

PM Malachi 1:6-2:9 Worship the LORD

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[0 : 0 0] This evening to the book of Malachi, and we're going to be reading from chapter 1, verse 6 through into chapter 2. If you're using the church Bible, that's on page 968.

So Malachi, the last book in the Old Testament. We considered the early part of chapter 1 this morning, and we're going to be looking now this evening at this section of the book, and we're going to start reading chapter 1 and verse 6.

A son honours his father, and a servant his master. If then I am the father, where is my honour? And if I am a master, where is my fear?

Says the Lord of hosts to you, O priests, who despise my name. But you say, how have we despised your name? By offering polluted food upon my altar.

But you say, how have we polluted you? By saying that the Lord's table may be despised. When you offer blind animals in sacrifice, is that not evil?

[1 : 1 1] And when you offer those that are lame or sick, is that not evil? Present that to your governor. Will he accept you or show you favour? Says the Lord of hosts.

And now entreat the favour of God, that he may be gracious to us. With such a gift from your hand, will he show favour to any of you? Says the Lord of hosts. O that there were one among you who would shut the doors, that you might not kindle fire on my altar in vain.

I have no pleasure in you, says the Lord of hosts. And I will not accept an offering from your hand. For from the rising of the sun to its setting, my name will be great among the nations.

And in every place, incense will be offered to my name and a pure offering. For my name will be great among the nations, says the Lord of hosts.

But you profane it when you say that the Lord's table is polluted, and its fruit, that is its food, may be despised. But you say, what a weariness this is.

[2 : 1 9] And you snort at it, says the Lord of hosts. You bring what has been taken by violence, or is lame, or sick, and this you bring as your offering. Shall I accept that from you, says the Lord?

Cursed be the cheat who has made a male in his flock, and vows it, and yet sacrifices to the Lord what is blemished. For I am a great king, says the Lord of hosts, and my name will be feared among the nations.

And now, O priests, this command is for you. If you will not listen, if you will not take it to heart, to give honour to my name, says the Lord of hosts, then I will send the curse upon you, and I will curse your blessings.

Indeed, I have already cursed them, because you do not lay it to heart. Behold, I will rebuke your offspring, and spread dung on your faces, the dung of your offerings, and you shall be taken away with it.

So shall you know, that I have sent this command to you. That my covenant with Levi may stand, says the Lord of hosts. My covenant with him was one of life and peace, and I gave them to him.

[3 : 32] It was a covenant to fear, and he feared me. He stood in awe of my name. True instruction was in his mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips.

He walked with me in peace and uprightness, and he turned many from iniquity. For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and people should seek instruction from his mouth, for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts.

But you have turned aside from the way. You have caused many to stumble by your instruction. You have corrupted the covenant of Levi, says the Lord of hosts.

And so I make you despised, and abased before all the people, inasmuch as you do not keep my ways, but show partiality in your instruction.

Amen. So reads God's word. Well, as we come to God's word tonight, then, we're going to be considering that passage that we read a few moments ago from Malachi, starting in chapter 1 and running through into chapter 2.

[4 : 46] The structure of the book of Malachi, as we said this morning, can be broken down into six debates between God and the people. So God speaking through the prophet to the people of Israel.

And we looked at the first of those this morning, the debate there about the love of God. God affirming his love for his people, and the people questioning God's love.

And as we said this morning, that is very much a foundational matter, a foundational debate. It's God, in a sense, laying out to the people the whole basis of his relationship with them.

And that is his love for them. And then once that is established, then, in a sense, everything else flows out from that. It's the shortest of the debates in this book, but in many ways, it's the most fundamental.

And so tonight, we're going to move on from that foundation, and we're going to look at the second debate that we find in the passage that we read, spanning through chapter 1, verse 6, into chapter 2, verse 9.

[5 : 51] It's the longest debate in the book. And I would suggest to you that we might infer from that that it is a much-needed subject to be addressed.

And I think it was very much needed in the time the prophet was speaking. And it's a subject, I think, that we would do well to address in our own times. And it's the subject of the worship of God.

We could think of it a little bit like a house or a building. Without a foundation, there's nothing that's going to stand. If you build a building without foundations, it's going to fall down.

There's no point putting an impressive building up if there are now no foundations. But built correctly, a beautiful building with foundations, it's wonderful.

But the thing that catches the eye is the beautiful building, isn't it? You don't see the foundations. It's under the ground. You have to kind of know it's there to even appreciate it.

[6 : 57] They may even seem quite small, but they have to be substantial in order to support a grand building on the top. And in a similar way, the foundational debate that we looked at this morning about the love of God needs to be in place before anything else can be discussed in terms of the relationship between God and his people.

It may only take a few lines. It's just, what, four verses, effectively, of this book of Malachi. But it's substantial in its importance.

But then on top of this foundation, you see what we're now getting is this matter of a debate on worship. And the worship of God, in a sense, is like the big building that you see based on the foundations that you don't see.

It's the visible actions of God's people. That's what worship is. It's the visible response of God's people to God's love towards them.

It's based on this foundational truth of God's sovereign and unwarranted love for his people. It's his people's response to that.

[8 : 0 6] It should be their loving, worshipful response. There's an old story told. I'm not sure who first told it. I remember my father telling this story of three bricklayers working on a building site and somebody passing by.

And the passerby walked up to the first bricklayer and said, what are you doing? And the man said, well, can't you see? I am laying bricks. And the passerby went on.

And he came to the second bricklayer and asked the same question. What are you doing? And the second bricklayer said, well, I'm helping to build a wall. So the passerby went on. He came up to the third bricklayer and said, what is it that you're doing?

And the third bricklayer said, I'm helping to build a house. And what's more, it's going to be a great house. It's going to be a palace. It's for a king.

Three bricklayers, you see, all doing the same thing, laying bricks. But their perceptions of what they're doing were totally different. And I wonder, what would your reply have been to somebody in the street tonight as you walked into the church building if they'd said to you, what are you doing?

[9 : 1 6] What are you going to do when you go in through that door? Perhaps it might have been the response of the first bricklayer. I'm laying bricks. Well, what does that mean? Well, I'm going into this building.

I'm going to sing psalms. I'm going to say prayers. I'm going to listen to a sermon. Maybe it would be, well, I'm coming along because I see myself as part of the community of God's people.

And we want to give testimony to God. And especially as we're in days when there is very little testimony to God. So I'm coming to do that by singing psalms and praying and listening to God's preached word.

Well, all true, isn't it? Or maybe, and I trust that this might have been your response or something similar. I've come here this evening to engage in the most wonderful thing that ever a man or woman can do in this life.

I'm here to join with God's people. I'm here to join with God's people who are filled with the Spirit. I'm here to join with God's people along with the angels and the archangels to join with the great company in heaven magnifying and glorifying the name of the almighty God and his son, Jesus Christ.

[1 0 : 3 3] I'm coming here to worship God. You see, that's what we're here to do tonight, isn't it? And we can only do that if we've got the foundations right.

If we remember God's love and his faithfulness towards us and we come here in a loving, worshipful response to his love towards us.

And you see, the way that the Israelites were coming to worship God and the way that we indeed come to worship God was the basis of this debate here in our passage, debate number two.

Now, we don't have time to look at all aspects of the whole passage. There's a lot there. So what we're going to do is a bit of an overview of what we've read and then we're going to concentrate on some specific lessons that we can draw from verses six through nine in chapter one.

So the overview then. And God starts off the debate there in verse six. He references the dual relationships with the people that he has. And the relationships are the relationship of father and the relationship of master.

[11 : 41] And he accuses the priests and by implication the people as well of despising his name. Of not honoring him. And just in the same way as in the pattern that we saw this morning in the first debate God makes this accusation that people respond.

The priests respond in this sort of incredulous manner. And they say, well, how have we despised your name? How? You see, the temple had been rebuilt.

Temple worship had been re-established. And the priests here are saying, well, what's your problem, God? We're doing all this stuff. We're acting like priests.

We're doing the sacrifices and so on. What's the problem? So God answers them and it's verses seven through to verse 14. And he answers them in no uncertain terms to show them that the worship of him is actually completely unacceptable in the way that they are doing it.

In fact, it's so unacceptable to him that he says, I wish there was one of you who would lock the doors up. Shut the church up. Shut the temple so that you cannot abuse my worship.

[12 : 57] The priests, you see, call it worship. But God says, no, no, it's nothing of the sort. You're breaking my laws.

You're breaking my regulations about the sacrifices to me. You're bringing flawed offerings to me, says God. And he illustrates this in verse eight with reference to the Persian governor.

Now it's an accusation against the priests and the people that are illustrated from something that they would have been familiar with. There are carvings from the palace of the Persian king of the time that show processions of servants and people bringing food and livestock to the king.

And God says to them, you wouldn't dare bring flawed livestock. You wouldn't dare bring rotting fruit as you're offering to the governor.

So God says, so why do you do it to me? If you wouldn't dare bring a flawed offering to him, what are you doing with my offerings? Imagine how shocking it must have been for the people to hear the prophet's message from God that because of these flawed offerings, God is saying, I want to lock up the temple doors.

[14 : 16] I want to stop this altogether. That's how bad it is. In verse 10, there perhaps seems to be an element even of God's despair for his people where he says, if only there was one of you who understood how bad things have got and took action.

That's what God seems to be saying there. But no, he says, there isn't even one of you. You're all condemned. You see, God's rejection of their worship and God's rejection of their actions is total.

He has no delight in the priests and the way they're practicing their worship is unacceptable to him. But then we get this little glimpse from the prophet of God's ultimate victory there in verse 11.

And even if the worship of God's people at this time is unacceptable, God is saying, I will bring my purposes to pass. Your faulty worship is not going to stop the eventual bringing to pass of my purposes.

You will not thwart my purposes. And we get this wonderful sort of prophetic view, really, of the future beyond Old Testament times. And surely we've got God here pointing forward to the New Testament times when the gospel is going to go abroad.

[15 : 35] It's going to go to all corners of the world. It's looking forward to the time when all day long, from the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun, God's name will be praised. He will be great among the nations.

Now, we may not be living in the complete fullness of those times, but we're certainly living in times that can't be far off it, aren't we? And we have knowledge of it. I'm sure that there's many of you here tonight who do missionaries in all different parts of the world.

There's people here week by week, aren't there, from different parts of the world. There's people here tonight from Brazil, the other side of the world to us. There were people here this morning from Iran, the other side of the world to us.

I've been privileged in the work that I am involved in to travel to different parts of the world over the last 25 years or so and meet Christians. China, Australia, Hawaii even.

Meeting Christians, gathering with Christians, worshipping with Christians, and these are the times that we live in. We're seeing a fulfilment of this prophecy here, even in our own day.

[16 : 54] God's name indeed is being praised even tonight among the nations. And from the rising of the sun to the setting, I mean, you know, think about time zones. I've been in places in the world where I've been 10, 11 hours behind.

I've been placed in the world where I've been 10, 11 hours ahead. And when I'm 10, 11 hours behind, I'm thinking about my home and the fact the church met 10, 11 hours before.

When I'm the other way around, I'm thinking about the fact that I'm worshipping God today, 10, 11 hours time, my family are going to be going to church to do the same thing. From the rising of the sun to the setting of the sun.

God's name is being praised. But then God returns to his people again, verse 12 to 14. And again, he condemns them again for their unacceptable worship and their sneering attitude towards him.

And then as we move on into chapter 2, God addresses the priests. And he uses Levi as an example of how they should be acting. Levi is the example to the priests of what they should be doing.

[18 : 00] And God warns the priests of the consequences of carrying on in their own ways. And he sets out for them there in verse 7 the truth that they should be the messenger.

They should be carrying the truth of God to his people. And they're not. It's a very solemn passage. And I think in what God, through his prophet in Malachi, is saying to the people there, it speaks to us very loudly today.

And we would do well to remember that not all that labels itself worship even in our day and age is pleasing to God. We can be very sincere in our worship but we can be wrong.

You see, sincerity is not the criterion for determining what should happen when God's people come together to worship him. God sets out his standards in the scriptures and that's his word.

God sets out his word. And he expects them to be followed. And you see, without a spirit-filled focus on Jesus and his salvation, a focus on the love of God towards us and his mercy, dare I say even that without this God would rather that we shut up the doors of the church and had no worship at all?

[19 : 17] Because that's what he's saying to his people in the Old Testament. And he's the same God, isn't he, today? He'd rather have no worship than worship that obscures his glory.

Worship that pulls the glory and the focus to us. Worship that gives no recognition to what God has done for us and deserving sinners that we are.

And so, I think what we should ask ourselves then when we come to worship God week by week, the question we have to ask is what will there be about the service of worship today, tonight, this morning, whenever, that's pleasing to God?

Because that's the question. What about this is going to be pleasing to God? I wonder, is that a question that we ask? Or are we perhaps more likely to ask questions such as well what can I get from the service today?

Will the service today meet my needs? Will we sing things I like to sing? And are we going to use tunes that I like when we sing?

[20 : 28] We perhaps wonder, will the preacher be any good this week? Maybe it's not questions that we ask, but maybe it's things that in the back of our minds almost subconsciously we think.

Do we come here week by week hoping that, well, I hope the service isn't too long today because we've got lots of things to get away and do for the rest of the day. Maybe, I hope the service isn't too long this morning because I've got dinner in the oven at home and it might spoil if the service is too long.

Maybe we come here week by week to see our friends, people that we haven't seen for the rest of the week and we want to meet up again with them. Maybe you come because somehow you're afraid of missing out. You're not quite sure what it is you might miss out on, but you come because you're afraid you might miss out on something.

That's why you're here. But you see, no, we come, don't we, to worship the almighty God and our question should be, will our worship be acceptable to him?

That's the question we should ask. Well, you might well ask, well, how do we know what pleases him? How do we know that? And we can start to answer that question, I think, by looking a little more closely now at verses 6 through to 9.

[21 : 39] And the first thing that we can notice is that there is a characteristic of worship that pleases God. There are two particular things that God tells us here in these verses.

Firstly, our worship of him has to be like the honour that a son has for his father. It's there in verse 6. A son honours his father, says God. And so our worship of God must be patterned on the honour of a son to the father.

I'm sure everybody here will be familiar with the fifth commandment. If you can't remember, it's honour your father and mother. It's what children should do. And we're all children, aren't we?

And you see, a failure to honour our parents, scripture condemns. And in a very vivid way in Proverbs 30, for instance, verse 11, Proverbs 30, there are those who curse their fathers and do not bless their mothers.

And what will happen to them? Well, that's given to us in verse 17 of Proverbs 30. The eye that mocks a father and scorns to obey a mother will be picked out by ravens of the valley and eaten by the vultures.

[22 : 42] That's a pretty graphic portrayal, isn't it? Of the consequences of the failure to honour parents. We can look elsewhere, too, to see what honour should look like.

Paul spells it out, Ephesians 6, about children honouring parents. And what does that include? Well, it includes obedience. Ephesians 6, 1, children obey your parents in the Lord.

For this is right. And he goes on to quote verse 2, the fifth commandment. How do we honour our parents? Well, it's by obedience in the Lord. And that's not blind obedience, is it?

Not obedience when they tell us to do things that are contrary to God's commands, but obedience in the Lord. In other words, obedience in the ways of the Lord that our parents instruct us in.

In the Old Testament, we've got a number of times where God refers to himself as the father to Israel. And we display honour to the father by our obedience to his commands.

[23 : 53] And you see, God here in Malachi is saying to the people, this is what you're supposed to do. If a father should honour their earthly, sorry, if a son should honour their earthly father, and show obedience to their earthly father, then how much more should you, my children, my spiritual children, how much more should you honour me, your heavenly father?

And how much more should you obey me, your heavenly father? Obey my word that I've given you. You see, God expects honour and obedience.

And in their false worship, they were given him neither. The lesson for us then, when we come to God in worship, it should be characterised by honouring him and obedience to him.

But the second characteristic of worship God lays out here in verse 6, and that is the respect, the reverence, the fear of a servant towards the master. You see, honour towards a master includes this thing called fear.

We've got examples of servants in the Old Testament and perhaps one of the best known is Abraham's servant in Genesis 24. He's sent off to the homelands to find a bride for Isaac.

[25 : 11] He travels probably 300 plus miles to find a bride in obedience to his master, finds the lady, brings her back another 300 plus miles. He was a model servant who obeyed his master.

And then of course we've got things in the New Testament too that reflect on this. 1 Peter 2.18 and Ephesians 6 where Peter in the one instance and Paul in the other give instructions to slaves in the New Testament and the instruction could be summarized by obey your masters with respect and fear.

And then you have in the Old Testament God referring to Israel again as my servant. So again he's emphasizing another place in the Old Testament to you are my servants and that implies a relationship of respect and fear.

It's a servant master relationship that should exist. And God again here in Malachi is saying this is what should be there but in your worship you're not displaying this.

You're not giving me the honour and the fear that is due to me as your master. If the servant you see is due to give a response of respect and reverence and obedience and fear of the master to their earthly master then how much more God is saying should this be due to me your heavenly God.

[26 : 38] And this should be true to us shouldn't it? It's a mark a characteristic of true worship and it should be a mark of our worship too. Do we worship God with reverence? Do we worship God with awe?

Do we worship God in servanthood obedience? And do we worship God in reverential fear? You see these are the two marks of true worship required in Malachi's day.

Honour like the son to the father and honour and fear like the servant to the master. Today things are no different. God's the same God. It requires true worship from his people and these two characteristics should again be present.

So solemn duty you know that we have to worship God. We have to worship in his ways in spirit in truth in filial obedience in servanthood obedience and godly fear.

And we need to ask ourselves as we worship God week by week is this the motivation and the spirit of our worship? Do we come with that frame in mind? Do we come in that spirit? Did we come in that frame of mind tonight coming here?

[27 : 46] We sing our psalms that's great. We speak our prayers with a hearty amen I trust and that's good. We hear God's word read and preached and that's a good thing. But is it all characterised by a sense of reverence and awe?

Knowing that we are in the presence here tonight of the one true God the one who is glorious who's been gracious towards us so much so that he sent his son to come into this world to die on the cross to bear the penalty for our sins.

Reverence and awe. Filial fear. Well there's some practical things I think this implies when we come to church in the light of honouring God with obedience a practical thing how do we hear God's word?

Do we come with a worshipful heart so when we hear God's word preached we aren't just assessing what pleasure it's given to us to hear that message today. What a terrible sermon we might say today or what a wonderful sermon we had today.

We're looking at the quality of the sermon is that how we come? Or do we come with worshipful hearts? So when the sermon is being preached when God's word is being expounded do we come with worshipful hearts?

[28 : 59] Not worship of the minister and his skills or lack of skills in preaching but we come seeking to engage we come with a desire to engage in the hearing of God's word and we come with a desire to obey God's word as we hear it being preached remembering that true worship you see is honouring with obedience.

But then something else when we come to church we sing God's praises are our hearts in it? Do we bring true spiritual devotion to our singing? Do we honour our father and our master in our singing?

Or do we just mumble through the words? and our hearts aren't really in it perhaps we don't even sing? We're singing praise to our great God a great God who saved us a God who we owe everything to and we owe allegiance to a God who expects our spirit-filled God-honouring worship it's just too easy isn't it to bumble through the singing oh we like that tune but we don't really think about what words we're singing you see that's not God-honouring worship we shouldn't be switching off when we sing it's not just a chance to stand up and stretch our legs a little bit it's an integral part you see of worshipping the almighty God we should sing with our hearts and our minds engaged sing with reverence and awe another practical outworking of this need to bring acceptable worship to God is this it's a question how do we prepare for worship how are we prepared for worship it's perhaps true that sometimes we can bring less than our best just as the

Israelites were bringing less than their best we can do the same in the way we come to worship because our minds and hearts haven't been prepared for it maybe we just dash out of the house we rush into church we listen to the call to worship we grab the psalter from underneath the chair in front of us and off we go and we think we're worshipping but we're not prepared you see the priests and the high priests especially were to prepare themselves to worship and entering the temple and the people too the people of God had to prepare before they entered the temple and we should be prepared when we come to church let's prepare our hearts and our minds now what might that mean well probably doesn't apply to many people in the congregation tonight but I'll use it just as an example and you can work it out from there it perhaps starts the night before Saturday night late nights on a Saturday night especially for youngsters well they're a matter of choice often sometimes they're unavoidable fine that is true but late nights can all too easily ruin and destroy worship on a

Sunday morning you stay up half the night and then you struggle to drag yourself out of bed on a Sunday morning you get to church 1030 maybe well don't be surprised if that's you if at the end of the service you think to yourself that was a terrible service well who's to blame well no one but you you see here in our passage the Israelites were bringing animal sacrifices of animals that were lame animals that were sick animals that were blind animals with defects that that God says this is totally unacceptable why do you think then he'd accept our worship when we come to him unprepared tired out from the late night that we choose to have you see just as with the Israelites no preparation meant unacceptable worship then so too for us the preparation for worship is more than just the night before and it goes on right up to the start of the service sometimes times there are unavoidable delays to us leaving the house and getting to church and if the devil can get in the way of our preparations you know he will it's amazing our children are all grown up now but I know there are young children here it's amazing to me how often things happen on a Sunday morning or just before church on a

[33 : 06] Sunday evening that that never seem to happen any other time and they disturb our preparations for worship why do you think that is well the devil doesn't want you here that's a very good reason why that happens you see how we are when we get here affects our preparation for worship are we in a total lather because we've been rushing because just at the last minute well the baby filled the nappy and they've got to get changed before we leave the house perfect legitimate thing to have to do but it's not the best preparation for worship is it because it's left us rushing perhaps we're in this room ahead of time but but we're not taking time to quieten ourselves to think about what we're here to do we're having a little chat with our neighbors or whatever it might be lack of preparation you see for the Israelites made their worship unacceptable let's make sure our preparation for worship week by week is appropriate and is God honoring but preparation for worship isn't just about physical presence but also mental presence isn't it do we come here prepared to do mental battle are we coming to to worship prepared to have a mind exercising time with God's people and particularly do we come to actively engage with the preaching of

God's word preacher once said this they said if you come expecting to be bored don't be surprised if you're not disappointed so did you come here tonight expecting to be bored in this part of the service well if you did you're probably not disappointed right now you see when we come to worship we have to come with our minds and our hearts engaged we should come expecting to listen we should come expecting to to wrestle with the text as the preacher preaches trying to understand wanting to do the best that we can with our minds and our understanding so that we can be not just hearers of God's word but we can be doers of God's word and we can leave this place and put these things into practice and why should we even bother about that why should we care about that why should we care about that because we want to progress don't we in our Christian lives do you not pray that God day by day would sanctify you more fill you more with his spirit bringing increasing honour to him to enable us to live lives that bring glory to him that's why these things matter you see now it's absolutely true that preachers have a responsibility to try to make things understandable and clear and declare the whole truths from the

Bible that's absolutely true and help the hearer to make sense of God's word and apply it in their lives but you know as hearers we must never use the inability of the preacher as an excuse when we ourselves are not prepared to wrestle with the message I got nothing from today's sermon we might say but the question is this is that because we came to church unprepared not willing to make an effort to engage with God not willing to make an effort to engage in God honouring worship not willing to have our minds engaged and if the preacher couldn't make that message so simple that a two year old in the service could understand it then the fact that we got nothing from it well it's his fault not my fault I'm not prepared to work at this you see if that's us then the reality is that we came to church tonight for a bit of a snooze and that's not acceptable worship in

God's eyes but then finally we could be forgiven for thinking that what we have here in the second debate in Malachi is a picture of doom and gloom and as we've been looking at some of the applications to ourselves we might again be thinking well that's doom and gloom too I could never live up to that kind of an expectation I just couldn't do that God's standards are too much for me and in some senses you know that's right in some senses that's absolutely right we are God's people we are sinners but we're saved by grace and nonetheless we are sinners and that can affect the way that we come to worship God and even if we try to get things as right as we possibly can then even our very best is always tainted by sin isn't it but you see in chapter 2 God pronounces his curse on the priests and the people but I think he's also offering a hope chapter 2 verse 2 if you will not listen then says the Lord and the obvious thing to take from that is that they didn't listen then God says there will be a curse on you and God goes on doesn't he verse 4 then to reference his covenant with Levi and the blessings that came from obedience to that it was the blessings of life and peace and it came from what well it came from the covenant with Levi and it came from the fear of God's name the awe of God's name is there for you in verse 5 and on it verse 6 Levi then is held up as being the true teacher the one who through his honouring of God did what well we're told he turned many away from their iniquity and God you see here is saying to the priest here's your example be like this guy be like Levi you know about him be like him be the ones verse 7 be the ones to guard knowledge the ones who will instruct God's people are right in God's ways the ones who will tell them to repent of their ways be like you should be

God is saying turn away from unacceptable worship and be like Levi do the right thing you see there's a measure of hope there isn't there do the right thing but if you don't curse then you'll be cursed and again I think for us today that there is as we consider this subject that there is hope for us there are things we can do the things that we've spoken about this evening that perhaps could help us and as we think through these things you go away and think through these things over the next few days there may be other things that occur to you as the way that you live your life the way you come to church week by week things that could help you in the worship of God and worshipping God in spirit and in truth things that we can do to make our worship more acceptable to God but but most of all note this God showed the priests an example of Levi and he said there's your example but you see we have a greater example it's not Levi it's the Lord Jesus

[40 : 14] Christ he's our example our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ God's Son and you know the remarkable thing about that example is this and it's that Jesus right now is in heaven and he's mediating on our behalf on behalf of the people who he has redeemed and he's mediating on our behalf when we do what well when we worship God and if we worship from our hearts with a desire to honor God a desire to reverence God in awe of God and we desire to worship God through the name of the Lord Jesus Christ when we seek to honor and obey with holy fear our Lord and our master then the Lord Jesus Jesus Christ is mediating on our behalf to make our worship acceptable to the almighty God that's better than having Levi's an example we are remarkably privileged now we might feel we've got a lot to learn about worship and

I think we do I don't think we ever stop learning do we we may feel that we've got things to repent of in the way that we approach worship the things that we do the things we think we may be realized that aspects of the way we come to worship need to be changed and made new maybe we need a new behavior or a new attitude of heart in the way we come to worship perhaps we need to change the way that we bring our minds to worship our bodies to worship maybe we need to come with more wholehearted devotion maybe we need to come with more obedience more honor more reverence more awe when we come to worship maybe we need to bring something else to worship to something we haven't mentioned tonight and I think it's often the missing jewel so to speak in our worship and it's this love that little word love why do we worship God why do we come here week by week and it should be because we come here because we love God and we love our Savior the

Lord Jesus Christ it should be because we want to honor because our response for his love towards us is a loving response to him should be because we've been gripped by the love of God in Christ Jesus in love God solved us when we had no thought of him in love Christ came to this world to die for us in love we have salvation through faith in Christ and coming to worship should be our loving response to God's love for us in our worship is there reverence and awe is that honor and obedience but also there's this little word love is there love when we come to worship week by week if we lack any of that we need to take note of verse 9 there of chapter 1 and treat the favor of God that he may be gracious to us gracious to us we need to pray to God we need to ask God for help in our worship that's what entreat means doesn't it to plead with him to ask him that he would help us to worship him in spirit in truth to ask him that he would make our worship acceptable to him

William Cowper the hymn writer wrote to him that many of you perhaps will know it's over for a closer walk with God and he wrote this line he said the dearest idol I have known what e'er that idol be help me to tear it from thy throne and worship only thee friends whatever that idol is that keeps us from bringing acceptable worship to God well may that hymn writer's words be our prayer to God help me to tear it away and worship only thee amen bless you thank you www.perelyipe.perely.org Thanks come to our region bye video son Rob couple ab