

# THE DANGEROUS ACT OF WORSHIP

Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Isaiah 1.10-17, Micah 6.1-8

Prepared by Curtis Bronzan  
curtis@gspc.org | 562/493.2553 x115

## I. Introduction to this Series and Study

This weekend we begin a series discussing worship. It's the first of three components included in our mission statement that, we believe, a disciple does: Connect with God.

But, what *is* worship? How *do* we connect with God? Is it just through the songs we sing? Or by the words we hear? Is it being at a particular place at a particular time to do and say particular things? Or is it something else altogether?

And, further, what does worship *do*? In other words, does our connecting with God change anything – or does it just cause us to miss the kickoff of the football game?

My prayer is that through this five part series inspired by Mark Labberton's book of the same name, that indeed, our worship would become dangerous. That it would change us! For that is the kind of worship God desires and Scripture describes. (FYI: *The Dangerous Act of Worship* books will be available next Sunday (or in the office on Tuesday), should you be interested in reading along. They were backordered!)

## II. Connecting with One Another

How do you wake up in the morning? An alarm? Naturally?

How do you *feel* when you awake? Rested and ready to go? Or tired and wanting more sleep!?

## III. Study the Text

### a. Read Isaiah 1.10-17.

What jumps out at you in this passage? What questions do you have after reading it? What does it say about worship?

### b. In verse 10, Isaiah addresses the "rulers of Sodom" and "people of Gomorrah." Do you think he was specifically addressing Sodom and Gomorrah? Or is this meant symbolically?

You may recall the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah in Genesis 19. The story, however, starts earlier, and addresses more than the sexual desires asserted in 19.5. Additional sins of Sodom and Gomorrah are explained by the prophet Ezekiel in 16.49-50:

Now this was the sin of your sister Sodom: She and her daughters were arrogant, overfed and unconcerned; they did not help the poor and needy. They were haughty and did detestable things before me. Therefore I did away with them as you have seen.

To be clear, the story of Sodom and Gomorrah addresses multiple sins. Which do you think is on Isaiah's mind in the above passage?

- c. Sacrifice was an integral aspect of worship during the time of Isaiah's writing. Why, then, do you think the LORD, through Isaiah, declares,

The multitude of your sacrifices –  
what are they to me?

After discussing the above question, read 1<sup>st</sup> Samuel 15.22-23. How does this help explain sacrifice?

One scholar writes that, for Samuel and the prophets following him, "Sacrifice [is] considered secondary to obedience and faith." What do you think? Do you agree? Why or why not?

- d. In verse 13, God declares, "Stop bringing meaningless offerings!" This is the least used passage in all of Scripture during annual stewardship campaigns. Why do you think God says this?
- e. In verse 16-17, God (re)calls His people to the work of justice. What does this have to do with worship?
- f. Read Micah 6.1-8. How is this passage similar to Isaiah 1? How is it different?
- g. Reread Micah 6.4-5. Here the prophet reminds God's people what He had done for them in the past. How has God cared for you in the past?
- h. Verses 6-8 are well known. And for good reason! In the context of the passage we see two options for connecting with God. One scholar writes,

This question represents one of the two basic ideas about religion. How can a man approach God? One answer is: with sacrifice, things, good works. The other answer is reflected in verse 8. God requires not some external gifts from his worshiper, but a humble communicant who loves to serve God and practice justice toward his fellow-man.

How does this reframe worship?

#### IV. Pray

- a. Pray that God would use this series to awaken us to true, biblical worship, which includes not only songs of praise and words from Scripture, but lives of righteousness and the work of justice,
- b. Lift up our ongoing dismissal from the PC(USA), that our discerning and discussing would be gracious and Spirit-filled,
- c. Pray for our Pastors, Staff, Elders, and Deacons, that they lead and serve in God's strength and for His glory.