

February 8, 2026 - 2 Samuel 6:1-23 - "According to the Word of the Lord: Anger - Joy, Presence of God"

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[0 : 00] Today our scripture is from 6th chapter of 2 Samuel. David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, thirty thousand.

! And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baal Judah! to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, who sits enthroned on the cherubim.

And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab, which was on the hill. And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart with the ark of God, and Ahio went before the ark.

And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals. And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hand to the ark of God and took hold of it, for the oxen stumbled.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah, and God struck him down there because of his error. And he died there beside the ark of God. And David was angry because the Lord had broken out against Uzzah, and that place is called Perez Uzzah to this day.

[1 : 18] And David was afraid of the Lord that day, and he said, How can the ark of the Lord come to me? So David was not willing to take the ark of the Lord into the city of David.

But David took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite three months. And the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all his household.

And it was told King David, The Lord has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and all that belongs to him because of the ark of God. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David with rejoicing.

And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fattened animal. And David danced before the Lord with all his might.

And David was wearing a linen ephod. So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn. As the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michael, the daughter of Saul, looked out of the window and saw King David leaping and dancing before the Lord, and she despised him in her heart.

[2 : 36] And they brought in the ark of the Lord and set it in its place inside the tent that David had pitched for it. And David offered burnt offerings and peace offerings before the Lord.

And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts and distributed among all the people the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake of bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one.

Then all the people departed, each to his house. And David returned to bless his household. But Michael, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet David and said, How the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants, female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself.

And David said to Michael, It was before the Lord who chose me above your father and above all his house to appoint me as prince over Israel, the people of the Lord, and I will celebrate before the Lord.

I will make myself yet more contemptible than this, and I will be abased in your eyes. But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor.

[4 : 00] And Michael, the daughter of Saul, had no child to the day of her death. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. All right.

Good morning, church. How are we doing today? Yeah, let's go. For those of you that don't know me, my name is Carmen Arroyo. I'm one of the pastors here. And it is a joy to open up the word of the Lord with you this morning.

And as we begin, I want us to go through a few questions that really don't live in theory, are not ideological, but they live where we actually hurt.

I want us to think about in the fact if we've ever actually been angry before. Very angry. Angry to even people that you love.

Maybe it's your child, your spouse, your friend, your neighbor, your coworker. All this anger that wells up into you and something just flares inside of you.

[5 : 07] I want us to also think about if we've ever been crushed by something we couldn't control. Something that didn't go the way that it should.

We see these things happening in the news today. We see the innocence of children being killed, countries at war, things being slaughtered, and pain everywhere.

And we see them, and we look at them, and we have to ask why. And sometimes it swells so much up more than just asking why to the people involved.

We ask why to God. Now, I'm not talking about the kind of polished religious answer of, oh, well, it's because of this or because of that type of faith.

I'm talking about the anger when you have the raw moments where your heart says, Lord, why would you allow this? Why now? And that's where today's text meets us.

[6 : 19] Because here in 2 Samuel 6, God is near, but he's never near on our terms. And joy in his presence comes only by approaching him according to the word of the Lord.

And so we'll be walking through this chapter in three sections, and we'll see how God has turned presumption into obedience and fear into reverent joy.

And I've titled this sermon According to the word of the Lord, From Anger to Joy in the Presence of God. Let's open in prayer. Father God, I pray and I thank you for everything that you continue to provide for us, providing the way, Father, and all that we are able to do to glorify you.

I pray today, Father, as we look into your word that our ears are opened, our hearts are softened, and that we're able to listen, obey, and glorify you.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. So, let us begin where the story begins. It's a sincere celebration, attempt to bring God back to the presence of Israel, right?

[7 : 38] And in this, we get the shocking reminder of how God is holy. And so, as we look in the section one, I've titled Holy Anger, Human Anger, and Fear of the Lord.

We'll be diving into 2 Samuel 6, verses 1 through 10. Let us go ahead and read verse 1. David again gathered all the chosen men of Israel, 30,000.

That opening verse is a far cry from where David was when he was running away from Saul in 1 Samuel, where he only had about 400 men. Now, that's 30,000 people. It's from all the 12 tribes of Judah, or of Israel, and they're meeting all in one place.

This is a moment that we've been seeing since the last few weeks where we've seen David's trajectory go from outlaw to king, where he's been able to be anointed king.

He's the feeding of the Philistines, and we see this in this moment of national joy and unity. It's a very big occasion.

[8 : 41] And so, verse 2, And David arose and went with all the people who were with him from Baal Judah to bring up from there the ark of God, which is called by the name of the Lord of hosts, who sits enthroned on the cherubim.

So, here we have David, like I said, the 12 tribes of Israel, gathering them together to bring back the ark of God. It's the presence of God back from where it was left in 1 Samuel within their midst.

And now, I do want to take a quick moment to kind of talk about what this ark of God is. And it wasn't this lucky charm or it wasn't this religious prop, and it was, according to the word of the Lord, the covenant sign that the Holy Lord dwelt amongst his people.

And it was centered was the mercy seat where atoning blood was offered. And its origin goes all the way back to Moses at Mount Sinai, and it was designed for mobility, where it was pretty much a four foot by two and a half foot by two and a half foot rectangle box made of wood and plated in gold.

It had holes in it where posts were also made out of wood and plated in gold where Levitical priests had to carry it. And it was mobile and went wherever the Israelites went.

[9 : 56] And it was center factor in a lot of the Holy War narrative. And the thing is, though, church, is that the Israelites ended up abusing this ark.

They ended up treating it as an object to bring about glory to themselves and winds in the battlefield. And instead of doing that, what they were commanded to do, our God allowed them to allow the ark to be captured by the Philistines.

And so, we saw that in 1 Samuel. But even when the ark was in the enemy hands, the ark was no tame thing. It was transported on a new cart to the Philistine cities where the hand of the Lord magnified His glory and smashed their gods and then also sent plagues and death to all the Philistines, all of the Gentiles that were looking and treating this thing incorrectly.

So, the thing is, is that eventually the Philistines were like, we've had enough of this. Send it back to the Israelites. We're full of plagues. We have tumors. We have death.

Just get out of here. And so, after that, the word of the Lord says that the ark was taken to Kariath-Jerim where it remained in the house of Abinadab largely neglected until the days of David.

[11 : 20] So, they put the ark on a cart with two cows and they sent it off and it went out back to the Israelites. So, quite the journey, isn't it? Kind of like, where in the world is the ark?

But it leads us exactly to where we are today. And so, let's read in verses 3 through 5. And they carried the ark of God on a new cart and brought it out of the house of Abinadab which was on the hill.

And Uzzah and Ahio, the sons of Abinadab, were driving the new cart with the ark of God and Ahio went before the ark. And David and all the house of Israel were celebrating before the Lord with songs and lyres and harps and tambourines and castanets and cymbals.

And so, what we see here, church, is this great, grandiose scene. You can feel the electricity in the air. Let's imagine for a moment that we have, like I said, all the 30,000 people were called to this specific spot to bring about the ark back to Jerusalem.

and I would like for us to imagine for a second to focus in on Abinadab and his sons. And I want to imagine them sitting around the kitchen table and they're eating bread or whatever they might be eating and the thing is is that Abinadab is like, all right, guys, my boys, we have the new king, we have all these people here, we're going to bring the ark back to Jerusalem.

[12:53] It's a great honor. Let's go. And so then boys are probably also as equally excited but they may not be as excited to take this very heavy ark plated gold 10 plus miles from their house to Jerusalem.

So, they're probably talking like, there has to be another way to do this. And then another one was like, I have an idea. Let's put the ark on a cart.

That'll be easy. We can make the cart with all the bells and whistles, something perfect for a king and something that won't break our backs in the process. And if you guys are thinking, like, wait a second, didn't Carmen just talk about the Philistines and a new cart?

It means you're paying attention. That's good. You should know that. So, the day of the procession arrives, 30,000 men from all over Israel, commoners and commanders, generals to priests, peasants to royalty, they're all there.

And the music is filling the air. Victory is fresh from the Philistines. The king is leading and now the ark of God is coming back home to Jerusalem. They line up, they move out.

[14:10] Ohio is guiding the new cart up front and Uzzah is following them in the rear. And as they march, they celebrate before the Lord with all of their might. Can you picture it, church?

Onwards to verse 6 through 7. No? Is that old? Am I not allowed to do that anymore? And when they came to the threshing floor of Nacon, Uzzah put out his hands to the ark of God and took hold of it for the oxen stumbled.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Uzzah and God struck him down there because of this error and he died there besides the ark of God. And just like that, Uzzah reached out, touched the ark and fell under judgment.

The music stopped, the dancing stops, the cheers die in the air and one man is dead besides the ark. This may be shocking to you.

You may be asking yourself, why would God do something like that? He was just trying to help. Why does he have to die? But I want us to reflect on that question because most of us might have, when we first read this, asked that very same question.

[15:30] But the thing is, is that very same question is quite revealing because in this very instance, it is exposing our very instinct as well. This is exposing our instinct of we want, we want to steady the holiness with our own hands.

We want to approach God on our own terms. We want to manage him. We want to try to make him safe. Church, this is the sin of presumption.

Are you under the presumption that you can treat obedience like it's optional? Or that you can negotiate with God as if his presence was something like a contract?

God isn't here. This is my life. What I do behind my closed doors, God isn't around. I don't have to do certain things because the Bible says them to do.

I don't like that portion of the Bible, of the text. I'm going to ignore it. That's not my Jesus.

[16:46] This sin of presumption brings our methods, our shortcuts, our traditions, our self-made righteousness rather than coming to him according to his word.

And the shock that you feel when you read passages like this in his word is exactly the point. God cannot be tamed. Are you trying to tame him?

I want us to remember that the ark of God here is topped with the mercy seat and Uzzah was in the presence of God and received judgment instantly. Just like each and every single one of us will stand before him in judgment one day.

and his verdict will be perfectly just and according to the word of the Lord and will either receive eternal life or his wrath. You see, church, the issue is not God's presence.

It's approaching God on our own terms instead of his. let's read on verses 8 through 10 which read, come with me.

[17 : 54] And David was angry because the Lord had broken out against Uzzah and that place is called Perez-Uzzah to this day. And David was afraid of the Lord that day and he said, how can the ark of the Lord come to me?

So David was not willing to take the ark of the Lord into the city of David but David took it aside to the house of Obed-Edom the Gittite. David is angry, church.

I don't want us to just skip past this. David isn't some cold theologian standing over the corpse of Uzzah saying, well, yes, of course this is what holiness does.

He's a man, he's a king, he's a worshiper and what we see here in this heartbeat, in this celebration, this collapse into confusion, there's this grief and there's this rage that's within him.

Verse 8 says, David was angry because the Lord had broken out against Uzzah so he names the place Perez Uzzah that's breaking out against him because he can't unsee what he saw.

[19 : 07] Then verse 9, David was afraid of the Lord that day. His anger doesn't stay anger. We have to see this. It becomes fear. fear. Not the fear of a scary movie but the sobering fact that he is not in control.

This King David that had so many wins, so much success, he was the anointed one of God and what he thought he was doing was good and right and just turns out to be wrong and someone died because of it.

that he is dealing with a living God with holiness and he is not in control.

And David asked a question that sits underneath so many of our own disappointments in our lives. How can the ark of the Lord come to me? It's not a logistics question.

It's a heart question. It's a question behind how can I pray when I feel numb? It's a question behind how can I worship when I'm hurting?

[20 : 27] It's a question behind how can I trust God when I don't understand what he's doing? It's behind how can I draw near when I feel unworthy, when I feel confused, when I feel angry.

And so what does David do? It says in verse 10, he stops the procession and diverts the ark to the house of Obed-Edom, the Gittite. In other words, once God's holiness confronts him, David pauses.

He hesitates. He creates distance. Some of us know this move very well. When life wounds us and God feels heavy, we don't always run towards him.

Sometimes we back up. We keep him at arm's length. We still show up, but our heart is put in neutral. We do the things because we're meant to do them, but our heart isn't near.

But here's what we must not miss here, church, is that David's pause is not the end of the story.

[21 : 39] And it's not, and if we only stare at this judgment, at this portion of the text, we will misunderstand the heart of God in this passage. so that we don't interpret God by one single isolated incident.

We interpret him by his whole revelation, his holiness and his mercy, his justice and his generosity, his discipline and his fatherly love, his grace.

And Hebrews 12 reminds us that his discipline, although it is painful, it is purposeful. It's proof of sonship.

It's not abandonment. No good father would allow his son to continue acting certain ways without bringing him into discipline. And neither does our father in heaven.

And we may not know all the reasons for his hand, but we can know his heart because he has shown it in his word. So, yes, it is okay to feel the weight.

[22 : 51] It is okay to weep. It is okay to ask why, but it is not okay to let anger turn into accusation or disappointment become disbelief. We bring our anger to the Lord, not away.

We bring our questions to his word, not to our own assumptions. Because the answer to David's question, how can the ark of the Lord come to me, is not God needs to change or that holiness needs to be adjusted.

It's not that we need a better cart. It is we need to approach him as he commanded, according to the word of the Lord.

So we just saw how David learned holiness can't be handled casually. now let's see how God teaches him the difference between presumption and obedience.

As we turn to section two, I've titled it Reform, Repentance, Joy, according to the word of the Lord. We'll be going through verses 11 through 19.

[24 : 03] Let's read verse 11. And the ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom, the Gittite, three months, and the Lord blessed Obed-Edom and all of his household.

Church, this verse is doing a lot of work. Right? You may be looking at this verse, you're like, okay, David just shuffled it off to some guy. But what I want us to see here is that this Obed-Edom character, this Gittite, is often referred to as a Gentile, and yet, despite the fact that he is a Gentile, his blessings, God's blessings, are still overflowing into his home.

And what this is doing, church, is quietly foreshadowing what the promises and prophecies are made in Amos chapter 9 verses 11 through 12 when he raises up and restores David's fallen booth.

And these blessings of David's kingdom will extend beyond Israel to the nations. And I promise the early church would then later recognize in Acts. So it's interesting to see that this failure, this perceived failure by the world, and this removal of the ark from the procession and giving it to someone who brings it rightly into his home, this Gentile is able to not only receive the blessings, which aren't really dictated in his word right here, but it also then fuels the prophecy that has been completed.

It's a lot. And there's a lot of stuff going on. And this is where the things started to change for David because David heard about the blessing and he realizes something crucial, that God's presence isn't the problem that our approach is.

[25 : 50] And the question isn't how do we keep God away, but how do we come near rightly according to the word of the Lord? Now let's move on to the first part of verse 12 and reads, and it was told, King David the Lord has blessed the household of Obed-Edom and all the things belonging to him because of the ark of God.

Like I said, this changes everything, church. The way that David approached this initially versus the way that he's approaching it now is severely different.

And so David goes about it again, but not with the same casual confidence that he did the first time. This time, there is a holy caution. He's not trying to manage God, he's learning to come near to him the way that God has spoken him to come.

And before he even takes another step, I want us to go ahead and reference 1 Chronicles 15. And 1 Chronicles, or all the Chronicles, is very similar to how we view Acts with the New Testament.

It's a more detailed depiction of the things that are happening here in 2 Samuel. And what we see here, and what David is doing in 1 Chronicles 15 shows that he is doing something much more than what he did when he first started the first procession.

[27:13] He's summoning the priests and the Levites. He's pitching a tabernacle for the ark, or he's preparing a place for the ark. He's commanding them to consecrate themselves, these Levitical priests.

He appoints leaders as gatekeepers, and orders the singers and musicians, and he puts the whole procession under careful alignment because worship of a holy God is not impulsive or chaotic, but reverent, obedient, and ordered joy.

Let's look on to verse 12, the second half. So David went and brought up the ark of God from the house of Obed-Edom to the city of David with rejoicing.

Listen to that, rejoicing. David's fear does not become his permanent distance. He saw something happen terribly. He didn't understand why. He was angry. He was fearful. But then how?

He reproaches God according to his word, and he is rejoicing. And he's able to turn this, and God's able to move David from fear into joy, not by lowering his holiness, but by teaching him obedience.

[28:30] And this is where 1 Chronicles also helps us see this change, where Samuel, like I said, was narrating this attempt and the second attempt. The Chronicles gives us the catalyst.

And if we read in 1 Chronicles 15, verse 15, it reads, And the Levites carried the Ark of God on their shoulders with the poles, as Moses had commanded, according to the word of the Lord.

That's this whole correction in one sentence. Not fives, not convenience, not innovation, but not borrowed methods, but according to the word of the Lord.

So, what we see here is when God is approached in this way, holiness doesn't destroy joy. Holiness protects and purifies joy.

Now I want us to watch what happens as we move the procession through verses 13 through 15. And when those who bore the ark of the Lord had gone six steps, he sacrificed an ox and a fatted calf.

[29:40] This is humility. This is dependence. David's not saying we're going to just casually stroll in and move this ark of God. We're not going to stroll into holiness, into the presence of holiness.

The sacrifices aren't a way to calm down God either. They are an acknowledgement that God is holy and we need mercy and that he himself has provided a way for us to be drawn near to him.

And then comes the joy. And as we read everyone's favorite verse in this chapter, I don't know if you guys have ever heard the song, when the spirit of the Lord comes upon my heart I will dance.

Like, no, some people, okay, some people are, so anyway, verse 14, and David danced before the Lord with all of his might. And what we need to see here first is that everyone remembers the dancing.

Everyone loves to say, I dance like David. But you know what, in that very same hymn, not the one from the 1900s, 1996, but the one even before that, the original hymn, it was said, I will pray like David prayed, I will sing like David sang, and then I will dance like David danced.

[30 : 59] We can't forget what happened here first, church. There was reverence, and then rejoicing. Everyone wants to move forward to the dancing part.

Because we need to see that obedience doesn't extinguish joy. Obedience purifies it. And so David isn't performing for the crowd or creating this atmosphere.

He is worshiping before the Lord, this dancing with all of his might. And in verse 15 we read, So David and all the house of Israel brought up the ark of the Lord with shouting and with the sound of the horn.

This is reverent celebration, joy that befits his holiness. And we're going to skip ahead to verse 17, but don't worry, I'm not forgetting about verse 16.

We'll get back to her in a second. So, moving forward to verse 17. The ark arrives and offerings are made and something beautiful happens.

[32 : 07] I want us to see that worship doesn't hinder his emotions, David's emotions. What it ends up doing is it spills outward and it's a blessing towards other people. And as we read in verse 18, where did I?

I lost my spot. Wait a second, guys. I'm sorry. There we are. Verse 18, And when David had finished offering the burnt offerings and the peace offerings, he blessed the people in the name of the Lord of hosts.

And verse 19, he distributes food to everyone. All the people, the whole multitude of Israel, both men and women, a cake and a bread, a portion of meat, and a cake of raisins to each one.

Then all the people departed for their house. And you see what this right kind of worship delivers or produces church. That when we approach God according to his word, it doesn't create chaos.

It creates ordered joy. It doesn't end in a spectacle. It ends in a community that is strengthened. They become blessed. They are cared for and they are provided for.

[33 : 22] But I want us to see here, church, just like everyone else goes home, so too does David. And the ark doesn't just come into Jerusalem.

It comes into David's home as well. And when worship gets close, it doesn't only reveal God's holiness. It reveals what we truly love and what we truly feel.

Fear. And we'll see that in section three, which I've titled Worship Reveals the Heart. And we'll be going over verses 20 through 23.

Let's read verse 20. And David returned to bless his household. But Michal, the daughter of Saul, came out to meet David and said, how the king of Israel honored himself today, uncovering himself today before the eyes of his servants, female servants, as one of the vulgar fellows shamelessly uncovers himself.

So after a day of reverent joy, in the streets of Jerusalem, David walks into his house to a conflict.

[34 : 34] And that's not accidental because, church, worship just doesn't stay here. It follows us to our house, it follows us to our work, it follows us into the streets, it follows us to wherever we go.

people. And so what it does here is that it exposes what's happening in our own hearts and often what's happening in our very homes.

And remember verse 16 that we skipped. It was the ark of the Lord coming into the city and Michal, the daughter of Saul, looked out of her window and saw David leaping and dancing for the Lord and she despised him in her heart.

while the whole city was rejoicing at the nearness of God, there is someone watching the same worship and feeling something completely different.

Not joy, not reverence, but contempt. And why? Well, Michal doesn't say, stay quiet, she tells us.

[35 : 40] And she tells us her issue isn't that she's trying to protect the holiness of God. Her issue is optics. Her dignity, reputation, royal image.

And she says how the king honored himself today. I loved how you read it. It was perfect with the sarcasm and contempt in there.

But she says how the king honored himself today. And in her eyes, worship that looks undignified is shameful. That is humility is embarrassing. And church, I want us to notice a tragedy here with David when he comes home with the intention of blessing his household.

He's still carrying all of the joy, all of the reverent celebration that just happened. He's wanting his own home to taste what the city just tasted, the nearness of God, the goodness of God, and the blessing of God.

God. And yet he's met not with shared joy, but with sarcasm and contempt. Some of us in here know that pain very well.

[36 : 50] And you long for those in your own house, your spouse, your children, your family, your closest friends, to see the joy that is found in the Lord and in his word.

You long for them to know the freedom from sin, the peace that surpasses all understanding, the love that is freely given. And sometimes when you speak of the goodness of God, you are met with the same type of response.

Look at you. You're making a fool of yourself. I want us to listen to David's response in verses 21 through 22.

And David said to Michal, it was before the Lord who chose me above your father and above all his house to appoint me as prince over Israel and the people of the Lord and I will celebrate before the Lord.

I will make myself yet more contemptible than this and I will be abased in your eyes. But by the female servants of whom you have spoken, by them I shall be held in honor.

[38 : 00] I want us to see, church, that his defense is probably one of the most other important lines in this passage because his worship, it was before the Lord.

And this is the dividing line of not only this passage but most of our lives. And David anchors this worship in two things, God's choosing and God's worth.

He says, the Lord chose me, he appointed me over his people. He's saying that this isn't about me trying to look impressive. This is not performance.

This is not image management. This is about God's greatness. This is about God's mercy. This is about the presence of God amongst his people. And then David basically says, if you think that was low, I will go lower.

I'll make myself yet even more contemptible. I'll embarrass you even more. I will be a base in your eyes. Why? Because worship is not for the crowd.

[39 : 09] Worship is not some type of branding strategy to try to get your album out there or to get likes on Instagram or whatever they do. Worship is not a public relations campaign.

Worship is before the Lord. And here's this fork in the road that I was talking about. This passage sets in front of us. The fear of man versus the fear of the Lord. The fear of man says, what will people think of me?

The fear of the Lord says, what is God worthy of? The fear of man needs dignity. The fear of the Lord embraces humility. And we should pause here.

I want to make sure that I'm being very clear because some of you may be sitting here and you're thinking, well, I'm not expressive. Carmen, you're an extrovert.

It's easy for you to be loud. I know. However, there's a lot of introverts here and the thing is not how loud we are but the posture of our hearts.

[40 : 11] We can't look at the loudness of someone and look at someone who is more quiet and faithfully worshiping and think that there's something different.

so this is not the point. The point is not personality. The point is posture.

And what we see here is that Michael despises David's worship because it threatens her pride and her sense of image. And David embraces humility because it is God in the center.

And then we come to the sobering end in verse 23. And Michal, the daughter of Saul, had no child to the day of her death.

That's a hard verse and scripture doesn't treat it lightly and neither will we. The text doesn't tell us the exact method in which why Michal never conceived a child, whether or not David never went into her again or if God closed her womb.

[41 : 29] But it does give us the final note and I want us to let this be a warning for all of us that this chapter closes with barrenness as a sobering picture that when contempt for God or God centered worship takes root it does not produce life.

It withers it. And church here's the warning is that it's possible to be near the things of God to worship to be near worship to be near songs to be near sermons to be near church life and still have a heart that despises humble devotion.

It is possible to sit close enough to see it and yet be so captured by self and your own reputation! that we cannot rejoice when God is actually being honored. So the text has taken us on this huge journey of anger fear reform and joy.

And then it presses the deeper question that we seem that we want to answer today that if God is this holy and his word governs access where is the final and perfect way to draw near in church?

It's been the same answer even before Moses before Sinai before David the ark that in the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God that before creation before covenant signs before the covered gold before the mercy seat sprinkled with God there was the word eternal living and holy and in him was life and the life was the light of man that that means that the word of God is not simply this empty ink on a page it is not advice for people who already have it together it is life it is light and then we see the wonders of wonders happen the word became flesh and dwelt among us that God we read in the Old Testament came near and is not by lowering!

[43 : 43] His holiness but by making by taking on our own humanity He stepped into our frailty our sorrow our grief our confusion into the very world that makes us cry out why Lord why now because Jesus Christ is the word made flesh the commanded way of nearness he is not merely some messenger he is the word of the Lord he is the mercy seat the priest and the mediator God's own way of bringing sinners near and what that means for the darkness that you brought in here this morning or the darkness that you may feel in the future that light shines in the darkness and the darkness has not overcome it your darkness is real your pain is real your questions are real but so is

Christ and they cannot extinguish his light cancel his promise or pry you away from his hands praise God for Jesus Christ so Christian because the word has become flesh because God has come near in Jesus this is why we can still wrestle and we can still cling to hope we ask why Lord why would you allow this and why now I can't pretend to give you an answer to all the scars that you've had nor can anyone else we won't fully know on this side of glory can we look at the evidences of do we live in a fallen world yes does our father who loves his people discipline and sanctify yes and still sometimes those biblical truths don't feel big enough sometimes to hold the weight of what we're carrying so hear this you don't have to pretend you don't have to clean yourself up before you come you don't have to bring polite prayers to him when you are trying to hide your tears bring the weight bring the confusion bring the anger but bring it to him because the gospel doesn't teach you to stop feeling it teaches you where you should bring those feelings and you bring it to him you're not bringing it to some distant force you're bringing it to the word that has been made flesh to the one who took on grief our grief into his own body who stopped who stepped into suffering and walked through onto the other side and listen church

I want us to see this point is where joy is born not in pretending not in having all the answers not in controlling the outcome but knowing that the holy God who can break out in judgment has also broken out in grace in that very same moment that he broke out against Uzzah on the cross grace overflowed!

And abundantly for all those in him! And John says from his fullness we have received all received grace upon grace so your joy is not rooted in a pain free life your joy is rooted in a living Christ he lived without sin he bore wrath for sinners he died he rose and he reigns and he will return again so even if you limp like Jacob wrestling throughout the night Christian cling to Christ because your grip is not the foundation of your salvation his grip is and to you who are not in Christ I have simple questions of what do you do with your pain your anger your fear your guilt do you try to numb it with money with drugs with alcohol comfort convenience do you try to approach

God on your own terms by your own new cart do you decide for yourself what is good and what is evil and then live crushed underneath it my prayer is that you see your need and you come to Christ because there will be a judgment day and we all will bend the knee because this dependence on Jesus Christ isn't weakness it's the only way to life he is the only mediator the only safe way into the presence of God and so church God's presence isn't something that we can manage it's a gift that we receive according to the word of the Lord fulfilled in Jesus Christ the word made flesh soli deo gloria solus Christus for the glory of God alone and

[49 : 24] Christ alone let us pray