

# Psalm 15

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Preacher: Chris Trousdale

[ 0 : 0 0 ] You guys, take a seat and open your Bibles up to the book of Psalms, Psalm 15.

This will be our last Sunday this summer in the book of Psalms. We're going to get back to Romans in August. Next week we'll have a special sermon detailing some of the things that we're going to be doing in the coming months and looking at the reasons from Scripture why we're going to be structuring and doing some things that way.

And so that's coming next week. But this morning we get to finish our time in the Psalms for the summer. We started in Psalm 9 back in June and now here we are in Psalm 15.

And so if you haven't found your place there, if you're using one of the Bibles in the chairs, it'll be on page 453 and I want you guys to stand again to your feet as we read God's Word together.

A Psalm of David. O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks the truth in his heart.

[ 1 : 1 4 ] Who does not slander with his tongue and does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend. In whose eyes a vile person is despised, but who honors those who fear the Lord.

Who swears to his own hurt and does not change. Who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. He who does these things shall never be moved.

Thank you for this word, Father. Teach us through it, we ask in Christ's name. Amen. You guys be seated. If you guys have been a part of churches, various churches, for a length of time, I mean more than just a year or two, but if you've spent some time in the church, then you might be familiar with the phrase, the worship wars.

Worship wars is a phrase coined to describe disagreements and sometimes sharp disagreements and sometimes angry disagreements among people on how worship ought to be done within the church.

Exactly what we should do when we gather together. In more recent decades, that is centered on the issue of the debate between should we sing only traditional songs and hymns using traditional instrumentation, or should we sing newer, more contemporary songs with more contemporary instrumentation and those sorts of things.

[ 2 : 3 0 ] But the worship wars are not something new. They predated even the coining of the term so that if you look throughout church history, there have been debates about what ought to be done when the church gathers together.

How should we conduct ourselves? What exactly should we do? Usually we think about music when we think about those things, and a lot of those debates have to do with music. So it has been debated throughout church history, should you sing only the Psalms?

That is, should you sing only words that come directly from Scripture, or is it appropriate to sing words that are drawn out of ideas, concepts, and principles from Scriptures, but written by modern-day men and women?

Is it okay to sing things that are not strictly taken from the Bible word for word, or ought we to confine ourselves primarily to the Psalms and other places where we find poetry in the Bible? That's been a major debate throughout church history concerning church worship music.

But it goes beyond that. It goes into debates about whether or not our services should be more liturgical and have a lot of the extra things that you typically see in churches like the Roman Catholic Church or the Episcopal Church, and a lot of the more outward ceremonial aspects to worship.

[ 3 : 3 9 ] Are those appropriate, or should we have a more simple worship service that most evangelicals are much more familiar with? What's appropriate? What can we do when we gather

together for worship?

And there have been lots of discussions, lots of debates throughout church history, and especially in the last 40 to 50 years, over what's appropriate and what we actually ought to do in worship. But that's not the question that David is asking at the beginning of this psalm. David is not asking the question, what should we do when we gather together? David's asking, who can actually be a part of that gathering?

Who has the right? Who can come into God's presence? So this psalm, though it's about worship, is not so much about what we do in worship, as who will participate in worship.

Which is not to say the what will we do question is not important and is not significant. God cares about what we do when we gather together.

[ 4 : 36 ] In fact, there's a story from the Old Testament that some of you may be familiar with. It's in Leviticus chapter 10. You can feel free to turn there if you want, or the words will be on the screen. But in Leviticus chapter 10, we read the story of two men who approach God and do things in worship that are not permitted by God.

It seems like a strange story to us. Leviticus chapter 10 tells us that Nadab and Abihu, those are great names, you want to name your future children then, I'm sure, the sons of Aaron each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and authored strange or unauthorized fire before the Lord, which He had not commanded them.

They were offering sacrifices, these Old Testament priests, but not offering the types of sacrifices that God Himself had commanded. So it's not that they're not entering into some form of worship, it's that they're not entering into the kind of worship God prescribed, the kind of worship that He commanded.

And God cares about what we do, and so He responds. Verse 2, And fire came out from before the Lord and consumed them, and they died before the Lord.

That's immediate judgment. He's not playing around when it comes to worship in this particular passage. God is not playing around. He does care about what we do in worship.

[ 5 : 55 ] He does not very often send fire down to immediately consume us when we do things that aren't correct in worship. If He did, then probably most of us wouldn't even be here today, because at some point in time we've participated in some form of worship that God's Word does not command us to do, that God's Word does not contain.

God cares about what we do in worship. And that's not only an Old Testament concept. We see that in the New Testament. We see, for instance, in 1 Corinthians, that God gives many instructions concerning, Paul gives many instructions concerning the actual form of worship in the church at Corinth because there were so many abuses.

God does care about those things, but I think that God actually has as much concern, if not greater concern, over who comes to worship Him. Not simply over what we do when we gather, but who will be allowed, what kind of person is able to come into God's presence.

Notice David's question in verse 1. O Lord, who shall sojourn in your tent? Who shall dwell on your holy hill? The tent is obviously a reference to the tabernacle, that sort of movable temple that the Israelites used before they had built the temple in Jerusalem.

Now I think probably this psalm was written during the period in which David was king and he was ruling from Jerusalem. Because if you'll remember in the Old Testament, David wanted to build a permanent physical structure for worship in Jerusalem.

[ 7 : 24 ] He wanted to build a temple, but God did not permit David to build a temple. David's son Solomon instead was permitted to build a more permanent structure in Jerusalem. So that throughout David's reign, though the temple grounds were located in Jerusalem as we find them throughout the rest of Israel's history, nevertheless they were still using the tent.

They were still using the tabernacle. So that the phrase, the holy hill of God, I think is probably Mount Zion, the hill upon which we would find the temple in Old Testament times.

But at this point in time, they're worshipping in the tabernacle. That's where all the sacrifices are being made. And David asked the simple question, who can enter in? Who can go into that place? Who can participate in worship on God's holy hill? And on one level, we would want to give a very simple answer to that question. We would want to say that, from a new covenant perspective in particular, we would want to say that all those who've trusted in Christ, all those whose sins have been washed away by His blood, those who have been forgiven by Him, may enter into God's

presence, may come in to worship God.

Because after all, when Jesus was sacrificed, the curtain that separated the holy of holies in the center of the temple, was torn in two, symbolizing that all those in Christ now have access to the holiest place.

[ 8 : 48 ] All those in Christ may now come into God's presence. No longer is it just the priestly class. No longer is it just the high priest. Now all who trust in Christ are in a legitimate sense priests before God and may, through the blood of Jesus, enter into God's presence.

We have a mediator. We, through Him, now can go into God's presence. So on one level, we would want to answer David's question by saying, well, David, we live in the new covenant and therefore, those who want to sojourn in God's tents, those who want to dwell on His holy hill, are all of us who've called upon the name of Christ.

And that's the right answer to give, but I'm not sure it's answering David's specific question here. I think David is asking this question within the context of the covenant people.

I don't think he's asking the question, who may enter into the Holy of Holies? That was an obvious answer. And David wouldn't have had to write the rest of this psalm. He could have simply said, the high priest may enter into the Holy of Holies once a year.

If that were his question. But that's not his question. I think his question pertains to the larger sanctuary structure of the tabernacle.

[ 10 : 01 ] Because the Israelites would regularly gather together later at the temple, at this point in history, at the tabernacle, and enter into the tent, though not the middle of the tent, the Holy of Holies, but they would enter into the tent to participate in worship.

And I think that's what David has in mind. David is not saying, who has the right to come and offer sacrifices to God, or who has the right to enter into the Holy of Holies.

Under the New Covenant, we would say all those in Christ. But David's question is, what kind of person can come and worship God? What are the moral requirements for a person if they are going to regularly enter into worship in God's presence?

Or if we were to ask this question today, we might say, what kind of person can come and be a part of the authentic, genuine worship of God's people?

What kind of person can do that? On one level, on the surface level, we would say anybody is welcome to come into a worship service. That's not the question of who can come and sit in a chair and sing songs.

[ 11 : 06 ] It's who might actually engage in real, authentic, spiritual worship and experience the presence of God through the power of the Spirit. Who might do that?

And David's answer is given to us throughout the rest of this psalm. This psalm is very much about the heart of a person who comes to worship before the Lord.

And most of David's response, if you read through it, is really just an application of the command to love your neighbor as yourself. He gives a general response in verses 2 and 3.

And as he breaks down that general response, you begin to notice that all of the things that David says characterize the kind of person that can come before God in worship. All of those pertain to how you go about loving other people.

Take a look at the general answer in verses 2 and 3. David answers, He who walks blamelessly and does what is right and speaks the truth in his heart.

[ 12 : 07 ] That's the kind of person. Threefold description. You walk blamelessly, you do what is right, and you speak the truth in or from the heart. Now more detail.

Who does not slander with his tongue, does no evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his friend. Who is the kind of person who can come in to the worship of the Lord?

Well, from the bird's eye point of view, we want to say a person who lives a righteous life. A person who walks blamelessly with the Lord. A person who actually believes and speaks the truth.

These are not merely generic things. These help us to see and understand and get a hold on what we're looking for. You don't want to just live your life with no regard for what the Word of God says and then expect that you can just come in to worship as if nothing has transpired during the week. No, you must walk blamelessly. You must be a righteous person. You must be a person in whom the Holy Spirit is producing righteousness. And you have to be a person who's committed to the truth. You speak the truth in your heart.

[13:12] This is an internal occurrence of the truth that really lands upon you and then begins to flow out of you from your heart. Jesus tells us that out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.

And David speaks to that kind of issue that the truth ought to flow from our hearts or be in our hearts and it ought to be on our lips. Those who speak the truth in their hearts.

This is the kind of person. And you can tell whether or not someone is walking blamelessly, whether or not they are doing righteous, whether they speak the truth in their hearts, by how they treat other people.

By whether or not they practically obey the command to love your neighbor as yourself, as it's broken down. Let's take a look at some of these details. Verse 3.

He doesn't slander with his tongue. He does know evil to his neighbor. He does not take up a reproach against his friends. So after three general statements of the kind of morality required, now we get three more specific statements about how we're supposed to treat people around us.

[14:20] Number one, you don't slander people with your tongue. You don't speak evil things of others. You don't say bad things about others. Of course, this is a major problem that we find being dealt with over and over throughout the New Testament epistles.

Over and over, the apostles have to address the issue of speech. Of what sorts of things people say. Of how we use our words toward one another.

Because sometimes we don't even recognize. We don't even notice when we're using words in ways to tear others down and to break down other people.

We don't even recognize it. Or sometimes we become involved in gossip and we become involved in spreading things about other people. We're using our words. We're speaking things about others that we simply ought not to speak.

Things that we ought not to say. So for instance, James addresses the issue in the book of James. In chapter 3, he says in verse 6 that the tongue is a fire.

[15:26] A world of unrighteousness. He says, The tongue is set among our members, staining the whole body, setting on fire the entire course of life, and set on fire by hell.

He goes on to say that every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed, and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame the tongue. It is a restless evil, full of deadly poison.

And then notice verse 9. I think it pertains directly to our worship. He says, With it, that is with our tongue, or with our words, we bless our Lord and Father, and with it we curse people who are made in the likeness of God.

He goes down a little further and says, My brothers, these things, they ought not to be so. He says, With the same mouth that we would come and sing praises to God, with that same mouth, we curse our brothers.

With the same mouth that we would want to come here on Sunday mornings, and sing songs together, and we want to come and say nice things while we're gathered here together, and we want to speak pleasantries to one another during worship, and we want to sit and listen to things being said, with the same mouths that we would use here on Sunday mornings, to bless the Lord, we leave here, and we use these same mouths to curse people who are made in God's image.

[16:53] God takes very seriously the way that we use our words. God takes very seriously the things that we say. So that we tell kids all the time, if you don't have anything nice to say, don't say anything at all.

We tell kids that all the time, and yet, I think that as adults, we need to hear that. We need to be reminded of that reality. We need to remember that.

What we do with our mouths when we're outside of worship can affect whether or not God will hear and listen to what we say when we're gathered together for worship. It does no good to sing song after song after song on Sunday morning, if you've been using your mouth to dishonor God and dishonor people made in His image throughout the rest of the week.

It does no good. If you gossip during the week, you cannot sing songs on Sunday that will be received by the Lord as an offering acceptable to Him.

If you say bad things about others during the week, you cannot come in on Sunday morning and offer up prayers with the rest of the church and expect God to pretend that those words are acceptable to Him. These things ought not to be so.

[ 18 : 03 ] And so David begins by saying that we don't speak evil. We don't slander other people. If you want to be the kind of person, if you want to have the moral character to come in and worship God and be there on His holy hill in His presence, then you must not be the kind of person that slanders others.

You must not be the kind of person that James describes as blessing God with your mouth and cursing those made in His image. That simply will not work.

What we do with our mouths matters a great deal. What we do with our mouths during the week determines whether or not what we do with our mouths here actually matters and counts before God is genuine worship.

Then he goes on and says that the person who can worship does no evil to his neighbor nor takes up a reproach against his friend. I think that these are two ways of saying essentially the same thing.

I think neighbor and friend are parallel terms. And I think to do no evil, to not take up a reproach are simply two ways of saying the same thing. This is a serious issue though because this word reproach would normally refer to some sort of public accusation.

[ 19 : 15 ] Making a public claim about someone. And a negative public claim. So that in ancient Israel, in every small town, in every city, they would have a group of men who sat at the gates, named the elders, and their job was to judge various cases amongst the people.

And if you came before them and you made a negative statement about your neighbor, about someone else in the town, if you leveled a charge at them, it better be true.

It needs to be based in reality. David says, the person who would want to come and worship the Lord is not going to throw accusations at people. He's not going to do evil to people.

He's not going to make them look bad in the eyes of the community. In fact, exactly the opposite is true. Our goal, in reference to other people, ought to be to build them up.

We ought to want good things for other people that are in our lives. We ought to want, both with our words and with our actions, we should want to help people and not hinder them.

[ 20 : 15 ] And if we're the kind of person that hinders people, then we'll find ourselves struggling when we come in to worship. Struggling to feel rightly.

Struggling to really enter in to worship. Have you ever had one of those weeks where you come to church and you sit and you sing through the words and you bow your head during the prayer and you go through all the motions and yet you could just be eating a ham sandwich for all that matters. You feel nothing. You could be doing anything else and you would feel the same way. Sometimes that's misleading because our feelings ebb and flow and sometimes that can just be the case of we're emotional creatures and we don't always control our feelings.

But sometimes it's because there's something standing in the way of us actually experiencing the presence of God in the gathered congregation. And the thing standing in the way most often is our own behavior.

Our own failure to treat others the way that we ought to treat them so that we come into worship needing to confess our sins rather than sing praises.

[ 21 : 28 ] We come into worship needing to repent rather than sing songs. David says, the person who wants to come into God's presence, the person who wants to participate in worship needs to be the kind of person that loves their neighbor authentically, speaks no evil against them, does no harm to them, does not falsely accuse them of things, but treats them well.

But of course that does not mean that we pretend as if everyone around us is living morally upright lives themselves.

because a lot of times we take phrases like love your neighbor as yourself or we take things like speak no evil against someone, don't slander someone, and we take those kinds of phrases and we twist them and we turn them into an excuse never to confront anyone.

We turn them into an excuse not to speak the truth to someone when they need to hear the truth because we think, well, it wouldn't be loving to say something like that to someone. It wouldn't be loving to confront someone over their sin.

But speaking the truth out of your heart, not slandering other people, not doing wrong to people, does not mean that you refuse to recognize evil in the world around you and even in other people around you.

[ 22 : 50 ] Notice what David says. Verse 4. The same person who loves their neighbor in verse 3, in verse 4 we read this, In his eyes, a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord.

In his eyes, a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the Lord. How do these things work together?

How do you love other people? How can you love your neighbor if your neighbor is in fact a vile person and David says you ought to despise vile people? How can you do that?

I spent a lot of time on this verse this week, just thinking about it, just wrestling with the fact that Jesus tells us to love our enemies and David says to despise a vile person.

The fact that both the Old Testament and the New Testament repeatedly contain the command to love your neighbor and yet David says despise a vile person. And it's not as if David has forgotten about the love your neighbor command.

[ 23 : 59 ] The previous verse was all about that, was practical application of that command. So David believes that we can love our neighbor and yet despise the vile person. How can that be? How can you weave these things together?

Well, this kind of statement is not rare in Scripture. And it has two parts to it if you notice. He says that you despise a vile person but you honor those who fear the Lord.

And so there's a comparison here between how you think about sin and those steeped in sin and how you think about righteousness and those who actually honor and fear the Lord and live righteously.

And you don't think and feel the same way about those two categories. You simply do not. It's not just here in the Psalms. For instance, in the prophet Amos.

You don't have to turn there. It might take you a while to find it. But in Amos 5, verse 15, we read this. Hate evil and love good and establish justice in the gate.

[ 24 : 59 ] It may be that the Lord, the God of hosts, will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph. Hate evil and love good so that love for good can be coupled with hate for evil.

Love and hate are not necessarily opposite concepts. They can coexist side by side. In fact, you might say that loving the good, that is, loving God and all that He says is good, automatically requires you to hate the things that oppose God and oppose the good.

For a better example, though, you might turn to the book of Romans. In Romans chapter 12, Paul speaks in a very similar way. He says in verse 9, Let love be genuine, abhor what is evil, hold fast to what is good, love one another with brotherly affection, outdo one another in showing honor.

So Paul believes that you can have genuine love, you can love one another with brotherly love, you can outdo one another in showing honor, you can do all of that while at the same time abhorring what is evil.

It is entirely possible, and in fact we might say that it is required for love to be authentic and genuine, for it to be coupled with a disdain and abhorrence and a hatred for what is in fact evil.

[ 26 : 23 ] You see, we live in a society that says love would never confront, that love would never condemn, and yet we read a Bible that says that love requires the opposing and abhorrence and hatred of all that opposes love.

Love requires the hatred of evil, righteousness requires the hatred of unrighteousness. So that it is entirely possible to both love someone who is trapped and lost in their sin and proclaim the gospel and yet have an abhorrence for all that they stand for and all that you see in their lives.

So most of you probably this week, most of you probably read about or watched on television or on the internet all the business with Planned Parenthood and the sort of secretly taped video that was released in which you have a very high official doctor within Planned Parenthood describing how they sell fetal body parts, babies, organs, and things after an abortion and discuss it casually as if it's no big deal.

And I watched the video that was recorded and there was just a sickening feeling as you watch it how casually something that evil and wicked is talked about.

And there is, there was simultaneously in me as I listened to this woman talk, there was simultaneously an abhorrence of everything that she stood for and all that she did and her whole life and yet there was also within me this voice that said she needs to hear the gospel.

[ 28 : 12 ] And there is somehow God is capable of producing within you both a despising of the wicked person and a love for the wicked person simultaneously so that you don't have to approve or

ignore or downplay the wickedness and evil of some people and yet you can love them in the midst of that.

Pray for them in the midst of that and hope that they come to a saving knowledge of who Jesus is and that their wickedness just like your wickedness is erased by the blood of Jesus.

I think it is entirely possible to despise those who are vile and bless those who persecute you. And I think it is possible to do those at the same time.

And we have got to be able to bring those kinds of things together in our hearts and in our minds if we want to be the kind of people who can come with a sense of freedom into God's presence to worship Him.

So God is greatly concerned with how we treat our neighbor in the daily goings-on of our lives. He is greatly concerned that we respond to evil and wickedness in the world in an appropriate way if we are going to be a people who worship Him.

[ 29 : 28 ] But He gets more specific and He moves beyond that in the rest of this psalm. Because in the rest of this psalm He actually addresses something that I think hits home for a lot of people.

He turns His attention to not merely what we do with our family or with the people who live around us. He turns His attention to what we do in our work lives.

In the business that we conduct in the world. So, take a look at the end of verse 4. Second half of verse 4. We're told that the person who would come and worship is one who swears to his own hurt and does not change.

Who does not put out his money at interest and does not take a bribe against the innocent. All of these statements I believe have to do with the way that we conduct business in the world.

The way that we go about our trade, our job, our commerce. Whatever it is that you do in the world these verses pertain to that. So, for instance this strange little phrase translated in ESV fairly literally as He swears to His own hurt and does not change.

[ 30 : 36 ] That's a difficult phrase. It's difficult to translate. And even after it's translated it's a little bit difficult to catch the sense of it. But I think the main point of it is is that the person who would come and worship before God is the kind of person who in their daily lives out in the world if they're going to make a promise to someone if they're going to take a risk at something they're going to risk themselves.

They're going to risk their own livelihood not someone else's. If they're going to make a pledge that pledge is going to be based upon something that would cause harm to them. They don't risk other people's standing.

They don't risk someone else's reputation. They don't risk someone else being hurt. But they if they need to make a promise make a pledge if they need to do that they'll risk what is theirs.

Their own possessions their own livelihood their own physical well-being. If they're to risk something it will be their own. And then they don't waver from that. They don't change. They don't change in mid-course.

They don't change their mind. They don't prove to be a liar about the thing that they pledged and promised. They don't endanger others in their business dealings. If anybody is to be put in danger or at risk it's themselves that's put at danger and risk.

[ 31 : 51 ] And then moving on from that he goes on and he says that he does not put out his money at interest. Well what do we make of that? Because I I would say I own a home although I don't quite yet own it yet.

The bank owns my house paying the bank off that's the way it works in today's world. And so when you want to buy a house many of you have been through this process some of you are going through it right now when you want to buy a house you have to go and apply for a loan because very few people have all that amount of cash just sitting in their bank account and as you apply for a loan if you're approved for the loan the bank gives you the money to buy the house you pay the bank back but you pay them interest.

Does that mean that every banker you've ever met in your life is violating this commandment ought not to be showing up on Sundays for worship and expecting to be able to enter into God's presence? Is that what the text means?

Because if that's what it means then Christians need to get out of the modern banking business let's just be honest if that's what it means then some people have to change their jobs. I'm not sure that that's exactly what's meant here I think what David is addressing is something that was very

common in the ancient world in the ancient world often times a man would lend his neighbor money and then charge him an exorbitant amount of interest sometimes a third sometimes 50% and it was a way of causing someone to be led into indentured servanthood or slavery that if you lent someone enough money and at the front end of that you determined to charge amount of interest that they could never pay then you could eventually have that person get to the point where they have to sell themselves into your service and they have to become your servant it was a major problem in the ancient world it happened all the time and in fact the Israelites were forbidden if they gave money to a fellow Jew they were not allowed to charge interest they could not do it they were not allowed because of the danger of that whole system and that whole process so that I think the main point that David is making here is that the person who would come before

God and worship lives their lives and conducts their business in such a way that they would never take advantage of someone else they would never lend somebody money and charge them a rate of interest where they could never pay it back they're not going to take advantage of other people so that a Christian mechanic should never overcharge for the parts and components that they install in someone's car nor should a Christian mechanic ever suggest that someone get work and repairs done to their car that are not needed and are not necessary they should not suggest because they see someone who's gullible and doesn't know much about cars they shouldn't suggest that they get things repaired that in reality they probably don't need to have repaired a Christian mechanic would conduct their business so the people who came in would know this guy is not going to overcharge me for his services this guy is not going to perform services that I don't need to be performed that's the way a Christian mechanic ought to operate and you can apply that across the board in all sorts of professions sometimes though if you're just a cog in the larger will of a larger machine a larger corporation the most that you can do is be fair and even in your dealings with anybody that you deal with in the midst of your business so that so that if you if you're working out in a plant you don't you don't cheat your employer out of money by not doing your work and sitting around and hiding in dark corners and not doing the work and taking a nap on the job and nor do you nor do you force other work on the other workers because you're not working hard enough and doing what you ought to do in your business life whatever it may be whatever you might do whether you fix computers or you work on cars or you work at a plant or you're a doctor or you're an attorney there are lots of opportunities to cheat whatever system you're involved in but if you cheat a system someone else has to pay the price for it and David says the person who lives and conducts their lives out in the work world in that way ought not to presume that they can just come into God's presence on Sunday with no problem at all

[ 36 : 00 ] Christians ought to be those who deal even handedly and fairly with people I think so often the thing that trips us up in this is that we have we have bought into what's often called the secular sacred divide we have bought into the mindset that part of your life is devoted to sacred things religious things and that would include Sunday morning worship services and a few other aspects of your life and then the rest of your life is your life dealing with the secular dealing with things in the world and that you have to conduct yourself in one way in the secular realm in order to survive and make it and thrive but you don't want to conduct yourself in the same way among sacred things when you gather together with other Christians or when you're at Bible study or you're at worship you don't want to conduct yourself so that you end up with two spheres of life the secular and the sacred that are guided by different sets of principles all together and you will not find that in the scriptures

Paul tells us whatever work we do we work as if we're working for the Lord how does that fit a sacred secular divide how does that work it does not work we hear this all the time from politicians we will hear politicians and in order to gain more voters they will say well yes I'm a Christian and these are my values as a Christian but I don't determine my politics but that's my religion that's my spiritual life but when I conduct myself as a congressman or whatever else they might happen to be I conduct myself by these principles I understand I can't apply Christian morality to this aspect of my life and they've accepted the secular sacred divide which does not exist there is no part of creation one theologian has said over which God does not scream mine it's all his your work belongs to him whatever you do

Monday through Saturday belongs to him whether you stay at home with your kids or whether you go off to work no matter what you do it belongs to him and if you conduct yourself during those days and those hours in ways in which so that you take advantage of other people the scriptures say do

not assume that you may just enter into God's presence casually on Sunday morning and sing your songs and pray your prayers and listen to the sermon and think that all will be well no David says God is not only looking for a certain kind of worship he's looking for a certain kind of worshiper he's looking for a person whose heart has been fundamentally transformed we point you to one other place in the scriptures before we close that speak to this issue Isaiah chapter 1 God speaks through the prophet

Isaiah to the people of Israel he says what to me is the multitude of your sacrifices says the Lord I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well fed beasts I do not delight in the blood of bulls or of lambs or of goats when you come to appear before me who has required of you this trampling of my courts bring no more vain offerings incense is an abomination to me new moon and sabbath and the calling of convocations I cannot God says I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly God will not endure sin in the hearts of his people as they gather together he says at the end of verse 16 the same passage cease to do evil learn to do good seek justice correct oppression bring justice to the fatherless plead the widow's cause practical righteousness in your everyday life demonstrated through your loving of your neighbor means that you are the kind of person who can joyfully enter into

God's presence and receive the full benefits of coming before him but a failure to do that means that all of your offerings are not acceptable to him it means that no matter what you might sing or say on Sunday God will not accept that as appropriate worship if it comes from a heart that's not filled with love for other people and practical everyday righteousness throughout the week God cares a great deal about the kind of worshippers who come before him and of course none of us none of us can claim to have done all of these things perfectly every week nobody can come and say that there's no given week upon which they don't do something that they ought not to have done that they don't speak a harsh word that they wish that they could take back that they don't participate briefly in gossip before the Lord rebukes them that they don't spend some time lazily on the job or that they don't deal fairly with someone that they ought to be there's not a week that goes by that one of those things we don't do so that what God requires of us is constant continual repentance you want to come into his presence then endeavor to live a righteous life throughout the week and then repent on Sunday morning before you come and gather together and your worship will become an acceptable sacrifice of praise to him let's pray to to him to him to him to him