

Eternal Church

March 17, 2013

CALL TO WORSHIP

Psalm 96:1-9

1. *Oh sing to the LORD a new song; sing to the LORD, all the earth!*
2. *Sing to the LORD, bless his name; tell of his salvation from day to day.*
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; 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.*
6. *Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.*
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!*

WORSHIP & SERMON TRANSITION

- **Prayer**
- **Children Dismissal**
- Turn to **Malachi chapter 1**... (if you're not sure...)

Great is the Lord and Greatly to be Praised!

Malachi 1:6-14

INTRO

- **Name & Role**
- **Ohio/History/Teaching**
- It's a **little weird** to be up here like this. I'm way more comfortable with a guitar and mic stand in front of me. Somehow it acts as a psychological barrier between us. ...now, I just feel real exposed. haha.
- Anyway, this is my **first time doing** something like this, so be nice in your conversations at lunch and in all your social media updates. It would be a real bummer to stumble across a quote like: "lol... listen to what my worship pastor said this morning. what an idiot!" So if you want to go that route, maybe something more like: "awww, our music minister... bless his heart. he tried."
- **I'm up here this morning because** Skip once told me that if the Lord ever laid something on my heart to share with the congregation to let him know.
 - **usually when the Lord put something on my heart** for you all, I just write a song about it and force you all to learn it. I guess this time I was supposed to preach.
 - **so here's what the Lord has put on my heart.** here we go. Everyone ready?
- **"Great is the Lord!"**
- ...you know, I debated whether or not I needed to say anymore. I'm kind of new to this preaching thing, but I thought, man... if I could just say that, everyone would feel the weight and depth of that.
 - **A fourth** of us might fall to our knees in response and repentance.
 - **Half of us** would get saved right then and there.
 - **Danny Nelms** and **Bob Lee** gather the deacons and rush to find a way to get water in here so that we could baptize all the converts immediately.
 - **We'd quickly find out where the charismatics were**, because they would all be praying and singing in tongues.

- **Tom Harvey** goes and stands on 160 proclaiming, “REPENT! The Kingdom of our God is NIGH!”
 - **Ben Smith** gathers up 20 people and they immediately leave for Guatemala.
 - **The people who are a little more reformed**, would be interrupted in their hymn sing and quickly flip to corinthians and try to discern what in the world is happening with the tongues and if it's Biblical or not
 - but it's all so awesome because we have the many parts of the body responding to this great truth! ... **“Great is the Lord!”**
- ...but then I thought... since this is my first time, maybe I should prepare the other half of the sermon.
 - So...**first half**: “Great is the Lord!”
 - **Second half**: “and Greatly to be Praised!”
 - You know, something that I say from time to time up here is that worship is about **revelation and response**. Psalm 96:4 is just one of the many that show this idea:
 - **Revelation**: “Great is the Lord.”
 - **Response**: “and Greatly to be praised.”
 - So as the Lord reveals himself to us (He is great),
 - our response should be GREAT praise!
 - Let's get a little **interactive** this morning.
 - I want to say that together, so repeat after me...
 - **Great is the Lord... (repeat)**
 - **and Greatly to be Praised... (repeat)**.
 - **Again...**
 - and now, **all together**, just you guys, on three! **1, 2, 3...**
 - “Great is the Lord and Greatly to be Praised!”
 - **YES!** (:
 - **If there's one thing** I want you to take from today, it's that!
 - **It's scripture.**
 - **“Great is the Lord and Greatly to be Praised!”**
 - I Chronicles 16:25, Psalm 48:1, Psalm 96:4, Psalm 145:3
 - We read it at the beginning of worship.
 - It's simple and yet SO profound! **“Great is the Lord and Greatly to be Praised!”**
 - So, that's where we're headed today.

MUSIC STORIES

- Most of you know that I got married this summer. (:
- **[ivy & jesse picture]**
- Ivy is **originally from Iowa and her parents care for people with Alzheimer's**. These people they care for are the coolest! When i first met Ivy, she talked about Wanita.
- **[ivy + wanita picture]**

- **Wanita** is now 99 years old. Ivy loves this lady. One winter Ivy came in from shoveling the driveway. “Wanita, do you want to come out and build a snowman with me?” “No!” “Please!” “No!” “PLEASE!” “NO!” “Wanita, don’t you love me?” “I love you, but I DON’T like snowmen!”
- One of their former residents was **Maybell**. Sometimes Ivy would call her “Maybull.” “M-A-Y-B-E-L-L, it’s MayBELL!” She hated being called Maybull. Maybell had Alzheimer's.
 - **Alzheimer's disease** (which is a form of dementia) is a progressive brain disorder that damages and eventually destroys brain cells, leading to memory loss and changes in thinking and other brain functions.
 - Ivy said it was so interesting because they could sing songs and leave out a word, and Maybell would fill in the blank... “**you are my sunshine**, my only sunshine, you make me...” ...Maybell would fill in the blank. “happy.” How crazy is that!?!?
- **Daniel Stuber** (one of your Deacons here at Eternal) called me up a few weeks ago and told me this story... Grandpa (96 years old with dementia) doesn’t even recognize Daniel. The church that they go to was having a service to thank the Lord for a new building that He had blessed their church with. They had a time of worship and sang a bunch of hymns. Daniel noted that his grandpa sang along and knew every word! How beautiful and powerful is that!
- I start off this morning with **these stories**...
 - one, as the “music minister,” someone here has to **emphasize the importance of worship through music**. ...right?
 - How powerful music can be in our lives. Someone with Alzheimer's and Dementia have the ability to remember words and lyrics.
 - ...honestly, I feel the weight of that! What a **heavy responsibility** in choosing songs to sing every week. ...it’s not something I take lightly. (...so even when you don’t like a particular song on Sunday, at least KNOW that it has been thought through and prayed over. It’s not some flippant thing.) (:
 - **The other reason is that just like Maybell, I want to be able to say...**
 - “**Great is the Lord**,” and you guys say...
 - **AMEN!**
- Ok! **That’s my intro!** haha. How am I doing?
 - **My love language is “affirmation,”** so feel free to throw out an “**Amen!**” or a “**Hallelujah**” if you feel the need to testify to something you hear.
- Ok. Let’s keep going! (:

WORSHIP DISCLAIMER

Worship is not JUST singing songs, and yet worship IS singing songs.

- A real quick “worship disclaimer,” before we continue. I could speak another 5 sermons on **worship as a lifestyle**, but that will be for another time (depending on how this sermon goes). Worship is so much more than singing songs, **BUT there is also an importance and emphasis on worshipping together through singing.**
- **Worship as Singing:**
 - **Levites**
 - 1 of the 12 tribes of Israel,
 - assigned to ministering through music?

- **2 Chronicles 20**
 - Sending the musicians to the front of the battle line. As they began to sing, God set ambush against Judah's enemies
 - Ton's of **Psalms about singing to the Lord**
 - Sing to the Lord, Sing a new song. here's a good one... Make a LOUD noise to the Lord! Praise Him on stringed instruments and cymbals.
 - **Acts 16:25-26**
 - About midnight **Paul** and **Silas** were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened.
 - **Ephesians 5:19 and Colossians 3:16**
 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
 - **Isaiah 6 and Revelation**
 - Singing around the Lamb on His Throne.
 - **Personal Examples**
- ...so, all that to say... as I refer to "worship" today, although there is a lot of overlap, **I will be primarily referring to congregational worship through song.**
 - Ok. Let's do this! Stand as we read.

TODAY'S SCRIPTURE

[Sermon Art]

- (sidenote: as we stand, I want you to think for a second... do you know **WHY we stand when we read the word of God?** It's because... ready... "Great is the Lord and..." YES! Because reading **His WORD is different than reading anything else.** It's HOLY. So we set it apart from other things by standing to read it.)

Malachi 1:6-14

6. *A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear? says the LORD of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, 'How have we despised your name?'*
7. *By offering polluted food upon my altar. But you say, 'How have we polluted you?' By saying that the LORD's table may be despised.*
8. *When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil? And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor; will he accept you or show you favor? says the LORD of hosts.*
9. *And now entreat the favor of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favor to any of you? says the LORD of hosts.*
10. *Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain! I have no pleasure in you, says the LORD of hosts, and I will not accept an offering from your hand.*
11. *For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations, and in every place incense will be offered to my name, and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.*
12. *But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is, its food may be despised.*

13. *But you say, 'What a weariness this is,' and you snort at it, says the LORD of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence or is lame or sick, and this you bring as your offering! Shall I accept that from your hand? says the LORD.*
14. *Cursed be the cheat who has a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.*

QUICK INTRO TO MALACHI

- moving back **500 some years before the book of Acts**... Around the time of Ezra and Nehemiah.
- The name **Malachi literally means: "my messenger"**
- **This book is an "Oracle"** (sub-genre of prophesy).
 - "It's a **divine command or communication.**"
 - "A burden with implications of urgent responsibility and even dread."
- **Malachi is writing to "Israel"** (that includes us all). Israel is responsible for all covenant responsibilities. (the offerings and sacrifices).

HONOR

- The passage **starts off talking about "honor."**
 - **Verse 6:** *"A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If then I am a father, where is my honor? And if I am a master, where is my fear?"*
- Clearly God is concerned about honor, and about **giving honor where honor is due!**
 - **Exodus 20:12**
 - The 10 Commandments.
 - *"Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long in the land that the LORD your God is giving you."*
 - shows his heart for how children should relate to their fathers.
 - and what does scripture say about **our relationship to God**...
 - **Exodus 4:22**
 - *"Then you shall say to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the LORD, Israel is my firstborn son'"*
 - God calls Israel (that's all of us) His "firstborn son."
 - part of His covenant with Abraham in Genesis 15.
 - **So, in light of these passages:**
 - how much more should "Israel" honor their HEAVENLY Father.
 - **If we move to the New Testament:**
 - **Luke 6:46**
 - *"Why do you call me Lord, Lord (master), and not do what I tell you."*
 - a big part of honoring your Father is being **obedient**.
 - which get's us into the next question...

SO WHAT WERE THESE PRIESTS GUILTY OF?

- **The Passage says that they:**
 - despised His Name
 - offered polluted food
 - blind, lame, sick animals
 - kindled fire on His altar in vain
 - complained, "what a weariness this is" - snorted at it
 - cheated: had a male and offered what was blemished
- Quite the list of shortcomings.

- **let's unpack this.** There are a lot of layers here.
- **Lame Offerings**
 - We have to go back to **Leviticus!**
 - Leviticus law... (Leviticus get's a bad rap.)
 - All kinds of offerings:
 - **Burnt** Offering: for petition or praise
 - **Peace** Offering: for fellowship with the Lord
 - **Sin** Offering: for atonement of a committed sin; purification
 - **Guilt** Offering: for atonement of a committed sin; compensation
 - **Grain** Offering: to emphasize the offering it accompanies
 - **They were guilty in what they were offering. the blemished and lame.**
- **Not only were they lame. ...but they were vain.**
 - (see what I did there?) (:
- **Vain Offerings**
- **Verse 10:** *"Oh that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain!"*
 - **I immediately think of Matthew 15:7-8**
 - *"You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you, when he said: 'This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;'"*
 - **God is not a fan of hypocritical worship.**
 - **Isaiah 1:11-20**
 - The Lord **doesn't need your vain offerings.** The Lord is **tired of these** kinds of offerings. **"abomination," "I can not endure it," "my soul hates," "they have become a burden to me," "I'm weary of them,"** etc.
 - **If that doesn't do it for you, then... Let's look to a situation in Leviticus when someone "kindled fire on His altar in vain."**
 - **Leviticus 10:1-3** *"Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered unauthorized fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD."*
 - **Vain and Rebellious**
 - **The point is** that God doesn't want or need your vain offerings.
 - **Side note:** The beauty of being the "music minister" is that I can throw that out there, and leave it for Skip to explain later. haha. Sorry Skip.
- So we've got: **Lame Offerings and Vain Offerings**
 - they're both the fruit of a distant heart.
- **ESV Commentary Quote:**
 - "Malachi's contemporaries may have been free from blatant idolatry and relatively orthodox in their beliefs, but theirs had become a dead orthodoxy. They were all too ready to make ethical compromises and to dilute the strenuous demands of proper worship."
- **My interpretation:**
 - They compromised what was due to the Lord, because they had lost sight of who the Lord was and their hearts had grown distant.

THINK OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF A BLEMISHED SACRIFICE

What does an unacceptable sacrifice speak of?

- Remember that the **sacrifices** in the OT **did not take away the peoples' sin**.
 - They were a **type** or **prefiguring** of Christ. ...they were pointing forward to Christ! ...the ultimate fulfillment.
 - So a blemished sacrifice says that I think this is good enough.
 - ...**a sacrifice that was not perfect profaned the name of Jesus!**
 - It was a despising of His name.
- **But, they're not thinking about that.**
 - These people had become weary. ...and were "snorting."
 - As I said, their "orthodoxy had become **dead**" and their hearts had grown **distant**."
- You know what the cure for something like this is?
 - in my own life. when my heart becomes distant...

REMEMBERING "WHY?"

Weariness with such strict requirements.

- **WHY** such a strict requirement?
 - Because SIN requires a PERFECT sacrifice!
 - **Leviticus 22:20** "*You shall not offer anything that has a blemish, for it will not be acceptable for you.*"
 - it's easy to get caught up in the fact that it doesn't meet his requirements.
 - but why?
 - ...because it's not acceptable for you! For your sin.
 - **Your sin requires something that's not blemished.**
- **The seriousness of sin requires a perfect sacrifice.**
- **So, let's get a little more personal...**

SO WHAT ABOUT US?

What is our acceptable offering to the Lord?

- Here's the beauty of the Gospel. The answer...
 - **Jesus Christ!**
 - We sing about it every week!
 - Next week is a remembrance of it.
 - The following week is a celebration of it.
- The beauty of the Gospel is this...
 - Jesus Christ is the **only acceptable sacrifice** for us.
 - ...Christ ALONE **meets the demands of God!**

You know what happens now. We usually stop there. I mean, cause what else is there to say? Christ has done it! It is FINISHED! He has done it all! Period.

- Listen to the author of **Psalm 116:12-14**
 - "*What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me?*"
 - He's essentially asking the same question. What can I give back to the Lord? He's done it all! He's paid it all. He provided the ultimate offering and sacrifice.
 - Well, he goes on...
 - "*What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD, I will pay my vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people.*"

- We have NOTHING to give back! **Nothing, except** lifting up the cup of salvation, and calling upon the name of the Lord! Paying our vows to the Lord in the presence of all His people!
- **Hebrews 13:15-16** “Sacrifices Pleasing to God”
 - *“Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.”*
- **This is what we’re left with!** Jesus paid the ultimate offering and sacrifice. We’re left with offering up sacrifices of praise. Paying our vows to the LORD in the presence of all his people! **That’s what Sunday morning is all about!**
- That’s the **Revelation and Response!**
 - Great is the Lord! (Jesus paid it all! The ultimate sacrifice!)
 - **...but don’t stop there!** RESPOND to that truth! He is GREATLY to be praised!!!
- As you worship, remember WHY?
 - If you respond without the revelation, you’re going to end up like the priests in Malachi and the hypocrites in Matthew.
 - Remembering Why will help you to respond from the heart!
- **I think there’s a strong parallel in the implications of a blemished sacrifice in the Old Testament and today.**
 - In the Old Testament, the sacrifices and offerings point to or prefigure Christ.
 - In the same way, I think our offerings and sacrifices of praise today point to Christ in how we value Him.

FUTURE WORSHIP

It’s GOING to happen!

I love how Malachi proclaims this at the end.

- **Verse 11:**
 - *“For from the rising of the sun to its setting my name will be great among the nations”*
 - *“and in every place incense will be offered to my name”*
 - *“For my name will be great among the nations, says the LORD of hosts.”*
- **Verse 14:**
 - *“For I am a great King, says the LORD of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.”*
- **His glory will be proclaimed among the nations!**
- (Isaiah 2:2, 56:7, 60:3, 66:19, and hundreds of other verses.)
- **“From the rising of the sun to it’s setting...”** it’s **predictive language** that refers to a future time of great blessing.
- Isaiah 45:6 and 59:19 use this phrase with a reference to when **all the nations will know and fear the Lord.**
- Isaiah 19:19-25. Egypt and Assyria (Israel’s worst enemies...representing the world) will worship our Great God! **The world united in worship!**
- Isaiah 66:2b - “but this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.”
- **Isaiah 66:20-21** “brothers from all nations,” and **“some of them also I will take for priests and for Levites, says the Lord.”**
- ...I’m trying to be one of those Levites!!! (: (know what I’m saying!)
- **The Lord is ONE! ...the sole object of worship!** (Zechariah 14:9)

- We're getting a **taste of this right now!** Now is a **partial fulfillment** of this passage.

CONCLUSION

- Just like Malachi said to the priests in this verse who were offering blemished sacrifices, I want to say to us this morning.
 - Our God is a GREAT King and His name will be feared among the nations.
 - it's going to happen!
 - Let's join in and be a part of it!

SOME THINGS TO THINK ABOUT

- **We are "hosting the presence of God."**
 - ...the name above every other name!
 - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them."
- **This is a set apart time once a week.**
 - ...interesting that the passage makes the example of the Governor.
- It has been hitting me as I think through this...
 - **Why do we have to teach inside the church, that which is so natural outside of the church?**
- This may not be a perfect illustration, but...
 - You know, I was thinking at the beginning of the sermon (you know, when everyone got saved and all that stuff?). What if I got up at Michael Jordan's Hall of fame induction and made a great statement about him. Think about it. Put yourself there. I'm at a gathering to recognize and in a sense worship MJ. Here's the statement: "Today we recognize Michael Jordan, the GREATEST basketball player to EVER play the game." Does ANYONE in that crowd just sit there with their mouths closed and their hands folded in their lap? Or sipping coffee?
- MJ was just a man. Jesus Christ is GOD the SON!
 - so why is it so natural outside of the church, but here we have to teach how to stand, clap, raise our hands, and lift up a shout of praise to the Lord.
- **Christ has redeemed us!** He's saved us. Ephesians 2.
 - what sacrifice and offering of praise can we as a church bring in light of that?
- **Psalm 22:3**
 - *"Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel."*

"WHAT A WEARINESS"

A Call to Remember

Can I challenge you all with some practical things for a minute.

- Every Sunday we have a flood of people that come in **5, 10, 15, 20 minutes late...**
 - Honor the Lord!
 - Great is the Lord and Greatly to be praised!
- We're a unique church in that although we don't have as **strenuous demands** as Leviticus calls for, we have to do a LOT to make this happen every week.
 - Set-Up, Sound, Visuals, Worship Team...
 - Let's continue that! Remember what the task is about.

- Great is the Lord and Greatly to be praised!
- I can't tell you how many times I've heard: **"I'm not the hand raising type."**
 - In my head I'm sarcastically thinking, "you mean you're not the Biblical type?"
 - I wish I had more time to spend on this, but its Biblical! (www.eternalworship.net)
 - We raise our hands because: Great is the Lord and Greatly to be praised!
- Man, I want **to say "Amen"** to pastor Skip, but what will people think?
 - Great is the Lord and Greatly to be praised!
- How about those awkward times when a **cell phone** goes off in worship.
 - Honor the Lord by turning your phones off.
 - Great is the Lord and Greatly to be praised!
- For **those of you who don't sing out** because you are tone deaf...
 - I wish you knew my dad, because he was WAY more tone deaf than you, AND he did it with his hands in the air! So he was a tone-deaf charismatic!
 - You know why... because, he knew that the Lord was Great and deserved ALL his praise.
- **He deserves and demands our praise! Let's be a church that gives it to Him!**

CONCLUSION

- Psalm 145:1-7
- Pray