

Being God's Community

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- [0 : 0 0] We'll begin our worship by singing to God's praise in Psalm 34. It's the Sing Psalms version on page 40 of the Psalm book. We're going to sing from verse 8 to verse 14.
- Again, I'm just a reminder that the Sunday school starts today and the tweenies will come in as well and they'll go out to the Sunday school and the tweenies during the second singing. So we're glad that the Sunday school and resuming again today, we give thanks for that.
- Psalm 34 at verse 8, come taste and see, the Lord is good who trusts and him is blessed. O fear the Lord, you saints with need, you will not be oppressed. We'll sing from verse 8 to 14 to God's praise and we stand to sing.
- Come taste and see, the Lord is good who trusts and him is blessed.
- O fear the Lord, you saints with need, you will not be oppressed.
- [1 : 1 6] Young lions may grow weak and faint and hunger for their food, but those who wait upon the Lord will not be oppressed.
- Come hear my children gather round and listen to my word.
- And I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord.
- Does anyone delight in life and long to see good days?
- God bless you, the Lord is good. Then keep your tongue from evil speech, your lips from lying ways.
- [2 : 5 0] Depart and turn from evil paths and practice what is right.
- Desire to know the way of peace, pursue it with your might.
- I will come to God in prayer. Let us pray. Amen.
- I will come to my word and I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord. We pray that every one of us as we gather together here will have a real hunger to come and hear what you have to say to us.
- And to give thanks that in him we have one who is able to save.
- [4 : 4 6] Help us to turn from our evil paths if that is what we need. And that we would come and follow him and put our trust in him. We thank you then for your word.
- We thank you for all your people as we gather together in your name today. Here and as those who tune online. Those who meet throughout our land and throughout the world today.
- We thank you that there is a chorus of your people offering a praise to you far and wide. And so we ask that you will hear our prayers. That you will bless us in all we do.
- May it be to your glory. And all we ask, we ask the forgiveness of our sins. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Well a word to the young ones before you go out.
- As I was praying there I mentioned that this is the day that the Lord has made. And what do we think of when we think maybe of these words? This is the day.

[5 : 44] What day is the psalmist there talking about? What's your favorite day of the week? Does anybody have a favorite day of the week?

I'm sure everybody's favorite day is Monday. Is it? Monday is usually everybody's favorite day. When you get to go back to school. When you get to go back to work. It's a great day, is it?

I don't think you're convinced that Monday is your favorite day at all. Maybe Saturday is your favorite day. Saturday when you get to take a break. Have a long lie. Do the things that you want.

Maybe meet up with pals and enjoy a wee break. Just think about that. What's your favorite day of the week? Another thing is that sometimes maybe when you wake up.

You wonder what day is it? Not just young ones but older ones too. Especially maybe during holiday times. You wake up and you wonder what day is it today? And how do you find out what day it is?

[6 : 43] Maybe you put it on the news. And see well what day is it? They'll tell me on the news. Or you pick up a newspaper and it'll tell you what day it is. Maybe you check your phone or something like that.

Just to find out what day it is. And sometimes you'll maybe be disappointed what day it is. Other days you'll be glad what day it is. I want you to think today about a special day that God has given to us.

He has given us every day of course. All seven days in the week. But he gave us a special day in the week. And a day that I hope will if it's not already become all of our favorite day of the week.

All of that to us. That will be our favorite day of the week. And that is Sunday. Sunday and today is a special day because we come together to worship God.

We come together today with Sunday school starting once again. We come with the creche and the tweenies coming together. We come as a people. We come and worship God together.

[7 : 44] And it really is a special day. And that's what the psalm reminds us. Psalm 118. Where the psalmist says, This is the day God made in it.

We'll joy triumphantly. The psalmist is so glad that there is a day that we can come and worship God. And may that be our song today as we come together.

That we would delight and rejoice that God has given us this day. His own day. The Lord's day. This Sunday. To come and worship Him together.

We may have other favorite days in the week as well. Days we enjoy doing different things on. But may Sunday really be a special day for us all. Where we give thanks to God for the rest that He gives us.

And especially the rest that He gives us in knowing His own Son, Jesus. So may you be blessed today in your classes as they resume. And may we all be blessed in this.

[8 : 43] His day may be a real time of refreshment for us. Well, we give thanks to God. And we're going to share together now in the Lord's Prayer. And we'll just say that together.

So we'll put our hands together and say the Lord's Prayer. Our Father which art in heaven. Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation. But deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. We're going to sing again to God's praise in Psalm 5.

And this is in the Scottish Psalter version. Page 203 of the Psalm book. Psalm 5 on page 203. We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 7.

[9 : 49] Give ear unto my words, O Lord, my meditation way. Hear my loud cry, my King, my God. For I to thee will pray. So we'll sing these words to God.

Psalm 5, verse 1 to 7. And we stand to sing. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Give ear unto my words, O Lord, my meditation way.

Hear my loud cry, my King, my God. For I to thee will pray.

Lord, thou shalt early hear my voice. I early will direct my prayer to thee.

And looking up, an answer will expect.

[11 : 15] For thou art not the God that doth in wickedness delight.

Neither shall evil dwell with thee, nor fool stand in thy sight.

All that ill-doers are the haste.

God's hope that liars be. The bloody and deceitful man abhorred is by thee.

But I into thy heart will come in thine abundant grace.

[12 : 41] And I will worship in thy fear toward thy holy place.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We're going to read together in God's word now in the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy.

Deuteronomy chapter 6. Let me read the whole of this chapter. Deuteronomy chapter 6.

In the previous chapter, Moses has just given to the people of Israel the Ten Commandments. And they're about to enter into the Promised Land. They're preparing to go into the Promised Land.

So he's given them these commandments. And now he is instructing them in how they are to live as they seek to go into this new land. So in chapter 6, we read these words.

[13 : 56] Now this is a commandment, the statutes and the rules that the Lord your God commanded me to teach you. That you may do them in the land to which you are going over.

To possess it. That you may fear the Lord your God. You and your son and your son's son. By keeping all his statutes and his commandments. Which I command you all the days of your life.

And that your days may be long. Hear therefore, O Israel. And be careful to do them. That it may go well with you. And that you may multiply greatly.

As the Lord, the God of your fathers has promised you. In a land flowing with milk and honey. Hear, O Israel. The Lord our God.

The Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart. And with all your soul. And with all your might. And these words that I command you today. Shall be on your heart.

[14 : 55] You shall teach them diligently to your children. And shall talk of them when you sit in your house. And when you walk by the way. And when you lie down. And when you rise.

You shall bind them as a sign on your hand. And they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house. And on your gates.

And when the Lord your God brings you into the land. That he swore to your fathers. To Abraham. To Isaac. And to Jacob. To give you. With great and good cities.

That you did not build. And houses full of good things. That you did not fill. And cisterns that you did not dig. And vineyards and olive trees. That you did not plant.

And when you eat and are full. Then take care lest you forget the Lord. Who brought you out of the land of Egypt. Out of the house of slavery. It is the Lord your God you shall fear.

[15 : 54] Him you shall serve. And by his name you shall swear. You shall not go after other gods. The gods of the peoples who are around you.

For the Lord your God in your midst is a jealous God. Lest the anger of the Lord your God be kindled against you. And he destroy you from the face of the earth.

You shall not put the Lord your God to the test. As you tested him at Massa. You shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God. And the testimonies and his statutes which he has commanded you.

And you shall do what is right. And good in the sight of the Lord. That it may go well with you. And that you may go in and take possession. Of the good land that the Lord swore to give your fathers.

By thrusting out all your enemies from before you. As the Lord has promised. When your sons ask you in time to come. What is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes.

[16 : 55] And the rules that the Lord our God has commanded you. Then you shall say to your son. We were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt. And the Lord brought us out of Egypt.

With a mighty hand. And the Lord showed signs and wonders. Great and grievous against Egypt. And against Pharaoh. And all his household before our eyes.

And he brought us out from there. That he might bring us in. And give us the land that he swore to give to our fathers. And the Lord commanded us to do all these statutes.

To fear the Lord our God. For our good always. That he might preserve us alive. As we are this day. And it will be righteousness for us.

If we are careful to do. All his commandments. Before the Lord our God. As he has commanded us. Amen. And may God bless that reading.

[17 : 52] From his word. We will again engage in prayer. Let us bow our heads in a word of prayer. Our Father in heaven. As we hear of the instructions.

That you gave your people of old. They may seem instructions for a people. So long ago. And not relevant to ourselves. We may be think that in our own wisdom.

That we have the knowledge to go forward. By our own understanding. Of the ways of this world. That we can build our own commandments. That we can find our own way.

That we can do as we please. But in your word. We find that there is only one way. To live. And that that is according to your truth.

And that your truth. Is a word that stands firm forever. That your word is relevant today. As it always is. It always will be. For it is a word that is able to give life.

[18 : 51] And to give blessing to your people. We thank you that in the midst of. A people who often failed you. As we read in the Old Testament. Who were distracted.

Who listened to the wrong voices. Who went according to their own wisdom. That you still spoke to them. And called them back to yourself. And as we live in a day.

That is so similar. A day when we have listened to the voices. Of this world. When we have gone our own paths. And had our own wisdom.

As we saw it. We thank you that you are still a God who speaks. And a God who is still calling. A people back to yourself. And so may each of us hear your voice.

And your word to us this day. Return to me. That I may return to you. May we seek your blessing over us. As a people. And that you would do us good.

[19 : 47] In these days. That you preserve us. You keep us. And it is only in your strength. That we go on. So help us to acknowledge you. And to give thanks to you.

And to praise your name. That you are a God. Who is so faithful. We do thank you for this. Your day. We thank you Lord. For the blessings that are ours. We thank you for the abundance.

Of good things. That we enjoy from your hand. We are richly blessed. In this past week. We give you thanks. For the communion season. We enjoyed together. For the encouragements.

That were there. We give you thanks. For new members then. And also in the last few months. As we see them. In our intimation sheet today. We pray that you will bless them.

Each one mentioned. That you will guard them. That you will uphold them. That you will use them Lord. In your kingdom. And in our midst. As a people here. We thank you for the way.

[20 : 44] You strengthen us in number. We thank you for the way. You strengthen us. In our faith. Through word and sacrament. We thank you for the way. That we are strengthened.

In our fellowship. With one another. And we do pray your blessing. Upon the fellowship. Of your people here. That together. We will indeed encourage. One another.

We thank you for all. The things that are resuming. In our midst. As a congregation. We pray your blessing. On the Sunday school. Once again. We give you thanks. For all the children. For the teachers.

For the helpers. Your blessing. And peace be upon them. We thank you. For the youth fellowship. God willing to take place. This evening. We thank you Lord. For the young ones.

Who are involved in that. Both in leading. And in coming along to it. And we pray your blessing. On us as we gather there. We thank you. For all that's going on. Through the week. With the toddler groups.

[21 : 38] For the prayer meetings. With the resumption. Of the over 55 group. To start soon. With the WFM. And so many other events. Going on Lord. We give you thanks.

That you are a God. Who is giving us. The opportunities. For all of these things. Once again. And may you bless it. To us as a people. We give you thanks. To that in the midst.

Of the sorrows. And sadness. Of this world. That you are a God. Who is compassionate. And kind. One who is able. To comfort. As only you can. And as a congregation.

As once again. We have the sad news. In this past days. Of deaths in our midst. We give you thanks Lord. That you are a God. Who speaks. And who ministers.

We pray for each family. Who has lost a loved one. We pray for our congregation. As we mourn the passing. Of people who are loved. By many here. Lord. And we pray that.

[22 : 33] In the days ahead. In services. To take place. Of worship. And of the funeral service. We ask your blessing. On all that is done. In your name. We look to our land.

As well Lord. And we pray. Oh Lord. That you will guide us. By your wisdom. As we think of the week ahead. And the appointment. Of a new prime minister. To our nation. We pray that.

Whoever it is. That is appointed. May be used by you. That they would bow the knee. Before you. That they would hear your voice. In the midst of all the other voices. That will clamor for attention.

We pray for our land. Oh Lord. In the midst of all the different struggles. That we have. How we need you Lord. To pour our new spirit upon us. To come in a day of your power.

To revive us. To bring us the peace. That only you can. We pray that. For our world as a whole. We thank you for those. Who go out. Into the midst of all the different lands.

- [23 : 30] Of this world. Proclaiming your name. We thank you for Muriel. And pray for our own ministry. And pray your blessing on her. That you will uphold her.
- And keep her. And we thank you for opportunities. To meet with her online. And pray that that will be blessed. To each and every one of us. So we thank you Lord. That there is much to praise your name for.
- Above all Lord. We pray that. In this day. In this time of worship. And as we go forward. In your strength. That you will be our shepherd. That you will guide us Lord.
- And give us. From your living waters. To refresh our souls. And to give us. That quenching of our thirst. That we live in a dry parched land.
- As your word describes it so often. We thank you Lord. That there is refreshing showers. From your spirit. And from on high. So we pray Lord. Refresh us.
- [24 : 26] Do us good. And continue with us. Throughout this day. Help us to do all. To your glory. The singing of your praise. The worship of your name. The reading of your word.
- And our meditation upon it. May it be blessed by you. And we ask all. Acknowledging our sins anew. Thankful for the forgiveness you offer. In Jesus Christ our Lord.
- In whose name we pray. Amen. Amen. We again sing to God's praise. Before we turn to the passage. We're going to look at. Singing in Psalm 127.
- Psalm 127. The singing Psalms. Version on page 171. Unless the Lord builds up the house. Its builders toil in vain.
- Unless he keeps the city safe. They vainly watch maintain. We'll sing the whole of this Psalm. To God's praise. Psalm 127. And we stand to sing.
- [25 : 24] Amen. Unless the Lord builds up the house.
- It's builders toil in vain. Unless he keeps the city safe.
- They living watch in vain. In vain you rise before the dawn.
- And with our vainly keep. That you may toil for food to eat.
- He gives his love won't sleep. Sons are a precious heritage.
- [26 : 41] A blessing from the Lord. The children that are born to us.
- The children that are born to us. Are truly history, Lord. Like our rose in a warrior's hand.
- Our children of one's youth. The man who's quivered full of them.
- The man who's quivered full of them. Is blessed by God in truth. Such men will not be put to shame.
- That will not be their fate. When they contend against their foes.
- [28 : 03] Who faced them in the gate. Well, let's turn to our reading in Deuteronomy chapter 6.
- We're thinking about the first nine verses of this chapter. We can read again at verse 4. And so it goes on.
- Normally, when you have a mass walk out in church. It wouldn't fill you with much enthusiasm. But today, looking on as the children walked out. It was great to see and encouraging to see so many of them.
- Going out through the various exits. It's great to see a hunger for parents to bring their children to Sunday school. To creche and to twinnies. It's great to see so many people of different ages coming together to worship God.
- Because that is the way that we are meant to live as a people. We are to be a people. Whatever age and stage we are at in life. That come and give thanks to God and praise to God for all his goodness to us.

[29 : 36] And we often speak in the place which we live as a sense of community. And in our islands, we do indeed enjoy that blessing of having a real sense of community.

It's something that we hold dear to ourselves. A sense of belonging. A sense of knowing that maybe in our greatest times of need. That there are always people who will come and gather around us and help us in our times of need.

We ask ourselves today, what does it mean to live in a community? And what kind of community are we? When we look around ourselves, we see that there are many different types of community that we can belong to.

A community is often seen as a group of people who have a particular interest in mind. So even around us, we could have such a community as we often would say, a Gaelic community.

We might have a real sense of being a part of a musical community around us. Many people have these kinds of interests. We speak about the scientific community and all kinds of different interests that we have.

[30 : 47] But you find with these kinds of communities that there's almost an exclusiveness to them. You have to have an interest in these things or a desire for these things to be part of that community and to feel a real sense of belonging.

But there's another kind of community that is even more precious to us. We have all these kinds of communities around us. But the greatest kind of community that we enjoy and are part of here is to be a community of God's people.

To have that blessing of being together around God's word, young and old alike. There being a oneness and a bond that exists between us that has its foundation in Christ our Lord.

And to have that desire to bring ourselves together as families, as individuals, but collectively coming as a community of God's people, praying together, worshipping together, and seeking God's good on us as a people.

So what kind of community then does God want us to be? As we come together to worship, we are not to be an exclusive kind of group.

[32 : 02] We are not to be accepting only of a certain kind of people. But we are to be very much an inclusive community. That we would feel welcome.

That we would feel at home. That we would feel the presence of a place of peace in our midst as we gather together to worship God.

Young, old, middle-aged, whatever our background, wherever we're from. That we would find a real sense of oneness as a community under God's word.

And above all, that we would have God and his word in our midst as a people. That is what we have here in the book of Deuteronomy.

That's what we have in the passage before us today. And today as we think of the Sunday school resuming, as we see so many young ones coming out, is to think not just that we are a people who, yes, we are blessed by having young ones and seeing them here.

[33 : 01] That we feel also that we are all part of this community together. And to see our own responsibility towards our young ones and towards one another.

And our responsibility towards God. To truly be his community. And as we look at this passage today, we see what Moses is instructing the children of Israel.

To be as a community. And how that they are to live together as one with God at the heart of their community. Somebody once said, what forms and sustains a community isn't a commitment to community per se, but a commitment to the word.

So it's not just to feel a commitment to the people around us, but to have that foundation of a commitment to the word that gives us that sense of belonging and that sense of community.

Because as Moses is speaking to the children of Israel here, he is giving them a warning too. This is how you are to live. This is how you will find blessing. But he gives them a ringing warning in their ears as well.

[34 : 13] And you see that in verse 11 and 12. He's saying there, when you're going into this land, remember it's not a city you built yourselves. It has houses full of all good things that you did not fill, and cisterns that you did not dig, and vineyards and olive trees that you did not plant.

There's all of these things. But he says, when you eat and are full, then take care lest you forget the Lord. The Lord, who he says, brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery.

Again, we think of our own day, we have so much. And that warning rings through in our ears. Let us be careful that as a community of God's people, we do not forget the Lord.

So I want us to think of three things that we have in this passage that gives us a sense of the kind of community that we are to be. The first thing is that we are to be a listening community.

The second thing is we are to be a loving community. And the third thing is we are to be a living community. So the first thing is we are to be a listening community.

[35 : 27] How can we obey God's word? How can we live as God's community if we do not listen to what he is saying to us, if we do not heed the instruction of his word?

So there in verse four, Moses is saying to the people, hear, O Israel. Listen, O Israel, to what I am saying to you.

This is the beginning of God's dealing with the people and telling them, as you go into this land, this is one of the first things you must do. You must listen to my word.

Listen to what I am saying to you. And why is this? Well, God knows the kind of place that they are going into. He knows the land in which they are going into and he knows the temptations that there will be around them.

They are going to enter into a land that already has various kinds of communities. Communities that have various and many gods.

[36 : 29] And as God's children go into this land, they are going to be confronted with these other communities. They are going to hear what these other communities are saying to them and to listen to them talking about their gods and their ways and the way that they would seek to move them towards living themselves.

They are going to hear much advice. And in many ways, God knows the temptation is going to be there for them. To listen to this, it's going to seem so much better and easier than the God that they have had and listened to in the past.

But God is saying to them, listen, the Lord, our God, the Lord is one. So they are to listen to what God is saying.

And as a people today, the same instruction rings through to ourselves. How often in your life do you hear advice? How often in your life are you given instruction and told that this is what you are to do?

This is how you are to live. This is what you are to believe. We're flooded day by day with information. It comes at us thick and fast. There's so many voices trying to vie for our attention, telling us that this is what we need to hear.

[37 : 47] This is what we need to listen to. It's constant. But what or who is it that we are listening to ourselves? We can easily become stressed by all that we hear.

Being pulled in so many different kinds of directions. And that's the challenges that the children of Israel were going to face. That's the temptations that they were going to be confronted with constantly.

So God is saying to his community, to his people, listen first and foremost to what I am saying. Listen to my voice.

Hear what I am saying to you. And that is what we are to do today ourselves as well. In the midst of everything, all the information that's constantly flowing our way, we as a people are to listen to what God is saying to us.

To listen to what his word is saying to us. To put our trust in his word. To put our trust in his son, Christ Jesus, who is the word that became flesh and dwelt among us.

[38 : 57] We have this precious resource before us to enable us as a community, a community of God's people, to listen to what he is saying.

The Psalm, Psalm 34 that we sung, it says, Come here, my children, gather round and listen to my word and I will help you understand how you may fear the Lord.

There is instruction there for us and it is to come and to listen. But are you too busy to listen? Are you too busy to be still for a moment and listen to what God is saying to us?

Even as God's people we can become so busy that we don't listen to what God is saying to us. We don't make time to hear what God is saying to us. Charles Swindle is a famous Christian writer.

He's written many books. He wrote a book called Stress Fractures. And in that book he's speaking about the busyness of his own life.

[40 : 03] and the effect it had on him. And he says at one point in that book that he had far too many commitments in his life.

He was doing too much. He was becoming nervous and tense about everything. And this was affecting his life at home. He was saying I was snapping at my wife and her children.

I was choking down my food at mealtimes. Feeling irritated at those unexpected interruptions through the day. Before long he says things around our home started to reflect the pattern of my life.

That was just hurry, hurry, hurry. He says it was becoming unbearable. But then something happened that left an impression on him. He says I distinctly remember after supper one evening the words of our younger daughter Colleen.

she wanted to tell me something important. Something that had happened to her in school that day. And so she started speaking hurriedly and she said Daddy I want to tell you something and I'll tell you really fast.

[41 : 18] And suddenly it dawned on Charles Wendell. He realised her frustration that everyone was in the household was becoming so fast paced everything had to be rushed.

And he stopped and he answered and said to her honey you can tell me and you don't have to tell me really fast. Say it slowly.

But it was her response then that really hit home to him. She said then listen slowly. Are we so rushed in our life today that everything needs to be done quickly.

Even our listening has got to be done quickly because we've got so many other things to do. Our listening to God's word our making time for him it's becoming a rush.

As God's community we are to engage in listening to him and making time to listen to him. As we gather round God's word we find that he's talking to every one of us together young and old all of us together to come and listen to what God is saying to us.

[42 : 34] Sometimes we just have to heed that advice ourselves that we listen slowly that we make time for God. So let us be a listening community of God's people.

Listening to each other listening to our children listening to young and old alike making time for one another but above all listening to God and what his word is saying to us.

The second thing we see here is that we are to be a loving community. So as you go through these verses we find that following the first part which is to listen and to hear what God is saying to us we are also to be challenged by what we hear.

We are not just to hear and put it away. We are to listen and seek understanding in what God is saying to us. And the challenges there for us is that if we want to be a community of God's people we have to ask ourselves well where is our heart's desire directed.

If we come to see that God is one and there is no other God and if we are listening to him then what are we to do with that? Well he goes on here in verse 5 to give us instruction.

[43 : 54] He says you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart.

There is instruction there for us we are to be a loving people. That we are to listen to what God is saying to us but that we are also to put that into practice in the sense of being affected by what we are hearing.

As we make time to listen to God as we hear what he is saying to us as he opens our ears and opens our heart what is that doing to us? Is our heart becoming hard?

Are we pushing him away? Or are we listening and seeking understanding through prayerfully approaching him? Moses is saying to the children of Israel here you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.

And the question for us is do we love the Lord and especially do we love the Lord with all our heart? Somebody once said the first duty of every soul is to find not its freedom but its master.

[45 : 14] Not to find our freedom but to find our master. And so who is it or what is it that you love most in this life? Who or what is the master the ruler of your life?

If we are to be a community of God's people if we are to listen to his word then we are to see that our love should be directed towards God first and foremost.

if we were to ask today how does that congregation grow in godliness? How do we individually grow in godliness?

By listening and recognizing that God is worth all our love and that we can love only because he first loved us and gave himself for us.

that we would be moved by the love of God for us. To love him with all our heart. To love our families.

[46 : 20] To love our community. To love our young people. To love our old people. That the love of God would transcend everything that we seek to do for him. In the New Testament as Jesus was teaching his people around him one person came to him and said teacher which is the greatest commandment in the law.

And where did Jesus take them for that greatest commandment? He took them to these words that we have in Deuteronomy. Jesus said to him you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your mind.

This is the great and first commandment and a second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. a loving community as the Lord at his heart and in our heart and as we love the Lord with all our heart that leads to us loving our neighbor as ourself.

Having a desire and a hunger that our community be one but in the sense that we would also see many others coming into this community a belonging and finding belonging in God and in his son Christ Jesus.

Moses is telling his people here he's instructing them in discipleship if you like. That's what we would call it today. We disciple one another. We disciple individuals.

[47 : 48] We disciple ourselves collectively. He is speaking to the community here in Moses' day and saying disciple one another. Love one another. Love the Lord and do good to each other.

And so today he's instructing us in the same way too. To disciple, to encourage one another, to pray for one another, to be there for one another.

All of these things. It's not just thinking biblically but acting biblically. He says here these are the commands that you are to do.

These are the things that you are to do. So it's not just a case of simply listening to these commandments. It's not just a case that you know these commandments.

It's not a case that you can recite these commandments or that even you accept these commandments. It's that you do these commandments. That you put these things into practice.

[48 : 53] Martin Luther once said, a religion that gives nothing, costs nothing, and suffers nothing is worth nothing. So what is our community like?

Is it a community that's willing to give? Is it a community that's willing to bear a cost? Is it a community that's willing to suffer? Because if we're not, we're worth nothing.

So God's word challenges us to do as he commands, to be a loving community, loving the Lord and loving our neighbor.

The final thing I want us to take from this is that we are to be a living community. If we are called to be a people who hear these things, and if we are called to be a people who love the Lord with all our heart, we have to leave it with this, what are we going to do with that?

What will we do with that? Surely it's to make sure that we are practicing these things, not just on a Sunday, not just in our time of worship, not just in bringing our children to Sunday school and that's that box checked for the week, but together actively living for God, instructing our children, encouraging them, discipling and helping one another, being in fellowship with one another, worshipping throughout the week, living together in a sense of being active in every way we can, prayerfully, practically.

[50 : 33] We all have a part to play, every one of us. It doesn't matter where we are in life, it doesn't matter even if we're not able to come out as we once did. Maybe there's those tuning in online and you maybe don't feel you belong to this community, you do, and you have an active part to play in this community as you pray for it, as you remember different people, as we all engage together, we become a living community for Christ, showing forth his love towards those around us.

Paul, as he wrote to the church at Philippi, he instructed them to live in this way. He says in chapter 4, verse 8, finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things.

And what you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things. Practice these things. And he says the God of peace will be with you.

That is a promise that the children of Israel had from God here in Deuteronomy 6. He says to them that it would go well with you. He speaks here about teaching diligently the children, speaking about these things as you sit in your house, when you walk in the way, when you lie down, when you rise.

You shall bind these words as signs on your hand. There shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them in your doorposts and in your gates. And all of this is so that it may go well with them.

[52 : 24] Practice these things. That is what we are to do as a people as well. We are given these instructions as how we are to live for God, to practice, to teach, to talk, to bind, to write.

to be a living and a learning community together, a people who know God and love God, and show that in our practice in how we live.

Today it's encouraging that the Sunday school starts and to see so many coming, but this isn't just a message of how to parent and to teach our children. This isn't Moses giving instruction here.

This is how you deal with your young ones and that's all. It's a whole community of God's people living together as one, worshipping together as one.

Everything that we do, we do for the glory of God. So may it be that we seek to do it all together for His glory. What's your greatest accomplishment in life?

[53 : 37] As you look back over your life, what's your greatest accomplishment? It's a question that the former President of the United States, George Bush Senior, was asked once.

And he had done many things in his life. There are many things that he could have maybe said, well this is the greatest accomplishment I see in my life. He had been a Navy pilot in the Second World War.

He had been a vice president to Ronald Reagan for eight years. He was president himself. He could have spoken of his time as the head of the CIA.

He could have mentioned so many different things that he had done in his life. But you know what he answered when he was asked that question, what is your greatest accomplishment in life?

He said, my greatest accomplishment is that my children still come to see me. He had done all these things in his life, but it hadn't affected the fact that his children could still come to speak to him.

[54 : 45] That means making time. And for ourselves, what would be our greatest accomplishment? We can maybe achieve so much in life, but our greatest accomplishment would surely be that we have time for our children, time for our families, time for ourselves as a community of God's people, time for each other, but above all, time for God.

That we don't become so busy and so rushed in life, that we start to listen to all the voices that are speaking around us, that this is what we need, but that we would listen to God, listen to what he is saying, to do as he commands, to love him with all our hearts, and to live in fellowship for him with one another, young, old, middle-aged, that we would be the community of God that he would want us to be, and to reflect his love to those around us.

So may God help us to be the community that he longs for his people to be, a listening community, a loving community, and a living community for him.

Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we do pray that in our weaknesses and in our temptations to listen to all the wrong voices around us, that you will help us in our hearts to love you and to listen to you and to live for you with all our being.

Lord, teach us your ways and show us your paths, we pray, for we ask it all in your precious name. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing to God's praise in Psalm 133.

[56 : 51] Let's sing Psalms version. Psalm 133, the sing Psalms version on page 175.

It's maybe a familiar Psalm 2 as it speaks of the blessing that there is in unity and the blessing that we seek from God. How excellent a thing it is, how pleasant and how good, when brothers dwell in unity and live as brothers should.

we'll sing the whole of the Psalm to God's praise and we stand to sing. How excellent a thing it is, how pleasant and how good, when brothers dwell in unity and live as brothers should.

For it is like the precious heart, for the heart, the hero's head, that running over down his fear, upon his color spread, like care, most view, upon the hill, hold high on it he stands, the Lord bestows his blessing there, the light of life that never ends.

If you allow me a moment to go to the main door after the benediction, we'll close with the benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore. Amen.

[59 : 54] Thank you.