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So, if you've got a copy of the outline We are down to the zechariah passage And where we are now is we have Uh well we're in big number two, israel.

As a nation of grace. Uh, the lord having Uh, displayed himself as The god of grace and the covenant of grace. And they were to be a nation that knew god, that had Uh, rules laws from god giving given to them. As a display of the difference that the knowledge of god makes, And you remember that all the way back when we were Beginning in Deuteronomy and seeing that.

When other when other nations saw, what kind of nation israel was Uh, they were to marvel. That of all the, all the nations on the earth, israel was a nation that had god so near to it. And they were supposed to see the nearness of god in the goodness of their laws, and then the good that came out Of their keeping.

Their laws, but what we have seen Um, is that israel did not do that and that god was furious with them? And the exiled then and then he restored them, he returned them from exile. But we are seeing again. That this has not produced a change in israel. And we've already begun to anticipate as we were.

As we were, especially in isaiah, Considering how the worldliness within the old testament church. So many of them being unconverted. Uh, the worldliness within the old testament. Church was something that Uh, was setting up for jesus to be. Israel as israel ought to have been the servant that israel ought to have been the true light in the world.

Israel failing to be a light to the nations, but jesus is the light of the world. And his people then. Or to shine with his life. And So in the scope of the bible as a whole, The. The mortifying of worldliness the killing of worldliness in the church. Our treasuring god and And our using, then earthly treasure, both for the enjoyment and Of god and the spread of his kingdom.

And for the good of our neighbor loving god, with all the heart, soul mind, strength, and wallet. And loving our neighbor. As ourselves, which includes. Uh, time effort material things, etc. That when believers in the new testament church do this, the superiority of christ over israel or christ over moses.

If you will, to use the Of the way that hebrews makes that comparison is supposed to come out. And so there's a there's an extent to which worldliness in the church self-indulgence Uh, that does not treasure god, in the things of god, let alone in our earthly things. Uh, and self-indulgence that does not lead also to Uh, genuine love of the neighbor is more offensive.

Then worldliness was in israel. Because it's over against, what, what christ's church is supposed to be, like, in, in the history of redemption. In the progression. Uh, from the old testament to the new testament. And one of the things that that we saw, As we were leading to the exile, was that god picked on.

The self-indulgence and especially. Yeah, if you remember the, the cows of besan that's just really Offensive language, but that's offensive language because they were being offensive to

god. And how into their adornment the, the wealthy women of the northern kingdom in the most fertile area of the northern kingdom were And how?

They didn't care about the poor. Uh, and they're not caring about the poor was symptomatic of or Concurrent with came from the same source. From, they're not caring about god. What? We have those things. Again, zechariah is after the exile. And, And they are asking a question and they sound very sincere and we're in zechariah 7.

They're asking a question and they are. Uh, they are very sincere. Or they appear to sound. They want to sound at least. Uh, very sincere. As they ask, as they ask this question about, You know, does god still want? Uh, the same church calendar that they were keeping Uh, when they were exiled.

So, that's the first. Uh, seven verses and then Well. The the first three verses is their question. God's answer in verses four through seven is Yeah. Stop deceiving yourselves. As if you really care about me and really want to know what i say about worship, you know, at least they're keeping, you know, trying to keep the regulative principle, right?

Not just coming up with their own feast, they want to know, Um, if god wants these Um, Buddy basically says, When you do the things that i tell you to do, you're not doing them for me. And so his answer to what they should do. Actually has to do with the second great commandment has to do with Uh, commandments.

Uh, five through 10. And, And it comes out in what we would call our deaconal service. And that means, Of course, and You can pray for the arp. The, the question of The deacon deaconess. Uh, female deacon issue is Been kicked down the road a couple of times and it's coming to sin it.

In june, and An interaction with some elders. In our Presbyterian who are Uh, pretty confused on the issue. Uh, This pet this, this weekend. We are all. Deacons lowercase D. There's no such thing as a christian who is not called to be a servant because they have a christ to as a servant.

And the word that is is transliterated. Deacon is actually used of christ several times in the gospel. And, Uh, it's We are all deacons in the lower case d way, and it's an hour deaconal service. That god gives us the opportunity to see Whether it's him, we are really treasuring.

And so, he answers What should we do in worship question with? Well, here's what you should do and you're not at worship. So that you'll know that when you do what i tell you to do at worship, Your heart is really towards me. All right, so with all that as set up, Let's let's hear the chapter and maybe, i'll Uh, point out a couple more things before we move on.

Now in the fourth year of king, dariahus it came to pass that the word of yawhi came to zechariah on the fourth day of the ninth month. His left When the people sent charaser with regular melech and his men to the house of god to pray before he all went.

And to ask the priests who were in the house. If you all the way of hosts and the prophets saying, Should i weep in the fifth month and fast as i have done for so many years? Then the word of y'all way of hosts came to me saying, say to all the people of the land and to the priests When you fasted and mourn in the fifth and seventh month.

During those 70 years. Did you really fast for me? For me. When you eat, and when you drink, Do you not eat and drink for yourselves? Should you not have obeyed the words, which

yahweh proclaimed? Through the former prophets when jerusalem and the cities around, it were inhabited and prosperous.

And the south and the lowland were inhabited. Then the word of yahweh came to zechariah saying, thus says, yahuweh of us. Execute true justice. Show mercy. The compassion. Everyone to his brother. Do not oppress the widow. Or the fatherless. The alien. Or the poor. Let none of you plan evil in his heart against his brother.

But they refused to heed. Shrub. Their shoulders and stopped their ears. So that they could not hear. Yes, they made their hearts like flint, which means super hard. Refusing to hear the law and the words, which Yahweh of hosts had sent by his spirit through the former prophets. Thus, great wrath came.

From y'all way of hosts. Therefore, it happened, That just as he proclaimed and they would not hear. So they called out and i would not listen. Says, yahua have hosts. But i scattered them with a whirlwind among all the nations, which they had not known, Thus, the land became desolate after them.

So that no one passed through or returned. From they made the pleasant land. Desolate. So, you hear in the chapter, They want to know what they should do in worship. And that's a good question to ask. We should want to know what to do and worship. The lord. Again, and that progression from moses to jesus, he really did change the The calendar and the The outward aspects of his worship from.

From moses, who was a servant in the house to jesus, who is the son over the house? We've got the whole book of Hebrews on that. But even more important. Or. Well. Just as important. As getting the actions of worship correctly. Is that we act by faith upon god in the actions of that worship.

That. We by his spirit controlling us and helping us. Would interact with god himself. So kids when when we go over there and it's time to pray is very important. Yes that you're you're elders of studied the bible and you know thank god for Uh, for faithful elders and pastors.

Have distilled and condensed the teaching of the Bible and things like the confession and the larger catechism, and Um well, the original Westminster directory for public worship. Um, Uh, so Uh, you can have pretty good confidence and as you grow and read and study the Bible and see that, yeah.

What we're doing is what the bible says? It'll it'll increase. I hope you're gratitude to god for those whom he has set over you and your younger years and those you'll be sent before all of us. Uh, in former years. So, the activities that are selected are our biblical.

And it's important for you to learn to do things. Like give attention like mesa is just now or just was. Yeah. She's Uh, You know, she's got a seat that's turned away but she's trying as as much as he can to turn, and You know, i would I would tell my children point your eyes at me because it's easier for you to tell.

When you're pointing your eyes. And if you point your eyes, well, the ears are attached. You're pointing, you're pointing your ears too. And it's important to do things like when the word is being taught. You give your eyes so that you're giving your ears. But also important to give your mind.

The that you are receiving what god's word says and trying to understand and and hopefully you've got your Bible in front of you. The booklet is very helpful. It's not a bible. I get if you're

not accustomed to bring in your bible, let me encourage you to bring your bible and read out of your bible.

Uh,

That's that's all take time to say about that. Just now Uh, But to to, to be receiving the words as the actual words of god, And that the reason to understand those words is not so that you can become theologically conversant to feel good about how much you know, and make others.

And that others will feel good about you and how much, you know, Uh, but god is instructing me. Right now, and he's chosen to be worshiped by instructing me, which means not just my mind, but also my heart. And everything's good about god, that you hear. In, in the bible, the you praise with the heart while you listen with the mind, i bless you.

Got you are like this. That's wonderful. Everything that you hear, that, that convicts you, that that you. Yes. Lord, i am like that. Forgive me? Or yes. Lord. You have done in that. In me, thank you. So that even the goods that he has, he has worked in you that you hear about and just confirmed an affirmed by the bible becomes a point of praise.

Uh, you hear something that you ought to do that. You haven't been doing and and you can commit to him in that, you know, the the making of vows, as part of worship, is not just something that happens formally. Although that does happen sometimes, right? We we stand up.

We're responding to the word of god and what god is doing among us. And we make formal verbal vows, or standing up. Vows Uh, at the end of baptism when everybody stands But it's the making of vows during worship is something you do as you read and as you hear It's important to learn, not just to Uh, to keep the rustling and the fidgeting and the playing with things.

To a minimum during prayer. Uh, so that so that we can all hear. And i say to a minimum we don't ask absolute silence. You can't. Stop being children who are in, you know, Uh, you haven't built up your self-control yet, but it's also important to listen along. And agree with your hearts.

It's one of the reasons we pray from the bible. And we prayed from the passages that we've just heard. So so that not only do you develop that skill, but you're able with what we call a goodwill, a good conscience. To because you're being led and praying, something that comes from what we just heard from god to.

You can agree in your heart and give yourself the god. And know him and treasure him and interact with him in the worship. But we want to know that we do that and we're very self-dis. We're very easily self-deceived, aren't we? I can convince myself. That i'm interacting with god and i'm just playing games in my head.

How can i know? Well, one of the ways i can know is that as he works in me, A delight in him. That isn't going to express itself only in the worship. Right worship is not a non-feeling thing. It is a not to be measured by feelings thing. Right, you understand those two things?

Because there are there are many in false worship who have really intense feelings. And we look at the bible and say, well that's not how God says to be worship, so that's idolatry. And they may actually feel good about jesus. Uh, but they're feelings are not necessarily worship feelings.

Whatever feelings are about Jesus, our independent of and by God's mercy, despite what they are doing in the assembly, not because of her through. What they are doing in the assembly. And then there can be intense emotions during right worship. That are not actually about God. That are about ourselves.

And one thing we can do is we can say with Peter Lord you know all things, you know that I love you. Which means? I do know that I love you. I don't know how much. And I don't know how much of what I think is love for you is genuine, but whatever is in me that is love for you.

It is from you and you are the expert on how much I love you. Right, that's what we can say to God and rejoice. That we actually do love him and be whatever. I know about how much I love him is not is not the actual amount because sometimes, you know.

We're this messed up. We can accuse ourselves falsely. And, um, you know, our hearts condemn us or don't condemn us in the scripture says, but God is greater than my heart. Well, the God who's greater than my heart has told me that if I love him and his image in the worship service, I am gonna love his image in all of the people in my life, too.

Because they are made in his image. And especially believers because they've been renewed in his image and united to Christ and bound to his covenant. And have the the external visible adoption. In addition, to those who genuinely believe the internal eternal, adoption. But I'm also going to love my neighbor.

Because, although he has fallen from the image of God in which we are originally created. The image of God remains in him to an extent, that God is so furious. With hatred of him that he counts at murder. So that's why the, the Zechariah 7 to one to three question.

Gives the gets the Zechariah 7 verses four to seven evaluation and then the Zechariah 7. Eight through 14, answer. And so, as you know, whatever extent you love God. If you don't care about the plight of people, and we have, you know, we live in the information age.

We are continually bombarded by opportunities to discern whether we care about the plight of people. It ought to be. It ought to be a significantly moving thing. And I'm not just talking about earthquakes and Uh, and collateral. What do they call it when civilians are killed? Collateral damage is the property.

Oh, anyway. You, yes, the people killed in war. But even sorry. I'll remember it like in the dead of night when I can't sleep. The next week, but but it gives me comfort that we couldn't come up with it together. Thank you for that. Um, but even when we hear about the greatest wickedness, you know, the the Perversion, alphabet soup stuff that is in the culture.

That is. Symptomatic of a people who do not know that God made them. And they are without God in the world and they are without hope in the world, and they are despising his glory, and they are under his wrath. And that's not just provoking his wrath. That's demonstrating that we live in a culture that is in an advanced state.

Of already being under his wrath. And as you know, with all of the hatred that we have for the wickedness, there is there also to be that this grief for them. And there ought to be. You know, the caring about the widow. And the fatherless. And the stranger. And the poor.

And don't get me wrong, we're not, you know. Um, Yeah, we're not for lawlessness. You care for the strangers. Estrangement from God. More than the stranger's strangeness to the US. Right? So you care about whatever has plight is in material things, but you also care about the

lawlessness. You know, if they are and it's not just illegal immigrants, who have it hard legal ones, have it hard to which are care about, then have a special care for that.

Right? If they are among them, the ones who are Um, Obeying god. Anyway, we we rabbit trailed a little bit, but The diagonal ministry of the church is very important. Because not only as worship to be a priority in the church, as As we heard last week in nehemiah 13, Uh, but what we do in in diagonal things, in addition to making sure we are materially taking care of things in a way that we can worship.

But what we do with our material things also, as a way of demonstrating that when we worship, we're actually Worshiping. It's an opportunity to see coming out of us. You know, jesus was not first and foremost, a social justice warrior. He was first and foremost, a worship warrior. He came for the for the sake of the glory of god and the church that was being redeemed unto that glory of god and he loved the church and gave himself for her for that reason.

But he also had unbounded compassion upon the masses both in their spiritual misery and in their physical misery, why? Because that compassion comes from the same place.

So yes, worship first. But How we love our neighbor. And how we love our neighbor, even in their worldly, plight And what we do with our resources. An expression of that, which Which drives the worship. Um,

I think we'll just Uh, read nehemiah 5 and Uh, the beginning of Or most of malachi 3. And we'll and we'll close the breath. That way we can. Move on to the lord jesus himself. Uh, praise god, lord willing next week.

Again, this is after the exile, this is after Um, This is after the restoration to the land. There was a great outcry of the people in their wives against their jewish president brethren. For there were those who said we are sons and our daughters are many, therefore, let us get grain that we may eat and live.

There were also some who said we have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses that we might buy grain because of the famine. There were also those who said we have borrowed money for the king's tax. On our lands and our vineyards. And yet, now, our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children.

Indeed, we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves and some of our daughters have been brought into slavery. It is not in our power to redeem them. For other young men have our lands and vineyards. And i became very angry when i heard their outcrying, these words, After serious thought.

I rebuked nobles and rulers and said to them. Each of you is exacting usury from his brother, abusive interest on loans. So, i called a great assembly against them. And i said to them, according to our ability, we have redeemed, our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nation's now.

Indeed, will you even sell your brethren or should they be sold to us? Then they were silenced and found nothing to say. Then i said, what you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our god? Because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies.

I also with my brethren and my servants, i'm lending them money and grain please, let us stop this usury. Restore now to them even this day, their lands, their vineyards, they're all of groves,

their houses also, a hundredth of the money in the grain, then you whine and the oil that you have charged them.

So they said we will restore it and we will require nothing from them. We'll do as you say, Then i called the priests and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. When i shook out the fold of my garment and said, so may god shake out each man from his house and from his property who does not perform this promise.

Even thus, may he be shaken out and emptied. And all the assembly said, amen. And praised your way. And then the people did according to this promise. Moreover, from the time that i was appointed to be their governor, in the land of judah, from the 20th year until the 32nd year of king yehoshafat, 12 years neither, i nor my brother is eight the governor's provisions.

The former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people took from the bread and whined, besides 40 shekels of silver. Yes. Even their servants, poor rule over the people. But i did not do so because Of the fear of god. Indeed, i also continued to work on this wall.

And we did not buy any land. All my servants were gathered there for the work at my table were 150, jews, and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. Now, that which was prepared daily was one. Oxen, six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me and once every 10 days and abundance of all kinds of wine, Yet, in spite of this, i did not demand the governor's, provisions.

Because the burden was heavy on this people. Remember me my god for good. According to all that i have done for this people. And as we turn to malachi 3, Remind you that he's not saying. I have earned from god, his favor. By all of this good, but that god who gives the fear of god also gives That love for brother and that love for neighbor.

That is the fruit of the fear of god. And he's asking god to act in accordance with the mercy that he's already sent to nehemiah to give him the fear of god and love for his neighbor. And it encourages us to be able to say, oh lord, All the good that i have done is already from you.

Now, will you not continue to remember me? And the good that you have sustained me in doing. The lord loves to respond to his son. Again. Um, You remember when we were connecting? Uh, to first Timothy 2 and the adornment. Of the ladies that the prayer meeting, And how they dress attractively to God instead of attractively to man.

And when god sees, then dressed in the character of his son, Uh, he loves his son, he responds to his son. That which we see very imperfectly and sinfully sinfully in isaac because it's awe, the smell of my son jacob's wearing he saw's robes. Yeah, Deceptively. Oh, god has given us to be clothed with christ.

And we come to him. And, He is pleased to give us everything good. Both for the sake of his love, but the love was also given in his son before the world began. And in response to the character of his son on us. The cloud rewards. Good works with great pleasure.

Not because we merit anything by those good works. But by his grace, That's a reward of grace. Don't let anyone rob you of the idea. That god responds to the good works of his saints. He does. So in mercy, And then malachi 3. Behold, i send my messenger and he will prepare the way before me and the lord whom you seek will, suddenly come to his temple.

Even the messenger of the covenant, in whom you delight. The hold he is coming. Says, y'all live hosts. But who can endure the day of his coming? And who can stand when he appears. For he is like a refiner's fire. And like launderer soap. He will sit as a refiner and a purifier of

silver, you know, purify the sons of Levi and purge them as gold and silver that they may offer to y'all play and offering and righteousness.

Then they then the offering of judah and jerusalem will be pleasant to Yahweh as in the days of old is in former years. And i will come near you for judgment. I will be a swift witness. Against source, first against adulterers. Against perverse. Against those who exploit wage earners.

And widows endorphins. And against those who turn away and alien. Because they, Do not fear me. Says, y'all have hosts. Frame y'all and i do not change. Therefore, you are not consumed. No sons of jacob. Yet from the days of your fathers, you have gone away from my ordinances and have not kept them return to me and i will return to you since you always But you said in what way shall we return?

Will a man rob god. Yet you have robbed me. But you say in what way have we robbed you? Entirets, and offerings. You are cursed with a curse for you have robbed me. Even this whole nation, bring all the ties into the storehouse. That there may be food in my house and try me now and this, Since y'all who have hosts.

If i will not open for you, the windows of heaven. And pour out for you. Such blessing. That there will not be room enough to receive it. And i will rebuke the devourer for your sakes so that he will not destroy the fruit of your ground nor shall the vine fail, to bear fruit for you in the field.

Says, y'all live hosts. And all nations will call you blessed. For you will be a delightful land. Says, yahweh. Of hosts. And so again, The fear of god expresses itself both in. Our desire that our resources. Uh, would be Given over to god for the facilitating of his worship.

And also, it's reflected in. Our being just and righteous in our healing with earthly things. And that was part of the repentance. That would be commanded by the one who came ahead of christ and part of the repentance that christ gave. When he came. Praise god. Let's pray. Our father in heaven.

We thank you. Um, we thank you for giving us earthly things to enjoy. We've even enjoyed some of it while we Begin to study this morning. We thank you that you have taught us. Of yourself as the creator of all good things. That we might enjoy you. And the good things that you have made.

And we pray now that as we come, especially to act upon you in the worship, That you would give us to enjoy you yourself from the heart by your grace. Oh, lord, that can't come from us. It comes only by your spirit. And so we pray for the help of your spirit.

Comes only in, and from, and through your son. And so, we pray that especially in his helping us Your spirit would stir up our faith. That we would worship you through jesus. And his name, even we ask it. Amen.