

“The Beauty of Holy-Mess”

Summary

This Christmas Eve message invites us to reflect on the true spirit of gift-giving, reminding us that God is the ultimate gift-giver. The central theme revolves around worship in the midst of life's messiness, drawing inspiration from Psalms 96:7-9. We're encouraged to 'worship in the beauty of holy mess,' acknowledging that our imperfect circumstances don't hinder genuine worship but rather provide an opportunity for it. This perspective echoes Mary and Joseph's experience, facing inconveniences and challenges while birthing the Savior. The message challenges us to ascribe glory and honor to God, especially when life feels chaotic. It's a powerful reminder that true worship is a heart function, not just an outward action. As we navigate our own 'holy messes,' we're called to choose worship, magnifying God above our circumstances and trusting Him with our lives without strings attached.

Chapters

Chapter 1 - 0:00 - 5:00: The Gift of Worship

We explore the concept of giving to God through worship and glory.

Chapter 2 - 5:00 - 10:00 : Worship in the Midst of Mess

We learn about worshipping God in the midst of life's messy situations.

Chapter 3 - 10:00 - 15:00: The Light of Christ

We explore the symbolism of light in relation to Christ and our role as light-bearers.

Main Points – The Beauty of Holy Mess (Christmas Eve Service 2024)

Title: Worshiping in the Beauty of Holy Mess: Giving Glory to God This Christmas

Sermon Summary: This Christmas Eve sermon encourages believers to worship God authentically, even amidst life's challenges and imperfections. Pastor Rob emphasizes that true worship is a heart-level offering to God, not dependent on circumstances but rather an opportunity to glorify Him in all situations. The sermon draws parallels between the Jewish festival of Hanukkah and Christmas, using the symbolism of light to represent Christ and believers' role in sharing His light with the world.

Key Points:

- God desires genuine worship from our hearts, not just outward actions
- We are called to worship God in the midst of our "holy mess" - life's imperfections and challenges
- Giving glory to God means ascribing to Him the honor and strength He deserves
- Christians are called to be the light of the world, reflecting Christ's light to others
- Surrendering control to God in difficult situations is an act of worship

Scripture References:

- Psalm 96:7-9
- Isaiah 66:1
- Matthew 5:14-15
- John 1:4-5, 8:12, 9:5

Stories:

- The pastor's personal anecdote about changing his sermon at the last minute
- The story of Mary and Joseph's challenging circumstances during Christ's birth
- An anecdote about giving a brass plate as a gift with strings attached
- The story of Hanukkah and the miracle of the oil lasting for eight days

Small Group Study Guide – The Beauty of Holy-Mess (Christmas Eve 2024)

Small Group Guide: Worshiping in the Beauty of Holy Mess

Opening Prayer:

Ask a volunteer to open the session in prayer, inviting God's presence and guidance.

Key Takeaways:

1. Christmas is about God giving us the gift of a Savior.
2. God desires our worship, especially in the midst of life's messiness.
3. We are called to give God glory, honor, and strength through our worship.
4. Jesus is the light of the world, and we are called to reflect His light.

Discussion Questions:

1. The pastor mentioned the "RGV translation" of Psalm 96:9: "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holy mess." How does this resonate with your current life situation?
2. Reflect on the story of Mary and Joseph. How did they exemplify worship in the midst of difficult circumstances?
3. The sermon talks about giving God a "Visa gift card" type of offering. What does this mean to you, and how can we offer our lives to God without strings attached?
4. How does the symbolism of the Hanukkah menorah relate to Jesus and our role as Christians?
5. Pastor Rob said, "I don't think the mess is actually a hindrance to real worship. Now it feels like it is. But I think the mess is an invitation to worship." How can we change our perspective to see our challenges as opportunities for worship?
6. Discuss the concept of being "the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14-15). How can we practically shine Christ's light in our daily lives, especially during difficult times?

Practical Applications:

1. This week, identify one "messy" situation in your life. Commit to intentionally worshiping God in the midst of it, perhaps through prayer, singing, or journaling.
2. Practice "ascribing glory to God" by verbally acknowledging His goodness and power, especially when faced with challenges.

3. Choose one person or situation where you can be a "light" this week. Plan a specific action to demonstrate Christ's love and grace.

4. Reflect on areas of your life where you might be giving to God with "strings attached." Prayerfully consider how to surrender these areas fully to Him.

Closing Prayer:

Close the session by having group members light candles (if possible) and offering short prayers of commitment to be light-bearers in their spheres of influence.

Discussion Questions – The Beauty of Holy-Mess (Christmas Eve Service 2024)

How can we practice 'worshiping in the beauty of holy mess' in our daily lives, especially during challenging times?

What does it mean to give God glory and strength, and how can we practically apply this concept in our everyday experiences?

How does the imagery of Christ as the 'servant candle' in the Hanukkah menorah deepen our understanding of Jesus' role in our lives?

In what ways can we be 'the light of the world' as Jesus instructed, particularly in our homes and communities?

How might viewing our personal struggles as an 'invitation to worship' change our perspective and response to difficulties?

What are some practical ways we can give our lives to God 'without strings attached,' allowing Him to use us as He sees fit?

How does the concept of worshiping at God's 'footstool' (earth) challenge our ideas about when and where worship should occur?

In what ways can we balance acknowledging the 'mess' in our lives while still focusing on giving glory to God?

How might the convergence of Hanukkah and Christmas this year inspire us to reflect more deeply on the light of Christ in our world?

What does it mean to you personally to 'receive and give' the light of Christ, and how can this shape your interactions with others?

Scriptures – The Beauty of Holy-Mess

Here are the [scripture references](#) mentioned or alluded to in the sermon:

1. Psalm 96:7-9
2. Psalm 99:5
3. Isaiah 66:1
4. Isaiah 9:2
5. John 1:4-5
6. John 8:12
7. John 9:5
8. Matthew 5:14-15

Additionally, while not directly quoted, the sermon alludes to these biblical concepts:

1. John 3:16 (God's love and giving of His Son)
2. Luke 2 (The Christmas story, including Mary and Joseph's journey and Jesus' birth)
3. 1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (Our bodies as temples of the Holy Spirit, relating to the Hanukkah temple rededication story)
4. Matthew 20:28 (Jesus as a servant, relating to the "servant candle" in the Hanukkah menorah)
5. Revelation 3:20 (Jesus knocking at the door, relating to the theme of inviting Jesus into our lives)
6. Romans 12:1 (Offering our bodies as living sacrifices, relating to the theme of giving ourselves to God)
7. James 1:2-4 (Considering trials joy, relating to worshipping in the midst of difficulties or "holy mess")

These additional references align with the main themes of worship, giving glory to God, Jesus as the light of the world, and serving others as discussed in the sermon.

Devotional – The Beauty of Holy Mess (Christmas Eve 2024)

Here's a 5-day Bible reading plan and devotional guide based on the themes from the transcription:

Day 1: Worshiping in “Holy-Mess”, in the midst of mess

Reading: Psalm 96:7-9

Devotional: In a world full of distractions and challenges, it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the "mess" of life. Yet, God calls us to worship Him not just in perfect circumstances, but in the midst of our struggles. Today's passage reminds us to "give unto the Lord glory and strength." Reflect on areas of your life that feel messy or out of control. How can you choose to worship God in these situations? Remember, true worship is a heart posture, not just external actions. Ask God to help you see His beauty and holiness even in the midst of life's challenges.

Day 2: The Light of the World

Reading: John 8:12-20

Devotional: Jesus declares Himself to be the "light of the world." In a dark and often confusing world, Christ offers clarity, hope, and direction. Consider areas of your life where you feel in need of guidance or illumination. How can you invite Christ's light into these situations? Remember that as followers of Jesus, we are called to reflect His light to others. Pray for opportunities to shine Christ's light in your interactions with others today.

Day 3: Giving Our Best to God

Reading: Romans 12:1-2

Devotional: The sermon emphasized giving God our best, not just leftovers. Paul urges us to offer our bodies as "living sacrifices." This isn't about physical self-harm, but about dedicating our whole selves - thoughts, actions, and priorities - to God. What areas of your life have you been holding back from God? Consider making a specific commitment to offer that area to God today. Ask for His help in transforming your mind so that you can discern His will more clearly.

Day 4: God's Presence in Our Struggles

Reading: Isaiah 43:1-3

Devotional: The Christmas story reminds us that God entered our messy world in the person of Jesus. Today's passage assures us that God is with us even in times of trouble. Reflect on a current struggle in your life. How might God be present in this situation, even if it's not immediately obvious? Take time to thank God for His promise to be with you, and ask for the faith to trust Him even when circumstances are difficult.

Day 5: Sharing the Light

Reading: Matthew 5:14-16

Devotional: Just as Jesus is the light of the world, He calls His followers to be lights as well. This isn't about drawing attention to ourselves, but about reflecting Christ's love and truth to those around us. Think about your spheres of influence - family, work, community. How can you intentionally shine Christ's light in these areas today? Remember, sometimes the smallest acts of kindness or words of encouragement can have a profound impact. Ask God to use you as His instrument of light and love in the world.