



SERMON OF THE WEEK

First Presbyterian Church of Honolulu at Ko'olau

October 5, 2014

"True Worship" (Facing the Giants Series)

The Rev. Dr. Dan Chun

Good morning to you all who are watching on TV or watching or listening on the website. In a sense, today's sermon has to do with the Ickey Shuffle.

Ickey Woods is a former Cincinnati Bengal football player who would always get excited when he scored a touchdown, so much so that he would always dance in the end zone, a dance became known as the Ickey Shuffle.

Today, we can see Ickey's enthusiasm in a contemporary GEICO commercial that speaks of unbridled enthusiasm no matter the location. Here is the Ickey Shuffle. (Video of ad was shown.)

The Ickey Shuffle shows enthusiasm for the small and the big things, an enthusiasm that some may think is inappropriate, especially in a supermarket when your number is called to get your order for meat.

Here is how this fits into the sermon. In our worship of our God, some may think that enthusiasm demonstrated in worship is uncalled for.

A few weeks ago I preached on how the Ark of the Covenant was brought into Jerusalem by King David, and how a man named Uzzah touched the Ark of the Covenant and died. It wasn't David who died but it was the Uzzah guy!

If you didn't hear that sermon you might want to go to our website or to our podcast with our new church app to hear it or see it to fully understand today's talk.

The death of Uzzah resulting from having touched the Ark of the Covenant was such a catastrophe that the Ark was not taken to Jerusalem but was detoured to the house of a man named Obededom. While the ark was there, Obededom's family was incredibly blessed.

Three months later David tries again to bring the ark into the holy city of Jerusalem. This time, they know how to transport the Ark. Don't touch it. Don't rush it. And use the poles and procedures that God told the Jewish people on how to use to transport the ark.

This story has so many facets. It is gory and violent to animals; it is artistic, aesthetic and yet abhorrent, but it is also about judgmentalism. It's about religion and ritual versus true worship but best of all it ends in grace. And now here is our Scripture passage for the morning, starting with 2 Samuel chapter 6 verse 12.

2Sam. 6:12 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;

2Sam. 6:13 and when those who bore the ark of the LORD had gone six paces, he sacrificed an ox and a fatling.

2Sam. 6:14 David danced before the LORD with all his might; David was girded with a linen ephod.

2Sam. 6:15 So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the LORD with shouting, and with the sound of the trumpet.

2Sam. 6:16 As the ark of the LORD came into the city of David, Michal 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.

2Sam. 6:17 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 offerings of well being before the LORD.

2Sam. 6:18 When David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the offerings of well being, he blessed the people in the name of the LORD of hosts,

2Sam. 6:19 and distributed food among all the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, to each a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins. Then all the people went back to their homes.

2 *Sam. 6:20 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' maids, as any vulgar fellow might shamelessly uncover himself!"*

2Sam. 6:21 David said to Michal, "It was before the LORD, who chose me in place of your father and all his household, to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the LORD, that I have danced before the LORD.

2Sam. 6:22 I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in my own eyes; but by the maids of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor."

2Sam. 6:23 And Michal the daughter of Saul had no child to the day of her death.

This is the Word of God.

This story is deep in meaning with so many things going on at the same time. Imagine the holy Ark of the Covenant is coming into the city of Jerusalem. But as the Ark moves every six steps, an ox or a fatling is then killed. That's thousands of oxen and calves! It's oxtail soup and kalbi time for the city!

For those of you who love animals or who are vegetarian this is horrible. But sacrifices are supposed to be horrible. It is supposed to be about something or someone who is completely innocent giving its life as a sacrifice for someone sinful so that someone else might proceed in life. From the beginning of time, all cultures understood that there is sin, and when there is sin, a penalty must be made.

These were burnt offerings. You can read about them in Leviticus

1. A burnt offering meant you had to put your hand on it to identify with it. Then you had to slay the animal and completely burn it. Why? To identify with the animal meant that "I should be destroyed to come into this place, but someone or something will be completely destroyed for me so I can pass."

David knew that in order to have the Ark in the Holy City, for him to pass or others to pass, something or someone would have to be utterly destroyed to pay for sin. I know we don't like the word sin, but I think today headlines prove sin is still prevalent. We see a lot of evil and its effects in the world like the beheadings in the Middle East, poverty in the Congo, expression in Hong Kong, and domestic violence in the USA.

It meant from even back then that there was a deep spiritual understanding that the only way for a person to come into the presence of God is not through good deeds. It is through a sacrifice.

David may have been thinking, "I'm not having a parade in order to know the Lord. I'm having this procession BECAUSE I KNOW the Lord. And because I know the Lord, I can only enter into His presence through the sacrifice of another for my sins. This ox or calf is destroyed in my place so I can pass. My sins are forgiven because of this sacrifice, and now I can pass on towards God."

As a Christian, we realize that in order for us to be in the presence of God, our sin had to be removed, and that could only be done with the sacrifice of something or someone. Does this sound weird to some of you? Let's break this down.

What is the basis of our sin? Sin is when we place our identity in anything other than God, the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. If

we put our identity in money or accomplishments or good deeds or our status, that is sin. Sin is also when we think that we please God by placing our identity in rules, laws, and customs.

The Pharisees, the religious lawmakers during Jesus's time, did that. It was a sin because they didn't place their identity in God but instead in the laws God gave them. Follow the rules and you are a good person. Break the rules and you are a bad person. That's religion. We're not into religion.

The law was that if you sin, you die. Karma is—you get what you deserve. What goes around, comes around. But God's grace—because I love you, if you sin, I the Lord will die. That's why Bono of U2 says he is not into karma. He is into grace. He said he doesn't want to get what he deserves. He chooses Christ over karma any day.

Through Jesus, God said, "I am not going to ask any man or animal to die for the sin of humans. I myself will come down on earth and be the sacrifice, to be the recipient of a horrible violent sacrifice called crucifixion in order that you can be in the holy presence of God."

Now that's amazing grace. God is so holy, so holy, so unimaginably holy that He cannot have a drop of sin in His presence. Yet this Holy God sends His Son Jesus to earth to die so that we can approach God. So that we can touch Him and hug Him and talk to him up close and personal.

A God who dies for us should humble us when we know He doesn't deserve to die for us. It's our sin, not His. The mark of a true Christian is humility. Why? Because to know that Jesus as friend, Lord, and Savior, who also died for us, transforms our life.

As Tim Keller says, “When you decide to follow Jesus it is not then that you think more of yourself. Neither, is it that you think less of yourself. No, your self-image is something completely different. It is that you think of your self less.”

You don’t care as much what people think about you. You don’t care about impressing people. You think of your self less. Not less of yourself.

So then we come to the second part of the story. David who has a heart after God, decides to dance before the Ark as it comes into Jerusalem. The Ark is the symbol of the living God’s presence in their lives. David loves God so much, he starts dancing before the Ark with his servants and other people. He does his own version of a holy Ickey Shuffle. He is Justin Timberlake for Jesus. He is Pharell Williams singing *Happy*.

He is leaping and dancing and shouting with joy, not with cold cuts like Ickey, but then he gives the people a cake of bread and a cake or raisins and a portion of meat for indeed there was a lot of slaughtered meat that day. It was L & L city!

David didn’t know Jesus then, but he placed his identity in God. He was all about God, not rules. For us today, it’s God in the flesh.

The irony is that if you become a stickler for rules and customs to avoid sin then you will end up like the Pharisees who became more involved in themselves than with God. David may have looked foolish to the world as he danced before the Lord but that’s because his identity was not in his crown or his power but in God. Can we live like that?

Everything flows from worship, from a heart after God. You might be the best preacher in the

world, the best praying person in the world, but if we do not worship we will not be a strong follower of God. But a true follower of God may be lacking in many skills but you can still be a great worshipper.

David may not have been a good dancer but he knew how to worship and that is what made his life close to God. When our hearts are connected to God we soar. We were created to worship in our prayers, in meditation, in our personal devotions, or in church. And if things seem stale in our lives now, it may be that we forgot how to worship. We got into being busy and not being a lover of God.

Meanwhile, back in our story, Michal, David’s wife and the daughter of the former King Saul, is watching this spectacle of dancing from her royal home. She looks down and sees her husband dancing with the common people wearing only an ephod, which is like a prayer apron, instead of his kingly robes.

When David finally finishes dancing and gets to where Michal was, she says, in essence. “This is beneath you! You are an embarrassment.”

And David replies, in essence, “I will be humiliated in my eyes, but not in their eyes.”

Michal, the daughter of King Saul, was raised to be a royal. She thought she was special. People were beneath her. She was into status, position, and respect. But not David. He was into worship and following God, which meant that he might abase himself that others might be raised up.

Here’s the irony: If you desperately want respect, you will never get it. If you love God, and don’t worry about people honoring you, you will get all the honor necessary. A

mark of a true worshipper is that you give God 100% credit for all the good in your life. If you try to keep even 10% of credit to say how great and talented you are without God, that is a sin. God should get all 100% of glory for the blessings in our lives.

Sometimes we try so hard to make ourselves look good, and it doesn’t work. Striving for that will always make us thirsty for more. But if you give money or share your time or talent with others purely to help without wanting or expecting anything in return, you will get all the honor you deserve in the end. Anything else will pollute your desires for respect.

The people I respect are the ones who didn’t act in a way in order to get respect. They acted in a way to get the right things done in the right way no matter how they looked. David didn’t act in a way to get the people’s respect, or in a way to have people say “You are the king.” He was happy because God chose him and said, “You are the king.”

When he saw Uzzah get killed, when he heard that Obededom’s house was blessed, David knew it was all grace. He was reminded that he was the chosen to be king not because of his deeds, which were many, but because God chose him.

On this day we need to know that God chose us to be His children—His princes and princesses. And it’s all grace. Therefore, deep inside of us should be this well of worship bubbling inside of us that comes out individually or corporately on a Sunday morning.

It is out of worship that a desire for social justice comes. It is out of worship that we have a heart for the poor and oppressed and compassion for our neighbors. When we worship it should be all out.

We should shout for joy. We should be free to raise up our arms and hands when we sing. Remember that is how the ancient church did it from the first century. Raising of hands and loud prayers, no caring what people think. That is how the early church worshipped.

But as you have heard me say before if you choose to NOT move your arms or hands and always be quiet during worship and not sing, that is contemporary, modern, and RADICAL! That is a new form of worship never seen by the church fathers and mothers. It's novel because that was not how it was done in the early church.

And if you are exuberant and demonstrative, and you raise up your hands, that is so old school. That is so old fashioned and traditional for that is how the ancients prayed all throughout the centuries until worship came to England or America.

Back to our sermon text, it says in the end of the passage that after Michal criticized David: "And Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child to the day of her death."

And we can say, "Whoa, that is really harsh. Was that a judgment on her for not liking David worshipping as God liked it?"

It's not so much a judgment but a reality. It's a metaphor. If we don't worship right, if we don't move throughout the day in worship of the living God, if we are fearful for what people will say and how it will affect our self-image, if we actually pray and sing to God with all of our heart, soul and mind, then that is a terminal disease in our souls. We will not bear fruit in our lives.

There is a God-shaped vacuum in our hearts waiting to be filled with Christ—the one who

sacrificed His life for us so that we can be in the presence of God. And if we have chosen not to follow Him, if we have chosen not to accept His sacrifice, and if we have chosen not to worship Him, then we are dead. Our lives will not bear the fruit of life that God wanted us to have.

Why do we fear worship? Why are we sometimes hesitant in singing out our praises? May it not be because we are like Michal and say, "What will people say? And it is beneath us to sing that we give our lives to God." Life is for sophisticated people.

David said life and worship is for the common people, and so he danced with them before the Lord. Michal who came through the royal line of King Saul, bore no child for David.

David's children were born through Bathsheba, who, as we learned the last time I preached, was a commoner, a wife of a soldier, and an adulteress. And it is through this woman that the Messiah Jesus Christ is ultimately born. It is Bathsheba, not Michal, who is in the family tree of Jesus. It is Bathsheba the commoner, not Michal the royal, whom God chooses showing that God is a God of grace no religion. It is Bathsheba the adulteress, the failure in a marriage, who understood what grace is.

In a religion, the thing that keeps you from God is your failure. If you do not achieve, if you do not do enough good, you will not get to God.

But in our Christian faith, which is not religion, in the gospel of Christianity, the one thing that keeps you from God is your failure to admit you're a failure. When we know we are a failure, we find grace. When we know we are a failure, we find God. Michal did not understand grace or God. Bathsheba did, and so it was through her line that the Messiah

Himself came.

One last thing, and this is an aside to men. I think men sometimes have it harder than women to be expressive about their worship of God. But remember this about King David. King David was a man above all men. Testosterone tough. Ram tough. He would have been the toughest Navy Seal or Special Forces guy you would have ever met. He had killed lions and bears with his own hands and slingshots. He killed thousands and thousands of enemy soldiers many with his own hands. He was a leader among leaders.

But he had no problem worshipping God in song, poetry and, yes, dance. He didn't care if people thought it was unmanly or unkingly.

Did you know that Psalm 24 was written by David to celebrate the moving of the ark on this very day of our passage? David was a poet, a prophet, a prince and a King.

I close by reading Psalm 24, and know that verse 8 refers to the King of Glory, meaning the coming Messiah, whom we today know as Jesus. Hear this poetry of praise of the Almighty God written by a great soldier and warrior: (Scripture in Living Bible version)

Psa. 24:1 The earth is the LORD's, and everything in it. The world and all its people belong to him.

Psa. 24:2 For he laid the earth's foundation on the seas and built it on the ocean depths.

Psa. 24:3 Who may climb the mountain of the LORD? Who may stand in his holy place?

Psa. 24:4 Only those whose hands and hearts are pure, who do not worship idols and never tell lies.

Psa. 24:5 *They will receive the LORD's blessing and have a right relationship with God their savior.*

Psa. 24:6 Such people may seek you and worship in your presence, O God of Jacob.

Psa. 24:7 Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter.

Psa. 24:8 Who is the King of glory? The LORD, strong and mighty; the LORD, invincible in battle.

Psa. 24:9 Open up, ancient gates! Open up, ancient doors, and let the King of glory enter.

Psa. 24:10 Who is the King of glory? The LORD of Heaven's Armies— he is the King of glory.

David was a man who went all out for God.

And so I want to close this sermon asking you to do something as an act of worship that might be out of the comfort zone for some of you. And if you are really uncomfortable doing this, I give you the freedom to not do anything.

Don't worry I am not going to ask you to dance. I am going to ask you to sing this last song with all of your heart, soul, and mind. While we sing this song, raise up your hands. The ancient sign of surrender was with both hands up palms open. Perfect for surrendering our lives to our Lord. Surrender means to submit to an authority and to cease resistance. That is what we should do with God the best authority in life.

Or if you choose you can raise just one hand or close a fist as I often do when I sing to say, "I am in solidarity with You, God, as You are the Lord. I submit to be in His majesty's service."

And as we sing, I am going to ask the Holy Spirit to come upon you and fill you in a new and fresh way. Feel free to close your eyes now and then as you sing. And after that we shall have communion together to further worship God who sacrificed his life that we might have life.

Let me pray for us. Come, Holy Spirit, come. Come and breathe a new wind into our lives. Come and fall upon us. And now from our hearts, may our words truly praise you.

Let us stand and sing Glorify Thy Name and praise the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit with all of our soul.