



**Series:** 2 Samuel  
**Date:** May 21, 2023  
**Speaker:** Spence Shelton, Lead Pastor  
**Text:** 2 Samuel 6:1-23  
**Title:** Worship God with Undignified Reverence

### SUMMER DISCIPLESHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Hey, church our mission is to make disciples of Jesus. That word just means a follower of Jesus. One foot in front of the other. So, when we think about this Summer, we are thinking about how it can be a next step for you. The kids have VBS and it's going to be awesome. And I know many people who point back to VBS as a pivotal moment in their faith. They gave their lives to Christ, or some seeds got planted, whatever it was that was the pivotal moment. So, I'm excited for that. Middle & High are going to camp. Insanely powerful time.

College is going on city project. In other words what I'm saying is we don't take summer off here at Mercy. We try to give our community group leaders a rest from a long, good year. BUT we actually put our discipleship efforts into another gear. I'm pretty excited about it.

But let me talk to the adults for a second. I've got 2 options for you depending on where you are in your faith.

1. **Summer in the Psalms** - Just saw the video about. One psalm a week for 12 weeks. I've been doing this for years and it has impacted my life greatly. You slow down & read the same psalm every day. Write down what you learn about God and what you learn about yourself. And then you can use the psalm to pray to God. The Psalms help head knowledge become heart knowledge. They help you cultivate a relationship with God. And we are doing this because in our sermons we are studying the kingship of David. And he's the one that wrote half of them. So, we'll look at 12 of David's psalms and see how he was processing things internally as we follow his life in 2 Samuel. My advice - get a friend or two and do this together then get up for breakfast or coffee or whatever and talk about what God is showing you each week.
2. **DMT** - Some of you want to really dive in. You've been walking with Christ, and you are ready for a challenge. I want you to check out our Disciple Making Teams. It's a 10-week discipleship intensive. We've only got room



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for 50 people. This May be the best thing we do to form you as a disciple. I PROMISE you will take a giant step forward in your walk with God. We have an info session right after the service you'll hear more about at the end of service.

Again, my point in all of this is buckle up, summer is going to be a really formative time for us Mercy Church and I'm excited about it.

#### Introduction - Worship Variety

Today David is going to go on a worship journey. Like all in one chapter. Ending up with him dancing in the streets in his underwear. Completely sober. And ya'll, I think God has a word for Mercy Church in this passage that I'm so excited about. Because here at Mercy what I have observed these past few years is that among our people are a wide array of backgrounds as it relates to church and faith and - in particular we got people from all over the place when it comes to worship in a church gathering like the one, we are in right now.

Some of you come from more subdued, more liturgical backgrounds. Like Presbyterian, Anglican, Methodist - When you put all those together, they are called White People. But for real worship for you was reflective in nature. Not a lot of movement or visible expressiveness.

Others of you come from more expressive backgrounds like Pentecostal, church of God, some non denom, backgrounds &

for you the service Hadn't really started until somebody fell out.

And I can see the tension each Sunday man. those of you from more subdued backgrounds are looking at more energetic worshippers like "ya'll are weird" and maybe you question their sincerity. And then the more energetic worshippers are like "Ya'll know Jesus rose again, right? Cause you are acting like you are at a funeral."

AND THEN, there are those of you who mercy is your first experience in church. And you think ALL OF IT is a strange!

I love that our church is this mixture of people from so many different backgrounds because we can learn from one another and even more importantly we offer the world a visible picture of the unity God brings in the gospel.

I think God has something for everyone in the passage we have today no matter your background. I actually think & hope some of you really experience change today in your approach to worshipping God. You'll find that the subdued people are partly right, and the expressive people are partly right. And both are partly wrong too.

And in all of this my hope is to help you see God rightly through this chapter. And I just have a sense...I'm going to offend some of you. Particularly if you have a background in church. And in those moments where you feel offended just remember its God's word, not mine. So, take it up with him.



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My main idea is a call to action for you coming out of this passage:

**Worship God with undignified reverence because he is your only audience, and he is worthy.**

That's going to be the spirit of worship laid out in 2 Samuel 6. A HIGH HIGH HIGH value on Reverence. On the holiness of God and how it should impact everything we do. Not just how we approach corporate worship but all of life. You should not leave today without a fresh awareness of the HOLINESS OF GOD. And at the same time, you should be challenged in what the outward expression of your reverence looks like. But what you have to understand is that what I'm going to call you to is not simply behavior modification. We are going to deal with the heart. And my hope is to show you GOD and then to help set you free to worship him in a way that will actually be good for your soul.

Because it may be that without realizing it your approach to worship has been a spiritual mask for your own pride. Whether that's you waving your hands & shouting OR you are being completely expressionless - And what has really been happening is your primary audience you've been worshipping FOR, both in the room on Sunday and in other areas of life - has been other people and not God. So, you want to look a certain way and be viewed a certain way. And THAT is at the heart of what we will see. So, if you feel yourself bristling up...let's just look behind the bristles and see what you might be believing that doesn't line up with God's word. The goal is not behavior modification. It's heart change. And I promise

hearts changed by the gospel will worship in a way that lines up with God's word.

**2 He and all his troops set out to bring the ark of God from Baale-judah. The ark bears the Name, the name of the Lord of Armies who is enthroned between the cherubim.**

Ok CONTEXT. The ARK - Back When Israel left Egypt God told them to construct a big, wooden box and overlay it with gold inside and out and that was going to be the place where His presence would dwell; THAT'S THE BIG DEAL HERE. GOD'S PRESENCE.

On top there were two golden angels facing each other, over a thing called the mercy seat. The mercy seat is going to be super important today.

See originally the ark was placed in the center of God's people in the "tabernacle" in a place called the Holy of Holies, where it was the only piece of furniture there. 1 priest could go in 1 time each year, and he would take the blood of a sacrifice and sprinkle it in "the mercy seat" between the cherubim, signifying that God would one day provide a sacrifice for their sin. Inside the ark was Aaron's rod (symbolizing God's power), some manna (symbolizing God's provision) and the 10 commandments (symbolizing God's law). IN SHORT - this thing was the symbolic PRESENCE OF GOD and THE MOST IMPORTANT thing in all of Israel. Here's the problem, the reason David is going to get it...is because it was lost in battle back in 1 Samuel 5. The philistines took it & put it in their temple. Which was a huge



mistake. While the ark was there God wreaked all kinds of havoc on the philistines. He decapitated their God, the idol of Dagon. Awesome moment. THEN, he gave them all tumors and sent mice to overrun the capital city.

So, the Philistines are like...GET THIS OUTTA HERE. After passing it to a couple of towns in their country...and the same thing happening there...they eventually send it to the Israelites. Literally they put it on a cart along with the strangest "I'm sorry gift" ever - They put golden tumors & golden mice in the cart with the ark. & hitch it to a couple of cows. And the cows just start walking towards Israel.

Well, the oxen go to an Israelite guys house named Shemesh. But some in his home...opened the ark. And if you know the raiders of the lost ark...you know this is a bad idea. Those folks die so now Shemesh says...get this outta my house. And a guy in the next town over named Abinidab takes it and just puts it in a room and shuts the door. KEEP OUT sign on it.

THAT is 1 Samuel 5. And the ark sits there for 20 years in this guy's house. But David WANTS God's presence. And this is the critical difference between he and Saul. He desires the ark.

There is a word there to the evangelical church. 2 Samuel 5 was all about God saving them from their enemies. And we tend to get really hype about invoking God to help us in the midst of the latest cultural crisis. We get our adrenaline pumping for a war against the culture. But ya'll what motivates David is not who is AGAINST them but who is AMONG them. And what should motivate our worship and zeal is not who is

against us but who is among us. Worship God FOR GOD. Serve God FOR GOD. ok gotta keep going.

3 They set the ark of God on a new cart and transported it from Abinadab's house, which was on the hill. Uzzah and Ahio, sons of Abinadab, were guiding the cart 4 and brought it with the ark of God from Abinadab's house on the hill. Ahio walked in front of the ark. 5 David and the whole house of Israel were dancing before the Lord with all kinds of fir wood instruments, lyres, harps, tambourines, sistrums (Hebrew for Hammond B-3 Organ), and cymbals.

Guys they were having a worship service. And I want you to see the thread. David and all of Israel. 30k...were dancing before the Lord. That's going to keep coming up. David...THE KING...was dancing.

6 When they came to Nacon's threshing floor, Uzzah reached out to the ark of God and took hold of it because the oxen had stumbled. 7 Then the Lord's anger burned against Uzzah, and God struck him dead on the spot for his irreverence, and he died there next to the ark of God. 8 David was angry because of the Lord's outburst against Uzzah, so he named that place Outburst Against Uzzah, as it is today.



How many of you understand that reaction? One of the things I love about the Bible is how relatable it is. David looks at God and says, “God, He was just trying to help! Come on.”<sup>1</sup>

The reason I ask you if you relate to David is that sometimes people encounter truths about God in the Bible, and they feel offended... and they assume that we are the 1<sup>st</sup> generation in history to be enlightened enough to be offended by the Bible. The Bible has been offending people for ages, including its writers.

I’ll never forget Bart Erhman, professor of religious studies at UNC, saying to us in his NT class that at the heart of why he didn’t believe in Christianity - was not all of the supposed contradictions he had uncovered in the text - but at the heart was his inability to square how a good and loving God could allow all the evil in the world. So, he surmised he just didn’t like the God of the bible. And what I love is that the bible GETS this.

David gets this. David was angry at God because of what he perceived as unnecessarily harsh judgment. You’re not the first one. The Bible has been offending all peoples in all places and at all times.

The point is, don’t be an ignorant and arrogant American who assumes you’re the 1<sup>st</sup> people in history to be offended just because you graduated with a college degree. You say, “Well,

how is that supposed to help?” Because they found greater more compelling reasons to believe in the face of these realities. And you need a faith that doesn’t ignore pain but instead makes room for it.

9 David feared the Lord that day and said, “How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?” 10 So he was not willing to bring the ark of the Lord to the city of David; instead, he diverted it to the house of Obed-edom of Gath.

David is SO upset, confused, and afraid he leaves the ark in another guy’s house. And like I said we can relate to David. And we read this, and we say...the punishment doesn’t fit the crime. And ya’ll I’m just going to tell you - The punishment is NOT more severe than the crime.

Look at a couple of things. FIRST - God had given specific instructions about how the ark was to be carried. They had put the ark on a cart. The ARK was NOT meant to be carried on a cart. That was what the philistines did. It was supposed to be carried on poles by several men in a place of honor. That should be a big ole clue to you about how God feels about the whole “I worship God in MY OWN WAY” attitude. Ummm, no. You don’t decide how God is worshipped. GOD decides how God is worshipped. And both David AND Uzzah are choosing THEIR way over God’s way.

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<sup>1</sup> I owe a great deal on David & Uzzah to Dale Ralph Davis & J.D. Greear. Greear’s sermon “Gospel Centered Worship” and Davis’ chapter “The

terror and ecstasy of God” in his commentary Out of Every Adversity illuminated so much for me in this section of the chapter.



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Secondly and even more importantly here - Uzzah's big problem is that he is unaware of his own sinfulness. See he sees the ark falling - the ark that carries the PRESENCE OF GOD - and he thinks...he's gotta keep it from hitting the dirty ground. And the mistake there is thinking his hands are LESS dirty than the ground. But in reality, they are far more defiled.

The dirt has never sinned against God. But Uzzah, like all people, certainly has. And it is the SIN of man that would defile the ark, not the a-moral dirt God made.

Uzzah doesn't recognize that, so he dies. David doesn't recognize it either, so he gets angry. Here's what I'll say.

**Our failure to understand God's judgment is rooted in a failure to see the wickedness of our own sin.**

Let's talk about today. Nobody has seen the ark in 2500 years. Except for Harrison Ford. So, what is the connection?

One of the reactions people have to Christianity is - Why would a loving God send people to hell? Eternity APART from God is the cost of ONE SIN? Like I tell one lie and now I'm doomed for eternity? The PUNISHMENT SEEMS TOO SEVERE

Well first - just by saying that you've decided that apparently YOU, not God, need to be the standard bearer for who gets in and out of heaven. So where is the line? Good people? What makes someone good? What makes a deed good? Quickly what you'll see is that your standard of good is relative and

therefore irrelevant. We need a universal standard to judge us by and that is what the God of the universe gives us.

Secondly - When we say the punishment is too severe it reveals we don't see how WICKED the sin is or how HOLY God is. Sin is outright DEFIANCE of God's authority. It's saying I don't want God. I CHOOSE ME over GOD. Period. And that is COSMIC TREASON. And you are like yeah but...is it really that bad? YES.

If I were to offer you a glass of sweet tea and tell you there is only a couple drops of urine in it - what would you say? You'd say the whole cup is defiled. That's what your sin does to you. And God WILL NOT be defiled by your sin. Because he is perfectly holy, he in his nature cannot be. So, he wipes out anything unholy from his presence. So, your only hope for being in God's presence and not DYING is if your sin can be somehow taken away from you. Then like Adam & Eve before the fall you could walk with God again. We are getting there.

But we gotta keep going.

**12 It was reported to King David, "The Lord has blessed Obed-edom's family and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God." So, David went and had the ark of God brought up from Obed-edom's house to the city of David with rejoicing. 13 When those carrying the ark of the Lord advanced six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened calf.**

Notice the change in worship. David has had a change of heart. He's come back to the Lord. And now he is worshipping God God's way. The ark is being carried on poles as God



instructed. And Sacrifices for sin are being made to God. Here's what that means. That means they would stop; they would kill the animals...and then they would sprinkle the blood of the animal onto the MERCY SEAT. The spot in between the two angels wings. That blood was SUBSTITUTIONARY. Their sin deserved death; we've covered that. But because God LOVED his people, he made a way for their sin to still be PAID FOR while miraculously they could stay alive. He said you may substitute this animal's blood for your own. Sprinkle it on this thing I've called the mercy seat. Because it is in this act that you are receiving my mercy. So, David did this.

And this is where I want you to hear the gospel.

2 He himself is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours, but also for those of the whole world -- 1 John 2:2

Because Jesus was without sin...he could be our substitute. And because he was GOD...he was powerful enough, his blood was powerful enough, to be a substitute for the whole world. For all who will believe. See the wage of sin is death. BUT THE GIFT OF GOD is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. Listen though your sin is more wicked than you ever realized...the MERCY of God is greater than you could ever imagine. And he accepts Christ payment on your behalf. If you will repent and believe. Stop working and start believing. And when you understand the gospel

Wickedness of Sin + Holiness of God = Reverence

Sacrifice of Jesus + Reconciliation to God = Humility. No pride.

THAT GREAT LOVE...IT WILL CAUSE TO WORSHIP GOD WITH REVERENCE. YOU WILL BE IN AWE AND WONDER

AND THANKFULNESS. SO MUCH SO... that your heart might burst open and well you might just react like David.

14 David was dancing with all his might before the Lord wearing a linen ephod. 15 He and the whole house of Israel were bringing up the ark of the Lord with shouts and the sound of the ram's horn.

David is the great king of Israel. There are 30k people marching with him. 3 things I want you to see IN VERSE 14. 1 - dancing with all his might. THE RESPONSE TO THE PRESENCE OF GOD & THE FORGIVENESS HE HAS THROUGH THE MERCY SEAT - IS to dance with everything he has. 2 - he is doing so BEFORE THE LORD. That's his audience. So important ya'll and will come up again in a moment. 3) that linen ephod - It's a priests article of clothing because he's serving as a priest right now (big for next week) - but it's also basically underwear. David is dancing...with all his might. Before the Lord...IN HIS UNDERWEAR. Then, the chapter shifts to David's marriage....

16 As the ark of the Lord was entering the city of David, Saul's daughter Michal looked down from the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart...

20 When David returned home to bless his household, Saul's daughter Michal came out to meet him.

Notice the author didn't say his wife, Michal. But instead, Saul's daughter. That's important.



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“How the king of Israel honored himself today!” she said. Here is the bible showing you that sarcasm in marital conflict is not new) “He exposed himself today in the sight of the slave girls of his subjects like a vulgar person would expose himself.” Saul’s daughter is concerned with appearances. Just like Saul, she was concerned with image. What the world around him thought. Well Michal seems to have forgotten she is talking to not only the king of Israel but the king of trash talk.

21 David replied to Michal, “It was before the Lord who chose me over your father and his whole family (oooooh David just brought her dad into this) to appoint me ruler over the Lord’s people Israel. I will dance before the Lord, 22 and I will dishonor myself and humble myself even more. However, by the slave girls you spoke about, I will be honored.” 23 And Saul’s daughter Michal had no child to the day of her death.

I will dance before the Lord. I will humble and dishonor myself even more.

I want this explanation to be what God uses to search your heart.

First - **David’s first audience in worship was God.**

And some of you need to do some soul searching about this. Is this your heart in worship? And worship isn’t confined to this gathering here at Church.

**Worship is your response to the gospel in every area of your life.**

How you spend your money is worship. How you spend your time is worship. How you treat your kids, your spouse,

strangers, employees...it’s all worship. SO, WHAT IS the way your life your life ...or better...the way YOU WORSHIP with your life SAYING YOU BELIEVE ABOUT GOD?

Now because this text is telling us about a corporate worship service, I have no problem saying to you - WHEN YOU COME TO CHURCH - WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE? What is your participation in corporate worship saying about what you believe about God?

David is saying I’m not going to be like Saul. My audience is God alone and I will DANCE. And I will do it with EVERYTHING I’VE GOT. I’m not goin 50%.

Let me talk real practically here. Because there is application to you no matter what background you come from. And first let me say - the application for NOBODY is to strip down to your underwear and dance around. So, let’s take that off the table and then ask - Ok what IS our application?

Well, here’s what I’ll say - **OUR corporate worship should physically and visibly demonstrate how much we REVERE God and How grateful we are to God.**

My old pastor, who was here last week, used to say, “What if the reason our community out there doesn’t take God more seriously is the result of the way we worship in here.”

So let me answer a couple common objections I get and then let’s put this into practice.





I don't have an expressive personality. Pastor I just am not an expressive person. And listen this is where I want to say I hear you. I DO think you should be genuine. Some people come from more subdued upbringings, and some are just more chill. Praise God for you by the way. We need you balancing out the dramatic people. Ha! I tend to be more in your camp. Here's what I'll say - FIRST: If I were to give you \$1 million dollars and you were to somberly say with your head down...thank you praise God...then a more subdued posture is probably genuine. BUT if you would get hype about it. Or about anything else in life...like the winning field goal of a football team you don't even play on...then maybe you just don't value your salvation as much as you think you do.

- 1) Matt 26 - Alabaster flask - She poured it on his feet because he was worthy. Nothing to do with her personality.

I believe somber reflection is appropriate in worship.

- 2) To which I say - ME TOO! There are times where we need to kneel in quiet reverence. We need to Psalm 46 - BE STILL as the Psalmist says and KNOW that he is God.
- 3) But that is not the singular description of worship in the bible. Sometimes you need to weep over your sin. Sometimes you need to take notes in the sermon because you are LEARNING. And sometimes you need to clap your hands and shout amen and stand and sing and give praise to God because he HAS SAVED YOU FROM SIN AND DEATH! And you need

to cry GLORY HALLELUJAH, HE HAS SET ME FREE!!

- 4) My pastor told me this a long time ago and I'm passing it on to you because it wrecked me then really helped me. Some of you need to repent of the pride & dignity you carry into worship with you.
  - a) Guys - who think showing emotion is girly. Listen to me all I can say is - David killed lions and bears, killed goliath and chopped off his head, was a fierce and successful military general. AND HE DANCED UNDIGNIFIED WITH ALL HIS MIGHT BEFORE THE LORD. So, I think you are not as MANLY as David.
  - b) ALSO - your inability to show emotion is actually a problem. TRUST ME. I've been growing in this a lot. You need to show more emotion in your home, in your friendships. You need to get comfortable with expressing emotion in a healthy way or we are all going to deal with the fallout of you bottling stuff up and then expressing it unhealthily. SO, let's START with your worship of God.

What will your version of worshipping God with all your might look like? AGAIN, IT SHOULD MATCH THE WAY YOU WORSHIP GOD WITH THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.



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You are like - BUT I'VE GOT NO RHYTHM. Listen...Thanks be to God some of our brothers and sisters do. Nobody is going to knock you for going all out though. And more importantly - God doesn't care. And he's your audience.

I'm new to Christianity I don't know enough.

Ok - You do know enough. Ya'll saw that fire in south park this week. It was tragic. Couple of people lost their lives. But thanks to some quick very brave work by our firefighters, 15 people were saved. Listen - If that was one of you - would you need to know anything about that firefighter who saved you in order to express your gratitude? NO. What he did is what makes you thankful. Listen the more you get to know Jesus the more you will worship him, but all you NEED to worship him is the news of your salvation!

And lastly listen - we are about the heart here. Not the behavior. Change happens slowly over time. I know some Christians grew up in really expressive settings and for a long time felt hypocritical. The expression was just an emotional facade. And then they finally learned the deep truth of the gospel. And their heart became filled with reverence for this holy God and love for his mercy. And everything changed for them. Even their worship practice was redeemed. Same for those from less expressive background. Started worshipping with more freedom.

You are more wicked than you ever realized & God is more holy than you know - So we must show him great reverence.

The point - keep the gospel at the center and you'll worship God with undignified reverence. Which will be for his glory and your good.