

God Made the World for Worship His Glory

by John Piper

This sermon emphasizes the importance of individual souls rightly seeing and savoring the glory of Christ, highlighting the connection between individual worship and corporate worship as the Bride of Christ. It explores the essence of worship originating from the heart's affections for God, leading to the formation of the worshiping church. The ultimate goal is the worshiping bride of Christ, where diverse voices in harmony reveal the greatness of God's leader, Jesus.

Duration: 37:36

Scripture: Isaiah 43:6, Ephesians 5:27, 2 Corinthians 2:1, Revelation 5:9

Topics: "Individual Worship", "Corporate Worship"

Description

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Transcript

Would you pray with me? We have done it and now we do it one more Time here before I speak we wait for you We wait for you And I pray that you would come now in our waiting and in my speaking and Satisfy our souls in Christ and all that he has done and all that you father are for us in him And I pray that under you father we would see that there isn't anything greater except for one thing There isn't anything greater under you except for one thing then the individual soul of flame in worship and that one thing is the Bride of Christ of flame in worship. So come and show us now the connection Between these two things I pray And set our hearts and our churches aflame with God centered Christ exalting Bible saturated worship I Ask this in Jesus name. Amen So the individual human soul Underline the word individual the individual human soul Rightly seeing The glory of Christ and rightly savoring the glory of Christ is at the heart of the purpose for which God made the world and until we grasp the Relationship between that and Corporate worship, we won't be able to give an account for why The worship of the bride the worship of the temple the worship of the body Is the ultimate end for why God made the world not merely the individual soul Worshipping.

So what I want to do in this message is try to steer a course between two errors On the one side is the error of thinking that the relationship between the individual Worshipping human soul and God that

Relationship between my soul and God in worship is the ultimate purpose for which God made the world. It's not the other error that I would like to avoid is being so captivated by the corporate reality of the worshiping people of God, the body of Christ, the temple of God, The bride of Christ, that we lose sight of the fact that the vital Ongoing eternal Intensity of the individual soul is absolutely essential for the authenticity of that Corporate reality of worship, which is the ultimate goal for which God made the world. So the New Testament forbids that we Neglect or forget or minimize the radical essential eternal significance of the individual worshiping soul. It forbids don't ever forget that don't ever minimize that don't ever neglect that don't ever think that there can be a God-centered worship without that. And the New Testament forbids that we forget or neglect or minimize the coming into being Through Christ of a blazingly beautiful bride Who is more than the sum of her parts? So that's where we're going. Let's begin by focusing on the relationship between the individual soul and The ultimate purpose of God's they want to. I don't want to downplay or minimize either of these we start with the individual Will end with the corporate. One of the clearest statements in God's Word about the end for which God made everything is Isaiah 43:6 and 7. I'll read it to you: Bring my sons from afar, My daughters from the ends of the earth. Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory. Every son, every daughter created to display the glory of God. Or Ephesians chapter 1 verse 11: He works all things according to the counsel of his will, so that we might be to the praise of his glory. Or Romans 11:36: From him and through him and to him are all things, to him be glory Forever and ever amen. So God created the world. He sustains the world. He governs the world. He does everything in the world to display his glory.

That is his greatness, his beauty, His worth, those are my three efforts to get at the meaning of the word glory. Oh how often we will use the word glory in this conference. You'll hear it. No doubt hundreds of times. So I'm filling it up with three other words for you, you can meditate on whether greatness, beauty, worth. Helps you grasp what you're saying when you say that word glory. He does everything he does in order to display his glory, the heavens Declare the glory of God and the sky above Proclaims his handiwork. Psalm 19:1 the trees of the forest sing for joy. Psalm 96:12 the rivers Clap their hands and the hills sing for joy together. Psalm 98:8 The meadows and the valleys shout and sing for joy. Psalm 65:13 or Isaiah 44: Sing Oh heavens Shout Oh depths of the earth Break forth into singing Oh mountains Oh Forest and every tree in it for the Lord will be glorified in Israel. So you got the heavens, the mountains, in the hills, the forest and the trees, the rivers and the meadows, all of them Created to sing this thing or clap To the glory of their maker and they do for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear. That's what they are doing. May the Lord give you eyes and give you ears if you haven't heard it or seen it, so does a 150 voice Choir of unbelieving musicians singing the hallelujah chorus, you can find that on almost any large city venue every Easter unbelievers singing handles Messiah Surrounded by an orchestra full of unbelieving musicians and they too are like trees and meadows Glorifying God With their God given amazing creativity and skill like trees Soulless trees Clapping their hands.

So if God gets so much glory from the the external echoes of His creative and redeeming excellency in this world like that external evidences of his Reality if he gets so much glory that way Why is there a need? for the individual human soul to have any particular affections for God. In order to him for him to achieve his creator purpose. Isn't it enough that God's purpose is being glorified by the trees and the planets and the skies and the hills and the rivers and the orchestras and the choirs. All singing because they were made in the image of God whether they believe or not. Isn't that enough and of course the answer is no. No, it's not enough. Why? Because God does not intend to be half glorified. picture a king a king and a kingdom two kinds of kings a King may be glorified magnified praised honored for his great achievements power wisdom He rules his kingdom with an iron hand He sees to it great fortifications have been built in

my kingdom Beautiful buildings have been built in my kingdom Gardens have been constructed in my kingdom. My citizens under my iron hand have been forced to become phenomenal Excellent musicians playing grand and excellent music in my kingdom The finest pieces of art I Forced to be made in my kingdom he's not so great a king and he's not so glorified as The king who is loved by his people admired revered cherished treasured desired enjoyed By his people so that the affections of their king exalting Hearts create greater fortifications and more beautiful buildings and greater gardens and greater musical compositions a king is more glorified By a cherishing people than a cowering people He's not going to be settling for half glorification He will have all the glory from the heart and the skill Jesus said to the Scribes and Pharisees This is one of the most important statements on worship in the Bible you hypocrites Well did Isaiah prophesy about you saying This people honors me with their lips But their heart is far from me in Vain, do they worship me? vain zero In vain do they worship me Matthew 15 7 So here you have in this text an excellent use of the mouth That's what lips are for with your lips You honor me That's what they're for and they're doing it half My honor is sounding forth. My glory is sounding forth from your lips being glorified by your mouth Just like by the mountains and the trees and the rivers and the unbelieving orchestras and Ensembles and choirs on Easter Their heart he says is far away The heart only exists in one place in an individual Individual hearts are far away Meaning what? verse 9 Matthew 59 Meaning in vain.

Do they worship me in vain? Meaning it's an external echo Of excellence and a zero in the heart It's not worship. It's not the essence It misses the essence the the essence of worship is the heart aflame with affection for the beauties of God What comes out of the mouth is fruit? To that root where that root is severed and those affections are gone this God counts as Zero in vain. Do they worship me? That's not why he created the world Not to be half glorified externally glorified trees clapping their hands Unbelieving orchestras reflecting his excellence.

That's not why he created the world He Created the world In order that there might be an echo of his excellence in the hearts of his affectionate people that affection Is the echo of his excellence that completes the reason for creation at the individual level Where that's not present Amos 5 23 The voice of God sounds over every congregation Take away from me the noise of your songs To the melody of your harps. I will not listen Says the Lord Why? The heart is not there Don't hire unbelievers in your church it almost goes without saying But is so crucial I will say it anyway that these absolutely essential effects affections are In individual hearts and nowhere else That's where affection love Treasuring desiring delighting. That's where they exist here nowhere else Everything else is expression or awakening Causes, but here's where it resides Just think of it the universe made for this These affections these loves.

It's the first commandment to love the Lord your God with all your tell me That's the first one. Yes, the others are mentioned number one starts here If not there the others don't count He turns away from them Now let's switch gears. Let's turn to the question of The corporate reality if affections for God in the individual human soul are the essence and I think they are the essence of The self-glorifying purpose of God in the universe Now mark the word essence because I'm not saying totality.

I'm not saying the individual human heart affections are the totality of worship or the totality of God's Ultimate purpose they are the essence Without which nothing counts Okay, so keep that word in mind if affections for God in the individual soul are the essence of the self-glorifying purpose of God in creating the world How do those heart affections give rise? to the corporate reality of the worshiping church Because it's clear from the New Testament It's not just millions and millions of Isolated independent human souls with white hot affection for God that he's aiming at like a billion solos That's not the picture of

the end of history God is bringing into being a diverse global church pictured as the body The temple the bride of Christ Paul pictures the church as the wife of Jesus in Ephesians 5 27 and it's what he says About the purpose of Christ the second person of the Trinity the creator of the universe Coming into the world. Why did he come? Why did he come and die? Here's what it says in Ephesians 5 27 so that He might present the church to himself in splendor He wants a beautiful wife For his son for himself in splendor without spot or wrinkle or any such thing that she might be holy and without blemish So Christ means to have a beautiful wife It's an amazing statement a wife Made up of millions of white hot worshiping individuals But vastly more so this talk is about the more why more how more? This conference is devoted to blessing churches, at least that's my understanding what's going on here blessing Congregational singing especially there's more but mainly I'm hoping that's what happens hundreds and hundreds of Congregations do what they're called to do better because of what happens here So this local expression of The local church, what is it? Emerging global everlasting corporate Worshiping reality called the bride of Christ What local churches do in their gathered worshiping assemblies is? to You can say a different ways rehearse For that eternal vocation of the bride For taste of That eternal vocation of the bride That's what we do week after week in our gatherings called corporate worship now. There's a text My guess is for many of you who think worship thoughts all the time This text is very prominent in your mind, and I shall make sure you see what I see You probably see more Let me show you three Absolutely crucial things that I see as I read this to you this Ephesians 5 Ephesians 5 18 and 19 Be filled with the Spirit Addressing one another In Psalms and hymns and spiritual songs singing and making melody to the Lord With your heart With your heart three things From your heart, or it's not worship to the Lord always Addressing one another Always that's corporate worship Now it doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter whether the song is Vertically directed like we come Oh Christ to thee the second person singular vertical Or Horizontal come Christians join us and sing you you plural second person plural. It doesn't matter Whether the song happens to be Grammatically addressed to God or grammatically addressed to people This text says and it's true Every song is sung in the presence of God And he's listening to every song and he's either holding his nose or loving it he's enjoying as he will forever the reception of our praises into his life Whether we're singing to each other or whether we're singing to him and it's from Thirdly so to him to each other it's from the heart or it's not worship God's design is that we every gathering in worship rehearse for the everlasting corporate reality of The bride in worship So what's plain from those? Verses Ephesians 5 18 and 19 is that the birthplace of The essence of worship the birthplace of the essence of worship is the individual human heart It says from the heart He mentions from the heart in corporate worship That's the birthplace because there isn't any other place where affections for God happen Affections are native to the human soul nowhere else and then from this furnace of Christ exalting affections There flames up expressions In song to God song to people and the corporate reality the worshiping bride is brought into being By the combining of these individual burning hearts into a new reality This is where I'm going. I'm getting near the end here new reality first the foretaste Here in corporate worship and then finally in the complete Perfected eternal worship of the bride in the presence of the Lamb Forever that's the ultimate goal of God in creation now why? What is it about the corporate reality of the singing bride That makes her worship the ultimate end rather than just me me and God in love with each other and me singing and me obeying and That's the end.

That's the point of creation You doing that me doing that 10,000 of us doing that why isn't that the end and the goal? Why is it there? There's this thing called the corporate reality the bride of Christ. Why? And I have three answers one 2nd Corinthians chapter 2 verses 1 to 3 Clue us in to a mystery about joy Because I think joy in God delight in God Desiring God's satisfaction. We just sang it until my heart is

satisfied Because that's the end Like you don't try to get satisfied in order to do something for God He doesn't need you at all Therefore satisfaction in him is the end.

That's the goal. That's what makes him smile You are totally content and satisfied in me. I'm the end.

I'm the goal You show that in a hundred ways This text 2nd Corinthians 2 1 2 3 clues us in about there's a mystery here That clues us in why individual joy in God is not the end Alone, I read it to you Paul says two things here This is verse 2 of 2nd Corinthians 2 if I cause you pain Who is there to make me glad But the one whom I have pained in the next verse I Felt sure of you all that my joy Would be the joy of you all In the body of Christ where we are Spiritually united in him something profound Happens in the experience of joy in God My joy in God your joy in God together Paul says my joy, I was sure Would be the joy of you all and yours would be mine My joy in God is more Because yours is mine and yours is more because Mine is yours Therefore the totality of Christ exalting affection that comes into being in corporate worship is not merely the sum of the parts It's more a new reality has come into being in the bride Worshiping together a great mystery comes into being the worshiping bride is the goal of creation because the Interpenetration of Christ exalting joy is something new Something greater something more God glorifying than the assembly of individual flames of Affection, that's number one number two the unified harmony of diverse voices is more beautiful Than the greatest sound of voices in unison. Let me stay back and make sure you're with me I'm trying to give you three reasons Why? Not the individual soul a flame with love to God is the end of creation But rather the body of Christ the bride of Christ United in corporate worship is the end of creation. That's what I'm trying to do This is reason number two the unified harmony of diverse voices is more beautiful than the greatest Sound of voices in unison.

It is a glorious thing not to minimize unison It is a glorious thing when say 50,000 people Blast with unison like an army going to war and singing their ballad of homeland That's a glorious thing but if those voices were to at a point break into Diverse Harmony something else happens not less And not dispensing with the former But glorious and I'm not just talking about a musical phenomenon here though. That's clear It's true about countless diversities in the body of Christ that God is up to these days right time across all time Geography ethnic diversities age diversities male and female diversities personality diversities taste and preference diversities voice quality diversities Think think of Bob Dylan and Pavarotti And I won't even venture Pavarotti I Love them both in their own way such diversity But God is doing in the gathering of the bride of Christ in united diversity of the worshiping bride Something more beautiful is created than if she were all of one kind on any number of scales That's the second reason why corporate worship of the bride is ultimate not just Individuals and third and lastly God designed for Christ To have a worshiping bride and not just worshiping individuals because the greatness and the beauty and the worth of a leader is Revealed by the extent of the diversity he can inspire and Motivate in who follows him who has allegiance to him. I'm thinking of Revelation 5. I'll read it to you It's a very familiar text.

You know it. Well, I'm thinking of our Redeemer leader, right? What did he do to lead us to lead us together into one priesthood in one kingdom? What did he do? He died He ransomed a people. So here's what it says.

They sang a new song saying worthy now Notice the ground of the worthiness Worthy are you because creation was Made to exalt the worthiness of the Lamb Worthy are you to take the scroll to open its seals for you were slain and By your blood you ransom people from every tribe and every language and all the people and all the Nations and you have made them one kingdom and one priesthood a singing kingdom and a singing Priesthood so the glory of Christ the point of that text is the glory of Christ the honor of the

Lamb Shines more brightly because he's the kind of Redeemer leader Who can hold together the allegiance of unbelievably diverse people? He can hold us together in Song and in many many other ways so in conclusion The the universe is created to display the worth of the Lamb His glory his greatness his beauty his worth and in him to display the beauty of God When you gather next Sunday is my application when you gather next Sunday in Corporate Worship whether small say your church is 30 people or large 3,000 or so Remember what you're doing there is not merely assembling Intensely affectionate individuals who love God and want to go vertical as solitary individuals, that's not Merely what's happening? What's happening is you are becoming a manifestation a foretaste a Rehearsal of the end the ultimate end for which God made the world by combining individual souls aflame for Christ and Something more they become something more a greater joy a greater harmony a greater diverse allegiance The worshiping bride of Christ the goal of all things. Let's pray so father grant that our affections would be individually unbounded Because you are of unbounded excellence And grant that our churches would become foretastes Rehearsals manifestations of the end for which you made all things the bride Worshiping in that new reality, which we call corporate worship Pray this in Jesus name

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