

# A Worshipper Named David

2 Samuel 24:18-25

August 5, 2018

Please read 2 Samuel 24:18-25 before reading this sermon.

When I introduce myself to people, I usually say something like, “Hi, I’m Jerry, I’m one of the pastors here” or “Hi, I’m Jerry, this is my wife Debbie.” But how about you; how do you introduce yourself? Have you ever said something like, (using your own name of course) “Hi, I’m Jerry, and I’m a worshipper”? Well, probably not. But, today, I’d like to introduce you to a worshipper named David.

**David was a worshipper.** We know he was a warrior, a king, a husband and father, but he was also a worshipper. Do you happen to know what instrument David played?<sup>1</sup> 1 Samuel 16:23 tells us, “...David would take up his lyre and play...”<sup>2</sup> The lyre probably looked something like the picture over on the right. It was a stringed instrument, not really a harp, but something similar. The lyre was one of the instruments often played when singing one of the psalms. Do you know how many of the psalms are attributed to David as their author? As many as 75; that’s half of the 150 psalms!<sup>3</sup> Some of these 75 were actually written “by” David but others may well have been written “for” Him or dedicated in his honor.<sup>4</sup> Regardless, David wrote a lot of them. Most of the psalms don’t give us precise dates as to when they were written, but, based on sheer volume, it seems likely that David probably wrote his various psalms throughout his life. David was a worshipper and he’s got a few things to teach us about being worshippers!



The primary reason that worshippers worship is that God is worthy. God is worthy of our worship because of WHO He is. David writes in Psalm 145:1-2, “I will exalt you, my God the King; I will praise your name for ever and ever. Every day I will praise you and extol your name for ever and ever.” God is also worthy of our worship because of WHAT He’s done. David goes on in Psalm 145:4-5, “One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendor of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works.” Because of WHO God is and because of WHAT He has done, His people worship Him! Psalm 33:1 declares, “Sing joyfully to the LORD, you righteous; it is fitting for the upright to praise him.” And, Psalm 147:1 agrees, “Praise the LORD. How good it is to sing praises to our God, how pleasant and fitting to praise him!” Worship music is certainly something designed FOR God’s glory but, at the same time, it’s interesting to note that...

**David’s worship music was a blessing to others.** The obvious evidence for this, is the fact that David wrote as many as half of our psalms.<sup>5</sup> In addition to this though, consider the verse we read earlier in 1 Samuel 16:23, “Whenever the spirit from God came on Saul, David would take up his lyre and play. Then relief would come to Saul; he would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him.” Now, that’s an intriguing verse that we don’t have time to dig into fully this morning, but it illustrates the way in which David’s worship music had a cathartic effect on King Saul. I would imagine that many of us could give testimony to the comfort and encouragement that we have received from the psalms David has written. Psalm 23 alone, stands as a prime example of a Psalm that has comforted millions of people! Many of us would also give testimony to the comfort and healing we’ve experienced through classic hymns of the faith as well as through contemporary songs written in our own lifetimes.

But, is worship really about making US feel better? You might be surprised to hear me say, “well, yes, that is one of the things that worship accomplishes.” It’s not the primary reason WHY we

<sup>1</sup> It’s interesting to note that the English title for the book of Psalms is based on the Hebrew word “*mizmor*” which has to do with “songs sung to the accompaniment of stringed instruments.” *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 968.

<sup>2</sup> Earlier in verse 17 Saul’s comment indicates that David could not only play, but he played well! Verse 21 says that Saul liked him very much.

<sup>3</sup> *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 969.

<sup>4</sup> Approximately 100 of the 150 psalms are attributed to one author or another but it’s not always clear whether it is BY them or FOR them, etc. See *NIV Zondervan Study Bible* note on pp. 968-969 for a discussion on the Hebrew preposition “*le*.”

<sup>5</sup> David wrote many psalms under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. See 2 Samuel 23:1-2; Matthew 22:43-44; Acts 1:16, 2:25, 4:25; and Hebrews 4:7.

worship, but it is certainly one of the common outcomes. When we give God the honor He is due and when we set our thoughts rightly on Him and His majesty, it benefits us in many tangible and intangible ways.<sup>6</sup> Let's run with this a little further. Worship music is described in Ephesians 5:19 as, "SPEAKING to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord." These worship songs are from our hearts TO the Lord but, at the same time, they are also a way of speaking TO one another. Isn't that interesting? This same idea is echoed in Colossians 3:16, "Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." Again, this verse ends by clarifying that we are singing TO God from our hearts, but at the same time we are teaching/admonishing ONE ANOTHER through the Psalms, hymns, and songs. Therefore, one could convincingly argue, that on a Sunday morning, the songs we sing are equally as important as the sermons we preach.

Worship songs calm/comfort our souls, they teach/admonish us, and, at the same time, they bring God glory! I see this as just one more demonstration of the grace and goodness of God toward us. Even when we worship Him and want our songs and devotion to be all about His glory, when end up finding our greatest personal joy and contentment. What an awesome God we worship! David's worship music was a blessing to others. So, all of this begs the question: ***How can you and I bless one another with our worship?***

Worship is often something we connect with music, which is understandable. But worship is FAR broader than just the songs we sing or play on our instruments. As a matter of fact... **David worshipped God with more than JUST music.** There's an interesting story in 2 Samuel about a time in Israel's history when the Ark of the Covenant is being brought up to Jerusalem. This Ark was a sign of the very presence of God in their midst. So this obviously called for a response of passionate worship. We read in 2 Samuel 6:5 that, "David and all Israel were celebrating with all their might before the LORD, with castanets, harps, lyres, timbrels, sistrums and cymbals." There's then an unfortunate incident where someone irreverently touches the ark and God strikes them dead. David then gets nervous and decides to hold off on bringing the ark into Jerusalem. A few months later, however, David again decides to bring the ark up to Jerusalem. This time we read in 2 Samuel 6:14-15, "Wearing a linen ephod, David was dancing before the LORD with all his might, while he and all Israel were bringing up the ark of the LORD with shouts and the sound of trumpets." If you look at this entire chapter, you'll discover that David worshipped through songs and dancing, through animal sacrifices and by blessing everyone in crowd by giving them food. But we then run into a very interesting scene in 2 Samuel 6:20-22, "When David returned home to bless his household, Michal<sup>7</sup> daughter of Saul came out to meet him and said, "How the king of Israel has distinguished himself today, going around half-naked in full view of the slave girls of his servants as any vulgar fellow would!" David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me rather than your father or anyone from his house when he appointed me ruler over the LORD's people Israel—I will celebrate before the LORD. I will become even more undignified than this, and I will be humiliated in my own eyes. But by these slave girls you spoke of, I will be held in honor."

Now, I find this challenging to think about, because I have a tendency to lean toward pretty conservative dress and appropriate behavior when I come to worship God on Sunday mornings. I don't mean to press this too far, because we do learn in places like 1 Corinthians 14<sup>8</sup> that God is not a God of disorder and that our worship services should be conducted in a "fitting and orderly way" (1 Corinthians 14:40). But, perhaps, at times, we become far too concerned about our own personal dignity and about which clothes we wear in worship.<sup>9</sup> Perhaps our conservative protocols and our reserved tendencies actually hold us back from fully expressing the worship that God deserves.

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<sup>6</sup> Consider Romans 12:2.

<sup>7</sup> Sounds like "MY kuhl," i.e. Michael.

<sup>8</sup> See 1 Corinthians 14:32-33, 39-40.

<sup>9</sup> Consider Luke 20:45-47.

While, on the one hand, we don't want to cause a distraction to others during worship, on the other hand, there are times when our praise should be jubilant and loud and probably even a little undignified.

David worshipped God in many ways. Through music, through dancing, through his leadership over Israel (which we're going to talk about more next week), and really through his whole life. This fits well with what we read about worship in Romans 12:1, "Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." In other words, Romans 12:1 is a call to transformed living.<sup>10</sup> This is why some translations say it's "your reasonable service." Because God has shown mercy on us all, our proper response is to live out our entire lives to God in worship. Not just with songs on Sunday mornings or a worship playlist throughout the week, but each moment of our lives as we work and play and live out our everyday lives. I've heard it said about Romans 12:1, that the problem with a living sacrifice is that, because it's alive, it can take itself back off the altar. In other words, it takes a daily, active choice for us to consistently worship God with our lives. Our true and proper worship goes far beyond attending church on Sunday mornings. More specifically, worship includes our thoughts and attitudes, our behavior, how we spend our time/money, and so on.

Money is actually an interesting way of measuring what we worship. The Bible talks about money very often.<sup>11</sup> Consider the simple, yet profound statement in Matthew 6:21, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." That's a compelling thought; wherever our money is, that's where our heart is. Our money reveals what we love and care about. In other words, money points toward what we worship. This is why I'm so impacted by King David's words in our opening Scripture reading from 2 Samuel 24:24, "No, I INSIST on paying you for it. I will not sacrifice to the LORD my God burnt offerings that cost me nothing."<sup>12</sup> David wasn't looking for a discount on his offering; he was committed to offering God his own very best. He wanted to feel the sacrifice personally, not just offer a sacrifice on behalf of others. This demonstrates once again how David was a man after God's own heart.

There aren't too many people who get excited when the pastor starts talking about tithes and offerings. I understand this but we still need to talk about it once and a while. Each time I talk about giving, I feel the need to remind everyone, that I don't know who gives to the church or how much anyone gives. I'm part of this church just like everyone else.<sup>13</sup> I do know what Debbie and I give for our tithe and offerings. We worship God through our giving just like most of you probably do. We support the General Ministry Fund and our Global Partners and the benevolence fund and so on. We pay attention to the back of the bulletin and we got a letter in the mail this week just like many of you did. We've responded by recently increasing our giving as much as we feel we can right now. We want this church to thrive spiritually and we know that part of having a strong ministry means having healthy, consistent giving.

There's an incredible prayer by King David in 1 Chronicles 29. God's people are bringing their gifts for the building of the temple. We don't have time to read the whole chapter but consider David's words in 1 Chronicles 29:14-17, "But who am I, and who are my people, **that we should be able to give as generously as this?** Everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your hand." ...LORD our God, all this abundance that we have provided for building you a temple for your Holy Name comes from your hand, and **all of it belongs to you.** I know, my God, that you test the heart and are pleased with integrity. All these things I have given willingly and with honest intent. **And now I have seen with joy how willingly your people who are here have given to you."**

What a wonderful testimony of worshipping God through our giving. All we have is from God. It is our great privilege to worship God with our financial giving. When I receive letters in the mail from a church or a Christian ministry, I'll admit, that sometimes my initial response can be cynical: "Oh boy,

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<sup>10</sup> *NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2315.

<sup>11</sup> This can make it a bit tough on us as preachers because we are committed to preaching the full counsel of God's Word.

<sup>12</sup> I find it interesting that this verse comes late in David's life.

<sup>13</sup> Consider 1 Peter 2:9.

who needs more money this time!” (Would you be willing to admit that you’ve sometimes felt this way?) But worshippers like David, cause us to rethink our giving through the lens of worship. Giving money to various ministries and missionaries is our great joy! Consider David’s insistence on paying for the sacrifice himself. He saw it as a privilege; no one was going to take that honor away from him. When the Apostle Paul is receiving a special offering for the Jerusalem church he gives these guidelines in 1 Corinthians 16:1-2, “Now about the collection for the Lord’s people: Do what I told the Galatian churches to do. On the first day of every week, each one of you should set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.” Paul doesn’t advise a specific amount or even a particular percentage of how much money people should give. But, he does offer two instructions:

**1) Each one should give a sum of money.**

**2) The sum of money should be “in keeping with your income.”**

Another place in the New Testament that talks about financial giving is 2 Corinthians 8-9. We don’t have time to dig into all that these two chapters teach, about honoring God with our finances. Let me just highlight a few key concepts. 2 Corinthians 8:7 says, “But since you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in complete earnestness and in the love we have kindled in you—see that you also excel in this grace of giving.” Generous giving of our finances is a grace that Scripture calls us to excel in. This doesn’t just include our church giving by the way, but wherever God would have us steward our possessions for His purposes. The *NIV Zondervan Study Bible* gives a quick summary of five characteristics of Christian stewardship<sup>14</sup> from 2 Corinthians 8-9: Christian stewardship is...

**Voluntary** (not forced)

**Generous** (not stingy)

**Enthusiastic** (not grudging)

**Deliberate** (not haphazard)

**Sensible** (not reckless)

Now, we’d have to read through chapters 8-9 to flesh out all those details, but this list gives us a good summary of things to consider, as we worship God with our giving. We worship God with our money. We worship Him with our songs/hymns of praise. We worship Him in so many other ways as well: by donating our time, volunteering our service, or caring for our neighbors. Perhaps the best way to wrap up our thoughts today is to consider another verse that we find written to the Corinthian church. 1 Corinthians 10:31 urges us, “So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.”

**As worshippers of God, let’s worship Him with our entire lives!**

*This sermon was preached at the Evangelical Free Church of Bemidji  
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<sup>14</sup> *The NIV Zondervan Study Bible*, Grand Rapids, MI, 2015, p. 2371.