

Revived Worship

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[0 : 00] Amen. Ezra chapter 6 verses 19 through 22.

! On the fourth day of the first month, the returned exiles kept the Passover. So they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves.

It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile, and also by everyone who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the Lord, the God of Israel.

And they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful. And had turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them, so that he aided them in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? A season in television is a group of episodes that are broadcast in one year.

[1 : 23] And before each new season of a TV show, there is a recap of the previous season that came before the newest episode the audience is about to watch.

This keeps the audience up to date so that they can better follow the storyline and what is about to come next. Those recaps often have a voiceover that says, last season on whatever show you watch, fill in the blank.

It's been nearly three months since I took a break from preaching verse by verse through the book of Ezra. So I'm going to begin this morning by refreshing your memory with a quick recap of what happened last season on Ezra.

If you recall, the book of Ezra opens with Israel's year, thousand year history as a nation coming to an end.

For centuries, God's people had taken his grace for granted. God's people continually rebelled against his commands.

[2 : 40] They polluted their minds and their hearts by adopting the political and religious practices of their pagan neighbors. They rejected God's prophets who warned them that their rebellion against God incurred his wrath.

Though there were times of repentance and revival, those times were often short-lived as God's people gradually reverted back to their rebellious ways.

Eventually, God's patience ran out as his warnings continued to go unheeded. The Babylonian Empire was God's instrument to discipline his people.

Babylon, under the reign of King Nebuchadnezzar, captured Jerusalem. They ransacked and plundered the temple of all of its treasures. They destroyed it.

And they deported Israel's best and brightest to serve in their courts, in their land. And they instituted new leaders to rule in Israel who would be loyal to them.

[3 : 51] As a nation, Israel was finished. Or so it seemed. The book of Ezra begins about 50 years after the fall of Jerusalem.

With the Jewish people living in exile. And during that 50-year period, God's people, as a result of his discipline, learned to reject the beliefs and the practices of their foreign neighbors.

God's discipline during this time purified them as he preserved them. And as he prepared them to return to the promised land.

God then, as we read in the beginning of Ezra, stirred the heart of Cyrus, the king of the new world power of Persia, to send his people back home.

To send them back to the promised land which he had banished them from. This was like a second exodus for God's people. All the treasures that were taken by the Babylonians were given back to the Jews as they were permitted to return and to rebuild the temple that was destroyed.

[5 : 04] However, as time went on, the returning exiles' efforts to rebuild the temple was met by external and internal opposition and conflict.

As a result, the work was halted. But finally, after 21 years, 21 years after the exiles had returned to Jerusalem, the temple was rebuilt and rededicated to the Lord God, who was faithful to preserve his people in exile and bring them home as he continued to fulfill his promises and his plan to save and to redeem his people through the eventual coming of his son, Jesus Christ.

And so now that the temple was rebuilt, now that it was rededicated, it was time to put it to use. The temple was designed by God to be a place where his people gathered to do what God created and designed people to do, to worship him.

And so the main idea for this morning's sermon is that God's people worship and revere him. God's people worship and revere him.

Reverence is a quality, I think, that is missing in a lot of churches today. I'm not talking so much about what we do when we gather to worship or what we wear or any other external thing.

[6 : 47] I'm talking about our internal attitudes towards God. The Israelites worshipped God all the way up until he sent them away into exile.

It got to the point where they no longer revered him even though they were worshipping him. Through Isaiah, God tells his people in Isaiah 29, 13, because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips while their hearts, their attitudes are far from me and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men.

God was not pleased with the empty, formulaic, sort of casual ritualism that characterized the worship of his people.

Centuries later, Jesus quoted that same passage as he indicted the Pharisees for possessing the same sort of irreverent attitude towards God in Matthew 15.

Hebrews 12, 28 says, Therefore, let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship with reverence and awe for God is a consuming fire.

[8 : 14] So we should revere God in worship. But what does reverence mean? The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines reverence as honor or respect, felt or shown, profound, adoring, odd respect, or a gesture of respect such as a bow.

That helps, but a better definition for reverence, I think, is holy caution. Holy caution.

When Isaiah receives a vision of God in his throne room, he expresses reverence, holy caution. Look at what he says in Isaiah 6, 5. He sees all these things. He sees God on his throne, and he says, In the New Testament, Peter does the same.

When he begins to realize who Jesus truly is, and he likewise expresses reverence and holy caution. In Luke 5, 8, when Peter saw it, when he saw the nets had been filled as Jesus had commanded, he ran out of his boat.

[9 : 44] He fell down at Jesus' feet, and he said, Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord. These men were deeply aware of their sin in the presence of God.

They didn't treat God like their buddy or like a pal. They didn't play down or disrespect his holiness. They worshipped in reverence, and they spent the rest of their lives reveling in the grace of God to save sinners.

For centuries, the Jews, God's chosen people, had downplayed his holiness as evidenced by their empty, formulaic forms of worship.

They forgot who God was, and as a result of that, they forgot who they were. But though they got it wrong so many times, God in his grace preserved his people in exile.

He preserved a remnant, and he brought them back to Jerusalem. And this time, they got it right as they turned their hearts, their attitudes towards him in reverent worship.

[11 : 08] In our text today, the Jews celebrate Passover for the first time in a really long time. And as they do that, we see three elements of their worship that should be evident in our worship today too.

Understand, we were all created to worship. Even if you don't believe in God, even if you don't believe in Jesus Christ, understand that you were designed by God, and he created you to worship. And you worship. Unfortunately, unbelievers just like believers, we worship our favorite sports team. Maybe not after yesterday, for some of you.

But we worship them. We worship possessions. We worship people. We worship money. We worship celebrities. We worship all kinds of things. But those things cannot completely satisfy us. But Jesus will. Only knowing the one who made you and who created you, who designed you, has the ability to fulfill the deepest longing and desires of your heart.

[12:23] Only he can satisfy you. You know, as believers, I'm thinking about this passage. I wonder if when people visit our church, do they observe in our worship a kind of empty form of ritualistic worship?

Do we look to them like a different group of people? Do we seem grumpy to them? Do they think that we truly believe what we sing, what we pray, and what we say?

Do they observe reverence in our worship? You know, I'm sure if I asked you this question, I know the answer is probably going to be yes.

As a church, as a Christian, do you want to see revival in our nation? I'm sure you would say yes. But I think for revival to truly take place, it will, and it must, begin in us as individuals.

It has to begin in you. And you're having the right kind of attitude towards God, who He is, and who you are.

[13:39] And so, as we go through this, I want you to examine our church, examine yourself. Do these three elements of worship characterize you?

Do they characterize our worship at Highland Park? The first element of worship, of reverent worship, I should say, that we see in this passage is that God's people remember their salvation. God's people remember their salvation. Look again at verse 19. On the 14th day of the first month, the returned exiles kept the Passover. Before we continue, it's important to take a minute and remember the purpose and the meaning of Passover.

in the book of Exodus, God's people are enslaved to the Egyptians. They are under the constant threat of genocide as a people.

And they've pleaded for God to deliver them. And God hears them. He hears their cries and He calls Moses to negotiate the release of His people.

[14:48] And we read about that in Exodus chapter 3 verses 10 through 12. God says to Moses, come, I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring my people, the children of Israel out of Egypt.

But Moses said to God, who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and bring the children of Israel out of Egypt? God said, but I will be with you and this shall be the sign for you that I have sent you.

When you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall serve God on this mountain. God had hardened the heart of Pharaoh and Pharaoh refused repeatedly to let God's people go.

Pharaoh did not revere God and he didn't think God was in any kind of position to tell him one of the most powerful men in the world what to do. And so as a result of his hardened heart, God sent a series of plagues on the Egyptians but Pharaoh was still undeterred.

The night of the first Passover was the night of the tenth and final plague. God told the Israelites his people to sacrifice a spotless lamb and to mark their doorposts with its blood.

[16:06] When the Lord passed through the nation he said that he would pass over the households whose doors were marked with the blood of the lamb.

The blood of the lamb saved God's people saved their sons from death. It protected them from God's wrath.

The Israelites were saved from God by God. They were saved by God's wrath through his grace.

The means of their salvation was a blood sacrifice which served as a substitute. Its life was given to save the lives of Israel's firstborn sons and the nation as a whole who God called his firstborn son.

And this was something that God wanted his people to never forget and to always remember. He gives that instruction in Exodus 12 verses 23 through 27.

[17:12] God says for the Lord will pass through to strike the Egyptians and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts the Lord will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you.

You shall observe this right as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the Lord will give you as he has promised you shall keep this service and when your children say to you what do you mean by this service you shall say it is the sacrifice of the Lord's Passover for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt and he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses and the people bowed their heads and worshipped.

Why would God want his people to remember this? Because we forget. We tend to forget what God has done for us and in doing so we can take him and we can take his salvation for granted.

When you go through something in the present that you don't want to go through, how often do you challenge God's faithfulness in your mind while forgetting about his past to you.

When it comes to God and our worship of him, too often our attitudes toward him are affected by the thought of God, what have you done for me lately?

[19 : 00] In a way we kind of treat God like we would our favorite sports team. When things are good, we show up, we sit close, we put on all of the gear, we want to be identified with that team when it's successful, but when things aren't going the way that we want, well, we tend to jump off the bandwagon.

We forget who God is, we forget who we are, and we take him for granted. We don't remember. We act as if our salvation through Jesus isn't enough.

There needs to be more. We forget, and we become fickle instead of remaining faithful. The Passover meal and the preparation that was needed to observe it served also as a reminder to God's people that it was the blood of the Lamb that saved them from death.

verse 20 provides a summary of the preparation that went into celebrating Passover. Look at that verse again with me. For the priests and the Levites had purified themselves together.

All of them were clean, so they slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the returned exiles, for their fellow priests, and for themselves. Now, the number of Levites who returned was 74, and the number of priests was 973.

[20 : 36] The number of Israelites who returned was around 43,000, and that doesn't include some of the Jews who were still living in the land when they came back. So we could estimate that there was about 70,000 people in this group, which required probably at least 7,000 lambs for sacrifice, and only 74 Levites dressed in white linen to carry out those sacrifices.

Needless to say, they had a lot of work to do, and it was a very messy job. At Passover, each head of a household brought a lamb into the temple and handed it over to one of the Levites.

The Levite would then slit the lamb's throat. A priest caught the blood in a basin, and then it would be passed from priest to priest until it got up to another one of the Levites who would then throw the blood at the base of the altar.

As the Levites and the priests did this work, they would sing, they would worship, they sang psalms. Psalms 113 through 118 to be specific, the Hallel.

Those psalms focused on God's faithfulness to save his people while they were slaves in Egypt and bring them out to the promised land.

[22 : 12] Once the lamb was slain, it was hung on the surrounding walls of the temple court. And there it was flayed by the priests.

the fatty portions were taken to the altar and they were burned, and the rest was returned to the owner, the head of the household, who took it back home and who cooked it and ate it with his family.

Imagine the sights. Imagine the smells, the sounds of all of this.

Lambs bleeding and bleeding while Levites are singing. Blood is everywhere. Dead lambs are hung on the walls as they're being butchered.

It would be hard for us to stomach. I think if it was me, I would go home and be like, you know what, I'm not really hungry after what I've seen, after what I've smelt.

[23 : 18] What was God communicating in this? What did he want his people to remember as they worshipped him during the Passover?

I think a few things. That he is the one who saves. That he is the one who rescues his people from slavery. That he is the one who gives us hope.

that he is the one who redeems. He is the one who prescribes and provides the means to propitiate his wrath. And he does this through the substitution of the life of a lamb.

A slaughtered sacrifice whose blood atoned for sin. All these lambs, all their blood, all their sacrifice was pointing to what God would one day do to make complete and final ultimate atonement for his people.

And that fulfillment came in the God-man, Jesus Christ. John the Baptist understood this. He was sent to prepare God's people for the coming and the ministry of his son, Jesus.

[24 : 44] And when he sees Jesus as he's baptizing, he declares, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This is he whom I said, after me comes a man who outranks me because he was before me.

I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water that he might be revealed to Israel. Jesus was truly human.

Truly God, he was spotless in that he never sinned. He lived the perfect life that God's holiness requires, and he willingly died on the cross as a sacrifice, shedding his blood to save us from slavery to sin, to save us from God's wrath towards our sin, and the eternal consequences of our sin.

Jesus is our Passover Lamb. as 1 Corinthians 5-7. For Christ, our Passover Lamb, has been sacrificed.

Jesus was crucified during Passover. The last supper he had with his disciples was a Passover meal where he infused that old meal with new meaning.

[26 : 03] He led the disciples from there in singing psalms to the Garden of Gethsemane, probably singing the same psalms, the praises that the Levites sang as they performed sacrifices in the temple.

And there he was arrested. He was unfairly tried. They lied about him. They whipped him. They beat him. They bloodied him. They hung him by nailing him to a cross where he was suspended between heaven and earth.

And he who knew sin became sin so that we by faith in him receive his righteousness. He took our place.

He took our sin, our condemnation. He died as our substitute. He endured God's wrath forsaken by the Father so that we who believe in him will never ever experience that.

And on the third day he rose again. He defeated our greatest foes. Sin, Satan, death.

[27 : 22] And by spiritually applying his blood to our lives by faith we are cleansed. We are forgiven. We are transformed.

We are set free from sin. and we are declared righteous before God the Father and we have eternal life.

Amen? Praise God. If God has saved you, you need to remember this gospel that has saved you every day.

When we gather to worship, we remember who Jesus is and who we are and what he has done to save us. And that should inspire reverent worship from us.

Is your worship reverent? Do you take your salvation for granted? Does your worship express an attitude of reverence or apathy?

[28 : 26] My college baseball coach used to tell us whenever we would moan and groan about anything, he would say, it's not my job to make you want to be here. It's not my job to make you excited to be here or to play baseball.

That should come naturally to you. Friend, believer, that should come naturally to you. If you know Jesus, if he has saved you, it should just come naturally to you.

Do you look forward to Sunday morning? Are you excited for that time when we gather for worship?

If not, maybe you've forgotten how great a recipient of God's love and grace that he's made you to be in Jesus.

Or maybe apathy is because you don't truly know him. Friend, he is the way, the truth, and the life. He is the way and the only way to eternal life. And he has brought you here to hear this good news which he desires that you will believe.

[29 : 36] And which leads me to my second point, or the second element, I should say, that should characterize God's people as we worship him in reverence. God's people repent of their sins.

God's people remember, God's people repent of their sins. Look at verse 22. It was eaten by the people of Israel who had returned from exile and also by everyone who had joined them and separated himself from the uncleanness of the peoples of the land to worship the Lord, the God of Israel.

Now, if you can remember back in chapter 4 of Ezra, the returning exiles at that point rejected offers from their Samaritan neighbors and other people living in that region to help them rebuild the temple.

The reason they rejected the offer was because they knew the true intentions that they had. The Samaritans said they worshiped the same God as the Jews did, but the Jews knew better. The Samaritans were religious syncretists. They took a bunch of little things from a bunch of different religions and they kind of blended them all together and that's what they believed.

[30 : 48] The Jews barred their bad theology from corrupting their community. And like the people back then, God's people today still encounters groups of people who want to influence us, to combine with us, to use our churches to promote their own agenda, which is not God's agenda.

Many of them from within and outside the church use Jesus' instruction to love your neighbor as yourself to excuse actions and attitudes that God calls sin in his word.

We want such people to visit our church but to become a member of this church you must be born again and share the same convictions we have which are based on God's word.

Like God's people then, we continue, we need to continue I should say, to be discerning today, using our Bible, his word, as our guide to keep us from being deceived.

We want our church to grow but we want it to grow for the right reasons, which would be people hearing the gospel and repenting of their sins as they turn to Jesus in faith.

[32 : 18] That's what we want. Some of the returned exiles neighbors realized that the God whom they served, the God whom they worshipped was the one true God.

And they must have made some kind of credible profession of faith that they were and as a result they were welcomed into the community of faith. What we see in verse 20 of Ezra chapter 6 is something that resembles the New Testament church more I think than it does Old Testament Israel.

Remember what Jesus commanded us before he ascended back into heaven after he rose again in Matthew 28 he said all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

Go to everybody everywhere. Proclaim the gospel. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach them to observe all that I have commanded you and behold I am with you always to the end of the age.

Jesus when he began his public ministry preached a message of repentance. A turning away from sin and a turning to him in faith.

[33 : 34] A separation from the world to pursue his kingdom and his righteousness. As it pertains to salvation to repent is to change your mind, change your heart about sin and about Jesus.

In Peter's sermon in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost, he preached the gospel and he concluded that message with a call for his listeners to repent.

In Acts chapter 2 verse 36 through 38 we read Peter here concluding, giving the invitation, let all of the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him Jesus, both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified.

now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, brothers what shall we do?

And Peter said to them, recite this prayer, come down this aisle, take this card and fill it out. Did he say that? No, what did he say? Repent.

[34 : 45] repent and be baptized, every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Peter called people to change their minds, their hearts about sin. In this case, also about their past rejection of Jesus and to place their faith, their trust in him as their Lord and as their Savior.

Repentance is necessary for salvation and is also a continual part of the Christian life. As we become more like Jesus in sanctification, we continually seek to put sin to death in ourselves. ourselves. And that comes through the Holy Spirit convicting us through the Word of God. And so repentance as Christians should be a part of our worship.

When we examine ourselves before we take communion as 1 Corinthians 11 instructs us, when we confess our sins to one another in Sunday school or in community group or sometime before or after church as James 5.16 tells us to do.

[36 : 09] I know for me, when I study and prepare the message throughout the week, my prayer is that God will convict me first and that I'll see my sins how he sees them and that I'll agree with them, agree with him about them, and that as a result of that, I'll continue to be made more like Jesus.

Jesus. The end of each sermon, which is an act of worship, by the way, worship is not just singing. The end of each sermon includes some kind of invitation.

And usually that invitation involves repentance. repentance. In his book, I Surrender, Patrick Morley writes about the church's integrity problem, how we often come off as hypocrites to the rest of the world.

And he says it's due to this misconception. He says that we can add Christ to our lives but not subtract sin. It is a change, repentance, in belief without a change in behavior.

He goes on to say it is revival without reformation, without repentance. Charles Spurgeon said repentance grows as faith grows.

[37 : 29] Do not make any mistake about it. Repentance is not a thing of days or weeks. He's talking about a brief time of duration, a temporary penance to be got over as fast as possible.

No, it is the grace of a lifetime like faith itself. Repentance is the inseparable companion opinion of faith.

When we gather to worship and remember the grace of God to save sinners, there will come times when like the prodigal son, the Holy Spirit brings us to our senses, convicting us of our sin and compelling us to return to Jesus.

And Jesus is the good shepherd who searches for his wandering sheep. He brings them back into the fold of God.

When we worship, we realize that though we fail time after time after time, Jesus does not fail and Jesus will not fail. Those he saves, he keeps.

[38 : 39] And he's faithful to forgive us and to love us and to keep us as saved as the day he saved us.

First John 1 9 says, if we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Christian, maybe you need to repent today of empty formulaic worship. Maybe your heart has grown cold or hardened by habitual sin in your life.

God has brought you here to remind you of the truth that we so easily forget. You've wandered, but in his love, in his grace, he is calling you back home.

There's no work that you have to do in that. You don't have to clean yourself up first. You don't have to come to, you know, a month's worth of Sunday school classes and worship services.

[40 : 08] No. You come to him and he's faithful to forgive you of all unrighteousness. And if you don't know Jesus again, he's calling you to a different kind of repentance.

He's calling you to saving faith. He's calling you to turn from your sinful life and to be saved by him today.

You probably know John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that he gave his only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.

If you don't know him today, Jesus wants you to know that. He wants you to experience his love and his grace, his mercy, his forgiveness, his salvation.

And I pray that today is the day of salvation for you. So now the third element of reverent worship that should characterize our worship today, God's people rejoice in him.

[41 : 18] We remember, we repent, and as we remember and as we repent, we rejoice. Look at verse 22. And they kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy, for the Lord had made them joyful and turned the heart of the king of Assyria to them so that he aided them in the worship of the house of God, the God of Israel.

The returned exiles remembered what God had done to save them in the past. They presented sacrifices as they repented of their sins in the present, but in all of this they rejoiced because they had hope for the future.

God had turned their enemies to their side. God had kept his promises. Though they had endured a lot of defeats, though they had much to repent of, they rejoiced that God is faithful, that God is sovereign, that he is the ruler of the world who preserves his people though they sin, and he gives them hope for the future.

As God's people today, we have even more reason to rejoice when we gather to worship.

We live on the other side of Jesus' coming, on the other side of the cross, on the other side of his resurrection. Jesus, the Passover lamb, has come. He was slain to redeem, to rescue, save his people, people from every nation, every tribe, every language.

[43 : 01] Man, we have this beautiful picture of what we have to look forward to in Revelation chapter 7, verses 9 through 12. There, John describes this vision he sees in heaven.

It says, after this I looked and behold, a great multitude that no one could number from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne, before the lamb, clothed in white robes with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, worshiping, salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the lamb.

And all the angels were standing around the throne, around the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell on their faces before the throne and worshipped, saying amen, blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honor and power and might to our God, be to God forever and ever. Amen. Amen. You know, I think too often in our churches, we act more and we act more like we've lost, that we're losing.

The other day, I was flipping through the TV and came across the NFL network and they were replaying last year's Super Bowl. If you remember last year's Super Bowl, the Chiefs won, right?

[44 : 38] But they were losing. For most of that game. And it was tied in overtime. And they won on a last second field goal.

I think I remember that. I didn't watch the, I can't remember. Anyhow, they won in overtime by a field goal. Okay? When I first watched that game, man, I was anxious.

And I was worried we're going to lose. Oh, I hope we don't lose. I don't want to lose. We watch it here with all the church family. Family. I don't want them to see this other side of me that I need to repent of.

But we won. And you know, I watch that game now with a completely different kind of attitude. We're losing, but I know that we're not going to lose.

We're making mistakes, but I know in the end that we're going to win. We're going to win. brother, sister, Christian, you may feel like you're losing.

[45 : 41] As a church, we may feel like we're losing the culture, our nation, the world. But understand this. We've won. We've won.

Jesus has won and he shares that victory with us. Yes, we are brokenhearted about what we see happening in our culture, in our workplaces, in our homes, even in our churches.

But we haven't lost. We're not going to lose. We have a mission to fulfill. And we can't fulfill that mission feeling sorry about ourselves or acting like there's no point and we've lost.

We have work to do. We have an awesome future ahead of us to look forward to. I believe that if there's going to be a revival, it is going to start in the church and more specifically, again, it's going to start in you.

In you. As we devote ourselves to the Lord in reverent worship of him.

[46 : 53] And as we do that, we continue to be less like the world and to be more like Jesus. And as a result of that, there will be an impact.

And so how should we adjust according to this message? I think pray for revival. revival. How often do you pray for that? I think so often we complain more than we pray.

Pray for revival. Pray for revival to take place in your life. I was thinking about Pastor Tyler's sermon last week on Acts chapter 17 verse 6.

Remember what one of the accusations the people who oppose the people of God said about them? They're turning the world upside down. Man, I pray for the church today that those who oppose the Lord would be able to say the same thing about us.

Those Christians are turning the world upside down. I believe it can happen. But I believe that God's people have a responsibility in that.

[48 : 01] We can't just sit back on our hands and be grouchy and be whiny and complain. We have work to do. And that work begins with you. The time that you spend with the Lord.

Your attitude towards him. Reverent. Worshipful. Worshipful. Doing all that you do to the glory of Jesus Christ. And if you do that, there will be an impact.

So that's my invitation to you who believe, to you who do not believe. I'm going to be up here as our praise team comes up, as they lead us in the closing hymn. I would love to talk to you more about Jesus.

I know that's not comfortable either. So you can find me after service. You can contact me some other time. Listen, I want to answer your questions.

I want to talk to you more about Jesus. So please, please accept that invitation. Right now, I invite you to pray with me.

[49 : 02] Let's pray. Lord God, forgive us that so often we forget. Lord, so often we live in the present afraid of the future.

Forgetting your past faithfulness. Forgetting your past promises. And Lord, we live and we act as if we've lost.

But we haven't. So Lord, I pray that for your people today that we would follow the example of your people back then in Ezra chapter 6. They took your word.

They took you seriously. They followed what you commanded. They remembered your salvation. They repented of their sins.

And they rejoiced in a God who forgives sinners. And who sets us free from sin and its consequences and gives us eternal life, Lord.

[50 : 05] And for that, we have much to be thankful for. In that, we have much to rejoice over. And so God, I pray as we go and we leave this place, Holy Spirit, that you would continue to bring your word to our attention.

that of all people in this world, we have the most reason to be joyful. And that God, in our joy, there would be revival. And that you would be glorified by all of you.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.