

"Sacrifice"

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Date: 14 June 2026

Preacher: Matt Coburn

[0 : 00] Well, good morning. It's good to see you all here. When we fail in a relationship, we wonder what happens next.

! What happens next with your teacher?

If you ignored your coach's instructions, ran your own play, and lost the game, what happens next?

If you proudly insisted on your own plan and lost the client, what happens with you and your boss going forward?

In these circumstances, we may feel all sorts of different reactions and feelings. We may want to deny that we did wrong or try to cover it up or minimize how bad it was.

[1 : 08] We may want to run away, just give up on the relationship altogether in guilt and shame. Sometimes we say, well, tell me what I can do to make it right.

How can I atone for this? Punish me somehow so that then we can somehow move forward.

Whatever it is, we expect that there will be consequences, but deep down, the question that we ask ourselves is, what will our relationship look like going forward?

This, maybe surprisingly, is the question that Numbers 15 is going to answer for us today. If you're visiting, we are in a series this summer in the book of Numbers, and the people of God as they journey from Mount Sinai to the edge of the promised land.

And as we have seen in the last couple of weeks, the launch out from Sinai has not gone well.

Rebellion in the hearts of God's people has been the theme of the day.

Grumbling and complaining about God's provision. Envy and jealousy about God's sovereignty and his roles that he's determined. Distrusting God and not obeying him to go in and to take the land that God had promised that he would give to them.

[2 : 38] They had sinned against God over and over again. And if you remember last week, they had received a consequence. There was a judgment. The generation of those above the age of 20, at the present time, as they're launching out from Sinai, they would not enter into the promised land.

And the people are asking, where do we go from here? And so God gives us a chapter of laws, which is surprising. Why laws?

Because in these laws, in this chapter, God is instructing his people on how they will go forward together. And that's what we're going to see in this chapter.

So we'll see God speaking to his people back then, and probably to us, too, as we recognize that we also, like them, sin and rebel and ask the question, how do we go forward together?

So with that, let me invite you to turn to Numbers 15, if you haven't done so already. I forgot the page number. It's like 112, 115.

[3 : 53] There you go. 115 in most of the Pew Bibles. And what I'm going to do is read the whole chapter. It's a little long, but I'm going to pull themes and threads out rather than walking through it.

So we're going to read the whole chapter together. And you know what? It's really hot. I'm going to say this. If you're able to do this, why don't we stand for the reading of God's Word just to give you something to do, keep you awake, and then we'll sit down again as we... If you're not able to stand, that's fine.

But Numbers 15. The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land you are to inhabit, which I am giving you, and you offer to the Lord from the herd or from the flock a food offering or a burnt offering or a sacrifice to fulfill a vow or as a freewill offering or at your appointed feast to make a pleasing aroma to the Lord, then he who brings his offering shall offer to the Lord a grain offering of a tenth of ephah of fine flour mixed with a quarter of a hin of oil, and you shall offer with the burnt offering or for the sacrifice a quarter of a hin of wine for the drink offering for each lamb or for a ram.

You shall offer a grain offering, two-tenths of an ephah for fine flour mixed with a third of a hin of oil, and for the drink offering you shall offer a third of a hin of wine, a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

And when you offer a bull as a burnt offering or sacrifice to fulfill a vow or for peace offerings to the Lord, then one shall offer with the bull a grain offering of three-tenths of an ephah of fine flour mixed with a hin of oil, and you shall offer for the drink offering half a hin of wine as a food offering a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

[5 : 59] Thus it shall be done for each bull or ram or each lamb or young goat, as many as you offer, and so shall you do with each one as many as there are. Every native Israelite shall do these things in this way, in offering a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

And if a stranger is sojourning with you or anyone is living permanently among you and he wishes to offer a food offering with a pleasing aroma to the Lord, he shall do as you do.

For the assembly there shall be one statute for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you, a statute forever throughout your generations. You and the sojourner shall be alike before the Lord. One law and one rule shall be for you and for the stranger who sojourns with you. And the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, When you come into the land to which I bring you, and when you eat of the bread of the land, you shall present a contribution to the Lord.

Of the first of your dough you shall present a loaf as a contribution. Like a contribution from the threshing floor, so shall you present it. Some of the first of your dough you shall give to the Lord as a contribution throughout your generations.

[7 : 16] But if you sin unintentionally and do not observe all these commandments that the Lord has given to Moses, all that the Lord has commanded you by Moses, from the day that the Lord gave commandments and onward throughout your generations, then if it was done unintentionally without the knowledge of the congregation, all the congregation shall offer one bull from the herd for a burnt offering, a pleasing aroma to the Lord.

And with its grain offering and its drink offering, according to the rule, one male goat for sin offering. And the priest shall make atonement for all the congregation of the people of Israel, and they shall be forgiven because it was a mistake.

And they have brought their offering, a food offering to the Lord and their sin offering before the Lord for their mistake. And all the congregation of the people of Israel shall be forgiven, and the stranger who sojourns among them, because the whole population was involved in the mistake.

And if one person sins unintentionally, he shall offer a female goat a year old for a sin offering, and the priest shall make atonement before the Lord for the person who makes a mistake when he sins unintentionally to make atonement for him, and he shall be forgiven.

You shall have one law for him who does anything unintentionally, for him who is native among the people of Israel, and for the stranger who sojourns among them. But the person who does anything with a high hand, whether he is native or sojourner, reviles the Lord, and that person shall be cut off from among his people.

[8 : 54] Because he has despised the word of the Lord and has broken his commandment, that person shall be utterly cut off. His iniquity shall be on him. Now while the people of Israel were in the wilderness, they found a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath day.

And those who found him gathering sticks brought him to Moses and Aaron and to all the congregation. They put him in custody, because it had not been made clear what should be done to him.

And the Lord said to Moses, The man shall be put to death. All the congregation shall stone him with stones outside the camp. And all the congregation brought him outside the camp and stoned him to death with stones, as the Lord commanded Moses.

The Lord said to Moses, Speak to the people of Israel and tell them to make tassels on the corners of their garments throughout their generations, and to put a cord of blue on the tassel of each corner.

And it shall be a tassel for you to look at and remember all the commandments of the Lord, to do them, not to follow after your own heart and your own eyes, which you are inclined to whore after.

[10 : 04] So you shall remember and do all my commandments and be holy to your God. I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God.

I am the Lord your God. This is God's word. Go ahead and take a seat. So friends, I want to be clear.

I have two goals this morning. One is to help you as you're reading a book like the book of Numbers to figure out what the heck. Like, what does this mean?

What does this chapter in this part in the book, why is it there and how does it fit? And then to see that in all of the richness of the Old Testament, it points us to the glorious work of God in the redemption of Christ that we have and to see that.

So that's what we're going to see. Break it down into four things. We're going to see four things that God says to his people after they've blown it. They've done the worst that they could do and they've borne consequences for it and now they're wondering, how do we move forward?

[11:10] God says to them in this chapter four things. First, he confirms his promise with his people. Secondly, he calls his people to wholehearted worship.

Thirdly, he warns his people of his holiness and his righteous judgment. And finally, he reaffirms his plan of redemption for his people in Christ.

So those are our four points. If you're taking your outline, there it is. God confirms first. God confirms his promises with his people. Did you notice in verse one?

Sorry, the wind is getting my pages here. We'll figure this out. All right. In verse one. Nope. In verse two. Speak to the people of Israel and say to them, when you come into the land.

Friends, you have to get this in context of the story to see how momentous this is. Because God is not saying, if you will continue to obey me, then you're going to come into my land.

[12:19] He says, when I fulfill my promise to you, the promise that he gave back in Exodus chapter three, Sam, if we can put it up, Exodus chapter three, when God came to Moses and he said this, I have surely seen the affliction of my people who are in Egypt and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters.

I know their sufferings and I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey.

The first thing that God says to his people is, I have not forsaken my promises to you.

I will accomplish this plan. And this isn't new because Nick talked about it last week. The next generation, God said, I will take them in.

But he reaffirms it here. He says, when you enter into the land. And then says, when you enter the land, this is how you want to live. And he gives all these laws and all these very particular instructions about how they're to be his people because he is their God.

[13:37] But the most important part is that he's saying, this will happen. I have not forsaken you. My relationship with you is not broken forever.

We will go ahead. And this is reaffirmed in all sorts of little cool details throughout this. When God says, hey, when you bring these offerings, like a peace offering or a free will offering, you should add to it grain with oil and wine.

Now, do you know what? Grain and oil and wine are all fruit of agriculture, of settled societies, not nomadic people, right?

And so part of what God is saying is, I'm leading you into a place flowing with milk and honey. It will be a place of abundance. And you will have all of these things, crops to harvest, grapes to harvest, olives to press to have oil.

You will have all of this to worship me with because I'm going to take you into the promised land. He says, you will have bread.

[14:47] Remember in the wilderness, they're eating unleavened bread. This is kind of the pattern. They're eating basically unleavened bread because they don't have time to sit around and wait for the yeast to rise.

But when you come into the land, you will have this. And remarkably, remember how God provided for food for the people in the desert? He gave them manna from heaven.

But you know what? When they enter the land, the land will produce fruit that will provide for God just as miraculously as the manna in some ways, and yet much more normally.

Reminding the people of this is the abundance that you have to look forward to because of my faithfulness to my promises, says God to his people.

What a remarkable thing. Imagine if your grandpa promised you on your 16th birthday that he would give you a car when you turned 21.

[15 : 52] But then in high school, you drove foolishly and you wrecked his car. And then he comes to you on your 18th birthday, and do you know what he gives you?

He gives you a keychain, and he gives you a cell phone holder, and he gives you a car wash kit. Now, you don't have the car yet, but what has grandpa said to you?

I'm going to fulfill that promise to you. You're going to get the car. God says, I'm going to fulfill my promises to you.

I will bring you in to a land of abundance. I will bring you in to a land flowing with milk and honey. Even though you have been rebellious, even though you have blown it, this is who I am, and I will continue to be so.

So that's the first thing that God says to his people. I will be faithful. I will confirm that my promises to you, I will fulfill. Then the second thing that he says is, flowing from this, therefore, I call you to a wholehearted worship.

[17 : 06] Why do I say this? Well, because the whole sacrificial system is a key. It's actually a language, and we don't speak sacrifice very well, do we?

There's actually a great article on desiringgod.org called The Syntax of Sacrifice. I highly recommend it. It'll just give you a good breakdown of the sacrificial system in the Old Testament and what it's actually speaking to.

And I will confess to you that I don't even know if I have it completely clear, because I'm not sure that it's always as precise as we want it to be, that this always means this, and these words are always meaning this.

I think God, throughout the Old Testament, uses it sometimes in overlapping categories. But what we can say is that there is a call to wholehearted worship that has caught up in all of the instructions for them to offer things to God, right?

And so when God commands them with food sacrifices and peace offerings to bring grain and wine and oil with it, this is all meant to be not a ritual in order to make sure things are right with God, but a joyful worship that God has provided for them.

[18 : 30] So every time they bring these sacrifices to God, the intent is that they would come with a heart of thanksgiving and of gratitude to exalt God and to say, God, you are the one who's provided and you are a great God for us.

What a beautiful thing that is. And notice that in these instructions, God gives all sorts of particularities. And you know what?

I don't have a good answer for you on why it's one hen or two hens or a half a hen or a third of a hen. You can see that there's a graduated system.

And what it might be, this is my speculation, what it might be is that the wholehearted worship we give is related to our capacity. If we have lots of things, if I have lots of bulls, then I have lots of things to offer and I'm going to give all of those things to you.

If I have very little, then I'm going to give all that I have to you, but it might be little. But God graciously says, all of us can come to Him in a wholehearted worship through this.

[19 : 38] And that's what we see through these food offerings. Through the burnt offerings, we recognize that wholehearted worship includes a regular confession of our sinfulness and our need for atonement.

Right? By offering these burnt offerings, we are recognizing that our sin must be judged. Right? And it's this picture that God gives us of these offerings which are burnt up.

That means they're not eaten by other people. The other offerings, they get offered to the Lord, but then they get shared. The priests get to eat some and people get to eat some and it's great. But the burnt offerings, they're burnt up completely. But as they're burnt up completely, there's an aroma that's lifted up to the Lord that is pleasing to God.

Why is that? Because this picture of sin being atoned for by death being enacted in this burnt offering is this picture of how God has promised that He will redeem His people.

And so in our wholehearted worship, we continue to do this over and over again. Right? We recognize, God, we are sinful, but You are a merciful and a gracious God.

[20 : 58] And we want to please You. And so in our pleasing, it doesn't mean we have to be perfect in order to please Him. And part of the perfection is our recognition that we sin, that we confess our sins, and He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

So that's the second part of wholehearted worship we see. The dough offering is a firstfruits offering. And again, this is one of the themes that we see in the Old Testament. Firstfruits, right? It's the firstborn children. It's the first oil pressing, right? It's the first of the harvest. And God constantly reminds us to say, take the firstfruits of our lives and offer them to God. Dedicate them. Consecrate them. Set them aside to recognize that all that we have has come from God. And all that we have, we are merely stewards of it to use for His glory and for His kingdom in the world.

So these are the ways that the sacrifices picture this wholehearted worship. And then at the end, did you notice what happened? God says, oh yeah, and one more thing.

[22 : 12] Because I know that you're a forgetful people and because you don't worship me every day, I'm going to give you this command. And you know what? I live in a neighborhood in New Haven where we have a lot of Orthodox Jews in our community.

And do you know what? I can always recognize them. You know why? Because they have tassels sticking out of their shirts, under the bottom of their shirts. Right? God says, I know that you're a forgetful people, so I'm going to graciously give you this sign.

Put this on all your clothing. These tassels with a blue thread. Blue being a very precious, a very precious and rare color. And therefore, there was a sense in which you were putting something valuable into this reminder.

And these tassels are meant to remind you. And do you remember what he said? To remind you what? To do all my commands and be holy to your God.

That is, be set apart. That is, orient your whole life not around what the world says is important or what you want to do, but around who God is and what he wants for your life.

[23 : 16] This is the picture of wholehearted worship that God is saying, though you've blown it, return and keep going.

Keep going in this pattern. And this is what I want for you. How do we today do this? Well, the Apostle Paul reminds us in Romans 12 of what are the sacrifices today?

Because we know that in the Old Testament, there are all these sacrifices, but those systems were finished in Christ. And we'll return to that again at the end of the sermon, but we read it earlier as well. Felicia read about how the sacrifices were never fully sufficient to accomplish redemption, but there were pictures, right?

And the fulfillment is in Christ. And so, Paul says this in Romans 12, 1. I appeal to you, therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercy of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing, you may discern what is the will of God and what is good and acceptable and perfect.

[24 : 33] Friends, the sacrifices we offer to God are not little things, but it's everything.

Everything we do, all of our lives, we are meant to come to God daily and say, God, here's my life. May it be to your glory. May I worship you wholeheartedly. And this does mean things, right? It means that we value our regular gatherings of worship together because we need to be reminded, like the tassels, of the goodness of God, right?

This is why we celebrate the Lord's Supper because that's God's reminder in the new covenant of the thing that we most need to remember, which is Christ's sacrifice for us.

But it's also the daily practice of offering ourselves up to the Lord. It may be daily dying to our selfish and sinful desires. It may be daily seeking Him.

[25 : 41] It means daily thinking about what are the firstfruits, the firstfruits of our time, the firstfruits of our love, the firstfruits of our affection, the firstfruits of our money, small and large choices of putting God first in our lives in worship.

As God is instructing Himself to do this, He not only assures His people of this call, but He also does warn them, right? This is what we see in verses 22 through 31, or actually 22 through 36, right?

He has this whole section on unintentional and intentional sins. And we're like, what is this all about? Well, here's the thing. God cares. God doesn't just care are we externally performing properly, but God cares about our hearts.

What is our motivation as we do things, right? And one part is about the community. If someone in the community sins and the whole community is affected by it, how do we respond?

And then verses 27 through 29 is about an individual sin, one person who makes a mistake, right? And what we are reminded of is that all of these sins require atonement, but forgiveness is possible, right?

[26 : 59] That God knows that we may sin, but He's provided a way for us. But then the warning has a sting at the end, doesn't it?

Because in 30 and 31, He uses these words, but when there is intentional, high-handed sin, when we look God in, and if you're a parent, you've known it when your child has done this, when you look God in the face and say, I don't care what you think.

I don't want to do what you want me to do. I'm going to do it my way. That kind of high-handed sin, that kind of rebellion against God, that rejection of His sovereign, fatherly authority in our lives, asserting ourselves, we're going to do it our way, He says, this is a very, very serious thing.

He then goes on and tells an example about this man who went out and picked up sticks on the Sabbath. And we think, what is the big deal? In the Old Testament, keeping the Sabbath was such a clear command on how the people of God would be set apart, would be the wholehearted people who would worship Him alone by simply obeying the commands.

Don't do work on Sunday. For Him to go out and pick up sticks was saying, God, I don't really care what you think. I need fire today, and I'm going to go get sticks.

[28 : 36] Right? He simply wanted to do life His way. And maybe He wasn't consciously thinking, I'm going to just, you know, flip God the finger and go and do what I want.

Right? It may just be that He was thinking of Himself and not living a daily life of worship to God. But in doing so, it was an act of severe rebellion.

And in that moment, there was consequence. There was no repentance on behalf of the man.

There was no sign of recognition that he had done wrong.

No seeking the Lord. And there was judgment. And friends, I wonder, I wonder if we drift into high-handed sin far more often.

When we know that something's wrong, but we do it anyway. Or when we wonder if something's wrong, we don't want to know what God says, so we just ignore Him because I'd rather just not know than to know and maybe not get to do what I want.

[29 : 53] Maybe we look at God's Word and we just say, I don't like it. I don't like what that says.

And so we do our own thing. Set ourselves up as the ultimate decider of what is good and bad.

This is the spirit of intentional and high-handed sin and the consequences are great. The people are saying, how do we go forward? God says, this is the one thing.

If you do this, you will be cut off. Now, this probably sounds harsh. We're trying to mix this with what we just learned in Galatians for the last six months about the gracious God who saves us apart from any of our works and all of those things.

But we need to recognize, first and foremost, that this message is a reminder that sin against an infinitely holy and glorious and majestic God is infinitely horrible.

And it deserves a judgment that we just don't like and we want to avoid. We like to think of sins as slip-ups, as foibles, as oops.

[31 : 10] But it's not. It's rebellion. It's rejection. It's a heart to live independently from God. Now, some of you are now, particularly those of you with tender consciences, are thinking, oh no, that's me.

I'm outside the camp. I'm done for. There is nothing. There's nothing more for me. Friends, the reality is that the Bible as a whole tells us that the wages of sin is truly death and it is truly great and we need to reckon that and to own that.

But our individual sins, there is always a chance while you are living for repentance. Right?

And if you're sitting here and you're thinking, oh no, I sinned against God this morning because I didn't have my quiet time because I overslept, be of good cheer. The fact that you even think that thought means that God is at work in you and recognize it and repent of it.

Say, God, I don't want to do that. God, I want to honor you today. But then receive forgiveness from him. God, this high-handedness, I believe in the Bible is not a category.

[32 : 25] Which side of the line are you on and you sin once and you get on the bad side and then you confess your sin and you get back on the good side. It's about a trajectory. It's about which direction are we going.

Right? And when we're heading towards God, we may sin along the way and there's forgiveness for that and we pursue God. And when we don't, and as this continues, as the trajectory goes further and further, our hearts become more hardened, our trajectory becomes clear, and our high-handed sin increases.

So it's not about where are we right now, today, but it's about where are we headed and what is it that fills our hearts and our minds.

Right? So, when we're facing this sin, how do we think about it? Do we have a heart to repent of our sin or do we choose to justify or excuse or minimize it?

Do we have a heart to please God or is it to, ultimately, to please ourselves? Do we want to worship God and make Him the greatest treasure of our lives or do we make our own pleasures and our own treasures the things that we prioritize the most?

[33 : 42] Do we think about the honor of God in our everyday life or do we seek to honor ourselves and others and what they want us to honor?

we need to sit with this warning because it's real and we need to recognize that if you are under the mistaken idea that the Old Testament God is a fierce and judgmental and harsh God and the New Testament God is a God of mercy, recognize that that is just completely wrong because the God of the Old Testament is a God of justice and mercy and the God of the New Testament is a God of justice and mercy and we need to hear the warning.

Here's Hebrews 10, 26 and following. This was written to the church after Christ ascended into heaven. It says, For if we go on sinning deliberately after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sin but a fearful expectation of judgment and a fury of fire that will consume the adversaries.

anyone who has set aside the law of Moses dies without mercy on the evidence of two or three witnesses. How much worse punishment do you think will be deserved by the one who has trampled underfoot the Son of God and has profaned the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified and has outraged the Spirit of grace?

For we know him who said, Vengeance is mine, I will repay. And again, the Lord will judge his people. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.

[35 : 29] Friends, to move ahead as God's people is to recognize how bad sin is. To recognize that our sin is a trampling of the blood of Jesus Christ.

It is an ignoring of it. It is a rejecting of it. It is devaluing it. And friends, when we've broken faith with God, it is a serious matter.

But this passage reminds us that in that moment, while we still have breath, we can turn to him. Because this passage closes with a reaffirmation of God's redemptive purposes for his people in Christ.

There is still a way forward if you're like, I've sinned. That's where I am at. I'm living a life that rejects God. It is high-handed and I'm in a terrible place right now.

I want you to hear God's call and invitation. You are not done because you are here today listening to this message so you can respond to it. Respond in faith to the God who has rescued his people.

[36 : 37] When you're reading a narrative like Numbers, the very beginnings and the very ends of these chapters are often very important. If you have the Bible open, look with me at the very end of chapter 15.

What does he remind his people again? Verse 41. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt to be your God.

I am the Lord your God. Again, this is the promise. But it's specifically about the fact that God has redeemed his people.

Right? Remember the Exodus story. They were enslaved and oppressed by the Egyptian people and God worked with a mighty hand doing miraculous things through Moses.

Right? Including judgment on Egypt for its sin. Breaking their power so that his people might be free. And he delivered them from the army and he delivered them through the Red Sea.

[37 : 41] This is the God who delivered his people from Egypt. And friends, the good news of the gospel is that Jesus is a second and a greater Exodus story where God has redeemed his people not from human oppressors but from the oppression of sin and death that has been our lot since the very beginning, since Adam and Eve fell in the garden.

And Christ came and said, I will be a sacrifice for you. I will be cut off from the camp. You who sin heinously and high-handedly against me, I will take that sin upon myself and be counted among the transgressors.

And I will hang on the cross for you. I will be the sacrifice that is truly needed because by my blood, your sins are now atoned for.

By my death, justice is now satisfied. By my resurrection, there is now hope and life for you. This is why Christ came. To rescue sinners like you and me. To redeem us out of our former ways of life and to be his people.

[39 : 12] And so, friends, when we have blown it, and some of us here today feel that very poignantly this morning, that we've blown it yesterday, the day before, some of us may be thinking, I've blown it for years.

Some of you may be thinking, I've never done anything but blow it. God calls you to come to Christ, to remember what God has done for you, that he who is faithful and said, I will fulfill my promises, this is the way that he calls us to do it, by trusting in what Christ has done for us.

And so, the writer of Hebrews tells us this great good news. Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain that is through his flesh, and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure waters, let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful.

Friends, this is what God says to us when we've blown it that badly. He who promised is faithful. Look to the cross, be renewed, and follow him.

Let's pray. Lord, thank you for this word. Thank you for the richness of it. Lord, thank you that you reveal yourself, even in some of the most unlikely places.

[41 : 05] Lord, we pray that we would worship you this morning. I pray for those who may be feeling now a burden of conviction, Lord, or of guilt or shame.

Lord, I pray that by your spirit you would remind them that Jesus has borne their guilt and shame and that by repentance and faith, Lord, they, they can come to you with full assurance.

Know your embrace and be your people. I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.