

Presence in an Age of Distraction

Good to see you guys. If I haven't met you, my name is Kent and I'm one of the pastors here. If you have a bible, turn with me to Luke 10. Last week, I went to see *Oppenheimer* last Sunday with some guys from my LifeGroup—anybody else seen it yet? I mean, what an *incredible, beautiful, deeply troubling* movie that was. I also found out, as I was watching it, that it was rated R, and deservedly so. But anyway, I went to go see that movie. And ever since then, the almighty algorithm of the interwebs has been targeting me with one “suggested post” after another all about *Oppenheimer* and its director, Christopher Nolan.

One of those posts carried the headline, *Christopher Nolan doesn't carry a smartphone*. And I thought, “okay, I'll bite.” So I pulled up the article. And turns out, not only doesn't he have a smartphone *currently*; he never has. He also doesn't *use* email, and he writes his movie scripts on a computer with no internet. And to me at least, that was kind of *fascinating*: Christopher Nolan, who is responsible for what I would consider some of the best movies in the last couple decades, chooses *not* to spend very much time on the world wide web. *And he's still alive! Like he still exists as a human in the modern world*. What a novel concept.

When explaining *why* he chooses not to carry a smartphone, here's what he said, “My *kids* would probably say I'm a complete *Luddite*. I would actually *resist* that description. I think *technology* and what it can *provide* is *amazing*. My *personal* choice is about how *involved* I get (with it).” He continued, “It's about the level of *distraction*. **If I'm generating my material and writing my own scripts, being on a smartphone all day wouldn't be very useful for me.**”

That's his reason. Not that he thinks technology is *bad*, not that he thinks people who *use* technology are evil or wrong—none of that. He just has concluded that for the type of person he wants to be, the type of things he wants to accomplish, a smartphone would simply be an unnecessary *distraction*. It just wouldn't be very *useful* for him. I don't think it's intentional, but that line actually reminds me a bit of Paul in 1 Corinthians saying that while “all things are *lawful* (or *permissible*), not all things are *beneficial*.”

The assumption being operated from there, I think, is that **we live in a world of distractions** (of which our *phones* are at least one major component). **But if we want to make room in life for the things that truly matter, that truly last and have an impact...then we will need to figure out a way to at least minimize those distractions and channel that time and attention into something more important than those distractions.**

I read somewhere a while back that the average human attention span is dropping with each passing year. In the year 2000, *before* the digital revolution truly took place, humans had an average attention span of *twelve seconds*. I wouldn't say that's exactly *impressive*, but it's something. Anybody want to guess what the average attention span is *now*? The most *recent* study I found said it is now down to *eight* seconds. Just for comparison, a *goldfish* has an attention span of *nine* seconds. We are now losing to *goldfish*. *But*, all the more reason to be conscious and aware of the types of things we are regularly giving our attention *to*. Does that make sense?

So today, I want us to talk about *distraction*. If you're joining for the first time this morning, **we're in week three of a series about how followers of Jesus are called to be different from the rest of the world, for the sake of the rest of the world.** The language *Jesus* uses for that of a "city on a hill." And I would argue that *one* of the ways we are called to be different is by being a people marked by *presence* in an age of *distraction*. A people that learn to say "no" to the constant propensity towards distraction, and say "yes" to presence with God, and with others.

For more on what I mean by all of that, I want to first look at the passage we've opened to: Luke 10. Gonna read from the ESV today instead of the NIV, just because I like to keep you on your toes. Starting in v. 38, it says this:

38 Now as they went on their way, Jesus entered a village. And a woman named **Martha welcomed** him into her house. **39** And she had a **sister** called **Mary**, who **sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching.** **40** But **Martha** was (notice this word:) **distracted** with **much serving**. And she went up to him and said, "Lord, do you not **care** that my **sister** has left me to serve **alone**? **Tell her then to help me.**" **41** But the **Lord** answered her, "**Martha, Martha**, you are **anxious and troubled** about **many things**, **42** but **one thing is necessary**. **Mary** has chosen the **good portion**, which will **not** be taken away **from her.**"

So this is a relatively short story in Luke's gospel. And we've taught on this passage quite a few times before in our church's history. But that's at least in part because **I think it is such a vivid depiction of both the *problem* of distraction, and of the much healthier *alternative* to distraction, which we might call "*presence*."** In the story, we read that Jesus went to a village, where he was invited into Martha's *home*. And once he went inside, Martha's sister, *Mary*, "sat at Jesus' feet and listened to his teaching," while her sister Martha was "distracted" by serving.

Now that word *distracted* in the passage means to “draw away,” or more literally, to “drag all around.” It’s a picture of a person being pulled away, pulled apart, and pulled from place to place with all sorts of different things. Things that they’re preoccupied with. It’s when you feel like you can’t ever focus on the thing in front of you, because of the fourteen other things that *aren’t* in front of you, that need to get done. That’s the state Martha is in in this story: she is *distracted*.

Now,, it says Martha is distracted *by* “much serving.” *Serving*, as we’ve pointed out before, is not a *bad* thing. In fact, according to Jesus himself, it often is a very, very *good* thing to be doing. So the point Jesus is making isn’t so much that Martha is doing something *bad*. It’s that she is allowing a *good* thing to *distract* her from a *necessary* thing. Namely, that it is *distracting* her from doing what *Mary* does in the story: being with Jesus, and listening to Jesus.

And I would argue that *we* often find ourselves in a *similar* position to Martha. **For a lot of us, the problem *isn’t* that we’re caught up in a lot of *bad* things, as much we are caught up in *good or neutral* things.** But *those* things are *distracting* us. They’re dragging us all around in every direction *except* for the one that would be most *helpful* for us. Namely, the direction of life lived *towards* God and the *things* of God. Catholic priest and author Ronald Rolheiser puts it this way:

*...we, for every kind of reason, good and bad, are **distracting ourselves into spiritual oblivion.** It is not that we have anything against God, depth, and spirit, we would like these, it is just that we are **habitually too preoccupied** to have any of these show up on our radar screens. We are more **busy than bad**, more **distracted than nonspiritual**, and more **interested in the movie theatre, the sports stadium, and the shopping mall and the fantasy life** they produce in us than we are in church. Pathological **busyness, distraction, and restlessness** are major blocks today within our spiritual lives.*

Now, it’s *possible* he may be overstating some of that for effect. Because *sometimes*, there *are* “bad” things interfering with our life with Jesus. Namely, sin. But still, there’s a very valid point to be made there. **Sometimes we can’t manage to have time for the great things in life, because we have crowded those things out by dozens upon dozens of good things. Fine things. Neutral things. In a word, we are distracted.** And those *distractions* have kept us from, in Jesus’ words, the one “necessary” thing. *Mary* in the story chooses *that* thing instead: she chooses to be *with* Jesus, and *listen* to him. That, according to Jesus, is the one thing you absolutely *can not* neglect as a follower of Jesus: being in the *presence* of God.

Another word for that would be the word “beholding.” Look with me on the screen at 2 Corinthians 3, v. 18. Paul, writing to the church at Corinth, says this:

*And we all, with unveiled face, **beholding** the **glory** of the Lord, are **being transformed** into the same image from **one degree of glory to another**. For this comes from the **Lord** who is the Spirit.*

“Beholding,” Paul says. Now, *beholding* is probably not a word most of us use in everyday conversation with people. If you go out to eat after the Gathering today, and the server brings out your food, I highly doubt you’re going to say “wow, I’m just sitting here *beholding* the glory and beauty of this meal.” We don’t talk like that. But we absolutely know what it *means* to “behold” things. We do it all the *time*. We absolutely, when that meal arrives, say things like “wow, that looks really good.” *Online*, there’s an entire category of posts on social media people have labeled “food porn”—which is just a term for really appetizing pictures of food from all over the world that people scroll through and drool over. That’s people *beholding* really good food.

This is why most of us, if you get us talking about our favorite Netflix show or movie, will talk for quite a while about it. It’s why we *watch* some shows and movies over and over and over again, even though we’ve already *seen* them. That’s us *beholding*. This is why we pull up our favorite song on Spotify and want other people with us to hear it, and get inordinately *angry* if people talk over it while it’s playing; because we want other people to *behold* that song like we *behold* it. So we absolutely understand the *concept* of beholding, even if we never use that word to describe it. I would argue that **as human beings, we have been hardwired to behold things.**

First and foremost, we are made to behold what Paul calls “the *glory* of the Lord.” Now, “glory” is *also* probably not a super familiar word to us—outside of singing it in worship songs. The word *glory* most literally means “weight.” If something is *glorious*, that means it is *heavy*. Most of the time in the bible, it means something is *figuratively* heavy. *Weighty*. Which is actually similar to language we use in English. If we go see a movie that really made us think and feel a lot of things—like *Oppenheimer*—we might say “that movie was *heavy*. It was *weighty*.” And what we mean by that is that it was *profound*. That it provoked all kinds of thinking and feeling and contemplation and reflection within us. That’s what it means, in essence, for something to be *glorious*.

And Paul says that we, as followers of Jesus, should spend time sitting with and beholding the profound, weighty, glory of God. So a question worth asking is this: what are some of the *glorious* things about *God*? I just want to give you a very small sampling of ways to answer that question, just to get you started:

- First, **God is eternal.**¹ He never had a beginning, and he will never have an end. He is the *uncreated* one. The other night, I was telling my daughter Norah, who is four, about how God *made* us. So she naturally asked, “...but who made *God*?” And I had this moment where I smiled and just said “*no one* made God. He just always was.”
- **God is never-changing.**² He is always the same in all of his virtues and character and commitments. God never promises something he doesn’t deliver. He never makes us *guess* at who he is or what he’s like. He’s the same yesterday, today, and forever.
- **God is all-knowing.**³ He knows everything about everything. He knows every letter of every word on every page in every book in the entire world. He knows which of those words are *true*, and which ones *aren’t*. He knows the *thoughts* of every person who has ever lived. He knows more *about* those thoughts than the people thinking them do.
- **God is infinitely wise.**⁴ There has never been a situation where God was confused about what to do or what decision to make.
- **God is infinitely capable.**⁵ The Scriptures say “our God is in the heavens and he does as he pleases.” There is nothing that can *stop* God from accomplishing his purposes on the earth.
- **God is infinitely powerful.**⁶ Sometimes I feel like I can’t get my kids to do a single thing I ask them to do without asking them approximately fourteen times to do it. God, on the other hand, speaks a *word* and creation comes into existence.
- **God is perfectly patient.**⁷ God extends grace after grace to people who hate him, reject him, mock him and run from him. He never flies off at the handle, he never loses his temper. The bible says he is “slow to anger, and *abounding* in steadfast love.”
- And, at the same time as *all* of this, **God identifies with the lowly.**⁸ Somehow, despite all of the immense power and knowledge and capability we just talked about, God gravitates towards the *lowly*—the neglected, the helpless, the forgotten about and picked over. Those that the world has chewed up and spit out—God sees *those* people and goes “them. I want *them*.”

¹ Deuteronomy 33:27, Job 36:26, Psalm 102:12, Revelation 1:8

² Malachi 3:6, Numbers 23:19, James 1:17

³ Psalm 147:5, Hebrews 4:12-13, 1 John 3:20

⁴ Proverbs 2:6, Romans 11:33, James 1:5

⁵ Isaiah 46:10, Ephesians 3:20-21

⁶ Genesis 1:3, Colossians 1:16, Psalm 19:1-4

⁷ Numbers 14:18, Psalm 86:15, Psalm 103:8

⁸ Philippians 2:6-8, 1 Corinthians 1:28-29, Isaiah 66:2

And as I said, that is just a *small portion* of the things the Scriptures teach us are *glorious* about God. We could live for a million years and still not even grasp a *fraction* of his glory. **There are an infinite number of things worthy of *beholding* about God.**

And Paul says in 2 Corinthians that **precisely *because of how glorious God is, when we spend time *beholding* that glory, something happens in us as a result.*** When we behold the glory of *God*, we are “transformed” into, in his language, “the same image.” Now, what does he mean *there*? Transformed into the “same image” as *what*? In the context of the passage, it would seem to mean the same image as *God himself*. So Paul *isn't* saying that when we behold God, we *become* God or *become a* god. But he *is* saying that we become *like* God; **we begin to reflect to the world around us what he is like.**

In context, Paul is alluding to a story in the book of Exodus where Moses would go up on a mountain, interact with God, and then would come down and would be literally *glowing* with the glory of the Lord.⁶ Paul is referencing that story and saying that, in a *similar* way, when we spend time *beholding* the glory of God, our lives will put on *display* that glory. Remember how we said a couple weeks ago that *we are called to be holy, because God is holy?*⁷ Remember how *Jesus* said we should “let our light shine before others,” so that they see our lives and “give *glory* to our Father in heaven”?⁸

Okay—all of that starts with us *beholding* the glory of God ourselves. *Beholding* God *transforms* us into his image, which brings even *more* glory back to God himself. **The rate at which we are *transformed* into God's image is directly proportional to our level of *attentiveness* to God. And the more time we spend in the presence of God, the more we are *able* to *embody* his presence to others.**

And *that*, church family, is precisely why *distraction* is such a problem. Because ***distraction* short-circuits all of that.** Everything I just mentioned. It prevents us from looking at God's glory and *beholding* it, which prevents us from becoming people who *embody* God's glory to others. **If we are not people *marked* by the presence of God, we can't possibly be people who *reflect* God to others.** So if we want to become the community God designed us to be, for the sake of the world, we *must* figure out a way to eliminate (or at least minimize) *anything* that *distracts* us from the presence of God. We must become a people *marked* by God's *presence*. Are you with me on all that?

⁶ See Exodus 34:29-33 (this is the story that the “unveiled face” comment refers to in 2 Cor. 3:18)

⁷ See 1 Peter 1:15-16

⁸ See Matthew 5:16

But in order to do that, we first need to figure out something. We need to figure out *why* we are so prone to distraction. / Last week, my wife and I sent our kids to my parents' house for a week. We call it "grandparent camp." A week where the kids are with them, and Ana and I do our best to catch our breath for a week or so. If you're a parent and the room and you *haven't* done that before, I've gotta say: I highly recommend it. When you're a parent of young kids at least, you don't get a lot of moments to catch your breath and have uninterrupted quiet and time with each other. And *last week*, for us, was an opportunity for just that.

But reflecting back on that week since then, I think I'm a little surprised at how much of that week I personally filled with *distractions*. Ana and I got *some* good time with each other, and we certainly got some quiet—but we also filled that time *up* with a lot of other things: both of us worked some extra hours. We cleaned and organized the house (and by "we" I mean "she" did). And then we did the typical millennial thing, which is to sit next to each other and scroll on our phones for way too long. We got some time together and with Jesus that week, but we also spent a lot of time *distracting* ourselves. Some of it, albeit with *fine* and *good things*—but still, distractions.

And the more I think about that week, the more I am reminded of something I've learned about *myself*. You see, it's not just that I *end up* distracted a lot of the time out of pure *necessity*. It's not that I just have too many things to get done and therefore distraction is *inevitable*. That's only it some of the time. **I think it's actually that deep down, I think I've actually come to prefer the distractions.** I think a lot of times, I'm actually more *comfortable* with the distractions than I am with *presence*. I'm Martha in the story from Luke 10—finding anything and everything to do except the one *necessary* thing in front of me.

I think there are parts of me that are essentially *allergic* to being in God's presence. At least for very long. Parts of me that are actually *nervous* to sit and be with Jesus, and listen to what he has to say. Because if I do *that*, there might be some things he has to say that I need to hear. And some of those things might be things I need to reckon with, deal with, own, repent of. And all of that can be *deep, grueling* work to do. I think there's part of me that would *rather* be pulled in a thousand different directions than just be *still*. Because you see, when I'm *still*, I have to at least acknowledge that the world can go on spinning without me. When I'm *still*, I have to admit that there is a God in charge of running things, and that God is not named Kent.

And sometimes I wonder if a lot of us have some of that going on. / To get anywhere in our fight *against* distraction and *towards* presence, we have to understand that *often*, there are actually things we are seeking from the *distraction* itself. *Distraction*,

often, just feels *easier* than a life of depth. / But while it may be *easier* in some ways, it certainly is not *better*. California pastor John Ortberg puts the problem this way:

*For many of us, the great danger is not that we will renounce our faith. It is that we will **become so distracted and rushed and preoccupied** that we will settle for a **mediocre version** of it. We will just **skim our lives** instead of **actually living them**.*

~~“Skimming our lives, instead of actually living them.”~~ I won’t make you raise your hand, but anybody else in the room *resonate* with what he’s saying there? Do you ever feel like you’re just *skimming* your life instead of actually *living* it? I very much feel that way sometimes. And I don’t know about you, but I don’t want that to become the *pattern* of my life. I don’t *want* to settle for a “mediocre version” of following Jesus.

So for the rest of our time, let’s talk about how we can go to work on trimming *distractions* out of our lives—as much as possible, at least—and *becoming* people marked by *presence* with Jesus. The first question we need to ask is this:

What am I distracted by?

What are the most consistent *distractions* in your life? What is the thing most consistently *keeping* you from regularly *being with*, and listening *to*, Jesus? Distractions come from a variety of sources, to be sure. But I would imagine for each of us, there is probably *one* thing causing at least the *majority* of the distractions. For me, it tends to be *work*. My job, here at City Church, is probably the thing that most consistently *distracts* me from presence with God (which I get is ironic, since I work at a church). But it really is: when I get a moment or two of quiet in my day, I most instinctively fill it up with problems I have to solve, or things we need to teach, or tasks I need to perform, *for* our church. Maybe it’s *work* for you too.

But maybe it’s *not*. Maybe for you, it’s *hobbies*. Again, that’s not to say that hobbies are a bad thing. Some of us—myself included—could probably *benefit* from developing some hobbies. But at the same time, for *some* people, *hobbies* are a way to avoid sitting and being with Jesus. We would rather get started on that next project, or go fill up our time with other things, than devote much time at all to beholding the glory of God on a semi-regular basis. Now, hobbies *can be* a *form* of worship—a way to worship God through the talents and interests he’s given us, a way to connect with others, enjoy his creation. But, they *also can be* a way to distract ourselves from the things that truly matter, like being *with* Jesus.

Maybe it's *not* work or hobbies—maybe it's *technology*. Maybe for you, every spare moment you have in life is being filled up by some combination of social media and entertainment. If you get a few moments to sit still during the day, either the TV is *on* or your phone is in your hand. Some of us even do both at the same time, for good measure. Maybe *technology* is the drug of choice for you a majority of the time.

Or maybe it's something else *still*. There are a multitude of different ways we choose to distract ourselves from the things that truly matter. But if we're going to get anywhere with doing anything about it, we have to first identify what the most frequent distraction, or distractions, are. Especially for those of us that gravitate towards technology, it might even be helpful to check the "Screen Time" feature on our phones—the thing that calculates exactly how much time you spend where? If you do that, that will likely give you a very clear picture of where the majority of your free time is going (it's also likely to make us very uncomfortable).

But all of this starts with figuring out *what* we are most distracted by. Then, second question...

When, and why, am I distracted?

Now, I do get that those are actually two different questions. But I sometimes find them helpful to answer together. And here's why. **At least a lot of the time, when we are distracted tells us a lot about why we're distracted.** Let me give you some examples of what I mean.

If you find yourself regularly *distracted* when you're at work, or when you're supposed to be working: **that could mean that you're struggling to find purpose or meaning in your work.** Now, I think some people would counsel you in that situation to just *find a different* job. And *maybe* that's the solution. *Maybe*. But I would argue an even more *holistic* solution would be to ask *why can't* I find meaning in my work? **Because the perspective of the Scriptures is that all work—no matter what it is or how interesting it is—matters to God.** So the question actually becomes "if this work matters to *God*, why doesn't it matter to *me*? What lies have I believed about myself or my time or my talents or my opportunities, that incline me to think what I am doing right now, in this moment, at my job, doesn't actually *matter*?" That's a valuable question to ask and answer.

If you find yourself regularly distracted *by* work when you're *not* at work—when you're at home with your roommates or spouse or kids, why is *that*? *Could* it be that you aren't fully grasping the importance of *that* time? The *sacredness* of *that* time? Is it that you

don't see your friendships or your marriage or your parenting as a place to rely on and encounter the very presence of God? Is it possible that there are lies we've believed there about the types of things God helps us with and the things he doesn't?

If you find yourself regularly distracted in the mornings or afternoons or evenings when you're doing your best to just sit and listen to the Spirit or learn from the Scriptures: why is that? Is it because you don't feel *productive* during that time? Is it because you *value* that time, but you feel a little lost on what to do and how during that time? Is it because there are other things that are tugging at your heart and mind in a way that makes that time feel mentally impossible to pull off? With any of those reasons, there are practical steps you can take to help with those things. Questions you can ask, practices you can engage in. But this is why I say that *often, when* we are distracted can tell us a lot about *why* we are distracted. It might be a pointer to a more specific diagnosis of the problem and therefore, a more helpful solution. Ask "when, and why am I distracted?" And then finally...

How can I fill those moments with God's presence?

So it's here that I should probably *clarify* something important. And that's that being *present with God* does not always mean sitting still, in one place, with a bible open, in a deep state of concentration—and Hillsong United playing in the background, just to set the mood. If that's how you roll, good for you. And I would argue that we do need to set at least *some* time aside each day, as best we can to be still and quiet before God. **But at the same time, don't believe the lie that those are the *only* moments you can fill with God's presence. His presence isn't *limited* to those types of settings.**

There was a follower of Jesus in the 17th century commonly known as Brother Lawrence. He worked as a dishwasher in a Paris monastery. In some of his writings compiled after his death, he said *this* about being in the presence of God. I find it so helpful:

*The time of **business** (by that, he means "doing his day job") does not with me differ from the time of prayer (or rather, his *personal* undivided time with God), and in the **noise** and **clatter** of my **kitchen**, while **several persons** are **calling** for different things, I **possess God** in as great **tranquility** as if I were **upon my knees** at the **Blessed Sacrament**.⁹*

He was Catholic, so the "Blessed Sacrament" was thought to be one of the holiest, most distraction-free places you could be. And yet here, he says that he was able to be just as

⁹ Brother Lawrence, *Practicing the Presence of God*.

much in the presence of God while he was washing dishes in a kitchen with people yelling about different things all around him, as he was when it was just him on his own before God. I don't know about you, but I *long* to think that way about God's presence. ...*and* I *also* sometimes feel *lightyears* away from thinking and operating that way. Can anybody else identify with *both* of those sentiments? Okay, good—so I'm not the only one who's bad at this. That's comforting to me.

But let me at least *offer* you what, at least in *theory*, is a way to move us in the right direction towards all of that. 1 Corinthians 10, v. 31 says this: "So whether you *eat* or *drink* or *whatever* you do, do it *all* for the *glory* of God." So "whatever" we do—whether we are eating or drinking or working or playing or resting or hobbing or stressing or struggling or hurting...**WHATEVER** we do—Paul just told us that we can do it *all for the glory* of God. Which *must* mean that we can do *all* of it in the *presence* of God too.

So when we *eat*, we remember that every single thing we eat was either created by God for us to enjoy, *or* created by someone who he gave the *ability* to think it up and prepare it. That, I would argue, is worthy of awe and attention and wonder. **Which means in that moment, as you eat, you can choose to be in the presence of God.** When we *drink*—and *yes, even when we drink alcohol*—we remember that, in the words of the psalms, God gave wine to "gladden the heart of man."¹⁰ Now, not to *intoxicate* the heart of man—that's a different thing—but to *gladden* the heart of man. Which means *drink*, too, is worthy of ascribing awe and attention and wonder to God. **Which means that in that moment too, you can choose to be in the presence of God.**

When we *work*, we remember that God *gave* us the opportunities and the abilities and the talents and the time we have, as well as relationships with the people around us. Which enables us to **be in the presence of God.** When we *play* and *rest*, we remember that God gave us the time and the margin to do those things, and to do them in a beautiful city like Knoxville, TN where there are all kinds of incredible places to do those things. Which means we can do *those* things in the presence of God. When we *worry*, we remember that *worry* is an invitation to trust the One who can do something about all the things we worry *about*, and we cast our worries *on* him. Which means that **even then, we can choose to live in the presence of God.** And when we *hurt*, we remember that we worship a "man of sorrows, acquainted with sorrow and grief."¹¹ Which means that **we can choose to live in his presence in those moments too.**

And I could go on. But I think *all* of this is what it means to *live* in the presence of God. To live in the *awareness of* God's presence with us. This is what it means to "*behold*" the

¹⁰ Psalm 104:15

¹¹ See Isaiah 53:3

glory of the Lord. And by doing that, to be “transformed from one degree of glory to another, which *comes* from the Lord, who is the Spirit.” And as we are *transformed* from one degree of glory to another, we become the City on the Hill Jesus dreamed of. We become a light in the darkness. All of that *starts* with *presence*.

So here in a moment, followers of Jesus in the room are going to head to the tables in the corners of the room, where they will partake of the bread and the cup. And what we are doing when we participate in that, is that we are remembering the moment in history where God made his presence *freely available* to each of us. By sending his son Jesus to the cross, he made a way for you and I to live *daily, hourly* in his presence. He gave us the ability to see past our sin *and* our various distractions, and live unhindered in his presence because of the cross and resurrection. So as we do that, let’s ask that he would make his presence known to us in *that* moment, but also in *all* the moments of our lives.

Let me pray for us.