

LET US DRAW NEAR - Biblical Worship and the Warming of the Soul - Part six

Teaching #2081 - Sunday, October 28th, 2018, 10:00 a.m.

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WHY WHOLE-HEARTEDNESS IN WORSHIP ISN'T ENOUGH (Pt. 2)

2 Samuel 6:1-23 - "David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand. [2] And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baale-judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts who sits enthroned on the cherubim. [3] And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart, [4] with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark. [5] And David and all the house of Israel were making merry before the Lord, with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. [6] And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled. [7] And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error, and he died there beside the ark of God. [8] And David was angry because the Lord had burst forth against Uzzah. And that place is called Perez-uzzah, to this day. [9] And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and he said, "How can the ark of the Lord come to me?" [10] So David was not willing to take the ark of the Lord into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. [11] And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household. [12] And it was told King David, "The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. [13] And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. [14] And David danced before the Lord with all his might. And David was wearing a linen ephod. [15] So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn. [16] As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal the daughter of Saul looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart. [17] And they brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place, inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord. [18] And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts [19] and distributed among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one. Then all the people departed, each to his house. [20] And David returned to bless his household. But Michal the daughter of Saul came out to meet David and said, "How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants' female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself!" [21] And David said to Michal, "It was before the Lord, who chose me above your father and above all his house, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord—and I will make merry before the Lord. [22] I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes. But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor." [23] And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

Last week we began our study of this fascinating passage. I won't go over the same background to these events that I covered in that message. The first point - and perhaps the central point of both teachings - was ***a passion for worship without an accompanying passion for knowledge is a dangerous thing***. Just ask Uzzah. He reached out to steady the ark from falling into the mud. He did it to protect the glory of God. He loved God. That's ***why*** he reached out to steady the ark. But he experienced terrible, immediate judgment from the God of the ark.

Why? Was he not sincere? Absolutely he was. But he was still ***disobedient***. Either he ***forgot*** or hadn't taken the time to ***learn*** in the first place ***how*** the ark of the Lord was to come to Israel - ***carried***, never on a ***cart***. The lesson? Sincerity without knowledge has no currency with God.

Now we move on to two more lessons from this great text:

2) **NOTICE DAVID'S RESPONSE TO GOD'S PURIFYING PRESENCE**

His reaction is exactly what mine would have been:

2 Samuel 6:9 - "And *David was afraid of the Lord that day*, and he said, 'How can the ark of the Lord come to me?'"

"If God is even anything close to this holy and fearful, how can I ever stand before Him? How can this kind of God possibly **not** destroy everything about me?" That's a very good question.

David isn't instantly made aware God is not a **chummy** God. There is a never dimming, never diminishing **otherness** about God. He is **loving**, to be sure, but is never **tame**.

Make no mistake about it. David would have never had anything to do with that ark again had it not been for a practical lesson God demonstrated while the ark was banished to the house of **Obed-edom** for ninety days - **2 Samuel 6:10-11** - **"So David was not willing to take the ark of the Lord into the city of David. But David took it aside to the house of Obed-edom the Gittite. [11] And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-edom the Gittite three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-edom and all his household."**

As David kept an eye on the ark from a distance, he saw that people **weren't** dropping over dead at Obed-edom's house. Everything was **great** at Obed-edom's house: **2 Samuel 6:12** - **"And it was told King David, 'The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God." So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing."**

And even a great man like King David had to learn the same lesson we all have to learn. The problem wasn't with the ark. And the problem wasn't with God. The problem was a lack of **knowledge** and then, because of that lack of knowledge, there was a lack of **obedience**.

So there are **two lessons**. God will never compromise with disobedience - even disobedience rooted in **ignorance**. And second, God always honors those who draw near to Him on His terms.

This is one of the most important aspects of your ongoing growth in discipleship. There is a lesson bound up in this incident that, more than anything else, will shape your walk with God from this point on until you see Jesus face to face. ***How do you hear God's call to holiness? What meaning does the phrase, the "fear of the Lord" take in your life?***

There are **two responses** to the holiness of God that are spiritually deadly:

- a) ***You can think God doesn't take sin any more seriously than most of us do.*** After all, if it doesn't bother **us** it seems intolerant of God to allow it to bother **Him**. And you can play up God's love and grace to the point that He is **morally indifferent** to all sins except the ones that still bother you.

My own opinion is that one of the reasons God allows us all to be badly **mistreated** at some time or another in our Christian walk - even right in the church - is without **feeling** mistreatment personally we have very little idea of what it **feels** like to be sinned **against**. And only being sinned **against** gives

us even a small picture of what our sins **feel** like in the heart of God.

We feel the pain of sin **inflicted** upon us. We don't feel the pain we **inflict** on God. We can actually be tempted to **complain** about the sins people commit against us to God **while** we are sinning against Him.

God allows the pain of sin to be felt by us to teach us what sin feels like on the **receiving** end. It's part of our spiritual **training**. It's deadly to not care enough about our sins against God because without holiness no one will ever see the Lord. The Bible makes that clear. But there is another terrible response to the truth of God's holiness:

- b) ***You can let God's holiness drive you from His presence and go underground into condemnation or unbelief.***

David almost makes that mistake in this account. ***"How shall the ark of the Lord come to me? We can't have anything to do with that ark. It will destroy all of us!"***

Probably there are people here, right now, thinking, ***"Pastor Don, if God is even half that strict, how shall I ever be able to approach Him?"***

Why did God bless Obed-edom so much? Why did He make his blessing so **pronounced** and **visible** on his household? There is only one answer to that question. He wanted to show David that He was a good God - that mercy and blessing were bound up with His presence. He was **enticing** David by blessing Obed-edom.

So what's the lesson? Yes, God is holy. Yes, He must be approached with care. Yes, He does require knowledge and understanding of His ways in worship. But the reason for all of that is not to **repel** people, but to **transform people - to grow people**.

That's why even in this Old Testament picture of the presence of God - the ark - the **contents** of the ark were chosen by God so carefully and specifically. The ark the people were dancing and singing around was an ark full of the **commandments of God**. These were put at the very center of the worship of the people.

But along with the **commandments** were samples of the **manna** provided from heaven for their journey through the wilderness. The God who **commanded** was the same God who **provided**. ***Obedience brought protection and blessing.***

Since the garden Satan's deception has always been the same. How many people hear God's liberating call for obedience in area of life and don't respond simply because they believe that same lie - that God is out to restrict their joy and freedom and fulfillment.

So the lesson for us today is to **hear the Word of holiness with reverence that leads to obedience**. Condemnation **paralyzes**. The fear of the Lord brings wisdom and obedience and, finally, freedom in the truest sense.

The New Testament states this same truth so clearly:

Hebrews 4:12-16 - "For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning

the thoughts and intentions of the heart. [13] And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account. [14] Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.”

Please take note: it's the sharp cutting edge to the Word that leads to our heavenly High Priest. It is only the **“active”** Word that makes us aware of our need. Don't shut out the active power of the Word of the Lord in your life through simple ignorance of its liberating purpose!

3) LEARN FROM GOD'S WRATH AND MOVE AHEAD IN HIS MERCY

2 Samuel 6:12-13 - “And it was told King David, ‘The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-edom and all that belongs to him, because of the ark of God.’ So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-edom to the city of David with rejoicing. [13] And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal.”

Notice that phrase, **“...those who bore the ark....”** (13). David had learned from God's Word. David now **took the time to obey the instruction of the Lord in everything.** And the ark was a source of joy and blessing for all Judah.

David **learned**, David **repented**, and David **moved on**. And I'll tell you **how** he moved ahead. The text says the people **offered sacrifices after six steps**(13). All of those sacrifices were pictures of the shed blood of Jesus. **You have to keep your eyes on Jesus to move ahead in mercy and peace.** You never move far **without** Him. You learn to **pace your life by Jesus.**

The **Word** will keep you **enlightened**. The **blood of Jesus** will keep you **clean**. Mercy, without the commitment to keep the Word is a sentimental self-deception. The Word, without constant access to mercy through Jesus is a cruel condemning hammer.

That's why, even in the actual construction of the ark, the **commandments of God** were inside the ark. And the **mercy seat** was on the lid of the ark. The Devil is happy to have me apply either one to my heart **as long as it is unaccompanied by the other.** That is the surest way to spiritual ruin. I constantly need the **correction and instruction of the Word** along with the **application of mercy** together in my life. These two **together** (the Word of instruction and the Cross of mercy) are like the wings on a airplane. Remove either one and the plane crashes. But taken together, they will keep your spiritual life flying until Jesus comes again.

Do worship the Lord with all your might. **Don't** despise passion in worship like Michal did. That only leads to **spiritual barrenness**. But **when** you worship, keep the Word at the center. Keep your mind full. Obey God's instructions. Remember Isaiah's vision of the Throne. And **“worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness.”**