

You Have a Heart for Worship: Will You Pour *It* Out?

Week 5

In The Winepress:

Remember, it all began with trouble. Gideon ended up threshing wheat in a winepress because he was trying to hide from the trouble. Doing his usual work in an unusual and uncomfortable place wondering where in the world God was in all the mess.

It was in this place God showed up, and we learned pouring out our troubles and complaints to God -- venting vertically -- is far more beneficial than grumbling to ourselves or friends. His complaining was a cry for relief from the trouble. It's true for us too when we find ourselves in troublesome places we never imagined, we seek relief in many different places. But the only true lasting relief is found in Jesus. And, praise God, no matter where we try to hide, He is sure to show up!

Oh! but it's one of the most difficult lessons to learn. The truth that Jesus's light shines brightest in darkness, in times of trouble. It's in the most uncomfortable painful places He moves us to a deeper knowledge of Himself and reveals our true identity -- who we were created to be. We were not created to hide from trouble, but to subdue it. We were created to rule in God's name, with His righteousness and love. When we recognize the reality of the story He is writing, the only thing left to do is fall to our knees and worship.

Trouble, darkness, and the revelation of God move us to worship differently than we did before.

When God set His people free from Egypt, He provided them with a law and a way of worship. He told them if they followed it and never wandered to the ways of other gods they would remain free and He would protect them from all harm. They would be blessed and prosperous.

But as we have seen, by the time of Judges, they had become complacent in their relationship with God. They put aside His ways, did what they thought was right in their own eyes, and ended up in serious trouble.

In the wilderness wanderings of Exodus, God established the way of worship for the Israelites through Moses. A designated place of worship was built -- the tabernacle -- and God gave specific instructions for how to worship Him.

Read Leviticus 1-3

These are the first three chapters of the law given to Moses and they define the basic offerings the Israelites were to present to God.

What were considered appropriate offerings for God? How were they to be presented to Him?

How did Gideon's gift (Judges 6:19) compare to the law for offerings? How was it the same? How was it different?

Would you consider Gideon's gift as an offering for worship? Why or why not?

Almost three hundred years before Gideon's time, Joshua set up the tabernacle in Shiloh as a central place of worship for God's people after they settled into their Promised Land. But the system of worship fell into decline as the people followed the ways of their neighbors rather than God's.

The ark of the covenant, within the tabernacle, was the designated place to meet with God. It was the place where His presence dwelt among His people.

Read Judges 6:11-20

Where did God's presence show up? Why?

What was revealed to Gideon?

In response to the cry of His people, even when their trouble was the result of rebellion against Himself, God came to where Gideon was trying to seek relief from the enemy by hiding in the winepress.

What does this reveal about God? Explain.

Gideon was not actively seeking God in His tabernacle, but we came to the conclusion from his complaint poured out to the angelic messenger that God was on his mind. Gideon blamed God

for the trouble he and his people were experiencing. Yet, God in His mercy and grace, showed up under a tree near the winepress. Since Gideon was not seeking Him in the usual way and place, God made His presence known in an unexpected setting.

Have you experienced God showing up in your hiding place? If so, how?

How did you respond?

What did God reveal about Himself to you?

Carol says:

In a difficult season of late, one filled with heartbreak, I confess I sought relief from the pain at the end of each day with a lovely glass of Chardonnay (or two... some days maybe more). It became what I looked forward to in the evening for relief and when the trouble drew near.

But God showed up in a way I didn't expect. Yes it was in a Bible study, but it's not what I expected Him to reveal. I thought I was doing just **fine**. I was actually doing two studies simultaneously, one on worship and one on idolatry.

He shone His light into my hiding place on the day of study where idols of comfort were discussed. First of all, I didn't really think seeking comfort was a path for idolatry at the time. But as I read, I heard the question: *What do you need to sacrifice?*

To my surprise and dismay the answer came quickly: *Wine*. I have to say my immediate response was: *No, that's not it*. And the conversation went on for a bit. Dare I say days? before I came into agreement with God that my relationship with my dear Chardonnay was becoming a problem.

So I did what He said. I sacrificed the five bottles of wine in my refrigerator, one a day for five days. With each offering He provided a Psalm to comfort me. He reminded me He knew right where I was and who He was in the midst of my heartache: *The God of all Comfort*.

It was difficult to substitute a fleshly comfort for the spiritual Comforter. I confessed to Him I didn't know how to receive His comfort and He would have to show me. And show me He did. Today, nine months later, I can tell you I have more peace and comfort in my heart than I have experienced in a very long time. Maybe ever. But not one thing has changed in my troubled little world.

Just my relationship with God as I come to know Him as my Comfort.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to comfort those who are in any affliction, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

2Corinthians 1:3-4 ESV

When we receive Him in our pain and trouble, when we trust Him to be who He says He is and obey His call, we come to know Him in a new way. A way we can in turn share with others. Amen.

Read John 4:19-24

Jesus was speaking to a Samaritan woman, which was taboo in the Jewish culture. The Samaritans' origins began after the northern kingdom of Israel was defeated by the Assyrians. This race of people was a mix between the Jews left behind and the foreigners brought in by the Assyrians to maintain their newly acquired land.¹ The dispute about the way of worship had been going on for a long time. The Jews of Judah who returned from their Babylonian exile would not allow the Samaritans to worship in Jerusalem at the temple. They refused to interact with them or travel through their land. But not Jesus (John 4:4-9).

What does the woman say she believes about Jesus? about worship?

What does Jesus say in return?

¹ Walter A. Elwell and Philip Wesley Comfort, *Tyndale Bible Dictionary* (Tyndale reference library; Wheaton, IL: Tyndale House Publishers, 2001), 1153–1154.

Do you see foreshadowing of the type of worship Jesus talks about in Gideon's experience with God? Explain.

Jesus ushered in a new way of worship for all people. He is the Light of the world, the Way, the Truth, the Life for all people of all nations. Through His life, death, and resurrection, we now have access to God by faith.

Just as the Holy Spirit hovered over the chaos in the Beginning, before a word of creation was spoken into existence, He still hovers today, waiting for the Word made flesh to bring Light into our darkness.

*You are all around me -- in front of me and in back of me. You lay your hand on me.
Such knowledge is beyond my grasp. It is so high I cannot reach it.*

Psalm 139:4-5 GW

Finding your place in the story.

Before we move into the last part of Gideon's gift giving story, let's review what we have learned.

Prepare *It*

Followers of Jesus are called to love God and others through the gifts God gives them. Most of the time, the gifts God calls us to give are not some off-the-wall thing we know nothing about. Instead, our troubles and life experience are used to inspire us to prepare what God is calling us to give.

Preparation of a gift takes practice, time, and sacrifice.

We've consistently asked you to consider what God is calling you to give. What has God inspired you to prepare?

Present *It*

Once the preparation is done the moment comes when we present our gift to God.

How is God calling you to present your gifts? where? when?

Put It Down

Once we've presented our gifts to God, we enter a process of letting go. We put them down on the Rock, trust Jesus with what we've brought, and slip under Jesus's yoke and rest in knowing what comes next is in His hands.

How does it feel to put down what God has prepared you to present?

Now, let's return to Gideon and the final phase of giving his gift.

Read Judges 6:19-20

What did the angel tell Gideon to do once he set his offering on the rock?

Prepare It.

Present It.

Put It Down.

and finally...

Pour It Out

All the preparation and presentation led Gideon back to the unusual place where he placed the meat on the rock and poured the broth over it. The last part of Gideon's gift slowly spread out over the rock and dripped down into the dirt.

Imagine yourself standing in Gideon's sandals. There you are pouring out what's been prepared, presented, and put down.

What thoughts go through your mind?

What feelings and emotions surface?

Consider pouring out the gift God has called you to prepare, present, and put down.

What does it look like to pour out your gift?

Is it what you expected? Explain.

Taking the final step of pouring out our gifts before the Lord is about total surrender because there's no going back. Songs can't be unsung. Words can't be unspoken. Offerings of money, time, or energy can't be taken back. Just like there was no way Gideon could gather up the poured out broth and return it to the jar, when we pour out our gifts, what's done is done.

Think about a time you poured out your gift before the Lord and others.

What happened in the moment of pouring out?

What did you see? hear? do?

Where was your focus in the pouring out?

In the space below, write Matthew 16:24.

Jesus gives three actions disciples must take to come after Him. **Circle** the first action above.

The first step in pouring out our gifts is the same. We must **deny ourselves**. We must surrender what's been prepared, presented, and put down to the holy work God has in store.

Oh, that this would be an easy step! but it's not. Because we have all kinds of visions and expectations about how God will use our gift God to build His kingdom. If we're honest, we have probably already defined clear outcomes of success and failure.

What visions/expectations do you have in the pouring out of your gifts?

Have you already defined what success and failure will look like? Explain?

Look up the definition of surrender and write it below.

Underline the words that draw your attention or speak to you in some way.

How do these parts of the definition of surrender speak to the pouring out of your gifts to the Lord?

What steps of surrender is God calling you to take?

Let's take a look at what happened after Gideon poured out his offering before the Lord.

Read Judges 6:21

What did the angel do to the gift Gideon poured out?

Full surrender of our gifts means we must first remember who God is and apart from His touch the gifts we give are worthless.

Read Isaiah 64:6

How does Isaiah describe righteous acts apart from God?

Consider the gifts God is calling you to give or the gifts you now pour out to Him.

Where do you see God's hand touching your gifts? Explain.

Is there some way you are attempting to use the gift your way or under your power?

Return to Judges 6:21

What happened to Gideon's offering?

Who does fire represent in the New Testament? (Hint: See Acts 2:1-3.)

Read 1Corinthians 3:16

According to this verse where does the Spirit dwell now?

For those who put their faith in Christ, for Believers, the Spirit of God lives inside us. We are the temple of God.

How should this truth shape how you see yourself? Explain.

In the pouring out of our gifts we first remember who God is and in the remembering we grab tight to who we are in Christ. When we do, then we are free to surrender what is poured out trusting the One who lives in us to complete His work.

This is the heart of worship. Pouring out our lives for and to the One who gave us His all.

Read Romans 12:1

What is our reasonable service of worship? How are we to offer ourselves to God?

What emotions stir when you read these words?

Present your body as a living sacrifice... this is reasonable worship. Sounds a bit extreme, especially to a world that says we need balance in our lives. But the world's way is not God's way.

Read Mark 8:35

What does Jesus teach us about how we are to live our lives? What are the two outcomes?

The truth is, everyday with every breath we pour out our lives for something or someone. If you want to know who or what you worship, look at your life. How you spend your day, pouring out your time, energy, resources. There you will find who or what you worship.

If it's not God, then it's idolatry. Who we serve defines what we worship.

Consider who it is that leads and guides the decisions you make each day. List them below.

Now, consider what every area of your life would look like if you let Holy Spirit direct your days. Write your thoughts below.

We often fear what we'll lose if we totally surrender our life to God. But the truth is, when we surrender all we have and are, lose ourselves to Him for His sake, we gain Life itself.

"The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you -- they are full of the Spirit and life. Yet there are some of you who do not believe." -- Jesus
John 6:63-64 NIV

The Examen: A Prayer Exercise

The Daily Examen is a technique of prayerful reflection on the events of the day in order to detect God's presence and discern his direction for us. The Examen is an ancient practice in the Church that can help us see God's hand at work in our whole experience.²

The Ignatian prayer technique can help us examine our daily living, the places we pour out energy, time, and resources. As we take a look back over a day with hearts turned toward God, we notice the moments that draw us closer to God and those that turn us away from God.

Before beginning, bring a pitcher of water and candle to your prayer space. As you settle your heart and mind on God, light the candle and invite God's presence into your space. Imagine He is sitting there beside you quietly waiting to talk about the day you've just experienced. Ask God to open your eyes to the way He sees your day.

Take a moment to give thanks for God's presence during your day. Tell God about the event or happening you are most thankful for and why.

² <https://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/>

Care-fully look back on your day guided by the Holy Spirit. Consider your waking moments, the events of the day, who you encountered, what work you accomplished, what's still left undone. As you remember, imagine placing each thing in your pitcher of water.

At what moment in the day did you feel closest to God? Why?

At what moment did you feel far from God? Repent.

Consider how God used you throughout the day. What gifts do you notice in yourself?

Spend a few more minutes prayerfully meditating on your day. Add each thought to your pitcher of water.

Take your pitcher of water to a place of pouring out. Maybe a flower bed or tree near you. Perhaps an available rock. Slowly pour out your day, fully examined in the Lord's presence. As you do watch the water flow out in sacrifice. Release your success and failures. Surrender the good and bad to God.

End your prayer time by asking God to go with you from this pouring out place.

Journal any additional thoughts.
