

What It Means to Worship at the Tron: Worship as Our Goal

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- [0 : 0 0] We are going to turn now to our Bibles and to our reading this evening. We're coming back to some very, well it ought to be familiar territory for many of us in recent months, back to the book of Hebrews.
- And I'm going to read this evening a little bit in chapter 10 and chapter 12. Not because we're coming back to Hebrews specifically, but we're beginning another new series this evening called From Couch to Crew.
- We spent a lot of time, probably too much time over the last six months on our couches, maybe stuck at home under lockdown and all the rest of it. And certainly as Christians, we don't want to be people who are on the couch. We don't want to be passengers in the Christian life or the Christian church.
- It's really important that we take up our calling to be part of the crew. That's what Jesus calls us to, crew on his lifeboat. And so we're going to be thinking about what it means to worship.
- That's the acronym that we are using in the church here to sum up the whole of our life, the whole of what it means to serve God here together. And so this week and next week, I want to be talking about what worship actually is, as far as the Bible is concerned, and what it isn't.
- [1 : 0 9] And then we're going to be looking at all the other things that make up that acronym, make up that wholesome life of serving the Lord here together. So this evening, I want to read a little bit in Hebrews chapter 10, beginning at verse 19.
- And then we'll read a few verses there and skip over to chapter 12 and verse 25. Hebrews 10 verse 19. Therefore, brothers, since we, that is we who live in this age of fulfillment, the last days, the new covenant in Christ, 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 priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.
- Let us hold fast or keep holding fast the confession of our hope without wavering. For he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near.
- Over to chapter 12 verse 25. Verse 25. See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, that is, in the ancient days when God spoke from Sinai and through the prophets, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven.

[2 : 54] At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, yet once more I will shake not only the earth, but also the heavens. This phrase, yet once more, indicates the removal of things that are shaken, that is, the things that have been made, in order that what cannot be shaken may remain.

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. And thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, well-pleasing worship, with reverence and awe.

For our God is a consuming fire. So let brotherly love continue. Don't neglect to show hospitality to strangers, for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

Remember those who are in prison, as though in prison with them, and those who are mistreated, since you also are in the body. Let marriage be held in honor among all, and let the marriage bed be undefiled, for God will judge the sexually immoral and the adulterous.

And keep your life free from love of money. Be content with what you have, for he has said, I will never leave you nor forsake you. And so we can confidently say, the Lord is my helper.

[4 : 12] I will not fear. What can man do to me? And remember your leaders, those who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life, and imitate their faith.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, and forever. Don't be led away by diverse, and strange teachings. For it's good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, not by foods, which haven't benefited those devoted to them.

Amen. May God bless to us his word. You might like to have your Bible open at Hebrews 12 and 13. We will get there eventually, but we've got quite a lot of work to do this evening, so wake up and put your thinking caps on, and be ready for some engagement.

On this whole topic of worship, Now, often there is controversy, quite a lot in churches today, over what people call worship. But the thing is, what we're often talking about, when we talk about worship, very often has nothing whatsoever to do with the Bible's concept of worship.

And what happens is, people go off in one direction, emphasizing something quite erroneous, and then others react against that emphasis, in a way that becomes often equally unhelpful.

[5 : 35] So you can make a healthy biblical corrective, but then go too far in the other direction. It's Martin Luther's drunk man on a galloping horse again. He falls off on the right-hand side, then he gets back on, and immediately falls off on the left-hand side, because he's leaning too far by compensation.

That seems to be the situation that we've got ourselves into, in this whole realm of worship. And what we find is, people missing the Bible's wholesome balance, and its emphasis on two directions, each of which is only part of the story.

So on the one hand, we have the very common idea, in many evangelical churches, particularly perhaps charismatic churches, that worship is merely what we're doing when we're gathering together. And very often, what they mean by that is just, the singing.

So we have a vast industry today of so-called worship music, music that will help you to worship. I saw one album that said on it, this will give you spine-tingling sensations of worship.

Wow. Because the artist, it said, had sent shivers down the spines of hundreds of thousands of people. Or I once had a letter from somebody saying, telling me about a conference they'd been at, and they said, yeah, there was some very good Bible teaching, and there was some great worship.

[6 : 53] What they meant was, they liked the band. And all the focus on that idea of worship, is on music, as leading us into God's presence, helping us to experience God's presence, and so on.

And so of course, that means that the worship leader, has great, great importance. And many of these folk nowadays, have sort of Christian rock star status. That's one idea, but that is a reductionist idea of worship.

But it's very common. It's very deficient. It's all about the event. It's all about the gathering. It's very little to do with the rest of life. And we're the ones who decide, whether worship is great, or whether it's poor.

However, that has very little, to do with the Bible's idea, of worship. And so in reaction to that, some others have unfortunately, gone in the opposite extreme.

And they've quite rightly pointed out, that the worship language, used in the New Testament, is tied, nearly always, to the whole of life. It's not talking about the assembly, the gathering of believers.

[8 : 00] Problem is that they say, want to make so much of that, that they almost want to say, that what's going on, when we're gathering together, like we are this evening, is not worship at all. That it's just merely, mutual edification, or teaching.

And they said, to call that worship, that's just to be, to be bound to the Old Testament, way of doing things. Not to the New Testament faith. And so you get an opposite extreme, that so emphasizes the fact, that worship is, the whole of life, which it is.

And it almost seems, that the one time, that you can be sure, in your whole life, you're not worshiping God, is when you gather together, and perhaps singing praise to God. Of course, that's equally, reductionist.

Is God not interested, in the communion, of his people, in that corporate gathering, that was such a central part, of the life of his people, all through the old ages? Now we're in the days of fulfillment, in the days of better things.

Is God no longer, interested in that? Is he only interested, in our works of service, that we do for him, during the week? Are our meetings, together like this, just purely horizontal affairs?

[9 : 10] Just training sessions, to prepare us, for the real worship, that will happen, Monday to Friday. And as we gather here, like this tonight, are we just, relating horizontally, only to one another, and not, consciously meeting, with the Lord himself, in a particularly special way?

Is there no sense, in which there's something, special going on, when we gather in Jesus name? Well I want to say, surely not, that can't be the case.

The problem is, you see theology by reaction, right to left, falling off the horse, is never very good. Whichever direction, you fall off the horse, it's still a fall. So we need to go back, to the Bible, back to the center, to get a balanced, biblical view, of all of this.

And when we do that, we find that there's truth, and error, in both of these extremes. Although not necessarily, in equal proportion. Next week, I want to look at, the specific issue, of corporate worship, our corporate gatherings.

And how there is, I believe, clearly an important, biblical, and a biblical New Testament, emphasis on that. Although we've got to be clear, what it is, and what it's not.

[10 : 19] But we do indeed, worship as we gather. Indeed, the corporate worship, of the church, is the essential gathering, for our ongoing renewal.

But tonight, I want us to tackle, the wider issue, of what worship is, in its wider sense, as far as the Bible's concerned. Worship, as our goal. And indeed, it is a matter, of the whole of life.

In fact, it is life, in all its fullness. The complete worship, of the Christian, is the ultimate goal, of our eternal, redemption.

So I want to think, in a few broad brush strokes, about the Bible's, big picture, of worship. The story of worship, in the Bible, from the beginning, to the end. The scope of worship. What we find, in the language of worship, in the Old Testament, and in the New Testament.

And then the shape, of that worship, in practical terms. Especially for, us as Christians today. So first of all then, the story of worship. Don Carson, once put it this way, the heart, of biblical religion, is God-centeredness.

[11 : 27] In short, it's worship. The heart, of biblical religion. Now that is, a big statement, but it's right, because worship, in the Bible, is the beginning, and the end, of everything.

And that's why, we've used the word, worship, as an acronym, to sum up, the whole of our church life, together here, at the Tron. Because worship, is the whole story, from the beginning, to the end. In the beginning, there was worship.

Read Genesis 1 and 2, you read, humanity, created in God's presence. Perfect covenant fellowship, perfect communion, of man and God. In right relationship, with God.

That's worship. That's how it should be. It's a situation, of perfection. Yet with all the potentiality, that God created for us. But in the end, of the Bible, you come to revelation, what do we see, in the vision?

The redeemed, will see his face, that will reign, with him. Man again, in right relationship, with God. That's a picture, of that covenant perfection, now in its consummation.

[12 : 33] And worship language, pervades the whole, of the book of Revelation. So the purpose, of creation, and recreation, is worship. Our very word, in English, worship, comes from a worth ship, and it speaks of that, right relationship, of worth, between God and man.

God has his place, of rightful worth, in our lives. And we have a, a right view, of our own place, in relation to him. Because he's our king, and our Lord, and we're his servants, his creatures.

But of course, what we call the fall, was a great rebellion, wasn't it? Against that. That right relationship, was turned upside down. As human beings, became their own rulers.

Wanting God, to serve them, instead of the other way around. And that's the heart of sin. Not God-centeredness, but self-centeredness. The self-preoccupation, of man, is the opposite, of true worship.

And so the whole story, of the Bible, between Genesis 1 and 2, and Revelation, is the story, of worship lost, and worship found. True worship, is abandoned, by mankind, in Adam, and his descendants.

[13 : 46] And true worship, is restored, in Christ, and for those, who are in Christ. And that's the story, of the Bible, in a nutshell. And where the first Adam, failed, transgressing, God's covenant, the last Adam, Paul says, triumphed, fulfilling, the new covenant forever.

Jesus, is supremely, the one who, as man, restores, right and true worship, of God. The right relationship, of man, to God, as his image bearer.

Perfect. You can see that, very well demonstrated, in Matthew chapter 4, in Jesus' wilderness experience, in his temptation. It's an exact, reversal, of the rebellion of Adam.

All of this, I will give you, said Satan to Jesus, if you will bow down, and worship me. Exactly what was said, to Adam. And Jesus said to him, away from me, Satan, because it's written, worship the Lord, your God, and serve him, only.

Now that's the heart, of true worship. Nothing to do with ceremonies. But it's an experience, of humble obedience. So in Hebrews 10, a little earlier, from where we read, it says this, when Christ came into the world, he said, sacrifices and offerings, you've not desired, but a body, you've prepared for me.

[15 : 09] Behold, I have come to do your will, O God, as it is written of me. That's true worship, restored, true God-centeredness, real worship of God, in man.

That's the goal, of God in creation, and the goal of God, in recreating us, through redemption. That's why John Piper, is spot on, when his book on mission, begins with this paragraph, missions, is not the ultimate goal, of the church.

Worship is. Missions exist, because worship doesn't. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions, fall on their faces, before the throne of God, missions, will be no more.

It's a temporary necessity. But worship, abides forever. See, the vision, that the Bible, causes us to long for, is that ultimate, perfection, of worship.

Christ, reigning with his people, in glory forever. And that's why, our vision statement, as a church, is focused on that, ultimate goal, of worship. We see the risen, Lord Jesus, crowded by people, from our city, and every nation, ransomed by his blood, raised by his spirit, through the gospel, and reigning, for eternity, with him, to the glory of God, the Father.

[16 : 39] So, whenever we think about, worship, that's above all, what we're to be thinking about. The complete, worship of the Christian, is the ultimate goal, of our eternal, redemption.

Now, once you see that, you see, it's very clear, isn't it, that worship, is not fundamentally, anything to do, with aesthetics. It's not about, the type of music you have, or the type of liturgy you have.

It's a spiritual matter. It's not about, mystical things, it's about morality, it's about, whom you serve, to whom do you, bow down. And that's where, we see the fundamental problem, for human beings.

Because sin has, inverted that right order, of worship. We've thrown off, God's yoke, haven't we? We've usurped, God's place. And so in fact, that means, it's absolutely impossible, for sinful humanity, to worship God, at all, in any meaningful sense, of that word.

Because even to begin, to worship God, in that true sense, requires something, absolutely decisive, to happen to us, and in us. To restore, that rightful order, that's been turned, upside down.

[17 : 50] Here's how, my father once put it, in a book of his. Until a man, is converted, which means, that his proud ego, is broken, and he takes his proper place, in relation to God.

He remains, the center of his world, and even God himself, is kept on the circumference. For God, to have his rightful place, means that we also, must take our rightful place.

And only then, is worship, in any true sense, a possibility. So the words, let us worship God, are best taken, as an invitation, to get right with God. To take our proper place, in relation to him.

To bow the knee, before him. Archbishop William Temple, once said this, to worship, is to quicken the conscience, by the holiness of God.

To feed the mind, with the truth of God. To purge the imagination, with the beauty of God. To open the heart, to the love of God. To devote the will, to the purpose of God. You see, giving oneself, in its totality, in our totality, to God, that, is worship.

[19 : 01] But that just demonstrates, doesn't it, that the magnitude, the sheer size, of the revolution, in our hearts, has to take place, before we can even begin, to worship God. God. And when we consider, how it is, that God brings, our conscience, our mind, our imagination, our heart, our will, into obedience to him.

It's then, that we begin to realize, what the real centralities are, in worship. Because it's only, by the word of the gospel, that that work of restoring, us to obedient worship, can take place.

It's the living word of God, that is the great, promoter of worship, and the great, great inspiration of worship. Only through the action, of the word of God, on us, and in us, can we be brought into, that right relationship, with God.

So worship can begin. And only by, our response, to that word, becoming greater, and fuller, can our worship deepen. Remember somebody, who started coming, to our church, many years ago.

Remember once, they said to me, I began attending the church, on such and such a date, but I began worshipping, three weeks later. What he meant was, he'd been converted, he'd bow the knee to Jesus, in those three weeks.

[20 : 19] You see, to worship truly, in a biblical sense, is to be transformed, into right relationship, with God, and to go on, being increasingly molded, and shaped, in that right relationship, as we engage with God, all throughout, our life.

And that's what mission is. It's the recreation, of that worship. Mission exists, because worship doesn't. But one day, it will, as it should do.

And that's the vision, that we long for. Christ reigning, with his people, in glory forever. forever. But until then, you see, the purpose, that we live for, is Christ, gathering those people, through the gospel today, back into worship.

From our city, from every nation, everyone that God, is calling back, to worship him, through the gospel. And that's why we say, that our purpose statement, is that we worship together, to make, and to grow, mature disciples, of Jesus Christ, in ever greater numbers, who with us, will glorify God, and enjoy him forever.

The great story, of God's redemption, the story of the whole Bible, is the story, of the whole cosmos, being restored, into that true state, of worship, through Christ, and in Christ.

[21 : 40] And we've got a part, to play, in that story. That's what the gospel, is all about. Nothing less than that. And Paul tells us, doesn't he, in Romans chapter 8, that that's what's happening, as the gospel, transforms men and women, so that they're conformed, into the image, of his son.

So that Christ, can be the firstborn, of many, many brothers and sisters, you and I. God is filling, his cosmos, with true worshipers. As the spirit of Jesus, the great worshiper, the true worshiper, is born in them, and changes them, from within.

That is God's, worship strategy, if I can put it that way. And that's the Bible story, of worship. The alpha, and the omega, the beginning, and the end. Worship lost, in Adam, and restored, in Jesus Christ, and imparted, to humankind, through the word, of the gospel of Christ.

So real worship, can't possibly be something, that we do, or achieve, by ourselves. It's all a response, to the restorative, and the transforming, power of God's grace, in us, through the word, of the gospel, as his spirit, applies it to our lives.

True worship begins, in response, to the word of God, and true worship, goes on, by response, to the word of God. So worship, is not just, an activity of life, it's an attitude of heart, it's the activity of life, it is life, it's the ultimate goal, of our creation.

[23 : 16] And according to the Bible, life, is worship. He said that the other week, Terry was speaking about that, last week. We're all worshiping, the question simply is, who are we worshiping?

And it's either, the one true God, or it's false gods, of our own imaginings. Paul tells us, doesn't he, in Romans 1, that sin means, that we've exchanged, the truth of God, for a lie, and we've started, worshiping creatures, created things, not the creator.

And so true worship, requires transformation, by God's grace. It's never something, that we can initiate, that we can work up. It's always a response, to the power of God, in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That's the story of worship, ruined by man, but restored by God, in and through the man, Jesus Christ. Second then, let's think about, the scope of worship.

In the way that the Bible, both Old Testament, and New Testament, speaks about worship. And what's very clear, as you look through the Bible, is that the language of worship, makes plain, that worship, in the Bible, was always understood, to be about, the whole of life.

[24 : 30] Life lived, under the kingship, of God. I've said, the story is about, the recreation of worship, through the redemption. And that's the story, of the whole Bible, from the beginning, to the end.

And the division in the Bible, is not between the Old Testament, and the New Testament. We often say this, the division in the Bible, is between, Genesis 2, and everything that comes afterwards.

After the fall, after the great rebellion, and it's great restoration. And it's important, because, sometimes when people, want to emphasize, when they want to talk about, the New Testament language, of worship, when they want to say, it's all tied, to the whole of life, and it's not tied, to meetings.

They want to emphasize, as though to say, that in the Old Testament, it was different. And it wasn't about, the whole of life. It was all about, sacrifices and temples, and so on. And they want to say, well no, we're New Testament Christians, and everything's different.

But that is a very, inadequate way, to look at this. Now we are, Bible Christians. It's one story, in the Bible, right from the very beginning, to the very end.

[25 : 36] Of course there are differences, now that Jesus has come. But essentially, there is great continuity. Continuity, of the people of God, right from the very beginning. The Bible's one story, it's not two stories.

There's one people of God, not two peoples of God. So yes, indeed, we do have the great privilege, of living in these days, of climax, of fulfillment. But as Sinclair Ferguson puts it, we have not a better salvation, but we have the same salvation, better.

Now we mustn't think, of the Old Testament, as just all about, empty ceremonies. That's something, that becomes real, only in the New Testament. That is not true. Far from it.

Right from the very start, of the Bible, you can see that, worship of God, was all about, a whole way of life. And that's why, the apostles constantly, point us back, for examples, for our lives, to the Old Testament saints.

We saw that, all the way through Hebrews, didn't we? Hebrews 11, especially. And you can see, that worship was, about the whole of life, right back at the beginning, when God called Israel, out of Egypt, and gave them, the Ten Commandments, at Sinai.

[26 : 47] First of all, God reveals himself, to them, as their great redeemer, their gracious savior. And that is why, he says, I alone, must be your covenant, Lord and ruler.

And he commands him, the first commandment, to worship none other, than him, as the true God. And then the Ten Commandments, and all the exposition, that follows there, in Exodus, is about how they're, to live their whole lives, in worship, in service, to this one Lord.

Same thing in Deuteronomy, we saw that, didn't we? When we studied that book. It's all about, what lives, of living worship, are to be like. It's just exactly, what Paul is speaking about, in Romans 12, where he talks about, presenting your bodies, as a living sacrifice.

That is, your spiritual worship. That's your reasonable service, he says. And that same emphasis, can be seen, in the terminology, that the Bible uses, all the way through, for worship.

Let me just give you, some of the common words. The most common word, all through the Bible, for worship, is a word that means, to bow down, to kneel, to bow low, to fall at somebody's feet. And it implies, submission, it implies, homage.

[27 : 57] That's what worship is. So for example, in Genesis 18, when the three angels, come unknown, to Abraham, he bows down, before them. Or Psalm 95, that we so often read, come let us, bow down in worship, let us kneel, before the Lord our maker.

The whole point, is that physical posture, reflects the, the true attitude, of heart, of homage. In the New Testament, it's used most, for people's response, to Jesus Christ.

Matthew chapter 14, the disciples, worship Jesus. They fall down, before him, after he stills the storm. John chapter 9, when Jesus heals, the blind man, he says, Lord I believe, and he worships him.

Paul speaks, in 1 Corinthians 14, about a complete outsider, coming into church, hearing the words of God, and falling down, in worship. And of course, in Revelation, all through, we have all heaven, falling down, bowing down, before the lamb.

It includes adoration, it includes praise, but above everything, it includes, and means submission, to the Lord, and the king. Next most common word, is the word serve, or minister to.

[29 : 16] In the Old Testament, the Hebrew word, can mean serving a person, but in the Greek translation, of the Old Testament, it's used exclusively, of serving God. So in Exodus, when Moses says, to Pharaoh, we're taking the people out, we're taking them out, to worship, to serve God.

And it included, all the things, the ceremonies, the Passover, and all of those things, but clearly, it indicated, overwhelmingly, a whole life, of service. So God says, in Deuteronomy 10, O Israel, what does the Lord your God, ask of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve, the Lord your God, with all your heart, and all your soul.

Observing his commands. That's worship, serving God, in glad and faithful obedience. Strikingly similar, isn't it, to Paul, in Romans 12, present your bodies, as a living sacrifice, which is your, spiritual service.

And in the New Testament, actually, the language is used repeatedly, of the new way, of serving God, through Jesus Christ. So in Romans 1, Paul says, he is serving God, as he preaches the gospel of Jesus.

Paul says in Philippians 3, that we, the true circumcision, we worship, who glory in Jesus. In Hebrews 9, we're told that we serve, the living God, through Christ's sacrifice.

[30 : 41] We serve, we worship God, through Jesus. Then his words, they're usually translated, about priestly service. It's the word, that we get our word, liturgy from.

And in the Old Testament, it was used, of specific service, in the temple, by the priests, and the Levites, and so on. Service that's given, directly to God. But in the New Testament, we find that word, being transformed, and used of all believers.

In Acts 13, the church, were gathered together, worshipping. They were, in congregational prayer together. In Romans 15, Paul talks about, his priestly duty, his priestly service, being, proclaiming the gospel.

And the noun, the word, liturgos, it's used in Hebrews 8, of Jesus, as the great, worship leader. By the way, Jesus is the only, true worship leader, there is, in the New Testament church.

But it's also used, by the way, of sacrificial giving, to others, in terms of giving money, for others needs. Paul uses that word, in 2 Corinthians 9, and throughout Philippians, where he's talking about giving.

[31 : 46] What he's saying is that, serving others, in that direct way, is a means of direct, priestly worship, of sacrifice to God. Such things, he says, are a fragrant offering, a sacrifice, acceptable, and pleasing to God.

Just like the sweet, savor offerings, in the temple. And then finally, there's fearing God, and showing reverence, for him.

And that entails, again, keeping his commands, walking in his ways, obeying his voice, revering, the one who speaks. At Sinai, God said to Moses, oh, that the people's hearts, would be inclined to fear me, and keep my commands, always.

Next chapter 10, Peter says to Cornelius, that God accepts men, from every nation, who fear him, and do what's right, bowing down to Jesus.

So throughout the whole Bible, we could sum up, the real scope, of true worship, in these words, from the scholar, David Peterson.

[32 : 50] Faithfulness, and obedience, to the covenant demands, of God, in every sphere of life, were the distinguishing, marks, of true religion, true worship.

Let's be very clear, from the Old Testament, to the New Testament, the change is not, from empty, outward ceremonies, to inward heart reality. No, no, no. That inward, life worship, total life worship, was there all the way through.

And in that sense, nothing has changed. The saints of old, were just like us, and we're just like them. That's what Hebrews 11, is saying.

They had sinful hearts, they constantly drifted back, from God's call of grace, just as we do, just as the people, the Hebrews writer, was writing to. And God had to keep, calling them back, into repentance.

And through his forgiveness, and through his acceptance, restoring them again, and again, into fellowship with him. Bringing them back, into true worship. And we couldn't survive either, any other way, could we?

[33 : 59] That's why, one of my favorite old hymns, is that one, I need thee, every hour, most gracious Lord. And the chorus, I need thee, oh I need thee, every hour, I need thee.

Bless me now, my Savior, that I come to thee. And we need Christ, don't we, to come to us, again and again, in forgiving grace, and in words of power, to enable us, just as the believers, of the Old Testament did.

That's not changed. We need, the constant renewal, of his Holy Spirit. But of course, what has changed, is how, we come to Christ, and how, we receive, the restoring grace, and mercy, that we need day by day.

How it is, that he imparts, that power to us, so that we can worship him. And it's still, through the word of God, that his spirit, calls us back to faithfulness, back into right relationship, with him.

Still through the word of God, that he guides us onward, as it has always been. But of course, for us now, it's not just the words, of the prophets, but the fulfillment, of the prophets, and the words of the gospel, and the commands of Christ, and all his apostles.

[35 : 13] We don't have less, we have far, far more, of the renewing word, of God's power. And what a blessing that is. We don't have to go, to see some prophet, in a land far away, to inquire of the Lord.

We have God's final word, in the scriptures, in our hands. But unlike, the people of God, who could only, access God, nearly, through the priests, and through the offerings, and the sacrifices, that they did, on the people's behalf, we have the wonderful privilege, of direct access, to God himself.

Of course, Old Testament believers, received real forgiveness, from God. Of course, they enjoyed, real fellowship with God. Of course, they received, real spiritual power, from Christ, the only mediator, there has ever been.

But they received it, only through the apparatus, of the priesthood, only through the sacrifices, of the temples, the words of the prophets. And what we have, is something, far more wonderful.

Because of Christ's, finished work, all of that, complicated religious apparatus, is now removed, it's done away with, forever. And Jesus is near to us, through his spirit, and we can go right, to him.

[36 : 30] We don't need a temple anymore, because he is our temple. He is the place, where we meet God, directly. We don't need, worship leaders anymore, to bring us, into God's presence, because we always have, free access, to his presence, through his spirit, who's within us.

And the whole book of Hebrews, remember, was written, to show us, just how much more, wonderfully privileged, we are, as inheritors, of the new covenant, in Jesus Christ. We still need a priest, of course, we still need, sacrifice for sin, to approach God.

But in Jesus, we have one, who is a priest forever, who's offered his sacrifice, once and for all, and who therefore, intercedes for us, and is powerful, to help us, all the time.

He's able to save, to the uttermost, those who draw near, to God through him. He always lives, to make intercession, for us. So what does it mean, for us, to worship?

Well the answer, we draw near to God, through our great, high priest, Jesus Christ, our worship leader. That's what we read, here in Hebrews chapter 10. Since we have, a great high priest, over the house of God, let us draw near, with a full heart, in full assurance of faith.

[37 : 48] And he goes on, let's hold fast, our confession, let's stir one another up, to love and good works. See he's saying, we draw near, we go in, if you like, into intimate fellowship, with our Savior and Lord.

And having done that, we go out, as it were, with strengthening, and enabling, to hold fast, without wavering, in lives, a worshipful response, to God.

That is the goal, of our true worship, both now, and forever. Well how does that look then, in the nitty gritty of life, for us today, as Christians, living in this gospel age, of fulfillment?

I want to think about that, briefly as we come, to a close. The shape, of our true worship. Hebrews 12 there, have a look at that, it's exceptionally clear, isn't it? What he's saying there, is the extraordinary privilege, that we have, of being believers, at the end, of the age.

It says in verse 18, that we've not just come, to the magnificence of Sinai, and it was magnificent. But he's saying, that we have already, gathered directly, around the throne, of Jesus, amid the throng of heaven.

[38 : 54] It's an extraordinary privilege. You have come, to Mount Zion, verse 22, the city, of the living God. But what he's telling us, is that huge privilege, gives us, huge responsibilities.

He's saying, that the stakes, are far, far higher for us, just because of the, great privilege we have. We're listening, not just, to the voice, that once shook the earth, but we're listening, to the voice, that shakes the very heavens, he says.

So how should that make us, think about our worship? Well look at verse 28, it's very clear. Not frivolously. Not casually.

Now we're to worship, he says, we're to serve God, with reverence and awe, because our God, is a consuming fire. And notice this, it's not just, is it, a right attitude, of reverence and awe, when we gather together, to hear God's word.

That's implied, I think. But it's much more, isn't it? It's a deadly, serious attitude, as we work, all of this out, in our daily lives, of worship.

[40 : 03] Because that's what he goes, right on to speak about, in chapter 13. There's no chapter break, in the original, in the original letter. He's talking here, about what that worship, looks like.

Of course, I've already said, and Paul's going to come back, to this in a couple of weeks, when we look at the first W, in our worship acronym, witness. Of course, the Great Commission, gives the church, its absolute first priority, of living worship, gospel mission.

We worship, as we live for witness, as we live, with Christ, gathering his people, today. But there's more, to worship, than just evangelism, in the New Testament.

real worship, is a right relationship, to God, in everything. And what's plain, right here, in chapter 13 of Hebrews, is the word to express, with due reverence, and diligence, all of that, in right relationships, within the church.

First one, let brotherly love, continue. Let it persevere. That's the real worship, of the church. So as we close, let's just be reminded, of the shape, of this fullest sense, of the corporate worship, of the church.

[41 : 14] The fellowship, of brotherly love, in Christ. And it's so down to earth, isn't it? First, verse two, worship means, right relationships, to strangers. Real worship, means giving a generous welcome.

Not just to our corporate home, our church buildings, but to our family homes. Such an encouragement, isn't it? When people open their homes, to one another. Well, Christian homes, are to be open homes, he says.

And Jesus is much more interested, in that kind of worship, than whether you can actually, sing well, or play an instrument, to praise him. Second, verse three, worship means, right relationships, to the mistreated, and those who are suffering, for the gospel.

It's implication, those in prison. Well, think about, what we hear, from the Barnabas Fund, from Release International, and other things. Do we care about that? Do we care about that, with our wallets?

He says to us, you've got bodies as well, you can suffer too, you're to suffer solidarity, with these believers, it's so important. Remember what Jesus said, whoever's doing it, to the least of these, my brothers, is doing it to me.

[42 : 21] Worship means, having a right relationship, to mistreated, Christian brothers. Thirdly, verse four, worship means, a right relationship, in marriage. marriage. That's an expression, of worship, that Jesus wants from us.

Part of our love, for all the fellowship, of brothers, is that we honor, our own marriages, and that we encourage, others in their marriages. There's a huge potential, isn't there, to discourage, others, everyone, if we're careless, in our own marriage.

But a huge, encouragement, to so many, when there are, godly, Christian marriages, to be witnessed to. Notice he says, it's to be held in honor, by all. So what he's saying is, whether you're married, or not, everybody has a stake, in marriages, being honored.

And so forth, there's a right relationship, in true worship, to sex itself. That's the second half, of verse four. Part of our worship of God, is guarding our sexual purity, and guarding that, of our brothers and sisters.

And it's such an encouragement, such a help, to one another, when we do. And equally, it's devastating, when we don't. And it's anti-worship, it's anti-God, it's anti-love, it hurts others terribly.

[43 : 37] One of the saddest things, in my life in ministry, is having seen, how some have wrecked, their Christian ministry, through adultery. And wrecked the lives, and ministries, and faith of so many others.

That's terrible consequences. And it happens, to Christian people, happens to Christian leaders, but we're all human. The apostle is saying, your sex life, is a big part of your worship.

It needs reverence, and awe, whether you're in a sexual relationship, or not. Verse five, equally, worship means, a right relationship, to our possessions. When did you last, lead your bank account, in a joyful worship session?

See, he's saying, it's not just about us, it affects everybody. It's a huge encouragement, isn't it? When everybody gives generously, to the gospel work, for the Lord's sake. But it's equally desperately sad, when the love of money, does pierce somebody's soul, and greed, takes them over.

It doesn't just affect that person, it affects others. Worship means, a right relationship, to our possessions. And verse seven, real worship means, a right relationship, to leaders, and to authority, in the church.

[44 : 49] Part of our worship, is that we're rightfully, thankful to God, for those who have taught us, and that we show that, by our loyalty, to their teaching, and to their way of life. One of the saddest things, you hear in the Christian church, is when somebody says, oh yes, I owe such a lot, to so and so, when they're mentioning, some solid, godly Bible teacher.

But then they go on to say, oh but of course, I've moved on, and matured now. And Jesus says, no don't move on, that's not maturity. Follow on, those who have taught you the truth.

And verse 17, is a verse to take seriously too. It's very easy sometimes, for some of us to think, that we can worship God, and yet be very out of sorts, in our hearts, with the leaders, that God has appointed, in the church.

They're never going to be perfect, let me tell you that, I am one. But Jesus says, we have to be joyful, we have not to be grudging, not to be groaning, in our attitude, it's part of our worship.

And finally, see verses 9 to 14, we won't go into it, but he's talking there, about worship, meaning right relationship, to the scorn, and the reproach, of the world, for the sake, of the truth, of the gospel.

[46 : 04] People often take, verse 15 here, in relation to singing, offering up a sacrifice, of praise to God. But look what's really being said. What is that sacrifice, of praise? Well, it's the fruitful confession, in the lives, of people, whose lips, acknowledge Christ, especially, when that acknowledgement, of Christ, leads them into suffering.

Verse 13, it's the witness, of those who go to him, and stand with him, outside the camp, bearing his reproach, because, their hearts, beat with the glory, of the eternal city, not, with the fleeting pleasures, of this world.

It's a sweet smelling, savor of a life, that rises up, to the Lord, totally committed, to Jesus, committed to his kingdom, no matter what, opprobrium is heaped on it, in this world.

People are unashamed, amid the insults, of this world, uncluttered, by the pleasures, of this world, unflinching, in making Christ, known in this world. That is real worship, says the risen Lord, Jesus Christ, whose word, thunders from heaven.

That's the worship, I want, corporately, from my church. That's the worship, I want from every one of you, my brothers and sisters. You see the shape, of true Christian worship.

[47 : 28] It's a life lived, isn't it, in the shape, of the one true worshiper. the Lord Jesus himself. It's shaped by his love, for his many brothers.

Shaped by his love, for the world. And shaped by the cross, on which he suffered, for the world. That's the complete worship, that's the ultimate goal, of our redemption.

It's what he's shaping us for now, today, and every day. Until one day, we will be shaped, truly and completely, like him, forever.

So friends, in our own lives, and in our life together, as a fellowship of Christ's people, here, in the Tron Church, let's be helping, one another, to offer to God, acceptable, truly pleasing worship, with reverence and awe, as he commands us, and as he desires of us.

Then we'll be, a truly worshipping people, to the praise, of his glorious grace. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank and praise you, that in our Lord Jesus Christ, we see, the true worshipper, restored, reclaimed, and now reigning in heaven, as man for us.

[49 : 03] How we marvel, Lord, that in him, we see our future, that you are calling us to, and that one day, we shall be like him. So help us, Lord, this day, and tomorrow, and every day of this week, to remember our calling, to remember the goal, of your call upon our lives, through Jesus Christ, and to live, in him, for him, and with him, more and more, as we heed your word, and as we allow, your spirit, more and more, to write that word, upon our hearts.

Hear us and help us, and help us to help, one another, we pray, for Jesus' sake. Amen.