



## MORE WORSHIP

Pleasing God more means honoring God first

### SUMMARY

We have become a very goal-oriented society, and, while that isn't a bad thing, we often fail to make the greatest purpose our greatest pursuit. With a myriad of options and opportunities, it is so easy for us to get distracted by and begin to drift towards things that aren't necessarily bad things, but they interfere with or take the place of what should be our greatest desire – to please God. This year, let's determine that our life is going to abound with and increase in those things that our Heavenly takes great delight in.

### REVIEW

We began this series by establishing the theme for our church this year: **MORE AND MORE - DETERMINED TO PLEASE THE LORD MORE IN 2024.**

We want to abound and increase in the things that God takes great delight in. It's a journey marked by **INTENSITY, INTEGRITY, INTERACTION** (with the Father and the family of God), and **INVESTMENT**.

We've found that it is possible for God to be pleased, for us to know what pleases God, and for us to please God with our life.

With that foundation, we began to consider some key elements that need to be in our life if we are going to please God more.

The first element is **MORE TRUST**. Pleasing God more begins with trusting God most.

The second element is **MORE DISCERNMENT**. Pleasing God more means living right in a world that is wrong.

The third element is **MORE OBEDIENCE**. Pleasing God more means obeying God first.

Last week, we found that the fourth element is **MORE FEAR**. Our key statement was this: **PLEASING GOD MORE MEANS LOVING GOD MOST**.

We considered the life of a man named Job, who lived during the times of the patriarchs – Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Simply put: Job was a man who lived right because he loved God above everything and everyone. Job's love was **REVEALED** (showed) and it was **REINFORCED** (strengthened) through adversity.

As we considered Job's life, we found that...

- 1) The fear of the Lord provides us with a **SOLID FOUNDATION** upon which to **STAND**.
- 2) The fear of the Lord provides us with a **SPIRITUAL FORMATION** that will make us **STRONGER**.
- 3) The fear of the Lord provides us with a **STRONG MOTIVATION** that will cause us to **STAY** faithful to God

God is worthy of our love regardless of the **BLESSINGS** that come into our life and regardless of the **BURDENS** that we have to carry through this life.

## MESSAGE

Last week, we left the narrative of Scripture to consider the example of Job. This week, we return to the narrative of Scripture where we once again find that much has changed.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob have all passed off the scene, and yet, the blessing of God has been **PRESERVED** and **PASSED DOWN** to the following generations (Hebrews 11:20-21).

Joseph, one of Jacob's twelve sons, was used by God to **DELIVER** the people of God out of a **PARTICULAR PROBLEM** (famine) and into what can best be described as a season of **PREPARATION** and a season of **PATIENCE** (Egypt).

Joseph's example is one that we all can, and we all should learn from. Let me attempt to summarize the final twenty chapters of the book of Genesis.

Wherever you're at right now and whatever you find yourself going through, this is a powerful truth for you to remember: God knows what He has promised you, God

knows when He is going to fulfill that promise to you, and God knows what He's doing right now in between the two. You might not understand it and you might not even like it, but when you get to where God is taking you, you'll quickly discover that you are better prepared for whatever "it" is all because you were allowed to go through whatever your "now" includes. So, what I'm trying to say is this: Don't waste your now even when you can't see beyond your "now" and even when it feels like your "now" is going to bury you. God is still good, God is still in control, and God's plan is still perfect. And you'll find out how and the why...later...and you'll have that much more of a reason to reason when you do.

Now, that's one thing to say, and it's a true thing to say, but it isn't always easy to live. Why? Because we don't want our now right now, we want our tomorrow right now.

We don't want the **BURDEN** now; we want the **BLESSING** now.

We don't want the **TRAINING** now; we want the **TREASURE** now.

We don't want the **WORK** now; we want the **WIN** now.

But here's the thing:

You can't have the blessing without the burden, and

You won't enjoy the treasure long without the training, and

You'll not get the win if you're not willing to put in the work.

Regardless of what society says, we're not **ENTITLED** to things in this life; we have a responsibility to **ENGAGE** in this life, and we are to do so all for the glory of God. That's what I think the nation of Israel was supposed to learn while they were in Egypt so that they could then live it out in the land of Canaan.

For four-hundred years, the nation of Israel lived under Egyptian bondage. Now, I'm not trying to **MINIMIZE** the **HURTS** and the **HARDSHIPS** that the people of God experienced during those years, but we have to be careful not to **MAXIMIZE** them either. If we're honest, we have a tendency to **CELEBRATE** the **MOUNTAINTOPS**, but **COMPLAIN** about the **MOUNTAIN CLIMB**. The truth of the matter is that if you're going to enjoy the blessings and the views from the mountaintop, then you must first engage the mountain by walking up the paths and by climbing over the rocks.

We could look at Israel's Egyptian bondage and say, "how bad it was," (which is what we often do) or we can look at the Egyptian bondage and say, "how much they learned."

Exodus 1:14 says, *“And they made their lives bitter with hard bondage, in mortar, and in brick, and in all manner of service in the field: all their service, wherein they made them serve, was with rigour.”*

Here’s the reality: the **EASY** life does not **EQUIP** us for real life. The easy life traps us in and limits us to our **FEELINGS** and to our **FLESH**, but adversity, when properly responded to, releases our **FAITH** to take us far beyond where our feelings and our flesh could ever take us. You see, while there were some things that they could learn in Egypt, there were other things that they could not learn in Egypt. Egypt, in the Bible, is always a picture of this world, and, while there are many things that we can learn in this world, there are certain things that this world simply cannot teach us.

Israel could learn how to make **BRICKS** in Egypt, but Egypt could not teach them how to build something that brought glory to God.

Israel could learn how to dig **DITCHES** in Egypt, but Egypt could not teach them how to be a channel of God’s love.

Israel could learn how to build **WALLS** and **CITIES** in Egypt, but Egypt could not teach them how to worship God.

So, what does God do? God raises up a man by the name of Moses whose purpose was to lead the nation of Israel out of the **WORLD** (Egypt) and into the **WILDERNESS** where they could learn to **WORSHIP** God.

Now, there’s a lot that we could highlight about the life of Moses. We could look at the **BIRTH** of Moses, the **BULWARKS** of the Nile, the **BAD DECISIONS** in Egypt, the **BACKSIDE** of the desert, or the **BURNING BUSH**, but I think the most important event in Moses’s life was when he **BOWED** before and worshipped the Lord.

Exodus 34:8-16 says, *“And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped. And he said, If now I have found grace in thy sight, O Lord, let my Lord, I pray thee, go among us; for it is a stiffnecked people; and pardon our iniquity and our sin, and take us for thine inheritance. And he said, Behold, I make a covenant: before all thy people I will do marvels, such as have not been done in all the earth, nor in any nation: and all the people among which thou art shall see the work of the LORD: for it is a terrible thing that I will do with thee. Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and*

*thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods."*

If you're in the habit of marking things in the Word of God, I'd like to draw your attention back to two statements that are made in the passage that we just read.

Verse 8 where the Bible says, *"And Moses made haste, and bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped."*

Verse 14 where the Bible says, *"For thou shalt worship no other god..."*

For a few moments, I'd like to consider this thought: **MORE WORSHIP - PLEASING GOD MORE MEANS HONORING GOD FIRST.**

Now, there is a lot going on in this particular passage, and I don't have the time and you don't have the patience for me to unfold everything that is happening here. So, in the spirit of oversimplification, let me just say this: God **DREW** Moses to Himself, so that He could **DEVELOP** Moses with His Word, in order to get from Moses what He **DESIRES** – true worship.

Worship today is something that we have lost both the **PERCEPTION** (understanding) of, the **PRACTICE** of, and the **PASSION** for. In western Christianity...

We have reduced "worship" to something that we go to once or perhaps a few times a week.

We have reduced "worship" to singing, to swaying, and/or to shouting.

We have reduced "worship" to a set of programs that fit perfectly within my pre-determined checklist of wants and wishes and that fits perfectly within my overly packed schedule.

We have reduced "worship" to an emotional experience that is entirely dependent on the performance of others and on our own personal preferences and pleasure.

We have, ultimately, reduced worship to give ourselves everything that we want, and, in doing so, we have robbed God of everything that He wants and everything that He deserves from us.

Let me be very clear about what I'm saying. Worship is not about you and me getting what we want, what we like, what we prefer. That's not worship. There is a name for that though – it's called **SELFISHNESS** and it's rooted in the sin of pride. And Christians today, specifically us in western Christianity practice selfish religion far more than we practice heartfelt worship. We would rather engage in "spiritual" entertainment that makes me feel good than engage in spiritual service that honors God.

Perhaps here would be a great place for me to give a proper definition of the word worship. *Worship* is when I surrender my life to God, and I serve God in a way that He prefers and that pleases Him.

I encourage you to go back through the interactions that Moses had with Pharaoh back in Egypt. Let me remind you that God was telling Moses the message that He was supposed to give. Over and over again, Moses gives Pharaoh the message to “Let God’s people go.” But that wasn’t all that God did, God gave three reasons why Pharaoh was to let His people go:

- (1) That they could hold a feast unto the LORD in the wilderness (1 time)
- (2) That they may do sacrifice unto the LORD (1 time)
- (3) That they may serve the LORD (6 times)

True worship is not focused on your **COMFORT**, it’s not focused on your **CONVENIENCE**, and it’s not focused on your **CONTENTMENT**. True worship is focused on your **CHANGE** (inside and out).

That word *serve* is a powerful word that encompasses all that we are: our **MOTIVATION**, our **WORK**, our **RESTRAINT**, our **HEARING**, and our **DRESS**. Singing is a part of worship and shouting is a part of worship, but surrender and service are the heart of worship. Worship is us giving God what He wants without **HESITATION**, without **HYPOCRISY** (saying one thing and doing another), and without **HOLDING OUT** or **BACK**.

Worshipping God means honoring God first, or perhaps I should say honoring God above all else. Simply put, worshipping God is me honoring God with my life. It is doing daily with my life (my **HEART**, my **LIPS**, my **LOVES**, my **LABOR**, my **FINANCES**, my **BODY**, my **TIME**, my **TALENTS**) what God delights in.

Matthew 15:8-9 says, *“This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.”*

When we are not serving the Lord in these areas then our attempts to worship the Lord are vain. They don’t achieve what we hope they’ll achieve because they don’t align with what God desires and what God delights in.

Jesus said, in John 4:23-24, *“But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth.”*