

Worshipping Transforms Our Everyday Actions

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[0 : 00] Now there's so much in this passage that we could draw from today. It is the very purpose of what we were created to do, who we were created to be. It's really exciting. There's so much we could get from just a small section and I would really encourage you guys to go home this week and ponder on this passage and see if there's anything else that strikes you about this word other than what we're going to try and draw from today. But for today I really hope that we may go away remembering that worshipping transforms our everyday actions with love, with forgiveness and with thankfulness.

And the first thing to note from this passage at the very beginning, Paul says to the Colossians, you are God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved. And that's the same for us reading it today. We are God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved. Before we even knew how to love God or even knew God ourselves, he first loved us and first chose us. And that's what worship is about, giving God back that love and that glory that he so deserves, giving God the worth, worthship. So that's what we're talking a bit about today.

And something Paul is really excited to talk to the Colossians about is this new way of living, this new pattern of living, this new rhythm of life. It brings fulfillment to our lives and he's talking about it through love and forgiveness and thanksgiving.

I've got a little story to tell to you about a moment in my life where I was regularly going to summer festivals, summer Christian festivals, which were a real highlight of my year. They sustained me, they gave me a real buzz and them in themselves are great things to go along to.

But there came a time where God really opened my eyes to realize that this thing I was living for, for the one week of the year, was meaning that I was missing out on a lot in the rest of the year.

[2 : 45] My rest of the year was pretty mundane, didn't really include God, didn't need God. I was all right on my own because I knew I was getting a buzz later on in the year. But God was saying, you're missing out, you're missing out on me in the every day. So I decided to take a little break from those festivals and try and get that hunger for God in the every day, try and see him in my everyday mundane life. And it was really interesting how that hunger developed and how I noticed things and was able to be thankful and prayer for what was going on. And I'll come back to that story later on.

But Paul is talking about putting on these Christ-like attributes, these Christ-like things, not living in a destructive or selfish way, which he's actually talked about a little bit before this passage. Instead, he's saying, put on these new behaviour patterns, put on compassion and kindness and humility and gentleness and patience. Put them on. But most importantly, worshipping transforms our everyday actions with love. Above all, he says, put on love. Now, if I was to take the clothing analogy a little bit too far, which I'm going to, I was thinking, if compassion was, say, our T-shirts and maybe kindness were our shorts. Love would probably be our underwear, I think. It's the most essential thing. It's the thing that you would not walk out of the house without wearing. You need to put on your underwear. You need to put on love. It's the first thing. It's most important.

If we're kind, if we're gentle, but we don't have love, what are we doing? What are we doing those things for? Love is our essential underwear. Clothe yourselves in love. Now, that's easy for me to say and easy for us to do when we love those who we know love us. We love those who we really admire and think are amazing. But we also know that that's not just what God is calling us to.

He's saying love. Love all. Love like Christ loves. I don't remember it. I wonder what it felt like for Christ to love those who were casting lots over his clothes while he was hanging there on the cross. Or what it was like for him to love those who completely disagreed with his teaching. Or even what it was like for Christ to love those who continually got it wrong and continually disobeyed his father, God.

Which perhaps is a lot like that for us. But Christ loves each one of us, even as we are. As we come to Jesus Christ and we give our whole selves to him, we get just a glimmer of that magnificent love that we receive. And this love is not just for us, is it? It's for sharing, it's for showing others this love that we've received which we can give over and show others.

[6 : 52] So close yourselves in it. Let others see and experience the love that Christ has given you. And moving on to my next point that love mustn't just come on its own. Love includes forgiveness.

Love includes forgiveness. We forgive because God forgives. That person who really irritates you or who you'd rather avoid on the street.

God forgives and loves and died for just as much as he did for you. Worshipping transforms our everyday actions with forgiveness.

For us, we do not need to operate out of fear or striving to be good enough. Because God says, for you I've forgiven you. You are good enough.

You are good. I am good enough. We are God's chosen people. We have received forgiveness.

The most powerful form of acceptance.

[8 : 05] And forgiveness is the Christ-like way that we are also called to live in community.

Forgiveness is the way that we're called into community to love others. So, as we come to worship, as we worship God just as we are, in our brokenness, in our fallenness, and we come to know the forgiveness that God pours out on us, in community, when we forgive others, we are showing that powerful action of God's love.

We're showing it back to others. So, as forgiven children, we are gifted with the grace to forgive others. And again, just as loving can be hard, forgiving can be hard, especially when we're caught up in anger or resentment towards someone else.

But when we remember God's grace on our lives, on your life, even you, wouldn't you wish for others to know that feeling of acceptance when we realise what God has done for us?

Wouldn't we wish that on others? So, worshipping also recognising that forgiveness. Worshipping transforms our everyday actions with thanksgiving.

[9 : 53] With thanksgiving. Just to recap to that story, when I was kind of living a bit of a mundane life, hoping for the buzz of the Christian festival in the weeks to come, I was waiting for that mountaintop experience.

God opened my eyes to be thankful to him in the everyday. Thankful for friendships, thankful for lovely weather, thankful for the provision of food, ability to walk around, for the gift of knowing God, for the gift of God revealing himself to us.

And as we choose to be thankful in everything, our hearts change, our eyes are opened to see as God sees.

And the more we're thankful for things, it's like it's contagious. The more we want to be thankful for things, the more it kind of spurs up from within. Thankfulness spurs thankfulness.

I used to commute to work when I was living in London, and sometimes I would take the opportunity to pray for those who were also commuting in to work.

[11 : 18] So I'd be on my bike, thinking about overtaking this other person, but actually then stopping and thinking, no, I'm going to pray for you while I cycle behind you. Because God loves them as much as he loves me.

And I don't know if they know God or not, and I don't know what's going on in their lives, but God does. And so actually I can engage in what God might be doing in their lives by praying for them, praying thankfulness over them for that day, which is perhaps a bit strange.

Perhaps you might think, well, what's the benefit in that? You're not going to see the results. But does that matter? The gift is that we get to engage in what God is doing around us.

We get to partake in what he is about. God is in the now. He's working around us. He's prompting us to engage in it. So as we worship our God and acknowledge all that he has done, even the fact that he has adopted us as sons and daughters into his family, he has called us and he has fitted us for a purpose.

How can we not be thankful? How can we not want to engage in what he's doing? I wonder when June was asking what was going on in your week this week, I wonder if there is anything that God is prompting you to be thankful about today.

[12 : 54] What's going on around your life today that God is engaged in? And it is a joy to engage in what God is doing.

It's a bit like a child operating in a playground. Sometimes you make mistakes or trip up and fall over, but God is the parent just watching and affirming and picking you back up and saying, have another go.

Here's another activity. Here's another apparatus to have a play with. Here's another person to speak to. Here's another person in need. Here's another person you can encourage.

God is so involved in our lives and it's a joy. It's a playground. When we worship and keep our eyes focused on Jesus, in love and as we forgive others and as we recognise and are thankful to God and give him the glory, we begin to see as God sees, which is just an incredible gift.

He might start to reveal a heart for the hungry or he might give you a real passion for justice or a compassion for your neighbour.

[14 : 24] He might give you the boldness to speak to someone that you haven't spoken to before. God is at work in our lives and it's a joy to engage in it.

And the great thing to note is that it's never a burden. It's not ours to hold. It's God at work. It's us to take part in.

It's a bit like, I wasn't going to share this, but it's a bit like when, if you imagine a surfer, when he's riding a wave, we're the surfer and God is the power behind the wave and we just get to enjoy that power and ride along with it.

God is at work and we get to take part. We get to enjoy. So as I come to close, let us remember to put on our essential underwear and wear love above all those other things.

Wear love so others can see. Not see your underwear, obviously. Just to know. So others can see your love is shining through.

[15 : 44] And let us forgive because God forgives us. Because God forgives us, it's a gift to forgive others. And let us be thankful in all.

Let us give God back the glory that he deserves, the worship that he deserves. So transforming, worshipping, transforms our everyday actions because worship becomes our everyday actions. It transforms us because worship is our everyday actions.