

# Churches shaped by grace

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- [ 0 : 00 ] Perhaps you've turned with me to Romans chapter 12, and we're looking particularly at verses 3 to 13 this morning, which is all about true worship once again.
- True worship is what human beings were created for, but instead, through our rebellion, we have become anti-worshippers. Romans chapter 1 verse 25 is very clear.
- They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshipped and served the creature rather than the creator. And that's the heart of sin.
- Instead of being lovers of God, people became lovers of selves. But when that happens, the result is not the utopia that people like John Lennon imagined.
- With God out of the way. It's not at all, all of the people living life in peace. No, instead, it is what Romans chapter 1 describes. A world of envy, of strife, deceit, of slander, and murder.
- [ 1 : 12 ] The real world, as every one of us knows it truly to be. And the answer to this calamity lies not in the will or the ability of man, but only in the power of God, in his gospel of grace, which pours out mercy even upon creatures of such disobedience and sin.
- And God shows extraordinary love for us in that while we were still sinners, while we were enemies, he reconciled himself to us in the death of his son, says Paul in Romans chapter 5.
- And thus, true worship is restored. As we respond with all of our lives to his great mercy. And it begins, as we saw last time we looked at this in verses 1 and 2, with character shaped by the grace of God for the glory of God.
- The beginning of chapter 12 and the very end of chapter 13 are like brackets for this section, which is of a piece, it's all together. So Romans 12, 1 and 2 tells us that real worship, spiritual worship, is life lived with renewed minds.
- That is, as we're shaped by grace, transformed, so that we're no longer conformed to this evil age. And likewise, the end of chapter 13 tells us that we're being shaped for glory, for a salvation that is still coming, so that we walk now in the light, not any longer in the darkness.
- [ 2 : 41 ] But as ever, of course, Paul is eager to earth this exhortation in the reality, in real life, for the people he's talking to.
- And so immediately he fleshes this principle out in giving us what it actually looks like for Christian churches and also for Christian citizens, still living as we are in a fallen world, among the people of this world, and under the powers of this world.
- Now, we can't make an absolute division of the text, but it does seem that the meat, as it were, at the very centre of the sandwich in this section, 12 and 13, is the part that runs from verse 14 of chapter 12 to verse 7 of chapter 13, where Paul is dealing in that section with the Christian citizenship.
- But on either side of those verses, you'll see that there's a focus, isn't there, on the corporate life of the Christian community, that is, the church. And Paul says in those two sections on either side, basically two things.

In verses 3 to 13 of chapter 12, that we're looking at today, he tells us that genuine loving service of one another in the church, in Christ's body, is loving service to the Lord.

[ 3 : 59 ] And therefore it is real worship. And likewise, in chapter 13, verses 8 to 10, that we also read, and we'll look at next time, he says that giving loving service to one another in the church fulfills the law of the Lord.

Therefore it is the true worship that God desires. Well, we're going to focus today on verses 3 to 13 of chapter 12, where Paul is very clear indeed, real worship, he says, means church life, church life shaped by grace.

To truly serve Christ, in other words, Paul is saying, means to truly love and serve Christ's people. And therefore genuine loving service of one another in the Christian fellowship is the evidence that love and service of God in our own hearts is actually real and not phony.

That's what Jesus himself said very clearly. You remember Matthew chapter 25, it's very stark, isn't it? When he talks about the sheep and the goats. Truly I say to you, he says, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, that is fellow Christian disciples in the church, you did it to me.

Likewise, the absence of genuine love to Christ's own people, Jesus says, is evidence of absence of love, absence of real worship to God himself.

[ 5 : 31 ] And so it is here. The gospel that Paul has been unfolding all through this letter is very plain. The grace and mercy of God that unites us to Christ by faith also always unites us with one another in fellowship.

Whether we're Jew or Gentile or great or small, we are, says verse 5 of chapter 12, we are one body in Christ. We are members, parts of one another. That language is striking all the way through.

One another and each one. And therefore all true Christians will recognize that. And they'll think rightly and they'll act rightly towards one another in our life together in one body.

Our church life together will be shaped by grace. Not conformed to this world's ways and actions as if the church were just like any other human organization, like a golf club or a political party or a social club or anything else.

No, not conformed to that way of doing things, but transformed by the thinking of the spirit of the world to come. So then, how do renewed minds think and act in relation to real life in the real church?

[ 6 : 53 ] Well, says Paul, three words really sum it up. Sobriety, service, and sincerity. Interestingly, there's no mention of the other two S words that are so often talked about when we're thinking about worship, singing, or the sacraments.

No, says Paul, real worship is rather sober thinking about each other, selfless giving to each other, and sincere loving of each other.

And where a Christian fellowship exhibits these things, there is evidence of real worship, says Paul. A corporate life being shaped by the grace of God in Christ.

Invisible obedience of faith. So let's look at these things then as Paul unfolds his teaching, beginning at verses three to five, which is all about, Paul says, sober thinking.

Sober thinking about each other in the light of the common faith God has given to each one by his grace. And that will always mean, says Paul, not superiority, but sobriety in our assessments of one another.

[ 8 : 04 ] Now you see, the world's thinking, and especially this is so in our modern society, isn't it? The world's thinking is very individualistic. It's all about me. I'm at the centre. I'm number one.

That's what pervades our way of thinking in the world. Now whether it's highbrow thinking, like William Henley's poem, *Invictus*, I am the master of my fate, I am the captain of my soul.

Or whether it's the lowbrow thinking of popular advertising, because I'm worth it. The slogan that must have sold at least an ocean of shampoo over the years. But whether it's highbrow thinking or lowbrow thinking, it's all about me.

It's all about how to find myself, how to be myself, how to fulfil myself, how to express myself. Of course, that breeds a culture of great insecurity, doesn't it?

Because we're constantly comparing ourselves to others in terms of superiority and inferiority. Sometimes we're feeling proudly superior to other people if we feel better, but often we're feeling rather enviously inferior, aren't we?

[ 9 : 13 ] And that's a toxic mix in any group, in any society. Just think about the rivalry and the bitterness that we see in the political parties. Just think about the strained relationships that we all know go on in the workplace so commonly.

But by contrast, says Paul, the true worshipper thinks with sober thinking in his assessment about himself and of other people. Because it's no longer he or she who are at the centre of the world.

His thinking, his mind, says verse 2, has been renewed. It's been set on the right way up again. So we see everything instead with God at the centre and with ourselves and others in right relationship to that centre.

Sober thinking, proper thinking, sees ourself as just a part of God's picture. Just one of the many in his family. And only there at all because, as verse 3 says, God has assigned to us faith as he has to everybody else.

Now that's very humbling, isn't it? You're only here this morning because God has assigned faith to you just as he has to everybody else who's a Christian here. It's very humbling but it's also very reassuring, isn't it?

[ 10 : 31 ] Because we are part of God's family not by proving ourselves superior but by the grace given to us by God. the grace that alone can guarantee our acceptance by God forever.

So verse 3, you see, there can be no superior thinking, no thinking above ourselves, only sober thinking, not conformed at all to this world's idea. This world's thinking, you see, looks at gifts and abilities that we have and possess and values these things as if these things gave us merit.

And we assume, we tend to assume that that's right and good, don't we? Think of the word meritocracy, how the politicians today love to talk about that.

We want meritocracy. That means power and influence and value according to what people do and achieve for themselves. But that's not Christian thinking.

No, our value comes not from our gifts but from the giver of those gifts from God himself. So in verse 3, Paul speaks of his apostolic authority and he uses it there to command the church by his words.

[ 11 : 49 ] But notice, he says, this is by the grace given to me from God. And so it is for everybody else in the church to think of themselves, he says, according to the measure of faith, God has assigned or distributed to each one.

I said that our version misses out the each one there. But it's very important. The point is that what Paul is saying is that what each Christian believer has comes only through faith and it comes only from God.

And that's true whether you're a Jew or a Gentile, whether you're a great one or a small one, whether you're an old-time Christian or whether you're a complete newcomer. The scholars argue what this phrase the measure of faith means, but however it's taken, the point that Paul's making is that it's God who gives to each one.

It's from his grace. So verse 3, Paul speaks of the grace given to me and the faith assigned to each one. Verse 6, again, the grace given to each.

Now we're all merely receivers. That's what he's saying. So there can't be any superiority, can there? No matter how great our gifts might be, they've been given to us. Paul himself, when he writes to Timothy, says, I'm the chief of sinners, but grace overflowed for me.

[ 13 : 16 ] Perhaps the best way of understanding the measure of faith is not in terms of different quantities of faith, but a differing purpose of that faith in terms of enduring each one for their particular calling, to play their particular part within the body of Christ.

Paul speaks very similarly in 1 Corinthians 7, verse 17, where he says, let each person lead the life God has assigned to him. Same word. And to which God has called him.

God gives faith, you see, by grace, for salvation, but also for service. Gifts that differ, verse 6, according to the grace given to us.

It's an almost parallel phrase to verse 3, according to the measure of faith given to us. Paul often uses faith and grace interchangeably as shorthand for by grace through faith.

So what he's saying is this, true worship, the obedience of faith, thinks rightly about our status, it's by grace, and rightly about our service.

[ 14 : 22 ] Our gifts also come by grace. There's no distinction at all in status and value with God or with one another, whether we're Jew or Gentile or whoever we are, whether we're an apostle or any believer in the church at Rome.

Each has been shown the same grace by God our Heavenly Father. He's had mercy, says Paul, on every one of us. But each of us also, says Paul, has got a particular personal calling within the one body of Christ.

And so there are clear distinctions in our role, in our service. Look at verse 4. For he's saying, just as in any human body there are different members, different parts, and not all have the same function, ears and eyes and feet and hands and all that.

Well, so it is with us, he says. Verse 5, and that means two things. Though many, he says, we are one body in Christ, but also, he says, therefore, we are members, we are parts of one another.

You see what he's saying? You can't be a part of Jesus Christ without being a part of one another. Union with Christ by faith means union with one another in fellowship in the church.

[ 15 : 42 ] That's why St. Cyprian's famous adage is true. Extra ecclesia nulla salus. And for those who don't know Latin, there might be one or two of you, outside the church, there is no salvation.

Because we can't be our truest selves without each other. We are one body in Christ, says Paul. Or else, we're not in Christ at all. And likewise, we are parts of one another.

Or else, we have no part in Christ at all. And by the same token, we are to be ourselves, says Paul. We're to be content with the part that God has given us and made us for and given us to perform.

We're not to be covetous about somebody else's part. We're not to wish that we had their place or their gift. But we're to rejoice that as they serve God, they also serve us.

And likewise, we serve them. That's sober thinking. And unless you recognize that, Paul says, you're not actually worshipping God at all.

[ 16 : 51 ] It doesn't matter what you're doing. Unless you understand that, there's no evidence of the transformed mind that the gospel brings. You can't just say, well, you see, I don't like the church.

I don't like it at all. I don't need it. I feel I'm worshipping God by going up a mountain and enjoying God's creation. Well, that's as grotesque, Paul would say, as finding a severed foot halfway up Ben Lomond.

It's absolutely no use to anything. It's no use unless it's attached to a body. Nor can you say, well, I don't really like fellowship with others. I prefer to just come to church late and leave early.

I just listen and that's fine for me and sometimes I don't even need to come. I can listen on the internet today. No. Nor can you even say, well, look, I prefer to keep a distance.

I don't like involvement. I don't want to be meaningfully involved in fellowship and serving in the church. No, says Paul, that's not sober thinking. That's not Christian thinking.

[ 17 : 55 ] That's superior thinking. That's the world's thinking. That's not being in Christ at all in the sense of the New Testament means.

That's what salvation is. It's to be part of his body. All true consecration to Christ in heaven involves visible commitment to Christ's body here on earth.

The two are inseparable in the Bible. And that commitment is made visible and tangible in real service. In each part actually playing the part that God has given us to do, that God has assigned to each one by his grace.

And that's what verses 6 to 8 are all about. Selfless giving. Selfless giving to each other using the gifts that God has given each of us by his grace for the common good.

And that will mean not status, but service will mark all of our actions for one another in the church. Paul's concerned you see, not just that we be content with the calling, the portion that God's assigned to us.

[ 19 : 10 ] He wants us to be absolutely committed to it. Verse 6, having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, that is to each of us, let us use them, says Paul.

That's the main thrust of this whole section, using what God has given each one of us. God has given each of us a gift or gifts. and it must pass through us and be used for the whole body, selflessly for God's people, else we are not responding in worship.

God's gifts are not given to the church in order to separate us into different ranks, different classes of people in the church, laity and clergy and things like that.

Nonsense. No, each part is given its gift for a purpose, and that purpose is the common good. It's not about individual Christians gaining status, it's about every individual Christian giving service to everybody else.

And that's Paul's constant teaching when he teaches about spiritual gifts. Listen to what he says elsewhere. There are a variety of gifts, but the same spirit. There are varieties of service, but the same Lord.

[ 20 : 29 ] And there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. So each is given the manifestation of the spirit for the common good.

1 Corinthians 12 verses 4 to 7. The same Lord, the same giver, but varieties of service and activities, but all for the common good, for the whole body to which we belong.

And the focus there, as here, is just the same, not so much on the gifting, but on the giving, on the using of what God has given us and using it selflessly to serve the whole church.

Ephesians 4, exactly the same emphasis, building up the whole body as each part does its work, says Paul. And that giving, that actually using of our gifts properly is the key theme here in verses 6 to 8.

Let us use them, says Paul. It's not an exhaustive list he gives here of gifts, it's just illustrative. There are seven different things that are mentioned, each of which is necessary and vital in any church.

[ 21 : 37 ] And each must be put into service and done properly, not to gain status, but to serve. So verse 6, the one who prophesies, says Paul, who tells forth God's word.

Well, the one who does that, Paul says in 1 Corinthians 14, does it to upbuild, to encourage, and to console. Well, let him do that, says Paul. How greatly we need that week by week in our churches, don't we?

How tragic, by contrast, it is when the one speaking God's words begins to think that the flock are all there just to admire him, or to help him build a reputation for himself.

The hungry sheep start to be the ones feeding the shepherd instead of the other way around, very often feeding his ego. And Paul says whoever speaks God's words bears a weighty responsibility.

is easy prey for his own sinfulness, self-delusion. So he must exercise that role, says Paul, in proportion to faith.

[ 22 : 39 ] That is, I think, meaning recognizing that his gift and his responsibility comes only by God's grace, and can only therefore be exercised by humble faith, which is the only kind of true faith there is.

He mustn't go beyond the role that God has given him to feed the flock. To some, I think that he therefore has some special authority. No, the only authority comes from God's word, not from him.

It's important to remember that in this age that we live in of internet gurus and so on, people who are so easily pumped up in the Christian church by adulation of younger Christians.

Oh, so-and-so says this. Oh, so-and-so says that. Oh, so-and-so says this is the Bible version to use. Sometimes what so-and-so says seems to be more important than what God says. No, says Paul, only in proportion to faith.

At the same time, of course, he mustn't hold back what God has given him to do and what he must say for the edification of the church. Just as Paul said to Timothy, fan into flame the gift that God has given you.

[ 23 : 47 ] Don't hold back. Again, verse 7, if it's serving, then do it in serving. We serve so as truly to serve others, not to serve ourselves by feeling needed or by giving our own ego a boost.

If it's teaching, then in teaching so that people actually learn, not just that we get stimulation from doing it. Same with exhortation. In doing just that, applying God's word to people's lives, to encourage them, to help them develop and mature, not so as we gain some sort of control over them or become a manipulator of them.

In contributing with generosity or literally with simplicity or with single-mindedness. In other words, not with a double-minded motive. You're giving in order to gain influence, giving with strings attached.

How easy it is to do that. If leading, says Paul, well with zeal and diligence in order to serve the church, not to lord it over people.

In acts of mercy, well with cheerfulness. Our demeanor, when we help somebody in distress, somebody perhaps who's in a mess physically or through sickness or self-harm or something, our demeanor tells an awful lot about our motivation, doesn't it?

[ 25 : 07 ] Whether we're really serving others or whether we're serving ourselves by making ourselves feel pious in doing it or hoping that others might think we're pious because we do it. John Calvin says, we're not to spoil the service we offer by our morose attitude.

And to be cheerful means that we're giving, not getting, doesn't it? Somebody who's in need of mercy, who's in dire straits, they don't have a lot of cheer to give you, do they? They don't make you feel naturally cheerful.

But if you give mercy with cheerfulness, you're giving them cheer as well as your mercy. You're radiating sunshine, not sanctimoniousness. That's what he's saying.

You see how that's the dynamic all the way through this list. It's all about self-giving, not self-serving. Gifts are for using, for the church, not to make us feel superior or satisfied with ourselves.

And in using these gifts, we're simply doing what God has equipped each one of us to do, no more and no less. And as Jesus said, when we've done all that we've been commanded and equipped for, we've only done our duty.

[ 26 : 21 ] We don't deserve special praise. Selfless giving to one another, living out the measure of faith God has assigned to each one of us for the whole body. That's our simple duty as Christians.

actions. But we find it very hard, don't we, to think soberly in assessing ourselves and others, to give selflessly to others in our actions.

So often the truth is that we do these things because we need to be needed, or because we want to be noticed, to be seen doing something, or to be treated specially or adulated.

It's so easy, isn't it, in a church fellowship to see the part that God has given us, to see it as the whole and forget that we're serving a whole body. So easy, isn't it, to jealously guard our part, our special thing, because we want to possess it.

It could be the music, it could be my Bible study group, it could be our organization, or whatever it is. We often discover those things, don't we? Those attitudes in our heart when there's a need to change something for the sake of the whole fellowship.

[ 27 : 33 ] And often this fury exposes the truth, you see, that it's not been about serving, it's about having something for me, and having my needs met.

It's not been about selfless giving, it's been about selfish getting. It's so easy and so naturally, isn't it, to think like that, because that is the world's thinking. We think about status, not service.

Just the other week there, I had an example of this myself, I had some time between meetings one evening, and I wanted to find a room up in Bass Street to do a bit of work quietly. I couldn't find a room anywhere, because every single one was being used.

And I was rather grumpy. I thought to myself, I am the minister of this church, for goodness sake, and I'm the only one who can't find a place to sit and do some work. As I was feeling grumpy like that, somebody came out into the corridor with a big smile on their face, and said, isn't this great?

Every single bit of this building is being used for Bible study. And I thought, yes, that's right, isn't it?

[ 28 : 40 ] I am a minister, a servant, of the Word of God, and if that's happening in every room in this building, that is my work. It's not interfering with my work.

How easy it is to see the part, our part, and not the whole. Well, right actions spring from right attitudes.

And the key attitude of heart that will produce this sober thinking and this selfless giving is love. Sincere love. And that's why Paul goes on immediately in verse 9 to talk about that.

There should be no break in our text here. Sincere loving is what these verses are about. Sincere loving of each other, reflecting our love for God's love for God himself, who he has shown love to each one of us individually.

That means that we'll not have spurious love, but sincere love always, and that that will mark our attitudes to one another in the church. Striking here, isn't it, that in this chapter, just like after 1 Corinthians 12, where Paul's speaking about gifts, immediately he goes on to talk about love, the more excellent way.

[ 29 : 56 ] And just so here, verse 9, let love be genuine. We'll only be able to serve one another truly, says Paul, if we love one another sincerely.

Not notice, feel love for one another, but love one another, says Paul. Love is a verb, it's a doing word, it's an active word. Love is a cardinal manifestation of the obedience of faith.

Peter puts it almost identically in 1 Peter 1, having purified your souls by obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart, he says.

Loving is not just emotional, not just effective, certainly not sentimental. We've so devalued the language of love in our culture today that we think that way.

But it's never that in the Bible. Love is supremely moral, it's supremely ethical. Look at verse 9, love begins, says Paul, with loathing.

[ 31 : 01 ] Abhor what is evil. That means hate it violently and recoil from it. What's evil here means especially things that damage other people, that treat them wrongly.

My chapter 13 verse 10 says love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love rather holds fast tenaciously, says Paul, to what is good. It's the active determination to love tangibly by conducting ourselves rightly and not wrongly in God's eyes that shows that our love is sincere, not spurious.

See, sincere love can never ever say something like this, oh well, I know that she's married to somebody else, but I love her and she loves me, so it must be right.

Of course not. So, sincere love clings to the command that says you shall not commit adultery. Chapter 13 verse 9 makes that plain.

Sincere love abhors everything that God has said is wrong because it damages people. Murder, adultery, stealing, envy, many other things that we sometimes excuse as the loving thing to do.

[ 32 : 20 ] We mustn't allow ourselves to be seduced into thinking differently. Love must never be sentimental in the Christian church. Love must be sincere. Paul gives us examples of what that looks like in verses 10 and verses 13 and he shows us again how outward looking love is.

It's not what I feel, but it's what I actually do. Verse 10, it loves with brotherly affection. That is, he's saying in the Christian church we are true family and therefore we must love like true family.

Blood's thicker than water. And we love our family, don't we, even when they drive us mad. You can't choose your family. Sometimes they do drive us mad, but we love them because they're family.

Well, yes, even families sometimes have great rifts and there can be estrangement, but that's an extremis, isn't it? Even then, there's always a hope of family reconciliation.

And so it must be in the church family. There may be people, no, there will be people who infuriate you in the church family. Well, show brotherly affection, says Paul.

[ 33 : 35 ] I guess brothers do sometimes have punch-ups, don't they? But at least it's brotherly punch-ups. And there's a distinction. Verse 10, sincere love, says Paul, honors others.



It competes to do so, not competing to be honored and made a fuss-off for my gifts and my contribution. So sincere love doesn't get in the huff when nobody says to you, oh, how well you did in that particular thing, leading or teaching or cleaning or making food or whatever.

No, sincere love goes out of its way to say to others how much and how well somebody else has done. Verse 13, sincere love contributes to the real needs of needy people.

And it pursues, not just seeks to show, but pursues zealously, hospitality. Not entertaining, but hospitality. There's a difference. Entertaining is spending time with your kind of people.

Biblical hospitality is cheerfully and generously opening your heart and opening your home and opening your wallet to all kinds of people who you don't necessarily naturally find easy at all, but who need the love and the care that can only be found in a true Christian fellowship.

[ 34 : 49 ] And contributing to needs is more than just pious words, isn't it? Oh, you're in my prayers, brother. No, it's the real help that people sometimes need in tangible ways. Maybe it is emotional support.

Maybe it's your time and your presence to share with somebody around a hospital bed or in a hospice or in a home after a bereavement or simply being with somebody in a crisis.

But it may be real tangible financial help. John Wesley said to have written to one of his poor Methodist preachers a card in which he wrote this verse, Trust in the Lord and do good.

So shall you dwell in the land and be fed. But he also put in two five-pound notes, which was a great deal of money 200 years ago. He got a lovely letter back from that poor preacher who said this, Dear sir, I've often been struck by the beauty of that passage, but I've never before had such useful expository notes upon it.

That's solid and substantial and active, sincere love, isn't it? But that attitude of tangible love to others, friends, which is outward looking, will only be really sincere like that if there is behind it a real love that is upward and forward looking.

[ 36 : 16 ] A love for Christ himself and for his gospel. And that's what the heart of this little section gives us in verse 11 and verse 12.

Not sloth, but zealous love, says Paul, for the Lord himself. Serving the Lord. That's what it's all about. Nothing else. And verse 12, rejoicing in hope.

That is the hope of glory. That's where it's all going. That's what enables us to be patient in trouble, to be constant in prayer. That's what keeps us going. Looking up and looking forward.

That's what enables our love to be sincere and our service, to be selfless. In the church, we're serving the Lord. The Lord who so loved us. We lift up his eyes, our eyes to his grace and his mercy.

It's ever before us. And we look forward to the great hope of glory that is nearer now as Paul than when we first believed. And we're moved to worship him.

[ 37 : 20 ] To love him and to serve him with all our being. And when Jesus says to us, like he said to Peter on the shore, if you love me, feed my sheep, tend my lambs.

We say, yes, Lord, I will. When he says to all the disciples, if you love me, love one another. We say, yes, Lord, we will. If you love me, says Jesus, keep my commandments.

And this is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. And that, says Paul, is real worship. Church life really shaped by the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

A congregation of people sweetened by the humbling of grace and strengthened by the hope of glory to love and to serve one another in Christ's body. Knowing that this, above all, is how we show our fervency of spirit in serving the Lord himself.

So let me ask you this morning, are you really worshipping God? Is your worship real spiritual worship that serves the Lord Jesus Christ the way he wants you to serve him?

[ 38 : 38 ] Are we a worshipping church here in St. George's Tron? We have singing, we have the sacraments, we have sermons. But are we being marked by sober thinking, right thinking?

Or superior thinking about each other? We have a real commitment to one another as parts of each other by the grace that unites us in the Lord Jesus.

Do we? Are we selflessly giving ourselves in real service to one another, using faithfully all the time, the talents, the money that God has given us?

Are we doing that for the common good? Are we doing that for the common good? Are we doing that for the common good? Selfless giving? Are we sincerely loving one another, not spuriously, but with genuine, tenacious and tangible love, showing the bonds that are ours in Jesus Christ?

That is a worship from this church that will be well pleasing to God. May God help us to offer our lives as such a living sacrifice.

[ 39 : 46 ] Let's pray. We, though many, are one body in Christ and individually parts of one another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.

Let love be genuine. Lord, help us to truly love and serve you today and this week and indeed always in our thoughts and our words and our deeds about one another and with one another and for one another.

That we might glorify your name in this city. For Jesus' sake. Amen.