

Exod 05-02-06a

Let's continue our worship this morning by taking a moment to specifically address ourselves to the Word of God. It's always a challenge to lay aside the pressing issues that are in our minds and the necessity for concentration and for susceptibility to the ministry of the Holy Spirit is encouraged in our thinking and in our souls by prayer as we approach God's throne in the light of Hebrews chapter 10, knowing that we need to sprinkle our bodies, we need to wash ourselves and to acknowledge any sins, known or unknown. We want to be impressionable.

We want to be teachable. We want to have the ability to learn and to grow and to be trained up in the way that we should go so that in the function of God's plan, in the future of God's plan, we will be of service. We will be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

So our time of prayer is much more than a formality. It's an opportunity to place ourselves directly in the path of God's grace and to receive the ministry of God's Spirit so that our time in the Word will be profitable not only to us but to those with whom we will come in contact because God blesses others through us. The Word that we learn is not just a benefit and a resource for us.

It can be and should be a benefit and a blessing to others. So let's take a moment as we approach the Word of God to go before Him in prayer. Father, what a privilege it is to set aside the cares of the day and of our ongoing existence here on earth to spend time in nourishing and comforting and encouraging our souls in the study of Your Word.

We thank You for the presence of the Holy Spirit, for His ministry to us, in reminding us of what we have learned, in enabling us to learn new things, in seeing the application, in appreciating the Lord Jesus Christ, in enabling our prayer life, in leading us into all truth, in the comfort and encouragement, the witness that He bears in our spirit that we are Your children, the seal that He represents upon us until the day of redemption. We thank You for all of those gifts and we are motivated and we have the desire that they not be given to us in vain. We ask Your blessing on us as we study Your Word.

We pray that God the Holy Spirit will find our hearts susceptible and teachable and that the truths that each one of us need to find and need to know for our particular circumstances will be found in the treasury of Your Word, in the treasury of our hearts, so that we walk in the path that You have designed for us and called us to in eternity past. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Our scripture reading this morning is from the 99th Psalm, Psalm 99. We have been looking in the study of Exodus, which we continue this morning, the 6th of February 2005. Our study in the book of Exodus is going to resume specifically in chapter 28 this morning.

But Psalm 99 is our scripture reading. And remembering that we are looking at the Holy of Holies, or the Most Holy Place, the single piece of furniture or the two pieces of furniture,

depending on how you look at it, being the Ark of the Covenant and the Mercy Seat, this Psalm and its pertinence will become evident. This is subtitled in the New King James, Praise to the Lord for His Holiness.

The Lord reigns. Let the people tremble. He dwells between the cherubim.

Let the earth be moved. The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above all the peoples. Let them praise Your great and awesome Name.

He is holy. The King's strength also loves justice. You have established equity.

You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His footstool. He is holy.

Moses and Aaron were among His priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon His Name. They called upon the Lord, and He answered them. He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar.

They kept His testimonies and the ordinance He gave them. You answered them, O Lord our God. You were to them God who forgives, though you took vengeance on their deeds.

Exalt the Lord our God, and worship at His holy hill. For the Lord our God is holy. The study of the Psalms is fascinating because there are many different aspects.

There are many different kinds of Psalms. They serve different purposes. You can look through our hymnal, which is what the book of Psalms was for Israel.

You can see that we have a section of patriotic hymns to sing on the 4th of July or thereabouts. We have Christmas songs to sing at the appropriate season. We have songs we sing most often at Easter.

Different sections, different hymns are pertinent for different things. In the same way, there are categories of Psalms that were used on special occasions or used in different ways. This particular Psalm addresses itself to worship on God's holy hill.

That's where it ends up in verse 9. It is an exhortation to worship at His holy hill. What is His holy hill? What is God's holy hill? It's Mount Zion, right? So it tells us that this Psalm is written after the time that worship has been moved to Zion. It's not from the time of Shiloh.

It's not from the time of wandering. It's not one of the songs of Moses, for example. It wasn't written by David during his time of wandering when Saul was king.

This Psalm is later. There is established worship in Zion on God's holy hill above Jerusalem. So it is at or after the time of David, at or after the time of Solomon, when worship has been localized in that place.

The Lord reigns, let the people tremble. If we were writing a Psalm of comfort, for example, or encouragement in distress, we would say the Lord reigns, let the people relax. The Lord reigns, let the people take a load off.

Let the people be refreshed. Let the people find hope and encouragement. That's not what this says.

Why? Context. This is not a Psalm of individual lament. This is not a Psalm of national appeal.

This is not a Psalm of distress. This is a Psalm of call to worship. And when you think about approaching God, and you're not running in there because you're in dire straits, what should our attitude be? The Lord reigns.

Let the peoples tremble. The nations ought to acknowledge God. Now they don't, but they ought to.

The peoples ought to tremble. Those who don't tremble will tremble one day, won't they? It is an appeal to the way things ought to be. The peoples here, talking about surrounding nations, they ought to be like Rahab in Jericho.

I've heard of your God, and I don't want to be here when our city is destroyed, so let me make a covenant with you. I hide your spies, you protect my family, because looking at your God, I tremble. I respect His presence.

What does it say about the demons and their belief in God? He says, you believe in God, you do well. The demons believe and do what? Tremble. It doesn't mean they are the faithful few.

It doesn't mean they are God's servants, and that they are part of the unfallen corpus of heavenly beings. They're Satan's minions. They're his... Fact.

What's the plural of factotum? I can't think of it. They're his hench persons. They're his agents, right? But the demons believe and tremble.

Let the peoples tremble. This is not a call to faith. It is a call to respect.

He dwells between the cherubim. What does this connote? We've seen it in Ezekiel. We've seen it in the design of the mercy seat.

We've seen it in the teachings of the Word of God related to the cherubim. What are they? They are guardians of the holiness of God. They create a living wall of separation between the presence of God and anything else.

If you want to come to God, you better find a way through the cherubim because they are there with their whorling sword, with their hot coals of fire to make a body guard, an honor guard for the holiness of God. That's why they are represented as looking in every direction. That's why they are represented as having fire at their disposal.

They guard the holiness of God. So when it says He dwells between the cherubim, let the earth be moved. What is the idea here? If you have the irresistible force of God's holiness and you have the immovable object of the earth, what's going to give? I can tell you that it's the immovable object.

The earth will be moved before the holiness of God is changed. Nothing will violate God's holiness. It will never change.

It will never diminish. And oddly enough, when we're going along doing our human being operations from day to day, we don't often find ourselves musing on the holiness of God, do we? It doesn't really generally form a part of our operational, here's my practical doctrine for the day. I can say, you know, touch not the unclean thing.

There's something I can practice. The man who can curb his tongue has brought his whole body under subjection. I see the application of that in my daily life.

I can't always do it, but I see the application of it. But to say God dwells between the cherubim, let the earth be moved, this isn't in my quiver of arrows. This isn't in my panoply of weapons that I draw on a regular basis to get through my day.

But it ought to be. It ought to be. That's why it's at the front of this psalm.

Because everything bows before God's holiness. Every knee will bow. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Why is it to His glory? Because the Lord Jesus is an expression of His holiness. His work on the cross is the single biggest demonstration of anything in the universe. And what does it demonstrate? God's holiness has to be satisfied or you're bound for destruction.

Even as believers, God's holiness has to be satisfied. We have to purify ourselves as we're going to see this morning in the operation of the Levitical priests. Their daily example teaches that God requires holiness.

Why do we have this big basin of water smack in the middle of things in the tabernacle courtyard? It's huge. It's got two containers full of water. Why? Anybody that walks in there says, these priests have got to wash.

Being a priest doesn't get you an inn. You have to be a clean priest. Being a Levite doesn't enable you to serve.

You have to be an unblemished Levite. You have to be a sanctified Levite. You have to meet God's qualification.

Your birth into the tribe of Levi does not qualify you to function as a priest. Your designation as a priest does not qualify you to approach God unless you are clean. God is holy.

Before we do anything, we have an issue. We're going to run in there and wave in God's face and say, Lord, Lord, help me, save me, fix this, do something, help so and so. What does Hebrews say? We can approach boldly the throne of grace, but how do we do it? We are sprinkled.

We are washed. Why? He dwells between the cherubim. Let the earth be moved.

Bob Thieme had a way of expressing this. He called it adjustment to the justice of God. God does not adjust to us.

We adjust to God. God does not change His standards to accommodate us. By faith, we allow Him to change us to meet His standards.

That's what's involved here. The Lord is great in Zion. Where is Zion? It doesn't say the Lord is great in Damascus.

It doesn't say the Lord is great in Cairo. He is, but that's not what it says here. The Lord is great in Zion.

Why? Because this is a song about worship. This is a song about acknowledging the holiness of God. God is great in Syria, but the Syrians don't know it.

God is great in Babylon, but the Babylonians don't acknowledge it. But in Zion, that's the place where God's holiness ought to be recognized. We, as the body and bride of Christ, ought to be in the forefront of recognizing the holiness of God, particularly as it is expressed in the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord is great in Zion, and He is high above all the peoples. But Zion is the place of recognition. Zion is the place of expression.

Zion is the place where His symbolic presence is manifest. Let them praise your great and awesome name. He is holy.

What's the problem in this little verse, from an English major point of view? The person changes right in midstream, doesn't it? Let them praise your great and holy name. Somebody is talking to God, and now somebody says, He is holy. Who is He? We're talking about the same God, so what has happened here? This is sort of a give and take.

This is like responsive reading. This is a two-part choir, if you will. One part of the choir sings, Let them praise your great and awesome name.

And then you've got them over there, and they say, He is holy. You could go back and study music and the structure of a lot of the Psalms in particular and find that there is a give and take. This is the understanding of the Song of Solomon, by the way, is that there is more than one speaker in view.

It's sort of like a play in ancient Greece where you would have the chorus over there, and a character would come out and soliloquize for a while, and then you have the chorus commenting on what has been said. There is more than one speaker in view. Obviously, that's signaled here by the change in person.

Something to take note of. Let them praise your great and awesome name. And then somebody pipes up and says, Holy is He.

Why do that? Well, by calling for praise and then giving praise, we say, we are the people who do this. We are the people of Zion. We are the people who do recognize His holiness.

It would be a very tragic thing to call for this praise or to give forth this praise in the song, but not do it in actual life. Same thing as I'm a Bible-thumping Christian, but there are areas of my life where I don't really live that way. I sing a good song, but I don't walk the walk.

Let them praise your great and awesome name. He is holy. You get this response.

The King's strength also loves justice. This is the big issue in our international politics right now, isn't it? If you heard the President's State of the Union address, thanks to the wonders of technology, I heard it sort of on time delay. I finally found a copy.

Patty said I should tell no one this, but we missed it because it was her birthday. We were having her birthday dinner, so we missed it live. And so a day or two ago, I guess it was yesterday morning, we thought, well, we need to hear it.

I've heard it was a great speech. Friday night Bible class, everybody said great speech. I'd hear it.

So I hunted around the web and found the President's State of the Union address and played the web media, listened to it. The thing was an hour long, and it was a great speech. And, I mean, he really socked it.

It was relevant. It was pertinent. It addressed current issues of the day and everything else.

And I thought, man, that's great. But I had heard that there was a thing, you know, a hug between a rocky lady and a fallen Marine's mother, and I never saw that in the speech. Well, I got to looking around, and I heard the one from last year, the one on WhiteHouse.gov. They haven't posted the new one.

I went to WhiteHouse.gov, President's State of the Union. It was great, but it was last year's. So I kept saying, hug? What hug? Did they edit it out? Was the criticism too severe? They thought, well, you know, it's grandstanding.

We'll just edit that part out. So anyway, come to find out, we had to go back and find a whole other speech and watch that one, which was the 2005 version. But I will tell you this.

It was a blessing in disguise because watching the one from 2004 and the one from 2005, if you've got two hours to spare, I recommend it because listening to what the President said a year ago and what has happened in the intervening 12 months and what he continues to say today, it is a consistent message. It has proved out. And you can also see the growth in the President because if you think he was forceful and confident in 2004, compare 2004 to 2005.

I mean, what a blessing to have a President of that caliber. Anyway, it was a fascinating experience. But it says here, the King's strength also loves justice.

Our international situation, which the President addressed in that speech, what is one of his main arguments? The tyrant and the oppressor has got to go. What is the definition of a tyrant and an oppressor? It is someone who has strength without justice. The beauty of a free form of government.

You know, this is the thing that kills me. There are people that are arguing and saying, well, you know, we're as bad as the communists. Now the communists are trying to spread communism.

Now we're just trying to go around and spread democracy everywhere. What's the difference? I mean, what a specious argument. What a shallow view of the world.

Oh, you're just like a communist. Come on. What is the intent of communism and socialism and tyranny in general? What is its goal? I sacrifice justice on the altar of benefiting the strong, the few.

This is my goal. I am Saddam Hussein. My faction of the Muslim world is a minority.

But I will grab the strength and I will foist my wishes and my whims and my insanity on everybody that I am superior to in strength. This is the goal of communism. This is the goal of fascism.

This is the goal of socialism. This is the form of every decadent form of government that's ever existed on the planet. It is a fallacious argument to say, well, spreading democracy is no different than spreading communism.

There's a huge difference and it's right here in this verse. This king's strength also loves justice. This form of government loves justice.

This form of government loves to deliver from oppression, not deliver oppression. We don't go around the world delivering oppression. Democracy delivers from oppression.

It's got its problems. It's an imperfect form of government. But we haven't seemed to arrive at a better one, and we won't until we have a benevolent dictatorship under the Lord Jesus Christ.

By the way, the perfect millennial government is not a democracy. Sorry to disappoint anybody who thinks it's going to be the future of peace and righteousness. Peace and righteousness will reign under a dictatorship.

He will rule them with a rod of iron. He will dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel. What's the difference in the Lord Jesus Christ in the millennium and Saddam Hussein in Iraq? The king's strength also loves justice.

It is not enough to be strong. You have to be strong and fair. You can't just wield authority.

It needs to be fair authority. You have established equity. You have executed justice and righteousness in Jacob.

God is qualified for this praise. The Lord Jesus Christ is going to be qualified as the millennial king sitting on the throne of his father David. Why? You want to talk about justice and equity? He invented them.

He is the embodiment of them. He is the one that has a demonstrated track record. In the election, they're always saying, Look at my record.

Look at my track record. Or look at the other guy's track record. What has he done? Let's look at the record.

Let's dig up old records. Let's manufacture old records if necessary. Whatever we have to do.

But let's look at what someone has done. What has this king done? He has executed justice and righteousness in Jacob. He has dispensed mercy for thousands of those who love him.

He has poured out wrath to the third and fourth generation of them that hate him. So, once again in verse 5, a call. Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his footstool.

And then you have the choral response. He is holy. Now we have a very interesting... Did you notice this when I read it the first time? This is what I find to be one of the more interesting parts of this song.

Moses and Aaron were among his priests. How often do we think of Moses as a priest? We think of him as the great prophet. Aaron is the priest, right? Well, the book says Moses was a priest.

Moses and Aaron were among his priests. And Samuel was among those who called upon his name. This is a high accolade for Samuel to be... You basically have Moses and Samuel.

Why is this occurring here? Why that particular choice? Why not Daniel or Jeremiah or somebody else? The law and the prophets. Moses is viewed as... He is most closely associated with the law. Samuel is considered to be the first prophet in Israel.

So, what is the reason for including them here? Moses and Aaron were among his priests. Samuel was among those who called upon his name. You have in Moses and Aaron leadership authority in Moses, priestly authority in Aaron and Moses, and prophetic authority in Samuel.

You have leadership in Moses, ministry in Aaron, prophecy in Samuel, but all three of them are

priests. Samuel is a priest. Aaron is a priest.

Moses is a priest. It's interesting that when we look at the Lord Jesus Christ and we recognize his three-fold identity as prophet, priest, and king, his priesthood is the mantle wrapped around all of those, just as it is with these three individuals here. Why? Because without priesthood, prophecy is useless.

You can send the prophets to the people and say, repent and worship, but if you've got no priesthood, you have no avenue of approach. You're calling... This is the whole problem with Calvinism, by the way. You're calling people, but denying them the way to come.

Sorry, I didn't decree your efficacious grace and eternity past. Come and be saved. You're going to hell if you don't get saved, but I've got no priesthood available for you.

The Lord Jesus had limited atonement, so his priestly function doesn't apply to you. There's no priesthood that can save you. Come to me.

Acknowledge righteousness, acknowledge my son, but there's no priesthood available for you. You see the problem? Priesthood surrounds all of these functions. Prophecy is useless.

The call to repentance, whether for initial salvation or change of mind for believers, is useless without priesthood. You and I can try to change our minds all we want. We can try to do better in God's plan as believers, but if there is not the function of priesthood in our souls, it's never going to happen.

You can't do it without priesthood. You cannot live a better life. You cannot be more obedient.

You cannot be more faithful. You cannot be in the center of God's will. You cannot be accomplishing his plan and his purpose without first accomplishing the necessary functions of priesthood.

That's why we have to approach washed with pure water, sprinkled from an evil conscience. Priesthood is the necessary precursor. It is the foundation.

It surrounds it. It envelops it. So Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, whether it's Moses leading the people for 40 years toward the promised land, whether it is Aaron functioning in the formal visible vestments of ministry, whether it is Samuel as the first great prophet in Israel, they're all priests.

Moses and Aaron were among his priests, and Samuel was among those who called upon his name. They called upon the Lord, and he answered them. He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar.

Now, what are you going to do with that? I can give you scripture for God speaking to Moses out of the cloudy pillar. I can give you scripture for God speaking to Moses and Aaron out of the cloudy pillar. Find me a scripture where it says God spoke to Samuel out of the cloudy pillar.

Psalm 99.7. That's where scripture says God spoke to Samuel out of the cloudy pillar. He spoke to them. It doesn't say he spoke to two out of three.

How are we supposed to take this? Do we include Samuel in this august group? Well, how about the rest of the verse? They kept his testimonies and the ordinance he gave them. Is this true of Samuel? We haven't narrowed down to talking about a subset of the group. There's no reason, there's no evidence you can give for narrowing the group.

He spoke to them in the cloudy pillar. I would offer you the thought that when Eli and Samuel went to sleep on that first night, and Samuel's name is called, that's what this verse is referring to. Did Eli see a cloudy pillar? Is there any mention of a cloudy pillar? No.

But is the principle the same? Are we trying to split hairs here? Are we trying to give a technical, scientific description of what happened? God spoke to them in the cloudy pillar. You want to split hairs and say, well, I don't see a cloudy pillar in 1 Samuel. Well, take it up with God.

What is the thrust? What's the point? The point is, these men who were priests, whatever their primary function, prophecy, priesthood, or kingly type leadership, civil leadership, were spoken to directly by God. From the cloudy pillar implies at first hand. God didn't speak to Jobob the Huldite back in the 12th rank of the Israelite camp.

He spoke to Moses, or he spoke to Aaron, or he spoke to Samuel, who then came and conveyed that word. So, they kept his testimonies and the ordinance he gave them. Notice that ordinance is singular here.

They kept his testimonies and the statute he gave them. What is this single statute? Ordinances, we can say, okay, that's all kinds of little applicable rules, but the statute or the ordinance he gave them. Well, if it's one statute, it has to be the same that was given to Moses, Aaron, and Samuel, right? Can you think of something that is common that God spoke to all three of those? What would be the essential statute? Did God tell Moses, say to this people? Did God give instructions to Aaron that communicated to the people? Did God say to Samuel, go to Eli and say? Go to this people and say? Go to King Saul and say? What is the statute? What you hear, that you will speak.

I was proud of Mrs. Criswell this morning in her Bible class because her church has begun the Saddleback Church program called 40 Days of Purpose. And under that program, every Sunday school class is supposed to follow their little quarterly. It's a 40-day program.

Every class studies the same thing. Little kids, intermediate kids, big kids, young adults, middle adults, old adults. Everybody is supposed to all be singing out of the same hymnal, all on the same sheet of music for these 40 days.

They're on day 7 right now. It started last week. So Mrs. Criswell got on, because she's been teaching through the Book of Jonah, and she said, I know, before I begin, I want to say something.

I know that the rest of the church is going with Rick Warren's 200 Days of Promise, or 300 Days of Promise. And she said, what is it? Somebody said, it's 40. She said, okay, 40 Days of Promise.

She never did get it right. Whatever the heck it is, 40 Days of Promise, 300 Days of Purpose, whatever the heck. She said, you know, Rick's a sweet boy.

We knew him from way back. She's 90-something years old. She knows everybody.

But she said, we're not doing that here, because the purpose of this is a Bible class. We're on the radio, and we advertise ourselves as a Bible class, and that's why I'm here. That's the only thing I know how to do, she said, is teach the Bible.

So do whatever you want to with the 40 Days of Promise, but we're going to study the Bible, and we're in the Book of Jonah. And she just went right on. And I thought, amen, Mrs. Griswold.

Knock them out. That's the purpose. You look in the book.

You find what's in the book. You communicate the book. You don't write a book and give it to everybody and say, follow my book.

There's some words about that at the end of Revelation. Go to the Bible. What other book do you need? You know, it's kind of like the song, Nothing But the Blood of Jesus.

No other fount I know. This is the fount of our information. I will look here and do my best to tell you what I see.

That's the statute, in my view. That's the single common denominator between Moses, Aaron, and Samuel. Lots of ordinances, one statute.

What is the purpose of the ordinances? To communicate God's will. What is the imperative for Moses and Aaron and for all of us? Reflect, communicate, live out the truth of God's word. They kept his testimonies.

They kept the statute he gave them. You answered them, O Lord our God. We hope to get answers from God when we pray, don't we? We've got issues.

We've got needs. We've got some pretty pressing circumstances at hand in one area or another. And we would hope to go to God and get an answer, right? Well, he's not saying, look at the prayer of Jabez, is he? Follow the prayer of Jabez.

That's where you get your answer. Enlarge my territory, this, that, and the other. There's no prayer of Jabez here.

He says, here's the men you answered, O Lord our God. You were to them God who forgives. You answered them.

You forgave them. Why? Because they knew how to approach. They were obedient and they

were faithful.

The same thing is true for us. We need to know how to approach. We need to be obedient.

We need to be faithful. We need to keep the testimonies and keep the statute. Hew to the line.

Lay a straight course of bricks in the word of truth. Be diligent to show yourself approved unto God. A workman who does not need to be ashamed.

Now, did they establish an unblemished track record of obedience? Moses messed up badly enough to be denied entrance into the land. Aaron gets the golden calf thing underway. Samuel raised horrible sons.

And the people in Israel said, we do not want your sons being prophetic leaders over us. All of these men made mistakes. Yet God was to them God who forgives.

Though you took vengeance on their deeds. Moses messed up and his deed cost him. Aaron messed up and his deeds cost him.

Aaron experienced one of the worst things any parent can see, which is the death of your son right before your eyes. And this happened to Aaron more than once. Samuel grieved for Saul all the days of his life.

Samuel was deeply disappointed in his own sons. Because he had seen the sons of Eli. And yet he was unable to avoid reproducing that same syndrome.

And God held him to account. You took vengeance on their deeds. But he does not take vengeance on them.

Moses is one of the most honored men in the Bible. Aaron is one of the most honored men in the Bible. God gave Aaron to Moses and said, he will be your mouth.

He will do the speaking so that you can keep this statute I'm giving you. Samuel is one of the most honored men in the Bible. But God took vengeance on their deeds.

So what's the conclusion in verse 9? Exalt the Lord our God and worship at his holy hill. And you get the idea that the chorus chimes in. For the Lord our God is holy.

The foundation, the understanding that ought to condition everything that we do, especially related to our spiritual life, is the holiness of God. That's why a big part of our spiritual life is referred to in terms of priesthood. If you don't have a holy God, you don't need a priesthood.

If you don't have a holy God, you don't necessarily need atonement. He's flexible. I can put up with a few mistakes here and there.

You got a little bit of impurity, a little bit of uncleanness, you got a little low-level sin problem going there. Eh, no big deal. It's not that kind of God.

You could imagine some other universe with some other God where that might be the case. But the God of our universe, the God of reality, is a God of holiness. And so it's critically important that we know how to do things right.

That's what priesthood is. Approaching in the right way, approaching in the right condition, keeping the ordinances, keeping the statute. The ordinances are not just an end in themselves.

They have a goal. They have a purpose. Exalt the Lord our God.

Worship at His holy hill. For the Lord our God is holy. There's one right place to worship.

That's God's holy hill. There's one right way to worship. And that's in the functions of priesthood.

In the old days, it was Zion and the Levitical priesthood. In this day, it's in our hearts. It's the temple of God in our midst.

And it is the Melchizedekian priesthood, of which the Lord Jesus Christ is high priest, which we have just now hit in our study of Hebrews, coming up here in chapter 6. So, all of this ties, all of this is an outgrowth of our study of the Holy of Holies, the ark with the mercy seat, with all of one piece, these two cherubim with their wings touching and God dwelling in the midst of the cherubim. When you pass the outer gate, you pass the altar, you pass the laver, you pass the middle gate of the holy place, you pass the lampstand, you pass the table of showbread, you pass the golden altar of incense, you pass the veil, and you enter into the very presence of God, what is the issue? God dwells between the cherubim. God is holy.

And a healthy appreciation for that fact will prevent us from being irreverent, flip, jocular, casual, as you see so much of modern Christianity and modern Christian worship being. What has been lost in modern worship? True appreciation for the holiness of God. That's what's at the center of the entire complex.

That's what's at the center of the Lord Jesus Christ and his priestly ministry and his atonement, is the holiness of God. Everything that is at the center of God's universe, is absolute justice and righteousness. Justice plus righteousness equals holiness.

Well, that's Psalm 99. We'll pause here and take our break. When we come back, we're going to pick up in Exodus 28 and see how these Levitical priests did their job.