

Brad Jordan / General Adult

Exodus: Delivered By God, For God / Exodus 34:10–28

This message from Exodus 34 confronts us with the truth that reconciliation with God reshapes the entirety of life. True joy is not found in fleeting circumstances, but in belonging to the God who redeems, dwells with, and orders His people. Following Israel's covenant renewal, God immediately establishes rhythms of worship, obedience, holiness, and rest—revealing that grace does not abolish responsibility but secures it. Worship flows from deliverance, requires holiness, demands trust, and claims all of life: time, resources, family, and devotion. God asserts His ownership, provides redemption through sacrifice, and protects those who obey Him. At the heart of the passage is a pressing reality—truly reconciled people always worship God. Not occasionally. Not conveniently. But consistently. This sermon calls believers to examine whether worship is central or negotiable, reminding us that grace has not merely forgiven us—it has reclaimed us entirely for the glory of God.

Introduction

The Puritan Matthew Henry wrote “Serious godliness is a continual feast, and joy in God always.” Years later AW Pink would write a similar statement “there is no greater privilege enjoyed on earth than for God’s saints to be gathered together, in festive assembly, around Himself.” We have just gone through a time of year where one of the main ideas or themes that is thrown around is joy. For most of the world that term carries with it temporary connotations of something ephemeral that makes them happy or what they may describe as joyful for a few moments at best. For us, as believers, there is a deeper truth to be found when we think about joy because where the world's joy is based on temporary, fading moments and items, our joy finds as its foundation the eternal redemptive plan of God to reconcile His people to Himself. In the book “The Valley of Vision” the editor Arthur Bennett pulls together the writings of various Puritans into prayers and poems. Many of these we have incorporated into our prayers during our worship services but this morning I want to share one with you directly out of the book. This particular writing is entitled “A Colloquy on Rejoicing”. The word colloquy means “a conversation or a serious conference” the Oxford dictionary includes “a gathering for discussion of

theological questions". This particular writing is framed in the manner of an individual having a conversation with their own soul, a soul that is dealing with many of the same issues as those of most of us in our everyday life:

"A Colloquy On Rejoicing"

Remember, O my soul, it is thy duty and privilege to rejoice in God: He requires it of thee for all His favours of grace. Rejoice then in the Giver and His goodness, Be happy in Him, O my heart, and in nothing but God, for whatever a man trusts in, from that he expects happiness. He who is the ground of thy faith should be the substance of thy joy. Whence then comes heaviness and dejection, when joy is sown in thee, promised by the Father, bestowed by the Son, inwrought by the Holy Spirit, thine by grace, thy birthright in believing? Art thou seeking to rejoice in thyself from an evil motive of pride and self-reputation? Thou hast nothing of thine own but sin, nothing to move God to be gracious or to continue His grace towards thee. If thou forget this thou wilt lose thy joy. Art thou grieving under a sense of indwelling sin? Let godly sorrow work repentance, as the true spirit which the Lord blesses, and which creates fullest joy; Sorrow for self opens rejoicing in God, Self-loathing draws down divine delights. Hast thou sought joys in some creature comfort? Look not below God for happiness; fall not asleep in Delilah's lap. Let God be all in all to thee and joy in the fountain that is always full.

The reason I chose this particular writing this morning is that it reminds me of the place where Israel stands at the moment before God. The covenant that they had made with God has been broken by their sin and as a result their joy suffers, but God in his infinite goodness and mercy provides. Just like Israel, when we are not living in accordance with God's word our joy can suffer as well, unless we remember that our joy is not based off of what we have done or are doing, but on what God the Father has ordained, God the Son has done and God the Holy Spirit is doing and sustaining. As a reminder, a few weeks ago when we first looked at this passage we saw Israel's reconciliation with God was not achieved by their repentance, obedience, or resolve—but by God's sovereign grace alone. A covenant shattered by sin was renewed by mercy. A people deserving judgment were restored because Yahweh chose to act. Moses stood on Sinai not as a negotiator, but as a mediator for a people who could not reconcile themselves to God.

We saw that God alone cuts the covenant, God alone performs the wondrous works, and God alone writes His law. From that reconciliation flows a necessary response: a transformed life marked by obedience, holiness, and right worship. The question pressed upon Israel—and upon us—was the same question Scripture asks again and again: *How then shall we live?*

Now, in the second part of this God continues to answer that question. He does not leave His reconciled people without instruction. Grace does not abolish obedience; it establishes it. In our text, the Lord sets before Israel the rhythms of an obedient life, the boundaries of a holy life, but also defined the right worship that must mark a people who belong to Him. These commands do not earn God's favor—they flow from it. They reveal what covenant life looks like when a holy God dwells among a redeemed people.

This takes us to the text for today as we return once again to Exodus 34 this morning we will be reading verses 10-28 but our focus will be on verses 17-26. Turn with me in your bible to our text for today and having found your place...

Text

Please stand in reverence for the reading of God's Holy, Inerrant, Infallible, authoritative, sufficient, complete and certain Word...

Exodus 34:10–28 LSB

Then God said, "Behold, I am going to cut a covenant. Before all your people I will do wondrous deeds which have not been created in all the earth nor among any of the nations; and all the people among whom you live will see the working of Yahweh, for it is a fearful thing that I am going to do with you.

"Be sure to keep what I am commanding you this day: behold, I am going to drive out the Amorite before you, and the Canaanite, the Hittite, the Perizzite, the Hivite, and the Jebusite.

"Beware lest you cut a covenant with the inhabitants of the land into which you are going, lest it become a snare in your midst.

“But *rather*, you are to tear down their altars and shatter their *sacred* pillars and cut down their Asherim

—for you shall not worship any other god, for Yahweh, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God—

lest you cut a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they play the harlot with their gods and sacrifice to their gods, and one *of them* invite you to eat of his sacrifice,

and you take some of his daughters for your sons, and his daughters play the harlot with their gods and cause your sons *also* to play the harlot with their gods.

“You shall make for yourself no molten gods.

“You shall keep the Feast of Unleavened Bread. For seven days you shall eat unleavened bread, which I commanded you, at the appointed time in the month of Abib, for in the month of Abib you came out of Egypt.

“The first offspring from every womb belongs to Me, even of all your male livestock, the first offspring from cattle and sheep.

“And you shall redeem with a lamb the first offspring from a donkey; and if you do not redeem *it*, then you shall break its neck. You shall redeem all the firstborn of your sons. None shall appear before Me empty-handed.

“You shall work six days, but on the seventh day you shall rest; *even* during plowing time and harvest you shall rest.

“And you shall celebrate the Feast of Weeks, *that is*, the first fruits of the wheat harvest, and the Feast of Ingathering at the turn of the year.

“Three times a year all your males are to appear before the Lord Yahweh, the God of Israel.

“For I will dispossess nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no

man shall covet your land when you go up three times a year to appear before Yahweh your God.

“You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, and the sacrifice of the Feast of the Passover shall not be left over until morning.

“You shall bring the very first of the first fruits of your ground into the house of Yahweh your God.

“**You** shall not boil a young goat in its mother’s milk.”

Then Yahweh said to Moses, “Write down these words, for in accordance with these words I have cut a covenant with you and with Israel.”

So he was there with Yahweh forty days and forty nights; he did not eat bread or drink water. And he wrote on the tablets the words of the covenant, the Ten Commandments.

Our prayer this morning is adapted from a prayer by Herman Witsius entitled “I Will Cling To You”:

Most gracious heavenly Father,

From eternity, O Lord, did You set Your thoughts upon us— to bring glory to Yourself through a people so undeserving? We are less than nothing before You. Yet we will keep You always before our eyes and treasure You in our hearts. We will delight to meditate on You, and together we cry out, “How precious are Your thoughts to us, O God! How vast is the sum of them!” With true repentance, we grieve the countless hours— the days, the weeks, the years— that passed without holy and pleasing thoughts of You. Did You, out of sheer mercy and love, choose us for salvation? Then we submit to You as our Lord and our King, the portion of our souls, our chief—no, our only—delight. Did You set Your love upon us while so many, left to themselves, rush toward destruction? Then let us not live carelessly or half-heartedly. We will strive to excel in love for You, in reverent worship before You, and in every duty of holiness. You did not merely appoint the end of our salvation, but the path that leads to it. You predestined us to holiness— beautiful in itself and necessary for our life. Without it, there is no salvation. So we will walk in it, never separating the goal from the way

You have ordained to reach it. Your purpose for our salvation is fixed and unchanging. Why then should our hearts wander— serving You one moment and sin the next? Why should we live divided when You have claimed us as Your own? We will cling to You. We would rather suffer than forsake or betray You. By Your grace, we will be steadfast and immovable, always abounding in the work You have given us to do, knowing that our labor in You is never in vain. By Your Spirit, You draw us into a love that surpasses all understanding. And we will love You in return with all our hearts, all our minds, and all our strength. You grant us assurance— not to make us careless, but to make us pure. And with this hope, we seek to purify ourselves, even as You are pure. Lord, You have honored us beyond measure by calling us Your children. You make this known by pouring Your love into our hearts through the Holy Spirit You have given. So empty us of everything else, that we might be filled with You alone. Let our life together be marked by love, worship, obedience, and joy in You — to the utmost of the strength You supply. We will cling to You as we pray all of these things in the name of our blessed Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Truly Reconciled People Worship the One True God

In the first message on verses 10-28 we spoke about what it meant to be truly reconciled people, which is a theme that we will carry through the message today because the instruction continues. Each of these three main themes, obedience, holiness and worship exist in the life of a believer, not as a means to obtain salvation or some special favor from God, but rather as a result of that salvation which has already been given and is guaranteed to be completed. We stress this because the message of much of the church has become the opposite of this, much of the church sees these things as optional and adaptable to the individuals situation, that obedience, holiness and right worship are definable by the individual versus being defined by God.

As a result of this viewpoint we end up with worship that looks and sounds like the world versus worship that is in accordance with the word of God. The ultimate result of this type of worship is that gods, little g, are formed and that is what is worshipped. Take the Israelites, while Moses was on the

mountain, receiving instructions from God regarding proper worship and approach, receiving the very instructions for His tabernacle where He would dwell in their midst, they determined to create a god out of gold so that they could worship in the manner that they wanted, notice God's words in verse 17 "You shall make for yourself no molten gods..."

By virtue of the demonstration in delivering the Israelites from Egypt, by His actions in providing and protecting the people as they came out of Egypt and traveled to Sinai, and in the commands He gave them there on Sinai, they know that there is only one, true God and they know that they were not to create an idol for worship, however we see, because of the desires of their heart, they have both created an idol and worshipped it versus the one true God. So we have God reminding them, not in a general way, but in a very specific way that there is but One True God and He alone is to be worshipped.

For us, even within the church, we need to be reminded that although we have been made new, reconciled to God our flesh still clings desperately, fighting to exert control over us and lead us away. As it has been said, our hearts are "idol factories". It is because of this truth that we need to be reminded that worship, true worship, begins when we ensure that our worship is of God and God alone. The question that we must ask then, is how do I know? How do I know when my worship is fallen away from God?

In John's gospel we find the record of the encounter between Christ and the woman at the well. You may recall that part of the exchange went as follows, reading from John 4:19-24

John 4:19-24 LSB

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I see that You are a prophet.

"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you *people* say that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, an hour is coming when neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.

"You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.

“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.

“God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

Essentially, she is asking the same question, she points to a truth that the Samaritans believed regarding the true place of worship, this mountain or the one that the Jews proclaim. Jesus’ response is that true worship takes place when it is first and foremost worship of the one, true God and when it is done in spirit, MacArthur is helpful:

John 1–11: The MacArthur New Testament Commentary The Christ

Spirit does not refer to the Holy Spirit but the human spirit. Worship must be internal, not external conformity to ceremonies and rituals. It must be from the heart. Truth calls for this heart worship to be consistent with what Scripture teaches and centered on the incarnate Word. The worship of neither the Samaritans nor the Jews could be characterized as being in spirit and truth, even though the Jews had a more complete understanding of the truth. Both groups focused on external factors. They conformed outwardly to regulations, observed rituals, and offered sacrifices. But the time had arrived, since the Messiah had come, when true worshipers would no longer be identified by where they worshiped. True worshipers are those who worship the Father in spirit and truth. Paul calls them “the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh” (Phil. 3:3). It is such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers by sovereignly drawing them to Himself (6:44, 65).

And so we must begin there, is our worship truly of Yahweh and is it in accordance with His word? If not we begin to err, notice how obedience is tied in with true worship, this is why Paul encouraged the Romans and all other believers to Romans 12:1–2 “Therefore I exhort you, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a sacrifice—living, holy, and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may approve what the will of God is, that which is good and pleasing and perfect.” When we begin with God as the object of our worship and His word as the source of our worship then our worship will be proper and right.

Truly Reconciled People Worship God As a Result of His Deliverance

Proper and right worship flows out of the deliverance that God has provided for His people. Each of us, born sinners, filled with a sinful nature, would have continued, left to our own devices on that path, a path that ultimately leads to eternal damnation. In God's grace and mercy He set His electing love upon us, His call was and is effectual and we turned from darkness to light, as a result we worship Him because of what He has done. Notice verse 18 where He commands them to keep the first of three Feasts found in our passage for today. This particular feast you may recall was tied to the Passover which was instituted prior to the final plague of the Angel of Death. Instituted for the purpose of identifying those who belonged to God and preventing them from being affected by the plague. Again, notice how obedience is tied in here, failure to obey the command to spread the blood on the doorpost and lintel meant that they did not belong to God and as a result would not be spared.

The first thing that we need to ensure that we understand is that the "feasts" celebrated in the Old Testament were for the purpose of God's people coming together before Him in communion and fellowship. Secondly we need to understand that they find their fulfillment in Christ and so we are no longer commanded to observe the feasts as they once did, but we are called to still gather. Notice the corporate atmosphere of these commands, again, this is about God's people coming together before Him, Pink writes:

Gleanings in Exodus Chapter 68: God's Claims

How blessedly this tells forth God's grand design in redemption: it is not only for the purpose of emancipating His people and bringing them unto Himself, but also that they may be happily gathered around Himself. That is what the "feast" speaks of, communion and joy. God gathered His redeemed around Himself in holy convocation, Himself the center of peace and blessing.

A few verses later, in verse 25 we read an additional command regarding the Feast of the Passover, notice Exodus 34:25 "You shall not offer the blood of My sacrifice with leavened bread, and the sacrifice of the Feast of

the Passover shall not be left over until morning.” Just as obedience comes into to play with worship, so does holiness, this is why these two are addressed first, for we are called to live obedient and holy lives which MUST include obedient and holy worship. I want to call your attention to a couple of things in verse 25; first, notice the statement “My sacrifice”, this speaks not only of the sacrifice that must be offered on a continual basis by the priests, but also serves typologically to point us forward to the Sacrifice that was “offered once for all”. It is interesting to see that the blood must not be offered with leavened bread. When we look scripture the concept of yeast (or leaven) is used in connection with sin and contamination. For Israel this was a reminder that the sacrifice was to be pure, undefiled. For us, the meaning is very similar but it speaks to the way in which our worship is to be undertaken in a holy manner, worthy of the sacrifice that made it possible to enter into the presence of Almighty God.

They were also commanded again to ensure that nothing remained until morning of the sacrifice, a promise of future provision but also of putting their faith in God and His provision and continually being reminded of the work that was done on their behalf. For us, this still serves as a reminder, echoed in the words of Christ in John 6:50-56

John 6:50–56 LSB

“This is the bread which comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die.

“I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and also the bread which I will give for the life of the world is My flesh.”

Then the Jews *began to* argue with one another, saying, “How can this man give us *His* flesh to eat?”

So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in yourselves.

“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up on the last day.

“For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink.

“He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him.

The provision that God has made for our salvation and our faith in that provision and the reality that it is complete. If we come to worship Him and there are doubts in our mind as to if that sacrifice was enough or if He will indeed sustain us, if we hold back, then what does our worship really say?

Truly Reconciled People Worship God in Fullness

The words of Exodus 34:19–20 confront us with a sweeping and humbling reality: *“All that opens the womb is Mine.”* With this declaration, Yahweh asserts His absolute and comprehensive ownership. Nothing exists outside His sovereign claim. Life itself—its beginning, its continuation, and its purpose—belongs wholly to Him. This is not merely a ceremonial regulation given to Israel; it is a theological assertion about reality. God is not claiming *part* of His people’s lives, nor merely their religious observance. He is claiming **everything**.

True worship, then, flows from reconciliation rightly understood. A people who have been redeemed by God cannot approach Him selectively. To be reconciled is to acknowledge that we are no longer our own. As Pink rightly presses upon us, we are not proprietors but stewards. Children, possessions, time, strength, intellect, resources—none are ours by right. They are entrusted to us by God and held for His glory. To worship God in fullness is to come before Him empty of self-ownership and full of grateful surrender.

This is why the language of redemption in verse 20 is so striking. The unclean animal—the donkey—must be redeemed with a lamb, or else destroyed. The picture is unavoidable and deeply humbling. We are not merely weak or misguided by nature; we are unclean, senseless, and stubborn in our fallen state. Yet God does not leave us to destruction. He provides a Lamb. Redemption precedes worship. Only those redeemed by sacrifice can appear before God—and they cannot appear *empty*. Redemption fills the heart with gratitude, the lips with praise, and the life with obedient offering.

Thus, worship is not confined to song, posture, or place. Worship is the lived response of a reconciled people who recognize that **all they are and all they have belong to God**. Parents dedicate their children not as a ritual, but as an acknowledgment of divine ownership. Believers steward their lives not reluctantly, but joyfully, knowing they were bought with a price. To withhold anything—children, resources, obedience, or devotion—is to deny the very redemption that made worship possible.

A truly reconciled people worship God in fullness because they know the fullness of His claim and the fullness of His grace. Having been redeemed by the Lamb, they come before Him not empty-handed, but offering themselves—heart, soul, strength, and life—as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God. This is worship in its fullest sense.

Truly Reconciled People Always Worship God

If Exodus 34 has been teaching us anything, it is this: reconciliation is never aimless. God does not restore His people merely so they can *feel forgiven*—He restores them so they can *walk with Him*. The golden calf revealed the truth of the nature of mankind; the renewal of the covenant reveals the mercy of God across all of history. And immediately, what follows reconciliation is not a blank slate for self-direction, but a gracious re-ordering of life around God Himself. Matthew Henry captures the pastoral logic well: Israel had proclaimed a “feast” to an idol; therefore God presses them back into the feasts He Himself appointed—so that their joy would never again be untethered from truth. God does not rob His servants of gladness; He provides for it. *Serious godliness is a continual feast, and joy in God always.*

So notice how the Lord lays it out: after separation to God, after dedication to God, after the call to worship and stewardship, the Lord now commands rhythm—holy rhythm—so that the reconciled life will not drift back into the chaos of self. And the first rhythm is not annual, but weekly:

“Six days you shall work, but on the seventh day you shall rest; even in plowing time and in harvest you shall rest.” (Ex. 34:21)

The Lord is not making a suggestion. He is laying claim. Not merely to

Israel's life and possessions, but also to their *time*. And He does it at the exact point where excuses feel most reasonable—*plowing time and harvest*. In other words, "even when it feels impossible, even when the workload is heavy, even when the schedule is packed, even when you feel like you cannot afford to stop—stop."

Because the Sabbath is not first a law about inactivity. It is a mercy about **occupation, or being engaged with God**. Pink's observation is worth pressing upon our consciences: this is "the Lord's provision of mercy for our soul's occupation with Himself." It is God teaching His reconciled people that their lives cannot be governed by urgency, production, and fear. The Sabbath is a weekly reminder by God Himself: *You are not sustained by your labor. You are sustained by your Lord.*

And if we are honest, this is precisely where we reveal what we truly worship. When life is frantic, when responsibility mounts, when demands increase, what do we instinctively sacrifice first? The gathered worship of God. The Word. Prayer. The quiet of communion. We tell ourselves we will return when harvest is done—when the pressure breaks—when things calm down. But God says, *even then*. Especially then. Because if you do not learn to rest with God in plowing time and harvest, you will not suddenly become restful with God when the schedule clears. You will simply become occupied with the next thing, and the next, and the next.

This is why Henry can say, with such wisdom, that "all worldly business must give way to that holy rest." Not because God is harsh, but because God is kind. He knows that the heart that will not pause before Him will eventually replace Him. A hurried soul is not a neutral soul—it is a vulnerable soul. And a people freshly reconciled must be guarded from returning to golden calves—calves that are not always made of gold, but of busyness, ambition, comfort, entertainment, and the quiet pride that says, "I must keep going or everything will fall apart."

But then the Lord moves from weekly rest to appointed, corporate worship:

"Three times a year all your males shall appear before the Lord Yahweh, the God of Israel." (Ex. 34:23)

Reconciled people do not merely worship privately; they worship *together*. God gathers them. He appoints the times. He sets the terms. The feasts were not invented by Israel for cultural tradition; they were instituted by

God for covenant remembrance. Redemption was to be rehearsed, proclaimed, and celebrated. God was teaching His people that worship is not occasional, not casual, and not optional. They “appear before the Lord”—as Henry says—like servants receiving commands, and like petitioners seeking favor. Yet they do so with joy, because the Lord is “the Lord God, infinitely blessed, great, and glorious,” but also “the personal God of Israel”—the God in covenant with His people, God who desires to tabernacle, or dwell with, His people.

And here is the tenderness of our God: He anticipates the objection before it is ever spoken.

If all the men leave, what about the land? What about our homes? What about our families? What about our safety?

And the Lord answers:

“For I will drive out nations before you and enlarge your borders, and no man shall covet your land when you go up to appear before Yahweh your God three times a year.” (Ex. 34:24)

Do you hear what God is saying? *Obedience will not make you vulnerable; obedience will place you under My protection.* The Lord does not merely restrain actions; He restrains desires. *No man shall covet your land.* That is sovereignty at its most personal level—God governing not only events, but hearts. Proverbs 21:1 is not a poetic idea; it is a living reality: *“The king’s heart is like channels of water in the hand of Yahweh; He turns it wherever He pleases.”*

So the command to worship is simultaneously a call to trust.

And that is where this presses on us today. We often treat worship like a leftover category—what we do as long as our schedule allows. But in Exodus 34, worship is a covenant expression of reconciliation. Truly reconciled people always worship God—because worship is not what we do when life is easy; it is what we do because God is worthy, because God is Owner, because God is Redeemer, because God is Protector, because God is God.

So let me ask it plainly:

When the pressure rises—when the schedule tightens—when “plowing

time and harvest” arrive in your life—does worship become negotiable? Do you begin to live as if God’s commands are reasonable in theory but unrealistic in practice? Or do you see that the way of duty is the way of safety, and that those who venture for Him shall never lose by Him?

Because the Lord is not calling you to worship as a religious accessory. He is calling you to worship as the lived evidence of a reconciled heart. A reconciled people do not drift away from God; they return to Him—weekly, repeatedly, corporately, joyfully—because they have learned what it means to belong to Him.

And if we belong to Him, then our time belongs to Him. Our calendar belongs to Him. Our work belongs to Him. Our homes belong to Him. Our families belong to Him. Our safety belongs to Him. And therefore, our worship cannot be partial. It must be consistent—because grace has not merely forgiven us; grace has reclaimed us.

Conclusion

Reconciliation with God is never an abstract doctrine—it is a reclaimed life. Exodus 34 does not leave us with a vague sense of forgiveness, but with a re-ordered existence shaped by God’s holiness, God’s claims, and God’s presence. A people reconciled by grace do not negotiate worship, redefine obedience, or compartmentalize holiness. They belong—entirely—to the Lord who redeemed them.

God does not merely forgive Israel; He gathers them, instructs them, claims their time, guards their lives, and anchors their joy. The same is true for us. Grace has not loosened God’s grip on us; it has secured it. And where grace reigns, worship becomes not occasional, not convenient, but continual.

So the question is not whether we affirm reconciliation—but whether we live like reconciled people.

Does your life testify that you belong to God—or only that you believe He exists?

When pressure rises, when the calendar fills, when obedience costs, does worship remain fixed—or does it drift? Because truly reconciled people do not ask whether worship fits their life; they order their life around worship.

Closing Prayer

Gracious and holy Father,

We come before You not as negotiators, but as those who have been claimed by grace. You have redeemed us at the cost of blood, not silver or gold, and You have reconciled us to Yourself when we could not move toward You on our own. Forgive us, Lord, for the ways we have treated worship as optional, obedience as flexible, and holiness as inconvenient. Expose the idols that quietly take Your place—our busyness, our fear, our desire for control.

Teach us to rest where You command us to rest, to gather where You call us to gather, and to trust where You have promised to protect. Shape our lives by Your Word, not by urgency. Let our worship rise not from habit, but from gratitude; not from pressure, but from joy; not from routine, but from reconciliation.

Claim our time, our work, our families, our strength, and our hearts. Let us appear before You not empty-handed, but offering ourselves—living sacrifices, holy and pleasing in Your sight. And may our joy be found where it can never fade: in You alone.

We ask this in the name of our faithful Redeemer, Jesus Christ.
Amen.