

LEADERTREKS **SERMON SERIES**

MARK OF A DISCIPLE

Disciples of Christ willingly submit to King Jesus.

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 95

SERMON OVERVIEW

This lesson looks at the necessity of submitting to Christ and explores the reasons why we, as believers, want to submit to our Creator, Savior, and King. One way we can practice submitting to Christ is by joyfully worshipping him. Students will learn about the negative effects of not submitting to authority from the example of the Israelites. Submission may seem completely foreign at first glance, but students will discover how common it is to submit to and worship things in their own lives. They'll also think through their motivations for worshipping Christ. Finally, students will be challenged to evaluate where in their life they need to practice submitting fully to God as King and asking God to soften their hearts.

OPENING

WELCOME AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

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ICE BREAKER QUESTION

- What/who are you a huge fan of and why? (e.g., celebrity, sports team, musician, favorite tv show, etc.)

MESSAGE

Use the following teaching points and suggested illustrations as a starting point to build your message.

READ PSALM 95

POINT 1: Jesus is our Creator, Savior, and King

This short Psalm describes so many amazing things about Jesus. He created the world and everything in it, including us—he literally holds the whole world in his hands (vv. 4–6)! Our salvation depends and rests on him; he is “the rock of our salvation” (v. 1). As the powerful King of the universe, he rules with wisdom and fairness (vv. 3, 8–11). He leads us and takes care of us (v. 7).

POINT 2: We must submit to Jesus

We love to love things! People were made to worship—to acknowledge and celebrate when we’ve experienced something or someone amazing. What we worship reveals what we’ve given our hearts to, whether it’s a sports team, favorite celebrity, or God of the universe. And the way we worship says something about how soft and committed our hearts are—will we keep showing up to cheer on our team even during a losing

streak? Psalm 95 commands the people of God to worship him with hearts soft and submitted to the One who made us. It also warns us about what happens when we harden our hearts.

This psalm references the Israelites' disbelief seen in Exodus 17:1–7. On their way to the Promised Land after being freed from Egypt, the Israelites began to question and test God because they were thirsty. They were tired of being in the wilderness, which led them to grumble and argue. They had hardened their hearts against God. Even though they doubted him, God still provided for his people out of an abundance of mercy. But even the name of the place (Massah means testing and Meribah means quarreling) stood as a reminder to the people not to harden their hearts but trust God.

Psalm 95 is both exciting and terrifying. Jesus, our King, wants a relationship with us. When we realize who Jesus is and how he treats his children, we gladly submit to him. He is worthy of our complete obedience and surrender! But if we choose to harden our hearts and not submit to Jesus, there will be consequences for our rebellion, just as there were for the Israelites. They wandered the desert for 40 years and lost out on seeing the Promised Land.

POINT 3: True submission leads to joyful worship

One way to express our submission to King Jesus is through joyful worship by singing praises (vv. 1–2), by bowing to him (v. 6), and by obeying him and following him only (vv. 8–10). When we truly submit to God, we are able to worship him in all circumstances.

ILLUSTRATION: The word fan, which comes from “fanatic,” may have once been considered an insult. Now fans have seemingly taken over the social media world. Fandoms from anime to mainstream sports have become increasingly popular. Some critics have warned about participation in fandoms being dangerous and potentially addictive. Whether it’s too many hours watching football or too many dollars spent on Doctor Who memorabilia, fandoms can take over one’s life. Fandom, in the extreme, is a form of submission and worship, and our hearts can idolize that specific fandom.

Experts suggest two appeals of fandoms: escape and community. Sometimes it’s a way to escape. Sometimes it’s a way to engage more deeply in the world. Even submitting in worship to God can be out of wrong motivations—perhaps escaping a difficult reality—instead of worshiping him out of humble submission with other believers.

When we truly submit to Jesus, with the right motivation, we can’t help but joyfully worship him! He is our Creator, Savior, and King, and our proper place is in submission to him. Even though it might sound restricting, the truth is that real freedom is found when we humbly submit to and worship Christ.

CLOSING REFLECTION

Use this prompt to wrap up your message and leave your students with a challenge to apply.

- Spend time this week talking to Jesus about those situations where you find it hard to submit to his Kingship in your life. Ask God to reveal to you whether there is any hardness in your heart and how you can more fully worship Jesus as your King.

GROUP DISCUSSION

Pick a few questions from below to discuss. Close with prayer.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- When have you experienced a memorable time of worshiping God? (This doesn't necessarily have to be singing worship songs.)
- What are you a fan of? Are you a member of any fandoms?
- How is being a fan of Christ's Kingdom different than being a fan of a tv show, celebrity, or sports team?
- Why did God punish the generation that refused to submit to him?
- What do we lose, both short- and long-term, when we fail to submit to God?
- What does it mean to submit to and worship God in everyday life (beyond church services)?
- What would you say is your motivation for worshiping Christ? Maybe it's to escape a difficult reality, a desire to build community, or another reason.
- Are there any situations or areas in your life where you grumble rather than submit to Jesus?
- What might a lack of joyful worship reveal about your level of submission to Jesus as King over those situations?

PRAYER

Close by praying or invite someone to pray for your group.

Use this space to keep track of any prayer requests.

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¹ Rachel Hatch, "Fans of fandom: Psychology faculty break down the passion and persecution of fans," *Illinois State University*, August 1, 2019, accessed May 1, 2020, <https://news.illinoisstate.edu/2019/08/fans-of-fandom-psychology-faculty-break-down-the-passion-and-persecution-of-fans/>.