

Why Worship? (Including Q&A;)

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- [0 : 0 0] In the first session this morning, we began a conversation about how we think of the church, what the church is. I tried to define the church as not something that we do, but something that God does.
- He gives us his promises, he gives us his presence, and he teaches us, encourages us in his purposes. Of course, we are receiving, human beings are receiving his promises, human beings are celebrating his presence, human beings are pursuing his purposes, but that doesn't mean that we're at the centre.
- And if that's the case, that the church, defining the church is about God's promise, presence and purpose, then in church services, week by week, we can think of what we're doing in terms of God's promise, God's presence and God's purpose.
- But before I unpack that, perhaps just a couple of words about worship generally. For there's a lot of debate about how we think, how we define what worship is.
- The Bible has two different definitions. If you read Romans 12, as I will, we can see this broad definition.
- [1 : 3 5] Romans 12 verses 1 and 2. I appeal to you, therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable, which is your spiritual worship.
- Don't be conformed to this world, but be transformed, and so on. In one sense, worship is everything you do with your body. Monday to Friday, every day of the week.
- The Bible defines worship in Romans 12 as a big category for every day of the week. But it's also true that the Bible speaks of worship as something we do through music or through song.
- So if you look at Revelation chapter 4 or Revelation chapter 5. Revelation 4, 9, for example. Whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to him who sits on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the 24 elders fall down before him who sit on the throne, and they worship him.
- They cast their crowns before him, saying, Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, and so on. And also in chapter 5, around the lamb on the throne, the one who saves, they sing, Worthy are you.
- [3 : 0 3] We worship you. So it seems to me that the Bible has the big definition of worship, which is everything you do in your body every single day of the week, and also describing singing, or what we do as church on Sundays together as worship.
- But for this hour, we're talking about what we do in church on Sundays. I'm not trying to suggest that you don't worship any other day of the week, but I am saying let's just for a few minutes think about church and church on Sundays as a particular topic of our weekend.
- Well, in church, if we're learning about God's promises and celebrating God's presence and pursuing God's purposes, that's what God does.
- What do you and I do when we're in church on Sundays? Well, we respond to God.

We participate in the life of God. And we anticipate the world to come. If you like, we respond to God's promises.

[4 : 25] We participate in God's presence. And we anticipate the life of the world to come.

A couple of people spoke to me over morning tea and said, Rhys, you haven't yet said what human beings do. So I did try deliberately in the first hour to talk about church in relation to what God is and does.

God's promise, God's presence, God's purpose. But of course, you and I are responding to God's promise and we're participating in his presence and we're anticipating the world to come.

Of course, it involves us, right? But a good church service, I think, as it reflects on what it's doing and why it's doing it, what it should be doing or what it's not doing yet, will ask the question, does our church service include God's promises?

Does our church service acknowledge God's presence? Does our church service teach us how to pursue God's purposes? All three, I think.

[5 : 36] Now, it might be that on any given day, on this particular Sunday, you do more of one than the other. That's okay. It doesn't mean that you have to divide up in terms of minutes every week the same amount given to each topic.

And anyway, that's a bit ridiculous because they bleed into each other. Our thinking about God's promise is a way of helping us experience God's presence, which itself is including us in with God's purposes.

It's a bit hard to divide them up, right, in our own personal experience. But still, it's a great little template for us as we think about our worship.

And not just because I want to train you to be leaders in church on Sundays, but I want you to get the most out of the experience of coming to church, even if you're not leading the service, right?

That you go away thinking that God has served you in so many different ways today. God served you by reminding you of his promises.

[6 : 41] And God has served you by drawing close when you're in trouble. Or God has served you by redefining what your purpose is in the world. Or if you put it another way, so much is happening in church on Sundays.

I want you to have your eyes opened that you can thank God for all the different things he's doing. And so church becomes not just one thing, but there's several things that God is doing and giving to us.

How rich our time together is week by week. So I want you to turn to people on your table and ask, how do you think these themes are expressed in your Sunday 10.30 service?

And you might be surprised that the person next to you thinks of the way that the service encourages them in their daily labor. But the next person sees something completely different about how they value, how they appreciate their experience on Sundays.

It will be delightful to hear how different members of the congregation receive God's gifts. You might have assumed that they received the same gift that you received. And that everyone is thinking the same way.

[8 : 02] But you might be surprised by the different ways that people value the fellowship. So turn to those around you for five minutes or so and talk about how you think God's promise, God's presence and God's purpose are expressed on Sundays.

Great. It's excellent to hear people engaging the question and trying to work out how the person to our right or to our left thinks about their experience Sunday by Sunday.

Well, I do think the big categories, the big theological categories for understanding church are God's promise, God's presence and God's purpose and that every day of the week as well as on Sundays.

But to help my students see worship, see Sunday meeting in a fresh way, I've put together a number of different metaphors or images that I hope will help you as well.

That worship is like a compass. Worship is like a gym. Worship is like a throne room. Worship is like a story.

[9 : 14] Worship is like a dress rehearsal. So I'm not doing anything that I haven't already done with the words promise, presence and purpose, but perhaps just expanding them using an image that you might be able to find useful in your own approach to meeting on Sundays.

So let me go through them. Tomorrow's sermon here in church is worship is a throne room. So I might do a little less now on that one so that I don't give away too much of my material for tomorrow.

Worship is a compass. Sunday by Sunday, God helps us to find our moral north. It's a good exercise.

I won't do it this morning because you might be a bit embarrassed. I often say to people I'm teaching this to, I'd like you to stand and turn to magnetic north. Or don't even stand.

Use your arm and point right now to where you think north is. Nice work. I did this. Glenn chimes in when he sees where everyone else is pointing.

[10 : 31] I did this with students a couple of weeks ago over Easter and they were totally confused. Like I got them to turn and face magnetic north and we were at Samwell Tops just south of Sydney and people were almost going over the cliff.

They were so confused about where north would lead them. What God wants to do in church Sunday by Sunday is give us a reminder not of moral, of magnetic north, but our moral north.

Those little corrections every week to point you again to God's way of living. And I take this picture largely from Romans chapter 1 where Paul reminds the people that their fundamental mistake is to worship the creature rather than the creator.

He uses the language of worship. We need the reminder every week what it means to worship the creator and not the creature.

And one of the reasons why we come to church is to do just that, to be taught, reminded, corrected, have exemplified the kind of worship of the creator that God asks of us.

[11 : 59] And I think having lots of regular opportunities is really healthy for our soul. Just imagine a hot summer is ahead of you and I give you this advice.

My advice to you to get through this hot summer is to drink five gallons of water in November. Five gallons will surely get you through, said no doctor ever.

No, the best way of getting through a hot summer is to drink a little bit regularly, right? So over this past summer I would ring my dad, who's almost 90, every day and ask him if he's drinking enough water.

I encourage him to put out the two litre jug on the bench and just to make sure by the end of the day he's got through the two litres. A little bit often is in some ways healthier than one big draft occasionally.

Church worship Sunday by Sunday is like that. It helps us to make the little correctives, the little changes, the little drinks, which then keep helping us back to pursue the creator, not the creature, to pursue moral north.

[13 : 20] I'm a big fan of making little corrections often. And you know that if you're hiking or if you're orienteering, that the best thing is to check the compass semi-regularly, rather than wait for seven hours of walking in the same direction and then to realise that you are a degree off.

It's not going to work for you. Worship, week by week, is giving us directions towards moral north, resetting our compass directions.

That might not be a metaphor that does much for you. That might be assumed. But in my experience, it helps people enormously to think about why turn up every week.

You know as well as I do how hard it is to get to church every week. But actually, we need to keep practising being at church regularly. When I was first a Christian, it was expected that I'd be at church twice every Sunday, in the morning and at night.

Pastors now tell me it's pretty acceptable for people to come one week in three. Now, I think that's probably not good for you and your soul, nor is it good for the fellowship to have such irregular commitment.

[14 : 53] Sunday by Sunday, week by week is better. Now, I get it that it's hard to kind of lasso the kids into line to get here. I get it. There's lots of pressures to do other things on Sundays.

A few weeks ago, I texted a friend from church before church and said to him, are you going to be at church this Sunday? Are you going to be at church this morning? Do we want to have coffee afterwards? And he texted back and he said, no, he's renovating the house.

I texted back and said, I didn't know that going to church and renovating the house were alternatives. Like, you can do both, right? You church in the morning, you renovate the house in the afternoon. But there was something else on.

Now, worship is a compass and it helps us regularly to find our moral north. Or if you want to put it more with the language of Romans chapter 1, that coming to church helps us, reminds us, teaches us to pursue the creator and not the creature.

Secondly, worship is a gym. You know the kind of people who are going to like this image, right? People like me who go to a gym regularly.

[16 : 01] By regular, I mean once every three years. But in my world, that is still regular. Paul wants us to be trained for righteousness.

And in 1 Timothy 4.7, Paul talks about physical training having some value, but spiritual training has value now and forever. Worship's a place where we get in some serious spiritual training.

It's interesting, if you read Exodus chapter 12 or Exodus chapter 13, Exodus 12 is before the people leave Egypt. They leave Egypt at the end of 12. Chapter 13 is after they've left Egypt, before they cross the Red Sea.

And it's extraordinary how often Moses, from God, tells the people to do something repeatedly. Before they leave Egypt, God tells them, you're going to hold a Passover every year in this month.

And then after they've left Egypt, God says, now that you've left Egypt, my advice to you is that you hold the Passover annually in this month. Before they leave Egypt, after they've left Egypt, God is instructing them to do something repeatedly.

[17 : 18] Not because repetition in itself is kind of spiritual, but it's better than forgetting something. That's certainly not spiritual.

Now, repetition is in order to remember. Remembering the Lord and his promises, his presence, his purposes, is really important for us. It's good for our soul. Worship is like a gym.

Yes, I know you might find boring the fact that we said prayers last week and we're saying prayers again this week. Yes, I know that you'd like something novel this week that you haven't had for a while.

I understand those pressures, but actually, it's good for our spiritual workout that we do some things repeatedly.

Now, some churches concentrate on doing one thing well. So, in terms of your spiritual muscles, you'd practice one thing, but not several others. A friend of mine, he teaches history in Scotland.

[18 : 25] He's got one of those personalities. He likes the detail. He travels the world lecturing, and he's kept this notebook for the last 40 years of everything he's experienced in any church service he's ever been to, ever, anywhere.

The sermon was 23 minutes. There were one Bible reading. There were two Bible readings. The prayers went for five minutes. There were three songs, one contemporary song. Because when he's retired, he wants to write up his experience of how church services have changed.

And he says, without a doubt, the biggest change in worship in the last 40 years is that evangelicals have stopped praying into sessions in their Sunday meeting.

All over the world, any denomination, that conservative Christians have basically given up praying for the world. Now, that's one spiritual muscle that we're used to practice in church that we don't train ourselves in much anymore.

I have people all the time coming to me in the Ridley Chapel and saying, hey, could I lead the prayers today? Because my church doesn't do prayers, and I think I'd be good at it. It happens all the time.

[19 : 40] Many churches have given up reading the Bible before the preacher preaches from the Bible. Now, the preacher might well read the Bible before his sermon, but lots of churches have given up someone else reading the scriptures before the sermon is preached.

So I have students coming to me and say, hey, could we have a shot at reading the Bible? Because we don't do that in our church all the time. Now, in a sense, you can pray at home, and you can pray in your small group.

I suspect that those churches that don't do it on Sundays haven't given up praying, although perhaps they have too. We're not good at praying, and you know as well as I do that church prayer meetings are one of the least well-attended things in a church's life.

However, I think a healthy church service, the church service gets us to exercise multiple spiritual muscles. It's an all-round workout.

Okay, I know that you could do, spend longer on your abs, or you could spend longer, what's another muscle? I don't even, after abs, I'm lost. There must be another one somewhere, right?

[20 : 56] I know that you might want to concentrate on one muscle and only exercise that one thing, but actually, there's lots of spiritual muscles. You can learn to lament in church. You can learn to praise in church.

You can learn to intercede for governments in church. You can learn to listen in church. You can learn to celebrate unity in church. Lots of spiritual muscles. They often involve repetition, I get it, and that's not a popular concept, but repetition is better than forgetting, and God gives instructions to his people to do things in order that they do not forget.

Well, thirdly, worship's a throne room. I think it's the experience in which we enter God's presence, or put it in a different way, it's the place where we draw near, draw near to the king and hear him speak and give him our petitions before he sends us out as his ambassadors in the world.

Listening and speaking are a really important part of what we do on Sundays. More of that tomorrow. Worship, fourthly, is a story.

Worship's a story, and by that I mean that worship traditionally has explained the story of the Bible, but not only explained the story, helped people to see that they're part of the story of the Bible.

[22 : 31] And if you're telling the story of the Bible, you're telling the story of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. What a beautiful passage Matthew 3 is.

Please turn to it. So I'm looking at 3.13. Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John to be baptised by him. John would have prevented him saying, I need to be baptised by you, and yet you come to me.

This is a bit weird, Jesus. I'm not buying this whole thing. You need to be baptised. But Jesus answered him, let it be so now, for thus it's fitting for us to fulfil all righteousness.

There's a bigger purpose, John. Believe me. Then John consented. And when Jesus was baptised, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him.

He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. And behold, a voice from heaven said, this is my blooded Son, with whom I am well pleased.

[23 : 33] It's an extraordinarily dense paragraph. But can you see that when Jesus is baptised, the Father speaks, and the Spirit descends.

This is a Trinitarian moment. This involves Father, Son, and Spirit working together. And not only that, Jesus is being baptised by John, who looks, he's dressed like Elijah.

He's been preaching in the wilderness, preparing for the coming of the Son. He's being baptised in the Jordan River. And you know that the Jordan River is an important marker in the Old Testament's storyline.

So we've got the story of Father, our Son, and Spirit working together. And as Jesus is being baptised, he's putting himself into the storyline of the Old Testament.

It's a prophet like Elijah, who's baptising him in the River Jordan, just like the people cross through the River Jordan to enter the Promised Land. And the Father, when he speaks, quotes from Psalm 2, this is my beloved son.

[24 : 43] And when Aaron was made high priest, he was first washed, and then he was anointed. Jesus, in a sense, is now here becoming the high priest of Israel.

He's being put into water, and he's being anointed by the Spirit. He's now the one who's going to lead our worship. The model worshipper. The one who enables us to worship and fulfil all righteousness.

So it's not surprising that just a few verses later, at the beginning of chapter 4, this is how the devil tempts Jesus. 4.7 Jesus said to him, you shall not put the Lord your God to the test.

Again, verse 8, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kings in the world and their glory. And he said to him, these I will give you if you will fall down and worship me, says the devil.

Jesus had just been made the high priest of Israel who was meant to lead worship. Now the devil is saying, I want you to worship me. I want you to give up your role as high priest.

[25 : 51] And of course, praise God, Jesus says, be gone, Satan. You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve. So the devil left him and angels came and ministered to him.

Can you see how in this small paragraph, lots of Bible themes connect? It tells the story of the Trinity and it tells the story of Israel and it tells the story effectively of what it means for us to worship through our high priest, the Lord Jesus Christ himself.

I think it's really important that in our Sunday services, we learn how to be part of a story. Because when Jesus had risen from the dead and told his disciples to baptize, he told them to baptize in the name of the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit.

That's our story, right? That we are now part of. When you're baptized, you're made part of that great story of the Trinity. But you're also part of the story of Israel.

passing through the waters and coming through the promised land. In fact, your baptism is a picture of what God wants to do for you on the last day. You can be so confident that you will get through the judgment day because you have connected yourself to Christ.

[27 : 14] There are different ways of doing this. The way traditionally Anglicans tell a story in their church services is by concentrating on the Father in the first third of the service and the Son in the middle third of the service and the Spirit the last third of the service.

Or, John Calvin argued that the first half of the service should have a focus on the old covenant and the second half of the service should have a focus on the new covenant.

That's why Calvin said you should read the Ten Commandments before you take the communion. Whatever way you do it, let's keep remembering to tell the story of the Bible through the sermon and also through the shape.

It can be powerfully encouraging to know that you belong to the big story. You're a participant in the big story of the world.

And finally, worship is a dress rehearsal. We do Sunday by Sunday what we're going to do forever and ever and ever.

[28 : 22] So why not practice now what will be the truth of our experience in the world to come? When we take the Lord's Supper, we're reminded from the words in 1 Corinthians 11 that we do this until he comes.

Indeed, when he comes, we'll be participants in a banquet, the marriage supper of the Lamb. We're getting ready for that day when we come to church Sunday by Sunday.

We're learning our lines. We're learning our part of the story. We're learning to get ready for the new world. Church belongs to the next world as much as it belongs to this one.

God's getting us ready for heaven. Why wouldn't you turn up and experience some of the blessings now? Well, of these different metaphors, these different pictures, I hope that they can refresh you as you get up on Sunday mornings at kind of whatever it is, 20 past 10, getting ready for your 10.30 service.

That you get up and that there's something of these pictures that remind you why you're going this morning. It might be that you get up and you feel like you don't want to, but you know you should go to the gym anyway.

[29 : 54] It might be you get up and you feel lonely, but you're reminded that you need to be part of the big story which church helps teach us. It might be that you need some correctives in your path and the church will be for you a compass.

It might be that God for you feels distant, but church is a reminder that in his words, he's come near. What I want you to do for a few minutes is turn to the people around you and ask them what of these metaphors has resonated in your heart and mind this morning.

There'll be no doubt some chances over lunch when we get stuck into the food truck to talk some more. Indeed, it'll be a great way of encouraging those in your service who aren't here today to talk to them tomorrow after church and say, hey, this is what I learnt from yesterday's golden weekend, not away.

What do you think? Which of these metaphors do you most resonate with when it comes to thinking about Sunday worship? Well, whatever your particular kind of delight is, whichever of these metaphors has most resonated with you, can I spend just two minutes talking to those of you who lead Sunday worship?

Of course, this is a unit I teach for 12 weeks at Ridley, so you're not going to get that. But I do want to ask, as a response to our learning this morning, that when you lead Sunday worship, to think of how you're educating people.

[31 : 38] It's an important teaching moment. But more than just teaching content, how you're forming the community through your words, through your gestures, through your assumptions, through your prayers, you are being used of God to bind this community together.

Not only are you educating or forming, you're also motivating people for the week ahead. you're not just there to provide information, you're leading to provide motivation that people find in their hour or two together on Sunday mornings some encouragement to persevere tomorrow and the next day and the next day.

For if we are honouring God's promises, presence and purpose, we're actually being motivated, not just in this hour or two together, but every day of the week.

Our Sunday service leadership in most of the churches I visit could well afford to be better trained, especially when it comes to thinking about how all these elements connect and serve the gathered community.

well, that's as much as I want to say without your prompting, but I suspect now there are going to be some questions. Vijay, do you want to lead this or shall I just take them from the floor?

[33 : 18] Thank you, Rhys. So one of the questions that came out of this table was what do you do when you're going to church or, oh yeah, Christian, you're going to a church gathering but you don't feel motivated or you, it's a repeated, it's a routine but week in, week out, you go, it's not doing anything to you.

How do you work that around? When you, do you stop going? Do you look for the next thing or how does that all work out? Yeah, sure, and of course we often find going to church difficult emotionally because there's someone there who's hurt us, because we think we've hurt it before, because my life is so busy and tiring that it's exhausting to be in a room with these people that some of them I know well, some of them are not so well.

Of course, it's hard to maintain the motivation but if your goal is to get to heaven, I think we need to take all the helps we can get that we would arrive there and church is one of the chief ways, the chief strategies that God has for helping us know we're on the right boat, we're on the right ship, we're heading in the right direction to arrive in glory.

So I understand that it's hard but I think not going to church is not the answer. Right? I hope that perhaps of these different metaphors that that will refresh people's expectation, that they might feel flat emotionally but they do recognize that even though emotionally church is difficult, it does provide for them a compass, it does give to them a sense of direction, that there might be something they get out of it even if they're feeling flat as they drive there.

So don't give up on going to church. As the writer to the Hebrews in chapter 10 reminds us, we need to draw near to God with his people as a way of spurring each other on to love and good deeds.

[35 : 31] I don't want us to ignore our emotions but I want us to be honest about our emotions. They're not the last word. A lot of non-Christians find going to church odd and the concept of it a little unusual.

I'm wondering whether you have some good ways of explaining in quite simple language what the role of church is to non-Christians. Yes, thank you. Of course, that's the controversial one that I haven't addressed this morning.

Church is for Christians is my argument. I wish and pray that non-Christians would come along as Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 14, fall down on their knees and say, surely God is in your midst.

I love it when non-Christians come to church and they receive God's gifts and get converted.

But I think primarily church is to help Christians get to heaven and it will be a bit weird for non-Christians to come along. We want to be as friendly as we can, but I don't think that means we stop having sermons because non-Christians would find a sermon odd.

[36 : 43] I don't think we stop singing because some non-Christians might find singing odd. I think we've just got to be ourselves and be relaxed and pray that God would use this experience, weird as it might be, to help them.

Mind you, it's not just the Christian, non-Christian thing. I find it weird when I go into places that I'm not normally a part of and see the way people do things.

If I go to the football club, I find that weird. They're doing things that I don't know what a pie night is. But that's okay. That's their thing and I've been invited along. And I have to work, understand the way they do things and why they do things.

And it might be a bit weird for me, but life has some weirdnesses in it. We're not to panic. I would like to know your view on the traditional Sunday worship and the contemporary one.

You know, there's crazy like Planet Shaker stuff worship. Sure. One of my students from Planet Shakers keeps saying, Rhys, I'm going to take you to my church.

[37 : 42] I'm going to take you to my church. I said, I dare you. I dare you. Neither is right, neither is wrong. My question is, does the traditional service or the Planet Shaker service help us to know God's promise and God's presence and God's purpose?

That's my theological question. question. And it might be that any given church does one of those things well, some of those things not so well.

I might not feel comfortable at a Planet Shakers church. That's okay. The goal isn't for me emotionally to have what I want. So I go to city on a hill in town and I don't like the services.

But I'm not there to like the services. That's not, my goal is to serve. So I'm happy to put up with things I don't like because I see in the fellowship that God's promises, God's presence and God's purposes are being honoured.

That's why I'm there. Yeah. Don't. I think it's good that we focused on why church is good for us. But is there something in maybe our modern approach to church that we don't like the idea of worship as being obligatory?

[39 : 04] Do not forsake the gathering together of God's people. And there is an obligation for us as Christians. If we call ourselves Christians, it's not something we've got a choice in the matter. We're obliged to do this.

Yes. We're obliged in as far as we're free in the Lord. So you don't want the chief category for understanding church to be about obligation.

No, church is a gift. Church is a blessing. Church is God throwing things at us. So keen is he for us to experience all his blessings.

But you're right. Our culture is a well, our culture says our culture is a culture that's not about obligation. But mind you, if you said to your hockey coach, I want to be in the team, but I don't want to turn up at training each week, well, you wouldn't be in the team.

If you said, I want to have this job, but I'm not prepared to be there at nine in the morning, well, there's still a lot of obligation in our culture, right? Millennials might not like it, but that's just the way we learn to work together as a community or as a team.

[40 : 15] So I am hesitant about using language of obligation in terms of church, because I want to see primarily in terms of what God gives us. But you're right, there are commands.

We need to obey them. Rhys, I've heard this metaphor that sometimes we might choose to polish things up. We might put on an armour and keep our armour nice and shiny and polished.

in terms of a service, where are some of the dangers for us in that space that we might put too much focus on being polished in a particular way? Yes, so we need to develop a culture of honesty and accountability.

Someone said to me this week, which is just lovely, I pray that my church will be a place where we're never surprised when someone tells us they've sinned. Which is kind of a weird way of phrasing it, but it was quite provocative.

That is, to actually be honest enough that we can own before each other our failings and encourage our brothers and sisters to serve us in dealing with that, to pray for us, to rebuke us, whatever it might be.

[41 : 33] So I think we need to be thinking about how we develop a culture of honesty and accountability. It's very hard to do it and to detect how you make the corrections.

Glenn and I ran a camp at St. Jude's years and years ago where I was working. And the first year we ran a camp on mentoring and how the congregation might elevate the importance of mentoring in the fellowship.

No mentoring relationships emerged. It was a complete dud from my perspective. The next year we ran a camp as we did regularly with university students on sex and relationships.

And we worked really hard at trying to think how we could run a camp where honesty and accountability were built in subtly to the program. And you know what?

Mentoring relationships developed out of it. Not just between guys and girls. But it was such an important lesson for me. If you build a culture of honest and accountability you'll actually find things like mentoring happen.

[42 : 45] But if you just say you've got a mentor you haven't actually done the work on the deep DNA of the fellowship that actually enables the mentoring to take root.

So honesty and accountability. I appreciated your little framework with God's promises, presence and purpose.

Just thinking about you talked about emotions a lot and I know feelings can be fickle. Emotions can be fickle. But often and for me certainly often having my, to use a cliché, my heart strings pulled in worship, not in an over the top way but can help me understand God's promises and understand his presence and his purposes for my life.

And I guess what I'm asking you is just from the conversations and the questions, I'm kind of, don't let me put words in your mouth, should we have a low expectation of our emotions being tugged in worship?

And if it happens that's just a bonus? Or is it something that we should rightly work on as, you know, corporately? Some of the things that some of us like to do here is using the performing arts in worship, not as a gimmick but based on God's word to help proclaim, like could be a puppet play or a drama or something.

[44 : 13] And I think often people feel they hear the message and their emotions are touched through those sort of creative things. So I guess to abbreviate my question, do you feel they have a place and to what degree should we have an expectation of our emotions being touched in worship?

And you're a musician, aren't you, Warwick? A fairly rusty one, but yes. Because I suspect that those who have been trained in music will understand this in ways that people like me who haven't been trained in music don't see.

So the great thing about singing songs is that they have content and the content is matched to music and it's matched to community participation.

Songs are enormously powerful in providing connection between our hearts and our heads and our fellowship. So I have no problem in us engaging emotions in church.

They're not the final word, but no, I think we need to work out how we do that in a way that's God-honoring. Yeah, I was going to say something else and now it's completely escaped my mind.

[45 : 37] Performing arts. Thank you. Yeah. So I don't mind in church the visual being used, but primarily church is about what you hear, not what you see.

So faith comes from hearing, Paul writes in Romans 10. I think the primary mechanism in church is speaking and listening, but secondarily there might be some visual helps too.

Calvin thought the best visual instructions we get are in the Lord's Supper, that we actually see bread and wine. And so Calvin took everything else out of the building in order that that one thing is seen more powerfully.

So I don't mind us having opportunity to see things in church, but I don't think it's the primary sense that's being applied. Our hearing God's voice is the primary mechanism, I think.

God's word through a drama or such faith claim that's legitimate? Sure. Well, I think it's legitimate, but it depends how it's done. In principle, yes, it can obscure God's word.

[46 : 51] It has to be done thoughtfully or in relation to other kinds of opportunities to hear God's word. Good. Wonderful. Wonderful. Wasn't it really fantastic, Rhys?

Thank you so much for having us. Yes. Thank you. Thank you.