

Corporate Expressions Of Desire & Delight

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[0:00] Please pray with me. Heavenly Father, we come now into a time where we open up your word and that we pray that this message would be something from you and not from me.

Lord, help me to get out of the way of what you want to communicate to your church this morning. God, I pray that as we behold your glory and your power and your character from your word, God, that we would be transformed increasingly, God, into your image.

God, may we not leave here unchanged, but may we be made more and more like our Savior, Jesus Christ. God, we pray this all in your name. Amen.

Well, good morning. For those who don't know, my name is Mike Lusa, and I'm one of the elders here at Shoreline. And I want to begin with a quote. So listen to this.

Magnifying God's greatness begins with the proclamation of objective biblical truths about God, but it ends with the expression of deep and holy affections toward God.

[1:15] We aren't simply reciting facts about God, like students reviewing their multiplication tables. God wants us to delight in him. He is exalted when all our energies are directed to one end, being satisfied in who he is.

So in our third of four sermons in a series on worship, in the opening of our first sermon, we talked about how the term worship can mean so many different things to so many different people. But what we care most about is what God has to say about worship from his word. Amen.

And why do we care so much about worship? Well, in Exodus, over and over again, God has Moses go to Pharaoh and say this. The Lord, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you saying, let my people go that they may serve or in other translations worship.

It's the same word, me in the wilderness. In Isaiah 43, which we read two weeks ago, bring my sons from afar, my daughters from the end of the earth, everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory.

John 4, Jesus said this, But the hour is coming and is now here when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.

[2:29] And in the final chapter of the Bible, which describes the new Jerusalem, we read this. No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it and his servants will worship him.

And so we see from first to last in scripture that worship is of utmost importance to God. It's the reason for which we were created. And as I said two weeks ago when we opened this series, our hope and prayer is that by the end of these four weeks, we as individuals, as a church body, we will understand more fully and desire more passionately the true worship of God because God is seeking such worshipers.

And we've titled this series, Worship on Earth as it is in Heaven. Do you have the clicker, by the way? I forgot to ask. It's all right. I'll just nod my head to you.

We titled it Worship on Earth as it is in Heaven because all the time now and forevermore in Heaven, God is being worshipped. God will be worshipped and he's being worshipped perfectly in Heaven.

And our worship in Heaven is going to be perfect. And what we want now is that perfect worship ushered forward into the present. We want our worship increasingly to be like our perfected worship in Heaven.

[3:46] So here's where we've been. The first week, we went through Romans 1 through 11 and then spent time in Romans 12 seeing that worship is all of life, right? True worship is a holy, all of life response to who God is, for who he is, and for what he's done as we find our satisfaction in him.

And that was the first week. Then last week, Ethan preached from 1 Peter 2 about how worship is a family affair, right? God is calling, he's giving us new identities individually, but also corporately as God is calling a people to himself to worship.

And we don't do Christianity alone. Individual Christians are not a thing in the New Testament. We do Christianity as the church. And we see, too, that the church collectively is the bride of Christ. I am not, Michael Lewis is not the bride of Christ. The church is the bride of Christ. And the local church embodies that in a practical way. The title of today's sermon is this, Corporate Worship, Expressions of Desire and Delight.

And the big idea is this. And you see this on the screen. We gather in corporate worship chiefly to meet with God, expressing with our minds, our hearts, and our bodies that we desire him and delight in him above all else.

[5:03] That's the big idea today. Let me read it one more time. We gather in corporate worship chiefly to meet with God, expressing with our minds, our hearts, and our bodies that we desire him and delight in him above all else.

And I will say that, so, the first sermon, it had a wide view on worship, because worship is all of life. Today's focus is narrowed in on corporate worship. So when I use the term worship today, most of the time I'm going to be talking about what we do here on Sunday mornings, our corporate gatherings together.

I just don't want there to be confusion. Like, Mike, you said worship is all of life. It is. It is all of life. Everything we do should be done to the glory of God. Today I'm talking about corporate worship. And so let's dig into this psalm here, Psalm 63.

If you look in your Bibles, you'll see here that there's an inscription, right? A psalm of David when he was in the wilderness of Judah. And so combined with verse 11 that says, The king shall rejoice in God.

This implies that David was king when he wrote this psalm, and that David was most likely hiding from his son Absalom in the wilderness. You see, King David, though a man after God's own heart, actually lived a life that was filled with drama and conflict.

[6:14] His son Amnon violated his own sister, which is David's daughter, Tamar. David's other son Absalom was furious. But David remained passive and unwilling to confront Amnon.

And eventually Absalom took matters into his own hands, and he had Amnon murdered. And still years passed by, and David continued to avoid dealing with the situation, just turning a blind eye to it.

And Absalom's anger eventually led to him rallying an army to force King David, his own father, from the throne. And so this psalm was most likely written in a time when David has fled from the throne, his own son is forcing him out, and now he's in the wilderness taking refuge in the dry, stifling Judean wilderness.

And so let's look at the first line there. Oh God, you are my God. Let's just stop right there. This first line is already worship. Oh God.

It recognizes God as ruler over all things. And he says, you are my God. And so David is declaring submission to God as not just the ruler, but as his ruler.

[7:25] Not just the one who reigns over all things, but the one who reigns over him and over his life. And so everything that follows in this psalm is rooted in this. Everything that follows must be viewed not as somebody who needs to come to God for the first time, but it's coming from somebody who already has a relationship with God, who has faith in God.

And this leads us now to the first point that I want to make, and it'll be up there. Worship involves desiring God and delighting in God with our souls.

So look in the text. Verse one, he says, Oh God, you are my God. Earnestly I seek you. My soul thirsts for you. My flesh faints for you as in a dry and weary land where there is no water.

So David, he is literally in a land where there is no water. Like he's literally parched. His mouth needs the sweet quenching of water, but what does he thirst after most of all?

He mostly thirsts for God. He wants his spirit to be quenched by God, even though the physical thirst is all over him. Charles Spurgeon said this, Thirst is an insatiable longing after that, which is one of the most essential supports of life, water, right?

[8:37] There is no reasoning with it. There's no forgetting it, no despising it, no overcoming it by stoical indifference. Thirst will be heard. The whole man must yield to its power.

I have an almost one year old and she makes it very clear. We've taught her more please. And she makes it very clear when she wants more water and then she'll point to the water. And it's like when she's thirsty, she's got to get her water. But then he says this, So question for Christians this morning, for believers that are gathered here.

Do you find yourselves longing most for God? Do you find yourselves fainting for God, earnestly desiring more of him?

Or are you instead settling for the pleasures of this world that make your desire for God lessen and lessen? We have so many things that we desire and seek after that our desire for God just wanes over time.

And I want to turn a brief word to unbelievers. This is a famous quote from C.S. Lewis. If you're an unbeliever here this morning, C.S. Lewis says this, Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists.

[9:59] A baby feels hunger. Well, there is such thing as food. A duckling wants to swim. Well, there is such thing as water. Men feel sexual desires. Well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

And so if you're here this morning and you don't know the Lord, but I know that there are desires in you and you're chasing after so many things, trying to fulfill desires. And I'm here this morning to tell you, there is a desire in your heart that cannot be satisfied by anything or anyone but God.

That's why that desire is in your heart. So turn to the Lord this morning and you will find that all of your satisfaction is found in him. Let's look at verse two.

David then says, So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. So in this state of longing, he's in the wilderness.

What does David remind himself of? He reminds himself of corporate worship. And why? Why does he remind himself of corporate worship? Because it was there in the gathered assembly of the people of God, in the gathered assembly of Israel, where God's power and his glory and his love was most acutely felt.

[11:20] See, in the New Testament, we see that worship, it becomes disconnected from localized and outward forms. In other words, the focus shifts away from times and places and seasons and rituals and onto the internal posture of the heart.

Right? Ethan said last week, The veil has been torn. Right? By the blood of Jesus Christ and him alone, that separation between us and the Father is removed. So now I can worship God myself in my heart.

Praise the Lord. However, it was true in the Old Testament and continues to be true in the New Testament that the presence of God is manifested in a unique way when his people gather to worship him.

You worshiping individually by yourself in your car is not the same as you worshiping here with all of God's saints. Let me show that to you. Matthew 18, verse 20, For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.

Ephesians 2, 22, In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. He's talking to the church. 1 Peter 2, from last week, You yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Christ.

[12:34] It's the church. He's talking about the church where we are gathered together. That's where he is. And if you don't believe me still, John Calvin, he said this, Let us know and be fully persuaded that wherever the faithful who worship him purely and in due form, according to the appointment of his word, are assembled together to engage in the solemn acts of religious worship, he is graciously present and provides in the midst of them.

So I want to focus in my question from above. Let's focus this in. Christians, do you come to church? Do you come to shoreline earnestly desiring more of God?

Do you gather corporately with the people of God chiefly because you want to meet with God? Not because you love to sing, not because you love your mind being stimulated, not because you're enjoying this 45 minutes free of your children, not because you like to socialize.

All those things are good, don't get me wrong, but the primary reason you ought to come here, the reason that you should get up and get your families out of the house is to meet with your God, meet with our God together.

That should be the main reason that we're in this room. Let's keep going. Verse 3, David says, Because your steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise you.

[13:55] And down in verse 5, he says, My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food. Okay, so we see that David longs for God above all else, right?

And then he recalls the times in corporate worship where he was beholding the power and the glory and the love of God. And then what happens? He's satisfied, right?

Your love is better than life. My soul will be satisfied. His thirst is quenched. He finds God to be his all-satisfying treasure and joy.

So there's a pattern here. There's a pattern that we see in this psalm, a drumbeat, if you will, of desiring and delighting. Desiring and delighting. And actually, it fits right into the pattern we talked about two weeks ago, right?

We talked about the revelation of God and then our response to him. And this actually fits right in. And so we see that we desire God. So we come longing hard after God, thirsting for him, wanting nothing but him, right?

[14:54] Our soul's yearning for him. And then we find that God reveals himself to us, right? We experience God. We behold his power and glory. We see his love on display.

And this happens primarily through the word of God, okay? And by the Holy Spirit giving us spiritual eyes to see these unseen realities. So we desire God as revealed to us.

And then we find that we delight in him. As we behold him, we find that our whole being is satisfied. And we're changed, right? We're changed by that, as we talked about last week a little bit.

So desire, revelation, delight, and this will be on the screen, and then response. So finally, we respond in expressions of worship and praise, right?

It's the outworking. It's the visible manifestation of our deep soul satisfaction in God. So that's the drumbeat. It's desire, revelation, delight, response.

[15:50] This is the drumbeat of our lives. And God is glorified in the whole process, right? God is glorified in our yearning for him. And he's glorified as he reveals himself to us.

And he's glorified as we delight in him. And he's glorified in our response of praise to him. And so we gather week after week in a spirit of longing for God and also an expectation of being satisfied in him as he reveals himself to us.

Now this has massive implications for how we do church, right? This has implications for how we prepare ourselves for church and for how we engage in church and for how we leave church.

We're going to spend most of the time talking about how we engage in church. But I want to spend just a couple minutes talking about how we prepare and how we ought to leave from corporate worship.

You see, often we come here on a Sunday morning and we're distracted, right? There's been craziness at home or we woke up late or whatever it is. And then oftentimes we leave from church and things that we ask each other are, hey, what did you think of church?

[16:57] Right? What did you get out of the sermon? What did you think of the music? Those are common questions and I'm prone to saying those as well. And I'm not saying that those are inherently bad questions, okay?

But I do think those questions reflect our American consumer mindset that we have as if like I come to church to get something and then I leave and I'm going to talk about what I got from church.

And I just think that there's better language that we ought to be using. And so let's talk about that real quick. First of all, how to prepare for corporate worship. This will be on the screen.

One, if we're coming primarily to meet with God and he's here in a special way, then we better prioritize this day. You're all here because you've prioritized our Sunday gathering. And this is our most important day of the week.

It's when we gather corporately with the people of God. So prioritize Sunday morning. Secondly, pray. Pray that God will prepare your heart and the hearts of the congregation for what we're doing here.

[17:57] Thirdly, read and meditate on scripture, right? To fill your mind with truth and then retune your heart to God by the Spirit. Fourthly, this is real practical. Sleep.

Now there's a lot of kids, right? And we can only do so much to guarantee we're going to get sleep.

But I think so much as it's in our power, Saturday night shouldn't be your latest night of the week because you're coming here to worship God, to meet with him, to engage all of your being in him.

So we ought to come well rested, right? You know, if you went to school, you found that if you crammed for a whole night and woke up and took the test, you probably didn't do as well as if you crammed for a whole day and then slept eight hours and then took the test.

And maybe some of you disagree. You're so, well, my experience proves you wrong. That's fine. But sleep is good for us. Next, come in a spirit of humility. And teachability.

That's huge. You're coming primarily to receive from the Lord and then to respond and worship to him. So if we're not coming humbly and with teachable hearts, then it's putting a wall to the spirit working and to God being worshiped.

[19:06] Come in a spirit of longing and expectation. That's what we're seeing from this psalm. Longing after God, expecting him to work because he's going to. And here's another really practical one. Forbear with one another on Sunday morning.

It's really easy to be upset on the way here. Kids are crying or your spouse makes you late or whatever it is.

But I think that we should try as much as possible to reduce distractions that are going to pull our hearts from longing after God to dealing with something else. So forbear with one another.

This is all just really practical things for how we ought to be preparing for corporate worship. There are other things we could talk about, but we're going to move on in the interest of time. Next, I want to talk about how we leave worship. Okay?

And so, better questions to ask than, hey, what did you think of church? How about this? How did God strike you with awe this morning? How did God manifest his power and glory among his people this morning?

[20:05] What truth from God's word resonated with your heart? In what ways did God show himself to be all satisfying? How was the steadfast love of God shown to be better than everything else in your life?

These aren't the questions. These are just questions that I think are better than what we normally ask. You can come up with your own, but the focus you see is on God and the work that he's doing and the glory that he has and he is showing to us.

That's what our focus should be. So now we're going to move into looking at how we engage in corporate worship, which is going to take the rest of the sermon. And so my second point is this.

Our desire for and delight in God ought to be expressed with our minds, our hearts, and our strength. And so we're going to talk about the implications of, you know, we come to God longing for him and to be satisfying in him.

What are the implications for how we actually do church here? What does it look like for us to express our worship to God as we move through this cycle of desire, revelation, delight, response?

[21:16] What does this look like? And so the first thing is we engage our minds. We engage our minds. Where am I getting this from in the text? We're in a text here.

Look at verse 2. David says, So I have looked upon you in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory. And then jump down to verse 6. He says, See, See, the mind is the gateway to the heart. Before David could feel satisfied in God and respond in joyful praise, he had to hear, right? He had to hear and to see and to think about and then meditate on and understand God's revelation to him. So that, like, that hearing, that seeing, that thinking, that meditating on and understanding, that is a work of the mind. Your mind has to be engaged in order for that to take place, right? And this isn't really a side note, but it's an incredibly important side note.

It's not the main point of my sermon. God has already given to us his complete revelation. Everyone hold up your Bibles. This is the word of God.

[22:27] This is God's, we got an iPhone, that's fine. We believe, we believe here at Shoreline that this is God's inspired, inerrant, sufficient word to us.

Let me try that again. Yeah, there we go. Let me try that again. At Shoreline, we believe that the Bible is God's inspired and errant, sufficient word to us. That doesn't mean it's everything there is to know, right?

It doesn't teach me my times tables. It means that it contains everything we need to know for salvation, everything we need to know about God and redemption and salvation and our future in heaven.

It's right here. There's not new revelation we're looking for, okay? And so, when the Spirit works and the Spirit moves, everything He does is consistent with this right here.

This is an important side note, right? This is God's revelation to us. And also, as a side note, and so, in the local church, the elders are called to uphold the sound doctrine and the teaching of the church.

[23:28] And do you know who else is? Yes. Raise your hands. The members of the church are called to that, okay? And so, this actually requires you to engage your mind in what is being said and what is being prayed and what is being sung.

You also are upholding the doctrine and teaching of this church. And so, if you hear something that doesn't sound like it's biblical, you come and talk to us and we will gladly talk to you about it. And side note, so the mind must be engaged if we are to take in and understand God's revelation to us. And what does this look like on a Sunday morning? This is really practical. It looks like listening. Listen, right? When someone is talking, praying, preaching, listen, engage your mind, pay close attention, right?

During the sermon, for many, it helps to take notes. For others, it's more of a distraction. That's up to your personal preference. But however you learn, however you stay engaged, listen up and stay engaged with your mind.

Second thing, think, right? This sounds silly, but it's so true. When we're singing, you don't just mindlessly sing the words off the screen. Engage your mind and think about what is being sung, right?

[24:34] How about this one? When there's a pause between songs or the singing has stopped and there's still music being played, don't just stand there waiting for somebody up front to do something. This is a time for you to keep your mind engaged on the Lord, on what is going on.

You can pray to God by yourself. You can repeat a line from the song out loud. There's ways that you can continue to engage your mind. As the preacher is preaching, engage your mind. Now, you're all tracking me, so this is good. Engage your mind and track with him, right? Think about what he's saying. Consider what it means for your life. Another example, when we're allowing time for reflection during communion, don't just stare into your cup of Welch's grape juice, right, and let your mind wander off.

Like, engage your mind. If it helps, turn to a passage of scripture, like Isaiah 53. It's a great passage to turn to, to focus your mind in on the truth of what Christ has done for us, but stay engaged.

So, as we intentionally engage our minds in each part of the service, we are participating in God-honoring worship. We are showing God with our minds that we desire him above all else and that we find our satisfaction in him.

[25:47] And we engage our minds. Secondly, we engage our hearts. Now, where am I getting this from? In the text. Verse 1. Earnestly, I seek you.

My soul thirsts for you. My flesh faints for you. Look at verse 3. Because your steadfast love is better than life. Look at verse 5. My soul will be satisfied as with fat and rich food. And even the end of verse 5, I'll praise you with joyful lips. So, we already talked about how worship involves desiring God and delighting in him, right? That's language of emotion.

That's language of affections. That's a language talking about what's going on in our hearts. And this whole psalm, like so many of the psalms, it's spilling over with affection for God.

Two weeks ago, we talked about how God, he doesn't want our worship if he doesn't have our hearts, right? We quoted Matthew 15. He's condemning the Pharisees, saying, this people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

[26:53] In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. That indictment right there, it actually emphasizes the importance of both truth, right?

He says, in vain, why? Because they were teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. They weren't teaching truth, and so it's in vain. And it also emphasizes the importance of affections, because he says, their heart is far from me, right?

I don't want your lip service, I want your heart. And so we see this idea of mind and heart, doctrine and devotion. Write this one down if you're taking notes.

Affections without truth yields godless zeal. Okay? Now at the same time, truth without affections yields cold, dead orthodoxy, right?

Even the demons believe God and shudder, but they aren't affectionate towards God. Neither of those things, truth without affections, affections without truth, neither of them glorifies God.

[27:55] Okay? My sincerity does not justify my godless practice, and my practice counts for nothing if it's not from a sincere heart. We need both of these things.

In scripture, though, we see that one of them is meant to serve the other, and the order is always this, the thoughts of my mind are meant to serve the affections of my heart.

Okay? That's always the order in scripture. John Piper says this in his chapter on worship and desiring God. Strong affections for God rooted in and shaped by what?

By the truth of the scripture. This is the bone and marrow of biblical worship. And another great quote, this is from Jonathan Edwards, one of the Puritan pastors. He said, it is his duty to raise the affections of my hearers as high as I possibly can, provided they are affected with nothing but truth and with affections that are not disagreeable to the nature of what they are affected with.

And so, we don't need to create a false dichotomy between thoughts and feelings. Okay? Some of you, this morning, are scared to let out your emotions.

[29:10] Okay? You're scared to show feeling and affection. You're scared of that. You're scared that we might go too far in that direction. And so, what you're actually scared of is not affection, but it's emotional-ism.

Okay, what's the difference? Emotional-ism is pursuing an emotional experience as the end. That's not our end. Our end is God. Our end is to meet with God, to glorify God, to savor God.

Right? But we're called to express that with our hearts and he wants our hearts. So, it's good to not want the emotional-ism, that pursuit, okay? But I have two things to say to this.

One, this might be a personal opinion here, but this local church is not near that. Okay. I don't think that we're too close to emotional-ism.

The danger at Shoreline, it's not that we continually pursue emotional experience absence of truth. I think the danger at Shoreline is that we pursue theological, mental, heady experiences that don't produce godly affections.

[30:13] Honestly, that's what I think our danger is here. We're more in danger of relying on our mental powers, of being impressed with our own

logic and thinking, rather than relying on the Spirit and being impressed with the power and glory of God.

So, yes, let's think critically. We're called to do that. Let's engage mentally. We don't check our brains at the door, okay? But let's earnestly pray that by God's grace and the power of the Spirit that those thoughts about God would set our hearts aflame for right feelings toward God.

So, I don't think Shoreline is in danger of that. Secondly, Christians have more reason to emote than anyone else, okay? Now, you might tell me, look, I'm just not an emotional person, okay? I hear you. I hear what you're saying. We all express ourselves differently from one another. That's guaranteed. But, I know a lot of people that claim to not be emotional and I know for a fact that there are things in this life that draw your emotions up out of you, okay?

Whether it's watching your team win or lose, right? The Super Bowl. Getting the job that you wanted or not getting the job you wanted. Watching your child take their first step for the first time or watching them willfully disobey you for the first time.

[31:32] Watching that nail go smoothly into the wood or, you know, watching yourself hit your nail instead. These things stir up emotion and even emotionless, supposed emotionless people have emotions and express emotions in different ways.

And so, the point that I'm making is this. Even the most even-keeled, unemotional people have emotions and what ought to stir up your emotions more than anything else, more than anyone else in this world, are the things of God.

Those things ought to stir up your affections more than anything else. Whether you're overcome by sorrow or sin or sadness for suffering or gratitude for Christ's work on the cross or joy that you are a child of God or eager hope in our glorious future with Christ.

Those are the things that ought to stir up godly emotions from within you. And particularly, Christians have more reason to feel joy than anyone else.

Joyful celebration is the most frequent response we see in Scripture. Why? Why is that? It's because of who God is and what he's done for us, right? I can go back through Romans 1-11 again.

[32:44] Should I do that? It is pretty sweet. Instead, I want to read briefly. This is Ephesians 2. Very well-known passage. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked.

Following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience. Jump down to verse 4. But God, being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace, you have been saved. And he raised us up with him and he seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.

Amen? That yields joyful celebration. That's why our response most often in scripture, there are other types of responses, but most often it's joyful celebration.

John Piper said from that same chapter I quoted before, worship is a way of reflecting back to God the radiance of his worth. The mirror that catches the rays of his radiance and reflects him back in worship is the joyful heart.

[33:59] So as our affections are ignited by biblical truth through the power of the Holy Spirit because that's not a work I can do. That's a work the Spirit does through the Word of God.

As our affections are ignited, rather than resist that, we relent. We relent to the Spirit's work in our hearts and then we raise these affections back to God. This is participating in God-honoring worship.

We're showing God with our hearts that we desire him above all else that we find all of our satisfaction in him. And so we engage our minds, we engage our hearts, and finally we engage our strength.

Now where am I getting this from? Look at verse 3. My lips will praise you. Verse 4. So I will bless you as long as I live.

In your name I will lift up my hands. Verse 5. My mouth will praise you with joyful lips. So what we see in this psalm and all over the psalms especially is that the outworking of our delight in God

ought to be physical expressions of praise.

[35:09] Bob Coughlin says this, biblical praise is normally expressed, spoken, and observable. That's why the psalms are filled with exhortations not only to proclaim God's greatness but to express his greatness with our bodies.

Now there are two types, well there's more than two types of people but two types of people I've thought of. Many of you have been in churches your whole life where physical expression and worship was kept to an absolute minimum.

Okay? You stand up, you sit down, you sing with your arms at your sides, you bow your head and close your eyes and you pray and like that's it. That's the limit of your physical expression. Lifting hands, kneeling, clapping, shouting in your mind, those are things for Pentecostal churches.

So there's that group of people and it should be avoided. Right? Then there are some of you who say, well that's fine for some but I'm just not expressive. Physical expressions don't do it for me. And so my response this morning is this, bodily expression matters and here's why. One, you're more expressive than you realize, okay? Just like people that say they're unemotional are more emotional than they realize.

[36:14] Two, bodily expression, it both reflects and it leads our hearts. And three, scripture provides numerous examples and exhortations to engage our bodies in corporate worship in specific ways.

So the first one there, you're more expressive than you realize. This is a similar argument. So you say you're not expressive and my response is you actually express yourself physically all the time. All the time.

Look, when someone you don't know or someone who's in authority over you walks by, how do you nod your head? You nod down, right? When your bro is walking by, you're like, oh, what's up, dude?

And so you nod your head up instead of down. And so that subtle shift, it said something. What you did with your head said something. When your child wants you to pick them up, what do they do? They raise their arms to you, right? And you, if you want your child to come to you, what do you do? You put your arms out to them, right? Even the most unexpressive parents will do that because they want their kid to come to them.

[37:14] Look, we shake our hands, we raise our arms in triumph when our team wins, right? Or we clap our hands and we cheer when our team wins. We open up our palms to say, look, man, I don't have any money for you. We express, I could go on for a long time with examples, okay?

The point is that, yes, you do express yourself with your body. Even if you're not expressive, you still use physical gestures and expressions because they say something. And what I'm saying is this, that what ought to prompt your bodily expression more than anyone, more than anything else, is God because of who he is, because of what he's done for you.

See, he alone is worthy of our deepest, strongest, and purest affections and our bodies ought to show it. Secondly, bodily expression both reflects and leads our hearts.

So what we just talked about, it tells you already that body posture matters because it speaks, but more than that, what we see in scripture is that the posture of our bodies during worship, it should indicate, right, it should reflect, it should express the posture that's going on internally.

It's an outward expression of an inward reality. And more than that, physical posture can actually shape the posture of our heart, right? So kneeling, kneeling is a sign of submission.

[38:32] You do it because you're showing submission. But sometimes kneeling helps produce humility in me, okay? Lifting hands, it's a sign, it could be a sign of a lot of things, of surrender, of praise because God is greater, but it can also aid in producing an offering up of myself to God.

And so we see that it both reflects our hearts, it actually can lead our hearts as well. And then finally, scripture provides numerous examples and exhortations. I'm not going to read all of them, but I am going to go through a bunch of them because I think some of you maybe don't believe me, and this is tough, especially if it's not something you've done, for most of your life.

So we're going to go through a bunch here. 2 Chronicles 7, verse 3. When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and the glory of the Lord on the temple, they bowed down with their faces to the ground on the pavement and worshipped and gave thanks for the Lord, saying, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.

Nehemiah 8, and Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it, all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands, and they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

Psalm 95, an exhortation, O come, let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord, our maker, for he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the sheep of his hand.

[40:06] Psalm 134, Come bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord. Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the Lord. Psalm 138, 2, I bow down towards your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and faithfulness.

Psalm 141, verse 2, Let my prayer be counted as incense before you, the lifting of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Psalm 143, verse 6, I stretch out my hands to you, my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

Lamentations 3, 41, Let us lift up our hearts and hands to God in heaven. In Daniel 6, we see that Daniel's regular prayer life, he was on his knees before God.

In Luke 22, we see that even Jesus, who is God, was on his knees before the Father. Philippians 2, So that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

And finally, I'll read one more. 1 Timothy 2, I desire them that in every place that the men should pray lifting holy hands without anger or quarreling. Now, we don't have time for this, but we see exhortations and examples to shout, to make a joyful noise, to clap our hands, to respond verbally by saying amen.

[41:31] Right? Now, whether you're singing a song or you're listening to the preached word, if a truth resonates with you in your heart, lift up your voice and shout about it. Right? Clap your hands and applause, not to the team, not to the preacher, but to God.

Say out loud, say thank you, Jesus. Say hallelujah. Say amen. Say yes, Lord, you are good. These are things that we can do and ought to do because they express verbally, outwardly, the praise that's going on in our hearts.

What about lamenting, Mike? You didn't mention that. Yes, there are definitely times for lamenting, but even in our lamenting, we're expressing our emotion and we can do physical things to express our lamenting.

And even further, lamenting most of the time in scripture gives way to joyful praise. So we have a reason for joy over our circumstances. What about silence?

Yes, there are times that are appropriate to be silent before the Lord, but in scripture, most of the time that people are silent, it's actually in judgment. It's not in worship.

[42:41] See, the norm, the norm in scripture is that we engage our minds, our hearts, our bodies with both reverent fear and joyful celebration. Both of those things.

And we engage them in a way that's responsive, that's passionate, that's expressive, that's participatory, that's truth-filled, that's God-directed. Right? It's praise of him because he is worthy, because of who he is, because of what he's done for us, because he satisfies the deepest longings of our souls.

And this is actually why we sing. We certainly sing because we're told to. There are actually, there's over 500 references to singing, there's over 50 direct exhortations to sing.

But we also sing because singing engages all of our being in one act of worship, engages our mind, it engages our heart, it engages our bodies, and this is why we sing. And just real quick, this is bonus.

There are other things that singing does. It'll be on the screen. It both encourages and expresses the Spirit's work in our hearts, right? Singing helps us to remember God's word. It helps us to teach one another and to be taught.

[43:51] It helps us express our unity with the church. There's all sorts of things that singing does. We could take another whole sermon to talk about singing specifically, but we're not going to.

And speaking of unity within the church, Ethan touched on this last week, and I want to reemphasize something. One of the primary reasons we gather corporately is to edify one another, right?

Priority number one, to be sure, is to meet with God and to worship God. But right beneath that and never in opposition to that, we gather to edify one another, to build up, to promote growth, to inspire, to, as Hebrews says, 10:24, to stir up one another to love and good works, right?

Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14 verse 26, that when you come together, let all things be done for building up. So that means that we as pastors, as leaders, as we plan, as we execute the service, everything ought to edify this body, right?

Now, that also means that you, that everything that you do when you're here, it ought to edify the church. The way that you engage in corporate worship, it ought to build up those around you.

[45:11] See, when people observe you actively engaged in the service, expressing your worship to God with all of your mind and all of your heart and all of your strength, they are encouraged to do the same, right?

We encourage one another towards that type of worship that God is worthy of. And the beauty of the local church is that we actually know each other, right? And this is, this is so neat.

We know each other's trials and we know each other's temptations and we know each other's struggles and we know each other's sufferings, right? Which makes our engaged, expressive worship that much more edifying to those around us, right?

When, so, so when you see that your brother or sister who has been struggling with a certain sin, you see them lifting their hands and singing with all their might, now my debt is paid.

It is paid in full by the precious blood that my Jesus spilled. That's edifying, right? Because you know what they've been walking through and now they're declaring their freedom from sin in Christ.

[46:09] Right? When you've, when you've walked with a family that's experienced significant loss and you glance over and you see them passionately singing, we trust you, your ways are higher than our own.

Or you hear them singing, a mighty fortress is our God, a bulwark never failing. That is edifying. That builds up the whole church.

The examples are endless. But this is one of the glorious beauties of being able to walk through life together and then week after week we gather in worship to express our praise to God.

As I conclude, I want to point out there are many hindrances to expressing our desire for God and our delight in God with all of our minds and hearts and strength.

There's a lot of things that keep us from actively engaging in worship. Here are a few. I'm sure there's many more. But here's a few. One, a lack of teaching or knowledge about corporate worship.

[47:12] Right? The hope for this sermon was that we would build some of that knowledge and that teaching about corporate worship. But we're really just scratching the surface. Like there is so much more to be said. We should read God's word with an eye towards corporate worship.

If corporate worship is that big of a deal and it is, then we should think about corporate worship from God's word. And there are an abundance of resources. One of them we have bought and it's on the back table.

It's a book called True Worshipers by Bob Coughlin. The worship team has been going through a book that's more designed for worship leaders called Worship Matters.

That book is more geared for the whole congregation and found it to be incredibly instructive and balanced in its approach on worship. So lack of teaching. You have less of an excuse for that now, but there's certainly more teaching and knowledge to be gained.

Secondly, a low view of God or unbelief or false beliefs. Right? If in my mind and my heart God is not as great as he truly is, right, if my view of his glory and his majesty and his supremacy is low, that will lead to stunted worship.

[48:24] Right? I will not be properly expressing the praise that he's due because I don't think he's due praise as much as he truly is. A low view of God. A high view of self or pride.

Right? See, if in our minds and our hearts we are greater than we really are, we won't properly understand our position before holy, awesome, creator God.

Our proper position is as a creature. Right? He is holy. We are not. He is awesome. We ought to be humbled before him. And if I come into the corporate service thinking that I'm great, then I don't have as much to celebrate either.

Right? Like the gospel's minimized. My sin doesn't look as bad as it is. God doesn't look as great as he is. The gospel isn't as amazing as it is and that leads to stunted worship which God is not due. He is due our full worship. And so we see this like idea of a minimized gospel when I view myself wrongly. And another facet of this pride or high view of self is fear of man.

[49:28] This is another outworking of pride. If I care more about my reputation and my appearance before others, this leads to self-conscious, self-glorifying worship.

So I'm going to care more about how I appear to you all than how God appears to you all. And that's what should be most on our minds, how God appears to us and us expressing those realities back to him.

I'm sure there are more but there are a lot of hindrances as continually our flesh is waging war against our inner spirit. Right? Our regenerate hearts that have been made new by the spirit through the work of Christ.

Those hearts those regenerate hearts they want to express themselves in praise and all these things are fleshly things that keep us from expressing the praise that God is due.

Now I'm not saying that you have to lift your hands every song and I'm not saying you have to kneel down I'm not saying you have to do these things because it ought to come from a pure heart. Right? It ought to come from hearts that are made new and they're made new by the truth of God's word but what I am doing is pushing you in that direction because some of you are just too comfortable and you come in and you're comfortable with what you're doing and I just want to push you towards discomfort.

[50:46] We don't come here to be comforted and so we come here to be comforted by the gospel and when the gospel comforts us we respond in praise and so I just want to I want to push us this direction towards expressive passionate praise of God because he's worthy of all of my affection he's worthy of my body expressing it to him he's worthy of all of those things and this it certainly requires a continual reliance on the spirit right?

The spirit has to be the one to take the word of God and illuminate my heart so I can see the truth of God's word it has to be the Holy Spirit it cannot be me it cannot be Pastor Dave or Jordan or anybody else or yourself reading God's word it has to be God himself taking his word transforming my mind we talked about that the first week too right?

And it has to be the spirit that raises godly affections in my heart I can't take the word of God and make my heart want God more that has to be God himself right?

And it has to be God that frees us from this whole self-consciousness and desire for my own reputation and comfort it has to be God that frees me from that so that I can raise holy affections back to him and so from first to last from coming to God for the first time until we meet God in the future the whole work of salvation it's all God right?

And my worship is all from God and for God and through God but he is worthy he's worthy of that type of praise so in a minute we're going to practice a couple of these things you'll notice your rows are spaced out a little more because we're going to have a time of kneeling together corporately as the church and as we sing we're going to have a time of lifting our hands to the Lord together as a church so that we can practice this because I know it does feel uncomfortable and it takes something a pushing sometimes to do it for the first time I'm not just I don't naturally when I didn't grow up raising my hands I didn't grow up in a charismatic church I grew up in your normal evangelical non-denominational church and I remember being very it felt awkward to raise my hands but we were encouraged to do it as a church and it helped free me from the self-conscious and I was always thinking about what people were going to think of me and the church helped me to

see that it didn't matter what people thought of me it mattered what God thinks of me and that expressive worship is actually edifying to the people around me and so I want to push us towards that we're not going to do this every week we're not going to do this very often where we're always telling you how to worship God that's not where we're headed we've only done this one other time before but I want us to feel what it feels like to do that together corporately so as the band comes up let's pray heavenly father there's so many personal preferences when it comes to worship in the gathered church and God we don't want our personal preferences to be the thing

[54:04] God that dictates what we do we do truly want it to be your word and God we don't want to go through motions that are absent of true worship we don't want to lift hands when our hearts are far from you God we want our worship to come from a pure heart but Lord as your children we recognize we are regenerated our hearts are made new we we are free from the power of sin and so our expression and worship can lead our hearts back to where they actually are they can help break the pride and the self consciousness and the low view of you that we can have in our flesh God free us from all these things Lord we want our worship to be fitting for a king God the king of the universe Lord we need your help in that and so we pray

God these things in your name so right now what I want us to do and you can continue in a spirit of prayer to the Lord with your eyes closed but I want us all to get on our knees whether you're facing forward or backward however you're able to fit if you're physically able if you're not physically able that's okay just get as low as you can but as a church I want us to show with our physical expression that God is king and we are not and so join me in praying right now on your own and then we'll join in prayer together just acknowledge who God is acknowledge his power and his glory acknowledge his supremacy in your life and over this world in prayer and over this Thank you. Thank you.

Father, you are the one who dwells, God, in unapproachable light. Lord, you spoke this world into existence by the power of your voice.

God, your thoughts are higher than our thoughts and your ways are higher than our ways. God, you appoint the rising and the falling of the sun.

[57:28] You set the stars in their place. God, you told the oceans where to stop and go no further. And God, you are sustaining our lives even now.

The air that we breathe is from you. And so, God, we kneel before a holy God. We kneel before the king of the universe. We kneel before the creator of this world.

God, acknowledging that we are creatures. We're your creatures. We are humbled before you.

God, in the light of your glory and your majesty, Lord, would you be exalted in our hearts?

Would you be exalted in all that we do? God, would our lives declare to you that you are glorious over all things? That is what you are.

And so, we acknowledge that before you this morning, Father God.