

11.10.2024 Sermon

The More You Know | Ephesians 3:14-21

SPEAKER

Elder Kevin Brisbin

This sermon series is on worship, and one of the things that I'm intersecting with worship this morning was I, too, am still kind of stuck on all the names of God. Beautiful, really liked that.

And one of the names of God that has always, well, not always, but has been meaningful to me since I've come to know it through the women's Bible study that my wife attended when we started here 20 years ago. This year, it's only used once in all of Scripture.

It's used by Hagar in Genesis, chapter 16, and she's been outcast, and she's feeling, man, already it's okay. It is. She's feeling that, and she cries out to El Rai. It says she made it up. And I love that we don't just have to call God by predetermined names. We can call him or them or her, whatever we need them to be for us in that moment, because that's who they promised to be for us, with us, alongside us, for us.

So, in that moment, Hagar is feeling invisible, cast out, like what's going to happen. And she says, El Rai, the God who sees me, and I am seen by the one who sees me.

And it's the only time it's used, which is remarkable to me, because it is such a beautiful name of God. Who doesn't want to be seen and who can't relate to the feeling of feeling like, "Does anyone see me?" Like, "Does anyone see this? Does anyone see what's going on? Does anyone feel this? Am I alone? Am I the only one?" As sure as I am standing here, I can assure you, God sees you. He sees you in a way that is wider and deeper and higher and greater than we can fathom, and he doesn't see us from far away. He joins us right where we are. He's not afraid of it. It's not like he's afraid to touch it or hurt too much, or will be angry, or he'll be angry at us.

He joins us, all of us, every one of us, right where we are, and sees us for all that we are and all that we're not yet, or all that we may never be, and loves us wholly and completely.

You see us as us. You are here with us. We're not invisible to you.

So, we're preaching on worship. And this is the seventh week in this rotation of preaching about worship, and I just want to be honest, I don't remember in all of

my... you know, I'm the newest preacher in the preaching rotation, but still, it's been maybe three or so years. I don't remember having a writer's block quite like I've had this week.

I just kept searching for the right thing to say, something to say, but I never found it. Just being honest, I don't feel like I found it. I. And so I've tried to listen. I've heard a lot of grief. I've tried to hold it alongside my own, and I've tried to acknowledge God, the parent, the child, and the spirit joining us and holding us and all of our various emotions along with us, and all that I can settle on is I love you.

I love you. I love you. I love this church. I love who we are. I love us. I love every corner, every table, every front row, every second row, every third row, fourth row, fifth row. People are putting up fingers telling me, "Don't miss my row." I just want you all to know that I love you. I try my best to see you, and I try my best to honor all that I see, because I believe that you are worthy of being seen, worthy of being seen, and I pray that I'll forever hold that space, and that we as a church will forever hold space for everyone at the table, because it's God's table and God's number one house role is to love.

Barbara Brown Taylor expresses this poignantly in her book *Holy Envy*, and I want to share this quote from that book:

"The only clear line I draw these days is this, when religion tries to come between me and my neighbor, I will choose my neighbor. Jesus never commanded me to love my religion."

And I want to take it a step further, if you go to the next slide and just kind of invite us to see it this way, the only clear line I draw these days is this, when "blank" tries to come between me and my neighbor, will I choose my neighbor? Because we need to remember that Jesus never commanded me to love my "blank" - and you can fill that in however you feel led to fill that in.

So, let us keep adding leaves to the table, keep making more room, and continue to love our neighbors the way that Jesus does. And let us not forget which tables Jesus flipped and which tables he sat at, and where those tables were located, and which people were and were not happy about those choices, because if we profess to follow Jesus and to be Christians, little Christ, let's act like it.

So, I want to say I found it easier to love God and my neighbor, to see the worth in other people. My whole life, my personal lifelong struggle has been more with the belief that I am worthy, partly because I grew up in a system that consistently reinforced that I wasn't, and partly because of a lifelong insecurity that I'm enough. So, I've outsourced my worthiness, also a defining trait of an Enneagram three,

requiring consistent affirmation from others outside of myself as I'm unable to find that within myself.

That's the main reason I sought out therapy as a 42-year-old man. I wanted to learn how to be self-affirming, and hope is to one day be able to believe that I'm worthy of existing in this world and worthy of love just because I am. I'm not there yet, but this word *worthy* is at the crux of our sermon today.

Worship. Etymologically, it comes from two old English words, the root word *worth*, meaning worthy or honorable, and the suffix (I can't pronounce it), but it's dash, S, C, I, P, E, which means the state of being. So, worship comes from these two words that, when put together, mean worth-ship or a state or condition of being worthy.

Now, today is the seventh sermon on worship. And so, to restate an earlier feeling, what can I possibly say? What can I say that you haven't already heard from six other preachers on this topic? And in case you're wondering, or wondering again, why is that? What are we doing? How is worship a gym? Well, as a centered-set Church, part of centering on Christ is decentering the church and church leadership as the means through which you need to connect with God.

Basically, we aren't gatekeepers. We aren't seeking control. Our aim is not to tell you what you must and must not think. We believe that's up to you.

What you believe is also your personal responsibility. And so, in this way, we feel it's more like a gym or a fitness center than a hospital, because a hospital has doctors and nurses who have the responsibility of diagnosing and treating you, while at a gym in a fitness center, they have personal trainers and people who teach classes, but you are the one doing the workout.

In the same way, we want to create a supportive environment for personal, spiritual, and theological development alongside one another. And so, the model for this series was born to choose a theological topic and then have all seven of our preachers teach on that from their own personal viewpoint and in their own style, to demonstrate our own variety and to support the congregation's personal studies, as they kind of sort this out for themselves, as you each exercise your own faith by working out your own theology. Did you catch it? I used exercise and working out in there.

Thank you. Thank you. Fiction and syntax matters, and when you first join a gym, you don't just start bench pressing hundreds of pounds. I know this as I belong to a gym, I know none of you are shocked. I definitely look like a person who goes to the gym regularly, but I just started a year ago. Actually, last October, I had been on a weight loss journey and then was switching from that into weight maintenance and was told that weight lifting was a good way to maintain one's weight. And so, I started something new. I had never stepped foot in the gym. Probably more of you

are less surprised by that, prior to a year ago, but I just started going and you learn what to do. You start with lighter weights, and you work your way up. And that's the thing. You start with, not bench-pressing hundreds of pounds. You base it on your personal goals. You start with a strategic combination of weights, reps, sets, and rest. So, what, how much you're going to lift, how many reps you're going to do, how many sets of those reps, and then how long you're going to or not going to rest in between those sets. And there are various variables that go into that. And then over time, you modulate those four variables to work towards and meet different goals.

And in the same way, we felt it prudent to not start this series out with something as heavy as several hundred pounds, like, so what happens when we die?

We thought that maybe we should start with some lighter weights, working this out as a community and, you know, work our way up to heavier weights. And so, we started with something that we've all actually experienced and have first-hand knowledge of: worship.

So that's where we've started. We felt it was something a little lighter, more accessible. Now, as we continue to learn how to work out our theologies, we'll obviously disagree. There's not one workout program to rule them all. Just like the gym, we have our own personal goals, programs, and circuits. Some will gravitate towards a spin class with a larger group and higher energy and step-by-step routine instructions. Others will gravitate towards free weights or machines with lifting partners or spotters. Still, others may offer solo cardio on a treadmill or an elliptical. You choose the right path for you, we're planning to offer supplemental programming outside of Sunday mornings for people who might want some more structure, like some of those options. We've set up foundations one and two classes for the spring. We also have other classes lined up on things like finances, mental health, relationships, suicide prevention, etc. And then within the services, we will continue these rotations of theological topics.

Thus, increasing the degree of difficulty over time and having them through the unique lens of each preacher. And so today, you have me. I am your personal trainer du jour. So what unique questions do you have about worship? For me? Or what do you want to hear about worship from me that's like a Kevin thing?

Oh, non-rhetorically... interactive for participation. Thank you. See, we embrace learning and discovery. I've never done things like this before because this makes me very uncomfortable, but I've decided to try it. But I'm getting help and support. They have to know you're actually asking. If you ask a question, they don't think you're asking a question.

Tony Saletta:

Kevin, I see you up there leading musically for worship. When you're doing that, is it easy for you to enter in worship for yourself, as compared to maybe being in the seat

as someone else leads? And what other forms of worship do you see yourself participating in? So, there are two questions.

Elder Kevin Brisbin:

I think that the answer is probably what you would expect from me, which is, yes.

Sometimes it's easier to enter in because I've had some control over it. Like, I've spent time thinking about, prophetically, what I feel like God is saying in that moment. And sometimes, because I'm the one thinking it, it more naturally aligns with where I might be. So, in some ways, I think that makes it easier to enter in.

But it also comes alongside its own challenges, like distractions. For example, is anyone coming with me? Am I up here singing alone? Oh, did I miss it? Is no one else thinking this? Is no one else feeling this? Is anyone coming along with me?

And then you kind of take that journey, too, right? You think, well, maybe that's what they need this morning. Maybe they need me to just sing over them. Maybe it's okay that they're not singing with me on those mornings. Or maybe I need to share an invitation and provide a doorway to help get them to where I am. Like, okay, this is where I'm at, and this is why I'm thinking this. You don't have to piece it together through the various parts of the songs that I've very strategically chosen.

So, in some ways, it's a journey, like a lot of things. In some ways, it makes it easier. In some ways, it makes it more difficult, but it's all part of the journey. And then... is anyone coming with me? I mean, is anyone feeling what my intentions are and going in the same direction, or taking the journey that I feel God is inviting us to go on that morning? You know, it's not everyone's thing either, and I live with someone for whom that's not their thing, and I love her. That's not her journey, and that's okay.

So, if you're like Erica, she likes worship, but she doesn't journey that path of worship the same way I do, and that's totally okay. I honor her journey of worship, and she honors mine. There's a mutual respect there. And as far as other ways we worship, I'll get into that in later parts of the sermon, but to answer the question and not avoid it, yes, there are other ways that I worship.

I think it partly has to do with what we're doing. It also has to do with the way in which we're doing it. But I promise I'll share more about that later. David...

Oh, yes, since we're talking about worship, I was thinking about the free will that David displayed and how people kind of rejected his free will with his oneness with God. In the process of trying to understand worship, how are you being free in will without constraints?

It's a good question. Sometimes I am, and sometimes I'm not. Sometimes I do feel able to.

You're specifically referencing the story that James preached about, where David was entering the city and dancing in the linen ephod, scandalously. And the daughter of Saul, Michal, said, like, "This is scandalous! This is vulgar," was the word I think she used.

And he said, "Oh, you think this is vulgar? Hold my beer. I'll become even more undignified than this. I will dance with holy abandonment and resolve like you've never seen. I'm not dancing for you, I'm dancing for God."

I haven't done that, but I have felt different times in my life when I've been able to enter into an act of worship, whether it's singing or otherwise, where I felt like I could abandon myself in a different or new way, or a way that felt more fully surrendered to what God or the Holy Spirit was doing in that place and time, and in my life at that moment. But I think, like all of us, we probably go in and out. I mean, how would you answer that? Do you have an answer for yourself on that? Huh?

How does this feel for you?

Yeah, I've been thinking a lot about lamentation and weeping with those who weep, mourning with those who mourn. I'm curious, where do you see the role of lament in worship? Is there ever an appropriate time for corporate lamentation?

You've been thinking about it. Can I ask you what your thoughts are first, or do you want me to answer first?

I'm just curious. I mean, it's a great question, and I feel like you've thought about it more than I have right now, and so I'd love to hear what your thoughts are. There's been a lot of loss in my life and other people's lives I know over the last few years. And this week, we're all feeling it, I'm sure.

I feel like that's been so important, being able to walk with each other in those times of lament and not holding back from crying out. We have a whole book in the Bible, Lamentations. So, I think it's often neglected, and I think it's really important to recognize. I agree. As a culture, we're not good at that. We're really uncomfortable with people feeling and showing their feelings. Sadness is even more uncomfortable for a lot of people. I think grief in general is something we're not good at. I remember preaching a sermon a couple of years ago on that because we don't know how to sit in it.

We don't know how to come alongside someone and not try to make it better by fixing it, but just coming and sitting beside them in their grief, not to pull them out of it, but just to join them, with no other agenda than to be with them in their grief. I think that's something beautifully demonstrated in Jewish culture that we could learn a lot from. Those are some beginning thoughts, but as for corporate lamentation in worship, absolutely, I see lamentation as part of worship. I'll be sure to share more thoughts on that later.

I want to join you in that answer, Kevin, as I pass on the next question. In certain traditions, there's this conflict between an overcoming, victorious God and sitting in the pain. They haven't bridged the gap of that reality. Our God is not binary in that way. There is this thing about sitting in the darkness, feeling the pain, and still knowing there is victory.

In the context of all types of worship that you personally do, how do you deal with or cope with doubt, both in yourself and in God?

Yeah, I can share a little bit about this personally. It's been a journey over the last couple of years, thinking about things differently than I have for a long time in my life. I used to spiritually bypass a lot of doubt and just throw a tarp of faith over it. But then it just left it unresolved. It didn't actually go away. I still had questions. I was just afraid, masking my fear as faith, and I don't do that as much anymore.

I'm less afraid to actually ask the questions I have, and I feel like there's more faith for me personally in that journey of being honest. And the journey has been a journey, but where I stand right now, I'm on it, so I don't have a final resolved answer, but the best answer I've experienced for myself is that I believe God does hear us and answer our prayers. And I believe the answer is His presence. I don't always see circumstances or situations change, which would have previously caused doubt, like, "Am I doing something wrong?" Or, "Is it me?" Or, "Do I not have enough faith?" But the experience for me now is that the answer is His presence, joining me with me, alongside me, where I am, more than necessarily changing the external circumstances themselves. But it's still a journey.

I just want to comment on the Lamentations. I find it comforting that in the Bible it says that even our tears are stored, and the Lord is aware of our pain. He is there in the measuring and knowing of it, and you're not alone. He sees us. He sees them. He doesn't look away from them or ignore them.

That's good.

Hey Kevin, I wrote this down because I'm not very good at speaking in front of you. I've got it written down.

You and I spoke briefly during the earlier parts of the church service today, and you said something that I can relate to, and I'm sure many of the people in here can also relate to. I asked you how you were doing, and you said, "You know, you've had a rough week, and work has become slightly toxic." I was wondering how you're able to navigate your life through this situation in worship? I'm sure many of us have similar situations going on.

Hey Eli, I just want to say really quick, he's fine. No one here minds this one ounce.

As a parent, I love it.

Just want to release any feels. He belongs and we love him.

For me, it's different for all of us, but to answer the question, how am I navigating it? I'm not doing great, and I try to be honest about that. Even when people ask me how I'm doing at church, I try to be honest. I try not to say things I don't mean. I want my words to mean what I'm saying.

Even in writing my sermon, I normally start with "Good morning," but this morning, I didn't. I started with the word "morning" because I didn't feel good, and I didn't want to say the other word. So, I didn't, and then I wrote the word "morning" with a U in parentheses just as a note for myself because that's how I was feeling. But I try to be authentic about where I am, letting myself feel, and giving myself space.

Historically, I haven't been good at feeling my own feelings. I care a lot for other people, and maybe I did that as a distraction, or maybe because it was coping or survival. But yeah, I have heavy and dark days. I try to get really intentional about noticing things that are beautiful or wonderful. Like what Terry preached about last week. I try to get intentional about those things because where I look is where I tend to go. Or, like that saying, "What you feed grows, and what you starve dies." So, if I spend all my time living in darkness and only looking at the darkness, it just becomes consuming. But if I ignore the darkness and pretend it's not real, I don't actually deal with it. I have to move through it.

The way for me has been the word "grieve." Grief allows me to acknowledge the reality of what I'm experiencing, but also gives me a conduit through which it can pass through me. I don't have to stay there. I don't have to say, "This isn't real," or, "Just get over it." I don't have to pretend it's not real or that what I'm feeling doesn't matter. But I also don't have to stay there. I can let it move through me.

So, I come home almost every day and say, "Alright, let's go for a walk." I take all my kids, some of them ride bikes or scooters, and I walk. We go outside, and I just get intentional about thinking about them. I find things that bring me joy or relationships that bring me joy. I try to take moments of gratitude, like we've been doing throughout the year.

I don't mean that tritely. I don't practice that every day. I don't keep a gratitude journal, but I'm not against it. I just don't have that discipline myself.

But yeah, I think I've found hope and gratitude, too. But for me, I have to acknowledge the reality of what I'm feeling.

Do you have any advice?

Miss Mary, you're very wise. Do you have advice for me?

She said it's not legal, but...

I think that goes back to Veronica's point. There're the lamentations. We're in such a hurry to get out of the valley, right? We rush to get out of the pain, instead of understanding that in the Bible and in our Creator, this was understood. There's a time for pain, a time for dwelling and understanding, a time for feeling, a time for growing. There's a time for reflection. How did we get here?

Don't rush out of it. But in it, God will meet you there and help lead you out in the appropriate way. What I love about how the Psalms are constructed is that it acknowledges there are problems. It acknowledges despair. It acknowledges questions. But it always ends with a period, it is done.

So, don't rush, and don't do the illegal thing.

I'm not going to ask, but don't put that on camera.

But this is saying, "I am human. I am real. And I'm not going to be phony with you just because they call me a Christian."

I'm not going to be phony.

Yeah, and I think one last thing I would add is just that when you're living authentically, even in moments of doubt and grief, it opens up the space for others to do the same.

When people see that, they're more likely to feel like they can be honest and not have to pretend either. So, in a sense, the community is worshiping together as we do that. There's beauty in that.

And I don't say this, no one's paying me to say this, but this church is a big part of it. For me, I love so many people here and feel love from so many people here, that coming to church, quite literally, is a lifeline to me. I don't know if church is like that for everyone, but this church is definitely like that for me.

I was excited to see you up today, because I knew we were going to go to grammar school for Christians, and I was wondering, what is the Hebrew word for worship?

I love you. Erica, CUDA. Hebrew. Grammar School Crash Course for Christians. It was not, I mean, it was a layup, but, I mean, it wasn't a plant. No, I'm so glad you asked. I'm not sure if everyone is, but if you know me, you know I love these things, and some of you do too. So, I'll share those with those of you who do—it is recorded in the Bible as the Hebrew word Shaka, which is super fun to say. Try it with me, Shaka. See that accent on that second syllable? Shaka, ooh. Say it again. Shaka. Who, say it again.

It also sounds like, it also sounds like a sound effect to me like, which also makes me think of Shaka Khan, the queen of funk. And now you all have “I’m Every Woman” stuck in your head the rest of the day. You’re welcome.

At any rate, the word Shaka is first translated as worship in Genesis, chapter 22, verse 5, when Abraham said to his young men, “Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy Isaac go over there. We will worship, and then we will come back to you,” sure you will, nothing at all suspicious. And that is the first time the word is translated as worship into English. But Shaka was first used in Genesis chapter 18, verse 2. It just was not translated as the word worship there, but it was first used in Genesis 18, verse 2. Abraham looked up and saw three men standing nearby. When he saw them, he hurried from the entrance of his tent to meet them, and Shaka Eretz bowed low to the earth.

Which is also interesting because one, its first usage was not directed towards God, which I thought that was interesting, but towards these three angelic or heavenly messengers or visitors. And then two, we’re all the way to Abraham when worship first shows up in the text. That’s 19 generations deep from Adam to Abraham and no recorded worshiping. No Adam and Eve worship. No Abel’s favored offering. Enoch walked with God, but not recorded as worshiping to or with God. Noah survives a worldwide catastrophic flood, but no new world worship night there either. No, he does build the first recorded altar in that story, which is a fun first. It’s the first time in post scripture, post Ark deliverance. But again, no recorded worship, but Abraham gets some otherworldly guests and boom, worship.

Now four chapters later, Abraham does hit us with it again, and this time towards God as again, it’s spoken as an understood term. Isaac and I were going to go over there and this altar and this bundle of wood, and we’re just going to worship. And then BRB, but it really takes off from there. All told, the word Shaka is used 172 times in the Old Testament.

Speaking of the Old Testament, these images are consistent with our understanding of the Hebrew expression and experience of worship observed in the Old Testament as a lifestyle of reverential response. So, the Old Testament view of worship is reverential response to God that involves a variety of activities, including bowing down, offering physical blood sacrifices, celebrating God’s actions, serving others, obeying God, and expressing gratitude. And that is Hebrew grammar school.

Would anyone like Greek grammar school?

Alright, because you begged.

Alright, alright, alright. Greek grammar school, it is expressed in four different words in the Greek in the New Testament. Interesting, right? So, the first is pros Cuneo. Pros Cuneo, it’s a derivative of two words, pros, meaning to like Tio and Kun, or Kun

meaning dog. So, it literally means to dog, but it is understood as to kiss the hand, like a dog licking his master's hand. See the importance of interpretation? Remember when I preached on how everything is interpreted, and the Bible clearly says less than we clearly think it says, am I right?

Well, anyway, *proskuneo* is the one word that's used. It is used 60 times in the New Testament, and it's one of the four words that is translated as worship. So, it's to kiss the hand. Oh, and there are stick figures too, for anyone who likes the stick figure.

The second is okay, so that is the word that is most often translated as worship. Go figure, they chose worship over to dog. I don't know, but of the four words translated worship, the most widely used word, edging out *proskuneo* by two, just not as frequently translated as the word worship, is *doxazo*. So, this is our second one, *doxazo*, which makes us think of words like doxology or doxa. And the word doxa is the Greek word for glory, and so *doxazo*, it just takes that word and makes it into a verb. So, it's to glorify, to glory, to glorify.

So, this is more like in Matthew 5, chapter 5, verse 16, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and doxazo your Father, which is in heaven," or the shepherds of Nativity fame returning to the fields, doxazing and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen. And then there is a ton of doxazing around miracles, like, anytime someone is healed, they were a doxazing to be sure.

The third one is *eulogeo*. *Eulogeo*, which, again, looks like that word eulogy for looking for like, oh, yeah, that's why that word looks familiar. *Eulogeo*, and this word means to bless or to praise. It's a compound word of *eu*, which means good, and *logos*, which means words, and then again, oh, turning it into a verb. So, it's too good a word. And to good word, or to bless or praise, is used by Jesus when He blessed the five loaves and the two fish that He then gave to the crowd. And it was the same word that was then used by the crowd to give Jesus to Jesus on what we call Palm Sunday, "Hosanna to the Son of David." *Eulogeo* is he who comes in the name of the Lord. And this word is used 44 times in the New Testament.

And then the fourth word is *compto*. *Compto*. And *compto* is more like the Old Testament word. It's the one that's closest to that, because *compto* means to bend, to bend, and it's most widely understood as to kneel. So, this is what we get in like Philippians, chapter 2, verse 10, "At the name of Jesus, every knee will come to." And that word is only used four times in the New Testament. It's the least widely used. But in the New Testament, we see worship more as like a profusive profession. It's to kiss or to glorify or to kneel or to bless, worship as an action. So, in the New Testament, worship is a lifestyle that includes many activities and is not limited to corporate worship services at the temple or during feasts. It's an expression of praise and submission to God. It's about the heart, giving praise,

offering your whole self, offering your material resources, loving God, prizing God, serving others, and obeying God.

If we go to the next slide, because we're already here, so in the Old Testament, you can go up again. I just was kind of like, then, like making some like, standing back and making some observations about these two kinds of viewpoints of God. And here's what I'm seeing. You're again, welcomed, invited, and encouraged to draw your own conclusions and to think about this and look for your own connections.

But in the Old Testament, the word that they use to describe worship, singularly, through the Old Testament, is this idea of bowing down like to the earth. So, it's, it's, it's again, it's as a posture. It's like it's down, it's in, and it's kind of closed in and low. And then in the New Testament, these four that we get are all much more, next slide, more like out and up. So, it's like this, like a kiss the hand. And it's like extending out from yourself to like the hand. Or it's, you know, glorifying or praising, or it's sharing a word of blessing, a eulogy, or it's, it's, you know, it's every knee will bow, you know, it's more of that type of gesture. It's more out and up.

And I just noticed this to kind of acknowledge worship is a spectrum. It's both in and low and sometimes a closed posture. It's also out and up and an open posture. It's kind of both. Something we've talked about through the different preaching series. But for whatever that might be worth.

Another question I had is, isn't worship singing?

Like, I feel like a long time, like, that's a lot. We kind of started with, right? Like, we kind of started with the idea that worship is singing, and we kind of expounded from there, but we kind of started with that point, and I just kind of wanted to acknowledge that as a jumping off point.

Can you guess the first instance of worship as singing in the Old Testament? Again, remember the first time the word worship was used was not until Abraham? So, it's something Abraham or beyond any guesses?

No, there is one before that. It's just a guess. It's fine.

I don't know. That's not the answer. I have written down whether it is correct or not.

The answer that I have is in Exodus chapter 15, when Moses and the Israelites sang after crossing the Red Sea and Miriam, the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, took a timber in her hand and went out after them with Lady women and with dancing. And Miriam answered them, and the song of Moses and Miriam went then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the Lord. "I will sing to the Lord, for He is highly exalted, both horse and his driver, he has hurled into the sea." And it goes on from there, but it gets a little dark.

Listen, I did not say it was the first theologically sound worship song. I just said it was the first recorded worship song, and the overflow of their hearts that day was that they had been delivered and that the other horses and drivers had not. We also read of David worshiping through song, though we know he played the lyre and that he sang, and Pastor James kicked off the whole series. And David's question about David dancing in an undignified, some say, vulgar way.

And we even get Jesus himself singing in the New Testament, there's one recording of Jesus singing. It's found in both Mark and Matthew. No surprise, Synoptic Gospels, Mark 14:26, and Matthew 26:30.

Immediately after the verses of the breaking of bread and the drinking of the cup, he was feeling away, and he was feeling pretty heavy, and what did he do? They sang him and then they went out to the Mount of Olives. They sang him when they were feeling heavy.

So yes, worship is singing, but it's also dancing like David, and it's also playing instruments again, like David and like Miriam, and it's also bowing down in quiet reverence and lifting up your voice in exultant praise. It's a cry of thanksgiving for healing. It's the blessing of a meal shared together with 5000 closest friends. It's reverent and it's undignified. We may think of the word hallelujah, for example, as a church word, right? Like, I say something really great, and you're like, hallelujah.

It actually comes from the root word Hallel which means to be clamorously loud and foolish, less of a church definition. And then the last part of Hallelujah yah comes from Yahweh. So, Hallelujah means to be clamorously loud and foolish before the Lord or to David's point, undignified, free.

That's the same idea in the word hallelujah.

So, we get it. Worship can be lots of things, but can it be everything? I mean, that's kind of one of the themes we've been hearing through the last set of sermons is that like worship can be anything, and yet worship isn't everything.

So, what's the distinction?

Sorry, this is, again, a non-rhetorical question, although it can be if you all are like we've had our max given.

But what's the distinction? If everything can be worship, but we kind of acknowledge everything is not worship, what makes worship? You.

The intent of a heart.

Yeah, wholeheartedly agree, that's the word I wrote intention, mindfulness, because we can be singing a quote worship song and not be worshipping too, right?

We've all been there, myself included. And we can also be sitting quietly, perhaps looking disengaged from worship, but be quietly contemplative in our hearts or souls, and that most certainly is worship.

Some of us sing, some of us don't. Some of us read, and some of us sketch, and some of us dance up front and some of us embroider in the back. All of it can be worship. All of it can be in a state or condition of being worthy, and it's different for each of us and even within ourselves. It's different on different days. Worship may look or feel or be different to you this Sunday than it was last Sunday. I get it, but I promise you this God was with you in your worship then, and they are with you in your worship now. God is with every bowed body and every lifted hand, every silent, unspoken prayer and every loud jubilant testimony, and every silent, unspoken testimony and every loud jubilant prayer.

Worship has always been a spectrum, an entire hallway of doors, multiple access points through which we can engage back with the one who was also with us, back in the hallway when we feel them with us and when we don't.

I don't know how to preach any other gospel, and so it is the good news that comes out from my mouth every time that I stand up here at the pulpit, and it's this, God is with us.

Their presence is their promise. Their presence is the answer to every prayer I pray. Their presence. God is with you, and God is with your neighbor, and God is with your other neighbor. You know the one, love is wide enough, love is long enough, it is high enough, and it is deep enough.

This is one of those things that I just love about God. We sometimes in this church call them like a God kiss. Call it whatever you'd like, or call it nothing, but we kind of remained in worship this morning, like we were going with worship. And then it kind of needed to keep going. And then it did.

And that last song you sang, where you landed, is the same place that I have been feeling God inviting us to land as a church this morning.

One of those four compos again, that was the one from the Greek that was only used four times. One of those four compos is found in Ephesians, chapter 3, verse 14 through 21. And as a slightly different act of worship, this morning, I want to invite us to read this aloud together, if you would be so inclined. Of course, saying it in your head or listening with intention is just as worshipful as we've just discussed. But if you'd like to, I wanted to put it up on the screen so that we anyone that would like to, we could say this together.

Alright, let's give it a shot.

For this reason, I kneel before the parent from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of their glorious riches, they may strengthen you with power through their Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all The Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,

And to know this love that surpasses knowledge that you may be filled to measure of all the fullness of God,

Now to God who is able, do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine according to their power that is at work within us. To God be the glory in the church and in Jesus Christ throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.