

Worship God!

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[0:00] 19, 1 through 10. After this I heard what seemed to be the loud voice of a great multitude in heaven crying out, Hallelujah! Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just.

! For he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immorality and has avenged on her the blood of his servants. Once more they cried out, Hallelujah! The smoke from her goes out up forever and ever.

And the twenty-four elders and the four living creatures fell down and worshipped God, who was seated on the throne, saying, Amen. Hallelujah! And from the throne came a voice saying, Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.

Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters, and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out, Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready. It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure.

[1:13] For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. And the angel said to me, Write this, Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb.

And he said to me, These are the true words of God. Then I fell down at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, You must not do that. I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus.

Worship God. For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. This is the word of the God. Good morning.

All right. How's the volume? Good. Good. My name is Jordan. It's a privilege. I got a fun task of preaching on Revelation. Some of you may have read through that and been like, What? It's angels talking to people and all this stuff. So we'll work through some of that. I only have a short amount of time. So I'll try to explain stuff.

[2:34] Happy for questions afterwards. It's been fun to dive into this. It's been a little mind-blowing and good. So I'll do my best to kind of explain the context. But Revelation.

So it's a book of prophecy. It's a book. It's apocalyptic literature. And so the idea is to, like the prophets of old, paint a picture of what's in the future.

And the goal of what we see in the future through prophecy should have an impact on our day now. So this is part four of our worship series.

And it's called Worship God. And so this is the main point of the text, right? We see it right away. Did anybody catch it? If you can pull the next slide up. Next slide. So right at the end, right? This is kind of weird. Something caught me off guard. Something I think might catch you off guard if we go back through it.

[3:30] And the angel said to me, write this. This is John. Okay, so John is given a vision. We'll talk about that in a second, actually. Write this. Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb. And he said to me, these are the words of God.

Then I fell down at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, you must not do that. I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers who hold the testament of Jesus. Worship God. So the whole point of this revelation, the whole point of this vision, is for John to be turned to worship to the God.

And so the revelation is so magnificent, John wants to worship the angel who took him there. So we'll go back. Matt, next slide. This will give you a context. So from the very beginning of the book of Revelation, we kind of get some understanding of what the book is about.

So I'll read this. I've underlined the things that I think kind of help us. The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God, this is the very first three verses of the book, right?

The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants, the things that must soon take place. He made it known by sending his angel to his servant, John, who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, even to all that he saw.

[4:41] Blessed is the one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and who keep what is written in it, for the time is near. So this whole book is describing a vision that this angel showed John for the purpose of revealing Jesus Christ and describing what is to come.

So yes, an angel is speaking to John. Yes, John is seeing a vision of a future celebration in the throne room of God. Yes, the purpose of this vision is to reveal to us truth about Jesus.

And yes, as the angels insist, the vision is intended to lead us to true worship. Blessed is one who reads aloud the words of this prophecy, and blessed are those who hear and keep what is written in it, for the time is near.

So first point, we all worship something. In this series, thus far, we've defined worship as a heart-engaged, all-of-life response to God for who he is and what he's done.

Or, true worship is a glad, holy, and total response to God for who he is and what he's done. This is a great definition. It highlights that true worship is sincere, is a sincere, joyous, all-of-life response to God.

[5:58] Notice, however, that this defines true worship. Today, this text kind of links us to false worship, right? It bridges the gap for us. Notice John's initial response to this magnificent vision is to worship in the throne room, that this vision is he falls down to worship the angel, which is missing the point.

Romans 1.23 explains that though God has revealed himself to man through the world he created, man, we have exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

So we all, the point is, we all have a propensity to worship. We all describe value to things. The biblical question is not whether or not you will worship, but who and what you will worship.

Will you suppress the truth about God and honor created things? Or will you worship the God who is behind his creation? So, I don't want to overdo this point.

I think we understand it from our own hearts, right? But let's, sex. Sex is a great answer, a great example, right? Sex is a really good thing. We've seen, it's a good thing that God created, right?

[7:20] But we have seen the problems that it creates in society. We've seen the problems that it creates in our own hearts when we try to enjoy the gift of what God created independent of the God who made it.

How much better is the God who gave us this created gift? But we, in our desire to receive the pleasure of what we want, we suppress the truth about God so that we can enjoy the things that he created without having to submit to his way, right?

And so, this is biblically worship, right? God made a great world. Romans 1.23 says, Our sinful desires lead us to suppress the truth about God so that we can put them out of the equation and pursue the things that we want, right?

So, we ascribe, we are all value ascribers, right? And so, true worship is ascribing ultimate value to God. God, false worship is ascribing ultimate value to something that is not God.

We do this in big things. We do this in small things, right? It can be as big as, Hey, I think my career is what's going to bring me honor and respect in society. I long for that honor and respect.

[8:23] And so, I'm going to sell myself for my career. I'm going to work late hours. I'm going to pursue the people that I think can get me what I want in my job. All the time, we're neglecting the God who made us to work, the God who created us with the abilities that we have.

And we're pushing him to the corners of our lives so that we can worship this thing that we want, right? We ascribe value to that. So, we worship with our lives whenever we choose to pursue something as ultimate that's not, right?

We can do it in little things. This is what was so convicting to me in this text. We can do it with little things. We do it so automatic, right? So, maybe you're a mom and you're tired and you're busy during the day and all you want is that moment of quiet and a hot cup of coffee, right?

So, in that moment, what you're looking for is not to be satisfied in your Savior, your God, the God who created coffee. You're looking to this cup of coffee to find your moment of satisfaction.

And we can bounce all day from one little piece of self-satisfaction to the next. And it sucks out our heart of true worship, right? It leads us to a place that doesn't honor God, right?

[9:28] When we exalt the things that he created, we exalt the things of this world over the God who made them for our enjoyment so that we could praise him. So, true worship is thinking, acting, and speaking in a way that attributes ultimate value to God.

False worship is thinking, acting, and speaking in a way that attributes ultimate value to something or someone else that is not God. Do we understand that?

I think it's for feedback. I think we'll see, as we come back to it, I don't know, we see this picture of worship in heaven. We kind of understand what it's like.

We kind of don't. Worship in heaven is going to be way better than worship here because worship in heaven is free of sin. It is free of compromise to the God who made us and created us and redeemed us, right?

And so, one of the challenges at the end of this, I'm getting way ahead of myself, but one of the challenges at the end of this is, right, we want to be, the whole point of this text is, right, we see this text and we know what's going to happen in the future, right?

[10:36] And so we want to bring the truth of the future into the now and live in that heaven-like celebration of God. But we're never going to be able to do that if we keep compromising and we're not really that excited about God because we're excited about a cup of coffee.

We're excited about getting home and watching the game or we're excited about these little things, whatever it is, good things, right, that we make to be ultimate things. And that just captures our heart and keeps us from giving the God who made us and saved us and redeemed us and gave us, promises us an eternal wedding.

I'm getting way ahead of myself. But he promises an eternal wedding, right? And we say, nah, I want this cup of coffee, you know, and I'm going to forget this God so that I can pursue this cup of coffee in the moment. So we'll keep going, but this idea, we are all worshipers.

I want you to understand that. You go throughout your day, you make all kinds of value choices through the things that you pursue. And if we want to be a church that is true to our desire for worship, to the true God, we need to fight that battle on the everyday joys and compromises.

Matt, next slide. John Calvin recognized this. He probably heard this quote. He says, the human heart is an idol factory.

[11:47] I realize I haven't described that term, right? Idols.

Biblically, an idol is something that you worship that's other than God, right? So we're called to worship God.

If you worship something else, that thing is an idol. If you make something more important than God, biblical language is an idol. And so John Calvin says, the human heart is an idol factory. We're always finding something else to pursue.

Paul Tripp says, you cannot divide human beings into those who worship and those who don't.

Everybody worships. It's just a matter of what, whom, or whom we serve. So now we're going to take some time to listen in on the content of this heavenly worship service.

And we're going to see how it influences our worship here at Shoreline. So next slide. The vision of heavenly worship should influence our worship now. So this is cool for our series, but it's actually one of the main points of the book of Revelation.

And I'll give you a little context of it. You see, though, we're studying Revelation 19 today.

Revelation was a text first written to a different community. It was written to seven churches in Asia Minor during the reign of the Roman emperor Domitian.

[13:09] While we don't know all the details, we do know some things. We know that the churches were facing extreme social pressure. They were being pressured to affirm and assimilate the wicked values of society.

They were being lured in by the sensuality of the culture and seduced by the promise of economic abundance. They were also being pressured through persecution. John mentions this in this letter as he talks to the churches.

He mentions the persecution to the churches. But we also know this reality from history. Revelation was, like I said, written during the time of Emperor Domitian. He was the guy who completed the Colosseum.

A couple of emperors before he started it, he completed it. So he was one of these guys that kind of founded the Roman blood sports. Right? And these, it was a culture that publicly celebrated the abuse and persecution of many people, including Christians.

You see, this letter was written in a time of great pressure for Christians. Pressure to indulge in the opulence of a wealthy, powerful society, or to stand against it, faithfully enduring its wrath.

[14:18] The picture of heavenly worship from Revelation 19 was meant to encourage faithfulness in these churches in Asia Minor, strengthening them to resist the empty promises of culture and remain faithful in the midst of persecution.

Revelation 19, this picture of the throne room of people in heaven praising our God, was meant to reorient their hearts. It was meant to reorient their hearts to a God who's at the center of the world, a God who is going to be victorious, a God who redeems his people, a God who is good, and a God who is powerful.

And that reorientation of their perspective on life was to strengthen them in the now. And that should be the same thing for us. A reorientation of what we know the outcome of this life will be should reorient us.

And it should drive us to worship, and that worship should compel us and propel us to stand faithful, to pursue God above all else, to not compromise to the good things that this culture promises, and to not be overcome by the pressures that this culture puts on us.

A good friend, Reese, Mike quoted him. He did a series on worship, and he talks about worship being a compass. I can't do an Australian accent like Mike did, but this really stuck with me, right?

[15:41] Because in worship, it points us back to true north. Because true worship will reorient us to a world where God is reigning. He is the reigning king. And that reorients and changes our perspective and gets us going back in the right direction.

So please don't neglect the worship with God's people. Please don't neglect to look at your God and worship him, because that is meant to reorient your heart and strengthen you as you start to see the world through the eyes of his perspective, through the eyes of his power.

Next slide. So we're going to jump into this. Let's see how this goes. You guys ready to participate? All right. Mike called me out last sermon. I've never been a big public participator. But Mike called me out, and he says, Hey, yo, buddy, you cheer for your Ohio State Buckeyes.

I've seen it. He didn't say that directly to me, but he said it directly to me. Right? And last time, last week, Mike said, Hey, we as Christians, we have every reason for God to animate us more than anything else.

[16:50] So we are looking at this picture of worship in heaven and not out to animate us. Agreed is a little foreign, right? Because the language is not quite as accessible as we'd expect.

But God gave this to us. 1 Corinthians 2. Sorry, it's taking me a second to get there. This is 1 Corinthians 2, verse 9.

It says, What eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined, what God has prepared for those who love him. And so we get this picture of worship in heaven, but we really have no idea. What he's prepared for us is so much better. Can we trust him in that? Can we participate in the worship of the saints in heaven as we read it together? So I'm asking you to participate. So what we're going to do is everything in blue is you guys.

Everything in white is me. And this is a boisterous praise to the Lord. And so I'll prompt you. Hopefully I can prompt you well.

[17:59] But we're going to read through this text again, and we're going to look at it in detail, the different aspects of what this community is worshipping. So the point that we're at in the outline is heavenly worship is vibrant, glorious, and unashamedly God-centered.

So this outpouring of heavenly worship begins with a loud hallelujah from a heavenly multitude, followed by praise-filled explanations about who God is and what he's done. And so church, we'll read this together.

Hallelujah. Salvation and glory and power belong to our God, for his judgments are true and just. For he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immortality, and he has avenged on her the blood of his servants.

Hallelujah. The smoke from her goes up forever and ever. And as this multitude pauses for a breath, John's vision focuses in on the 24 elders and the four living creatures who fall down in worship and simply exclaim, exclaim, Amen.

Hallelujah. And as the focus pans back out from the elders and the creatures, John hears a singular, strong, clear, yet unknown voice rise from the throne saying, Praise our God, all you his servants, you who fear him, small and great.

[19:19] Then the heavenly multitude erupts into loud praise, loud like the roar of mighty waters or the mighty peals of thunder, loud like you were just transported from this room to the base of Niagara Falls, loud like an epic Midwestern thunderstorm just snuck up on you.

Hallelujah. For the Lord our God reigns. Hallelujah. For the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his bride has made herself ready.

It was granted to her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure. For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. Well, I'm not sure.

I know we didn't reciprocate what John saw here, but thank you for your help. I hope that was helpful. Sorry, I let us stray there for a second. But before we assess this heavenly community, this heavenly community, this is full of individuals who have come through the brokenness of this world, and they are now with God in heaven, right?

So what they value is something that we should value. But before we see what it is they value, let's look at what they're not valuing, what they're not celebrating. They're not celebrating their success. They're not celebrating their class rank or their billet.

[20:35] They're not celebrating the attractiveness of their spouse, what colleges their children got into, the size of their homes or the quantity of their stuff, or the vacations they went on, or the adventures they had.

These are not something that the saints in heaven are celebrating. They don't care. Instead, they are unashamedly God-centered in their praise. The heavenly community is excited about their God. They are excited about a God of salvation, glory, and power. A God whose judgments are true and just. A God who brings an end to wickedness and vindicates his servants.

A God of small people and of great people. A God who is in absolute control over all. A God who designed the climax of creation to be the wedding celebration.

A wedding celebration, endowing honor and beauty, and uniting himself with his bride, the church, for all eternity. Is that what excites us in our everyday lives?

[21:35] It should, right? My heart this week oscillated quite a bit in that. But let's jump into it.

While several things emerge in their praise, two acts of God take center stage. They are celebrating their God, a God of judgment, and a God of salvation.

And in these two acts, we see his glory, his power, his justice, and his kindness. First, we'll look at judgment. As we look at the judgment in this text, we need to reach back in Revelation a little bit. To fully understand the judgment that we see here. I think we went ahead a few. Oh, yeah. We're here for a while.

Hopefully not too long. So, to understand this judgment, let me see, can you go back to the text? It might be helpful. Next one.

[22:34] There we go. For his judgments are true and just, for he has judged the great prostitute who corrupted the earth with her immortality

and has avenged on her the blood of his servants.

So, we see this. Who is this prostitute, right? What is this symbol, right? So, we look back at Revelation 17 and 18 and we see that Babylon is linked to this prostitute.

So, it's like, okay, well, that's helpful, but is it? Babylon. Who's Babylon, right? So, Babylon was an ancient city. Revelation picks up on a lot of the imagery and the other prophets. So, Daniel, in Daniel's time, Babylon was kind of the ruling power that ruled with a firm hand and brought economic prosperity and kind of took over the new world, right?

And so, Babylon here is linked to this prostitute. And the idea of Babylon throughout Revelation is that it's a combined, it's a combined, like, human power through military strength and economic prosperity, right?

And so, I don't think that they're expecting Babylon to rise again in the end times. That's just an image to show human power and human influence and human wealth, right?

[23:57] So, at the time of this reading, Babylon, for the churches in Asia Minor, was Rome, right? Because Rome had come in, they had conquered, they were still conquering, right?

They had brought in economic wealth, they had taken over a lot of things. If you were a friend of Rome, that was good. If you weren't a friend of Rome, that was bad, right? And so, we come in, this idea of Babylon is just the power, the human power structures in this world.

And there are human power structures that don't honor God, but they exalt their own power. And they seduce people, offering promises of wealth, and they crush people who are in their way, right? And so, this is kind of society in its rebellion. Another aspect of Revelation is that you kind of have two final judgments, right? You have the final judgment on Babylon and the final judgment on Satan, right?

But the picture of Revelation is that Babylon gets its power because it's being influenced by spiritual powers, dark spiritual powers, right? So, dark spiritual powers have been defeated.

[25:03] Christ has died and he has rose again, but the serpent is raging against humanity, trying to create destruction. One of the ways in which he does that is empowering wickedness and brutality in Babylon through human ways.

And so, this is a judgment that God's talking about. Babylon is a symbol of humanity's rebellion against God through the exaltation of its own power.

This is why Babylon is called a prostitute because she was seducing people with her power, wealth, and leading them to exchange the truth about God for a lie and worship her, a creature, rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

But not only has Babylon seduced the world, promising things that do not satisfy, she has also demanded full allegiance, crushing those who do not affirm her values, crushing God's people.

This is the spot that the Christians found themselves in Asia Minor at the writing of John, right?

[26:11] The brutality of Rome had come to such a head that they would abuse and torture people for public sport. They just brought in lots of wealth and they brought in lots of power and they did what they wanted.

And hopefully you were in their graces. If not, you were being crushed under their, for their enjoyment, right? And so this, this is, this is Babylon.

This is Babylon that God promises that this church in the end times is praising the Lord because of the overturn of its power, of its judgment.

And so, yeah, I got way lost. Make sense?

Am I getting nods or should I keep talking? I got a thumbs up. All right. All right. So maybe you're here today and you don't like this idea of God's judgment. I don't think our culture likes the idea of judgment.

[27:13] Well, I do think we like the idea of judgment. We just don't like the idea that God is the judge. So we see this total and complete judgment that the saints in heaven rejoice over. And we're like, ooh. But we'll watch taken and we'll cheer when Liam Neeson takes out a bunch of sex traffickers or we'll cheer as a culture when Osama Bin Laden is brought to justice, right?

So it's not justice that we have a problem with. We have a problem with God being the person who can enact judgment. We want judgment to come on our terms. That's self-worship again, right? That's exchanging the glory of God for that of a creature. And so if you here find yourself having a problem with a God who judges, I would challenge you.

Is your problem really with judgment or is it really with giving God the right to judge? The people in heaven praise God because his judgments are right and true.

But it is a fearful thing to fall under the judgment of the living God, right? And I think we naturally, our natural men want to run away from that.

[28:24] We want to mask it. We want to make excuses so we don't feel the pressure of it. But this text tells us that ultimate judgment is coming and it is good because everything that is broken, everything that is destroying this world is going to be put an end to.

And that moves us to the next point, right? The other thing that this heavenly worship service proclaims is that their God is a God of salvation and a God who has a wedding at the end of this salvation.

And so judgment, judgment doesn't go away. Judgment doesn't go away, but it gets taken by a savior. This whole book is to reveal Jesus Christ to us.

It's kind of interesting. There's a lot in Revelation, right? Revelation 4 and 5. John is again in the throne room of God and God has a scroll in his hand.

It has seven seals. So what these seven seals are is basically the restoration of God's world. These are seven seals that are going to go, the world is going to go through and before God restores it.

[29:28] And he cries and he says, who is worthy? Who is worthy? Nobody is worthy to open these seals. And John actually cries. He says he cries. I'll probably read this text for communion, but he cries because the world is unresolved.

The world is stuck in brokenness. And here's the scroll that will restore things, right? This is the vision, right? This is what he gets. And who is worthy? And then one of the elders says, I got to turn to it actually.

This was not planned, if you guys can't tell. All right, so weep no more.

Behold, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David has conquered so that he can open the scroll and its seven seals. So John's like, all right. And so he looks out and to his surprise, does he see the lion of the tribe of Judah?

No. What does he see? He sees a living, walking, slain lamb, a bloody, slain lamb. This is the God who is worthy for salvation.

[30:43] He is a God who came and suffered under his own judgment for our sin. He came in power and strength, the lion of the tribe of Judah, and sacrificed his power and his strength on your behalf so that God's judgment could be satisfied for his people, so that we might stand with him in heaven, so that we might come to his eternal wedding feast.

Right? This is the picture of Revelation. This savior, this Jesus came. Judgment is not taken away. Judgment is fully poured out, but is fully poured out on the sinless savior who came and who lived a righteous life for us so that he might die for our sin, so that he might take our judgment, so that we might be brought into his glory.

And that's what we see here today. We see saints brought into this glory and they're psyched about it. And they're praising their God of salvation. They're praising him like mighty peals of thunder.

They're praising him like the rushing of mighty water. And John is so impressed by this vision of true worship that he just wants to worship whatever's in front of him. Right?

But they are praising their God who came to save them. But it's not even, it gets even better. Right? Next, yeah, keep going. Next one. So, for the marriage of the lamb has come and his bride has made herself ready.

[32:05] It was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure. For the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints. So not only has this Jesus redeemed us through his blood, he has taken the people who are his, he's taken their punishment, he's taken their wrath.

But at the end of days, this group of believers is anticipating the promised wedding feast where he endows them with honor and beauty and clothes them in righteousness and unites himself with them.

So it's like, I don't know, you don't get much more honor than that. Well, we'll talk about it more. I don't know, this is a really powerful thing, especially when you think about the brokenness of the world that we live in and how it can devalue people and how it can chew people up and spit them out, how it promises lots of things and doesn't come through.

We have a God who promises us great things and comes through on our behalf because we can't on our own, because we can't be righteous, we can't live as a way. So maybe you're here today, wrongs.

Maybe you're here today and you are one who has been chewed up and spit out by the empty promises of a cruel and abusive society. Maybe you are a victim of the brutal power structures of this society.

[33:30] Well, know this, the sin done against you and done has not gone unnoticed to your God, to the true God, the ruling God, who will rule this world and the wickedness done against you will be called into judgment.

But even greater than this encouragement, know that Jesus died as a victim for all those who have been dirtied and soiled by the wicked deeds of others. He suffered and died for in the shame that you feel and he arose victorious for you.

And if you trust him, he is planning a great wedding day for you where he will clothe you with his righteous deeds and endow honor upon you. Think for a moment the power of this promise.

No matter what has broken you in this world, your God has redeemed you, he has made you clean, and at the end of time, he is preparing a wedding feast to you. Men, think of your wedding day.

Women, think of your wedding day if you're married. If you're not, I'll get to you in a second. Right? Men, think of when you saw your future wife first turn the corner.

[34:38] You saw her clothed in honor, clothed in white. What kind of joy filled your heart? Right? That kind of joy in anticipation is what God, this Jesus who died for you promises to have at the end of time when he receives you as his bride, when he receives the church.

Right? So think, enjoy that moment. Go back and think about it. Think about the joy of the anticipation of receiving your bride. And know that that is the image that God built into human relationships so that we might understand his anticipation and his excitement to receive you, his bride, purchased by his blood.

If you're a wife and you got married, right? Think of the excitement that you had or the value you felt when you saw your soon-to-be husband's eyes light up as soon as he saw you.

That is the value that Christ promises he will endow you with at the end of time. That is what these people are celebrating. If you're not married yet, I know there's some in here. Well, if you're, I got two illustrations.

If you're not married yet but going to be married soon, got a few. Got a few in this church, right? Don't miss this. Don't miss this. Soak in that moment and know that that moment is made to spur your heart on to true worship.

[36:03] It's going to be so much better. Don't fully let it be about you and your spouse, like love your spouse. Be psyched for your bride but know that that excitement and that anticipation is only meant to teach you about Christ's excitement and anticipation for you.

So don't miss that, right? Don't miss that opportunity to celebrate and to worship God in that way. If you're not married and you want to be and you're not there, it's okay, right? What we experience in marriage is only a small shadow of the joy that you'll experience at the end of the day when Christ receives you as a bride, right?

So if you're not there yet, take heart. You might be there soon. You might not but Christ is way better. Christ is way better than any fumbling spouse who's made his wife do all the work around the house because he can't prioritize his time well and prepare for a sermon, right?

Christ is way better than that. So, and he is longing to receive you as his bride at the end of days if you will trust him. All right, next slide.

We've fallen. All right, so I'm going to go back and I think there's two relevant things for us from the beginning of Revelation, right?

[37:24] Revelation was first written to churches. So we're going to read a text written to the church of Ephesus and we're going to read a text to the church of Laodicea and we're going to make some application for our life. To the church of Ephesus, I know your works, your toil, and your patient endurance and how you cannot bear with those who are evil but have tested those who call themselves apostles and are not and found them to be false.

I know you are enduring patiently and bearing up for my name's sake and you have not grown weary but I have this against you that you have abandoned the love you had at first.

Remember therefore from where you have fallen, repent and do the works you did at first. If not, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place unless you repent.

Next slide. To the church in Laodicea, I know your works, you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot.

So because you are lukewarm and neither cold nor hot, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich and I have prospered and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind, and naked.

[38:38] I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire so that you may be rich and white garments that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen and the salve to anoint your eyes so that you may see.

To those whom I love, I reprove and discipline so be zealous and repent. So Shoreline, we, like the church at Ephesus and the church at Laodicea, we are an outpost, we are intended to be an outpost of true worship in the midst of Babylon.

Babylon worships Babylon. Babylon worships the things of this world. Babylon worships its own power, its own wealth, but we are called to be an outpost, an alien outpost, a foreign people in the midst of a culture praising our God with true worship.

Like the heavenly community, God was at the center of their worship. We need to fight to keep Christ, to keep God at the center of our worship. We're so quick to make it about other things.

Mike said, hey, do you come here for the fellowship? Do you come here to spend time with people? Do you come here just because it's your routine? No, we come here to meet with our God. We come here to praise our God. It is what we were redeemed for.

[39:58] We were redeemed to give him glory, to bring him glory. We were created to give him glory. And so, we need to fight. We need to fight in our own hearts and as a church to keep Christ at the center of all that we do.

We also need to work through the power of the Spirit to put to death the false worship of our hearts. Maybe it's just me.

I think probably not. But I give so much of my heart daily to things that are not God. It's so automatic for us.

It's so automatic for us, particularly in our consumer-driven culture where we have lots of things. We have lots of things that can capture our attention and satisfy our immediate desires.

We need to fight to say, no, I like coffee, but that coffee is not going to satisfy me. Or, I like spending time with my kids, but my kids will not ultimately satisfy me.

[41:03] I find a lot of fulfillment in doing a good job at work, but that is not where my true value is found. Right? Our true value, our true satisfaction is found only in God. And we need to fight this battle in the big things, but particularly in the small things.

Because in all these small things, that our hearts are sucked away from true worship to our God. So if we want to be an outpost in the midst of Babylon proclaiming true worship of our king, we need to fight this battle in our hearts, in each other's hearts.

We need to support one another and help each other through the power of their spirit put to death the compromises that we make, the false gods that we serve. Like Laodicea, many of you have prospered and you don't feel like you need anything, but you forget that righteousness comes from

God and God alone.

Value comes from God and God alone and your self-dependence is simply a sign of self-worship, exposing your need for repentance and renewal at the cross of Christ. Like Ephesus, have you forgotten your first love?

Have you replaced the love for Christ with the self-satisfaction of service to the church? Is your half-hearted, often distracted worship an indication that you have exchanged the glory of God for the pleasures of religious service?

[42:16] So I say these because maybe it's true of my heart. I think our church is, for the most part, like, people are pretty well put together.

Is that where we find our joy? Or do we find our joy in our God? Do we find our joy in the religious service that we do, the commitments that we make, the time that we spend? Or are we really looking to our God for our satisfaction?

Israel, they worship God with their mouths, but their hearts were far from him. And Jesus came, I think sometimes as Christians, we think, hey, we need to go combat error out there, right?

We need to go combat error in the world. And that's true, that's part of our role. But when Jesus came, he came to first the Jewish people. The Romans, who had occupied Jerusalem, they didn't leave their gods at home.

There was plenty of error for Christ to go after in the Roman culture, but Christ came to show that a largely Orthodox Jewish people had forgotten him in the midst of their religious activity.

[43:30] I think we are all in danger of doing that because we are so wired towards self-performance and accomplishment that we can forget and lose our first love of God in our efforts to follow him and serve him.

So we may not be a people that worship God with our mouths, swear our hearts are far from him. If we are going to be an outpost of true worship in the midst of Babylon, we need to together fight for the centrality of God in all that we do.

And we need to work together to put away idols. Our worship here in this church will become more and more heaven-like as we pursue Christ and put Christ at the center and put away all false worship, whether it seems big or whether it seems small.

We'll pray. Dear only Father, Lord, I thank you for this vision of true and pure and good heavenly worship. God, we recognize that we're not there.

We recognize that our hearts are compromised, but may we not be discouraged. May we repent where we need to and may we trust the promises that someday you are bringing us into pure and good worship.

[44:45] God, it will be good. It will blow our expectations. It will far surpass our, I don't know, what we thought was possible, the joy that we thought could be had as we see you and as we worship you face to face.

God, we thank you that you died for us. We thank you that you took our judgment. We thank you that you gave us your righteousness. We thank you that you sit in heaven as a, making intercession for us, claiming our value through the completed work of Christ, not based on what we've done, but based on what he has already accomplished.

We thank you that our place with you is secure. God, and may all of these promises that we have in Christ just lead our hearts to worship, to lead our hearts to orient our lives around you and around service and praise to you.

God, help us as we worship you now. Give us true hearts to praise you and to proclaim your name. Amen.