

***Worship: Let All Creation Sing***

Sermon Series on 1-2 Chronicles

Kenwood Baptist Church

Pastor David Palmer

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**TEXT: 1 Chronicles 16:8-36**



It is good to be in the Lord's house this morning and to worship Him together as part of His family. We continue this morning in our fall series: *Worship God*. We are looking this year at the three main words of our vision statement that calls us, as redeemed people, united by faith in Christ and powered by His Spirit, first, to worship God. Theologian John Frame says it like this:

“Redemption is the means; worship is the goal. In one sense, worship is the whole point of everything. It is the purpose of history, the goal of the whole Christian story. Worship is not one segment of the Christian life among others. Worship is the entire Christian life, seen as a priestly offering to God. And when we meet together as a church, our time of worship is not merely a preliminary to something else; rather, it is the whole point of our existence as the body of Christ.”

Worship is the goal, and that is why we are looking at length at worship, and we need God's Word to help us understand what worship is. God's Word will help us feel a greater sense of freedom in worship; God's Word will also help us understand the content and quality of worship that brings God joy in His people. We are looking at a portion of God's Word, 1-2

Chronicles, that is unfamiliar to some. It is an open gate to our soul, and all we need is God's Word to come in, and it changes us. First and Second Chronicles will change us because this portion of God's Word is about worship.

Pastor Scott preached a fantastic sermon for us last week, a very powerful and strong word about the command to worship and how God's movement in our lives calls us. We saw the figure of David dancing before the Lord and rejoicing in the God of his salvation. You may have wondered: "Wow, I wish we had the music soundtrack to go with that!" Wouldn't it be great? It would be like watching this great moment in the Scripture and thinking it's a silent movie. For many of us, the Bible is like a silent movie, and yet we actually have the soundtrack from last week. We have the music that goes with the triumphal procession of God's presence and His being enthroned in the midst of the people. First Chronicles 15 tells us about the procession of the ark. First Chronicles 16 tells us about the song that went with it, and so keep your Bible open to 1 Chronicles 16. We are going to look at this passage, which is instructive for us.

The title of the sermon is *Let All Creation Sing*, and you'll see why as we get deeper into it. First Chronicles 16 tells us that when they brought the ark of God, they put it inside the tent that David had set for it. They offered sacrifices to God, and when the sacrifices were finished, David blessed the people. He distributed to them the bounty. Remember that the burnt offering is consumed on the altar, and that it is an offering for sin, but the peace offering, or fellowship offering is eaten by the people. This is the theological justification for the fellowship meal. Of the offerings there are some that are totally consumed by God, some eaten partly by the priests—the sin offering. But the vast majority of offerings, and we forget this sometimes, the vast majority of offerings that are offered on the altar, a portion is given to God and the rest is eaten by the people, because we are in a fellowship covenant bond with God, and that is displayed in our worship. So, it's no accident, it's not a Baptist innovation, to say we need two things here: we need a sanctuary and a fellowship hall. That's actually an echo of something really important in Scripture.

But then David did something remarkable in 1 Chronicles 16:4 for which we all should be profoundly grateful. We read that David appointed some of the Levites as ministers—or as servants, better translated— before the ark, and they were given a role that before this moment had not been assigned. They were given the task to do three things. Look at this. They were put there together, as the offering and the worship is happening, they are placed there "to invoke, to thank, and to praise the Lord." To invoke in Hebrew, for the Hebrew readers among us, is *to cause to remember*, literally. They are speaking; better, they are singing, as we will see. They are thanking God. They are praising God, and we have here David's joining with the worship service an element of singing and music.

Some of us may have a longer memories than others, but we do things on Sunday morning that we take for granted, like singing in English. That's a great gift. Isaac Watts was the first one to ever write songs in English, and we are grateful for that. We are grateful for the opportunity to use the instruments and join our voices. We are delighted to offer songs that are drawn from all portions of the Scripture, but when you reach all the way back, we see that David is putting singing and music and instrumentation as part of the regular worship service. I think it's awesome, and it's right, and it also gives us a crucial element of biblical worship. These are verbs of action; they are verbs of singing: invoke, thank, and praise the Lord. So, when we flow into the actual lyrics of the song that is sung on this occasion, we have to remember that the people are singing, but that there is a worship team, if you will, and we even have their names: Asaph, Zechariah, Jeiel, Shemiramoth, Jehiel, Mattithiah, Eliab, Benaiah, Obed-edom, and Jeiel. That was like the worship team. If they had had a bulletin, those are the names that would be on the bottom. These men led the people in worship. We do need to be led in worship, and then when we enter into the song that begins in 1 Chronicles 16:8, all of the verbs are plural. They are all plural. You can't see this in English. When we read in 1 Chronicles 16:8, "Give thanks to the Lord," we read that and it might mean just me, but actually, the Hebrew language differentiates the singular imperative from the plural, and all of these imperatives, all of these commands, all of these summons, are plural. If we were south of the river, we could say *y'all*. These are all *y'all* verbs, and so this is important. It means that you cannot obey God in this portion by yourself. It means you have to come together, for you cannot fulfill God's commands here by yourself. These are all plural, and the song begins with ten plural verbs: give thanks to the Lord; call on His name; make known His deeds; sing to Him; sing praises to Him; tell of all His wondrous works; glory in His holy name; let the hearts of those who seek Him rejoice; seek the Lord; seek His presence continuously. All those are plural, and it's a command. It's a command, like all of God's commands, for our good, for our joy.

A summons to praise is given to the gathered community. Some of us, maybe all of us, hear those commands and wonder: How do I do that? Maybe I'm not feeling that way, and we have this idea that worship is just something I do when I feel like it. Don't ever say that to your spouse: "Loving you is something I do just when I feel like it." Husbands, never say that! Wives, never say that! Worship is not a decision that we make just when we feel a certain way. Worship is a statement of reality. Worship is a reality, and God calls us into this reality. God kindly and graciously answers the question: "How do I get my heart to that place?" The way that Chronicles helps us in this regard is beginning in 1 Chronicles 16:12 and again in 1 Chronicles 16:15. We are told the same word, and that is *remember*. One of the most life-giving habits of the heart to move ourselves into a place of worship is to remember. We are a pretty forgetful group, actually. Sociologists tell us that most of us have a diminishing capacity to remember, and we need to remember. When you remember, then your heart is moved, your

mind is moved, so let's look at how we are commanded to remember. Again, this is in the plural, so it's for all of us. In 1 Chronicles 16:12, we read:

*“Remember the wondrous works that He has done, His miracles and the judgments He uttered.”*

These are God's wonders, the remarkable things that He has done in our life together.

I was telling someone yesterday a very small piece of remembering my own life. Once, I was talking with a friend who had bought a house. They had a young family with three kids, bought a house, and were ready to move in. The neighbor of the house was in the Homeowners Association of this neighborhood, and this neighbor said: “I don't want to live next to a family with young children. I don't want distractions with young kids,” and so she blocked the closing of the house, and right at the last minute, they weren't able to move into this house. So they spent the summer, eight weeks, homeless, living in the living room of a friend. I said, “Brother, give me the ending of that story.” He said, “You know, God opened up a new place for us, and it's actually a better place, and He taught us to trust in Him. We are just remembering His faithfulness.”

When I was in high school, my family was looking for a house to purchase. We found a house that was great. We were in the basement exclaiming about how the house was so perfect for us to live in. We were so excited! My parents were drafting the offer, and we were walking up the stairs when the realtor looked at my dad said: “I just sold the house!” Our hearts sank. “What! You sold the house?” “Yeah, someone just put an offer in while you were in the basement.” So, we started looking elsewhere. We ended up buying a house three blocks from that house. You know what? The house we bought those three blocks over was in a different school district, and because I went to that other school district, I ended up meeting my best friend who shared Christ with me. I would never have known him if I'd been in that other house. That's just a tiny mosaic tile when you start thinking what God has done. What are the wondrous works that He has done, His miracles that He has uttered? When God's people hear the word in 1 Chronicles 16:12, “*God's wonders,*” they think of the wonders of God at the Exodus, and the signs and wonders of His great power. Remember His miracles. He is the Lord our God.

We move to 1 Chronicles 16:15. We remember not only the miraculous things that He has done, but we:

*“Remember His covenant forever, the word that He commanded, for a thousand generations,”*

God has bound Himself to us in a covenant relationship. We use this language of relationship with God, and I fear sometimes we use it so often that we think about it just like a human

relationship. For many of us, relationships are sadly disposable, but relationship with God is something very different. It's more like the relationship with a spouse. It is a relationship that is bound and sealed with covenant vows and commitments. In 1 Chronicles 16:15 we read: *"Remember the covenant; remember what God did,"* specifically *"the word."* What was the word that He commanded for 1000 generations? In 1 Chronicles 16:16, we read it was the covenant, literally, that He cut with Abraham. Do you remember this moment in Genesis 15? When God called Abraham, He said: "Take these animals and slaughter them and put the pieces side-by-side." Abraham was preparing to walk through the pieces, calling down the imprecatory oath upon himself if he should not fulfill the terms of the covenant, and lo and behold, God said: "You stay right there, and I am going to pass through the pieces of the covenant, because I am committing Myself to you." Do you know that the living God, the God who said: "Let there be light," and there was light, has committed Himself to you? When He says in His Word that "all things work together for the good of those called by God," He meant that, and He has the power to pull that off. I don't know about you, but I start moving toward a posture of worship right there. He committed Himself to me, to you. The covenant He made with Abraham, the promise He made to Isaac, He confirmed to Jacob. It's an everlasting covenant. Sometimes we might think to ourselves, as 21st-century, postmodern, individualistic, lonely people, that God has committed Himself to just one person, or maybe one generation, but notice that in 1 Chronicles 16, God cuts the covenant with Abraham. He walks through the pieces and says: "I am going to do this," and then God graciously tells Abraham's son Isaac, "I am going to do this," and he tells Jacob, "I am going to do this." Then He says, "I am going to do this. It is the word for a thousand generations." If you count a generation by 40 years, then what's 1000x40? It's long time, isn't it? God has committed Himself generation to generation. A thousand. It is almost unimaginable. Is your heart moving closer to worship? A thousand generations certainly includes our own, and then He says, just in case you're wondering, He confirms it as an everlasting covenant. So, if you struggle with math, just forget about it. It's everlasting. You will never open your eyes or take in a breath that is outside the scope of God's covenant commitment to us.

In 1 Chronicles 16:19, the remembering is even more specific. Remember *"when you were few in number, a tiny group of little account, and sojourners in it."* Remember, Abraham was called to leave his ancestral home, go to this place God said, "I will show you." He walked around it, building an altar, marking out places of worship at the perimeter. He was sojourning in it, and God says: "I'm giving this all to you." The apostle Paul says that the promise of land to Abraham was in a sense typological, and that God's real promise to Abraham included all the earth, in Romans 4. We are the descendants of Abraham by faith in Christ, and so, as you look around, this is your place. Your name is on the deed. You don't have to strive to say: "Boy, I hope in my lifetime that we could move our family just one ZIP Code." God says: "I'm giving you the whole

thing in Christ.” God protects us with His providential care in 1 Chronicles 16:21. He allows no one to oppress His people. He rebukes kings and says in 1 Chronicles 16:22:

*“Touch not My anointed ones, do My prophets no harm!”*

Here God calls all of us *His Messiah*. We are all His anointed ones. We are all His people, and God is committed to protect and care for us. Is your heart moving closer to worship? As your heart moves closer to worship and you remember what God has done, His intervention in your life, His covenant commitment in your life, His providential care in your life, His ability to lead you, direct you—let's remember that's true for all of us, not just one of us, and not just one generation—it moves our heart closer to where it should be. When we come to the place of worshiping God and we remember what He has done, if your heart is cold and your mind is distracted, sometimes it is helpful to write down: “God, let me just remember what You have done among us.”

As your heart moves to worship and you start thinking about God's presence and power and His goodness and His ability to save, His sovereign powers, His covenant commitment, your heart starts to say, “Oh, Lord, I’ve got to tell You how great You are!” It’s not that God needs us to tell us how great He is, but He allows us to do that because when we express verbally our praise to God, we line up with reality. I want to live in reality, don't you? When we get to that place, and in our heart and mind we are ready to worship God and glorify Him, we are ready to praise Him, something fantastic happens, and it's a shift in 1 Chronicles 16:23. When you remember God's works, you remember His greatness, His power, His covenant commitment, then all of a sudden you start thinking: “Everybody has got to get in on this!” It’s the most natural thing when you remember what God has done, that you want to share that; you want to glorify God, but then you want other people around you to do that. First Chronicles 16:23 then says:

*“Sing to the LORD, all the earth! Tell of His salvation from day to day.”*

We remember together what He has done. I remember what He has done in my family. We remember what He has done at Kenwood Baptist Church. We remember what He has done through church history. We remember what He has done in God's word. We remember His covenant commitment to us, and then we think to ourselves: “Oh, this is where we are going.” Worship looks back and gathers its momentum, and then all the sudden worship is evangelistic. I remember, as a brand-new Christian, my first time going to church after trusting in Christ, and I saw people worshiping God like they knew Him. They were talking about God like He was speaking to them, and I thought: “I have been missing out on an awful lot.” Worship is evangelistic and it points us not only back, but it points us forward. The great ending is a worship service: *“Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Tell of His salvation from day to day.”* All the earth! All the time! In 1 Chronicles 16:24:

*“Declare His glory among the nations, His marvelous works among all the peoples!”*

All the earth, all the time, all the nations, all the peoples. First Chronicles 16:25 says:

*“For great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and He is to be feared above all gods.”*

All the earth; all the time; all the nations; all the people; above all gods. The gods that we make with our hands, the Bible says are worthless. That is pretty blunt, but it's true, and we need God's truth to set us free. Sometimes our worship doesn't flow out of our heart because we're enamored with what we've made. Jump to 1 Chronicles 16:28:

*“Ascribe to the LORD, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the LORD glory and strength!”*

All the earth; all the time; all the nations; all the people; above all gods; all the families. This is the promise in Genesis 12 that God told Abraham: *“In you, all the families of the earth will be blessed.”* Ascribe to the Lord all the earth; all the time; all the nations; all the peoples; above all the gods; all the families, and then the song thunders up to the highest register which says, not only all the peoples, but we are going to need all creation to launch into song. It is not sufficient to the glory of God if just all the people, all the time, praise Him. First Chronicles 16:31 says:

*“Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations,  
‘The LORD reigns!’”*

Let the heavens be glad. Maybe that includes the angelic host, but the summons is for the heavens to be glad and the earth itself to rejoice and let them say among the nations that the Lord reigns. He is King. First Chronicles 16:32 says:

*“Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it!”*

That means the great white sharks at some point. Have you ever seen a video of a great white shark in open water hunting seals? It is terrifying, to me! They come just roaring out of the water like a jet ski and grab. It's amazing! But at some level, 1 Chronicle 16 says that the sea is going roar and everything that is in it, and the field is going to exalt and everything in it. All creation itself in some way is going say: “Glory to God!” Even the trees are going to sing. The trees are going to sing for joy! How will that happen? I have no idea, but I want to hear that. I think it includes the dogwoods, but I think it also includes the redwoods.

Jonathan and I were in California in August, and we stopped and saw a tree that was 400 years old when God called Abraham. Big tree! and that is what it was called: The Big Tree. There was a sign in front of it: Big Tree. Big Tree is 2400 years old. Our arms stretched wide reached not even half of its diameter. I want to hear that tree. Don't you? I want to hear that tree sing for joy. What would that sound like? All creation; all the earth; all the time; all the nations; all the peoples; all creation, sing for joy before the Lord. Why? We read 1 Chronicles 16:33:

*“Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the LORD, for He comes to judge the earth.”*

His coming to judge the earth is the occasion of great rejoicing, because evil will be banished forever. Oh, Hallelujah! What a stunningly huge vision of worship. Is your heart getting a little closer. First Chronicles 16:34:

*“Oh give thanks to the LORD, for He is good; for His steadfast love endures forever!”*

God’s steadfast love, His covenant commitment, this language is translated as *grace* in the Hebrew New Testament, the modern Hebrew New Testament: His steadfast love, His covenant commitment, His gracious lovingkindness to us.

Pastor Fred was in Ethiopia the past three weeks, and he got to teach in a Christian school about grace. God worked powerfully there. Something you can find only in the Lord God Almighty: grace, steadfast love. As we come to the end of the song, we find that worship provides us an occasion for one another glorious thing. Look at 1 Chronicles 16:35:

*“Save us, O God of our salvation, and gather and deliver us from among the nations, that we may give thanks to Your holy name and glory in Your praise.”*

It is in the context of worship, when we line up with all creation, that we are emboldened to ask for God's help in prayer. When we remember what He's done, His power in our life together, His wonders in Scripture, when we remember that worship points us forward, that all creation will sing, and in between God's great and marvelous acts in the past and looking ahead to all that He will do, we stand here today and we are emboldened and encouraged to look to God, the God of our salvation and pray. This verse gives us three prayers: Save us, O God of our salvation. God answers that prayer. Gather us. Bring us together, gather us together. It can be a lonely world, but God's design is for us to be together as His people. Gather us; bring us back from scattered places. Lastly, deliver us. Do you need salvation this morning? God hears the prayer: Save us. Are you scattered? God hears the prayer: Gather us. Are you in a narrow spot, do you lack wisdom? God answers the prayer: Deliver us.

Notice the goal in 1 Chronicles 16:35. What happens when God answers our prayers? God's answer to our prayers just adds more fuel to that fire behind us and points us forward so that we may *“give thanks to Your holy name and glory in Your praise.”* The song ends in 1 Chronicles 16:36:

*“Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, from everlasting to everlasting!” Then all the people said, ‘Amen!’ and praised the LORD.”*

How does 1 Chronicles 16 teach us to worship this morning as Kenwood Baptist Church?

Number one: We see unequivocally that **worship is a verb**. Robert Weber says worship is a verb. It's an action. It isn't just a mindset. It is something you do. Listen to the verbs: give thanks, call, make known, sing, sing praise, tell, glory, seek, remember, declare, ascribe worship, tremble, be glad, rejoice, roar, exalt, sing for joy. Those are actions, aren't they? Worship is a verb. It's something We do.

Number two: **Worship expresses the Living Word of God**. As we heard 1 chronicle 16, some of us may have been thinking these words sound vaguely familiar. A remarkable thing about the song in 1 Chronicles 16 is that it is actually a combination of three Psalms. It is a quotation. God's word becomes active and alive.

Number three: **Worship realizes our creative gifts**. God puts in place Asaph through the hand of David. On that day, David appointed that thanksgiving be sung by Asaph and his brothers, and we hear of him again. Asaph didn't sing on just this occasion. When we read through the Book of Psalms, we to come Psalm 50:1, and we read:

*"A Psalm of Asaph. 'The Mighty One, God the LORD, speaks and summons the earth from the rising of the sun to its setting.'"*

You keep reading in the Psalms and you come Psalm 73: "A Psalm of Asaph." Psalm 74,75, 76,77,78,79, 80,81,82,83, all flow out of the heart of this man, and so the summons to sing calls for the creative gifts of the people. It is not just for that moment. It's a word, a covenant commitment for 1000 generations. Brothers and sisters, we are called to worship.

Number four: **Worship is a summons for all generations**. Robert Grant, a man whose name you probably don't know, was a son of the director of the East India Company. He was born in 1779 and became a lawyer when he was 29 years old. This man knew Christ, supported world missions, and was deeply committed to the gospel. As Robert Grant fed his soul on the Psalms, he was stirred by the translation of Psalm 104 in a version that was published in 1561. Robert Grant said:



*"O Worship the King all glorious above!  
O gratefully sing his power and his love,  
Our Shield and Defender, the Ancient of days,  
Pavilioned in splendor, and girded with praise."*

He wrote the lyrics of the hymn, "O, Worship the King," that we started the service with. His brother published 12 hymns that Robert Grant wrote, called *Sacred Poems*, the year of his

death. Are you getting closer to worship?

We sang “10,000 Reasons,” written by Matt Redman. He was born in 1974. His dad suffered



from depression and committed suicide. His mother remarried. His stepfather was abusive and was imprisoned. He grew up in a very broken family. Somebody told Matt: “You know, there's a service going on that's being conducted by Luis Palau, evangelist.” He went, and he discovered who he was supposed to be as a worshiper of God. He trusted Christ, and then his youth pastor said: “You're pretty good with the guitar. would you help lead the singing in the youth group?” So, he started leading the

worship in his youth group. He started feeding his soul on the Psalms, and then Matt Redman said: “You know, if you wake up one day and you cannot think of a reason to praise God, there is something wrong with you.” I believe that. Meditating on Psalm 103, he wrote the lyrics:

“Bless the Lord O my soul, O my soul  
Worship His holy name  
Sing like never before, O my soul  
I'll worship Your holy name  
For all Your goodness I will keep on singing,  
10,000 reasons for my heart to find.”

This song was used by God to draw many people to worship. Worship is evangelistic, isn't it?

Matt was invited to sing “10,000 Reasons” at Times Square in 2015. Tens of thousands of people gathered in Times Square and they sang 10,000 Reasons. Within 72 hours, 500,000 people had watched this on YouTube and shared it. We are made to worship.



Brothers and sisters, the call us morning is to worship God, to sing to Him. Every generation, all creation is invited. This morning, we are going to end our time with what might be a new song.

Pastor Scott said we have got to sing new songs. That's in God's Word: "*Sing to Him a new song.*" I learned this song just recently. It is a song called: "*So Will I.*" The man who wrote the song, Ben Hastings, says this:

"This song is about God as an artist working his masterpiece, a work of art called love. And it began with creation and it goes through the whole story where it was finished at the cross."

The lyrics of the song say:

"If the stars were made to worship so will I.  
You know if creation bows before You so will I.  
If it all exists to praise You so will I."

I want to invite you to stand, and I want to pray for us, and whether you know this song or not, God's Word calls us to worship Him and for our joy. He is worthy of our worship. He spoke and the world came into being. Hallelujah! He spoke and said: "I am committed to you." He spoke and said: "If you have trusted in Me, then your sins are forgiven." He spoke and said: "Follow Me."

Oh, Lord God, we come to You. We want to line with reality, Lord. We want to join the heavenly host. We want to join an innumerable multitude of the redeemed. We wanted to join, Lord, with the people who have remembered what You have done, and we want praise You, oh Lord God Almighty. Generation to generation will declare Your deeds, and Lord, this is our moment on the earth to bring You praise, and so, Lord, we want to remember who You are and what You have done and answer together: "The stars were made to worship, so will I. If the mountains bow in reference, so will I. If the oceans roar Your greatness, so will I. If the wind goes where You send it, so I. If the rocks cry out, so will I." Oh, Hallelujah! Lord, we praise You!

In Jesus' Name, Amen.