
Happy Labor Day to all of you. I want to welcome everybody across all of our campuses and wherever you may be happening to tune in from your living room or maybe you're listening to this on your daily commute later in the week. So glad you could join us.

Before we get rolling, I've got a little bit of an announcement that I need to make. And I really wasn't planning on making this announcement, but word has begun to get out, so I thought I needed to get out ahead of it. So here it goes. Due to some extended injuries that I just can't fully recover from, I've decided to go ahead and announce my retirement early. Is it too soon? Is it too soon? It feels a little too soon. I thought this was a good idea, until just now.

Hey, you guys doing okay? It's been a little over a week. For those of you who don't know what I'm talking about, our quarterback, Andrew Luck, shocked all of us last Saturday night right after the pre-season game by announcing his retirement right after they played the Chicago Bears, who I blame by the way for this and a whole bunch of other things.

Yeah, we're all kind of still reeling and we're sort of shocked by it. And yet, we'll be okay, alright? I think that we have a pretty good team and we want to wish Andrew the best and thank him for everything he did for our city and for our team.

But I think this is kind of good time to review a little elementary math in the wake of all of this. How many of you remember the greater than/less than signs?

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Any of you remember them. Any of you know how this works? For the life of me I couldn't figure this out, and I just recently did. The way that my teacher would explain this to me was by using the alligator trick. How many of you remember the alligator trick? It was like, this is the open mouth of an alligator and it's hungry. So it eats the bigger number. That's how it works.

Some of you are like, "What??? That could have saved me a whole bunch of strife in my elementary years." Better late than never, alright? And this works even when the numbers get bigger.

Bigger number, more complicated. Just look at it. Okay, this is greater than:

3 > 2

15 > 12

2,026 < 2,452

But there are some things that are not quite as clear. For example:

Purdue IU

Now, I'm just curious. When it comes to something like this, is it this—Purdue? Or is it—IU? We are a house divided. We need the grace that only Jesus can give.

So I take you through all of that, I'm actually serious about this. This next one right here...

NFL TPCC

The NFL kicks off this week, alright? And for some of you, not all, but for some of you you're going to be tempted to prioritize the NFL over the work that God wants to do in you and through you through your local church.

Some of you are like, "This doesn't apply to me because I don't care about the NFL." Well, you fill in the blank. I always know right that around this time of year—Labor Day Weekend—we start getting really busy. Maybe it's not the NFL. Maybe it's your kids' sports, maybe it's your work, maybe it's a hobby.

Whatever it is we get so busy around this time of the year, and I do it too, I need this reminder just as much as anybody. We need to make sure that the work that God wants to do in and through our life is greater than whatever it is that is competing for it. Anybody with me? Thank you for the sympathy clap.

Seriously. If you haven't gotten involved in Growth Track, go to Growth Track. If you're not in a group, get in a group. If you're not serving—please serve. Your church experience will only be as good as what you bring to it. And I just want to say, God is on the move, God is at work right now in our church and in the lives of people. And we don't want to be asleep at the wheel on it.

So I just want to say thank you to everybody who serves around here and I want to say to you: Serve in such a way that people would think that you're on staff. That they would say, "Wow. You are so loving and you're so bought in—you must be getting paid for this." And you can just go, "Nope. I just love Jesus and I love people and I want to get as many people to Jesus as possible.

Today we are beginning a new series of messages called *Six Words That Can Change Your Life*. And I just want to go ahead and acknowledge right out of the gate that I realize that might sound to a few of you like a little bit of a cheesy TV infomercial. Like

maybe it's promising more than it can actually deliver. Like six easy installments to a better you.

And I just want to go ahead and stop right there and say, "No, no, no. No, no. That's not what this is. This is not a formula. This is not a quick fix to some of life's complicated problems. It's not a self-help series.

What I want to do is I want to just walk through six actually very biblical words that are very simple words. There isn't going to be anything in this list that is going to blow your mind, but actually there is a tremendous amount of courage and conviction behind that word that God wants to use to bring about transformation in our lives.

So, the first word that I want to look at with you today is just simply this word right here. It's the word:

WOW

Everybody say: Wow. It's one of my favorite words. And it's a word that we use whenever we're not quite fully sure what to say. Meaning you're experiencing something or you're seeing something that is so amazing and so beautiful and so moving that oftentimes what just sort of spills out of you is: Wow.

And there are several moments in my life that are wow kind of moments. Like immediately what comes to my mind is my wedding day. When I saw my wife walk down the aisle in that dress, she was so beautiful. So under my breath I was just like, "Wow."

And when I was in the delivery room when all four of my kids were born (my wife was there too) but when all four of them were born and they came into the world I was just like, "Look at this gooey, ugly little thing." And I was like, "Wow."

The first time I ever went to the Grand Canyon I stood there and said, "This is unreal. Wow."

I want to show you a couple of pictures. This is a picture of me and my daughter—she's 15 now but she was 11 then. She went with me to Cape Town, South Africa a few years ago. And we took a little cable car up to the top of Table Mountain. And if you don't know what that is, it's a mountain in South Africa that is just flat on top. And we just hiked around for like two hours. I then I snapped this little picture with Cape Town in the background. It was just this moment... On the other side of the world with my oldest daughter and I was just like, "Wow."

A couple of months ago my wife and celebrated our 20th wedding anniversary by going to Italy, the Amalfi coast. It was a bucket list kind of a trip for us. And I snapped this picture of my wife from our hotel the first night that we were there. And I was just like,

“Wow.” And the coastline looks pretty amazing too. Guys, I hope you were taking notes because that’s how it is done.

And then at the infinity pool that they had at this hotel, my wife took this picture of me and I was walking along the edge of this infinity pool. Now, what you can’t see is right outside the frame of this picture is a sign that is strictly prohibiting what your pastor is doing, but I live on the edge, alright? Literally—literally I live on the edge.

There are all of these moments... I bet you as I show a few examples from my life, you’re probably thinking of a few from yours, “Yeah, that trip that we took,” or, “That experience that we had.” It was just this wow kind of a moment.

Now, have you ever noticed that when we are experiencing something if wow is not the thing that comes out of our mouths that, in general, as a human race one of the things that is likely to come out is, “Oh my God.” And there’s a reason for that. It’s because whether you realize it or not, there is something deep within your soul that desires to connect what you’re seeing and experiencing with your Creator.

So what I want to do in our time together today is I want to talk about the importance of aiming the wow that is already in your heart toward the only one who is really worthy of it. And to do that I want to take you to a passage of Scripture in Revelation 4.

So if you have a Bible or a Bible app, go ahead and turn there—Revelation 4. I hope you brought one. If you didn’t bring one today, please bring one with you next week. The passage will be on the monitor beside me, but I want you to know your way around the Bible.

So Revelation, chapter 4. Let me kind of set the table for the passage we’re going to read. This guy named John gets sent away—the actual word is exiled—to an island called Patmos. And he’s there all by himself. And Jesus comes to visit John. And Jesus wants to reveal some things to John. That’s where we get the name Revelation. And what Jesus does in Revelation 4, he’s just gotten done with addressing the seven churches and now he invites John—here’s the term—to enter in to the throne room of God.

And John is furiously writing down everything that he sees and hears and experiences so that you and I might know what that experience is like. And John is struggling to find the right words. And why Revelation sounds so far out when we read it is because John is stretching human language to its limits. His favorite word is *like*. It’s like this. It’s like that. “What’s it like, John?” He doesn’t really know, it’s just like this. And he’s trying to describe it all to us.

What he’s doing in Revelation 4 is he is describing this amazing wow moment. It’s actually a worship service. And listen as John writes, starting off in verse 1. It says, “*Then as I looked, I saw a door standing open in heaven,*” now this is important because

in the previous chapter, chapter 3, Jesus has just finished reprimanding the church in Laodicea for being lukewarm. He said: I wish you were hot or I wish you were cold. I wish you were all in or all out, none of this fence straddling stuff—you're lukewarm.

Whenever you might heat up something in the microwave, it's supposed to be eaten hot and if it's lukewarm it doesn't taste very good. And Jesus says: I just want to spit you out of my mouth. However, I stand at the door and knock. That's how he finishes chapter 3.

And now John walks through that door. And he is describing to us what he sees. And he says that same voice—that's the voice of Jesus—"I had heard before spoke to me like," there's that word, "a trumpet blast."

So he's saying that Jesus' voice is like a trumpet. Now he didn't literally mean that. Jesus' voice isn't literally like a trumpet. He says that Jesus' voice is loud and it's clear and it's distinct like a trumpet.

Then in verse two he says, "*And instantly I was in the Spirit*," pastor Ryan talked to us last week about what that means. It means that if you're in the Spirit he's leading you and he's guiding you and encouraging you, "*and I saw a throne in heaven and someone sitting on it.*"

Now the imagery of the throne is largely lost on us as a culture today because look around. We're all sitting in one. Now we don't call it that, but that's really what it is. When you walk into a room, like almost immediately you're like, "Where's my seat?" It's like a place of security and identity for us, "I need something really safe to park my backside in—this is mine. This is my throne."

But in the first century world only four kinds of people had a throne to sit in: Kings who ruled a nation, judges who rendered a verdict, warriors who conquered an enemy, and a priest who mediated between God and man. And Jesus is all of those things. And he's the one sitting on this throne.

And it says in verse 3, "*The one sitting on the throne was as brilliant as gemstones—*" that means that Jesus was illuminating light. In John, chapter 8 Jesus says, "*I am the light of the world.*" And then all around him are these gemstones, "*like jasper and carnelian. And the glow of an emerald circled his throne like a rainbow.*"

Now, what John is describing... I need you to use your minds here. Picture this. He just described Jesus sitting on a throne, light is illuminating out, all of these gemstones are around him—what happens when light illuminates through gemstones? It refracts. It redirects. It illuminates. It magnifies. Think disco ball. That's essentially what's happening.

And John is saying that in the throne room of God there is all of this light and all of this color. And color and light are really, really important to all of us. Chances are you went into your closet this morning and you picked out some clothes and the colors mattered to you. You wanted to match (most of you anyway). The color of car that you drive matters to you. The color you paint your walls matters to you. Color is more than just an esthetic. It serves a purpose. It's the reason why deer hunters don't hunt from hot pink deer stands.

Color serves a purpose and it sets a tone and it creates an environment and it speaks to us. This is the reason why in all of our rooms across all of our campuses, when we worship, we worship with color and light not white walls and florescent lights, because we worship God and not an orthodontist.

Going on in verse 4, *"Twenty-four thrones surrounded him, and twenty-four elders sat on them. They were all clothed in white and had gold crowns on their heads."*

So get the image in your mind. This is like the box suite. Jesus is in the middle and there are 24 seats of special honor around him. Who are these 24 elders? I don't know that it's hugely important. Here's my opinion on this based on something Jesus said in Matthew 19. The 24 elders represent the 12 tribes of Israel and the 12 disciples. These guys are gathered around Jesus on the throne. They've got crowns.

And it says in verse 5, *"From the throne came flashes of lightning and the rumble of thunder."* Any of you ever been directly underneath lightening and thunder? Man, it will scare you half to death. It is so powerful.

A few years ago I was out on a lake in southwest Missouri with a friend of mine and this thunderstorm rolled in right over us so quickly we didn't have time to get off of the water. And this lightening and thunder just boomed right over us. And I might have peed my pants a little bit. It was like so loud, it just shook me to the core. And I want you to know that that is what John is describing in the throne room of God.

And then he says in verse 5, *"And in front of the throne were seven torches with burning flames. This is the sevenfold Spirit of God."*

I don't have a ton of time to explain this, but I want you to know what the sevenfold Spirit of God means is that the ministry of the Holy Spirit is multi-faceted and it's tailor made. What that means is that when you enter in, which is what we are doing by the way, when you gather together with other people in the throne room of God the Holy Spirit can discern what is going on with you better than you can know what's going on with you.

And he knows that some of you came in here today with your faith tank on empty. And some of you came in today really discouraged. And some of you came in today actually feeling pretty good and the Holy Spirit says: Good, I want to challenge you. I want to

bring some conviction into your life. He is multi-faceted and he is tailor made. That's what that means.

And in verse 6 it says, *"In front of the throne was a shiny sea of glass, sparkling like crystal..."*

Get this image in your mind. There's the throne, there's the light, there's the disco ball, there's the 24 seats, then there's this sea of glass. Now very rarely is the ocean ever still. Think about that for a minute. Lakes are. You ever been to a lake real early in the morning and it's just smooth and it's just so serene. Well he says the sea is that way.

And this is huge because really what John is trying to say to us is three primary things. When you head into the throne room of God to worship the sea is calm like glass. And it simply means this.

Number one:

God is in control

God is in control even in something as out of control as the sea. In the first century world, even today, the ocean is intimidating. It was way more intimidating then because they didn't have radar, they didn't have all of the technology that we have. If your loved ones took off on a voyage across the sea the chances were high that you'd never see them again. And if the ocean swallowed them up, you'd never know it. But here he is saying that God has actually calmed the sea and he's actually calming the storms that are in your life as well.

The second thing this symbolizes is this:

God is approachable

The sea in the first century world was the primary thing that separated people and nations. And he says: No, I've actually calmed it all and it's translucent. You will have a clear pathway to the throne, whoever you are. Just come as you are. This is why the author of Hebrews says we can approach the throne of God with confidence.

Here's the third thing that we don't always make a connection to:

God is all about the acoustics

Baby... He is because what does calm water do? Calm water magnifies sound. It bounces off of it. And we see this all throughout the Psalms actually.

I want to show you one example of this. In Psalm, chapter 150 David writes this starting in verse 1. He says, *"Praise the Lord!"* That's the word for worship. Then on down in

verse 3 he says, *“Praise him with a blast of the ram’s horn; praise him with the lyre and harp! Praise him with the tambourine and dancing; praise him with strings and flutes! Praise him with a clash of cymbals; praise him with loud clanging cymbals.*

Now here’s the question I’ll ask. How do you do anything in that list quietly? How do you blow the ram’s horn quietly? How do clash the symbols quietly? You can’t.

And actually this is connected to our hearts. Whenever you’re in the car and a song comes on the radio that you just really love, it just speaks to your heart. What do you do? Do you reach over and turn it down or turn it up? You turn it up because you want to hear it more clearly.

Now let me finish out the passage. Verses 10 and 11 of Revelation 4, *“The twenty-four elders fall down”* and here’s the word, *“and worship the one sitting on the throne (the one who lives forever and ever).”* That’s Jesus. *“And they lay their crowns before the throne and say, ‘You are worthy, O Lord our God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and they exist because you created what you pleased.’”*

This is such a powerful image. You’ve got these guys sitting in the box seats with Jesus and they could have eluded themselves into thinking that they were pretty important because of that, but instead they take off their crowns and they lay them at Jesus’ feet. And what they are doing is they are directing the attention toward him, they are directing the honor and the affection toward Jesus, the one who is worthy of the worship, because this worship was not about them. Wow.

What John has just described here to us is what it looks like for us to enter in and he says: Here’s what I saw and here’s what I felt and here’s what we did. And the question that I have is: Is what John just described normative for what we experience? And if I’m being really honest, from my experience, from my church experience going all the way back to the day I’d say more times than not, tragically, it would be no. It doesn’t look anything like that.

See here’s what I’ve learned both from my life and just from observation. Most of the time, and I’m speaking to those of us who are Christ followers who come to church on a regular basis, most of the time our opinion or our perspective on worship is mostly formed by the tradition or the culture that we grew up in or what we’re used to or what we like and don’t like rather than what God’s word actually says about it.

Now, it doesn’t mean that your tradition, culture, opinion, and perspective are wrong or bad—in fact they may be right and good, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that they come from God’s word.

Some of you are like me. Some of you grew up in a church... The church I grew up in was nothing like this. The church I grew up in was very, very small and very, very traditional. We sat in things called pews. We had a piano and an organ and hymnals, and the

worship director stood up and conducted the music [with his hands]. I have no idea what that motion means, but he did it all of the time.

Others of you, maybe you grew up in a more liturgical setting, recited readings and prayers. Maybe some of you grew up in a very charismatic expression. Maybe others of you have no church background at all. All of this is new to you. And one of the things I absolutely love about our church is that we have people who come from all different backgrounds.

Now, one of the challenges to that is that I can't automatically assume that you know what I mean when I talk about worship or what it is that we're trying to accomplish when we worship, so as a result there is a certain percentage of the room at all of our campuses that is missing this *wow* moment.

So let me break it down for you. Here's the definition of worship. It's actually not even a religious thing.

WORSHIP: is to love, to show admiration, or affection

That's what it means. It is a response to something that you value the most. It reveals what you already adore. And I want you to know that you were made to do this.

YOU WERE MADE TO WORSHIP

Now some of you here right now are going, "Not me. I don't sing. I don't like to sing. I don't like the singing." That's why you come 20 minutes late and you bail right after I finish up, right? You think I don't see you. You're just like, "I'm not into it. I don't like to sing in cars." I didn't say anything about singing. I said you were made to love, to express admiration, you were made to express affection.

Some of you are like, "No, no Aaron. You don't understand. I'm not religious. I don't even believe in God. In fact, the only reason I'm here is because she's here and I'm into her. She's amazing."

That's great. I didn't say anything about being religious. I said that you were made to love and to show admiration and affection. You were made to worship. You are already worshiping. You are always worshiping. And, in fact, you're pretty good at it too. You go to a rock concert, something that has nothing to do with God—let's just say Justin Timberlake's in town. And you go and you see people—it has nothing to do with God—they are raising their hands and they are clapping and they are singing along and they're shouting and they're laughing.

What are they doing? Well, we don't connect it to worship because they're not in a church. And we would never say, "I'm worshiping Justin Timberlake." No, what you're

doing is you are showing some love. You're showing some admiration. You're showing some affection to this musician who is so talented.

You go to another house of worship that's in town. Lucas Oil Stadium. And you see people who Sunday morning stand here in a groomsman pose. You know the one, the groomsman pose [hands clasped in front of you, shoulders square, feet shoulder width apart]. And it's like, "I don't know about all that hand clapping. All that hand raising." That's how they say it. It's in my mind. But then that afternoon they go down to the stadium—the same people hands raised in the air, high fiving, cheering, screaming, losing their minds because somebody ran a ball into an end zone.

Now listen. We just have to be careful because we don't want to save our most authentic love, admiration, and affection for something that's not worthy of it. Your money and your time and your passion and your energy naturally flow to the things that you love. They just naturally go there.

The question isn't WHETHER but WHAT you will worship?

The question isn't whether you will worship. You're already worshipping. If there's only one thing that you take away from me in this message and our time together today, it would be that you're a worshiper. It has nothing to do with singing. It has nothing to do with what you believe about God. So you're already expressing love. You're already expressing admiration. You're already expressing affection.

What I want you to do is ask: What I'm worshipping—is it worth it? Is it the thing that is sustaining me? Is it the thing that is giving me hope? Because many of you worshiped your boyfriend, he let you down. Many of you worshiped your wife, she broke your heart. Many of you worshiped your job, you lost it. And it's just been one heartbreak after another because all of your affection—you just pushed all the chips on to something that couldn't sustain the weight of them.

And everyone in your life right now... I don't even have to train you to do this. You just automatically worship the things that you love.

"You've got to go to this restaurant. The tableside quac will change your life."

"Man, have you seen this show on Netflix? It's excellent. You've got to stick around to the final episode. It will totally turn your world upside down."

"Have you seen pictures of my grandkids?"

"Yes, we actually have."

“Well, let me show you again.” Because all grandparents know that all of the grandkids are God’s gift to you for not killing your kids, alright? Can I hear all of the grandparents in the room?

How do you know if somebody does CrossFit? They’ll tell you. Just give us time. I can use that joke because I do CrossFit. See, I just told you.

So here’s the thing. We just authentically, just naturally flow toward it.

Here’s where things get a little uncomfortable, now that we’ve established what you already worship. It’s how? How should we worship? What does that look like? Should it be hymns? Should it be contemporary songs? Should it be piano and organ or drums and guitars? Should it be hand raising and clapping? Should we do the groomsman pose? What should we do?

There are just as many opinions about this as there are people in the room. And I want you to know that the only opinion that matters on this is God’s.

I think, according to popular opinion, a lot of you think that we just sing the songs that I love. Like all of the songs we sing are on Aaron’s Spotify list. No. When you get introduced to a new song, I get introduced to a new song.

So whose opinion on this matters? Let’s look at what God has to say about it. Did you know that there are seven words in the Hebrew language for worship? My favorite one actually is this one. It’s found in Psalm, chapter 34, verse 1. David actually uses it.

He says, *“I will extol the LORD at all times; his tehillah will always be on my lips.”*

Some of you just perked up. You’re like, “What? I’ll worship like that.” I said tehillah. It’s very different, alright? So that’s my favorite.

Here’s the most common. The most common is:

Halal

And if that sounds familiar to you this is where we get our word for hallelujah. Here’s what it means. It means *to shine*. Once again, we go back to John, chapter 8. He is the light of the world. Jesus is sitting on the throne; he’s shining out this light. It means *to make a show*. One of the most common criticisms that we get is. “I don’t like your worship. Seems like a rock show. Yeah! ...*to boast, to be clamorously foolish, to rave or celebrate*.”

This is exciting. This is passionate. This is heartfelt. And we have managed—I’m talking about church history here—we have managed to make the word hallelujah so vanilla and boring. Hallelujah, hallelujah [slow and non-emotional]. When do we get out of here?

It means to celebrate! It means to express passion and God says this is the way that I want you to worship me. This is the most common description that we get. We actually see examples of it.

Psalm, chapter 47, verses 1 through 2. It says, “*Come,*” that’s an invitation, “*everyone!*” That means everyone. Not just a certain personality types, not just the extroverts, not just the partiers, but everyone. God says I want you to come, and I want you to, “*Clap your hands! Shout to God with joyful praise! For the Lord Most High is awesome.*”

That’s why he says that. So, when you go to the rock show or the sporting event with people shouting and clapping their hands, why are they doing it? Because they are going, “Man that play was awesome.” “That song was awesome.” I’m going to clap my hands.

When we come in here and we clap and shout, we’re going, “God, my life may not be awesome, but you are awesome!” So when people clap their hands... I’ve heard this criticism of our church before: You guys are a clappy church, aren’t you? We’re not being weird, we’re being obedient. And we’re not trying to copy the world, the world is actually worshiping—they just don’t know it.

So we go to the next example. Psalm, 63, verse 4, “*I will praise you as long as I live, lifting up my hands to you in prayer.*”

God actually asks us to do this. You’re like, “Well, it seems kind of weird.” Yeah. It is. Do it anyway. You’re like, “Well, I don’t want to draw attention to myself.” You’re not. You’re drawing attention to him [God].

See, here’s the thing. I know you well enough that right now some of you are arguing with me in your mind. It’s the best kind of argument, because you always win. But here’s what you are saying. You’re saying, “Aaron, I hear you, but I don’t worship that way. That’s not me. I would be pretending I’m someone I’m not. I don’t want to do that. And in my heart, Aaron, I’m doing all of those things that you say. I just don’t outwardly show it.”

I want you to know that I hear you. Can I just challenge you, lovingly, can I just ask you a few things? Number one:

When you do come in here. Make sure that you are entering in and that you are being authentic and that you’re not being bored or distracted—meaning you’re not on your phone, you’re not just holding your coffee, you’re not just standing there in a groomsman pose just looking around, but you’re entering in and you’re feeling the presence of God, because you are.

Can I say this? Can you just take a step outside...? I'm not asking you to go from groomsman pose all the way to lifting your hands high, I'm just saying take a step. What I mean by that is go from the groomsman pose to just carrying wood. Just groomsman pose to carrying wood [hands turned palms up and waist high]. And then you can progress to the one hand in the pocket to the one hand in the air. See this says, "I'm here to praise Jesus." The groomsman pose says, "Nothing to see here." That's just what it says.

I'm having so much fun right now!

And if the way that you worship is to be stoic, make sure that you're consistent. Man you better not invite me to go to a Colts game and I see you losing your mind. Or going to see a concert and your singing out at the top of your lungs. Because I'm going to go, "What in the world is going on here?"

Let me see if I can narrow it down sort of this way. If I were to come home at the end of a long day, which I often do (I think that went over your head) and if walk into the kitchen as I often to, and my family is sitting around the kitchen island as they always do—that's just kind of our favorite place to hang out.

And if I walk in, alright, it's the revelation of Aaron Brockett, "I'm here," and none of them acknowledge me they all just stay buried in their phones, or they're doing something over here or they're watching TV and none of them turn around, none of them say hello, none of them give me a hug, none of them smile—I expect a little kiss from the wife—none of that.

Nothing happens when I walk in and I'm like, "Hey, guys. Good to see you too." And if they were to turn to me and say, "Daddy, we're greeting you—just in our hearts. We're greeting you the way we want to greet you." I would say, "That's fantastic. Could you show me?" That's exactly what God is asking of us.

WORSHIP IS A DECISION YOU MAKE, NOT A FEELING THAT YOU HAVE

Some of you are waiting to get the feeling. And it will never come. You don't worship because you feel like it, you worship in order to feel like it. Just read through the Psalms. David, the psalmist, what he is doing is he is not activating a heart to worship, he is aiming a heart to worship that's already worshiping. Let me say that again because I don't want you to miss it. He's not activating, he's not trying to push you into worship, he's saying you're already doing it, just aim it. Just aim it in the right direction. And it really has nothing to do with how you feel.

Some of you came in here today—today you came in here and you said, "I'm not feeling it. It's cloudy outside. It's raining. It's Labor Day Weekend, we don't have any plans, you're the runner up. This is what we decided to do because we didn't have any plans. I'm not happy about it and I don't like that song. And it's so repetitive. 'This is how I fight

my battles. This is how I fight my battles. This is how I fight my battles. This is how I fight my battles. This is how I fight my battles. This is how I fight my battles.”

And you're right! But you must not like eating either. That's pretty repetitive too, "This is how I chew my food. This is how I chew my food." Alright? It's repetitive because it's replenishing. It's repetitive because it restores you. You get good at stuff you do over and over again.

So, worry is when you look at all of your problems and you worship. You go, "Wow. What am I going to do?" Envy is when you look at what other people have in relation to what you have and you go, "Wow." Anxiety is when you look at everything that is threatening your peace and you go, "Wow." Worship is when you look at God and you go, "Wow!"

Some of you might be like, "Alright. I get it. Why?" Let me give you three reasons and then I'll be done. Here's the first reason right here. If you're taking notes, jot this down:

God asks for it

I've actually softened that quite a bit because he doesn't ask for it, he commands it. And I know some of you bristle with that. You don't like anybody to command you to do anything, even God.

I love how the old Bible teacher J. Vernon McGee said it—only he could say it the way he said it. He goes, "This God's universe and he does things his way. Now you may have a better way, but you don't have a universe."

I love that. And I know that not all of you are there yet. I happen to be there just because God commands me, I'm like, "I'm in." If God told me, "Aaron, dress up like a rodeo clown and jump up and down on one foot and flap your wings to worship me," I'd be like, "Alright. Sweet, I'll do it if you want me to do it."

God commands it. Now some of you—what you don't like about that... I had a good friend say this to me a few years ago, he said, "I don't understand why a loving, gracious God would command us to worship him. That seems so selfish. I don't command my kids to worship me." And I would simply say, "Yeah, you're right, because you can't sustain your kids the way God can sustain you."

Listen, God knows that you're already worshiping and so when he commands you to worship him, it's the most loving thing he could say. He is saying: Stop putting your hope in things that can't give you hope. Direct it toward me and let me be your hope.

Here's the second thing:

Those around you need it

I can't say this enough, especially in the western church in America because we come to church almost exclusively thinking, "What can I get out of it? And if I don't like what I get out of it, I'm bouncing."

And I want you to know that it's not about you. It is about the people who are around you. In Ephesians, chapter 5, we see an example of this. It says, "*Instead, be filled with the Spirit,*" when you enter in, "*speaking to,*" who? "one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit."

That doesn't mean that this is a big musical. Thank goodness. What this means is that other people need your worship. Some walked in here today with their faith tank on empty and they need to borrow some of yours. Some walked in here today just so discouraged and they need some encouragement. Some walked in here today wondering if any of this is real and they need to see a real expression of a real person worshipping a real God.

Worship is not about you. Do you want to know the very first person who made worship about him? It was Satan. His name is Lucifer. He was one of the angels in heaven, one of the three, and he was in charge of worship and music and he got kicked out of heaven. Why? He made worship about him. So don't make worship about you.

I've got to tell you, man, there are so many Sundays when I come here and I don't feel like preaching. And I think the greatest misconception you could have about me, because I do this so often, is that I just probably roll out of bed everyday with a sermon on my lips, you know? And my kids just come to me and they say, "Father, would you open the word of God for us?" [In British accent]. They do this whole British accent thing, it's weird.

Or like on date night, my wife's just sharing some stuff with me and it's like, "Hey, what do you need from me? Do you need a hug?" She's like, "No, no. Really I just need three points that all begin with the same letter." No. That doesn't happen.

I'm just a human being. Maybe I've had a rough week or a rough meeting or I'm not feeling well or maybe I just feel distant from God and I'm really wrestling as I pull into the parking lot. I'm like, "There are roughly 10,000 people who expect me to say something good. And there are a few thousand other people who are watching online, and it exists on the inner web for like ever." It's a lot of pressure.

And I come in here going, "Man, this is going to be really bad." I've lost count—there are so many times when I'm sitting right down here and it's the worship of God's people that fills me up and gets me ready to preach.

Here's the last thing that I will give you. Listen:

You need it

You need it because life is hard and it's challenging. And you don't worship because you feel like it you worship in order to feel like it. And forgetfulness is the greatest enemy of faith. It's when we forget what God has done that we stop believing in what God will do. And if you're not moved to worship, that just simply means that you have amnesia. You've forgotten. You've forgotten who you are. You've forgotten who God is. You've forgotten what he did for you through Jesus. He gave you a hope and a future and your eternity is secure and you refuse to forget it, even if you don't feel like it.

And maybe you came here today and you're like, "I'm in the midst of this storm and I'm going to worship my way through it and I'm going to worship my way out of it."

And maybe you're here and you're wondering, "Why are all of these people singing? Why are they clapping? Why are they raising their hands?"

What you may not know about that guy who is singing really loud and off key, by the way, is that he used to be in prison and God got a hold of him and now he's set free and he's turned his life around. He refuses to forget it.

What you may not know about that lady who keeps her hands up during the entire song set is that she's not show-boating, but she used to actually be in an abusive relationship and Jesus set her free from that. She refuses to forget it.

What you may not know about that guy clapping in the middle of the sermon and just kind of disrupting you is that last year he walked in her finding out that his wife was walking out on him and today they walked in together holding hands. He refuses to forget it.

And at some point, every single one of us came into the presence of God as messy, jacked up sinners who have been forgiven in Jesus Christ. We've got a hope and a future and we refuse to forget it.

Listen man. When our worship gets stale, our mission goes stagnant. You want a church that accomplishes great things for God? It's always a worshiping church. Be real. Be authentic. Just as authentic as you are at the concert or the sporting event.

Now, here's the thing. More than anything, here's why you and I need to master a heart that looks to God and says, "Wow!" It's because of this. There is nothing in this life that will carry you through every season you are facing like worship will. And so we worship, not because everything is great.

I think oftentimes we think, "When God answers the prayers, then I will worship." "When I finally get the job, praises." But have you noticed that in the Bible some of the people who had lives that fell apart, they were the ones who worshiped the loudest? So you've

got a guy like Job who had everything taken from him and Job says, "The Lord gives, the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord."

In Habakkuk, chapter 3, verses 17 through 19 it says this, "*Though the fig tree does not bud,*" in other words, the deal fell through, "*and there are no grapes on the vines,*" we can't get pregnant, "*though the olive crop fails,*" the 401K is down, "*and the fields produce no food,*" I can't find a job, "*though there are no sheep in the pen and no cattle in the stalls,*" our kids are just rebelling against everything we taught them, "*yet I will rejoice in the LORD, I will be joyful in God my Savior. The Sovereign LORD is my strength; he makes my feet like the feet of a deer, he enables me to tread on the heights.*"

Listen. Your worship won't just change, your life will change when you worship God not just for what you see but for who he is. Not just for what he will do for you, but what he's already done.

And Habakkuk says something really strange in that passage. I don't know if you caught it. He said he will give you feet like a deer. I don't know about you, I'm like, "Thank you? Why would I want feet like a deer?"

Have you ever seen those nature shows when a deer or maybe a mountain goat is scaling this incredibly steep mountain because they've got strong, stable legs? That's what Habakkuk is getting at. He's saying that when you enter in and you come to God just as you are, you lay it all out there, God says that in the worship of my people, I'll strengthen you. I'll strengthen you for whatever season that you are in so that you can scale the heights.

If you meet somebody who is a spiritual giant, if you meet somebody and your like, "Wow, they are who I want to be in the future," I can guarantee you that they are somebody who has gone through an incredible amount of trials and God has strengthened their legs.

The worst thing that God could do for you every time you cry out because it's getting too steep is for him to say, "Okay, I'll pluck you off of the cliff." Then you don't build the muscle that you need. God says that he will sustain you in that. And if you're not in it right now, you will be one day. You're going to find yourself in a difficult season and you're going to be tempted to work your way through it.

That's how some of you deal with it, "Let me just bear down. Let me just clench my teeth. I'm just going to work my way through this difficult season. Bury the emotions so deep that nobody will ever find them." God says: Would you just worship your way through this?

Some of you just want to worry your way through these difficult seasons and God says: No, no. Just give me the worry and why don't you worship. Why don't you just worship

your way through this season and let God sustain you because he is the one worthy of the *wow* that is already in your heart.

Father, we've talked about it. Now we want to do it. So I pray that you would receive our *wow* today because you're the only one who is worthy of it. God, we want to accomplish great things in your name in this city. We have a mission that you've given us, and that mission gets stagnant when our worship gets stale. So I pray that you would move in this room and across all of our campuses. Help us to direct the *wow* that is already in our hearts to the one who is worthy of it. We ask this in Jesus' name. And everyone says: Amen.