

Let Us Exalt His Name Together

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[0 : 00] Amen. Please take your Bibles and open them up this morning to the book of Psalms. The book of Psalms. We're going to be in Psalm 34, verse 3 this morning.

We've been going through the Gospel of John, and we're going to take just a brief break from the Gospel of John for the month of January to remind ourselves of our mission and vision as a church. So this morning we're in Psalm 34, just one verse, verse 3.

And when you've found that in your Bibles, I ask that you please, if you're able, let's stand together for the reading of God's Word. Psalm 34, verse 3. It says, It says, O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together.

Let's pray. Lord, this is a life-defining verse for me and for us.

So I pray now as we begin the new year together in your Word that you would draw our hearts to affirm this verse with everything we are. And we ask this by the power of your Spirit at work in us.

[1 : 16] In the name of Christ, our Savior. Amen. And please be seated. There are not many verses that stir my heart the way that this one does.

Not many verses that compel me to worship and to exalt in the glory of God the way that this one does. It is a powerful verse. And my family knows that I love this verse.

In fact, one of the gifts that I received for Christmas this year was a framed picture where each of my three children had handwritten this verse out. Each one of them by hand.

I had it framed as an absolute masterpiece. And they said that it's for me to hang up in my office here at church. Although, to be honest, I'm having a hard time deciding where to put it.

Because to be truthful with you, it could just as appropriately be hung up in my home. This is a family-defining verse for my family.

[2 : 17] It's a life-defining verse for me. And it has become for us a church-defining verse for our church community. This has become our verse.

Our mission statement as a church is drawn from this verse. Psalm 34 verse 3. The call that David makes is, Oh, magnify the Lord with me.

Let us exalt His name together. That's the call. And our mission as a church family is to answer that call. So our mission as a church family is, We exist to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

It is a church-defining, mission-defining, identity-defining, direction-defining verse for us. If you or anybody else ever asks, Well, what is Sea Wee Bay about?

This verse is the answer. So my prayer for you and for us together as we begin a new year, 2024, together, is that we would hang this verse as a purpose-defining banner over every facet of our lives.

[3 : 38] That's my prayer for us. And so my aim today, very simply, is just to remind us of this mission. To remind us of our purpose to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And so I have just two observations to make this morning from verse 3 of Psalm 34. Two observations to make this morning. First, is that the name of the Lord is worthy of exaltation.

The name of the Lord is worthy of exaltation. And to state the obvious here, with David calling us to magnify the name of the Lord, to magnify His glory, to exalt in His name, David clearly believes that the name of the Lord is worthy of exaltation.

That He is worth being magnified. Meaning, David believes that God is worthy of all of our praise. You know, we should be clear what we mean when we say words like magnify and glory and exalt.

These are very Christian words. It's kind of Christianese. And sometimes we speak this way. And the meaning gets a little bit lost when we say these things over and over and over and over again.

[4 : 57] And so we need to be careful to define and to clarify, well, what exactly do we mean when we say magnify the glory of God? Well, to magnify His glory means to make a really big deal out of who He is.

It means to make Him central. To make Him not just an accessory to your life, but to make Him primary in your life.

To make Him and His glory your ultimate boast. To make His glory your ultimate aim. To make Him the ultimate deepest delight of your heart. Your ultimate joy.

And so what this looks like practically for you is that now all of your speech is aimed towards magnifying the glory of God. And now if this is your aim, what this looks like is all of your thoughts are taken captive and made obedient to Christ.

It looks like all of your actions, all of your motives, everything that you do throughout your day-to-day life is aimed towards this great end. To magnify the glory of God.

[6 : 05] That we would live as if this were the greatest thing in the universe because our heart is convinced that it is. That's magnification. That's exaltation.

That's what David says God is worthy of. And that, I believe, is meant to be the aim of your life. John Piper says it like this.

You've heard me quote this before. He says that there are two types of magnifying. There is microscope magnifying, where you make something that's very small appear to be big.

And then there is telescope magnifying, where you make something very big appear to you as big as it actually is. And so you take a microscope and you aim it at an ant, and that tiny little ant becomes much bigger in your sight.

Bigger than it actually is. You take a telescope and you point it upwards at the moon, and now you begin to see with greater clarity the shape, the color, the brightness, the texture.

[7 : 08] All of it is seen more clearly. All of a sudden it is magnified. That's what we mean when we say we want to magnify the glory of God. We want to make the biggest, greatest thing in the universe big and great in our lives, in our hearts, in our families, in our church, in our community, because we believe from our heart that He is worthy of complete and total exaltation.

I want you to just take a minute as we begin the year together and take an honest assessment of your heart right now. As you hear this call from David to come to magnify the Lord with me, let us exalt His name together.

This call to make God's glory primary in your life. I want you to ask yourself, does your heart agree that the Lord is worthy of this type of magnification?

Does your heart resonate with this call on your life that God is worthy of not just part of you, but all of you? And if not, then I want you to ask yourself, well, what is taking His place?

The truth is, your heart will worship something. It will worship someone or something.

[8 : 37] Our hearts are made, we are created to worship. It will magnify someone or something. Our problem tends to be, because of the effects of sin in our lives, our problem is that our hearts tend to microscope magnify small, trivial, passing, fading things.

We microscope magnify small things, and in doing so, we fail to look up and realize that there's far greater glory to be enjoyed. That's what sin is.

That's what sin does in our hearts and in our lives. Sin is giving anyone or anything other than God the honor that God alone is due.

Sin is pointing the telescope of our hearts at small things and making much of them when God alone is worthy of all honor and praise.

C.S. Lewis, in his book, *The Weight of Glory*, he says it like this. It would seem that our Lord finds our desires not too strong but too weak.

[9 : 47] We are half-hearted creatures fooling about with drink and sex and ambition when infinite joy is offered to us.

We are like an ignorant child who wants to go on making mud pies in a slum because he cannot imagine what is meant by the offer of a holiday at the sea. We are far too easily pleased.

So I'll ask you again this morning, Church, is your heart convinced that God is worthy of all praise?

You might be coming into the new year with a bit of a spiritual limp. You believe, you profess with your mouth that God is worthy of all praise. Yes, he's worthy of all honor.

But if we're honest, maybe your heart is a little bit slow this morning. If that's you, well, how do we stir our heart up to magnify his glory? How do we stir our heart up to exalt in his name the way David's calling us to do?

[10 : 49] How do we begin to point the telescope of our hearts upward at his glory of God so that we might see him more clearly and love him as he deserves?

Well, let me make a few suggestions for you this morning. First, consider his attributes. Consider his attributes.

Who else is perfectly holy? Where else can you turn? Anywhere on the earth to find someone or something completely pure, the fount of all goodness, totally, completely good and pure.

Where can you find that anywhere in the world? Who else is all powerful, without rival, without equal? Who else is all knowing, the fountain, the source, the giver of all truth and wisdom and knowledge?

What other pleasure, what other joy is infinite, eternal, unchanging? We praise good things here on earth despite their flaws, but the God we worship is flawless, eternally, totally good.

[11 : 54] That's who he is. There's no one like him. Consider his works of creation. How easy is it to just ignore the miracle of creation?

And how foolish are we that week after week, day after day, we spend our lives in God's creation, yet we're so dull to the glory of what God has made.

We're so blind to the creator of it all. Consider, who else created all things? Who else holds all things together?

Who set the sun and the moon and the stars in their place? Who knit you together in your mother's womb? Who commands the wind and the waves? Who tells the waters where to go, where to stop, and to go no further?

Church, if your heart is slow to exalt in the Lord, find in any part of creation something that's worthy of admiration and trace it all the way back up to the source.

- [12 : 58] Consider his work of creation. But don't stop at creation. Consider his works of redemption. Who else is so full of mercy and grace towards sinners?

Who else is so full of justice and loving kindness to not spare his own son, but to graciously give him up for us all that sinners like us might be saved?

Now, there's a reason why we focus our aim at the gospel, that we exist to magnify the glory of God specifically in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Why do we do that? Why do we say in the gospel specifically? Well, it's because we believe that the gospel of Jesus Christ is where the glory of God is most clearly seen.

This is where our hearts are transformed to love Him. This is where you and I, as we explore the depths of the love of God for you in Christ, this is where we grow in Christlikeness.

- [14 : 03] This is where we will spend the rest of eternity delighting in God's kindness to us in the gospel. If you're slow this morning to praise Him, if you feel that your heart is dull towards the Lord this morning, fix your mind on the cross.

Remind your heart of God's love for you in the gospel. Set your mind on things above where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God, risen, reigning, ruling, and returning.

Consider His work of redemption. And last suggestion here on this point, to consider His purpose in all of these works.

Consider His purpose in all of these works. Do you ever wonder why does God do any of this? Why does God create the world to begin with?

Why does God bother to save unworthy sinners like you and me? And why does God do anything that He does? I'll tell you, the answer that the Bible gives is that God's highest aim in everything God does is the magnification of God's glory.

- [15 : 21] That is why He does what He does. There's no higher purpose than this. If there were a higher purpose than this, God would be all about that, but there's not.

So everything He does is to the great end that His name would be magnified in all the earth. It is to that end that He made the world, the heavens declare the glory of God.

And it's to that end that He redeems sinners. If you are a Christian, we need to know His glory is the goal of your salvation.

Did you hear that great purpose as Randy read from Ephesians chapter 1 this morning? I hope you heard it just over and over and over and over and again throughout the book of Ephesians like a beating drum, that great purpose that Paul lines out for our salvation.

Listen to this. He says, He predestined us for adoption to Himself as sons through Christ Jesus according to the purpose of His will to the praise of His glorious grace.

- [16 : 26] Do you hear that? In Him we have obtained an inheritance having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

In Him you also when you heard the word of truth the gospel of your salvation and believed in Him were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory.

Do you hear it? Chapter 2 We were all dead in sin but God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which He loved us even when we were dead in our trespasses made us alive together with Christ by grace you have been saved and raised us up with Him and seated us with Him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus Why?

Verse 7 chapter 2 So that in the coming ages He might show us the immeasurable riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus Did you hear that?

Our eternity Christian will be spent exulting in the limitless depth of God's love for you in Christ Jesus All of eternity will be spent magnifying His glory in the gospel of Jesus Christ exulting in the gospel of His grace every day if there is such a thing in eternity every day will be filled with new reason to praise Him for His kindness to praise Him for His goodness to praise Him for His undeserved mercy and grace towards us who believe to the praise of His glory forever we were saved for that you were created for that that is why God chose you that is why Christ died for you that is what we have to look forward to in eternity that is what this church is about and so the question again are you living in line with that purpose right now let me humbly suggest to you that you will never be satisfied with your life until the glory of God is its ultimate purpose you will never be satisfied with anything else you find on this earth you will never be satisfied with your life until God's glory and the magnification of His glory is your highest aim let this verse define your life church magnify the glory of God exalt

[19 : 25] His name but as you do as you as you consider how you might orient your life around this great aim let me draw your attention to my second observation which is that second we are called to exalt His name together together together this is a corporate summons to exaltation when you read this verse it is good it is right and it is appropriate to think how can I make this the aim of my life that is good but what I want you to notice here is that the call here is not primarily for you alone this call is not just for scattered individuals to magnify the glory of God in their own way on their own terms on their own time as individuals sadly that is how many think about the

Christian life I don't know if you have noticed this but individualism has just consumed American Christianity and that makes sense doesn't it because that is the American way we are independent we think we are self sufficient we do what is best for us and then we take that independent mentality into our lives as Christians and we think wrongly we think well my relationship with God that is on my own terms it is in my way it is by myself that is my business and then we treat the church in those terms as well so long as it benefits me so long as I like the songs that are being sung so long as I understand and I appreciate what the pastor has to say that Sunday so long as I am getting something out of it then I will come on my terms in my own way our own spiritual growth well that is my business as my personal walk with the

Lord it is nobody else's business what I do how I think how I practice my Christianity how I handle my personal walk with the Lord it is all very personal and individual we should know that that may be the American way but church that is totally foreign to how the Bible speaks about the call to follow Christ Christianity is inherently corporate do you hear that in the call of David here he says magnify the Lord with me let us exalt his name together you may have heard it said before that faith is always personal but it is never private have you heard that and that's true you should absolutely you should have personal individual faith in Jesus Christ you must have personal faith in

Jesus Christ if you're going to be a genuine Christ follower but don't for a second believe that that personal faith is a totally private matter between you and God that doesn't involve anyone else far from it Christianity is not an individualistic religion it is a corporate religion and sure you can be a Christian without ever being a part of a church of course you can the same way you can be an arm and not be attached to a body the same way you can be a brick and not be connected to a building of course you can be those things but you were not meant to be you were not made to be that's not the purpose for which you were made an arm or a brick it may be that the building could benefit from you and you from the building the body could benefit from you and you from the body you can tell this strikes a nerve with me

I'll be honest with you church I'm I'm tired of seeing American Christianity the way the songs on the radio the way that people speak about their relationship with the Lord and their relationship if there is one to the church they speak about it as if all God wants is a million only children but the plan of God from before the ages began was not to adopt just a million only children it was to form a family of many brothers and sisters throughout the world not only you but you and you and you and you together there's a story of the great evangelist D.L. Moody D.L. Moody was visiting a church member who had been absent for some time and like a good pastor does he noticed and he went to go speak with him and when he found the man he was outside sitting by a fire and as Moody sat down the man told him he said

[24 : 41] I believe I can be just as good of a Christian outside the church as I could be inside of it that's a common line of thinking maybe you felt that way and so Moody did better than I would have he said nothing at all instead he reached for a pair of tongs and he grabbed one burning coal from the fire very quietly set it off to the side and they sat there in silence as they watched that one coal go from red hot to totally cold while the rest of the gathered coals in the fire burned on and once that one coal had clearly died out still not saying a word D.L. Moody grabbed the tongs once again picked up the cold coal placed it back alongside the others in the fire and sure enough what happened the black coal steadily began to turn orange and began to warm again Moody got up without saying a word to go home and the man said pastor thank you for the sermon

I'll see you next Sunday church if you feel a little bit cold in your affections for the Lord I don't know if there's a better way to warm the affections of your heart than to gather together with God's people I can't tell you how many times your faith has encouraged me as I hear you sing songs of worship as I speak with you as I hear your words of encouragement as I hear the ways you're struggling with this you're succeeding in this the Lord's working in your life here you want to learn this you have this question your faith encourages me I know you've felt some of that same stuff haven't you even if you're doing great spiritually and you don't see what in the world you could possibly gain from being a part of a church I would challenge that thought but could I just suggest that maybe others could gain from you and maybe your spiritual well being isn't only about you maybe others could gain from what the

Lord is doing in your life maybe you could be blessed and be a blessing as a part of a family in ways that are far greater than just on your own we have to remember that when we're called into union with God our Father through personal faith in Jesus Christ we are also called into union with all of our brothers and sisters in Christ that's the universal church the invisible church brothers and sisters from every tribe tongue and nation who will spend eternity exalting in the glory of God together but do you know where that invisible unity is most clearly seen and most clearly experienced on this side of eternity it's right here in the local church right here in the local church church now I just fear that many of us have simply lost the meaning and the purpose of the local church the local church is meant to be a foretaste of the glories of eternity glory of glory of glory of

God we offer one another forgiveness and mercy we comfort one another in our affliction we encourage one another and build one another up and we lift up our hearts together to magnify the glory of God that's what a church is for and if you're a part of this church I know you know what I mean church we are blessed here this church is a family there are many metaphors throughout the New Testament that give us pictures of what a church is I'll have you know none of them are individualistic we are we are the bride of Christ we are the temple of the living God we are a priesthood we are a kingdom of priests we are a spiritual army at war with the powers of darkness but you know most fundamentally the most common way that the

New Testament speaks about the church is as a family the church is a family of the redeemed I went home for Christmas you all know I wasn't here last week I missed you I wasn't here but I went home and I gathered with my physical family three sisters on one side two on the other lots of nieces and nephews grandparents uncles aunts cousins all of us have different places that we call home we have different tastes different personalities we've all had different experiences over the past year but we come together because we share a common bond we're family family the church at a basic fundamental level is a family much truer than flesh and blood and as a family as diverse and as distinct as we may be as individuals as a family we share several key things in common think about this with me as we close as a family every one of us shares a common past we were dead in our trespasses and sins in which we once walked every one of us we have different stories of what that looked like in your life we have different experiences of what that looked like in your own rebellion against the

[30 : 43] Lord but we share a common past we know what we have been saved from but praise God that we share a common salvation we share a common hope a thousand unique different testimonies but one common theme the word of God came to you in power and you believed by the grace of God that Christ Jesus came to save sinners of which I am the foremost that Christ Jesus has lived and died and risen to save you from your sin by the grace of God you believed and you were washed you were sanctified you were redeemed by the power of God every member of this church says yes that's my story because of this church we share a common aim it's the family motto we exist to magnify the glory of God in the gospel of Jesus

Christ together this is the great banner that hangs over every ministry of this church the great banner that hangs over every member's life as individuals the great banner that hangs over our identity together corporately as Sea Wee Bay church how will you make this your aim this year to magnify the glory of God I should probably ask first are you a part of a local family of believers it doesn't have to be here but I would encourage you if you're not a member of a church somewhere meaningfully where you can link arms together and be a part of the family consider how you might do that this year and for those who are a part of this church Sea Wee Bay how do we plan to magnify his glory this year well we've identified three ways three ways we'll explore them throughout the rest of January we aim to enjoy

God to equip the saints and to evangelize the lost those are our three buckets to enjoy to equip and to evangelize but over the next three weeks I've I've felt compelled to explore how we might accomplish these aims more specifically through prayer my desire for us as we go into 2024 is that we would enjoy him in prayer and that you as a church family would be equipped to pray and that we would pray and desire and ask the Lord earnestly to send laborers into his harvest field that we would commit to magnify his glory through prayer and that's where we're going Lord willing in the weeks to come let's pray Lord there is nothing greater that we could give our lives to than your glory we confess the tug and the pull of so many worldly desires and worldly pleasures fleeting things we microscope magnify small things and ignore the call on our lives to magnify your glory so we pray

Lord if there are any here who have not yet tasted and seen that the Lord is good would you would you draw their hearts to the glory of God and the gospel of Christ even now as I pray and Father we ask that together as a church family as we step forward into the new year Lord that we would be defined by this great call would you do it in us we pray in Jesus name amen