

Discovering God's Character through our Struggles: Worship - September 27th

We have this week and next week left on our current series where we're going through the Ten Commandments and we're talking about discovering the characteristic that God wants us to see of himself through our struggles, which we find in the Ten Commandments. Last week we looked at the Third Commandment. The Third Commandment was, "...thou shalt not take the Lord's name in vain." And we talked about how it's really the actual first commandment with promise because the scripture, the commandment says that those who break this commandment will not be held guiltless before God. But as we learned last week, I even had someone said they were going to make a shirt out of it. We looked at the Hebrew words in that passage and the phrase came out, don't nasa the Lord shim for shav. Don't take the Lord's name in vain. And it translates this way, if you use the definition, it says, don't take upon yourself to bear the weight of, which is the word nasa, God's identity, reputation, renown, authority, or character, which is his name or his shem, for false or deceptive motives, which is the word shav. And we spoke out of Jeremiah 23 for quite a bit of that, where the prophet is speaking against the false prophets who say, that they speak visions of their own heart, not the words of the Lord, but from their own mouth they say to those who despise me, the Lord has said. And it wasn't that the Lord had actually said that. It was their own visions of their own hearts for their own reasons. And We talked about not all who say thus saith the Lord is actually speaking on behalf of the Lord. And sometimes they are speaking for their own reasons. And Scripture teaches us in those instances we are taking, or they are taking the Lord's name in vain. And I wanted to just address a few things. I realized I said some things about... When someone says, thus saith the Lord, and it's used for false reasons, but I wanted to know that there are times when thus saith the Lord is real and God does speak to us because we are a church that believes in prophecy and that God still speaks to us. Do you believe that? Amen. And he does. Because of that belief, that gives place for people to abuse that sometimes for personal gains. And so I answered a question last week, how do you know if it is the word of the Lord that is speaking to you? If someone comes up and says, thus saith the Lord, how can you and I tell if it is truly God speaking to us or if it's... Well, not God and maybe them. And so here's how I explained it to last week to this parishioner who asked. And it says, Jesus gave us a command. He said, I must go to the comforter. I must go, sorry, that I can send the Comforter, which is the Holy Spirit. And he tells us through Scripture that the Holy Spirit will only speak what Jesus says. So we have that beautiful gift that the Holy Spirit doesn't speak wild, weird things. He only says what Jesus says. We also know from Scripture in the Gospels, Jesus said, "I only do and say what the Father tells me to do and say." So now we have God who's ordaining and speaking everything, Jesus who's got the mantle to repeat what God has said, and the Holy Spirit can't speak of his own volition. He has to say what Jesus says. So therefore, when the Holy Spirit is speaking, it's not just the Holy Spirit, it's God who is speaking to us. And the next part of that is that the Holy Spirit and Jesus and God won't say anything contrary to the Word of God. And so, I've got to go back here and grab this. Sorry, I meant to earlier. The Holy Spirit will never say anything that contradicts the Word of God. So we have a four-point system to check if what is being said to us is really real. Because if it's really real, Scripture will back it up. The Holy Spirit has said it because Jesus was told by God to say this thing. That's where thus saith the Lord comes from. Also, there's something else. If the Holy Spirit is really speaking to us and we have the Holy Spirit living inside of us, my spirit will be able to affirm the word that is spoken by someone else who is speaking from the Holy Spirit. It's the same spirit. We don't have the spirit of William Parsons living. Well, we do have that spirit, but we try not to let him out too much. We just try to stick with the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit has the ability to confirm the word that he is speaking to me if it's him in my heart. So that's how we can tell if the Holy Spirit or if the word that we're given is an actual thus saith the Lord. And that's a very simple, simple explanation. We can meet if you would have some deeper questions on that. Another quick way. that you can tell typically is if someone is giving you a word, and that word totally benefits the person who's giving it and has

nothing for you, so I can come up to Louie and say, Louie, I really feel like the Lord says to give me \$1,000. I'm not, I mean... That's probably not going to be the Holy Spirit because it has no benefit to Louis. But there's another way that we can tell if what the Word is being spoken doesn't benefit you and your spirit. It's like, you know, I don't really think that's the Word of the Lord. We can test that. We can take it to prayer and we can hear the Holy Spirit ourselves. Amen? All right. If you lost the context for that, you have to go listen to last week's sermon. But Getting back to our sermon this week, the second commandment, I find it interesting. These last three commandments that we're doing, they have a very similar vein running through them. And it's a vein of struggles that push my agenda. They push me to the front. They have selfish ambitions at the least, but it gets worse from there. And so... This week, I want to look at the prohibition from commandment number two for making idols, for bowing down and serving them. Our struggle this week is with worship. As people, we tend to struggle with worship. So God gave us the commandment to not bow down to carved images and serve them. And the characteristic that God gives us to help us combat this is that he is incomparable. There is no one like the living God. Amen? Amen. So if you will turn with me, we're going to end up in the book of John. So we'll start there now and then we'll work our way to it. Jesus is speaking to the woman at the well. And he talks to her about worship. So John chapter four, verses 23 and 24 says, but the hour is coming and now is when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth. For the Father is seeking such to worship him. God is spirit and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. Amen. Let's pray this morning. Father, we thank you for your word. Lord, we thank you that we can gather and we can hear and we can speak about what you are telling us, Father. So this morning, Father, as I share the word that you've put in my heart, Father, help me to be sensitive to your spirit, to speak your words only, to put away the spirit of Will Parsons, and to only listen to the Holy Spirit. And Father, I pray that you would anoint the words that I say. Let them be from you, Father, and I pray that you'd anoint our ears to hear what you are speaking to our hearts. to make us more like your son and help us to apply them in that way. We thank you for your word. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen. How many of you would agree we live in an amazing time? I think we live in quite an amazing time. How many of you lived through the 70s, 80s, and 90s? You don't have to raise your hand. There's a few of us. I actually did live in the 70s, so I don't remember much. I was very young, but still, we did live in the 70s. But in our house growing up, my dad was a pastor. He pastored for 30 years. We had a rule in our house in regards to music that we could not in any way, shape, or form listen to any kind of rock music. It all had to be Christian music. And... As I stated earlier, if you lived in the 70s, 80s, and 90s, Christian music was pretty rough back then. At least I think so, okay? It's not music you would listen to outside, or for me, if as a teenager it's not music, I would have my windows down just pumping out the radio, listening to... that. And I mean, there's a certain genre in my head, of course, because my parents had certain music. I don't know if any of you guys remember the Hosanna Integrity music that would come out. Like they would send a cassette to your house, at least we had the thing. And my parents would just wait in anticipation for this Hosanna Integrity music album that was coming out. And I mean, Amen. It was great church music. I mean, in the church, it was good. There was another one called Vineyard. I don't know if you guys remember Vineyard. It had a certain feel to it, okay? I actually went to Spotify, and I pulled up some just to listen, and I just cringed and praised God in my office, like, oh, thank you, Jesus, music has changed. but it had this certain feel. There were trumpets and there was this choir thing and there was these echoes going on and it was just rough. And I remember we had these rules and this was the only music we could listen to, but on an off chance, one of my friends let me listen to this band called Petra. Do you guys remember Petra? It was a Christian rock band back in my day. I mean, they were like the band. And I remember thinking, I wish I could just listen to Petra. And I asked my dad, Dad, can I listen to Petra? And these were my dad's words and how he described Petra. It was hard, head-banging, screamo Christian music. So I remember hearing that, and I'm like, yeah, it was kind of hard. And I went back and listened to it. Wow. It really wasn't much better than the praise and worship part, but anyway, it was far from that, but we were not allowed to listen to it. And I remember the first time I was old enough to go to the store and buy my own CD

with my own money, and it was \$16.99. And I went and bought this album of a band called Grammatrain, which was indeed headbanging screamo Christian music. And anyway, I digress. I speak about this this morning because my mind went back to it. Because as we talk about worship, our mind often goes to music and it goes to praise and it goes to worship and singing to God. Because if we say we're going to do worship, that's typically how we gravitate and think about worship. It's through music. I'm not saying that that is the wrong interpretation because it is definitely one, but this morning as we talk about worship through this commandment of an idol, it's not the same worship. They wouldn't go and sing necessarily. They would go and bow down and serve. And so as we move into this arena to talk about worship, There's an old song by Bob Dylan, I don't know if you know the song, but Willie Nelson and Jamie Johnson have redone it, and it's called, You Gotta Serve Somebody. And it's a great song in all honesty. But it speaks to, we have to serve someone. And the truth of the matter is, in life, you and I choose to serve one of two things. We can choose to serve God, or we can choose to serve the enemy. and we will worship one or the other. So this morning, our commandment found in Exodus chapter 20, I want to read it out to us so that we have it in our minds. It says, "...you shall not make for yourself a carved image, any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them, nor serve them." So we have a very interesting clause in here talking about idols. The purpose that we make a carved image is to bow down and serve them is what the commandment is teaching us. Now, I know that I have said in just about every sermon that I've preached that we tend to To move the boundaries of the commandments in a way that makes ourselves innocent. This is one of the few that I feel most Americans just kind of regulate to the back of the line because I don't serve idols. I don't have any carved image. I don't have a... carved image of a cow I've talked about my milk cow a lot but I don't have a carved image of her in my house and I go and say oh hi Betsy how are you I mean I do that to the living thing but I don't worship it she's a anyway But most of us, I would dare say none of us have molded images, carved images of wood, stone, or metal someplace in our home that we bring gifts to that we bow down and we serve and burn incense before. Most of us would see that as absurd and foolish. Like, yes, that's what cavemen did. That's not what modern people do. But yet, all across the world in many countries, this is still common practice. I know I've spoken to you guys of Japan. My wife was born there and I truly love the land of Japan. And it is truly a lost land. But many homes who follow the Shinto religion have in their houses what's called a God box. It's a place where you put God and you store him there. And when you need him, you bring him out. So you can talk to him and say, hey, you're not doing a very good job. and you give it some gifts and you worship it, and then you put it back in the box and go about your business. In India, with over 300 gods, it's a land full of shrines and temples and idols that people go and serve. And it's not limited to those two countries. There are many other cultures that have this idol worship that still exists in their lands. And While in America we don't necessarily have altars and shrines similar, we do have our own idols, don't we? Idols that we bow down, serve, and worship in our own way. We have idols of ideology. We have idols of political parties or governmental institutions. We have idols of pleasures and lifestyles and entertainment. Some of them are made of metal and they have engines. Some are wooden and we live in them. Some are made of stones represented by investments and wealth that we guard dearly. Because that's what's going to take care of us in the end. And there are many more that we could talk about this morning. But if our options are to either worship God or to worship some inanimate object, is there really any kind of choice there? I mean, we have a living God who cares for us, and we have this inanimate thing that we think takes care of us. but yet we choose to worship one or the other. And the answer is simple. Why would we choose to worship this inanimate object instead of the living God? The simple answer is we seek the desires of our own heart. We seek to fulfill and live out the dreams and desires we have in our own heart. Romans chapter one, verses 21 through 23 says, because they knew God and they did not glorify him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts and foolish hearts were darkened. They, professing to be wise, became fools and they changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image. a corruptible image of birds and four-footed

animals and creeping things. And I wish that I could explain, but outside of just understanding this just comes natural to us, our flesh desires something tangible to worship. We like having, I shouldn't say we like, the idea of having something tangible tangibly there seems to draw our attention more than it should when compared to God. Most of us have made the statement sometime in our life, boy, if God would only give me concrete evidence or if God would just come and speak the words to me and I could just know that I know that I know, that's good. We like having something we can grasp and something we can hear and something we can hold. We don't like abstract, woo-woo, got to trust what I can't see and just believe. We like what we can see and touch and smell and hear and taste. That seems real. That seems like, yeah, that's got substance to it. I can follow that. See, our senses is what God gave us to help lead and guide us and to help us figure out what's right and what's wrong and what's good and what's bad. But when we bring that to God, it doesn't always line up the way we want. See, if an idol has an advantage over God, and I put that as a very capitalized if, if an idol has an advantage over God, it's in this one area. I... control the idol. I can manage it. I can understand it because I'm the one giving its knowledge. I can possess it. I can decide the place that it has in my life, kind of like the Japanese God box. I can open it up and like, God, I really need you now. And if I don't, I can just push it aside and be like, you know, not today. I'm okay today. I don't need you today. This highlights our struggle this morning. See, our struggle is we fight the stubbornness of the flesh. Our heart has a loud voice, and boy, it tells us everything that we should do, and it tempts us in all kinds of ways. Scripture says that we are led astray. by the temptations and the lusts and the desires of our heart. It speaks loudly to us. It seeks to draw us far away from God. We want to follow that. We want to be the captain of our own ship. We want to know that we know that this is the right thing to do. And if my heart is telling me, you guys all know this song, right? If it makes you happy, why are you so sad? Just follow what your heart wants you to do. See, the problem really boils down to that God isn't mine to manipulate and manage. Jeremiah chapter 16. I've been reading through Jeremiah in my daily devotion. That's why we're getting a lot of Jeremiah right now. It's interesting how God always speaks to me from the book that I'm reading through. But Jeremiah chapter 16 says, "'Because your fathers have forsaken me,' says the Lord. They have walked after other gods and have served them and worshiped them and have forsaken me and not kept my law. And you have done worse than your fathers.'" For behold, each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart so that no one listens to me. See, if we're following the dictates of our heart, if we're letting our heart captain our ship, the last thing it wants is to hear from God. God's going to say, hey, you're going the wrong way. Like, no, leave me alone. I can get there. All roads lead where I need it to go. I can end up where I want to end up because I'm the one running the show. See, our flesh aligns with Satan's temptation to be in control of our own destiny. And if you really want to boil it down, it's to be our own God. We want control. I don't know how else to say it. It starts when we are two years old. We call them the terrible twos. They know what they want, and if you take anything that they have that they think is theirs, what do you get? You get to see what's really in the heart. And you know what? That doesn't ever stop until you die. The heart always seeks to run the show, always seeks to be in control, always seeks to get what it wants and to make sure that we're not listening to God. And I really believe that this is a core struggle we face. Because when Jesus was in the wilderness, he was given this very temptation by Satan. Satan had three shots. This was one of the shots he shot. He says, I will give you all of this. He showed him every nation in the world. All of this will be yours if you bow down, worship me. In essence, he's saying, if you will bow down and serve me. Our commandment is don't make an idol that you bow down and serve. Satan was asking Jesus, would you serve me so that I can give you this? And of course, we know how Jesus answered. But Satan's offer is the same to us. He comes to us and he shows us what's in our hearts. And he's like, you know what? You can have every desire in your heart if you'll just bow down and worship me. If you'll serve me, I can give you everything that your flesh wants. And that's the essence of our temptation to worship idols. the lifeless, inanimate representations of God that can't respond, that can't lead, that don't guide, what they do give us is the ability to follow our own evil hearts. They give us the ability to serve ourselves. See,

because ultimately, we want a God that serves our desires. We want a genie in a bottle. We want to just have what we have and have what we want. We don't want a God that has to, that we have to surrender to. We want a God that will surrender to us. So, in knowing that struggle and knowing that we have to come against our own hearts, how does God come to us to help us in the midst of this struggle for control and worship? He demonstrates that there are no other like him. There are no others like him. He is truth, and there is nothing that compares to him. Isaiah 46, verse 5 says, "...to whom will you liken me, and make my equal, and compare me that we should be alike?" If you really want some reading, Isaiah chapter 40 through 46, you will learn a lot about who God says He is. He speaks a lot in those six chapters about who God is. This is one of the famous passages I had to learn in Bible college. This is where God says, I am God knowing the end from the beginning. And that's the culmination of what He speaks about Himself in these six chapters. But it's six chapters of him just on repeat almost, reminding Israel that there's no one who comes close to him. There's no comparison to him. God has no worthy competition that can mount up to anything that could rival him. There's none. He defines who he is. He's the living God. And if you read through those things, you'll see that he can act. He can think. He can speak. He can breathe. He can know the end from the beginning. It's not inanimate. It's not lifeless. He's alive. And because he is the living God, the creator of all things... The Supreme Being, there is nothing or anyone that is greater than Him. Being that He is at the top of the worship chain, guess what? He gets to dictate how He's worshipped. He gets to set the terms on how He's worshipped. And He does. But before we get into that, I want to define what the word worship means. What does it mean to worship someone? We're just going to do this really quickly, but... If we are to worship because we got to serve somebody, we know that God demands it, Satan tempts us with it, and we all struggle with it in our daily lives. The word worship used in every instance I've used it this morning is the word proskuneio. And the best way to define it is that you acknowledge another being as being greater than you, and then you bend the knee to that. That's the word proskonehu. You bow or you bend or prostrate yourself before something greater than you. And it has many uses. Acts chapter 10, when Peter is talking to Cornelius, the people proskonehu before Peter, they fall down to worship him. Another instance, one we talked about, Satan asked Jesus to proskonehu himself before him, to bow down to him. John on the island of Patmos, when the angel came to speak to him, proskonehu himself before the angel and the angel said, no, no, no, don't do that. It is to see someone or something as having authority or power greater than your own and giving homage. I hate that word. It's hard to say. Giving honor to it, giving submission to it. See, when we worship God or we worship idols or other people or other things, We give them preference, priority, and power in our life. That's why this is such an important command, because it's not just bowing to it, it's you're allowing it to have authority over you. And it's very important who you prostrate yourself before. It's an act of submission to them. So for the Christian, to worship God means that we bow before God, understanding that He is greater than us, and He has power over us. So we should worship as He requires. John chapter 4, God spells out how He wants to be worshipped. Jesus speaking to the lady at the well, "...the hour is coming, and now is, when true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth." The Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him have to do it this specific way. You worship in Spirit. You worship in truth. That sounds easy, right? It's not so bad. It's not so bad. We have to worship Him in Spirit and truth. And I want you to know... I dug, and I studied, and I studied. But God kept bringing me back, I feel, to this very simple description that paints the point that we're trying to talk about this morning very powerfully. When God says He's looking for those to worship Him in spirit and truth, I believe it's simply speaking to our inward man, our spirit and our mind. must truly worship and recognize God for who He is. And I think this is why I wanted to come back here. Because if we look at the commandment talking about idols, the problem that the Israelites had at that time and that many people had, there wasn't a spiritual connection with God. It was all physical activity. And you can go and look like you were playing the part. You could look like you were giving the sacrifices. You could look like you were serving God faithfully on the outside while inwardly hating him. And this is highlighted in a lot of scriptures with the priesthood, especially

in the part of Jeremiah that I'm reading right now and Isaiah as they're falling away from God and as God is ready to send them into captivity. There's so many priests who are outwardly giving sacrifices to God. while they say they're in the back room bowing down to the idols that they truly served. There was no spiritual connection with God. It was just the dog and pony show, or it was just fulfilling their obligations as their job, while their heart truly wanted to be in front of the idols that they worshiped. It's not just lip service that God asked for. It's not just outward demonstration. It's not just looking the part on Sunday morning. It's real easy to come here and Act like everything's fine and we're just living the life and God is good and he's blessing to walk out the doors and be like, well, I'm going to put my Christianity on the shelf. Be back in seven days. Because when I'm here, I mean, I have to look it. I got to live it. I got to be it. Three whole hours. It's got to be real. The rest of the time, well, that's my time. I can do what I want to do. See, but when our spirit and our mind truly grasp that we are to worship and bow down and serve God, our outward actions follow. And I think this is very important because when we start James in a couple of weeks, this is a big part of it, especially those opening couple of chapters. It's not just about what we do, but it's about the heart. And if our heart is truly submitted to God, I shared several, well, it's probably been a month ago or more. I came to the church on Friday morning. As you know, Friday is my sermon writing day. So if you ever text or call me on Friday and I ignore you, it's because I'm doing something more important. I'm writing my sermon. That is my day. But I was bothered that morning and I was struggling and I shared the story. I don't remember all the details, but... I felt like God kept telling me to listen to this song, Worthy of It All by CCY. And then I refused. And I was like, no, God, because it's going to speak to me. And I don't want to hear that right now. I was following my heart. It was a moment. It was a moment. But I came here. I was trying to write a sermon and I just couldn't. So I was like, you know what? I just need to go pray. And I came here and I finally submitted. I listened to the song Worthy of It All. And I remember I was standing right there. I had my phone playing the song. And there's a lyric in the song that just, well, God just opened it up to my heart. The lyric says this, the saints and angels bow before your throne. I'm not going to sing it to you. It'd be pretty bad. But the lyric goes, the saints and angels bow before your throne. The elders cast their crowns before the lamb and sing worthy praise. Worthy There's two things happening in there both dealing with our sermon this morning this is all the Saints and the Angels they bow in other words they they humble their they proskuneo themselves before God and they choose to serve him and a lot of times We might do that action with our body or maybe even pretend in our spirit. I hate to say it that way, but there's another line that really caught my attention that morning because what I realized I was doing in that instance is I was keeping my crown. I was like, God, I can deal with my own stuff. I got this under control because if I do what you're asking me to do, I have to relinquish my crown. But God, this has given me the reason to not be happy with that. This has given me the reason to be mad at them. This has given me the reason to hold that grudge or to walk this path or to take pleasure in this sin or I don't know what your crown is, but it's two parts. We have to bow. Then we have to take the crown off our head. We have to throw it before God's feet. If you're going to worship God, you can't do it with a crown on your head. You can't be the center of your life. See, the one with the crown gets the attention. The one with the crown gets to give instructions. The one with the crown gets to make decisions and make rulings and people have to listen. If I'm wearing my crown, I'm telling God, hey, I'm in power here. You don't have authority. But if I really want to worship God, there comes a point where I have to be in spirit. My heart has to submit to Him first. But I've also got to be honest and truthful. I have to take my crown off. And I got to throw it before him and say, you know what, God, it's not me. It's not mine. It's not my will, as Jesus said. It's your will. It's your will. See, true worship flows from understanding God as he is. There's no one like him. You don't compare to God. We want to. We want to wear that crown and we want to pretend like we got it all under control. But you can't worship with a crown on your head. See, bowing before him means I have to abandon my pride. I have to abandon my ambitions. I have to abandon my own authority and submit to him. Idolatry seeks to exchange the truth about God for something corrupted, manageable, and controlled by my crown that I wear in front of it. As we begin to close this morning, I really hope

I was able to present a clear message I struggled this week. I struggled a lot. I was actually so nervous about it, I left my house at 5 this morning to come and rewrite it all. But I guess the struggle that I'm having with these final three commandments, and while they're particularly hitting hard, is because they're all about dealing with our selfish ambitions, dealing with our heart, putting God on the throne and taking myself out of it. Last week, it's not abusing his reputation to get what I want. This week, it's understanding I'm not in control. I have to relinquish my crown if I'm going to truly worship God. And I guess as I pondered this morning, and as I read through my sermon, I feel like it all boils down to this one question. In my life, where have I tried to make God manageable? Where have I tried to make God manageable? Manageable. If you don't know what that means, when you manage something, you tell it where to be, where to go, how to act, when to act, where to act, why to act. Where have I tried to manage God? Our greatest struggle comes from trying to dictate our own lives, to try to get God to agree with our assessment, to bless what we're doing, to tell God the plan and say, God, follow me, here we go. That's not what God asked for. God doesn't want you to lead. God wants you to follow. And you're not just following anybody. Beyond comparison, and holy and right is the one we seek to follow. All too often we try to give God our plans, to twist Scripture, to make God do what I want Him to do. Resisting His leading every time. It's like trying to walk your dog and he's pulling on the rope. That's us sometimes. We're just trying to tell God where to go. And while in our context we might not have idols built with wood or stone or metal, yet behind every idol that we choose to bow down before is the idol of self. We're truly wanting our own control. We're truly wanting to worship ourselves for being so awesome. What we're really worshiping is the version of us we want God to give. Maybe this is my version. Maybe your version is different. I don't know. But this is how I boil this down for me. This is the version that I want God to give me. I want my problem solved. I want all my wants provided. I want zero responsibility. I want lazy days, sipping sweet tea with real sugar and no weight problems. And I want Jesus to come back and take me to heaven where it'll just be a continuation of the same. To many, this is the greatest desire, and we bow down and we serve it, praying that God make our dream become a reality. But when we begin to compare what God is calling us to do, all of these desires are worthless. And unfortunately, even if we attained them, we wouldn't be happy. If you don't believe me, go read Genesis chapters 1 through 5. They had all of this. It just wasn't good enough. They wanted more. To desire anything other than God is to desire the candle when compared to the sun. There's just no comparison. So this morning, Exodus chapter 20 says not to make a carved image that we bow down and serve. The enemy and our own flesh is going to tempt us to make idols that we serve, not because they're better, not because we can compare to God, but because those idols, well, they give me power. They give me control. We get to become our own God. Get to worship ourselves. We get to be at the top of the worship food chain. Our own captain. We get to do it my way, like old Frankie sang. But every version of that is a selfish version. Every version of that that I choose, I choose to reject God. I choose to not worship Him. I choose to not bow down and serve the one true, living, gracious, loving, forgiving, merciful God. The old song by Bob Dylan is correct. We have to serve somebody. There's no middle ground. There's no spiritual Switzerland. You don't just get to say, not me. I choose to opt out. You serve one of two. You either serve God or you serve the enemy. And when you choose to serve yourself, well, you're not choosing God. Amen. And as I said, to worship God means to worship him in the spirit of truth is to literally take the crown off your own head and throw it to him. Surrender our desires to God because true worship flows from a place of understanding who he truly is, knowing that he's in control and blessedly you don't have to be. God who knows the end from the beginning is ordaining your life Choose him. Choose him. Because as scripture tells us, he gives us and brings us to a better place than we could ever dream up on our own. So again, I'll leave you with this one question. Where in life am I trying to make God manageable? To make him bow and serve my desires. Because when you identify them and when the Holy Spirit points them out to you, these are the areas that we have to surrender to God, to give him control and to worship him. Amen.