

0:00:01 Welcome back. This is video two for session six of the Exploring Theology course and we've been looking at the following question.

0:00:10 this has been the question. What have been some of the key experiences of your life? And at the end of the last video, we spent some time considering what those were, and reflecting on them.

0:00:19 We've been writing them down in our notebooks, and then when we come together, then we'll be able to share those that we're happy to share.

0:00:25 But the important thing about this is learning to sort of, just seeing what the shape of those experiences are, what they have, have in common.

0:00:33 Are we looking at isolated experiences, or are we looking at experiences which repeated, and they become almost amalgamated into one experience, even though they happen over and over again, over a period of time, type of thing.

0:00:45 so, underpinning all of this is for where we're going now, in terms of thinking about experience, is to be thinking about experience as encounters.

0:00:56 This is very much thinking about we're going to be mapping two kind of key ways of thinking about experience, and this is the first one, so, experience as encounter.

0:01:08 we talked in previous sessions about how we encounter God if you remember when I asked you, where is Jesus Christ?

0:01:20 Present in your church, we were talking about, effectively, where do we encounter, where do we encounter God? are we encountering God in the sacrament, are we encountering God in the proclamation of the word, in the preach, are we encountering God in the as the spirit indwells all of us, in

0:01:41 and within and in us so for many of us, I think, in those conversations when we were talking about what, what was important for us about the church was very much that sense of the, the people, the church being the people, the ecclesia, the, the gathering the assembly, and so there

0:01:57 were different ways of thinking about how we encounter, but when we're talking about those, worship is, as it were, a particular almost a subset of the broader category of experience, and to what degree do we trust our experiences, what, to what degree do we consider our experiences

0:02:17 as a source for theological reflection? Are they a reliable one? Are they a one that is valid within this kind of reflection on who God is and who we are and God's relationship with us and God's relationship with the world?

0:02:32 And so we're thinking now in terms of experience as an encounter, as encounter, that experience itself can be a source because it can speak of an encounter that we are having.

0:02:44 Now, we can have an encounter with somebody else, but we, you know, and, and I, I met them on the street, and if we were to be, you know, more formal about it, there were, you know, there was an encounter, we encountered them, type of thing has sort of certain resonances.

0:02:56 Doesn't it? But when, when we talk about encountering God, that can also happen, can't it? And that's very much the stuff of our experiences even if they are exceptional moments or exceptional in terms of maybe perhaps being quite the focal moments that, that we might be thinking

0:03:18 of. Anyway. How do we think about all of this? Because with worship, we were thinking about very specific experiences, if you like, in church or wherever church is, whatever shape church is taking, we're thinking about the experiences through the act of worship.

0:03:37 And as I say, we were thinking about things like the sacraments receiving the bread and the wine, hearing the word of God in the scriptures proclaimed and preached and so forth.

0:03:50 Okay. So that's one type, but then I want to step back from that and think about experience more broadly as a source for our theological reflection.

0:04:00 And at the moment, looking at it as this understanding of it being a experience as being an encounter. With God, where we are encountered by God, um, but where and how and so on and so forth.

0:04:15 So there's, there's a broad brush kind of thing, which I think is helpful to sort of just work through at this point, because I think it constrains some of our thinking all over, over all of this.

0:04:26 So I want to just, um, start to spend a few minutes, um, working our way through this. So, first of all, um, we think about, um, we sometimes divide the world up into sacred and secular.

0:04:37 And, um, you know, there's this division that we make, but it's helpful to sort of make a clear understanding as to what we're talking about there.

0:04:44 So when we're talking about what is sacred, well, um, we're talking about what is holy. Okay. The word sacred goes back and into Latin.

0:04:57 And we're talking about making something holy. And when we're talking about holy, we're talking about things that are set apart.

0:05:04 Holy, that's what holy means. Things things, they can be objects and they can be spaces and they can be people.

0:05:10 Um, we talk about the priesthood and the deacons, priests, and bishops of being of being holy orders entering someone who becomes ordained, enters holy orders.

0:05:24 We talk about them as holy, as in set apart. Um, and that's what we're talking about.

When we talk about sacred, um, we're talking about the things that we consider to be holy, and in some senses we view them to be set apart.

0:05:39 Um the, when we're talking about secular, we're kind of just like talking about all the rest, everything else. Um, there are all sorts of ways that we can unpack the word secular, but just for the, for the moment, let's work with this kind of division between that which is holy and everything, all

0:05:55 the rest. And I think a lot of the time we're working with this kind of working assumption. And so we're thinking about where do we encounter God?

0:06:03 Well, we encounter God when we go to church and we receive the sacraments and we hear the word proclaimed and in the community.

0:06:09 Of the people that we encounter and so on and so forth by the power of the spirit. when we share the peace, whatever it may be in that moment, or just even over coffee and the conversations that we have afterwards.

0:06:19 Um, that's kind of, this is a set apart time. We set apart time for many of us that will be on a Sunday morning or perhaps a Sunday evening, perhaps it's a midweek service or something like that, but it's a set apart time.

0:06:33 It's a, it's a sacred time, a holy time, which we have put to one side in order for there to be this encounter with God and the rest of the time that, you know, what we might refer to as the secular world is just the rest of the world that we live in, all the other, rest of our lives, type of thing

0:06:49 . Now, how does this, if we're working with something along these lines of there's sacred and secular kind of division, how is that sort of shaping how we're thinking?

0:07:00 And so, these are, I'm going to show you some just basic kind of a diagrammatic way of thinking about it.

0:07:09 So on the one hand, you've got the circle on the left and that's sacred. And then you've got the circle on the right, which is the world.

0:07:15 Okay. And there's a little bit that overlaps, but mainly for the most part, they have nothing to do with each other.

0:07:21 Okay. The vast majority of, of everything in the world has, is not to do with the sacred. The sacred has been set apart.

0:07:28 It's a small area. There is some overlap, but it's not significant. And this can shape how we think about experiences that when we think about experiences being something, well, yes, I can have all sorts of experiences in my life, but if they're experiences to do with God, well, then they're not

0:07:45 . They're primarily going to be, with this kind of schematizing of things, they're primarily going to be to do with church.

0:07:52 Our activities to do with church, and that can be not just in our worship services, but it can be acts, in our acts of love and service, where we are serving our community in the name of Christ.

0:08:02 Those can be moments when we have an encounter. That can be an experience which shapes our understanding. but they are, for the most part, we're thinking about our everyday, when we go to the supermarket, when we're paying a utility bill, when we're, you know, whatever it may be just in the ordinary

0:08:22 warp and weft of our lives, it's just like, well, okay, this is full of experiences all the time, but in what sense do, how do we frame them, and, and often times we just don't think of them.

0:08:33 In terms of anything to do with the sacred or the holy, then, because, you know, that's just, I'm just getting the kids to school type of thing here, you know, or I'm just visiting my aunt, or I'm popping into the care home to see my, my, my, my, a parent or something like that.

0:08:52 It's, it's just what you're doing every day or every other day or whenever, however frequent it may be. That's what practice, just going to work, laying out graphics if you're working as a graphic designer or if you're working in IT, doing a bit of coding or if you're an accountant, working through

0:09:08 auditing some figures and so on and so forth. This is just where the rest of our lives are spent and to what extent are those experiences sources of encounter and we sort of aren't anticipating that.

0:09:21 We're anticipating thinking of them being an encounter with God at any possible stage because we're working in some kind of sense, I would argue, with this kind of more or less binary division that there is the sacred and there is the world, there is the secular.

0:09:37 And the two overlap a little bit, but for the most part, they don't, type of thing. Okay. And then we can take that step forward and we think, thinking instead of the sacred, we're thinking about the church.

0:09:48 And so there's a little bit of the overlap between the church. If you like, it's the porch of the church.

0:09:53 It's, it's, it's the space where there's a little bit of the world comes walking in and they go like, Ooh, what's going on here?

0:09:59 And now they come and they don't come into the church type of thing. And people visiting it's, it's, it's the, um, the, that sort of liminal in between space kind of, um, between the church and the world, but we're working on that.

0:10:10 And those kinds of things. And we think if we're going to have experiences, which are going to shape how we speak and think and reflect about God, then they're going to be primary, primarily the kind of the churchy ones and in the churchy spaces and the churchy activities and so on and so forth,

0:10:24 not the ones broadly in what we refer to as the secular sphere, the world. Okay. And then if we manage to, tap this onto a connecting with a sort of God, then the sacred or the church becomes that mediating space between God and the world.

0:10:43 So the church becomes very pivotal in this kind of understanding, because this is the space. If you are going to encounter God, then this is the kind of space where you come to do that and everything.

0:10:53 But I think we all know that that's not really adequate. It's not really an adequate way of describing things because it just doesn't match our experiences, does it?

0:11:06 So is there another way of thinking about things which is then helpful for us to approach this, which is more productive, more, oh, I don't know what the word I'm looking for is, but it, it, it, it is more generative.

0:11:22 It, it, it acknowledges the thickness and the richness and the complexity of our lives that our experiences of God are not limited to what is nominally, nominally considered to be the sacred in that church, so on and so forth, okay?

0:11:41 It's more complicated, isn't it? And so, is there another way? And I, I think there is. And note the move that I make now, I'm going to step outside of what I'm talking to you and I'm just going to talk about the move that I'm making as I'm doing this, is that I'm now going to turn to scripture.

0:11:57 In my theological way of then proceeding, I am now going to turn to scripture to base where I go next in what I'm going to say to you.

0:12:06 It's just useful to, to acknowledge the kind of ways that I'm going. I'm, I'm not going to tradition now, I'm not going to reason, I've used a little bit of reason, I've talked a little bit about experience and so on and so forth, but now to make the move I'm going to turn to scripture.

0:12:21 So back on to what I was saying, I'm going to quote, here's a passage, here's a verse rather from Psalm 24, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof.

0:12:31 The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof. It all, everything, with this understanding, that everything that is on earth, in the world, the secular, it all exists and is within the compass of God, within the orbit of God, within in the sphere of God, it's not.

0:12:58 It's not as if, you know, Psalm 139, where can I flee from your presence, O Lord? It's not as if there's somewhere we can go, Ha!

0:13:07 Got away from God here. Jolly good. I mean, that's the whole Jonah's thing, is that, that's right, I'm off to Tarshish, because there's no way God's going to be able to keep up with me.

0:13:14 Yep. Hmm. Anyway. So rather than think about things like God and the sacred and the world with little bits of overlap and overlap and with the church being in the middle type of thing, being the way of connecting all of this, rather than with, going with this, the earth is the Lord's and the fullness

0:13:31 thereof, framing it this way, we're looking at it like this, aren't we? We're looking at the big outside circle you can see on the screen that just goes off the edges and everything, you know, just roll with the schematizing of this, that, it's God.

0:13:48 And within God is the world in whom we live and move and have our being. And then within the world there is that smaller subset, the sacred.

0:13:59 Yeah. Now note at this point I'm not talking about solely the church. I'm talking about the sacred as something that can happen anywhere, at any time.

0:14:13 So before I move on to that, just look at that, um, way of looking at it. Rather than thinking of separate, um, we were looking at separate kind of spheres that might have little overlaps and everything.

0:14:22 And God is way, way over on the left and the mediating kind of space is the sacred and then you have all the church, um, in one of the previous diagrams and then the world on the right.

0:14:33 No, we're looking at it as if- In God, everything is moves and has its being within the presence, the domain, the sphere of God.

0:14:43 It's not as if we can, Psalm 139 as I said, where can I flee from your presence? Yeah.

Nowhere. Um, the world is within and then within the world is set apart but within, not separate.

0:14:57 Within is the s- sacred, okay? So this then leads us to, this opens up and I think is more fitting to what we actually do experience, that experience as encounter, an encounter with God in our everyday life.

0:15:14 It's not something which is limited to, thank God, to our experiences of, sody, worship, and prayer. Now, our experiences of worship and prayer are very important when it comes to how we experience our encounters with God in our everyday life.

0:15:34 We're gonna come back to that. But the first point to make is that it's not that our experiences are not of our everyday lives, our son, somehow, hermetically sealed- It's off from the orbit, the agency, the activity of the Triune God.

0:15:54 Father, Son, Holy Spirit. It's not as if it's just like, ah, over here. It's got nothing to do with God.

0:16:00 God's out of sight. Nothing to do with God here, type of thing. God's the church bit. Not here. No. This understanding of the of this encourages us to think, and recognize that the- the- the Earth is the Lords and the fullness thereof.

0:16:16 Everything. Okay? Now, go back to the passage we were looking at for our Lectio Divina. as part of our- our- our work here, um, on for Session 6, our preparation for Session 6, for when we come together.

0:16:30 Is that Moses, yeah? Is there on up on Mount Horrib. He's doing what he always does. He's doing his job.

0:16:40 He's tending his flock. And he would have been doing this over and over and over. Yeah? This wasn't suddenly.

0:16:49 First day on the job, Moses, you go and turn some sheep. And and then that- woah! Wow! What's going on with that bush type of thing?

0:16:58 It's the- it- it was in the every day for Moses. And then he has this encounter. God encounters Moses. The- the- the agency here is with God.

0:17:13 God- Moses doesn't make this happen. He doesn't get himself into a super spiritual kind of woe state. He's just doing his- job.

0:17:24 He's tending the sheep. He's out in the wilderness with his flock. He's up on Mount Harab and zum. Then it suddenly happens.

0:17:34 The bush is a flame. And it's on fire, but it's not consumed. He's there. He's in his every day. And it is in this moment that he has the encounter with God.

0:17:45 His experience. And in every day- setting becomes an experience of God. And the Lord says to him, take take his shoes off.

0:17:54 The place where he is, which was just an everyday space. With the presence of God in that particular, particular way, in that moment, that intense, focused way, suddenly it becomes a holy space within all of, Creation.

0:18:12 It's not set apart. We're way before the tabernacle. We're way before the temple. and everything that follows, and we're way below the gathering of the church, and we're way before all the church buildings, and everything that followed, um, 300 years or so after Jesus's rising from the dead

0:18:30 and ascending to the right hand of God the Father. We're way back in the story, aren't we? in this moment doing something just every day, Moses has this encounter, and he has this experience, and this experience becomes pivotal for Moses.

0:18:48 And in its shapes, the rest of his life, this is the moment where everything turns. You know, he's, he's, he's, he's fled to he's fled to Egypt.

0:18:59 He's, he murdered the the Egyptian, and, and he had to hightail it out, and he's just eking out his existence as a shepherd.

0:19:09 And then he has this encounter with the bush, and this experience that happens within the everyday reshapes how he understands who God is, and who he is in response.

0:19:22 So, it's an experience- the experience that happens in the everyday. And, um, so, with this in mind, with the- all of existence being the domain in which God can encounter us, not just in our churchy bits.

0:19:38 I want you to go back and think about those experiences that you were listing at the end, and I was doing the same in my notebook, listing at the- at the end of the- the first- this video where I asked you just to think, you know, I asked you first off, you know, what comes to mind when you think of

0:19:51 the word experience, and so on and so forth. And then I asked you what were some of the key experiences in your life.

0:19:57 And you were- you were writing this down, I was writing mine down and everything. And what I'd like you to do now is to think about where was God in your experiences.

0:20:08 Okay? There are all sorts of ways we can go with this question. as always, it's not a question that they're being a right answer that I'm wanting you to get to or anything like that.

0:20:22 This is an exploration, yeah? You're- you're- you're- you're mapping out territory. You're- you're- you're- think of it, the image that comes to mind, and I don't know whether it's a good one because it's just coming to mind as I'm talking.

0:20:34 it's is like you're a cartographer. You've talked about the terrain of your experiences a moment ago, and now you're going to map them in a different way.

0:20:45 You and I, your experiences, me with my experiences, we're gonna map them in a different way. We're gonna- we're gonna do a- draw a different kind of map, and in this map, rather than looking for the contours and the shape of the experiences in themselves, we- and we'll now be looking as it were, is

0:21:01 it a sort of a subterranean level, or is it there above ground, but visible as it were, keeping with the map metaphor and terrain, that, you know, we're looking now for the shape of God in our lives.

0:21:13 Where was God in, in our experiences? That's one angle, okay? And then the other angle to think about when you're thinking about it is- you guys.

0:21:23 That as you are recalling these experiences, where is God in your experiences? So it's not just simply the experiences themselves, but it's also your recollection of these experiences.

0:21:37 Just think about the experiences. I asked you a question at the end of the first video, just out of the blue, think about some of the key experiences of your life so far.

0:21:47 Where is God in the reflection that you just did then as to why those experiences were, you know, where is God in the way that you were, cause you have done so much in your life, so much has happened to you.

0:22:03 So, how are those experiences being sifted? So these are the ones that you were writing down. And where is God involved in that sifting?

0:22:11 And not just the sifting, but in the connecting and so on. So there are the experiences themselves. Something dramatic may have happened to you in your life at some point.

0:22:20 I know things have happened to me in my life, so the thing for me to go and do over these next few minutes and similarly to you is to think about, well where was God in all of that?

0:22:29 You know at the time, it may not have been clear, but in retrospect, I'm now it's interpreting that experience in a different way and I'm seeing that God was actually there in a way that, perhaps in the moment, I wasn't able to see.

0:22:45 But there might be other experiences that you could have that, you know, that you're thinking in that moment, I know that I was in the presence of God.

0:22:53 It had nothing to do with church. I wasn't in a church building. I wasn't with my fellow Christians. I wasn't doing anything churchy.

0:23:00 But in that moment, I knew that I was in the presence of God because of the experience that I had then.

0:23:06 Yeah? and so that's an experience directly where God is immediately visible as in tangible. You had a clear sense of God's presence.

0:23:13 you may never have had an experience like that. Absolutely fine. It really is just a question just grappling with this question and seeing to what degree.

0:23:23 Remember. All the while here. We've got these different sources. We're learning how to think theologically. And one of the questions at the very beginning is that I was sort of hinted at is to what degree are our experiences, a, as it were, a trustworthy source for our theological reflections, our theological

0:23:43 thinking, our theological living. To what degree or are we? We're going to say, yeah, experiences. Yeah, they play a role, but really, I'm not going to give them I'm not going to bring them front and center because the ones that I think should take more place are going to be things like scripture

0:23:59 and tradition and reason and so on. So, and, and maybe even worship that really, yes, you can have these experiences, but it's the ones that happen in charge of them.

0:24:07 So, we're working through all these kinds of questions. So, you've got sort of different layers to these questions. going on at the same time.

0:24:13 Where was God in the experiences? In your experiences that you were jotting down as in at the time or in retrospect you can see god was there in those experiences?

0:24:24 How is God now in this act of thinking it through making connections for you? It might be happening as you were writing it down.

0:24:32 You were suddenly going like, and there was this, put that and so on. and use. Suddenly, where is God in those, in that knitting together, that sifting and connecting?

0:24:42 And and and and the while just thinking, you know, to what degree is drawing on our experiences like this?

0:24:51 As a place of encounter with God, to what degree are they reliable? What degree are they trustworthy? What degree are this is a theological source that I will pay close attention?

0:25:00 To going forward, compared to scripted tradition, reason and worship type of thing. Okay, so, that's enough of me talking.

0:25:07 I want you just to think about that. I'm gonna give you about, it's okay. I'm gonna give you about 15 minutes to think about this, okay?

0:25:15 Because it's a big question. And just go back to your notes and just see what connections you can make and so on and so forth.

0:25:21 And then we'll see where we get to with that. We'll bring these kind of reflections. and together when we meet, we'll have the opportunity to talk to others about their experiences and the connections and how they're framing this kind of question and where they've got to.

0:25:33 Okay. So, about 15 minutes. I've got a coffee, you've probably got a drink as you go. And so, I'm gonna turn the volume down for a little bit so I don't disturb you.

0:25:42 But I'm here doing exactly what I'm inviting writing you to do now, okay, with what I wrote for a little while.

0:25:48 There go. That's what I'm gonna do and invite you to do the same. So, I'll be back. I'll be here, but I'll be back in about 15 minutes or so.

0:25:56 And as always, if at the end of those 15 minutes, you need more time. Take more time. It's absolutely no rush, but, you know, that gives us a bit of space to do this together.

0:26:04 Okay. Right. Let's get going. Okay I will be very interested to hear how you've got on with that, and I found it a very striking exercise to do, and you may want to take more time, in which case, by all means, just pause the video at this point, but assuming that you're okay with a proceed

0:41:24 , I'm gonna carry on now for the moment, and I want- to make a- a connection with what we were doing last time, in the session five, talking about how do we worship and pray, when I would introduce you to this phrase in Latin, which was Lex Randy, Lex Credendi, as you'll recall, it's the phrase

0:41:40 which means, um, how we worship, um, shapes, how we- shapes what we believe, okay? And and then, um, implicit in that- which I think I did make explicit at some point.

0:41:55 Um, we're talking about that it's not just a one way straight, it's not just that how we worship shapes what we believe, but also what we believe shapes how we worship.

0:42:03 And the interesting thing is then, which I didn't talk about previously before, but just comes to mind, is of course that then what we believe isn't necessarily something that we have cooked up on our own.

0:42:12 It's something that we've received through the particular- Take the trigger. So, for example, imagine that we're part of a certain church with a certain kind of theological tradition and so on and so forth.

0:42:20 All of us are, whichever church we're into. They all have their theological traditions. Some are just more upfront about it than others.

0:42:26 Others, it's more implicit. That's going to be shaping. So, it's not like we're starting off from scratch making it all up ourselves.

0:42:32 It's then we are receiving that from the tradition. It's been handed on to us. That's shaping the-the-the-the-the buttons that we're-or the choruses that we're invited to, the worship songs that we're invited to sing.

0:42:43 and they in turn shape what we believe and on it goes. So, it's sort of a dialectical relationship between these, which is a fancy way of saying it's a two-way street.

0:42:53 the one shapes the other. It's not just all the traffic in one direction. Okay. I want to just this phrase has a third part of it, which I'm going to introduce you to now.

0:43:03 Which so you feel you've got your money's worth. is Lex Orandi, Lex could Andy, Lex, Lex Vivendi, the way we worship, the way we pray rather, shapes what we believe, which shapes how we live.

0:43:16 Okay. what we worship, shapes what we believe, which shapes how we live. Lex Orandi, Lex could Andy, Lex Vivendi, Vivendi.

0:43:27 The how we live, bit, yeah. And we can put this into a little diagram. So, the top of there, you've got Lex Orandi, then Lex could Andy, then Lex Vivendi, and let's put it into English so we all know what we're talking about here, what we worship, what we believe, and how we live.

0:43:46 And of course they see, that's the idea that, What we worship, shapes what we believe, which shapes how we live, which in turn shapes what we worship.

0:43:59 Now, of course you could start anywhere on this, couldn't you? last session we were looking at how worship starts, but if you were to take more, just sort of like a basic kind of, this is what we believe, that's going to shape how we live, which will then, and shape what we worship, and how

0:44:17 we live could be our starting point. Well, this is how we live, and we're going to talk about other stories that shape uh our thinking, and, and, and which w-which would then lead us to worship.

0:44:27 Other things, perhaps, put other things first and foremost, giving due acknowledgement, or giving them parity in the acknowledgement that we give them in our lives.

0:44:35 We-we-we may come to that, just depending on how we're doing on time. but of course it's not a one-way street.

0:44:41 I-I-the way the circle is looking at the moment, you can see the arrows are just going from what we worship to what we believe to how we live.

0:44:47 Yeah? But the arrows can also go in both directions, can't they? what we worship shapes how we live. What we worship shapes how we-what we believe, but what we believe shapes how we worship, and how we live shapes what we believe, and so on and so forth.

0:45:01 They're all going in each and every which way. Kind of direction. It's not just one thing, um, shaping it. So the Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, Lex Orandi, what we worship, what we pray how we pray shapes, um what we believe shapes, um how we live.

0:45:21 It all goes in the different directions. And so, um, I-I think we can do this at this point. Yeah, let's-let's do this as a point.

0:45:31 Um, I'm-I might not give you as much time as you'd like to think about this. Um, but I'll give you a few moments.

0:45:38 Um, and then if you need more time, just take more time. But what are some of the other things? Our culture.

0:45:44 The culture. Now this is a-this is a session that's being done within the Winchester Diocese. Um, it's the year 2025.

0:45:51 As I'm recording this, and so I'm talking about our culture as in the culture of the United Kingdom at this moment of time.

0:45:59 What are some of the other things our culture encourages us to worship? If you're watching this somewhere else in the world at some other point, then please localise it for you.

0:46:09 What are some of the other things our culture encourages us to worship? And remember when we were talking about- We were talking about worship.

0:46:17 and how we do that is with our time especially, our attention especially, and also our money. And sometimes our money is how we enable ourselves to give the time and the attention and so on.

0:46:30 And sometimes it's just money that we're spending on things. Because we want the material thing in itself. But then that gets timed into what we're giving our attention to.

0:46:39 And what we then spend our time doing and so on. So they're all interrelated in many, many, many ways. So I want you to think about what are some of the other things our culture encourages us to worship.

0:46:53 And as you do I don't know whether we're going to come to this later. So I might be jumping ahead, but not to worry if I don't think you know, how they, how that happens.

0:47:03 How, how, how are we encouraged to worship those things? How, how does, how do we get shaped to worship those things?

0:47:12 And we've been talking about the last session we're talking about the way worship was shaping, how we, what we believe, how our other activities in our lives shaping us, shaping what we believe in it.

0:47:22 Worship isn't the only as it were formational activity that we do formation by that. I mean what shapes us into the kind of person that we're becoming.

0:47:31 And there are other sources and other formation or pressures, there are other formational agencies as it were that are shaping us into become a certain site, a certain type of person, which holds something to be of um, absolute or ultimate worth.

0:47:47 And within our worshipping tradition as, as the church, then it's obviously we are holding God to be of ultimate worth and God revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

0:48:00 That is the one, this is the one, rather, who we are our worship is shaping us to worship. That's the idea.

0:48:09 But there is other stuff going on to be held that, that our culture is encouraging us to worship. So have a think about that.

0:48:16 as I say, this isn't enough time to think it through, but I want to keep this video to time.

0:48:21 So take about six minutes to think about that, and, um, and then we'll take it from there. Yes. About that.

0:48:31 Yeah. Okay. About six minutes. Something like that. Say five. Just keep it simple. Say five minutes from now. Just jot down what you think.

0:48:37 Some of the other things, our culture in car- just to worship, and how the- this question isn't on the screen, but- and how does our culture encourage us to do that?

0:48:47 Okay. how does our culture encourage us to worship those things? Let's take five on that, and see where we get.

0:48:52 Okay. Right, there we go wonder how you got on with that.

0:54:22 As always, I know I say this pretty much every time, but I really am interested to hear because you know uhh, uhh, uhh, uhh uhh, uhh, uhh, uhh, uhh.

0:54:34 There were all sorts of other stories. Always going on, so I'm interested to see which ones which other things, I've jumped ahead in a couple of steps in my mind.

0:54:47 in the sense that the things, the way that some of the other things that our culture and courage is to worship, how it goes about doing that is through, primarily through, I would argue, through telling stories.

0:54:59 Um, if you think about advertising, if you see an advert for you to buy that latest car or something like that, it's told- So, It's an implicit story, it's a snapshot of a story, but it's there are all sorts of coded elements within that story, symbolizing various things that you're meant to pick up on, which is indicating the kind of life, the kind of style, the kind of person. You are, if you buy this kind of car type of thing.

0:55:21 It's- it's using story to persuade you that this is something which is worth absolutely giving money to an umm- prioritizing in your life, and so on and so forth.

0:55:31 And, um, even if you were to talk about, say, the, um, American dream, um, in- in the states, referred to as the American Dream, the idea that if a self-say- self-made millionaire type of narrative, they come from nothing they achieve by the- you know, usually it's in a garage somewhere and they- they-

0:55:50 they rig something together and they- they- it suddenly becomes hugely s s- it's successful and they're a bit of a they're a bit of a maverick and so on and so forth.

0:55:57 There are all sorts of tropes that happen in the- um, tropes. there are all sorts of patterns in these stories, um, which then, um, shape the story and the expectation of how, um, you are to live your life type of thing.

0:56:10 And so, um, it's not that ours is the only story in town, the story that the church tells, the story that is our- our story is the- tradition by which we identify who God is and who we are and everything.

0:56:21 There are other stories encouraging us to worship other things. Um, so yes, okay. Um, quite where I'm going on my slides.

0:56:25 I'm not sure. There we go. That's looked at that. There we go. So yes, so this has, um, so this part has been looking at two aspects.

0:56:37 Um, I'm drawing video two to a close now. Um, that- We'll see experience is as encounter, as a-as a place of encounter, that it can be, a place of encounter, and can shape our understanding of God.

0:56:51 And it might not even simply be an encounter with God, where you're thinking that was a clear experience of the-of the presence of God in my life.



0:56:58 It could also be that that was a clear experience of the absence of God in my life. How on earth could God let this- what's happened?

0:57:05 It was horrific, it was dreadful, I don't can't- I can't make sense. How would a loving God? All those kinds of questions kick in.

0:57:14 And those experiences shape our understanding of who God is as well. Um, but they can be a place of encounter.

0:57:23 They can be a place of retrospective encounter. When we experience something and at the time we don't have a sense of- God's presence, we don't understand how God could be involved in that, but then retrospectively we see when we look backwards we go like ah yes, but type of thing.

0:57:37 So it can work in all sorts of ways. Those experiences can shape our understanding of who God is. So another way of talking about it is that those experiences can shape our theology, but our theology also then comes to interpret our experience.

0:57:53 We learn- And then, to reframe our experiences. What we might have perceived as the absence of God wasn't necessarily the absence of God.

0:58:02 we might perceive a a situation where we're thinking, well that was just chance that that happened. Or if you told- if you turned, you're afraid and you said, you know, I- you might have been a- there might have been a period where- you- you wouldn't have considered yourself to be somebody who

0:58:20 believed in God. I know there was certainly a large part of my life when I didn't. And, um, when, you know, you're just like, well that just happened.

0:58:27 It was just a fluke. You know, just coincidence type of thing. And then you learn, maybe you come back. You come to faith and then you start to reinterpret your past through your experiences of that have now been shaped by- what you have come to believe by your theology, your understanding of who God

0:58:44 is. And thereby you go back and you look over your older experiences and you go like, ah yes, I used to think about that experience in this way, but now I've come to reframe it.

0:58:55 I reinterpret it in the light of my understanding of who God is and my understanding has been shaped by all these different sources, the tradition, the- the- the- the by scripture re-tradition.

0:59:05 Reason, worship, and yes, experiences that I've had subsequently and so on. So it's all coming together in all of those and the question over and over again and this is why I have keep-keep asking this at the various points in the reflections of all these sessions.

0:59:20 So what does this say about God? What does this say about us? What does this say about the world? These are the questions that we need to keep asking and that the key one though is what does this say- about God and how is God present in and through all these things that are happening in our lives and

0:59:36 our experiences and so on. So that's where we're going to draw this video to a close with having thought about experience as a source.

0:59:43 Both is in terms of an encounter but also something which is interpreted which is reinterpreted by our theology, by what we have come to believe.

0:59:53 Remember we were thinking- Thank you. about Lex Orandi Lex could Andy Lex for then do what we've what we worship, shapes what we believe, shapes how we live and all the different ways that inter relates and shapes one another and so on.

1:00:05 So that's what we've been looking at with regards to experience. so with that we made the move to talking about worship in a broader sense, didn't we?

1:00:16 Towards the end we were talking about not just- Worship in the sense of the worst kind of worship that happens in the church.

1:00:22 And when I asked you that question about in the last session about how do we worship and pray, I should imagine some of you were saying, well, um, it's not just in church that I worship.

1:00:32 I worship when I go for a walk and- and I- and I worship when I'm in the forest and I'm worshiped when I'm down by the beach or I worship when I'm doing X, Y or Z.

1:00:40 And that then in- in its own right is shaping and giving- giving an understanding of a much broader sense of what worship means and with- so that our everyday lives, all of our lives, not just what we're doing when we're gathered together for our times in church and so on and so forth, our broader understanding

1:00:59 of what that is, is one where we're beginning to think about all our- all of our lives as- having this capacity, having this space for worshipping God, um, for being a place of worship.

1:01:12 So, um, an- an occasion for worship. So, um, with that, I want to start to move to that in the next session next- not in the next session, you'll be glad to know.

1:01:23 In the next video for this, the final session of session- session 6-6 of the Exploring Theology Course. If us. There we go.

1:01:31 I think I'm gonna have a glass of water now. And, um, take your time. We've covered some significant ground here.

1:01:38 And, as I said before, it's always good to let this stuff kind of settle in. Um, and if you are able to take a bit of time before you turn to the next video, um, that would be good.

1:01:48 Um, but however long you take in between these and everything, I look forward to seeing you shortly. Alright then. Bye now.