

# BELPRES CHURCH

## **Sermon: Worship Reform** Pastor Sergio Chavez

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Let us pray. Our Father, thank you so much for the God that you are, the God that continually loves us, the God that is the same today as it was yesterday, you will be tomorrow, Lord. Thank you for the blessings you are continually giving us even in this time of trouble, Lord. The breath in our lungs, a roof over our head, the clothes on our backs, and the food on our table, Lord. May you give us eyes to see and ears to hear for those who may be losing those things and how you will send us as saints to do your work, Lord. Thank you so much for loving us and your beautiful, and your glorious name, and together we all say it, amen.

I don't know how you can say amen online. You can just type it into the comment section there. Keep Ryan Beatty occupied. And for those of you don't know, Ryan Beatty is the one on here trying to, or maybe it's John Kim, I don't know who switched staff member, but you can keep him busy by putting a lot of comments.

Either way, when we think about worship, this is what we normally think about coming into a building, hanging out with some peeps, singing some songs, listening to scripture, may be listening through the sermon possibly. But that's the typical idea of worship, which is true. That is corporate worship, but that is not all of worship.

Worship happens all the time. The definition worship is to adore, to idolize, to esteem worthy reverence or homage that we worship all the time, more than just the time that we come into a building to worship. And we all worship something, we all idolize something. For me as a kid, the person who I idolized, the person who I worshiped was my bigger brother, because he was so cool. He was eight years older than I am, not he was, he is eight years old and I am, he's still with us, praise Lord.

My brother is eight years older than I am. So, when I was six he was 14. He had a bike, he could go wherever he wanted in the neighborhood. I could only be in front of the house because I was only six. I want to know what's in that block, but no, I couldn't go, but my brother could. He was so cool, he could go. When I was eight he was 16. He got his first job, which then he could buy his first car. Now he go anywhere in the world.

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It seem he could go and pick up his girlfriends and go out on dates and stuff. Man, I wanted to be like that. Now when I was 10 he was 18, and now he's graduated from high school. He gets to go to college, and he gets to go to places that all seem, I've never even thought of like clubs or whatever you can do when you're 18, and I just wanted to emulate, and I wanted to be like my brother one day.

He's the one who taught me how to tie a tie, how to wear suit, how to be fashionable. He's the one who taught me how to talk to girls. He's the one who taught me how to be cool. So, one day I said, "You know what? When I grow up, I'm going to be like my brother." And in some ways I have, I have a car and I have a bike. And if I just check in with my wife, I can go anywhere in the neighborhood, as long as she gives me the green light, I am out there man.

Keep the good, get rid of the bad. But we all worship something. For you it may be an athlete, it may be a movie star, it maybe a speaker that you connected with. Whatever it is, we all worship something. And what we're talking about today is what we do with that worship, and we need to be careful with who we worship. And we're still in the current sermon series of All In, and the tagline for that is how we become disciples, All In disciples versus church attenders.

A church attender is just somebody who walks in, checks off the mark that, "Hey, I did my church thing today. I can go back to my normal life." No, All In disciples means we worship all the time. Worship is one of the cornerstones of discipleship. And we're built for worship. If we go throughout scripture from Genesis to revelation, you will get example after example of how and when we worship God with our deeds, with our songs, with our bodies, with our offerings, with how we treat one another and et cetera, et cetera. You cannot go through scripture without bumping up against worship, because that's what God asks of us.

And today I want to talk about a particular story in the Bible, and that's of King Josiah, one of the Kings of Israel. But before we get to King Josiah, we got to lay down the groundwork of what's going on. 1 and 2 Kings is the account of all the Kings of Israel at that time, and unfortunately, most of them were not good Kings. They had really one job to perform and that was to remain faithful to God of Israel, to worship God. If they just did that, their kingdom or their reign would be good, but most of them didn't.

And 1 King starts off with King David, his handing off the kingdom over to a son, King Solomon, one of the wisest Kings of all of them, but King Solomon falls pretty quickly off the rails when he marries 700 wives. That's a lot of bikes, if we're using my brother's analogy, 700 wives. Now if you're with your kids, you can explain to them, how's that possible because I don't have an answer for you. I just want to hear you do it with your kids.

Although the 700 wives in it themselves was an issue in itself, even though he married them for political gain in order to bring peace to the land, it wasn't so much the marriage that was the issue, even though it was part of the issue. Really what it was is that with these 700 wives, the fact that they brought in idol worship and other religion, other gods introduced into the land and Solomon just let it happen. Now that was a problem, because his sole job was to worship God only. That was his one job. If he'd just read the 10 commandments, that was sitting in the temple that he ended up building, he would find out from the first four commandments, that what he was doing was wrong.

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We read on Exodus 23 through it, the first commandment, you shall have no other gods before me. Second one, you shall not make yourself a curving image, any wood idle or metal or stone or whatever, any shrine. You shall not take the name of the Lord your God name in vain, to respect God. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it Holy. Set aside a time for worship and if that isn't enough, for those of you who are at home, since you have all this extra time on your hands, you can go check out Deuteronomy 17, where there's a whole section of forbidden worship. King Solomon is breaking all this. And the danger here, is when introduce different idols into our lives, we have less and less room for God. Because we have to put our focus to keep these things up, and that starts to chip away and chip away at our time with God.

Now, it's pretty easy to find out if we have idols in our lives today. And I want to point out some things and I'm not, I don't want to dig the knife too deep, but if some of these things resonate with you, just reflect on a little bit. You might have some idol worship in your life if you can recite the 32 man roster of the Seahawks, but you can't name the 66 books of the Bible or even knew there were 66 books in the Bible, I think you might be in trouble.

Do you know the names of your favorite actors or your favorite characters in certain series or certain shows, but you can't even name the 12 disciples that followed Jesus. Do you know more about the football draft of the 2015, but you don't know the great disciple draft of 1833. One of those disciples had to get put on permanent IR. I'm not going to tell you how, you can go check it out on the Bible, but in that draft they gained two draft picks from that one person. Do you know more about the 10 bill of rights than you know about the 10 commandments? Or coming from an immigrant only because I've experienced this more than times I want to admit, do you not know either?

Are you more interested in your kids being accepted into fancy colleges than you are of them being accepted into the kingdom? Are you more concerned about the opinions of conservative or liberal talk show hosts or news anchors more than about the pastors who are trying to speak truth into your life through scripture? Do you know more of the names of yoga poses or dance moves or workout moves than you do the names of the spiritual gifts in the Bible? If you answered yes to some of these, you got some idols in your life, you're not alone. I got them too.

So we continue on 1 and 2 Kings, 1 and 2 Kings goes on King after King who continually worship other gods. And God sends prophet after prophet after prophet trying to pull them back to the one true God, but most of them don't listen. And it's not just the issue of having a graven image or a totem or a statue that worships. It's the religion, the worship that goes in paying homage to these things. All kinds of craziness comes with this and during that time, they introduce a bunch of stuff because they're no longer listening to God and they're listening to these idols or they're listening to these religions.

Some of these things are slavery, greed, the lust for power. People sold their bodies at the temple and it goes all the way till they have child sacrifices. All kinds of madness happens. These Kings introduced so many other religions that the people of God become lost. They lose their way. They don't even quite know how to worship God anymore. But as I said before, there was a few Kings who did listen to God and one of them, as I mentioned, is King Josiah.

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Now, for those of you in the audience on the comment section, I got a little contest for you. Whoever can answer first. We have set aside a lovely old tie from Pastor Dudley, who is willing to depart with, that if you can tell me, you got to be ready, whoever answers first, if you can tell me how old King Josiah was when he became King, you can get Dudley's tie. The studio audience can't participate. Sorry you all. You got to do it on comments, this is for all you at home. You wouldn't wear the tie anyways, Daniel, come on, don't be playing me.

But this is how 2 Kings 22:2 describes King Josiah, and he, King Josiah did what was right in the eyes of the Lord and walked in all the ways of David his father, and he did not turn aside to the right or to the left. King Josiah was going to focus on God solely. He was not going to turn to the right or to the left. It was just on God. And some of the things that he started doing when he was reigning in power, is he went to repair the temple because it was a little bit disheveled, and it was a bit neglected. And they had brought a bunch of other idols in there too. And while his workers are repairing the temple, they find the Torah, they find the word of God.

That's how bad it had gotten. They lost the word of God and they read the book to King Josiah and he tears his clothes in shame of what has become of God's people. He can't believe what he's hearing when he recognizes how far off the rails they have gone. And the thing that I love about Josiah is that here in scripture, when you read it, it says, he asked the priest to inquire the Lord about concerning the words that are in the book.

He was only focuses on God, and when he realized that maybe God's saying we should be doing something different. He doesn't run to a bunch of other people. He goes to God to ask him, "Is this true? Are we not doing what you asked of us?" In your life, when you're convicted, whether it's by a sermon or a song or a conversation, someone in some article and you're wondering, "Is God asking me to change some things in my life?" Go to your trusted people that you know of God, who you trust, deacons, elders or pastors, and ask them if maybe this is, check with them if God is calling you, and always check with scripture to find out if God is calling you somewhere else.

And so, once King Josiah recognizes the need to repentance, he then goes to the kingdom and he destroys all the idols and places of worship of these other gods. He cleanses the land of all false gods and idols and King Josiah is ruthless about it. He burns idols in the fields. He tears down altars and place for worship, he burns chariots that there're using somehow to worship the sun, he burned bones of the dead. He even killed the priest who were burning incense to the moon, the sun and the stars. King Josiah isn't having any of it.

He only wants his people to focus on God. And not only that, not only does he destroy the idols and he removes all things that point away from God, because as I said before, we all worship something. So, it's great when we recognize that something in our lives might be an idol and then we'll remove it. We'll, if we don't replace it with something, something else will creep in because we all worship something. King Josiah, not only does it remove the idols, he then creates worship reform and 2 Kings 23:21 says, King Josiah re-institutes keeping the Passover festival. This is how far they had gone from God. They were not even celebrating the Passover, the largest festival of Judaism. For those of you who don't know what the Passover is, the Passover is in remembrance of how God saved them from 400 years of slavery from

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Egypt. It is the biggest festival and remembrance and homage to God, and how he saved them and they weren't even doing that. King Josiah brings the people's focus back to God.

Now, this past week I called my mom to check in on her. They're getting older in age and my dad has diabetes and so he's compromised. And so, I just wanted to make sure they're doing okay. And I love calling my mom because every time I call her, I live now on the East side and I'm among different peoples, good peoples, but different. But when I call my mom, I remember my immigrant background because I am an immigrant. I had a very different childhood than some others. And she always brings me back to this perspective of our upbringing. And so, I ask her, I'm like, "How are things, are you guys okay?" And she's like, "Yeah, we're fine. We're doing what they're saying. We're washing our hands. We don't really leave our house that much anyways, but we're like we always have been. We always have a little bit of money in the bank, and we always have some food in the pantry just in case anything goes down."

And that comes from our immigrant upbringing because when we came to this country, nothing was assured at any given point, something could go wrong, we could get deported, we don't know what was going to happen. And so, we were always ready to trust in God that we might need to shift. And she goes, "We aren't doing anything different than we've always done. Our lives have always been in God's hands. He's always been faithful to us. Why would we ever now, even if we do get sick, if that is God's will, we have done everything he has asked of us and he has taken care of us this long."

King Josiah in 2 Kings 23:25, he's an amazing King. And we read the description that they give him that says, "Before him, King Josiah, there was no King like him who turned to the Lord with all his heart and with all his soul and with all his might, according to all the law of Moses, nor did any like him arise after him."

And if we fast forward later on into the new Testament and we read a story of when JC Jesus is hanging out with some peeps, some Pharisees and Sadducees, and they ask him, "Hey man, which is the most important commandment" And he answers them, "Matthew 22:37." He says, "Look, and he, Jesus, Yeshua said to him, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul," and say it with me, "With all your mind." Does that sound familiar?

What these two things are saying back in Kings 23:25, they're saying that Josiah worship God always, because he did it with all his heart, with all his soul and with all his mind. And Jesus is now saying that is the same thing today. You want to worship God, you want to know what the most important commandment is, your heart, your soul, and your mind. That leaves nothing out.

The scripture is saying that we're to worship God always, not just the one hour on the weekend. And if for some reason you do believe that the one hour of worship on the weekend is just confined to that one hour, well, there's 168 hours in the week. Then my question to you would be, what are you doing with the other 167. If you're only reserving one hour of worship for God, you got another 167 that you're worshiping something else, because we all worship something. The choice is yours.

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What I would say is take this curse of fear and panic of COVID-19, and King Josiah your idols, smash everything that is keeping you from God. If there's anything that is staring you in the face right now, is showing us what our idols are because they're getting stripped away from us, and we're trying to figure out what do we do with ourselves.

And a way we can reestablish worship. There's just a few suggestions that I have. Get creative, get on your knees and pray to God and see where he's leading you. But if you just need a starter, here's some ideas that I have for you. One for families out there, re-establish family worship. Find a book or some videos for devotions. I read the Bible with my kids every night and I know that may be other families out there who could use some help. So, what I did is I asked my kids, "Hey, would you be willing to read the Bible online so other families can join in?"

And so, here's a picture of me with my girls, Sabrina, who's reading, Christina, who's just hanging out, and my oldest daughter, Lisa, who's running the cameras. And every night we read the Bible together, we spend our family time of worship with others. Get creative, see where God can use you. Other things is times of prayer, while you're making your shut-in schedule because now your calendar just freed up. We'll put in 20 minutes of prayer. That's one less Netflix show. That's one less news report. Do not let this time pass you by. Get on your knees and pray.

Reading scriptures. Scripture, scriptures, english is hard, I don't, I jack it up every time. I've only been here 40 years. I'm getting there, read scripture like the workers of King Josiah, rediscover scripture. I know you got some dusty Bibles on your shelf somewhere, pull those Bibles out. And I know that you're on your devices anyway, so if a good place to start is go check out the Bible project, start there. They're great videos. It's a great resource, it's free. And I would say start with 1 and 2 Kings as we're talking today.

Another way to worship God outside of the weekend is to serve others, because that's what God asks of us to. A form of worshipping God is to serve others. We're to love our neighbors as ourselves. Now rewind this video and go back to what Dudley was saying. There's a bunch of great suggestions there. Look at those, because we want to be able to do it responsibly in this time. Look at ways how we can worship or serve others.

And then the last thing I would suggest for today, these are just some of my ideas is get into Bible study. You might have to get creative because we can't be in the same room, but even, what's this phrase? You are going to show an old trick new dog, is there something like that? I don't know what the American colloquialisms, is that a word colloquialisms?

Hey, look at that. Yeah baby. I'm getting it. I'm catching on. I've been part of a bible study for a long time. Most of these catch are retired, but I was like, "Hey listen, we can do Bible study on zoom." First of all, I had to explain what zoom was. It's video conferencing, most of them knew, and for those who don't know what zoom is, it is video conferencing. It's like a telephone with the camera that you can talk to people untethered in your own room. It's very similar to the telephone. It's just you can see people.

We decided, you know what, let's do our Bible study's zoom. Now it was a bit rough started. Here's a picture of us doing it, testing it because I knew there'd be some murky waters there and we did. We ended up having our Bible study after a test. Of course, one of them was like cutting in and out the whole time, so he only got like three words of the whole Bible study. Hopefully he was blessed, I'm not sure, because he cut it in and out, though I made him pray at the end. I'm like, "Hey, welcome back. Guess what? You're up to pray." So, moral of that story is get a good internet connection. That's the moral of that story.

Find ways to re-establish worship in your life. Worship reform is needed. Do not let this time pass you by. As Dudley said, "We should come out better than we went into this. If we trust in Lord, if we focus on God, take all these opportunities to reestablish worship in our lives, because to be an All In disciple, you can only worship one God. There's no rooms for others." Take this time to smash your idols, King Josiah those things so we can be focused and we can be the salt of the earth and the light on the hill to our communities.

Bow your heads with me, our father in heaven thank you so much for loving us Lord, even during this time, God, I asked you to be with those who are in high anxiety, who are a bit panicked right now, Lord. May your Holy spirit just come and comfort them. Just send them signs and wonders. Send them your saying, send them a phone call, whatever it may be, Lord, so that they know that they're not alone, God. Lift us up for those parents out there who are trying to homeschool and hold down a job and figure out what to do, God. I just ask, by the power of the Holy spirit, you bring us comfort and guidance and strength and stamina, God. Thank you so much for all your servants out there, the medical workers, the church workers, the neighbors, everybody who's trying to get through this, Lord. May we keep our focus on you, so at the end of the day, when COVID-19 ends we can praise your name, God Almighty, and we all say it together, amen.

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**Discussion Questions:** Read 2 Kings 22, 23:1-27

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1. In 2 Kings 22:2 it says King Josiah like King David did what was right in the sight of the Lord. What was that? (1 Kings 11:4)
2. Why do you believe that Priest Hilkiah gave the book to Shaphan in 2 Kings 22:8?
3. A bittersweet message is delivered by whom in 2 Kings 22:14-20? Why is the messenger so special in these times?
4. What was the message and what does you believe it says about God?
5. Why do you believe that Josiah's reform is so important in 2 Kings 23:21-23