

Gospel shaped worship

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[0 : 00] Good, well welcome all. Good to see you. Good to see you Marion. Welcome back, Daniela Norena. I haven't seen you for a while. Lovely to see you in your usual position. And we've been praying for you with your house move. So, it's all gone well? Praise God. Yeah, great.

Thank you, Anika, for your playing this morning. I've been blessed, yeah. Sorry, Anika. Sorry. I'm in the process of switching Anika and Anika around, so please give me...

I'm calling Anika Anya and Anya Anika. I think it's getting older. We thank you for everyone that served. And we thank Rosemary Warburton for doing the church cleaning this week.

And it's a thankless task, isn't it, church cleaning? But Rosemary did a great job this week. So, we thank the Lord for those who clean the church building. And thank you so much, Rosemary, for that service of love that nobody sees apart from me and Anika.

Anya. Anika. Yeah. Oh, dear me. Can you imagine I'm a teacher? Thank you, Phil, for praying for me. Okay. So, let's recap the past sermons.

[1 : 16] So, hopefully this will work. I'm going to press the clicker lots of times, apparently. So, keep it authentic. That's what we saw, first of all, in 1 Timothy.

And remember, John Woods was here. Yep, a couple of weeks ago. I'm clicking, clicking, clicking. Apparently, Anika says it will come on. Okay, so it's a little letter with a big function.

It's clear, intentional, and authoritative. The Apostle Paul speaks by the command of God. He is passing on this message to younger protegee Timothy, a leader in the church in Ephesus.

It's relational. In verse 2, we saw that, didn't we? Timothy, my true son in the faith. It tells us what to avoid and what to embrace.

We looked at the false teaching. It was going on. It's about sticking close to Jesus. It's called a pastoral letter. And last week, the gospel-shaped life in 1 Timothy.

[2 : 22] Again, I've got to click like mad, apparently, until it comes on. Human nature is intrinsically flawed. We're sinful. The gospel viewpoint, every single human is broken.

Paul was the prototype of the worst of sinners. And we are as well, aren't we? The gospel is focused on repentance, not on counting our sins.

I really enjoyed that point from last week. Often we can focus on our sin. It's about repentance. And Christ came to save sinners. We must fight against sin and hold on to our faith in Christ.

So, really, Paul is focusing on the gospel, the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ, which has saved him, saved us.

Hallelujah. And this little letter is actually huge. It has a huge message for us. And principally, it's about the saving work of Jesus Christ for sinners.

[3 : 24] So, gospel-shaped worship today, looking at 1 Timothy 2, verses 1 to 7. I've got the easier part.

Phil's got the harder part, I think. It's important, isn't it? It's important, isn't it? That we, as the gathered people of God, think about the gospel.

What should gospel-shaped worship look like here at Calvary Church Brighton? What is good and pleasing to God, our Savior? They're good questions, aren't they, as we operate as a church? Health checks.

And to be an evangelical church. And if we don't come away encouraged, then you can sack me. So, gospel-shaped worship or gospel-centered worship.

[4 : 47] Well, I think prayer, that's what Paul is saying to Timothy. Prayer is important. It's centered on prayer.

Prayer. Paul is urging or encouraging Timothy in verse 1. That prayer is important.

First of all, do you see that? Of first importance. J.D. Greer says, The apostles, Acts 6, verse 4.

The apostles saw praying as being central to their leadership calling. As well as preaching. In Greek, prayer and ministry of the word are written to show two equal things.

Prayer for them was not merely a preparation for ministry. It was ministry. It was ministry. It was what Jesus has sent them to do in the world.

[6 : 07] The Heidelberg Catechism defines a church service as containing four things. Prayer for them. Learning what God's word teaches.

Participating in the sacraments. The Lord's Supper, baptism, etc. Praying publicly. Prayer for them. And making offerings to the poor.

Prayer matters to God. So it should matter to us as a church. Paul later goes on, you see, in verse 3.

And says this is pleasing to God. Or a delight to God. The psalmist says, He brought me out into a spacious place.

He rescued me because He delighted in me. Do you realize that prayer delights God? Shouldn't that motivate us to pray more and more to our Heavenly Father?

[7 : 12] He delights that we communicate with Him. That we pray to Him. It's like a candle. Have you ever lit a candle? A scented candle?

I did last night. The sweet smell permeates the air. Our prayers are a delightful aroma to God.

Do you remember when Noah and his clan came out of the ark with the animals. And sacrificed burnt offerings to the Lord. How does the Lord respond?

The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma. And said in His heart, Never again will I curse the ground because of humans. Never again will I destroy all living creatures.

Prayer, brothers and sisters, is a wonderfully powerful gift that we have as a church. And it's so important that we use it. We all use it.

[8 : 17] And I think particularly Paul is speaking about public prayer here. So it's important, first of all. It's important.

And we should have varied prayer. Did you see that in the text? V varied prayer. It says, How varied do we pray as a church here at Calvary?

There are all kinds of prayers, isn't there? It's asking God, petitions, general prayers of adoration, confession, which we did today.

Arrow prayers, family prayers, private prayer, public prayer. Praying fervently. Praying continuously. Praying persistently.

Intercession. Praying on behalf of others. And thanking God. As I said, most scholars think that Paul was addressing the church here through Timothy.

[9 : 23] But we can apply this in other settings, can't we? And throughout the Bible, we see God's people lifting up a variety of prayers in differing situations.

Do you recall Nehemiah shoots up an arrow prayer in front of Artaxerxes in a difficult time. David cries out to the Lord on many occasions when he is in distress.

The psalmist laments the state of Jerusalem. Elijah prays earnestly for rain to come down. Solomon prays for wisdom.

Abraham, perhaps one of the first prayers in the Bible, pleads for mercy for Sodom. Paul continually thanks God for the churches in Asia Minor in his letters.

Hannah, persistent prayer. We're looking at that this morning. And God answers prayer, we saw. Samuel, he hears our prayers. Mary praises, magnifies the Lord.

[10 : 34] So we as a congregation here at Calvary, we should be and can be praying broad prayers and specific prayers. And I think we did that this morning.

Phil did that. And that's very healthy for us as a church. We have a prayer diary. I've got one printed out here.

Do you know that we've got a prayer diary here at Calvary Church? We can pray for people individually. This is really good. I've got to admit, sometimes I do forget. But I think today was Victoria, Vicki and Louvo.

Edification of the body. The FIEC churches. Eastbourne. Peace Haven. Arabic churches.

Government policy. And godliness. The world. It gives a broad range.

It's a really good tool to pray. I encourage us to use that. And also the Sussex Gospel Partnership Diary. This is really good. To pray for other churches in our county.

[11:40] Prayer is important and we should pray widely. John Stott tells a story of visiting a church, probably on holiday, on one occasion. And the lay reader prayed that the pastor would have a restful holiday.

We've done that with Phil and Maria. It's okay. There's nothing more about it. It's good. Fantastic. He prayed that two ladies would recover from illness. Again, it's biblical to pray for the sick. We continually pray for the sick, don't we? That's fine. That's brilliant. However, that was it. The prayer lasted around 30 seconds, if not less. He says he came away sad. Sensing that this church worshipped a little village god of their own devising. There was no recognition of the needs of the world.

And no attempt to embrace the world in prayer. I know a local Sussex minister, after completing his sermon prep, spends most of his time thinking and writing his public prayer for the Sunday gathering.

[12:51] So, prayer is important for us, brothers and sisters. And very prayer is important.

And all sorts of people. Do you see that? For all people. Actually, that's... Those two words, all people, crop up in this text.

Do you notice that? Verse 6. All people. Verse 4. All people. Paul is thinking universally here. Do we pray for all kinds of people at Calvary Church? Well, this is the encouragement Paul gives to Timothy. All people. Do we pray outwardly as a church?

Realistically, one can't pray for each and every single person on the globe, can we? I think Paul is saying, as I said, think universally. Not just, perhaps, Jewish believers, but other people groups too.

[13:58] Paul goes on in verse 2. Do you see that? He highlights for kings and all those in authority. Perhaps we tend to forget this.

And that is why he points it out. Paul, at that time, I think, was living under the Roman Emperor Nero. Who was not a believer. And by most accounts, a cruel tyrant.

Yet, prayer for him should be made. And others in high positions. Christians are not called to revolt against authority.

There is a reason why. Did you see that in verse 2? God is interested in our well-being. His desire is that we should live in harmony. In a harmonious society. Going about our lives without fear. And being able to shine for him.

[15:06] And to share his gospel. The economy matters to God. Our benefit system matters to God. Our education system matters. Our safety.

Our employment. Healthcare matters. How the elderly are cared for matters to God. Nuisance graffiti matters to God. The police and justice system matter.

Matter. And prayer changes people and situations. As Phil was praying. Let's pray that President Putin would be wise.

And not invade Ukraine. Let's think how we can pray for those in authority intelligently. How can we pray for the Prime Minister.

His cabinet. And our MPs. Do you know our local MP is Caroline Lucas? I've asked her for prayer requests. I'm waiting for a reply from Caroline.

[16:05] Caroline. How can we pray for our counsellors. Pete West. Sue Shanks. And Lizzie Dean. I'm sure Phil can probably tell us tonight.

Let's pray for them. They've got to make important difficult decisions. Perhaps under pressure. Maybe. That they would make wise choices. And be people of integrity.

That would be a good prayer. Wouldn't it? Not be swayed by popular thinking. Ultimately. Ultimately. We should be praying for their salvation. That they would know the Lord Jesus Christ.

I was thinking. I wonder if there was a person. Or group. Praying for the Apostle Paul. Before he was saved. I think there probably was. So let's pray for our rulers.

That they would be honest. Servant hearted. And pass laws that help. The poor and the vulnerable. That promotes freedom. Of preaching the good news of Jesus Christ.

[17:11] Phil and Corin. Were at our lap meeting. Last week. I think this is a great way. Of praying intelligently. For our community. Let's pray for the needs.

Of our city. Of Preston Circus. So that we might live. Peaceful lives. This is God honouring. Perhaps we can pray. For those things tonight. And can you think of others in authority?

Think out of the box. I was thinking perhaps our heads. And teachers. At schools. In our local area. They're in authority aren't they? Do you know.

That there are some schools. In our city. That do not let. Good news for everyone. Formerly known as Gideon's. Distribute. Distribute. Bibles to year seven.

Isn't that sad? There are some. School leaders. That have blocked that. Let's pray that this would change. That God would intervene. So that children would have God's word.

[18:09] God. How. How. How can we pray for them? I was thinking we could actually pray that. God would raise up. Christian teachers.

Christian head teachers. In our city. People in authority make. Important decisions. That affect a lot of people. It's important. Who are our leaders.

We ought to pray that they act wisely. To help create a more wholesome. Safer. Cleaner. Happier society. Where we can proclaim Christ.

Easier. Personally. I have been blessed. The Olivet School. To witness about my faith to others. And this has only been made open to me.

Because of the management. Being Christian. Or in favour of Christian ethics. Praise the Lord. God is interested in our society.

[19:09] Thank him that we have a good measure of freedom and safety. To meet and proclaim the risen Christ. I think Phil prayed that earlier. Or was it Aaron?

I think. Thank God that we can go out to London Road on a Thursday. Hand out tracts. And tell others about the Christian faith. May that long continue in this city.

And let's pray for the underground church. That do not have our freedoms. We think of North Korea. We think of Saudi Arabia perhaps.

China. Let's not limit God in our prayers. They're for all sorts of people. Gospel shaped prayers. Are for the people.

The Gentiles. Everybody. And we have a harvest field here. Don't we? In Preston Circus. On our doorstep. Phil was reminding Annika and I.

[20:08] That thousands live. Thousands of students. Sorry. Live in this vicinity. In blocks of flats. Let's pray that we can reach these people. And give them the life giving message of Jesus Christ.

Let's continue to pray for other gospel churches in our city. As well as our county. It's great isn't it? That we pray for Grace Church.

Park Hill. Ebenezer. And other big churches like BH. We're together aren't we? We preach the same message. Let us lift up our brothers and sisters. It's healthy to pray and support each other. Let's continue to pray for those we know overseas. Let's lift up those that we know personally. It must be a great encouragement wasn't it?

For Joel. Victor. Newdiff. The clerks. To receive news. That we've been praying for them. It always touches me when someone says. I've been praying for you. Do you do that?

[21:10] Do you text them? Do you send them an email? You should do. Because that will really encourage them. And we can learn from the master. Can't we? The Lord Jesus Christ. In his book.

Just Ask. A book about prayer. J.D. Greer says. I won't put on the American accent. You might think. That if there was ever a person.

Who didn't need to pray. It would be Jesus. I mean. When you're God the Son. Shouldn't that give you sufficient self-confidence. To go through the day?

Yet the gospel shows. Christ's life. Was saturated with prayer. As a man. Jesus depended on communion. With the Father.

For his strength. And the fullness. Of the Spirit. For his power. Let's learn from the master. So.

[22:07] A gospel centered church. Is a praying church. Are we a praying church. At Calvary church. I think. We are a good praying church. But it's always good to. Recalibrate.

And ask that question. And a gospel centered church. Is evangelistic. As well. I think. The thrust. Of these verses. Here.

In chapter 2. Verses 1 to 7. Is about evangelism. It says. God. Verse 4. Who wants all people. To be saved.

And to come. To a knowledge. Of the truth. For there is one God. And one mediator. Between God. And mankind. The man. Christ Jesus.

Who gave himself. As a ransom. For all people. It's all about. Telling the good news. That Jesus Christ.

[23:02] Has died. And risen. For the lost. Isn't it? Going out there. Proclaiming the truth. God is very concerned. With our lives here. On earth. For justice.

And equity. To rule. As we've been thinking about. But sadly. As we know. This will not always be the case. Because we. Are sinners. We have another mandate.

Don't we? As a church. We should be in the business. Of proclaiming. That there is only one way. To be saved. For all people. That's the gospel.

Isn't it? The great commission. Is to go. And make disciples. Of all nations. Ethnos. A gospel centered church. Should be engaged.

In evangelism. And discipleship. Our focus. Must also be. Reaching the lost souls. Of our city. Ezekiel says.

[23 : 59] As surely as I live. Declares the sovereign Lord. I take no pleasure. In the death. Of the wicked. But rather. That they turn.

From their ways. And live. Turn. Turn. Turn from your evil ways. It's good.

To pause. And remember. That sometimes. This takes a long time. Doesn't it? Salvation doesn't happen overnight. It takes years. And we pray. Pray.

Don't we? For those in our family. Those friends. I know some of you. Have been praying for years. For people to come to faith. Let's keep.

Persisting. In prayer. Because God wants to save. All people. Let's encourage ourselves.

[24 : 55] That God is in the business. Of saving. Men. Women. Boys and girls. From their sins. And bringing them. Into his kingdom. Today.

Seems to be a day. Of small things. Doesn't it? We don't see many conversions. Well I haven't. Recently anyway. In these recent years. But that should not.

Stop us. It shouldn't discourage us. He uses us. As his tools. To spread the gospel. Into the highways. And byways.

Of our lives. A gospel centered church. Is evangelistic. We actually thought about that. Recently. In Phil's. Sermons. Before he stepped back.

But not all. All will come. To this truth. And be saved. That's the reality. Isn't it? There's a tension there. Many reject. This good news. And it's their responsibility. It's their fault.

[25 : 56] Paul makes it clear. That not all. Will be saved. And we see that. In Timothy itself. If you want to turn over the page. 1 Timothy 4. Verse 1. Says.

The spirit clearly says. That in later times. Some will abandon the faith. And follow deceiving spirits. And things taught by demons.

And again. In chapter 5. Verse 24. It says. The sins of some. Are obvious.

Reaching the place of judgment. Ahead of them. The sins of others. Trail behind them. In the same way. Good deeds. Are obvious. Sorry.

That's. That's the. The 24. People. So. People are. Lost in sin. And sadly. People are. Not going to be saved.

[26 : 56] In Matthew. Chapter 7. Jesus says. Enter by the narrow gates. For the gate is wide. And the way is easy. That leads to destruction. And those who enter by it.

Are many. For the gate is narrow. And the way is hard. That leads to life. And those who find it. A few. And also Matthew.

It says. Then he will say to those. On his left. Depart from me. You cursed. Into the eternal fire. Prepared for the devil. And his angels.

This is the tension. God will not save everyone. But at the same time. The offer. Of salvation. Is universal. It goes out.

There is only. One God. For everyone. And one. Mediator. Between men. Verse 5. The man Christ.

[28 : 02] Jesus. The Brits. Worship this God. The Thais. Worship Buddha. The Irish. Worship that God. No. No. No.

No. No. No. No. There is only one God. Stott says. An intermediary. Must be able. To represent. Both sides. Equally.

This was Job's longing. If only. There was someone. To arbitrate. Between us. To lay his hand. Upon us.

Both. Love. And in Jesus Christ. Job's pathetic cry. Has been answered. For he is both.

God. And man. And therefore. Able. To mediate. Between us. There is a gap. Between humanity.

[29 : 00] And God. And there is only one person. Who can step in. No other person. No other person. Can do this. No other religion. No other. No other philosophy. It's only Jesus Christ.

Paul has been remarkably changed. Through this man's life. Death. And resurrection. Now. He is a herald. To this message. And one to all nations. Do you see that?

In verse 7. One of my favourite writers. Said this recently. The gospel is not fair. Fairness. Would have us all facing. The tempestuously. Angry God. With our sins unforgiven. It is unfair. That some. Should receive heaven. Through what Christ. Has done. The God. Of the Bible. Is partisan. He takes sides.

[29 : 59] He delights. In those. Who are clean. In his sight. Righteous. Before him. The word for this. Is grace.

So. To conclude. Corporate prayer is important. Isn't it brothers and sisters? That's what. Paul is saying here. To Timothy.

To Timothy. As he gives him the baton. To lead the church. What is your attitude. To public prayer? Is your desire.

To be with God's people. At the prayer meeting. Do you see it as a privilege? Do you see the importance.

Of evangelism. Do we as a church. To pray for those who are saved. Are we doing these things. Rightly as a church. Perhaps we can discuss these topics tonight.

[31 : 01] And pray about them. So let's ask the Lord. To help us in these things. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

We thank you for the gift of prayer. Thank you that we come. To the triune God. Through Jesus Christ. There is only one mediator. Between man and God.

The man Christ Jesus. We thank you for the privilege of prayer. Thank you that our prayers. Are answered. Perhaps not in our ways. But you are supreme.

Lord please help us as a church. To pray a right. To pray broad prayers. To pray narrow prayers. Lord help us.

To think about other people. Lord we thank you for this wonderful gift. Help us to be a church. Of evangelism. Reaching the lost. Lord. Please.

[32 : 02] Give us creativity with this. Give us understanding. Because your heart is to save. The lost. Your heart is for everyone. To come.

And bow the knee Lord. We ask this in Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.