

# True Worship

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[ 0 : 00 ] The book of Nehemiah in chapter 8. I have it as page 482 in the ESV Bible. Nehemiah chapter 8.

Reading from the beginning. And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the water gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel.

So Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly, both men and women, and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month.

And he read from it, facing the square before the water gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand.

And the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law. And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose.

[ 1 : 22 ] And beside him stood Matitha, Shema, Ananiah, Uriaah, Hilkiyah, and Masaiah on his right hand.

And Pedaiah, Mishael, Malkijah, Hashem, Hashbadanah, Zechariah, and Mishulam on his left hand. And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people.

And as he opened it, all the people stood. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, lifting up their hands.

And they bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. Also, Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Aqab, Shabethai, Hodiah, Messiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Peliah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the law while the people remained in their places.

They read from the book, from the law of God clearly, and they gave the meaning so that the people understood the reading.

[ 2 : 48 ] Amen. And we ask that God will open up our hearts and that he will give us the faith to receive his word, that he will bless his word to each one of us.

We're going to now join together in singing in Psalm 99A from Sing Psalms. It's on page 130. We're going to sing from the beginning to the verse of Mark 5, that's the first four stanzas.

The Lord reigns from his throne on high, let all the nations quake. He sits between the cherubim, so let the whole earth shake. Great is the Lord on Zion Hill, exalted over all.

Upon his great and holy name let all the nations call. Psalm 99A. We're going to sing from the beginning to the verse of Mark 5. Verse four stanzas, and we're going to stand to sing.

The Lord reigns from his throne on high, let all the nations quake.

[ 4 : 03 ] He sits between the cherubim, so let the whole earth shake. He sits between the cherubim, so let the whole earth shake.

Great is the Lord on Zion Hill, exalted over all.

Upon his great and holy name let all the nations call. Upon his great and holy name let all the nations call.

The king loves truth and equity, established by his might.

In Jacob you have done for us all that is just and right. In Jacob you have done for us all that is just and right.

[ 5 : 23 ] Thanks all the Lord our God with us, let all the world abroad.

Before his good still worship him, for holy is the Lord.

We're going to continue our reading now. We're going to, this time from, first of all from the book of Psalms.

And then from the book of Revelation. First of all the book of Psalms and Psalm number 95. Psalm number 95.

Oh come let us sing to the Lord. Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving.

[ 6 : 40 ] Let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise. For the Lord is a great God. And a great King above all gods.

In his hand are the depths of the earth. The heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his for he made it. And his hands formed the dry land.

Oh come let us worship and bow down. Let us kneel before the Lord our maker. For he is our God. And we are the people of his pasture. And the sheep of his hand. Today if you hear his voice. Do not harden your hearts as at Meribah.

As on the day at Massah in the wilderness. When your fathers put me to the test. And put me to the proof. Though they had seen my work. For forty years I loathed that generation.

[ 7 : 39 ] And said they are a people who go astray in their heart. They have not known my ways. Therefore I swore in my wrath. They shall not enter my rest.

And again the last book of the Bible. The book of Revelation. And we are going to turn to. Chapter 5.

Revelation chapter 5. And verse 9. Or rather verse 8.

Revelation chapter 5. And verse 8. And when he had taken the scroll. That's the Lamb. That's Jesus. When he had taken the scroll. The four living creatures and the twenty-four elders. Fell down before the Lamb. Each holding a harp. And golden bowls full of incense. Which are the prayers of the saints. And they sang a new song. Saying.

[ 8 : 39 ] Worthy are you to take the scroll. And open its seals. For you were slain. And by your blood. You ransomed people for God. From every tribe and language.

And people and nation. And you have made them a kingdom. And priests to our God. And they shall reign on the earth. Then I looked. And I heard around the throne. And the living creatures. And the elders. The voice of many angels. Numbering myriads of myriads. And thousands of thousands. Saying with a loud voice. Worthy is the Lamb who was slain.

To receive power. And wealth. And wisdom. And might. And honor. And glory. And blessing. And I heard every creature in heaven. And on earth. And under the earth. And in the sea.

And all that is in them. Saying. To him who sits on the throne. And to the Lamb. Be blessing. And honor. And glory. And might. Forever. And ever. And the four living creatures.

[ 9 : 32 ] Said. Amen. And the elders. Fell down. And worshipped. Amen. Amen. And we pray once again. That God will bless.

His own. Perfect word. To each one of us. We're going to. Bow our heads. Once again. In prayer. Our father in heaven.

We. Come to you. On behalf of. Other people. We come to you. Bringing to you. Our own needs. You see our hearts.

You know our circumstances. You know the things. That weigh heavily. Upon us. Whether they be. Family concerns. Whether they be. Concerns about. Our relationships.

With others. Concerns about. The future. About health. About which. Decisions. And choices. To make. In this life.

[ 10 : 30 ] Lord. They could be. Worries. That we have. We confess. That we harbor. These worries. Instead. Of bringing them. To you. We confess.

That often. We try to sort out. Our own problems. Instead. Of bringing our problems. Immediately. To you. We confess. Oh Lord.

That in our pride. We conceal. We try to conceal. Many of our life. Circumstances. From. You. The same way. As we try to put a.

Brave face. On things. Before other people. Lord. Teach us. Afresh. That. We are able. To come. To the God. Who. Sees. In secret.

And who is able. To reward us. Openly. And it is. It is dishonoring. To you. When we try. To live our lives. By our own strength. So Lord.

[ 11 : 22 ] Teach us. To take everything. To the Lord. In prayer. Whether they be. Private matters. We bring them. To you. Right now. In the secret. Of our hearts. Or whether they be.

Issues. That affect. The whole world. We give thanks. That we can take. The tiny things. The things. That only affect us. And yet. That are so important. To us. On the.

Major issues. The direction. In which the world. Is going. Father. We thank you. That we can take. Community concerns. To you. We thank you. Lord. That we live.

In a community. And we pray. For our community. It is our. Duty and privilege. To pray. For our neighbors. Our friends. Our work colleagues. The people. That we. We rub shoulders.

With day by day. We pray for them. We pray for those. Who we don't get on with. In this life. Pray for those. Who we clash with. We pray for where. There is conflict.

[12:16] In the workplace. Or. Amongst friends. Or family. Our father in heaven. We pray. That you will. Encourage us. To pray.

Day by day. About these conflicts. And to. To patiently. Leave these matters. With the Lord. And to make sure. That we live consistently. Christ like lives.

Our father in heaven. We pray. To learn. To leave things with you. And to believe. That you hear. And answer. All our prayer. Our father.

We pray for the. The affairs of. Of. The. This community. We pray for. Our education. We pray for our schools. We pray for the schools. That go back. Tomorrow.

After the. End of the year. Break. And we pray. Lord. That as the children. Go back. And as teachers. Go back. That they will be. Prepared. For. The next stage.

[13:11] In their education. We give thanks. Oh Lord. For. Our education system. And we ask. Lord. That you'll protect it. And protect our children. From the voices. That seek. To do harm.

Our father. We pray. Lord. To be supportive. As parents. And as a church. Of. Our schools. And we thank you. For them. We thank you. Lord. For those who preserve. Law and order.

Amongst us. And we. We recognize. The difficulty. And the complexity. We pray. Lord. For those. Who are. Judges. And for those. Who are involved. In the legal system. For those.

Who are police officers. We pray. For those. Who are in the health service. And pray. That you will. That you will give them. Strength. And wisdom. And guidance. Lord. In all that they do.

We live. At a time. When so much. Is available. To us. And yet. Lord. We also. Are continually. Reminded. Of our weakness. And our fragility. We pray.

[14:06] Lord. For social services. And Lord. We thank you. For the. The care. That is placed. Upon the vulnerable. And for the. On the weak. And on those. Lord. Who need.

Special attention. And special. Special. Care. At this time. Our father. In heaven. We thank you. For all that is done. For the underprivileged. For those who.

Don't have the same privileges. As others. And we ask. Lord. For them. We might be mindful. Of them. In all respects. Lord. We pray for those. Who are involved.

In crises. Of various kinds. We remember. Those who have gone out. To help. The countries. That have been. Affected. By the Ebola crisis. We think.

Oh Lord. Of those who have been. Affected. By them. By it. And we pray. For an end. To such. A crisis. Father. We pray. For the royal family. At this time.

[15:00] We pray. Especially. Lord. In view. Of the. Of the. Allegations. That are being made. Against. One of them. And we pray. Lord. That. Again.

For them. Because we are. Commanded. To pray. For those who govern us. And rule. And reign over us. Whether they be in government. Or royalty. Father. We pray. That your blessing. Will be upon them.

We ask. Lord. For students. As they return. To. To their place of study. After. The winter break. Pray. For those who are coming. Up to the end. Of time of study. Pray. For that they will find jobs. Suitable jobs. Pray. That you'll prepare. Our young people. Prepare them. Lord. To face. The realities of life. As adults. And as. Mature.

People. We pray. Lord. For your people. Amongst them. And pray. That you'll bless. Our witness. And their witness. Amongst. Many. Many. People. Our father. In heaven. We pray. That you will. That you will.

[15:55] Hear us now. And guide. Our service. This evening. Speak to us. Oh lord. And challenge us. And meet us. Afresh. In your word. In Jesus name. Amen.

We're going to sing. In that psalm. That we read. Psalm 95. It's the traditional version. Of the psalm. It's on page 357. And we're going to. Sing. To the tune. Gainsborough. 1.

To. 6. The first five. Stanzas. Page number 357. It's psalm 95. From 1. To 6. Oh come let us. Sing to the lord.

Come let us. Everyone. A joyful noise. Make to the rock. Of our salvation. From the beginning.

Down to the verse. Mark 6. Five stanzas. And we'll stand. To sing.

Amen. Thank you. It's the Lord.

[ 17 : 00 ] A joyful noise Gave to the roar Of our salvation Let us before his presence come With grace and thankful voice Let us sing sounds To him with praise And make a joyful noise For God our great God And great King Above all gods he is

Death of the earth But in his hand The strength of hills it is To him the spacious seed belongs For he the same did make The dry land also from his hands Its form at first it came O come and let us worship him Let us bow down with all

And on our knees Before the Lord Our maker let us fall Turn back with me to the second of our readings The book of psalms and psalm 95 And verse 6 O come Let us worship And bow down Let us kneel Before the Lord Our maker

I haven't forgotten Second Samuel I fully intend to return to it I must confess That there is A slight hesitancy In trying to tackle chapter 13 And those of you who have read Second Samuel chapter 13 Will know exactly Why I am hesitant But it is the word of God And we have to Because that's one of the That's what it means to Go through sequentially A book of the Bible You can't just ignore parts of it You prefer in some respects To do that Because of how distasteful it is It's a horrible chapter It's a really horrible chapter And that's why it's in the Bible But because it's in the Bible You have to face up to it And we will do that God willing Next week But for the meantime I thought we would do something different Just to bring the holiday season To a close And in recognition That we are still At the very beginning Of a brand new year I want us to ask a question Which should concern all of us This evening In church And the question is this What is worship?

[ 21 : 42 ] And how important Is worship? We've all come here this evening With the purpose of worshipping This is a service Of worship But are we as aware As we should be Of what we are doing When we walk in those doors And when we sit down And when we open our Bibles And we do And we go through All the elements That make up a service And as soon as you begin to ask The question What is worship?

Other questions come out Of the woodwork For example How do we know That we really are worshipping? How can you tell the difference Between real worship And what might be a pretense? And then There are other questions Like Can anyone worship? Can somebody just walk off the street And worship Just like that? And if not How can I find out Who Is entitled To worship? Well if I don't know What worship is Then I won't even know How to begin And then When you leave this building After a worship service Once I say the benediction Does that mean We stop worshipping?

Do we leave it all behind? And go on With our day to day Lives Whatever that life Might involve And then Is this the only way To worship?

[ 23 : 17 ] What we do here In Kenneth Street On a Sunday morning Or a Sunday night Is this the only way That there is To worship? Anyone who's been Elsewhere Knows that there are Variations All over the world In the way people Worship In the Christian church How can you explain Those variations?

And what does there Need to be In order to Worship God In the right way? I guess that follows on From a question I asked earlier on How can we know That we really Are worshipping?

What does there Need to be In order To worship God In the right way? Why do we do What we do In a worship service? We sing Why do we sing?

We pray Why do we pray? What are we doing When we're praying? We read the Bible Why do we read the Bible? We preach Or at least I preach And what part Do you have to play In it?

Am I doing my job right? And what part Do you have to play In a worship service? Are you just Spectating? Are you just here To listen to What I have to say And then go out And make whatever You want of it Afterwards?

[ 24 : 41 ] Or is there more To it than that? How important Is the way We worship On the outside? And how important Is the way We worship On the inside?

How long Should a service be? How should we feel When we're worshipping? Should we feel afraid?

Should we feel warm? Should we feel encouraged? Should we feel anything at all? Is it possible To improve Our worship?

And most of all How do I know That God Is receiving My worship?

That's the most important Question of all So it seems to me Tonight That at the very Beginning of this Brand new year As we Still make Our resolutions That as a Congregation Of God's people And as we Come here Sunday by Sunday And Wednesday By or Thursday Or whenever we Come to The prayer meeting That it should be One of our Objectives To focus On our Worship To rediscover Perhaps Where we've maybe Lost sight Of what we're doing When we worship In order that Our worship May be More and more Meaningful to us But more importantly That it might be Glorifying To The God Who is the Object Of Our worship It is God Who makes Worship Worship is Meaningless Without God

[ 26 : 41 ] At least In the Christian sense The fact is That everyone Worships Every human Being Lives for Something It could be Your job Or it could be Our family Or it could be Our sport Or our pastime Or whatever it is Whatever it is That thrills us That turns us on That's what we Worship Every human being Worships So if you're Saying Tonight Well I'm Not a Christian I'm out of This I don't Really I don't Worship Anything No you're You do You worship Whatever you Live for And that I guess Is about As good a Place to Start as Any What do What do What do You live For What Takes The central Part The central Place of Your life In your Life What is Your mind Focused on What are Your goals And objectives What are Your dreams What are your Dreams and ambitions

What are your dreams and ambitions What are your dreams and ambitions that's what you live for and that is what you worship And so tonight we begin by hoping that what we worship is the right thing and the right object of our worship has to be God what is worship then when it comes to the Bible well somebody said once to be human is to worship to be human is to worship To be human is to worship and what he meant by that was that that's what human beings were designed specifically for they were designed and built as the crown of God's creation in order and what separated them from every other living creature was was this the ability to communicate and to commune with God the ability to be conscious of who God was And to be awestruck by God to love God to speak to him to listen to him to love him and to enjoy him

That's God's purpose for building creating man and woman and for a while we don't know how long that's what happened there was perfect happiness in the garden of Eden while Adam and Eve they loved God The highlight of their day whatever else they were given to do in this wonderful place that God had given to them in a perfect environment in which there was no insecurity And no sin or guilt what the highlight of their day was meeting with God And the dead giveaway that something had gone terribly wrong With their relationship was when instead of running to him when he came into the garden in the cool of the day in Genesis chapter 3 they run away from him They had lost sight the pleasure of God had been lost They hid from him Didn't want to see him anymore

Because they feared him as with a fear that they had never experienced before Because now the God who had communed with them and had and had Made literally made their day Was a God who they now dreaded The second indication in the Bible of that something had gone Terribly wrong was when Cain offered his Worship sacrifice to God and God rejected it because As sin progressed in the world from the first generation to the second generation So the deceit That now was embedded in the heart of man It was a deceit that affected his communication with God So instead of coming with all his heart He couldn't do that anymore He brought a pretense to God And try to worship God on the outside

Rather than coming to God with all his heart And God, so God Refused, he declined to accept Cain's offering Meanwhile Abel Somehow his heart had been made right with God And his offering was made in faith Because he took God seriously and had listened to his word But nonetheless Despite our sinfulness God persisted with humankind And he entered into a special relationship With one particular family The family of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob They became his people His covenant people And his intention was to bring that family Into a unique relationship with himself In which they would know him And meet with him regularly But they also Must live a life That reflected that relationship And these are the two elements In which

[ 31 : 51 ] Which make up worship The element number one Is a meeting with God In which God's people gathered And in which they They expressed What he meant to them But element number two Was that they were to live lives That were to reflect that covenant relationship So that the whole of their lives Were a life Life which was dedicated To The obedience that God Required But of

course All of that failed Didn't it?

Because of our sin Even amongst Israel Even God's people Weren't able to keep God's commands And instead of Worshipping him And him alone They drifted And they They strayed Into worshipping idols They made for themselves Gods of stone And gods of wood And gods who they believed Controlled the elements And controlled the The atmosphere And the weather And the harvest Just like the nations Round about them And so God rejected His people And sent them Into captivity There was only one way In which God could restore That relationship That had been lost Through the fall And that was through himself Coming into the world As a human being And that's what happened In the person Of Jesus Christ And that's That was what Took place When God When Jesus Gave himself on the cross And rose again He called And invited people To himself In a restored relationship

That's what we have Tonight By faith In Jesus A restored relationship With God In which those Two elements exist We can come And we can meet With God We can come Boldly And confidently Knowing that our sin Has been forgiven In Jesus But we can also Put into practice In a new life That obedience That God has Commanded us It's not a perfect obedience It's not a sinless life None of us is sinless And yet it's a new life A life where God Takes the central place A life Which is consecrated And dedicated To the Lord That's what worship is Worship is When we come Either privately Or corporately And commune With God Knowing that He hears us And he receives Our worship

In the Lord Jesus Christ But when God Does that to a person When he changes A person's life He also brings them Into fellowship With other Christians And creates A particular bond Of friendship Which he calls Fellowship Or In which we've been Adopted Into his family And he has invited All of his people To come together To worship him Collectively Why is it that We do what we do Tonight Is it just because Of our habit Or because it's tradition No What we're doing tonight And what we did this morning It goes all the way back To the New Testament And to what the disciples did When they collectively Joined together On the first day of the week In John chapter 19 The day that Jesus rose from the dead It was the first day Of the week The day that we call The Lord's day The day that We believe as The Christian Sabbath Was replaced The seventh day

The day when When the disciples Met together To create the pattern By which Two thousand years Of Christian church The Christian church Would gather Every Lord's day What we're doing today Dates all the way back It's as old as the hills Two thousand years Since the disciples Met together In that That room With their doors locked For fear Of the Jews And into which Jesus Comes And meets with them That's exactly What we're doing today In that same Conviction And confidence That the same Lord Jesus The risen Triumphant Jesus Christ Is with us And he comes To meet with us That's what worship Is And it seems to me That that's the one thing That we lose sight of More often than anything else Is that Worship is living It's not just a habit It's not just a formality That you go through

[ 36 : 34 ] It's not just a routine When we gather here We're coming to meet With God Now you might say Well God is everywhere Of course he's everywhere But he has particularly Invited his people To gather together On the first day Of the week In accordance With the pattern That was set The day that Jesus Rose from the dead And he has promised To bless And to hear And to speak To his people Now within that pattern There are elements Which make up What we call A worship service They're actually Very simple elements There's nothing complicated About New Testament worship It was very Compared to the Old Testament system Of doing things In which they could Only approach God By the high priest And through the Priestly system With sacrifices And rituals And everything Had to be in the right place The New Testament Way of doing things Was a much Much simpler Way of doing things

Why? Because everything That had been foreshadowed By the priests And the sacrifices Had been fulfilled In the death Of Jesus Christ And so now The curtain Had been torn The access To the Father Had been created By Jesus And now we can Come confidently Each one of us Knowing that God Receives us And yet In the New Testament There is a pattern Elements Which we believe Ought to be there In place Important elements That we believe Are in place I hope There is prayer Prayer Prayer Prayer is when We speak to God We speak to God Believing That God Is listening To us Either privately Or collectively Like we've already Done this This evening And we will Already We will do again

What happens When I lead In prayer All I am doing Is giving expression To concerns That we all Ought to have Be completely Unappropriate For me to pray For my private Life In the pulpit These are things That I Pray about On my own But when I'm In the pulpit And when I'm Leading in prayer I need to pray For things that You are all Concerned about And that we're All agreed We want to Take to the Lord We want to Adore him We want to Express our Thanks to him For everything That he is We want to Praise him We want to Lift up our Hearts And recognize That we're doing Something Completely Unique We're doing Something That we've Been The one thing That we've Been designed To do You can't Do it Just doesn't Get Better than This To meet With God Collectively And to know And part of The problem Is that It sometimes Becomes such A routine And such A ritual We lose Sight of Actually What we're Doing We're meeting With God Because he Has invited Us to Come Together And to Meet With him In this Way When we Pray Collectively When we Give thanks To him When we Pray for The needs Of the Community For the Needs Of the World When we Pray for Mission Work We pray For various Countries All over The world We're simply Asking that God will Fulfill What he Has already Said in His word That all Nations Will hear The gospel And that People will Come to Faith in Jesus Christ Now your Part in That is Agreement You're not Spectators to That you're Not just Listening to My prayer It's all Of our Prayer It's a Collective Prayer It's one In which We're all Agreed And God Sees our Hearts He knows What we're Thinking about He knows To what Extent You're With What we're Saying And what We're Doing And God Graciously Receives That And yet The reality Is it's So hard To Concentrate Isn't It So hard It's not Hard for Me to Concentrate Because I'm The one Who's Leading But I Know I've Been Where You Are I'm Often Where You Are I Know How Hard It Is To Keep Up With What's Going On In A Service To Keep Focused Whoever Said That Worshipping Was Easy

[ 41 : 39 ] Whoever Suggested That it Wasn't Work Whoever Suggested That we Can Come In A Lacksadaisical Frame Of Mind Sometimes I Think That That's The Attitude That Many People Have They Think That They Can Sit And Just Relax We're Not Here To Relax We're Here To Join Together And To Meet With God If We Were To Have A Sight Of God In His Glory Today There Wouldn't Be One Single Relaxed Person In This Building So What Difference Does It Make Because We Can't See Him God Is Meeting With Us He Is Part Of This Service He's Hearing What We Are Saying So Please 2015 Let Us Concentrate All Of Us We're All In This Together Concentrate On What We're Doing When

We're Coming This Is The Greatest Privilege In The World The Greatest Privilege In The World A Number Of Years Ago As You Know I Had The Privilege Of Preaching Before Our Majesty The Queen I Will Never Forget That Day I Will Never Ever Forget That Day It's Left A Mark On Me For The Rest Of My Life But What A Greater Privilege Do We Have Every Single Sunday We're In The Presence Of The God Who Accepts The Worship Of His People We Have No Idea Of How Awesome That Privileges And I Think It Would Make Such A Difference If We Reminded Ourselves Of That Every Single Time We Come To This Place We Also Sing We Sing Because We're Commanded To Sing God's

People Always Sang Go Back To The Old Testament They Sang Jesus The Disciples Sang The New Testament Church We Believe Sang There's Not A Huge Amount Of Information In The New Testament About Their Their Their Singing And Precisely What Form Their Worship Would Take And I Don't Need To Tell You That Not Everyone Agrees As To What We Should Be Singing And Whether Psalms Or Hymns I'm Not Going To Get Into That Argument Because It Would To Get To To To To To What I Want To Do Is To Ask Are We Doing Are We Again Same As I Said Earlier On With Prayer Do We Know What We're Doing When We're Lifting Up Our Hearts And We're Expressing In Words That God Himself Has Given To Us Oh Come Let Us Sing To The Lord Come Let Us Everyone A Joyful Noise When We Sing Those Words Is It Not True That Our Familiarity With Them At Least I Have To Say Myself As Someone Who Has Who Was Brought Up On These Words Sometimes You Lose Sight Of Their Majesty And Their Grandeur And The Fact That We're Singing God's Word To Him And These Words Nobody Can Deny Irrespective Of Whatever Arguments There Are For Singing New Testament Song Or Old Testament Song You Can't Argue With The Grandeur Of These Words For God A Great God And Great King Above All Gods He Is Depths Of The Earth Are In His Hand The Strength Of Hills Is His But Once Again It Requires Focus It Requires Energy It Requires Melody In Our Hearts And With Our Voices It Requires Effort On Our Part To Sing In Such A Way That Expresses The Love That We Have In Our

Hearts For The Lord And All That He Has Done For Us In The Lord Jesus Christ What About Reading Now Here's Something That's Really Important And I Confess That Is Becoming Much More Important To Me In The Older I Get As A Minister Reading Is Not Just Preparing For The Sermon For In The Minds Of Many People The Pinnacle Of A Service Is The Sermon You Go Out And You Say Well That Was A Good Or Maybe Not A Good Service And What You Mean Is It Was A Good Or Not A Good Sermon The Service Is Not Just About The Sermon The Service Is Every Element Including The Reading Of A Service Some Churches Stand Specifically While The Chapter Is Read Of

[ 46 : 42 ] Course There's All These Questions About When Should We Sit When Should We Stand What Posture Should We Have Actually By The Way The Posture That We Really Ought To Adopt In Worship Is One Of Kneeling The Old Testament Is Full Of God's People Bowed Down And I Don't Mean Just Their Heads They Are On The Ground They Are Prostrate Before God They Are Kneeling With Their Faces On The Ground That Is If We Talk About Whether We Stand Or Sit Or What's More Reverend And What's Not More Reverend Actually The Real Posture Is One Of Kneeling I Remember When I Was A Young Boy Used To Family Worship And We And We Would Kneel If We Had People In Communion Times Or Whatever In Our House We Had Worship We Would All I

Seen 30 People In A Room Every Single One Of Them When It Came To Prayer They Would Get Up And They Would Go On Their Knees Don't Do that Anymore Suppose It's A But In Our Enthusiasm For Convenience Maybe We've Lost Something Maybe We've Lost That Sense Of The Fear Of God That Ought To Dominate Our Worship And I Don't Mean Dread Of God I Don't Mean That Fear That Makes Us Want To Run Away From I Mean That Fear In Which We Are Struck By His Glory And His Majesty And That Ought To Be The Feeling That We Ought To Have Now I Know That There Are All Kinds Of Distractions I Know That You Know Those Of You Who Have Families And Young Families I Know How How Difficult It Is To Get Kids Ready To Come To Church And You Are Saying Well It Takes Me

All My Time To Get To Church Let Alone To Feel Right About Coming To Church I Know All That I've Been There As Well And Nevertheless Should It Not Be An Objective Our Number One Objective As We Come Collectively To To Meet With God That We Focus Our Right On What We're Doing And That We Worship Him First And Foremost In Our Hearts So There's The Reading Of God's Word Because When We Read God's Word We Are Hearing God Speaking To Us Remember That When I Opened Remember What Happened When I Read That Chapter In Nehemiah Chapter 8 And When Ezra Who Was A Preacher At The Time He Opened The Bible And Everyone Stood Up That Was A Mark Of How They That How They Ought To React That They Were Just About To Hear God Speaking To Them Well Every Time Every Time We Open Our Bibles We Ought To Just Be Struck By That Sense Of What We're Doing Of So So So So So What We're Doing This Is God Speaking To Us Now I Hope This Evening That That It's Not My My It's Not My Point To Find Out To Locate All The Faults But It's My Hope That By Rediscovering What Worship Is That We Might Come To It Afresh In A Fresh Sense With A Renewed Sense Of What We Were Doing From Sunday To Sunday Well You've Got The Preaching Of God's Word As Well You've Got And I Guess You Know You Might Say Well That's Your Job Well Yes And No It Is But It's Your Job To Listen To God's Word Preaching

Is When You Explain What The Bible Is Saying In Such A Way That Brings Home To Us It's Reality And To Bring Home To Us What God Is Requiring Of Every One Of Us He Requires To Put Our Faith In Jesus Christ He Requires Obedience To Him A New In The New Life That He Has Given Us And We Get Our Encouragement And Our Impetus Day By Day Or Week By Week By Being Reminded Of How God's Word Shapes Or Ought To Shape Our Lives As The Whole Purpose Of Preaching No One That They Have Rediscovered In The Bible But Again Sometimes We Write Off The Preacher Or The Sermon And Because It May Not Be Delivered In The Way That Is Stimulating To You

[ 51 : 44 ] Or In A Very Lively Way Sometimes As Preachers Don't Always Have A Good Day We Sometimes Don't Always Get The Time To Prepare As We Ought To And There Are Various Reasons Why We Sometimes Are Not On The Ball As We Should Be But That Doesn't Mean That You Switch Off It's Still God's Word And The Challenge For Every One Of Us Is To Listen To The Explanation Of God's Word And It Might Trigger Off A Thought Or Something In Your Mind That Might Lead To To Another Rediscovery Something You Haven't Thought About For Maybe Years

Or something that that that that leads you to another passage in the Bible the Bible is God's living word and if we came to it with the questions and with the inquiring mind that there ought to be every single Sunday with that appetite and that hunger that every one of us should have I reckon that

We would go sometimes you know we expect to get something from the service and I'm not saying that you shouldn't get something from the service but if all you're there for is to get then what you're forgetting is that you're here to give you're here to offer to commit yourself afresh to the Lord and to learn are you telling me that you can read a chapter of God's word and not learn anything from that are you're telling me that you can sit for a whole hour in a service and not learn anything I think there's sometimes something wrong and sometimes it's down to the attitude in which we come to church an attitude that maybe is a wrong one and a negative one let's make sure that our hearts are right because worship begins on the inside it begins with what and who I am in relation to God on the inside when God's people when Israel tried to bring all their sacrifices and do all their things and take all the right boxes in the old testament because because their hearts were far from God God said I don't want to see it I don't want to hear it because your hearts are not where they should be the first thing that needs to be in place is faith in Jesus Christ I have bad news for you if you are not Christian tonight if you are not following Jesus you are not worshipping I'm not saying don't come here of course you can come here but you're not worshipping I'm not saying God doesn't see you and he takes no interest in you I'm not saying that at all what I am

saying is that if you're not a follower of Jesus you're not worshipping worship begins when a person comes to discover what Jesus has done for them and to accept that death for themselves and what God promises to that person is a new life a life in which that person in which you're brought to be one with Jesus like I was trying to say on Thursday we're united to Jesus we're joined to him and that's where it begins that's where real worship begins so if tonight for you worship is a chore if you have to be dragged to do that's a sign of where you are in relation to God but when God changes that and he will if you ask him to then everything changes and you want to come to church and you want to love God you want to love other people you want to join you want to read the Bible and to understand it you're given a hunger I'm not saying it's always the way it should be but that hunger is there and you'll never be satisfied with anything else that's what God does to a person and so the end result of our worship ought to be a changed life and an ever changing life the end result of a service here should be you and I leaving this place not leaving our worship behind but going on to serve God with our whole heart and to put into practice everything everything everything that

[ 56 : 45 ] We have discovered and learned in his word asking him to guide us to guide our conduct and our conversation and to shape the way we live so that we are living witnesses for him and so that we live and worship to his glory and to his praise in 2015 I hope that our worship will improve our worship needs to always improve by a rediscovery and a recovery of all that is essential in coming together to glorify God and enjoying him and serving him and listening to his revelation of himself let's bow our heads and prayer father in heaven we

ask now that you will bring to us our the great privilege that there is in coming to you the way we are this evening forgive us Lord forgive us for losing sight of that forgive us for treating this place with such contempt and for ignoring what we have tended to ignore father in heaven we pray that you will replace within us a spirit of zeal and a spirit of commitment Lord we we pray that you will energize us and give us to see afresh that we cannot do anything more human than to meet with you to give you the praise and the glory in our words and in our hearts and going out to obey you in Jesus name Amen Psalm 96 to close with Psalm 96

It's sing psalms version it's on page 127 and we're going to sing from verse 5 to verse 10 four stanzas the tune is Jackson Psalm 96 A is on page 127 and it's 5 to 10 for other gods are wood and stone the Lord made heaven's height all power and majesty are his he dwells in glorious light Psalm 96 from verse 5 to verse 10 and we're going to stand to sing God silvin Haieron The Lord made heavens high.

All power and majesty are His. He dwells in glorious light.

All nations to the Lord ask God. The glory that is due.

[ 60 : 10 ] Glory and strength ascribe to God. And praise His name anew.

Enter His courts with joy and ring. And all fighting with you.

Worship the Lord in holy fear. All earth before Him bow.

Till every land the Lord is King. Establishes the earth.

And cannot prove the Lord will judge the peoples in His truth.

[ 61 : 15 ] And now may the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The love of God the Father and the communion and fellowship of the Holy Spirit. Rest on and abide with each one of us both now and always.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.