

## Learning To Worship, Part 1

### Exodus 14-17 (ESV)

October 7, 2018  
Dr. Ritch Boerckel

We ask this big question about our study: What is God doing in the Exodus of the Israelites from Egypt? We could answer that question a number of ways. We might say, “God, in mercy, is liberating His people from Egyptian oppression.” We might say, “God is showing Pharaoh that the LORD is sovereign over the gods of Egypt.” We might say that, “God is revealing His faithfulness to His promises that He made hundreds of years earlier to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.” We might say, “God is working to bring His covenant people who are in Egypt, into the land that He promised them in Israel.” Now, all of these answers would be correct. But I think there is an answer that is more central to the story of Exodus, indeed more central to the big story of the Bible. What is God doing in the exodus of His people? God is redeeming a people so that they would worship Him. God is acting for His own Name’s sake.

The Lord aims to create a people who would give Him praise now and forever and ever. And what God aims at, He always hits. God’s purpose in redeeming His people from bondage is worship. If we are redeemed from our bondage to sin, there is a purpose, a central purpose for our lives. And that is that we would live now, from this day forward, lives that would glorify God in our worship to Him and of Him. In Isaiah chapter 43, God makes this very clear regarding His people, Israel.

**Isaiah 43:1, 7** But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: “Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine...everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made.”

Remember when God commissioned Moses to be His instrument in leading this people out of Egypt,

**Exodus 3:13-15** God said to Moses, “I am who I am.”...This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

He says, “Moses, what you’re about to do will be remembered so that My people would know who I am and they would worship Me throughout all the rest of time.” Remember when Moses first approached Pharaoh, Moses said to Pharaoh,

**Exodus 5:1** “Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, ‘Let my people go, that they may hold a feast to me in the wilderness.’”

God’s purpose was not merely to alleviate the pain and suffering of His people in Egypt. His purpose was to lead them into a worship service. God begins this whole deliverance of His people by appearing to Moses in a burning bush. God’s purposes are simply to be

known, to reveal Himself so that His people can know Him, revere Him, obey Him, and love Him. God's orientation in our salvation is very God-centered. Isaiah goes on to talk about this God-centeredness.

**Isaiah 43:20-21** for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people, the people whom I formed for myself that they might declare my praise.

**Isaiah 48:10-11** Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.

God says, "I have a purpose for the pain that you have been enduring." What is that purpose? It's for God's own sake. Remember also what God said as He explains to Moses why Pharaoh will not respond to the first nine plagues.

*14:4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." And they did so.*

He says, "Even now in this tenth plague, when it appeared that Pharaoh was hardening his heart even at this point," He says, "I am going to harden his heart yet again. He will pursue you as a people, but I will get glory over Pharaoh. I want even the Egyptians to know that I am the LORD." You see, again, our salvation is for God's Name's sake. God's passion for His glory runs all through the story. It runs all through the Scripture. God's intention is to call out a people from this world, a people for His own precious possession, a people who would worship Him.

The application then of course is very profound to our lives. If we have been redeemed by God through Jesus Christ, God's purpose for our life is to transform us into worshipers. That's our chief end. That is the very reason for our existence. It's that we would become worshipers of the living God. Our redemption from our sin is not the end purpose. It is the means toward that end. We were redeemed from sin. We were forgiven. We were washed. We were reconciled to God so that we would be a people who proclaim His glory, who enjoy God in our service and obedience to Him day after day after day. Jesus talks about this to the Samaritan woman by the well in John chapter 4. She is confused about worship and He tells her

**John 4:23-24** But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth."

The Father is seeking such people to worship Him. This is God's heart. It is His purpose. It is His kind intention. He is seeking such people to worship Him.

Now, the Israelites did not automatically become worshippers on the basis of being liberated from oppression in Egypt. And we don't automatically become worshipers simply because we come to church, because we become part of the community of God's people. God continues to work after the Israelites' initial salvation from Egypt. He works and shapes them into the kind of people who would worship Him in spirit and in truth. This is God's end game for us, His people. Worship defines our present purpose and our eternal future.

Undoubtedly, the Israelites were perhaps a bit confused by the hardship that they experienced after leaving Egypt. Undoubtedly, many of them thought, "Once we get out of Egypt, life is going to be easy." But nothing could be further from the truth. God ordains incredibly difficult events to teach this people how to worship Him. God uses these trials to create worshipping hearts. That's why James says for us to consider it all joy when we encounter trials of various kinds. (James 1:2) What is God doing? He's creating in us a heart that has the ability and the desire to worship God. And that is our very purpose for being born.

God has a curriculum to help us become worshipers and we're going to talk about that curriculum today. I learned this morning in the first service that I'm only going to talk about one event instead of three. Next week, we'll take up the other two events that teach us about worship. But today, we're going to look at the first subject. This is God's college course in worship. And the first subject that we're introduced to by God as God fashions us to become worshipers is the subject of

### **Subject #1: Hydrology – Give praise with joy to God for parting the waters.**

This is the water and its movements on the earth. God's use of water here in Exodus 14 teaches us to give praise to God with joy when He parts the waters. And we often have waters in our life that need to be parted when we're trapped, when we're up against the wall, and God remarkably enters into our lives. God is teaching this people that when that happens, we need to trust God and then afterwards to take time to give praise with joy to God for parting those waters.

*14:1 Then the Lord said to Moses, 2 "Tell the people of Israel to turn back and encamp in front of Pi-hahiroth, between Migdol and the sea, in front of Baal-zephon; you shall encamp facing it, by the sea. 3 For Pharaoh will say of the people of Israel, 'They are wandering in the land; the wilderness has shut them in.' 4 And I will harden Pharaoh's heart, and he will pursue them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, and the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord." And they did so.*

So immediately God leads the Israelites to travel east toward the Sinai Peninsula and then inexplicably, God leads them to travel back west into a cul-de-sac. The desert is on one side, the mountains on the other side, the sea is in front of them, and Egypt, that place of oppression, is behind them. Pharaoh has been watching their movements after they left Egypt. He sees them wandering in this inexplicably unreasonable fashion. He thinks, "They don't know what they're doing." And he is excited by that because his softness of

heart has begun to harden. He is angry that the firstborn has been killed. He is upset that the economic prosperity of Egypt has been threatened. He wants this people back to be slaves. Undoubtedly he wants to unleash some wrath on some of them. But I think his main purpose is to bring the majority of them back into slavery for cheap labor for the Egyptian economy. And he thinks, “They have no idea what they’re doing or where they’re going. And they’ve camped in the perfect place for me to attack them.” Pharaoh then gathered up his army and his chariots and he pursued them.

*14:10 When Pharaoh drew near, the people of Israel lifted up their eyes, and behold, the Egyptians were marching after them, and they feared greatly. And the people of Israel cried out to the Lord.*

This wasn’t a cry of humble prayer. It was a cry of fear. It was a cry of anxiety. It was also a cry of resentment.

*14:11 They said to Moses, “Is it because there are no graves in Egypt that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness?”*

They’re pointing fingers at God’s representative.

*What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? 12 Is not this what we said to you in Egypt: ‘Leave us alone that we may serve the Egyptians’?*

“We were happy there.” You see, distress causes us to forget what has even happened in our own lives.

*For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness.”*

Their hearts are filled with unbelief. That’s why they’re in such an anxious, terrified state. Their heart is also filled with contempt for Moses. How quickly after seeing God act in mighty ways in our lives do we forget God’s greatness, God’s provision, and God’s goodness? This of this! This is a people who had seen God defeat Pharaoh and all the Egyptian gods through a series of supernatural plagues. There were ten of them; one plague after another. This is a people who witnessed God’s protection as the Destroyer passed over their home and their homes were covered by the blood of this lamb. And all those houses that were not covered by the blood of the lamb were affected with death; the death of the firstborn. This is a people who did not need one more sign from God that God is real, that God is working, that God is great and that God is gracious. They had all the signs they needed. They simply needed to trust in the Lord who had shown Himself already in powerful, dynamic, loving ways to them.

And beloved, you and I are in the same condition. We are not a people who need one more sign in order to trust in the Lord. God has given us ample signs through His Son, even more so than these earlier Israelites, through His Son, Jesus. He has given us ample proof that He is a God who is real, He is a God who is gracious, He is a God who we can trust. And yet, this was not a people who were trusting in the Lord.

Trials test our faith. Trials in themselves have no value. We do not grow simply because we experience trials. Trials will either drive us toward God in worship as we place ourselves under God's care, or they will push us away from God in rebellion or in fear as we move into self-sufficiency, as we move into solutions that we are discovering for ourselves. This is a people whose immediate response to the concern of the Egyptian army...and it was a great concern. It was a great army. They were angry. They were wanting to exact revenge. So the concern of the objective trial was real. But this was a people who, instead of looking up in dependence upon God, they looked outward at the enemy and looked inward at themselves, and they only found disruption. They only found chaos. They only found unbelief. The principle we learn from them is that we cannot worship God and worry at the same time! Worship and worry never coexist in the same heart at the same moment. Worry flows from a heart that denies God's sufficiency and His faithfulness. Worship flows from a heart that leans upon God when threats fall upon us.

So notice then Moses' kind leadership of His people. He is still a spiritual leader. He doesn't act in frustration and exasperation, striking back at this unbelieving people. But he acts gently and kindly and yet encouragingly, motivating them to push into the Lord in faith.

*14:13 And Moses said to the people, "Fear not, stand firm, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will work for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall never see again. 14 The Lord will fight for you,*

He says these three things. "Don't fear. Stand firm. Don't waver in your faith. And watch God work. You will see the salvation of the Lord." Pharaoh miscalculated God's sovereign power. He thought at this point that because the Israelites were in confusion, that now he could overcome and fight against God. As someone once said, "Our arms are too short to box with God." May we never think that we can stand up and resist God and somehow win; somehow the outcome that will be produced is favorable and life-giving. Pharaoh made a fatal error. Moses said, "The Lord will fight for you." How sweet it is to be among God's redeemed; those who can say that "The Lord fights for me." When we're in Christ, we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. If God be for us, who can be against us? And then Moses says this:

*and you have only to be silent."*

Now this is quite a message for Moses to deliver. Keep in mind that God didn't tell Moses how He was going to deliver the people from the Egyptians. Moses, in going before the people, is going to give a message. And the people, in unbelief, undoubtedly are going to ask the question, "Well, how are you going to save us? How is this going to work out? Tell me the plan. If you tell me the plan and it makes sense to me, okay, we'll calm our hearts. We need to know the plan." God says, "Moses, I'm not even going to tell you the plan because the plan is not important so much as my Person. Trust my Person. I'll reveal the plan at the right time. But right now, you don't want to trust in any

plan that I would give you for liberating you from the Egyptians.” And in our problems, in our difficulties, when we’re backed up against the Red Sea, what do we naturally look for? We say, “God, show me the plan. Show me the way out.” And God says, “No, I’m not going to show you the plan. I want you just to be silent before me. Consider me as the liberator who fights for you. Trust in me.” And Moses did. Moses believed God. Without blinking, he just told the people; not the plan. He didn’t have a plan. He didn’t know how God was going to liberate this people from this assaulting, vicious, angry army that was powerful.

When we consider worship, understand that worship often begins with our silence before the Lord. We think that worship begins with our singing to the Lord. And singing is a part of worship. We’re going to get to that when we look at chapter 15. But before we sing, we must remain silent before the Lord as we reflect on His Person; His sovereign perfection, His faithfulness, His goodness, His mercy, His wisdom, His righteousness, His lovingkindness toward us. We quietly reflect on His Person and we also quietly reflect on His promises. What did God say He would do for us? Moses simply said, “Here’s what God said He would do for us. He said He would fight for us. That’s enough!” So I ask you: Is it enough for you? I believe it is. The Psalmist knows it is.

**Psalm 37:5** Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him, and he will act.

That’s what the Lord does. Just commit your way to the Lord. Surrender yourself.

**Psalm 37:6-7** He will bring forth your righteousness as the light, and your justice as the noonday. Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him; fret not yourself over the one who prospers in his way, over the man who carries out evil devices!

Psalm 46 makes the same case.

**Psalm 46:9-11** He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow and shatters the spear; he burns the chariots with fire. “Be still, and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!” The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our fortress. *Selah*

This is where worship begins. It’s in a stillness before the Lord; a stillness reflecting upon His revelation of Himself to our lives, to our heart. What happens when we as a people listen to God tell us to be still, to be silent? Well first, we stop looking at the world around us. There is nothing good that comes from focusing our hearts on the terrible problems that press against us. As long as the Israelites were looking back over their shoulders and seeing these six hundred chariots making dust off in the horizon, the army that is following with sharpened spears, there will never be rest.

The second thing that happens when we’re still is not only do we take our eyes off the world around us, but we also stop looking inside of ourselves for some solution. We’re a people who are, by nature, problem solvers. When we encounter a problem, we immediately say, “What can I do to solve this problem. So we naturally work to solve our

own problems. Becoming silent before the Lord helps us to move our hearts away from self-sufficiency. It makes us to recognize our own helplessness. And finally, when we're silent, not only do we stop looking at the world around us and stop looking internally for some solution, but finally, we begin to look upward and we begin to see God for who He is and what He has promised in the midst of our distress.

Most of you know the story of Corrie Ten Boom. Her family rescued many Jews during the Nazi Holocaust, in their own home. And as a result, they were arrested. Everyone in Corrie's family went to Concentration Camps. They were sent there, and everyone except for Corrie died in Concentration Camps. She was a woman who knows what it's like for the Egyptians to push her up against the Red Sea. This is what she said, and I think it's very profound. *"If you look at the world, you'll be distressed."* Can I get an Amen? If the first thing you look at is the newspaper or the most recent news website, you're going to live your whole day with distress. *"If you look at the world, you'll be distressed. If you look within, you'll be depressed."* In other words, Corrie says, "There's nothing here to solve my problems. *"But if you look at Christ, you'll be at rest."* We have to decide what kind of life we want to live; a life of worship that is truly at rest. Rest is what God promises His people, and it's rest that flows through the path of worship. That's the only place where there's rest. Everywhere else, there is distress and depression. It's in Christ that there is rest.

*14:15 The Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to me? Tell the people of Israel to go forward. 16 Lift up your staff, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it, that the people of Israel may go through the sea on dry ground."*

God now gives the plan. Now think of this plan. Has this ever worked in the history of mankind, leading up to this event? You have a great army pushing you up against the sea and all you have to do is the leader just stands up there with his arms outstretched and the sea opens up? Has it ever happened since then? Think about you being in Moses' place and God says, "Here's my plan, Moses. Stretch out your arms and the sea will part and you will walk across that sea on dry ground." Moses believed God to do the impossible. Whatever God says He will do, He will do. Moses believed that. And because he was looking up to God, he saw Him for the great God, the God who does the impossible. God goes on to say,

*17 And I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they shall go in after them, and I will get glory over Pharaoh and all his host, his chariots, and his horsemen. 18 And the Egyptians shall know that I am the Lord, when I have gotten glory over Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen."*

And of course this is what God did. God uses Moses' faith to bring deliverance to the people. I think God uses Moses' faith also to stimulate faith in the hearts of unbelieving non-worshipping people. And by the way beloved, we need one another in the church. We need to encourage one another. We all get to a point at some point where there's an unbelieving heart starting to press in. We need other brothers and sisters to come along and say, "No. God says let's raise up our hands and the sea will part. I'm going to be part

of that company. How about you?” We need one another. Families need dads to stimulate faith in children and in their spouse. They need moms who would stimulate faith in their children and their husbands. Families need brothers and sisters and children whose faith stimulates faith. We need friends, godly friends who stimulate faith because they are willing to believe God, believe God in the face of the ridiculous. It seems ridiculous from a human standpoint simply to raise your arms, and yet that is what Moses does.

Moses refuses to be exasperated at all the unbelief he sees in the community of God. He refuses to say, “These are a bunch of people who don’t believe, anyway. Why should I even be part of them?” He refuses to withdraw. And that’s easy, by the way, in the community of faith, because there’s a lot of unbelief in the church of Jesus. It’s easy to say, “Where are the people who believe God?” We begin to be grumpy and condemning and look at everybody. “Where is everybody? How come they’re not believing? How come they’re not worshiping God?” Moses instead stands in there and says, “I want to be with you and I want to stimulate faith. I want to obey God and watch God work.

*14:22 And the people of Israel went into the midst of the sea on dry ground, the waters being a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.*

Think of that! Imagine that you’re walking on dry ground. It’s amazing! It’s like a wall. You can imagine that some of them...I’m sure that some of the kids reached out and touched the wall of water. (Laughter!) Parents were probably saying, “Don’t touch that! It might fall down.” And undoubtedly, they’re looking and they’re seeing sea life right there like it’s in a giant aquarium. Think of that!

*14:23 The Egyptians pursued and went in after them into the midst of the sea, all Pharaoh’s horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.*

They said, “Well if it worked for them, we can go in, too.”

*24 And in the morning watch the Lord in the pillar of fire and of cloud looked down on the Egyptian forces and threw the Egyptian forces into a panic, 25 clogging their chariot wheels so that they drove heavily. And the Egyptians said, “Let us flee from before Israel, for the Lord fights for them against the Egyptians.”*

I want you to observe, friends, that the Egyptians acknowledged God’s power and His presence. The Egyptians did! And this teaches us something about worship. Worship of the true God is not simply intellectually acknowledging God’s power and presence. The Egyptians acknowledged “the God of Israel is really powerful, He’s really strong, and He’s fighting for the Israelites. Let’s get out of the sea right now!” There are many people that grow up in Christian churches hearing the Gospel message. They say, “Yes, I believe the Bible is God’s Word. Yes, I believe Jesus is the Son of God. Yes, I believe He died on the cross. Yes, I believe He rose again. Yes, I believe He is coming again.” They are acknowledging God’s presence and God’s power in this world, but yet they are outside of redemption, outside of worship. Worship is drawing near to God to trust Him.

Worship is bowing the knee to God to submit to Him. And worship is lifting the heart to God to rejoice in Him.

A friend of mine was baptized this past week. I've known him for twenty-five years. In all twenty-five years of his life, He acknowledged God. He acknowledged all the doctrines that the Bible teaches about the Gospel. In fact, he was in our church for a greater part of those twenty-five years. He was the Treasurer in this church. And yet, at his baptism just last week, he said, "I knew all these things and I acknowledged them verbally, but I never submitted my life to the Lordship of Jesus." And I'll tell you, the last two years of his life, it's like I have a new friend. For the first 22 or 23 years of my friendship with him, it was just up and down. Sometimes he'd check in with an interest in the Lord, but then he'd back away into worldly pursuits. And now almost every morning, he sends me a text about how great God is and what God is doing in his life and how he's witnessing to people. It's like this person is brand new. Why is that? It's because God transformed his heart. God made this one who was simply acknowledging God to become someone who would worship God. And I pray that God would do that for you. I pray that you wouldn't stop just at the level of acknowledging the Lord.

The application we learn from this story, I think one application is when we feel afraid, God calls us to be silent before Him and just simply to consider His greatness and His goodness.

*14:30 Thus the Lord saved Israel that day from the hand of the Egyptians, and Israel saw the Egyptians dead on the seashore. 31 Israel saw the great power that the Lord used against the Egyptians, so the people feared the Lord, and they believed in the Lord and in his servant Moses.*

*15:1 Then Moses and the people of Israel sang this song to the Lord,*

So they had just left the sea, and Moses composes this song of worship to God. He gathers the people of Israel, and they're all ready to sing praise to God for His greatness and His faithfulness to His promise. The song begins this way.

*saying, "I will sing to the Lord, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea. 2 The Lord is my strength and my song, and he has become my salvation; this is my God, and I will praise him, my father's God, and I will exalt him.*

You see, a saved people is a singing people. And God loves to hear His people sing with joyful praise as we gather together for worship. Do you imagine that it was hard for Moses to motivate the people to sing with joy right after they crossed over on dry ground and right after they saw God close up the sea on their enemies who were seeking to kill them? Do you imagine he had to say, "Let's start singing! Come on! Sing louder!" Do you think he had to jazz up the crowd? I don't think so. I think this experience of deliverance was so fresh and so exciting that they wanted to connect to this living God and they wanted to rejoice in God immediately. Saved people are singing people.

But, how about us? What happens in between the moment, the nearness of this miracle of salvation, and a week later or a month later or a year later, with this very people? Do you think a year later Moses would have had a hard time to get them to sing with that kind of joy? I think so, on the basis of the fact that they wandered in the wilderness because of their unbelief for 40 years. What happened? The loss of the immediacy of the salvation caused them to lose the glory of their salvation. Was this event any less miraculous a week later? No. A year later? No. 10 years later? No. But their sense of their excitement and their joy in the miracle was lost. If we are to be worshipers, first, see this also. This was not just Moses singing a solo. This was Moses inviting the whole congregation to participate in singing as an expression of their joy and praise to the Lord.

What is required in order to be part of a worship time when we sing praise to God? The answer is we must be saved. Apart from salvation, we'll have no joy and there is no motivation. There is no internal core to our singing. What is not required is a great voice. What is not required is kind of a sense of an emotional uplift. What is not required is a certain specific melody. We don't even know what melody they were singing. It's totally irrelevant. What's necessary is that we know that we have been saved and that God is the source of our salvation and we have connected with joy to the miraculous nature of our own salvation. That's it!

Notice also that this song is all about God. It's not about Moses. Moses' name doesn't even appear in this song. It's about God and His glory. Eleven times, the name of the Lord appears in this song. Twenty-five times, pronouns are used; he, him, for the Lord. Great praise songs center not upon us, not even upon our own experience, although again, that's not wrong to talk about our own experience with the Lord. But great praise songs center on God's greatness and His lovingkindness to us.

As Moses writes this new song for the people, I can almost hear a group of Israelites grumble, "Why do we have to learn a new song? I like the old songs better. We sang them in Egypt for 400 years. And by the way, Miriam, (verses 20 and 21) is it really proper to take out those tambourines and start dancing?"

In order to sing with vibrancy, I believe it's vital that we stay connected to the supernatural joyful effect of our own salvation. When we do that, it really won't matter so much what happens from the platform in leadership in music because the people come ready to give expression of joyful praise to the Lord.

Joe Stowell asked a professional violinist the question, "What makes the sounds from a Stradivarius violin so great?" This violinist explained that Stradivarius lived in a small Italian village in the 1700s. Since he was too poor to buy fine wood for his violins, he pulled his wood from a polluted harbor of his village. Three hundred years ago, these harbors were the equivalent of town dumps. They were a smelly, dismal stew of trash, human and animal waste, and garbage. As experts analyze the wood of these famous violins, they discover that microbes in the contaminated water had eaten away the inside of the cells inside that wood. The only thing left of these cells is sort of the outer core, the superstructure. So, when a violinist plays a Stradivarius violin, it's like an organ with a

thousand tiny sound chambers, each reverberating the sound in the hollowness of the cells as the bow moves across the strings. Stowell writes, “What a great picture of what Jesus has done for us! Valueless and lost in the soul-rotting disease of our own sin, Jesus came and pulled us from the sludge. As the Bible puts it, He loved us while we were yet sinners. In other words, even though we had been eaten hollow by sin, He reached down from the cross and wiped us clean. And then He crafted us into priceless instruments to resonate the strong and distinct sounds of His love and grace and glory.”

And that, my friends, is the very purpose of our life. It is to be such an instrument. To be pulled out of the sludge and hollowed out by our sin with nothingness, only with the ability to be an echo, a sound chamber of the grace that now fills us. It reverberates through us and produces this wonderful love for God and love for His mission and love for His people. Do you desire to worship the Lord? It’s the very center of God’s purpose in our lives. Without it, we have no purpose. We have no meaning. We have no life. It is what we will be doing for all of eternity; just simply enjoying God and enjoying His presence. We will never ever, ever come to an end of the wonder of discovery of God’s great mystery and glory.

I want to close with an encouragement from John Ortberg. And as I read this, I want you to ask the question: Am I a worshiper of God? The first step to that is by placing your faith in Jesus. No one is a worshiper naturally. We have to be redeemed. We have to be transformed into worshipers. So have you been transformed? Have you been made new so that now you’re an instrument in God’s hands, fashioned for God’s pleasure? And then if you can say, “Yes, I’ve trusted in Jesus,” then ask the question: Am I a worshiper now? Am I worshipping? Is that the focus of my heart? How do I realign God’s purpose with my life so that I am what God has made me to be? And I’m growing in that direction day by day. God is so gracious. He will meet you if you call out to Him with that desire.

John Ortberg writes: *“I need to worship because without it I can forget that I have a big God beside me and live in fear. I need to worship because without it I can forget his calling and begin to live in a spirit of self-preoccupation. I need to worship because without it I lose a sense of wonder and gratitude and plod through life with blinders on. I need to worship because my natural tendency is toward self-reliance and stubborn independence.”*

We need to worship. Thankfully, God has made a way. He has parted the waters so we can walk on dry ground through His Son, Jesus, and worship Him. Let’s do it together, now and forever!