

Hearing the Voice of God

by Shane Idleman

To hear God's voice and live a surrendered life, we must prioritize worship and make it a lifestyle of laying our heart before God in reflection and meditation.

Duration: 53:10

Scripture: Psalm 95:6, John 4:23-24, Philipians 4:7, James 4:8, Revelation 2:5

Topics: "Worship", "Repentance"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of worshiping God to hear His voice clearly. It addresses the hindrances to worship, such as lack of genuine relationship with Christ, holding onto besetting sins, pride, and wrong perceptions of worship. The speaker challenges the audience to move from conviction to action, highlighting the need for true repentance and returning to God in worship to experience His grace and peace.

Transcript

And I'm actually going to speak to you tonight. You can see the message up there instead of podcast. Of course, it's God cast hearing his voice.

And what happened this week is interesting. I was putting together the message in Matthew 10 is where we're at. I had it all dialed in.

It looks good. But it wasn't really convicting my heart. It wasn't really all week just kind of blah, you know.

And well, I guess hopefully God will do something with it. And I know he will. But there is something else kind of just just in my heart all week and wanting to to preach on something different.

Didn't know what it was until Friday morning. Early Friday morning got up and I wrote it all out within about two hours. And then the devil plays games with your mind on things like, wow, the people don't want to hear that.

You just wasted your time. You don't know what's going to happen. You just they've heard all this stuff before.

You should have went back to the old sermon. You know, you're going to be, you know, just going to be a failure up there and you're dealing with all that different stuff. But I know, Lord, I know you put this in my

heart for a reason.

I touch my heart. I know it's going to touch other people's hearts. So on Friday, the whole sermon took a detour.

Still, we're still talking about hearing God's voice. But I want to talk about hearing God's voice through worship, hearing God's voice through worship. And the reason I chose this whole topic on hearing God's voice, and I'm probably going to do it for the next few weeks, is most people, including myself, I'm not up here saying, how could you? Most people follow the wrong voices because we live in deception.

Be hearers of the word and doers of the word or you're living in deception. And I and I finally stopped this week and I said, hold on, hold on, Lord. This is if you look at counseling appointments, financial disasters, relational disasters, spiritual disasters, emotional disasters and Christian in the lives of Christians, much of it is linked back to.

Hearing the wrong voice, following the wrong thing. If I can look back at many of the things in my own life, I'm sure you and your life, you look back and go, how did I get on that detour? How did I get sideswiped with that one? And we hear the wrong voice. Most follow the wrong voice because they live in deception.

And it's interesting as Christians, I've noticed this. We can know the word of God. I know the word of God and we think we're good.

But that knowledge without the application, as I've talked about many times before, that's why I said, why do I have to talk on this again? It's almost like God saying until we get it right, we've got to be reminded of this truth. And I guess it's in pastoral care and pastoral counseling. The connection is often made here.

They know it, but they don't do it and they don't hear the true voice of God. They're following the wrong thing. And it's almost like this.

We blind our eyes and I know what it says. And we walk around like this. Where's the steps at? Where's the speaker? I'm a Christian still, right? I'm a Christian, but I don't know where I'm going.

And we're bumping into things. We're knocking over things and we go through life like that. And so I just want to stop and say, OK, hold on.

Let's listen to God's voice. And it wasn't something I could put together real quick because it started to go into different segments. Hearing God's voice through worship, hearing God's voice through his word, hearing God's voice through prayer.

You can't just encapsulate this in a quick sermon because we're hungry and get out of here. It's not going to work. So I want to just slow down and say, OK, a pastor gave me the best advice I ever got about six months ago when I was in Matthew.

He said, you know what, if you ever feel like getting out of Matthew for a week or two or three, it's fine. You don't have to be stuck on this. Well, I got to get through that.

I got to get through. And I'm actually preaching for services this weekend. I've got the preaching twice tomorrow.

So I've got this whole thing is in my heart, maybe not as much for Westside, but for the other church. But I'm hoping it is for Westside as well. And I want to reread what I read last week.

Some of the email correspondences we get, and this is probably why I want to preach on this theme. And a mother, a wife wrote these words, if you remember from last week, I'm at a loss. My Christian husband is verbally and physically abusive.

Christian husband. Ironically, he thinks that I'm the problem. He sees no need to change.

He'll quote scriptures about submission while yelling and cursing. His anger is also destroying our children. A home once filled with laughter and joy is now filled with fear and depression.

We walk on eggshells and cherish the times when he is gone. He also loves his pornography more than his family. I can no longer bear it.

I've never thought of divorce, but now it's a daily struggle. What do you what do you say to that? A Christian husband, a Christian family, and even in my life, I found that who I am publicly and who I am privately is a challenge. Right, everything, oh, you must have the perfect marriage, the perfect thing with your kids.

No, not really. We all struggle. And we'll never be perfect like Christ, but I sure want to fill in the gaps and bring them very close together, don't you? I love when my kids say, Daddy's home.

Yeah, yeah. Not like, oh, when's he leaving? You know, walking on eggshells because it's very easy to believe this. I believe this with all my heart, but my actions say something else.

My I'm drawn to something else. I know what this says, but I know what this says, but I'm going to do something I know. And we live in this vacillating area of of choices between what I know to be right and what my flesh wants to do.

And don't remember the words of Paul, Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death? I want to do the things I want to do. I don't do and things I don't want to do. I do.

Oh, wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from this body of sin and death? Well, with the mind, I serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin. So I want to talk to you guys, and I'm going to go slow through this whole series over the next few weeks, and we just need to hear God's voice better. I mean, I'm all up for this sermon and convicting me as well.

I want to hear his voice better. I don't want to make financial relational decisions just like, well, let's just go for it and see if God's in it. I want to hear his voice.

And Jesus said many times, you guys, this will sound familiar to you. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear. Jesus would say often, he who has an ear to hear, let him hear.

And I think it's time that we start to hear the cry of our children, hear the pleading of our spouses, hear the weeping of broken families. Hear the young lives that are being destroyed by rejecting God and his truth. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear.

And as I was pondering this whole thing, it kept coming back again and again, the amount of responsibility that God puts on the heart of the hearer. He who has an ear to hear, let him hear. Stop blaming the devil.

If I hear that one more time this week, well, the devil made me, no, he sure didn't. All he does is entice. He'll just put the, when you're fasting, he'll just put the chocolate bar in the front row there.

Somebody forgets a chocolate bar, that's what he, he's not going to make you go over like a puppet and go pick it up and eat it. And he just presents the bait. He's a deceiver.

He appears as an angel like to deceive. That's why not only do you have to know the word of God, you have to obey the word of God. Even when I don't feel like it, Shane.

Oh, absolutely. As a matter of fact, I'm learning that that's the best time to do it. When I don't feel like it, Jesus doesn't say he has an ear to hear when they feel like it.

He has an ear to hear when this isn't happening. He was whoever has an ear to hear and that you study this. And I studied the Greek text.

I studied commentaries and who has an ear to hear. It's almost spiritual hearing is what this is. Who has an ear to hear spiritually? Not this.

See, we think of this, right? And some people always say, what's Jesus talking about? It has nothing to do with these. It has everything to do with this. Whoever has an ear to hear, let him hear what the spirit of the Lord is saying.

And I love this quote from Paul Tripp. I came across another book I'm reading almost about halfway through. I want to recommend it.

It's called *Dangerous Calling, Confronting the Unique Challenges of Pastoral Ministry*. And as I'm reading it going, this is good for anybody because he's showing the disconnect between our public and our private. And he made a statement in there.

I highlight it. I reread again. And I said, I've never thought of it this way, but it's absolutely correct.

He said, no one is more influential in your life than you are. What do you think? My mom, my dad, my mentors that no, nobody is influencing me more than me. Right, my thought life, and he made a statement to he said, the lawyer within must be replaced with the Holy Spirit within, because what does a lawyer do? Defense lawyer.

Yeah, I have a defense lawyer in here. Did you know that? Well, yeah, but God, it's been a hard day. It's been a long week.

But, but he's defending, he's defending my actions. He said, put that defense lawyer to bed and bring out the Holy Spirit of God and let him direct you. No one is more influential in your life than you are.

That's why the power of it here is very important. How often have we talked about that? Because can't you talk yourself into things? Or is it just me? Talk yourself right in. I know that's not right.

But, and we fail to hear the voice of God. Why are we failing to hear the voice of God? There's always a disconnect often between our public and our private life. Here's what I want to talk about hearing his voice through worship, hearing God's voice through worship.

And I know just that title bores people. Just that title bores people. If you want to write a best-selling book, you're not going to title it that.

I guarantee when we watch the views on YouTube, this, this title is not going to get as many hits and views as other titles. Overcoming sin and temptation. Oh, man, that'll go, that'll hit the charts.

But hearing God's voice through worship. What the heck? And we miss a key element there. And what I, what I'm trying to really get at is this.

Hearing God's voice through worship has everything. Do you want to hear God's voice? First, we got to start with that. Does anybody want to hear God's voice and be led of the spirit of God and, and make better decisions? Okay, I'm guarantee everybody in this room.

Hearing God's voice is all about positioning. GPS, right? Global Positioning Satellite, GPS. It's all about positioning.

If there's a children's ministry worker next door right now, I need to go talk to you. Is this going to work? Hey, by the way, we're going to have a potluck at 530. Can you make sure the kids are done? Okay, I'm sure she got it, right? What, what are you saying? What are you, she can't even hear you, right? She can't hear me.

I've got to go out that door, open the other door and position myself. So she can hear me. Hearing God's voice is all about positioning.

We walk around all as if God's, he's everywhere. I got it. You know, we don't, you know, we don't believe in this Eastern mysticism and all the God's in the trees and bushes.

I mean, he's omnipresent. He's everywhere. But to hear his voice, you've got to position yourself in such a way to receive.

You've got to move the earplugs out. You've got to get in a certain position. I'm not talking about hands up or knees on the ground.

I'm talking about the heart has to be in a certain position to hear him. So to hear his voice through worship demands, I have to position myself in such a way to hear God. And many people go through their entire week.

They come on Saturday. That's not going to cut it. And that's why the majority of counseling appointments, the majority of lives falling apart has everything to do with hearing God's voice or not hearing it.

Because God says, my sheep hear my voice, a stranger they will not follow. So why do I follow him then? My sheep hear my voice, a stranger they will not follow. It's all about positioning the sheep, position themselves behind the shepherd.

Wherever you go, I'm going to go. Whatever you say, I'm going to do. That's why I talk often about the fully abandoned life, the fully surrendered life.

For that very reason, many Christians are not positioning themselves to hear the hear the voice of God. I mean, we'll be the pastor who steps up in a pulpit and spends his week watching TV all week. Does he expect he's going to speak into the lives of people? He didn't hear anything from God.

He heard pop psychology in a popular sermon. And he's going to just, well, here we go. We've got to position ourselves to hear God's voice.

And worship opens our spiritual ears. That's the power of worship. It opens our spiritual ears, which is really our heart.

Worship opens that heart. So when people don't worship, we got to wonder, are they hearing from God often? The choices they make, the lifestyle. And again, what have I said a few weeks ago? Many times when somebody's life is falling apart, I say one quick sentence.

Tell me about your worship and devotional life. Non-existent. Non-existent.

I rarely hear somebody. Personally, I haven't. But I'm sure it's out there because every time I make an absolute statement, somebody says, well, I know somebody in Kansas.

But I don't know of anybody who has self-inflicted problems. I'm not talking about struggles we all go through, but self-inflicted struggles. And say their marriage is breaking up.

Pornography is an issue. And you say, tell me about your worship. Like, oh, man, every morning for two hours, I'm in the word of God.

I've got worship on. Before you know it, I'm on my face on the floor. I never hear that, ever.

Because if I hear that, I don't hear the other thing. I can't hear both of those. Think about that.

Can you see a powerful worship and devotional life and a life full of sin and besetting sin and going away from God? They can't coexist. Because when we're stuck in this, we sure don't want to do this. Because actually, I want to get away from God as far as I can when I'm caught in this certain type of lifestyle.

Well, sure, I know him. I read his word now and then. I'll say the right things.

But I'm not going to worship him. But those who worship him. I'm not talking about stumbling down them, but talking about worshipers who are worshiping God, their lifestyle.

There's armor on with that. They can hear the voice of God. They're sensitive to the things of the Holy Spirit.

So that's what I'm trying to get at. I like what Al Whittingill said here. We want God as long as he doesn't change what we like.

But any person not open to change is not open to revival. Revival will come only to a desperate church, not a content church. We can say the same thing.

Change will only come to a desperate Christian, not a complacent, content Christian. God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. He does not reward the mere casual inquirer.

Most Americans worship their work, work at their play and play at their worship. And that's what's happening. I believe I believe with all my heart that God wants to get this message into people's hearts.

If you would just worship me, if you would turn back, turn back and begin worshiping me, make your lifestyle focused around worship me, time in the word of God and spending time worshiping that your

spiritual eyes would be open even more so than they are now. Because what it does, it aligns my heart with God's heart. See, I can't worship and hold on to besetting sin, right? What I mean by besetting, it's continuous, unrepentant, allowable sin.

I'm not talking about perfect because nobody in this room would be here. But we can't allow that to continue and still be worshippers of God because the worship brings havoc to the sinful heart. The worship crushes the sinful heart.

Worship, you cry out to God and you say, Lord, I'm asked for forgiveness. Save me and redeem me. I've been saved, but I need salvation for my heart again.

I need my emotions to be restored. Worship does not fill in the gap until it's time for the message. Often, worship is the message.

And I really want to get that point across. Worship is not, you know, we didn't have Gabe and the guys up here just to kind of, let's get some time in there before the message. People think that.

Well, I'm going to miss worship. I'm coming just for the message. Or when's worship over? And people ask me, if I get there 430, why can't I still catch the message? I'm like, you don't get it.

Worship sometimes is the message because as the heart is opening up and worshipping God, he begins to speak to the heart, begins to restore and rebuild and renew. And then the message just comes up and compliments what God's already doing in the heart. It's called a tag team.

They're not separate. Worship does not fill in the gap until it's time for the message. Often, it's the message.

Worship is a lifestyle of laying our heart before God in reflection and meditation. Tremendous joy and healing often take place. But this is also where heart surgery takes place.

You see, to hear God, I must remove the earplugs, the things plugging up my heart. And that's what worship does. That's why I believe many people come into church cold and callous and unchanged week after week, after month, after month, because worship is null and void.

Worship is deficient. Worship is lacking. And we know if it is, right? Right now, if the concern is convicting, why is he talking on this topic? Can't he just get to something more meaty? Can't he? You know, God wants to talk to us in this area of worship, because that you think you love the Bible now.

Wait till it's married with a worshipping heart. Theology coming through a person who's on fire for God. That's powerful.

A person who does not worship will have a difficult time hearing and discerning God's voice. Worship positions the heart to hear, the spiritual eyes to see, and the mind to comprehend the will of God. See, everything's working there with worship.

And of course, we're going to get into the word. We're going to other spiritual disciplines later. But right now I'm talking about this foundational principle that is missing in many, many people's lives.

Worship positions the heart to hear, my spiritual eyes to see, and the mind to comprehend the will of God. Because it's almost like an instrument. You know, you're tuning in.

You're tuning in the heart. You're tuning in everything about your spiritual side to hear the will of God, to sit with I mean, if you're married and your wife lives in New York and you live in California, how's that going to work? Can you ever talk? Well, I know who she is. She's out there in California somewhere.

You never talk. That's the same thing with relationship and building that relationship with God. Let's take a quick survey on this.

How many of you worship? Most people say, yeah, I do. Now, here's the kicker. I'm not talking about putting on music as you go about your day.

I'm talking about stopping your day and listening to God through prayer, worship in his word. This is the three chord strand that is not easily broken. Because I put music on driving.

No, I mean, I mean, just stopping your day and saying, Lord, I'm going to worship you. I'm going to put on worship. I'm going to have the word of God in front of me.

I'm going to pray. Lord, I'm going to take some time when you set my day around that. See, what happens is we try to set everything else around other things.

Well, we'll try to fit this in later. I'll try to fit in worship later if I get to it. It never does.

You know what happens to appointments that never get on the calendar? They never get on the calendar. They never get done. They never get accomplished.

So things, you know, those things most important to you are on your calendar and you find time. Every man that has a golf game planned for tomorrow will be on that course. Barring the flu or something.

Right? Will he not? Oh, of course. As sure as the sun's coming up. He's getting up and he's heading there.

What's the problem with this issue then? With worship and setting time aside for God. And I know it's challenging, but God doesn't ask us to do what we cannot do. And I know it's challenging, but here's what happens.

Once the challenge is overcome, once you resist the devil and he flees, once you tell the flesh, sorry, you're not getting your way this time, then the peace and the joy come, the filling of the spirit come. It's a byproduct of obedience. That's how important this topic is.

So how many people worship? I'm talking about putting on and not putting on music, but stopping your entire day saying, Lord, this time is for you. I'm going to worship you. I'm going to seek you with all of my heart.

Would you speak to me? You think he's going to go? No, no. Go back to your busy schedule. I mean, to me, I believe that busyness is the enemy of worship.

Busyness is the enemy of Christian seeking God. How do I know? Because it's shot me down a lot of times. Getting too busy, too busy, too busy.

He just keeps you so distracted so we don't hear the voice of God. I thought of this analogy. It's like a seed in the soil.

The Word of God plants. Prayer provides the sunlight and worship supplies the water. Without it, you'll dry up.

You know all the songs, right? Let it rain. Come to the water. Let he who thirst thirst no more.

Open the floodgates. What are all those about? God flooding into our heart. Remember the song when we were little? Or at least when I was little? I've got a river of life flowing out of me.

Makes it lame to walk in the blind two-seat, right? Well, if you don't have a river of life flowing in you, how in the world is it going to flow out? You see, that's the problem. Actually, that could have been the sermon, and we should have just did an hour worth of worship. If it's not flowing in, it's not going to flow out.

See you next week. So you say, why is Christianity dead? Why does God seem distant? Why can't I read the word of God? Why am I yawning? Why can't I wait to get out of here? I hear all the shame, but what's the disconnect is worship. As it flows in, it's got to flow out.

He who believes on me as the scriptures say, out of his belly will flow rivers of living water. Well, if we took a survey, who's got that rivers of living water flowing out? Do you, do you, do you, do you, do you? You know what most people would say? No, I have no idea what he's talking about. It's not flowing out because it's not flowing in.

Does that make sense? I mean, if you believe on me as the scriptures say, well, actually the first part is a sermon in itself. If you truly believe on him, most people don't. They say they do, but they don't truly believe, and they haven't surrendered their life to Christ.

But if you have, and there's not rivers of living water flowing out, where's the kink in the hose? Actually, let's say, where's the kink in the heart? It's not with God. It's never with God, never with God. Is there a distance sometimes? Are you going through a valley? Does God seem, where are you? I'm praying to brass, of course.

Welcome to Christianity. But the problem never rests in God. The problem with worship is always us.

We don't go to worship. God says, nope, I'm on vacation. Try me next week.

Go into worship. Nope, God, not, I'm putting do not disturb on my door. The connection's not there.

Where's that river of life flowing out of most Christians? Think about this. When was the last time you witnessed to anybody? When was the last time you got up and you said, I look at my clock, I can't wait to get up and worship God. When was the last time you're so passionate about Christ as passionate about your favorite sports team? Where is that? And I understand it's not me, because if it was me, the flesh would take over.

It's the Holy Spirit residing within the believer that brings those fruits to fruition. So if you go home and you're just, man, Lord, I just don't feel anything. I'm just dead.

I know what Shane's saying, but I don't feel it. That's not necessarily a bad thing because self-examination is taking place. But you have to let that self-examination take you to the end result of finding an answer.

And the answer often is worship. I just haven't met too many people that set aside time in their day and worship God that are going through so many of the challenges that many people are of not hearing God's

voice. I just don't see that.

And actually, many of the great men and women of God that we read about in the 1600s, 1700s, 1890s, whatever, you think worship was not a part of their daily life? Martin Luther said, I think the day ill will spent if I haven't spent three hours in prayer and worship every morning. Now, I don't want to make people convicted because that's unrealistic. Yeah, maybe for some people.

But I sure would like to die trying, wouldn't you? I mean, if you just take how much time is on TV each night and we say we don't have the time? No, it's all about reprioritizing our time. We have the time. We just don't want to do it.

The problem is I don't have a river of life flowing into me, and that's why a river of life's not flowing out of me. It all starts here with worship and breaking before God and opening your heart and struggling. The flesh will not like this.

Anytime you say, you know what, I'm going to start that tomorrow morning, your flesh is going to say, no, you're not. No, you're not. We're going to stay in comfortable Christianity.

Remember, we've loved it for the last five or 10 years, haven't we? Haven't we loved it? Come on, you don't want to do that. Let's just sleep in. Let's just get, you know, let's come on.

You don't want to do, you've got to fight the flesh. You've got to bring the flesh into submission. That's why Paul said, I train my flesh.

It doesn't train me. I bring my body into submission. It doesn't bring me into submission.

I tell it what to do. It doesn't tell me what to do. We're going to worship God tomorrow, whether you like it or not, flesh.

Oh, what about if I fall asleep? Well, maybe you will. Or maybe it's better for you in the evening. I don't know.

I don't want to put little guidelines and you have to do this. I'm just saying we've got to worship God. There's a problem there when we fail to worship God.

Those who worship God must worship him in spirit and in truth. Worship wasn't a vibe. It wasn't like, well, maybe, or you might want to consider this.

It was part of Christianity. They had to worship God. Why do we need all three? And I'm going to talk separately in the future, but on the word, on prayer, on worship, if we only have the word, if all I have is this without worship, guess what happens? I become cold, callous, and mechanical.

I become a modern day Pharisee. And I don't have the spirit of God within me, so I'm going to tell you off instead of gently correct you. I'm going to be defensive instead of humble and teachable.

You see how that works? If I just have this, I just become some mean Bible-thumping Christian. Just let you have it. Just let you have it.

Yeah, family, this guy. Why? Submit to me. Haven't you read the Bible? No, sir, haven't you read the Bible? Submit to Christ and die for your wife.

No wonder she's not submitting to you. You've got to provide an environment for submission. And submission isn't just some guy, dude, I'm submitting to Christ.

And they say, family says, would you leave? Sure, I'll leave as I submit to Christ. That's all it is. It's not some big power position, machismo, macho man, all this stuff.

Biblical submission, we throw that definition around as if it's controlling, domineering, and dominating. It's not. It's a gracious husband, leader, leading his family.

And I don't know of too many families that wouldn't just say, Lord, let him lead. If he's leading you because he loves you and he's following Christ. Actually, wives are desperate for that.

They're craving it. It's everywhere. So if you just have the worship, though, you'll become cold and callous.

This is what happens. Why? We rule our house with a rod of iron, but we know nothing about the compassion of Christ. If this is all you have.

But if all you have is worship, right? If all I have is worship, I may have emotional highs, but I have no foundation. We will inevitably shape God into whatever we think he is or whatever we want him to be. This is what happens.

Without the word of God and all you just go to church, all I do is worship. The Holy Spirit's moving. The Holy Spirit's moving.

Don't, you know, just whatever. We're not going to have any foundation. We're not going to have any grounding.

Then we kind of put God into whatever. Well, I think God is this and he'll allow this and here's what God is. But there's no foundation.

God knew us so well that he says, I must give you structure. I must give you a foundation for your life. So worship without the word of God, basically theology is dangerous.

That's why I often joke if it's odd, it's God. Churches believe if it's odd, it's God. Anything goes.

Anything. Do whatever you want. The Holy Spirit's moving.

Why? I sure don't see that. I sure don't see that. But that's what happens.

And I know people, all they do is worship. Sometimes, I know it's not the case in Gabe because we've talked a lot before and I can say this, but I know other worship leaders. All they do is worship.

They never read the Bible. So that's why the lyrics will get way out here into Never Never Land. That's why there's no foundation.

That's why they're just as grumpy and arrogant and mean as the pastor sometimes, right? Because worship alone doesn't do much if you're not grounded in the word of God. Because our own sinful flesh will take over and just take us wherever it wants. And then we become thinking so high of ourselves.

I'm such a great worship person. It's all about worshiping God. I don't really know what the Bible says, but I'm just worshiping God.

And you turn into something that's not biblical. Go visit churches where the word of God is not taught or preached or encouraged. That's why you see the guys on TV falling from this and falling from this and falling from this.

It's unbalanced. Now, if I only have prayer, this is interesting. If all I do is prayer, because we know there's some religions out there or say some churches that are just, you know, they're just kind of dead orthodox prayer.

If all I have is prayer, it becomes one-way communication in the list of demands of what I want from God. I don't have time to worship. I'm definitely not going to read the word.

But God, would you do this? And would you give me this? And would you do that? You're not hearing from God. You're not hearing the heart of God. So it's three strands that are not easily broken.

Worship, the word, and prayer. And I thought of this as well, the gun analogy, right? That's a big debate now, guns. Oh, guns, got to get rid of the guns, you know.

Nobody wants to mention it's a sin problem, a moral problem, right? You don't want to go to the heart of the matter. But think about this. The word of God is the bullet.

The word of God is the bullet. Prayer is the chamber that holds that bullet in place. But worship is what pulls the trigger.

Worship, pow, that's where the power comes from. You can't just have, I mean, I could bring a .30-06 shell. It's nothing.

Set it right there. You guys could look at it. I can even put it in the chamber of the gun.

Most of you probably head for the door, right? Still no big deal at all. Probably get arrested maybe, right? .30-06 with a live shell in there. But where does the damage come from? Where does it really cause havoc? Where does it, and I'm not meaning worship cause havoc, but that's where the heart really gets set on fire.

That's where you pull the trigger and you hear the power of that gun. You hear the power of that rifle. That's during worship.

That's what worship's like. It's like pulling the trigger of your Christianity. It's hard to be on your knees or sit in a chair and worshiping God and praying and confessing and being built up and being stripped of everything and letting him heal you, letting him restore you, letting him renew you and get up and leave there no different.

It's impossible. That's why Jesus said true worshipers are gonna worship God in spirit and in truth. It's a worshiping lifestyle.

Why many don't worship? All right, you ready to go where the rubber meets the road? Why many don't worship? Why they don't hear from God? Well, in short, it hurts. Doesn't it? Worship hurts. When I worship tomorrow morning, it's gonna confront anything that is not pleasing God in my life.

You can't sit there and worship God without the Holy Spirit bringing remembrance. What I call the sledgehammer of God, right? Bam, bam, attitude towards spouses, attitude towards others, reaching out

when you should reach out to people when you haven't or whatever it is. This is what it hurts.

During worship, I realize that I need God. My utter dependence is magnified and my sin is exposed. During worship, I'm just, utter dependence on God is magnified.

I'm not all that in a bag of chips, right? My sin is exposed. I lay bare before God. It's actually, that's worship, is you're laying bare before God.

The heart lays bare before God and say, Lord, you search me. You try me. You convict me.

But that's a good thing, right? To lay bare before God. One of the songs we do sometimes is Glorious Ruins. And the lyrics say, I look to the cross as my failure is lost.

In the light of your glorious grace, let the ruins come to life in the beauty of your name. Rising up from the ashes, God, forever you reign. See, it's hard to sing that song and leave there negative.

Leave there cast out. Leave there burdened. Worship relieves us of all those things.

Worship heals. It restores. It renews.

It breaks. It builds. It consumes.

It opens the ears of my heart. My heart changes and aligns with God. See, that's what happens during worship.

My heart actually changes and aligns with God. See, in all the scriptures, pray what you will and you'll receive it. Most people go, oh, that's not true.

Oh, sure it is. When you're in the will of God, you're not praying for a Mercedes Benz. You're just praying for a reliable car.

You're not praying for the house on the hill. You're just praying for a house. You're not praying for \$100,000 to come in the mail.

You're praying, Lord, just provide. See, you can tell fleshy prayers from heart-searching prayers that God has planted in your heart. When my will aligns with God's will through worship and prayer and these spiritual disciplines, then when you pray, it's as if you're lifting up heaven because you're agreeing with God.

Your heart's in alignment with his now. Instead of saying, Lord, change that wicked spouse, you're saying, Lord, change me. Lord, change me.

I'm so sorry. I've caused that. I've caused that.

Would you change me? And see how everything changes. The whole prayer life changes when our heart is aligned with God. Once I submit and surrender to worship, the floodgates open and change takes place.

Woe to the minister who does not worship. You're going to feed God's people, yet you yourself are malnourished. You're going to preach about brokenness and humility, but you do not humble yourself.

And here's why we run from worship. And here's why we silence God's voice. Why we run from worship.

And I'll just shoot you straight with probably the top four or five reasons. The obvious reason that most people run from worship is if they don't know him. See, many people, I'm convinced that many people come to church, but they've never truly repented of their sin.

They never truly ask Christ to come into their heart and save them and conquer sin and acknowledge what he did on the cross. And they repent and their lives changed. So, of course, they don't like worship.

They hate worship. Get me out of it. I don't want to hear that stuff because the darkness doesn't like the light of the gospel penetrating their heart.

So you have to ask yourself, if I don't like worship, I would say, why? Why don't I like worship? And so we start with this number one obvious reason. Person doesn't have a genuine relationship with Christ. Now, of course, that's not everything, but that's the place to start.

The next issue we just talked about earlier, besetting sin. What that is, it's my little vice and I'm not willing to give up. Right? Anybody have those? That's my one little vice.

I'm not willing to give up. And unconfessed sin and worship cannot dwell in the same house. So many times, let me give you an example of what now Christian leaders are calling an epidemic in the rise of the porn industry within the Christian community.

I mean, you've got guys, you've got to have safeguards on your phones, on your iPads, on your computers. You've got to have it all dialed in because the enemy is coming after you. He's coming after me.

I know he's coming after you. But if a man is continually or a woman now, it's like one out of four women, statistics. Maybe we should change gears and preach to the women as well.

But a person out there, if you're engaging in this on a continual basis, you think you're going to want to worship God? You think that's going to help worship or hinder worship? So we hold on to these besetting sins. I just keep falling and I keep falling and I keep falling. I don't want to worship.

I have a hard time worshipping. But God says, come to me and worship. Let me break that addiction.

Let me break that problem. Let me break it. How many of us hold on to bitterness and anger and resentment? I mean, talking to people, I know they're so bitter and angry and upset at people.

It permeates from their whole life and they don't think it's true. Oh, I don't have a problem with them. Then why are you so mad at them? I can see it come out of your veins, come out of your neck.

Oh, my spouse, my ex-spouse. And they just hold on to all this bitter, toxic waste into the heart. And you think you're going to go worship? You might play worship.

You might play at it, right? Put a few songs on, sit there. Yeah, I know. I know I really need to confess and repent of that and ask for it.

But I'm not going to. I'm not going to. No, no.

And we hold on to those things. I mean, there's a whole list we could do, right? Of sins that we know that we just like to hold on to. God says, get rid of it.

Get rid of that mouth. Get rid of that gossip. Get rid of that slander.

Get rid of it. Get rid of that sex. You fill in the blank.

We say, oh, I kind of like it, though. We hold on to our sin as they are like dear children, right? Like, what was that? John, I think J.C. Ryle. I quoted him last year.

That our sins are as dear to us as our children. And we hold on to them. But as he said, the parting must come.

The parting must come. So it's very hard to continue in sin and worship God. One or the other will prevail.

If I'm worshiping God, sin is held at bay. But if I'm caught in sin, unconfessed sin, unrepentant sin, then worship's held at bay. Now, we might come to church and sing some songs.

Yeah, that was great. We might even do this and stuff. But that's not worshiping God.

That's going through the motions. And you know the difference. I know the difference.

And I do want to encourage you. It's not like you're going to get up every morning or at night and just get a great time of worship. Sometimes it stinks.

I've had times this week, I'm like, man, Lord, this is not. What happened? I'm up at 430 in the morning. This sermon's not coming together.

Putting on, I'm just not, what's going on? And usually in that case, I need to put this to the side, put this to the side, and just lay still before God. Sit still and just let him just minister to me. Just speak into my heart.

Because I get so caught up. I got to get through this. I got to get through this.

I got to get through it. And just stop, just stop and listen to me. But if we hold on to besetting sin, and I don't want to make a point of this more than I have to, but even you talk to people, I thought, you know, I have a problem with drugs or alcohol.

You think they worship a lot? They can't because the addiction's now got controlled and the Holy Spirit's not controlling. So we go through life not worshiping because of these things. Now, here's probably one of my favorite ones because it was me.

Why we run from worship and as a result, we silence the voice of God. Pride, especially for guys, is it not? It's what I call tough guy syndrome. Can I be honest with you? This might hurt.

But 20 years ago, I would have laughed at you. I would have laughed at this worship. I would have laughed.

I would have mocked this place. A bunch of lukewarm, just a bunch of, well, let me read. I wrote it down.

These are just a bunch of emotional wrecks or fanatical followers. They are sensitive wimps. Real men don't worship God.

This is a bunch of looney-tune men. I would have laughed at worship. I would have.

I guarantee it. I went to church, I was, look at these guys. Who do they think they are? Remember, I told the story last year when I was, you know, and this isn't coming from some emotional guy, right? My family's from the farms of Oklahoma.

My dad used to always say, boy, you don't cry. Boy, you don't cry. So I was raised in that environment of non-emotional.

So when God changes my heart and emotions come out, this isn't coming from some emotional wreck or fanatical guy or some sensitive wimp. This is coming from a guy who had to hold his feelings back to survive. I had to be quiet.

I couldn't show emotion. So be very careful, men. I wish I could hang my hat here and stop here for a while.

All great men of God worship God. You would do your family more good than reading books and saying all the right things and instead just worship him. I mean, I'm honestly getting tired of men who say all the right things, but they don't do it.

They're not worshipers. They mock the worship and yet their lives are falling apart. They mock worship and yet they're distant from God.

This pride prohibits worship, does it not? I'm not going to be like those clowns. I'm just going to sit here, got my composure, I'm good. Look at those guys.

It prevents worship. Now, this is interesting. It's not always expressive.

You know, we think of worship and you know, Shane, I'm not thinking of right, just for a minute, just get out of your mind, whatever, dancing, arms up. I'm not talking about any of that. I'm just talking about my posture simply reflects my heart.

So I'm worshipping God at home. I'm probably not going to be on the computer, right? I'm going to be in a chair on the floor and on my knees just saying, Lord, would you guide my family? Lord, would you restore these relationships? Lord, protect my children. Lord, keep them healthy.

Lord, protect them. Lord, we pray for our nation and our church and you just go into a time of prayer and worship. The posture just reflects the heart.

So it's not about this. It's not about this. It's not about really anything.

Granted, if we're just sitting there going like this, I'm going to shoot straight or I'll shoot you straight. Something's wrong with your heart. If you're in a hurry to get out of worship, something's wrong with the heart spiritually.

Well, we don't prefer, we prefer the old hands. Okay, that's fine. But something, if you don't prefer, if worship is hurting and not helping, something's wrong there.

And then the fourth reason, a wrong perception of worship. And that's what I said. We have a wrong perception of worship.

Those guys are just emotional wrecks. They're sensitive wimps, right? We have a wrong perception of worship. We think worship, you know, if I said, okay, people, we're not worshipping.

Some of you would think, oh, we got to do, we got to raise our hands. Do I got to do this? Do I got to like run down the aisles like some churches? Do we have to get the flags out? Right? That's just expression, different expressions. A lot of people do those things who are not worshipping God.

They're going through the moment. Look at me. Look at me.

Aren't I so holy? Aren't I so holy? And they go out and they cuss at their wife and they grab a six pack on the way home. You want to shoot straight sermon, right? I'm just shooting you straight. This stuff drives me crazy.

Maybe not first service. Second service is when this stuff happens. Not first service, not the first service.

But man, let me just say quick things. Worship strengthens me. I don't know how you do it.

Worship strengthens me. Most people, I guarantee, if you receive the amount of criticism and stuff I receive, you would be an emotional wreck if you didn't worship. You would be, how do you get through life? Men can actually become little babies when we don't get our way, right? As soon as life throws me a curveball, what happens? I go pout in the corner.

So it's ironically, the men that think they're playing Mr. Tough Guy are really Mr. Baby because they can't handle anything. If their brand new car gets a little dust on or hurt, they go into a fit. If they didn't make a certain amount of money, they go into a fit.

If they don't get their wages right, they go into a fit. Bunch of little babies crying to mommy. That's what I thought.

I thought I was a tough guy, remember? Bench pressing 400 pounds, drinking beer, getting in fights. I was a tough guy. I was a wimp inside.

If I received the amount of pressure then that I receive now, I would have crumbled and ran home to my mommy and asked for my blankie. But I was Mr. Tough Guy, right? That's what people have. They have this facade.

They're Mr. Tough Guy. They're not Mr. Tough Guy. They can't handle criticism.

They can't love their wife. They can't get into the word of God. They don't wanna worship.

They're very critical. And they think they're Mr. Tough Guy? You better change your perception of worship, sir. Worship strengthens you.

Sometimes you guys know I write now for the Christian Post every once a week. And there are some comments on there, borderlining on death threats that they have to remove. The old Shane would track down the address and go, okay, let's handle this old school.

But I can't do that or I'll end up in jail. So worship strengthens me and fortifies me because when the enemy comes in like a flood, the spirit of the Lord raises up a standard against him. As I'm worshipping, the enemy must flee.

As I'm worshipping, the enemy has to flee. As you're worshipping, the enemy can't come in and work in a worshipping heart. We have to bring every thought captive to the obedience of Christ through worship.

When your kids are getting old and they're rebelling, you think yelling at them and doing all these things is gonna help? Worship's gonna help. Worship brings a prodigal son home. Worship restores.

Worship strengthens. You've got a difficult meeting. You better be worshipping before that.

Not grabbing a Red Bull and listening to whoever on the radio. That's not gonna cut it. You'll arrive as an anxious nutcase.

500 milligrams of caffeine, the government's coming to get us. Did you hear, did you hear? Men have become a bunch of babies. When they should be protecting their homes, they're scaring them.

The protector has ran away. And they call us weak for worshipping. Wow, unbelievable.

I'll just close with this. I have a hard time believing that Jesus just stood there and twiddled his thumbs when they were worshipping. Do you? You think Jesus just worshiped the Father like this? I mean, we're talking He worshiped the Father.

He spent time in prayer at His presence. Jesus, while it was still dark, throughout the night would pray to His Father. Jesus Christ Himself, you don't think you need to? Or me? And I found this often, those in need of worship are those who are the most busy.

Even the most busy at the service, serving the most need to worship. Those who are busy in life need to worship. The busiest people that I know are the ones who are not worshipers.

You need to make some lifestyle changes if you want to truly make some time for God. Because the enemy will pull you in as much. Let me give you another job.

Let me give you an income raise. Let me give you seven days a week, 12 hours a day. And then let me plant this thought in your mind.

Yeah, just work hard for two more years. Then you can retire early. You know how many people have told me that? They're still working 20 years later and they've lost their family.

You know how many men I know that say, Shane, I know it's going to be seven days a week away from my family for the next five years. But after that, no, there's no after that. It's too late.

Too late. And that's what I love about worship. It helps me look down the road.

It gets my heart ready for now and for the future. When are we going to stop just being convicted and start acting upon the conviction? I want to leave you with that question. When are we going to stop just being convicted and start acting upon that conviction? I almost bought a whole bunch of duct tape and was going to cut it up and give it to all the guys in here.

Remember what we talked about? Put some duct tape on your mouth, stop saying it and start doing it. If I have another wife come up and tell me, she says, yeah, my husband tells you one thing, but let me tell you what he's doing at home. I'm going to preach 10 more of these sermons.

Because they say it right right now. Many of you are going, yeah, I know. I mean, man, I got to do it.

Shane, you're really stirring something in me. You're really stirring something. Well, you've been saying that for the last three years.

When's it going to stop stirring and make the cake? Because conviction alone doesn't do anything. The devil say you stay convicted. You stay right there in that conviction mode for the rest of your life.

The old saying, the road to hell is paved with good intentions. The road to destroying our lives is paved with good intentions. Again, Jesus says, whoever has an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches.

Return to your first love. Whoever has a hear an ear, let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. Repent and return from your false doctrine, your hypocrisy.

Again, in Revelation, whoever has an ear ears, whoever has ears, it's responsibility. Let him hear what the spirit says to the churches. I know your deeds.

You have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up and strengthen what remains. God says, return to me and I'll return to you.

Thus saith the Lord. It's a hard thing to hear, but let me remind you that during worship, you can run to his grace, run to his forgiveness, run to his love, run to his peace. And the danger of preaching a sermon like this is all we can do is just bring out the sledgehammer and forget about the grace.

But it's actually the grace that relieves the sledgehammer. It's a great, God says, listen, I'm gracious and I'm forgiving. Just come back.

Just come back. Just just just say, Lord, I need to work on these areas. He says, I'm gracious.

Let the peace of God that surpasses all understanding rule your hearts and your minds. Let it let it. The Bible is so full of obedience words.

Let it do not be conformed. Make no provision for it's a mind in the will coming in and worshiping God.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32152.mp3>

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