

## We Aspire To Be A Worshipping Church

In this series we aim to layout 10 aspects of Christ Central Church that we especially value and aspire to grow in. We seek to make Jesus famous in this city and beyond by the transforming power of His gospel, and our conviction is that each of these aspirations will help guide us toward that end.

### Introduction: You and I were created to worship God

*What is the chief and highest end of man? Answer: Man's chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever. (Greater Westminster Catechism)*

Why are you on the earth? What is the point of your existence? In short, you and I were created to be worshippers! To glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever! To spend your life attempting to find your purpose elsewhere is to miss out on being the very person God created you to be, you'll never know who you really are as a person until you know what it is to be a worshipper of God.

**Q.** How does knowing that you were created to glorify and enjoy God above all other things affect how you live each day?

**Read Psalm 63**

### I) The Worshipping Church Thirsts for God in the Wilderness (verse 1)

David is in the wilderness and he has an enemy hot on his heels eager to destroy him. He doesn't in this instance pray for rescue or question God's faithfulness in light of his circumstances, rather, as he surveys the barrenness of the wilderness around him he realises how his soul is just as dead if it weren't for the work of God in his life. He thirsts after God as one dying in the desert thirsts for water.

We thirst for Him because we need Him and because our city needs Him. We are not praying 'rescue us from this place', Christ prayed in John 17 **'I do not ask that you take them out of the world'**, because **'to live is Christ'**, we have a mission, as we together drink often from the 'spring of living water' so we must draw other parched souls to drink, to meet their creator, to enjoy Him with us!

**Q.** Why do you think it is that we can so easily be drawn to other places beside God to be refreshed?

**Q.** Why is worshipping God comparable to an oasis in a desert? What do you think it is that stops people thirsting after God?

### II) The Worshipping Church Seeks the Presence of God above all else (verse 2)

The 'Sanctuary' was a highly significant place for worship during the Old Covenant. When speaking to Moses on Mount Sinai, God instructed him to build a 'tent of meeting' which would under King Solomon become the temple, this was commanded in order that God **'may dwell in the midst of (His) people'**.

Wonderfully, in our New Covenant context, God has chosen His people to be the 'sanctuary' we as His church are the dwelling place (see Ephesians 2:22 and 2 Corinthians 6:16). Whenever we gather we come into His presence and are before His throne room.

When we worship together as a church it is not simply a warm up exercise for heaven when somehow worship will be even more genuine and meaningful, nor is it simply pretending and make belief, wishfully thinking that God is with us. **It is genuine worship in the presence of God himself.**

**Q.** How can we know that we are in the presence of God? Helpful answers to this question can be found in these verses: John 16:8 (conviction of sin), 2 Corinthians 3:17 (freedom) and Psalm 16:11 (joy).

### III) The Worshipping Church is satisfied by the love of God above all else (verses 3 and 5)

The greatest gift you and I receive as we worship together, as we break bread and sing together, is an assurance of the love of God towards us and there is no experience in life that can compare! There is nothing that God loves in us more than when we are delighting in Him.

**By this we know what love is; Jesus laid down His life for us – 1 John 3:16**

God loves you so much, that He was prepared to become a human, to be tortured and crucified, to take upon Himself your guilt, your hurt, your disappointment, your anger, your lust, your pride, your greed and pay for those things Himself, so that you can be free.

A church shaped by this kind of love is simply stunning! Exceedingly generous, unconditionally caring, self-denying; it is a God glorifying community. Where those who are broken are made whole, those who are despairing are given hope, where those who are dirty are made clean and those who are aimless are called to adventure. That's the church we aspire to be!

**Q.** That verse in 1 John says that Jesus sacrifice for us at the cross is the very definition of love – why?

**Q.** How would you expect a church shaped by this kind of love to look?

**Q.** In what ways can we love one another as Christ has loved us?

#### **IV) The Worshipping Church Triumphs over darkness by Praising God above all else**

Did you notice how David finished off the psalm? It's not exactly a smooth landing, he goes from using such poetic language in describing God and worshipping Him, to essentially saying; 'my enemies will be torn apart by wild dogs'.

You and I have an enemy, an adversary. The Devil is a real spiritual being whose only concern is to stop God from being worshipped. He will throw every tempting thing in your path to stop you from enjoying God. And there's nothing he hates more than when men and women thirst after God. There is no single group of people he hates more than a worshipping and praising church! As we worship together we advance the purposes of God in this city and take back ground the evil one has stolen.

**Q.** How does worshipping and praising God help us conquer the schemes of the evil one in our lives?

**Q.** Why do you think it is that God has created us to be a worshipping and praising people? And why do you think it will be through enjoying God that we will see great breakthrough in mission?