

Introduction

If you have your Bible, I want to invite you to open it up with me to the Book of Exodus. We're going to be starting today in Exodus chapter 5. We'll be reading all of Exodus 5 and a few verses in chapter 6 as well. We are continuing our series through the life of Moses. We're really examining specifically those first 14 to 15 chapters of the Book of Exodus... really examining how it is that God used Moses to bring His people out of Egypt and into Israel. We're talking about, then, the power that God used to perfect a people. I'm very excited about this and looking forward to it. Let's pray together and then we will begin this morning.

"Father, we feel weak. This morning we've done many things since we've last gathered that have not brought glory to Your Name. Father, we've certainly strayed from You with our passions and with our actions, yet You continue to pour out grace. God, You save us, You love us, You redeem us, so God we gather together to declare that You indeed are God. Lord, as we open up Your Word, we need to hear from You today. Father, could You please use Your Word and Your Spirit to change us. God, mold us. Father, I pray that as I speak that these words would not be from my heart, Lord, but they would be from Your heart. And Father I pray for every person who is here this morning, God, that Your Word would speak to them in a way that would impact them. Lord, I ask that, if there is any person who is here this morning who has yet to say 'Yes' to Your Son Jesus, that today would be the day that they would turn to You in faith. Father, I pray that as Your Word is spoken that they would sense You drawing them to You. Lord, we ask this and we pray it in the Name of Your Son Jesus Christ. Amen."

Exodus chapter 5: *"Afterward Moses and Aaron went and said to Pharaoh, 'Thus says the Lord, the God of Israel, 'Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness.'" But Pharaoh said, 'Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice and let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and moreover, I will not let Israel go.' Then they said, 'The God of the Hebrews has met with us. Please let us go a three days' journey into the wilderness that we may sacrifice to the Lord our God, lest He fall upon us with pestilence or with the sword.' But the king of Egypt said to them, 'Moses and Aaron, why do you take the people away from their work? Get back to your burdens.' And Pharaoh said, 'Behold, the people of the land are now many, and you make them rest from their burdens!' The same day Pharaoh commanded the taskmasters of the people and their foremen, 'You shall no longer give the people straw to make bricks, as in the past; let them go and gather straw for themselves. But the number of bricks that they made in the past you shall impose on them, you shall by no means reduce it, for they are idle. Therefore they cry, "Let us go and offer sacrifice to our God." Let heavier work be laid on the men that they may labor at it and pay no regard to lying words.'*

"So the taskmasters and the foremen of the people went out and said to the people. 'Thus says Pharaoh, "I will not give you straw. Go and get your straw yourselves wherever you can find it, but your work will not be reduced in the least.'" So the people were scattered throughout all the land of Egypt to gather stubble for straw. The taskmasters were urgent, saying, 'Complete your work, your daily task each day, as when there was straw.' And the foremen of the people of Israel, whom Pharaoh's taskmasters had set over them, were beaten and were asked, 'Why have you not done all your task of making bricks today and yesterday, as in the past?'

"Then the foremen of the people of Israel came and cried to Pharaoh, 'Why do you treat your servants like this? No straw is given to your servants, yet they say to us, "Make bricks!" And behold, your servants are beaten; but the fault is in your own people.' But he said, 'You are idle, you are idle; that is why you say, "Let us go and sacrifice to the Lord." Go now and work. No straw will be given you, but you must still

deliver the same number of bricks.' The foremen of the people of Israel saw that they were in trouble when they said, 'You shall by no means reduce your number of bricks, your daily task each day.' They met Moses and Aaron who were waiting for them, as they came out from Pharaoh; and they said to them, 'The Lord look on you and judge, because you have made us stink in the sight of Pharaoh and his servants, and have put a sword in their hand to kill us.'

"Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, "O Lord, why have You done evil to this people? Why did You ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, he has done evil to this people, and You have not delivered your people at all.

"But the Lord said to Moses, 'Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh; for with a strong hand he will send them out, and with a strong hand he will drive them out of his land.'

"God speaks Moses and said to him, 'I am the Lord. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, as God Almighty, but by My Name the Lord, I did not make Myself known to them. I also established My covenant with them to give them the land of Canaan, the land in which they lived as sojourners. Moreover, I have heard the groaning of the people of Israel whom the Egyptians hold as slaves, and I have remembered My covenant. Say therefore to the people of Israel, "I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgement. I will take you to be My people and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the Lord.'" Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery.

"So the Lord said to Moses, 'Go in, tell Pharaoh king of Egypt to let the people of Israel go out of his land.' But Moses said to the Lord, 'Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me. How then shall Pharaoh listen to me, for I am of uncircumcised lips?' But the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge about the people of Israel and about Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt."

This is one of those passages of Scripture that has been ingrained into the collective consciousness of the Church. You've heard of making bricks without straw. You've heard of the fact that the Egyptians were cruel, that they were harsh, that they imposed strict guidelines... strict slavery... upon the Israelites. But what does that have to do with you and with me? We've talked about the fact that really the Book of Exodus, at its heart, is sort of a battle. It's a battle between the power of the Lord and the power of Pharaoh. In this passage we see that Pharaoh does his very best, his dead-level best, to impose his will upon the Israelites. In contrast, though, the Lord then stands up against Pharaoh and declares, "Now I will exercise My power." So we begin to see really the first moment in this showdown. Who truly has the power? Is it Pharaoh or is it the Lord? So that is why I believe, as I read this, that really this passage (Exodus 5 and the first half of Exodus 6) is really about a declaration of allegiance. It's about who is it that the people of Israel will finally and ultimately decide that they belong to? Do they belong to the Lord, or do they belong to Pharaoh? You see, really, this passage is about worship. Who is it that they will give their energy toward?

I always thought it's interesting because whenever I think of Exodus, for some reason the default position of my mind and of my heart is that Pharaoh hears from Moses first and Moses says, "Let my people go from

slavery." But actually that is not what the original request is. The first request, whenever Moses appears before Pharaoh in chapter 5, is this: *"Let My people go, that they may hold a feast to Me in the wilderness."* The very first thing that Moses asks of Pharaoh is "Pharaoh, let us go for three days out into the wilderness and let us worship." That's all that he has asked, and this should tell you something about Pharaoh. If Pharaoh was really interested in simply managing his workforce, he would probably ascertain, "This would be a great way for me to keep everyone happy and to really manage the people that are doing the hard labor of building up the kingdom of Egypt." He would probably decide, "Yeah, sure. Go out for a few days and then come back, and then you can get right back to work." But that's not really what Pharaoh decides. Why? ...Because Pharaoh is not about having a happy workforce. Pharaoh ultimately wants to show that he's the one in charge. So the request to worship is rejected. Now why is it rejected?

1. Worship is Odd. (5:2)

I think that really, for you and for me, it's the same thing. Whenever we start to think about worship, particularly in the face of a culture who often does not understand why it is that we worship... I think that we will decide and understand that worship, in the eyes of those who are not believers, is always something that is very, very odd. Whenever people look at what we do with our time to give honor and to give praise to a God whom we cannot see, I think they will always ultimately find it to be bizarre. That's why Pharaoh says, "Who is the Lord?" And then even ultimately says, toward the second half of verse 2, "I do not know the Lord." In other words, "If you want to worship God, do that on your own time, but that's not really essential to me." Worship is always an odd activity.

I think that sometimes as a church, as believers, it's very easy for us to define ourselves by our ethical behavior. Right? We say, "Well, we have a different view of sex than the rest of the world" or "We have a different view of money than the rest of the world" or "We have a different way of carving out family than the rest of the world." Ultimately, when you get right down to it, I think that before there's any sort of ethical behavior from the people of God... foundational, behind that, below that... grounding everything more essential is the act of worship. We make a declaration about God. I want you to think about why people might think that that's weird. We get together in a room and we sing out loud to someone we can't see. Some of you are like, "I don't sing. I'm here. I just endure that part. I don't sing." You know, I want to just make a brief case that you should sing. Let me tell you why. The best that I can think about it, there are really only three places where large groups of people get together and sing. Number one: Concerts. Right? And really, to be honest, we don't really want to hear you sing anyway. We paid money to hear the person on the stage... so stop singing. Right? Number two: College sporting events. Have you noticed this? Even there, people are singing and they're singing about this idea of being bonded together to declare that this team that's about to take the field or the court or whatever, they're the one that they're really excited for... they're rooting for. There's typically a fight song. Right? There's a team song. And then there's worship. How many songs have been written to give praise and glory to Jesus? ...Innumerable, really. We wouldn't even begin to know. Song after song after song... It's one of the most scriptural things that you could do, to sing to a God whom you cannot see. There is a Book in the center of the Bible filled with songs... the Psalms... essentially saying, "The heart of your Scripture is worship; Right at the middle of it... it's singing." Philippians chapter 2 is perhaps the oldest Christological hymn in the Christian Church. Most likely whenever Paul was quoting that, people were reading it and they could hear the music behind it because if I begin to say, "Amazing grace, how sweet the sound..." you immediately have a tune that comes to your mind. Why is that? ...Because music has power... even those of you who resist the act of singing. Revelation is filled with a vision of heaven and what happens in heaven. People get on their knees or they stand up and they throw their crowns down, and time and time and time again they sing. There is

something about gathering together and singing that matters. Now think about this for a second. If you're not a believer and you walk into a worship assembly and you see a group of adults... not children... adults singing to Someone whom they cannot see. What might you first think? "That's weird." Why do we do that? ...Because we are declaring, "These things are so beautiful that ordinary words cannot express the emotions I possess about this God. This requires melody. This requires art. This requires poetry. God is worth that much." When we come together, we don't just sing; we also read a Book, but we read the same Book every week... The same Book every week because we declare that this Book is a book that tells us about God because this Book has been received from God. It is God's Word, and in those days... in Moses' day... there were things that they did that set them apart as odd as well.

Think about some of the other things we do. We confess our sins in public. That's weird! What else do we do? We pray. What else do we do? We greet one another. You know that greeting thing that you do whenever you shake hands? That's actually a derivative of an old liturgical thing; probably some of you here in this room grew up in a liturgical tradition where every week you would turn around and you would offer the sign of peace to those around you in worship. Anybody here ever done that before? What do you say? "Peace be with you and also with you." You see, there's something about the communal act of worship that even though it is quite odd, it is essentially foundational and we must do it. Why? ...Because every single week, in worship, something essential happens. Every week in worship we are pointed to the same truth, over and over and over. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself." Worship is a sign of our faith that that is actually true. When we worship, we there saying, "We believe. We have faith. We trust that God actually is who He declares to be in the Word. We believe when we worship that God has done what He has said He has done... in Jesus Christ." So while people might come in and say, "I don't know the Lord. Who is the Lord that I should even allow you to do this?" Christians every week continue to gather together and participate in this odd behavior, singing to a God they cannot see, reading a Book that declares who God is, confessing sin, praying, taking a meal together, saying "this is My body, this is My blood," offering the sign of peace, and they do it over and over and over saying, "I have faith that God is who He says that He is."

2. And Demanding. (5:9)

Now, the interesting thing about this is that whenever they ask to worship, this is enough to offend Pharaoh. He says, "No, you can't do that." He wants them to work harder. He says, "Your worship... it's actually a sign of laziness. You're not getting anything done. You're just trying to go out there and loaf." You know, for years the Sabbath was seen as a waste of time. So Pharaoh takes away the straw that was necessarily to make the bricks, and they would take that straw to put the dirt paste around it that would harden and then bake into bricks. When they took that away from them and said, "Go gather your own straw," Pharaoh essentially says, "I'm going to take more of your energy, and you're going to give your worship and your honor and your glory to me."

It's interesting... did you know that the same Hebrew word for "work" that Pharaoh uses "abad" is also the very same word that Moses uses when he appears before Pharaoh and says, "Let us go worship"? Think about that. Pharaoh says, "Get back to work... "abad," and Moses says, "Let us go worship... "abad"...The same word. I think it's interesting because actually historically the word "liturgy" means "work of the people"... the public's work. They gather together and they do what? They ascribe worth. They give worth to who God is. It's no coincidence then that Pharaoh says, "No... you work for me," and the Lord says, "No, no, no... You work for Me; you give Me your primary energy." This is the thing that I was thinking about. It's always difficult for us whenever we worship because, just like Pharaoh, our culture or

our sin nature or something is always declaring, "Now, you give me your primary allegiance. You give me your primary energy." Worship is work... which leads us to another question. Where, then, ought worship rank in the course of our lives?

You see, there was a time 50 years ago... a hundred years ago... however far back in this nation when it was not odd to worship at all. Everyone, or at least it felt like everyone, did it. Those days are long gone. When you worship now, you are making a declaration because now there is always a competition for your energy. Whether it's your sin or whether it's the culture, people will tell you, "You know, it doesn't matter if you don't worship this week. It's just not that big of a deal. God doesn't care. God will forgive you. It's not that important if you don't worship." Time and time again we say, "But I don't 'abad' for you; I don't work for you. I give my work, my energy, my time, and my presence to the Lord." Let's be clear. Worship is not the way by which we are saved, but it is the outpouring of our response to the grace of God. Once we understand that God has saved us, that God alone is the One worthy, that God alone is the tower, the rock, the One who is high... only in that moment, once we understand how high and lofty God is and we understand our proper perspective apart from God, only then can we give proper worship, proper "abad" to God. What happens is that whenever we worship we begin to understand what it means to follow God. Think about this: Worship ultimately is an act of discipleship because it is training us how to follow God.

I say this regularly. I tell parents all the time, "Mom... Dad... you should bring your kids with you to worship." I know, by the way, that it's a pain. I have kids so let me tell you why I think that. "And Dad, I'm looking straight at you. Dad, I know you don't want to sing, but you tell me... Do you think that your kid learns when he looks at his father and he says, 'That tough man shows a tender side when he lifts his voice in praise'?" Do you know what happens? He says, "My Dad thinks that there is Someone bigger than him." Don't you dare be too proud to sing in front of your kids and sing praises to your God! That's just pride. That's all that it is. You push that out of the way right now because the man who will not allow his children to sing praises to God... guess what?... He's raising kids who will become prideful as well. Don't do that! And you say, "I don't have time... They're going to mess with me. They're going to ask me stuff the whole time in church." Yeah, they are, and you're going to teach them how to sit still, and you're going to teach them how to listen, and you're going to teach them how to open the Bible, and you're going to teach them the words to the song, and you're going to sing those songs with them in the car when you turn on the radio, and you're going to do those things. Do you know what happens? Over a lifetime, you say, "I don't know the Bible." Fine. You don't have to teach them the Bible but teach them how to worship because you know what happens when they watch you worship? Then they'll begin to understand how to engage the Scripture. Even if you don't understand how to teach the Bible, they'll begin to see it in you. Teach your children how to worship.

Do you know what's funny? I know so many parents that are passionate about teaching their kid how to mow the yard or how to do laundry or how to cook or how to throw a baseball, but they won't ever teach them the words to "Amazing Grace." Listen... if you're a believer... where does worship rank in the life of your family? Who do you "abad" for? Do you work for the Lord or do you work for the demands of the culture? We work for the Lord and we do not work so that we will earn His salvation or His favor. We are working to pass the Gospel of grace on to the next generation. When my friends or my neighbors say, "Man... you go to church every single week." "Yeah that's right. I do that because it's more important that I do this than anything else."

3. And Counter-Intuitive. (5:22)

Let me tell you why people think that you shouldn't worship. Look at the end of chapter 5. Look at verse 22: *"Then Moses turned to the Lord and said, 'O Lord, why have You done evil to this people?'"* In other words... You see, the people are mad at Moses. "Moses, it's your fault that we're getting beaten because you asked to go worship." So then Moses goes to God and he complains. *"...Lord, why have You done evil to this people? Why did You ever send me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your Name, he has done evil to this people, and You have not delivered your people at all."* In other words... translation: "Hey, this whole worship thing... It doesn't really seem to be making a whole lot of difference. Where's the results, God? When do I begin to see something that matters?" This is the third thing about worship: It's highly counter-intuitive. Why does that matter? It matters for this very specific reason: Our culture... we are a materialist culture by default. We think that things are only worth doing if we see a tangible result. I go to work, I get paid. Right? So, there you go; there's a result. We think that only if we see a tangible result do things begin to happen. So we think, "Do you know why I don't want to go to church this morning?... I could sleep in... I could watch 'Meet the Press'... I could be reading... I could work in my yard... I could go play golf... I could fish... I could be catching up on my emails. Why am I here?" Let me tell you why you're here... because this is the least selfish thing you will do all week... because here, guess what? It's not about you. Everything else you do all week long... you're either doing it for a selfish reason or you're mad that you're not getting to do what you want to do because you're selfish. When you come here... refreshingly, thankfully... it has absolutely zero to do with you. It has everything to do with Him. Now, here's the crazy part about that. Even though it has nothing to do with you, it changes us anyway. (Clapping) That's the crazy thing about it. When you come in here and you give all glory, all adoration, all attention, all praise back to the Father... when you do that, guess what happens? It still changes you because every week your heart hits the "reset" button and you realize, "The universe does not rotate around me." And you realize, "The universe actually flows from and back unto only God Himself." You need to worship and I need to worship because Moses says, "Lord, this feels like really this is kind of a waste of time." Well, guess what? Even though it has nothing to do with you, it has everything to do with you because it changes you.

4. Yet a Teacher (6:6)

Let me show it to you. Look at this: So you say, "Well, this feels like it's kind of a waste of time" ...look at verse 6 in chapter 6: The Lord then says, "I will" seven times. "I will" ...not "you will"... not "y'all will..." not "he will..." but "Me." Why is that? ...Because He says, "Let me show you... now you're starting to get it Moses. Now you're starting to understand."

Worship is weird, you're right... and it takes a lot of work and a lot of energy... you're right. You could be on the golf course. You could be at home sleeping in. You could be getting ahead on all of the things that you need to do this week, but guess what? It doesn't have anything to do with you. It has everything to do with Me... and verse 6 is that powerful reminder. He says, "I will bring you out... I will redeem you... I will take you to be my people... I will bring you into the land." "I" ... "I" ... "I" Guess what? Worship is about declaring that it is about God. Worship teaches us, week in and week out, that everything flows from the gracious and powerful and sovereign hand of the Lord. That's the reason that we worship... because I need to be taught that God will bring me out, that God will deliver me... that God will redeem me... that God takes me to be His... that God will be my God... that He will bring me into the land and that He will give it to me. The language of redemption, the language of adoption, the language of inheritance... It's all here in Exodus chapter 6.

Why does that matter? It matters because it goes counter to the narrative in our world. The rest of our world is always saying, "Be the best you can be." Hey, listen; it's good to be great. You should work hard and be the best you can be in your respective field. But listen... ultimately, there is only one hero and His name is Jesus Christ. If you were attempting to be great without God, then guess what? You are worshipping yourself and you are not worshipping the Lord. God is the hero because God is the One who delivers, redeems, takes, brings, and gives. God is the One. So here He says, "Now, look; you go into worship because of Me, not because of what you want."

5. Despite Our Faithlessness (6:9)

So we get to the end, and here's the crazy part: You thought it's been crazy. No... it gets really crazy now. Look at this: So Moses says, "Wow... You're right God. You're the One who's powerful. You're the One who stands over everything. Because of that, what ought I do?" He says, "Go tell the people." So in chapter 6, verse 9: *"Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel..."* So he tells them, "Okay... God's going to redeem, God's going to deliver, God's going to give, God's going to do all this. And it says, *"Moses spoke thus to the people of Israel, but they did not listen to Moses, because of their broken spirit and harsh slavery."* They didn't want any part of it. They had had enough.

What do you think God did in response to that? Let me tell you what I would do if I was God. "Alright... wipe 'em out. Let's move on." But He did not do that. Instead, what the Lord does is interesting. Go to verse 13: *"But the Lord spoke to Moses and Aaron and gave them a charge about the people of Israel and about Pharaoh king of Egypt, to bring the people of Israel out of the land of Egypt."* I wish there had been another word there and it said, "Anyway." He'd say, "I don't care that my people are faithless right now. I'm going to deliver them anyway." Why do you need to hear that? You and I need to hear that because this is the beautiful and glorious truth of worship. It's that even though some of you in this room right now don't feel like you have enough faith... guess what? God delivers anyway. Even though some of you in this room feel like you don't have what it takes... God rescues anyway. You see, that's actually a precursor to the Gospel because it's the truth that even when the people of Israel are faithless, God remains faithful.

I was reading in Scripture yesterday: Paul writes, "The law and righteousness was entrusted to the people of Israel." And then he writes these words in Romans 3:3: *"What if some were unfaithful? Does their faithlessness nullify the faithfulness of God?"* In other words, do the people that are described in the Book of Exodus and all those generations that followed, up to this moment, if some of them were faithless, does that nullify God's faithfulness? Do you know what Paul's response is? *"By no means."* In other words, despite your weakness, God is still working deliverance for you and offering His Son Jesus Christ. You see, this is the thing... It is that many of us right now say, "Well then what do I need to do? Do I need to become more spiritual or go to church more or become a better person?" No. You simply call on the Name of the Lord and you will be saved. This is actually why we come to worship in the first place. Those of us who are lifelong believers have heard steady streams from other places over our lives that have told us, "If you'll just try a little harder, be a little better, then God will see you and be pleased." Listen to me... The moment that Jesus Christ gave His life on the cross and the moment that you received Him by faith, that was all that ever needed to take place for you to be eternally set, received, and righteous in the eyes of God. That is why we worship because, in faith, we believe that that is true. I have received that. You have received that, and if you have yet to receive that here and you're here today... this is why we worship. Do you want to know why we sing? The reason that we sing is because our righteous and holy God, a wrathful God, that deserves to send me to hell, and very rightfully so, has chosen instead to give me life, and peace,

and beauty, and a party, and a banquet, and an inheritance in the name of Jesus because He has put the righteousness of Christ on me. That's why we worship.

So I want you to understand this. Worship may be odd and worship may compete with all of the other energy claims in your own life, and worship may be one of those things that you say, "I don't even know if it's doing any good." But trust me... week in and week out, your heart is being trained to understand that only One delivers, only One saves, only One gives, and only One is the One worth calling upon, and that name is the Name of the Lord. So every single week when we gather here together, I want to challenge you... "Prioritize worship in your life." I say in our membership class and I'll say it again... "If you're not out of town and you're not sick, you should be here." Why is that? ...Because there is nothing you will do every week that is more important than to gather together and give praise to the Name of Jesus Christ. Does worship save you? Of course not! Jesus Christ did but it's a way to say "Thanks."

This week our team went to Africa and had incredible stories, I've heard. I don't have time to share all of those, but I want to share with you one story. There was a man in one of the marketplaces that had never heard the Gospel, and the reason that he had not heard the Gospel was because he was deaf. It just so happened that a lady on our team, Debbie, could sign. She was able to communicate with this man, and he was able to hear the Gospel and understand it for the first time. He was an alcoholic and God saved him. It's just a beautiful, beautiful thing. An hour's van ride down the road, the team was back at their base of operations in a small town called Lemoru. Hours later, they were just resting in their huts, and they got word that a man was standing outside the gate and wanted to speak to Debbie. It was the deaf man. He had walked the equivalent of an hour's bus ride. They went outside, thinking he had probably come to ask for money or to ask for food. He said, "I just came here because I wanted to tell you 'thank you' for telling me about Jesus in a way that I could understand." Then he turned around and he walked off. That was it! He just wanted to say, "Thank you."

Don't talk to me about "I'm too tired to go to church on Sunday morning." This God has sought after you, He has fought for you, He has sent His Son to die for you, He has delivered you, He has given you everything, and because He has given you everything, we ought, gratefully and with glad hearts, to gather together every week and say, "Lord, thank you for traveling a great distance to come and save me and speak the Gospel to me in a language that I might understand. Thank you, God, for saving me and for finding me."

So this is why I want to challenge you every week when we sing, when we read the Word of God, when we greet one another with the sign of peace, when we take the Lord's Supper, when we confess our sin, when we pray. Every week we are reminding ourselves that we are broken, we are sinful, and we are in need, and God alone has provided the means of salvation. We are reordering our passions. We are rightfully ordering our desires and placing God at the highest emphasis in our life. We are reminding ourselves that the grace of God is big enough for any failure, even when like the people of Israel we say, "I don't want any part of that because I'm under a harsh slavery or I'm tired of being beat up by the world." Even then, God is still faithful and He remains right here declaring to us through His Word that He has sought us and saved us... even when we have nothing left to give. So in the songs that we sing: "Nothing but the blood of Jesus." ...in the words that we read: "I will deliver you." ... in the meal that we take, "This is My Body, broken for you." Over and over. I want you to know you never once hear these words: "Try harder. Be better." You hear instead: "My grace is enough." Amen and amen. Let's pray.

"Father, thank you for the gift of worship. Thank you, God, that we might, just like the people of Israel, even when we are faithless, be found faithful because of Christ. God, even when we are broken, that we might be found holy and righteous because of the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ. Thank you Father for the blood that washed over us and saved us; and God thank you for the fact that You never once left us or forgot about us. So now, Father, we pray for every person that is in this room. God, I pray that some of us who have got our hearts out of whack, Lord, that we would prioritize worship highly. Father, for those who are here that are worshipping other gods or sin nature or other struggles, Lord, that today would be the day that they would say 'Yes' to You. So, Father, I lift high right now Your Name; and God I pray that because You are the One alone who saves, Lord, that today you would seek and save any lost in this room. Father, if there is anyone who is here who says, 'Wow... I have not placed my life on the altar before Jesus Christ and allowed the cross and the empty tomb to be the means by which I am saved'... Father, I pray Lord that they would be delivered... that they would be saved in this moment Lord... That You would draw them to You. God, we declare You to be Father, we declare You to be holy, we declare You to be the only One that saves. Father, anyone who needs to move and respond, I ask they do so now, in the Name of Your Son Jesus, Amen."