

The Primary Focus of the Church: Worship Christ

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[0:00] After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, Come up here and I will show you what must take place after this.

At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian, a rainbow resembling an emerald, and circled a throne.

Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings, and peals of thunder.

Before the throne seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the center around the throne were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes in front and in back.

The first living creature was like a lion. The second was like an ox. The third had a face like a man. The fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings, and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings.

[1:16] Day and night they never stopped saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come. Whenever the living creatures give honor, glory, and thanks to him who sits on the throne, and who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives forever and ever.

They lay their crowns before the throne and say, You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power. For you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

And I saw in the right hand of him who sits on the throne, a scroll with writing on both sides, and sealed with seven seals. And I saw a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?

But no one in heaven or on earth or under the earth could open the scroll or even look inside it. I wept and wept because no one was found who was worthy to open the scroll or look inside.

Then one of the elders said to me, Do not weep. See, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, is triumphed. He is able to open the scroll and its seven seals. Then I saw a lamb looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne, encircled by the four living creatures and the elders.

[2:37] He had seven horns and seven eyes, which are the seven spirits of God sent out into all the earth. He came and took the scroll from the right hand of him who sat on the throne.

And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the lamb. Each one had a harp, and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of the saints.

And they sang a new song. You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain. And with your blood you purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation.

You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God. And they will reign on the earth. Then I looked and heard the voice of many angels numbering thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand.

They encircled the throne and the living creatures and the elders. Then in a loud voice they sang, Worthy is the lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise.

[3:39] Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and on the sea and all that is in them, singing, To him who sits on the throne and to the lamb, be praise and honor and glory and power forever and ever.

The four living creatures said, Amen, and the elders fell down and worshipped. Next week we're going to resume our study in the attributes of God.

But this morning I want us to think together, what is the primary focus of the church of Jesus Christ? What's the primary focus of the church of Jesus Christ?

There are many things tugging at the sleeve of the church today. Do this, do that. And many times from the word of God itself. There's evangelism and missions.

There's teaching and counseling. There's fellowship and building up of the saints. There's intercessory prayer. There's visitation. There's church discipline.

[4:44] There's social action and works of compassion and care for the needy. There's the matter of logistics, a building and the care of it, finances and other things.

And all these things can call for the attention of the church and divert its attention from the one thing needful, the main thing, the thing that is to ever stay at the center of our universe as a church.

Well, what is that center? What is it that is to be the primary focus that in all these other things that we do and must do, we not lose contact with the center?

I would like to posit this morning that the primary focus of the church of Jesus Christ is the worship of Jesus Christ. to worship Him.

Blessed is the congregation who has self-consciously identified that as the church's primary focus. That's the kind of church I want to be a part of where worshiping Christ is the sun of the solar system and all that happens in the church revolves around that.

[5:57] Christ, worshiping Him, the central activity, the focal point, the main thing. Now it's not easy to keep the main thing the main thing.

I preached this message two weeks ago to a young congregation in Wheeling, West Virginia. It's important for a church as it begins to know what's to be the main thing here.

But as I thought, here we are, a congregation 24 years old. We've been gathering together and been a church for that long.

Do we need to be reminded of the main thing? And the answer is yes, because drift happens. It's very easy to drift for organizations, civic clubs even, and especially churches to begin with a right purpose and mission and then to drift from it.

And they're no longer doing what was once its primary focus and mission. I think of the Ivy League schools that were founded early in our nation's history and how many of them were founded with the mission and the primary focus of training men for the ministry, giving a biblical education along with the other sciences and studies and arts, and that we might have statesmen who are honorable and moral and taught in the things of God's Word, businessmen who know the Bible, and this land might be built up in its character, in its development.

[7:39] But needless to say, drift has happened among the Ivy League schools. And no longer is the Bible central to the curriculum. It's not at the core. And they're not training men to be holy preachers of the Word of God.

And what happens to institutions and civic organizations can easily happen to churches. And so I'd like to call this time out from our usual study on the attributes of God to remind ourselves that worshiping Christ must ever be the main thing here.

And so may He use our thoughts together this morning to that end. I want us to be considering then why the worship of Christ in His church is so important that we would actually refer to it as the church's primary focus.

Does the Bible warrant such an exalted position for the worship of Christ? Or is it just one of the many planets spinning around?

Is something else the center? Well, I have five points. Five reasons why it's so important for the church to worship Christ.

[8:56] You could probably add another five or ten. Let's consider these five together. And I start with the obvious. The church ought to worship Christ and keep that primary first of all because He is worthy.

Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise. Psalm 145.3 The fact of the matter is that Jesus Christ deserves our worship just for who He is.

He is such a glorious being. He's God. He is man. And He's loving. And He's gracious. And He has perfect compassion and mercy and wrath and anger and faithfulness and sovereignty.

And so we ought to worship Him because of who He is. We ought to fall at His feet. Isn't that what we find in the Gospels? That as people understand more and more of just who He is, that they fall at His feet.

And worship Him. But not only are we to worship Him because of who He is, we're to worship Him because of what He has done. What He has done.

[10 : 12] Worthy is the Lamb who was slain. to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise. You mean He died the damnable death of the cross for me?

Oh, then worshipping Him must ever be the heartbeat of my heart, the very center of my being. Why am I here today? Why have I been left to live another day on God's earth?

To worship the Lord Jesus for who He is and what He's done in redeeming me from sin. Every attribute of Jesus calls forth worship.

Every deed and act of Jesus calls forth adoration and awe for Himself. So He deserves to be worshipped by all mankind for who He is and what He's done.

Now, you've noticed that the world is not giving worship to Jesus Christ all around us here in Bremen. They're not worshipping Jesus. I say the world has other things on its mind.

[11 : 25] They're ignoring Jesus. They're taking His name in vain. They're filling His day of worship with other things, with anything, but the worship of Him.

And their hearts are running after other idols instead. Worshipping self. Giving God-like status to their own desires, to other people and things.

It's all worship stolen from Jesus Christ, you know. It's worship that He deserves. It's being pilfered and given to other gods.

And so, the world receives from Him life and breath and everything else. They see all the wonders of what He has made. And rather than bow and worship and acknowledge His name, they refuse to give Him glory.

They refuse to thank Him. And that is the indictment of all mankind without God in Romans chapter 1. For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him nor as God, nor gave thanks to Him.

[12 : 29] they exchanged the truth of God for a lie and worshipped and served created things rather than the Creator who is forever blessed. And that's the most horrendous crime anywhere on the planet today.

People not worshipping Jesus Christ. It's the most appalling thing that man withholds the worship due to the Lord of all.

Now right in the midst of this worship withholding world, God has planted a church. A called out people.

They too were part of the world. But He's called them out and called them together. And why are they assembled? And why are they called together? But to worship the Lord Jesus Christ.

So that here in this place in the midst of a Christ-rejecting world, true worship might rise to the worthy King of kings that from these hearts thanks and glory, praise and honor might be given to Him.

[13 : 34] What an important calling for the church. Worship Christ. And so here His word is preached and His sheep hear His voice.

And they have the glories of Christ held before Him His person, His work. This book is about Jesus, isn't it? If we've learned anything, I trust we've learned that. That it sets forth Christ.

And so it's to be opened and read and preached. Christ is set forth as the object of awe and adoration and worship and praise of fear and reverence and obedience and gratitude.

Here you sing to Him and here you sing of Him. out there His name is ignored and cursed. In here it's sung and praised in song.

The late Dr. James Boyce of the 10th Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia used to love to point out that Christianity alone of all the major world religions gives its worshippers something to sing about.

[14 : 36] Redemption through the blood of Jesus Christ. Christ. So we sing. He's put a new song in our hearts even praise to our God.

And we give expression to that gladness and joy as we sing and make music in our hearts to the Lord. The Lord Jesus. Here He's worshipped in prayer.

Did you know that everything that we plead is pleaded in His name? That worthy name. through His merits the merits of Christ and even the giving of thanks is to be done through the name of Jesus Ephesians 5 20 tells us.

Here the ordinances set forth Christ in His salvation buried dead buried resurrected given to us in His body and given us His blood.

Here the tithes and offerings are cheerfully given to Him on His day the first day of the week as instructed in 1 Corinthians 16. And so the world this morning can you hear it?

[15 : 47] They're saying loud and clear Jesus Christ is not worthy of worship. Grace Fellowship Church your Lord is not worthy of worship. That's what they're saying.

The more we see this wicked world withholding worship from Jesus the more eager we ought to be to get our bones out of bed in the morning and to get here and to sing His praise and to make Him the center of our life and worshiping Him the center of our activity together.

We ought to worship Christ as a church because He's worthy. Secondly, because this is how we're made like Him. Do you know that God the Father has a plan to make all of His family just like our elder brother Jesus Christ?

Romans 8.29 He's predetermined it. He's predestined it. But everyone in His family will bear the likeness of His Son. You know He loves His Son so much and He thinks so highly of His Son. This is my beloved Son with whom I'm well pleased that He's going to make everyone to bear the image of His Son. Now that's His plan. How does He do it?

[17 : 02] How does it happen? Well the Bible says that we become like what we worship. We become like what we worship. What we ascribe worth to.

What we ascribe the greatest weight and glory to. We become like that. Psalm 135.18 shows us that principle in its perversion.

Psalm 135.18 Those who make idols and trust in them will be like them. They become like what they worship. We see that with people.

You set up people as an idol in your heart and you become like them. You want to dress like them. You want to talk like them. Walk like them. And live like them. And have value systems like them. And you become like what you worship. But not only is the perversion of that principle true. The true application of that principle is true. That as we worship the Lord Jesus Christ we are made more and more like Him.

[18 : 12] The worship of Christ is the great sanctifier of the church. It's the great sanctifying activity of the church of Jesus Christ. It's how we're made holy like Jesus.

The Apostle Paul was convinced of this. And it affected his methodology in the churches. It affected his priorities in the church. 2 Corinthians 3.18 And we who with unveiled faces all contemplate the Lord's glory are being transformed into His likeness with ever increasing glory which comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.

Here in 2 Corinthians 3.18 we notice the process by which we're sanctified by which we're transformed into the likeness of Christ. It is by beholding the Lord's glory.

It is by contemplating Him. Gazing at His excellencies. Pondering His majesty.

Thinking about His true worth. Worth. It is the worship of Christ. I was struck by Stuart Olliot's short, concise, pungent word to me when in our fellowship he was talking about these problems in the church.

[19 : 34] He says, you know what's at the root of it? People are not thinking big enough thoughts about Jesus Christ. And that's what Paul's telling us. Because it's as we think about Christ and focus and behold His glory that we are changed into the likeness of our Savior.

And I found that true in my own experience and yes, in my own ministry here. In seeking to sanctify God's people I can preach bare duty until I'm blue in the face.

Do, do, do. I can plead. I can complain. I can give pep talks. I can scold. I can threaten. I can rebuke. But until duty is seen in the light of Christ's glory the results are small and pitiful indeed.

But let Christ be lifted up and seen in the beauty of His character for who He is. And there comes forth a power from His being to transform us from one stage of glory to another into the likeness of Jesus Christ.

It says He is being worshipped that He's most pleased to come in transforming power and to change our minds and the way we think and our affections and what we love and our wills and what we choose and to make them more like Jesus.

[20:59] So I say that the worship of Christ is the very sanctifying activity of the church. And this affected Paul's methodology with the churches.

It was his primary focus then to lift up Christ before them. So when he writes to the church of God in Corinth riddled with so many problems what does he do? He lifts up Christ before their eyes.

The book starts and he's talking about their problems in unity. There were divisions among them. So he says is Christ divided?

We've got problems in the church and Paul wants to talk about Christ. Interesting, isn't it?

Chapter 4 you had the leaven of the immoral brother being tolerated in the congregation. Christ our Passover has been slain.

[22:00] Therefore let us keep the festival not with old yeast of wickedness. Expel the wicked man from among you for a little yeast leavens the whole lump.

Christ our Passover lamb has been sacrificed. Chapter 6 sexual immorality among these who have been saved out of an immoral background still carrying on from time to time with their immorality.

What will Paul say? You are not your own. You were bought at a price. Therefore glorify God with your body which is his.

And they knew the price was none other than the Son of God lifted up and paled upon the cross suffering the wrath of God. So in the field Paul plants the cross of Jesus Christ because it's as we see Christ that the roots of our sins will be withered.

I thought there was something of an illustration of that on our way home last week as we drove along the main interstate coming through Tennessee or somewhere up ahead I could see adult entertainment spread out all over huge building complex on the right side of the road and as we approached immediately I saw this other thing someone had erected a white cross cross Rick you've been by that place maybe maybe some of you who travel a lot have seen it it's taller than any tree I've seen huge wide base wide arms and it just sticks right up into the heavens and it had a way of drawing my attention away from the smut over here to this grand object this cross that's rising up out of nowhere someone evidently wanted to plant the cross here and draw people's attention and focus away from this to that and I think that's what Paul does immorality in the church he plants the cross of Christ

[24:08] Christ was slain you've been bought with precious blood how can you be joined to a harlot and join the members of Christ's body to such a one so you see his methodology in Corinth whatever the sin Paul lifts up Christ bringing him before their eyes that just like that serpent on the pole of old it's in looking on him that we are healed that we live it's the beholding of his glory that is the remedy for every poison of sin and for every needed change in our lives individually and as a church it was the same for the church in Colossae throughout Paul holds up the supremacy of Christ that's the theme Christ is preeminent and so he deserves the supreme place in your life he is preeminent he is supreme therefore you must give in the supreme place in your life in your heart Colossians 128 Paul gives us his methodology and his primary focus we proclaim him three words we proclaim him we lift him up admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom so that we may present everyone perfect in

Christ you see his aim his aim for the church is to present everyone perfect in Christ that we be sanctified and changed and made holy even to the point where we are perfectly made into his image that's the aim that's what Paul's after in Corinth what's his method how are the saints perfected in Christ by having Christ set before them for them to worship so we proclaim him we hold him up to you that you might contemplate him because we know that's the process by which you're made like him and every virtue and every grace in the Christian life grows as we see it in Jesus Christ as we worship him what is it that you need do you need more love come and see love incarnate in Jesus do you need more patience follow him through the gospels and see his dealings with wicked impolite rude sinners do you need more mercy more humility more faithfulness more self control it's as we see these virtues in

Christ that we draw from him the fountain the same grace and are made like him the Philippian church they needed humility didn't they as we've studied it recently humility that would consider others better than themselves so what does Paul do let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus he who was rich in heaven became poor he who left heaven's glories humbled himself became a man died the death of the cross let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus he lifts up Christ because it's in seeing Christ that your pride starts to stink in your own nostrils seeing his humility makes your pride look so ugly seeing his selflessness makes your preoccupation with

self look so infantile it worked that way for the disciples whom Jesus walked with in John chapter 13 John the apostle shares his most embarrassing experience and he would say it was evening before Jesus was crucified we were all gathered in the upper room to celebrate the Passover for the last time everything had been provided all the provisions! were made everything the room completely furnished there was the pitcher of water the basin the towel but there was no servant we just rented the facility the servant didn't come with it no servant to do the dirty work so none of us were in a mind to do the dirty work of washing feet you see we had been arguing along the way who was the greatest and it wasn't the only time we had had this argument it was an ongoing argument that we just picked up from time to time and we were at it again that night so none of us were about to wash the feet of the other that would be an admission of inferiority that would mean that we were beneath this other person and we thought it the activity beneath us we apostles we're apostles after all we're too great for this and so we'd rather eat with dirty feet than to play the servant ourself and so the water and the basin and the towel just sat there and stared at us until he got up and took off his clothes stripped down like a servant would wrapped himself in the towel and got down and started to wash our feet and he put my dirty feet in the basin and rubbed my feet with his fingers and dried them off with a towel and [29 : 48] I was so embarrassed that he would stoop so low to serve me who wasn't even ready to stoop to serve my fellow apostle and and I am ashamed to even think of it you see it was as they saw the humility of their savior that their own pride started to reek and that they rose up with confession and repentance to be washed from their sins and the spirit of God was doing that work to make them more like their savior so the Peter you read in his letters in first Peter and second Peter is a different Peter he had been made more and more like the savior how by having him set before him by watching him and that's the way the church is sanctified as Christ is set before us were changed more and more into his image it was no different in the churches!

in Galatia Paul's aim my dear children for whom I am again in the pain of childbirth until Christ is formed in you that's my whole aim with you I want to see Christ formed in you I want to see something of Christ in your walk in your life in the way you treat each other as husbands and wives and parents and children and siblings and the way you interact with the world and the way you treat your neighbor and I want to see Christ formed in you that's his aim what's your method Paul how are you going to go about that chapter 3 verse 1 before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified he lifted up Christ and knew that by doing so Christ would be formed in them where he is held up where he is adored and worshipped there he will be formed in the worshipper is that not reason enough for us to keep worshipping

Christ as the main thing in the church but thirdly this is the fuel for ministry and service some would say no no John you've got it all wrong it's not worship of Christ it's ministry it's evangelism it's missions that's got to be the center and focus the hub out of which everything revolves and some people would pit the two as if they're enemies oh it's got to either be evangelism or it's got to be the worship of Christ it's either got to be worship or worship or missions the most energetic service for Christ grows out of Christ enthralled worshipers is that not true that you work harder when you are so filled in your heart with love for Jesus it's just here that our view is seen to be in such contrast with all other works base religions in those systems as in every other system of religion other than the pure gospel of

Christ works of service are done as a means to bring salvation the driving motive behind their works is bondage to fear I better do some more I never know have I done enough have I done enough to make myself worthy in God's sight so fear is thought necessary to get people out there and to get busy!

Martin Luther thought otherwise we're coming up on Reformation Day that old black and white movie of Martin Luther Gateway Films put out in 1953 Martin Luther's father confessor is objecting to Martin's understanding of the gospel Martin has just said by faith man lives and is made righteous not by what he does for himself be it adoration of relics singing of masses!

[33 : 49] pilgrimages to Rome purchase of pardon for his sins no no but by faith in what God has done for him already through his son and his father confessor says Dr.

Martin if you leave the Christian to live only by faith if you sweep away all good works all these glorious things you dismiss as mere crutches what will you put in their place and Luther's one word answer is Christ Christ that's all they need feeding on Christ you will find them to work harder than anyone who is working in order to reach heaven by their works may As a result of the glory of Christ

seen in the full and free forgiveness that came through Christ's blood.

He knew firsthand that nothing motivates works of service like setting forth the glory of Christ in the gospel of free grace. It's Isaiah 6 all over again.

Isaiah sees what? He sees the glory of Christ in vision. Immediately feels his sins. And then is freely pardoned from his sins.

Remember the angel brings the coal and touches his tongue and cleanses him from his sin. And what's Isaiah's response? Oh, since salvation is full and free, I'm just going to sit around and enjoy it.

[35 : 30] I'm not going to work and serve. No, I don't need to. I don't have to do any works because I'm forgiven. I don't have to earn any more points. It's already mine.

No. No. What is Isaiah's response to free grace? In the glorious vision of Christ, it's here am I, Lord. Send me. And that's the response of every one of you who have been to the cross and have seen Christ's glory.

And as he's continually held before you and as you worship him. Lord, could there be something that I could do for you to further your name, to lift up your praise in the earth?

Christ's love in the gospel compelled the apostle Paul to no longer live for himself, but for Christ. 2 Corinthians 5. He was compelled by the love of Christ to no longer live for himself, but for him.

He was held in its grip. He couldn't shake it. Jesus loves me. I want to serve him. It was the woman in Luke 7 who couldn't get over how much Christ had forgiven her that loved much and so served much.

[36 : 38] So really, we could put it on an equation. Our service to Christ will rise no higher than our worship of Christ. What do you think of Christ?

What do you think of Jesus? How big are your thoughts of him? And the answer to that question will go a long way in answering.

What are you doing for him? Yes, you see, the worship of Christ is the fuel for ministry and for service. First, living sacrifices are offered unto God by Christ's captivated worshipers.

But fourthly, why keep Christ at the focus of the church, the worship of him? Fourth, because this is how sinners are saved.

This is how sinners are saved. Our choice is not between worshiping God and evangelism. Oh, if we worship God, then we're ignoring sinners. So we've got to chuck the worship service, the worship of Christ, and just focus on sinners.

[37 : 45] It's not an either-or proposition. As the apostle says in 1 Corinthians 14, it was in the presence of the worshiping congregation that Paul envisioned an unbeliever being convinced that he is a sinner and the secrets of his heart laid bare, and so he'll fall down and worship God, exclaiming, God is really among you.

That's as an unbeliever comes in and sees the church worshiping the Lord Jesus. They're brought under conviction of sin.

They're brought to see the presence of God in the midst. What is it that sinners are blinded to?

They're blinded to the glory of Christ, the beauty of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 4.4, For the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

That's why your neighbor went shopping today instead of worshiping. Saw more glory there than in Jesus.

[38 : 57] That's why your work associates never darken the door of a church, perhaps, because they see no glory in Jesus. There's no reason to interrupt my life and my pleasurable weekends with church.

No glory in Jesus. They've not seen it. The God of this age has blinded their minds. So what is it that sinners need to see in order to be saved?

The glory of Jesus. The good news of the glory of Christ. So what does Paul do? He preaches Christ.

2 Corinthians 4.5, the very next verse, For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ is Lord in ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. And we might say, But Paul, save your breath.

They're blind and they cannot see. So why preach Christ? Well, Paul knows that God is pleased in the preaching of Christ to open the eyes of the blind and to let them see the worth and value, the glory of Jesus.

[40:03] The next verse, God who said, Let light shine out of darkness, made His light shine in our hearts to give us what? The light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus.

Jesus. We saw glory in Jesus where we saw none before. And we became worshipers forever. And that happens as Jesus is held up and preached.

Not just here, please. I'm not saying that. We need to preach out there in the workplace, in the school, across the backyard. But church, as you worship and lift up Jesus in your songs, your prayers, your preaching, others will see His glory and God will be pleased to pull off the blinders and to bring lost sinners to Christ.

And that's why Paul said, I am resolved that while I was, I was resolved that while I was with you to know nothing except Christ and Him crucified. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved, it's the power of God.

And God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe. Jews demand miraculous signs. Greeks look for wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified.

[41:25] Stumbling block to the Jews, foolishness to the Gentiles, but to those whom God has called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power and the wisdom of God. And so Spurgeon says to his fellow ministers, I believe that those sermons which are fullest of Christ are most likely to be blessed to the conversion of the hearers.

Let your sermons be full of Christ. From beginning to end, crammed full of the gospel, preach Jesus Christ, brethren, always and everywhere. And Spurgeon saw the fruit of that in many that streamed to faith in the Lord Jesus.

He's pleased to use the worship of Christ and His church as a means to draw sinners to salvation for His own glory. Come to the last of my reasons this morning.

I said you could add your own five to these, but why should the church keep as its primary focus the worship of Christ? Simply because that's the primary focus in heaven.

It's the primary focus in heaven. Remember, Moses was told in building the place of worship below that the tabernacle was to be built according to the pattern, the pattern revealed in heaven.

[42:52] Our worship is to be patterned after heaven's worship. Have you ever come upon a people that are looking up in the sky?

Not just one, but a whole group and they're all looking up. And you come down the sidewalk and you bump into this crowd. What is your natural instinct? Is to walk on by?

No, it's immediately stop and look up, isn't it? But we have such a scene in the book of Revelation. That's why I had it read for us. Chapters 4 and chapter 5.

You got a whole crowd there, don't you? Not just people, but some weird creatures to us. Some heavenly, angelic beings and faces like lions and bears.

But the one thing that's true of all these people in Revelation 4 and 5 is that they're all looking at the same place. And where are they looking?

[43:57] They're looking to the center of the throne. And they see Him, the Lion, the Lamb, the Lord Jesus.

He is the focal point of heaven. Now, here according to Hebrews 12 are the spirits of just men made perfect. Not just the angelic creatures, but the spirits of righteous men who have died and their spirits have been perfected and they're there as well and they're looking.

And so that means there's Adam and there's Abraham and they're staring with an expression of glad surprise. And there's David and there's Noah and Moses and Isaiah and they're transfixed. They're lost in wonder, love and praise. Now, these are men who had seen amazing things here on earth. They'd seen the Red Sea open up and just stand there for a while while all the children of Israel pass through.

Amazing things. They'd seen water come out of a rock. These apostles who were there, they saw a dead man come to life.

[45:21] They saw lame people get up and walk. They saw blind people suddenly begin to see. And yet to a man, they're all standing there gazing with a look of awe at this that surpasses anything else they've ever seen.

And so as we come upon the scene in Revelation chapter 4 and 5, we instinctively want to know where are they looking? And their focus, as I said, is the center of the throne, the Lamb, looking as if He had been slain.

And the song is all, worthy is the Lamb, worthy is the Lamb that was slain. Do you want to know what heaven will be like? Well, the center of attention, the main attraction in heaven, it's Jesus Christ.

It's Christ Himself. and His glorious work of redemption. Saints there never get over the fact that He was slain for them, that He took hell for them to purchase them for God.

Sinless angels themselves wonder at it. That God would send His own Son to redeem this bunch of sinners. And they look into these things, the angels do, with wonder.

[46:42] those there in heaven want nothing better than to see the face of Jesus and to behold His glory and to live with Him forever. The Queen of Sheba heard of the fame and glory of King Solomon and she packed her bags and all kinds of goodies with it and went a long distance to see if it was really true.

And she interviewed the King and she sat and saw His servants and all of His wealth and listened to all of His answers and at the end of it she said, the half has never been told.

What I heard of you was just a little piece of what reality is to your glory and wisdom and wealth.

And so, brothers and sisters, we've heard of that place, haven't we?

We've heard of the glory of that place. And when we get there we'll see many wonderful things. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has ever conceived what God has prepared for those who love Him.

You will see amazing things. But when you bump into me you will not be saying and talking about the gates of pearls and the golden streets.

[48:05] but with bated breath every one of you will say, have you seen Him? Have you seen Him?

The Lamb, the Lord Jesus, the half has never been told. Oh, we're told so much of His glory, aren't we? But it's just a thimble in an ocean of who He is.

Worshiping Christ is the universal preoccupation in heaven. It's the main thing there. Let it be the same here. Because He's worthy.

Because that's how we're made like Him. Because that's how we're energized and motivated for ministry and service. Because that's how sinners are saved as they see His glory.

And that's what you were made for. And when you come to worship Christ you finally have come home. This is why I was made.

[49:08] This is why I was made the way I am. And I finally find full expression in my redeemed humanity as what I am as a human being. What I was made to do.

I find it preeminently in the worship of Jesus Christ. Church, this is what you were redeemed for.

This is why you're not still a part of the world that withholds worship from Christ.

You've been redeemed for this glory in Christ. This is what glorifies God. Remember, He's so pleased with His Son that He has decreed that every knee will bow someday and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

And oh, how the Father loves His Son and wants to see Him worshiped. May we give ourselves to such worship. No church can remain healthy that loses its primary focus.

Let us not drift from this, brethren. Let us come every time we gather with that phrase upon our hearts that the Greeks had when they came to see Jesus.

[50:13] And they said to His disciples, Sirs, we would see Jesus. We would see Jesus. Is that why you come? Is that why you worship? You come here to see Jesus, to see more of His glory.

Lord, I need to see more of Your glory. Come with such a heart. and if you're still lost this morning, may the Lord have mercy on you, withholding worship from the One who gives you life and breath and everything else, and you see no beauty in Him to worship Him.

May you open your eyes, come to Him, repent of your great, awful crying of not worshiping Jesus.

Let's pray. Father in Heaven, You are good to us to give us a Bible that tells us about Jesus.

What would we know of Him without the Scriptures? And there's so much here about Him. Indeed, we could make the Bible our chief book as we aim to do all of our life and we would never get to the end of His glory.

He's altogether lovely, He's the fairest of 10,000 and we thank You for Him and His glory. Open our eyes to see more of it. Cure us from our attractions with the things of this world that rob glory from Jesus.

[51 : 43] Lord Jesus, forgive us for forgetting You, for not loving You, for not glorying in You as we ought. And O bring us together in every assembly of Your church with this primary heartbeat to see Christ exalted.

Be glorified in Your church, Lord Jesus. We acknowledge that we only exist as Your church because of Your shed blood. And we also acknowledge that too often we're cold to the glorious realities of who You are and what You've done.

Expand our hearts with bigger thoughts of You. So wither up our temptations and attractions to sin. Draw sinners to Yourself and sanctify us.

We ask it all for Your own praise and for our good. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.