



**ENTER** God's presence

**Ascribe to the Lord, all you families of nations, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength. Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness.**

**– 1 Chronicles 16:28-29**

Lord God, you are worthy of all glory and praise. As we gather around your word today, may it stir our hearts to sing your praises and direct our lives to bring glory to your name. Amen.



**SHARE** life together

1. **Share your highs and lows with each other?**
2. **Share how you went with your living purposefully from last time?**
3. **What is your favourite part of Sunday morning worship?**

Five months ago, the world went into freefall in a major way. All the idols we had built, all the things we relied on, all our plans for the future were thrown into disarray when COVID-19 hit. Sport was cancelled. Financial markets crashed. Travel was curtailed. Social activities were halted. Freedoms were restricted and churches shut their doors. The world went into panic. But worship remained. Faith formed worship is a gift that God gives to press reset on our lives - to recalibrate, refocus, re-imagine and reset our perspective, our priorities and our purpose - and restore us to God's original intention for our lives. It centres, shapes and transforms our lives daily to rise above every confusing and challenging situation and live for that which has ultimate value - the praise and glory of God. As we move forward, able to physically gather together for worship, we press reset again as we experience and explore the blessings of faith formed worship.

Week beginning:  
**Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2020**

Worship series:

**Faith Formed**



**VERSE** for the week

Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!"

**1 Chronicles 16:31**



**REMEMBER** this week

Faith formed worship is a daily reset button for our thoughts, emotions, desires and actions.

It enables our minds to imagine creatively, our lives to inspire continuously, our love to flow extravagantly and our hearts to trust securely.



**LISTEN** attentively

Read John 12:1-11

4. What key words/thoughts/ideas/questions arise for you as you hear this text?
5. What do you hear this scripture saying to you right now?
6. What do Mary's actions say about her heart?

This week we are talking about 'faith formed worship'. In this particular passage of Scripture we see two different approaches to worship. But before we get to that, we need to understand what worship actually is. There is nothing in this reading that looks like what we do on Sunday and there certainly does not appear to be any singing. So what is worship really? At a fundamental level, worship is an expression of reverence or adoration for someone, or something, of great worth. So to worship Jesus means to acknowledge his 'worth' or worthiness. This is certainly part of what we do in church on Sundays but it is far from the whole story. In our Sunday services, our 'worship' is always a response to what God does for us. God reveals himself and makes himself available to us through his word, and we praise him as a result of understanding some of who he is. He offers us freedom and forgiveness of sins through confession and absolution, and so we give him thanks and praise for that. He comes to us again in Holy Communion, and brings with him the assurance of forgiveness and strength for our continued journey with him. This too, elicits a response of praise and worship. In this encounter there are three different people or groups of people who all respond to Jesus and what he has done (specifically, raising Lazarus) in different ways. Firstly, Mary appears overcome with emotion and extravagantly expresses her love and thanks toward Jesus by anointing him with this expensive perfume (probably worth almost a year's wages for a labourer). Secondly there is Judas, who appears in this text to see Jesus as a meal ticket. He is upset to see something so valuable 'wasted' on Jesus. It would have been better for him to have the money in the common purse where he could have helped himself as well as helping the poor. His reason for hanging out with Jesus seems to have been to get something out of it for himself.

7. Which of these two resonates most with your experiences of 'worship'?



**GROW** deeper

Take a look at Romans 12:1-2

Often we can get caught up in what we get out of worship. We can be like Judas and only worship God because we want to get something out of it. Maybe we want people to think better of us when they see us worshipping. Maybe we use worship as a coercive tool to leverage God when we want something from him. But going to church or singing some praise and worship songs are not the whole picture.

Paul writes in Romans 12 that we are to offer our lives as living sacrifices, that to offer yourself to God is a true act of spiritual worship.

8. How do you understand the idea of offering yourself as a living sacrifice?
9. In the Bible, worship has always included an element of sacrifice. From Cain and Abel offering their sacrifices to the Lord, to the sacrifices offered in the tabernacle and then later, in the temple, to the sacrifice of this expensive perfume and ultimately to the sacrifice of Jesus himself. How do you feel about Paul's statement that true worship occurs when we live as sacrifices?

Presumably, Mary offered Jesus the most precious thing she had access to by anointing him with this perfume. He did not demand it from her, she offered it, perhaps even sacrificed it, freely. The most important or valuable thing most of us have is our lives. The gifts or sacrifices that we bring communicate the value that we place on Jesus. What does a life focussed on self promotion and self gratification communicate. It communicates a greater value on self, than on the life giving sacrifice of Jesus Christ. However, a life lived in self-sacrifice, and selfless service to God and others, communicates that our lives only have worth because of the new life we have in Jesus. Everything we do in our studies, or our employment; everything we do in our roles as children or parents or grandparents, friends, students,

employees or employers, can be an act of faith formed worship when we do it to the praise and Glory of Jesus. We don't need to be at church, we don't need to be able to sing or play an instrument to be able to worship.

## 10. In what kinds of situations do you find it easier to worship God?



### LIVE purposefully

Unfortunately we have a tendency to make worship about us. Sometimes we don't feel like worshipping or we just can't get excited about it. Hopefully, as we have come to understand through this LifeGroup guide, Worship is not about how we feel. It is about honouring God for who he is and all that he has done for us and that doesn't change. God is always worthy of our praise and adoration even if we don't feel like giving it to him. Worship is not a feeling, it is an action. Sometimes we need to choose to worship despite the way we feel. In fact, it is in this kind of situation where God uses our worship to reorient our thinking and to 'press the reset button' in our lives. When we worship, the focus of our worship becomes our grounding center. If we don't feel like worshipping God it is probably because we have pushed him to the edges of our lives. Worship places him back in the center and allows him to recalibrate and focus us on Him and his love rather than those things which have distracted us and absorbed our attention and focus.

11. **The things that we do in a Sunday church service are meant to lead us into worship. What things from church could you bring into your daily routine to help you worship God with all of your life, not just your Sundays?**
12. **We cannot worship someone or something that we do not really know. God reveals himself to us through his word. Maybe you are still doing well with your Bible reading after our faith formed listening study a few weeks ago. If not, recommit to reading God's word regularly. As you discover more of who God is in his Word, you will be led and inspired to praise him even more!**
13. **End each day this week by keeping a 'praise list'. Simply spend a little time each night to make a list of at least three things to praise God for which he has done for you during the day.**



### PRAY intentionally

- Praise God for all the ways he provides for you.
- Ask the Holy Spirit to help you live as a living sacrifice, bringing honour and glory to God in all that you do.
- Pray for those who are finding it difficult to praise God in the midst of Coronavirus. May the joy of life with Jesus find its way back to the center of their lives.



### BLESS one another

You might like to address one person in your group and make the sign of the cross in the air as you say...

**[Name], may your life declare that God reigns. Amen**