**Pastor Tim’s Message Notes from 9-5-2021**

One of the fondest memories in my spiritual journey was attending a weekly worship service at Messiah College called Powerhouse. Powerhouse was a student-led worship service every Thursday night for an hour or so in the chapel on campus.

I really looked forward to Powerhouse as did many other students. No matter what we were going through, whether it was studying for a test or writing a paper or whatever, this was an opportunity to re-focus our minds on our great God and simply giving Him honor and glory for who He is.

Just picture a packed chapel filled with college students worshipping our Triune God through song and praise. As much as I was enjoying studying the Bible and growing in my walk with God in other ways, Powerhouse was a special time each week that I really looked forward to.

In fact, deep and heartfelt worship is what we were made for. I think of the scene in heaven described in the Book of Revelation, where these creatures are lost in worship of the Lord and saying **“Holy, Holy Holy is the Lord God Almighty – who was and is and is to come.”** Powerhouse was a glimpse of that.

For truly, as important as Scripture is, it is not to be an end in itself. Scripture is meant to lead us to know, love, and worship God.

David was someone who knew God and loved God’s written Word, but with David it was never just about learning facts about God. It was about an intimately close relationship with the Lord, expressed in worship.

And I think that David’s strong desire to worship God with every part of his being revealed him to be a man after God’s own heart.

Last week, we found David in a very difficult situation, as he and his army returned to find their families and possessions had been plundered and taken captive by an attacking army. But because David was a true worshipper, he found his strength in God. And we know that the Lord restored all that was lost.

That story was found in 1 Samuel chapter 30. In the very next chapter, King Saul dies in battle against the Philistines and only a few chapters later, David is crowned King over all of Israel.

Soon after David is made king, David leads Israel in conquering Jerusalem, which was a heavily fortified city. And after conquering Jerusalem, David desires to make this city the capital of Isarel and to bring the ark of God into the city.

While God’s presence was not limited to the ark, God chose to manifest His presence in a powerful way through that ark. And David wanted to be as close to God’s presence as possible.

This scene of the ark being carried into Jerusalem is found in 2 Samuel 6, beginning at verse 13 and it reveals David to be a passionate worshiper of our God. Let us hear God’s Word together.

**13When those who were carrying the ark of the Lord had taken six steps, he sacrificed a bull and a fattened calf. 14Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the Lord with all his might, 15while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of trumpets.**

**16As the ark of the Lord was entering the City of David, Michal daughter of Saul watched from a window. And when she saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, she despised him in her heart.**

**17They brought the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it, and David sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings before the Lord. 18After he had finished sacrificing the burnt offerings and fellowship offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord Almighty. 19Then he gave a loaf of bread, a cake of dates and a cake of raisins to each person in the whole crowd of Israelites, both men and women. And all the people went to their homes.**

**20When David returned home to bless his household, Michal daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, “How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!”**

**21David said to Michal, “It was before the Lord, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the Lord’s people Israel—I will celebrate before the Lord. 22I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor.”**

This passage shows David at his best. David worshipped God with unashamed passion. He danced with all his might. He was willing to look foolish. He wasn’t worried about having to appear dignified or stoic. David didn’t care what people thought about him, including even his wife.

And not only did David prioritize his own passionate worship, he gave instructions to the Levites – which was the priestly tribe – to minister before the ark of the LORD. David guides them in the importance of praise and worship.

It is powerful! And can be found in 1 Chronicles 16:7-36. While I am not going to read all of it at this time, in it David speaks about many of the reasons Israel was to worship and praise God, such as God’s mighty power, His just judgments, and everlasting love and his covenant-keeping faithfulness.

This reminds us that David not only wanted to be a souled out worshiper, but also that to help others become souled out worshippers as well.

Finally, worship is ascribing God the worth that He is due. Worship is thanking God for His mercy and grace. David wanted to give God the glory and honor that He deserved. And David was thankful for God’s mercy and grace towards him.

Before going any further, as we think about this passage and its relevance for our lives today, it is important to note that our Triune God has wired each of us different from one another. Not everyone is moved to worship God through dance or through instruments, as David was.

***But this is the thing that I want you to remember. We were created to know and worship God and I encourage you to be passionate worshippers in whatever that looks like for you.***

God is good all the time and all the time God is good. Even in the most difficult and challenging times, our great God is good and He is worthy of our passionate worship. Even if you feel like Job and has gone through one thing after another, we can remember the words of Job – “The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed by the Name of the Lord.”

In Romans chapter 12, Paul writes about offering our bodies to the Lord as an act of worship. I believe that Paul is focusing on not acting in sinful ways with our bodies. But I also believe that God wants us to offer every part of our body to Him as worship.

So if the Spirit of God is leading you to raise your hands as we sing to the Lord, please do so. Or to come forward to knee and pray as we have our time of prayer, please do so. I welcome hand raising and dancing and people on their knees or lying on their face before God. Please feel free to worship our God freely, as David did – in the unique way that God made you.

It could be other expressions as well. C.S. Lewis, the well-known Christian author of the 20th century, believed that the best prayer is wordless. Sometimes it is looking up to the heavens with love and devotion. It’s not a formula, it’s about our hearts.

Jesus said that true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in the truth. It’s about our hearts and our minds being passionately devoted to God.

This story of David also reminds us to not worry about what others may be thinking of us as we worship God. That’s their problem. Our focus should be on the Lord.

There have been numerous times in my life that I have felt led to bow down before God as I worship or to raise my hands as expressions of praise.

Also, like David, worship must not be confined to church. David worshipped from a window somewhere as the ark was making its way into Jerusalem. He wasn’t in church, so to speak. This reminds us that we can worship anywhere and everywhere. Out at a park or as we are driving. We could be wherever and whenever. But every place can be holy ground. We can worship God everywhere.

Jesus told the Samaritan woman at the well that soon the day was coming when people wouldn’t be focused on the place of worship as much as the importance of being a worshiper and living to worship God in spirit and in truth.

When we worship we are giving our Triune God the glory that He alone is worthy to receive.

True worship helps us to focus on God, rather than ourselves. So much about the worldly thinking is self-focused, but worship is about offering ourselves to God and focusing on Him.

It is not about our words. It is about acknowledging our Triune God to be who He is and giving thanks to Him.