

Picture Perfect Worship

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- [0 : 0 0] We're now going to turn to our Bible reading. We've had a last-minute change of plan. It's not going to be Nathan preaching on James this morning, Bible spread around at the front, the sides at the back.
- Do grab one. And if you're using one of those, I believe it will be on page 386, 387. So 2 Chronicles chapter 35.
- And we'll begin reading at verse 1. Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord in Jerusalem, and they slaughtered the Passover lamb on the 14th day of the first month.
- He appointed the priests to their offices and encouraged them in the service of the house of the Lord. And he said to the Levites, who taught all Israel and who were holy to the Lord, put the holy ark in the house that Solomon, the son of David, king of Israel, built.
- You need not carry it in on your shoulders. Now, serve the Lord your God and his people Israel. Prepare yourselves according to your father's houses by your divisions, as prescribed in the writing of David, king of Israel, and the document of Solomon, his son.
- [1 : 4 2] And stand in the holy place according to the groupings of the father's houses of your brothers, the lay people, and according to the division of the Levites by father's household. And slaughter the Passover lamb, and consecrate yourselves, and prepare for your brothers to do according to the word of the Lord by Moses.
- Then Josiah contributed to the lay people, as Passover offerings for all who are present, lambs and young goats from the flock to the number of 30,000, and 3,000 bulls.
- These were from the king's possessions. And his officials contributed willingly to the people, to the priests and to the Levites. Helkiah, Zechariah, and Jehiel, the chief officers of the house of God, gave to the priests for the Passover offerings 2,600 Passover lambs and 300 bulls.
- Kunaniah also, and Shemaiah, and Nethanel, his brothers, and Hashabiah, and Jael, and Jehoshabad, the chiefs of the Levites, gave to the Levites for the Passover offerings 5,000 lambs and young goats and 500 bulls.
- When the service had been prepared for, the priests stood in their place, and the Levites in their divisions according to the king's command. And they slaughtered the Passover lamb, and the priests through blood that they'd received from them while the Levites flayed the sacrifices.
- [3 : 1 3] And they set aside the burnt offerings that they might distribute them according to the groupings of the father's houses of the lay people to offer to the Lord, as it is written in the book of Moses.
- And so they did with the bulls. And they roasted the Passover lamb with fire according to the rule, and they boiled the holy offerings in pots and cauldrons and in pans, and carried them quickly to all the lay people.
- And afterwards, they prepared for themselves and for the priests, because the priests, the sons of Aaron, were offering the burnt offerings and the fat parts until night. So the Levites prepared for themselves and for the priests, the sons of Aaron.

The singers, the sons of Asaph, were in their place according to the command of David, and Asaph, and Haman, and Judithin, the king's seer, and the gatekeepers were at each gate. They did not need to depart from their service, for their brothers, the Levites, prepared for them.

So, all the service of the Lord was prepared that day to keep the Passover and to offer burnt offerings on the altar of the Lord according to the command of King Josiah.

[4 : 23] And the people of Israel who were present kept the Passover at that time and the feast of unleavened bread seven days. No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet.

None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah and the priests and the Levites and all Judah and Israel who were present.

And the inhabitants of Jerusalem. In the 18th year of the reign of Josiah, this Passover was kept. Amen.

This is God's word. Well, do you open once again in your Bibles to 2 Chronicles, chapter 35.

A picture paints a thousand words. When trying to change or to communicate something, there is great power in a vision or a picture showing what things could look like or showing the difference that a change will make is important to bring up people along with you.

[5 : 41] And when you paint the picture, when you show people the possibilities, you want it to inspire. You want to show how great it can be. So it's been in the news recently that there are plans to build a new stadium from Manchester United.

And the model that's put out is designed to excite, to be audacious. Look at how wonderful it can be. It just wouldn't enthuse people if the early vision isn't daring and grand.

Who knows what will come to pass with that. But a bold picture can inspire, can help you to see beyond the current state of affairs. Or in another way, still with sport, if you're coaching someone to help with their tennis stroke or their golf swing, you don't show them an average model to aspire to.

You want them to see the ideal swing, the best forehand, what it looks like for the body to be in the perfect position, again, to give them something to aspire to.

And that is what the chronicler is doing in this passage that we're looking at this morning. He wants his readers to have worship as their priority.

[6 : 54] The chronicler was writing to the people who'd returned from exile. Same people that we've been seeing in Ezra and Nehemiah. They were back in the land of promise.

And so things were looking up after exile, but all was not well. The challenge for the people who returned to the land was to reestablish the critical pillars of life that were part and parcel of belonging to the Lord.

And central to life as God's people is wholehearted, joyful worship of God. And so we see in all the books that are written to the remnant who've returned this same kind of focus.

the last three prophets of the Old Testament, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi, and Inezra, and Nehemiah as well. These are the things that are focused on rebuilding the temple, reforming worship, and rebuilding Jerusalem to what it once was.

And so the chronicler writing to these same people is trying to inspire the people towards what life as God's people is really like. He's picturing for them through their own history, through the great King Josiah.

[8 : 08] He's picturing what life as God's people ought to be prioritizing and shaped by and shaped around. And so as we approach the celebration of Passover that we have in this passage, it comes off the back of the significant rediscovery of the book that happens in the previous chapter.

So look back to chapter 34, verse 14. Josiah, as a good king, had set about repairing the temple. And as it was being repaired, we read verse 14 that Hilkiah, the priest, found the book of the law of the Lord given through Moses.

And then verse 19, when it's made its way to Josiah and it's read to him, he realizes how significant this discovery is and he tears his clothes.

He knew it was a monumental discovery but that it was going to be a terrible exposure for the people. He stands for a prophetic word and it confirms this.

For here was the precious word of God that had been buried in the temple, long forgotten and thus long overlooked. But because Josiah is a good king, he doesn't scorn God's word.

[9 : 23] God's word is opened to him, brought to him and he responds in faith. Look at chapter 34 verse 31, he seeks to renew covenant. He renews covenant committing to walk after the Lord and keep his commandments and his testimonies and his statutes with all his heart and all his soul to perform the words of the covenant that were written in this book.

And then notice he also wanted this for all the people in Jerusalem and Benjamin as well. Josiah had found again the book of the law, the book of the covenant, most likely Deuteronomy or the Pentateuch.

It had been lost, buried away, deep inside the temple, untouched for years, forgotten about and this discovery led him to recommit the life of Judah, a nation that had disastrously ignored God's word.

It led him to recommit to the great covenant that God had made with his people. Josiah is in awe of God's word. It's gripped him and it's at work in him and so he responds to God.

And so here in chapter 35, Josiah is put before God's people as a great king. He's a model for believers. And the climax of his example in Chronicles is the celebration of this Passover.

[10 : 47] And this is not just any Passover. This is not average Jews serve or golf swing that's being modeled for the people. No, this is the greatest Passover that is celebrated by God's people under any of the kings.

This is picture perfect worship. Look at verse 1. It begins with a summary that tells us that the Passover was celebrated.

But then from verses 2 to 15, there's a step back in time where we see the preparations put in place for being able to celebrate it. And then look at verses 16 to 19.

They carry on straight from verse 1 as a further summary of what happened. And they tell us about how significant this Passover was. Look at verse 18.

No Passover like it had been kept in Israel since the days of Samuel the prophet. None of the kings of Israel had kept such a Passover as was kept by Josiah.

[11 : 50] And indeed, it was kept by all the people. So this is the crowning example of what true worship looks like. This is picture perfect in order to shape and inspire God's people on how to live as his people.

And the chronicler tells us three things about the preparation and celebration of this great Passover that take us to the very heart of true worship. But notice, before we look at the three points, notice that this Passover happens, verse 19, in the 18th year.

It's the same year as the discovery of the book back in chapter 34. And so the chronicler wants us to be a new doubt that God's spirit-given words working in his people is what drives true worship.

so that this celebration is not a hollow, outward, ritualistic thing, but instead is celebrated as real-life worship that flows from God's voice speaking to the heart of his king and to his people.

True worship comes from God's people gladly receiving his gospel word. And with that said, we see firstly then that true worship is careful, verses 2 to 6.

[13 : 14] True worship is careful. God's people truly worship God as they obediently carry out what God has revealed to them.

Worship is not an experience that we choose around what suits us best. It's not primarily about how it feels for us. Worship is our response to all that God has declared and all that God has done.

And it's obvious even on a relational level, isn't it, that our response to a wonderful gift that is given to us or a response to the wonderful outpouring of love by someone to us is shaped by what the giver will appreciate.

When our affections are stirred by someone, then the response ought to be something that likewise works to their affections. So if I was wanting to show appreciation for my wife, for her loving support, it would be a mistake for me to buy her football tickets or a new gadget.

Not only is this something that's more for me than for her, she's told me many times she has no interest in those things, not even slightly. And just as she's told me that she doesn't appreciate these things, she has also hinted and explicitly told me the things that she does like.

[14 : 33] So it's going to be more like giving flowers or jewelry or handbags or artwork. And similarly, wholehearted worship of God isn't shaped by what God's people like.

No. It's shaped by what God has said. And that's what we see here in Josiah. Look at verse 1. Josiah kept a Passover to the Lord.

But notice the details. It's kept in Jerusalem as it should be, not anywhere else. Notice again, verse 1, that the Lamb is slaughtered on the 14th day of the first month as it should be.

Now these details might seem unimportant to us, but they can't be taken for granted. Hezekiah, another great king a few chapters earlier, celebrates a Passover that's on a similar level to this, though not quite as great.

And Hezekiah delays the Passover by a month. He does so for good reason. There's precedent in the law to allow for it. But here, in this picture-perfect worship of Josiah, there's no nuance, no deviation, everything, every detail is as it should be, as God had commanded.

[15 : 57] Josiah has carefully planned and prepared for this grand event. And so verse 2, he places the priests in position to serve in the way that they're meant to. He appoints them to their offices, putting things in the right order.

Then in verses 3 to 6, we have the meticulous instructions given to the Levites, those who facilitated and served the temple and priests. And notice the real care in the preparation. Josiah gives seven commands to the Levites.

Verse 3, there are two. They're to put the ark in the temple, and they're also to serve the Lord and His people. Verse 4, there's another one. They're to prepare themselves in the correct divisions.

They're to follow the example and instruction of the great kings David and Solomon. Verse 5, they're to stand in the holy place, again in the correct divisions. And in verse 6, there are three commands.

Slaughter the lamb, consecrate yourselves, and prepare for your brothers to do according to Moses. Seven ordered commands, seven commands to carefully celebrate the worship of the Lord.

[17 : 08] And look at a couple of the things that the commands focus on. First, there's a focus on holiness. Look at verse 3. The commands are to those who were holy to the Lord.

That is, set aside for this particular service. And they're to put the holy ark where it belongs. And where it belongs is the temple, the center of life before a holy God.

Verse 5, they're to stand in the holy place. Verse 6, they're to consecrate themselves. They're to be prepared, clean washed, in order to participate and serve and enable the worship of God.

And so great care is taken because God is a holy God. There must be care taken because we cannot approach God with a kind of flippancy that we might approach a friend or colleague or family member.

God's love for us, our unique relationship with God, doesn't mean that we can be casual about how you relate to Him. For He is still the Creator, we the creation.

[18 : 16] He is holy and we, outside of the blood of His Son, are far from it. And in the same way that a parent or a spouse doesn't appreciate being treated just like any other person, like a friend or an acquaintance, well, true worship of God takes seriously just who God is, a holy God.

but a holy God who welcomes us to worship Him. A holy God whose word speaking to us, whose word at work within us turns us to Him and draws us to worship Him.

And so care is to be taken because of who we worship. It can't just be any old thing we'll do or it can't just be on our terms with what suits us. I think this speaks to how we prepare for gathering on a Sunday.

I was struck a few years ago our prayer meeting rarely goes by without somebody praying for our preachers. That's a good and right and healthy thing to do and it's in line with taking worship seriously to pray for preachers in their preparation to bring God's word.

But a number of years ago a godly lady in our congregation prayed for the preparation for Sunday and her prayer was all taken up with asking God to prepare the hearts of the congregation for the preaching.

[19 : 38] That we'd all be prepared to hear and heed and to respond and not refuse it. That's a very good thing to pray for ourselves and for our brothers and sisters because we don't want to come to worship on a Sunday with a sense of flippancy do we?

No, we want to come with reverence with expectancy coming to sit under God's word and have Him speak to us that we might hear and respond not let it wash over us. that we've come prepared for that not coming distracted or having been up all night socializing and now bleary eyed or running through the door halfway through the service.

For in worship God Himself is present here in our midst the holy God who's created the heavens and the earth who's redeemed us through the precious blood of Jesus and who is here drawing near to us and really and truly speaking to us.

God's spirit given word draws us to see the immense reverence that God's people are to have for Him. And Josiah's worship was so exemplary because he got that God's holiness is to be taken seriously.

It is an immense thing to come before God in worship. It's an immense thing to join with the whole heavenly host of angels heaven's army in acknowledging and declaring that holy, holy, holy is the Lord God almighty.

[21 : 06] The whole earth is filled with His glory. That's an immense thing. And it's an immense thing to have that God presence Himself here amongst us to speak to us.

But these commands don't just focus on taking seriously that God is holy taking seriously who He is. Notice that they are also concerned with God's people. Verse 3, the Levites are to serve the Lord and His people.

And that is part of what is behind the ordering into groups and divisions in verses 4 and 5. We'll see more on that later. But then notice verse 6, the Levites are to prepare for their brothers to celebrate the Passover.

Because whilst care is to be taken so that worship of God is reverent with very obvious vertical concern, it is also in the gathering together as God's people that they are reassured, that we are reassured, that God is who He says He is, that He has acted mightily to pour out grace to His people to us.

That's what we do as we gather. We gather to worship God and to be reassured together of His great grace poured out for us really and truly.

[22 : 31] And so Josiah sets before us a great example of a people who are driven by God's Word and so His Spirit to worship. And whilst worship does involve all of life, it is particularly focused on the gathering of God's people.

And the example we are given here is that true worship is driven by God and who He is and it is driven by seeing all of God's people partaking in that which assures them of God's grace.

And so we don't want to be a hindrance do we to our brothers and sisters when we do gather but rather a help modeling for one another and enabling one another to taste the wonders of His grace that we are assured of as we gather.

When we gather for worship now it is such a precious thing. Sunday is the day when God's people when we when we're remade reshaped reassured of what we were created for of what we've been redeemed for.

This is the time when we have our eyes collectively lifted above this world to be reminded of what is ultimate of heaven and hell of the goal of our lives and of the grace of God.

[23 : 47] And we need that. It's so valuable to us. It's what will see us persevere. It is the regular means of grace for us. And so true worship has a concern a care that our our brothers and sisters are able to be blessed in that worship that we're concerned to that end.

And all of this is so very far from the ideas of worship being about how it makes me feel what I want. We want to be concerned for a holy God and for our brothers and sisters.

So Josiah's worship is careful concerned to take God seriously and to enable God's people to delight in the gospel. So Josiah's worship is careful but also verses 7 to 9 it's costly.

It's costly. God's word at work in his people is uniquely able to prompt the pouring out of gifts to him sacrificially and generously.

For an encounter with the living God and his gospel word completely transforms what is of true value. In Josiah we have set before us an example of generous sacrifice of giving out of a heart of worship.

[25 : 02] Look at verse 7. Josiah made contributions for the lay people. He provided 30,000 lambs and goats for the Passover. he gave out of his own herds out of his own pocket incredible numbers of animals so that the people could worship God.

He provided so that ministry could happen. He provided so that people could be assured that God is gracious to be reminded that God is the one who can bring and has brought redemption and rescue to his people.

And likewise verse 8 following their king's lead his officials contributed 2,600 lambs and the chain reaction continues verse 9 others gave 5,000 lambs great and sacrificial giving.

But notice two things about the giving. The chronicler emphasizes that verse 8 it was contributed willingly voluntarily. Josiah didn't have a sword to his officials throats forcing them to open their wallets.

No they gladly willingly pour out what they have generously following after their king. But as well as the offerings being given willingly look at what is given.

- [26 : 24] This is a Passover celebration but Josiah and all the officials give above and beyond what is required. they are not just meeting the immediate and imminent need they are going above that for they give bulls too.

Lambs were given for the Passover but there are also bulls given which would be for the thank offerings. And the costly pouring out of offerings wasn't just for this one occasion but was so that God's people would continue to truly worship him.

These offerings and sacrifices were the means of God drawing near to his people. That's what happened when they celebrated them. They were assured of his presence with them. And so the giving was to provide ongoing blessing to the people of God.

Their giving was a lavish provision to guarantee for their brothers and sisters they could continue to enjoy God's presence with them. And so the chronicler was showing us pouring out of gifts to inspire and to draw wholehearted!

Worship in God's people. And that's often a struggle for God's people when they live in the world. For the things that belong to this world can seem to trump what God has said and promised.

- [27 : 39] Turn over to Haggai. Haggai was another prophet who ministered around the time of the chronicler. And look at Haggai chapter 1. After Zephaniah, before Zechariah, right towards the end of the Old Testament.

Haggai chapter 1, verses 2 to 4. Thus says the Lord of hosts, these people say the time has not yet come to rebuild the house of the Lord.

Then the word of the Lord came by the hand of Haggai the prophet. Verse 4, is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your panelled houses while this house lies in ruin?

The chronicler was addressing an issue in his own day. A people truly transformed by the life-giving spirit-giving word of God will willingly give to the Lord to prioritize his worship just like Josiah and his officials.

Whereas we see the remnant who have returned to the land. Those who received this book, the same people as Haggai, they were busy building their own nice houses with beautiful wooden panels rather than the temple.

- [29 : 03] It's not time for the temple, it's time for our houses. And this whole area of giving cuts to the heart. Those whom Haggai was ministering to would have been getting very nervous at the mention of giving.

It would be an uncomfortable reality for them, knowing that their credit card statements, their bank balances, expose what they really love. They'd be left squirming. Whereas here, Josiah and his officials give lavish sums willingly, with the attitude that Paul describes in Corinthians as cheerful givers.

And there are all kinds of similar temptations for us today, aren't there? This isn't a unique struggle for the remnant. We are constantly bombarded with ways that we can spend our money, our substance to maximize this life.

Bigger, nicer houses, nice wooden paneling, newer cars, better education for our kids, the latest iPhone, more holidays, and on and on and on, just like the remnant.

But here, the chronicler wants God's people to see exemplified in Josiah something akin to the woman who anoints Jesus' head with very costly ointment.

- [30 : 16] It's poured out without reservation, lovingly poured out on his feet, and told that this is a beautiful thing.

And so whilst true worship is in one sense costly, there's a sense of which it isn't costly because pouring out things for the Lord, giving lavishly to his kingdom shows that things, that money, that animals, that wooden panels, that ointment aren't that valuable because the giving actually shows that God is of greatest value.

It shows that we take Jesus seriously when he says that it's more blessed to give than to receive. Paul in Philippians 4 speaks of pouring out our resources for the gospel as fruit that increases to our credit, as a fragrant offering, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing to God.

It shows that God's people delight to live for that commendation at the last day. Well done, good and faithful servant. You have done a beautiful thing by pouring out the cost list of things.

that's true worship of God. And whilst the chronicler uses Josiah as a grand example of sacrificial giving from a king, don't we have the greatest example in this regard?

[31 : 40] Listen to Hebrews. Jesus entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves, but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.

Our king doesn't just give animals so that we can be assured of God's grace. He gave himself so that we could have an eternal redemption, so that no more animals are needed.

He has undertaken to be and to do all that is required for us to worship, to taste of all God's goodness and riches, to assure us that we can draw near to God in an ongoing and enduring way, and we can never outgive God.

He has lavished grace upon grace to us in the person of his son, and it's fitting that there's a lavish response. So Josiah's Passover models for God's people that true worship is careful, that it's costly, and finally verses 10 to 15 that it's covenantal.

Covenantal. True worship finds its expression within the covenant, that is, within the relationship that God's people uniquely have with him through his gracious rescue.

[33 : 00] And so worship encompasses all of God's covenant people. Worship is covenantal in that it is rooted in God's promised salvation, and it's enjoyed by all those who belong to God's people, his covenant people.

So notice, it was the scale of this Passover, the involvement of all people, verse 18, that made it the greatest one. But also, the very basis of our relationship to God, the very reason that means we sinful human beings can come before a holy God and not be instantly obliterated, is because of God's covenant with his people.

And so we see the celebration reaches its climax in these verses as the blood is spilt, as verse 11, the rescuing lamb is slaughtered, and it's important that this picture perfect scene of worship centers around Passover.

Back when God's people were groaning in their slavery in Egypt, we read that God heard them and remembered his covenant. And that is what moves him to bring this great rescue for the first Passover.

Passover, that's what moves him to bring this great rescue that the Passover, the first one, realizes, and that everyone afterwards was celebrating.

[34 : 24] God acting to keep his covenant promises to rescue the people he'd promised would be his, and to lead them to the land of promise. That's what was happening at the first Passover. Passover. Josiah's exemplary model of worship revolves around the festival that remembers God's great mercy in saving Israel from slavery.

That's what's being remembered. God passing over the Israelites who had blood spread on the doorposts. A great rescue from judgment that came to Israel only because of God's grace through his covenant.

The chronicler emphasizes in this passage that not only was Josiah a true son of David, not only was Josiah a great king who followed in the line of Solomon and David, Josiah's obedience, Josiah's responding to God goes further back, further back than the time of the kings, back to the Exodus, back to Moses.

So we do have details of course that show Josiah was a great and obedient king. Verse 3, he's mentioned in the same breath as Solomon and David, same in verse 4, verse 15 again, David's there.

And in Chronicles, when a king is linked to David and Solomon, it's the way the chronicler shows us they're a good king, they're following a good pattern. So of course, Josiah's like that. But then notice there's an added emphasis here.

[35 : 49] For whilst there are numerous mentions of David and Solomon, Josiah is also keen to honor what Moses has said. And naturally, as we've seen, this whole celebration followed the rediscovery of the book of the law, the book of Moses.

And so we see verse 6, Josiah was doing things according to the word of Moses. Verse 12, things were to be done as it is written in the book of Moses.

Another subtle reference to Moses, verse 13, the detail about offerings being carried quickly to all the lay people. well, just as the first Passover came with a command to celebrate it ready to leave, belt fastened eat in haste.

So we see the same thing echoed here. And so the chronicler is showing us that this celebration of worship flows out of the very heart of the gospel itself, for it flows out of God's rescue of his people and the definitive covenant relationship that flows out of that rescue.

Our worship is always marked by the reality of God's gracious rescue. Worship is a means of grace rooted in God's covenant promise. We come to be assured of what God has done and that he's faithful to all that he's promised.

[37 : 11] But notice in these verses also the purpose of all the ordering that took place in the preparation. We've mentioned it already, but verse 10, the priests and Levites stand in their places as the king had commanded in verse 4.

And once the slaughter had happened, look at verse 12, the careful ordering of things allowed the distribution to reach the lay people according to their groupings. Verse 13, it allowed the offerings to reach all the lay people.

And so that's the focus of verses 10 to 13, showing us all the lay people, the average believer, receiving the Passover meal. people. But that wasn't all. The careful ordering in verses 14 to 15 also shows us that the priests, the Levites, the musicians, the gatekeepers who were serving the people were also receiving from it.

Look at verse 14. The priests were busy serving the people by offering the burnt offerings until night. They were laboring all day, but they were not to miss out in this celebration.

Nobody was. So they too are provided for. Likewise, verse 15, the singers were in their positions leading the people in songs and the gatekeepers in their positions, all doing important jobs that were part of being faithful to God.

[38 : 28] But look at the end of verse 15. None of these people needed to depart from their posts, from their service, for the Levites prepared for them all. This Passover encompassed all God's people.

It was a covenant meal for the whole covenant family. And true worship is for all who belong to God. There's an exception for nobody. The Passover is set up as a great model and example, and all this despite Josiah just hearing that Judah was heading for exile.

There'd been much sin in the recent history of his people, but that doesn't preclude him from drawing his people to worship God. Because any who humble themselves and seek God, like Josiah had begun to do, any who do that are able to worship God and to taste and see that he's good.

Any who knew and celebrate that God's great act of rescue is the only hope that we have, well then we're able to worship God, to carry on tasting of his goodness.

This Passover shows us that there is grace for all who believe, a covenant relationship for all who believe. And with it, a heart opens to the possibility and the longing to worship God.

[39 : 50] The chronicler sets before God's people a model of true worship. And his message here is that anyone who receives God's word and responds to it, any church that takes God's word seriously, can truly partake in the immense experience of the true worship of God.

an experience from which we are assured of every spiritual blessing in the heavenly realms. An experience which allows us to gather in the presence of God, to have him speak words of assurance to us, to assure us that he's rescued us, to assure us that he's present with us and will continue with us.

And when that's the case, what else is fitting but to praise the Lord? Let's pray. Lord, we know all that you've done for us.

We know that you have moved and worked to enable us to be your people. And so we ask that you would plant your word deeply within us.

And in doing so would make it our life's joy to bring honour to you in all that we do. And so, Lord, help us that as a church, our worship of you would be a truly pleasing aroma.

[41 : 25] And we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. to