

Shout It Out!

Ephesians 5:19-21

Main focus of this series: This series is a formulation of key teachings and understandings from the book of Ephesians. It is the textbook for Christian living, affective church growth and unity. It is also a manual for harmony in the home and an affective lifestyle in our work place in the world. Ephesians draws many lines, it is clear and very defined. Why many Christians fail to live fully in the shadow of the cross is because they have never ventured into the truths documented in Paul's writings to the Ephesians. In an effort to decipher each statement of Paul in Ephesians we believe we will learn how to successfully operate in the three positions of the believer: to sit (**Ephesians 1-3**), to walk (**Ephesians 4-6:9**) and to stand (**Ephesians 6:10-24**). The first half of Ephesians (chapters 1-3) tells us what a Christian is and the last three chapters define how to live that out in harmony with other believer's and separately from non-believer's.

The importance of this message today: We live in a world of **excess access**. We can find what we want, when we want it as soon as we want it. This can be very helpful when we are trying to get all the right answers on our open book History test or repair a damaged part of our house. But if we are not careful, this instant, consistent access can overwhelm us. This access problem is not only in things, but it is also in relationships, our relationship with God and our relationship with others. To be a passionate believer in Christ and worshiper of God in the heavenly realm, and to thrive in this world will require us to fight harder and be more focused in our life.

What is most challenging is that you and I have a part in God receiving all the praise and worship that is due only to Him. As I spoke last week and will continue the thought today, our praise to God is important and powerful, we, **the church (1) will determine the level of worship and praise** that God will receive, and next week we will discuss how **(2) Satan desires it** and how **(3) God Deserves it**.

What I have learned and observed over the years is that the expression of worship will not stay in a box, nor will the way that we have learned to express our love to Him. Sometimes our impression of worship makes many people feel uncomfortable, question and doubt. Lifting our hands, crying out, shouting before the Lord, dancing before the Lord are all so awkward, different and unusual.

When you first observe extravagant worship it takes you back. Your first time to observe people are shouting, dancing and openly expressing their love to God can make you feel like you don't know if you should run and hide or watch the show. If you are cautious my nature and have a tendency to judge all you see, all you can do is look around the room and try to find the "flesh" in operation so you can discount what is going on. All this because it's not what you are used to. That is not how we do it. On first encounter, your first impression is that this is a show and then the sincerity of the expression brings to mind that it is a show, a show to God.

I like how **Robert Morris** describes praise and worship:

- **Praise is what brings God into our presence and worship is what you do when He gets there.**

Breakthrough Night of Prayer and Worship

Each month on the second Tuesday of the month we have what we call the “Breakthrough Night of Prayer.” On that particular night we have open worship and ministry in prayer. This coming Tuesday is one of those nights. Once a quarter we have what we call a “Breakthrough Night of Worship” with a time of celebration, praise and ministry, our next one is in November. It's not about one being better than the other one, it is our intentional purpose. This Tuesday we are focusing on praying and seeking God.

The question is, what are you going to do with worship? How are you going to respond to it? Are you an observer or are you a participator when it comes to worshipping God? When you are born into worship you realize that you will never go back to the way you used to worship, primarily because you know what it means to have an open expression with God and you don't want to ever go back there.

A couple of weeks ago we prayed over several of our youth for the anointing of worship to set upon them. I relayed a story about my own life when I was about 13 years old and our small church had it's annual split and we were again without a worship leader or anyone to play the instruments. Our pastor asked me and a young girl to come up and they laid hands on us and prayed for an anointing of worship. In a month we were both chording the music and playing soundly by the end of the year. I became a worshiper of God way before I realized people had a problem with it or that anyone thought differently. I remember what some people experience by coming to our church is the same shock I experienced going to theirs. I had never seen people sing with their eyes open all the time, without any expression, without tears or lifted hands. I had never seen people sing worship, I had only known to express worship, and that is a different thing. This is not a statement of pride or judgment. But you must understand, that the understanding of worship goes both ways. It's as odd not to be expressive for me as it might be for some of you to see expressive worship. Jesus says in John 4:24:

“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.”

John 4:24

God wants to be worshiped in Spirit and in Truth. Some churches are strong on truth and others are strong in the spirit, but God wants us to be strong in both. Many people have come from a deficit in their church where truth was stressed and the spirit was ignored or excused or even taught out of the church and the bible. Because of that deficit of worship or the spirit realm, many people have a tendency to want to catch up with all they missed, and the pendulum swings to the other side. The challenge is to be balanced but still remain open to allowing God to be known and expressed.

I want to express my appreciation and confidence I have in Pastor Tony and all those who participate in our worship ministry here at Cornerstone Church. We prayed for over a year for God's leading in that role. There were some wonderful people who assisted in that area of ministry and did a wonderful job. But God was leading us in a particular direction and is still doing so through the leadership of Pastor Tony. And I

appreciate his sensitivity and utilization of his gifting in that area of ministry. **Gifting** is what you get from God and **talent** is how you utilize that gifting. It takes work to develop talent even though you are gifted. But God does not anoint talent, He anoints character. No matter who you are, if you minister before other people in this church, your character will be challenged and addressed because we want to worship the Lord in "Spirit" and in "Truth." That's why we wait on developing or utilizing people who come to our church because many come with high talent, but we want the character to be exposed and that takes time. That's why we ask you to get involved with a life group so people can get to know you. So your character can be established. I believe the presence of God is best invited by people of Godly character. I also believe true worshipers of God cannot stand long before God that He does not deal with character issues. I learned in my ten years of youth ministry that if I could get the youth to worship God then He would deal with their character. Once you desire the presence of God you will do everything you can to keep it, you don't want anything to come between you and Him. God will deal with your character so He can anoint your life.

"Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."
Ephesians 5:19-21

1. **The Church Determines It**

Praise and worship is determined by the church. The Bible recognizes all the things in nature point toward God. Creation itself was created to magnify God. But that is not God's greatest desire of worship. He wants you and I to take that position on earth.

When you look at American History, what do you believe the percentage of churchgoers was then compared to now? Right now it is estimated that 34% of the American population attends church on any given Sunday. How many believe that the percentage was higher in 1800 or lower in 1800? Church attendance in 1800 was 4%. If you have the chance to be taught true American History you will find that something happened between 1800 and 1830, it was called "The Great Awakening." We are still feeling the impact of what happened in the early 1800's.

People had fallen away from God in tremendous numbers. There were some preachers who God raised up by the name of **Charles Finney, Lyman Beecher** that God began to work through. There were great numbers of people who responded toward the movement back to God in their faith. The church became the church. It had incredible social impact on society and the abolitionist came out of this movement. There were actually two Great Awakenings, the first in the 1700's by a man named Johnathan Edwards and the second was in the early 1800's and that movement spread Methodist and Baptist all over this country.



Lyman
Beecher



Charles
Finney

What happens is that God's Spirit moves and the church repents. In doing so they pray to become the *hands and feet of God* and they become worshipers of Him. We study that throughout history and in His Word that what follows **repentance** and

worship of God is always pours out **blessing** and a demonstration of His **power**. Now what do you think happens after this kind of movement of God? Think of Thanksgiving.

- **Example:** We have our **Thanksgiving Dinner** coming up *November 18* at the 31 building. What always happens after I eat, especially at that lunch is a need to park it and rest.

The cycle that comes after repentance is an incredible outpouring of God's blessings come then the church with this abundance begins to become overwhelmed with a **lethargic attitude and becomes sleepy, lazy and tired**. **They forgot the greatest need is their continual pursuit of God's presence through praise and worship and God's purpose through the Word of God.**

When you forget that your greatest need is the pursuit of God's presence through praise and worship and God's purpose through the Word of God you began to substitute the pursuit of God with the pursuit of happiness.

Moses

In the Old Testament book of Exodus we find that in the first 18 chapters took place before Moses went up to the mountain to meet with God. From chapter 12 to chapter 19 took three months:

- Oppression of Israel (Chapter 1)
- The birth early life of Moses (Chapter 2)
- The call of Moses (Chapter 3)
- The empowerment of Moses and preparation to confront of Pharaoh (Chapter 4)
- The first failed confrontation of Moses, extra straw (Chapter 5)
- The fear of Moses and Aaron chosen to speak for him (Chapter 6)
- The 10 plagues (Chapters 7-11)
- The passover and exodus (Chapter 12)
- The consecration of the firstborn (Chapter 13:1-16)
- The crossing of the Red Sea (Chapter 13:17-15:21)
- The journey in the desert (Chapters 15:22-
 - Miraculously provides **water** (15:22-27)
 - Miraculously provides **quail** (16:1-36)
 - Miraculously provides water (17:1-7)
 - Miraculously provides victory over Amalekites, Aaron and Hur (17:8-15)
 - Moses is visited and trained by father-in-law, Jethro (18:1-27)
- **Moses first Mt. Sinai talk with God (Chapter 19)**

Moses has a short and simple meeting with God and God defines how He wants Israel to **pursue His presence through praise and worship and God's purpose through the His SpokenWord.**

*"Then Moses went up to God, and the LORD called to him from the mountain and said, "This is what you are to say to the house of Jacob and what you are to **tell the people of Israel:** 'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself.'"*

Exodus 19:3-4

"Now if you *obey me fully and keep my covenant*, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, *you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.*" These are the words you are to speak to the Israelites."

Exodus 19:5-6

We have a book in the Bible called, Leviticus. It is the laws and responsibilities of the the priest who served in the temple. Leviticus 9 is the starting point of Levitical priesthood. But if you have studied much on the Levitical priesthood and temple worship, it is surprising that this was never the intended plan of God. He never intended that the Levities would be the priest in the temple. **He wanted the whole nation of Israel to be priests**, to personally perform the proper acts of worship in relationship with the appropriate acts of obedience, obey Him fully and keep His covenant. So God instructed Moses to go back and **consecrate** the people of Israel so that they could stand and observe God's presence so God could affirm Moses as a leader in front of everyone, (Exodus 19:10-15).

- **Vs. 16- Clouds, thunder and lighting.**
- **Vs. 17- Moses leads them out to meet with God.**
- **Vs. 19- Sound of a loud trumpet and Moses spoke and God answered.**
- **Vs. 20- God moved to the top of the mountain and called Moses up.**

*"...and the LORD said to him, "Go down and warn the people so they do not force their way through to see the LORD and many of them perish. Even the priests, who approach the LORD, **must consecrate themselves**, or the LORD will break out against them."*

Exodus 19:21-22

God warns Moses that no one should come up to the top of the mountain other than who He said He wanted up there. **But He still wanted the people to hear Him, but for them to hear Him they must consecrate themselves.**

God Gives The First Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17)

Many people do not know that God gave the Ten Commandments three times and the first time he verbally gives the first Ten Commandments to Moses and the children of Israel. But it frightened the Israelites,

"When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear. They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, 'Speak to us yourself and we will listen. But do not have God speak to us or we will die.'"

Exodus 20:18-19

It was God's intention to speak personally to the children of Israel so they could hear Him directly. **But they had a false belief. They believed the lie that if God spoke to you you would die.** It somewhat resembles the lie today that if God speaks to you you are weird or strange or deranged or spiritually unstable. Or the lie that God only wants to speak bad things. But why shouldn't God want to converse with you, He is

your Father God!

God's desire to speak to you is powerful, but there are those who are afraid of His voice. What is exciting to you about God, His power, His gifts, His signs and wonders causes some people to run and hide.

- **Example:** I'll never forget in High School that there was a tongues of the Holy Spirit without an interpretation. A lady got up and ran out of the church. We had a small church so any unusual activity was very noticeable. I thought that the tongues must have scared her or she didn't believe in that sort of stuff and was offended and left. Someone followed her out of the building to talk to her as she got into her car. When asked why she was leaving she said, "Who told that person about me and why did they say everything about me in front of everyone else?" When asked what was said the lady responded that the person said all the things she was going through and that God could help her and give her peace. The lady received Christ right there in her car.

In Exodus 20:22-24:2, Moses spends an undesignated amount of time with God and writes down everything God had told him in the presence of God.

"Moses then took the blood, sprinkled it on the people and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant that the LORD has made with you in accordance with all these words.'"
Exodus 24:8

Moses went up to the mountain as directed of the Lord, this time God tells him that He is going to give Moses the Ten Commandments on a tablet of stone.

"The LORD said to Moses, 'Come up to me on the mountain and stay here, and I will give you the tablets of stone, with the law and commands I have written for their instruction.'"
Exodus 24:12

This time he stays on the mountain for 40 days and nights and in **Chapter 25-32**, God instructs him on the Tabernacle and all the furnishings that are to go in it and all the responsibilities of the priests. Right before Moses came down, Aaron led the children of Israel into a horrible act of sin.

"When the people saw that Moses was so long in coming down from the mountain, they gathered around Aaron and said, 'Come, make us gods who will go before us. As for this fellow Moses who brought us up out of Egypt, we don't know what has happened to him.'"
Exodus 32:1

Aaron took the gold of the people there and formed a calf out of it and they worshiped it. Calf worship was part of the worship from Egypt. They may have come out of Egypt but they couldn't get away from it.

"When Moses approached the camp and saw the calf and the dancing, his anger burned and he threw the tablets out of his hands, breaking them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. And he took the calf they had made and burned it in the fire; then he ground it to powder, scattered it on the water and made the Israelites drink it."
Exodus 32:19-20

Exit Israel As Main Worshipers, Enter Priesthood As Worshipers

Moses is so angry when he saw what was going on that he takes the tablets of stone and crushes them to pieces at the foot of the mountain. He makes golden cool aid and makes them all drink it. Moses talks to Aaron and in disgust walks to the entrance of the camp and asks,

*"So he stood at the entrance to the camp and said, "Whoever is for the LORD, come to me." And all the **Levites** rallied to him."*

Exodus 32:26

Isn't that interesting, of all the 12 tribes of Israel, the only ones to step up for the Lord was the Levites. They rallied behind Moses.

*"Then he said to them, 'This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Each man strap a sword to his side. Go back and forth through the camp from one end to the other, each killing his brother and friend and neighbor.' " The Levites did as Moses commanded, and that day about **three thousand of the people died.**"*

Exodus 32:27-28

*"Then Moses said, '**You have been set apart to the LORD today, for you were against your own sons and brothers, and he has blessed you this day.**'"*

Exodus 32:29

God wanted to wipe everyone of them out, but Moses stood and pleaded for their lives. God offered Moses a whole new generation of people, but Moses had a heart of mercy and it touched the heart of God.

The amazing story that took place this day was that the people of God lost the opportunity to be their own **priesthood**. Though the Israelites were saved from God's wrath they had lost the opportunity to present their own sacrifice before the Lord. This particular day worship left Israel and was given only to the priesthood. From that day on, worship would be a religious observation not a personal participation.

The challenges Moses faced then is the challenges we face today. A frequently-cited 1998 report from Focus on the Family noted that 1,500 pastors leave the ministry each month due to moral failures, spiritual burnout or contention in their churches. The main burden, I believe, is that people still want the pastor to be the priest. They have not learned the full call of the priesthood of the believer and therefor misinformed and unhealthy structured church continue to pile the work of the priesthood upon their pastor, destroying his ministry, his family and the church. This unhealthy trend has to stop. It's time for the people of God to have a hunger for the voice of God and a willingness that the whole tribe be worshipers of God, not a select few.

We have this incredible grace of God that offers us to come through the Blood of the Lamb...we don't even have to slay it. It was done once and all for us, all we have to do is walk in that victory, but how often do we respond to that opportunity, to act in our priesthood? The Priest's actions was a worship unto God. To miss our priestly responsibilities is to miss worship, and what a great loss to miss that.