

Planned for God's Pleasure

Last week, we began our "Living the Purposed Life" fall preaching series by noting humanity's three great questions: 1) The question of our existence – why am I alive? 2) The question of our significance – does my life matter? And 3) The question of life's intention – what is my purpose?

It is pastor Rick Warren's contention that when we give ourselves to the five foundational purposes for humanity (as summarized in the Great commandment and great commission), then we will have discovered the fulfillment of our deepest needs in life. That's why I'm asking us throughout this series to---

CHOOSE GOD'S PURPOSES Over ~~YOUR PREFERENCES~~

"Do this and you will live"
Luke 10:28 NIV

Warren outlines the five-fold purposes of God with 5-M's:

MAGNIFICATION – Planned for God's Pleasure
MEMBERSHIP – Formed for God's Family
MATURITY – Created to Become Like Christ
MINISTRY – Shaped for Serving God
MISSION – Made for a Mission

He takes these core purposes from the two most important commands in the Bible: The GREAT COMANDMENT and the GREAT COMMISSION.

The Great Commandment: Mark 12:30-31a NIV:

30 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.' **31** The second is this: '**Love your neighbor** as yourself.'

The Great Commission: Matthew 28:19-20 NIV:

19 Therefore you must go and **make disciples** of all nations. **Baptize** them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. **20** **Teach** them to obey everything I have commanded you.

Today, we focus in on our first life-purpose which is the WORSHIP OF GOD (Magnification). When it comes to worship, the Bible is filled with images and instructions on getting this part of our relationship right. Everything rises and falls based upon our worship of God, because worship is about the deepest loyalties and affections of our hearts. As it turns out, biblical worship is not really about instruments, songs, liturgies, festivals, sacrifices, prayers, sermons or offerings.

As much as God enjoys harmony, symphony and energy generated in celebration services no matter what the style, ***it's not a song or sonata that God is after, but a loving, humble grateful heart that adores Him.*** Worship is that place where the heart of God and the heart of His children meet. ***Worship is to be all about a loyal love relationship of honor, gratitude and obedience we have with our Creator God.***

If heaven represents a desired perfection that we will one day embody, perhaps that is where we should learn what we need to know about our worship of God. And so, **to the THRONE ROOM we go** this morning.

Read Revelation 4:8-11 NLT

⁸Each of these [four] living beings had six wings, and their wings were covered with eyes, inside and out. *Day after day and night after night they keep on saying*, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty--the one who always was, who is, and who is still to come." ⁹Whenever the living beings give glory and honor and thanks to the one sitting on the throne, the one who lives forever and ever, ¹⁰the twenty-four elders *fall down and worship* the one who lives forever and ever. And they *lay their crowns before the throne* and say, ¹¹"You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created everything, and *it is for your pleasure that they exist and were created.*"

When I think about John's vision of heavenly worship, and what it is that God wills and dreams for our lives, four descriptions and dispositions come to mind:

1. *Worshipping (Pleasing God) is... The Unceasing Way of My Life*

"Day after day and night after night..." – vs. 8b

Worship is not a service, an event, or offering. It's not scripted in a Sunday morning bulletin or even best experienced in a sanctuary. As Heaven shows, worship is...day after day and night after night. A worshipper's heart is never far from praise, gratitude, hope, and joy because they are never far from God.

Jesus said, "Remain in me, as I also remain in you" (John 15:4a). To be continually present, attentive, staying in the story and focused on what the throne room reveals to us (A PICTURE OF PERPETUAL ECSTASY): Worship is AN UNSTOPPABLE FASCINATION between God's love for me and my love for God. It thrives in an atmosphere of yielded hearts, receptive lives, humble spirits, teachable minds,

cooperative partnership, trusting faith, honoring authority, and an obedient walk. This is the gratifying reward of our faith. As the author of Hebrews reminds us: *"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him"* (Hebrews 11:6 NIV). Worship then, is its own reward – day after day and night after night!

2. **Worshipping (Pleasing God) is...** ***Humbly Yielding My Life***

"...fall down and worship..." - vs. 10a

My whole being (my mind, heart, and life) is presented to God through my body as I prostrate or "fall down" before Him. Our human body is intended to be a bridge for everything that resides within us. To **physically prostrate our bodies** is for us an experiential leadership initiative for **the rest of my being to "FALL IN LINE!"** God is **NOT INTERESTED in our GROVELING – but in our CLOSE AFFECTION.**

Bowing down right-sizes our relationship and positions us for intimacy. As the depressed and mentally distressed **Sheila Walsh** once noted in a hospital Psyche ward, **"I never knew God lived so close to the floor!"** This is why the orthodox Jews rock their bodies at the Western wailing wall in Jerusalem. This is why Muslims bow down three times a day and prayer facing east towards Mecca. I once led a staff retreat where I had my whole staff lay face down on the floor, and then had us pray prayers over our life relative to the positions of our bodies. **"Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker"**
Psalm 95:6 NIV

3. **Worshipping (Pleasing God) is...** ***Relinquishing Privilege***

"...lay their crowns before the throne..." – vs. 10b

My authority, position, prestige, power, and personhood have all been delegated and deposited from heaven as part of God's "every spiritual blessing" (Ephesians 1:3). To return my crown is not to reject these gifts, but to acknowledge and honor them as coming from a sovereign, gracious, and benevolent Father who has honored me with His image and His gift of life. To give my crown back is to relinquish **my** plans, **my** preferences, and **my** personal pursuits in exchange for the highest pursuit of all, **ALIVENESS with My Creator**.

Worship has never been about fulfilling a preference, a duty, or meeting an obligation. God has no desire for that kind of relationship. **We are designed to worship not to GET something FOR ourselves, but to GIVE something OUT OF ourselves!** We worship to release our expressions of love, thanksgiving, praise, joy, honor, and awe! In worship, I come to focus not on myself and my needs, but on God's great goodness and His unimaginable glory! **"With Jesus' help, let us continually offer our sacrifice of praise to God by proclaiming the glory of his name" (Hebrews 13:15 NLT).**

Americans are CONSUMERS. Consumers have many CHOICES. Many choices fosters BRAND LOYALTY. Brand loyalty establishes entitlement and the PREFERENCE DRIVEN LIFE. This life rises and falls based upon the **circumstances** of worship, instead of the **Creator**. Giving up the right to be right and the need to be catered to – releases us from the grip of PREFERENCE and frees us to imbed our lives in God's PURPOSES!

4. Worshipping (Pleasing God) is... *God's Dream Fulfilled*

"...it is for your pleasure [will, desire, wish, dream, preference] that they exist and were created." – vs. 11.b

The WILL of God in our lives as His imaged-bearing creation, is that we fulfill His dream of mutual love, unending loyalty, and eternal joy! This is how we describe paradise! Eden restored! Doesn't it stand to reason that if God can draw us into a place where He has GREAT PLEASURE IN US --- then that will also be a place where we discover GREAT PLEASURE IN HIM! Would you like to live in a place (a disposition) of great pleasure? I want to move into that neighborhood. I want to hang out with those people.

Paul reminds us: **"...live a life worthy of the Lord and please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge (relationship) of God... Colossians 1:10 NIV**

I don't know about you, but for me, it's that phrase, "DAY AFTER DAY AND NIGHT AFTER NIGHT" that presents a challenge. Anybody can sing a song or two they don't like while sitting in church on Sunday morning. But it's that 24/7 thing that really tests our true intentions and the desires of my heart.

As important as it is, ***Sunday morning really isn't the time when God finds out what we think of Him.*** It turns out you've already sent your message loud and clear from Monday through Saturday! That's where our relationship with God lives...or dies. Maybe, instead of thinking about a song-and-preaching service on Sunday mornings, we need to consider what worship is without any of our trappings and traditions.

Worship Artist Matt Redman helps us to understand the deeper call of God on our lives through his song, ***"Heart of Worship."*** If ever there was a song that is fit to teach us about **"WORSHIP"** in a **COVID-SINGING-VACATED SERVICE**, Here are a few of his opening lyrics:

**When the music fades
All is stripped away
And I simply come**

**Longing just to bring
Something that's of worth
That will bless Your heart**

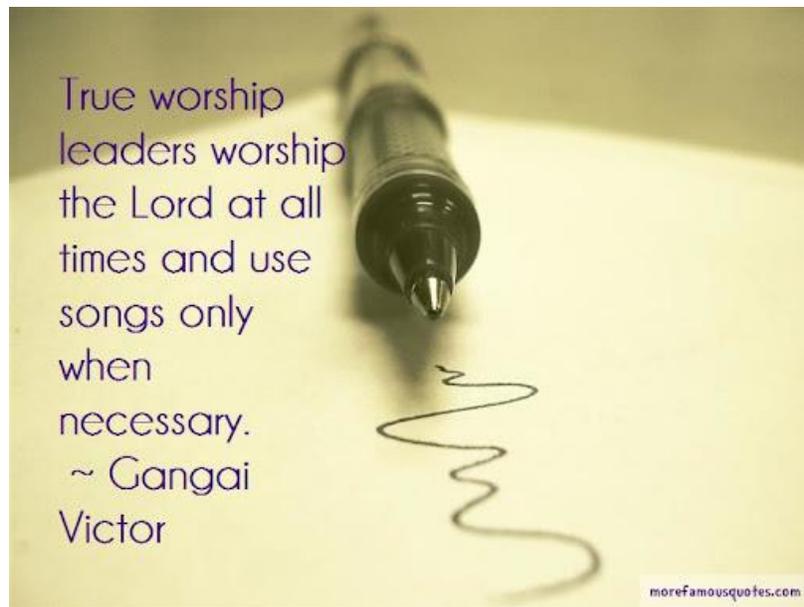
**I'll bring You more than a song
For a song in itself
Is not what You have required**

**You search much deeper within
Through the way things appear
You're looking into my heart**

**I'm coming back to the heart of worship
And it's all about You,
It's all about You, Jesus**

**I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I've made it
When it's all about You,
It's all about You, Jesus**

Gangai Victor, Musician and Worship Leader in the nation of India, Calls us to expand our experiential understanding of worship way beyond music. Similar to St. Francis' famous quote about preaching ("Preach always, when necessary, use words"), so too Gangai says:



There are **168 hours in each week**. We usually **sing** once a week, for maybe **15-20 minutes**. If we are going to do that **"DAY AFTER DAY, AND NIGHT AFTER NIGHT"** approach to living, then we must have a Jeremiah heart:

**“For if I say I’ll never again mention
the Lord—never more speak in his
name—then his word in my heart is
like fire that burns in my bones, and I
can’t hold it in any longer”**

Jeremiah 20:9 TLB

WORSHIP is a LOVE FIRE that cannot be held in; that cannot be unexpressed. It is a burning, God—given, passion to love the One who loves us; to believe the One who promises us; to follow the One who guides us; and to trust the One who calls us. **DO THIS, AND YOU WILL LIVE!** Amen!