

Hi everyone, my name is Mark Fisher, I'm finishing up eighth grade at West Side, and today it's my job to bring together all you've seen, heard, and experienced.

Today has all been about worship. On your way in today I hope you noticed our welcome sign that says, "The reason we breathe, is to sing of His glory". That sign sums up our reason for being here today, tomorrow, the next day, and the next day-we exist to bring glory to God. Hopefully you've experienced a new way to glorify God today-who would have thought that God and bubbles could mix so well? Or maybe for you it meant stepping out of your comfort zone while singing-maybe today you lifted up your hands a little-not a lot, just a little. Maybe that baby step will be the first of many steps out of what is comfortable towards a deeper connection with the Lord.

What I really liked about today was how our individual and collective testimonies all point to a God that loves us. We can respond to His love in tons of different ways. What He wants most from us is to make our entire existence an act of worship. Worship is singing His praise but it is way more. Worship is loving our neighbor, worship is respecting our parents,

worship is taking pride in our work, worship is making dinner for a friend who has too much on their plate, worship is supporting a kid across the world so they can grow up strong, worship is being aware of how what we do can hurt or help other people, worship is turning the other cheek, worship is giving hope to the homeless, and worship is obedience.

We did cardboard testimonies to testify to God's greatness and to let all of you know that you're not alone in your struggles. I think from week to week as a church we can forget how legit God really is-not because He fixes us whenever we mess up or struggle, but that He cares about our situations and wants to get down in the trenches with us. Depending on what side of the fence you're on with your theology you can argue about God allowing pain and/or causing the pain in the first place. I'm not a theologian yet by trade so I'll skip over that talk, but no matter what you believe we know this truth...God can use every single one of us and our story of struggles and the stories of our lives to bring glory to Himself. But that can be confusing. Why do we have to have pain at all-why do we have to learn the hard way sometimes so His point can be made?

I don't know about you, but when my life is smooth sailing I start to think pretty highly of myself and less about God. Maybe it's not even obvious, but we get busy, things are going great, I make the best baseball team, and all of a sudden I can't remember the last time I've read the Bible. I'm just saying. Sometimes God has to be drastic to get our attention back on Him. I'm going to have Brandon read a story from the Bible about one of the main guys in the Old Testament and how God totally got his attention and commanded his obedience. It's a story we've all heard-hear it today with new ears and an open heart.

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So Abraham is a pretty important guy in the Bible-and when I say pretty important I mean REALLY important. He's the father of all generations-he was the head honcho of the Israelite nation. His whole life is a story of worship, love, and as we saw in this story, complete obedience to God. I don't know about you, but this whole story seems pretty messed up. Why did God even ask Abraham to sacrifice his son, the one person whom God had promised He would grow a mighty nation out of? How was God supposed to make good on His promise if he killed off the main character?

Well that's the crazy thing about God-His plans are perfect even when we don't understand them-even if it seems like He's making things harder than they have to be, it's ALWAYS for a reason.

Think of the last time you decided to make a plan for your life-you get it all sorted out, the money, the job, the school you're going to attend, the person you're going to marry, etc., etc, then BAM!!!!!!!!!!!!!! You lose the job, you don't make the team, you do a junky job of saving the money you need for school, and your fiancé decides to leave you hangin. WHY?????

Again, I'm no theologian so I don't know why.....but God does. He is a God that LOVES us, the God that promises us that He will give us a hope and a future. He promises never to leave us, to love us into eternity with a love so big that He gave His only Son to die for us, and a God that is always in control of our circumstances. For all those reasons and more, we need to worship God with our lives. He could actually not do any of those things if He didn't want to-we don't praise and worship Him because of WHAT he does for us, but for WHO he is for us. He should be our everything, is He your everything today? Let's pray.

Dear God, thank you so much for today. Thank you for being a God of love, forgiveness, and understanding when we don't understand the world around us. I just ask Lord that as we go from this place today that we will love and worship you with all that we are. That we won't be able to go through a single day without praising you for your greatness. Thank you for all you are to us, we love and praise you, amen.

Final Blessing

Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more
Than all we ask or imagine
According to His power that is at work within us
To Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus
Throughout all generations,
Forever and ever! Amen.