he will do.

Who is more worthy than God? And in recognizing God's worth-ship, who could be more worthy of our worship?

[21 : 11] If the focus of silence, then, is listening to God, and we talked about silence and solitude in the spiritual disciplines, the focus of worship is experiencing God.

The focus of worship is experiencing God. worship starts with, not music, but it starts with a recognition of who God is.

It's not about our feelings or our emotions or whether we feel like worshipping God. Worship is about giving God the recognition, recognizing the worth that he has, the worth and worship that is due to him.

The focus of our worship, then, is God himself. Revelation chapter 4 gives us some of the most powerful statements of worship and God's worthiness anywhere in Scripture.

Revelation chapter 4, verse 8 includes the familiar words, and we sang a bit about this this morning, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty who was and is and is to come.

[22 : 35] And in Revelation 4, verse 11, we read, You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power.

For you created all things, and by your will, they were created and have their being. We recognize that while he is all-powerful and God could easily take all the glory and power and honor for himself, John writes that God is worthy to receive those things from us.

That is part of why we were made to worship God and recognize his worthiness. Yes, God's power alone is sufficient enough to make him worthy, but it's also his nature, his character, to receive glory and honor and power back from all creation.

Second, worship is not about who we are or what we want. Do you hear that? Worship is not about who we are or what we want.

It's about who God is and what his worthiness should, by association, and naturally draw out of us.

[24 : 06] Just by the nature of who God is and his character and what he has done for us, that he is the creator of all things, our souls and our hearts and our entire being should be drawn into worshipping him.

We've already recognized that human tendency to want things the way we want them, right? But I hope you're coming to recognize that the true biblical nature of worship is not about our preferences or our desires.

last fall and winter we explored the characteristics and qualities of God in two back-to-back sermon series. And friends, it's those qualities that make God worthy of our worship.

So if you've already forgotten those, go back and revisit them. It's those qualities of God that should cause us to fall on our knees to our knees in adoration, in praise, in gratitude as we worship him.

As we reflect on our lives and the many blessings God has given us, the many ways he has walked with us and protected us and the depth of love that he has for us, how can we do anything but worship him?

[25 : 38] Have you ever reflected on what an attitude of worship can mean in and for your life? A biblical perspective on worship should change the way we speak, the way we act, the way we serve, the way we love, the way we live.

It should change all of those things completely. Why? Because we begin to see that everything in our lives, no matter if we see it as mundane or significant, when those things are done with a heart that is focused on God, whatever actions we take, whatever things we do in our day, when we do those things with a heart that is focused on God, even the most simple task, even the most simple action, can become an act of worship.

In fact, when we have the proper perspective on what it means to worship God and bring glory to Him, the spiritual disciplines themselves can and should be acts of worship.

We can worship God through serving others. We worship Him in prayer. We worship God in confessing our sins to one another. We're in times studying scripture or even in times, yes, believe it or not, of silence and solitude.

All of those things can be worship. We can worship God, my friends, in every day and in every moment of our lives, not just on Sundays.

[27 : 24] But I want us to recognize something important and perhaps even obvious. Worship is not confined to a specific concrete or physical set of actions we take.

It's not just confined to the physical. Ultimately, worship, the Bible talks about this, has a significant spiritual dimension as well.

Can you recognize that too? We worship God through the power of the Holy Spirit and we pray for the Spirit's power to help us worship with the right heart and the right perspective.

We talk about the same power that rose Jesus from the dead lives within us, the Holy Spirit. And it's the Holy Spirit who resonates with our own spirit as we worship God.

The fact that genuine worship is to be carried on in the unseen spiritual realm is something that comes across in Jesus' words. True worship is not anchored to merely the physical.

[28 : 38] We read in John 4, sorry, John chapter 4, verses 23 and 24. Jesus said, the hour is coming and now is when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth.

for such the Father seeks to worship him. God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.

So we recognize then that true worship involves not just our bodies and our physical actions but our spirit as well. Mary gave a great example of this.

She knew she was worshiping God in that way as she recognized in Luke chapter 1, verses 46 and 47. Mary reflected, my soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

I hope that you've personally experienced a time like that when you were worshiping God whether you were on your own or in a group of other people and you felt somehow as though your spirit was resonating almost like a tuning fork vibrating with a perfect pitch with perfect note.

[30 : 05] I hope you've experienced that. I have and it is the closest thing to heaven I can imagine. Perhaps when that happened for you you felt peace.

You were filled with joy. Perhaps it gave you a sense of connection beyond yourself. My friends, that is what true worship focused on God can feel like.

So third, how can we practice true worship in our lives? Well, having recognized that many people begin with a preconception that worship is about the singing that we do in church, it might be somewhat difficult to think of worship as a spiritual discipline.

But I hope that in our time together today you've come to see that a singing centric view of worship is actually extremely limiting and quite confining.

Absolutely, singing is part of worship and can be. But it's not all there is to it. While we have tended to make worship about personal preferences and style, we need to move beyond that as well.

[31 : 27] As human beings, I believe we recognize a tendency to be drawn into worshiping many things. People worship art and music, the beauty of nature, or other things that create a sense of awe in us.

But we need to recognize that in worshiping things like that, we're worshiping the creations, not the creator. We're worshiping the creations, not the creator.

As author Richard Foster says, to worship is to experience reality, to touch life. It is to know, to feel, to experience the resurrected Christ in the midst of the gathered community.

Worship is human response to divine initiative. Worship is our responding to the overtures of love from the heart of the Father.

It is kindled within us only when the Spirit of God touches our human spirit. God draws us into worshiping him.

[32 : 49] And worship is a discipline that we need to develop and grow in. An important key to effective worship is getting rid of distractions whenever you can.

Whatever it is that might be a distraction to you, make sure you identify it and take steps to remove it. Ask God to help you identify and remove distractions that cause you to lean into an idea that worship is about what you want.

If you like to sing, plan a time to sit in the presence of God singing your favorite songs of praise and worship to him. If you're not a singer, I know people who aren't.

remember your singing to God doesn't have to be perfect. That's maybe one of the blessings of interacting and having church this way.

You can sing your lungs out in praise to God and not worry about deafening the person next to you. Or sounding like nails on a chalkboard.

[33 : 58] God is not picky when your heart is focused on worshiping him. So try listening to recorded praise if you're not a singer and don't feel like that's one of your gifts.

Listen to recorded praise and worship music. As you begin to learn the words to the songs, try adapting them into prayers to God, prayers of worship, your personal worship to him.

It's also good to learn worship music, learn without, sorry, it's helpful to learn to worship without music and singing and there's many ways that you can do that.

You might enjoy reciting the names of God. Framed in our kitchen, we have a list of the names of God in a picture frame and it's so beautiful to reflect on that.

Reading scripture out loud can be worship as well. Creating a dance, I know I'm talking to Baptists, but creating a dance might be something that would move you and draw you close in worship to God.

[35 : 08] Or even as I said before, worshiping in silence and meditation, reflecting on time alone between you and God.

Many people, and you know this about me, many people enjoy worshiping God in nature. And if that resonates with you, take a walk in a river valley or the forest or if you get the opportunity the mountains.

Carefully spend time observing all that God has created around you. Worship Him for every beautiful creation. Friends, no matter how or where you choose to worship God, the most important thing is that your heart is focused on Him.

God has created you to worship Him. And He's created you as a unique and special individual. That's who you are.

So as you experiment with worship, use your imagination in new and creative ways. Allow your God-given imagination and creativity to draw you into His presence in a new way.

[36 : 26] You may find a new and special connection that you've never explored before. I want to challenge you to seek to move beyond worship as you've ever known it before.

Challenge yourself, challenge your old perspectives on worship and make sure that God is always the focus of your worship.

My friends, you were made to worship and you were made by the one who is the most worthy of your worship.

Worship your God. Amen. We're going to close our time together this morning by singing the doxology.

This will be our closing prayer and our benediction. So the familiar words of this praise and worship song composition will be familiar to you.

[37 : 29] They'll appear on the screen and the worship leader, the singing leader in this case, will lead us in these words. So I want you to reflect on the words of the doxology.

They are in many ways one of the ultimate prayers of praise and worship to God. So I encourage you to worship God in this way this morning.

May be blessed as you worship him. And as we finish the words of the doxology, go in peace my friends. I encourage you to have a worshipful week.

God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. God bless you. praise God from him all blessings fall.

[38 : 35] Praise him all creatures here below. Praise him above ye heaven behold.

yea heaven was there beholden courage between my Praise God.

Blessings for all. Praise Him, all creatures here below.

Praise Him above, ye heavenly home. Praise Father, Son, that's holy home.

Bless you. Praise Father, Son, that's holy home. So beat■■■ Christ.

[40 : 32] Hm.