

00:00 Welcome back everybody, this is the fourth video of the fifth session of the Exploring Theology course, where we're considering how do we worship and pray.

00:15 And in the last video we've been especially looking at how we worship, and if you'll recall at the end of that video I was asking you to go off to your church, go along to where you need normally worship and to the service that you normally go to, and to go with your eyes open as it were to what you're

00:32 doing there that you do every time, that happens every time, that sort of, however informal, however formal, whichever end of the spectrum, wherever you are on that spectrum of kind of worship, there will be things that you're doing every time, that's part of the, as it were, the rich kind of ritual,

00:48 even if it's not, even if you don't think of it in those kind of terms, there are these things that we do every time.

00:53 So, having thought about that, you would, I invited you to sort of find a quiet space, come home, however it may have worked for you, and then jot down some of those things which you noted that you're doing every time.

01:06 So, what I'd like you to do now is to think about the following question.

01:13 the three things that repeat each week in your church, or every time you go along to this service, of the three things that repeat each week, every time, in your church, in your, in this act of worship, pick three.

01:28 Pick three words, phrases, things that happen, or actions. They don't have to be words. three things that happen every time, and then I want you to think about the following three questions, okay, and they'll be familiar by now.

01:44 So, the first one is to think about what do these three things, these three phrases, words, actions, what, what do they say about God?

01:55 That's the first and foremost question. If you go back to our very first question, who is God? What do these words and phrases that you repeat each time, these actions that you repeat each time, what do they say about God?

02:09 What do they say about you? And what do they say about the world? Okay, so, three actions, words, phrases, if you want to go back more than three, absolutely fine, but let's keep it manageable.

02:27 So, of those three things, think about them from these three angles. What are they saying about God? What are they saying about you?

02:34 What are they saying about the world? Okay, let's take ten, fifteen minutes over that, something like that. that gives you about, say, five minutes per kind of thing to think about, and just explore those.

02:54 Go back to your notes that you looked through, that you made after that act of worship that you attended, and just cast your mind back to it, and think, okay, yeah, there was that, and there was that, and other things might jump to mind as you do this.

03:09 Just make the notes, and draw up your reflections for, so that we can share when we come together. What are these things saying about God?

03:17 What are they saying about you? What are they saying about the world? Okay, let's take about 15 minutes on this.

03:24 There we go. Okay, I wonder how you got on with that.

17:52 And I look forward to when we're able to share some of our reflections from this. About what these three or so acts and words and actions and so on and so forth that we repeat.

18:03 what do they say about God? What do they say about us? What do they say about the world? So, okay.

18:09 So, with that in mind, let's move on and come back to this broader question of why do we repeat? And you know, I think what might I, I, I've touched on this in the last time when I was talking about that rock in, in, in Norway and the way it was shaped over time by the water and these

18:30 , you know, Lex Orandi, Lex Quidendi, this, the way we pray, the way we worship shapes what we believe. And yes, that's sort of at the broader kind of, kind of level.

18:40 I just want to go into it a little bit more in this final section of the final video for session five.

18:47 So a couple of things to bear in mind. Firstly, when we were talking about tradition, I made the distinction between tradition versus traditionalism, tradition being this act of handing on both the content of what's handed on, the message and how we hand it on, so on and so forth, versus traditionalism

19:01 , which is what we, most of us would kick against is, is that when we think of, you know, well, we might think that we don't like tradition, but actually what we're thinking about is tradition.

19:09 So hang on, someone just knocking on the door, so give me a second. Thank and weekend. Sorry, so where was I?

19:15 Yes, I was talking about the difference between tradition versus traditionalism and with traditionalism being just when we do it for its own sake, for its own purpose.

19:24 With that in mind, there's another sort of, similarly, there's this issue of thinking about ritual and I want to draw this, this same kind of distinction between ritual versus ritualism.

19:39 it may be that when you think of ritual, you have negative associations and you're thinking, oh, that's just doing things by rote.

19:45 It's just simple repetition, so on and so forth. And I think when we're talking about that, what a helpful distinction is to think about that in terms of ritualism.

19:55 That ritualism is when we just do things the way we do things for the purpose of just doing it that way.

20:00 There's no, there's no further purpose behind it. It's just like, this is how we do things. It's, it's very closely related to that tradition and traditionalism kind of distinction.

20:10 But ritual has a very important part in our lives, in all aspects of our lives, but especially when it comes to worship and this repetition is part of ritual.

20:22 And again, I really want to underscore this because, um, oftentimes in conversation I've had with, um, folk up and down the diocese and further afield, people will make the distinction and say, well, the kind of, the, the church that I'm at, we're, we're not into, we don't do that kind of ritual stuff

20:37 . We're not into that. We don't do liturgy, blah, blah, blah. I want you to step back from that if you can, and just recognize that whatever your style of worship, whatever tradition of church you're a part of, there will be things that you do and I hope that you will have realized this through going

20:53 along to your service this Sunday, this Sunday Gone, and just making some observations, jotting down some things. There are things that you do every week, they happen every week.

21:04 Even if it's in the most informal laidback kind of service that we used to have many years ago at the church hall, Christchurch Priory, it was just, you know, it was just very, very relaxed and so on and so forth.

21:16 And yet, underpinning it, there was still the same kind of thing that would happen every time we did it. And, um, yeah.

21:24 So, it, it, it uh, watch out for the trap of thinking, oh, we're not a church that does liturgy, or we're not the church that does ritual.

21:33 Your church that does do liturgy, whether you know it or not, and you are a church that does do ritual.

21:38 Or whether you know it or not. We all are. We can't avoid it. Um, and so we're doing these things, we're doing them week in, week out.

21:46 So, this is coming back to the question of why we repeat. Okay, so why do we repeat? And now, I gave you some kind of broad brush kind of understanding in terms of thinking, well, the way we, we, we worship, the way that we pray, the way that we worship shapes what we believe.

22:00 Yeah. I want to just, Let's go a little bit deeper on this time and just see if we can explore a little bit further.

22:07 Why do we repeat? Yes, it's shaping us. Um, why do we repeat these actions and these words and worship? Yes, it's shaping what we believe.

22:19 But, um, what else is it doing as we do that? Okay. So, I just want to just take a bit of time.

22:26 Can I take ten minutes just to think about this? Just see where you go with it. It's, um, it's one of those questions where I'm not giving you too much guidance.

22:33 Um, and then, um, I'm going to suggest, um uh, three reasons. Why? Um, they're not the definitive reasons in any sense.

22:42 They're just three reasons that I think that we have, um, as to why we're, we're, what we're doing. These, these repetitive acts.

22:49 Why do we do these things? Ritually. Whether it's informal. Whether it's formal. We do these things every time we gather in the way that we do them.

22:57 Why are we doing it in this kind of way? So, take ten minutes. I'm going to set the timer. I'm going to jot down some thoughts and, um, and then I'll come back and then that will take us into our final part of session five.

23:10 So, there we go. Talk to you in a moment. I'm talking about why do we- we repeat in the context of these acts of worship.

24:31 Yeah. Not in general. We can talk about that maybe next time when we're talking about how do we live out our everyday faith.

24:37 But in this instance, I'm talking about how- why do we repeat within these acts of worship, umm, that we're talking about, um, in this session?

33:08 of you in the group that I'll be a part of, and in your other groups, you'll be able to share with each other some of your your thinking as to why we repeat these things in our worship beyond the sort of broader understanding of what we, what we pray, what we worship, the way we pray, the

33:27 way we worship shapes how we believe, shapes what we believe. So, I, I'm, I'm, I've got three suggestions, and this is going to bring us into, sort of, towards the end of this session five.

33:37 So there are three reasons I, I would offer among many. I am in no way saying that these are the three reasons, okay?

33:46 They're just three reasons. And, firstly, food. Uh, we've talked about food we started off thinking about food in, in the scriptures.

33:55 Didn't we? It's really eating, eating eating the scriptures. And you know, one of the reasons why we, we do this is to encounter encounter Christ, isn't it?

34:07 We, we look to encounter Christ in our eating of the scriptures, of hearing the scriptures. And hearing them week in, week out is vital to that.

34:17 In and hearing them proclaimed hearing them. Preached, as as well you know, this is food for our journey.

34:27 Uh, one of the the, the metaphors is that it's manner for us in the wilderness. you know, we're, we need, we need sustenance as we go along.

34:36 We need to be sustained, we need food. And obviously that takes us to thinking about the Eucharist and receiving the bread and the wine of our Lord Jesus Christ.

34:44 And receiving that so that we can be sustained on our journey, on our pilgrimage as we travel in faith.

34:52 so God sustains us. So that's the first one I would say. We need to do it. It's not just like, oh, I had a meal, I went to church 15 years ago, but you know, I'm still fine.

35:02 I'm, you know, no problem. I'm still going with what happened 15 years ago. most of us are not like that.

35:07 We need to be sustained frequently, just in the same way that we need to eat frequently. it's not enough just to eat a meal, you know, six months apart type of thing.

35:16 We need it, we need it every day. We need to be eating every day. We need to, and, and in this sort of regular, weekly, corporate act of worship, supplementing what we do as individuals and in smaller groups, and however we're doing it.

35:29 it, this needs to be a repetitive, a repetitive, repeated action. We need to eat repeatedly, we need to eat and be sustained by the presence of Christ through the scriptures, through the Eucharist, through our corporate acts of worship.

35:42 And so, that's, that's first one, because we you know, we need to be sustained because when we're talking about manner in the wilderness, one of the things we're saying is that we are in the wilderness, we're in Act 4, we're, we're, we're, you know, it's one way of framing it, thinking about being

35:53 in Act 4, and obviously when I'm talking about being Act 4, the other way of thinking, one of the reasons we're repeating is because we're reminding ourselves of the story that we're living by.

36:04 There are, you know, each week doing this shapes our beliefs, it reinforces our understanding of the story that we are inhabiting.

36:11 Who is God? Who are we? How does the story, uhm you know, give sense to this, this story of who God is?

36:20 It's the story of who we are. And the scriptures that, the story that tells us, the overarching narrative scripture, think about these five Acts that we were talking about, and we're in the fourth Act, the Act called the Church, and in between the the death, resurrection, and ascension of Christ

36:39 , and his return, and the fulfilment, and the culmination, that's Act 5. And the resurrection of all creation, that's Act 5.

36:47 We're in Act 4, the way that the story is, is shaped. And we're living, uhm we're living then.

36:55 And so in that time, you know, we repeat this, because there are all sorts of other ways of framing what it is to be, uhm uh the story that we live by.

37:07 You know, just simple things. Like turning around, there's all the phrases, you know, eat, sleep, repeat, eat, sleep, repeat. Uh, the, the things like that, uhm uh, effectively saying that there's no further kind of meaning to being alive.

37:19 Whereas we have an understanding that the story is going somewhere. But we need to remind ourselves of the story that we live by.

37:26 And that's one of the things we do by repeating these actions and these words and these phrases in our worship.

37:32 They shape the beliefs and they remind us of the story that we are living in. This is the story which gives the identity of God and gives us our identity.

37:43 And that is exactly the third reason why I would say that we do these things repeatedly. Because this story tells us who we are.

37:52 It shapes us in all sorts of ways, doesn't it? I mean, there are all sorts of other ways. We're thinking about who we are, but these repeated actions shape our understanding of our identity.

38:03 there are other stories, there are other ways of wanting to think about us in terms of our identity. say for example, in our time, in our place, in our kind of economic system, one of the key ways of wanting us to understand ourselves is first and foremost as consumers.

38:17 That I am what I buy. I am what I wear. Where I am, I am who I am because I have this type of phone, I have this kind of house, I have that kind of car, I wear these kind of clothes, and I go on this kind of holiday, whatever it may be.

38:31 Those are all other competing narratives for wanting to give us our sense of identity, whereas this story, mediated through these repeated actions that we do week after week, is telling us this is who we are.

38:44 And it's giving us the sustenance, giving us the food for that journey to travel along that narrative storyline that we are currently in, which is, as it were, is act four of the five-act play.

38:58 but within that core identity, rather than our core identity being that of a consumer or so on and so forth, within that story, our core identity, remember, we talked about about it very early on, we're talking about the Imago Dei, that we are made in the image of God.

39:15 this is one of the things that we touched on in the second session when we were talking about who are we.

39:23 And this is, this is, this is critical to all of it. And so by doing this, we're reminding ourselves, these repeated actions that we're reminding us of who we are in relationship to, to God, and that we are made in God's image, that we are made in the Imago of, the Imago Dei, we are the, made 39:44 in the image and likeness of God. The repeated story is helping us clarify our identity, it's clarifying the story that we live by, and it's giving us food for the journey.

39:54 It's sustaining us as we go. And given that who we are, made in the image and likeness of God, one of our key things, going back to it, that image of God, that Imago Dei, is this understanding that we have this role, we have this function, as it were, this, this thing that we are called to do, and we

40:13 are called to be ambassadors for God in creation, we're called, it's, it's a, it's a priestly role for all of us, we're called to.

40:20 to image into creation, God's desires and intentions and presence into the, into creation, and also what we are to do, is to reflect God's praises, to reflect to God, the praises and worship of all creation of God.

40:38 We have this dual role, we reflect God into creation and we reflect creation's praises and glory, glory, glory. glorifying of God, to God.

40:47 It's this dual world. And the other word that we have for this action of reflecting God's praises to God, of all creation, and that, you know, being part of our role of being made in the image and likeness of God, well that's, that's because we are called to worship.

41:01 That's, we are worshipping beings and this is our vocation. If you think about it, that's one of the first commandments that God gives to Moses on Mount Sinai, and it's saying that I am the Lord your God who got you out of a terrible mess in Egypt.

41:21 You're gonna have no other gods ahead of me. One of the, and don't make idols. Why? Because you are the idol.

41:28 You are the icon. You are the one that is meant to represent God in creation. No one else. You're the one.

41:32 You're God. You're meant to do it. Don't go and make other ones. You're meant to be doing this. the, the heart, our heart, the way we go offline, go back to the human propensity to, eh, things up, is that we want to go off and we want to worship other things.

41:47 Our desires get misdirected. They go off in other directions. But by these repeated acts of worship, we're able to, the Spirit is able to, rather, bring us back to the place where we were going, yes, this is who we are.

41:58 This is what we're called to do. This is what, this is the one, this is God whom we are called to worship in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, by the power of the Spirit.

42:08 This is what we are called to do. This is our vocation, being made in the image and likeness of God, for the glory of God and for the world that he loves.

42:21 you think about it, how much time do you actually spend worshipping, as it were, in the gathered, gathered community when we come together in church to worship?

42:33 It's maybe like one hour on a Sunday morning, every week, every other week, maybe a little bit longer, maybe a little bit less.

42:41 Sometimes there are some interruptions, you need to travel off a and see an aunt here or go away on work there and it all gets mixed up and interrupted and everything.

42:49 The point is we're not spending all our time, are we, worshipping together in church, doing these acts of worship, the kind of thing we've been talking about.

42:58 And go back to what I was talking about in the second video about how we pray shapes what we believe, not just how we worship shapes what we believe, how we pray shapes what we believe, but we're not praying all the There are intentional moments of prayer, there are, you know, we might be throwing up

43:14 our own prayers during the course of the day when things happen, so on and so forth, but we're not praying all the time.

43:19 What about the rest of our time? If you think about it, the rest of our days when we're not praying, the rest of our week when we're not praying, you know, what about all of that?

43:32 What about, what about the rest of the time that we live when we're not intentionally worshipping in the kind of focused way that we've been talking about in this video?

43:44 Well, that's going to be our topic for next time, for our final session of the Exploring Theology course, and the title for that session is How Do We Live Out Our Everyday Faith?

44:02 I'm really looking forward to that because in many ways, almost all the other videos, all the other sessions we've done, builds up to this because as I said to you in that very first video, if you recall, I was talking about thinking theologically.

44:17 It's not just a question of thinking theologically, it's a question of how we live theologically. So this is this is almost like the rubber hits the road.

44:24 How do we live out our everyday faith given that it's, you know, that's where we spend most of our time.

44:30 How do we live out our everyday faith and how does that shape our understanding of God? What does that reveal about God?

44:36 Just in the way that we've been talking about an implicit theology that's there in our acts of worship, what's the implicit theology of how we live out our everyday faith?

44:43 That's all for next time. But for now, let's turn to draw this all to a close. Let's have a quick look at the summary.

44:51 So, starting off, didn't we, we talked about this idea of thinking about theology as conversation, and Jeff Astley was is one of the key people in this area, thinking about a conversation with the past, scripture, the creeds, the traditions of the church conversation in the present with

45:09 other people. with people writing now, people YouTubing, podcasting, so on and so forth, all happening now, those who you've been talking about in in, in your groups you've been doing this course, and conversations with ourselves, viewing things from different angles and different times in

45:25 our own lives, and so on and so forth, and fundamentally in and through all of this, it's been a conversation with God.

45:33 Then, we went on to thinking about eating scripture with Grigo II, good old Grigo, and he had this image of how we eat scriptures eat the scriptures, and suck out the flavor as we're meditating, things like that, and, and enjoy the flavor, and, and, and what have you, okay?

45:51 So, those different ways, and then we mapped that onto we were thinking, we would map that onto our own reading of scriptures.

45:58 We read this passage from Isaiah chapter 6, the first few verses, when Isaiah has this vision of God in the in the temple, and next time, as I said, I'm going to talk I'm going to explore another way of thinking about our reading of scripture, and in this kind of way, which has to do

46:18 with bees. So, I'll, I'll leave that for next time. Then, after that, I introduced you to this idea of Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, going back to Prosper of Aquitaine, who was this disciple, as it were, of Augustine of Hippo, was defending Augustine's theology, and that kind of thing.

46:39 But he had this phrase, which has been, sort of, made a little bit short, a little bit more compact in our day, Lex Orandi, Lex Credendi, which is this, how we pray, shapes, um how what we believe.

46:53 And so, we then were spending some time thinking about how do we pray. And so, we were literally looking from that.

46:58 Lex Orandi, we were thinking, well, how do we pray? And we explored different ways that we pray, and we were, I was asking you to think about all that kind of thing and jot it down.

47:06 We're going to be talking about this when we gather. And we were then trying to work out, What's some of the implicit theology?

47:11 What's the theology that's hidden underneath and in and through these words and ways that we pray? What's it saying about our understanding of God and us and the relationship between us and God and God and the world and us and the world and so on?

47:25 Okay? So that was how do we pray, then we've looked, and this is what we've just recently most done. How do we worship?

47:31 And again, we were thinking about how we worship, Shapes what we believe, what we think about God, ourselves, the world, and I asked you to go off and think, um, we did that Desert Island, um, hymns thing, didn't we?

47:44 And you wrote down what your favourite hymn I did that too, we wrote it out, and with them I asked you to think about the language that's used in that hymn and what it's saying about God, what it's saying about you, what it's saying about the world.

47:58 And, um, we did that, and then I kind of asked you, we, we, we mapped on some of the other stuff that we do in church, didn't we?

48:04 I talked about things like when we say prayers, we talked about the Our Father, um, we talked about the Eucharist, the Mass, the Lord's Prayer the Lord's Supper, and we talked about all sorts of other things, didn't we?

48:15 As we went along the way, and then with all that in mind I asked you to go to your service, to a church service that you normally attend, and to notice what you repeat- Thank patience.

48:22 Because I'd use that image of that Norwegian very striking Norwegian stone on the west, northwest coast of Norway made out of, I think it's Eglucite, Eglucite, Eglucite, Eglucite, and, um it looks like kind of like an inverted, well, it looked not inverted, it looks like a mushroom, wasn't

48:40 it? And the water that's had the sea, that's had this effect shaping it like that, and so these actions of repetition- for today's edition.

48:46 And how they're shaping us over time. And Bart's just having a little stretch. And, um, and, and then what were the three things that really stood out from you from observing your worship, sort of, you know, standing back a little bit from it?

48:59 And what were those three things, sort of, um, asked you to talk about those three- the three things. Take three examples of things that you would that you had noted.

49:09 And what were they- face. Saying about God. What were they saying about you? What was it saying about the world and the relationship between those three, but especially with reference to God.

49:17 And then we stood back and we thought about, sort of, the broader question about, again, coming back to it. Like, why do we repeat?

49:23 And we were thinking about, you know, um, stuff along the lines of saying, I, I, you had your thoughts, you've written them down, we're gonna show those when we meet.

49:32 But I was thinking about things like, well, food. And, um, this is if you know we're coming to the end.

49:37 Come on, bud. Um where are we? There we go. Um, food, um, edit this bit. And it's, you know, come on, come on.

49:49 Yes. There we go. Well done. Um, the where was it? Like, why do we repeat? And this thing's like, yeah, that's right.

49:57 I was talking about, Things like food, and story, and identity, and that we're called to be worshipping beings. But then that raised the big question, well hang on a second, we don't spend all our time praying, we don't spend all our time worshipping in this kind of focused, focal kind of way when we're

50:14 gathered together in our churches and everything. What about the rest of the time? And that's gonna be our topic for next time, isn't it?

50:22 Thank When we look at this broader question of how do we live out our everyday faith? Yes, that's what we're gonna do next time, Bart.

50:29 Okay, so Bart's looking forward to that, hopefully you are too. Anyway, so, with all that in mind, let's draw this to a close by praying that same prayer which had a strong focus, didn't it about the Holy Spirit.

50:42 So this, again, you see, this is a prayer, we say these kind of prayers over and over, they're gonna shape Okay bye.

50:46 So we've got God the Father, we've got Holy Spirit, Jesus Christ our Lord. All three in there, this understanding of God being the Trinity and that it's there, implicit in all our prayers.

51:00 Um, so there we go. Uh, right. Here we are. Let's pray this prayer together and we'll draw this uh, fifth session to a clap.

51:10 Okay, you stay still, but, no, you're not having my tea. Wait. There we go. Here we go. Please, say this prayer with me wherever you are watching this.

51:21 Please say this prayer with me. And then we'll draw things to a close. Okay? Oh my God, who sent your Holy Spirit to be the life and light of your church.

51:39 Open our hearts to the riches of your grace that we may bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in love and joy and peace through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

51:56 Amen. There we go, everybody. Oh, yes, one more thing, usual Colombo style.

52:09 One more thing. Which is just to say, as usual with these videos, there's some optional, some recommended and optional resources where I'm just going to give you some pointers if you want to follow any of these particular angles further in different directions.

52:24 Right, Bart said that's enough, I'm off. So there we go, that's our cue. Let's draw this to a close. If you do get time, check out those extra resources, but if you don't, don't worry, there's no problem, just come along.

52:34 Looking forward to seeing you all. And for now, may God bless us all and have a good time thinking through all of this and engaging with the extra resources as and when, if you have time.

52:48 There we go. Alright then. Bye everybody. Take care.