

# Dedicated

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 23 June 2024

Preacher: Mike Scrivani

[ 0 : 00 ] Let us pray.

The people of Israel, the priests, and the Levites, and the rest of the returned exiles celebrated the dedication of this house of God with joy. They offered at the dedication of this house of God 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and as a sin offering for all Israel, 12 male goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

And they set the priests and their divisions and the Levites and their divisions for the service of God at Jerusalem as it is written in the book of Moses.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. The biggest celebration that I've ever attended was in 2015 when the Kansas City Royals won the World Series for the first time in 30 years.

An estimated 800,000 people clad in blue packed the parade route leading to Union stations to celebrate the end of three decades of baseball misery.

[ 1 : 41 ] Many of those who came to celebrate weren't alive the last time that the Royals had won the World Series in 1985. So people were ecstatic to say the least.

As the players took the stage, they hoisted the coveted trophy over their heads. They took the microphone and they said that their victory, this trophy, was for the people of Kansas City.

Their victory was our victory. Which was interesting to me because none of us who apparently shared their victory were allowed to stand on the stage with them.

None of us got to hold or even to touch the World Series trophy. None of us received a championship ring. The closest any of us would get to those items was to see them through a glass trophy case, which would eventually be housed inside Royal Stadium, which would require the purchase of a ticket to a Royals game.

So this championship we celebrated, and this trophy that was supposedly dedicated to us was one that none of us could touch.

[ 3 : 06 ] And if we wanted to see it up close, we would have to pay for the privilege. But even still, the people of Kansas City celebrated as if this championship truly belonged to them.

And they would make the trek and they would pay the price to enter the house where this treasured item was kept. An item dedicated to the people of Kansas City, but again, one that none of them could touch or hold.

But imagine if the Royals players gathered that day, handed the trophy down to those gathered to celebrate their victory. Imagine they passed it off the stage down to that large crowd.

People are sinful. By the time that shiny trophy passed through a few hundred hands, it would have been covered with fingerprints polluted by dirty hands.

Its form would have been mangled by people desperate to grab it, to grasp it. It would be scarred and marred by those who did not truly appreciate its value.

[ 4 : 18 ] We would have destroyed that trophy. So a protective distance had to be maintained. The Bible tells us that God is holy.

He is completely and totally without sin. The Bible also tells us that from the beginning, God who created humanity uniquely in His image, desired to live among and commune with His people. In the Garden of Eden, before sin entered the world, God walked and He talked with Adam and Eve in the cool of the day. But after Adam and Eve disobeyed God, their sin created a separation between them and God.

However, in His love and grace, God promised that He would make a way for sinful people to still be able to enter and dwell around His holy presence.

Ultimately, He promised that He would send an offspring of the woman who would reverse the curse of sin. In the meantime, He provided a sacrifice, animal skins, to cover Adam and Eve's

nakedness and their shame.

[ 5 : 52 ] And from that point onward, God continued to reveal Himself to His people, expressing His desire to dwell among them.

In Leviticus chapter 26, verses 11 through 12, God tells His people, I will make my dwelling among you, and my soul shall not abhor you, and I will walk among you, and I will be your God, and you shall be my people.

As the Israelites wandered in the desert, God desired to inhabit a place near His people. Exodus 25, verse 8, God gives instruction, At this time in redemptive history, the people of God lived in portable tents.

So God caused His presence to dwell among them in a portable tabernacle, like a giant tent. His presence was the guiding force that told His people when to stay put and when to pull up stakes and move on as they journeyed towards the promised land.

[ 7 : 12 ] In Exodus 40, 36 through 38, we read, After God's people entered the promised land and exchanged their portable tents, For fixed dwellings, God affixed His name to a place, Sanctifying Solomon's temple as His holy dwelling place on earth amongst His people.

In 1 Kings 8, 10 through 11, we read, And when the priest came out of the holy place, a cloud filled the house of the Lord, speaking of that temple, So that the priest could not stand to minister because of the cloud.

For the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord. The holy of holies in the temple was the inner sanctum of that place.

It was the place where the Ark of the Covenant was kept. It was the place where the high priest was, and only the high priest, Was permitted to enter one time each year to sprinkle the blood of the sacrifice on the Day of Atonement On top of the Ark of the Covenant to atone for the sins of God's people.

The temple was destroyed, that temple was destroyed by the Babylonians as a result of the sinfulness of God's people.

[ 9 : 01 ] And now in Ezra, as we've been going through, we see that that temple once destroyed is being rebuilt By those who were sent in exile and whom God sends back to accomplish this task.

But the temple was truly a type or a foreshadowing of God's desire to truly dwell in the midst of His people And to totally remove the sin that separated sinful people from His holy presence.

The temple, in all of its furnishings, all of its sacrifices, all of its worship, Pointed to God's eventual, physical, tangible presence, dwelling among sinful people In the form of His incarnate Son, Jesus Christ.

In John's Gospel, he begins by identifying Jesus and His true nature and His true identity. In John chapter 1 verses 1 through 4, he testifies, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was the life, and the life was the light of men.

[ 10 : 33 ] And then in verse 14, he says, And the Word became flesh and dwelt, dwelt among us, and we have seen His glory, glory as the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

In John 14, the Greek word translated as dwelt means to pitch a tabernacle, to pitch a tent. John uses this term in reference to the Old Testament structure, the tabernacle, where God met with Israel, where God met with Moses face to face before the temple was constructed.

Now, God, in a far more personal way, chose to dwell among His people as a person.

Jesus, being truly God and truly man, lived a sinless life, and He gave His life to atone completely for the sins of His people, putting an end to the sacrificial system and granting those who believe in Him permanent access to God the Father.

Under the new covenant in Jesus, the church, His bride, now serves as God's temple.

[ 11 : 57 ] 1 Corinthians 3, 16-17 says, Do you not know that you are God's temple and that God's Spirit dwells in you? If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy him, for God's temple is holy and you are that temple.

What this means is that we, Christians, people whom God has saved, are joined into one family, one body as the church, and we are today the holy dwelling place of God's presence.

The you in 1 Corinthians 3, 16-17, which I just read, is plural. Paul is referring to believers as a group. He's talking also about the local church.

The temple in Jerusalem was a sacred building dedicated to the worship of God. So according to Paul, the church is the equivalent of the temple today.

God's presence resides in the church. And the church, as a result, is to worship Him in spirit and in truth. Jesus said in John 14, 23, If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

[13:20] Peter reiterates to believers in 1 Peter 2, 5, You, yourselves, like living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

Not only is the church as a whole and as a local body of believers the dwelling place of God's presence today, but the Bible also says that individual believers are themselves temples of the Holy Spirit.

1 Corinthians 6, 19-20 tells us, Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God?

You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body. So taking all of this together, as we look at Ezra chapter 6, verses 16 through 18, we need to see it in light of New Testament realities.

The temple, again, foreshadowed Jesus and what he accomplished for us. He is God the Father's greatest treasure.

[14:38] Passed down, handed down to sinful men who touched him, and scarred him, and marred him, and covered them with their sin. This was all according to God's divine plan, that through his sacrifice, atonement was made, salvation for sinners is complete, we truly receive his victory.

We are clothed in his righteousness. The gap that sin created between sinful man and holy God creator has been closed through the cross of Jesus Christ, who saves us, and who causes his spirit to indwell us, grafting us into his body, and making us temples of the living, God.

God, do you live as if that reality is true? Are you dedicated, truly dedicated for the purpose, or to the purpose, for which God made you, and saved you?

The main idea for this morning's sermon is that God's people dedicate his temple to worship him. God's people dedicate his temple to worship him, and I want you to think about that personally. You are God's temple.

[16:12] Are you dedicated to worship him? In the context of Ezra chapter 6, 21 years had passed since the exiles had returned to Jerusalem, and now the temple had finally been rebuilt.

Though the people had been frustrated by external opposition and internal conflict, God caused the work to reach its completion. And now the people gathered as one to dedicate the temple to worship him.

as they do that, we notice three features of their worship that should still be featured, I think, even more so in the people of God today.

People are temples of his Holy Spirit. And as we go through each of these features, I challenge you to think about our church, to think about yourself, and to ask if these features characterize us as a church and you as a born-again present-day temple of God by faith in Jesus Christ.

The first feature that we see here is one of celebration in verse 16. Celebration of God's goodness. Now before we move into the celebratory nature of this dedication, I think we need to pause for a moment and compare the dedication of this temple in Ezra and the dedication of Solomon's temple, the first temple which this one in Ezra was replacing.

[18:01] The dedication of Solomon's temple recorded in 1 Kings chapter 8 and 2 Chronicles 7 was a grand affair. It was a huge celebration.

As pictured by the number of sacrifices that were made on that day compared to the number of sacrifices that were made on this day of dedication recorded in Ezra chapter 6.

The dedication of Solomon's temple included the sacrifice of hundreds of thousands of animals while the dedication of Ezra's temple was merely sacrifices in the hundreds.

During Solomon's time, Israel was a lot more prosperous and they had a lot more people. In comparison, the dedication of Solomon's temple to Ezra's temple would be like comparing a high school state championship celebration to a Super Bowl championship celebration.

Not only did the dedication of Solomon's temple include more people and more sacrifices, but it also included the Ark of the Covenant which housed the Ten Commandments, the tablets that God

had written on the pot of manna and Aaron's staff.

[ 19 : 18 ] And during their time in exile, the Ark of the Covenant was lost and no Indiana Jones did not find it. And it's not in some warehouse held by the CIA or whoever.

But the Ark was absent. It had gone missing. So in this dedication, there was no Ark of the Covenant. And there also was not a Solomon-like figure, a king, to lead the proceedings which added a mount of dignity and royal pageantry to the festivities.

All of that was missing. But despite these reductions, the people of God had reason to celebrate. God, speaking through His prophet Zechariah, giving this message to these people during this time, said to them, for whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.

Though the rebuilt temple was smaller in scale, though it was less ornate, and its dedication was missing a lot of the pomp and circumstance that surrounded the first dedication, the Lord announced His pleasure with the work.

In other words, don't despise what God is pleased with. And don't fail to celebrate God's victories even if they seem small to you.

[ 20 : 53 ] As a pastor, I hear a lot of people's testimonies. many of them were saved at a young age and they grew up in the church.

And sometimes when they share their testimony, they almost seemed ashamed of how, I don't know, in their mind they think it's kind of boring.

You know, compared to somebody who maybe was saved later in life and who had gone through a lot of really hard and difficult things and they're more impressed by that testimony than they are their own.

But so, salvation is a miraculous work of God. And praise God for His grace to save people when they're young. So, your testimony may seem small to you, but it's not.

Don't despise what God is pleased with. Additionally, churches can get caught up in numbers and they can compare their membership roles and their budgets and a bunch of other things to other churches to see how they're measuring up.

[ 22 : 04 ] But a church, no matter how small it is, if they are faithful to God and to seeking His will, God is pleased.

And there's much to celebrate. The Jewish people had emerged at this point in their history from one of the worst periods in their history.

They had a place to worship in the manner that God had prescribed to them in His Word. God was faithful to keep that Word. He was faithful to preserve them in their time of exile.

God provided them with prophets who proclaimed His Word without fear and they had the promise of a future Messiah, a Savior, who the temple in the prophetic words of Zechariah alluded to.

And that was not a small thing. You know, as a church, we have a lot to celebrate. During a time when many churches are in a state of decline, ours is not.

[ 23 : 14 ] during a time when a lot of churches have traded in doctrinal fidelity to appease the world. Ours has not.

We've seen the Lord save people here. We've seen people make their public professions of faith through baptism here. How awesome was that?

We've been honored to remember faithful servants of Jesus who lived their lives dedicated to Him and who we now know through death have entered into the joy of their Master in eternal life.

Our building is often full of the sounds of children laughing and crying and screaming.

What a blessing. We are blessed with the opportunity. By God, we are blessed with this opportunity to help bring up the next generation in the way that they should go.

[ 24 : 27 ] That's something to celebrate. Most importantly, we have a Savior Savior, who has atoned for our sins, who intercedes right now on our behalf, who keeps us, and who continually lavishes us with His grace and His mercy.

We have the truth. We've been set free. We more so than any people have reason to celebrate. celebrate. So why do we complain so much?

Ask yourself, do you complain more than you celebrate what God is doing in this place or what He's done in your life?

Christian, you are a temple of the Holy Spirit. you have reason to celebrate all the time.

Do people see the joy of the Lord in you? In this place, in your home, in your neighborhood, where you work? Do they see it when they come and they worship with us?

[ 25 : 54 ] Do they sense that these people, these people love Jesus? I can tell. They're excited to be here. Do we seem victorious or defeated?

Are you truly dedicated as a temple of the Holy Spirit to celebrate God's goodness? When you wake up on Sunday morning, are you eager to come into this place and worship Him? Is there joy in your worship? Celebration should be a feature of this church and of us as believers. The second feature that we see here is confession of sin. Verse 17 says, they offered at the dedication of the house of God 100 bulls, 200 rams, 400 lambs, and as sin offering for all Israel 12 mil goats according to the number of the tribes of Israel.

Again, this was a day of celebration, but the Israelites were not to forget that they were sinners and without shedding the blood, without the shedding of blood, I should say, there is no remission of sins.

[ 27 : 16 ] There was no room in this celebration for self-ingadulation. celebration. There was no time for anyone to give themselves a pat on the back and take credit for the progress that had been made.

This day of celebration included a time for them to not only confess their failure, but also confess God's faithfulness to them, even though they had failed Him time after time after time. There was consequences for their sin. They lived in exile for 50 to 60 years after the temple was destroyed, but God keeps His covenant.

God preserves a remnant. He is faithful to us even when we fail Him. That's something to celebrate too, isn't it? Too often, I think, we view God as unkind, unloving, a disciplinarian, a Father whose approval we just can never get, no matter what we do.

Yes, God disciplines us when we sin, but as the book of Hebrews reminds us in chapter 12 verses 5 through 7, and have you forgotten the exhortation that addresses you as sons?

[ 28 : 35 ] My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be wary when reproved by Him. For the Lord disciplines the one He loves, and He chastises every son whom He receives.

It is for discipline that you have to endure. God is treating you as sons for what son is there whom His Father does not discipline? A loving father and mother disciplines their children to educate them and to protect them from actions and attitudes that would harm them and harm others.

Jesus revealed what the father is like in His parable of the prodigal son. He is eager.

He's waiting. He's looking for His son to return. His son who basically wished Him death and who took His inheritance early and who went and wasted it all.

this sinful son. He's waiting. He's anticipating. He's looking for Him to return and then when He does He acts foolishly by tying His robe up around His legs exposing them and running to His son embracing His son celebrating the return of His son.

[ 30 : 03 ] that's what God is like. We don't deserve any of this. We don't deserve any of that kind of treatment.

But God is gracious and He's faithful and He's merciful to forgive us of the sins that we confess.

1 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.

All of it. There's a second element of their confession expressed at the dedication of the temple in Ezra that we need to understand as well. And that is the communal nature of it.

The sin of the people had consequences for the entire community for the entire nation.

Unconfessed sin has personal and it has corporal consequences.

[ 31 : 17 ] Israel learned this lesson the hard way and they learned it many times. And while we are ultimately accountable to God we are also accountable to one another when we sin.

And sin has a way of disrupting and breaking apart our corporate fellowship and unity as a church which we've seen from God's word is a temple.

In Philippians 4 the apostle Paul calls out two ladies by name. So imagine this letter is received and it's read and all the churches gathered and there's this conflict between these two ladies Lodia! Lodia and Syntyche! And everybody knows about it maybe they're talking about it but you know there's a problem here and it's creating disfellowship in this church.

And so imagine this letter is read for the first time you're Lodia you're Syntyche and your name all of a sudden is read from this letter and he says I entreat Lodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the

Lord.

[ 32 : 34 ] Notice he doesn't say anything about what their dispute was about he just says that you guys need to get over and figure it out and you need to agree in the Lord. Yes he says I also ask you true companion help these women he says to the church help these women resolve this issue.

who have labored side by side with me in the gospel together with Clement and the rest of my fellow workers whose names are written in the book of life. In Matthew 18 Jesus doesn't just tell us he commands us to seek to resolve conflicts and hurt feelings when we are sinned against by a brother or a sister in Christ.

James 5 16 urges us to therefore confess your sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working.

So look we need each other's help in our struggle with sin and we need each other's prayers we need each other's encouragement we need each other's accountability.

accountability we need constant reminders from one another of who we as temples of the Holy Spirit are and understand how sinful actions can disrupt our gospel influence in this church and to our community.

[ 34 : 09 ] Amen. Amen. The third feature of this dedication that should be featured in our lives and in our church is commitment to God's word.

So they're celebrating his goodness they were confessing their sins and now they express a commitment to God's word in verse 18. And they set the priests and their divisions and the Levites and their divisions for the service of God at Jerusalem as it is written in the book of Moses.

On the day of this dedication the people committed themselves to follow the instructions God prescribed for worship of him in his word.

They searched the scriptures handed down to them from Moses which had been preserved while they were in exile and they committed themselves to obey the instruction of God's word.

In some ways this was a new beginning but this new beginning did not mean that they had liberty to introduce new things. There was no pandering to generational tests no attempts to turn worship into some kind of performance no mixing of worldliness with godliness.

[ 35 : 27 ] Remember how these people had already rejected the Samaritans who wanted to participate in the rebuilding of the temple and they said no we don't worship the same God we don't believe the same things.

They got back to the basics they were committed to obey God's word. They dedicated themselves to what was written by God seeking his glory which was also for their good.

to I I know that I share a lot of stories about my time in seminary and my preaching professor who I was blessed to sit underneath while I was there and I do that because those years were so formative for me I learned a lot about God I learned a lot about myself and I learned about preaching and I remember in preaching class, each one of us students, we had our day to preach. You would stand up in the classroom and you would preach and everybody else would evaluate your sermon and in the back of the classroom was Dr. Aubrey and his was the evaluation that really mattered and I remember after I'd been going in this class for a little while, got a little bit over the jitters and nerves, I had this great illustration.

It was about a pintail duck. Maybe some of you know what a pintail duck is. It's a duck and I worked at Cabela's in college and this pintail duck was like our store mascot, a real live duck but it had its wings clipped so it couldn't fly around the store and in the back of the store was like this big mountain, fake mountain, with a bunch of animals that were once alive but now were stuffed and there was a pond where this duck would just kind of swim around, crawl around that mountain and then I remember during duck hunting season, they would put the duck decoys in the pond that the pintail duck swam in and there was a decoy of a pintail duck and that duck all day long would just swim around and around and around the decoy that looked like him.

[ 38 : 03 ] I think it was a hymn. Doesn't matter. But I thought this was a great illustration. I'll tell you what, I don't even remember what I was illustrating. And I had my classmates were just, I mean they were laughing and they were maybe holding back tears.

This was a great illustration to begin my sermon but it was a long illustration. I thought I was doing good and then I looked to the back where my professor was seated and at first he was smiling and then as the illustration got longer and I hadn't said anything about the Bible, he just began to tap his Bible like this.

And he was finally relieved when I actually started preaching. But listen, I share that story with you because I think a lot of times in our culture, the church has become more about performance on Sunday morning.

And sermons are a lot more about what will make people laugh? What will make people cry? What will make people feel good about themselves? And look, preaching, there's things that are funny and make us cry and those are okay things as long as they are things that have to do with what is written in God's Word.

And the point isn't to entertain people but to feed people. That's true with preaching. That's true with Sunday school teaching. That's true with Awana and youth group and everything that we do as a church.

[ 39 : 44 ] The point isn't to entertain. The point is to conduct ourselves as God's people according to His Word and to teach God's Word in this place.

And I ask you, are you truly dedicated to filling your mind and your heart with the Word of God? Do you truly treasure it and value it? Do you meditate upon it? Look at what the psalmist says in Psalm 119, 105, verses 1 through 12 about how much he treasures and is dedicated to the Word of God.

He says, The wicked have laid a snare for me, but I do not stray from your precepts.

Your testimonies are my heritage forever, for they are the joy of my heart. I incline my heart to perform your statutes forever to the end.

[ 41 : 25 ] Are you as committed to God's Word as you should be? When you celebrate or when you worship, is there celebration?

Or is there just going through the motions? Are you confessing your sins because that's what you're commanded to do? Are you entrusting yourself to your brothers and your sisters in Christ that they would be used by God to help you?

Or are you too prideful to admit that you, like the rest of us, are a sinner in need of a Savior? And so how should we adjust to all of this?

I think it's this. Dedicate your temple to worship and serve the Lord. And I'm talking about you. You. Believer. Dedicate. Your temple. To worship and to serve the Lord.

[ 42 : 32 ] Ephesians 2, 19-22 says, So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, speaking of those who have been saved and born again, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. In that picture you see a cornerstone.

The cornerstone is the principal stone. It's usually placed at the corner of an edifice to guide the workers in building the rest of the wall, in building the rest of the structure.

The cornerstone was usually the largest and the most solid and the most carefully constructed of any of the stones in the building.

The Bible, as we've just read in Ephesians and in other places, describes Jesus as the cornerstone. He is the cornerstone upon which our church is built.

[ 43 : 59 ] He is the cornerstone on which your faith resides. He is foundational. Once the cornerstone was set, it becomes the basis for determining every measurement in the remainder of the construction.

Everything was aligned to the cornerstone. As the cornerstone of the building of the church, Jesus is our standard of measure and alignment.

And the same is true, Christian, of your life. Is Jesus the cornerstone of our temple, our church?

Is he the cornerstone of your life? If you're an unbeliever this morning, I say it and I mean it, I am glad that you're here.

And you have to understand that it's by God's design that you are here. And I imagine that you're here. Because without Jesus as your cornerstone, everything in your life gets out of line.

[ 45 : 12 ] Everything gets out of whack. It's hard to know who and what to believe. And you know that there's something missing in your life. You've heard about how gracious and merciful God the Father is.

That Jesus would come. That he would willingly live the sinless life. That none of us is capable of living. That he would willingly die on the cross as a sacrifice. And being truly man and being truly God, his sacrifice was sufficient to atone for all of our sins for the one who places their faith in him. And you're here this morning to hear this message and to hear this gospel. And I hope that you'll believe it. I hope that you'll be saved. I hope that we'll be able to celebrate with you what God has begun in your life.

I know you may have questions. And I encourage you, please, find me. Find Pastor Tyler. We would love to talk with you.

And share with you more about how good, how gracious, how merciful, how forgiving, how wonderful Jesus Christ is.

[ 46 : 28 ] For you who are a believer, I challenge you. Examine your life. What are you putting into your temple? Would you bring it into this place amongst other people?

And if not, then why are you bringing it into your body? Or your mind? Or your house? And together, if we're dedicated to be the kind of people that God has called us to be, God will be pleased.

And we'll have much to celebrate. Let's pray. Let's pray. It's a tremendous privilege that we have as your people today living on this side of the cross.

God, we have the complete revelation of your word. Lord, we know that Jesus has come in fulfillment of your promises in the Old Testament.

God, this is he fulfilled all those prophecies, so he will fulfill the ones that will be realized in the future. God, in your grace and your mercy, in your desire to dwell among us, you've made it possible through your son, Jesus.

[ 47 : 48 ] Lord, forgive us that that truth, that reality is one that we don't stop and think about and celebrate enough. Lord, forgive us that too often instead of confessing our sins to you or to one another, we're prideful.

We don't want to admit that we actually are sinners and that we actually need people's help. Lord, forgive us that at times we're not committed to your word, that we rationalize why it's better for us to disobey than to obey.

And we come up with excuses. Forgive us, Lord. And I pray, God, that each of us this day would be truly dedicated, even more so than we've been in the past, to celebrating how awesome you are, to confessing our sins and be there to help one another in time of need.

And, God, to just be committed to your word because this world that we live in is desperate need.

Of Christians who are dedicated to you. So, God, I pray for each of us, Holy Spirit, that you would move us to dedicate ourselves to you in ways that we haven't before.

And that you would be pleased and you'd receive all the glory. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.