



# Saint John

UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

**Date:** July 7<sup>th</sup> **Worship as Lifestyle: Radical Worship**

**By:** Rev. Dr. Iosmar Alvarez

**Place:** Saint John Church, Prospect, Ky

**Theme:** "Honoring God in All We Do"

**Text:** 2 Samuel 6:1-10 NIV

Theme: "Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem"

**Focus and Function:** To explore the reverence, joy, and humility involved in bringing the presence of God into our worship.

## Introduction:

Good morning, brothers and sisters. Today, we gather to reflect on the essence of true worship and to consider how we bring the presence of God into our lives. Our passage today is from 2 Samuel 6:1-10, where we find the account of "Bringing the Ark to Jerusalem." This passage offers us meaningful insights into the reverence, joy, and humility involved in bringing the presence of God into our worship.

## Three Principles out of 2 Samuel 6:

Reverence: Recognizing the holiness of God's presence in our worship.

Joy: Celebrating the presence of God with thanksgiving and praise.

Humility: Surrendering ourselves before the Lord in worship.

In our walk of faith, there are moments when we are called to engage in what I like to call "**Radical Worship**," where our devotion to Jesus Christ takes precedence over any earthly expectations or consequences. This leads me to the story of a young man named Micah Price, a testament to unwavering faith and radical worship.

Micah Price, a high school student from Kentucky, received his diploma on Wednesday, five days after his classmates, due to his bold profession of faith. During his graduation ceremony, Micah was chosen to give a speech. The school had meticulously reviewed and approved his script, ensuring none contained religious references. However, sparked by his devotion, Micah went off-script.

He stood before his peers and said, "My Lord and Savior is your answer. Class, everyone in the audience today, I'm here to tell you if you don't have any of those things in your life, you can't seem to find the answer, my Lord and Savior is your answer. He will give you the truth, the way, and the life".

Micah knew that his impromptu testimony could have repercussions; he submitted eight drafts, each requiring removing any religious content. Yet, he chose to heed a higher calling, prioritizing his faith over the risk of academic penalties. This daring act of radical worship led to the school temporarily withholding his diploma, but it also sent a powerful message about standing firm in one's faith.

As it is written in **Romans 1:16**, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes." Micah embodied this scripture, using his platform to glorify God unabashedly.

Worship encompasses more than just gifts and instruments; it is about position and alignment. It is fundamentally about knowing the God we worship. Worship centers on God, not on those around us. It's rooted in the heart, transcending status, culture, and location. Numbers or good intentions do not define worship, nor does noise.

In essence, worship's true essence is found in genuine connection and heartfelt devotion to God.

### **Point 1: "A Reverent Heart"**

#### **"David's worshipping heart: A heart like God's heart."**

The heart of the worshiper: 1 Samuel 13:14 <sup>14</sup>But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out **a man after his own heart** and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."

#### Uzzah's Irreverent Action and David's Lack of Understanding

Uzzah's irreverent action of holding the ark and David's lack of understanding of how to move the ark of the Lord serve as cautionary tales, reminding us of the importance of worshiping God according to the scriptures. In **2 Samuel 6:6-7**, we read, "When they came to the threshing floor of Nakon, Uzzah reached out and took hold of the ark of God, because the oxen stumbled. The Lord's anger burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore, God struck him down, and he died there beside the ark of God."

This incident highlights the severe consequences of disregarding God's commands regarding the handling of the ark. Uzzah, though well-intentioned, failed to recognize the ark's holiness **and the specific instructions regarding its transport**. Similarly, despite his deep desire to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, David lacked an understanding of the proper procedures for handling it, ultimately leading to Uzzah's tragic end.

Exploring the story of Uzzah's irreverent action and David's lack of understanding regarding the transportation of the Ark of the Lord reminds us of the vital importance of worshiping God according to His explicit instructions as given in the scriptures.

**2 Samuel 6:3–5** David had the men "**set the ark of God on a new cart**" (v. 3), the employment of a new cart being a sign of respect for the holy object. As respectful and well-intended as David's effort was, however, it violated Torah guidelines regarding the transport of the ark (cf. Num 4:15; 7:9). In fact, David's actions in this matter were spiritually ignorant Philistines (cf. 1 Sam 6:7, 10).

### **God's Instructions to Moses and Aaron**

In **Numbers 4:15**, God gives specific instructions to Moses and Aaron concerning the transportation of the Ark of the Covenant. The passage states, "After Aaron and his sons have finished covering the holy furnishings and all the holy articles, and when the camp is ready to

move, the Kohathites are to come to do the carrying. **But they must not touch the holy things** or they will die. The Kohathites are to carry those things that are in the tent of meeting."

God designated the Kohathites to carry the holy items, including the Ark, with strict guidelines on how to handle and transport these sacred objects.

**2 Samuel 6:6–7** As the oxcart was being pulled down the hill, an unforeseen tragedy occurred, as "the oxen stumbled". Instinctively, the levitical priest Uzzah reached out and "took hold of the ark of God" to stabilize and protect it. However, in so doing he committed a capital offense established in the Torah (cf. Num 4:15). **Since he was not an Aaronic priest, he was prohibited from touching this holiest object in the Yahwistic faith.** Uzzah's conscientious effort to protect the ark actually defiled it

The Levites were to carry the Ark on their shoulders using poles, ensuring they did not touch the holy items directly. This explicit instruction emphasized reverence and respect due to the sacredness of God's presence, symbolized by the Ark.

### **David's Lack of Understanding**

Despite the clear guidance provided in the scriptures, David, in his zeal to bring the Ark to Jerusalem, overlooked or disregarded the specific instructions on how to transport it. Serving as a cautionary tale, **illustrating the dangers of presuming to worship God according to our own ideas or desires rather than in alignment with His revealed will.** As a result, Uzzah's irreverent act of reaching out and touching the Ark, to steady it when the oxen stumbled, violated God's command and led to tragic consequences.

**2 Samuel 6:1-10** reveals the importance of reverence in our worship. Just as King David and those with him showed reverence when they sought to bring the Ark of God to Jerusalem, we, too, must acknowledge the holiness of God's presence in our worship. A reverent heart helps us to shift our focus from ourselves to the Almighty, understanding that we are in the presence of the Holy One.

As we reflect on these accounts, we are called to honor God's commands in worship, just as Moses and Aaron faithfully adhered to the divine instructions regarding the Ark.

How can you incorporate the lessons from Uzzah and David's experiences into your personal worship and corporate gatherings to enhance the reverence, joy, and humility in your worship lifestyle?

The scriptures provide us with a blueprint for approaching God in reverence, obedience, and humility, ensuring that our worship is pleasing and acceptable in His sight.

Let us heed the lesson from Uzzah's irreverent action and David's lack of understanding and commit ourselves to worshiping God according to the scriptures, following His commands faithfully, and approaching His presence with reverence and humility.

### **Point 2: "A Joyful Heart"**

We are called to express our joy with thanksgiving and praise as we celebrate God's presence in our lives. The passage shows us that David "**danced before the Lord with all his might,**"

expressing his uncontainable joy at bringing the Ark to Jerusalem. In our worship, we are to find joy in God's presence and express it wholeheartedly, just as David did.

David's exuberant worship as he brought the Ark to Jerusalem powerfully illustrates the importance of joy in worship on three levels.

- The Biblical Emphasis on Joy in Worship: Scripture urges us to worship with gladness and joyful songs, emphasizing the role of joy in worship (Psalm 100:2).
- The connection between Joy and Gratitude: David's joy reflected deep gratitude for God's presence among his people. Our joy in worship is an expression of gratitude for God's faithfulness and blessings.
- Joy as an Expression of Faith: David's joyous worship demonstrated his unwavering faith and trust in God. Our joyous worship affirms our trust in God's goodness and sovereignty.

### Point 3: "A Humble Heart"

**2 Samuel 6: 7 The LORD'S anger** burned against Uzzah because of his irreverent act; therefore God struck him down and he died there beside the ark of God. **8 Then David was angry because the LORD'S wrath had broken out against Uzzah**, and to this day that place is called Perez Uzzah. **9 David was afraid of the LORD** that day and said, "**How can the ark of the LORD ever come to me?**" **10** He was not willing to take the ark of the LORD to be with him in the City of David

David, who had acted with noble intentions in the matter of moving the ark, was angry. The stated reason for David's emotional storm was "because the Lord had broken out against Uzzah" (v. 8)

**Was David mad at God for killing Uzzah?** (unlikely, since God was merely enforcing the Torah) Or **was David upset that Uzzah had acted in such a way as to cause God to bring fatal judgment to bear?** (more likely).

Having witnessed a dramatic demonstration of the Lord's zeal to protect his holiness, David became "afraid of the Lord that day" (v. 9). His deepened respect for the Lord's power and for his willingness to use it against anyone who would violate the Torah caused David to ask, "**How can the ark of the Lord ever come to me?**"

**Key Worship Principle:** The fear generated by this event was positive, for "when people are no longer awed, respectful, or fearful of God's holiness, the community is put at risk"

Finally, we must embrace humility as an essential aspect of our worship. **Surrendering ourselves before the Lord requires humility, acknowledging our dependence on God, and recognizing His sovereignty.** As we bring God's presence into our worship, we do so with a deeply humble heart, laying ourselves bare before the Almighty.

### Personal application of the message:

Engaging reflective questions to help deepen the congregation's understanding.

1. How does the story of Uzzah and David's experience with the Ark of the Lord challenge your perception of worship?

2. In what ways have you encountered moments of irreverence in your own worship practices? How can you address these areas and cultivate a spirit of reverence in your worship?
3. Reflect on a time when you may have acted out of good intentions but lacked understanding of God's instructions. How can you ensure that your worship aligns with God's revealed will?
4. Consider the significance of following God's commands in worship. How can you deepen your knowledge of scripture to ensure our worship is grounded in truth?
5. How can you apply the principle of honoring God's instructions in worship beyond the physical acts of reverence to encompass the attitude of your heart and the authenticity of your worship?

### **Call to Action:**

As we reflect on these aspects of worship, we are called to take action. Let us ...

1. Set aside dedicated time for personal worship and prayer in the presence of God.
2. Engage in corporate worship with reverence, joy, and humility.
3. Use music, art, or other creative expressions to worship God in spirit and truth.

### **Contemporary Theologian Quote:**

Contemporary Theologian Quote: **C.S. Lewis** once said, "I need Christ, not something that resembles Him. I need Him as He is, as He is revealed in the Bible, and not as I wish Him to be. We only learn to behave ourselves in the presence of God." This quote echoes the importance of orienting our worship towards the true nature of God, not our own perceptions or desires.

C.S. Lewis

### **Conclusion:**

As we conclude, remember that worship is more than a momentary experience. It is a lifestyle, an ongoing interaction with the Divine.

Let us be inspired by Micah's and David's radical worship. Let us not be swayed by societal norms or potential repercussions when professing our faith. May we stand boldly and proclaim the name of Jesus, trusting that He is the way, the truth, and the life.

Let us strive to bring God's presence into our worship with reverence, joy, and humility, cherishing the opportunity to commune with the Almighty. May our lives resonate with the melody of worship, and may our hearts dance to celebrate the divine presence in our midst.

### **Prayer:**

Lord, may your presence fill our worship with reverence, joy, and humility as we draw near to you with grateful hearts.

### **Benediction:**

May God's presence dwell richly in your worship, filling you with reverence, joy, and humility as you draw closer to Him. Amen.

## Sermon Notes:

Pre-Context Story. Who was David as a worshiper?

### "David's worshipping heart: A heart like God's heart."

The heart of the worshiper: 1 Samuel 13:14 <sup>14</sup> But now your kingdom will not endure; the Lord has sought out **a man after his own heart** and appointed him ruler of his people, because you have not kept the Lord's command."

**The Kohathites** were a Levitical clan descending from Kohath, the second son of Levi. In the Bible, this group had specific religious duties:

1. **Tabernacle Care:** They were responsible for carrying and caring for the sacred objects of the Tabernacle, including the Ark of the Covenant, the Table of Showbread, the menorah, altars, and the sacred utensils (Numbers 4:4-15).
2. **Non-Priestly Role:** Unlike the descendants of Aaron, the Kohathites were not priests. They played a crucial support role in the maintenance and transport of sacred items.
3. **Cities:** They were assigned specific cities within the Israelite territories (Joshua 21:4-5).

This clan played an essential part in ensuring the proper handling and transportation of Israel's holy artifacts during their time in the wilderness and beyond.

### All the Tribes of Israel Anoint David King at Hebron (5:1–5) 2 Samuel 2:2-7

1 All the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, "We are your own flesh and blood. 2 In the past, while Saul was king over us, you were the one who led Israel on their military campaigns. And the LORD said to you, 'You will shepherd my people Israel, and you will become their ruler.' "

3 When all the elders of Israel had come to King David at Hebron, the king made a compact with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel.

4 David was thirty years old when he became king, and he reigned forty years. 5 In Hebron he reigned over Judah seven years and six months, and in Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years.

**5:1–2** Credible opposition to David's claim to kingship over all Israel died with Abner and Ish-Bosheth. Making David Israel's next monarch thus became Israel's only rational alternative.

### Four factors strengthened this conclusion:

- 1- David's impressive record of military successes while in service to Saul (cf. 1 Sam 18:13–14, 30),

- 2- The Prophetic revelations regarding David's destiny as Israel's leader (cf. 1 Sam 16:1; 2 Sam 3:9, 18).
- 3- Abner's endorsement of him (cf. 3:9–10, 17–18),
- 4- And his respectful treatment of the slain leaders of the Saulide dynasty (3:28–35; 4:12).

## **2 Samuel 2:2-7**

### **The Lord Blesses David as King in Jerusalem (5:9–16)**

9 David then took up residence in the fortress and called it the City of David. He built up the area around it, from the supporting terraces inward. 10 And he became more and more powerful because the LORD God Almighty was with him.

11 Now Hiram king of Tyre sent messengers to David, along with cedar logs and carpenters and stonemasons, and they built a palace for David. **12 And David knew that the LORD had established him as king over Israel and had exalted his kingdom for the sake of his people Israel.**

**13 After he left Hebron, David** took more concubines and wives in Jerusalem, and **more sons and daughters were born to him.** 14 These are the names of the children born to him there: Shammua, Shobab, Nathan, Solomon, 15Ibhar, Elishua, Nepheg, Japhia, 16Elishama, Eliada and Eliphelet.

### **"David's obedient heart: A heart like God's heart vs.25." 1 Samuel 5:19-25**

<sup>19</sup> And David inquired of the Lord, "Shall I go up against the Philistines? Will you give them into my hand?" And the Lord said to David, "Go up, for I will certainly give the Philistines into your hand." <sup>20</sup> And David came to **Baal-perazim**, and David defeated them there. And he said, "**The Lord has broken through** my enemies before me like a breaking flood." Therefore the name of that place is called **Baal-perazim** (lit., "**Lord of the breakings forth**<sup>1</sup>"). <sup>21</sup> And **the Philistines left their idols there**, and David and his men carried them away.

<sup>22</sup> And the Philistines came up yet again and spread out in the Valley of Rephaim. <sup>23</sup> And when David inquired of the Lord, he said, "You shall not go up; go around to their rear, and come against them opposite the balsam trees. <sup>24</sup> **And when you hear the sound of marching in the tops of the balsam trees, then rouse yourself, for then the Lord has gone out before you to strike down the army of the Philistines.**" <sup>25</sup> And **David did as the Lord commanded him**, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer. <sup>2</sup>

The Lord affirmed David's inclination to fight the Philistines; in fact, he provided David with a strategy for victory as well as the promise of a miraculous intervention that would result in a resounding victory for Israel. This phenomenon, somewhat reminiscent of God's timely provision of thunder prior to another Israelite attack against the Philistines (**1 Sam 7:10**), may have been accomplished through an unusually strong gust of wind or through some more spectacular divine intervention in the natural order. Regardless, it was to be understood as a definite sign that the Lord had "**gone out in front of**" (v. 24) his earthly forces "to strike the Philistine army."

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<sup>1</sup> Bergen, Robert D. [1, 2 Samuel](#). Vol. 7. Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996. Print. The New American Commentary.

<sup>2</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles, 2016. Print.

In language reflecting descriptions of the obedient heroes of the Torah (e.g., **Noah, Gen 7:9, 16; Abraham, Gen 21:4; and Moses, Exod 7:6**), “David did as the Lord commanded him” (v. 25). The results of David’s obedience were spectacular.

### **The obedient heroes of the Torah (e.g.)**

**Noah, Gen 7:9:** <sup>9</sup> male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah.

**Abraham, Gen 21:4** <sup>4</sup>When his son Isaac was eight days old, Abraham circumcised him, as God commanded him.

**Moses, Exod 7:6,** <sup>6</sup>Moses and Aaron did just as the LORD commanded them.

**David, 1 Samuel 5:25** <sup>25</sup> And **David did as the Lord commanded him**, and struck down the Philistines from Geba to Gezer. The results of David’s obedience were spectacular.

Especially significant in this event, David deferred his attack until the Lord had gone out in front of Israel. In so doing, he was charting a course for the nation that differed fundamentally from the one the people had proposed during the days of Samuel.

**Don’t try to be like everyone else, or you will lose the presence and blessing of God.**

**1 Samuel 8:19-20** <sup>19</sup> But the people refused to listen to Samuel. “No!” they said. “We want a king over us. <sup>20</sup> Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles.”

<sup>20</sup> **Then we will be like all the other nations:** In the book of Genesis, specifically in **Genesis 36**, it is mentioned that Esau's descendants became the **kings of Edom**. This is in the context of Esau's genealogy, detailing the chiefs and kings who were his descendants.

**Previously, the Israelites had asked to “be like all the other nations,” with an earthly “king to lead us and to go out before us to fight our battles” (1 Sam 8:20).** Under David’s leadership (as under Moses’ and Joshua’s before him), **the Lord—not a mortal king—would go out before the nation to fight their battles.**