

visit

## **Worship: Our chance to respond to God**

### **Exodus 15 - Pastor Guy Gray**

#### **Worship: It's at the very center of the story**

At the critical high point of this incredible story of freedom, identity and purpose comes a worship song. And it's perfect. What else could possibly have fit so perfectly at this moment? The moment it registers in their minds --the amazing thing that God has done for them-- they have this overwhelming impulse to connect mind with heart. So they worship. The big lesson is simple and profound: worship is always at the center of the story. If you are paying attention, if you "get it," if you understand what God has really done and is doing, you will worship!

"Then Moses and the Israelites sang this song to the LORD." Yes, but how did they learn the song? It must be that Moses the leader now became Moses the worship leader! Moses taught the song and the people joined in. They just "stopped everything" and learned a song. They had choir practice in the middle of nowhere. They took their first step into a new life of freedom and stopped right there to worship. How beautiful and important is that!

#### **Worship: It's your choice to bring your heart to God**

"I will sing to the LORD." The opening line of the song reminds us that worship is a conscious choice. In the Hebrew, the verb "to sing" is in what is called the "cohortative" form. This is an interesting form which basically turns the verb into a self-exhortation. It's like telling yourself to do something. It is a little self-talk where you say, "Come on self, sing!" So the first lesson in worship is that you must choose to engage your heart with your mind and then express both heart & mind in a tangible outward expression.

#### **Worship: It's your choice to openly join with others**

So the Israelites sang. They all sang this song together. But when they did, they each engaged personally with God, "The LORD is my strength and my song..." So here is the next lesson about worship: worship is a personal engagement with God in a public setting. Worship is a shared experience. What makes it a truly dynamic experience for a community is when people are openly engaging with God personally, but doing it together with others. It is an experience that uniquely binds us together as a living community of faith in the LORD.

#### **Worship: It's the dynamic of speaking/singing directly to the LORD**

"Your right hand, O LORD was majestic in power." Notice how this song of worship directs us to speak/sing directly to the LORD. Worship is much more than singing about God. In worship, we speak/sing directly to God. In this, the song becomes a form of prayer that connects us personally to God. This is when heart and mind truly come together in worship. And we do this in the company of others. This is when the faith community becomes something dramatically more than just a bunch of people singing songs about God.

#### **Worship: It's your affirmation and celebration of all that is truly most important**

There are three great themes in the worship song of Exodus 15. First is the amazing victory of God that set them free (15:1-10). This is Redemption. The first theme of worship is what God has done to rescue us through Jesus Christ. In worship we look back to God's great work in Christ and we respond with heart and mind. We sing. We talk to God. We join with others in shared celebration. This is joy-filled gratitude. The next great theme is the awesome nature of God himself (15:11). In worship we think deeply about who God really is and we honor Him for the glory of His character. This is adoration. The third great theme is hope (15:13-18). In worship we project ourselves in faith into the future that God has promised us. In view of the victory that God has won and the awesomeness of who He is, we find the faith to embrace hope and worship Him ahead of time for what He will do. How powerful all of this can be in our lives and how totally appropriate it is for us to give God worship. It's no wonder that throughout God's Word we are called to be genuine worshipers. May the LORD help us to grow deeper as a worshiping community at River West!

#### **Questions for Further Personal Reflection & Group Discussion**

This week take some time reading/praying through some other model prayers and songs of worship in the Word. See: 2 Samuel 22:1-51, Isaiah 12:1-6, Luke 1:46-55, Luke 1:67-79 & Revelation 5:9-14.

## **Upcoming:**

### **FRIDAY 12/15**

Mom's Day Out, 10am-2pm  
at Lake Grove. See Monthly Update  
for more info. Space Limited!  
RSVP with Lindsie

### **SUNDAY 12/17**

All Church Service, 10am  
at Lakeridge Performing Arts Center

### **WEDNESDAY 12/20**

Parent Date Night, 6:30pm  
at River West Green Tree. Space  
Limited! RSVP with Lindsie

### **SATURDAY 12/23**

No Christmas Eve Service

### **SUNDAY 12/24**

No morning services  
Christmas Eve Service, 5:30, 7, 8:30 and  
10pm at Lake Grove. Childcare  
provided for 5:30, 7 & 8:30pm

### **WEEK of 12/25- 1/1**

River West Office Closed