

2 Samuel 6:1-5
The Ark Comes to Town
WRCoB 10.22.23

So, October is Pastor's Appreciation Month.

Nice!

I know you appreciate me more than one month
Out of the year.

I truly appreciate your love and support
Over the past 5 and half years of being your pastor.

Did you now that October is also
National Bullying Prevention Month?

I wonder, is there a reason they put both in October?
Pastor Appreciation and Bullying Prevention?

Maybe its a subtle but not so subtle way
To let your pastor know
Not to use the pulpit as a bully pulpit.

A bully pulpit is a conspicuous position that provides an opportunity to speak out and be listened to. This term was coined by United States President Theodore Roosevelt, who referred to his office as a "bully pulpit", by which he meant a terrific platform from which to advocate an agenda.

I hope you don't think that of me.

That instead of pushing my own agenda
And exerting my own authority
I preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Today we talk about King David
And the Ark of the Covenant.

But first, let me ask
Why do so many Davids end up as ministers?

Is it just coincidence
That your last three pastors were all named David?

The meaning of the name David is *Beloved*

And I pray we Davids fulfill the meaning of our name.

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David, the son of Jesse was known
As a man after God's own heart.

A bit strange, really, knowing David
Was an adulterer, rapist, deceiver, and murderer.

He led the complicated life of a shrewd politician
A warrior, a diplomat, and a king
Until things came crashing down on him

Precipitated by the equally shrewd prophet Nathan.

In my humble understanding
David was a man after God's own heart

Because, though he was a huge sinner
He was also a huge penitent.

Psalm 51:1-2 NRSV

**Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;
according to your abundant mercy,**

blot out my transgressions.

**²Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,
and cleanse me from my sin.**

He was a man after God's own heart
Because he loved God
With everything he had within him.

He loved God with heart, soul, strength and mind.

I don't think there is anyone else in the Bible
Except for Jesus
That loved God the way David loved him.

Read the psalms attributed to him and you will see.

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Last week, we spoke of Ruth
The great grandmother to David
Whose lineage continues all the way to Jesus.

Ruth lived during the time of Judges.

The time of Judges, the people were to be ruled by God.

Well, it didn't work out that way.

The people were wayward and rebellious
And instead of submitting to the rule of God
The people did as they pleased.

So, fearing what God might do to them
And wanting to emulate the surrounding nations

The Hebrew people demanded a king to rule them
To which God finally consented to.

The first king, King Saul, didn't fare so well

So God, through the prophet Samuel
Called the youngest of Jesse's sons
A little shepherd boy
To be the next king of Israel.

King David was a good warrior
And defeated many of Israel's enemies
Including the Philistines.

You know the story of David and Goliath.

Philistia was located along the coast of the Mediterranean.

The area contained five cities
Gaza, Ashkelon, Ashdod, Gath, and Ekron.

It became known as Palestine by the Greeks.

However, the Palestinians of today
Do not trace their roots to the Philistines
But to the Canaanites.

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The Philistines had held the Ark of the Covenant
Capturing it in battle with the Israeli army

It had been taken into battle for its power and protection.

Now this Ark of the Covenant was the elaborate box
That contained the stone tablets

On which the LORD God engraved the 10 Commandments.

It was the Hebrew people's most sacred possession
Recognized as having great power.

But it didn't have a permanent home.

During the early years the Hebrew people were nomadic.

The nation was still in the throes of conquest.

The Ark of the Covenant traveled with them
From place to place.

When they would stop to make camp
They would erect the elaborate tent
Called the tabernacle
And house the ark for a period of time.

It was their place of worship and sacrifice.

When King David became king of Israel
He made two decisive moves.

He made Jerusalem the permanent capital of Israel
Moving the center of government
From the city of Baalah of Judah
To the city of Jerusalem.

The second decisive move King David made
Was to remove the Ark of the Covenant
From cold storage

And carry it to the center of Jerusalem.

It is still housed in the tabernacle.

It is only later, David's successor, son, Solomon
Became king that the temple was built
To house the Ark of the Covenant.

King David placed the Ark of the Covenant
Strategically in the center of the city

To remind the people of Israel
To place God in the center of their lives.

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As the ark entered Jerusalem
David and the whole house of Israel
Some thirty thousand strong

Celebrated its arrival with song
And dance and musical instruments

Our reading from Psalm 150 is a testimony
To how the people of Israel praised their LORD God.

It was a special day to behold!

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In my weekly preparation for preaching
I listen to three commentators
On the website called Working Preacher.

They have a weekly podcast
Discussing the Narrative Lectionary text of the week.

One commentator mentioned
She attended a biblical workshop recently

They ended the conference with a worship service.

Afterwards, they were having coffee and refreshments
And one of the attendees excitedly stated
That she had tickets for the Taylor Swift concert

She started dancing
Raising her hands in the air and singing.

Other attendees quickly joined her

The commentator concluded that they showed more praise
Celebrating Taylor Swift's coming concert

Then they showed praise to God in worship.

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And so, my question for today is this.

How do we show our praise to God
For all the wonderful things God has done?

David and his entourage with their dancing and singing
And playing their musical instruments
Show key components to praising God.

Giving praise to God has physical and emotional
Along with spiritual characteristics

Music and movement are wonderful ways to praise God.

Music communicates to God the messages from our hearts.

Music helps us express praise when words alone seem thin.

Praising God is unidirectional.

Meaning praise goes in one direction
Like a one-way street.

We praise God, God doesn't praise us.

It is an expression of our love and admiration
A response to God's goodness and mercy
And blessings, and salvation.

Praise is creation's response to its Creator.

Everything which has breath praises their Maker.

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Now, there's a difference between praise and worship.

They're not exactly synonyms

I told you that praise is one directional.

Worship on the other is multi-directional
In worship we enter into communion with God.

Worship is like a two-way street
Our love goes out to God
And God's love comes back to us.

Worship is directed by the Holy Spirit.

Praise, on one hand, is carried to God in the Spirit's arms.

Praise is dancing and singing at the foot of God's throne

Worship, on the other hand, bows low before God
And is anointed by God's Holy Spirit.

We do both when we gather for Sunday morning.

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Brethren have been called a bit stiff
When they give praise and worship to God.
Which is a bit unfortunate.

Because Brethren

With their emphasis in four-part harmony
Express praise and worship quite well.

The blending of voices is truly an act of praise.

Just because most Brethren can't dance

Or clap in time to the music

Doesn't mean they aren't praising God.

However, having said that

We, Brethren, could loosen up a bit!

A little body movement

A little raising of hands

A little swaying of the body

These things will not jeopardize your membership status.

We give expression in some way of our love for God.

From classical music to Christian hip-hop

If it is truly God we are giving praise to

Then there is no right or wrong way.

Jesus said to the woman at the well.

John 4:24 CEV God is Spirit, and those who worship God must be led by the Spirit to worship him according to the truth.

It is the Spirit that helps us to praise God.

So, when the Ark comes to town

Be like King David.

You don't have to dance in the streets half-naked
Or shout or hoop or scream

But praise you must give
For our God is worthy of our praise.