

The First Commandment

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Preacher: Stephen Murray

[0 : 00] Exodus chapter 20 and verses 1 to 21. Verse 1 of chapter 20.

God spoke all these words. I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery. You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth, beneath or in the waters below.

You shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name. Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God.

On it you shall not do any work, neither you nor your son or daughter, nor your male or female servant, nor your animals, nor any foreigner residing in your towns. For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but he rested on the seventh day.

[1 : 18] Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Honor your father and your mother so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you. You shall not murder, you shall not commit adultery, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.

You shall not covet your neighbor's house, you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or his male or female servant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. When the people saw the thunder and lightning and heard the trumpet and saw the mountain in smoke, they trembled with fear.

They stayed at a distance and said to Moses, speak to us yourself and we will listen, but do not have God speak to us or we will die. Moses said to the people, do not be afraid.

God has come to test you so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning. People remained at a distance while Moses approached the thick darkness where God was.

This is the word of the Lord. Let's ask for God's help as we study this together. Father, this is your word, this is your truth, and we need your truth in our lives. We need to be fed.

[2 : 31] We need to understand it, not just with our heads, but with our hearts, and so we need the work of your spirit. And so I want your spirit to be present with us this morning, taking the truths of the Bible and putting them deeply in our hearts.

Won't you show us Jesus? He himself says that this Bible is about him. And so every time we open this Bible, we ought to see him. And so show him us this morning, we pray.

Help us now, we ask for Christ's sake. Amen. So we continue again in our series of the Ten Commandments, walking through. We're now finally, and many of you are very, very excited about this, we're finally actually in the commandments proper.

So commandment number one today, the first commandment. Now, if you were part of Hope City before the merger, where we became the Union Chapel, so in other words, if you've been in the church for a long time, at least the church that I was in before this for a long time, then you know that there's a bit of a running joke in the church about my reliance, or in the view of some of you, my over-reliance on the teaching and the theology of Timothy Keller.

If you have no idea who Tim Keller is, then let me fill you in just for a second. Keller is a New York Times best-selling author, Christian author. For many years, he was the pastor of Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City, which he and his wife, Kathy, planted in 1989.

[3 : 57] Now, today he's retired, sadly struggling with what looks like terminal cancer at the moment, but he still has almost 493,000 followers on Twitter.

Now, to put that into context, the Archbishop of Canterbury, Justin Welby, and that is the head of the global Anglican Church, he only has 175,000 followers on Twitter. I don't know if that means that Presbyterians just like social media more than Anglicans, but take it for what it is.

Now, around the year 2000, I actually became aware of his ministry. I started listening to his sermons, started reading his articles. Back then, it was all like kind of dial-up internet, so you had to spend the entire night to download one sermon.

His vision for reaching secular urban cities through church planting, through the robust preaching of the gospel that both engages skeptics, but also preaches to the hearts of believers, that really, really captivated me, that vision.

It's like, I want to do this. I want to be involved in this. And in 2009, Robert and I, by God's providence, spent seven weeks at Redeemer in New York with 12 other couples doing an intensive in urban church planting, where Keller led a lot of the sessions with us and taught us on a whole lot of different subjects.

[5 : 12] In fact, because of that particular historic connection with Redeemer, people have often, over the years, come to our services, and they've met me, and they've said, is this the Tim Keller church? I'm like, well, I don't know what a Tim Keller church is, but I'm sure, come inside.

All of this to say, he has probably been more influential on me than any other living pastor or theologian. And this has not gone unnoticed on our congregation, hence the running jokes.

Now, why this introduction to Tim Keller? Well, because today I'm going to speak about a subject that Keller has profoundly influenced me on, probably more than anything else that he's influenced me on is this, and that is the subject of idolatry.

And so I'm going to reference him quite a bit in this sermon. And since I'm going to speak about idolatry, I want to put to bed the humorous notion that I have an idolatrous relationship with Tim Keller and his theology.

So here are some cold, hard facts for all the haters out there. I went through my entire sermon archive, all the sermons I've preached at Hope City first, and then now in the Union Chapel over a nine-and-a-half-year period.

[6 : 19] There are about 413 sermons on that file. Here are the top 10 theologians or pastors that I have quoted or referenced the most based on the number of times that they appear in my sermons.

So counting down from number 10. In 10th place, we have a tie between the New Testament scholar Don Carson and Martin Luther King Jr., the civil rights leader and pastor. 2.7% of my sermons have a reference to them.

In 9th place, and some of you are going to be a little bit disappointed by this, and I'm working on this, being a good Reformed Presbyterian. In 9th place is John Calvin, the father of Reformed theology. 2.9% of my sermons reference him.

8th place, someone who influenced me a lot early on in ministry, John Stott, the Anglican preacher. 3.6% of my sermons reference him. 7th place, his contemporary, Martin Lloyd-Jones, the Welsh preacher.

Also in London, 3.9% of my sermons reference him. 6th place, another contemporary of theirs, J.I. Packer, Anglican theologian. 5.1% of my sermons reference him.

[7 : 24] Then we go all the way back in history for 5th place to North Africa in the 4th century, Bishop Augustine, St. Augustine, the Bishop of North Africa. 5.8% of my sermons reference him.

And 4th place, come all the way forward, but not all the way to the present day, to the Reformation, to Martin Luther, not to be confused with Martin Luther King Jr., but Martin Luther, the German reformer. 9.2% of my sermons reference him.

3rd place, Timothy Keller. 16% of my sermons reference him. 2nd place, any guesses? C.S. Lewis, 2nd place, the Christian writer and apologist, 21%, and number 1, referencing 100% of my sermons, Jesus of Nazareth.

So there you go. Definitive proof that I don't idolize Tim Keller or quote him way more than anybody else, so you don't roll your eyes when those inevitable TK quotations come in today's sermon.

Now let's get to what we're actually looking at this morning, and that is the first commandment. Israel at the foot of Mount Sinai. They've been rescued by God from Egypt. God enters into a covenant with them, establishes that He is their God, that He has rescued them, and then He proceeds with the stipulations of the covenant.

[8 : 42] And the first commandment is the first stipulation. Exodus 20, verse 3. Look down there in your Bibles. You shall have no other gods before me.

Two questions this morning. Number one, what is being prohibited in the first commandment? And number two, how do I keep the first commandment?

What's being prohibited, and how do I keep the first commandment? Here's the first one. What's being prohibited? By virtue of placing this commandment at the head of all the other commandments and the rest of the covenant stipulations that then go on further, it makes sense that this is the most fundamental commandment.

Right? You shall have no other gods before God or in place of God. And that really is the basic definition of idolatry, to have a God in place of God, a small g God in place of capital G God.

Now don't for a second think that the first commandment is teaching that there are actually a whole lot of different deities out there besides God, and that you just have to worship God above all those other deities out there.

[9 : 50] The Bible is unanimous in the fact that there is only one true God. So Psalm 96, verse 4 and 5 says this, Great is the Lord and most worthy of praise.

He is to be feared above all gods, for all the gods of the nations are idols, but the Lord made the heavens. So Psalm is saying, look, God is worthy of worship.

That is, in His essence, He is praiseworthy unlike the other gods. But then He takes it a step further and He says, oh, by the way, all the other gods are not really actually gods. They're idols, dumb, mute statues carved out of wood or stone.

In fact, the Hebrew word for idol, the origin of that word basically means nothingness or worthlessness. So the rationale for worshiping God? God is actually real.

And everything else you might worship is not real. But if that is true then, all other gods are not real gods, does that make the first commandment kind of irrelevant for you and me this morning?

[10 : 50] I mean, because think about the ancient gods that are out there. Think about the likes of Zeus or Athena or Hermes or ancient Canaanite gods from the time of Moses, characters like Baal or Asherah or Dagon.

We imagine people bowing down to statues of those kinds of gods. And then we look at that and go, yep, that's idolatry right there. That's breaking the first commandment and breaking the second commandment actually as well, which we'll look at next week.

In which case, this command doesn't really apply to us sitting here this morning because any of you bowed down and offered sacrifices to a pagan deity this week, this year?

So none of us are idolaters then. Now certainly one of the direct applications of this command in Exodus 20 is to prohibit the people there listening from going out and worshiping Baal and that pantheon of gods.

But that's not the only way the Bible speaks about idolatry. So Paul, for example, in the book of Colossians, the chapter three, verse five, he will say, put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature, sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires, and greed, which is idolatry.

[12 : 09] There he's not talking about some personified God whose name is greed. He's talking about lusting after wealth. He says, that's a God. When you lust after wealth, that's a God. And that's not just in the New Testament.

It's actually even in the Old Testament. So you go to the Old Testament prophetic book of Habakkuk. It is a real book in the Bible. I know you've never been to that part of the Bible before, but it's there. Habakkuk, the prophet speaks of the mighty military nation of Babylon.

And he says in verse 11 of chapter one, he says that the Babylonians, and I quote, strength is their God, and they figuratively burn incense and sacrifice to their military power.

So you can, you can, a God, an idol, can be any finite thing that you worship, that you give reverence to, that you give service to, that you trust in.

In his little book, Counterfeit Gods, and you really, if you want to get your head around this concept, get hold of this book and read it. Counterfeit Gods by Tim Keller. He describes an idol this way.

[13 : 11] He says, anything more important to you than God, anything that absorbs your heart and imagination more than God, anything you seek to give, to give you what only God can give you. Which means an idol can be a range of things, can't it?

Money can be an idol for you. Sex and Romans can be an idol for you. Power can be an idol for you. Control can be an idol for you. Anything that you elevate to supreme status in your life, where you are directing your best efforts, your best, your deepest affections, your most valuable time towards it, anything like that can be an idol.

Thomas Oden, a Methodist theologian, puts it this way. He says, when a finite value becomes a center of value by which other values are judged and has been elevated to centrality and imagined as a final source of meaning, then one has chosen what Jews and Christians call a God.

To be worshipped as a God, something must be sufficiently good to be plausibly regarded as the rightful center of one's valuing. One has a God when a finite value is worshipped and adored and viewed as that without which one cannot receive life joyfully.

You put something in your life as supreme, in the place of God, and you have an idol. And you will worship and you will sacrifice for that idol because that idol is at the center of your life.

[14 : 35] It brings you a sense of joy or meaning and purpose. So you do things. You do things in service of that idol. Think about it this way. Some of the sacrificing in ancient idolatry was particularly bloody and gruesome.

So in ancient Canaan, archaeologists have discovered that child sacrifice was a very common part of worship of the deity Molech. Now we live in this sophisticated society that we do today and we like to think we've moved past those primitive times.

But child sacrifice is alive and well. It's often an important sacrifice that needs to be made on the altar of the God of Korea in our developed and fast-paced societies, cities, marriages, friendships, health, all those things we sacrifice on the altar, the altars of various modern gods, the gods of our city.

It's interesting that Thomas Oden in that quote, he points out that for something to be a god it has to be, and I quote, sufficiently good to be plausibly regarded as such.

We think of ancient gods, we think of these bloodthirsty tyrants who need appeasing, and when we think of modern gods, we think of greed and lust and unfettered power, bad things, evil things, that everyone kind of agrees, well those are bad things, you don't want to be enslaved to that, you don't want to worship that.

[15 : 58] But more often than not, idols are not bad things, but good things, good things that we turn into ultimate things, great things that we turn into supreme things.

Wanting a career and gaining wealth is not a bad thing, it is a good thing and mostly necessary part of living in this world. But when it's elevated to an ultimate thing, it becomes an idol.

Wanting sexual intimacy and romantic relationship is a natural and very human thing, but when it gets lifted to supreme, it becomes quite a destructively dangerous and brutal idol. Idols are good things turned into God.

We just basically take one O out there. And that makes them very sneaky, very dangerous for us. We're taking things that we're supposed to value and we're tweaking the pecking order in our hearts.

So bringing God down and bringing this particular good value up. And that wreaks havoc in our behavior, in our thought life, in our emotional life.

[17 : 09] Friends, I promise you right now, I promise you right now that a large part of the messed up stuff that's happening in your life right now, whatever that is, is either because of an idol you have or an idol somebody near you has that's in relationship with you.

Now while you can't account for what other people's idols are, you can't do something about your own. And so the most natural question is what is my idol? How do I know what my idol is? Right? Second commandment is obviously a very natural extension of the first commandment.

Right? Don't have any gods before me. And then second commandment, don't try and contain God in a physical image that you bow down to. That's a very natural flow from the one commandment to the other. But the 16th century reformer Martin Luther, he pointed out that there's actually a natural flow between the first commandment and all the other nine commandments.

You see, he said you don't really lie, you don't steal, you don't murder, you don't do any of those other later things, break those other later commandments on the list unless you've first broken the first commandment.

When you've got a God who comes along, and he says, I'm your God, worship me alone, and then he says, commandment eight, don't steal. You don't steal something unless at some point in your life having that thing that is not yours, not rightfully yours, becomes more important to you than obeying the God who said, thou shalt not steal.

[18 : 38] And so when you do steal, what you're essentially demonstrating is that you have a God above God. You see that? And so you steal. And so by monitoring our behavior, by monitoring our emotions and our passions and the things we do, that's key to identifying what our idols are.

Now this is probably the most helpful thing I think that Keller has given me on the subject of idolatry, and if you've been around for a while, you've probably heard these three things before, but he gives you these three tests.

It's not the only way to figure out what your idol is, but three tests. Test number one is the anger test. If someone blocks you from getting a valuable or good thing, you get angry, right?

Someone blocks you on the freeway when you are rightfully in that lane and you're going at the speed limit and then they are going lower than the speed when they pull across in front of you, you get angry, you get frustrated, you vent a little bit.

But if somebody blocks you from getting an ultimate thing, something that you've based your life on, something that you are building your identity on, then you get inordinately angry, over angry, angry in an irrational and unreasonable way.

[19 : 47] You lose it. You just flip out, uncontrollably angry. You have that in your life right now? Are you having trouble forgiving somebody right now?

Is there something about which you are fuming so much in the inside that you really just can't come to grips with that anger? the root of that might be an idol controlling you, a God that you worship before God.

There's a fear test. If something good or valuable to you is threatened, you get worried. You get anxious. You fear, and rightly so. If something is there and it's yours and it's going to get taken away, you get worried.

But if something ultimate to you is threatened, something that you build your identity on, your sense of meaning on, your sense of hope and joy on, well then you get paralyzed by fear.

Totally paralyzed. You absolutely fall apart. You can't control your anxiety. You have inordinate fear of the thought of that thing getting taken away from you. Do you have something like that in your life right now?

[21 : 01] Where something that makes you so anxious that you feel sick in the pit of your stomach even thinking about the idea of losing that. It could be possible you have an idol controlling you, enslaving you.

You have a God that you're worshipping before God. And then the third test is the sadness test. If you lose something, good or valuable, it's not just threatened but you actually lose it.

Then you grieve and you weep. It's sad and it takes time to grieve. It takes time to get over the loss of something very important. But if you lose something that is ultimate to you, something that you have built your identity on, something you have built your life on, something that justifies you, if you lose that, well then you want to throw yourself off a bridge.

You are completely and totally and utterly devastated. You are broken and you don't recover from that kind of hurt. hurt. You don't come back from that kind of hurt. Have you got a sadness like that in you right now?

A sadness that kind of engulfs every single waking moment of your life? It's possible that that sadness is there because you're worshipping a small g God before God.

[22 : 18] when you look at your life right now, your emotions, particularly your extreme emotions, when you look at where your very best energy, your very best effort, your very best time is invested, what does that say about who or what you worship as supreme?

It's a hard thing to look at, isn't it? From a personal point of view, coming to grips with this concept of idolatry in the Bible and what it truly means to obey the first commandment has been, for me, incredibly, incredibly transformative for my spiritual, emotional, and psychological life.

And the reason for that is it's given me a way to understand myself. It's given me a way to understand my disobedience, my bad behavior, my negative thoughts and emotions, my responses to people. So when people criticize me or when people praise me, my passions, why I find something so easy to do and some things I have so much apathy towards, the concept of idolatry is like the ultimate diagnostic tool in the Bible.

It makes so much sense of our complex human existence. And so I want to say to you, you need to come to grips with this concept. You need to come to grips with the fact that you are a worshiper.

You are going to worship. You cannot not worship. This is who we are. We're hardwired that way. And if you are not worshipping God as supreme, then you are worshipping something else and the worship of that something else is going to produce something in your life.

[23 : 52] Behaviors, thoughts, emotions, desires. And so if you're worshipping is by necessity going to produce these outputs in your life that serve your particular God, then you had better, better, better, better, better make sure that you have the right and the very best God as the object of your worship so that you get the very best outputs.

You had better make sure that the God you're worshipping is the source of all goodness and beauty and truth. You had better make sure that the God that you are worshipping is a source of all holiness and righteousness and justice.

You had better make sure that the God that you are worshipping is the source of all love and grace and compassion. And friends, I only know one God like that. And that's the creator God of the Bible who comes to us in Jesus Christ.

You want the very best spiritual, emotional, and practical outputs in your life? It's pretty simple. Obey the first commandment.

You shall have no other gods before me. Now I want to add a little caution at this point. And this will lead us on to our second point. Talking about idolatry in this way can make it sound like obeying the first commandment is simply a means to making you a better person.

[25 : 15] Right? It's just there to help you out. Just like everybody else on TV at the moment. In other words, worshipping God will produce better outputs. You'll be a better version of yourself if you worship God rather than anything else.

And so the worship of God is really just a means to an end and that end being your personal flourishing. God is a tool then in a happy and productive and flourishing life.

Add him to all the other tools you already use out there like all your productivity apps on your phone, your Enneagram or Myers-Briggs tests, your exercise, your meditation, your therapy, your coffee.

But that is, if we think about it that way, that is to radically, radically misunderstand and confuse the fruit of obedience with the basis for obedience.

And if you don't get this right, you will never be able to effectively unseat unwanted idols from the throne of your heart and truly worship the God of the Bible as supreme.

[26 : 14] So here's the second point. How do I keep the first commandment? Now there's more than one reason to keep the first commandment if we're thinking about the basis for obedience. There's more than one reason. The most obvious reason, and this is the point of that earlier quote in Psalm 96, is that God is God.

God is God, and therefore by definition He really is the only worthy object of worship. I mean here is, I'm going to read again chapter 3 of the Westminster Confession of Faith.

We professed a version of chapter 3 in the profession earlier on in the service today, but this is chapter 3. This is what we call theology proper, the doctrine of God.

This is who God is according to the Bible. There is only one living and true God who is infinite in being and perfection. He is most pure, spirit, invisible with neither body parts nor passive properties.

He is unchangeable, boundless, eternal, and incomprehensible. He is almighty, most wise, most holy, most free, and most absolute. He works all things according to the counsel of His own unchangeable and most righteous will for His own glory.

[27 : 21] He is most loving, gracious, merciful, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth, forgiving in iniquity, transgression, and sin, and He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. And it goes on quite a bit longer than that.

That is the God of the Bible. That's who He is. By sheer force of who He is, we should worship Him.

In fact, this sermon should be incredibly, incredibly short. I should come up here and go, guys, Exodus 21, verse 3, you shall have no other gods before God. Why? Because this is who God is.

End of story. Go home and worship God only. It's reason enough. There's nothing else that we can worship that comes even close. That would be the chief motivation for obeying the first commandment and worshipping God above all, is that He is worthy above all.

But there's a second motivation that's actually implicit in the command itself. That when we understand it, I think what it does is it helps us take all these amazing theological truths about God and treasure them in our hearts.

[28 : 26] So we don't just know that God is worthy of all worship, but we feel that God is worthy of all worship. Look at the command again in verse 3. You shall have no other gods before me.

See those last two words? Before me. In Hebrew, it's literally before my face. Now when commenting on the first commandment, the reformers often took time to comment on these last two words.

Before me. In fact, even in our Westminster larger confession, there's a special question dedicated, detailed answer to that one phrase. Before me. So John Calvin wrote, the words before me go to increase the indignity.

God being provoked to jealousy whenever we substitute our fictions in his stead. Just as an unfaithful wife stings her husband's heart more deeply when her adultery is committed openly before his eyes.

So picking up on this analogy, there's a pastor in America, Kevin DeYoung, who has a little book on the Ten Commandments, really helpful little book on the Ten Commandments, and he picks up on Calvin's analogy, and he says this to kind of bring it alive to our present day.

[29 : 36] He says, you cannot have a both and relationship with your spouse, at least not for very long. Suppose a husband came home and said, honey, it's good to see you.

I want to introduce someone who's very special to me. And don't get me wrong, you're also very special to me, but I've met someone else. She's lovely, and I'm going to spend some time with her, but also a lot of time with you.

I just want to let you know that some nights I'm going to be with her instead. I think you two will get along just fine. You'll be great friends. You both mean so much to me. What should a wife say in this situation?

Oh, that's great, dear. I'm honored that I can still be a part of your life. Hardly. See what he's saying? When we disobey the first commandment, we commit the most appalling act of spiritual adultery.

We parade our illicit lover before the face of the true lover of our souls. Breaking the first commandment is the most depraved thing we can possibly do as human beings.

[30 : 46] Now, why do we do that? Why would we do this? Why would we want to worship anyone or anything before the face of the God who had immense cost to himself took us to be his precious bride?

What do I mean by that? Well, the Apostle Paul, Ephesians 5, 25, Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word to present her to himself as a radiant church without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish but holy and blameless.

Friends, when you were covered in your own filth, when you were unlovable, Christ came and at the cost of his own life he took you to be his bride.

He made you clean. How? With his own blood he washed away all that spiritual and moral filth and he made you radiant. That's the gospel.

And the more you take hold of that gospel, the more the full weight of that truth presses down upon your heart, the more you will be horrified by the thought of parading any other lover before the face of your loving Savior.

[32 : 11] Gazing on your true lover is the only way to break down the terrible grip of idols in your heart. It's the only way to pry the fingers of the idol off.

You won't beat your idols by sheer determination or discipline although you need to apply those things. You must exercise those things in the fight. But your ultimate victory in the fight to keep the first commandment is one when you savor Christ.

When you look at him. The hymn writer Frederick Lehman describes the love that you have from God in Christ with these words.

The love of God is greater far than tongue or pen can ever tell. It goes beyond the highest star and reaches to the lowest hell. The guilty pair bowed down with care God gave his son to win.

His erring child he reconciled and pardoned from his sin. Could we with ink the ocean fill and were the skies of parchment made were every stalk on earth a quill and every man a scribe by trade to write the love of God above would drain the ocean dry nor could the scroll contain the whole though stretched from sky to sky.

[33 : 34] Why would we get it? Why would we let any other lover get in the way of that love? When we look at the cross we look right into the face of incredible love mind blowing love love that we cannot conceive of and what we see there must drive us to renounce idols to turn away to tear down the idols as William Carpenter the hymn writer writes the dearest idol I have known whatever that idol be help me to tear it from thy throne and worship only thee.

Friends I want to encourage you this morning keep the first commandment plunge deeply into the love God has for you in Christ keep that first commandment let's pray our heavenly savior and our king we have idolatrous hearts that worship all sorts of things in so many subtle and subconscious ways even we elevate good things in our life to the throne of our heart and we lower our respect for you we lower our worship for you and then we wonder why why our lives are in such a broken state why so many things are going wrong it's because we have taken the source of all life and meaning and beauty and truth and goodness and we've we've stopped having that as a thing driving us we've stopped having you as a thing driving us and we've let some lesser God be king forgive us for that sin

Lord forgive us for that horrendous sin and let us see the love of Christ clearly that not only ought we to worship you just because you are worthy of worship but you have loved us when we have not deserved it you have taken us as your bride when we have not earned it Father show us that love and through us gazing upon that love expel all idols from our hearts we pray Lord I pray for any person here this morning who doesn't worship God as supreme because they've never submitted to Christ they've never repented of sin and trusted in Christ's saving work on the cross for them I pray that you would bring them to salvation this morning Lord Father help us to be a church that keeps the first commandment we ask this for Christ's sake and his glory Amen Praise to him