

Worship That Calls for a Sword

by Carter Conlon

The sermon emphasizes the importance of true worship, which is defined by Jesus as worship in spirit and in truth, and warns against false worship, which is a singing of noise without God's presence.

Duration: 56:43

Scripture: Exodus 32:1

Topics: "Worship"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher discusses the story of Moses and the Israelites in Exodus 32. He emphasizes the importance of recognizing the sound of victory and the need to look within ourselves rather than blaming others for our problems. The preacher also mentions voice graphing and how it can be used to identify someone's origin. He concludes by highlighting the power of calling on the Lord for strength and salvation, referencing verses from the book of Psalms.

Transcript

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And it's worship that calls for a sword. Worship that calls for a sword. Exodus chapter 32, let's pray together.

Now, Father, I ask you for great grace to speak this word clearly. I ask you, Holy Spirit, for the power to live it personally. I ask you, God, that you would touch my heart as you touch the hearts of your people here this morning, that you would deliver us from all pretense of worship.

God, that you would touch us. Holy Spirit, you have to come and quicken this word. Quicken it.

If you don't quicken it, it has no effect. It will just fall onto the floor and will not accomplish your purposes. I ask you now, Holy Spirit, to quicken me, quicken this word.

Lord, we understand that the anointing is not by any exuberance that we have. The anointing comes in agreement with the word of God. Lord, today we ask for the power to agree with your word that your kingdom may advance in us and through us, that we may be a people prepared for your coming, a people that will honor you all the days of our lives.

God, I thank you for what you alone can accomplish in this time in your word. In Jesus' name. Now, Exodus 32 is a chapter that talks about a... I think it's the beginning of a tragic series of events that ultimately, in the long run, way down the road is going to result in the people that God brought out of captivity being taken into captivity again.

Exodus 32 talks or tells us about a condition of the human heart that is a frailty in our sin nature. It's in you, it's in me, it's in all of us. It's a time when the people had come through tremendous struggle and battle.

They had seen the angel of death pass over and kill all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, and yet spare them because they had walked in obedience. They had put the blood of the lamb, as they were called to do, on the doorpost of their house. They had gathered together.

They had eaten the unleavened bread and the lamb, all of which are a type of a consecration, as it is, or a setting apart for the purposes of God. As God's people, we are called to be set apart. We are in the world, but the Bible says clearly we're not of the world.

We are not to be entertained by the world. We are not to gravitate to the things of the world for our pleasure or our leisure. These things can be sometimes good in themselves, but anything that enters the Christian life that begins to occupy the mind and the heart is a dangerous issue, no matter what it is.

Even if it's a good thing, it can push Christ away from the borders of your heart and your mind. And they were in a season after this tremendous battle and struggle, as many are who are even here today. We come out of darkness.

God delivers us. We fight many battles to get free of the grip of darkness. And anyone who's here today who's walked with God for any amount of time, you are fully aware of this struggle.

You came to Christ, and perhaps it was a bondage of a mental torment. It can be alcohol. It can be fornication, numerous things that were holding you.

And as you begin to obey God, you saw God come in power and set you free. You came through the river, as it is, of impossibility, just like the children of Israel did. And you had a song on the other side of great victory, an incredible song of victory.

You came into the house of God. And many have sung that song here in Times Square Church, just like Miriam and others did, when they grabbed the tambourine and they sang that song, I will sing unto the Lord, he has triumphed gloriously. The horse and the rider, he's thrown into the sea.

Incredible times of victory being brought from places of impossibility. And that is the song and that's the testimony of many who are even here in the house of God today. And the people of God eventually came to a mountain experience where Moses went up to receive the commandments of God.

And while he was gone, they were in a season where they didn't seem to be going forward or backwards. It should have been really a time of rest. The Bible does say that God gives his beloved rest.

And there are seasons in the Christian life when God will just allow you to rest. He's not a slave driver. He doesn't drive his children into the ground.

He doesn't cause us to keep going when we have no strength to go anymore. He does bring us into, first of all, obviously, a spiritual rest in Christ and then a physical rest. From time to time, he will give to his servants, to those that are living for him.

And it was in this time that the people, something began to stir in the hearts of the people. And they said, well, we haven't heard from God for a long time and we don't know where Moses is. And they wanted a God.

They weren't hearing. They hadn't heard for a while. And that is sometimes a wonderful restful place, but it can often be a very dangerous place to be in.

Because the human heart has a tendency, when it's not hearing from God, to invent God. To begin to make its own God. Well, I haven't heard.

I'm not seemingly getting anything out of the Bible when I read it lately. So, what is God really like? Not waiting on the Holy Spirit. Not waiting on God to speak.

Not waiting on definitive truth, which really tells us religious in an answer that will cause us not to go astray. But the human heart has a tendency to invent its own God. And this is exactly what the people did.

And they went to a priest, Aaron, who was really just, I say this lovingly, but he was just a stuffed shirt. He had no integrity. This man never heard from God.

God had warned Moses right from the beginning and said, Here's a man who doesn't hear from me, but he speaks well. If you want him along for the journey, you can have him. But the Bible says it was in anger that Aaron was, in a sense, attached to Moses.

And Aaron went along for the journey and became the spokesman for Moses because he didn't hear from God. It was Moses that heard from God, and Aaron just repeated everything that Moses spoke to him. God said to Moses, This man will be your mouth, but you will be God to him.

He was warning him, This man doesn't hear from me. And I'm going to be speaking on this sometime in the future because Aaron is the result of fear in the life of Moses. Moses was afraid.

He looked at his own failings. And because he didn't have confidence in the God that created him and could keep him, he was subsequently saddled with this man, Aaron, his own brother, who followed along with him and became a source of grief to the entire camp of Israel. And so Aaron said to the people, Take off your earrings and your golden bracelets.

And you know, when you're fastening another God, it can seem so holy and sacrificial. Take off these valuable things and give them to the work of God. And so, Aaron, the people begin to give, and it looks sacrificial.

It looks good. There's a plea, as it is, perhaps, to give very valuable things to what they consider to be the work of God. And he went and he melted them down and he fashioned a golden calf.

And he said, Here are your gods that brought you out of the land of Egypt. And the Bible says that the next day the people rose up and offered burnt offerings and peace offerings. And they sat down to eat and drink and they rose up to play.

And now here are Moses and Joshua. They're up on the mountain in the presence of God. Now, the people are down at the foot of the mountain and they're dancing around this golden calf.

And as far as they're concerned, this is a wonderful worship service. They're having a marvelous time. They now have a visible God of their own making, a tangible God that they can now see and feel and touch.

That's what they wanted. They had a hard time accepting this God who only leads and works through faith. They said, We don't want this anymore.

We want a tangible God. We want to be able to see Him, smell Him, feel Him, touch Him. And so all of their senses are now satisfied.

And they have this God that they fashioned with their own hands. They're all dancing around. And I'm sure that they are feeling they're having a wonderful worship time.

They are worshipping this God that brought them out, as they think, out of the land of Egypt. It's really just a golden calf made from earrings and bracelets. And down into this come Moses and Joshua.

Now, they have been in the presence of the Lord. And the people feel like they're worshipping. But Moses and Joshua, coming from God's presence, this intimacy, this time of wonderful intimacy with God, coming down the mountain, begin to hear this noise.

And Joshua says to Moses in verse 17, Exodus 32, 17, says, When Joshua heard the noise of the people as they shouted, he said to Moses, There's a noise of war in the camp. Isn't it amazing? It may have sounded like worship to those around the camp, but to a man who had just come from God's presence, it sounded like war. Incredible.

There is a worship that sounds like war. It is so annoying. It is so hard to sit in a service like that.

The people are dancing and shouting and twirling in the aisles. And it is just so excruciating. You can't wait to get through it.

It's so awful. I've been there many, many times and quite recently was in a service like that. Just high-priced death.

All these worship leaders come in and they're extremely talented, but so far from God. And they begin to lead the people in worship of a God of their own making, a God of their own understanding. They have no understanding of the holiness of God.

And it is so awful to be there. It is excruciating. Recently, in one service, I got to the point where I just blocked my ears.

I literally couldn't listen to it anymore. I had to shut it out and begin to just intercede and begin to pray for the people who are gathered around this time of worship as they saw it. And Joshua said, There's a noise of war.

But Moses said, It's not the voice of them that shout for mastery. Moses was familiar with the war time worship. In other words, there is a cry that you can hear among God's people in legitimate times where they are crying for the victory or shouting because they have gotten the victory.

It is, in a sense, loud. It is exuberant. But the victory is in it.

And Moses is saying, I'm not hearing the victory. They're shouting, but I don't hear victory. Oh, folks, you have to have a discerning ear to know the difference.

You can go into a church service and get so fooled and think these people are so alive and they can shout and be exuberant. Remember, Jesus said to the church of Sardis in Revelation, You have a reputation that you live, but you're dead. You have a name that you live, but you're dead.

People come into your service, Sardis, and you are worshiping and exuberant and jumping up and down and twirling in the aisles. You have a reputation. And the undiscerning ear comes in and says, Oh, this is so alive.

This is so God. But Jesus comes into the midst of it and says, No, there's something else going on here. They're shouting, Moses said, but it's not the shouting of victory.

There is a certain sound, beloved. When somebody is shouting in victory, there's a sound. You cannot mask it.

You cannot get away from it. There is a sound. I shared a couple of weeks ago in a message about voice graphing.

When you when you hear in a typical North American society, we have a low pitch drop at the end of our sentences. If you were to follow a voice graph graph, you would say we say come in, sit down. There's a low pitch drop.

It's just there. You're not aware of it, but it's part of our speech pattern. You can determine really where somebody is from in the world oftentimes just by graphing their voice.

And that's what they're that's what they were doing. For example, in in in Iraq, when the leader would get up and make a some kind of a statement, not being sure who it was, they would match that with known voice graphs to see if the two match. Is it in fact the same person that is speaking? And in a similar sense, our voices are being graphed in heaven.

You can be shouting and proclaiming victory. But if there is no victory, there's something wrong in the voice. There's something wrong.

A heart that is not living in victory can do can shout all at once. But there's something missing in it. There's a there's there's something in the pitch that isn't right.

And the discerning ear can hear it. You know that something isn't right. There's a lot of shouting, but it's lacking that sound.

I can't quite explain it, but it's a sound. You just know it if you've been in the presence of God. I know it.

I know instinctively now when a singer gets up and sings, whether they're living for the Lord or not. I knew it in a service in Cuba that the worship leader was not living for God. And I preached on it that night.

And thankfully, that that person was on his knees trembling and shaking before God when it was over. Not really his fault. He hadn't been taught, I believe, in whatever place he'd come from.

He hadn't been properly taught that the song and the life have got to match. The two have got to be together or God is not in it. And he said, it's not the voice of those that shout for mastery.

And neither is it the voice of them that cry for being overcome. Now, there is a cry and it is genuine worship. It's an honest heart that comes into the house of the Lord and is just saying, Jesus, you see it in Psalm 18, where David the Psalmist says that the snares of death prevented me and sorrow and darkness all around me.

And he says, I cried out to the Lord in my in my distress. I cried out to God and he heard my cry. There is a cry where we have the victory and there's a cry where we're in the battle.

But at the very foundation of that cry is a desire to have God move and bring us to victory. And Moses said, no, I don't hear people singing for the victory and I don't hear them singing because they want the victory. No, he said, there's something else.

He said, but it's the noise of those who sing that I hear. It's the noise. Incredible when you think about it.

Now, here these people are singing in verse eight and their song is these be thy gods, O Israel, which have brought thee up out of the land of Egypt. These are songs of victory. They're songs of power, but they're singing them to a powerless God of their own making.

They're songs about former times that has no present application to their lives. Now, I wonder how many people are doing that in the church of Jesus Christ this morning all over the world. In a congregation singing songs of great victory up from the grave he arose is a wonder.

I'm sure that's being sung 10,000 times, 10,000 times around the world today. But how many people are not living in the victory of the resurrection? How many people are singing about somebody else's victory? A song that somebody else wrote about a former time that has no application to their personal lives anymore. And that's the tragedy of the human condition.

That's where our sin nature will take us if we are not careful. Singing about victory. Singing about power.

There's power, power, wonder, working power. I wonder how many people in the church of Jesus Christ sang that this morning across America. And there are adulterers and fornicators and liars and thieves.

And they're standing, they're singing, there's power, power, wonder, working power in the precious blood of the Lamb. Somebody wrote that song and was living in victory. But it's got to come to the point where it's not somebody else's song that we're singing in the house of God.

It's got to come to the point where it's my song and it's your song. Where I stand and there's truth behind it. There is power, wonder, working power in the precious blood of the Lamb.

And by God's grace, he has brought me into his victory. Moses said this is the song of light, of noise. This is noise.

I was in a service recently where the worship was noise. It was excruciating noise. The word for noise in the Hebrew is lightness.

Lightness. There's no substance to it. It's light.

It's just a flippant throwing around of words, holy words. A flippant throwing out of words of faith that have no practical application in reality. It's light.

It's light. Jesus rose from the dead. I love the Lord.

I wonder how many people today throughout the world sang I love you Lord. And it isn't true and God knows it. It's light.

It's also the word that is used for fame in Hebrew, which is interesting. It's light, meaning without substance, and also the word used for fame, which implies that there's a seeking of reputation with no ongoing work that brings glory to God in the life. A seeking of reputation.

A seeking of being holy. A seeking of being known as it is. Or a seeking to be perceived, understood as a certain type of people.

But there is no ongoing work in the life that brings glory to God. Singing of a song, looking for fame, but there's nothing in the life that brings honor to God. So little.

Moses, no wonder he was angry. No wonder he came down the mountain and took the tablets of God and smashed them all over the mountain, looking at what the people of God had become in such a short period of time. The singing of noise is defined by the absence of God's presence.

The absence of God's presence in the life, the heart, the mind, the voice of the singer. It is the absence of the reality of God in Jesus Christ. It's only a song.

It can be melodious. It can cause us to clap our hands. It can excite us.

But there's an absence of God in it. John 4, if you'll go there with me, please, in the New Testament. John chapter 4. Now, in this particular passage, beginning at verse 20.

Jesus once and for all defined true worship. True worship. And folks, the definition is here.

We don't have to look any farther than this particular scripture and you're going to see it. John 4 20. Now, he encountered a Samaritan woman at a well.

And she threw at him a question, perceiving him to be a prophet. And she said, our fathers worshipped in this mountain and you say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship. In other words, there's a controversy about worship.

Some say it should be here and others say it should be there. And she was saying to him, well, I think you're a prophet. So what do you say? Where do you say or how do you say worship should be conducted and where should it be conducted? And Jesus said to her in verse 21, woman, believe me, the hour comes when you shall neither in this mountain nor yet at Jerusalem worship the father.

In other words, it will no longer be a specific place. You worship, you know not what. We know what we worship for salvation of the Jews.

But the hour comes, verse 23, and now is when the true worshipers shall worship the father in spirit and in truth. For the father seeks such to worship him in spirit and in truth. He said, this is true worship.

There is no other kind of worship. This is worship that is acceptable to God. Now, it is worship from a heart that is being shown and led into the power of a new life.

That's what he's talking about. It is, I'm going to be, I am the truth, Christ said. I'm going to go to a cross.

On the third day, I'm going to be raised by the power of the Holy Spirit into a new life. And everyone who trusts in me, I'm going to bring them also into that new life. But in order to get into that life, you have to agree with the truth.

I'm going to speak truth to you. Everything I speak to you is truth. You must agree with me when I speak to you.

If you don't agree with me, you'll be cast into a prison and have to pay all that is due until you get out. You've got to agree when I speak into your heart. When I talk about issues, you've got to come into line with the word of God.

And when you agree, then by the power of the Holy Ghost, this is the beloved hope of the Christian church, apart as it is from our salvation. By the same spirit that raised Christ from the dead, you shall too be quickened by that spirit. In other words, you'll no longer be bound by the weakness and death that has reigned in your life.

You'll be brought into a new life. You'll worship me in truth and in spirit. I will show you the truth, and then by the power of the Holy Spirit, I'll make the truth a reality in your life.

You will be constantly growing, constantly changing, constantly as it is evolving into the very person that God has destined you to be. And I will so work in your life that it will bring honor and glory to my name, says the Lord. There will be a fame in you, but it will not be of yourself.

It will not be about style or form or tradition. There will be a fame because you have life in you that nobody in the world can have apart from Christ. Hallelujah! John 16, if you go there very quickly with me.

John 16, verse 13. Jesus talking about the Holy Spirit now. Remember, worship is in spirit and in truth.

In John 16, verse 13, he said, When he, the Spirit of truth, is come, he will guide you into all truth. For he shall not speak of himself whatsoever he shall hear. He shall speak, and he will show you things to come.

He shall glorify me, for he shall receive of mine. In other words, he knows what is mine, and he will show it to you. And all things that the Father has are mine.

And therefore said I, that he shall take what is mine, or take of mine, and shall show it to you. In other words, he will announce it to you. Actually, if you look at the original Greek text, it means he will shout it out.

He will make a declaration of what is yours. This is what the Holy Spirit will do. And verse 13 says, he will show you things to come.

The original Greek text says that he will show you things that will move you from one place to another. He will show you things. The Holy Spirit will come, and maybe you're a liar.

But the Holy Spirit will say, I am going to make you a man of truth. I'm going to change you. He will show you things to come.

And when you embrace that truth, the Holy Spirit now comes, and by the power of God, makes that a reality in your life. If any man is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old things pass away, and all things are made new.

The Holy Spirit will show you. Yes, you may not have the mastery yet. You may be in a terrific battle, as you see it, for your very life and your very soul.

But there will be something in your cry in the house of God that is advancing his kingdom within you. Whether you have the victory or you want the victory, you will be standing and there will be something in you. It will be heard in heaven.

It will be accepted before the throne of God. You remember in Psalm 18, when David cried out to the Lord, he was being swallowed by his enemies. And the Bible says that my cry, he said, came before him even into his ears, and he was wroth.

An anger came into the heart of God, if I can put it plainly. He said, who is messing with my son David down on the earth? All heaven stands still. The Bible says smoke came out of his nostrils.

He was mad because somebody was messing with his son down on planet earth. It said he began to send lightning bolts down and he stood on the wings of a cherub and did fly. And David said, he came down and scattered my enemies and then invited me into the battle and gave me strength.

Hallelujah. He said he gave me strength and I became so strong that a ball of steel could be broken by my arms. He said, I pursued my enemies and I grabbed them by the neck and threw them into the dust until they were not able to rise anymore.

David said, I will call on the Lord who is worthy to be praised and so shall I be saved from mine enemies. Hallelujah. Jesus goes on in chapter 16 and verse 23, and in that day you will ask me nothing.

In other words, you are asking me a lot of questions. But a day is coming, he was saying to those that he was specifically speaking to now in John 16, that you're not going to have any more questions because you're going to understand what it is that I came to do. Verily, verily, I say unto you, whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it to you.

Now, we're talking in the context of asking for things that are in line with the Word of God. Not things to consume on our own lusts. Not things just to make us happy.

Also things to make us holy and bring us into the purposes of God for our lives. Verse 24, he says, hitherto or up to this point you've asked nothing in my name. Ask and you shall receive that your joy might be full.

Ask me and I will do it. There's no substitute for that kind of a heart in worship. You might be living in defeat.

Or it might seem like you're living in defeat in some area of your life. But let me tell you, when you come in with a believing heart and say, yes Lord, I don't see the victory. But I have it.

I believe that I have it. Because you said that if I would ask anything according to your will, you would do it. And oh God, the devil has trampled on this area of my life for as long back as I can remember.

But God, I'm tired of it. And I don't want to live there anymore. And God, I'm crying out to you.

I'm crying out to you because I know that you are true to your Word. I know you're a man. You're not a man that can lie.

You're almighty God. I know you only have to speak the Word and my soul will be healed. God in heaven, I'm crying out to you today.

And I'm asking you to come and do what only you can do. There's a sound in that kind of a song. That's why we often tell the choir, if you're going through pain, sing through your pain.

Don't lose your confidence in God. Don't cast your confidence away in times of adversity. Continue to sing.

Continue to worship Him. And watch the miraculous begin to happen in your life. Don't ever play games.

Don't ever pretend you're something you're not. Don't come into the house of God and insult the holiness of God by singing songs that have no personal meaning or application to your heart and life. John 15, again, Jesus said it this way.

He said, if you abide in me, in verse 7, and my words abide in you, you ask what you will, and it shall be done. If you abide in me, in other words, if your life is mine, if my life is yours, if you want what I want, if you're walking with me, if we are one in truth, if you are seeking my kingdom first and my righteousness, you ask me for whatever you want, and I will do it. That's an incredible promise, isn't it? You ask me for whatever you want.

If you're a nasty person, ask for a spirit of love, and I'll do it. If you have a hard time forgiving, ask me for the power, and all of a sudden, it will just come to you. It will be miraculously spoken into your life.

You don't have to work it up. You don't have to try to make it happen. You just stand in me.

You just stand in me. You just plant yourself deep in the water of my word. And verse 8 says, Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit, and so shall you be my disciples.

Now, beloved, that doesn't mean that you do a lot of works, as nice as those things may be. But the much fruit comes just... It's the Christian life. Christ is saying, This is how my Father is glorified.

That there are a people who finally find me as Savior. They yield their lives to me. They confess and repent of their sin.

They begin to understand that I have come to bring them into a newness of life. That's what the death and the resurrection is all about. If it was just about salvation, I would take them all home now.

It's about more than that. It's about a testimony on this side of eternity. It's about God having a people.

It's about Christ being the head, and a people being His body on this side of eternity that make a declaration to this whole known world that God is alive and sitting at the right hand of all power. And He says, Here's how you glorify my Father. You let my life flow in you.

You abide in me. You let my words find root in your life. You let me, by the power of the Holy Ghost, make my word a reality in you.

You just stand still and see the salvation of God. You don't have to struggle. You don't see an apple tree struggling out in the field.

Have you ever seen an apple tree groaning? You don't struggle. You abide. And the fruit just comes.

It just grows. You change into the image of Christ. Morning by morning.

You wake up one day and say, By God's grace, I'm not what I was last week. There's a change happening in my life. Oh, you may be still in the battle, but you can come into the house of God and you can sing, I will sing unto the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously.

The horse and the rider, that's the things that are pursuing me from the past. He's thrown them into the sea. Hallelujah.

Psalms 47, if you'll go there please with me. I'll be closing very shortly. A psalmist says in Psalm 47, He says, Oh, clap your hands, all you people.

And shout to God with the voice of triumph. The voice of triumph. The voice of a people who know that the victory is theirs because of their God.

The voice of a people who make a determination in their heart to go forward. God, I'm not going backwards. I'm going forward.

I'm in the battle, but I'm victorious. Because Jesus, you were already sitting at the right hand of the Father. You already rose from the dead.

The Bible says clearly, I am seated in you in heavenly places. I'm in Christ in heavenly places. I'm seated at the victory in Christ at the right hand of God.

Yes, I'm in the battle, but I can clap my hands, and I can sing to God with the voice of triumph. I can make a declaration, The devil, you might have had me, and you might have had me locked up and sewn up, but I tell you something, Christ is in my life now. You have lost the battle.

You have lost the battle. You have no power over me anymore. You have no power over my life, and you're not holding me in this area any longer.

I'm going forward in the power of God, and I'm going to sing to Him, and I'm going to declare Him faithful and righteous. Even in the midst of the battle, I'm going to make that declaration to God. Sing, he said, shout with the voice of triumph, for the Lord Most High is a great King over all the earth.

He is the King. The psalmist says, settle it in your heart, because once it's settled, then you can know that you will always have the victory. He is the King.

There is no other king. There is no other ruler. There is no other power.

There is no other name that is above the name of Jesus Christ. He is the King. Hallelujah.

He shall subdue, verse 3, the people under us and the nations under our feet. He shall choose our inheritance. Actually, the shall choose in the Hebrew means He will give us the best.

He will give us the best for our inheritance. For us, the excellency of Jacob whom He loved. God, verse 5, has gone up with a shout.

What was it that He shouted on the cross? It is finished. Father, into Thy hands I commit my spirit. God went up with a shout.

And when He went up with a shout, He took death and hell and captivity captive and gave gifts unto man. The Bible says He made an open display of the powers of darkness. He took all of their weapons and displayed them.

They were empty. They were bankrupt. They were out of gas.

They had no more power. He displayed them openly. That's what He did.

And He gave gifts unto man. Hallelujah. He went up with a shout.

The Lord went up with the sound of a trumpet. In other words, there was rejoicing in the heart of Christ. There was worship in heaven.

When Christ rose from the dead, when Christ said, It is finished, there was a worship going on. There was a celebration. Hallelujah.

All heaven knew that nothing could keep God's people captive any longer. Paul knew it. He said, Not angel, not power, not principality, not height, not depth, nor anything that is to come.

No, nothing can keep us from the love of God, which is ours in Jesus Christ. Nothing. Sing praises, verse 6, to God.

Sing praises. Sing praises to our King, He says. Sing praises.

For God, verse 7, is the King of all the earth. Sing ye praises with understanding. Sing praises with understanding.

We are not called to be mindless fools in the house of God. Sing praises with understanding. Sing praises with the knowledge of who Christ is.

Sing praises with the knowledge of our position in Christ. Sing praises with the knowledge of our power in Christ. Sing praises with the knowledge of our destiny in Christ.

Sing praises with the understanding that the battle is won. It's won. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. The battle is won. Thank God.

Thank God the battle is won. Moses and Joshua came down from the mountain. And Moses said, what happened? He said to Aaron, what have you done? Or what have the people done to you that you've

brought such a great sin upon them? Aaron answers and says, well, you know the people, that they're bent on mischief.

You see, this ministry that invents a God is expert at pronouncing blame. On other people. Who's to blame for the mess? The ministry can't look within.

It has to look without. Comes into the house of God and can't worship anymore. It says, something has happened to the choir.

Can you sense it? Can you feel it like I do? Something's wrong with the preaching. It's an issue of the human heart that shifts the blame from looking within to looking without. It's a product of our sin nature.

When the sin nature gets out of control, we stop looking to heaven and start looking to the left and to the right. We're no longer looking for the victory. And so we look around to find out who seemingly is in a worse condition than we are so that we can feel good about ourselves.

That's the sin nature. And then he says to Moses, well, they gave me these golden earrings and I cast them into the fire and out came a calf. And that's the second.

It's a lying spirit that will not deal in truth. This was not the truth. Here's a man.

I don't understand why Aaron lived so long. I don't understand why God didn't kill him. The Holy Spirit's going to show me somewhere down the line.

He did a lot worse things than Ananias and Sapphira ever did in Acts chapter 5. And this guy seemed to just have nine lives, literally. But he lies. He lies to Moses.

He lies to God. It's a lying spirit that will not deal with the condition. Why wouldn't he just say I was afraid? And fear overcame me.

And I was afraid of their voices and I was afraid of the people. Because that really was the issue. And so I began to carve this God that would make them happy.

I wasn't hearing from God myself, so I had to do something or the people were all going to rebel. I had to make them happy. And there's a whole ministry today in the church that does that.

They're not hearing from God. I believe that many of them are not called of God. That's why they don't hear because they're not called to the ministry.

They just have a good presentation. They're good speakers like Aaron, but they're not called. There's no vision.

There's no passion. There's nothing. Three points to nowhere, most of their sermons.

A lying spirit that won't deal with the true condition. And the end result of that is the people, it says, Moses saw that the people were naked to their shame among their enemies. They were naked.

The armor was gone. There was no longer an ability to fight. There were songs about fighting, but no longer an ability to fight.

One of the greatest tragedies of many of our recent charismatic phenomenon in North America in the last, say, 15 years is that there have been a lot of war songs and just feels strewn with wounded and slain people when it's all over. Naked with no power to fight because you can't fight without truth and you can't fight without the Holy Spirit. And the end result is empty rhetoric that passes off for worship.

I fear today that in the church of Jesus Christ, we are beginning to worship, worship. And I know many of you are aware of this. We go in and just worship the worship because it has a nice melody to it and it makes us move and we feel good.

And there's all kinds of stuff now even going out in the secular markets and the secular world are drawn to it because there's no conviction in it. Folks, I want to tell you something. Beware of that.

Beware of worshipping worship. It's not about that. It's about worshipping Christ and Christ alone.

And so finally, Moses stood in the gate and he said, Who's on the Lord's side? Let him come to me. And the Bible says the sons of Levi gathered themselves together. And then he said, Put every man his sword by his side and go in and out from gate to gate throughout the camp and slay every man his brother and every man his companion and every man his neighbor.

And the children of Levi did according to the word of Moses. And there fell of the people that day about three thousand men. Moses said, Consecrate yourselves today to the Lord, every man upon his son and upon his brother, that he may bestow upon you a blessing this day.

In other words, that he may bring you back one more time into the power of his life. There is a time to take a sword to our worship. There is a time when every man and woman who's honest and young person before God can say, God, do I mean what I'm singing? Is it true? Am I really walking in victory or anticipating walking in victory? Or am I starting to play a game? Do I really worship the one true God? Or am I worshipping a God of my own imagination? Is this a God that's somewhere, some sort of halfway to heaven that I have just invented that makes me comfortable? It's kind of where my comfort level is as a person.

And so this is the God that I choose to serve, even though I fashioned him with my own hands. This really isn't the God of heaven. What kind of a song am I singing? Does it glorify Jesus Christ? My heart's cry for Times Square Church and for my life.

I was up on my rooftop last night praying and I said, Oh, Jesus, I need your help. I need your help. There's something that will get into all of us if we're not careful.

Something that takes the heart from true worship to form and tradition. It has afflicted and affected churches and denominations throughout the world for hundreds and hundreds of years. Starting out with a glorious revival presence of God and ending up that you can set your watch by how the service runs.

The songs are rote. There's no power in them anymore. And you see less and less people coming to God because there's no conviction any longer.

I prayed an honest prayer last night. I said, God, if my leadership, and I only have a part leadership in Times Square Church. I have the title of senior pastor, but it's really just a title.

We honor Pastor David as the senior pastor of this church. He is the man God used to found this church. And he will always have a place of respect and esteem in this church.

I have a part in the leadership just like Pastor Neil does and Pastor Patrick does. But I prayed last night. And I said, God, if my part is ever going to cause this church to backslide, then just take me home.

I would rather just go to heaven now than ever bring a reproach on the name of Jesus Christ, than ever lead a people to singing songs and there's no longer life in it. It was a sincere prayer. I prayed it in the past.

I'd rather just go home. And I felt the Holy Spirit say that He was going to go to the areas of my heart that He needed to go to. He was going to take me places where He had to, in my heart.

And all He required of me was to seek Him and be honest. And that's all He requires of you today. That's all He requires of all of us is an honest heart.

If we don't have an honest heart, we will degenerate like every other church. We will degenerate. We will sing fancy songs and there will be very little life left.

I would hate to ever think that could happen to this church. But I would be a fool to think it couldn't happen. I want to implore you today that if you have been singing the song but not living the life, you've not been trusting God for the power, you've built another God, it happens.

I want to challenge you to take the sword to it today. Now, the sword is the word you've heard today. The Bible says clearly the word of God is the sword of the Spirit.

And you've got to take the sword now and say, Lord, You've got to put to death this thing in me. You've got to put to death this singing songs about things that I'm not living. Singing songs about past victories.

Singing songs that somebody else wrote but don't apply to my life. Lord, I want to live as a person of truth. And when You come into this house, Jesus, Holy Spirit, when You walk these aisles, I want You to hear my voice.

And maybe I'll be in the battle right up to my neck, but I will still be crying out for the victory. And the areas where I've known victory, I will shout out and make a declaration that didn't come by might or power. It came by Your Holy Spirit.

You gave me the victory. There's no other way I ever could have known it. I guess all I can say today is if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you, I'm going to ask you in a moment to just get out of your seat, make your way to this altar, and we'll pray together.

And I do have a word for those who come. I'm going to show you the other side of worship. In the education annex, I'd have to ask, there's so many people here today that you just stand between the screens and we will pray together as well.

But if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you and drawing you, would you take this sword now and trust God to put to death all false singing and all pretending, other gods, and all these things that want to get a hold of every heart, and they're after everybody here. Would you take the sword to it today and say, Jesus, my song is going to be a true song in Your house. Revelation 19.

Let me just read it to you. This is what John heard in heaven. Now, this is the other side of worship.

This is the worship that goes on around the throne of God. And he said, A voice came out of the throne saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thundering, saying, Hallelujah, for the Lord God omnipotent reigns.

Now, the word omnipotent means all-powerful. This was the worship course in heaven. They stood out thousands upon thousands, times tens of thousands, and their song was, The Lord God all-powerful reigns.

Now, this is the song in heaven. It should be the song on the earth as well. Verse 7, they said, Let us be glad and rejoice and give honor to him, for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife has made herself ready.

Now, she can only make herself ready in the power of God. She can't do it in her own strength. Verse 8 says, And to her was granted that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white, for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

And he said to me, Write, Blessed are they which are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, These are the true sayings of God. The word blessed in the Greek is markerios, and it means indwelt by Christ and fully satisfied.

Blessed are they that are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb. They are indwelt by Christ, and they are fully satisfied. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, I worship you.

I thank you for loving me and speaking to me even in the midst of my struggles. Thank you for never failing me, for never leaving me, for not forsaking me. I believe you have a wonderful plan and incredible strength to speak into my life and to make a reality by the power of the Holy Spirit.

I open my heart to truth, and Holy Spirit, I ask you, by the power of Jesus, to take the sword to all false worship, all false praise, all songs that I don't mean, or I have refused to believe. I ask you to take this falseness out of my life and out of my heart. Jesus, I ask you and you alone to be glorified in my life by making me into what I could never be in my own strength.

By taking me where I could never go in my own power and giving me understanding I could never possess by my own wisdom. Put a song in my mouth, but before my mouth, put a song of faith in my heart and change me from image to image and glory to glory by the power of God. Lord Jesus, I ask today that a false song of praise to the wrong God would never, ever come from my lips or come from this church.

I'm asking you, Jesus, to purge us with truth, lift us with grace, and let the joy of the Lord be our incredible strength. Until you come, Jesus, we ask that from our mouths would come genuine and pure worship and praise that gives glory and honor to the only God, the only kingdom, the only power, the only life. Jesus, we love you, we thank you in your mighty name.

Now thank you. Hallelujah. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. Hallelujah. Thank you, Lord.

Hallelujah. Now I want to close with a song for you. When peace like a river attendeth my way, when sorrows like sea billows roll, whatever my lot thou hast taught me to say, it is well, it is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul. And Lord, haste the day when my face shall be sighed, every cloud be rolled back as a scroll.

For the trough shall resound and the Lord shall descend. Even so, it is well with my soul. It is well with my soul.

It is well, it is well with my soul. My sin, oh, the joy of this glorious thought. My sin, not just a part, thank God, but the whole.

Hallelujah. His nail to the cross and I bear it no more. Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, oh, my soul.

It is well with my soul. It is well, it is well with my soul. It is well with my soul.

It is well, it is well with my soul. This is the conclusion of the message.

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