**Psalm 122:1 I rejoiced with those who said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”**

What are we doing here this morning? Why is it important that we are here? What should I be doing while here in church? These are among some of the questions that commonly get brought up when Christians talk about connecting with God’s Word during worship services at church. It is more than just coming and sitting here for around an hour. Instead, this gathering as a group of Christians presents one of the highpoints of the week. Our regular, although sometimes overemphasized and sometime underemphasized, participation in worship services at church give us not only a time to connect with God’s Word but also a unique opportunity to celebrate, thank, praise, uplift, bond, and honor.

Coming to a worship service at church is like going to a game. There is a crowd or congregation. There is something to see. Preparation done. There’s excitement in the air. A bounce in your step as you come in. It’s exciting time to be around God’s Word. This is the place where you get to be in the presence of greatest. It’s reserved unlike other places to drip with that God is here with us. Everything around us right now is to remind us about God and his goodness to us. There is much to be thankful for when we enter God’s house with fellow Christians.

Such places of worship have lead Christians from many centuries not only to echo but also hold dearly King David’s words in **Psalm 122:1 I rejoiced with those who said to me, “Let us go to the house of the Lord.”** This is the place where so much happens. It is the place where we celebrate the greatest moments of life from birth to death. Within the church service God encourages as he leads us to focus on him, who we are, and his blessings. In the worship services in church, he builds relationships that cause us to rejoice.

So then why are worship services avoided? Why does coming to worship seem to be an inconvenience or just another thing in a busy schedule? This is where knowing a bit more about what God was getting at with the 3rd Commandment (Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy) answers the whys.

The heart of the 3rd Commandment is about rest; meaning complete rest of all kinds. God understanding the busyness of earthly life knew that it is not good for people to be go go go all the time. People need rest. You need rest. Rest doesn’t just happen. Good physical rest doesn’t just happen. Likewise, good spiritual rest doesn’t just happen. You need to prepare and plan for both kinds of rest and these kinds of rest go together.

The truth is: worship services at church are not to be convenient. Instead, they are to be unmovable foundations, bases, safe places, oases. They don’t just appear. You don’t just stumble upon such places. They are intentional. Worship services at church take all kinds of efforts to be prepared to get the rest that is needed.

When do you start preparing to connect with God and his Word at a worship service? How about preparing finish with one church service? As a desert wonderer plans and prepares to get to the next oasis, the Christian prepares for the next worship service. It does wonders for the Christian when the 3rd Commandment is followed with worship. We Christians know we are sinful. We recognize we need Jesus.

It’s actually quite simple to do as well. Map them out in your schedule with a greater importance and protection than any other activity. That means all other things are told no. It’s just that simple. Out of fear and love for God, you set the time when you are going to in a worship service where you will get you rest by telling everything else in life to stop. Whenever anything is getting in the way you say no to it. Whatever excuse we can give we say no to it.

Our connecting with God and his Word in worship services is of such importance that it takes our all. If we are going to get the rest, we need it takes the very best to get it. That means the rest we find in our Savior doesn’t start when we walk through the doors of our church for a worship service. It starts well before that. Besides just making sure we get here, it includes getting physical rest to be able to stay awake by not working ourselves so hard or staying out late so that when we come to church, we can’t stay awake. It means giving our full focus to God. Worship in church services isn’t making sure we blocked off this time to sit in a pew. Worship in church service covers our day-to-day actions so that we are able to receive the rest God wants and offers to give us.

We fall into the sinful traps when worship is what we do when we find the time for it or don’t prepare to be engaged in worship before we step through the door. Just coming to worship leads to a mindless going through the motions as if this is just another thing to check off our list of tasks to get done. Something we do.

Worship services in church are for God’s light to shine on us and why it’s of premium importance. “Going to church” isn’t about watching what is done like you might go to a game and be a spectator. Instead, going to church is more like going to the game and you are going to get into the mix. You are going to be the one participating. The liturgy helps guide us in that. When you just mindlessly go through worship as a spectator you miss what God does through worship and leave without the rest he wants to give.

It’s easy to miss that worship services in church are about being in the presence of God. Through the law and gospel proclaimed in the service we are brought to see our sinfulness and God who has come to us with forgiveness. We come into the church as sinners needed to be refreshed by God. So, we begin in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit to remind us that we have been adopted—chosen, paid for, and brought home—by God in our baptisms (Gospel). We are confronted with our sinfulness of thought, word, and deed as we are then guided to make confess of our sins (Law). With the absolution by the authority of Christ, we are encouraged to find our rest in Christ (Gospel). Through all of this we are active in worship actually doing something.

Then we get to the clearer connection with God’s Word, all four of the lessons from God’s Word. They shine a light on us. Sometimes that light exposes our sinfulness. Sometimes that light is the warm glow of forgiveness. Sometime that light is allowing us to see what we as Christians are to do. Sometimes is it a mixture. When we go through the motions or fail to pay attention for any reason, we miss the rest and are like an athlete who was daydreaming on the field and caught unaware when he was to use his skill. Such a person doesn’t want to be seen. He wants to hide so people don’t see his failure.

Through the God’s Word in the liturgy and the lessons, God connects us to him. This connection of God’s Word can be intimidating. It’s a lot to take in. When you are well prepared for worship in a church service you are placed directly before God, the most powerful audience and he is going to be paying attention to you. To your performance. To your preparation. Only through his news about Jesus being the one with you are you able to rejoice. Only through Jesus forgiveness are you ready to say, **Let us go to the house of the Lord.** Only with Jesus and his forgiveness does anyone truly want to be rejoicing in the house of the Lord. When Jesus is at the center of someone’s life, no becomes the easy answer to anything and everything that would get in the way of someone being in church for a worship service.

But also, as we are ready to say those words **Let us go to the house of the Lord** remember worship isn’t just and individual thing. Looking at worship as just for you the individual is another common trap. It’s why people say such things as “I don’t have to go to church to be a Christian,” and “I don’t get anything out of church service.” Worship in church services uplifts, gives rest to Christians, with God’s Word as we do it together.

If you are at a game and you are the one eyes are on, the most comforting way to do that is to do with a team. The people in your church are your team. The eyes of God are on all of you. Each of them is a proclamation of what God does through his Word. He brings children into his family and raises them. He sustains people through life and challenges them to live for him. He encourages and bring people to himself. The proclamation of the goodness of God is seen in the various ages of people within the church. This is why is it important that churches have all the different ages because it attests to the power of God’s Word at his continue work. Seeing all the different people shows that God’s Word is living and active.

So far we have looked at how we connect with God’s Word through the use off devotionals and worship in church services. They go together to build and prepare a Christian for the time when we will all stand before God with his eyes on us when he asks us why he should let us into heaven. God’s Word shows us we are sinful and that Jesus is the reason we are able to stand before God. Wouldn’t it be nice to be able to strengthen, be stronger, more ready to face God? We will look at doing that in the next two weeks. Amen.

Points to consider as an individual or with a small group:

* Worship in Church services is like…
* List 2 benefits of worship is Church services.
* What is a possible trap of only connecting with God’s Word during worship in Church services?