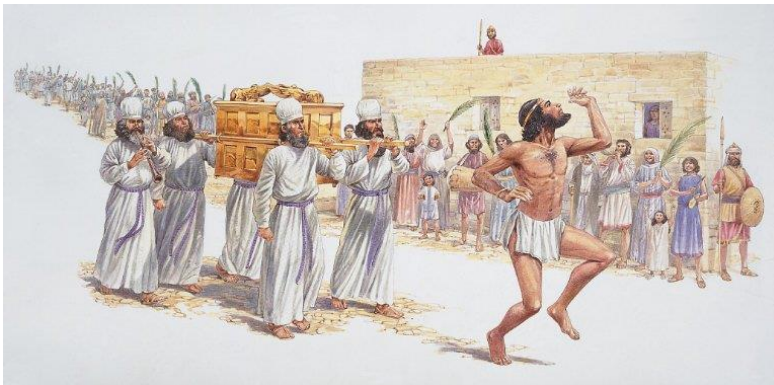


**High St Uniting Church Frankston**  
**Extravagant Worship      2 Samuel 6:1 – 5, 12B – 19**



Vs 16:

*Michal, 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.*

There are so many threads and interesting ideas in this story of David bringing the ark to Jerusalem. It's a religious story,

with David not just bringing the ark to Jerusalem, but uniting the people before God. It's a political story, with David cementing the place of Jerusalem as the capital, over and above the cities of the other tribes. And then, with the mention of Michal, it also becomes a family and dynasty story, and a story of what it means to be king. However, because David is king at the appointment of God, this is a story that is a fantastic portrayal of grateful worship, extravagant, all for God, worship.

Michal was not just David's wife, but a princess in her own right, the daughter of Saul. The story of David and Michal shows that there is, or was, love and respect between them, but it was also a political match, intended to smooth the way of succession from Saul to David. If they were to have a son, he would be a king to unite the factions. As a daughter of a king, she was familiar with how a king should act, particularly in public, and this half-dressed fool dancing down the street was not being a king. If you read on in the chapter, David comes to see Michal and she spits out her contempt at the king dancing down the street semi-naked like a commoner, in front of all the servant girls. And David responds that he was not dancing for the servant girls, he was dancing for the Lord, the Lord who chose him to be king instead of Saul, and he would happily make himself more contemptible in her eyes and abased in his own eyes to bring God glory. And as much as Michal may hold him in contempt, he is held in honour by those servant girls. And the little addition at the end of the story – Michal had no child – is not just an interpersonal comment about David and Michal's relationship, it is a note that Michal is as rejected by God as Saul was. Michal may have known how a king should behave, but she had no idea how a king under God should worship his Lord. For Michal, worship was all about ritual and solemnity and decorum. For David, worship was about joy, and celebration, and giving your all in gratitude before the greatness of God.

*Years ago, I went to see a show by a Christian artist, Randy Matthews, who was just doing his thing which was definitely not what other Christian artists would do, fooling around and telling self-deprecating stories. And he said, "Scripture calls us to be a peculiar people, and I've got that down pat."*

*This was at the same time as the trend of people dressing as clowns and being a clown for God, taking literally Paul's talk of not being afraid to be thought a fool in his determination to show the wisdom of God in Christ.*

*Even I got into it for an annual street parade in Geelong. I dressed up my car as the empty tomb, with the stone rolled away and "God is alive" posted on each side, and I dressed myself as a jester and danced in front of the car all through the parade. A fool for Christ.*

David's wish to honour God and celebrate God's presence led him to set aside his dignity and decorum, because what is dignity before God? He took seriously the commandment to love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your mind, and that includes all the emotions, joy, gratitude, happiness, pleasure, and devotion. And if that meant looking like a fool, he didn't care because he was demonstrating the depth of his love and gratitude. Not just gratitude for being anointed king, but for all the care, protection, and strength in fighting off enemies and being able to claim the throne. And gratitude for being the one able to honour God by placing the ark in a new home in the middle of the religious and political life of Israel. Gratitude that overflowed in joyous worship.

Are we grateful for all that God has done in our lives and for the worldwide growth of the Gospel? Are we truly grateful for the presence of God in our lives? Then why is so much of our worship formal, and staid, and structured, and ritualised? Where is the joy? Where is the spontaneous, all-body, worship? We look down on the so-called happy clappy congregations. It's not in our culture to call out 'Amen!' during prayers and sermons. So, what do we do with this story of the exuberant David dancing in worship? Is it more about culture than worship?

Now, of course, I take these as questions to me as the worship leader, not just to you, but this story of David dancing down the street raises questions for all of us in how we worship. We don't have to go dancing down the street, half-naked or dressed as a clown, but is this the call to unleash our emotions in worship?

What do you think? Turn to the person or people near you and talk about worship. What is more important, emotion filled worship or propriety and dignity and decorum?

What is our dignity before the wonders of God's love and care? David danced half-naked down the street, Jesus rode a young donkey into Jerusalem, the Wesley's avoided serious church music to praise God in popular tunes of the day. The glory of God is so much more important than our sensibilities or reputation. Let's give ourselves over to the worship of our great and loving God.