

We'll be looking at the first seven verses, Ezra 3, 1 through 7. Well, to overview the first three chapters, this is the way that I would most succinctly summarize them. Chapter 1, the work of God. Chapter two, the people of God. Chapter three, the worship of God. The work of God, the people of God, and the worship of God. See the work of God in chapter one because God is stirring up Cyrus' heart to give this decree and the heart of the people to receive the decree and to go to Jerusalem. So there you see the work of God in chapter one. Chapter two, you see the people of God because it's a lot of people and they're God's people and they're heading back to Jerusalem. And then in chapter three, which we come to this evening, we see the worship of God.

With this in mind, let us pray and ask God to bless the reading and the preaching of his holy word. Oh God, we come before you praising you and thanking you that in your word we have a light in the darkness. And we pray, oh Father, that it would be a light to us this evening, that we might see yourself and see the truths which you have revealed in your word in Ezra three rightly. And by your grace, we would store them up in our hearts and we would practice them in our lives.

In the name of Jesus, amen. Ezra chapter three, verses one through seven. This is the word of God. When the seventh month came and the children of Israel were in the towns, the people gathered as one man to Jerusalem. Then arose Jeshua, the son of Josedach with his fellow priests and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel with his kinsmen.

And they built the altar of the God of Israel to offer burnt offerings on it, as it is written in the law of Moses, the man of God. They set the altar in its place, for fear was on them because of the peoples of the lands. And they offered burnt offerings on it to the Lord, burnt offerings morning and evening. And they kept the Feast of Booths, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by number according to the rule, as each day required. And after that, the regular burnt offerings, the offerings at the new moon, and at all the appointed feasts of the Lord, and the offerings of everyone who made a freewill offering to the Lord. From the first day of the seventh month, they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord.

But the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid. So they gave money to the Masons and the carpenters, and food, drink, and oil to the Sidonians and Tyrants, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the Sea of Tejapa. according to the grant that they had from Cyrus, king of Persia.

Thus ends the reading of God's word. May he bless now the proclamation of it to our lives. Well, the most important thing in the world is the worship of God. The most important thing you do in your entire life is worship God. And the saddest thing about the world around us is that they do not worship God. The best part about your life on earth is gathering for corporate worship. And the best thing about heaven is that you will gather for corporate worship ceaselessly and sinlessly forever to worship the triune God. That is what makes heaven so wonderful, is that you get to worship God ceaselessly, sinlessly, forever. That is what makes heaven so wonderful.

Well, tonight in our text, you see the people of God coming back from Babylon, and the first thing they do is worship God. And they do so according to His word. So tonight, we're going to consider the worship of God, and we're going to consider the worship of God under three headings. First, the priority of worship. Second, the principle of worship, and third, the people of worship. Priority, principle, and people. So first, the priority of worship. You see the priority of worship throughout this text.

Verse one mentions that they are gathering together on the seventh month. Now the seventh month was the holiest month in Israel. During this month, the people of God celebrated the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, and the Feast of Booths. All three of those very important celebrations took place in the seventh month.

And so this is what they're doing in verse one, is they're gathering together as one man to worship God. This shows the priority of worship. But you also see what is at least perhaps an indication of the priority of worship in the two names listed in verse 2.

You see there, Jeshua, and you see Zerubbabel. Now, Jeshua is the high priest, and he represented the priestly lineage, the priestly line. You can read about his genealogy in 1 Chronicles 6. He descended from Aaron. Zerubbabel was a descendant of King David, so he represents the kingly line. Well, he is not actually a functional king, he is a governor, but he represents that kingly line of David.

Now why this is significant, and at least perhaps is suggesting something of the priority of worship in verse 2, is the fact that Jeshua's name is listed before Zerubbabel's. Now, it is possible that we're reading too much into the text at this point, however, it is at least suggested that this is to imply the priority of worship.

Why do I say that? Because if you were to look at, I did this, if you were to look at every single time Zerubbabel's name and Jeshua's name are listed back to back in the Bible, every single time, 11 times are listed back to back, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Zerubbabel, Jeshua, 11 times, except for one time. when it's Jeshua, then Zerubbabel.

And that one time is right here in verse two. So for example, we're not gonna go look at all 10, but look back at chapter two, verse two. What we see there in chapter two, verse two, they came with Zerubbabel, that's the kingly line, and then who's listed next? Jeshua, that is the priestly line, chapter two, verse two. Look at chapter three, verse two.

Now, in the second year, after they're coming to the house of God at Jerusalem in the second month, Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua, the son of Josedach. And then chapter 4, verse 2. They approached Zerubbabel and the heads of father's houses and said to them, let us build with you for we worship your God as you do. And we have been sacrificing to him ever since the days of the Sidonians.

Oh, it's chapter, it's actually verse three, sorry, but Zerubbabel, Jeshua and the rest, verse three of chapter four. So there's just three nearby examples of this pattern So, it seems reasonable to ask why isn't it Zerubbabel and Jeshua in chapter 3 verse 2? Why is it Jeshua first? And the whole context of this chapter is highlighting, particularly these first seven verses, the worship of God. And so it seems at least reasonable to suppose that what God is trying to tip you off to by this ordering is that they were prioritizing worship more than anything else when you get to the start chapter 3.

But what is not up for debate, which anyone would have to agree with, is that the first thing they do is build an altar. That's non-negotiable, that's obvious in the text. They get back and they start to build altars, or an altar rather, not altars, plural, an altar. And this follows a pattern that you can see in Scripture. You can think of Noah, when he gets off the ark in Genesis 8, he builds an altar. You can think of Genesis 12, where Abram builds an altar after he's told that he is to receive the promised land. This is a common pattern when God is delivering his people, they are responding in worship of God by building an altar. The priority of worship then is seen in this text. Makes you think perhaps of Jesus' words in Matthew 6, seek first, Priority first, the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all these things will be added to you.

For 70 years, God's people had been underneath God's discipline in Babylon. For 70 years, they had been underneath his heavy rod because they had perpetually not done what they're doing in these first seven verses. They didn't prioritize the worship of God. And the end result of their not prioritizing the worship of God was their being disciplined and sent to Babylon for 70 years.

But God disciplines those whom he loves. And the end result of his disciplining of them was that they returned with the right perspective, at least at this point. They returned with a desire to give him the glory due his name. Maybe you here this evening are underneath the disciplining rod of your heavenly father. And that rod is meant to drive you back to the worshiping of his name.

Worship God. Prioritize his worship. And so do you prioritize the worship of God here this evening? Do you prioritize private worship? Do you prioritize family worship? And above all else, do you prioritize the corporate worship of God, especially the corporate worship of God.

This is why you exist, is to worship God. And if there's anything in your life here this evening that is preventing you from gathering in corporate worship, especially corporate worship, that thing needs to go. Because this is why you exist, is to worship God. And whatever that thing is, it isn't as important.

Perhaps this wasn't my most shining moment, I don't know, but one time there was someone at my house, not here, but we were getting to know one another, and he was, I think, supposed to be a fine young Christian. I hope he really was. He was in college, and he was studying music, and we were getting to know one another, and he said, I said, oh, where do you go to church?

I just haven't been able to go recently. I've just been really swamped with music, and I said, He said, I can't make it, I've been too swamped. I said, yes you can. He said, no, no, no, I've been really busy. No, you can make it to worship. I don't know that he listened or he went.

But my point was, there can be legitimate providential hindrances, health and so forth, don't misunderstand. But the point is, worship needs to be your priority. But secondly, the principle of worship, the principle of worship. So we saw the priority, now let us consider the principle. The principle of worship is simple. It's very simple. God commands you to worship according to his word. That's the principle of worship. Worship God according to his word. This means that you do not worship God however you want to worship God. God loves you enough to not only tell you who to worship, but how to worship.

Imagine a wife tells her husband, Love flowers, and I really despise dark chocolate. And then the next day, the husband brings her a giant dark chocolate bar. And she says, honey, I told you that I love flowers. I despise dark chocolate. He said, I heard you, I heard you. But I love dark chocolate. That wife, rightly so, is going to be upset with him. And he says to her, well, I just thought once you rejected the dark chocolate, then I could eat it.

The truth is, that's how many people approach the worshiping of God. Their question isn't, what does God like, want, command? It's, what do I like? What do I want? What would make me happy? Well, I ask you, Who are you worshiping in that scenario? You're worshiping yourself. God tells you how he wants you to worship him. And you see that this is to be according to his word throughout Ezra chapter 3.

In verse 2, we see the words, as it is written. In verse 4, again, as it is written. They are doing things by the book. I once heard a young man criticize the worship of the church in which I was raised, and he said, it's too by the book. If that's the criticism that you're getting for your worship, that's a compliment. Because you should want to be doing things by the book, assuming the book is the Bible. Well, you see them worshiping God according to his words, not just because of the explicit statement, as it is written, which is seen twice, but even through the various details. Look at the start of verse three, they set the altar in its place.

Now when I was preparing this text earlier this past week, I really wanted in its place to be the exact place that they had done it previously. That's the way it sounded to me, in its place, like it had a proper place, a certain place, and they were making sure they put it right back where it had been 70 years earlier before the Babylonians destroyed it. And then I did more study. And then I found out that's exactly what it means. And I was thrilled because it's so perfect, isn't it?

They didn't just get back to Jerusalem and go, you know what, I think it would be nice if we were to set up the altar and there's a nice little cove over there that might look really good, might look good against that backdrop of those caves. No, they got back and they said, let's find the old ruins and let's put it right back where it belongs, in its place. Now, where is its place?

Well, its place is Mount Moriah, where Abraham was going to be sacrificing Isaac, and God provided a ram in the thicket. Its place is the very place where, if you remember the story when David had the census of his army, And he counted them in and he shouldn't have. And then God sent the plague and 70,000 people of Israel died. And then David builds an altar in this very place and makes a burnt offering sacrifice. And God commands the angel to put its sword back in its sheath.

That's this place. How do we know that? Turn over to 1 Chronicles 21. 1 Chronicles 21. This is that exact place where he had done these things for his people in the past. 1 Chronicles. 21 is the story of the census, and we won't read the whole story, but hopefully you know something of that story and what is happening, and we're going to sort of plop into the middle of it. Let's start in 18. 1 Chronicles 21 beginning in verse 18. Now the angel of the Lord had commanded Gad to say to David that David should go up and raise an altar to the Lord on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite. So David went up at Gad's word which he had spoken in the name of the Lord.

Now Ornan was threshing wheat. He turned and saw the angel and his four sons who were with him hid themselves. As David came to Ornan, Ornan looked and saw David and went out from the threshing floor and paid homage to David with his face to the ground. And David said to Ornan, give me the site of the threshing floor that I may build on it and alter to the Lord.

Give it to me at its full price that the plague may be averted from the people. Then Ornan said to David, take it and let my Lord, the king, do what seems good to him. See, I give the oxen for burnt offerings and the threshing sledges for the wood and the wheat for a grain offering. I give it all. But King David said to Ornan, no, but I will buy them for the full price. I will not take for the Lord what is yours, nor offer burnt offerings that cost me nothing. So David paid Ornan 600 shekels of gold by weight for the site.

And David built there an altar to the Lord and presented burnt offerings and peace offerings, and called on the Lord, and the Lord answered him with fire from heaven upon the altar of burnt offerings. Then the Lord commanded the angel, and he put his sword back into its sheath. At that time when David saw that the Lord had answered him at the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite, He sacrificed there for the tabernacle of the Lord which Moses had made in the wilderness, and the altar of burnt offering were at that time in the high place at Gibeon. But David could not go before it to inquire of God, for he was afraid of the sword of the angel of the Lord. David said, ready for this, here shall be the house of the Lord God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel. Then Second Chronicles chapter three, verse one.

Second Chronicles 3.1, then Solomon began to build the house of the Lord in Jerusalem on Mount Moriah, where the Lord had appeared to David his father at the place that David had appointed on the threshing floor of Ornan the Jebusite.

Now, however many hundreds of years have transpired, they're back in that very place where God had been faithful to his people in the past, and they build the altar right back there. They're worshiping God according to his word. Down to the details, you see it in the morning and evening sacrifices of verse 3. That was a command of God in the Old Testament, to make these sacrifices morning and evening. You see it in verse 4 because when they have the celebration of the Feasts of Booths, the text says they gave the offerings by number according to the rule. There was a rule as each day required, and you read about that rule in Numbers chapter 12. Celebration lasted eight days and consisted of 198 animal sacrifices, and they made sure they did it in eight days, and they sacrificed 198 animals.

And then you see this sort of catch-all verse of them doing things according to God's word and worship in verse five, when it lists all these different things, and they're doing each of them, each of these different sacrifices of verse five according to God's word.

So what does all this teach you about the principle of worship? The principle of worship is to worship God according to his word. Now, when you worship God according to his word, it means that you actually get to glorify God in your worship. It frees you from the guilt of feeling like you always need to have a moving experience for the worship service to be genuine or real. You don't have to come to worship being all put together.

You can come beaten down and exhausted. You can come to worship with a fresh coffee stain on your new blouse. You can come to worship having not slept the night before because your children were up all night and you're sleep deprived. You can come exhausted and beaten down with fresh tears on your face. And if you worship God according to his word, you can leave still exhausted and you can leave knowing this. God was glorified in the worshiping of his name today through this weak, beaten, exhausted saint. Why? Because that saint worshiped God according to his word by the power of the spirit in the name of Jesus Christ.

Contrast that with so much of modern feeling-based worship. You come to the service and it's more like a concert than a traditional worship service, a traditional Christian worship service. And things are not done according to what pleases man, they're done according to what, or pleasing God, they're done according to what pleases man. And the end result is you might feel very moved. But did you honor God? You can be very moved at a football game. And it's not worshiping God.

Is it being done in a way that honors the great, awesome God who has loved you enough to tell you how he wants you to worship him in his word? When you worship according to his word, it is liberating. not restricting. It's liberating because you don't have to guess if what you did was right today in the worship service.

You don't have to wonder if he was honored by it. Again, the wife who tells the husband what she wants, that's liberating for the husband because he can actually do it. Instead of wondering, I don't know if this is what she wanted and I'm not sure she's going to receive it. He can know and that frees him to go about caring for his wife well. And so God tells you this is what I want and you get to do it and makes worship incredibly exhilarating and freeing and encouraging.

I want to make a brief note here this evening on the comment in verse three on morning and evening sacrifices. The Bible suggests that there is wisdom in some sort of morning and evening pattern to the worshiping of his name. Let me give a very brief outline of ways in which you see this in the Bible. This could be at least a Sunday school lesson. In the Old Testament, you see morning and evening sacrifices. You see it here, you see it in Exodus, you see it in Numbers. In Psalm 92, which is called a Psalm of a Sabbath, you see morning and evening worship.

In John chapter 20, when Christ reveals himself to Mary Magdalene after the resurrection, it tells you it was in the morning, on the first day of the week. And then, later on, in John chapter 20, it tells you on the same day, and then it tells you, in case you forgot what day of the week that was, the first day of the week, in the evening, Jesus reveals himself to the men behind the locked door. Do you remember that story? When you come to the book of Revelation, in chapter 4 verse 8, you read that the living for living creatures are worshiping God. day and night, and then you see the saints who are glorified in heaven doing the same thing in Revelation 7, 15.

And we could add to this. You could go to Acts 20, verse 7, where you see the sermon where Paul is preaching at night until the people fall asleep, falls out the window. Eutychus, remember that story? Or you could go to what we just saw, them praying and singing hymns at midnight. The point is, we have to be very careful.

We never, ever, ever want to go beyond God's word. but we also never want to say less than God's word. And so let us hold this with a sense of humility, but let us deal honestly with what do we determine the scriptures are teaching

us? It's obvious there's some sort of pattern here. That is why we have morning and evening worship, because we believe there's a pattern being displayed in scripture and we want to do our best to honor that. And I would encourage that pattern to be exemplified, not just corporately on the Lord's Day, but in some measure in your own homes. We're not here to give a long list of this is exactly how it ought to be done. It could be a prayer in the evening and maybe a little bit of time in word and the prayer in the morning. I think you can work these things out. But I think it's really clear in the scriptures that there's some pattern here and we would be wise to strive to follow that pattern at some level in our Christian lives.

Well thirdly, the people of worship, the people of worship. You learn three things about the people of worship here in our text. Dale Ralph Davis points out that they're fearful and faithful, they're fearful and faithful worshipers. And I would add to that that they're sinners. Fearful, faithful, and sinners.

You see they're fearful in verse 3 where we read that they set the altar in its place for fear was on them because of the people of the land. Ralph Davis points out that fear does not prevent them from worshiping God. It drives them to worship God in verse three. It's because of this fear that they're driven to the worship of God.

So you're here this evening and you have lots of fear in your life. You fear death. You fear tomorrow. You fear the loss of loved ones, your children and what's going on in their lives. You fear your finances. You fear the state of the country. That fear should not prevent you from worshiping God, but it should drive you to worship God because that is where you are safe. It reorients you to the God of glory and omnipotence and wonder and amazement. It gets your mind back on what matters most. I shared this in the prayer meeting on Friday morning. But I was recently reading through 1 Samuel, and in 1 Samuel 7, it's fascinating to me. They gather at Mizpah to worship God. The Philistines find out that they're there at Mizpah worshiping God. They surround them, they're going to kill them. It even says the people of God are afraid.

And you know what they do? They continue to worship God. And you know what God does? He defeats their enemies. They didn't stop worshiping, and you can't stop worshiping either, even in your fear. Worship God. Faithful is another thing you see about them. They're faithful. Now, we've seen they're faithful in all the particular ways. They kept the sacrifices, and that's legitimate, but there's also another way.

It mentions the free will offerings that they are giving. And the free will offerings display an overflowing love for God that wasn't commanded, but it sort of issues out of a heart of gratitude for what he has done. You just give over what he requires because you simply love him. One person writes of the freewill offerings, the freewill offering could be made at any time. The soul of the worshiper might simply be overflowing over God and his benefits.

Such freewill offerings were and are the essence of a living Can't you imagine that these people after being in Babylon for 70 years and now they've been delivered and so they almost just can't help themselves but give these free will offerings because they're astounded and astonished at the covenant faithfulness of their God to deliver them from the Babylonians and get them back into the promised land to worship him and so they give out of that gratitude.

And you see their faithfulness as well and they're preparing the material to build the temple in the future. Going to build the temple in the future and they start to get the materials together. And it's fascinating to look at how the materials they get together and even the way they purchase them corresponds with the way Solomon had done things with the first temple.

But you also see that they're sinners. Look at verse six for example. From the first day of the seventh month, they began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord, but the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid." How does this little verse indicate that they're sinners? Well, you can see it really throughout the text because this word, burnt offerings, is used six times in the text.

They had been commanded by Cyrus in chapter 1 verse 2 when he made the decree to go back and do what? Build the temple. Why aren't they building it yet? Why do they seem to be delaying? They're delaying out of reverence for God. They're delaying because they know that they have no business building a temple if they haven't built an altar.

They know that they cannot get into the presence of God and worship Him if there's not the shedding of blood first for their sins. They know that if they try to build a temple without the shedding of blood, they will never be able to enter that temple because they are sinners. And unless blood is shed for them in their place, they cannot give God the worship due His name because they're not worthy.

Specifically, you see this phrase, burnt offering, over and over and over again six times. Every single time they gave one of those offerings up, morning and evening, verse three, and all the other times you read the word burnt offering in the text. Every time they gave one of those animals to be sacrificed, the burnt offering specifically, you lay your hands on it, you have to slit its throat. Every single time, you know what that said to them?

You're a sinner. You're a sinner. Morning and evening. Let me just remind you again, you're still a sinner. And you know what else it said to them? God is a forgiver. God is a forgiver. God is a forgiver. Told them over and over and over again that though their sins are many, God's mercy is more. He forgives sinners through the shedding of blood.

The burnt offering specifically showed forth propitiation for sin and consecration. Propitiation and consecration. Try to cover this in something of a quick thumbnail sketch, but you see that the burnt offering showed forth propitiation. That means wrath removing. It means removing wrath. We need to have the wrath of God removed from us. We need a propitiation for our sins. And the way the burnt offering showed this, for example, is seen in the first time you see a burnt offering in Genesis chapter 8. Noah gets off the ark, Genesis 8, 20 and 21. He gets off the ark and he gives a burnt offering. And we read there that it's a pleasing aroma in the nostrils of the Lord.

And he will not flood the earth again. But why will he not flood the earth again? Is it because there was no reason to flood the earth? Is it because there was no sin still on the earth? Well, there were eight people alive, so you know how many sinners there were left? There were eight. So God had every reason to still flood the earth. The reason he didn't flood the earth is because propitiation.

A sacrifice was made The wrath of God, ultimately pointing to the Messiah, will be poured out on the Lamb of God who came to take away the sins of the world. And that propitiatory sacrifice there in Genesis 8, which was a burnt offering, points forward to Christ. And you see this again in David. We just read it a second ago in 1 Chronicles 21.

Did you remember it was a burnt offering specifically that was offered? And remember what happened? what God commanded the angel to do after the burnt offering was offered, to put his sword back in his sheath. Why would he put his sword back in his sheath? The sword represented wrath and it was put in its sheath because a propitiation was made. And then additionally, it represents consecration.

The burnt offering highlights consecration because it was the only sacrifice that was entirely burned up to nothingness and smoke. Others would be a portion of the animal, but not the burnt offering, other than the skin of the animal. The whole animal was burned up, and the reason is because it represented that the offerer was giving up his whole self to God. All of his being was being given over to God.

Do you remember how the book of Exodus ends? We end there in the book of Exodus, and this is similar to what we're seeing happen here in our text. In Exodus chapter 40, Moses, we read this, Exodus 40, 34 and 35, then the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. This is 40, 35, or 34. 34 says, the cloud covered the tent of meeting and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle and Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled on it and the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle. So how does it end there in verses 34 and 35?

Here's the tent of meeting and you know what you're not allowed to do? Meet with God there because his glory fills it. So here's the temple meet, here where you meet with God and guess what? You're not allowed to enter. You're not allowed. You can't go in. God is essentially saying this is where my presence is and you're not allowed to be in my presence. God moves into the neighborhood and he says, you're never allowed to come over to my house.

And then how does Leviticus begin? The Lord called Moses and spoke to him from the tent of meeting, saying, speak to the people of Israel and say to them, when any one of you brings an offering to the Lord, you shall bring your offering of livestock from the herd or from the flock.

If the offering is a burnt offering, there's a burnt offering from the herd, he shall offer a male without blemish, he shall bring it to the entrance of the tent of meeting. that he may be accepted before the Lord. He shall lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering and it shall be accepted for him to make atonement for sin. Then he shall kill the bull before the Lord and Aaron's sons. The priests shall bring the blood and throw it and throw the blood against the sides of the altar that is at the entrance of the tent of meeting.

Exodus ends. Here's where God's present. Leviticus begins, here's how you can go into his presence. That's what's happening in Ezra chapter three. They're not building the temple yet because they need to have a bloodshed for them. They know that that's where God's gonna meet with them, but they need to have atonement before they try to enter into his presence. So that is what is happening here.

They're sinners and they need the atoning blood of Jesus Christ. Why don't we have an altar here this evening? Why isn't there bloodshed? Why don't we have it here? Do you know the answer? I suppose you do. It's because Christ has shed his blood. Thousands upon thousands upon thousands of animals, hundreds of thousands, millions of animals shed their blood, all pointing to Christ. And the reason we don't do that here this evening is because Christ shed his blood for you.

The way you can worship God this evening is through the death and resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus Christ. Apart from his death, his resurrection, his continual intercession, You can have all sorts of ideas that you're worshiping God, but you're not. But in Christ Jesus, you are worshiping the one living and true God, and that is an incredible thing. You get to worship God, and when you do it according to his word, you are glorifying him. You could have an awful day, a terrible week, but you show up to worship, and you know what happens? God is glorified. Your worship through Christ by the power of the Spirit is a sweet-smelling aroma in the nostrils of your heavenly Father.

Let us pray. Almighty God, we praise you and thank you for the worship of your name. Father, there's not a single one of us who doesn't at some point, if not daily, certainly weekly fail to prioritize your worship or to worship you, but not do it according to your word. But oh God, we praise you for the Lamb of God who was slain for our sins, that we might come again and say, Father, forgive us for our sins. We praise you for Jesus. He is our high priest. And it is in his name, Father, that we worship you by the power of your spirit.

And this worship service this evening, because of no righteousness of our own, has been a pleasing aroma in your nostrils and will continue to be through the benediction only and completely and entirely because of the finished work of Christ and his continual intercession for us. And we praise you for him in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of our sins, and we can enter into your presence. To you be the glory forever and ever. Amen.