

Drawing Near to God Wisely

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- [0 : 0 0] Good morning. Aren't you glad church doesn't have to be boring?
God is not boring, right? So church shouldn't be boring. Amen. Wonderful worship this morning. And everything went perfectly.
Just because the way it's supposed to, right? It's just the Lord is reminding us that this is a service of worship, not performance. Amen.
So amen. It's good to see so many people out, man. I didn't know if I'd be here preaching to the cameras this morning.
It was 12 degrees, but thanks for your faithfulness. We're looking at Ecclesiastes chapter 5 this morning. We've been going through Ecclesiastes, and there's a lot in this little book.
- [1 : 0 0] It's just a little Old Testament book, but there's a lot there. And I think this is maybe number five that we've been on as I've had opportunity to look at this book.
And I'm being blessed. Solomon has been reflecting on wisdom for life. And now in this passage, he's admonishing us about something very important is how we draw near to him in worship, right?
And that's why you came this morning, to worship him. The desire to draw near to God is why we get up early on a weekday and we sit maybe with our cup of coffee and have our morning prayers.
One of Solomon's themes in Ecclesiastes is the fear of God. And in this passage, he applies the fear of God to our worship. He really goes to preaching.
He's been, in the first four chapters, he's been just sort of reflecting on life and saying, this is what I see and so on. And then in chapter five now, he's got some points.
- [2 : 0 0] The preacher has come out and understood correctly, you know, our fear of God is not like our fear of snakes or our fear of a shark, right? That kind of fear makes you run away.
You want to get as far away as you can, as fast as you can. But the fear of God makes you want to draw near. It makes you want to run to him.
You know, that kind of fear is not biblical. The fear of God that would be terror or dread.
We want to run to him. So keep that in mind as we read. And we'll look at a good definition of the fear of God in just a minute. So reading from Ecclesiastes chapter five, one through seven. He says, guard your steps when you go to the house of God.
To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools. For they do not know that they are doing evil. Be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God.
- [3 : 0 5] For God is in heaven and you are on earth. Therefore, let your words be few. For a dream comes with much business and a fool's voice with many words.
When you vow a vow to God, do not delay paying it, for he has no pleasure in fools. Pay what you vow. It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay.

Let not your mouth lead you into sin and do not say before the messenger that it was a mistake. Why should God be angry at your voice and destroy the work of your hands?

For when dreams increase and words grow many, there is vanity. But God is the one you must fear. Amen. This is the word of the Lord for us this morning.

Amen. Let's pray. Father, we thank you for drawing us again into worship as we've come on the Lord's Day to honor you, to look to learn from you, from your word, come to enjoy singing praise to you, hearing prayers and offering prayers to you, and also coming to your table this morning to be reminded of all that you have done for us in Christ.

[4 : 21] You've given us commands in your word, Father, not to make us good or to make us feel better about ourselves, but your commands show us our failures, show us our weakness.

They show us our need for a Savior who perfectly obeyed, and we know he is our strength and our ever-present help. So we ask you this morning, Holy Spirit, to search us and forgive us for our sins and keep us depending upon you.

Forgive the preacher for his sins, for you look right into the heart, and we thank you in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. You can be seated. So when we draw near to God in private prayer and Bible reading or in the corporate gathering of the church on the Lord's Day, it's good to remember who is the most important person in the audience.

We should be most concerned that Father, Son, and Holy Spirit leave the service feeling like, you know, worship was really good today.

I was really blessed by those songs and the prayers and the preaching of the word. That was a blessing. And Solomon emphasizes that God is the one we must fear.

[5 : 48] You know, how are we to think about the fear of God? So here's a definition from the book of Proverbs. The fear of the Lord is a continual, humble, and faithful submission to Yahweh, which compels one to hate evil and turn away from it and brings with it rewards better than all earthly treasures, the rewards of love for and a knowledge of God and long life, the rewards of confidence, of satisfaction and protection.

So, understood correctly, the fear of the Lord leads us into greater love, right? Greater humility, greater submission to His will, greater knowledge of who He is, greater satisfaction.

It doesn't make us want to run away. It wants it to make us to run into to find greater satisfaction. The fear of God is not terror or dread for those who are in Christ.

It's just, you could describe it as a trembling trust or reverential trust that draws us into worshipping Him for what He's done.

We love that song, right? What He's done that we sing sometimes. All the glory and the honor to the Son. That's what the fear of God gives us, this reverential trust.

[7 : 16] Our songs of praise should be about what He's done, not about us, right? Drawing to God with the proper attitude of humble submission to Him should change us. When we come into worship, something should happen that there's a little bit of a transformation that takes place.

Think about the woman with a sinful reputation who showed up at Simon the Pharisee's house. You remember where Jesus was invited to dinner, and Luke talks about it in chapter 7.

She brought some expensive perfume, and she began touching the feet of Jesus, weeping and wetting His feet with her tears. Then she began wiping His feet with her hair.

And her act of worship of the Lord really brought about some transformation in her. Jesus ended up saying to her, Your faith has saved you.

Go in peace. Her life was changed by the encounter she had with the Lord Jesus. And Jesus was right there in Simon's house. And Simon the Pharisee, He had an opportunity to draw near to Jesus, but he missed it.

[8 : 26] Because he was too busy judging the woman and judging Jesus, allowing her to touch Him. You see, Simon was depending on his own goodness, not realizing that he needed a Savior just as much as she did.

Because he was just as much a sinner, and he demonstrated that by his judgment of her. And Jesus, remember, told him that little parable about forgiveness, and who would be forgiven more.

And Simon agreed. The person who had been forgiven the larger amount. But Simon's heart needed to be transformed by an encounter of worship with the Lord Jesus.

Someone said that Ecclesiastes helps us with our tendency to fall into this kind of external religiosity that is more concerned with outward show than with inward holiness.

Outward show, inward holiness. God is not so concerned if we raise our hands or we sway or we... That's all good, right?

[9 : 31] Every culture and every church is different in how we worship, but we don't judge one another. If somebody raises their hand, we don't judge them for raising their hand.

Or if somebody doesn't raise their hands. Because the outward show is not as important as the inward work that God is doing, right? He's concerned with what's going on inside of us, in our hearts.

Not so much that outward display. Remember what David says in Psalm 51 in his confession to God for his sins. He says, God, you delight in truth in the inward being.

And you teach me wisdom in the secret heart. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. It's all about the heart, heart, heart. God looks deep into our hearts and he wants to transform us.

Every opportunity he gets. Because he's here. He's present with us, right? Father, Son, Holy Spirit is with us. Solomon points out that the true fear of God, that reverential trust in him, will change us as we draw near to him in worship.

[10 : 44] The proper fear of God makes us better listeners, Solomon says, to what God is saying to us. He wants us to listen. He says, first of all, we should be careful to listen, in verse one, to what God is saying.

To draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools. God is always saying something to us through his word. You know, every time you open the scripture, God is speaking.

God is speaking to you. And our problem is that we're not always listening very well, right? We're often distracted to what God is saying. And we see this command all throughout the Old Testament where God instructs his people to listen.

Listen to what I have to say. Moses says it about 10 times in Deuteronomy. He says, Hear, O Israel. Hear, O Israel. Listen to what God is saying to you.

Isaiah repeats the same admonition several times as well. Listen to the Lord your God. In the New Testament, Jesus often repeats the same admonition. He says, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

[11 : 56] Listen. The Apostle Paul says the same thing in Romans 10, 17. He says, So faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ. Listen to the Lord.

James says it in chapter one, verse 19. He says, My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen. Right? Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to become angry.

See, a proper fear of God, understood correctly, this humble trust in him will make us better listeners to what he's saying to us.

You know, the false gods of the nations who opposed Israel, they couldn't hear, and people couldn't hear from them because they couldn't speak. They were both deaf and mute, but we know the gracious God of Israel, he demonstrated that he was a hearing God.

He's a speaking God. He could respond to his people. You remember that great drama between the God of Elijah and the false God, Baal, that's recorded in 1 Kings 18.

[13 : 06] It says that the false prophets of the God, Baal, they called on the name of Baal from morning till noon. Baal, answer us, they shouted.

But there was no response. No one answered, and they danced around the altar they had made. At noon, Elijah began to taunt them. Shout louder, he said.

Surely he is a God. Perhaps he is deep in thought or busy or traveling. Elijah had a sense of humor. Maybe he's sleeping and must be awakened.

So they shouted louder and slashed themselves with swords and spears as was their custom until their blood flowed. Midday passed and they continued their frantic prophesying until the time for the evening sacrifice, but there was no response.

No one answered. No one paid attention. How sad it is to call on a God and have no way of hearing from him.

[14 : 09] He can't respond. To trust in a God that ignores you because he's not really there. He's just a figment of someone's imagination. You know, these false prophets, they were certainly, as Solomon says, offering the sacrifice of fools to an imaginary God who couldn't respond to them.

After they'd worn themselves out, you know, into the evening, imagine, everybody there watching this whole drama throughout the day. Then Elijah's almighty, omnipotent, hearing God, he came and demonstrated who he is.

The word says that fire from the Lord fell and consumed not just the burnt offering that Elijah had prepared, but the wood and the stones and even the dust.

Then licked up all the water that had been poured around the altar and into a trench. You know, stones and dust don't burn. And water doesn't burn unless there's a fire sent from God to demonstrate who he is, to show the contrast between the true God and false gods.

And people were changed from that experience. Fear, the fear of God brought about a change. And in this case, the fear of God brought some real trembling that it was hard for them even to stand up.

[15 : 39] It says, when all the people saw it, they fell on their faces and said, the Lord, he is God. The Lord, he is God. You know, God wants us to recognize who he is in his unlimited power.

He wants us to know that he will not share his glory with the heart idols that we often put in his place, materialism and physical beauty and accomplishment and all those things.

He doesn't share his glory with that. Elijah's God is the same God that we call on. He's the same God that we pray to this morning.

He hasn't changed, right? He's a real person and he hears and he's not silent. And he wants us, he wants you to develop greater listening skills to what he has to say.

You know, it's really better to listen, Solomon says, than to offer sacrifices of fools. It's no good if you leave the worship service feeling really good, feeling like, you know, man, that was really good.

[16 : 50] It made me feel good. I was entertained, but you haven't heard from him. It hasn't changed you in any way. There's been no transformation because entertainment can't change you.

Entertainment is good. There's nothing wrong with entertainment. It, you know, it can release stress and we can find enjoyment in entertainment, but that's not one of the purposes for worship, right?

Because entertainment has no power to change us. God has to meet us to do that in worship. So how can we better prepare our minds and hearts for drawing near to him on the Lord's day, for example?

You know, could we take some time the evening before, maybe on Saturday evening or early Sunday morning maybe to just prepare our hearts for the worship service?

Could we read the scripture ahead of time? Some people, sometimes you come in here and you sit and the scripture is scrolled on the screen and sit and listen to the praise team, maybe practicing.

[17 : 58] But could we prepare our hearts for coming into something that is very special in the life of a Christian is corporate worship. You think about when a musician is going to go into a great performance, how that musician prepares or a great athlete before a competitive event, maybe in the Olympics, I don't know if you ever followed that great gold medalist Michael Phelps, 23 gold medals and five other Olympic medals.

What he was doing before a swim competition, he was focused, right? He usually had some headphones in. I don't know what he was, I wondered what he was listening to.

You know, what was it that was clearing his mind from the distractions, shut out all the distortions and the distractions so he could focus, so he could get in that pool and, you know, do his thing.

Solomon's original audience, they would have had to make greater preparations to attend temple worship. You know, imagine if you're bringing a live animal to sacrifice, then that would require some pre-planning for the service.

You don't just show up at the last minute and rush in. But thankfully, you know, Jesus has done away with temple worship and animal sacrifices with his supreme sacrifice and we don't have to bring in bleeding sheep anymore and offer them as a sacrifice on the altar.

[19 : 33] We are greatly blessed now that the distance between God and his people has been bridged with our mediator, Christ. Because now, we worship the Father in spirit and truth wherever two or three are gathered together in his name, right?

We can draw near to God anywhere, at any time, in any place, through the finished work of Christ, but especially in corporate worship of his people on the Lord's day, we're called, we're commanded to not forsake the assembling together of ourselves like we're doing today to worship, to sing together, to be encouraged with the singing and the preaching and the sacraments.

You know, a proper fear of God makes us better listeners to what he is saying. So may he help us to be good listeners at New City Fellowship.

A proper fear of God also makes us more careful with our words. Solomon has some things to say in this first part of chapter five about what we speak, how we use our voice in worship.

He gives three warnings about careless words in the context of our drawing near to God. Basically, he's admonishing his listeners with three warnings that they should be careful with what they say to God.

[20 : 58] They should be careful that when they do use words that they say what they mean and mean what they say. And they should be careful that they don't allow their mouth to lead them into sin.

Anybody have a problem with that? Ever? Gossip or anger or, right? That's a problem for us, right?

That little instrument of the tongue can lead us astray very quickly. And he's giving these warnings about, you know, approaching God in worship to be careful.

As we've noted, you know, his context was temple worship, but there's some applications we can make for our worship today in the church. And one important thing we can take away from the study of worship in the temple is the reverence and the care that was given to it.

Just in our worship services, you know, just as in our worship services, music was a very important component of their worship. and there's a reason that God had a musician and a songwriter as the one who would make provisions for the building of the temple, King David.

[22 : 11] And as a musician, David set aside 4,000 Levites. That's more than 10% of the tribe to serve as musicians in the temple. 1 Chronicles 23, verse 5 says, to offer praise to the Lord with the instruments that God had made for praise.

You know, we appreciate our musicians and our singers and we wish we had 4,000 to choose from.

Daniel and Prakash would love to have no problems whenever they sent out a request for a musician or a praise team member. They always get a yes.

The temple musicians were careful with their words in the songs they sang in praise to God and we too, we're careful with the words that we sing. And Solomon says, silence before God would be better than rash or hasty words or words that take away from the glory of God and give it to ourselves.

And just because a song hits number one on the Christian contemporary chart doesn't mean that we bring it into worship right away and, you know, teach you to sing it.

[23 : 21] Because the words are important and the words that we speak to God in our singing are important. And so Daniel and Prakash and his team, they examine, you know, what we say in worship.

So God wants us to be careful with our words, make sure they're bringing glory to him and not to ourselves. His second warning is to be careful that we say what we mean and mean what we say.

And in verses four to five he mentions vows five times. So Solomon thinks this is important. And vows, you know, were not commanded in worship but they were allowed as long as the person making the vow really meant what they vowed and didn't think that God was not listening when they made that vow.

You recall Hannah made a vow to the Lord. We read about it in 1 Samuel where she said, O Lord of hosts, if you will indeed look on the affliction of your servant and remember me and not forget your servant but will give to your servant a son then I will give him to the Lord all the days of his life.

You know? So what if Hannah later after God had provided Samuel as her son she decided that oops, it was a mistake. I didn't really mean to say all of that.

[24 : 41] You know? In essence, right, she would be saying, Hannah would be saying my words really didn't matter before God. Maybe God wasn't really listening or maybe he was busy or he was traveling or he was asleep.

No, God is not like Baal, right? God hears everything that we say. Not just in worship but all the time. He is ever present and if we have Christ in us and the Holy Spirit, he goes with us everywhere and we have to depend upon him all the time because we mess it up, we have to be careful to say what we mean and mean what we say.

Right? It's better, he says, not to vow that we should vow and not pay. We're familiar with the couple we read about in Acts 5 who made the commitment to sell a piece of land.

You remember? And they were going to give the entire proceeds to the work of the church. Ananias and Sapphira, they didn't have to make that promise. Peter says that the money was at their disposal.

They could have used it in any way they chose but the problem was in what they said. The problem was that they lied to God's Holy Spirit with their words and they didn't mean what they said and they kept back part of the proceeds and sadly, because of it, they both died suddenly.

[26 : 09] And Luke says that people were changed. He says, the great fear seized the whole church and all who heard about these events. So a proper fear of God and a proper reverential trust came over.

Everybody who heard about Ananias and Sapphira, so you could say they didn't die in vain because God got some glory from that incident.

A proper fear of God and proper reverential trust came over all who heard about it. And Solomon, in giving these warnings, he just wants us to recognize the danger of our own voice in what we say to God and what we say to others.

That there's a danger. We need to put a guard, as Job said, toward the end of his book after he had said a lot of words and his friends had said a lot of words and some of them were just meaningless foolishness.

Job says, I place my hand over my mouth. You know, that silence is better in the presence of God rather than rash, meaningless words or meaningless singing in a song that, you know, doesn't really mean that we're putting the glory where it belongs.

[27 : 26] Think about the care you would want to have if you were to meet a very important person like, say, Queen Elizabeth. May she rest in peace. In Queen Elizabeth's younger days in the mid-1960s, she came to visit St. James Prep School in Montego Bay on one of her visits to Jamaica.

Jamaica became independent in 1962 and remained in the British Commonwealth and some of the students at St. James Prep actually got to sing to the Queen and sadly, I wasn't chosen to be in the choir.

You know, I was first grade probably, you know, I would have messed it all up. But I think my sisters had that honor and I've read that there were proper protocols to follow in the presence of Queen Elizabeth.

They weren't the law but just customary things out of respect for her position. You know, so you were supposed to greet her as your majesty and then, yes ma'am, after the initial greeting and men were expected to do a little bow, you know, just to show reverence, to respect for the Queen.

Ladies, of course, did the curtsy thing and I can't demonstrate that for you. I'm sorry, but, you know, I suppose you wouldn't be arrested if you just went up to the Queen, you know, and tried to give her a high five and say, what's up Liz?

[29 : 00] You know, but it wouldn't be nice. It wouldn't be proper for you to do that. There's a little distance between me and the members of the royal family.

But it's nothing like the distance between God and man. Nothing like the distance, you know, God is, Solomon reminds us, God is in heaven and you are on earth. Jesus, how did he teach us to pray?

Our Father, who art in heaven to remind us that God is above us. It's true that our Father has made a way through Christ for us to just come with confidence any time to come into his presence.

We have this wonderful, intimate relationship because we're united to Christ and we come as Christ to the Father. But he's still God and we're not.

Nor will we ever be. We are united to Christ. We come first to listen and speak second. When we come, we draw near to God in his presence.

[30 : 07] We want to hear from him. We don't want just to blabber on and on. Jesus, in giving the prayer that we know is the Lord's Prayer, he gave some instructions kind of in the prologue that, you know, don't just be a babbling fool and just think that, you know, more words will be meaningful to God.

He gave us that instruction of how we are to go and that's a good, that's a good formula for you to use. If you journal or your morning prayers, if you don't know what to pray for, just start praying through the Lord's Prayer.

Our Father, if you say, Our Father who art in heaven, may your name be honored today in my life and in anybody's life that I come in contact with. that's a big deal right there.

That's important. And then go on through, you know, ask for your daily bread that God would provide for you. Forgive me my sins. Remind me of ways that I have sinned.

And as I have been forgiven, so let me forgive others. In the vows and the commitments that we make, Solomon warns us to be careful.

[31 : 17] So think about the ways that we make vows as Christians today, the vows that we take, promises that we make, you know, in our marriage vows, for example, that comes to mind.

God is listening to our marriage vows. Even if you got married in the courthouse, God is listening. He was there because marriage was his idea, right? I officiated the wedding for my son and daughter-in-law, Zach and Sophia, and they wanted to be married under the big, beautiful oak tree in our backyard.

And I made sure to remind the couple and the audience that, you know, even though we weren't gathered in the church building, this was still a church wedding. You know, the church is the gathered people of God, and we gathered in his name to officiate that wedding ceremony.

So our marriage vows, we know that we take vows and they're important. What are some other ways that we take vows and make commitments before the Lord?

What about our membership vows? When you join New City, you make a commitment to five things, five vows that you were asked to take before God, before the elders, and you stood here before the congregation.

[32 : 38] And just like marriage, you know, church membership is God's idea. That's not something the PCA came up with. This is biblical. Our Christian community and accountability and a commitment to a local family of believers is biblical.

It's God's idea. Joining a church is not like joining the gym. Right? That you, you know, you're dissatisfied, they don't clean off the equipment or whatever, you don't like the trainer, so you're just gonna go get another gym.

No, it's a much greater commitment when you join a covenant community, join a church and put yourself under the care of elders. It's God's idea.

Can we look at those five biblical commitments for just a minute? You remember when you met with the elders, they asked you, do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God justly deserving his displeasure and without hope except through his sovereign mercy?

So we should never make that commitment. We say, I do. Right? We should never at some later point say, well, I take that back. I want to take it back. I'm really not as big a sinner as I thought at first.

[33 : 55] I don't really need as much mercy as you're trying to give me. All right, another commitment you make is to believe in the Lord Jesus as the Son of God and Savior of sinners and to receive and trust Him alone for salvation as He's offered in the gospel.

And this is not just one time. This is an ongoing work, right? Believing the gospel is something we need to do every day, continually, going back to remembering the good news of what Christ has done.

You take a vow to resolve and promise in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit that you will endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Christ. And the key in that vow, that third question, is humble reliance on someone else.

That you're not saying, I'm going to do this, you know, I'm going to grit my teeth and I'm going to live as becomes a follower of Christ. No, it's in humble reliance on Him for you to walk worthy as His followers.

The command that Solomon is giving us to guard our steps, to listen to the Lord's instruction, to not let our mouths lead us into sin. These are not commands that you can keep in your own strength.

[35 : 10] They're meant to show you your need for Christ, your need for a Savior, to make you more dependent on Him. They're meant to make you want to come to church so you can be blessed, so you can rely more upon Him, come to times of prayer and small group and get involved in fellowship and service.

Fourth vow we make, we promise to support the church and its worship and work to the best of our ability. And you need a Savior to help you to be faithful in attendance and faithful in giving your tithes and your offerings, to be faithful on an early morning when it's really cold and you'd rather just stay at home, but to know how important it is for other people to feel your presence as we come together to feel, sense the presence of God.

you need His help, His grace to be faithful in giving you the energy for service in the work of the ministry in our community.

And then lastly, as members, we make a commitment to submit ourselves to the government and discipline of the church and promise to strive for its purity and peace. And you definitely need Jesus here to help you with submission to spiritual authority that God places over you, to be able to submit to imperfect elders in the church.

You know, only a strong Savior can help us to submit ourselves to imperfect authority. But that's what that vow is saying. That's what that question is. Will I come under submission because they are under submission themselves to the Savior?

[36 : 47] We need a Savior to help us in all these ways. And we need to pray for our leaders as well. Another example of vows we take in the church is at baptism, right, of our covenant children.

The members of the church, you guys as members, stand. And technically, I'm not a member of New City. I don't know if you knew that, but in the PCA, I'm a member of the Presbytery.

Kevin and I, as teaching elders, are members of Tennessee Valley Presbytery. However, I stand along with the members because what would it look like for the pastor, you know, to stay seated when we're saying we commit to help, you know, in the Christian nurture of the children.

Do you as a congregation undertake the responsibility of assisting the parents in the Christian nurture of this child? And you say, we do, right?

We do take on this responsibility. We know it's the parents' primary responsibility, but in the covenant community, it's not theirs alone, right?

[37 : 53] We are together in community as members of the covenant community together. We commit ourselves to the whole community. We commit ourselves to those parents and those children.

And there are practical ways that we show what we mean when we say that vow. So when there's a need for helpers in children's ministry or in GLAD or in the nursery or with youth, we remember the vow that we've taken to assist the parents in the Christian nurture of our children.

And we don't say, well, the parents should serve in the nursery, right? The parents should teach Sunday school. Those parents of teenagers should be working in the youth department. No, we took responsibility as a church, as a community, right?

We took responsibility for assisting with the nurture of the children and God hears us. He hears what we say. So Solomon is just reminding us.

When you make a vow, it's important. Just like a marriage vow, it's important. One of the points Solomon is making is that our words matter. What we say matters.

[39 : 05] Our listening to hear from God matters. And God hears us and he speaks to us and he gives more grace to help us as we depend on him and we depend on our faithful Savior.

Amen? Amen. Let me pray for us before we go to the table this morning. Lord, we thank you for your good grace that is available to us.

your desire is to have us give you everything. To give ourselves away as we sing in that one praise song, I give myself away so you can use me in gratitude that you have given everything to us.

You are the one who sings that song the best. I give myself away because you, Lord Jesus, gave up everything for us to help us in our daily lives as we depend on you.

As we, on the Lord's Day, we worship and we come to hear from you and we follow through hopefully by your grace on what we hear you saying to us.

[40 : 24] So, we ask you to continue to transform us, oh God, day by day through our repentance and faith. As we draw near to you and we give you praise in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. So, elders, if you want to come, we'll invite everybody to partake of the Lord's Table this morning and we're reminded that, you know, this bread and cup really point to the type of love that God has for us.

That's it. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.