

Life Group Guide: Authentic Worship

Based on Isaiah 6 and Genesis 22

Overview

This week's sermon explored what authentic worship truly means for followers of Jesus. Drawing from Isaiah 6 and Genesis 22, Pastor Chris unpacked the Hebrew word *hineni* — "here I am" — and showed how it runs through Scripture as the defining posture of genuine worship. From Abraham to Isaiah to Jesus himself, *hineni* represents a complete, unconditional availability to God that precedes any song sung or instrument played.

Key Takeaways

- **Authentic worship starts with a response.** Before music, before church attendance, before any outward expression, worship begins when you say to Jesus, "Here I am."
- **Hineni means total availability.** The word carries the weight of: I am fully present, I have already said yes before you asked, and I am ready to be interrupted and redirected.
- **Jesus is the ultimate expression of hineni.** As Hebrews 10:5-7 shows, Jesus stepped into human flesh and said to the Father, "Here I am — I have come to do your will." Every other use of *hineni* in Scripture points toward and flows from his.
- **God's extravagant mercy demands an extravagant response.** Just as Isaiah was forgiven without asking, he responded without hesitation. Seeing what God has done for us is meant to produce the same response in us.
- **We are sent.** As Jesus said, "As the Father sent me, so I send you." Our *hineni* is not just a private spiritual moment — it is a commission to confront sin and death and release the life of God wherever we go.

Discussion Questions

Opening (Ice Breaker)

1. Think of a time when someone was fully present and available for you — a parent, a friend, a mentor. What did that feel like? What made it meaningful?

Digging In

2. Pastor Chris described hineni as meaning "all of me, present, available, no conditions — I have already said yes before you even ask the question." How does that definition challenge or expand your understanding of what it means to worship God?
3. The sermon traced hineni through several figures — Joseph, Jacob, Moses, Samuel, David, and ultimately Jesus. Which of those stories resonated with you most, and why?
4. In Genesis 22, Isaac never says the word hineni, but he lives it by allowing his father to place the wood on his back and bind him to the altar. Pastor Chris said, "If you have seen the Father, then you have seen the Son." What does it look like in your own life when your actions say hineni even when your words do not?
5. The sermon pointed out that the first time the word "worship" appears in the Bible (Genesis 22:5), it is directly connected to hineni — and there is no instrument, no song, no stage. What does that tell us about what worship fundamentally is?
6. Pastor Chris said, "Authentic worship starts when you respond to Jesus, here I am." Do you feel there are areas of your life where you have not yet fully given God that response? What holds you back?

Going Deeper

7. The sermon identified several specific spheres where God may be asking for your hineni: marriage, parenting, singleness, the workplace, finances, the local church, and the wider world. Which of those areas feels most challenging for you right now, and why?
8. Pastor Chris shared that Jesus' hineni — his willingness to be sent — is what makes it possible for God to say to us, "Here I am" in our times of need (Isaiah 52:6, Isaiah 65:1). How does knowing that God himself says hineni to you change the way you think about giving your yes to him?
9. The sermon closed with the image of Pastor Chris throwing away worn-out sneakers in Israel and Rwanda as a personal act of worship and recommitment. He said, "God, you've got my yes again and again and again because this is my worship to you." What might a similar moment of intentional recommitment look like for you?

Practical Applications

Choose one or more of the following to put into practice before your group meets again:

- **Name your sphere.** Identify one specific area of your life — your home, your workplace, your finances, your community — where God is asking for your hineni. Write it down and pray over it daily this week.
- **Practice presence.** Choose one relationship in your life — a spouse, a child, a friend, a coworker — and make a deliberate effort to be fully present and available to that person this week as a reflection of the hineni God has shown you.
- **Pray the word.** Begin each morning this week by saying out loud, "Lord, here I am — fully present, available, no conditions. Redirect me however you will today." Notice how that posture shapes your day.
- **Find your yes.** Is there a place of service — in your church, your neighborhood, or beyond — where you have been hesitating? Take one concrete step this week toward saying yes.

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- **Share your story.** Pastor Chris asked, "Where has God brought you because you said yes?" Take time this week to write down or tell someone a story of what God has done in your life when you gave him your hineni. Gratitude fuels further worship.

Closing Prayer

Close your group time by praying together, asking God to move the truth of hineni from your heads into your hearts — and from your hearts into your lives. You may want to close with each person saying simply, "Lord, here I am" as an act of worship and surrender.