



# FIRM FOUNDATIONS. FRESH FAITH.

## Sermon Study Guide

### Week 6: Worship

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Church music has changed dramatically over the years. From the days of hymn books and organs, to guitar-led worship and clap-along choruses, to full bands and contemporary anthems. Yet through all the stylistic changes, one thing has remained constant: the people of God continue to praise. Because praise matters.

This week we explore the practice of praise and reflect on the invitation to **public** and **personal** worship that reveals God's **perspective** and His **presence**.

#### Praise is Public

Read Acts 2:42-47 and Ephesians 5:18-20

Praise is something we do together. There is something powerful about singing with others. Even modern science supports this idea. Research shows that group singing improves emotional wellbeing, strengthens social bonds, and releases chemicals in the brain associated with happiness and connection. But beyond the scientific benefits, there is something spiritually profound about shared worship.

When believers sing together, they declare truth collectively and remind each other of God's goodness. This is why gathering matters. In an age where faith can easily become private and individualised, the Bible reminds us that worship is meant to be shared.

When we sing together, we join a much larger story, the story of God's people across generations and around the world.



1. What role has music or singing played in your own faith journey? Are there particular songs that have shaped your understanding of God?
2. Why do you think singing together is such a powerful experience? How does it differ from listening to worship music alone?
3. Paul reminds us in Ephesians that praise is trinitarian—it is directed to **the Father**, offered **through Jesus Christ**, and empowered by **the Holy Spirit**. How does this theological lens encourage you?

## Praise is Personal

Read Psalm 103:1-5 and Romans 1:21-25

While praise is something we do together, it is also deeply personal. Paul writes in Ephesians that believers should “make music from your heart to the Lord” and Psalm 103 speaks of praising from our “inmost being”.

Worship is not about performance or musical ability. It flows from the heart and the soul.

Every person brings their own story, experiences and emotions into worship. Joy, grief, gratitude, confusion, everything we carry can be brought before God because praise is one of the ways we draw near and allow His Spirit to reorient us.

Every human being worships something. Whether we realise it or not, we all direct our affection toward something we believe will give life meaning or fulfilment — success, relationships, comfort, security or achievement. But Scripture reminds us that when our worship becomes centred on created things instead of the Creator, our hearts become misaligned.

True worship re-centres our love on God. And when our focus changes, our lives follow.

1. Why do you think humans naturally give their devotion to something?
2. What are some things people commonly “worship” instead of God?

## Praise Reveals God’s Perspective

Read Acts 16:22-25 and Psalm 13:1-6

Human beings long for transcendence. Deep down, we desire something bigger than ourselves. Yet modern Western culture often limits life to what philosopher Charles



Taylor calls the “immanent frame”—a view of the world that excludes the supernatural.

When transcendence disappears, people often feel a sense of emptiness, but praise reconnects us to the power and greatness of the sovereign God.

This is the God who Paul and Silas worshipped while in chains. Beaten and imprisoned, they chose to pray and sing rather than complain and despair. Their circumstances had not changed, but their perspective had. They trusted that God was still in control and they lifted a song of praise for all to hear.

Life often brings seasons of uncertainty, pain, or disappointment. In those moments, our perspective can easily become clouded by fear, frustration, or discouragement. Praise does not deny these struggles, it reframes them. It allows us to bring our questions and laments honestly before God, to be reminded of the hope we have in Him and strengthened by His presence.

1. Have you experienced a time when worship helped shift your perspective during a hard season?
2. Are there current areas of your life where lament is needed? How can you bring this before God in worship with both honesty and trust?

## Praise Reveals God’s Presence

Read Psalm 22:1-5 and Revelation 5:11-13

Through the gift of Jesus, we can experience God’s presence anywhere and at any time. Yet praise has a unique way of helping us become more aware of that presence. As C. S. Lewis once wrote: “It is in the process of being worshipped that God communicates His presence.”

When we focus our hearts and minds on God—declaring His goodness and His greatness—we often begin to sense His nearness in fresh ways. Sometimes this awareness feels tangible and powerful. At other times it is quiet and subtle. But through praise, our hearts become more open to the work of the Holy Spirit.

Worship also reminds us that we are part of something eternal. The book of Revelation gives us a glimpse of heaven where countless voices declare the worthiness of Jesus. When Christians gather to praise God today, they are participating in that same eternal reality.



Praise reminds us of the future that awaits us, a day when there will be no more suffering, no more tears, and no more pain. Until then, praise reveals God's presence now and reminds us of the hope that is still to come.

1. How does the vision of heavenly worship in Revelation shape your understanding of praise today?
2. How do you approach Sunday worship? Do you come expectant? Do you participate wholeheartedly? What might be holding you back?

## Close with Praise

Spend some time practicing praise together. You might choose to:

- Read Psalm 150 aloud as a group
- Play a worship song and sing together
- Share brief prayers of thanksgiving

## Prayer

Lord, thank you that you are worthy of our praise in every season. Help us to lift our eyes to you, to trust you in the midst of our circumstances, and to become more aware of your presence in our lives. Shape our hearts so that our worship reflects our love for you. Amen.