

God-Centered Worship

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[0 : 00] All right, well, welcome again to Faith This Morning as we are talking about worship today, continuing with our series Unstoppable, but looking at how worship fits in with this life mission that God has called us to.

And as we think about worship, often it seems that in the church in America, we've come to think of worship as being a spectator sport.

As we have a group on the platform and they are leading in worship, they're singing, and very often those who are sitting in the pew, sitting in the auditorium, watch what's going on on the stage and are spectators during a time of worship.

But as we look in Scripture, there could be nothing further from the truth. As we look in Scripture, we see that worship is not a spectator sport.

We see that worship is about meeting a holy, a majestic God and spending time with Him and leaving that time of worship, living a life of obedience.

[1 : 18] This morning, as we are going to be looking at how this idea of worship fits in with the idea of our unstoppable mission, is we're going to look at Mark chapter 11.

So if you have your Bibles this morning, let's turn them to Mark chapter 11. We will be looking at verses 15 through 19. And as we see Mark chapter 11, Jesus has come into Jerusalem the day before in what we have come to call the triumphal entry.

And he and his disciples went out, spent the evening in Bethany. And the next, the following day, where we're going to catch up with this story in verses 15 through 19, is when he enters back into the city.

And as we pick up here in Mark chapter 11, let's pray. Father, this morning, as we have come into this time of worship today, please help us to catch a glimpse of who you are.

Realize that worship is not something that we watch others do, not something that we casually enter into. But Father, help us to catch the vision of who you are.

[2 : 45] Truly enter into a time where we revere your greatness and we reflect your holiness. And in turn, commit to your purpose as we leave this time of worship this morning.

We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. So let's look at Mark chapter 11, starting with verse 15. Bible says, so they came to Jerusalem.

They had, Jesus had entered in triumphantly the day before. They go out of town, stay in Bethany, come back into Jerusalem. And we see in verse 15, so they came to Jerusalem.

Then Jesus went into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

And he would not allow anyone to carry wares or merchandise through the temple. Then he taught, saying to them, is it not written, my house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations?

[3 : 59] But you have made it a den of thieves. And the scribes and chief priests heard it and sought how they might destroy him. For they feared him because all the people were astonished at his teaching.

And when evening had come, he went out of the city. And what we see here, something that is a bit out of character for Jesus. He comes in, and what he does is the moment he comes into the city, he enters into the temple, and he starts overturning tables, and he starts telling people to stop, and don't bring your merchandise, don't bring your stuff, don't bring your wares into the temple.

And he cleans out the temple area, if you will. And I think what we're going to see, and you say, well, this is kind of an unusual passage to use to talk about worship.

But I think what we're going to see is this is not just any place of worship, the temple that Jesus has just entered into. This is not just a church building. This is not just a sanctuary.

The temple was a place where God had set up for his people to come and experience his presence, to experience his majesty, to experience his glory throughout the Old Testament.

[5 : 23] If anyone wanted to be in the presence of God, they would come into the temple. And I think what we're going to see is a pretty good commentary from the mouth of Jesus on what worship is all about, and what encountering God's glory and giving.

God's glory is all about. So I want to think this morning about what God-centered worship really looks like based on this passage.

And as we do that, we first of all are going to see here that as we look at what true worship really is, we're going to see that those who encounter the presence of God, when we, when God is the center of our worship, we're going to revere his greatness.

When we're really worshiping, when we are experiencing God-centered worship throughout our lives, we're going to revere the greatness of God. And this is just part of the passage that many may overlook in verse 15.

He comes to Jerusalem. Jesus goes into the temple and began to drive out those who bought and sold in the temple, overturn the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

[6 : 50] But I want us to see what happens in verse 16. Look there at verse 16. And he would not allow anyone to carry wares through the temple.

I want us to see what's going on here. Think about it. As people are in the city, Jerusalem has very narrow streets, and there were people who were lining the streets, street vendors, people who sold clothing, people who sold utensils, kitchen wares, we're selling food, we're selling whatever. And so as you're walking through the city, everyone is, there's this hustle, there's this bustle. But it's time to go home.

So what do people do? You've got two choices. You've got this huge structure. That's in the middle of the city of Jerusalem. You can either walk the long walk around it to go home, or you could take a shortcut and walk through the temple to the opposite gate, and it would literally be a shortcut.

And people, it seems, according to what Jesus was saying here, were taking this shortcut. He says he would not allow anyone to carry their merchandise through the temple.

[8 : 16] And so what, I don't know how he does it, but he says, stop. Stop carrying your stuff through the temple here. And these people, God's people, were in this process, had lost sight of the fact that they were in the very presence and glory of God.

Now this is huge. We need to understand understand that this is Jesus talking about what is supposed to be happening in the presence of God.

I want us to see here two facets of false worship that began happening among these people. The first thing that we see that this false worship, it wasn't that they were worshiping false gods.

They weren't worshiping an idol. They didn't have an image to Ashtaroth or any of these other idol or any of these other false gods.

But they had entered into false worship. They were involved in fake worship, if you will. And so the first thing that we see in this false worship is God's people had become uninterested in the majesty of God.

[9 : 30] Because what happens in the temple? You meet God. But what were the people doing? They were carrying all their stuff, shortcut, through the temple so they could get home and eat dinner.

And they were forgetting that the moment you entered through that gate into the temple area, you met God. So they become uninterested in the majesty of God.

Does that happen sometimes? We get so used to God, we take Him for granted, and we forget who He is, and we no longer have this Isaiah experience, Oh, woe is me, for I am unclean, a man of unclean lips.

We forget who God really is, and we become uninterested. So here was the people who would just walk back and forth through the temple, carrying all their stuff, carrying their business, and doing what they wanted to do, and never giving a second thought, never paying any mind to the fact that they were in the presence of the God of the universe.

They'd become uninterested in His presence. And throughout the Old Testament, we see that God's saying, before you come into My presence, you need to prepare yourself.

[10:48] We see that in Psalm 24. Psalm 24, verse 3, the psalmist says, Who may ascend into the hill of the Lord, or who may stand in His holy place?

Who is it? The person that has prepared themselves. The person that has confessed their sin. The person that has gotten themselves right with God, and prepared themselves to come into the presence of God.

He who has clean hands, and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully. And Psalm 15 gives a whole list of things that God expected His people to be involved in, engaged in, before they come into His presence.

So He's saying, this is a special place. This is a holy place. Set apart. I am here. So be careful before you come in here. They had missed out completely, and had become uninterested in the majesty of God.

But let me ask you, when you walked in here, into this place that's dedicated for the next few minutes to spend time with God in corporate worship, what was on your mind?

[12:03] On what went on last week? On lunch? On hoping the preacher wasn't going to go really long today? What was on our mind?

Did we truly prepare ourselves to come into the presence of God? Come in here saying, God, I am longing to meet with my fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and spend some time in corporate worship together like the early church did.

God, open me up and see if there be any wicked way in me having our sin confessed. And looking forward to this time when we are with one another worshiping God.

Is it possible that we have become sometimes as casual with God as these Jews had become as they were carrying their merchandise back and forth through the temple using it as a shortcut rather than seeing Him for who He really was.

So we see, first of all, that in their worship they had become uninterested in the majesty of God. The second thing that we see is they had become unaware of the presence of God.

[13:25] They had forgotten what the temple was all about. They were walking in and out through the presence of God and it never hit them that God, His glorious presence was dwelling with them in that place.

You see, they chose when they would worship. Oh, we're going to worship now and so we're going to worship. But the rest of the week they were just using it as a shortcut.

They chose when and where they would worship rather than living lives of worship. You see, worship is not just about what happens when we're together worshiping Him when we sacrifice. It's about what happens when we, also, it's about what happens when we leave that sacrifice. We spend, what, an hour in worship and in God's Word and then we leave sometimes and many people never think about God until next Sunday or until the next time that they are together.

It's kind of like what was happening with God's people and the Jews. I'm going to show you a picture of what this looks like in the Old Testament. This was nothing new for the people of Israel and kind of a background of what's happening here in Mark chapter 11.

[14:50] Hold your place here and let's turn to Isaiah chapter 1 and we will be looking at verses 11 to 14 and I want you to hear what God says to His people.

These are pretty startling words from the mouth of God. Isaiah 11, 1. This is God speaking to His people about their worship and I want you to hear what He says.

Isaiah 1 starting with verse 11. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to me says the Lord? I've had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed cattle.

I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or goats. He says, when you come to appear before me who has required this from your hand to trample my courts?

He says, bring no more futile sacrifices. Incense is an abomination to me. The new moons, the Sabbaths, the calling of assemblies. I cannot endure the iniquity and the sacred meeting.

[15:52] He says, your new moons and your appointed feast. He says, my soul hates. They are trouble to me. I am weary of bearing them. Did you catch that? This is a picture of a people that had become pretty routine in their worship.

See, week in and week out, they were doing the drill. They were bringing their sacrifices just like God had said. They weren't doing anything in worship that was against what God had ordained. They were following the procedure. They were doing the drill. They were doing what good people do when they worship. But why does God respond the way that he does? In the middle of all of it,

he says, stop!

Stop bringing meaningless sacrifices. He actually tells them that their sacrifices and their worship was detestable to him. Is it possible that God can come to the point where he hates our worship like he told the Jews?

He says, stop! Stop! You might as well stay home! If you're just going to come and go through the motions because I hate it.

[17:05] It's a hard thing for people of God to hear that God says, I'm not accepting your worship. I hate it. It's detestable to me because you are making this a meaningless thing.

You're just coming here, going through the motions, and then going home. God says, I will have none of it. That's what he told his people. And you think, well, pastor, that's a history lesson.

So what's the whole point of this? Well, think about it. Is it possible for us to get into the same routine? Alarm clock goes off. We get dressed.

Put on our Sunday clothes. We go do the drill. We go home. Life as usual for the rest of the week. It's possible that this becomes just a routine.

We all fall. We all have the danger of falling in to that routine. God is not interested in our religion. He's honored with our hearts and with our obedience.

[18:04] And there's a danger today in missing this whole point of worship. I want us to see very quickly what real worship is all about. And as we talk about true worship, true worship rediscovers rediscovers his majesty.

as I trust we're going to see this morning, as we're going to experience this morning, if we have gotten to the point where we have tended to be a little casual, a little uninterested in the presence, the majesty of God this morning, that together we will rediscover his majesty.

A people who worship don't truly grow casual with God. Don't give second thought to the fact that God is in our presence. We're singing to the God of the universe. We don't stand with our arms crossed and saying, what's going to happen next?

I wonder if I'm going to like the next song. I hope the roast doesn't burn. I got the crock pot turned on, I think. You know, we're so engaged and so involved in worship.

We're fixed on his greatness. And it's just amazing. I've had the opportunity on multiple occasions to be in the middle of the desert southwest and spending time watching the sunset.

[19:30] And it's so amazing. It's out in the middle of the desert and literally 360 degrees around you, there is nothing on the horizon.

Not a tree, not a building, nothing. So you look 360 degrees around you and you see flat horizon. And when the sun sets, the stars come out, billions and billions of stars.

Stars we'll never see here in South Louisiana. And it reminded me of Isaiah 40.

and as we see his glory and what we can experience. It says in Isaiah 40, 25, To whom then will you liken me?

Or to whom shall I be equal? God is saying to his people, Who's like me? Where in the world can you find someone like me? Says the Holy One.

[20:32] He says, Lift up your eyes on high and see who has created these things. Who brings out their host by number. He calls them all by name by the greatness of his might and the strength of his power.

He says that not one is missing. Now think about that. The God whom we worship hung all these billions and billions and billions of stars out in space.

Not only does he bring them out one by one, he names them. Jack, Mary, Joe, Alpha, 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 8.

I mean, I don't know what the names are, but God in his infinite majesty and his glory every evening to us hangs the stars in space.

Consider that majesty. Whether we're in the middle of a well-lit city or we're out in the middle of the desert with not a light for hundreds of miles around and to see the glory and the majesty of God.

[21:41] God, help us never to lose sight of your majesty and your glory. As we see that true worship not only rediscovers his majesty, unlike what was happening in the temple, true worship rejoices in his presence.

It's like not only do we rediscover the majesty of God, when we experience and when we see and when we sense the majesty of God, we rejoice that we're in the presence of God, rather than oh, gotta go to church this morning, oh, picture's going long.

No, we rejoice in the presence of God. As opposed to being unaware of his presence, we rejoice in the fact that he's there and that we're here with him.

We are in the presence of God and when we're in the presence of God, everything changes. You know that everything changed when Jesus died on the cross for us?

Not only did he die on the cross in our place, not only did he take our sin upon himself, not only did he rise again from the grave, but we know the presence of God from that point forward is not limited to a building, not limited to a physical area.

[23 : 08] Yet I can't help but think sometimes that the very presence of God is something that is the least understood and least experienced thing to those who follow Jesus.

So what do you mean? Well, let me explain. How many of you believe that God loves you? Okay? Good. How many of you pray every day, God, please love me?

Oh, God, I pray that today, right here, right now, that you would love me. How many of you have ever prayed that prayer? Not a hand. I've never prayed that.

Why? Because I know he loves me, and I never have to ask him to love me. Because I always realize he loves me.

But how many of us have prayed this prayer? God, please be with us today. I have. God, as we worship you together, in this place, Lord, we ask you to be with us.

[24 : 21] God, what are we doing? Are we ignorant? Did God leave us at any point in time? And we have to pray for God to come back?

Why don't we do that? Why don't we pray for God to love us? Because we know he'll always love us. So why do we pray God be with us? Think about it.

When we pray that, who left? We did. So, would it not be a better prayer than praying God be with us?

God, help me to come back to you? I think that would be more accurate, because God never leaves us. We are in the presence of God. And we understand that when we truly worship him, we will rediscover his majesty, we will rejoice in his presence.

Let's rejoice in the fact that he's with us. So, here's a second. I want to invite us to do something a little bit different. In a moment, we're going to stand.

[25 : 33] And what I want to invite us to do is I want to sing to God, lift up his name, give him the honor, the glory, and ascribe to him the majesty that he has, and with the entire affection of our hearts, God, whether it's with hands lifted, or whether it's with heads bowed, maybe it's on your knees, whatever it is, I invite you this morning to worship like you've never worshipped before.

Come to him this morning and say, God, forgive me if that's the case for being casual in your presence. Father, help me to rediscover who you are.

All right, go back with me to Mark 11. Mark chapter 11, when verses 15 through 19 Jesus has entered the temple, he has a little out of character, and he is, I believe, showing his people about worship, what worship really is about.

I want us to see the importance of holiness, the holiness of God in this whole picture. We see Jesus come on the scene, and we see that when God is at the center of our worship, we reflect his holiness.

We reflect how holy God is. I just want to give us a picture of what's going on as Jesus comes in, overturns these tables, and of the people who were buying and selling there, he overturns the benches of those that were selling doves, and just to get a picture about what's going on here, people would come in, would bring their sacrifices, they would come from far away, and often they would come and they would buy their sacrifices in Jerusalem before they went to offer those sacrifices, and because they traveled from far away, they didn't necessarily bring their sacrifices with them, so they would buy them while they were there.

[27 : 51] They would also exchange their money, their foreign currency, they would exchange it for the currency there in Jerusalem to pay their temple tax, and there was really this whole temple economy going on.

There was this whole temple business that people were engaged in, and involved in, and that was taking place right here in the temple, and Jesus walks in, and imagine this, Jesus is walking through the streets of Jerusalem.

He was accustomed to seeing the street vendors hawking their wares. He was accustomed to the hustle and the bustle of the busy lined streets, but think about as Jesus is expecting to go and

worship in the temple.

He walks through the temple gate, and what does he see? It's like he never left the street. He is seeing the same hustle and bustle. He is seeing people coming around, and people coming, hey, come and try it, we've got doves here, doves, two, four shekel, whatever the price was, and Jesus walked from the city, or walked from the street, into the temple area, and it was like he didn't even change places.

And so what we're going to see is Jesus here, and he gets upset with what's going on here at the temple. This is the place where people were to experience the glory of God, the place of worship, the place where the presence of God dwelt, and these people were involved and engaged in all this business, and he didn't see anything different from what was happening all around the city.

[29 : 36] So he turns all their stuff over, and effectively what he's saying is, this place, this temple area that I have said is where my presence dwells.

My presence is not in the city, my presence is in the temple, the Holy of Holies. That's where my people come to meet me. So effectively what Jesus is saying here is this place is set apart.

And when the Bible uses that term, set apart, it means holy, holy, set apart for his use. And as we think about ourselves, are what we doing reflecting his glory?

And oftentimes the discussion that goes on in worship, and how can we be more like what's happening out there so we can attract more people in here?

How can we make our services more appealing to others? And when it comes to our worship, our real, real worship, here's what I want us to see.

[30 : 43] The church, is it really a reflection of God or is it a reflection of the world? Now, I'm talking about something that is much, much more deeper than song style.

I'm talking about something that is much deeper than worship style or worship form, because down through the ages, Christian songwriters, Christian hymn writers, have consistently used the current cultural music of their day in their songwriting.

So there's nothing new today with that going on. But what I'm talking about here is our lives. people who were greedy.

He saw the same busyness. He saw the same materialism. He saw the same thing going on. He saw the people who were greedy.

He saw the same busyness. He saw the same activity going on. The activity wasn't wrong outside the temple. people. But what he says is, this place is different.

[31 : 58] It's set apart. It's a place where we come and worship, where we can kind of step out of the busyness of life for a little bit and spend time in worship here.

And he says this place is filled with the same hustle, the same bustle, and sometimes I'm wondering if this can be a commentary of what's going on in the church today. We come in and it's life as usual.

We go out like nothing seems to change. We don't leave our cares. We don't leave everything outside our time of worship to gather corporately. But as we mentioned earlier, everything changed when Jesus died on the cross.

The temple, the curtain was rent in two. Jesus died on the cross in our place, took our sin, now today we do not have to go to a temple.

We don't have to go to a building to worship. Isn't that great? We don't have to get in the car, pack up the stuff, pack in the kids, and go on an epic road trip to go see God.

[33 : 14] Right? People had to do that back in the Old Testament. Road trip. We're going to go worship. We don't do that today. Why? Because where's the temple? Let's look at 1 Corinthians 6, verses 18-20.

And you say, Pastor, where are you going with this? Well, I'll show you in just a minute. In 1 Corinthians 6, 18, the Bible says, flee sexual immorality. Every sin that a man does is outside the body, but he who commits sexual immorality, sins against his own body.

Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit? Who is, where's the Holy Spirit? He's in you, in us, whom you have from God, and you are not your own, for you are bought at a price.

Therefore, glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God. So where's the temple today? It's in us. We are the temple.

God's presence is within every follower of Christ, everyone who has been baptized into the body of Christ, everyone who has accepted the free gift of what Jesus did on the cross of Calvary.

[34 : 33] We received his righteousness, and along with that, we received the down payment, if you will, that he was going to come back for us. We received his Holy Spirit.

So where is the temple today? We are the temple of God. This is huge when it comes to worship today. You see, we are the reflection of God's character in the world.

At one point in time, the world had to come to the temple to experience God. But now, the world can experience God through us because we are the temple of God.

God, God's Holy Spirit is residing within us. Not a temple, not a building, but our lives are a reflection of the character of God. Now, here's the thing.

Across the world today, if you want to gather people, what do you do? what's happening very often is, if you can put on a big enough show, if you can have enough talent on the stage, if you can have a preacher that is charismatic and is able to keep the people entertained, whether he uses the Bible or not, that might be negotiable, then you can draw a crowd.

[35 : 57] But we have to ask ourselves, is this really effective at showing the glory of God to the rest of the world? What is God's way?

Or, you might ask, how are we going to be effective at showing the glory of God here in Lake Charles? By drawing a crowd into the building? No, I think it's by going out and bringing God out into the world.

That's what's going to be effective. Not by just bringing people here inside the four walls and packing the place and having another mega church. Now, that's nice if that's what God wants to do in our place, but we're much more effective by going outside these four walls after we've left corporate worship and bringing God into the world, showing others who God is and how it plays out in a regular life, bringing the temple of God to others.

Now, guys, do you remember the day when you asked your wife to marry you? Do you remember what it felt like when she said yes? It's like, oh my word, I have got a wonderful gift and it's just amazing.

Your world changed. Probably the way you walked changed. People probably looked at you and said, something different about you. What happened? She said yes.

[37 : 25] Right? Your whole world changed. Why? Because now you realized that what a valuable treasure you now had or you were going to have because she said yes.

Now, can I remind you, when you placed your faith and trust in Jesus Christ, your whole world changed. The Holy Spirit came to indwell in you and you had the most valuable possession that's ever existed inside of you.

And it's a sad commentary on worship today around this world, around this country, when the Spirit of God is dwelling within us and all too often the lives of those who are called to be holy are often no different than the lives of those who don't have the Holy Spirit.

And I think it's a sad commentary on the church today when we are no different. I'm not talking about different for the sake of being different. Not about as some sects say, you know what, you can't wear buttons because buttons are unholy, you know, or that you need to wear your shirt this way or you have to wear your hair that way or this or that.

No, I'm not talking about being different for the sake of being different and just looking weird. No, being different in that we live differently. We live with a different ideal. We live with a different goal. We have a different reason for existence and it's to glorify God.

[38 : 59] I want to ask us two questions this morning. First thing is personally, personally, what, and I want us to think about this, what areas of my life, ask yourself this question, what areas of my life are not reflecting his holiness?

holiness. So you know what's going on in your life much better than anybody else. And don't forget this. Honoring God is not just, or dishonoring God is not just doing the things that don't honor God. It's also failing to do that which is the most honoring to God. See, sin is not just doing things that are dishonoring. It's failing to do, it's also failing to do the things that are most honoring to God.

Not only is it commission, but it's omission as well. So think about your life. I also want us to ask this question. Corporately, us as a body, faith, we think about that.

What are the areas of the church that are not reflecting his holiness? Are we about taking care of ourselves? Are we about doing what's comfortable to us?

[40 : 18] Are we doing about what is honoring to God? Keeping the mission alive. His mission is making disciples, saying the world come to know Jesus Christ as their Savior.

He wills it all come to repentance and he's called us, his people, to bring the message of the gospel to others and so that they might trust Christ as their Savior as well.

And as we look at all throughout the Old Testament, corporate worship has always been important and confession has always been a part of corporate worship.

We see God consistently throughout the Old Testament calling his people to come with clean hands, a pure heart. What happened when God's people had drifted away?

He said, confess your sin. Very often they corporately confessed their sin, but they took care of their sin before God and they came back to him. Stop putting up this face like everything's okay.

[41 : 27] Deal with what is going on in our lives and in order to come back to him. And something that I find interesting, every single period of revival in church history never started with the lost coming to Christ.

It all started with God's people coming back to God. God's people confessing their sin. God's people getting revived.

And when God's people within the church got revived, then people outside came to know him. And then we saw, we would see whole communities come to know Jesus.

It didn't start from outside. It started from inside. So what I want to invite us to do right now is for us, and I know this is going to be uncomfortable for some of you, because sometimes you may have never, or maybe, not saying that, maybe it's been a little while since you've done business with him. So what I want us to do as our musicians play, is to spend some time before God, asking him, God, what do you want me to do?

[42 : 48] Is there sin in my life? And confess it. Let's everyone stand. Father, we are so thankful this morning. We're so thankful for your forgiveness, forgiveness, and that because you love us, because our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, died on the cross for our sin, we are able to be forgiven.

Thank you, Father, for your cleansing. Lord, as we continue this morning in your word, we thank you, we praise you. In your name we pray. Amen.

You may be seated. Now I want us to show us the final facet of God-centered worship this morning. As we come back to Mark chapter 11, when God is at the center of our worship, we revere his greatness.

When God is the center of our worship, we reflect his holiness out to the world. but also, when we are engaged in true God-centered worship, we will commit to his purpose.

Now I want us to see as we reflect his holiness this morning and how this unfolds through this passage of scripture, how we can commit to the purpose of God this morning.

[44 : 17] We've seen some pretty important things so far in Mark chapter 11. Jesus saying that in the presence of God there ought to be a difference. In the presence of God we ought to rediscover his majesty, be rejoicing in his majesty.

In the presence of God we are to reflect his holiness and then we are to go out as we leave that time of worship, that time with him and reflect his glory, his majesty to the world.

But as we've been talking about becoming casual in our worship and sometimes not reflecting this holiness of God, I want you to see how this last facet of worship connects with our mission.

That is leading others to become fully formed followers of Jesus Christ. Look at Mark 11. I want us to look at verse 17 this morning when Jesus begins to speak up after the very uncharacteristic turning over the tables and telling them stop, get out of here with all your stuff.

I remember one morning, I think it was Sawyer when he was watching one of the little videos in the morning before school and that was the video, Jesus overturning the table of the money changers and those who were selling doves and he asked Catherine, he said, Nana, is Jesus naughty?

[45 : 53] Because he got mad. No, no, honey, Jesus is not naughty. He was doing what he had to do, what he needed to do to teach the people a lesson that when you come into worship in the presence of God, you need to be different and God needs to be the one that's the center of our worship rather than all the things that they were doing there in the hustle and the bustle, land, the business of what was going on.

So what we are seeing here is how this connects with what we do when we go out of this place.

Look at verse 17. It says, Then he taught, saying to them, Is it not written, My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations, but you have made it a den of thieves, or a den of robbers.

He's quoting from the Old Testament. Anybody know where Jesus is quoting from here? Jeremiah 7-11. I thought some of you were going to look in your notes and like you already knew it.

That's okay. I had to look it up too. And so here in, or there in Jeremiah, you don't have to turn there this morning, but what God is doing is, God is talking to his people again, and he's saying, you've come to me, and you just come to worship for this short period of time, and you go back out and sin like you were doing before you came.

And he says, you're just acting like this is a little place of refuge, but you've made it, you've just made it a den of robbers. That's what he says in the Old Testament.

[47 : 31] But what I want us to do is look at Isaiah 56 this morning, and in Isaiah 56, what we're going to look at is God in his temple address, Jeremiah was saying, this is what I want you to do when you come into my presence.

He says, I never asked for your sacrifices. I ask that you walk with me with a pure and a clean heart, and this is what I want for you, but you've missed out on that, and you've made it a den of robbers, the place kind of where you hide out.

But look what he says. He says, is it not written, my house is a den, he says, you made my house a den of robbers. Let's look at Isaiah 56.

Where was he quoting when he said a den of robbers? Let's look at Isaiah 56. Now, here's what I want us to do. We've got to see this. If we miss this, we're going to miss the entire, I think, intent of this passage here in Mark 11.

Hold your place here in Mark 11. Let's look at Isaiah 56 and see what God's word says here. Well, we see Jesus when he's saying here, my house will be called a house of prayer for all nations, and immediately, very often, what happens, what do we do?

[48 : 56] We go into this discourse about the church, the sanctuary here, this is the place of prayer. prayer. And yes, we know that prayer is important. We know that the church ought to be engaged and involved in prayer.

Undoubtedly, we see that prayer is important. But oftentimes, we miss the whole point. That's really not what God's talking about. God's not talking about when we come together to worship that we ought to be praying and it's about a building.

But it's interesting, throughout the Old Testament, God said his temple was a place of prayer. But why did Jesus quote specifically from Isaiah 56?

We're going to look at that. Isaiah 56, 6 and 7. I believe there was a reason why Jesus quoted Isaiah passage rather than some of the other passages because of the point that he was trying to make about that place.

specifically where they were standing was a place of prayer. But not only that, it was a place of prayer for a particular people.

[50 : 08] Also, the sons of the foreigner who joined themselves to the Lord. So God is saying the temple is a place for my people, but in verse 6, he says not only that, not only is it a place for my people, but he says this is a place for the foreigner who joins themselves to the Lord to serve him and to love the name of the Lord, to be a servant, everyone who keeps from defiling the Sabbath and hold fast my covenant, and even them will I bring to my holy mountain and make them joyful in my house of prayer, their burnt offerings and their sacrifices will be accepted on my altar, for my house shall be called a house of prayer for whom?

For all nations. So what he was saying is, now verse 7 is talking about the house of prayer being a house of prayer for all nations, foreigners who bind themselves to the Lord.

Throughout scripture, the Old Testament especially, you have two groups of people. Even today, there are only two groups of people. There are Jews and there are non-Jews.

Simple. There are Jews. Who are the non-Jews? We are, the Gentiles. If you're not a Jew, you are a Gentile. So if you were not a Jew, you were considered a foreigner.

You were considered someone who was not in the family of God, not in, he were not God's people. So you were a foreigner. So what I said foreigners in the New Testament is talking about non-Jews, talking about Gentiles.

[51 : 47] So why does Jesus quote this in Mark 11? Well, let me give you a little bit of a geography of the temple in order for us to understand that.

As we see here, people were walking in from the city. They would walk in, whether they came from the northern or from the other side, they would walk into the temple and they would walk into, there

were different sections of the temple.

As you went further in, this was the Holy of Holies, number one up here. The further you went into the temple, it restricted more and more who was able to go there.

So what we had here in this outside courtyard were the Gentiles' courtyard. That's where the foreigners, those who were Gentiles, those who were non-Jews, came to worship.

There was a sign before you come in to this other area. You cannot enter. Otherwise, you could suffer the penalty of death. And so inside we hear, there is right there, the court of the Jewish women.

[52 : 58] So Jewish women could only go this far. When you went further, you went into the court of the Jews, which was where the Jewish men were able to go.

And then further on in, this is the court right here on the side. This is the court of the priests. But then, when it comes to this Holy of Holies, there was only one person that could go in there once a year.

It was the high priest. Now think about that. There were told in Jewish history that the high priest, the one who, it was his time that year, would wear a bell on his clothes.

So as he was inside the Holy of Holies, doing his thing, everyone outside, because the temple area was supposed to be quiet. You'll hear, tingle, tingle, tingle, tingle, a little bell, tingle, tingle, tingle.

The priest was still alive. But what happened if the priest went in with sin, or the priest had unconfessed sin, and his heart wasn't right? The Bible said God could strike him dead.

[54 : 03] So what would happen? Stop hearing the bell? Not good news. And so, when Jesus walks in, and he sees the money changers, he sees the selling of doves, and he sees people walking through to get across town, where do you think they had set up?

Not in the court of the Jewish women. Not in the court of the Jews. They had set up in the court of the Gentiles. So what was happening?

The Gentiles couldn't come and pray. So in effect, what were they doing? They were saying, oops, sorry, this is our place. We're using it now. We're using it today, off limits.

Now they could still come, but how could you worship God and pray in the midst of all that hustle and bustle? It was no longer a place restricted.

It was no longer a place of prayer where the nations could come in, those who were seeking God. It was no longer a place where those who were seeking God could come in and find out about God, pray, and seek his presence.

[55 : 12] And so what we're seeing here is pretty intense. People were setting up tables, most likely in the court of the Gentiles, the big area in there.

You can see how small it is when you go into the court of the Jews, court of the Jewish women, court of the Jews, and the court of the priest there. And so the implications, I believe, are huge for us.

So as we're winding this down to a close, we see this, that as we commit to his purposes, how we worship will greatly affect who else worships.

How we worship will greatly affect who else worships. These people had become so unholy. They had begun indulging themselves in so many things, and basically they were saying to the nations, you can't encounter God here because we're busy doing our own thing.

They filled up that space that was supposed to be a place for the Gentiles to come in and worship, and they said we're going to do this our way. And I think that this is a dangerous temptation sometimes that we face today.

[56 : 24] We miss out on the point that what is done in this room together ought to lead us to go out and to bring God to the nations.

to bring God to the world. And sometimes we're so busy about the roast, we're so busy thinking about whatever, we have not even made our time with God a place where we come to him.

So my house is not just a place of prayer for us, it's a place of prayer for the nations. As we think about how it relates to worship, think about it this way. Worship is the fuel of this unstoppable mission.

What is this unstoppable mission? Being leading others to become fully formed and functioning followers of Jesus Christ, making disciples. And so it's worship that I believe is the fuel of that mission.

So what did Jesus say? See, this is a place where you come to meet me, where you come to meet God. Let all the hustle and bustle stay outside. Because you're keeping the nations, you're keeping the Gentiles from hearing about me.

[57 : 42] You've made us a den of robbers. So our worship is what drives us out to go out and share the gospel. But also, we see that worship is the goal of this unstoppable mission.

Think about it this way. There's going to be a day when we no longer need to go out and evangelize.

There's going to be a day when we no longer need to make disciples. Because on that day, evangelism won't be necessary. Why?

Because we will be in the presence of God. The Bible talks about, Revelation 7, talks about a time where every tribe, every nation, every tongue will confess, Jesus Christ is Lord.

And so there's going to come a day, not only is worship the fuel of the mission, worship is the goal of the mission, because one day we're going to worship forever. So that's the goal.

[58 : 47] The goal is so that we can go out, share Jesus, make disciples, so that one day, as much as like Charles as possible, as much as the world as possible, is going to worship alongside of us.

Because the goal of everything we do is worship. And that God would get the glory. That's the goal of everything. In worship, we don't just see his greatness.

We don't just confess our sin. But we surrender ourselves to his purpose. So let's look at the biblical truth as we close. The biblical truth is God-centered worship always leads to God-sized sacrifice and obedience.

So if we've truly worshipped, you can't leave different. It's like the Cubs. The Cubs won the series, right?

It's like Cubs fans. The night after the Cubs win. Guess what? After a, what, 90, 100-something year drought?

[59 : 58] They left changed. You think? They went out to the streets and they partied because their team won. They left.

The event changed. And so God-centered worship always leads to God-sized sacrifice and God-sized obedience. So as we think about this this morning, as we close, I want us to spend a little bit of time asking God, what do you want us to do?

How do you want us to leave this place? What do you want us to be involved in? God, how is my life going to change?

And as we look at our next steps, it could be allow God to revolutionize my worship as I revere his greatness. It could be, Lord, as I leave this place, I'm going to spend some time this week and share the gospel with this person that you set on my heart.

God, I'm going to do this that I know that you've been calling me to do. God, this is how I'm going to leave this place and serve you with my life.

[61 : 20] Let's all stand. Let's all stand.