

11.3.22 evening Service English

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Date: 11 March 2022

Preacher: Reverend John Lachie Macleod

[0 : 0 0] Good evening and a warm welcome to the service this evening and those who are visiting from other congregations are especially welcome it's good to see a good number this evening and those online as well a warm welcome as we come together to to worship God.

One or two intimations first of all just to say that the service is over this weekend tomorrow there'll be a prayer meeting at six o'clock and then the service which the prayer meeting will be led by the elders one of the elders and the the evening service at seven will be led by John again and then on Sunday the service is at 11 and at six as usual and we celebrate the sacrament of the Lord's Supper at the service at 11. The other thing is at the end of all the services there'll be a retiring collection and the money that's raised will go to the Blytheswood appeal the Ukraine appeal that Blytheswood are managing so please if you're able to give give to that and finally just to say well almost finally to say that the session opened this morning and any who know the Lord and who trust the Lord but haven't yet come forward to profess faith in the Lord Jesus be encouraged to to do so this evening the session I'll meet just to my left in the wee room next door so please stay behind if you are trusting the Lord we remember his call is his command is do this in remembrance of me and the final thing is just to say that we're delighted to have John I thought I always thought it was John Lachey but I was told today through your mother so it must be right it's not John Lachey it's John I wouldn't argue with your mother either it's John it's not John Lachey it's John McLeod but he's always been known to us as John Lachey so John it's good to have you with us today and over the weekend I don't need to introduce you you're well known better known than I am here and we're very happy to have you and we pray God's blessing on you as you lead these services thank you David and thanks so much for the invitation to be with you it's great to be I always have an excuse to come back home sometimes you get asked to do things and you say well I need to pray about that other times you get asked to do things and you just say yes and this was one of the ones where I just said yes but I do appreciate the opportunity but recognizing that it's a responsibility and it's a privilege because we're coming together to worship our God we're coming together to seek his presence and to remember him as David said through the command he gave us to remember him in the bread and in the cup that he gave to the church as a lasting remembrance of the wonder of the love he has for his people that he loved us and gave himself for us so we're going to begin this evening service singing together the words of medical psalm number 95 we're going to sing from the beginning down to the end of the verse marked six oh come let us sing to the Lord come let us everyone a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation and we'll sing down to verse six so come and let us worship him let us bow down with all and on our knees before the Lord our maker let us fall oh come let us sing to the Lord come let us everyone a joyful noise make to the rock of our salvation and we'll sing to the Lord our salvation let us before his presence come with his unthankful voice let us sing song to him with grace

and make a joyful noise all God our great God our great God and great King above all God he is oh efendim so belongs for he the same did make the dry land also from his hands its form at first did take

O come and let us worship him let us bow down with all and on our knees before the Lord our maker let us fall well we do come before our God and our maker and whilst we may not kneel we will bow and we will still our hearts and call on God's name as we pray let's pray together eternal father we thank you that tonight we are reminded of the wonder of the glorious privilege that is set before us whenever doors are opened in the house of worship for us to come and to gather whenever we hear the words that invite us to engage in song and in praise and engage in prayer and to come into a place that has been designated for the worship of your holy name whilst we recognise you are never confined to these spaces or places yet we recognise the privilege of being

in them and being roused from all that is going on in our own life's activity to be reminded of the very purpose for which we exist which is to bow before you to know you to glorify you to enjoy you and ultimately to have a foretaste in this life of what will be fully expressed in a world to come when you are completely unworthily worshipped in the way that you deserve we thank you our God that you are one who invites us into the experience and knowledge of what it is to worship God we thank you Lord as we acknowledge there is so much to it than simply the tunes or the words or the phrases or even the intellectual aspect of teaching we recognise that in the worship of God we enter into profound spiritual realities and it is our desire Lord that as we prepare for these times together in these coming days and especially as we're preparing mind and heart to gather around your table on your day we're recognising that we long to engage in the reality of the kind of worship that brings joy and honour to your holy name for the Father seeks such as will worship him in spirit and in truth is what our Saviour revealed to our thirsting soul concerning the reality of worship we know Lord it's not the times or lengths of service it's not the content of service that will define the wonder of the worship it's what will happen in the human hearts that gather engaging with the heart of the eternal father who so loved this world that he gave his only begotten son that whosoever should believe in him should not perish but should have eternal life and so we thank you that your heart is open towards us and that we are invited to worship you because you have invited us and called us to come to know you we thank you that you are the

[9 : 09] God who thought upon us before we ever thought upon you and that you thought of us with good intention and with merciful purposes before we realised how much we need your mercy and depend on your goodness and we thank you that it was in your thoughts oh God to come to reveal yourself to us to redeem us and to make us your very own not just for the passage of time but for the glory of all eternity and so Lord as we recognise the wonder and power of the ways in which you have thought of us and invited us to yourself so we ask now in the light of your great mercy and love towards us we ask that you would hear our prayers that you would be with us in these days together that you would Lord bless the gatherings with the knowledge of your presence and that we would sense the glory of what it means to belong to the eternal God and to know him as our father who is in heaven and so we ask you Lord to think of us in these days and in these gatherings and we do pray that hearts would be stirred to follow you lives would be called to confess you and that the direction of the years we spend in this world would be shaped by our desire to follow after you and Lord we recognise as we ask you to think of us and remember us we're so conscious oh Lord of the need that exists in our world which is so vast and so beyond our resourcing and our understanding as we think of the fact that we meet together you

Lord at a time when nations are at war and the impact of all that is happening so close to our own nation is something unfolding day by day unknown to us but known in your purposes and known in your plans and so we pray tonight for Ukraine we pray for Russia we recognise the complexities of these situations but ultimately we're appalled at the atrocities that unfold as we see the testimony to the reality of sin to the reality of fallenness to the reality of the brokenness of this world where humanity rather than bow to God exalts itself as God so Lord we plead for your rescuing we plead for your help and so we do pray especially for the brothers and sisters in Christ who are caught up in the midst of the warfare we feel unworthy Lord of identifying with them in many ways when we see the commitment of so many believers determined to stay and to serve in the knowledge that when these days pass whenever and however that will be they will have left a testimony to the steadfastness of

Christ and to the steadfastness of the gospel in the midst of the shaking kingdoms of this world so Lord we pray that you would bless the world bless the suffering bless those who are afraid bless your people bless your church and be near us in your pardoning power for Jesus sake and glory amen we're going to sing again to God's praise worship the king worship the king all glorious sabbath oh greatly sing his power and his love holy praes his wine and his love his praise whose robe is the light whose canopy space

His chariots of wrath, the deep thunder clouds firm, and dark is it upon the wings of the storm. The earth with its toll of wonders untold, almighty thy power hath founded all old, hath established it fast by a changeless decree, and round it hath cast like a mantle the sea.

[14 : 16] Thy bountiful care of tongue can recite, it breathes in the air, it shines in the light, it streams from the hills, it descends to the plain, and sweetly distills in the dew and the rain.

Frail children of dust and feeble as trail, in thee do we trust, nor find thee to fail.

Thy mercies how tender, how firm to the end, how maker, defender, redeemer, and friend.
O Lord of all might, how boundless thy love, while angels delight, to him thee above.

The humbler creation, though feeble there lays, with true adoration shall sing to thy praise.

[15:42] Well, this evening I want us to look at Psalm 95. We've already sung the metrical version of it, but if we could turn to number 95 in the book of Psalms, I want to read the Psalm, which we'll later come to look at and pray for God's help in our understanding of it, as we look to this Psalm, just to open up our hearts and minds in the thinking about coming together over this weekend, and on the Lord's Day and the communion service in the church.

Here we have a psalm that truly invites us into the worship of God. Psalm number 95, I read from the beginning. Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord.

Let us shout aloud to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving, and extol him with music and song.

Come, let us bow down in worship.

Let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker, for he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.

[17:26] Today, if only you would hear his voice. Do not harden your hearts as you did at Meribah, as you did that day at Massah in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested me.

They tried me, though they had seen what I did. For forty years I was angry with that generation. I said they are a people whose hearts go astray, and they have not known my ways.

So I declared an oath in my anger, they shall never enter my rest. May the Lord bless that psalm in its reading to us.

And just before we come to look at it, let's do as the psalm has instructed us, and extol him with music and song, as we sing together again, though the nations rage.

Kingdom rise and fall, that if there is still one king, reigning over all.

[18:51] So I will not fear, for this earth remains, that my God is the Ancient of Days.

For my God is the Ancient of Days.

Though the dread of night overwhelms my soul, He is here with me, I am not alone, For his love is sure, And he knows my name, For my God is the Ancient of Days.

None above him, None before him, All of time in his hands, For every joy shall he be, And never stand.

All the power, All the glory, I will trust in his name, For my God is the Ancient of Days.

[20:27] Though I may not see, What the future brings, I will watch and wait, For the Saviour King, Let my joy complete, Standing face to face, In the presence of the Ancient of Days.

And Him, Oh, Obviously notBLE ■■■ieni which graphic Tôi die, And however he scanf ■■■■■, There we carry,ares abalone, hands, for his throne is shall remain and ever stand.

All the power, all the glory I will trust in his name, for my God is the Ancient of Days.

For my God is the Ancient of Days. There's probably not a subject as controversial in the Western Church and certainly in the Scottish Church over the last number of years as what do we mean when we speak of corporate worship and what's involved in coming together to worship God.

It's been a deeply divisive issue, it's been a profoundly challenging issue and I'm sure your minister's very thankful that I'm not really going to go into that issue. But I'm going to speak about what Psalm 95 shares with regards to worship and how it calls us and rouses us to worship God. It is very much as many of the Psalms are a call to worship.

[22:27] There's a voice that comes from the Word of God that stirs us up and reminds us that we need to worship and that reminds us that God is worthy of our worship.

And one of the great benefits, I believe, of a communion season is that it is a time that just challenges us to think about our lives, to think where we're going, to think about the critical things and the important things when it comes to our life and our relationship with God as we hear from the Word of God, the call to follow Christ, the call to respond to the Gospel, the call to come and to worship God.

We need these times in our lives. The car I had before my present one, just after I had bought it, it was probably one of the fanciest cars I've ever owned and I had things in it that I still don't know what the buttons were for.

But the first time I went on a long drive with it, you know, that's when you're testing. I say new car, it was new to me, it was actually one of the oldest cars I've bought since my teens, but it was driving

down the motorway in England with my son and the next thing this warning sound went off and of course I panicked and I looked immediately to the dashboard and up in front of me came this message, drowsiness detected.

And I had two thoughts, the first one was I was astonished at the technology because it was actually right, I was, long drive, hot afternoon, getting sleepy. The second thought I had was, I wonder if I could get one of these in the church.

[24 : 06] Drowsiness detected and so often we know the challenge of it physically but spiritually there can be a drowsiness and a weariness that we need rousing from in our lives and here in Psalm 95 we know that the psalmist comes with that kind of burden because at the psalm ended we recognised that he was drawing in comparison with an era in the past that was one of the most shameful episodes in Israel's history where the people hadn't responded to the call of God, hadn't responded to the voice of the Lord.

In fact they had heard his voice but they had hardened their hearts and so here's the drowsiness detection warning. I don't want you to be like that. I don't want you to fall asleep at the wheel of your life.

I want you to be alert. I want you to be alive. I want you to know what it is to follow after God and to give God the glory he deserves with all that you are.

And so this word comes to us at the outset of these meetings together to start us and to recognise that this is a privilege we are called to to come before the Lord and to worship him.

It is worth noting that it is a call to corporate worship. It is again without going into any of the controversies churches I've had to deal with in the light of COVID and post lockdown but there is no doubt here that there is a corporate emphasis given in the call that comes to sing to the Lord to gather together come let us sing come let us shout let us come before him let us do this let us kneel let us bow down for he is our God the strength of the shared corporate identity the power of fellowship in the body of Christ that the mutual encouragement of one another as we gather together and remind one another that we are in this together as we wage war against the weaknesses of our flesh and the darkness in the world and as we seek to exalt and glorify our God in the midst of it here is this reminder of the power and value

[26 : 22] God has placed on physical gathering together and the importance that he gives to it a number of years ago when I was involved in the teams that used to go to the Republic of Moldova one of our team one time just I guess feeling overwhelmed at the needs that were there one of the team did a quick calculation and worked out it had cost over £3,000 for us as a team to fly there it's a lot cheaper now thanks to Ryanair and Wizzair and such like but it was £3,000 there was £6 of about £500 each and he said think what they could have done with that money and so he went and spoke to the pastor and said would it be better for you if we send the money and we weren't able to come but we could give you that money for the work in your community and he said to him he says I'd rather you came supposing you never had a penny to spend because the value of the fellowship the encouragement of the togetherness the bond of sharing in the worship of God together especially when like he you live in quite an isolated and isolating environment it's something

God values it's something God encourages we know Hebrew the letter to the Hebrews warned the first century Christians against abandoning coming together and here we have a situation where this psalm is inviting us to recognise the value of coming and sharing as we're stirring one another and stirred together to worship the Lord as before we go into the detail of the psalm it's also worth noting we're noting these opening themes if you like of this being a worship being a conscious conscientious response to the invitation God has set before us but we do notice there is a great variety in the expressions that are granted to all the elements of their worship there will be thanksgiving there will be shouting there will be singing there will be music there will be song but there's also the solemnity of understanding what is at stake because as the psalm turned towards the end we notice the kind of the theme of it changes dramatically from this great sense of celebration and exuberance we have the great solemnity of the danger of what could happen if the people were to ignore the invitation there's the the danger that is invoked in the human heart that doesn't respond to worship that doesn't come to

God we see that worship is a serious business it has a very serious involvement of our souls and our lives it involves expression from us but it also demands attention from us listen and we'll come back to some of this in a few moments when we look at some of the elements of the worship but you know isn't it remarkable how so many of the themes that are explored are not connected to so

many of the themes you hear in our discussions on worship this is going to the very heart of our relationship with God it's going to the heart of our understanding of our salvation and the spirit we bring before him and the attitudes we bring before that's critical to worship one of the finest definitions I've ever come across with regards worship because we recognize that whilst the focus in the psalm and this evening is primarily on our worshiping together publicly we recognize that worshiping together publicly is just part of our living daily in our worship of God and William Temple said to worship is to quicken the conscience by the holiness of God to feed the mind with the truth of God to purge the imagination by the beauty of God to open the heart to the love of God and to devote the will to the purpose of God and that definition of worship would certainly fit with what the psalmist is driving us to hear because as he invites us and encourages us to worship it is so clear that his focus is not well what do you want to do as you come to worship he's telling us what's to be done because of who God is that's what demands and drives the substance of the worship that they bring that's what's so imperative to the true worship that is asked the starting point is well what do we feel not what do we feel like doing today or what do we want to do today but he says we need to come and sing for joy because we're coming before the Lord who is the rock of our salvation we're coming before the God of glory we're coming before the eternal creator we're coming before the one who holds this messed up world in the power of his hands he's made it he's formed it he's watched over it he governs it he looks out for it he speaks to it he calls his people from the darkness of it this is the God who exists this is the God who lives this is the God who is worthy of our worship and therefore it is him and him alone that should be our concern when we come to worship as the great preacher Eric Alexander once said he was he had once heard somebody say that worship is not a consumer activity as they were challenging some attitudes in churches about worship and he said well actually worship is a consumer activity but God is the consumer God is the one who consumes the worship

[32 : 32] God is the one who the songs are for God is the one who the praise and the prayers are for God is the one that we want to please ultimately and primarily with the messages and with the teaching as much as we want all these things to do so much for us primarily they're all for him and to him to give glory in his holy name we come he says to worship the Lord the focus must be our great God and Savior and that's one of the wonderful things in a weekend like this that it brings us back to that wonderful action of the heart of God that is at the center of everything we hope for everything that we need to believe in everything that gives us peace in this life and hope for the life to come the cross of Christ and the one whose body was given and whose blood was shed for us come sing to the

Lord to the rock let's come before him with thanksgiving God is to be at the forefront of what we do in our worship together and it's such a simple straightforward reality but it's one where we often fail where we often collapse because we get influenced by many other things and we get shaped by religious culture worldly culture we get shaped by our own circumstances things are hard why should I go and sing for joy to the Lord does anyone get any idea what's going on in my mind or in my heart there's a war that's affecting our world how can we sing for joy to the Lord but the psalmist is clear and we have to be certain in our understanding he wasn't writing to a perfect society and a perfect world he was writing to broken human beings he was writing to those whose failures were apparent and recorded in history he said you need to come you need to get before God you need to rejoice in his presence you're to focus on him and allow him to shape your life this is the Lord your Bible will have it in capitals as we recognise the addressing of the covenant God the self existent eternal God he says come sing for joy to this supreme God who exists without beginning and without end everything in this world is weary everything within this world is tiresome at one stage or another even this war that has started there are people already estimating about how it's going to end because it is going to end we don't know how we don't know when but it will end like every war before but what will never end is the life of God and the power of God and the glory of God and so from this world of tiresome things we're invited into the presence and life and joy of the eternal God to worship and to come before the great I am and to come and to shout to the rock of our salvation what a wonderful ascription he gives as he begins to unfold the understanding of God he wants to inspire our worship this is the rock of our salvation there is so much that that word conveys to us the great old hymn rock of ages cleft for me we sang it in our praising tonight of this the rock of ages that certain powerful existence of God in the midst of our knowledge of life with its brevity the amazing truth of this great certainty stability in a world of instability and uncertainty

God is this great unmovable person this unmovable power this unshakable unbreakable God in a life where so much of what we hold to and what we experience gets shaken and gets broken but come and sing to God and worship the God who is the rock and he's the rock of our salvation he's saying this to the people of Israel come and sing and shout for joy to the rock of our salvation God is our salvation even before we come to understand some of the great new testament verses extolling the wonders and the virtues of justification by faith alone here here is the old testament declaring to the people of God God is your salvation not your perfection not your goodness not your works not your giving not your kindness not your personality not even the history and the heritage though all these things mattered in their day rejoice in this however broken you are however lost you are however far you have wandered however much you have drifted there is a salvation that is real a salvation that is powerful a salvation to be received because that salvation is in God himself he is our rock he's the one who saves it's in his heart to save us it's in his nature to save us it's his desire to save us well we know there are days when we doubt and there are days when we struggle but it's the Lord that's the rock of our salvation it's not our experience it's not our ability it's not our accomplishment as we come to sing with joy to the Lord today we come and sing not because we've made a good effort today to be a good Christian we come and we sing today because the unfailing Lord set his saving love towards us and we worship him I met a man just last night travelling home hadn't seen him for many years we used to hang about together when we were both converted round about the same time and did so much together and you start reminiscing and you start remembering and you almost get wistful about how great things used to be and they were but the

[39 : 02] God who brought us joy then is the God who is the same yesterday today and forever he's the God who still saves tonight and we're just as saved tonight as we were back then because it was the Lord who saved and we've got just as much reason to be thankful for that salvation whether we're three weeks away from a godless lifestyle or thirty years away from it because the salvation is just as real just as powerful just as undeserved he's a rock the God who saves us come and sing to him and again that get emphasized as so often it does in the Psalms for the Lord is the great God the great king above all gods the Israelites lived in a multi-faith world the Israelites lived amongst people who had their gods and thought their gods were better gods the Israelites lived in a world that was full of temptations we know how often they drifted and fell in the light of all the invitations from other nations to come and to worship their gods and as the Psalmist is extolling them and exhorting them to come before

God with thanksgiving he's reminding this is why we worship to the who of our worship is the Lord and him alone how we do it is in a spirit of thanksgiving in a spirit of celebration and this is why because the Lord that we are called to is the great God the great king above all gods he's above and beyond any deity that other people have imagined or thought about there's a true greatness to God it's why worship should never get boring it gets boring because we lose our focus of God but if we think about who God is and if we're motivated in our thinking to contemplate the reality of his existence there's an inexhaustible wealth in these thoughts that can motivate and stir our worship way back in the 1950s

A.W. Tozer wrote so much about public worship together I think the church in the 21st century has become the church of his nightmares in the wider world he wrote at one time in my opinion the great single need of the moment is that light-hearted superficial religionists be struck down with a vision of God high and lifted up with his train filling the temple the holy art of worship seems to have passed away like the Shekinah glory from the tabernacle as a result we are left to our own devices and forced to make up the lack of spontaneous worship by bringing in countless cheap and tawdry activities to hold the attention of the church people because we've lost that sense of God come and worship why you're going to put on a good show for us there's going to be loads of cool and exciting things to do come and worship because the

Lord is the great God the great King above all gods you see if people are passionate about something they will praise a number of years ago I'm not going to share all the detail of how I know this but when it started after I was taking my son to a football match I was dropping him off and he was meeting his friends and I don't want to go too much into all the culture of that but there are what we nowadays call ultra fans and they were all gathering together and I had known a little bit about what happened in the stadium you still see them and what astonished me was as I was watching all these boys gathered they were all 13 14 15 16 and what amazed me was these were the boys that

were singing songs not the good songs that we used to sing in church but they were using the tunes that people in many churches say oh you know young ones aren't interested in that today you know you've got to have different tunes you can't sing these old tunes well go to the football stadiums of our land and you'll still hear them using the tunes because they're passionate about what they're singing about it's not the tunes that need changing it's the hearts that need changing and the passion and the vision of the glory of

God if I go to West Bromage Albion and one of the songs they sing every week is the Lord's my shepherd I'll not want because a wee boy came from Sunday school singing that one day and to this day they all sing it I'm sure very few of them think about it or not enough of them think about what they're singing but it's remarkable and it struck me that day watching all these young boys singing tunes that people in my church kept telling me were too old fashioned to sing anymore and I was thinking you know they don't care what the tune but they're absolutely in love with what they're singing about and it burdens me I have to confess why young people in the church haven't got a vision of God it causes their hearts to burn and their hearts to sing the Lord's the great God he's the great king above all gods come and worship him this is why you should worship this is why you should love this is the greatness of the one that we come to he's the one that we draw near to oh yeah there's all kinds of powers in this world and there's all kinds of things going on in this world there's all kinds of dictators there's all kinds of influences but they're all going to pass away they're all going to disappear and when they're all gone they will all be acknowledging that there was only one great power one great God one great king and you had the chance to know him you had the opportunity to worship him and to draw near to him we're drawing near he says to the one who rules in all things and the psalm having celebrated salvation goes on to celebrate creation these are the great themes that we see in the songs that are recorded in revelation for us some of the early chapters of revelation and you see the great things that are celebrated there the fact that [45 : 43] God is the creator he made everything in this world from nothing and God is the redeemer he's the one who saved a people for himself he's the one who loved us and made a way possible for us to come back to him and as the psalmist here is celebrating why we should be excited in worshiping God because of his greatness and his power and his glory he reminds us in his hand the depths of the earth the mountain peaks the sea it's all his it all belongs to him he made this world and he still owns it we know that there's a desperate landlord the prince of the power of the air who's been destructed and we know that he is engaged in this world and doing so many things that are causing people to fear and to be in all kinds of disruptive distracted ways taking their eyes off the greatness and the privilege of worship we know that there are all kinds of small g gods at work in this world but he says they're not going to deliver they're not going to fulfill their promises but we come to the God who will fulfill his promises he will do this for us he will be the one who conquers all his enemies he will be the one who delivers our souls and leads us through the dark waters and the one who takes us into his glorious presence this is why he's worthy this is why he deserves because he shepherds us he provides for us he watches over us we're the people of his pasture he has an intent care for us we're the flock under his care he's protective of us here we see something that reminds us that worship truly is a spiritually intimate experience and why it's important

God feeds us personally God cares for us personally this is relational it's at the heart of worship so often we've been caught up in the arguments that are all about the function of worship but at the heart of worship here is spiritual intimacy coming to God because he wants us to come because he has something to give us he's got something to heal us he's got something to warn us he's got something to provide for us oh come he says let us bow down in worship let us kneel before him I know that we can come out of duty we can sometimes come out of tradition some traditions are good for us if they keep us doing good things let's not miss the moment of the greatness of the spiritual opportunity there is to meet with God and to know the wonder the unending wonder of what it means to worship him and note what he says and this is key to through worship if we go back to the definition

I used earlier to quicken the conscience feed the mind purge the imagination open the heart and devote the will to the purpose of God there's lots of things we can do in worship if you want to be exuberant if you want to be whatever the Bible talks about singing for joy shouting aloud extolling with music and song but let's not miss the two critical elements that were mentioned here in verse 6 with regards to what it means to worship God and what makes worship productive because

sometimes if we only look at the exuberance it's not spiritual it can sometimes be just emotional the great preacher Martin Lloyd Jones said that one of the great needs in preaching was emotion but one of the greatest dangers was emotionalism and I think what he said of preaching is through of worship and he says I want you to experience them but listen he says we need to come before God bowing down in worship and kneeling before our make now these two things are mentioned not just to give some kind of guidance for physical posture the Bible would never want us to do things physically that have no spiritual meaning and in the activities that he mentioned we have two elements that are really critical to making us productive and enjoyable worshippers of God and it's submission and listen bowing down and kneeling to be signs of the spiritual surrender and to be signs of our spiritual submission before the Lord our God come he says isn't it interesting this second invitation comes halfway through the psalm as it were having given us all the excitement exuberance all the reasons why we should be so wonderfully privileged and and anticipate about coming in worshiping God together but he says we need to bow down we need to kneel we need to recognize

God's place and our place in this we need to recognize surrender we need to realize that worship is an act of our will it's like that old story of the boy I've told it so many times I may have told it here before it's one of my favorite illustrations maybe I can identify with it the little boy in school who was having a battle of wills with his teacher and the teacher was demanding that he sat down and it was one of these moments that was kind of becoming embarrassing for the whole classroom eventually the little boy sits and the teacher has that sense of victory folds her arms and kind of goes see and the wee boy says yeah but on the inside I'm still standing up friends worship can never be a battle of wills like that when it comes to God I surrender all all to thee my blessed savior I surrender all as Warren

[52 : 05] Wiersbe said alas some people who enjoy lifting their hands and shouting do not enjoy enjoy bowing their knees and submitting worship is surrender worship is submission worship is acknowledging his worthiness and our unworthiness it's acknowledging his authority and his power over us he's our maker he's our God and so we come to him and that is why as we come to the close we notice that the psalm then turns to a very solemn theme and a very solemn tone having been so full of excitement and so full of encouragement from the last line of verse seven down to the end it's a very solemn expression from God as he continues to address the worship and this is why it's solemn because it it comes to this critical issue of yielding our will to God because if we don't it's really serious business and there's no amount of noise there's no amount of shouting there's no amount of singing and there's no amount of music is ever going to mask the fact that we never surrender to God if we don't surrender to God and listen to his voice the psalmist points back to incidents historically where Israel's complaining shone through where their unbelief came to hinder their progress with God they never entered the promise because they never trusted they went along with the voices of the crowd so God was speaking to them and God was challenging them and God was saying here's what

I have for you you go forward and take hold of what I have for you but there were voices that say I don't think we can do this I don't think we can stand up to this I don't think that we're going to conquer these giants and so they disobeyed and their hearts hardened and they never followed through and God spoke but they never listened and so there's this urgency that comes through towards the end that as well as the great encouragement we've had for believing people to come to enjoy to be revived be renewed in your understanding in the worship of God so there is an urgent message to the person who to this point has not succumbed their will to the will of God today tonight if God's voice is speaking to you for the goodness of your soul and for the glory of that God do not leave this place without sorting it don't leave your seat without yielding your heart opening your soul and saying Lord

I surrender it's one of the saddest things that the corporate worship of God's people could actually harden the hearts of some who gather because of what's going on within them God speaks his voice is heard but these people in the past in Israel heard and complained heard and murmured heard and disappointed and heard and turned away from God as someone said of the word of God the way we treat the word of God is the way we treat the God of the world and he had spoken and they refused to listen and God says I declared an oath and anger that never entered my rest and this is the very final point the realization that worship together on earth is preparation entering into the rest was God's purpose the Sabbath the promised land all these things were pointing to Christ

and to the rest of

God that enjoyment of God and his people together go I'm not going to turn to it now but Hebrews chapter 3 from verse 7 into the fourth chapter again these historic issues being used as reminders of the danger of not going into the rest of God the rest for your soul the rest that is to be found when you come to Christ and how that is an anticipation and a preparation for the eternal rest that you have with God and by rest I'm not just meaning lying around doing nothing sleeping and being slovenly that's not what it's talking about it's talking about that kind of rest that we were created you know it's if we go back to the parallels we spoke about creation and redemption already as they're mentioned in this psalm you go back to Genesis and you have humanity in their very first experience of life being born and sorry being created to enjoy the rest of God day six humanity created day seven God rests what was the first experience whatever your understanding of the progress of creation this is what the

Bible tells us man was made for you were made and before you worked before you enjoyed creation before you engaged with all the environment around you he was in the presence of God in the rest of God in the enjoyment for God that's what we lost that stillness that rest that pleasure that wonder that worship and now we come to begin life again by finding rest in Christ resting in the finished work of Calvary resting in the blood resting in the cross resting in Jesus and that life begins the great anticipation of a life that eternally worships the one who made us and who loved us let's pray father we know that many a human soul goes through that longing and that wrestling of realizing we were made for so much more than our experience of our days in this world and yet not everyone who goes through that wrestling will hear the voice that beckons them to find the rest and the peace that is found when we know the pardon and the forgiveness and the glory of the new life that is given to us in

[58 : 45] Jesus Christ father may there be no hardening of hearts in this place tonight indeed Lord we would ask that through the wonders of your grace for it is your grace alone that can accomplish this that even if a hard heart enter tonight that even in this evening hour by the work of your spirit and your truth that there would be that softening and that breaking in your holy presence and so Lord for every one of us whatever particularly spoke to us whatever we heard from your voice tonight may we not harden our hearts against it but instead yield our hearts to it for your eternal praise and glory amen there is a higher throne than all this world has known where faithful ones from every tongue will one day come before the sun will stand made faultless through the lamb believing hearts find promised grace salvation comes there is a higher throne and all this world has known where faithful ones from every tongue will be one day come before the sun will stand before the sun will stand believe in hearts find promise grace salvation come salvation come hear heaven's voices sing their thunderous anthem rings through emerald ports and sapphire skies their praises rise all glory wisdom power strength thanks and honor are to God our King who reigns on high forevermore and there will find our home our life before the throne will honor him in perfect song where we belong we'll find our home our life before the throne will honor him in perfect song where we belong hear white beach tears day die hear white beach tears day die as thirst and hunger die as thirst and hunger die as thirst and hunger die as the lamb becomes the shepherd king we'll reign with him hear heaven's voices sing their thunderous anthem ring through emerald port and sapphire skies their praises rise all glory wisdom power strength thanks and honor are to God our King who reigns on high forever and to the King who reigns on high the King who reigns on high forever more

In thanks and honour are to God our King who reigns on high forevermore.

And to the King who reigns forever, be glory, honour and praise. And to his people here on the earth, may he grant to each one of us the grace to believe, the hope to prevail and the love to overcome so that the blessing of the eternal Father, Son and Holy Spirit would be with each one of us this night and forevermore. Amen.