

If you knew Lauren and me and but have not met our children, it would not take you long to figure out which ones were ours out of a crowd. There are certain family traits that we just possess. Now there are variances with all three of my children. My 8-year-old, my 5-year-old and my 2-year-old have different behavioral patterns and they respond differently to discipline, but they have a lot of things in common. All of them are taller than they should be at their age. I'm right at 6'5" and Lauren is right at 5'7", and so our children are tall. Our youngest is a monster. She's like in the 75th percentile for 3-year-olds, but she just turned 2. She eats normal 2-year-olds for breakfast. She is an absolute beast. None of the three possess an "inside voice." They are loud and overly-confident to the point of broken bones and relationships with strangers we have yet to meet. My 8-year-old has literally introduced us to people in the neighborhood at Starbucks. They are all unbelievably hard-headed, all three of them. They refuse to learn the easy way. Maybe you got blessed with one of those, but we have not been blessed with any of those. . . I believe much to my mother's delight. So there are family traits, there are things about which you can go, "Yeah, that's a Chandler kid. That's what the Chandlers do," despite the fact that there are variances. Well in the Romans 8, the Bible begins to unpack how salvation works and then why salvation happens. In Romans 8:29 what God does in His saving works is to conform us to the image of His Son, which means God's work in you and in me is about conforming us to look like and reflect God's glory most perfectly as we see in the Son. So God is shaping and molding all of us. Some of that shaping and molding is pleasant, and some of it is not. But all of it is to conform us to the image of His Son.

Now, John 4 is a spectacular chapter in the Bible around worship. Jesus is teaching and revealing things about worship in John 4. As we begin to read this story, the first thing I want to point out is barriers toward worship. You saw in Rebekah Finfrock's testimony. You heard her say that there was just this barrier and how she was unable to enter into worship. Although she knew her heart should have affection for the Lord, she didn't know that she believed what we were singing about. She didn't know that she believed what we were teaching, despite the fact that she would say, "I was a believer in Christ." So there are barriers to worship. So we're going to walk through what those barriers are in the text, then we'll get to Jesus teaching what worship should and then I want to point to a couple of other things. We're going to start in the last sentence of John 4:6. Now Jesus is walking through Samaria and He gets tired, stops and sits down next to the well. The story is interesting because, although His disciples had been walking with Him, He tells His disciples to go on into town and get lunch. He sits down next to the well, and you're going to see how this plays out. So let's look at the text. "It was about the sixth hour." That's noon. It's high noon. "A woman from Samaria came to draw water." Now we already need to stop because something is off culturally here. This has been one of the hottest summers in recent memory, correct? I don't know about how it has lined up historically, but have you seen people out between noon and 3:00 riding bikes or jogging? What's your initial thought? "That's crazy." You almost want them to die just to show them how dumb that is. "When you keel over, that's on you. It's 113°F outside." But when you see people running at night or in the morning, you're like, "Yeah. Absolutely." Now when winter comes, that whole line of thinking is going to reverse. If they're running in the middle of the day, you're like, "Yeah, why wouldn't you run right now? It's perfect weather for running." If you see them at night, you're like, "That fool is going to get run over." And it switches. The reason I'm pointing this out is because women in the 1st century don't go to the well at noon. They go early in the morning before anything else is really happening. Drawing water, even to this day, in third world countries is the first thing you do when you get up in the morning. It becomes the tea, it becomes how you wash up, it becomes what you cook with. Drawing water occurred sometimes before the sun even came up. But for whatever reason, this woman is there at noon. No one else is there except Jesus by the side of the well.

And let's look what happens next. "Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)" To call the relationship between the Jews and Samaritans one of racial tension would be an understatement. The Jews despised the Samaritans and considered them to be half-breed betrayers of their own race. It makes anything that we know in our history to be a blip on the screen compared to the immense hatred that these two had for one another, primarily on the Jewish side of things. In fact, Jews would thank God in the temple that they weren't born a Samaritan and then ask God not to save the Samaritans. How jacked up are you if you're like, "Save me, but just don't save those people." There is a level of hatred here that you would have to dig deep in history to find. "Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock." Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life." Now look at her response. "The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water." So in this story, in this historical event, this woman comes out at noon to the well, Jesus says, "Give Me water," and she says, "Why would You talk to me? I am a Samaritan. There are racial issues between the two of us. I am a woman; you are a man. There are social-cultural rules here that keep us from interacting with one another. Why would You ask me to get you a drink?" Jesus' response is, "If you knew who was asking you, you would ask Me." "Well how are You going to get me anything to drink? You don't even have a cup." That's her response. So then He begins to outline the difference between drinking from a well that satisfies for a moment and drinking from a well that satisfies forever. He draws this sharp contrast between the two. So her question is, "Are You greater than Jacob? Are You too good for this well? Jacob and his sons drank from this well. Aren't You a Jew? The livestock drank from this well. All that Israel was built upon drank from this well. Are You better than that?" And He points to the flaw in the well. "It doesn't work long-term. It only works for a moment, and then you have to come back. But My well satisfies forever."

So here's your first barrier of worship. You're drinking from the wrong well. Let me highlight three wells in our culture that I believe we go to over and over again, despite the fact that they satisfy for a moment only to lead us thirsting for more. And then I'll go over why some of those are unbelievably dangerous in the times in which we live. Here's the first well – money and comfort. It's not just money, because very few people hoard money just for money's sake. It's money AND comfort. So this is a well that we go to. And I want to be really honest here. New stuff is nice. It's almost intoxicating, isn't it? There is an emotive response to trinkets and toys. You can get almost a high from new stuff. Now we're in a perilous situation because, in our day and age, what's new becomes old very, very quickly. Therefore, the high of what is new rarely even wears off before we replace it with something newer. So we go from trinket to toy to trinket to toy, from new thing to new thing and keep drawing from that well. It feels good for a second. Those new clothes, that new house, that new car, that new gun, whatever you collect just feels good for a second and makes everything settle for a moment. And if given too long, it will lose its power, and it will be time for something new. Apple has absolutely dialed into that and is owning. It's intoxicating, and most of us are inebriated with the stuff of future garage sales enough to not realize that we're drinking sand. The first well that so many of us go to over and over again is money and comfort.

The second well is relationships and sex. We are infatuated by those. In the same way that money and comfort are not intrinsically evil or wrong, relationships and sex aren't intrinsically evil or wrong. Everything gets off when you elevate them beyond what God created them for. C.S. Lewis had a great illustration. I'm going to take it and make it a bit more modern. Imagine that could all hop on a plane right now, fly to another country, go to its red light district and go into a seedy strip joint, if they rolled out a cart covered with a sheet right next to the pole, rolled the sheet back just a little bit to let you see just a slice of of bacon. And then they quickly cover it again. And then they lift the sheet a little more

and show you a burger and cover it up. And then they remove the sheet off of the entire cart to reveal a smorgasbord and we begin throwing ones at it. Wouldn't you think that something was wrong in that culture in how they viewed food. Wouldn't you think, "Hey, something is broken in how they look at burgers. It's just a burger." Wouldn't you be a little off? How strange is it that we have rolled relationships and sex to where we have? Now relationships and sex are gifts from God. They are beautiful gifts from God. He is the Author and Creator of those things, but when you elevate them beyond where they should be, you leave nothing for yourself but heartache and disappointment. Women, you will never find a man who completes you. Such is the brokenness of the human heart in need of a Savior, if you had a man who thought nothing but of you, how to romance you and how to love you well, if you came home every day to rose petals on the ground and six pack abs gleaming while he changed your kids diaper, you'd be like, "Gah, why does he keep doing this with the roses? And why doesn't he let me do anything? Do you think I'm an idiot? You don't think I can change a diaper?" You'll begin to fantasize about a guy with a gut who hated you. Because a man is not going to satisfy what has gone wrong in you. Only Jesus will do that. And guys, if you came home to a woman who was barely wearing anything but just a slab of meat after she has sequestered the kids and recorded all of the college games that week, I'm not saying that would be a great day, but I'm saying that over time you would begin to fantasize about a salad and about some other woman. Because your heart is broken. You need a Savior. She can't fix it.

So in the wisdom literature, you get these two stories that I think are so vitally important to us in 2011, which is why I believe God put them in the Bible, the timeless and inerrant Word of God that teaches to this day. In the book of Job, Job loses everything and finds out that God is enough, even if you lose everything. But in the book of Ecclesiastes, Solomon gets everything. And Solomon should be the alarm for 2011 American evangelicals, if not Americans in general. Because Solomon is screaming, "Hey, it doesn't work! I have 300 wives; it doesn't work! I've built all of them a house, I've built the Lord's temple, I've built my own mansion, I've planted forests, I've thrown parties so big that they were sung about and written about, I've owned ranches and hilltop estates, and it's meaningless. All of it is meaningless." And Solomon sounds the alarm to you and me who will probably never be Job or Solomon. You and I unfortunately are stuck between the two men trying to figure out what Solomon already knows, and most of us are never going to be wealthy enough and powerful enough to get to the end of the line. So you will always have something more to pursue, something new to try to get, some new hope that you're cranking up out of that well in the hopes that it will bring you life. And it's not going to work.

And then the third well we run to, I'll try to define in two ways. The third well is respect or success. We want approval, we want acceptance, we want other people to look at us and really be glad at what they see. We want to be pointed to as the example. We want to be shown respect. We feel like we are entitled to it. We love that well. But that little pat on the back from man is fleeting. The same guy who pats you on the back will turn around and stab you in it. And then what more affirmation do you need than the cross of Jesus Christ? How silly is a man's "Good job, buddy" compared to the fact that God, knowing you, knowing your motivations, died on the cross for you. Because man can approve and accept you without any knowledge of your motives. You can have shady, sinful, wicked motives that lead you to do righteous acts in order to get the approval of man all the while with a wicked heart. God knows your wicked heart, and still Christ dies on the cross. Your approval is woven into the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross, not what men and women think about you. That's slavery. Not to mention that someone is always going to dislike you. If not, you're probably just a sell out. You're probably a spineless worm. In fact, doesn't Jesus even warn people, "Hey, be nervous if everyone loves you. They persecuted Me, and they persecuted the prophets. This is what happens when you make a stand. People get angry. Be prepared for that."

So these are the three wells that we go to. Basically where we exalt the name of Jesus, we only do that in order to make it appear that He's our goal when in reality what we want is something out of these wells and we believe that Jesus will get the rope up quicker. It's called idolatry. When Jesus is a means to some other end for you, you are an idolater. What

you really want and what your god really is is whatever that thing is you're pursuing that you think Jesus is going to help you get. And if He loves you, it's pretty easy to expose where your heart is. He just has to take from you that god that you're serving. And He only does that to the ones He loves. The passive wrath of God in Romans 1 is where He says, "Oh, that's what you want? That's what you think is going to make you happy? Go on. Go chase that." And then we go, "How dare God do anything like that." You did it. You chose. You said, "Forget You. I'll take Your stuff." And this is the first obstacle to worship – we're digging in the wrong wells.

Let's look at what comes next. Verse 16, "Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come here." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true." The woman said to him, "Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet." I love this interaction. Jesus now exposes the woman. The first barrier is she is digging in the wrong well. She's trying to get life out of the wrong well. Here comes the second barrier to worship. "Go get your husband." "Well I don't have a husband." "No, you don't. You've had five and the man you're now living with, you're exchanging sex for rent with. So what you have said is true. You don't have a husband." Now notice that there is no condemnation. He just simply spits the facts of her life out for her. The second barrier to worship is unrepentant, unconfessed sin. Do you know why she's out at the well at noon now? In this culture, adultery is a capital offense. Do you remember when they dragged the naked woman before Jesus, threw her at His feet and cited the Mosaic law? "The law says that we should stone her. She was caught in the act, guilty. What do You say?" Jesus bends down in the supreme act of coolness and just starts drawing in the dirt. I've done that a couple of times now when somebody asks me something. And then He says, "Let the one who is without sin to cast the first stone." And then from oldest to youngest, they drop the stones and walk away. It's a fascinating story. This woman is in shame, hiding from a culture that views her as unclean. And Jesus addresses it. He addresses her sin. "You're right. You don't have a husband. You've had five and the guy you're living with now isn't your man." Unrepentant, unconfessed sin will not separate you from the love of Christ in His salvation if you are regenerate, if you have been saved, but it will most definitely affect your ability to worship. It will most definitely affect your nearness to God, your awareness of the presence of God and your ability to hear and learn deeply from Him. And it doesn't have to be, "I've had five husbands and the guy I'm living with now isn't my husband." Did you hear Rebekah's confession to her group? "I have a hard time entering into worship. I don't know that I believe what we're singing." And that served as a catalyst to greater intimacy with the Lord and freedom in worship. There was a confession of sin. And what you and I have done that has killed our ability to worship freely is we have divided sin up into, "Don't kill anybody. . . don't lie. . ." But Rebekah's confession wasn't that she had lied, stolen or that she had abused something or someone. Her confession was, "Man, my heart wasn't inflamed with a love for the Lord. So when we sing, I don't feel like I can with any real integrity." It's a simple heartfelt confession out of which sprung greater worship. With unconfessed, unrepentant sin in your life, worship will suffer. Why is this such a big deal? Because you were created to worship and without worshiping Jesus, you will be worshiping something, but whatever that something is will not be able to hold up under the weight of your expectations of it. So to repent and confess is to violently pursue our own joy and the glory of God. Again, we have covered this for the last three weeks.

There's one more barrier to worship, so let's keep reading. "'Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.'" Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.'" So here's the third barrier to worship. It's a simple one. Ignorance. You can't worship what you don't know, and unfortunately we are a culture that has been given permission to create god in our own minds and worship a god of our own creation. Most of us find the God of the Bible to be a bit too edgy for modern sensibilities. So we want to create, we want to pull back on the wrath stuff and God being angry toward sinners because that's just not going to fly in this day and age. Jesus needs better PR. So you're going to do that by giving Him an Extreme Makeover. We're going to make Him friendlier, make Him a bit whiter and give Him a happier disposition.

He's not going to flip over tables anymore, and He's not coming back with a tattoo on His leg, bringing the sword and filling the streets with blood. That's not Jesus now. Jesus is like a more masculine Tinker Bell. And people are really going to love that Jesus. Except if you follow mainline evangelicalism, how's that working out for us? All you have to do is look at mainline evangelicalism to watch the death of churches as they begin to give up and surrender aspects of the God of the Bible. "Ooh, that's too harsh. Let's give Jesus a makeover." But now you strip Him of His deity, you strip Him of His authority and you strip Him of His power. . .and then you wonder why people don't worship Him. The God of the Bible is scary. Yes, He is. He's beyond terrifying. The Bible tells us that, upon His return, men will cry out for mountains to fall on them and there won't be any mountains to fall on them. That's terror. This is the God of the Bible. So what has happened is we've been allowed to create in our own minds our version of Jesus that we worship. And worship always suffers when man is exalted and God is belittled. Worship explodes from this reality: you are a rebellious, wicked, sinner and God has loved you in Christ. There are no secrets from Him, and yet still He pursued and saved you. This woman doesn't have any secrets. Secrecy is a myth. God knows and yet still has extended mercy and grace in the cross. It's at that place that worship can explode. If you remove the fact that you're a sinner, if you elevate yourself to some other place, if you exalt yourself and go, "I'm not really that bad. I'm kind of a good man/woman," then worship is going to suffer. And if you belittle God by stripping away aspects of His power, then worship is going to suffer. Worship flourishes when you know who you are, you know who He is, you see how massive that gap is and see how Jesus filled it. That's where worship explodes. So these are the three barriers to worship in this text. If you're unable to enter in and worship, I'd put some cash down that it's in one of those three areas.

Let's keep reading. He's now going to tell us what worship is. Verse 23, "But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." God is seeking worshipers with inflamed hearts and informed minds, and those two feed off of one another. So what I've learned about people is they tend to have dispositions. Some of you are more intellectual, so you want a theological grid that lines out how God works, where you fit and how that should all flow. You're not prone to emotions and you're not prone to give yourself over to affections. You tend to look at affections as though they're the enemy. "What we just need is truth, and if we could just listen to the truth and buy into the truth, then we can get safely home." And then other people are like, "Are you kidding me? Why do you read so much? We should just sing, pray, hold hands and cry and laugh. And that's what we should be doing. That is cold and dead. You always want to talk about doctrine. That's the problem. If we could just love Jesus with our hearts. God has never just asked me to be a theologian." Everybody is a theologian. Just some of us are heretics. Everybody has an idea about who God is and how God works. Some of us are just wrong. In the same way God has never asked you to be a brainiac, He hasn't asked you to be a moron either. "Just guess. I mean, I gave you the Bible so you could search around in there, but you have just such a happy heart. Don't worry about it. You'll figure it out. It will be fine." No, we worship in spirit and in truth. We have an informed mind through the revealed Word of God and the Spirit's presence in our lives inflames the heart. And the inflamed heart creates the energy for the growing mind. Our intellect is not at odds with our faith. Our faith is not at odds with our intellect. All truth is our truth because we are of Christ and Christ is of God.

Let's keep reading. Verse 25, "The woman said to him, 'I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.'" Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am he.'" So He just unpacks, "Here are the barriers to worship. Here's how you're going to worship." And her response is just, "Well when the Messiah is coming, He's going to sort all this out." And He's like, "That's what just happened. I just sorted it out. I just figured it all out for us." Now look at her response. "Just then his disciples came back. They marveled that he was talking with a woman, but no one said, 'What do you seek?' or, 'Why are you talking with her?'" So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" They went out of the town and were coming to him." Do you see the immediate change in her? Here she has been avoiding the hostilities

of the men and women in town. She has been avoiding their aggression towards her and their judgment of her. She meets Jesus and He exposes her sin in a compassionate, forgiving way. And now she's reborn. Now she's running into town going, "You've got to come hear this guy. You've got to come let Him tell you what He told me. He told me everything about myself. You've got to come check this out." Do you see already the state of her heart is beginning to shift?

Let's keep going. "Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, saying, "Rabbi, eat." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Has anyone brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work." Just as the woman at the well didn't quite get what was going on and needed Jesus to correct for her that she's digging in the wrong well, that she had some sin that needed to be confessed and repented of and that she had some ignorance that needed clearing up, the disciples are talking about a sandwich and He's going, "There are bigger things going on here than lunch, bro." And they were tasked with getting the lunch. So if you're a churchman, let me just unpack this quickly. Don't let the task overtake the task giver. We do the task because of the task giver, because we love the task giver, not for the task's sake. So you have in this moment a spectacular unpacking of the gospel to people who already know the gospel. So it's as the woman with five husbands who is ignorant of what God is about in the universe needs the gospel, the men who are following Jesus need the gospel. It's as though, even in this, Jesus is beginning to weave into the fabric of His future church that the gospel doesn't just save you but it sustains you and carries you all the way home.

And then I want you to notice this last little piece. Verse 39, "Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." So when the Samaritans came to him, they asked him to stay with them, and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world.'" Now, when I said last week that discipleship wasn't a silver bullet, that it wasn't just one stream but multiple streams, that it was overlapping circles where there are multiple pieces that make up discipleship, you're seeing it happen in this text. You've got worship, you've got community when she goes back into the town, you've service where she says, "Come and listen. Come out with me. Let me show you. Let me introduce you to this man," and you've got multiplication where you've got men and women being added to the kingdom through the testimony and worship of a woman with five husbands and is currently living with one who is not, a woman who was ignorant of the things of God until Jesus proclaimed the kingdom. You see in here all the things that we believe are important for discipleship overlapping in one story of Christ teaching what worship is, what it's not and what its barriers are.

So let me end today with just this. Can you resonate with Finrock's story where you are struggling to enter in, where you are struggling to worship, where you open up the Bible and it's just words on a page? As we begin to sing the Word of God, as we begin to proclaim it, are you stuck? Let's talk just for a second about how worship look here at the Village. There are two pieces. One is organic where the organization doesn't do anything around it. So I bought last week Matt Redman's new record Ten Thousand Reasons. I've just been blaring that thing in my car and worshiping the Lord. I have rolled down my windows, had that hair dryer kind of hotness coming in and just got after the Lord. It was just me and the Lord. The Village didn't buy me the record. It is not in the membership covenant of the Village Church that I am to turn up loud music in my car and worship the Lord. That was just me. Almost every morning outside of Saturday and Sunday, Lauren and I get up at our dining room table to sit, read talk and pray. And she will go after my heart ruthlessly. She does not let me get away with answering some surface question. And I'm going to try to go after her heart. At night, before we go to bed, we gather around the Jesus Story Book Bible and read a chapter of it, and we do prayer requests. It has been the same prayers for about two years now. There are no new prayer requests. Reid has asked the same things, and Audrey has asked the same things. Now Norah is a bit too young, so she's in bed. We'll invite her in a little bit later. So we pray and then we sing, "Clap your hands, all ye people. Shout to the Lord with a voice of triumph. Clap

your hands, all ye people. Shout to the Lord with a voice of praise. Hosanna, Hosanna!" And then I take Reid to his bed, Lauren takes Audrey to her bed, I pray with Reid and Reid repeats after me a prayer about manhood. We pray that God would make him a man. We pray that God would enable him to be a hard worker and a sharp thinker. We pray that God would allow him to protect his mama, to protect his sisters and to follow God with his whole heart. I pray and he repeats after me. Then we thank God for giving him the most awesome daddy ever, and then I tickle him, we hug, say amen and it's a night. That's worship, and the Village doesn't drive that. My heart that has been made anew drives that. I can go on and on. I try to slowly eat my food and think about the fact that God did that, God made that. About once or twice a year, we all go out as a group of friends and we eat in ways that are outside of our tax bracket. We laugh a lot and tell stories. And I just want to be really dialed in on that night that this is a shadow of what is to come at the wedding supper of the Lamb, and it becomes worship. You should be worshiping in ways that don't have anything to do with the Village Church, outside of the fact that you're a part of the covenant community.

Then you have the Village Church as an organization. When you come in here on the weekends, here's what I want to promise you. All week, I am praying for you. Some of you I am praying for by name, and some of you I don't know. But I'm praying and asking God to move. I'm asking God to do what I know I can't. Now I know I can try to persuade, I know I can try to motivate, but there is nothing in me that can transform the heart of a man. The Holy Spirit has to do that. So I'm pleading and asking for that. I'm going to be a slave to the text, which means I'm going to say things that are going to make you find places that say it softer. I'm going to press harder than some people are comfortable with, and I'm going to do that because I can feel the crushing weight of my own accountability before the Lord. I'd rather stand in front of God and go, "I just thought You meant what You said. I didn't know there was some code to be broken. I just read it for what it said." If I'm a fundamentalist, I apologize and the blood of Christ will cover that. But I'd rather say that than, "Oh man, I thought You were kidding. You see, I thought what You meant was something else." I'd rather not have to take that posture. It means that we'll be, almost all of the time, going line by line through the Bible. It means we're going to sing and sing things that are rooted in truth. Have you noticed that our songs, regardless of campus, have accompanying Scriptures from which we get the lyrics? We're not putting those lines in because they rhyme. We're trying to proclaim the glory and goodness of God, and we're going to do that in our weekend services week in and week out. There's something spiritually profound about what happens when God's people gather to make much of Jesus. Twice in the last two years, I have had that taken from me for an extended season. The first was my surgery. The first time I came back to the gathering of this body was Christmas Eve. I sat in the very back corner and just wept almost uncontrollably the whole time. Part of it was I was hopped up on steroids and part of it was that I get irritable and frustrated when I can't be with the saints. And David said this. In Psalm 42 when he's in such despair, he's remembering the great assembly, he remembers leading them into worship, he remembers worshiping with the saints. This is a lot more than just getting together. Something is happening here. It's a shot of spiritual energy, spiritual steroids for the week that is to come and the week that we're coming from. And we're going to get together the first Wednesday night of every month, and we're going to humble ourselves before the Lord and say, "We can't. You can. Please help us." And that's an act of worship. We're going to create small group communities that you can do life at a deeper level with one another, and in that deeper level of living, you'll worship. And that's how we organize gospel-centered worship. Much of it will take place organically. What we will put our energy, time and effort into are groups, weekend services and elder led prayer.

But for today, are there barriers? Are you digging in the wrong well? Here's how you answer that question. What are you really after? When you lay in bed at night, what are you thinking about? What's that thing that you're chasing? What is it that if you got it, all of life would be better? Maybe you're in college and that's a degree. Maybe you're single and that's a spouse. Maybe that's a job that you want. Maybe it's a house that you want. What's that thing that you're really after? What well are you digging in? Or is your pursuit, is your desire to know Him, to worship Him and to make much of Him? If you're pulling up the bucket from the wrong well, it doesn't matter what's in it. Do you have unrepentant, unconfessed sin in your life? Then you have to know that the joy of worship isn't going to be with you. The joy of worship occurs when

you are honest about your shortcomings and get to get under the waterfall of God's grace. To know you're guilty and find out that you're forgiven is unbelievably powerful in regards to igniting the reason you exist – worship. Or maybe you're just ignorant. And I don't mean that cruelly. I've been to a lot of places that don't teach much on the nature and character of God. You heard it in Beck's story. "I knew that there was this moral thing that I was supposed to live up to and knew I couldn't. So all of a sudden there is shame because I can't be what I'm supposed to be. I've got shame on me now. So I've got to run from God, and I can't actually be known." No, you are known, you do fall short and God has extended grace to you in Christ so that He might be gloried in by saving what is broken. Can I draw your attention to the cross? "Well Matt, I'm a train wreck." Yeah, you are. Which is why the cross was so severe. Do you have barriers to worship? Might I push you to confess and repent. Maybe that involves having a conversation with somebody you know, maybe that involves you coming up and talking to one of our men and women here are here for just that, but I implore you to do business with the Spirit of God as you were created to worship. I want to encourage you to worship, but just worship rightly for your own joy. I'm asking you to quit drinking sand and drink water, water that will yield life.

Let's pray. "Father, I thank You for these men and women. Again, thank You for Your Word, how it presses on us, how it reveals to us. I pray that, where there are barriers to our worshipping you, You will kick those barriers down and that we might enjoy making much of You. Help us where we're digging in the wrong wells. Help us where we are walking in unrepentant sin. Reveal to us where we are ignorant. It's for Your beautiful name I pray. Amen."