

Let me start with a question. Have you come here this morning to do something or to receive something? You came to worship God so of course it's to do something. It would be impossible to receive something unless I handed out things in the aisles. You walk out with the same amount you walked in with. We don't hand out iPhones or computers as prizes for coming. Receiving something is impossible. You come here to do something, you come to worship. Right?

Worship isn't about the songs you sing, the creeds you say, or the offerings you give. Worship isn't doing something. It's about you, your heart, your faith, your God really doing something for you. Something is wrong if you walk out the same as when you came in. If you walk out unchanged something is wrong with you. Worship is God doing something for you and to you.

Peter and John were two of the better known apostles of Jesus. Peter was the outspoken one and John the loving one. Their interaction and encounter with the cripple man outside the temple gate in the second lesson helps us see what sincere worship looks and sounds like. It's their encounter with this man that helps us...

**Break the Huddle: for sincere worship**  
**Responding to the gift of Jesus**  
**Worshiping with a sincere heart**

Forty years this man had been unable to walk. Forty years of being carried by friends to the temple gate called Beautiful to beg for money. Forty years without any ability to get around on his own, completely dependent on others to get him places. Imagine his struggle for daily survival, his inability to provide for any family. Imagine his sad situation. But the day Peter and John walked by a physical healing took place unexpectedly. So unexpectedly the man wondered if the apostles were really speaking to him. Most people didn't look at him when they walked by or dropped a few coins next to him. And once they spoke, without learning or practice, he stood up on his legs for the first time ever.

Physical healing wasn't the only thing that happened that day. No ordinary person could make a man walk. Peter left no doubt. **"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk."** In an instant, physical healing in a miraculous gift. In an instant, spiritual healing too as a miraculous gift from Jesus. Jesus got credit for two miracles, the man's ability to walk and the man's faith. And with both the man couldn't be slowed down. He could walk, run, and jump. You can imagine him running up to people, jumping up and down the stairs by the gate, soaking in the ability to look people in the eye. This was praise. **"Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God."** He gave all credit to God. We don't know exactly what he said. I think maybe it was shouts as loud as he could, "I can walk. I can run. And it's all thanks to God. It's all because of Jesus." Not exactly the controlled, well organized, formal worship we're used to. This was more the spontaneous shouting, can't help but praise God kind of worship of a man who couldn't be contained.

You heard about the lines for the new iPhone 5s on Friday. The brand new, shiny, in demand phone of the moment. What if someone bought it but walked out with it still in the box? And got home and left it in the box? Why spend that money and get a nice new phone and not play with it? Is your reaction to God's mercy the same sometimes? Do you keep Jesus in the box, content just to know he's there? And when you advance in your career you don't sing the praises of God but rather yourself and your hard work. And when the phone blinks or chirps you don't say thank you to God who allowed you to have such amazing technology but rather you paused everything including family and God. You might be keeping Jesus in his box even as good things happen and life goes well. You praise others, you praise a program, you praise a book, you praise yourself. You sin by not praising God and instead keeping him boxed up. That's not the right response.

Opening the Bible and hearing what it says about you and about God; letting those words wash over you is like opening up a gift on Christmas morning. You didn't deserve something so great, but someone got it for you anyway. I was completely lost in sin. I was completely against God and wanted nothing to do with him. But he got me the best gift anyway. He sent his son Jesus for me. I open the Bible and from page one God tells me of his love for me. He crafted a beautiful world just for me and announced that human beings were his most prized possession. He treats me with special care and he allows things to happen in this world that will always be for my eternal good. The Savior he sent won for all of us, you and me, the greatest gift when he defeated sin and Satan and conquered death.

Don't worry if you want to crack a smile. It's okay to want to pump your fist, let out a holler, or even tear up. Your heart responds to what Christ Jesus has done for you. Giving credit to him and giving thanks to him are pretty natural things. Different people respond in different ways. It's always a confident 'no' response when someone asks you to get involved in something sinful. It's a joy that carries into words and actions the love and promises of Jesus. You and I were in the worst of spots because of our sins. Suddenly those sins are gone, we realize they're paid for by Christ, and we can't help but react with thanks. That's the appropriate response to Christ's gift for you. Friends, that's sincere worship.

After Peter and John took the formerly crippled man into the temple they started preaching, got mobbed by people wanting to be near them, and then they were hauled off before the religious leaders. We don't really hear anything about the man again. Do you think the next day he would've asked his buddies to come and carry him to the gate called Beautiful so he could beg for money again? No way! This man's worship was sincere. His heart was changed. His running, jumping, and praising God were for real. He realized what Jesus had done and he worshiped with a sincere heart.

For too many worship seems like a chore. Does it for you? Sunday morning comes mighty early, even for 10:30. You might guilt yourself into getting up and getting ready. You show up only to hear what sounds like basically the same message every week. And then your body might be here, but your mind and heart are back in pillowland. You fight the strong urge to check your phone or iPad constantly. Email probably more important. Games more entertaining. Messages, Facebook, just about anything is more fun. And when the mind does engage it only wants to complain because worship isn't what you want. More contemporary songs, more traditional hymns. More from the hymnal, less from the hymnal. Louder, softer. You really want what you want. Each of us, myself included, is sinful that way. If we don't get and hear what we want our hearts won't be in it.

The Holy Spirit sets you free from all that. Worship isn't about the songs, the liturgy, hymnals, video projection boards, or high definition televisions. It's not about you or me. Sincere worship for the heart is all about what Christ Jesus did for you. His sacrifice, his willingness to give himself completely wipes away your sins of wanting what you want when you want it. All the laziness and attention on yourself are turned around and set right in the forgiveness of Jesus. The sins of half hearted worship or no worship at all and all the guilt that's associated with it on a Sunday like today, Jesus took those sins away too. He frees you so that your heart can be sincere in worship. He wants you right now to let all those sins go. They're gone in him. You're free to rejoice, worship, sing, and dance if you want as much as you want because Christ Jesus set you free.

God breaks through the hard insincere hearts in you and me. Then he breaks up this worship huddle so we can get back to sincere worship that goes beyond these walls. Sincere worship from the heart starts with the message of Christ. We sing it, shout it, and praise God with joy in our hearts. Worship is meant to be corporate, together with other Christians. Different believers putting their collective gifts together for service to Christ's church. And we come to encourage and be encouraged. For that we need others. Worship doesn't start when we walk through the door and end when we walk out. Anywhere you are, here inside this building, at work, at school, wherever, give thanks to God, feel God's grace, and worship with a sincere heart.

You didn't come here to do something. Oh sure you read, listened, and sang along. But this morning is not about those things specifically. Worship is about you and God. It's about him sending Jesus for you. It's about you hearing what Jesus has done and the gifts he's given you. It's about your reactions of joy and praise. It's about God breaking through your heart and breaking the huddle for sincere worship.