

Views of Worship- David

Last Sunday we started a new series of messages called “views of worship.” We are going to be learning about how to worship more sincerely and more perfectly by looking at worship through the eyes of some biblical characters. Last week it was a couple of hypothetical characters in one of Jesus’ parables. Today, we’re going to look at worship through the eyes of David.

There is much we could learn about worship from many biblical characters but without a doubt none more than David. We could learn from his youth how about he offered up songs of worship in the solitude of tending sheep. We could observe how his beautiful worship melodies soothed the troubled spirit of king Saul. I’m sure we could learn much about uninhibited expression of worship by observing David’s exuberant worship as they brought the ark of covenant into Jerusalem . Of course we could learn much from David’s many psalms of worship and praise. But today, we are going to look at one specific, significant event in the life of the elder David. A time of worship that led to his own and the nations’ restoration and reconciliation with God.

1 The LORD’s anger burned against Israel again, and it stirred up David against them to say: “Go, count [the people of] Israel and Judah .”² So the king said to Joab, the commander of his army, “Go through all the tribes of Israel from Dan to Beer-sheba and register the troops so I can know their number.”³ Joab replied to the king, “May the LORD your God multiply the troops 100 times more than they are—while my lord the king looks on! But why does my lord the king want to do this?”⁴ Yet the king’s order

prevailed over Joab and the commanders of the army. So Joab and the commanders of the army left the king's presence to register the troops of Israel . **2** Sam 24:1-4 (HCSB)

And that's what they did. Joab and the commanders of the army went to the far corners of the nation counting all the available troops. After nearly 10 months they returned to Jerusalem with a report of 1.3 million troops available to fight.

10 David's conscience troubled him after he had taken a census of the troops. He said to the LORD, "I have sinned greatly in what I've done. Now, LORD, because I've been very foolish, please take away your servant's guilt." **2** Sam 24:10 (HCSB)

What was the big deal about taking a census of the troops? Shouldn't a good king want to know how many troops he has available to fight if the need arises? Where was the sin in that? Why was David's conscience troubled? Using some of his key personnel to count the troops may not have been a sinful behavior in itself other than the fact that there were some much more urgent issues at hand: Israel 's rebellion. David should have concentrated most if not all of his own and his staff's energy in bringing the people back to God. They should have been preaching repentance rather than counting soldiers. This, at the very least, was a sin of omission..... **17** So, for the person who knows to do good and doesn't do it, it is a sin. **J**ames 4:17 (HCSB) That's why David's conscience troubled him. He felt guilty wasting time on the trivial when such an urgent matter was being ignored. And, much more than a troubled conscience was about to come.

11 When David got up in the morning, a revelation from the LORD had come to the prophet Gad, David's seer: ¹² "Go and say to David, 'This is what the LORD says: I am offering you three [choices]. Choose one of them, and I will do it to you.' " ¹³ So Gad went to David, told him [the choices] , and asked him, "Do you want three years of famine to come on your land, to flee from your foes three months while they pursue you, or to have a plague in your land three days? Now, think it over and decide what answer I should take back to the One who sent me." ¹⁴ David answered Gad, "I have great anxiety. Please, let us fall into the LORD's hands because His mercies are great, but don't let me fall into human hands." **2** Sam 24:11-14 (HCSB)

Gad was David's spiritual adviser. He was God's messenger, a prophet. Prophets were sometimes called seers because they "saw" God given visions. God spoke to Gad regarding what David had done.

Why did God speak first to Gad? Why didn't He speak directly to David? It was Gad's God-given gift and calling to see and deliver significant messages to God's people. Occasionally God spoke to individuals, but most of the time, He spoke through His messengers. The message was not good. The punishment: 3 years of famine, 3 months of being pursued by enemies, or 3 days of plague.

Was that too harsh? It is not our place to question God's judgment. We don't know the extent of Israel and David's rebellion. We don't know how long God through His prophets pleaded with David and the people to repent and turn back. If we could see the whole picture, we might even say it wasn't harsh enough.

15 So the LORD sent a plague on Israel from that morning until the appointed time, and from Dan to Beer-sheba 70,000 men died. **16** Then the angel extended his hand toward Jerusalem to destroy it, but the LORD relented concerning the destruction and said to the angel who was destroying the people, “Enough, withdraw your hand now!” The angel of the LORD was then at the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite. **2** Sam 24:15-16 (HCSB)

This was God Himself through His angel bringing premature death to 70,000 men of His own people. This was not unique to this one event or even the Old Testament. The New Testament also clearly teaches of those who are saved whom God called home prematurely because continued disobedience and unrepentant sin.

This angel of death had been stopped by God at a specific place near Jerusalem, the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.

17 When David saw the angel striking the people, he said to the LORD, “Look, I am the one who has sinned; I am the one who has done wrong. But these sheep, what have they done? Please, let Your hand be against me and my father’s family.” **2** Sam 24:17 (HCSB)

It was true that David had sinned, but the people had also sinned. It was reasonable that God punish David and the people. They were all guilty. So, It was good, humble, and honorable that David sought to take blame all on himself and intercede for the people. This was at least a good start.

18 Gad came to David that day and said to him, “Go up and set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” **19** David went up in obedience to Gad’s command, just as the LORD had commanded. **20** Araunah looked down and saw the king and his servants coming toward him, so he went out and bowed to the king with his face to the ground. **21** Araunah said, “Why has my lord the king come to his servant?” David replied, “To buy the threshing floor from you in order to build an altar to the LORD, so the plague on the people may be halted.” **22** Araunah said to David, “My lord the king may take whatever he wants and offer it. Here are the oxen for a burnt offering and the threshing sledges and ox yokes for the wood. **23** [My] king, Araunah gives everything here to the king.” Then he said to the king, “May the LORD your God accept you.” **24** The king answered Araunah, “No, I insist on buying it from you for a price, for I will not offer to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost [me] nothing.” David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for 50 ounces of silver. **25** He built an altar to the LORD there and offered burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then the LORD answered prayer on behalf of the land, and the plague on Israel ended. **2** Sam 24:18-25 (HCSB)

Let’s reset the stage: The people of Israel sinned. David sinned. In reasonable and fair judgment, God sent a plague on Israel taking the lives of 70,000 men in one day. David interceded for the people. God gave David very specific instructions on what to do to stop the plague. “Go up and set up an altar to the LORD on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite.” David proceeded to obey God’s command. He went to the threshing floor of Araunah and attempted to buy it from him. Araunah, overwhelmed at the presence of the king David, offered everything David needed,

including the animals, for free. David refused the gift and insisted that he pay for everything.

Lesson: David, even when offered, refused to enter that time of worship with a sacrifice that did not cost him anything. David came to understand something very valuable: True, life-changing, life-saving worship must cost the worshipper something. The worshipper David, could not enter this life and death occasion for worship not having made any kind of sacrifice. It just doesn't work that way. He refused Araunah's offer and paid him a reasonable price, 50 ounces of silver.

Lessons from the worshipper:

Repent (this was the main difference between the Pharisee and the tax collector) Sin has severe consequences, not only for eternity, but also in this life. We may do a pretty good job of hiding it from friends, loved ones, and the church, but we will never be able to hide our sins from God. Unconfessed, unrepented sin will completely shut the door of worship for any individual who tries to come in. Only one solution-

⁹ If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say, "We have not sinned," we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us. **1** John 1:9-10 (HCSB)

Whatever sacrifices or service you or I offer up, not having first come to God in humble sincere repentance, will be a stench in the nostrils of God. David and all Israel's initial problem was unrepented sin.

Prioritize your energy and attention on what matters most. One of the most sad and sometimes evening sickening things I have repeatedly seen over the years as a minister is the amount of time, energy and effort wasted on things that, in the broader, heavenly scheme of things, don't amount to a hill of beans. These kind of things exhaust the pastors, deacons, and ministry leaders and they distract the whole church from its God-called purpose. One of the greatest favors you could do me, the church and all the kingdom of heaven is to get in the habit of asking yourself, before you get in a tizzy or begin to question or challenge something, "is this thing I'm concerned about of any genuine heavenly, eternal value?"

33 But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you. Matt 6:33 (HCSB)

David's silly soldier counting blunder wasted 10 months of precious time and personnel and cost many human lives. He should have been seeking the kingdom. He should have been concerned with leading his people to repentance when instead he chose to count soldiers.

Sacrifice

David understood something that would be very valuable for us all to understand- the cost of worship. Understanding the pure and holy character and nature of God, we should not even dream of or ever hope to enter into the presence of God without some sacrifice, without it costing us something. Consider three areas of sacrifice. All three are necessary.

Attitude- humility, brokenness, repentance (David repented)

Giving- beyond what is required (insisted on paying for what he could have gotten for free.

Service- faithfully involving yourself in kingdom work. He didn't send someone else to buy the threshing floor or offer the sacrifice. He did it himself.

Jesus paid the ultimate sacrifice for us on the cross, it is reasonable that we consistently make living sacrifices for Him.

1 Therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, I urge you to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God; this is your spiritual worship.¹ **R**omans 12:1 (HCSB)

To enter a worship experience not having made at least one, if not all of these sacrifices, is to remain an observer, a spectator.