

Title: The heart of worship  
Text: 2 Samuel 6.16-23  
Theme: Our need of redemption  
Series: 2 Samuel  
Prop Stmtnt: True worship reveals our hearts, which reveals how much we need Christ.

The joy of major celebrations is often at odds with our personal lives. How many times have you poured out your heart to God in worship through praying, singing and engaging with God's Word, only to face ridicule, resentment, outright hostility or just the reality of the people in your life who are dealing with their own difficult situations? No day of worship or celebration of God now is perfect. Someday it will be. But it is not that way, not yet.

Read Text:

What are we to think of Michal? She experienced several public and obviously personally painful events. Her sister (Merab) was promised by her dad, King Saul to be given to David as his wife. Instead, she was given to another. Then when Saul realized that having his daughter marry David would likely mean that he could keep an eye of David, he gave his daughter, Michal to David to marry. 1 Samuel 18 says that Michal loved him which made Saul even more afraid of David. Michal is presented as being in the middle. She loves David and fears her dad. In 1 Samuel 19, David has to run for his life and Michal helps him escape by deception. But then she lies to her dad and makes David out to be a monster who "threatened to kill her." Her dad hates her husband. Her dad hates the man that he gave her to (made her) marry. This is on Saul. But she lied to her dad and threw her husband under the bus. Yet, he was the king and he was a lunatic and everyone knew it. The tabloids can't get enough of this.

At the same time, Michal is not a genuine Yahweh worshipper. She has an idol in her home and uses that in the ruse to cover-up David's escape. It's mentioned in passing, but it is mentioned. We are therefore right to ask what on earth is that doing here? Later on (1 Samuel 25.44) we learn that Michal was given by Saul to another man to marry after David ran for his life. This man seems to love her. When Michal's brother, Ish-bosheth is king in place of Saul, Ish-bosheth, agrees to David's demand for the return of Michal. So, Ish-bosheth takes her from her husband of at least a couple of years (possibly a few more) who is devastated by this but powerless to stop it. We do not know if she was the only wife of Palti. We don't know if Palti was old, weak, maybe a bit poor. We simply don't know. We don't know what Michal thought. The picture we have of Michal is that she is the daughter of a king who is treated like a pawn for the sake of image, influence and power. She had loved David, but that seems to be long-gone. Here is a lady who, let's face it, had very little control over many things in her life.

In trying to piece things together, we have to limit ourselves to the pieces that God gives us. I am not comfortable psycho-analyzing every character in the Bible and drawing conclusions based on what I think probably happened. I have to stay in the lane of the text. If I speculate, I will say so. But I have to take the plain reading of the text above all. So yes, based on what know about Michal, we can see that she had plenty of opportunities to be bitter based on all that had

happened to her. Does that mean that we give her a pass? After all, how would you expect her to respond? What is clear from the text? Michal despises David. This is the same word that was used to describe Goliath's view of David (1 Samuel 17.42). This was the same word used to describe Hophni and Phineas' attitude toward God (1 Samuel 2.30). Michal's view of David is the same one that Isaiah says the enemies of God will have toward Christ. The Spirit of God uses a very strong and defining word to describe what is going on in Michal's heart. She despises the King, anointed by God and the occasion that opens up her heart like a volcano is his fervent worship of God. My conclusion is that while we can have sympathy for Michal, we cannot defend her. Here is a question for us:

Is disappointment ever a reason for bitterness and spite? Disappointment is an occasion for it, but it is it a reason for it? In other words, do I have to become bitter when I am disappointed? NO! Disappointment reveals my internal beliefs. Like Michal, we all function with a set of internal rules that God exposes over time based on what he has me experience. I will address this a bit more in a minute. For now, we can clearly say that when we do not know all the facts. Michal did not know what was in David's heart, but her bitterness meant that she couldn't see straight and so she made a huge assumption and she could not have been more wrong.

1. **It is easy to make false assumptions.** (16)

Michal (the daughter of Saul – vv. 16, 20) looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the LORD. Don't miss the narrator's use of the language. Saul is not called King Saul, but David is called King David. She saw him leaping and dancing before the LORD. He was celebrating the coming of the Ark into the city. David was actually doing this before the LORD and for the LORD.

We know, based on the song that David wrote for this occasion and based on the elaborate preparations that went into this event, that David poured everything he had into this. But it was more than putting a lot of effort into an event. He did this before the LORD. He did this unto the LORD. Michal either did not know or did not care that it was before the LORD. She did not have the entire picture and perhaps didn't want to. But, either way, she came to some very bad assumptions and despised David.

Do you ever find yourself feeling a sense of disgust or superiority over against people who are worshiping God? You and I do that, when our own hearts are cold to God. We accuse others of being frauds or ignorant louses because we project on them the very things that we struggle with. When someone is worshiping in spirit and in truth, it is easy to make false assumptions. Be careful. Sin is a monster. False assumptions provide the fuel for hateful accusations.

2. **It is easy to make hateful accusations.** (20)

I do not think that Michal was genuinely concerned about modesty and decorum. So much of the time, the accusations that we make say more about our own hearts than they do someone else. What is Michal angry about? David was leaping and dancing before the LORD and he was

shamelessly uncovered. Does that mean that David was doing acrobatic moves in nothing but a pair of gym shorts, showing off his toned body? No. he was in a linen ephod. This was a full body garment that would have looked like a simple one-piece robe. That is the problem as Michal sees it. David has disrobed as the king and appears to be a commoner, a vulgar (slave, low-life, low caste, beneath me/us, not like royalty). David has forgotten who he is and appears to be dishonoring to the position and title of King. "How the king of Israel honored himself today!" (sarcasm) She accuses him of doing this before the commoners (female servants). Not just servants, but the female servants. Again, do not miss this. Michal sees David worshipping God with all of his might and she despised him. Later after David blessed the people and the people received their gifts of food and were sent on their way, David came home. Michal's despising of David in her heart burned like a fire. She could not wait for him to come into the home, she, "the daughter of Saul" (20) came out to meet David. She was waiting for this confrontation. She fed the fire that burned and rehearsed her little forked-tongue speech so that she could inflict maximum damage in an effort to ruin his day and ruin him, if possible. This is ugly. David aligns himself as a servant of God. David identifies himself as a worshiper and servant of God. David leads his nation in bringing the Ark of the Covenant, the seat of the throne of God to its rightful home and Michal is so blinded by her bitterness that she misses all of that. Michal was that close to the glory of God and missed Him!

Her failure to consider the LORD as the object of David's worship led her to accuse him of being an embarrassment to the throne. Again, this says a lot more about her than it does about David. She despised David because he lowered himself to the level of other people that she despised. Genuine heart-felt worship of God, looks foolish to our world. You can be applauded if you drive for hours in order to go to a concert, or a sporting event, but if you give your life to the worship of God, you are scary. You and I can be just like Michal. We all have serious disappointments in our life that are tailor made opportunities for bitterness. What should we do?

### 3. Put yourself in a position to worship God. (16)

If you look at Saturn at night you will see a tiny reflection of light in the shape of a ball. (pic) It looks small. You do not realize that Saturn is massive. The planet Saturn is so large that we could fit 700 earths into Saturn. That is how people view God. They see him at a distance and assume that he is small, far-away, hazy and disconnected. But, when you see God through the lens of Scripture, and you begin to see him up close, then it is like looking at Saturn through a telescope. (pic) That which appears to be small and fuzzy is actually massive and overwhelming.

Michal has no eyes for God. She doesn't see the Ark of the Covenant, she sees David. She doesn't view David before the LORD (as he was) she sees him before people, because the Lord is not in her sight. She does not see God as God is. Without the lens of Scripture, we will not only see God as small and irrelevant, but another thing happens that Michal illustrates and that is this. Without the right view of God, things that are actually small appear to be really big and important. Michal had a view of herself that was way too big. Being with the people of God, welcoming the Ark of God and worshipping God was not a priority for her. There were other things that were more important to her. Therefore, things that were small, like herself were

inflated in her mind as being too important. This is why David's humility was such a threat to her. He had more to be proud about than she did and yet he humbled himself.

Worshiping God with the people of God is a means of grace. What was David and the people doing? They were using their words, their voices, their songs, their bodies to do the very thing that they were made by their Creator to do. They were worshiping God with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength. Michal did not go to "church" that day. She chose not to align herself with and identify herself with the people of God. She made it very clear that she was not one of those. Those people were beneath her. She chose not to open her mouth in praise to God. God uses our praise of him not only to bless him and bless others, it blesses us. Our praise has a way of opening up our hearts to God. The truths that we sing cause our hearts to be tender to God. I clearly see in this text a warning to any of us who are inclined to distance ourselves from the glad worship of God. The glad worship of God helps us see God through a telescope, so that what is truly massive is seen as truly massive. Without the telescope of God, you will look at life through a microscope, meaning, things that are small, will appear to be really big.<sup>1</sup>

David saw himself as being "before the LORD" while Michal saw him (and I would argue herself) as being before others. In Michal's case, she chose not to worship God. The fact is, we all worship. The issue is what do we worship. If we do not worship the Creator then we will worship either ourselves or something that is thinly veiled disguise of ourselves. However, when you worship God, you will not only acknowledge and embrace the fact that you are not God, but worshiping God properly will lead you to the conclusion that you are on the same level as everyone else. The ground is level at the foot of the cross. We are all in need of God's grace. Be careful of your criticism. Your criticism may reveal more of your own heart than it does of the heart of the other. But now it's David's turn

#### 4. **Worshiping the Lord does not shield you from attack.** (20-22)

David not only led the nation in the worship of God; he went home to bless his own household. It is obvious that David did a deep dive into what it means to rightfully worship God as it relates to the Ark of the Covenant. When you compare the account here in 2 Samuel 6 to the sister account in 1 Chronicles 15-16 you see what I mean. 2 Samuel 6 tells us about the first disastrous event which resulted in the death of Uzzah while the Chronicles account focuses upon the 2<sup>nd</sup> event. In chapter 15 there is a detailed list of the priests by their groups. There is a naming of the singers and musicians. In fact Derek's favorite Bible verse is in chapter 16 (v.22) where the next names "Chenaniah, leader of the Levites in music, should direct the music, for he understood it." It always helps if the one leading the music actually understands music, right? But, this time, in addition to the music, there were sacrifices offered and they were offered every six steps. This time, the sacrifices are extravagant. The music and musicians and planning are beyond anything that I can recall Israel organizing up to this point. My point is simply this: David did this. David directed this. David planned this out and he pulled it off and it was spectacular. He did for the Lord and the Lord accepted it.

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<sup>1</sup> I got this telescope, microscope idea from one of Piper's books. Not sure which one.

The day was a spectacular event. But David did not want his family missing out. There will be times when David's life as a husband and father are neglectful, hypocritical, and tragic. But, not this time. David wants his family to be blessed. He wants them to know God and he is coming home from an exciting and exhausting day of worship. His heart has to be exploding. But then this. Michal is waiting. She is furious and ready to pounce. She comes out to him. She has no concept of what has taken place. She has no vision for the glory of God or the grace of God poured out on the nation through her husband, the king. She is humiliated that her husband, the king would stoop to such a level and her forked tongue pours out the poison that has been building in her heart and now David enjoying the favor of God and the joy of his people is met with this. Her words are burning, cutting and brutal. She is the accuser of the brethren attacking the heart of a believer in the very thing that we are most sensitive about.

How many times has that happened to you? How many times have you had a deeply meaningful time with God in worship and fellowship with other believers, or participated in a ministry event where you gave of yourself, happily so for the benefit of others (concert series, VBS, missions trip), only to have someone attack you, and attack your motives, and mock your efforts as if you were an utter hypocrite? Sometimes it is a member of your own family. "If they only knew what you were at home!" "Oh, I'm SO glad that everyone at church thinks that you are such an awesome teacher, such a wonderful servant, such an amazing singer." And the knife of accusation heated red hot in that furnace of fury is thrust into your soul. One person, one accusation can do so much damage. David could have thought, thanks God. Is this what I get for all of my efforts? Is this my reward for trying to follow you? Am I really this bad? Beloved, this is a terrible scene. How are we to respond when attacked like this?

When I first read this, I was trying to give Michal some benefit of doubt and I thought that David is possibly responding in a way that he lowers himself to her level. She attacks him so he attacks back. Let me remind you that the LORD chose me and not your dad! But, the more I looked at this, I've come a little different conclusion. The narrator simply tells us what David said. The narrator does not assign motive, nor describe tone. We just have the words. In Michal's case, we are told that she despised David in her heart. Therefore, we know the context and flavor of her words. We don't know that with David. So, I thought, maybe David didn't respond to her dagger of poison with one of his own. After all, what Michal said was wrong and when you look at it, everything that David said, was actually true. So, I don't know if he said this loudly, cruelly, or humbly and sadly. But look at what he said and I am paraphrasing.

"Michal, I didn't do this "for them." It was before the LORD. You are making this about you and not only is it not about you, but you can't even see who it is about. Don't you see? God has been gracious to me. God has chosen me to be king and prince. He chose me above your father, who destroyed his life and almost the nation because he feared people instead of fearing God. I am not going to do that. I am going to respond to the grace of God in my life by making much of God. I will make merry before the LORD and if that embarrasses you, well, that is on you. But I am not going to change. I am giving my life to glad worship of God which means that I will be even more contemptible than what you saw today. You don't get it. But there are those who do.