**Recalibrate – Week 4 – Respond**

**Message Big Idea:** Change this in printed stuff Through worship we respond to God, ~~each other, and our world.~~

**Scripture:** James 1:22-25; John 14:27; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Ezekiel 47:1-12

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**Introduction: Awkward Responses**

Have you ever told a joke or a story, expecting an uproarious response, only to be met with crickets? Well, as a pastor – let me assure you, I am well acquainted with this feeling. It’s practically a part of the job description. ☺ And it isn’t just here…

I was expecting a “pastor story.”

I remember a few months into our (Ian) marriage, Katie and I were on a road trip and I dropped what, to this day I am convinced was one of the best, side-splitting jokes ever uttered by human lips. I mean, this joke was solid gold. But to my dismay, when I reached my big punch-line, I looked over to see Katie silently answering emails on her phone, unaffected.

So, I gathered myself.

Cleared my throat.

Sat up straight in my seat.

And began telling the joke again, from the top.

Fifteen seconds in, without looking up from her phone, my wife lovingly stopped me and said, “I heard you the first time. It just wasn’t funny.”

You know, looking back, she was probably right.

But responses are important, aren’t they? In fact, one could argue they’re absolutely key to social interactions. Without responses, we are often left feeling awkward, out of sorts.

**Series Recap**

Today we wrap up our series called, “Recalibrate” – a series all about how worship recalibrates our hearts, our entire lives with God. We need this recalibration. As we go through the crazy twists and turns of our days, we all can drift off course spiritually. Bullet list. We lose perspective. We forget the truths we know. We wander from God. We end up in places we never intended to be. We need something to recalibrate us and point us in the right direction. Worship is that something.

Throughout this series, we’ve been talking about it means to truly worship, not just with our Sunday mornings, but our entire lives.

* We’ve talked about **Remembering**. We learned that worship helps us *remember* who God is and who we are. When we come together we trust God with our distractions, confess where we’ve gone off course, and remember what God has done and continues to do in and through us.
* We’ve talked about **Receiving** - how worship is a posture, not of *taking*, but *receiving* from God. God loves to give good gifts to his children, and he always has something for us to receive when we gather together. It may come through the teaching, a line in a song, a word of encouragement from a friend. This makes worship seem different than receiving (not inclusive) Worship opens up our hearts to receive Jesus and his truth for our lives.

Yet worship is incomplete, it’s deficient without a response of some kind. So what does it really mean to *respond* to God in worship?

**Responding in Worship**

To answer the question of what it means to respond to God in worship I think it’s important for us to begin by defining what worship is. If you look in a standard dictionary you’ll find this definition:

*“Adoration or devotion shown toward a person or a principle.”*

Using this because it’s normally not a good idea to use dictionary definitions. And I’ve got to tell you… I actually like that definition.

Now devotion is a word that most of us are familiar with:

* Devotion to family
* Devotion to a job
* Devotion to the Bears ☺

Ok, that last one is probably closer to *longsuffering*…

But at some level most of us understand the concept of being devoted to something or someone.

But adoration, on the other hand, isn’t a word we use often in our normal conversations with each other… I guess with the occasional *“I adore dark chocolate”*… and so I think it’s important for us to consider this word, especially when it comes to worshipping God.

The synonyms for the word adoration are rich with meaning:

* Reverence
* Exaltation
* Glorification
* Passion

So you see, this word means so much more than how you *feel* about your dessert. If worship means approaching God with a sense of “adoration”… that means we come to God with the desire and expectation to glorify and exalt him, filled with reverence and passion, with all of our being… everything we are.

This feels clunky…maybe we don’t need it. Does that make you think a little differently about worship? Or does it make you appreciate with just a little more clarity what this response might look like? I know it does for me. Instead: Yet oftentimes when I come to this place those words don’t describe how I respond… make this a personal moment out of the didactic moment.

I’ve heard worship described as the *“act of pouring oneself out to God.”* And while that concept might seem strange to most of us… I actually think it’s pretty accurate. If you stop and think about it, whether we realize it or not, we’re constantly pouring ourselves out to something. ~~in worship~~. Should the “if” and “when”…

I got confused here. Repeating “pouring out” too much. Now this kind of *“pouring out”* probably looks different for each of us and most of the time has nothing to do with God… but every one of us continually “pours ourselves out” to something. Sometimes we pour ourselves out for:

* A **person** that we love and cherish and so we’re constantly giving ourselves… pouring ourselves out for that person and the relationship we have.
* Sometimes we pour ourselves out for a **cause** that we care about and are devoted to.
* We pour ourselves out for an **experience** that we’ve been chasing after.
* Maybe we find ourselves, more times than we wish, pouring ourselves out for an **achievement**… either at work or at home.
* Or maybe it’s simply **status** that, time and again, we pour ourselves out to attain.

Listen, worship is not an **“if”**… it’s a **“when.”** We all worship… we all pour ourselves out for something. And as followers of Jesus it’s important for us to work together to direct the focus of our worship on God. You see when we gather as a community, not only do we remember and receive, we also have an opportunity to respond... to pour out our adoration and devotion towards God.

Author Harold Best put it this way: Feels long…can we pare it down?

*“We were created continuously outpouring. Note that I did not say we were created to be continuous outpourers. Nor can I dare imply that we were created to worship. This would suggest that God is an incomplete person whose need for something outside himself (worship) completes his sense of himself. It might not even be safe to say that we were created for worship, ~~because the inference can be drawn that worship is a capacity that can be separated out and eventually relegated to one of several categories of being~~. I believe it is strategically important, therefore, to say that we were created continuously outpouring—we were created in that condition, at that instant, imago Dei.*”

Now “imago Dei” simply means the “image of God.” And what Best is saying here is since God is a loving and giving God, and humankind is made in God’s image, then that means we, too, are meant to be constantly giving… pouring ourselves out in worship to God. You see that is our response to God.

**Respond Experiences**

Rather than just talking about *“responding,”* I think it’s a good idea to actually practice it. Sometimes a conversation about worship, about responding to God, can start to feel ethereal… like it’s out there somewhere… and so I want to make sure we make it super personal today. I’d love for us all to experience this outpouring together.

*(In this section, we’ll work with our Arts Directors to craft an experience for each subsequent point.)*

Most of these experiences should feel familiar to most of us, especially if we’ve been around COMMUNITY for a while.

So I want to begin with the practice of **Praise**. Through praise, we respond by verbally proclaiming praise to God. Typically we do this by singing God’s praises. We praise him for his person, his character, and his power. Even though some of us might not be professional singers, it’s important for us to collectively lift our voices to God and together praise him for who he is.

EXPERIENCE

Next I’d love for us to respond to God through the practice of **Gratitude**. This means that we simply express thanks to God for what he’s done in our lives and in our world. Together we worship God and respond to him by articulating all the ways we’re grateful for God’s presence and work in our lives.

EXPERIENCE

Lastly, I’d like us to all respond to God through the practice of **Generosity**. We respond by giving back to God a part of what he’s already blessed us with. This is something that we practice together every week to be faithful to God’s call to be generous people… to live generous lives. So that other people might find their way back to God.

EXPERIENCE

Possibly move Communion into this moment…somewhere in these.

**Conclusion: A Charge**

**Could this end the service.**

I hope that was meaningful and that you were able to experience just a taste of what worship can be through those practices. But it’s important for us to realize that those aren’t the only ways to worship God… to pour ourselves out to our Creator. Worship should be part of everything that makes us who we are.

You know sometimes it’s easy for us to begin to think that worship just happens in here. It’s easy to convince ourselves that worship is 1 hour every Sunday morning. The problem is that nothing could be further from the truth! We’re not meant to relegate our “worship” of God to a single time and place each week… instead our lives should be defined by worship.

Remember, “*we were created continuously outpouring…”* that means worship doesn’t just happen in here… we’re also meant to respond God, through worship, “out there.” And when we go “out there” - we pour ourselves out to God, and then we come back together here next week to recalibrate again. That’s the rhythm God built us for.

The Apostle Paul even challenges us to live a life of worship. In his letter to the Colossians he says,

“Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. Break…Paul didn’t stop there. He wasn’t just talking about what we do “in here”

And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him... ~~Do we need this part? not for human masters, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.”~~ (Colossians 3:16-17, 23-24)

This means that responding to God is a “whole life” kind of thing. With everything we have, in everything we do… we’re called to respond to God with our adoration and devotion, pouring ourselves out to God.

Pray with me.

**Communion**

*(The idea is that the service would close with Communion)*

To close the service today we want to take one more opportunity to respond to God worship God… this time through Communion. Communion is a chance each and every week to pause from the business and hectic pace of life and remember Jesus. It’s a chance for us to focus in on the most important moment in human history: the death and resurrection of our Lord and Savior. Jesus’ sacrifice brought us peace with God and brought us in to God’s family.

The bread represents Jesus body that was broken for us and the juice represents his blood that was shed to take away our sins. In a moment I’m going to invite you to come down the center aisle to these tables where those symbols are placed. I invite you to take the bread and dip it in the juice and take communion. As you do, let this be another moment of worship. Focus on God, pour yourself out to him, and praise him for the amazing grace he’s shown us all.

Let’s receive Communion together now.