



Loving God Together (Psalm 100, Hebrews 10:24-25)

I. INTRO

- A. We are seven weeks into a series entitled "Simplify."
 - 1. A core concept of the series is that we humans tend to take simple things and make them complicated but God tends to take complicated things and make them simple.
 - 2. As a church we want to simplify – and as a church, we want to help you simplify your life in order to invest in the lives of people.
 - 3. At KHC we want to do three things really well: Love God, Love People, Serve. We view this process as the essentials of basic discipleship.
- B. Today I would like for us to consider what it means to Love God Together. The purpose of the worship service is to focus on loving God together.
- C. I'll begin with a sweeping statement: **Every human being on the planet is a worshiper.**
 - 1. Anthropologists talk about "cultural universals," which make up a (surprisingly) long list of commonalities in virtually every culture around the world.
 - 2. Making the list of "cultural universals" are the common desires to love and to celebrate. I would equate these characteristics with worship. You could say that all human beings on the planet are hardwired, or designed, to love and to celebrate (and then evangelize – e.g., books, movies, restaurants, etc.).
 - 3. My experience (and Scripture) tells me that our hardwired instinct to worship tends to go astray. Here is how two very bright people think we tend to stray:
 - a. Eighteenth century pastor and theologian, **Jonathan Edwards** spoke of inborn "religious affections." Edwards says our religious affections orient our soul to naturally worship objects other than God (think of the

magnetic needle of a compass). He said we often end up worshipping (primarily): relationships, achievement, and work.¹

- b. Psychiatrist **Alfred Adler** (a colleague and friendly critic of Sigmund Freud) would say the human soul automatically orients primarily toward one of four things: control, power, comfort, or approval.

D. So, what's the point?

1. We are all born worshippers.
2. Our natural inclination is to NOT worship God. (See Jeremiah 17:9)

E. This leads us to an initial definition of worship: **Worship is pulling our affections off our idols and placing them on God.** (Worshipping God is not natural.)

F. Here's another sweeping statement: **Almost all of the pain in our lives can be traced back to what we have (falsely) worshiped.**

1. We've worshiped the wrong things and we have sabotaged our relationship with God and other people.
2. We have created behavior patterns that tend to lead us away from God. (We tend to place our trust in the things that Edwards and Adler suggest: relationships, achievement, work, control, power, comfort, and/or approval. And many of us have been burned.)

G. There are two passages I would like to read as we consider what it means to love God together: Psalm 100 and Hebrews 10:24-25 – then I will pray and we will jump in...

H. *"Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth. ² Serve the Lord with gladness; Come before Him with joyful singing. ³ Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. ⁴ Enter His gates with thanksgiving And His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His name. ⁵ For the Lord is good; His lovingkindness is everlasting And His faithfulness to all generations."* --Psalm 100

I. *"And let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, ²⁵ not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near."* -- Hebrews 10:24-25

¹ <http://www.jonathan-edwards.org/ReligiousAffections.pdf>

II. BODY

A. Today, as we consider loving God together, I'd like to make two points:

1. **Define worship**
2. **Discover our role in a weekly worship service**

B. We'll look at them one at a time:

1. **Define worship:**

- a. The word *worship* comes from an Old English word meaning "worth-ship."
- b. "Worth-ship" has two parts:
 - 1) *Seeing* what God is worth
 - 2) *Giving* God what He is worth. (So, worship is seeing and responding.)
- c. Two definitions of worship – one is quick and easy, the other is more theologically robust:
 - 1) Worship is the act of ascribing ultimate value to something in a way that energizes and engages your whole person. This is why music is so important to worshipping well...
 - 2) Redemption is the means; worship is the goal. In one sense, worship is the whole point of everything. It is the purpose of history, the goal of the whole Christian story. Worship is not one segment of the Christian life among others. Worship is the entire Christian life, seen as a priestly offering to God. And when we meet together as a church, our time of worship is not merely a preliminary to something else; rather, it is the whole point of our existence as the body of Christ. –John Frame

2. **Discover our role in a weekly worship service**

- a. Two Points:
 - 1) **God is accomplishing something unique in our togetherness that cannot be accomplished when we're off on our own.**
 - 2) **We celebrate in corporate worship that God is working on us to bring about gospel joy.**
- b. Let's look at them one at a time:

1) **God is accomplishing something unique in our togetherness that cannot be accomplished when we're off on our own.**

- a) God doesn't NEED our praise and worship. God is perfectly content and joyful in the "dance" of the Trinity. So, Loving God Together must be for our benefit.
- b) Exodus 3 (vs. 12, 18) – The first time God gathers His people together to do something among them corporately. It's on repeat throughout the Scriptures. God has saved us to Himself while saving us to a people.
- c) Here's a nerdy fact: There are at least 4,720 verses (2,698 in the OT and 2,022 in the NT) with the plural form translated as the English "you." This could cause a reader to think it is directed at us as individuals rather than the Church as a community.
- d) Here's the basis of what I'd like for us to see and acknowledge today: God is up to something for our good and His own glory when we gather in a worship service.
 - When we gather it's not about what we bring to God, it's about what God is doing among us.
 - When we gather together God is not only PRESENT but God is ACTIVE – in the singing, in the praying, in the giving of tithes and offerings, in the reading of God's Word, in the sermon, in the confessing of our sins, in the corporate crying out to God.
 - God is at work shaping, and molding, and moving in us. Whether or not we feel anything.
- e) What we celebrate in worship is that God is working on us. The most intensive sanctification happens when we gather together to worship, BUT here's the thing -- we must come honestly. We simply cannot do what I call the "happy clappy Christian thing." We must come into the room honest, and real, and vulnerable. I'll give you an example:
 - There could be two people next to one another in the same row. One person is exuberant – maybe even giddy, hands and head raised to the heavens...and at

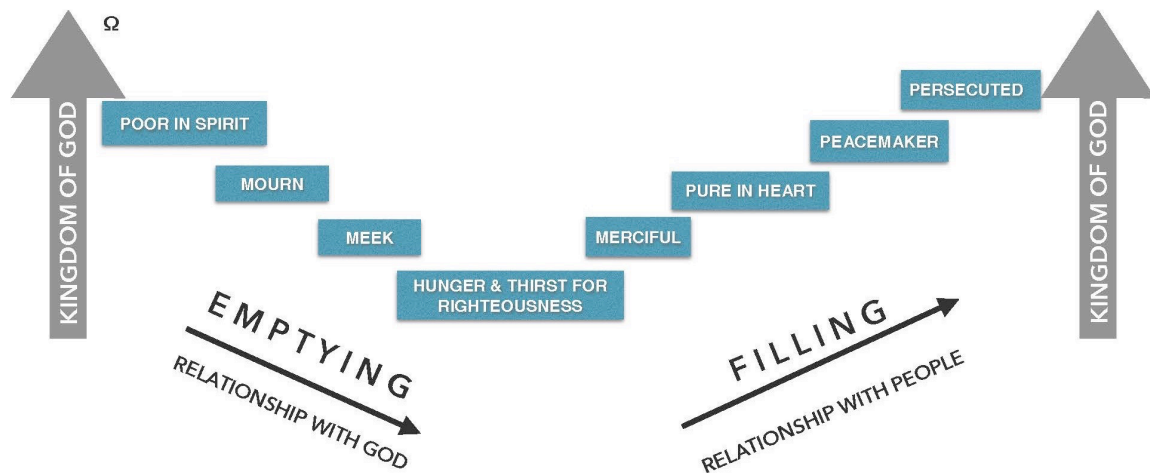
the same time the person the person just two feet away is mourning and weeping.

- Both are expressions of heartfelt worship. The Lord sees into our hearts and acknowledges true worship in spirit and truth.
- f) **The big picture point of a worship gathering is coming together in order to receive, by faith, that God is working on us – changing us, sanctifying us. The God of the universe is transforming us – for our good and for His glory.**
 - g) There will be seasons when we feel that and seasons when we won't. The truth of God's Word is that whether or not we feel it, it's happening.
 - h) For me it's like going to the gym. There are days when I can't wait to get there – and there are days when I need to drag myself there. But, almost always, when I'm finished my workout and taken my shower I will bounce down the stairs – so glad that I was there.
 - i) Or, it's like watching our kids grow...
 - j) Something of eternal and divine importance is happening in this space when we gather for weekend services.
 - k) Parents, I am glad you are here with your children today. I would also ask, "What kind of message are we sending to our children when their activities consistently override the priority of being in church together?" For some people the weekend worship services have become a matter of convenience, not commitment.

2) We celebrate in corporate worship that God is working on us to bring about gospel joy.

- a) Wherever the Bible is read and the gospel is preached God is speaking to His people. Every aspect of a worship service represents God's desire to shape us into fully devoted worshippers of God – from the singing to the praying, to the giving of our tithes and offerings, to the sermon, to the response.

- b) When we gather weekly for corporate worship we are welcoming and embracing God's active work in our lives.
- c) How can we best prepare ourselves for a worship service? Here's how I prepare myself: I want to bring into a worship service an honest assessment of my brokenness and pain. I usually go to the first four Beatitudes (vs. 3-6):



- Poor in spirit (being acutely aware of my need)
 - Mourning (over my own waywardness – and the trouble in the world)
 - Gentleness/meekness (an attitude of submission to God)
 - (Hopefully) a spark of hunger and thirst for God.
- d) It is difficult for us to believe that acknowledging being poor in spirit and mourning will produce in us gospel joy.
- e) Here is one of the best definition for godly sorrow and repentance that I have ever come across: Repentance is “an about face movement from denial and rebellion to truth and surrender...[that] involves the response of humble hunger, bold movement, and wild celebration when faced with the reality of our fallen state and the grace of God...It is a shift in perspective as to where life is found...It is melting into the

warm arms of God, received when it would be so understandable to be spurned.”²

- f) As I empty myself before God (recovery folks refer to this as a “searching and fearless moral inventory”) I can begin to see, and celebrate, that God doesn’t see me as I tend to see myself, but God sees me as I am “*in Christ*.”

III. CONCLUSION

- A. When God commands His people gather in order to sing, and repent, and to listen to His Word, and to pray -- it’s not for God’s benefit for ours.
1. God is accomplishing something unique in our togetherness that cannot be accomplished when we’re off on our own.
 2. We celebrate in corporate worship that God is working on us to bring about gospel joy.
- B. I will close with this...last week we considered the mission of the Church, found in Luke 24 and Matthew 28. Here is a concluding quote that will blow your mind: “Mission exists because worship doesn’t.” --John Piper ³
1. Here’s the point that he’s seeking to make: The ultimate goal of mission is to “bring the nations into the white-hot enjoyment of God's glory.”
 2. For the Christian it is on the anvil of our gathering together in the worship service that God forges gospel joy – that is transmitted to the people God has sovereignly placed in our lives.

² Dan Allender, *The Wounded Heart*, Navpress, 1990: 217.

³ John Piper. *Let the Nations Be Glad: The Supremacy of God in Missions*.

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P.A.S.S. Questions For KHC Group Leaders

Sermon Dates: 10/29-30, 2016

Sermon Title: Loving God Together

Sermon Passage: Psalm 100, Hebrews 10:24-25

Group Leaders: Don't feel like you need to get through all the questions. Pick one participation question and 2-3 others. Also, feel free to adapt or ask your own questions. The main objective is to underscore the main points of the sermon in an interactive/dialogical way – and certainly leave room for prayer.

P - Participation (get everyone involved in the dialog)

1. What is your favorite day of the year to celebrate and what makes it so special to you?
2. In the past has church attendance been optional for you? Why or why not?

A - Application (makes it personal)

3. How can we worship God exuberantly if we don't feel like it? Should we "work up" our feelings? If not, how do we get the right affections?
4. True or false? Another way to think about a worship service is to view it as one-and-a-half hours of intense sanctification where I submit my body, soul, and spirit to the Holy Spirit to be changed, shaped, and transformed to become more like Jesus. (Why or why not?)

S - Scripture (thinking biblically is a learned behavior! :-)

5. Read Hebrews 10:19-25. (Some Bible translations sub-title this section "A New and Living Way" from v. 20.) Make a list of the assertions made (e.g., "we have" in vs. 19 & 21) and also list the imperatives (e.g., "let us" in vs. 22, 23, and 24). How do you think these assertions and imperatives will help us when we gather to worship God corporately?

S – Sharing (aim for a time of honest reflection, authenticity, and transparency in a safe atmosphere modeled by you). [Choose one of the following as a final dialogue question.]

6. Looking back over the last few years (or months) how has God shaped, changed, or grown you? (I.e., what's different about your life now?)