

Renewing a Vision for Shoreline Pt. 2 - Exalting Christ

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Date: 09 November 2025

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[0:00] Amen. The scripture passage for today is 1 Peter 2, verses 1-12.

! At the conclusion of the reading, I will declare, this is the word of the Lord. And the church, in joyful response to his revelation given to us, will together say, thanks be to God.

So put away all malice and all deceit, and hypocrisy and envy and all slander. Like newborn infants, long for the pure spiritual milk, that by it you may grow up into salvation, if indeed you have tasted that the Lord is good.

As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men, but in the sight of God, chosen and precious. You yourself, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For it stands in scripture, Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a cornerstone chosen and precious. And whoever believes in him will not be put to shame.

[1:25] So the honor is for you who believe. But for those who do not believe, the stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone.

And a stone of stumbling, a rock of offense. They stumble because they disobey the word, as they were destined to do. But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul.

Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation.

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Well, Heavenly Father, as we talked about last week, that any spiritual life, any spiritual growth, it happens, Lord, not because of us.

[2:56] It happens because of you. It happens because of your spirit's power at work through your word and through your gospel. And so we come, Lord, we come before you needy.

We come before you dependent. We come before you unable to accomplish the things that we want to accomplish here in this body, Lord. And so we just ask God that you would pour your spirit out upon us, that you would help us to understand what your word says.

And God, as Jim prayed, to go and do those things, Lord, with transformed hearts. For your glory, Lord, we pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Well, good morning, Shoreline.

So glad that you all are here this morning. It's a privilege every week to worship Christ with you today. If you didn't get them on the way in, there are handouts.

Tyler has them in his hand. So if anybody needs one, raise your hand and he will come pass them out. And if not, great. There's also others on the back table. And I also do want to mention, when we're talking about handouts, I don't know if Andrew mentioned it or not.

[4:04] I might have missed it. My father, no, Randy Matthews, his prayer sheet is on the back table. Be sure to take that, stick it in your Bible, pray for him before and after his trip he leaves tomorrow.

So yeah. In the first chapter of his book, The Pursuit of God, great book by A.W. Tozer, he writes this in the first chapter. Before a sinful man can think a right thought of God, there must have been a work of enlightenment done within him.

We pursue God because, and only because, he has first put an urge within us that spurs us to the pursuit. Well, as we talked about last week, that enlightenment done within a sinner's heart is the work of God's Spirit through the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Tozer writes, God is always previous. God is always previous. He is a great initiator, not only of creation, but also of redemption. And through his gracious initiating acts, he has established not only individual Christians, but thanks be to God that he has, but also the church.

He brings Christians into a body, a family. Now, you know, you might summarize, and reflect, and I wish I had used this verse last week, but you might summarize the whole first half of my sermon last week with this one declaration of Christ in Matthew 16, 18.

[5:26] I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. By his gracious will, through his word, his spirit, his gospel, God has established and continues to build his church.

And so because of that, we seek to be a church submitted to God's word, dependent on the Spirit, centered on the gospel, and devoted to prayer. Now, if you're joining us for the first time this week, that brings you up to speed in our current four-part sermon series, *Renewing a Vision for Shoreline*. And also, if you're new, I just want to say, we normally preach through books of the Bible here, one passage after another. But as we hit our 10-year mark of ministry by God's grace, we're taking a month to step back and to consider, where is God leading us as a church?

So we're preaching here topically through our vision for Shoreline. In the pursuit of God, Tozer continues, the impulse to pursue God originates with God. But the outworking of that impulse is our following hard after him.

Religion, so far as it is genuine, is in essence the response of created personalities to the creating personality, God.

[6:43] And so these next three weeks of our vision series, we're considering what does it look like for us to properly respond to our creating, redeeming God.

And so you'll see on the handout that we've written down, you know, nine different ways, essentially, from 5 to 13, bucketed into these three main categories.

These are all ways that we respond to the grace of God in Christ. And the three main categories that we respond is by exalting his name, by edifying the body, and by expanding his kingdom.

Exalting Christ, edifying the body of Christ, expanding the kingdom of Christ. And so today we begin with that very first one of chief importance, exalting Christ.

Exalting Christ. And the main point today is very simple, really. It is we exist to worship Christ. As individuals, as a church, we exist to worship Christ for our good and for the glory of God.

[7:50] We exist to worship Christ for our good and for the glory of God. Now remember, as we progress through this series, we're first looking at the theological foundation of our vision.

That is, what does the Bible have to say? And how does God, you know, how does God want us to lead our church forward here? And then that moves into the practical outworking.

So from theological vision, the basis, to the practical outworking in the life of our church. Because we're here in a specific place and time and context. So please get a copy of God's word in front of you.

If you don't have one, there's Bibles on the back table as always. So feel free to take one and keep it as our gift to you. And again, in this topical series, we're kind of flipping all over scripture, not just sticking in one passage.

So sometimes you can flip there. Sometimes it might not make sense to you. That's all good. And we're gonna begin again today by surveying the big picture in scripture. Now, last week we walked through the redemptive narrative of scripture to see our main point.

[8:57] And we're gonna do that again in a bit. But first, we're gonna jump around a little bit in a more logic-driven, then sort of like a chronology-driven path, if that makes sense. And the first thing that I want us to see is that all things exist for the glory of God.

All things exist for God's glory. You know, back in April, we looked at, we were in 1 Corinthians chapter 8, and Paul declared there that in contrast to the pagan gods that the culture worshiped, there is, Paul says, there is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist.

The last week, we sort of looked at the first half of this, how we've been established by God, from whom are all things. He's established all things. This week, we're really looking at that second half, for whom we exist.

We exist for God. And not just us, but all things exist for God. In Revelation chapter 4, feel free to flip there if you want.

Revelation chapter 4. We're given there in John's vision, eyes and ears, as it were, within the throne room of God. And the living creatures, verses 9 through 11, you see there that the living creatures, the elders that are before the presence of the Lord, are day and night, giving God glory and honor and thanks.

[10:22] They fall down before him who is seated on the throne and worship him who lives forever and ever. They cast their crowns before the throne, saying, worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power.

For you created all things, and by your will, they existed and were created. The living creatures and the elders are doing what all things were made to do, to worship God.

And that is to shine a spotlight on his infinite worth, his infinite beauty and majesty and splendor and excellencies, to praise and honor and extol and exalt and magnify his matchless name.

We need a lot of words in the English language to try and talk about this, to give him glory. That's what Paul means when he says that it's for God that we exist.

So that's the first premise. All things exist for God's glory. Now here's the second premise here.

God is rightly jealous for his own glory.

[11:29] Perhaps it sounds strange to you. God is rightly jealous for his own glory. Now this truth is seen all throughout Scripture, and there are few better instances of this than in Exodus chapter 9.

So feel free if you want to turn to Exodus, the second book of the Bible, Exodus chapter 9, verses 13 through 16. God is speaking to Pharaoh, so the most powerful man in the world at that time.

God is speaking to Pharaoh through Moses. And here's what God tells Moses to say to Pharaoh.

Let my people go, that they may serve me.

For this time I will send all my plagues on you yourself and on your servants and your people, so that you may know that there is none like me in all the earth.

For by now I could have put out my hand and struck you and your people with pestilence, and you would have been cut off from the earth. But for this purpose I have raised you up.

[12:26] God says, I raised you up, Pharaoh, right? For this purpose, to show you my power so that my name may be proclaimed in all the earth.

God is rightly jealous for his glory. And so he tells Israel to have no other gods before him or to make a carved idol. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God.

Exodus 20, 4 through 6. And God declares in Isaiah 42, 8, I am the Lord, that is my name, my glory. I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.

And our natural response is, sheesh, what an egotistical God. You know, I bet his Insta feed would be just full of these self-glamorizing photos. I bet his Facebook feed would just be bashing others and exalting himself.

You know, we naturally think God's jealousy for his glory is a negative sign of self-absorption because our jealousy is almost always that way.

[13:29] But friends, God is not like us. God is not like us. God is not jealous for his glory like I'm jealous for my neighbor's house. He actually possesses infinite worth and infinite glory in himself.

Psalms 96, 6. Splendor and majesty are before him. Strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. J.I.

Packer writes in the book, Knowing God, God's jealousy is not a compound of frustration, envy, and spite, as human jealousy so often is, but appears instead as a, listen to this, it appears instead,

God's jealousy appears instead as a praiseworthy zeal to preserve something supremely precious.

To preserve something supremely precious. God is rightly jealous for his own glory. And

considering his complete sovereignty, he will get glory in the end one way or another.

For the earth, this is worth memorizing, Habakkuk 2, 14. For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.

For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. Okay, so a good question to ask then is, how then is God glorified?

[14:54] And that leads to the third premise here. God is glorified first through creation. In Psalm 19, verse one, David says, the heavens declare the glory of God and the sky above proclaims its handiwork.

And Paul writes in Romans 1, 20, that God's eternal power and divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world and the things that have been made.

This entire universe, from the smallest little seed to the grandest galaxy, is a living sermon proclaiming the glory of God. God's glorified through creation.

And God is, this is where we're going here, God is glorified especially through his worshiping people. And this is where I want to move us again through redemptive history quickly.

The first thing we see here, we see this purpose in the creation of mankind, that God is particularly glorified through the community of the saints is reflected in the beginning.

[15:53] We were created male and female in the likeness of God, bearing God's image. And then we are told to be fruitful and to multiply and fill the earth and subdue it.

Our purpose from the outset as a people, as humanity, was to glorify God by knowing him and making him known. By extending his gracious rule to the ends of the earth.

Of course, we really botched that by falling into sin. But God wasn't done with us. He did go on to judge the world through a global flood.

But in mercy, he preserved a faithful remnant in Noah and his family. And then, fast forward, he called Abraham and he established the nation of Israel. And so, you know, we looked at this a little bit last week.

This became Israel's purpose. God renewed his creation purpose for mankind in and through Israel. You know, we looked last week at Exodus 19, 4 through 6, in which God says that he rescued and established Israel to obey his voice and to keep his covenant, to be his treasured possession, and to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.

[17:03] So God formed Israel that she might know him and make him known. That she might put on display for the world to see the goodness, the glory, the holiness of God.

And of course, Israel failed time and again to be the kingdom of priests, to be the holy nation that God called her to be. But God wasn't done. He wasn't done. Remember what he said in Habakkuk 2, 14.

The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. God would receive glory through his worshiping people. And so Christ came.

And Christ did what we could never do, what Israel could never do. He lived a life laser focused on the glory of God in every way fulfilling the law and remaining obedient to the Father.

And then he did what we could never imagine. He died our death. He substituted himself in our place upon the cross. We were objects of wrath because of sin against a holy God.

[18:15] But he, Christ, he averted God's wrath by absorbing it all on himself and in himself. And so now by faith in Jesus' name, we're forgiven of our sin.

We are given his righteousness. Therefore, Paul says, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. 2 Corinthians 5, 17. So do you see what happened?

Our creation purpose, which we marred by sin, which became Israel's national purpose, which she abandoned through rebellion, that purpose has been renewed through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Christ. This is now the church's purpose through Christ, through the gospel, the church, has become a new kind of humanity that is once again able to know God and to make him known.

We are once again able to rightfully bear, to accurately bear God's image and put his goodness and his glory on display for the world to see. And not only the world, but the whole cosmos.

[19:26] God's eternal purpose, realizing Christ Jesus, is that Ephesians 3, 10, through the church, I hope you're starting to realize this, we're using this verse a lot this year. Through the church, the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the

heavenly places.

Through the church, God's multifaceted, diamond-like wisdom is made known to the cosmos. And in the text that we read before, that Jason read, but you, Peter tells the church, in 1 Peter 2, 9, notice the language, the similar language to Israel, but you, Christians, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.

Peter could not make it more clear. I'm referring back to Israel in Exodus chapter 19. You, Christians, in Christ, are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession.

Why? That you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Through the gospel, mankind's creation purpose is restored, and the church now is the focal point for the display of God's glory to the universe.

And what's more, as if it doesn't get better here, I wanted to make it clear here, number five, glorifying God is actually our good.

[20:55] It's not only the purpose that we were made for, but it's also our good. It's just so important to see in the scriptures. You know, if you read the book of Deuteronomy, it is so clear that Israel's highest good is found in glorifying God.

I'm just going to give you one example. Deuteronomy 6.24. Moses said, He'll say other things like, God is your praise.

He is your life. For our good always. And of course, there's the beautiful promise that we've memorized, Romans 8.28, that we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

All things, all things, work together for good, for those that love God. You know, we're going to spend eternity utterly astounded at this reality, that God, in his sovereign, just inexplicable grace, he has bound up together his glory and our good.

That's crazy. And the Westminster Catechism teaches this, that the chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy him forever.

[22:27] Right? Our highest good, our ultimate satisfaction, our ultimate joy, it is not found in pursuing anything other than God and in glorifying God.

Blessed be God that he's worked this way in history. So when God establishes a holy, redeemed people through the Spirit, through the Gospel, he does so for the exaltation of Christ and for our good and for the glory of his name.

We exist to worship Christ for our good and for the glory of God. Now that is, that's the theological grounding here for where we're going in the rest part of this sermon.

So there are three key vision principles that we see flowing sort of directly out of this. And as I said last week, these vision principles, these are attributes that we seek to be increasingly characterized by as a church community.

You know, if somebody new comes to Shoreline and spends a month or so with us, we would want them to be able to describe us in these ways. And so first, today, fifth over all, we seek to be a church, this is the most direct outflow here, we seek to be a church magnifying God's glory.

[23:51] So this is on the backside of your handout now. We seek to be a church that zealously pursues the glory of God in everything that we do because it's the reason we were made.

David calls the gathered assembly to worship in Psalm 34. He says, I will bless the Lord at all times. His praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord.

Let the humble, now he's calling others into this worship service, let the humble hear and be glad.

Oh, magnify the Lord with me and let us exalt his name together.

And you know, magnifying God's glory, which I've kind of said earlier, it's like shining a spotlight.

We're not making God's glory bigger, okay?

God's glory is God's glory. It is what it is. But we are seeking to focus on it and to exalt the glory of God and to shine a spotlight on the glory of God, on his beauty and his majesty and his splendor.

[24:52] And that doesn't only happen here in gathered worship. Romans 12, verse 1. So after Paul relishes in the gospel for 11 chapters, he says, I appeal to you, therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God.

So in view of everything that I talked about, offer your bodies, present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

So magnifying God's glory, it's an all-of-life endeavor. Okay, so how does that work out practically then in the life of the church? How does it work out practically? Well, the first thing that it works out as is in the priority of corporate worship and in the aim of corporate worship.

So if our chief aim in life is to magnify God's glory, and if God has specifically created a people through the gospel of Christ for the praise of his name, then that means two things.

Okay, that means, first of all, that the corporate gathering, this gathering must be prioritized above other commitments. It should hold central importance in our lives, central place in our weekly schedules as individuals and as families, and then the second thing is, the aim of our corporate gatherings must first and foremost be the glory of God.

[26:17] When we enter into this space, we must do so with a radically Godward focus. We are chiefly here, chiefly here, first and foremost for the glory of God, for the worship of the name of Christ.

And so that means that we come in here as engaged participants, not passive spectators. Each of us is a priest. If you're in Christ, you are part of the kingdom of priests, offering spiritual sacrifices to God for his glory.

And one particular way that manifests itself is that we seek to be a singing church. This manifests itself in a lot of ways, but we can't get into all that here. But we seek to be a singing church.

Not only does God command us like 400 times to sing, but even more, God has given us a song to sing, a song of redemption. And we're going to be singing, not just here, we're going to be singing a song of praise and redemption for the rest of eternity.

And so we seek to be a singing church, extolling the Lord through song for all that he is and all that he's done for us in Christ. So the priority and the aim of corporate worship, the second thing is the aim of really everything that we do in ministry, all the discipling endeavors that we partake in, they need to have at their aim the glory of God.

[27:42] We don't do these things first to get anything out of them though we do want to be spiritually built up. But we don't do them first for that reason. We don't even do them first to care for others though we do want and we're called to care for others.

And we don't do them first to draw the loss to salvation though we certainly want the loss to be saved. Like we want all of those things. But the chief aim, the priority of all of our ministry activity needs to be bringing glory to God.

And this order is so important because our ministry to one another it can so easily devolve into people pleasing. It becomes about me and about others.

We are here, so again, we are here to please others in the sense of, we looked at this in 1 Corinthians 10, in the sense of loving others with sacrificial self-giving love in the pattern of Christ. But we're not here to please others in the sense of seeking after their approval rather than God's. And we twist that up very easily. And this is why the aim of all of our ministry activity needs to be the glory of God.

[28:54] And just expanding outward, it needs to be the aim of all of life. Not only our ministry activity but everything that we think, say, and do, we seek to be driven by worship of God, worship of Christ.

So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. 1 Corinthians 10, 31.

And as we read earlier from Romans 12, 1, our entire lives are spiritual offerings of worship to the Lord.

And so this means in every aspect of our individual and corporate lives, whether the way we steward our finances, the way we spend our time, our aim needs to be the magnification of the glory of God.

And just the last thing I want to say before moving on here, this is really the sum and the aim of all of the vision principles in this whole sermon series. It follows from this that literally every other of the vision principles results in glory to God and has as its aim the glory of God.

So for you Star Wars fans, this is kind of like an I am all the Jedi moment. Magnifying God's glory is all the vision principles. So being submitted to God's word, it gives God glory, right?

[30:19] Being dependent on the spirit, being centered on the gospel, being devoted to prayer, all of those things bring honor and glory and

praise. They're Godward directed. They're for his glory.

So living out that biblical vision, it puts a spotlight on his worth, on his beauty. And so the same is for all of the vision principles. Andrew mentioned in Elders' meeting, this is kind of like spaghetti, this vision.

Like we're trying to take things that are very tightly interwoven and lay it out in a logical way, but everything's connected together here. And that's no, it's not truer than this principle here.

Everything is to magnify the glory of God. We seek to be a church magnifying God's glory. And we seek to be a church, number six, treasuring Christ.

Treasuring Christ. We seek to be a church that holds Jesus Christ as our highest treasure and good, seeking to know him and love him more.

[31:22] Somebody say amen to that. We seek to be a church that holds Jesus Christ as our highest treasure and good, seeking to know him and love him more.

Now it's striking, again going back to Israel, it's striking how many times Moses points the people of Israel back to what Jesus would later describe as the first and greatest commandment.

To love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Mark 12 verse 30. Above all, God wants us to know him and to love him.

To know him and love him. But we specifically chose here not to say treasuring God, though we do treasure God, but we specifically chose treasuring Christ.

And that's because, as John puts it in the first chapter of his gospel, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the eternal Word, he took on human flesh and he dwelt among us and he revealed to us in greater clarity than ever before the glory of God the Father.

[32:30] When we look at Jesus, we're looking at God. That's why Jesus said, whoever has seen me, John 14, 9, has seen the Father. To know and love Christ is to know and love God.

And in that same conversation in the upper room, Jesus also declares, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

And what would it cost him to become for us the way? His life of supreme value. It cost him his life. Sacrifice upon the cross.

So not only is Jesus Lord, Jesus is Lord. He rules over all things and so we should submit to him as Lord. and he revealed to us God in greater clarity.

But Jesus is also Savior. Jesus laid down his life on our behalf that we might know God whom to know is eternal life. Jesus said, and he was praying to the Father in John 17, and this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

[33:40] how rich a treasure we possess in Jesus Christ our Lord. His blood our ransom and defense, his glory our reward.

The sum of all created things is worthless in compare, for our inheritance is him whose praise angels declare. Jesus is the pearl of greatest price, as Marcus preached on a few weeks ago. worth selling all to possess. And you know, the Apostle Paul believed so, telling the Philippians, but whatever gain I had, I counted as loss for the sake of Christ.

Indeed, I count everything as loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Jesus Christ my Lord. Lord, we seek to be a church treasuring Christ.

So how does that vision work out practically in the life of our church? Well, again, I go back to the priority and the aim of what we do right here. You know, Jesus promised his disciples that where two or three are gathered in my name, there I am among them.

[34:52] God's presence was always uniquely and powerfully manifested among the gathered assembly of the saints. And so we see, for example, David longing to be in the sanctuary, beholding your power and glory, Psalm 63, verse 2.

We have all the more reason in Christ to prioritize corporate worship and the aim of our gatherings. Again, tied very closely with magnifying God's glory is for us to see and to savor, to desire, to delight in Jesus Christ.

Bob Coughlin writes in the book *Worship Matters*, magnifying God's greatness begins with the proclamation of objective biblical truths about God, but it ends with the expression of deep and holy affections toward God.

We aren't simply reciting facts about God like students reviewing their multiplication tables. God wants us to delight in him. He is exalted when all our energies are directed to one end, being satisfied and who he is.

And sort of underneath that is Christ-centered preaching. And we touched on this last week. But when we talk about, last week we talked about gospel-centered preaching.

[36:10] When we talk about gospel-centered preaching, we're really talking about Christ-centered preaching. Not only is the gospel, the message of the gospel, the interpretive key to all of Scripture, but Christ is the central hero in all of Scripture.

It all points to his infinite worth. And so here at Shoreline, you should not hear a single sermon in which Christ is not proclaimed and treasured.

If you do, please confront me. Or if you don't want to do that, talk to another elder or something. But we should always be proclaiming Christ from all of Scripture.

It's about him. Similarly, as to the last point, it's the aim of all of our ministry activity. Again, this is coupled very closely with magnifying God's glory.

All of our ministry activity should have as its aim the pursuit of Christ. Knowing Christ more, loving Christ more, and then helping others to do the same.

[37:10] So just to make this a little bit more practical, one example here, husbands, fathers, and I've been talking to you more recently. Our primary ministry, and I get this switched up too often here, guys.

Our primary ministry, our primary calling is to our wives and to our children. Are you, fathers, husbands, are we, are we shepherding our families not only towards God's word, but towards God himself?

Not only towards the gospel, but towards Christ. Now you understand there is a difference there.

There's a difference. It's a difference between knowing facts about your wife, like your favorite dessert, or the way that she feels most loved, which you should know, by the way.

I'm not saying don't know that. You should know that. But it's a difference between knowing facts about your wife and actually knowing your wife. Right? I'll bet, I'll bet, I'll bet that GPT knows more facts about your wife.

I hope not, but it probably does. Okay? But it does not have a living, breathing, dynamic, intimate relationship with her.

[38:19] And so we need to lead our wives and lead our children towards a relationship with Christ, towards treasuring him. And in order to do that, guys, we need ourselves to be pursuing Christ.

As Carl likes to say, Carl, you were mentioned earlier, Carl likes to say this, you can fool a fool, you can con a con, but you can't kid a kid. Right? Kids can smell a counterfeit.

Okay? So let's show them a real, albeit imperfect, devotion to Christ above all else in our home.

Okay, the next thing, meaningful membership.

We're going to talk more about membership in particular next week, but displaying Christ in the community of the church is what I'm talking about here. Now, we spent like all year talking about this from 1 Corinthians.

What it looks like for the church to put Christ on display in all things. So if you want to flesh that out, listen to like, you know, 50 sermons. And then we participated in a six-week gospel culture study just to work that out in still more practical ways.

[39:28] Our treasuring of Christ above all else, our pursuit of knowing Him and of loving Him, it will, it ought to manifest itself in the actual culture of the church.

The way that we treat each other, the way that we interact with each other, the way that we love and serve one another and as we behold His glory, we're transformed into His likeness. And so Christ should be being put on display in our church culture.

We're going to talk about that more next week. And the ordinances. Again, we'll be talking a little bit more about these next week. Christ has given us these amazing, rich symbols and imagery in baptism and in the Lord's Supper.

I mention them here specifically under treasuring Christ because both baptism and the Lord's Supper demonstrate that Christ is our highest treasure.

Just think for a second. Baptism, it represents the grace of God to unite us eternally in Christ, in His death and His resurrection. And that's for His exaltation.

[40:34] We're exalting Christ even in the act of baptism because we have died and risen with Him. It's His work that has accomplished salvation. And in the Lord's Supper, which we're going to partake of, it's an ongoing fellowship that we have with Christ and one another and it's visibly, tangibly, edibly demonstrating the all-surpassing worth of Christ.

He's our satisfaction. He is our nourishment. And so, even in those ordinances, we're treasuring Christ. The last thing here, do we seek to be a church magnifying God's glory, treasuring Christ, pursuing holiness.

We seek to be a church that is in the world but not of the world, reflecting the holy likeness of God as we increasingly conform to the image of Christ.

So why does this belong here under exalt? Why are we talking about that? And the answer is because God so closely connects our holiness individually and corporately with knowing and loving Him.

These two things are tethered very closely in Scripture. So first, what is holiness? The word holy, it carries kind of two related, two ideas.

[41:55] Being set apart, being distinct, combined with that of moral purity. In his book, *Holy in Christ*, Andrew Murray writes that it expresses the idea of something distinguished from others, separate from them by superior excellence.

You know, Scripture makes clear that God and God alone is holy. He is in a category of one and yet, He, the Holy One, makes holy.

He makes holy and He specifically makes His people holy. And so if His people who have been made holy are to accurately reflect His image and His likeness to the world, then they need to live lives of holiness, right?

Distinct from the sinful world around them to radiant in moral purity, which is radiant in Christ. So knowing and loving God, it looks like holiness in heart and life.

You know, we saw, again, in Exodus 19, God called, He rescued Israel to be a holy nation. And then in Leviticus, all over, are phrases like this in 1145, for I am the Lord who brought you up out of the land of Egypt to be your God.

[43:13] You shall therefore be holy for I am holy. And this imperative is not removed, it's actually reinforced in the gospel.

We have been made holy forever by the blood of Christ so that, there's a so that, like, we might reflect God's holy likeness in the world for His glory.

Jesus said, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. Love for Christ means obedience to Christ. It means reflecting the holy likeness of Christ.

Again, as Paul says in Romans 8 29, after saying that God works all things for our good, he says, for those whom he foreknew, he also predestined for what? To be conformed to the image of his Son.

That's what God's after. His will for us is our sanctification, our continual growth in likeness to Christ. And so knowing and loving Christ means increasingly reflecting the holy likeness of Christ in heart and life for the glory of God.

[44:19] So how does that vision work out practically in our church? And I go back again to the aim of corporate worship.

Now we've already asserted that our primary aim is magnifying God's glory and that's tethered very closely to treasuring Christ but right beneath that, which really becomes all of next week, Edify, right beneath that is one of our aims here is for the saints to be formed increasingly into the likeness of Christ.

It's Christ formation. That's what all discipleship is about. That's what we're seeking to do here. And yes, we do want this service to be in some way accessible to the outsider, right, to the unbelievers, 1 Corinthians 14.

But that's a lesser priority and more of a byproduct, really, of exalting Christ and edifying the saints. Okay, seeker-sensitive church models. They might get people in the door.

They might get people to pray a prayer but they don't seem to grow disciples of Christ that are increasingly putting sin to death and growing in holiness.

[45:29] And so speaking of disciples, here's the next thing, a culture of discipling. This is part of being a member here. We're going to talk more about the Great Commission. It's not only, the Great Commission is not only baptizing but what's the next part?

It's teaching others to obey all that Christ has commanded. It's preparing the bride of Christ to be presented mature in Christ when he returns.

And so, therefore, we seek here to have a culture of discipling in which all the saints are helping one another follow Jesus. That's what discipling is. It's helping one another follow Jesus.

But notice I said culture, not programs. We're not against programs. We have programs here, right? But we want to be a church where people pursue one another almost like entrepreneurs.

We're pursuing one another for discipleship. We're getting involved in each other's lives, doing spiritual good to each other with or without an actual program in place.

[46:30] And again, the goal here is conformity to the holy likeness of Christ. So it's not merely community, but it's community that puts Jesus on display. Again, we're going to talk more about the Great Commission in the next couple of weeks.

There's two more things here, two more things. The first is a culture of humility, transparency, and accountability. As long as we live on this side of heaven, we are works in progress.

Are we not? Like, there's sin to be rooted out. There are blind spots to be exposed. There are hidden idols that need to be smashed. And we need each other's help to do this.

Ray Ortlund talked about this as one aspect, he said, of walking in the light. Paul calls the Ephesians in Ephesians 5 to expose the unfruitful works of darkness.

Expose them. Let the light shine on them. James says, James 5.16, confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. And so we seek here to have a culture in which we're humbly recognizing our indwelling sin and our ongoing need for grace.

[47:41] We can do that, by the way, because we already have the approval of Christ. Okay? We don't have to fake it. We know that we're sinners worse than we could, you know, than we want to admit, but Christ loves us far more.

That's sort of a Tim Kellerism. Far more than we could possibly imagine. And so we want to have a culture here of humbly confessing our sins to one another, of holding one another accountable as we are together pursuing holiness for the glory of God.

And that leads, finally, to the also popular topic of church discipline. Now listen, you know, we preach the whole sermon in 1 Corinthians 5 on church discipline, so you can go to that if you want to hear more about this.

We don't practice church discipline, surprise, surprise, because it's fun, okay, or because it's popular, but because it's good, okay? Church discipline protects the holy name of Christ by protecting the holiness of the church.

And that's why it's actually good. Hebrews 12, 10 says that God disciplines us for our good that we may share in his holiness.

[48:55] The church discipline process actually begins, according to Christ in Matthew 18, 15, with one brother, one sister, lovingly confronting another who is in sin. It's only if that person doesn't repent that the matter is then expanded to include two or three, and then it's expanded to include the church, and then if they still don't repent, they're excommunicated from the church.

That means they're treated as an unbeliever. The church discipline protects the holiness of the church, which in turn protects the holy name of Christ, which is the name that we're seeking to exalt above all things to a watching world.

And so therefore, it should also be said, and we see this in John 17 in Jesus' high priestly prayer, that the holiness of the church is inherently missional. The holiness of the church is missional.

When unbelievers peer into, you know, this room and this culture, this community, what do they see? If they see a redeemed gospel culture that's strikingly different from the world that they're used

to, that is reflecting the holy likeness of Christ, then they know, listen, they know that Christ is risen, and he's reigning in his church, and he is at work here, and he is powerful, and that he offers them to eternal life.

And so the salvation of the lost is at stake in the holiness of the church. And so to, you know, as we already said, is the name of Christ and the glory of God.

[50:29] Shoreline, God has graciously established the universal church, right, that spans the generations and the ages, and this particular local church by the blood of his Son, Jesus Christ, and by the power of his Spirit.

And he's done that in order that we might be a focal point, a focal point for the display of his glory to the universe. We exist to exalt Christ.

We exist to worship him for our good and for the glory of God. And so, may we as a church increasingly forsake every idol that vies for our worship, and there are many.

May we, with undivided hearts, seek to lift high the name of Jesus above all others. May we increasingly become a people magnifying God's glory and treasuring Christ and pursuing holiness for our good and for the glory of God.

Heavenly Father, do this in us, Lord. This is, these are our desires that we see from your word and we are unable, again, we're unable to bring them about.

[51:37] And so, we're ever dependent on you, Lord. We will work hard, Lord, with your energy. We'll work hard to seek you and to seek your word and to try to apply these principles, but we need your spirit to be the one that changes our hearts and makes us like these things that we are after.

Father, do that among us for your glory, God, for our good and for the good of the nations, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.