

Am I Worthy of Praising God?

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Preacher: Walt Alexander

[0 : 00] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Psalm 51. I'm going to begin reading in verse 1. Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love, according to your abundant mercy, blot out my transgressions.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin. For I know my transgressions and my sin is ever before me.

Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth and the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.

[1 : 25] Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean. Wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Let me hear joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have broken rejoice. Hide your face from my sins and blot out my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.

Deliver me from blood guiltiness, O God, O God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of your righteousness. O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise.

[2 : 37] For you will not delight in sacrifice, or I would give it. You will not be pleased with a burnt offering. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.

O God, you will not despise. Do good to Zion in your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem.

Then will you delight in right sacrifices, and burnt offerings, and whole burnt offerings. Then bulls will be offered on your altar. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Amen. Amen. One pastor begins one of his books in this way. I am a Christian pastor. I love my wife.

I'm not looking at porn. I am a sexual sinner. I could say the same thing. I'm a Christian pastor. I love my wife.

[3 : 39] I'm not looking at porn. I'm a sexual sinner. But it wasn't always that way. When I was eight or nine years old, I was playing backyard football with the neighborhood kids.

One of the older kids showed me a magazine he should not have. What I saw produced in me a crushing combination of curiosity, excitement, guilt, and shame.

It began a rather lengthy, but largely secret and hidden fight with lust. There are few things more draining and debilitating than living in secret or hidden sin.

There's nothing more miserable than living in hidden or secret sin. When living in hidden or secret sin, you cannot love sin enough to forget about everything and enjoy it.

But you also cannot love God enough to forget about everything and worship him. This is especially the case, I believe, when we gather.

[4 : 46] That's why I wanted to hit this psalm in this series. When we gather to praise and worship the Lord while battling sin, especially hidden or secret sin, voices question us.

How can you sing of the Lord who saved you and surrounds you? Who are you to lift your voice and raise your hand?

Do you remember what you did yesterday? Do you remember what you did yet again this week? And so those living in hidden or secret sin gradually drift away from praising God, from gathering to worship him and following Christ.

And yet, there's another way. In this psalm, David famously, infamously, if you want to say it, turns from sin to the living God.

David teaches us how to pray our way out of hidden and secret sin in this passage. But this passage is not just a prayer for those battling secret or hidden sin.

[5 : 56] This is a prayer you all, we all must learn to pray. This is a prayer Jesus wants all of us to pray. I believe this is the prayer that the tax collector prayed when he said, Oh God, have mercy on me, beating his chest.

I am a sinner. It's quite similar to the prayer the prodigal son prayed when he said, I've sinned against heaven and before you.

I'm no longer worthy to be called your son. It is a prayer we all must learn to pray. But it's a prayer we'll only learn to pray by realizing our deepest problem is our own sin.

Our deepest problem is not inflation or liberalism or political instability.

Our deepest problem is sin, not our neighbor's sin, not our spouse's sin, not the sins of anyone done to us, but our sins, our alienation from God, our rebellion against God and the coming judgment.

[7 : 08] The Puritan Thomas Chalmers, who we gave you a book on Father's Day by Thomas Chalmers. He said, this is the most deeply affecting of all the Psalms.

And listen, he said, and I am sure the one most applicable to me. Hmm. I wonder if I can say that. This morning in the midst of this Psalms of Praise series, this is a prayer we all must learn to pray because it's the key to true joy and peace and to sincerely worshiping God.

This is a psalm that was sung. The superscript says, to the choir master. This is David's prayer first and foremost, but it is a song that was sung in the assembly.

David's helping us to see that when battling secret or hidden sin, when plagued by sin, we don't stay away from worshiping God because of it, nor do we hide away, hide our sin when we worship God, but we deal seriously with it when we gather together and find joy and peace.

So where we're going, in a word, praise the Lord who alone transforms guilty sinners into sincere worshipers of the living God. I pray the Lord who alone transforms guilty sinners into sincere worshipers of the living God.

[8 : 34] The first point we're going to break this out in is God is whom we have offended. God is whom we have offended throughout this psalm.

God is humbling himself before, or David's humbling himself before God. You see that right at the outset. Have mercy on me, O God. According to your steadfast love, blot out all my transgression. Wash me thoroughly. Cleanse me. The primary people David references in this psalm is the Lord and himself. Twenty-five times he says, you and your, you and your, underlining that he is gathered into the presence of God.

Thirty-five times he says, I, me, my, referring to himself. The only other people he mentions in this psalm are sinners, are transgressors.

David's focus upon God reveals his awareness that it's primarily against God that he has sinned, and God whom he has offended. Now we know all this is true, but considering the story behind this psalm, it all seems utterly absurd.

[9 : 48] This is King David ruling over the people of Israel, and when the kings were supposed to go out to war, stayed home.

This is King David who took another man's wife to himself, the woman Bathsheba. This is King David when he could not get Uriah to go against his conscience, had Uriah killed.

How can there be a prayer of repentance with no mention of Bathsheba, of Uriah, of the people whom David has failed?

Well, David realizes his sin is mainly against the living God. Several realities about the nature of sin come to the forefront in verse 4.

If you look there with me, he says, Against you, you only have I sinned. Sin is primarily against God. Sin can be against ourselves.

[11 : 01] The Apostle Paul says, Flee sexual morality. Every other sin a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against himself. Sin can be against ourselves.

Sin can be against our neighbor. Paul says again, Control your body in holiness and honor, that you not transgress or wrong a brother. But sin is always against God.

Sin is always against him. The wrongfulness of sin lies in who it is against. Sin is always against God. Sin is always against God. Now, if someone, if you're a youngster, and someone in the grocery store told you to mind your manners and obey your mother, you would most likely roll your eyes.

If your neighbor told you to mind your manners and obey your mother's, you might listen, depending on the relational proximity of this neighbor.

If your uncle told you to mind your manners and obey your mom, you would likely listen. But if your father told you to mind your manners and obey your mom, you would really listen and get right to it, unless you're a fool.

[12:20] Why do we respond to our father in a different way? Because of this unique relationship and the unique authority he has been given. How much more the Lord?

Who made us and saved us and called us to live in a manner worthy of him.

So when we sin, we are firstly turning against him and breaking the covenant he made with us. I'm reminded of the story of Joseph when he's serving in Potiphar's house.

One of those stories that you don't forget easily in our Bibles. And Potiphar's wife is continuing to compliment him and seeks to seduce him. And he suddenly says, how then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?

It just jumps off the page. Why? Because he's riveted by this awareness that he belonged to God. So when David realizes his sin is primarily against God, he realizes it is far more serious than Bathsheba or the people of Israel realize.

[13:35] Because he's offended the Almighty God. Sin is against God. Sin is done in God's sight. Look at the way verse 4 continues. Against you, you only have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight.

All of the sin David did in secret was in the sight of God. Spurgeon says, the God whom we offend was present when the trespass was committed.

The true test of character is not what you do when everybody's watching, but what you do when no one is watching and the Lord is always watching. Just like Matthew 6 when he says, when you fast or when you give or when you pray, your Father who sees you in secret will reward you.

The omniscience of God means God knows all things. The omnipresence of God means God sees all things, sees all that is done everywhere.

The Puritan Stephen Charnock helpfully says what this awareness should bring into our lives. How terrible, he writes, should the thoughts of this attribute be to sinners.

[14:50] How foolish is it to imagine any hiding place from the incomprehensible God. When men have shut the door and made all darkness within to meditate or commit a crime, they cannot in the most intricate recesses be sheltered from the presence of God.

Hypocrites cannot disguise their sentiments from him. He is in the most secret nook of their hearts. No thought is hid, no lust is secret, but the eye of God beholds this and that and the other.

Incredible truth. We don't have to wonder though how David realized that God saw what he had done in secret. Look at the superscription.

We don't believe these were inspired in the original text, but nevertheless, very old and usually faithfully represent the history of the text.

To the choir master, if you're in the ESV, I don't know, most of them have this superscription. To the choir master, a psalm of David when Nathan the prophet went to him after he had gone in to Bathsheba.

[16:11] If you remember, the story David had killed Bathsheba's husband, Uriah the Hittite, and then he took Bathsheba to be his wife and had a baby with her, everything was buttoned up.

Everything was covered up. Plan succeeded. But then Nathan went to him, the prophet. He told him his story.

You should look at this, 1 Samuel 12. He told him a story about a poor man who had a lamb that he loved and cared for. Said this poor man had this lamb that he loved and cared for.

Then one day, a rich man came along and killed his precious lamb. David became angry as he's telling this story. He said, that man deserves to die. Nathan says, you are the man.

You're the man who took this poor man's wife and he said, you've despised the word of God to do what is evil in his sight.

[17:16] God saw what no one else saw and sent the prophet to David to let him know that God saw it all. I mean, are we living like God doesn't see?

it's so sobering. Sin is against God.

Sin is in the sight of God. Sin is worthy of God's just judgment. Look what he says, against you, you only have a sin and done what is evil in your sight so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment.

David realizes if his sin against God and is done in God's sight, then he has no excuse. God is righteous and just to judge him for his sin.

He realizes that God is in effect. Therefore, the accuser, he says, you're justified in your words. The one bringing the accusations against you, the attorney, bringing them against you but God is also the judge, blameless in your judgment, blameless to render verdict over you because of what you've done and so David realizes he is in trouble to put it mildly.

[18:40] All throughout this prayer, David's crying out against the punishment, he's crying out about his sin and what he's done. He never cries out about being punished.

He just immediately, he keeps saying again and again, he deserves every punishment that comes. We see that right at the outset in the first two verses, he prays every word for sin in the Old Testament, transgressions, iniquity, and sin.

In verse three, he says, I know my transgressions. My sin is ever before me. When he's talking about I know them, he's not saying I mentally understand them or even acknowledge them.

It's a word that means I'm deeply aware of my transgressions. He says, my sin is ever before me. Far too often, I could functionally rewrite this verse and say, Lord, I know the sins of others. Their sins are ever before me.

[19:45] I'm burdened too. I look at the news, I'm burdened for their sins out there. They're always before me. But that's not what David prays. This is a man buried under the burden of his own sin, wasting away.

He's saying, in effect, unless you do something, I'm never moving on. From the awareness of who my sin is against and the reality of what it deserves, he continues in verse 5.

He says, I was brought forth in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. Not talking about the act that brought him into the world was a sinful act. He's saying, I've just been a sinner ever since the beginning.

He's saying, my sin is ever before me and it's always been before me. Perhaps if his adultery had been a misstep or a case of being in the wrong place at the wrong time or just a one night stand, he would cry out against the judgment of God but he said, I have not sinned here.

I'm not a sinner here because I have sinned. I have sinned because I'm a sinner because it's flowing from this heart that's always wicked.

[21:00] He's saying, in effect, I'm unable to stop sinning. I'm captive to sin, unable to free myself from sin. The only just response of a holy God is judgment.

Look at what he says in verse 6. You delight. After seeing what he sees in his own heart, he says, oh, you delight in truth and the inward being.

See, in the massive gulf between what God desires and what he realizes about himself. Martin Lloyd-Jones once said, the only way you can become a Christian is by shutting your mouth.

Now, what he meant was not literally shut your mouth until you stop making excuses for your sin. You must personally reckon with your sin against the holy God.

We all must personally reckon. Have you personally reckoned with the reality of a sinful nature of the enemy within? This awareness that even after becoming a Christian, Jeremiah 17 says, before becoming a Christian, your heart is deceitful and above all and beyond cure.

[22:27] Deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Even after becoming a Christian, Galatians 5, 17 says, the desires of the spirit are waging war against desires of his flesh. Your heart is not a pristine place where God lives, but a battleground where good and evil are battling it out.

You must personally reckon with the reality of your sin, the reality of our captivity to sin because of the sinful nature. After Adam, sin is as unchosen, as hunger, as comfortable as sleep, as unavoidable as gravity.

You're not a sinner because you sinned. You sinned because you're a sinner. You must personally reckon with it. Charles Spurgeon helps us. When we deal seriously with our sin, we follow David. God will deal gently with us. When we deal seriously with our sin, God will deal gently with us. When we hate what the Lord hates, he will soon make an end of it to our joy and peace. God is the one we've offended. Point two, humility is what he desires. Humility is what he desires. David models how to respond when confronted with the reality of sin, how to confess it, how to humble ourselves.

[23 : 50] he prays firstly for God to cleanse him. The beginning in these verbs of confession, he prays, blot out my transgression, wash me, cleanse me.

Verse seven through nine, he reverses the order. Cleanse me or purge me, wash me, blot out, verse nine. He says, purge me.

Cleanse me with hyssop. Hyssop is a plant that grows in the Middle East. If you remember on the night of the Passover, the Lord said, take a hyssop branch and dip it in the blood and put it on the lintel and on the doorpost so that all who pass through this entrance into this house, the angel of death will pass over all of them.

so he's saying as it were, Lord, remember the Passover and pass over me. Cleanse me with hyssop. Purge me. I shall be clean.

I love it. Purge me with hyssop and I shall be clean. Is there a verse more filled with faith than all of Holy Scripture? He's just said, I know my sin is ever before me.

[25 : 12] I know my sin has always been before me. I know I'm captive to sin, but if you'll cleanse me, I'll be clean. All of my weaknesses do not inhibit your strength and your power to cleanse me.

I just love that so much. He continues, wash me. The idea here is not a ritual cleansing merely through sacrifice, but a washing out of all the dirt.

this was used for laundering, for doing the laundry, getting the mud out. Wash me. Scrub it out, God. I will be whiter than snow.

Let me hear, verse 8, joy and gladness. Let the bones that you have broken rejoice. The sinner, the outcast, longs to be back to hear the joy of heaven, to hear the song of the God who sings over his people.

Verse 9, blot out my transgressions. What is that? Take the white out. Take me off your list. Cancel them.

[26 : 28] Remove me from the record. Blot them all out. There's a refreshing lack of finger pointing in this passage that we so desperately need.

Several years ago, I listened to the book Educated by Tara Westover. It's a story about Tara who grew up in a Mormon home with a very hard-line view of the Bible and a very far-right view of the world.

She was never registered as a child, never received a Social Security number, never able to leave her parents' sight. It's a painful book because she endured horrific abuse by her brother without the protection of her mother or father.

She got out. She got educated. She ran away. She tells the story of emailing her parents, her abusers.

She tells the story of her mother writing her back. She said her mother wrote, you were my child. I should have protected you.

[27 : 46] In her book, Tara writes, I lived a lifetime in the moment I read those lines. A lifetime that was not the one I had lived.

I became a different person. I remembered a different childhood. I didn't understand the magic of those words then. I don't understand it now. I only know this, that when my mother told me that she had not been the mother she'd wished she'd been, she became the mother to me for the first time. Tara wrote her back, I love you. There's a sense in which that's what David's doing here. He's playing it straight.

He's owning it up. He's saying, I am dirty. I am unclean.

I am guilty. I'm worthy of judgment. He's had his mouth shut, awareness of what he deserves, but now he's crying out with the words of confession and repentance.

[28 : 56] So he prays for God to cleanse him and then he prays for God to change him. Look in verse 10, he prays, create in me a clean heart, oh God.

These wonderful words that we know from this passage all so well. This word for create always has God as his subject. It's the word for create in the beginning.

God created the heavens and the earth. This word always has God as his subject and means to bring into existence that which did not exist before. So David's crying out for God to do what only God can do.

He's not saying God clean up my old heart. That's a wonderful prayer. Clean up my old heart. But he's saying I don't even think that's enough. Make me a new heart.

He's crying out for a new sovereign work of God. Give me a clean heart God. He knows his sin is so great, his debt is so large, his captivity so certain that there's nothing he can do.

[30 : 03] He cries out to God. He's aware that he can clean the outside of the cup but only God can clean the inside. He can change the behavior for a little while but only God can change the heart.

And so he prays renew a right spirit in me. Transform me into one who is fixed and steadfast and single minded to what is right.

Uphold me with a willing spirit. Change me so that doing what is right is free and spontaneous.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation.

Verse 12. What's all this mean? What David's given us a window into is what God ultimately wants from us is not our obedience, not our best efforts, not our battle plans, not our resolutions, even if we've blown it.

What God ultimately wants is our humility and desperation. God wants us to come to him with words of humility, with words of desperation, saying as it were, I have sinned, I have failed, I can't stop, unless you do something, I am hammered.

[31 : 24] The point is not God wants you to know how terrible you are. The point is God wants you to know that you can only make it out by relying on his strength. Strikingly, it's almost as if David anticipates what God comes to do in the new birth.

He's crying out for a new heart. That's exactly what God promises in the new covenant. I'll put a new heart in you, a heart that fears me, that loves me, that follows me, because only that type of change can guarantee that we would follow him all the days of our lives.

And so we come to him with words of humility and desperation. I've been a Christian for 23 years, it's so hard for the church to get this right.

The culture in many churches is not so much different than the culture in general. Far too often, churches are just a bunch of isolated individuals trying to impress one another.

One pastor says in the church you can either be impressive or known. Only a fool would choose to be impressive. I want this to be a church, I pray this is a church where we throw off delusions of strength, shirk the spin of trying to act like we're better than we are, stop masquerading with smiles.

[32 : 46] We should smile, you know. Run away from concealing our weakness behind success, popularity, politics, and whatever. Where is God calling you to admit your need, to come in humility?

Where are you reluctant to come to the light? It's not surprising that it's hard to come into the light. darkness hates the light. Sin grows in secret, but in confession the light breaks through.

Is it a struggle with lust, as I mentioned at the outset? The truth about your marriage, the truth about your use of alcohol, the truth about your struggle with work, whatever.

This could be a wonderful time to come clean. God is here. God is here. He's in the light. Invites us to come into the light, to have fellowship with him.

This may be coming to life for the very first time for you. Don't have a sincere relationship with Christ and he invites you to come to him. Humble yourself before him and to know him truly.

[34 : 02] through the gospel of Jesus Christ. So God is the one we've offended.

Humility is what he desires. Praise is what we give, point three. David models how to respond to God's deliverance. David writes in the future tense in this last section of the psalm, verse 13 and following.

He's anticipating what God will do as he cries out for help. He says, then I will teach transgressors your ways and sinners will return to you.

The first people, I love this, he wants to talk to are transgressors and sinners. That's the heart of God. He says, deliver me from blood guiltiness and my tongue will sing aloud.

verse 15, open my lips and my mouth will declare your praise. Once sin was all he could think about, but if God delivers him, he says, I'll sing your praise.

[35 : 08] Open my lips, I'll declare your gratefulness. I'll declare gratefulness to you for all that you have done. He's anticipating a mighty deliverance by God to set him free once and for all.

God. In 1849, a young Dostoevsky, a Russian novelist, barely missed the killing squad or the firing squad.

He was imprisoned in Russia with a group of other revolutionaries against the communist government and sentenced to death. The men were marched out into the square prepared to die, to be executed.

The firing squad gathered. The drums began to play. Death was seconds away. The very last moment, a messenger arrived on horseback and said, the execution has been canceled by the czar.

one man broke down crying. Another went mad. Dostoevsky broke out in song.

[36 : 19] Song. I love it. He says, he remembers he went back to his cell and he says, I cannot recall when I was ever as happy as on that day. I walked up and down my cell and sang the whole time, sang at the top of my lungs, so happy at being given back my life.

That's what David is envisioning here. A deliverance by God against the evil of our sin is a deliverance that only can be celebrated with singing, with rejoicing that God has indeed done it. Charles Spurgeon helps us. A great sinner pardon makes a great singer. Sin has a loud voice and so should our thankfulness have. We shall sing our praises if we be saved, but our theme will be the Lord our righteousness in whose merits we stand righteously accepted.

A great sinner makes a great savior. The reality of our deliverance is far better than missing the firing squad. The reality of our deliverance is that one has been put forward in our place to take the death we deserve, so the punishment completely canceled.

It might never come to us and so we sing the great offering of the New Testament church of the Christian. It's not a bull or a goat.

[37 : 41] It's not a bird or any other animal. It's a song of praise. It's the only thing you will not stop doing.

What do they do in heaven? They sing praise. I think in all this, in this picture of David responding and celebrating in praise, we see the true meaning of praise.

C.S. Lewis, a British author, was famously agitated by the whole idea of praise. He thought, what is going on in the Psalms where God says, praise him, praise him, praise him, praise him.

What kind of God needs continual compliments? Isn't the need for continual compliments a sign of a small minded person?

Not of a great one. But he came to see that the world rings with praise. Lovers praise one another. Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

[38 : 43] Praising one another. Readers praise their favorite authors. Hikers praise their favorite mountains. Fans praise their teens. Foodies praise the cuisine.

Not only that, but we just instantaneously recruit others into praising what we pray. Did you see that? Have you tasted this? Have you done this? We're always praising.

Why do we praise? Not because the things need their compliments. The Tennessee vault, they may need your compliments this fall, so please do praise them. But we're not looking for compliments.

We praise because it completes the joy. I mean, is a meal a really great meal? Unless you erupt in celebration?

C.S. Lewis says, I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment. It is its appointed consummation. God commands our praise not because he needs the compliments, but because he wants us to have the joy.

[39 : 49] That's what this series is all about. He wants you to have the joy of praising it, of living for him. David brings this prayer to a close. Verse 16, he says, grounding all that he said about praising him.

He says, you will not delight in sacrifice, I'd give it, or be pleased with a burnt offering. Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart.

You will not despise. The sacrifices that please God are not that of animals ultimately, but a heart and spirit offered up sincerely to God.

God commands us to worship him sincerely. I think this is one of the points that trip us up as we battle sin. We come into the assembly. We think, how can I be singing after the struggle I've had?

How can I be lifting my hands? If anybody saw my week, they would say, you fraud. Well, that's not hypocrisy, though. Hypocrisy is trying to intentionally deceive someone.

[40 : 55] Crying out because you're a sinner and you know it is not hypocrisy. That's sincerity, actually. And so we respond to God's greatness in proper ways, not because we've stopped sinning, but because we still do and we still need a Savior and we're amazed at what he's given.

Look at verse 18 and 19. He continues, do good to Zion and your good pleasure. Build up the walls of Jerusalem. Then you'll delight in right sacrifices and burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings. Then bulls will be offered. Which one is it? Do you delight in a broken and contrite heart? Or do you delight in sacrifices?

Repetition of the word. I think the point is, David's not saying don't offer sacrifices. Old Testament religion, he's saying you should.

But don't only offer sacrifices. Same thing when we gather. Don't just sing. Don't just bow your knees. Don't just pray. Don't just listen.

[42 : 02] Off your heart. The best of sacrifices is nothing without a sincere heart of worship. But a sincere heart of worship brings the best of sacrifice. It brings our hearts.

It brings our gifts. If we stand and sing and we don't give anything, when he commands us to give, then we're a fraud.

Most of all, we give our lives. We are, as it were, living sacrifices. Our spiritual worship to him. Praise the Lord who alone transforms guilty sinners into sincere worshipers of God.

This morning, we're concluding this series and I want to say a couple things in conclusion. Our goal with this series, this little mini-series, if you've been tracked along, you may be a guest, you don't know what we're talking about, that's fine too.

Our goal is as a church we would naturally respond to God's greatness and glory in physical ways that point to his glory and our satisfaction in him.

[43 : 07] You know, one of our burdens, one of my burdens has been to release you from the fear of distraction. You know, in the South, we're all prim and popper and don't want to just distract one another. I want to release you from some of the fear of distraction.

You know, there is an important sense in which we're trying to edify one another, but there's a more important sense that you be not overly concerned about distraction. We did want to, I wanted to challenge you not to let the approval of man cause you to refrain from singing and responding in ways the Bible commends.

I want you to experience freedom from the fear of man. Fear of man is a snare, read this morning. But this final point, we must remember, the sacrifices that please God align with our hearts.

We could sing and shout and raise our hands, bow our knees, but if we're living in secret or hidden sin, if we're doing that which we think we're supposed to do so that everybody sees that we're doing what we're supposed to do, it will not be pleasing to God.

Now you can sing in a setting where your hands are by your side if your heart's not, and your heart can be offered up to the Lord, and it can be wonderful and beautiful.

[44 : 30] You can sing in a setting where your hands are way out of here doing whatever and jumping up and down, and yet your heart not be offered up to the Lord and it be pleasing.

evil, ungodly, and unpleasing to the Lord, and so we come with our hearts and our hands and our lives to worship the Lord.

May God help us. Father in heaven, we thank you for the privilege and the joy of sitting under your word, and we all take these moments for granted.

we thank you for the inspired, inerrant, infallible word of God which is able to build us up, make us thoroughly equipped for every good work, and I pray that that word would go forth.

Anything that aligns with it and was helpful would be remembered, anything not would be forgotten. would you cause your word to bring forth a prophet in us as we seek to follow you and declare the praises of him who called us out of darkness and into light.

[45 : 49] We thank you. In Jesus' name, amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee. For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at trinitygraceathens.com through the