

Pray.

As most of you know, 2 weeks ago, 21 people from Grace Church traveled to NYC to **take the gospel to immigrants** who have come from places in the world that are unreached with the good news of Christ.

[NYC Team Picture....leave up until first point]

To those who prayed for us, and gave financially to help us go, **thank you!** The trip was truly a **success**.

- Our relationships were strengthened.
- Our hearts were effected.
- Fruit was born for the sake of the nations through our team.

One of the **most encouraging aspects** of the trip was seeing the **11 teenagers** serve God through **sharing their faith**, doing **construction** projects, working with **children**, and pairing up with **ESL** students in class.

They really did do a great job!

We hope that one **lasting effect** of the trip is that **as you hear** the excitement from those who went, you catch what they have begun to catch—a **heart for God's glory** among **all peoples**.

There may not be a passage of Scripture that more captures my prayer for the heart beat of our church than **Psalm 96**.

Psalm 96 connects the worship of God with the mission of God.

It **shows us that how we worship** God and **how we join God in mission** have an indestructible connection.

It saddens me to admit that I don't think I've made this connection sufficiently until recently.

But I came across this quote from Edmund Clowney a few weeks ago, and it has really flipped a switch in my brain: **"When we worship God as we ought that's when the nations listen."**

"Worship & Mission"

1. Worship is the Aim of Missions

When we think about **"worship," we often think of singing**. And indeed singing is an important form of worship. But certainly not the only.

In the first point, when I say that worship is the aim of missions, what I'm saying is **that the goal of missions is that the gospel would create hearts that have been flattened with awe at the glory of God; wrecked hearts that overflow into singing, and evangelism, and preaching, and study, and poetry and various other forms of demonstrating the worth of our majestic God. That is worship.**

Some of you are familiar with the famous John Piper quote, **"Missions exists because worship doesn't."** We agree wholeheartedly.

See this in the text:

1a, "sing to the Lord, all the earth!"

7-9, " [7] Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

[8] Ascribe to the LORD the glory due his name; bring an offering, and come into his courts!

[9] Worship the LORD in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth!

We take the gospel to the nations, so that through the proclamation of the gospel, and subsequent faith in it, the nations will turn into a worshipping band of Jesus followers.

Now, **why is it that worship is the aim of missions?**

Because **worship is a primary way to glorify God**, and **glory for God** is the greatest reality for which we can strive.

Again, see this in the text:

Psalm 96.3-6:

[3] Declare HIS GLORY among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!

[WHY?]

[4] For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised;

[BUT NOT JUST THAT HE IS GREAT....HE IS GREAT OVER AND AGAINST ALL OTHER GODS]

he is to be feared above all gods.

[5] For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the LORD made the heavens.

.....

[7] Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!

God's glory is the display of his prevailing excellence. Worship points to it.

The aim of missions is to declare his Glory among the nations so that they turn away from dead idols and worship God.

ill. In Times Square.....merchants seek to display their excellence.

This is what worship accomplishes. It lifts up God's name as great over and against all others claims to excellence.

Listen to John Stott, "The highest of missionary motives is neither obedience to the Great Commission (important as that is), nor love for sinners who are alienated and perishing (strong as that incentive is, especially when we contemplate the wrath of God....), but rather zeal—burning and passionate zeal—for the glory of Jesus Christ."

This is the **same thing the apostle Paul says** about his calling as a missionary: "[I am called] to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations."

All so that the **Savior King receives what is his due** among all peoples.

So, worship is the AIM of missions. **Not as an end in itself, but for the sake of the glory** of His Name.

2. Worship is the Fuel of Missions

The **worship leader** in Psalm 96 is calling out in **two different directions**; along two different tracks.

On the **one hand he is inviting the nations to give up their idols, and worship** the One true God.....that is the aim of missions.

But on the **other hand**, he is **calling the people of God to go to the nations and declare the glory** of God to the nations:

3, "Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!"

10, "Say among the nations, "The LORD reigns! Yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved; he will judge the peoples with equity."

Here, I want you to see **that the kind of people that go to the nations as missionaries are worshipping people**.

The **kind of people** that share the **gospel with their neighbor**; that show up at a **How Good are You Event**?....those are worshipping people.

John Piper says, "Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching [or I think we could safely say, 'evangelism']. You can't commend what you don't cherish."

ill. One of our young people was confronted with that very challenge in NYC. This teenager **realized that they were commending something that they did not fully cherish**. That conflict brought about a tremendous work of God in the teen's heart. You'll get to hear about it more fully at baptism next week.

ill. Dallas Cowboy fans do not commend the Redskins to their friends. They only commend what they cherish.

If His Glory is not our own passion, then we won't be able to cross cultures or give money so that others can cross cultures in order to DECLARE that GLORY to others.

I cannot commend what I do not cherish.

ill. on the NYC bus...drunk guy talking on a iPod nano.....smelled like pee..... I despised him in my heart.....never sought to share the gospel with him.

Next morning: Kristen Rae, **John 1.46**, "Nathanael said to him, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" Philip said to him, "Come and see."

I was immediately effected.....she went on to quote **Mark 2.17**, "“Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”"

I was, **at that point, much better positioned to take the gospel** to poor people who did not look like me, talk like me, were very different than me. Because I was positioned as a worshipper.

This is the reason that the **main task of the Christian life is to bore into and know Jesus** Christ. The main task is not to check the EV box off your list of duties.

Your main task is to **cherish Jesus Christ**. When you do....EV will flow naturally out of your life.

ill. A big part of the group got on the NYC bus the first day...camp out in the back...and started **singing praise songs together**. I was impressed. Now, there was **some silliness** in it, but I don't think it was pure silliness. **I think it was also gospel joy, getting ready to spill over into gospel proclamation.**

That's the paradigm.

3. Worship is the Witness of Missions

--Worship is **not just about me** (though it is good for me).

--Worship is not just about **me and the other Christians gathered with me** (though it is a grace to them)

--And worship is **not just about God** (though it magnifies Him, and that is good).

WORSHIP IS ALSO ABOUT NON-CHRISTIAN PEOPLE WHO WITNESS IT.

And this brings us back to the Edmund Clowney quote from earlier: **“When we worship God as we ought that's when the nations listen.”**

It is Clowney, who also coined the term **“doxological evangelism”**. Or, worship as evangelism.

That is what I'm **driving at in this 3rd point**: true worship has an evangelistic effect.

To set that up let me tell you the story of **another place in Scripture** where the entirety of **Psalm 96 shows up**.

At one time the **presence of God** among the people of God was represented physically in the **ark of the covenant**. In the time of **Saul's reign** as king over Israel the ark had been **captured** and held by the pagan **Philistines** (they of Goliath's lineage). Not longer after Saul died and David took his place as King over Israel, **David decides to recapture the ark**.

And so he gathers all of his military leaders together, they **craft a plan**, and they **capture the ark** back from the Philistines. Then God leads them in a **series of military victories** over these Philistines where they destroy several Philistine **cities**, and burn a bunch of Philistine **idols**.

Then in **1 Chronicles 15-16**, just after this recapture of the ark, and string of military victories, David puts together an **elaborate parade** into newly captured Jerusalem with the ark prominently featured. It's a **victory parade into a city just captured from the Jebusites**. It's a **celebration of God's superiority over the false gods**. **It's a boast**. It's a display of God's greatness and his people's success. And this display **pleases the LORD**.

Well, here's the thing that is **particularly relevant** about this event for us this morning. The **full text of Psalm 96 is the featured song** of the victory parade.

David **gathers his worship leaders**. He tells them to gather their **instruments**. And then he composes a song that is compiled from Psalm 105, 106, 115, and the entirety of Psalm 96. And these **worship leaders lead this throng of shouting, clapping, singing, playing, dancing worshippers through the streets** of Jerusalem, celebrating God's **victory over the false of gods** of the peoples that surrounded Israel.

They were **making a monstrously big show out of exalting God as greater** and stronger and better than any idol.....and they **did it through worship**. Their **worship was a victorious boast** in the **prevailing excellence** of their God. And, we could say, the prevailing excellence of their God, **as over and against** the false gods of the people.

Now we live in the New Covenant. We don't kill Philistines or burn the idols of the peoples. We don't have victory parades through the streets of Grand Rapids, MI or Dallas, TX.

But there is a common thread between what King David did then, and what King Jesus is leading us to do now---we boast in God's superiority through our worship.

This is what Paul means when he says on multiple occasions in the NT, **“Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”**

Or in **Galatians 6.14**, **“Far be it from me to boast except** in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Our **worship is intended to be a boast** about the superiority of Jesus over against all pretenders to his throne. **When we treasure Jesus above all else, we declare him to be superior** to all other gods....idols....pursuits....passions.....

What does this look like?

*In our **individual lives**, we demonstrate Jesus' worth by being **more devoted to him** than to everything else in life. **More passionate about him** than anything else.*

Example Football season is coming, and you know, I like football. But honestly, **what does it say about the worth of Jesus if I haven't tried to memorize a single verse from his Word in months, or study his word this week**, but I know the weight and height of every guy on the Redskins depth chart. I know that Rex was 19-26 for 207 yards on Friday night, and that Tim Hightower averaged 4.4 yards/carry.

It **seems to demonstrate that in my heart the Redskins are more worthy** of devotion and passion than Jesus is.

That **witnesses something false** to the world.

Our corporate worship should also serve as doxological evangelism.

In **1 Corinthians 14** when Paul is instructing the church at Corinth about their corporate worship gatherings, he says that **one effect** of those gatherings should be that **unbelievers** who are present would, **“declare that God is really among you.”**

That’s what we want. We want to **worship here in this place in such a way** that when unbelievers are present there is **something about how we respond** to God and rejoice in His truth, that makes them see that God is precious to us.

ill. The **grandson of Billy Graham** tells the story of how he became a Christian.

At 16, he was kicked out of his house.

He spent the next several years partying on the street and clubs of South Beach in Miami.

But then one day he woke up after a drunken night of partying. He felt empty and frustrated that what sin had promised, it had failed to deliver. It was a Sunday morning. And so wearing the same clothes as the night before, he stumbled into a church.

And now I’m quoting him....

“It wasn’t long before I realized how different everything was in that place. I immediately recognized the distinctiveness of God. Through both the music and the message, it was clear that God, not I, was the guest of honor there....I didn’t understand everything the preacher said that morning, and I didn’t like all the songs that were sung. But the style of the service became a non-issue as I encountered something I couldn’t escape, something more joltingly powerful than anything I’d ever experienced....I was observing the people of God being wrecked afresh by God’s good news announcement that in the person of Jesus Christ, he had done for them what they could never do for themselves. In and through the praising, praying and preaching, the mighty acts of God in bringing salvation to our broken world, were being recited and rehearsed.”

Now Grace Church—don’t you **want our corporate worship to have that sort of effect** on those who attend?

Do you worship—in your day to day life—and in this gathering--in such a way that people looking on would see that **Jesus is very precious to you?** Do people

look at you worship and say—“you know I don’t really get all that is going on with that guy, but he is passionate about what he is singing about. What is being said from God’s word is very important to him.”

Maybe you’d say, **“hey, I’m worshipping in my heart....**that doesn’t necessarily mean you’ll be able to see it on my face.”

And while I completely understand that we are **all different sorts of people....**I can’t **clap and sing** at the same time. Even when I try to clap I have to stare at someone else doing it, who I think can keep time. So I get that we are different sorts of people.

But here’s something **I’m seeing from the Bible**—my participation in worship (corporately here) and in my life outside of here....**can have an impact** for the sake of the glory of God. **My worship is the witness of missions.**

My worship can display the prevailing excellence of Jesus. Or it can announce that Jesus is just alright.

I want my worship to point toward a glorious Savior. Not a second string, ho-hum, ok, take him or leave Him Savior.

But I have to **confess** that sometimes I’ve been **controlled by people’s opinions** of me **more than** I have been **eager to see God glorified** through me.

I have feared people’s perception of me more than I have loved God’s glory. That is a grievous thing.

That may be true of you as well. As I have repented of loving myself; my own reputation, more than God, I would encourage you to do the same.

What I want for me....and us....is that Jesus would be **so precious** to us at the **heart level....**that in turn you’d be able to **see that on our faces**, and in our **voices**, and in our **body language**.

Then, the nations—who in increasing measure are walking through those doors-- will begin to **listen**.

Here is what commentator **Derek Kidner** says about Psalm 96, “The build-up of repeated words and phrases (sing...ascribe....he comes....) give the psalm an insistent vigor and contributes to the air of almost irrepressible excitement at the prospect of God’s coming....Nothing listless or introverted, nothing stale, befits the praise of God.”

May our worship...in daily life....and corporately on Sundays.....may it befit the praise of our Great God!

4. Worship is the Consummation of Missions

For those who have found forgiveness in Christ, there is coming a day with no more sickness, no more tears, or pain, or sin. All that is wrong will be undone. The curse of sin will be lifted. We will work and worship minus the intrusion and bondage of sin. And we will do it with other blood-bought saints from around the globe.

But until that day comes we gather for worship one day a week, not in order to forget the troubles of this world, but to be reminded that this world is not all that there is.

Here is what Tullian Tchividjian [Titch-I-VI-JIN] says, “When we worship together, we enjoy and experience an intrusion of heaven into the real world—of end-time into time. It’s the future being brought into the present. In our worship together....[we] get a weekly taste of what will eventually be permanent and eternal.”

And Psalm 96.11-13 describes this future reality:

[11] Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice;
let the sea roar, and all that fills it;
[12] let the field exult, and everything in it!
Then shall all the trees of the forest sing for joy
[13] before the LORD, for he comes,
for he comes to judge the earth.
He will judge the world in righteousness,
and the peoples in his faithfulness.

When the curse of sin is lifted, and God makes all things new in the New Heavens and the New Earth, than people from all nations will gladly live under God’s rule, and will worship God according to his gracious character.

When this happens, the creation, which was subjected to futility by God after sin came into the world; the creation that has been suffering and groaning under the bondage of sin....will be set free and it will join the redeemed people of God in the cosmic choir

The rocks will cry out.
The sea will roar.
The fields will exult.
The trees of the forest will sing for joy.

What will that look like exactly? *I don’t know.* But I do know that its going to be good. Really good.

May our worship point us to the day when we join God’s cosmic choir and give Him the praise befitting such a great Savior.

Pray.