

## **Worship Brings Unity** **Will Collens**

**SLIDE 1** I'm really honored to be asked to speak today, in fact I'm actually really nervous. Last Sunday after church, I was on my way to a leadership meeting with Pastor Jordan. I mentioned to him that I was pretty nervous to share and that I was setting aside 2 days to prepare. His response? "I'd be nervous too because this guy was REALLY GOOD. Like REALLY GOOD. Like 11 out of 10. No pressure". Then he laughed and said "no I'm sure you'll do great"

**SLIDE 2** Pastor Jordan has started a sermon series titled "WHY". Why we worship, why we study God's Word, and why we start churches.

**SLIDE 3** It's a lot of fun to get really deep in Gods Word, but it's also really vital to always know why we do what we do. In staff Pastor Jordan always reminds us that "the why is more important than the what". So today we are going to get into why we worship. And its because

**SLIDE 4** WORSHIP BRINGS UNITY.

I know today is Mother's Day, and while I'm not preaching a typical Mother's Day message, I do think it will tie together. To add to the pressure I already felt preaching in front of all of you, I have my parents here today with us. My mom is an amazing woman. In the middle of incredible trauma dealing with my sisters illness (my youngest sister died of leukemia at the age of 19 after a long battle), I can say that my mom always kept her focus on Jesus. She taught me so much about unity, even though she didn't use that word, much of who I am today and the way I respond to situations - I learned from her. (Give her a hug & gift - honor her). I love you mom.

**SLIDE 5** I love this quote by Edmund Clowney - "When we worship God as we ought, that's when the nations listen". As I mentioned, the message today is titled WORSHIP BRINGS UNITY. When we are willing to walk in obedience, to worship God with all of ourselves (not just on a Sunday morning), then the people that we've been wanting for so long to know Jesus can see Him in us. There's something in the Spiritual realm that gets unlocked when we worship in Spirit and in Truth. When we are in unity it's like there's a veil or curtain that gets drawn back and Jesus is seen instead of us. It's beautiful. It's amazing. I can't tell you how many people have asked why there is so much fruit at Immerse nights, or why when we worship that people get healed and amazing moves of the Holy Spirit

happen. I'll tell you right now it has nothing to do with me except for obedience. There is an anointing that happens and is actually **COMMANDED** by God Himself when we are in unity. We see that in Psalm 133

**SLIDE 6** “Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity! It is like the precious oil on the head, running down on the beard, on the beard of Aaron, running down on the collar of his robes! It is like the dew of Hermon, which falls on the mountains of Zion! For there the Lord has commanded the blessing, life forevermore.

**SLIDE 7** This is a big deal. There's not too many places in the Bible where there's such an obvious demand or command of a blessing. Another place is the blessing when we read aloud the book of Revelation, but if I was preaching on Revelation this morning Pastor Jordan would be the one who was really nervous instead of me. I can just see his face as I would talk on the mark of the beast and the rapture and the timing of it all..... just kidding. All kidding aside, this is a HUGE deal. I want the blessing! As an example think of the songs we sing out of Revelation - (which remember singing IS speaking aloud). Revelation Son, Worthy of it all, Storms all around You. These songs have a unique anointing on them because they are out of Revelation with a commanded blessing! If you've ever seen my leading worship and not know what to do, many times I will sing one of those songs or start to sing scripture from that book. And the commanded blessing is why! I know that Gods Word is truth and if he says something will happen, IT WILL! So lets go back to that Psalm. If God tells me that when we are in unity there is a **COMMANDED BLESSING**, then I'm going to pursue that blessing! It would be crazy not to!

We also see the power of unity in John 17. This is my life verse or scripture. This is what I live by and founded United Worship on. This is why I love being in ministry here at Rock of Grace. To me the anointing of the power of the gospel, in doing ministry **TOGETHER** is wrapped up in this. This is the fulfillment of the great commission and also our vision here “Leading People to follow Jesus together”. This was Jesus final prayer before he was betrayed. The very next verses He was arrested and betrayed by those He was closest to.

**SLIDE 8-9** John 17:20-24 NLT “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. I pray

that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you. And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me. “I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!”

Jesus was desperate and IS desperate that we ALL would be with Him. And He says that unity - TRUE UNITY is how that happens. So what is true unity? Do we have to agree on everything? We see a lot of organizations - even churches - function in their interpretation of unity. We see them say “we all agree on tongues” or missions, or music styles, or politics or masks. But that’s not real unity - and you can see the fruit (or lack of fruit). We are going to go over what this sermon is titled - that true worship brings unity. I believe that our worship team, or the worship team at Immerse would have much of the same anointing doing ANYTHING for Jesus. I think that we could go to a baseball game or an outreach and that people would still be reached and drawn to Jesus because of the unity we have and fight for. I don’t agree with everyone I’m in ministry with on all things, but I am in relationship with them and I KNOW them. I think the best of them even when I have an opportunity not to. I’ve found it’s pretty hard to be upset with someone you just had over for dinner or went fishing with.

**SLIDE 10** Worship brings unity. Pretty much everyone who hears the word worship thinks of music. I’m not discounting the power of what God can do when we sing and play music for Him. I’ve seen crazy miracles happen and many, many people come to know Jesus during musical worship times. We are instructed to sing Spiritual songs and since I’m the worship leader here I hope that you can see I’m NOT discounting that. But I don’t think when it comes to worship bringing unity that it actually has anything to do with it.

**SLIDE 11** “It’s not about singing the song. It’s about living the song.” This is not something that only those in leadership positions or on stage are called to. This last year we’ve heard a lot of things said like “we’re in this together”. Well I don’t know about all those other things but I can promise you that if we are all called to Rock of Grace and we are all sons

and daughters of Jesus then we ARE ALL CALLED TO LIVE A LIFE OF WORSHIP.

**SLIDE 12** If we TRULY know Jesus and our identity in Him, if we are truly worshipping Him with our lives, then unity will happen and through that the commanded blessing of the Lord. This is true in ministry, at work, at home, ANYWHERE we go - a commanded blessing.

One of the things I really love as we have launched DavidU is watching people truly learn and know their identity in Him. When we know who we are and Whose we are, then we have no choice but to obey Him - and Disobedience isn't an option. To truly worship Jesus and to truly pursue unity we must know our identity. Did you know that you are a priest? Worship is NOT just for those on the worship team to do and for others to enjoy. In the Old Testament the priest was the only one who could facilitate being in the presence of God. Only one man for an entire nation. He had to go for everyone else. But because of the sacrifice of Jesus YOU are now a priest if you have given your life to Him and can be in His presence every day! It's in the Word of God many times.

**SLIDE 13** 1 Peter 2:5 You yourselves like living stones are being built up into a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.  
So If you are a Christian, God has made you to be a part of something He is building - the church. And He has called you to function in that church as a priest.

**SLIDE 14** 1 Peter 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for His own possession, that you may proclaim the excellences of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

**SLIDE 15** Today in Assembly of God churches or in most non denominational churches we don't use the word priest or think of one man to have authority to minister. But we do sometimes elevate those in ministry as the ones who have the anointing to do ministry. We do it all the time, with worship teams and pastors. We've all heard of those who have been called as Levites that are set apart to minister and we ALWAYS associate that with musical gifting. But do you know what set apart the Levites from everyone else? It wasn't musical gifting. I can guarantee you that every single Levite (hundreds of thousands of people) wasn't a Pastor Jordan that is just maddeningly good at everything with music. What set

them aside was obedience and a heart of reconciliation. Let's look at what scripture says. This is the story of the golden calf in Exodus 32. The people of God have been guided VISIBLY by God almighty out of slavery. Moses is up on the mountain TALKING TO GOD and being given the stone tablets. While on the mountain the people become restless and ask Aaron to build them a false god that they can worship. Moses returns and this is what happens.

**SLIDE 16** Exodus 32:25-26 NLT "Moses saw that Aaron had let the people get completely out of control, much to the amusement of their enemies. So he stood at the entrance to the camp and shouted, "All of you who are on the Lord's side, come here and join me." And all the Levites gathered around him."

This is what set the Levites apart. RECONCILIATION. It is because they were the only ones to say that obedience to the Lord and repentance is more important than their pride. They were set aside that day. And we can be set aside today! You see, being a Levite, living a life of worship has nothing to do with music. It is about living a life submitted to the almighty God and creator of the universe! It's about knowing HIM. YOU can have that amazing anointing of a Levite with the blessing of God almighty over YOU and your life. It's not just for me or Pastor Jordan or Pastor Mark!

When we know Him, we are called to live in a way that honors Him. We are called to the ministry of reconciliation. Because He reconciled or ended the chasm between us by His sacrifice. . In my life I have never seen fruit the way I have when I have pursued reconciliation.

**SLIDE 17** Reconciliation is the end of the estrangement, caused by sin between God and humanity. There was a great divide caused by sin so that all these rules had to be followed and only one person could be in the presence of God. Sacrifice had to be made - Reconciliation. If God Himself did that for me, then I must do the same for others. He did it for me KNOWING that I would sin against Him and betray Him. He died for Judas and Barrabus. I can't truly live a life of worship when I have something in my heart against someone else. I want to clarify that this has nothing to do with others hearts - it's about YOUR heart. It doesn't mean that everything in your life is perfect - it means that you're aware of things you've been harboring in your heart and are giving them first to Jesus, and then going to someone you've wronged. It doesn't mean that you're waiting for

anyone who wronged you to come to you - that's THEIR heart, between them and God.

**SLIDE 18** Matthew 6:14-15 NLT “If you forgive those who sin against you, your heavenly Father will forgive you. But if you refuse to forgive others, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

You might be thinking this is too simple. If I pursue reconciliation, to know and truly love those around me. To truly walk in forgiveness and show honor even to those who have wronged me and have a pure heart before God - that all of a sudden God will anoint me to do amazing things? YES! It's a COMMANDED blessing. But the point isn't just to do these things, the point is to love Jesus so much that I want to obey Him to please Him. He has done so much for me, and I love Him so much that I can't even consider the option of not obeying Him. Here's another example in the Bible.

**SLIDE 19** Matthew 5:23-24 ESV “So if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar and go. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift.”

I want to share part of my testimony to illustrate this, and I've asked permission from these people to share this story today. I was born blind in my left eye, but I always had an eye. In the early 2000's I was put into a position as a worship leader basically because I was talented and my gifting as a leader was definitely seen, but I didn't understand what it meant to lead. So I “led worship”. I sang songs, I definitely wanted to see a move of God. I grew up in the church and with an amazing Christian family, so I always “believed” but I don't really think I knew who I was in Him. My identity was that I was good at music and a good singer. I deeply cared for my friends but those I didn't naturally “click” with, I didn't really take the time to care. So for several years we did good music and saw no results. Melanie and Ryan were on that worship team. So was Ruth. Those of you who know my family now know that Martin and Ruth are family. But it wasn't always that way. I didn't like Ruth back then and she knew it. I didn't treat her well. I gossiped about her. I rolled my eyes. I sinned against her and others that I was called to minister to.

Then in 2009 I started to get severe headaches that really interrupted my every day life. It got to the point that I would throw up every day at work. I

ended up going to the hospital and they found a mass behind my eye, pressing against nerves and my brain. Because I already had no sight in that eye, the safest way to remove the tumor was to remove my eye. Until the surgery happened I was told there was a good possibility I had cancer. But I didn't. After my surgery I wasn't allowed to do anything. No work. No music. No going upstairs. No holding my daughter. So my identity was taken away. I was a husband. I was a singer. I was a dad. I was a hard worker. One night I was feeling sorry for myself and Tab put a bible on the couch beside me. I was pretty upset with God and I brushed it onto the floor after she went up to bed. Later that night I woke up and the Bible looked like it was on fire. I picked it up and it had opened to the book of Judges chapter 6 - to the story of Gideon. I started to read. I was Gideon. I was afraid and didn't know my identity. The Bible says that Gideon was threshing wheat in a winepress, which is a hole in the ground. He was afraid. We see after God appears to him that Gideon actually argues. He says that God has chosen the wrong guy because he is weak, in fact the weakest in his family.

But what I saw that day was verse 12.

**SLIDE 20** Judges 6:12 ESV "And the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him, "The Lord is with you, O mighty man of valor."

God saw Gideon as the complete warrior, courageous and ready for battle even though his feelings were the exact opposite. It was me. God saw me as a warrior - and He sees you the same way. Something happened to me, and I started to worship God! I wanted to glorify and obey Him, and I KNEW what I needed to do, not because of some pressure or guilt but because I wanted to be nearer and nearer to Him. So I told my wife, and the next week I showed up at church and talked to the worship team. I repented. I wept. I said we were going to glorify Jesus with our team and watch Him move. I asked Ruth to forgive me. The next week I led worship again and for the first time in my life I saw someone be healed during worship. The week after I led the first person in my life to Jesus. We built relationships and friendships in that ministry that are still strong today. We saw a revival. We saw many people know Jesus as Savior. Today Ryan and Melanie are here and not only in ministry with me here, but at United Worship. Ruth and Martin are literally our family. Do we agree on everything? NO! But because God commands me to, and because I have invested more than a song in them, I know that even if I see another

believer doing something I would not, I will think the best of them and be FREE!

This might seem overly simple, but I don't think that the gospel is meant to be confusing. I think it is meant to be understood. I'm telling you today that if you see something different in me, or wonder where the anointing or fruit comes from, I can tell you with 100% confidence that it is because I know who I am, whose I am, and that disobedience is not an option, and that I am reconciled with my brothers and sisters.

**SLIDE 21** Because of this there is the commanded blessing! The I don't get the luxury of going ONE DAY with something in my heart against my brother. Just ask the worship team or anyone with United Worship. Before we worship corporately or lead others, we surrender everything to Him because there are lives at stake with how we worship. Again it's not the song, it's the anointing that comes from unity - from a group that is reconciled to God and each other. Please understand I'm not saying that preparation or excellence isn't important - IT IS. We are called to do things with excellence as unto the Lord (and that's another message for another day). What I AM saying is that I would rather have the blessing of anointing than anything else.

One of my mentors, Pastor David Gray, told me a story that has always stuck with me. Pastor David is a very polished and accomplished speaker. He's amazing. But he told me a story of when he was younger, how he and another man he knew went and preached at the same church. I'm not sure if it was a conference or church service - but they both preached. Pastor David said his sermon was spot on - just as he had practiced - but there wasn't much response. Then his friend came up and spoke, and he wasn't very refined or well spoken. He lost his place and just didn't do very well in comparison. But when the altar call came the place was completely flooded, and Pastor David was shocked. You see there was an unmistakable anointing on this man. As I was preparing this week and getting nervous I remembered this story. I would rather have the anointing and blessing of God over my family and life than ANYTHING, and the best thing I can do today to share with you so that you can have the anointing and blessing of God over you and your family. And the way to do that is so simple. To truly worship Him with your life - to reconcile first with Jesus and then with others (which is worship) will bring that unity.



**SLIDE 22** So today to close I want to just be very transparent and real with you. I want to humbly ask you to truly examine your heart. Maybe God is showing you something you didn't even realize. I remember when I realized I had carried an offense with someone in a different state and I was leading worship that night. I wrote a letter to them right then and there - because it wasn't worth it to me to wait and possibly miss out on seeing Jesus move. Maybe you've been carrying a weight or a hurt for years and years and haven't been able to let it go. Maybe you need to forgive yourself, or maybe you need to be reconciled to Jesus by giving your life to Him.

Today is Mother's Day. When I talk to moms about what they want most, do you know what it is? It's not a gift or anything like that. Every time the answer is the same. They want their family together - and I don't mean physically. They want their children and family in unity. So let's all of us honor Jesus and reconcile to Him FIRST

**SLIDE 23** Our response time is going to be a little different today. I'm going to ask you to close your eyes for a minute. We are going to worship Jesus by making sure we are in right standing with Him. If you're not today - right now you have an opportunity. - salvation altar call

Next we are going to talk to Him and search our hearts if there's something we need to make right with a brother or sister.

This isn't just about our blood relatives, it's about the Kingdom as a whole. We must be in unity as a CHURCH family as well. If you're worried about losing respect, I have never seen one person humble themselves and lose respect, they've only gained it by doing so. This week I'm asking you to reconcile relationships with others so that the anointing and blessing of God will be all over your life. The things that you've been desperate to see will begin to happen because the COMMANDED blessing of unity will bear on your life.