

YHWH or the Highway

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[0 : 00] But this evening we are going to be back in the book of Leviticus. You might like to pick your Bible up and turn there now. We're going to read in Leviticus chapter 9 towards the end. Stephen Ballingall will be preaching to us again this evening.

He's been leading us very ably through some of these chapters which are full of all kinds of things which are quite unfamiliar to us. But Stephen's been showing us, helped lead us right to the very heart of the Christian faith and full of importance for us.

So we're going to be reading most of chapter 10 but beginning at chapter 9 and verse 22. Leviticus 9 then and verse 22.

Then Aaron lifted up his hands towards the people and blessed them. And he came down from offering the sin offering and the burnt offering and the peace offerings.

And Moses and Aaron went into the tent of meeting and when they came out they blessed the people. And the glory of the Lord appeared to all the people. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed the burnt offering.

[1 : 17] And the pieces of fat on the altar. And when all the people saw it they shouted and they fell on their faces. Now Nadab and Abihu the sons of Aaron each took a censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it.

And offered unauthorized fire before the Lord which he had not commanded them. And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them.

And they died before the Lord. And then Moses said to Aaron, This is what the Lord has said. Among those who are near me I will be sanctified.

And before all the people I will be glorified. And Aaron held his peace. And Moses called Mishael and Elzaphan, the sons of Uziel, the uncle of Aaron.

And he said to them, Come near, carry your brothers away from the front of the sanctuary and out of the camp. So they came near and carried them in their coats out of the camp as Moses had said.

[2 : 25] And Moses said to Aaron and to Eliezer and Ithamar, his sons, Don't let the hair of your heads hang loose.

And don't tear your clothes lest you die. And wrath come upon all the congregation. But let your brothers, the whole house of Israel, Bewail the burning that the Lord has kindled.

And do not go outside the entrance of the tent of meeting lest you die. For the anointing oil of the Lord is upon you. And they did according to the word of Moses.

And the Lord spoke to Aaron saying, Drink no wine or strong drink, you or your sons with you. When you go into the tent of meeting lest you die. It shall be a statute forever throughout your generations.

You are to distinguish between the holy and the common. And between the unclean and the clean. And you are to teach the people of Israel all the statutes that the Lord has spoken to them by Moses.

[3 : 33] Moses spoke to Aaron and to Eliezer and Ithamar, his surviving sons. Take the grain offering that's left of the Lord's food offerings and eat it unleavened beside the altar for it's most holy.

You shall eat it in a holy place. Because it's your due and your son's due from the Lord's food offerings. For so I am commanded. But the breast that is waved and the thigh that's contributed. You shall eat in a clean place. You and your sons and your daughters with you. For they are given as your due and your sons. From the sacrifices of the peace offerings of the people of Israel. The thigh that is contributed. And the breast that is waved. They shall bring with the food offerings of the fat pieces to wave. For a wave offering before the Lord. And it shall be yours and your sons

with you as a due forever as the Lord has commanded.

Now Moses diligently inquired about the goat of the sin offering. And behold, it was burned up. And he was angry with Eliezer and Ithamar, the surviving sons of Aaron.

[4 : 42] Saying, why have you not eaten the sin offering in the place of the sanctuary? Since it is a thing most holy and has been given to you that you may bear the iniquity of the congregation to make atonement for them before the Lord.

Behold, its blood was not brought into the inner part of the sanctuary. You certainly ought to have eaten it in the sanctuary as I commanded. Aaron said to Moses, Behold, today they have offered their sin offering and their burnt offerings before the Lord.

And yet such things as these have happened to me. If I had eaten the sin offering today, would the Lord have approved? And when Moses heard that, he approved.

Amen. May God bless to us this, his word. Solemn as it is. And may he teach us what he wants us to understand from it.

Good evening all. Please keep your Bibles open at Leviticus 9 and 10 as we go through this passage together. Entering a nuclear reactor is no easy task, to put it lightly.

[6 : 05] It's one of the greatest sources of power known to man. But because of that power, it can be absolutely fatal. It is life or death when you're approaching a nuclear reactor.

So entering one isn't something to be taken lightly. For one person to enter into the reactor, they will have studied for years. They'll know the protocols inside out like the back of their hand.

And when it comes to the day itself of entering the reactor, it takes a team of about 15 people, nearly one whole hour, to prepare one person to go inside for a short time.

They've got to wear specially designed protective overalls, radiation masks to breathe through. And all the while, they carry their little Geiger counters, clicking away, reminding them of how much danger they're in if even one step in the process goes wrong.

It's a very dangerous business coming this close to something of such great power. So why on earth would you want to do it? Well, in our current times, it's quite easy to see, isn't it?

[7 : 18] When our energy supplies appear threatened, we understand why they do it, why we need it so much. They take on this difficult and dangerous work of approaching the reactor so that life will continue and flourish.

So that we'll have heat in our homes through the winter. So the lights won't go out. So hospitals will have a steady flow of power as they seek to preserve life. Going near something like that, as dangerous as it is, is worth it for the benefit it brings.

It's worth the danger of drawing near. And this evening, as we come to Leviticus, we see the presence of God dwelling in his tabernacle, his embassy on earth.

And he is like a nuclear reactor. We saw that in the reading, didn't we? A consuming fire that comes out and engulfs two men. Which is terrifying.

We're not meant to read this and have no emotional reaction to it at all. This really is God. And this really is how he feels about sinful humans being in his presence.

[8 : 32] Because he is a God who is holy, who is just, and who cannot dwell in the presence of sin. Which presents us with one great big problem.

Because we are a sinful people. Who desperately need the life that he promises to give those who draw near in faith.

So how can a people like us live with a God like that? In many ways, that's the big question that Leviticus keeps on asking. How can a holy God who hates sin live with and bring salvation to his sinful people?

And this evening, we get part of the answer. That God provides a way. In his grace, the Lord God, in all his holiness, provides a way for sinful people like us to draw near and receive his salvation.

Which you can only get in his presence. Because his salvation isn't some legal proceeding outside of him. It's not something he can send away to people like a message or a package.

[9 : 48] No, salvation is not something that you can separate from his presence. Instead, he is our salvation. And it's only found in drawing near to him.

And receiving by faith the righteousness which he provides. That's why we so desperately need to draw near to him. And this event teaches us that the Lord's presence is not something that we may treat casually.

In the same way you don't treat a nuclear reactor casually. If you walk in on your shorts and t-shirt without a care in the world. And try to carve out your own way of approaching it. Your own interpretation of the rules.

Well, you're dead within minutes. But the Lord in his grace provides a way. He opens up a way for us to draw near and receive him.

That's what we're going to be seeing tonight as we consider these events together. And we're going to be covering a lot of ground tonight. And that's so that we can look at the whole story. And get the grand sweep of what's happening.

[11:00] Because while chapters 8 and 9 are important in their own right. As they validate the priesthood set up by the Lord. The way they are recorded is done so to show just how out of step and out of tune chapter 10 is.

With everything that preceded it. It's like an orchestra has started playing a beautiful piece of music in chapters 8 and 9. With all the different layers of musicians slowly added in.

Building towards a magnificent crescendo. When suddenly in chapter 10. One of the violinists goes rogue. And starts singing their favorite football chant mid-concert. No offense violinists.

It's that out of tune with everything that's preceded it. And what follows after. So we'll try to take the broad sweep of chapters 8 and 9 firstly as a whole. Where we see the presence of the Lord treated rightly.

That's our first point. The presence of the Lord treated rightly. And here we see how difficult it is. For sinful people to be in the presence of God.

[12:05] We spent some time going through the first five offerings in the book. And for all of these offerings to happen. Israel needed priests. For every single offering. They needed a people set apart specifically for this task.

Their worship depended on it. So God provided a way. He set aside one group of people in Israel called the Levites. Whose whole lives were to be dedicated to this task.

To mediate between God and his people. If you flick back a page and look at chapter 8. You'll see the beginning of the ordination of priests. It only involves one family.

But this is front page nationwide news. Verse 3 of chapter 8. All the congregation are assembled to see this happen. And given that Israel was at least.

At the very least. Several hundred thousand people at this time. This was no small deal. This is not so much like a family having a dinner for someone getting a new job.

[13:05] But more like the President of the United States being sworn in for their duty. I'm sure you'll have seen pictures from inaugurations of the past. You usually get a superb bird's eye view of the crowds from the top of the Washington Monument.

Looking all the way along to the Capitol building where the President's being sworn in. And the amount of people there is just staggering. As hundreds of thousands of people are lined up one after one. To see their President be sworn in.

And of course they're not getting sworn in themselves. But their representative is. That's what the President is. Their representative. And that's why all the Israelites turned up to this.

Because each of them had a personal stake in this. If they were ever going to offer a sacrifice to the Lord. In the hope of being atoned for. Of being at one with him.

Of being reconciled with God. Then they had to follow the way that God provided. And do it through the priests. So everyone is gathered around to watch this.

[14:05] To see their representatives sworn in. And set apart for this essential work that they were doing. Chapter 8 tells the rest of the story of their ordination. And we'll cover it quick fire.

So in verses 5 to 13. The priest and tabernacle are set apart for the work to be done. Then in verses 14 to 29. They're to present three offerings.

Firstly verses 14 to 17. A sin offering. As they put their sin to death. And repent towards the Lord. Because even though they're set apart and holy. They're still sinful people.

In verses 18 to 21. A burnt offering. Showing their devotion to the Lord. And in verses 22 to 29 of chapter 8. They have an ordination offering.

Which is quite unique. And it's used to set the priests apart for their calling. That's what the strange details in verse 23 and 24 are all about. Smearing blood on the ear, thumb and toe.

[15:06] They were being set apart in their hearing. In their doing. And their walking. So words, actions and directions. From their head to their toe.

This wasn't a nine to five job for them. They couldn't suddenly up sticks. Put their notice in. And seek a new career path. But this was a calling. So everything in their lives. Was being dedicated to the Lord. In this work. Then verse 30 to 36. The priests are anointed with oil. Poured over each of them. Drenching them. Almost like a protective layer. On top of their clothes. As they were to enter the tabernacle. And they were told to stand for seven days straight. In the tabernacle course. To complete their ordination. A seven day process for making something new. As the Lord made a way. [16:02] To live together. And through all of this. They followed all of the Lord's commands. Obediently following each step diligently. That's the beat of the drum. Through the whole chapter. You can see that pop up at the end of every paragraph.

In chapter eight. And that continues in chapter nine. Where we have the high priest. Aaron. Preparing the people for. End of nine verse four. Today the Lord will appear to you. The Lord will appear to you. He will come. And dwell among you. And that propels the narrative onwards. And that's what the focus is on for the rest of the story. The arrival of the Lord among his people.

So Aaron prepares by cleansing himself. And atoning for his own sin. Which is really quite a poignant moment in the story. If you look at chapter nine. Verse eight. Aaron draws near to the altar. And kills the calf. Of the sin offering. Which was for himself. So to atone for his sin.

[17:08] Aaron quite fittingly offers a calf. This is the only time that the calf is mentioned in the whole book of Leviticus. And it's only been mentioned in one chapter in the Bible before.

It's a piercing reminder of Aaron's own sin. As he not long before this ordination ceremony. Fashioned a golden calf.

With his own hands. And led Israel in idolatrous worship of it. It's piercing for him. But also a great reminder of the Lord's redemption.

That even for a sinner like Aaron. The Lord would provide a way. For him to draw near to his presence. And then that's when we come.

To the Lord's arrival. Which happens. In verses 22 to 24 of chapter nine. And now the way that this story is written. Along with the first half of chapter 10.

[18:04] Helps us see that there's a parallel between these two events here. There are two scenes which mirror each other. One at the end of chapter nine and one at the start of chapter 10. They both follow a similar pattern.

Which groups them together. And it helps us see how difficult and dangerous a thing it is to draw near to the living God. In both of these sections there are two people approaching.

Reaction from the Lord. And then response from the people. So Aaron and Moses go into the tabernacle. Verse 22. To offer sin, burn and peace offerings to the Lord.

And then they come out to bless the people. That they may see the Lord. And after those offerings and that blessing. Verse 23. The glory of the Lord appeared to all the people.

Which is the high point of Leviticus so far. Because all of these offerings and sacrifices the people were to take part in. Were so that the Lord would dwell among them.

[19:09] So that they could draw near to him. And enjoy him. Encounter him. Meet with him. Because what happens in verse 23 is what our worship is all about after all.

The Lord appeared to the people. He came down in fire and they knew that he was present among them. That's always the goal of worship. Both then and now. That we would have God's presence among us.

As we gather together on his day. As his people. In his name. The Lord was living. With his sinful. Unclean people.

And he did so on the basis that they approached him in the way he provided. They worshipped him as he desired. And trusted in the means of faith which he gave them through these animal sacrifices.

And the presence of the Lord then emerges from within the tabernacle itself. Verse 24. Consuming the burnt offering and the pieces of fat that were on the altar. And that shows that he is accepting Moses and Aaron's substitute.

[20 : 17] He is happy to place his judgment of their sin on the animal which they have offered in faith. Rather than the guilty party. And how do the people respond?

End of verse 24. When all the people saw it. They shouted. And fell on their faces. Which is the language of worship.

Worship. They respond in worship. And adoration. Not long ago they'd been in Egypt. Surrounded by foreign idols. And a pharaoh who thought he was God. But now they had.

The Lord their God. The only God. The living God. The holy God. Living among them. In the midst of them. And they could draw near to him in worship.

Go right up to his front door. It's the right response to the Lord's presence being revealed to them. They shout out in this mixture of fear and praise.

[21 : 13] And worship him. Because while he is among them. He is still the nuclear reactor. As much as they are blessed by him. They don't want to fall into the trap of treating him casually.

Of presuming on his kindness. Like he's just their mate. Or their friend. An acquaintance. That couldn't be further from the truth. He's the holy God.

The one who comes down to dwell in fire. And so he is to be treated. With reverence. And awe. That is the God who came to dwell among his people.

And this huge ordination ceremony for the priests. All of their preparation and careful attention. To the commands God gave them. Finally paid off. God was meeting with his people.

He provided a way for them to draw near. And they were blessed by his saving presence. And there's then a chilling turn in the passage.

[22 : 20] Where we see secondly. The presence of the Lord treated lightly. In verses 1 to 7 of chapter 10. And we see here how dangerous it is.

For sinful people. To be in the presence of God. And so here the high point of chapter 9. Comes crashing down. It crashes and burns very quickly.

Because we see a mirror image of the Lord. Appearing in chapter 9. But in a scenario where everything goes wrong. The two people who enter. Are Aaron's eldest sons.

Nadab and Abihu. They're sons of the high priest. And Nadab was first in line. To inherit the role of being high priest for God's people. So they knew very well.

What they'd been commanded to do. Each of these men took their censers. They're kind of like large bowls. With coals inside them. Meant to carry fire or incense. And they carried these censers into the tent of meeting.

[23 : 20] And offered unauthorized. Or your footnotes might say strange. Fire before the Lord. And we don't know exactly what this strange fire that they offered was.

It could have been that they got fire from the wrong place. Or that they were a part of the tabernacle. They weren't meant to be. It could have been that they were drunk. But while we don't know exactly what this sin was.

The text tells us enough. We learn in verse 1. That they had offered strange fire before the Lord. Which he had not commanded them.

Whatever it was they were doing. The key detail we need to remember. Is that the Lord had not commanded them to do it. The language isn't accidental. This wasn't an honest mistake.

But this was disobedience. They were knowingly breaking a direct command from the Lord. He provided a way to draw near to himself. And they went their own way.

[24 : 20] And it's a complete contrast to the priests in chapters 8 and 9. Who repeatedly did everything according to the Lord's command. Moses stressed that point again and again.

As he records what happened. He says that they did as the Lord commanded him. Twelve times. In chapters 8 and 9. It's the beat of the drum.

Through that whole narrative. So whatever Nadab and Abihu did. It was out of step. And out of tune. With everything that preceded it. And it was directly against.

What they knew. The Lord had commanded them not to do. Let's see the Lord's reaction. Verse 2. Fire came out from before the Lord.

And consumed them. And they died before the Lord. The Lord consumed them.

[25 : 20] It's really odd language to use. How could the Lord have consumed them? And why would he do such a thing? Well the parallel with the events before.

Help us to understand what's going on here. In chapter 9 verse 24. We're told that the fire of the Lord. Consumes. Moses and Aaron's offering. Exact same words in the Hebrew.

Which tie these two events together. Very tightly. He was consuming the offering. As a substitute for their sin. Placing his judgment they deserved. On the animal they'd offered in their place. But in this instance. The Lord isn't consuming the animal. But the priests themselves. They had disobeyed God's commands. So they paid the price.

For their own sin. And then verse 4. Aaron's cousins are instructed to take the bodies. Away from the tent of meeting. And outside the camp.

[26 : 16] Far away. From the people who God was drawing near to. Nadab and Abihu received death. And banishment from the camp.

And this is the consistent punishment for sin. Displayed throughout the whole Bible. I think that our deliberate nods towards Eden. And the creation account.

In this whole narrative. In the sweep of this story. Millie referenced that this morning. Didn't he? How the garden mirrored the tabernacle. And Adam was given priestly work to do. To work and guard the garden.

There's a huge amount of imagery. That evokes Eden in the tabernacle. And here we're given a seven day ordination process. Where the high point is seen when the Lord appears.

Almost like as Leviticus 26 says. He's walking among them. Walking in the garden with his people. Enjoying their fellowship. At the end of chapter 9. They enjoy it for some time.

[27 : 15] But. We know what happens next. Two people go into God's place. Do what the Lord had not commanded. And are given death.

And banishment. It mirrors Eden. And it's what we're promised. If we refuse to bow the knee. And repent towards God in this life. Death.

And being outside of his saving presence. After we're judged. It's the consistent punishment for sin. Displayed throughout the whole Bible. We just see it brought forward here.

And the Lord's comment in verse 3. Helps us see why this punishment was right and fair. Verse 3. Among those who are near me. I will be sanctified.

And before all the people. I will be glorified. And this is key. Because there the Lord is explaining why he had to act in the way he did.

[28 : 17] The two halves of that statement correspond to each other. There's a link between the priest treating God as sanctified or holy. And all the people glorifying him. And the point he's making is really simple.

If those with closest access to him don't treat him as holy. Then how will the rest of Israel treat him? If the priest treated him casually. That would spread out into the whole community.

They wouldn't be a people who glorify God. But instead bring shame to his name. And crucially.

They would not receive his salvation. Which is only found in drawing near to his presence.

As difficult. As dangerous. And as deadly. As that can be for sinful people. God is completely unique. And holy.

Utterly unlike us in so many ways. So he was to be treated as he is. Particularly by his priests. And Aaron knew that.

[29 : 20] That's why in his response to the Lord's comment. Aaron end of verse 3. Holds his peace. He's silent. He's got nothing to say.

No complaint. His sons have just died. But he's still speechless. Because he knows that God's actions were right and fair. And in verse 6.

He's told not to publicly mourn the death of his sons. All of Israel. Is allowed to mourn this. And commanded to mourn this. But Aaron and his sons weren't to do so publicly.

But the Lord wasn't being cruel here. He wasn't kicking a man when he's down. The Lord was protecting him and the rest of the priests. Lest they die.

They were still in the process of ordination. So they had their anointing oil. And priestly clothes. On which. Which were designed to set them apart. As clean before the Lord. As able to enter his presence.

[30 : 21] So if they. Did the usual things they would do in their culture. To express grief. Like tear their clothes. Or make their hair ragged. And remove the oil. Then they would have been subject to the same fate.

As Nadab and Abangu. Being consumed by the Lord. So he wasn't punishing Aaron and the priests. But was protecting them. And the passage ends in verse 7.

On a somber. But encouraging note. The sons have died. They have been banished from the camp. And Israel has mourned this dark day.

However the passage ends with this. Verse 7. And they did. According to the word. Of Moses. Normal service resumes.

The Lord provided a way for his sinful people. To draw near. And they recommitted themselves. To following his ways. They can go on treating him. As sanctified.

[31 : 24] So that he is glorified. Before all the people. Well let's take some time. To consider two. Implications for us.

That this story makes. That focus. On how we enter. Into God's presence. And how we encounter him. During it. So firstly.

Entering. God's presence. And the first half of our passage. Reminded us of just how. Difficult it is to enter God's presence. All the various purifications.

Offerings. Ordination rites. All the careful ways. In which they were to approach the Lord. Stress just how. Difficult it was. For humans. To draw near. To a holy God. And our takeaway point from that. Is not that God is unreasonable. That his bar is too high. That he's unrealistic. But that we are so. Sinful. Our sin. Offends God so much.

[32 : 20] And he is so holy. That he has to provide. A difficult way. For us to know him. To enter into his presence. And for Israel. The way to enter.

And draw near to him. Was found in the priesthood. Only through them. Through this clean. Holy people. Could they have a representative. Go into God's presence.

On their behalf. And come out alive. And for us today. The way in which we approach the Lord. Is only through Christ. Christ. He is our great high priest.

Whose name is love. Whoever lives. And pleads for us. And he has fulfilled. And he continues to do. The work of being our high priest.

Entering into the most holy place. The throne room of heaven. Not the earthly copy. But the real thing in heaven. He's in there. On our behalf. With our name on his hands.

[33 : 17] And in his heart. He is the only way. We may draw near to the Lord today. As Jesus said. No one.

Comes to the father. Except through. Me. See. It's about. Drawing near. Coming to the father. And Jesus is the only way.

Of us doing that. Trusting in his blood. Is the way. In which we approach the Lord. God. And because of that blood. As Hebrews 10 says. Since we have confidence.

To enter the holy places. By the blood of Jesus. Let us. Draw near. With a true heart. In full. Assurance.

Of faith. Which is wonderful. Isn't it? This God. Who is rightfully angry. At our sin. Who rightly wishes. To judge us. For our sin. We may approach him.

[34 : 15] Confidently. With the full. Assurance. Of faith. Thanks to Christ's. Perfect sacrifice. That's why. In Christ's blood.

The Lord. Who is this. Nuclear reactor. And consuming. Fire. Which is so. Dangerous. For sinful people. Doesn't tell us. To back off. And keep a safe distance.

But rather. Invites. And commands us. To draw. Near to him. In worship. To draw near to him. And then. He will draw near.

To us. That's the great privilege. Of being a Christian. Real. Engagement. And nearness. With the holy God.

God. And that we meet him. Not only. As a consuming fire. But also. As a caring father. Who gives us life.

[35 : 09] In his son. Not through some. Abstract. External. Legal proceeding. But through. Him. Himself. As John 14. Puts it. Through father.

Son. And Holy Spirit. Making their home. With us. In our hearts. And saving us. By their presence. Salvation. Salvation.

Lies. In. The Lord. Himself. And in his presence. So we must keep on. Drawing near to him. In the way he has provided. Which is Christ.

And Christ alone. And flowing out from that. Secondly. Let's consider. Encountering. God's presence. Christ is the only way.

For us to enter into the Lord's presence. To be able to. Enjoy the salvation. That comes through knowing him. But while we are in his presence. Encountering.

[36 : 04] Meeting him. As we are right now. The Lord does not want us to treat him. Casually. Because we need to be clear.

That Christ's blood. Doesn't mean that he has come and dealt with the consuming fire nature of God. And that everyone can relax about God's holiness now. This is not fear in the Old Testament. And joy in the New One. Instead. It is reverent awe. Right through the whole timeline. Being cleansed by Christ's blood.

Is not an excuse for us to be. Casual. Or presumptuous towards the Lord. Isn't that the lesson Nadab and Abihu learned the hard way? That despite the blood sacrifices.

They couldn't just encounter God in whatever way they saw fit. Casually. But we are to approach the Lord as he desires. As he wants us to.

[37 : 01] As he invites us to. And this raises some implications for us. As we gather. Sunday by Sunday. In our church services. Our worship.

Meetings. Because this. This meeting right now. Is the place. Where we meet. With the Lord on earth. Where we encounter him.

And draw near to him. In worship. This place. This room right now. Is the closest you're ever going to get. To heaven. On earth. As the Lord presences himself. Among us.

Right now. Hebrews 12. Makes that clear. When it's speaking specifically. About the Sunday gathering. When God meets with his people. The author of Hebrews says.

Let us offer to God. Acceptable. Worship. With reverence. And awe. For. Our God.

[37 : 57] Is. A consuming. Fire. Not was. Is. A consuming fire. Because he hasn't had a personality change.

He still cares about holiness. He still cares about sin. And he. Cannot dwell in his presence. You see. Our God is both. A caring father.

And a consuming fire. And that's where his glory is seen. He is the God. We draw near. In faith. We draw near. We draw near. In faith. In faith. In faith. In faith. In faith. In faith.

In faith. In faith. Confident. In Christ's sacrifice. We as Christians today. Have far greater privileges. Than even the priests.

Who went into the tabernacle. And joined. And that also means. That we have far greater responsibility. Not to treat the Lord's presence. Casually.

[38 : 55] We should be approaching. This gathering. Our gatherings. On the Lord's day. With reverence. And awe. As we are commanded to.

And I don't want to be overly prescriptive here. Damage can be done when churches are dogmatic and unkind about the specific practicalities of worship. But it's very much worth us considering. Does the way we treat the Sunday gathering. As we draw near to him. Reflect. The God we meet here. Are we.

The kingdom of priests that we are. As one Peter says. Are we treating God as. Sanctified. So that he. Is glorified. Does the way we approach church.

Reflect the fact that we are gathered to meet our caring father and consuming fire. Or. Is the way we arrive to meet God. Showing that we are.

[39 : 57] Casual. About him. That we make a habit of regularly turning up. Late. Not treating his meeting as a priority. Not even giving him the same respect that you give your job.

Would never turn up late there. Does the way we sing. Reflect the God we worship. Or are we casual. Not singing much for certain songs.

Because. Well the tunes not to my taste. Don't really like that one. Does the way we share. In the communal prayers. Show that we are part of the family conversation.

With our holy God. And his people. Or are we casual. And disengaged. Clock watching. Until we can all say amen.

Amen. Does the way we listen to his word preached. Hearing him speak. As Christ speaks to us. Show that we want him to be glorified.

[40 : 58] Or are we constantly putting ourselves. Above. His word. Considering whether it's. Entertaining enough for us. What does the way.

We treat. God's gathering. Say. About what we think of him. They are deeply connected things. For this is the Lord's meeting.

And it's his presence. We're drawing near to. We are drawing near to our creator God. Our caring father. And our consuming fire. And as we draw near. We must remember. That he. Is the object. Of worship. He. Is why we gather. So does the manner. In which we encounter him. In worship. Show that we treat him. As. Sanctified. So that he may be. Glorified. Not treating him.

[41 : 58] Casually. Like he's just a mate. Or an acquaintance. Not making our own way. But treating him. As he is. As holy.

Sanctified. Where there is none. Like. Him. So let us as a church. Delight. In drawing near. To our savior God. For that is where our salvation is found. In him. In drawing near. In drawing near. To our savior.

And let us treat his presence. Highly. With reverence and awe. For he is. The God. Of glory. Our consuming fire.

Let's pray. Our father God. We thank you. That you make your presence.

[42 : 59] Your home. With us. That you bless us. Not with mere gifts. But with yourself. With your presence.

Among us. We thank you. That in Christ. We may approach. And draw near to you. Help us not to approach you. Casually. But with reverence.

And awe. For you are our holy God. Give us hearts. That treat you as sanctified. So that you may be glorified.

Before all. And we ask this. In the name of our great. High priest. Jesus. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.