**Sermon Series: The Four Building Blocks of Our Faith**
**Sermon Title: The Attitude of Worship**

**Text: Psalm 27:4 – One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.**

**Introduction:** As his parents watched from the patio, a little boy played baseball by himself in the backyard. Of course, this amounted to tossing a ball into the air and attempting to hit it with his bat. As he did so he proclaimed to no one in particular**, "I'm the greatest hitter in the world!"** Unfortunately, he missed the ball and, since he was the umpire too, regretfully announced, **"Strike one."** Undaunted the little fellow picked up the ball, threw it back into the air and said, **"I'm the greatest baseball hitter ever!"** With even greater intensity he swung the bat but all he caught was air for his efforts**. "Strike two,"** he said. The boy paused a moment, examined the bat and ball carefully, and then for a third time threw the ball into the air. **"I'm the greatest hitter in the history of baseball,"** he said. This time he swung for all he was worth, but just like the other two attempts, he missed. **"Strike three,"** he mumbled. Then the boy sat for a moment considering what had just happened. After a minute or so, he turned to his parents and much to their surprise said, **"Wow, I just struck out the greatest hitter in the world! I must be the greatest pitcher in the world."**

Attitude really matters, doesn't it? It can make the difference between a good day and a bad day, a good marriage and a bad marriage, perhaps even a good life and a bad life. **Chuck Swindoll** says, "**Words can never adequately convey the incredible impact of our attitude toward life. The longer I live the more convinced I become that life is 10% what happens to us and 90% how we respond to it**."

Have you ever considered that your choice of attitude even affects your worship experience? In **Psalm 27**, David begins by expressing his confidence in God. This declaration of faith is written in the context of an attack from without by his enemies (**Psalm 27:1-3 -- The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When evildoers assail me to eat up my flesh, my adversaries and foes, it is they who stumble and fall. 3 Though an army encamp against me, my heart shall not fear; though war arise against me, yet I will be confident**). What might have caused fear and anxiety in someone who did not trust God, results only in the longing of David to be closer to God. "**One thing I ask of the Lord, this is what I seek**," he says, "**that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to seek Him in His temple**." This is remarkable! David was the king of Israel, the leader of their armies and a preacher of the Word of God. **The pressures associated with any one of these responsibilities would be more than most of us are capable of bearing**. So how does he hold it together? He does so by maintaining an attitude of worship. Let's take a few moments and break down what David has to say about this all-important pursuit.

**The Discipline of Worship** (**Psalm 27:4a -- One thing have I asked of the Lord**). **To be a person who is a true worshipper of the Lord Jesus Christ requires a substantial commitment to personal discipline**. In a day and age when so many things compete for our worship and devotion, believers are often forced to make choices. David resisted the temptation to be consumed with his many duties in leading a nation. Instead, he chose to make God his number one priority. **This single-minded pursuit is what made him such an effective leader.** Do you remember the run-in David had with Goliath in **1 Samuel 17**? **While all the other soldiers could only see their situation from a human, and therefore hopeless, perspective, David, the worshipper of God, did not fall victim to such thinking**. He was willing to oppose Goliath not because he was stronger or a more experienced soldier, but because he was highly motivated. David was offended by the arrogance of Goliath and his unwillingness to acknowledge the greatness of the God he worshipped (**1 Samuel 17:45-47 -- Then David said to the Philistine, "You come to me with a sword and with a spear and with a javelin, but I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have defied. 46 This day**

**the Lord will deliver you into my hand, and I will strike you down and cut off your head. And I will give the dead bodies of the host of the Philistines this day to the birds of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel, 47 and that all this assembly may know that the Lord saves not with sword and spear. For the battle is the Lord's, and he will give you into our hand").** **Goliath could have ridiculed the armies of Israel, David himself, and even his mother, but nothing drew the young man's ire like the unwillingness of the Philistine to respect and honor his God**. We could say that David was obsessed with honoring His God.

**How important it is that we as a church maintain this important discipline? We must be careful not to lose the perspective that we exist to glorify God. I sometimes become concerned that in an effort to be relevant the evangelical movement has become man-centered rather than God-centered**. (It is at least possible that we could fall prey to this as well). Somehow for at least a few decades, the primary question for evangelicalism become, "***How do we get more people and grow our churches***?" **We failed to recognize that the paradigm for success in our churches was set, not by the immutable and infallible Word of God, but by our culture. *Big is good and bigger is better.* Those with the largest congregations obviously know what they're doing and so therefore reserve the right to set the agendas for the rest of the church**. What we failed to understand is that because we bought into our culture's definition of success, believers are no longer the ones leading the body of Christ to glorify God. **The practice of Christian worship, the purpose for which we exist, is being redesigned to suit the desires of those outside the church. If their attendance is contingent on more singing and less teaching, we capitulate to their desires**. If they want the teaching to be more about how to live a good and happy life and less about theology and doctrine, we preach to accommodate. If certain doctrinal positions offend, we avoid them! If the services are too long or at too inconvenient of a time, no problem! We'll adjust. **We would be wise to grasp that what is ultimately being removed is not the barriers that have kept the church from reaching the lost, but the worship of God as He is revealed to us in the Scriptures**. **We cannot worship what we do not know. And we will not know God if our primary ambition is to worship man**. May we avoid the tyranny of our times by disciplining our minds to think as David did: "**One thing I ask**," he prayed, "**this is what I seek**."

**The Destination of Worship** (**Psalm 27:4b -- ...That I may dwell in the house of the Lord**). David was not referring here to the Tabernacle, the place where God dwelt in the times preceding Solomon. He also was not thinking about the temple that his son, Solomon, would build. These places were not dwellings to be lived in. **David was speaking of an ongoing and intimate relationship with God where we live in His very presence.** Worship is meant to bring us to the throne of God so that we might grow in our understanding of Him. This is what Jesus referred to as "**eternal life**" in **John 17:3 -- And this is eternal life, that they know you the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.** In providing for us life that would never end, God was giving Himself to us. If worship doesn't bring us into the presence of God through His Son, then one of two things has gone wrong: **Either we are worshipping the wrong thing or we're worshipping for the wrong reason**.

- **The object of our worship.** The very first commandment given to Israel was to "**have no other gods before me** (**Exodus 20:3**). He alone is to be the One we worship. God is clear on this. Whatever we do, it is to be done to His glory (**See 1 Corinthians 10:31**). He is so central to our existence that the most routine things can and should be done to His glory! Think about it. It is possible to eat and drink (so says the Apostle Paul) to the glory of God. This is how God intended for us to live. **We only get it wrong when we fail to worship God and begin to worship our idols – something that takes the place of God in our lives**. Paul warned us of this in **Romans 1:18-25 -- For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. 19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. 21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish**

**hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools, 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles**.

- **The motivation for worship.** The Lord did not receive Cain's sacrifice because it was not right, but because his life was not right with God (**Genesis 4:4-7 -- And the Lord had regard for Abel and his offering, 5 but for Cain and his offering he had no regard. So Cain was very angry, and his face fell. 6 The Lord said to Cain, "Why are you angry, and why has your face fallen? 7 If you do well, will you not be accepted? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door. Its desire is for you, but you must rule over it**). **It was not the sacrifice itself that was wrong, for grain offerings were offered to God in other places in the Scriptures with good results. It was a matter of the heart, and Cain's was not right with God**. This is ought to be a word of caution to us. It is possible to engage in the worship of God in a way that is not pleasing to our Lord. Certainly, this was the problem that Jesus had with the Pharisees and teachers of the Law in **Matthew 15**. They pretended that their traditions were all about honoring God, but in fact, they were about manipulating others to their own advantage. Thus, they rendered the commandments of God null and void causing Jesus to conclude that their worship was meaningless and empty (**Matthew 15:8-9 -- This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; 9 in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men**). Had they truly desired to please God, they would have followed the example of Christ in loving others.

**People seek access to the throne of God for many reasons. Often it is because we want something from Him. There is, however, one motive that seems more right than others--because we want to know Him**. There once was an old woman who unfortunately was gradually losing her memory. Throughout her life, however, this woman had cherished and depended on the Word of God, committing many verses to memory. Her favorite was **2 Timothy 1:12 -- "I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day**." Confined to a bed in a nursing home, her family knew that she would never leave it alive. As they visited, she would quote verses, especially **2 Timothy 1:12 -- But I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am convinced that he is able to guard until that Day what has been entrusted to me**. But with the passing of time, even parts of this well-loved verse began to fade. "***I know in whom I have believed...he is able to guard what I have entrusted to Him***..." Then it was..."***what I have entrusted to Him***..." A few short days before her death all she could remember was..."***entrusted to Him***." Finally, in her last moments, there was only one word left, ***Him***." She whispered it again and again as she stood on the doorstep of heaven. "***Him...Him...Him***." **It was all that was left and it was all that was needed. (Review: The discipline of worship (one thing); the destination of worship (that I may dwell in the house of the Lord).**

**The Duration of Worship** (**Psalm 27:4c … all the days of my life).** David could think of nothing better than to spend the rest of his life dwelling in the very presence of God. **Worship is not a momentary experience. It is a life-long pursuit where we give all that we are to honor all that He is**. In **Psalm 34:1-3**, David provides for us a model of what this looks like:

- ***We worship God willingly*** (**I *WILL* bless the Lord** ...). Worship is a free-will offering to God!
- ***We worship God continually*** (… ***AT ALL TIMES***_...). There is never an inappropriate time for worship. Jehoshaphat led the Israelites in worship as they were about to engage in battle (**See 2 Chronicles 20:18-21**).
- ***We worship God personally*** (***MY SOUL* shall make its boast in the Lord**...). No one else can do your worshipping for you.
- ***We worship God corporately*** (***O MAGNIFY THE LORD WITH ME AND LET US EXALT HIS NAME TOGETHER***.) We are meant to worship God with others. **(Review: The discipline of worship (one thing); the destination of worship (that I may dwell in the house of the Lord); the duration of worship (all the days of my life).**

**The Desire of Worship** (**Psalm 27:4d … TO GAZE UPON THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD AND TO SEEK HIM IN HIS TEMPLE)**. David had two desires in worship: TO BOTH SEE AND SEEK THE LORD.

A. ***To see the beauty of the Lord***. The Hebrew, "to behold the beauty of the Lord," is a saying expressing ***the absolute delight which gazing continually at God's glory brings to us***. It is beyond words and must be experienced to be understood.
B. ***To seek Him in His temple***. The idea is to actively and passionately pursue God that we might know Him better and enjoy Him more. It is the desire described in **Psalm 42:1 -- As the deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you, O God**.

**Conclusion: These two desires, that we could see His beauty and increasingly seek Him out, are meant to have a profound impact on the life of a believer**. They are meant to produce a decreasing satisfaction with the things of the world and insatiable thirst for the presence of God. In his book, ***Sahara Unveiled***, ***William Langewiesche*** tells the story of an Algerian named **Lag Lag** and a companion whose truck broke down while crossing the desert. They nearly died during the three weeks they waited before being rescued. As their bodies became dehydrated, they found that they were willing to drink anything in the hopes of quenching their terrible thirst. The sun forced them under the truck into the shade where they dug a shallow trench. Day after day, they lay there. They had food, but did not eat, fearing it would intensify their thirst. Dehydration, not starvation, kills wanderers in the desert. How did they manage to survive? They drank rusty radiator water, which is, in effect, a poison. What makes a man drink water mixed with antifreeze and residue from the engine? The answer is simple: The overwhelming desire to live. **What drives Christians to seek out God in His temple and to see His beauty? The answer is just as simple: The unquenchable desire to know God and see Him in all His glory.**