



HOW WE WORSHIP THE KING

By Neil Smith at King of Kings on 16 Sept 2018.

Credit: Some content used from Bob Kauflin from his book "Worship Matters."

SUMMARY

1. We value God in worship
2. We value God's presence in worship
3. We value praise in worship
4. We value expression in worship
5. We value intimacy in worship
6. We value participation in worship

INTRODUCTION

So over the past three weeks we have been looking at Worship – and 'How to worship a King.' But today I want to dial back, and focus more precisely on worship in the King of Kings setting. What is important to our church about worship – How do WE (we being King of Kings) worship our King? What are our particular distinctives, what's important to us, in terms of our DNA and vision as a church?

My prayer for this message... is that it will really help to set some values for us as a church when it comes to worship. Because worship is important!

I know perhaps there are some here today who don't quite get the fuss around worship... perhaps you're a skeptic... or perhaps there are just times when for you... worship feels empty... dry and pointless. I want to say to you... Worship matters!

Worship should matter to us, because it matters to God! It matters to God because he is the one worthy of our worship! and it matters to us... because we were made to worship! So, with that said...

What do we as a church value about worship???... here goes... if you're taking notes, here is the first point...

WE VALUE GOD IN WORSHIP

Remember how we defined worship in our first message? = Worship is about understanding the worth-ship of God! We live in a me, me, me, world – but worship is not about me, me, me, it's about God, God, God!

You may have heard about the incident where someone approached Francis Chan to complain about the worship at his church, the church member said; *"I didn't really like worship today!"* And now famously, Francis Chan responded by saying; *"That's okay! We weren't worshipping you!"*... Ouch – but there is so much truth in that.

Worship is not about me... it's not for me... it's for HIM. Worship is all about God and how amazing He is! Can I get a amen to that!?? There we go! When I look at Him, and all that He has done for us... worship, adoration and praise is the only suitable response! So I want to remind you today... that God is the focus of our worship.

Jimmy Needham has a song which you will hear at the end of this message... with this line; *"You can sing all you want to... yes, you can sing all you want to... and still get it wrong... worship is more than a song."*

Worship is about God, and as a church, that's a value for us. We are not into doing "sing songs." We are not into "entertainment" or "performance." This is not a "show." We want our worship to be about God, and for God, and we want every single person who steps foot in here on Sundays to join us in giving Him praise. And if you've missed that my friend, you've missed the heart of worship. We want all of our worship, all of our lives, to be worship to our King.

The Bible is full of this kind of worshipful focus on God... King David sang this in 1 Chronicles when the Ark was returned...

"Ascribe to the LORD, all you families of nations, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength. ²⁹ Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the LORD in the splendor of his holiness."

³⁰ Tremble before him, all the earth! The world is firmly established; it cannot be moved. ³¹ Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The LORD reigns!" ³² Let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let the fields be jubilant, and everything in them!

³³ Let the trees of the forest sing, let them sing for joy before the LORD, for he comes to judge the earth. ³⁴ Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; his love endures forever.

35 Cry out, "Save us, God our Savior; gather us and deliver us from the nations, that we may give thanks to your holy name, and glory in your praise." 36 Praise be to the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting. Then all the people said "Amen" and "Praise the LORD."

(1 Chronicles 16:28-36)

Love that passage! It's so full of passion! And it's so full of a worshipful focus on God! Not on David. Not on the people. Think about it, David could have been all focused on himself, because he had restored the ark with his fighting men, but instead... He recognised it was God, and his focus and his worship was on God!

We value God in worship... But secondly...

WE VALUE GOD'S PRESENCE IN WORSHIP

I know that there can be a lot of confusion around God's presence in worship. Some of you may be thinking, "*Neil, isn't God present everywhere? Doesn't the bible teach that God is omnipresent?*" and you would be right...

Scripture does reveal that God is present everywhere... one great example is from the book of Psalms where it says...

***"Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence?
8 If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths,
you are there." (Ps 139:7-8)***

Well, that pretty much covers it, right? You can't escape God's presence. He is everywhere... but get this, while God is present everywhere, he also chooses sometimes to localise his presence, just as he did so unexpectedly for Moses in a burning bush in Exodus chapter 3. God "manifests" or "reveals" his presence if you like. Just like in the book of Acts at Pentecost. By way, we are starting our new series in the book of Acts next week called "Supernatural" – and you don't want to miss it! So God loves to reveal his presence... And so you get command's like this in scripture to...

"Seek his presence continually." (Psalm 105:4)

So there is this interesting dynamic, where God's presence is everywhere, but we are also called to seek his presence! Pursue his presence! To be God chasers!

Furthermore, now in the New Testament, through the Holy Spirit, God promises to be present with his people, because of our union with Jesus Christ. In the book of Ephesians, Paul teaches us that we are now the temple of the Holy Spirit, take a look...

"And in him... you too... are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit." (Eph 2:22)

So as believers... we become a dwelling place, a home... for the Spirit of God. Incredible. God moves in, and it's meant to be like a extreme home makeover!

So how I like to think of it is like this, although God is always present with us, there are of course times when we become more aware of his presence. Maybe a sudden wave of peace comes over us, or maybe an incredible joy rises up from the depths of our soul! In these moments, has God's presence come down to us? No. God was present from the beginning, but we've just become more aware of Him with us!

Biblically, what brings us into the presence of God... is believing in the death and resurrection of Jesus...and being a child of God. But we do want to become more aware of his presence! We do want to cherish God's presence! We want to pursue God's active presence more and more. Does that make sense?

Church, I want us to be a people of his presence. If you want to know what our vision is for worship – I want us to be a church that pursues the presence of God!

Remember, you can sing all you want to... and still get it wrong... worship is more than a song. In worship, we want to encounter God's presence! That's a value for us.

We value God's presence in worship... next one...

WE VALUE PRAISE IN WORSHIP

Often when we come before God... our focus is on our need... not on who He is. An attitude of thankfulness and praise is a wonderful antidote to that. When we lift our eyes to Him, and thank Him.. for who He is... and all that He has done for us, praise flows from our hearts in gratitude. One of the Psalm writers said it like this...

“Sing praises to God, sing praises; sing praises to our King, sing praises. ⁷ For God is the King of all the earth; sing to him a psalm of praise. ⁸ God reigns over the nations; God is seated on his holy throne.” (Psalm 47:6-8)

When we worship... We have to get our eyes up! We have to get our focus off ourselves. So often we get bogged down in our needs and our troubles, yet focusing on God can lift us out of that pit of despair... as the Psalms call it. As a church, we value praise, because God deserves our honour and praise as well as the fact that it helps us see His big picture and keep a proper perspective in times of trouble. Psalm 9 says...

“I will give thanks to you, LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds. ² I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing the praises of your name, O Most High.” (Psalm 9:1-2)

There have been some occasions when I've found that praise can even get me through a dark and difficult place... you can praise your way through to breakthrough!

We value praise in worship... but also...

WE VALUE EXPRESSION IN WORSHIP

We are whole people, and we can worship God as a whole person. Some of us are gifted musically and worship playing an instrument. Others just love to sing, some love to dance, and others worship through other means. Like painting. Or writing. Or doing something for God. Gary Chapman has a famous and interesting book that shows how people express love in different ways – the Love Languages: Words of affirmation, Quality time, Receiving gifts, Acts of service, Physical touch. The aim of his books is to help people understand that we all express love differently – the same is true in worship. We all express love differently, but the point is we must express our love to God!

You will remember the passage that Tristan shared with us of King David being extravagant in his worship dance before the Lord as the Ark was brought back to Israel. It's worth reminding you of that again... It's in 2 Samuel...

“Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, ¹⁵ while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets.

¹⁶ As 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.”
(2 Samuel 6:14-16)

We each have different ways of worshipping before the Lord but we need to learn not to judge one another because of it. If you are an elbow flapper, a heel rocker, a kneeler, a hand raiser, a flag waver, or a dancer, or any other interesting category, you are welcome here at King of Kings as you worship the Lord with your whole heart and your whole body! Amen?!

I should add a disclaimer – Feel free to worship like David, but please keep your all your clothes on! Can I get a Amen to that?

Here is another thing I want to say. We at King of Kings are a diverse group of people – we represent different cultural groups, genders, ages, socio economic groups. Nothing brought that home to me like the worship survey we did last year – there are as many opinions as there are people in this church. Yet we come together with a common purpose – because of Jesus and what He has done for us. So as we worship together, and express our love for Jesus together, let's do so with respect, love, and unity in the Lord. Paul says in Romans...

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, ⁶ so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. ⁷ Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” (Romans 15:5-7)

We need to be careful not to confuse unity with sameness. We can be united because we are worshipping Jesus, it does not mean we have to be the same. Therefore we need to extend acceptance towards one another.

So church, you can sing all you want to... and still get it wrong... worship is more than a song. We value expression in worship... here is the next one...

WE VALUE INTIMACY IN WORSHIP

If you were here last week, you'll remember the story Sino told of the lady who cleaned Jesus's feet with her tears and her hair before pouring perfume on them, and kissing His feet. That was an intimate act. And it was something that Jesus applauded. If you want to bring pleasing worship to God. You need to know that He values intimacy in worship. Intimacy is closeness, familiarity, warmth towards someone... Listen to what Jesus said about this lady again in Luke chapter 7...

“Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.

⁴⁶You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown.” (Luke 7:44-47)

King of Kings. Are you still wondering how you're meant to worship? Worship like this lady who kissed Jesus' feet. If I am honest with myself, as much as I would like to say I am a true worshipper... I would have been one of those guys that day...to whom Jesus said – “*You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet.*”

(Content below adapted from Bob Kauflin)

I know that some of you grew up in a religious environment that was characterised by conservativeness, reverence, and silence. I told you about my Trinity Baptist days with the Redemption Hymnal. So I know what that was like. Jokes, fooling around, and loud noises were completely out of place on Sundays. A parent or authority figure had to be around all the children in that church so that they did not do anything inappropriate. We were reminded, we are in God's house, and we should act like it!

This kind of reverence is totally understandable in the light of who God is. So songs like the old “Holy Holy Holy!” are very appropriate at times. Because he is holy and awesome and we should behave reverently in his presence.

And this is not just an Old Testament thing, Hebrews 12 says;

“... so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, ²⁹for our “God is a consuming fire.” (Heb 12:28)

Worship that approaches God... too casually loses sight of this truth.

But... But... But... as we can see from this passage with Jesus and this lady... We don't only want to have Transcendent Worship... with this reverence, and awe. The other characteristic of God, is his Immanence. God is also immanent, which means he is near to us. He wants to be intimate with us. He is not just a million miles away, He is right here. And so we want to worship in a way that understands both of these truths! We need to worship understanding that he is High and lifted up! And Holy! And Awesome! And so above and beyond anything we can understand... but he is also near... and he loves the kisses of his children.

And so many worship songs from a few years ago brought this out... like "As the deer pants for the water" and "Breathe" and "Hungry" there is this emphasis on God's desire for us to know his nearness, and to worship like this lady worshipped.

Mat Redman really got this tension right in his song "O Sacred King;"

*O Sacred King... O Holy King...
How can I honour you rightly...
Honour that's fit for your name?
O sacred friend... O holy friend
I don't take what you give lightly
Friendship instead of disgrace
For it's the mystery of the universe... You're the God of holiness
Yet you welcome souls like me...
And with the blessing of Your Fathers heart... You disciple the ones you love
There's kindness in your majesty.*

Worship that values the transcendence of God... reverence... But also worship that values his immanence.... Intimacy.

You see friends, once again... you can sing all you want to... and still get it wrong... worship is more than a song. We value intimacy in worship... and it is hard to have intimacy, or closeness with someone that you don't spend time with. If our worship is reserved for a 30 minute slot during a Sunday service, we miss out on the deeper relationship with God. You can't build intimacy once a week for 30 minutes! Ask the married couples here... if they are honest... they will say it doesn't work like that. If you want to build a relationship and develop intimacy with God, you need to daily be seeking His presence.

We value intimacy in worship... but finally today...

WE VALUE PARTICIPATION IN WORSHIP

While we realise that everyone has their own style and way of worshipping it is also important to come together to worship.

It is so easy in this day and age... to isolate yourself... and to think that by doing church online... or by listening to Podcasts... or by watching the God Channel... that

that is enough. But you are designed to be part of a community... and worship is part of building that. Listen to what the Apostle Paul says in Colossians...

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. ¹⁷ And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.”
(Colossians 3:16-17)

You see friends... worship can and should happen privately... individually... personally. You need to build that spiritual discipline into your life. But worship is much more than just that... there is a corporate element to worship, where God designed it so that we as his body could all participate together.

Paul said that only happens when we get together, when we encourage each other with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing together! Singing together to God! With gratitude in our hearts. Are we doing this church? Are we encouraging each other with psalms, hymns, songs in the Spirit, singing together to God, with gratitude in our hearts? All participating corporately.

Yes, we have people in our church who have the title “worship leaders” – they are there to help us worship – but not to entertain us or to perform for us. It is not a concert that we are coming together for, where you purchase your tickets at Computicket before hand! They are just here to help us magnify the Lord with music! But it’s something we are meant to do together. Together.

So at King of Kings we value participation – whether that be singing, praying, clapping, sharing a Word of encouragement or praise. We value corporate worship as we are body and a family. Your participation may be to share a testimony, to encourage others, or it may be to join in a song with your whole heart. If you have musical giftings you may want to consider joining the worship team – you can chat to Sino about that.

We understand there is an important level of spontaneity in worship, and we encourage you to shout out your praises to God in your own way. Don’t feel inhibited to do that.

As always... We want to encourage the contribution of the congregation... so we always have a microphone at the front of the auditorium. This is always overseen by one or more of the pastors... So if you feel you would like to share something...Come talk to the Pastor at the front here... It’s only wise for us to review each contribution for content, appropriateness and attitude before it is shared. When done responsibly and humbly, this is one more way that we can lead the church to cherishing God’s presence in our midst.”

So King of Kings... Let’s make these worship values part of our DNA moving forward...

We value God in worship
We value God's presence in worship
We value praise in worship
We value expression in worship
We value intimacy in worship
We value participation in worship

Church, you can sing all you want to...
Yes, you can sing all you want to...
And still get it wrong... worship is more than a song

Let's pray together...

DANCE (Jimmy Needham – Clear the Stage)