

Oak Hills Baptist Church
Sermon Title: "Gather—Bringing Our Best to Worship"
By Pastor Kimlyn Bender
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Sermon Summary

To gather together as God's people in worship is a central part of our Christian faith. Nevertheless, we often fail to understand worship or bring our best to the Lord in our worship. Just like in the Old Testament when Malachi addressed the failures of worship for the people of Judah, so we also often see worship as a burden and a chore and fail to bring God our best. Part of the problem is that we forget that worship really is about God, and not our own enjoyment, and another is that we fail to prepare ourselves for worship. When we remember the purpose of worship, and when we prepare for an encounter with God, our hearts can be changed, for as we offer God our worship and declare his worth and glory for the salvation he has brought, we ourselves can be transformed.

1. Launching

* Any initial thoughts or questions from Sunday's sermon?

2. Read the passage

Malachi 1:6-14; Romans 12:1-2

3. Diving into the Text

In Malachi's time, the people were bringing blind, crippled, and diseased animals as a sacrifice. Not only that, but priests were accepting them and offering them up to God.

1. In your own life, do you find times when you offer the equivalent up to God, by withholding your best or ideal from Him? In what way?
2. In regards to Sunday morning worship, do you ever find it a burden, or boring? If so, is it a result of not bringing your best to worship, or something different?

Pastor Kimlyn talked about the four "P's" of corporate worship: Praise, Prayer, Proclamation, and Practices. (Hebrews 10:24-25)

3. Which of these four is the easiest for you? Most difficult? Most frequently forgotten or overlooked?
4. Share with the group how the four "P's" intersect with your daily life. How and when do you incorporate them into Monday-Saturday?

Pastor Kimlyn challenged us to think about preparing for worship. (Prayer and meditation, reading scripture, service, not being over committed, establishing a Saturday evening routine, not habitually coming late, and coming with an expectation to meet with God.)

5. What are the ways you prepare yourself for worship? What could you eliminate? What could you change? What do you feel prompted to add?
6. Does your worship ever include more than just Sunday morning? If so, what does it include? If not, what would you like it to include?

Romans 12:1 talks about the presentations of our very lives as sacrifices of worship.

7. Pastor Kimlyn said that worship is primarily about offering ourselves to God. What are your thoughts on that? How should it alter your approach to worship? For us as a body?
8. As a form of accountability, give practical applications you want to make this upcoming week. Next week, touch back on this and discuss how you did.

4. Responding & Prayer

This week, think of worship as God's way of transforming us to Himself rather than being conformed to the world. As you do so, consider how that might not only affect your next Sunday worship, but your entire week, and maybe even certain lifestyle choices.