

Real-Life Worship — Delivery Transcript

Hebrews 13:7–17 (CSB) • Wes Terry • Sunday, May 4, 2025 • Faith IRL

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We're going to be in the book of Hebrews chapter 13. If you don't have your Bible, there's actually one on the chair in the seat in front of you. I'm actually preaching from that Bible this morning. So turn to 1070. 1070 in your pew Bible. And that's where we're going to be this morning as we kick off a new series called Faith IRL. And I got to confess I'm not yet forty, but I'm a very old man because I had no idea what IRL stood for when I saw it popping up all over the internet and in text messages and things like that, so I went to UrbanDictionary.com, my trusted source of hip young sayings and IRL stands for, can anybody guess? Look at you youngsters. Yeah, in real life. Was that just me being stupid or is that really something fresh and new? I didn't know anything about it. But we're looking at Faith IRL, which is faith in real life, because as Taylor said last week, kind of stuck with me. If Christianity is true, then it ought to be able to transform our life because real truth ought to apply in real life for real people, addressing real problems.

Amen. And if Christianity is only true in a theoretical sense or a philosophical sense, well it might be good for making arguments and in academia, but it has no real utility in your normal day-to-day life. And one of the reasons I am a Christian and I believe Christianity is the truth of God, the God who created the real world, is because Christian truth does work in real life. That Christian faith applies to real life and helps address and solve real problems.

And so that's what we're going to look at in the book of Hebrews. We've been in the book of Hebrews. We've been looking at the warning passages in the book of Hebrews. And so what we're going to do over the next four or so weeks is fill in some of the gaps on what was left unsaid from those warning passages in chapters 12 and 13 of the book of Hebrews. And the book of Hebrews is an epistle, so it's like all the other letters in the New Testament near the end, but it's also a written sermon.

And any good sermon has a lot of bang at the final end, you know, the conclusion of some exhortations, and this book of Hebrews is no different. But it's also like a lot of the other epistles in the New Testament in that it saves all of the practical application for the end. So

real faith gets fleshed out in real life. I almost titled the series Faith in the Flesh. It just sounded wrong. So it sounded cool actually, but it feels wrong. So I didn't do that. We're going to do Faith IRL and we're going to pick it up in chapter twelve, verse twenty-eight, which is where we last left when we looked at this final warning passage.

And we're going to read down through chapter thirteen, verse eight. So he says in verse twenty-eight of chapter twelve, therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Let us be thankful, because by it, by gratitude, we may serve or worship God acceptably, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. Let brotherly love continue. Don't neglect to show hospitality, for by doing this, some have welcomed angels as guests without even knowing it. Remember those in prison as though you were in prison with them, and then remember the mistreated as though you yourselves were suffering bodily.

Marriage is to be honored by everyone, and the marriage bed kept undefiled, because God will judge the sexually immoral and adulterers, and then keep your life free from the love of money be satisfied with what you have, for he himself has said, I will never leave you or abandon you. Therefore we may boldly say, the Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What can man do to me? And then verse 7, remember your leaders who have spoken God's word to you as you carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith.

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. This is such a wonderful text near the end of the book of Hebrews, but if you're honest you read those verses and it feels very punchy, very disjointed, let brotherly love continue, then goes on to us visiting prisoners, then goes on to taking care of suffering people. It feels like they're pretty disjointed exhortations or commands, but they're all within this framework at the end of verse twelve, verse twenty-eight, chapter twelve, verse twenty-eight, which talks about worship. We can worship God with gratitude, with reverence and awe, because we've experienced, we've received in Jesus something better.

And I would say verses 1 to 6 apply to a life of worship outside the four walls of gathered worship. And then I would say verses 7, really all the way down to 17, apply to worship inside the four walls of the worship gathering. We're going to look at the first six verses next week. We're going to look at the final seven verses this week because this week, in God's providence, we are celebrating one of our spiritual leaders, Pastor Vernon, and we are in need of being reminded of what worship, gathered worship is all about.

Because for many of us in the room this morning, you may find yourself in a totally different worship building, a totally different worship style. A lot of things about gathered worship that look different today than what it might have looked like when you were growing up or what it might have looked like even last week. And there are some really helpful reminders

in this text that kind of renew in us what genuine Christian worship, gathered worship is all about. So real faith should apply to real life and real faith ought to shape our approach.

So what does real life worship look like? That's what he's going to go into. And you can see that he's juxtaposing or he's contrasting worship, New Testament worship that is in the person of Jesus with this counterfeit alternative that was being presented by these strange new teachers. See that on the one hand in verse 8 because he says remember your leaders, and as you remember your leaders, never forget Jesus Christ is unchanging. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. There's actually not even a verb in the original language, it's just Jesus Christ.

Never changing, yesterday, today, forevermore. So these leaders that come and go here today, gone tomorrow, we remember them, we honor them. And we fix our eyes on the one who never leaves us, never forsakes us, the unchanging Jesus. That is where worship is centrally located for the Christian under this new covenant. That's contrasted with a different approach and a different teaching presented by these different leaders. So if you look in verse 9, he talks about these strange new teachers. Don't be led astray by various kinds of strange teachings. For it's good for the heart to be established by grace, and not by food regulation, since those who observe them have not benefited.

So we don't know what these strange teachings are, but it was a vision of worship being presented by these false teachers and it was taking away from the gospel of grace the centrality of Christ and was kind of emphasizing dietary restrictions, rules, regulations, traditions, and a very external, self-reliant approach to worship. And the author of Hebrews is saying don't do that. Don't go there. I know it may feel attractive. Why? Because these were former Jews, remember? These are young Christians. Coming out of first century Judaism. Every day when they went to worship, they would worship in the temple according to the Old Testament design.

And it was so deeply ingrained in them that when they became Christians and they were worshiping Jesus instead of at the temple through some other version, it was upsetting their apple cart. It was disturbing their approach to how they normally thought about church. And they were also getting pressure from their rabbi and mom and dad or whoever else. Why would you worship Jesus when this is how we worship? So they were drifting, they were feeling the pressure to slip away from worshiping Jesus into something else. And the author of Hebrews is saying, don't do that.

It's a counterfeit worship. It's a false worship. It will not be better. It will actually be worse. It will not draw you near to God. It will not strengthen you by grace. It will in fact do the opposite. Just look at those who do it. They have not benefited. And so true worship is in Jesus. And he's going to even take it further than that. True worship is enabled, or you could say established, exclusively, defined by the cross of Jesus Christ. It is the person and work of

Jesus on the cross that makes Christian worship unique from all other worship every other place in the world, including Judaism in the Old Testament.

Now how does he do it? Well look at verse ten. First thing he does is he talks about this altar. Now I don't when I was growing up, when I thought about the altar, I thought about the stairs leading up to the stage in a church. Anyone else think that's the altar? Thank you. I'm not alone. You're wrong. I was wrong. That's not an altar. Okay. Those are stairs. This is a stage. Nothing special about this building. You know, it's just a nice building. In the Old Testament, an altar was a flat surface on which an offering was made to God. And in the book of Genesis, when Abraham would make an altar, it was just like a bunch of stones flattened out and he would offer up a sacrifice.

When you get to the tabernacle, which is what he's talking about here, when he says. We have an altar from which those who worship at the tabernacle do not have a right to eat. He's talking about this altar and this altar. There were two altars in the Old Testament tabernacle. One was called the brazen altar named after what it's made out of, which is bronze. This was the biggest one, and it was the one on which animals were sacrificed, and then they would be burnt up as an offering to God.

And then the blood of that animal sacrifice would be like painted on the four horns of the altar. And then the high priest would come in here to the holy place. And he would take that blood of the animal and he would paint it on the four horns of this altar. This altar is called the altar of incense. Some people call it the golden altar because of what it's made out of. Can you guess what it's made out of? It's made out of gold. He would come in here and he'd paint on those four horns of that altar.

And then this part, which is separated by this curtain, was called the holy of holies. It was the most holy place in the tabernacle, and only one person could go in there, only one time a year. And that was the high priest. Otherwise, when a priest like this would offer sacrifices on this altar, sometimes they could eat from it and sometimes they couldn't. Like for unintentional sins or sins that were not so serious, the priest could sacrifice the animal, burn up some parts, and then the rest of the meat he could keep for himself and his family.

We call it perks of the job, right? But other sacrifices for a serious sin you could not eat from the animal. And then on the most serious sacrifice on the most serious day, that was the day of atonement. It's talked about in Leviticus 16. The animal would be slaughtered, the blood would be put on the horns, and then the carcass of the animal the parts that weren't burned up on the altar, like the fat and the liver and the other tasty things. It was taken outside the tabernacle tent and burned.

Outside the camp. And that is what he's talking about in the next verse. The bodies of those animals. We have a different altar in Jesus. Their altar, their priest could or could not eat

from their altar. We have an altar which we can eat from, but the bodies of those animals in the Old Testament, their blood was brought into the most holy place by the high priest as a sin offering. That offering was burned outside the camp. And so he's contrasting the altar of Jesus with the altar of the Old Testament, and he's saying the altar in Jesus is better first because we can eat from that altar.

We can eat from that altar. Every time we take the Lord's Supper, what do we do? We say, this is the body of Christ, which is the bread is the body of Christ which is broken for you. The juice or the wine, depending if you're Baptist or reckless. The wine is the blood of Christ which is shed for you. And at least in Protestant theology, we don't believe the bread and the wine literally become the body and blood of Jesus, but we do believe, or at least I believe, that there is a genuine presence.

Of Christ in the taking of the Lord's Supper and that you partake of Christ, you eat from the altar. In worship when you take the Lord's Supper. And that's what he's describing. Those priests didn't get to eat from their altar, but we get to eat from our altar. What is our altar? Well, it's not the Lord's Supper. It is the cross of Jesus Christ. The Lord's Supper is commemorating what Jesus Christ did on the cross because that was the altar on which Jesus made atonement for sin. On the cross, Jesus died in our place for our sin.

He did not die for his sin, but for ours. He in making atonement for sin, we have our sins forgiven so that we no longer have God's wrath resting over our heads, but we also get to be united with Christ and become partakers of his priestly work. So just as he as a priest made atonement with the better offering of his own life, we become priests of God and get to eat from that altar, namely as we celebrate the Lord's Supper. Eating and partaking of the presence of Jesus Christ. And that is Christian worship.

That's why the Lord's Supper is so fundamental to Christian worship. Now I don't know that the Lord's Supper is what this author has in mind, but it's certainly what I think of when I think of eating from the altar. What does that mean practically? That's a lot of theology, Wes, what does that look like practically? The implications for Christian worship, number one, is that worship is no longer about a place. Number two, worship is no longer restricted to certain kinds of people. Put yourself in the shoes of that first century audience.

The only acceptable worship was worship in the temple the only acceptable worship was by people like the Aaronic priesthood and they had to be really good priesthood at that and they had to wear a certain kind of garb and they had to go at it a certain kind of way and the symbol of our worship isn't that altar, it isn't that temple, it's a bloody cross. And the cross goes left and right, east and west, as far as you can imagine, to remind you that everybody is welcome at the foot of the cross because Jesus made atonement for the sins of the world.

And the cross goes as high as north as you can imagine and far south as you can imagine to remind you that even the worst of sinners Who've done even the worst of things, who come from the worst of lines, are welcome at the foot of the cross because Jesus has made atonement that is sufficient for your sin. And when you come to the cross, you're reminded that worship is not about a place. It's not about a physical location, whether it's 2500 South 27th or 6500 Military Drive. It is about a cross, a symbol that communicates the universal, incredible love of God for you demonstrated through the cross of Jesus Christ, who made atonement for your sins so that you could be set free.

That's Christian worship and that's why it's better. That's why he said, why would you go back to the temple? Why would you go back to that old stuff? He abolished the old when he established the new. But he doesn't stop there. It's not just that we eat from a better altar. Jesus also suffered outside the gate so that he might sanctify the people by his own blood. So let us then go to him outside the camp, bearing his disgrace. I don't know if you caught this, but he says, gate up here camp down here.

He's bringing Leviticus 16 and the crucifixion together, just like this. And he's saying, you remember in the Old Testament that the sacrificial animal when he was sacrificed and burnt up that his carcass had to go outside the camp. Why? Because that was the sacrifice for sin. Sinful things don't go in the camp, they go outside the camp because outside the camp is where unholy things are. That's also why those who went outside the camp had to be ceremonially cleansed before they could come back in the camp, because in the camp was holy, outside the camp was unholy.

And he's saying Jesus is like that sacrifice. Except Jesus wasn't crucified outside the camp. He was crucified outside of what? The gate. Well what gate are you talking about? Anybody guess? Jerusalem. The city gates of Jerusalem. You know what they thought about Jerusalem, first century Jews? It is the holiest city, for the holiest of people, for the holiest of worship, on the most holiest of days. And if worship means anything, it's in that temple at that place. Except Jesus didn't make atonement for sin in the temple, did he? He went into the city gates, they hailed him:

Hosanna, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Except he went into the temple, he turned over the tables, and in his teaching he made some important people so angry they accused him of blasphemy at a mock trial. They condemned him to die by crucifixion by the Romans. He was beaten, he was tortured, he was dragged outside the city, and he hung on a wooden cross bearing reproach and shame. But Jesus did not go outside the gate because he was unholy. He did nothing wrong. He lived a sinless, perfect life of love.

It wasn't because he was unholy, it was because we are unholy. He went outside the gate for us. He died for our sin, not his sin. And in going outside the gate, here's what he's communicating about worship. He's saying worship. In Jesus is different because Christian

worship isn't about what you do. Christian worship is about what God has done for you in Christ. It isn't about priestly garbs and traditions and rules and Jerusalem and the gold temple and in fact, the temple a couple years later is going to be destroyed, not one rock on top of the next.

Christian worship is about a bloody cross. Because through the cross, God says to you and to me, who always wonder, have I done enough? Am I good enough? Am I strong enough? Will God accept me now? Christian worship is centered on a cross to say you could never be good enough, but God loves you. And He loves you so much, He did for you what you could not do for yourself. He was good enough for you, and then died in your place to bear the penalty of your not good enough sin, and then clothes you with his good enough righteousness so that you can be set free. He went to the unholy place so unholy people could be made holy by the blood of Jesus.

He sanctified them by his blood outside the gate. That's why he says you got to go out there. You got to go outside the gate. You got to be where Jesus is. And remember for a first century audience He's essentially saying you need to leave your traditions, you need to leave your rules and regulations, you need to leave the familiar, you need to leave the orientation of worship around a temple, and you need to go outside Jerusalem, outside the temple. To the foot of a cross of a crucified Savior. For many Jews, a false prophet, a failed Messiah who hung on a tree, and you need to identify with that Jesus at that cross in that place. That's what worship is.

Which was revolutionary and a reminder for us worship is not about a place it's not for certain kind of people, and it's not about what we do. It's about what Jesus Christ has done for us outside the gates and we go to him there. And sometimes that means to worship the Lord, we got to leave our familiar. And we got to be a little bit uncomfortable and some of those norms and traditions and preferences that we unintentionally correlate with worship. We have to set aside and be reminded, worship has always only ever been about Jesus crucified for sinners.

The holy one and the unholy place so unholy people could be set free. And why would you do that? Well if you look at verse 14, the motivation was because we're not living for Jerusalem. We do not have an enduring city here. Instead we seek the one that is to come. So in Jesus we eat from the better altar and in Jesus we inherit a better city. That's what Christian worship is. It's about Jesus. It's at the foot of the cross. It is open to all, and it is for unholy people to be made holy in Jesus.

What does that look like? How do you express worship? Well you might imagine it's not again what a lot of them thought about. They thought worship was about sacrifices, temple rituals. He says no, true worship, verse 15, is therefore through Jesus continually offering up to God a sacrifice of praise not of animals, not of blood, of praise. That is the fruit of lips that

confess his name. Don't neglect to do what is good and to share, for God is pleased with such sacrifices. This goes right back to what Paul said in Romans 12 when he says you want to worship the Lord.

Here's what worship is. Looking at that, being moved by that, overtaken by that, offer your body as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to the Lord. You don't need to offer an animal sacrifice because Jesus has made atonement with his life. You don't need showbread. You don't need the candles. You don't need the altar. Jesus took care of all of those things. The only thing that is left for you to do is to offer your life. Wholly surrender to the Lord. As an act that is pleasing. Lord, I want to be pleasing to you.

You've given everything to me. What right do I have to withhold anything from you? I give you my life, my all. It's fully surrendered. That is what worship looks like for the Christian. Now that's theoretical, right? It's easy to say that. What does that look like? He gives you two specific examples. A sacrifice of praise and then a sacrifice of sharing, sharing with other people. What does it look like to sacrifice praise? He said it's the fruit of lips that confess his name. So one visible, measurable expression of worship is Christ-exalting gratitude.

And again, it's easy for us to think, well, I worship Jesus in my house, in my closet. Thank you, Jesus. It's just me and the Lord. Even sometimes in worship service, it's all about me and Jesus, confessing Jesus. But some people get a little bit uncomfortable because why are you looking at me? Don't listen to me. I don't want to sing too loud. I sound like a broken like a dying rabbit when I sing to the Lord. And so you get a little bit of shame, you get a little bit of reproach, but that's nothing compared to what this audience would have experienced when they say, I will publicly confess the name of Jesus.

You're telling me you're worshipping a crucified false Messiah? You're telling me you worship that guy that was executed by the Romans outside the city gates of Jerusalem? That's what I'm saying I will unapologetically confess the name of Jesus because my salvation is in Jesus' name. And it may not look pretty, and I may get scorn and I may get reproach, but that's where my hope is. It is at the cross. And what does that look like for us in our culture? Where there's just as much contempt and scorn for the cross of Christ in our culture as there was in theirs.

Maybe not in the Bible belt of Abilene, Texas, but just test it a little bit in your workplace when you're surrounded by so-called Christians who cuss like sailors. Maybe you're one of those Christians, I don't know. And they start telling jokes and doing things that dishonor the name of Jesus. And you've publicly identified yourself as the follower of Jesus, what you do in response will confess or not confess the name of Jesus. Do you confess the name of Jesus even when it's unpopular, inconvenient. Will you bear his reproach and shame?

That's what Christ-exalting gratitude looks like. It is you've withheld nothing from me. How can I withhold anything from you? I give you my life, my all, which must at least entail my attitude at work or my don't give a care what people think when I'm at the church and I'm worshipping the Lord or I'm saying amen or I'm letting people know that my hope is in Jesus. I don't care what people think about me, my lips will praise his name it's Christ-exalting gratitude, and then it's self-denying generosity. He says the sacrifices that are pleasing to God are don't forget to do good and to share.

He's talking about everything he just mentioned in verses one to six, hospitality, visiting the prisoners, suffering people. He's saying, I want you to take the excess above what you need to meet your needs and I want you to benefit the needs of others through your generosity. Pastor David used to say the proof is in the pudding. It's not technically this phrase. The phrase is the proof of the pudding is in the tasting. But that's too many words and nobody says it. So it says the proof is in the pudding.

I love the phrase your proof is in the pudding because it is the proof's in the pudding. It doesn't matter what you say, your talk is cheap. Show me what you mean by what you do. The proof is in the pudding. When it comes to Christian discipleship, when it comes to Christian maturity, the proof is in the giving. And the reason I say that is because so much of Christian maturity is ethereal, theoretical, subjective, fruit of the Spirit is things like love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, self-control. How do you measure that?

Like are you a patient person? I don't know. Are you a good person? Depends who's asking. Depends on what day. It's hard to measure. Are you a generous person? Now that's easy to answer. That's easy to measure. Because all you have to do is to take whatever you have above your needs, and how much of that are you willing to give away to help meet the needs of other people? That is generosity that's why I think that's why Jesus preached about money more than anything else. I think that's why at the end of our worship service we take up an offering.

Because in taking up an offering, it's not just to pay the light bill, although that's good to pay the light bill. Those lights are so bright, it's hard to see anybody. Meet their practical needs, obviously. We help meet the practical needs of people. But the most important need any person has is the spiritual need to be reconciled to God. And we help meet that need through generously giving of our finances to advance the kingdom of God, and that is an act of worship. Maybe the act of worship outside of Christ-exalting gratitude.

That's what worship looks like in real life. It's not about a place. It's not about traditions. It's not about preferences. It's about the foot of the cross. Confessing Jesus even when it's inconvenient and unpopular and demonstrating the proof of the pudding through a life of generosity. Jesus actually said the mark of discipleship is love which is true, but you can give without loving. You cannot love without giving. And so giving is the expression of whether or

not a person truly loves the Lord. Jesus told the woman at the well, she was asking, you know, you're smart.

You seem like you know the Bible, Jesus. Do we worship on this mountain or that mountain? Is it Samaria or is it Jerusalem? And you remember what he said to her? He said, look, God wants worshipers, but the worship God really wants is not about a mountain. He's looking for people who will worship him in spirit and in truth. And that kind of worship is centered at the foot of Jesus' cross because he is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through him. Not sacrifices, not dietary restrictions, not rules and regulations.

It's by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone. And the truth that you really truly believe is in how you live your life. A life wholly surrendered, offered up to Him, expressed through gratitude and generosity. Is Christian worship. Now he closes with this discussion about spiritual leadership, which I got to admit when I first read it I thought, I really want to talk about this because we're honoring Pastor Vernon, but it's in this context because it starts in verse 7 and ends in verse 17, and it's both about spiritual leaders.

Remember your leaders, they've spoken God's word to you. Carefully observe the outcome of their lives, imitate their faith, and then at the very tail end, obey your leaders, submit to them, since they keep watch over your souls as those who will give an account. And I know it's tempting to think, well spiritual leaders, that's separate from corporate worship. And I would be tempted to think the same and I would treat them totally different. But the author of Hebrews puts them together like a little theology sandwich. Leader on the front end, leader on the back end, worship in the middle.

And that's on purpose. He doesn't make accidents. He's a careful writer. He wants us to see those words together. We can't understand genuine Christian worship without understanding this call to spiritual leadership. What does he say to leaders? Or what is the relationship? I'm sorry. To me, the relationship is you can't have true worship without spiritual leadership. Spiritual, I'm sorry, true worship is entrusted to spiritual leaders. Doesn't mean you can't worship on your own at your house, but true worship is gathered worship, right? Corporate worship has to be gathered. It has to be a church.

It has to be under leadership. That's God's design. He gave the local church pastors, elders, deacons, pastors and elders, same thing. Deacons. Sunday school teachers, there is a hierarchy of leadership in the church, whether we like it or not, because someone has to be responsible to organize it. And to turn the lights on and to pay the light. But someone has to do all of that work, and that's why God gives local churches spiritual leaders. As we celebrate Pastor Vernon, I'm telling you Pastor Vernon was doing stuff at Broadview West every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday that nobody else was doing.

And none of those things would have happened at Broadview West had it not been for the stewardship of Pastor Vernon. There is a relationship between true worship and spiritual leaders. It is entrusted to spiritual leaders. Doesn't mean that you don't worship. It doesn't mean that the only people who worship are spiritual leaders. It means that spiritual leaders are uniquely entrusted with a stewardship to make sure that true worship takes place. How do they do that? Well he mentions three things. We don't have time to get into all of them, but I want to show you these three and we're going to celebrate these things about Pastor Vernon tonight at 5:00 PM. But I think it's true of all of your spiritual leaders.

Number one, they're to preach the word of God. He says, remember your leaders, those who preached the word of God to you. You would not know Jesus were it not for the proclamation of the gospel through the lips of that man. Or woman. They preach the word of God to you, and for that you need to remember them. You need to honor them. Any preacher worth following is a preacher called by God to preach the gospel. A lot of people want to be preachers. I don't know why anybody would want to be a preacher.

I tell my kids all the time, no, no, no, no, no. You don't want to be a preacher. The only reason I'm preaching is because there is a fire in my bones. I must preach the gospel like I cannot do any other thing. I could maybe make more money. Maybe not, probably not, but I could maybe make more money doing something else. But woe is me if I don't preach the gospel. Every man worth following is a man committed with the call to preach. But they don't just preach, they practice what they preach.

He says, look at the way they live. Imitate their faith. And Pastor Vernon I think should be honored, not just because he preached the gospel, but because he practiced what he preached. He's not a perfect person. I'm certainly not a perfect person. You should never put your preacher on a pedestal. But every preacher's in a fishbowl, like it or not. They're in the fishbowl. And it's not a bad thing, and preachers shouldn't get bent out of shape about it. It is a biblical thing. Because you ought to be able to look to your spiritual leaders and they be able to say to you, follow me as I follow Jesus.

I'm not a perfect example, but I will at least be a living example of what it looks like to follow Jesus and Pastor Vernon is to be commended for being that man. You can't you literally can't follow Vernon without following Jesus because he has the name of Jesus on his hat. The first day I met him I thought that's kind of what did I think? I thought it was kind of uncool. That's uncool. It's like, cool, Jesus on your hat. I bet he doesn't wear that every day. He literally wears it every single day.

Because as Paul said, I've been crucified with Christ. It's not I who live, it's Christ who lives in me. Vernon is all about making Jesus famous, not himself, and preaching that gospel and demonstrating it through the way that he lived his life. We should remember our leaders. We should honor them. We should celebrate them. That is a gift of God to us, a means of his

grace. But the most important things that a leader does is then verse 17. Everybody gets hung up on the obey, submit. It even feels weird saying it, you know, as a pastor.

Why? Obey, submit, because they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will give an account. So our spiritual leaders pastor the ones that they lead. This is why you don't just want a man to preach on Sunday morning. You want someone who will do your wedding. Do your funeral, be at the hospital bed, call and check on you when you're not feeling well, go and get you when you're acting like a fool and about to destroy your life, someone who will confront your spouse who's acting a fool and about to destroy your marriage.

You need those people to shepherd your soul because we're like sheep who need a shepherd. And our great shepherd is up in heaven, so he calls these under-shepherds to be the hands and feet and the fleshly bodies of the shepherding care of Jesus Christ so that when we're in a bad way we have an earthly shepherd who says let me love you let me lead you let me care for you and Pastor Vernon should be commended for that. I certainly, when I was living in their garage apartment and actively participating in the leadership of Broadview West, he was a fantastic pastor.

And people don't remember the sermons. They remember the love. They remember the care. And that's why you submit to a pastor. That's why you celebrate your leaders because at the end of the day, this verse keeps me up at night. They will stand before God and they will give an account. And they won't just give an account for the life that they lived. They will give an account for the people that they led. This is true of me. It's true of Pastor Vernon. It's true of every member of our pastoral team.

This is why we have church membership. Because I want to know who I'm accountable for. And I'm not going to be accountable for your sins. That's between you and the Lord, but I am accountable for the flourishing of your life under the spiritual dynamics of Broadview Baptist Church. And we need to honor Pastor Vernon for doing that well at Broadview West. So here's how we're going to end. We honor our leaders, we worship Jesus. Jesus Christ is unchanging. He's the same yesterday, today, and forever. So as we enter into this time of invitation, I want us to fix our eyes on the great shepherd.

Even as we honor and celebrate our earthly shepherds. And maybe this morning you feel a little bit out of sorts because worship is different than what I'm used to. It isn't what I wanted. It isn't what I feel good in. It's different from the traditions and preferences that I have. And maybe this morning you could allow the Lord to take your eyes off of those earthly expectations, off of the earthly Jerusalem onto the heavenly Jerusalem that comes down out of heaven and the king of that city, which is a crucified Savior.

And just ask the Lord, I want to keep my eyes on Jesus. The one who never changes, the one who's the same yesterday, today, and forever. And he can fill your heart, fill your life through

repentance and faith if you'll go to where he is outside those city gates. So you bow your heads and close your eyes as we enter into this time of response...