

# A Call to Worship

by Shane Idleman

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*A call to worship is a reminder that true worship is not just about going through the motions, but about having a heart that is surrendered to God.*

**Duration:** 1:02:43

**Scripture:** 1 John 4:20

**Topics:** "True Worship", "Communion"

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## Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of true worship, highlighting the need to experience God genuinely, remove distractions, and restore broken relationships to worship Him fully. It also stresses the significance of knowing God personally and desiring more of Him to engage in heartfelt worship. Communion is offered as a time to remember Christ's sacrifice on the cross.

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## Transcript

I want to talk to you tonight from the topic of a call to worship. And you'll see in your notes here, I'm going to try to keep that course, but it's going to be a little difficult because this topic is definitely on my heart. This is the real reason for the season.

This is a call to worship. With that said, let me read the introduction to this message. And I'm quoting here from Wayne Grudem.

And he says, Can I say that again? Many evangelical churches do not truly worship God in their hearts. If genuine worship is lacking in our churches, we should ask how can we bring ourselves to experience much more the depth and riches of worship, which is the natural response to the believing heart. Now, this is important.

We must remember that worship is a spiritual matter and the primary solutions will therefore be spiritual ones. So with that said, I want to just talk about three things introduction, then I'll get to the message. Number one, those who truly worship God have truly experienced God.

Let me say that again. Those who truly worship God truly have experienced God. If you don't worship God, I submit to you that you might not have truly experienced Him.

Because out of that heart, we worship God. This is what forces people up early in the morning to worship Him and worship Him and late at night and worship Him. And people say, oh, no, they're just extreme.

They're just fanatical. No, that's worship. That's the heart who's experienced God.

They want to worship. So it goes without saying, those who truly worship God have truly experienced God. The reason many people don't worship God is they haven't experienced Him.

Also, the next point there, God brings us out so that He can bring us into His presence. And what I mean by that is God brings us out of the world or out of society or come out from among them, be separate or into this church tonight, right? Out of the world so you can be into His presence. That's what worship.

That's a lot of times why we come together is to worship Him, to come out from the world so we can enter into His presence. And the next thing, this is going to step on some toes, but if you listen to me for any length of time, you know I do that quite often. So this isn't going to be out of character.

But worship is a characteristic of genuine faith. Genuine faith. When a person has genuinely been converted, worship is a byproduct.

If there's no worship, there's no conversion. It's impossible. Genuine faith.

When somebody believes on the only name that saves, out of that heart, they have to worship. They have to. And as we look throughout the Bible, there's many things that confirm genuine saving faith.

A transformed life, a love for God and His Word, and all these repentance of these things. But at the heart of it all is sincere and genuine worship. And I know this ruffles feathers and people get upset, but you know what? That's a good thing, because those who need to hear this message and those who are convicted by this message actually need to hear it.

And it challenges us to the core. If I don't truly worship God, if I have just dead formalism and legalistic dogma, then I'm not truly saved. If I'm not truly worshipping, I'm not talking about perfection.

Again, I always want to clarify that. But a heart that's set on worshipping Him, not jumping up and down or not doing this and just worshipping Him. You know, if you've experienced God and you worship Him, you know exactly what I'm talking about.

If you haven't, then you don't know what I'm talking about. What do you mean, Shane? Should I stand there and do this? No, a heart that worships God, how a person is created many different ways. The man in the back with his head bowed, crying and weeping is the same as the lady up front worshipping like this.

It doesn't matter. It's all a condition of the heart. It's amazing.

You can go to a Dodgers game and people are acting like animals, jumping up and down and yelling. The other guy's sitting there paying attention because his son's in the outfield. We'll see the difference there.

They're both respect that team. They're both the same thing with Christianity. A heart that's surrendered to God will worship.

You have to worship. You have to worship. And I'm going to ask you this question right now.

Here's the test for this. When worship is happening, do you say, not another song? I mean, let's get brutally honest. A heart that is worshipping God rarely says, not another song.

It's going to be, Shane's going to be 10 minutes longer now. Think about that. A heart that is genuinely worshipping God wants more of that.

Can I give you a confession tonight? I don't want to come up here half the time. I don't want Chelsea to just cut loose for another hour and let's get on our faces and worship God for the love of God. That's how we're going to change.

That's how we're going to break. That's how lives are going to be transformed. That's how we're going to change our community.

Not coming in just to hear another message and leave and nothing changes. And a lot of times people ask me, why don't you guys do this? And why don't you have a large band? And why don't you do this? And maybe at some point, but what's wrong with just worshipping? What is wrong with that? So you have to think about that. Do you want to just miss worship and hope that the next song doesn't come up? Because I would challenge you tonight, there's a heart problem and you need heart surgery.

That's biblical. That's the true test of the heart. I know because I used to do it.

I used to come in late, like I've talked about before. I hope that worship's over. Oh Lord, not another song.

And what do you do? You just stand there and you sing a little bit. You move your lips and nobody thinks you're weird, but God knows your heart. That's why this is a call to worship.

And I know you thought I was just going to talk about a little baby born in a manger, but that's why we're here, to worship that little baby born in a manger. And a lot of times you guys don't see it because we don't toot our own horn and different things, but we get emails from all over now internationally of people being transformed because the truth is being spoken, not politically correct, but biblically correct. So I know that this irritates, but you have two different things.

You have two choices when this irritates, to submit to God's word and surrender to him or keep getting bitter and upset. That's the two choices. It was interesting this week, I was reading on systematic theology and reading on the covenants of God.

And this statement absolutely blew my mind. Wayne Gruta made this statement. He said, when it comes to the covenants of God, they don't use a Greek word that means a contract like we think we negotiate.

They use a strong Hebrew word that says, God lays it out, this is it. You either submit to it or you reject it. There's no negotiating.

There's no contract, how about this? How about that? No, no, no. He lays it out. So it's not a covenant as we think contract.

It's God saying, here it is. I lay it out. This is it.

Choose life that you may live. But the American church wants to negotiate with God. We wanna negotiate the truth.

Did he really say? Can we really say that? Shane, who are you to say with such audacity? Who are you to say that so arrogant that he's the only way, the only truth, the only life? See, nobody has a problem with politically correct statements. They have a problem when we start digging deep and seeing what God

requires. And say, oh, that's so negative.

The bad news would be very negative. You said, we're without hope. Good luck.

The Mayan calendar might've been wrong, but something's coming up. We're all doomed to destruction. That's bad news.

All we do is we say the result of not following God. That's the bad news. But the good news is the other side of that coin.

You see how that works? So this isn't bad stuff. This isn't convict. I mean, it's convicting, but in a good way.

I know a lot of people sometimes say, oh, I don't wanna go back to church. I feel so convicted. But that's a good thing because God uses that conviction to tighten those screws down.

And finally, finally, okay, I'll break. Finally, because sinful human man does not break unless God applies the pressure. It doesn't.

I wouldn't. Would you? That's why life is challenging. I've talked about that before.

We're either coming out of a difficult season or we're going right into one because He keeps us at the foot of that cross and keeps us there. Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil because the Lord is my help. He's my shepherd.

He's my shelter. That's who we look to. And I just see it all the time.

The dead formalism is not worship. Dead formalism is not worship. Grab hymnal number 42 and let's just sit there.

We have head knowledge. We're singing about God, but we don't know God. That's just head knowledge.

That's hands in the pocket. I could care less. Let me give, you know, get through this.

And that's not worship, folks. We've made the mistake of thinking, let's come and let's worship. You are not worshipping.

That's dead formalism. And what is happening, you'll see a big shift. And you're seeing, I've talked about this before in the church now, in our nation, especially because there's no heartfelt worship.

They're using slick marketing campaigns, surveys. They're using all these things. They're using gimmicks to get people in and to keep people in.

Can we give away this? Can we do this? Can we just worship God? The heart worshipping God, that's how he builds the church. So that's just the introduction. I want to get that point across that those who truly, truly experience God, they truly worship Him.

So if somebody's not worshipping God, I question the sincerity of their commitment to Christ. Do they truly know Him? Because if you know Him as Lord and Savior, you have to worship Him. I was on a road to destruction, eternal damnation, away from God.

He reached out and saved me, yet I'm gonna rejoice more when the Broncos win? What's wrong here? So let's begin the message, a call to worship. It's the steps on toes. Don't worry, it stepped on my toes way before it steps on yours.

What is worship? See, we talk about worship all the time. So let's define what is worship. Worship is the attitude and the acts of reverence.

See, catch this, catch this. It's the attitude and acts. You can't have one without the other.

You can have a lot of acts like, yes, we're here, we're singing the hymnal number this. I've got heads up worship. My heart's not involved.

I've got the acts. The attitude's not there. And if you have the attitude of worship, you have to have the acts.

What does that look like? I don't know. I'm not talking about jumping up and down and all this crazy stuff. And if somebody wants to do that, that's great.

I don't mind any. How do you worship God? I mean, if somebody's just been delivered from 10 years of a crystal myth addiction, you think they might be a little excited? I don't know. Call me silly.

They might want to worship. Yet us in our smug pews and sit there, we sit and we judge. Oh, look at that.

The difference is they've got a heart worshiping God because they've experienced it. We don't. So we want to pick and we want to judge and we want to pull them down.

So what is genuine worship? The attitude and acts of reverence to God. And really mainly in the Hebrew, it was a bowing down or a prostrate oneself, a posture that indicates reverence to God. So when people worship God, their acts resembled that worship.

They would prostrate themselves. They would lay down. A lot of times when I read the revivals of the 1700s, 1800s, 1900s, I'm amazed at how churches would just close down for the rest of the night.

People would be weeping in their seats, prostrate, crying out to God. That's not weirdness. That's biblical Christianity because God is visiting his people.

Hence the word revival. And we don't want that right now because it's not very comfortable. But that's what worship is.

Heartfelt worship is attitude and acts of reverence towards God. It's not sitting or standing, just looking at a screen, singing along. That's not worship.

That's not worship. That's going through the motions. And it reminds me of the church that Jesus talked about.

Oh, I know your works. I know your good deeds. I know this.

I know you know the truth, but you've left your first love. And he says, return to me and I'll return to you. So anytime there's a disconnect with worship, we have to remember that the problem isn't God.

Do you realize that? The problem is never with God. Never with God. Never? Never with God.

The problem never is with God. Well, I'm just not feeling this. I'm just not being led here.

God seems distant. The problem is never with him. The problem often is with the human heart and where we're at right relationship with him.

The worship is probably one of the most important things, but one of the most important Christian disciplines that you will ever have in your life. I see a lot of people, they know the scripture, but they become legalistic, rigid Pharisees. Why? Because they don't have the heart of worship.

See, if you can combine correct theology with a heart of worship, that's powerful. That's biblical Christianity. One without the other is not good.

We've talked about that on the Holy Spirit before, but the next thing, when we're talking about, now we know what correct worship is, well, then what is false worship? What is false worship? It's a broad category of acts and attitudes that includes honoring any object, person, or entity other than the one true and living God. See, we don't realize it, but we all worship something. Everybody in this room worships something or someone.

What are you talking about, Shane? Oh, absolutely. Where do we give our affections to? Who do we give our heart to? Where do we give our time to? Where do we give our money to? This all speaks volumes as to what we worship. So false worship, all it is, it's a broad category of acts and attitudes where we honor any object or person other than God.

The Old Testament referred to it often as idolatry, right? You heard that term all the time. And say, Shane, we don't put those little statues on our shelves anymore. No, we don't.

We have big 44-inch ones that sit right there instead. Oh, don't get me started. We don't put them on our shelves, we'll park them in the garage.

I mean, let's get real. Listen, God called me to deliver messages. I don't care if they're hard or easy.

I've just got to speak what He puts on my heart early in the morning as I'm weeping and praying and putting this together. Half the time I argue with Him and say, I'm not gonna do that. We're gonna have somebody else leave it.

You know, say, that's too hard. I don't care anymore because this is what's got to change that heart. He breaks me, then I break you through the preaching of the Word.

And what you'll see the prophets do throughout the entire Old Testament is they challenged our idolatry, mine included, because it can sneak up in the smallest ways. It's whatever we begin to give our attention to, whatever we begin to worship. And if you think it's so funny as I do, you think, oh, yeah, right, big 44-inch TV.

Well, if we've got three or four hours a day there mesmerized by the message, yet we have no time for God's Word, you tell me who and what we're worshipping. There's no other way around that no matter how we want to disguise it or it's relaxing or it's this. That's the bottom line, who we give our hearts to and we're mesmerized by it.

Now, I'm not one of those guys that say, this is evil, it's of the devil. Absolutely not. Maybe someday we'll have these programs on the television.

I don't, I mean, whatever, however God wants to use it. But when your heart is given over to something and you're mesmerized, you have no time for the Word of God, but we have time for everything else. There's a heart problem.

That's false worship because we're giving attitudes and actions that should be given to God, not 24-7 because we have to work, we have to raise our family, we have to pay bills, but our lifestyle should be that that's focused in God's direction. Now, what's the next part here of false worship? It also includes impure, improper, or other inappropriate acts directed towards the worship of the true God. See, here's where the church has to be very careful.

We can come here and we can have impure and improper and inappropriate acts of worship towards God. You might say, Shane, what am I talking about? What are you talking about? Well, this is when we come in here, sometimes we have all this bitterness and anger we're holding into our hearts. Jesus said, if you've got something against your brother, don't even bring your act of worship, your gift to the altar, go home and work it out, then come back and worship.

So a lot of times we come in and we worship, but we have this false sense of worship because our heart's really not right. The only way a person can genuinely worship God is when the heart is in right relationship with Him. That is genuine worship.

So those are the definitions of worship. What is true worship? What is false worship? Now it begs the question, why worship? Why worship God? Well, as you've read before in some of the articles I wrote, God is not a cosmic ball of love. He's not universal love.

He's not a doting grandfather. He's the creator of heaven and earth. That's why we worship Him.

Worship, worthy of our praise. That's the whole point behind worship. He created me.

Why would I not just worship that? He created me and then He sustains me. And then not only does He sustain me, He provides for me. And then not only does He create, sustain and provide for me, He redeems me.

And not only does He redeem, save, sustain and created me, what else does He do? He guides me. So from creation, from inception to provision, all the way down, He is creator. He sustains me.

That's why I have to worship Him. That's why you have to worship Him. He doesn't just create and say, good luck.

He sustains you. He provides for you. And then He sends redemption for you.

I mean, if you just think about that, that's why communion is so important. That's why we'll have it after the service because that's when the blood is remembered, the blood that was shed. That's when the body that was bruised, what He did for us, that's when all that stuff is remembered.

We remember what happened. We remember the cross. That's why we worship.

That's why communion is an important part of worship. That's why we worship. Now on that note, there's three why's of Christmas that a lot of people ask.

I know a lot of families are out of town this weekend, but I wanted to answer some of these questions because when we talk about Christmas and this season, I don't think we can forget these three points or we're in trouble. Number one, why did He come? Why did He come? Why is there a little baby born in a manger and all these nativity scenes? He was born to die. That's why we're here.

That's why this season. That's why the trees. He was born to die.

And I started to think of Mary. Did she know? This little baby that she's holding, that she's going to give up for the sins of the world and hand this child over after 33 years for doing nothing? And I thought as horrific as what we saw in the news in that elementary school. Absolutely horrific.

I mean, of all the tragedies we've experienced, this one has not been sitting well with me. But you know what would have been worse than that? If the parents saw the execution. Mary saw the execution.

She saw them beat her son beyond recognition. They saw, she saw her son up there being whipped with a cat of nine tails. And if I described it, I can make everybody in this room cry.

What happens to the flesh as it pulled off of him? Gina, this is Christmas time. Talk about the baby. I can't talk about the baby with talking about why he was born.

He was born to die. Emmanuel with us. God with us.

See, now you understand Philippians 2. God has highly exalted Him. Why? Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider robbery to be equal with God. But he made himself of no reputation, stepped down from heaven, took on sinful flesh and became obedient to the point of death, even the death on a cross.

Therefore, God has highly exalted Him and given Him a name, which above every name, at the name of Jesus Christ, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord. That's why we're here. I can't ignore this difficult topic because it is right in our face.

He was born to die. Scriptural support, Luke, for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost. Jesus didn't just come to turn the other cheek.

Jesus didn't just come to be a good teacher. Jesus didn't come to show us how to live. Jesus came to take on sinful flesh and die for the sins of the world.

He himself said, I came to seek and to save, not the righteous arrogant, but the sinners in need of a Savior. But the church is silent on this point. It offends people, Shane.

That's right, it offends people. It's supposed to. The cross is messy.

It's bloody. It's not fun. It's not something I'm looking forward to teaching my kids, but I have to because without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sin.

As the song says, oh, the blood is a sacrifice for me. It is my victory. Oh, the blood.

This morning, I was up early. I had to keep rewinding that song 15 times. So much for it's too repetitive.

We've already sung that one. When you're worshipping God, you don't care if you just sang that song. You want to hit rewind, rewind, rewind.

Tell me about the blood. Tell me about Christ again because that's a hard worshipping God. You can't just turn it off.

It's engaged. It's too late now. You turned it on.

It's too late. Let the fire fall from heaven. Let the glory fall and let's worship God.

That's worship. That's worship. That's why this is a call to worship.

It's not about a tree and \$1,000 on a credit card and my kid's getting mad because they're fighting over toys Tuesday morning. He was born to die. And you picture her holding that little child knowing that someday she's going to give him up for the sins of the world.

And as the mother sees her son hung upon the cross, the mother saw the son hung upon the cross. Could you see that? I couldn't. That's why we're here.

We can't forget this foundational truth. Do you know that this point in time was so horrific, so horrific that Jesus Christ himself said a prayer that God did not answer? Jesus prayed a prayer that God didn't answer? Yeah. Shane, you're getting a little off here.

No, Jesus prayed a prayer that God did not answer. He could not answer. No, no, no, no, Shane, you need to check your text again.

I did. This text has brought me to tears many times when I've preached on this at other places. The prayer that God did not answer, that Jesus prayed, you know what it is? Most people know what it is.

Father, take this cup from me. Father. He's not saying it like I'm saying it.

He's in the garden of Gethsemane with blood coming out of his forehead. Do you really believe that, Shane? Yeah, when the corpuscles are under so much stress, ask any physician worth their salt. They'll tell you that that is possible to be actually dripping the blood because what's going to happen? God, take away from me.

Jesus said, Lord, if there be any other way, take away this cup. This cup, what's he talking about? It's Old Testament imagery. The cup and wrath and indignation of God basically when all hell breaks loose.

He said, take this cup because when the wrath of God is poured upon the cross at Calvary, the sins of the world culminating on that point in history, that's what Jesus is saying. Is there any other way? Father, is there any other way? Anything else, any other way we can do? Any backup plans? Now's the time to do it. Any other way? And you know what he said? No, son, there's no other way.

There's no other way. The son had to submit to the will of the father. Father, if there's any other way, take this cup from me.

I cannot endure this. In my humanity, in my frailty, in my weakness, I cannot endure this. That's why you understand now Hebrews.

He was tempted and tested at all points as we are, yet he was without sin. We have a high priest that can sympathize with our weaknesses. Have you ever went through anything like that? I sure haven't.

And God said, son, I cannot take this from you. And then Jesus said, nevertheless, not my will, but your will be done. Man, that's heavy.

You're absolutely right. That's heavy. And we need to get back to the heavy stuff again.

We need to break that prideful human heart so the church begins to cry out for God. It begins to fear Him again. It begins to stop this coddling of the truth so we don't offend anybody.

It's time we offend people in love. Say, this is the cross is messy. Absolutely.

The blood of Christ is not fun. Absolutely. Let me tell you why that happened because of the sin of humanity.

That's why He had to come, born to die. Creation executing their creator. Puts a little different perspective on Tuesday, doesn't it? That's why this is called a call to worship.

Next, why did He come? A lot of people are confused on this. Why did He come as a man? Emmanuel, God with us. Why did He come as a man? And I pulled out just three points.

Here, number one, it shows that salvation ultimately must come from the Lord. That's why He had to come as a man and be born of a virgin. Listen, this is gonna be important because people are gonna mock you.

People are gonna tease you, especially little kids. We've got to educate them in this area. He had to come as a virgin because ultimately salvation can only come from God.

The virgin birth made it possible of the uniting of full deity and full humanity. Christ's full deity and full humanity were meant in the person of Jesus Christ. How that works, nobody really knows.

It's called hypostatic union. It's this marriage of divinity and humanity. But this is how it had to be done.

Number three, the virgin birth also makes it possible for Christ's true humanity to be there without inherited sin. All human beings have inherited legal guilt and corrupt moral nature from their first father, Adam. But the fact that Jesus did not have a human father means that the line of descent from Adam is partially interrupted.

See, this is why the virgin birth is so important. And this is why I get upset at authors out there like Rob Bell, who's saying the virgin birth is just like a spring on a trampoline. We could probably remove it and keep bouncing.

No, sir, we can't. That's getting heretical, okay? This is important. The virgin birth, because now God can send His Son born of a woman, not the DNA of man, the DNA of God, brought forth by the Holy Spirit, not even of Mary.

She was just the vessel, the womb. That's why there's no inherited sin. Because God, through the Holy Spirit, planted Christ inside of her womb.

There is no inherited sin. And just as a side note, for some of you guys, just because I, you know, just to educate a little bit, in 1854, somebody by the name of Pope Pius IX decided to claim that there is immaculate conception. And this is where Protestant church differs from the Roman Catholic church.

They say that Mary was without sin. That's the only way Christ could be without sin, okay? Immaculate conception, 1854. That's why there's divisions here, because they take things that are not in the Bible.

Mary can have sin in her because she didn't birth forth Christ. God planted Him through the Holy Spirit into the womb of Mary. So there's not the DNA of man, there's not the DNA of Mary, necessarily.

God planted that child in her womb. So think about that. Because if there's immaculate conception, it's true, then did that mean Mary's parents, mom didn't have any sin either? Of course not.

And then from that becomes a perpetual virginity of Mary, meaning she never had any other kids. She remained pure and a virgin. The Bible says she had other children.

And see what happens when the papal authority begins to put things on top of what, and they supersede the Bible, that's what sparked the Protestant Reformation. They said, oh, we can't keep doing this. Here, let's post a 95 thesis on the doors of Wittenberg Church in Germany, let's talk about these things that you're going not the right direction.

And they said, no, we're not gonna talk about these things. So that's why you have the big split in the Roman Catholic Church and Protestantism, because of mainly these things. Mary is not co-redeemer.

Mary is not mediator. The problem is Protestants give her too little props and the Roman Catholic Church way too much. I mean, she brought Jesus into the world.

The Bible says she's highly favored. She remained a virgin up, but she did everything, she followed God. She is a perfect example for young women.

But when I see bumper stickers, you can't find Jesus, look for his mother. Come on, that's running, you're getting, I think Mary would be saying, what in the world are they doing? Don't pray to me, I'm not co-redeemer. I'm not co-mediator.

She and I can't believe you're saying that. Popes have said this. They've said, yes, this and this and this.

There's nowhere in here. He is our only high priest. He is our redeemer.

There's no co-redeemer. You don't pray to Mary to get to Jesus. You come boldly to the throne room of grace and pray to Jesus Christ on your own.

So see, these things aren't, I'm not trying to cause fights. I'm just showing you the difference between the different belief system, where it comes from. Anytime you try to go outside of this and supersede this and add to this and trailer this, you're going to go in a very dangerous direction.

That's why you'll see a lot of that more of the ritualistic type of things in that branch of religion. But I'm not gonna get on that point because I've got people listening who are Catholics. So my whole point is we love them.

I've got a lot of good friends that are Roman Catholics. I was an altar boy. I graduated from Paraclete High School.

So yeah, but when you start to stray away from the Word of God, that's a dangerous thing. And I think we need to talk about these difficult things. I mean, people don't want to talk about it.

I don't want you to talk about it. The truth invites scrutiny. Let's sit down and let's talk about these things.

It never runs from scrutiny. The truth will prevail every single time. So that's why the virgin birth is so important.

That's why He had to come as a man. It's the only way God could redeem humankind because the shedding of blood, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, humanity sinned. He had to send the perfect sacrifice to be born of a virgin, raised, and then 33 years of age or thereabouts was crucified for the sins of the world.

That's why the virgin birth is so important. The final point on this one is why the cross? Why the cross? I think we already talked about that. First Peter, he himself bore our sins.

Hebrews 9, Christ having been offered once to bear the sins of many. Hebrews 9, 12, he did not enter by the means of the blood and goats and calves, but he entered by the most holy place once and for all by his own blood, having obtained eternal redemption. That's why you understand the song Chelsea saying, oh, the blood that washes me shed for me.

What a sacrifice that saved my life. Yes, the blood. It is my victory.

So that's the three whys to Christmas. Why did he come? Why did he come as a man? And why the cross? Now, what I want to do while we conclude is I want to now bring this into practical application because I don't want everybody leaving here going, oh, Lord, golly, Shane sure was upset today. I'm not upset.

I'm passionate. I'm passionate. Now, my favorite part, application, because this is when you can kind of dig a little deeper.

Worship requires heart surgery. Okay, if you guys genuinely are moved, you're genuinely convicted right now, we need a little bit of heart surgery and it's going to hurt. But this is where the rubber meets the road.

To truly worship God, number one, we must be striving for holiness. Do you realize that worshiping God cannot come from a polluted mind? It cannot come from a polluted lifestyle. That's why the Bible draws us often back to holiness.

For without holiness, no man will see the Lord. Also, First Timothy, I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands. The Psalmist said, who may ascend into the hill of the Lord? He who has clean hands and a pure heart and who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor has he sworn deceitfully.

See, what happens is many people come in here without the holiness aspect. They come in just like the world. Okay, I sing a few songs, now I'm leaving.

There's no worship taking place because genuine heartfelt worship complements a life that is holy and set apart for God. Not perfection, but direction. This is so much why I beat up on the media and people don't like it.

But that's why. Because how can you, let me ask this question, how can you live like hell all week and expect heaven to fall? I mean, how can you? How can we fill our minds with darkness all week and expect the light of the gospel to shine? Let me say that again. How can we fill our minds with darkness and expect the light of the gospel to shine? How can we worship ourselves all week and expect to flip on the switch to

God today? It doesn't work.

See why this holiness is such a critical thing. Paul would say, come out from among them and be separate. The Old Testament say, come out from among them and be separate.

Why did God call the people, children out of Israel or out of Egypt? I'm sorry. Come out and worship me. Come out from among them, be separate.

Stay away from those Assyrians and the Babylonians. Stay away from the Hittites and the Perzites. Stay away from all these nations.

Why? Because they will take you away from me. It's that lifestyle of holiness and surrender to God. So if you truly want to worship, lifestyle changes have got to occur.

Not perfection. I wouldn't even be up here. I know I get this point across a lot, but I have to because I don't want people leaving here thinking, oh, you're gonna do everything perfect.

Can't do this. Can't do that. No, there's a lot of freedom in Christ, but there's also a lot of abstinence saying, I can't do that because it's going to affect my worship.

I can't say that it's gonna affect my worship. I can't hang out with that person. It's gonna affect my worship.

I can't do all that junk on Facebook because it's gonna affect my worship. I can't look at those images or go there. It's gonna affect my worship.

I can't watch all these movies that are coming out that my flesh loves to because it's going to affect my worship. See, that's what people don't understand, is the media influences us one way or the other. And I have a whole series on holiness if you want to hear more on that, but I don't want to belabor that point much, but you've got to understand something, that I don't really care what people watch, but it affects your holiness, it affects your lifestyle, it affects your worship.

What you watch, what you listen to, all those things. Shane, you've said that before, yeah, and I'll probably say it again, because it's vitally important, nobody's listening. When are you going to stop talking about these things? When do we start doing them? It reminds me of a story 150 years ago, Charles Spurgeon, if many of you know him, always used to preach on repentance, and repentance, repentance, and a young man came up to him after the service and said, Mr. Spurgeon, when are you going to stop preaching on repentance? And he said, young man, when you do.

See that repetitive nature there. So a heart check, it demands, when you start to, when you start to say, I'm removing these things that are pulling me down, I'm just going to worship you, God, that God starts to fill you mindly with His Spirit, big time. Avoid distractions.

Number two, if you truly want to worship God, avoid distractions. Again, God brings us out so that He can bring us in. God brings us out so He can bring us in.

I see I'm losing some people here, so I'm going to throw some water on you. Just kidding, I'm going to try this example, I hope it works. This is, I hope it works, I was telling Russell earlier, I don't have time to try it.

But I want, Shirley, I see you back there too, don't worry, I'm going to clean this up afterwards. I want you guys to picture this. This is the world.

This is all the junk, all the distractions, all the addictions, all the fear, the anxiety. This is the world. This is what we carry around.

This is how most people walk around, don't they? Just full of the world, full of the junk, full of all this. And I'm talking about worship. They don't want to hear worship.

They're full, they don't love this, but they're full of this, the unhealthy desires, everything you can think of that you just don't like, from lust and addictions, everything. This is the world, fear and anxiety. We see all the news, you turn on the news, everything, everybody's wanting outlaw guns now.

I tell you, that's not the answer. Holy cow. Should have had some teachers equipped at that school, and then probably things wouldn't have happened a little different.

But I'm getting, oh, I'm getting off again, gosh darn it. So this is the world, this is worship, right? I'm trying to get you to worship, but junk. So what happens when, again, let's hope this works.

When we begin to pour worship in, well, let me see here, gonna make some rumors, it's gonna make a big mess. When we begin to pour worship in, I don't know if it'll work, but it should, it should begin to push all these other things upward and out of our lives. So see, as we worship, well, hold on, as we're worshipping, this is what should happen.

All the junk, all that just comes out, you're worshipping, you're worshipping, you're worshipping, you're worshipping, you're worshipping, you're worshipping. That's what happens. You can't, you just keep worshipping and worshipping God.

All the junk has to fall out, and it cannot dwell in the same place as worship. It can't. Sure, there's a little junk in the trunk, there's a little leftover.

That's our sinful nature, it's not all going, it's not all leaving on this side of heaven. There's a little bit of stuff in there, but as you start to worship, what happens? What happens? There's my doubt, there's my guilt, there's my shame, there's my lust, there's my addiction, there's my fear, there's my anxiety. Worship forces it out, it cannot stay in the same vessel.

That's the same with us. Worship, worship cannot stay in the same vessel. When you worship, all these things have to come out.

They can't stay there. So I told my wife, I hope I preach just as good tonight as I did this morning in the garage when God was breaking me and getting all this junk out of my life. Let the bitterness go, let the gossip, let the slander, let the addiction, everything must go.

You cannot worship God and hold on to addictions at the same time. It's not possible. You're either loving one or the other.

People who have problems with addictions, I always say, get into worship like you never have before. You cannot sing worthy is the lamb and down a forty. It's not possible.

You can't. You can't. You can't talk it up and put on worthy is the lamb.

It's not possible. You can't sit there and click on porn and have hill song on the other side. You can't worship over crowds, all of that and pushes it out.

That's why I'm so passionate about this, because that's what it does to the mess in your life. It takes it out. It gets rid of it.

That's worship. That's why we need a call to worship. That's why I want to worship.

That's why I have to worship. Ask my wife. My whole day is centered around, guess what? My kids, my family, my job, nope.

Worship. Worship in the morning, because that's how I become a better father. That's how you become a better mother.

You don't need more books. You don't need more CDs. You need to worship.

Get on your hands and face and break before Almighty God, because what happens in the course of a day, that water starts to go out, right? We don't have time to worship anymore. The water just leaves. The water just leaves.

And then what happens? You have all the room. The worship is leaving. It's gone.

As it goes more and more and more, then you just begin to put all this stuff back in. That's why Paul would say, be filled with the Holy Spirit. In the original language, it's almost a weird play on words, be being filled.

Be being filled. It's an ongoing be filled with the Holy Spirit, ongoing, because the pollution of the world pulls the worship out of me. My flesh, my flesh and the Spirit are like this.

This whole day so far, I just had juice. I'm just fasting before this message. And around 1030 this morning, it was not fun.

So, oh my gosh, I'll just sit. Come on, Lord. And then around 1230, oh, just a sandwich.

I can make a great excuse to start tomorrow. You know, and I had, you know what I finally said? I hope I can say this, but I said, flesh, shut your mouth. Shut up.

I am in control of you. You're not in control of me. Shut up.

I'm not going to eat anything. Shut your mouth. I control you by the power of the Holy Spirit.

You do not control me. So, what you're feeling today is me been fighting the flesh all day, fasting so I can prepare and preach this message what God's put on my heart. Now, I might eat 2000 calories after the service, but that's what happens.

It was amazing. You can tell your flesh no. I brought organic trail mix and organic apple for right after the service so I don't go home and binge.

See, I know my flesh, so I make no provision for it. I try to fight it. But do you realize that you don't understand the battle there? The flesh and the spirit are constantly at war.

Read Romans 5, Romans 6, Romans 7. Read the last half of 1 Corinthians and some of 2 Corinthians. The flesh and the spirit. You tell the flesh to submit.

You do not have control over me. You don't. As a child of God, it does not have control over you, but it has really good influence.

Just reeling it in, just putting out the bait. Every excuse in the world. Every excuse in the world.

I mean, I thought 12, 13, who's going to care? I just need an egg and a muffin. I mean, come on. What's the big deal? See, it's hard at first, but when the discipline comes, then comes the power.

Then comes the anointing. I'm not hungry whatsoever. I haven't been for three hours listening to Chelsea and worship and wanting to worship God and wanting to preach because I wanted to empty myself.

I had to because I have sinful, fallen human flesh just like you do, and you've got to pour in the worship. You've got to pour in the worship. That's the only way that you're going to begin to break addictions and strongholds, bad attitudes, this.

I mean, some of you know, and I've talked to, my mom knows, brother knows, Morgan knows. I mean, when I was growing up, anger, I had a real issue with anger. So did my dad.

I mean, talk about flying off the handle, getting upset. I'm sure it'll always be a struggle, but it has to submit to me. It has to submit to the work of the Holy Spirit.

It can't dwell. So when I worship, when I come out of that place worshiping, I hold my kids tighter. I love my wife better.

Why? Because I'm filled with the Spirit of God. That's a call to worship. I hope everybody gets back home and gets worship music on.

Turn off the junk and begin to reprogram your heart. I mean, think about what we're allowing in without allowing worship in. Now, here's on this point of avoid distractions.

What is distracting you? What is distracting you from worshiping God? This is not hard. It's very elementary. I could ask my daughter this question.

Whatever zaps your time, whatever takes your time, time that could be worshiping God, whatever steals that time and takes it, that's a distraction. That's why when you've heard me say a good thing isn't always a God thing. The enemy will allow many good things.

Do you know that most people who fall in Christian ministry, leaders, are really, really, really involved in ministry? Very good things. But they put that before their relationship with God and down they come. Pride cometh before a fall.

We can get so busy. You should be so busy worshiping God that you're too busy not to. See, whatever's distracting you, that's why I don't need a whole bunch of rules and do this, do that.

Whatever's distracting you, whatever's distracting you, you've got to remove it. You have to remove it. I'll give you a real little practical example for me.

I don't like opening up, but I know it helps people. I've had the hardest time, and this is so little, it's like, what the heck is up with this? But she knows what pulls me away from worshiping God early in the morning. You want to know what does? 16-ounce venti coffee.

Here's why. I can't sit still. I've got stuff to do.

I won't sit down. It's pulling me away. It becomes idolatry.

You're so addicted to it. Right? It pulls me. So I can't worship God.

I've got to study, and my mind's just going a million miles a minute. I can't sit down. I've got to stand up.

This, I get anxious. I get irritable. Not the fruit of the Spirit.

I get angry. I snap at my wife. I snap at my kids.

This little tiny cup. But I'm not saying a broad statement. I'm saying me.

I've identified this as not good. I can sit and read the Word of God for two hours and pray and worship with just a nice green tea. But I get that big venti.

I cannot sit still for five minutes. And then I'm mad the rest of the day because I didn't get my quiet time in. Now I'm irritable.

Now I'm anxious, and now I'm upset, and now I'm high strung. Just yesterday, I think you remember this, I was having a hard time around lunchtime. I mean, it was like, oh, I stopped coffee.

I'm fasting and all this stuff. And I was on a call, and I said, I'll just get a Red Bull drink. And I'll just have a little bit.

But before I know it, I'm over my call, and the Red Bull's gone. And I get home. My wife's like, what's wrong with you? I'm like, I don't know.

What the? Okay. Wow. No wonder.

That thing just really just, I don't know what it did. It just turns on high gear. Now the adrenaline glands are going.

Everything's going. I'm angry. I'm irritable.

Get out of the way. Traffic. Everything's bothering me.

Like, what is this? This is ridiculous. So I'm just showing you how the little things that we don't think are a big deal are a very big deal if they are fighting against exactly what God is wanting to accomplish in you. So that's why I don't get legalistic about it.

Somebody can handle a cup in the morning. Great. I'm just telling you me what it does to me.

I can't sit there, and my wife doesn't want to be around me. I don't think that's good. Just throwing it out there.

Just throwing it out there. Wow. So that's just avoiding distraction.

So that's a big struggle for me in the morning, because I love it. And those who love coffee know what I'm talking about. Oh, man, you love it.

But it really messes up my worship. So don't hold me to it. I won't see Chelsea in the drive-thru at five in the morning at Starbucks.

And if you see me going in there, I'm probably getting a green tea. So just don't hold me to all these rules. But you know in your life right now, because God is convicting you.

See, I don't have to. He's convicting you. What distracts you? What distracts you? What's pulling your time away? Facebook? Oh, that's not good.

That's not. I mean, we turn off our phones and emails on Sunday. It's like, I'm like, oh, my God, what's wrong with me? Like, I can't turn.

I got to leave. Oh, I think the church will still be there tomorrow. I hope so.

Oh, man, I can't. So we have to leave it at home, because it gets you. These little addictions, you're so used to things.

What's going on? Just turn that stuff. It's distractions. So now I'm going to get.

I'll hurry up so we can be done here. The third thing you have to do is you have to restore broken relationships. If you truly want to worship God, all this junk on the floor, half of that is broken relationships.

That's why many people aren't worshipping God. They're coming in with a root of bitterness. They're coming in with anger.

They're coming in with unforgiveness, and they expect they're going to worship God. They're filled with hatred. They expect the love of God to fill their life.

They're filled with bitterness. They expect the Holy Spirit of God to rejuvenate them. They are mistaken.

We have to fix those broken relationships. Look at Matthew 524. Go and be reconciled to your brother before you worship.

So all of us sitting in here with our little mouths, and we're upset at this person. We don't like this person. We don't like this person.

It must all die at the foot of the cross if you truly want to worship God. It has to. Apologies, forgiveness, everything.

If you truly want to worship God, I'm talking about people who truly want to. I know not everybody does. I know we like to keep our little bitterness in here.

I know I've got them right here, right where I want them. No, you don't. You're hurting your relationship with God.

But we can come in and play games and pretend, can't we? Worthy is the Lamb. Worthy is the Lamb. I hate that guy over there.

Worthy is the Lamb. Worthy is the Lamb. Shane really upset me last week.

I hope he doesn't even go into Twilight and Harry Potter and all that. Worthy is the Lamb. Oh, there's that girl.

Look what she's wearing. I can't believe she's wearing that to church. Holy cow.

Worthy is the Lamb. You think you're going to worship God with that judgmental spirit? I have to. I struggle with it too.

Oh, there's that person again. Oh, Lord. They're going to drill me after this message.

Oh, gosh, I don't like them. Can't they just find another church? Lord, please. And it messes up worship.

So you have to go and be reconciled to your brother before you worship. 1 Peter 3, 7. Oh, gosh, we're going to step on some toes. Husbands, in the same way, be considerate as you live with your wives and treat them with respect as a weaker partner so that your prayers are not hindered.

We have husbands coming in here, worshiping God, putting on happy faces, and they just cussed out their wife on the way to church. They just yelled at the kids, and they're going to come in here as if everything's good. Hey, brother, how's it going? I don't know.

How's it going two miles ago when you just chewed out your entire family? Let's get real. I know it's hard. It's difficult, church day.

That's why I leave an hour and a half early. I don't have to ride with my kids throwing fits and doing all this stuff because, oh, it's hard. I know that.

But look at what he's saying here. God won't even answer your prayers. If spouses are not treating their spouses correctly, we come in here and we think we're honestly going to worship God? He says, no way.

That's why you leave here empty. That's why you leave here just as empty as when you arrived. That's why when you leave, you say, nothing changed.

I want what Shane's talking about. Then you've got to get rid of these destructive habits. What about 1 John 4.20? If anyone says, I love God, yet hates his brother, he is a liar.

I mean, these guys don't mince words. If you say you love God, but you're holding hatred and contempt for somebody, God's word says it's lying. You're lying.

I'm lying. So these heart checks must happen. The last verse, Hebrews 12.15. See to it that no one misses the grace of God, and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many.

I will tell you right now that this verse right here is why many churches get divided and why many Christians aren't friends with each other in the church. We'll come and tolerate each other, but we're not going to be friends with each other. We allow a root of bitterness to grow up.

We said something or did something offensive. And now the person holds this bitterness, and as we know, bitterness doesn't just stay there as a nice little, nice little, cute little bitterness. No, it grows and grows and grows.

So we come here and we think we're going to worship God with the spirit of bitterness and jealousy and resentment. It can't happen. So that's why I'm saying my whole point of worship is for your heart to break,

for my heart to break, and allow God's penetrating power to go into us.

As we close on this point, Chelsea, you can come back up. And we're going to just finish with the song and go into a time of communion. But why people aren't worshipping God, some of you might say, wait, Shane, you missed the most important thing, and I did.

I did miss the most important thing. Many are not worshipping God because they truly don't know Him. So as this message goes out, the radio, the internet, wherever it goes, and tonight, if you don't truly know God, you can't manufacture it.

You can't follow my checklist and hope it works out. You have to truly know Him. You have to repent of your sin and trust in the only name that saves.

That's why we're here for Christmas. Actually, that's the whole reason for the season, born to die. Born to die for what? To die for the sins of the world.

So as a person repents and believes, that's how they can truly worship God. So if you've not done that, that has to happen tonight. Number two, many are not worshipping Him because they don't want more of Him.

I'm just going to be honest with you guys. Many of you, many across this landscape are not truly worshipping God because you don't want more of Him. You've got Him right here in your pocket, tucked in, nice little comfortable God.

He doesn't demand too much from me. That's why there's not true worship taking place, is because we don't want more of Him. We're scared.

We're worried. We don't want to be fanatical and extreme. But to truly worship God, you have to empty yourself of everything and allow Him to fill you completely.

And then you'll truly know, truly know heartfelt worship. Because worship starts right now. Worship starts in your heart and in your mind as you're considering this thing, Lord, I want that.

All it is, is the heart crying out and breaking and emptying itself and saying, Lord, it's time to worship you now for the rest of my life. I've been living a lie. I've been living a game.

I've been playing church. I've got everybody fooled except Him. You do not have Him fooled.

Trust me. He knows every heart of man. He holds your heart in the very palm of His hands.

Every breath we take, He knows. So what we're going to do, we're going to go into a time of communion. As Chelsea does this song, what this is, if you haven't been here before, we have tables in the back.

You can just get up at your convenience. Actually, there's not as many people as I thought there would be, so we don't have to do this too methodically. And you don't have to get right up.

You can get up in two minutes, halfway through the song. But we're going to let you take your communion at your leisure. And what this is, you just take the bread, you take the cup, and you stay there, you go back to your seat.

You remember what Christ did on the cross. You remember Calvary. You remember the blood that was shed, and you take it.

You remember the body that was broken and bruised, and you take of it. That's all communion is. It's for believers who want to remember what Christ did on the cross.

That's why we call this a call to worship. That's why communion is done, to remember that. Jesus said, every time you meet, come together, remember me, take of this, and remember.

So there's no format. I'm not going to come back up and say, now take of the elements. You take it at your convenience.

You get up, and you take it at your convenience. But also, while you guys can go ahead and stand right now. While people are taking communion in the back, what we did this time is we left the front and sides open.

What you'll see is a lot of people with prayer badges on. I'm going to come back up and do the announcements in a minute. You'll see people with prayer badges on.

If you need prayer for anything, healing, deliverance, your marriage, salvation of your kids, your own spiritual life, you're committing everything to God tonight. Whatever it is, if you need prayer, we want to be here for you. So as you guys go back and get communion, I'm going to ask that those who have badges on, to kind of go to the side of the building, maybe a few in the back, even a few of us up front.

And we'll just be here. We'll be here, and we'll be available if you need prayer. So with that said, you guys can go ahead and head to the back and take communion, and we'll come right back.

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