

Purity and Praise

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[0 : 00] But we need God's help to understand this.

Let's pray. Heavenly Father, I just pray once again, please, by your Spirit, illuminate our minds, help us to understand what you have to say to us, even through this ancient book of Numbers, and even in these chapters, which seems so difficult and remote from us.

Please help us to see how you are still speaking to us today through this passage. In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen. Now let's begin by playing a word association game and ask, what do you think of when you hear the word holiness?

What word or picture comes to mind? For many in our society, I suspect that the first word that comes to mind is self-righteous. Holiness conjures up images of bearded men, lecturing them on their personal lifestyles, while hypocritically engaging or endorsing acts of bribery, burglary, or dishonesty.

It's what we call holier than thou. And so it's no surprise that if people have such a picture in their heads when they hear the word holy, they respond by saying, no thanks.

[1 : 23] And it's not much better in church either. Often, Christians hear the word holy and can't help but equate it with strict, or joyless, or unrealistic, or even legalistic.

Hear the word holy, and the picture that comes to mind is a long list of prohibitions and restrictions. Don't smoke. Don't swear.

Don't do drugs. Don't play too many computer games. Or perhaps it brings to mind certain mannerisms or styles of dress. People who say, praise God, unnaturally, or whose fashion sense comes from the 60s.

Or perhaps it conjures up images of something like monks and nuns, where the emphasis is more about caring about spiritual things, and less on so-called unspiritual things, or ordinary things, like working and praying, sorry, not praying, and sleeping and resting.

And it seems as if our worst suspicions are confirmed when we come to today's passage in the book, of Numbers. You see, today's passage is primarily concerned with holiness and worship.

[2 : 46] Hence our sermon title, Purity and Praise. And as soon as you hear that, you might say, I knew it. After all, when I first read it, Pastor, I couldn't make sense of it all.

There's skin diseases, and legal matters, and some weird primitive marriage ritual in chapter 5. There's Nazarite vows in chapter 6. There's a mind-numbingly long description of offerings in chapter 7, which I spared you.

There's the purification of Levites in chapter 8. I mean, it all looks so random and irrelevant. But now you tell me, Pastor, that it's all about holiness.

Oh, and this confirms what I've always thought. Being holy is about being weird, and odd, and unattractive. It's, oh, do this, don't do that. So, no thanks. If today's passage is about holiness, I'm not interested.

But interestingly, if we were to examine the Bible, the way they think about holiness is pretty different. So, if you were to turn with me to somewhere like Psalm 29, verse 2, for example, it will be on the screen, this is what we find.

- [4 : 01] Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name. Worship the Lord in the splendor of his holiness. Or as another translation puts it, worship the Lord in the beauty of his holiness. Again, if we were playing the word association game, we wouldn't have associated holiness with beauty, would we? And yet, that's exactly what the Bible does. Holiness is beautiful. And in Numbers 5 to 8, that's exactly what God is interested in. A holy people. And therefore, a beautiful people. Not a self-righteous people, not a joyless people, but a beautiful people. A holy people. You see, come back with me to the book of Numbers and let's rejoin the story. Last week, we saw that God had begun organizing his people.
- [5 : 11] An army is being raised and counted. The tenth of meeting, where God's presence is to be found, is placed right at the center of the camp. And various rules and responsibilities, especially for the Levites, are laid down. But at the end of Numbers 4, the preparations are not yet complete. they are preparing for a journey. But it's not quite time to leave Mount Sinai just yet. Why? You see, yes, they are about to go on a journey, but not just with anybody, but with a special person, the Lord God Himself. And that means special preparations have to be made. Think about it this way. Here in KEC, it appears that these couple of months is the season for weddings. We had one last week, we're going to have another one next week, and then we'll have another one two weeks after that. And in every one of those weddings, well, the bride isn't just going to show up dressed in T-shirt and shorts.
- [6 : 25] No, she's going to make sure that when she makes that journey from her home down the aisle to her groom, she's going to look as beautiful and radiant as possible. There's going to be special preparations made. And that's exactly what the Lord is preparing His people for in Numbers 5 to 8. He wants to ensure that they are beautiful and radiant, pure, and holy. And so that's why we get these laws and instructions. They are wedding preparations. But how do these laws and instructions showcase the beauty of holiness? And why is holiness so important and necessary anyway? Well, those are the kind of questions that Numbers 5 to 8 is going to answer, and I'm going to concentrate on Numbers 5 to 6 today simply because of time. And we're just going to see two reasons why we need to be holy. And here's reason number one. Be holy because the Lord is holy.
- [7 : 35] Be holy because the Lord is holy. You see, if we were to flip through Numbers chapter 5 to 8, we'll notice that it echoes much of the book of Leviticus. Now, that is a book that's probably as unfamiliar to us as the book of Numbers. But I think there is one verse in there that many of us will know. And that's Leviticus chapter 19 verse 2 which says, Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy. And it's a verse that's directly applicable to Christians because the Apostle Peter quotes and applies it to us directly in the New Testament in 1 Peter chapter 1 verse 15 which we read this morning. And that verse, Be holy as I am holy also captures the essence of why the Old Testament law exists. We need to be holy because it reflects our Creator. So, what does it mean to say the Lord is holy? Well, let's allow Numbers 5 to unpack that for us. Just look at Numbers 5 verses 1 to 4 and let me read verse 1 and 2.

[8 : 59] The Lord said to Moses, Command the Israelites to send away from the camp anyone who has a defouling skin disease or a discharge of any kind or who is ceremonially unclean because of a dead body.

Now, at first glance, this looks more like public health regulations. After all, the number of people in this camp is huge and living conditions are probably a little bit cramped.

In such conditions, any sickness could easily spread. So, it seems to make perfect sense that if anyone has contracted a contagious disease, well, you should quarantine him.

After all, that's what we do to people with dengue or hand foot and mouth disease and leptospirosis. this. And that's what some commentators think this section is all about.

It's simply a matter of public hygiene. Now, there is certainly a public health dimension here, but when we look at the text again, we see that that's not the main concern.

[10 : 07] After all, if that was what all the text was about, then verse three is a little bit strange. Look at verse three. Now, if it was simply about hygiene, you would expect the dead body to be put outside the camp, not the healthy people who had contact with it.

But here, it's the healthy people who are being sent out. So, what's going on? Well, let's read verse three again. And now it becomes clearer.

It's not so much about public health, but divine purity. You see, the Lord is holy. And that means nothing unholy can be in his presence.

Otherwise, defilement happens and the Lord cannot dwell in their midst. Now, at first glance, this doesn't quite make sense to us.

But that's because we haven't understood yet what it really means for God to be holy. Holiness is about moral character, yes, holiness.

[11 : 42] But that is not quite the essence of holiness. When we say God is holy, we mean more than that. Let me borrow an analogy from those good folk at the Bible Project for a moment.

So, think of it like this. God's holiness is like the sun. In our solar system, at least, the sun is unique. It's in a class of its own.

There's nothing like it. And the sun is the only reason life exists on our planet. That's how powerful the sun is. No sun, no life.

And so, in that sense, you can say our sun is holy. There is only one sun. And that's what holiness means when applied to God.

Holiness comes from the Hebrew word kadosh, which means to cut or to separate. And so, God is radically separate, radically different from us.

[12 : 51] He's distinct from anything and everything that has ever existed or will ever exist. He is in a class of his own and he gives life as only he can.

he's holy. But more than that, you could stretch the analogy further and say the area around the sun is also holy.

Because think about it, the closer you get to the sun, the more intense it gets. And actually, if you get too close, well, you know what's going to happen to you.

And so, ironically, this very good source of life is also dangerous. And that's God. God is intensely good and intensely life-giving.

But if you defile yourselves, well, his holy presence becomes too dangerous for us. Because it's just too intense for us. And that's why the default need to be outside the camp where God dwells.

[14 : 09] Otherwise, they'll be destroyed. You see, what has happened to all those people mentioned in verses 1 and 2? Death has touched them.

They have come into contact with dead bodies. or they have lost blood or bodily fluids which are associated with life and so they are seen as losing life.

Or they have skin diseases that eat away at their body and so they become a visual representation of death. And in God's universe, the realm of death and the realm of life cannot mix.

And the holy God who is full of life cannot touch death which is the result of sin. Not because God cannot stand to be in the presence of sin, but because sin cannot stand to be in the presence of God.

Anything sin and death touches will be destroyed. So none of that can come into contact with the living God.

[15 : 21] Later on in chapter 6, verse 9 to 12, we can see the same principle again. As those who take Nazarite vows are given instructions about what to do if they accidentally come into contact with a dead body, they need to make atonement because again, death pollutes them.

Because the Lord is holy, they need to be holy, untarnished by sin, and death. And actually, this idea is found in the New Testament as well.

When we go to the end of the Bible, to Revelation chapter 21, verse 27, it will be on the screen, where the new creation is being described while we read this. nothing impure will ever be brought into the New Jerusalem, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful.

So you can see it's actually the same thing in the New Testament. In his presence, nothing defiled can enter. And the rest of chapter 5 shows again and again in different ways how God is holy, how he is this unique, life-giving being.

Look at chapter 5, verse 5 to 6, for example. The Lord said to Moses, say to the Israelites, any man or woman who wrongs another in any way and so is unfaithful to the Lord is guilty.

[17 : 04] Well, this time, in this section, it deals with a situation where one person has wronged another, perhaps by stealing property from the other, as inferred by the book of Leviticus.

But notice how God sees it in these verses. When a person wrongs another, it is actually not just an offence against the other person, but against God.

He is unfaithful to the Lord. Why? Well, once again, it's because God is holy. And because God is holy, he values each person highly.

he is the one who gave life to the other person. He is the one who stamped his image on him or her, and so he takes it personally when wrong is done against him or her.

And so can you notice how beautiful holiness actually is? Because God's holy, he becomes the wrong person's defender.

[18 : 16] He becomes their champion. He values us and wants whatever wrong done to us to be made right. I'll come down again with me to chapter 5, verse 11 to 31.

And the issue here is one of marital unfaithfulness. What happens if the wife comes under suspicion for adultery? But there's no proof.

Well, she has to undergo an elaborate ritual to determine her guilt or innocence. Now, at first glance, this process seems cruel and unfair.

But why is the woman singled out? But when measured against the cultural conventions of the time, the opposite is actually true. You see, in many ancient Near Eastern cultures, the woman was already deemed guilty unless proven innocent.

The Code of Hammurabi, for instance, said that in such a case, the woman has to be thrown into the river. And if she drowns, oh well, too bad, she must be guilty.

[19 : 25] But here, no presumption of guilt or innocence is made. In fact, it's assumed that if she is innocent, well, she has nothing to worry about because she surely will be vindicated.

For in verses 19 to 24, the woman is to take an oath. And basically, she says, if I'm faithful, well, the water I'm going to drink isn't going to harm me.

But if I am unfaithful, I'm going to suffer the curse of barrenness. notice who is in charge of this matter.

Look at verses 15 to 16. In verse 15, the husband is to take his wife to the priest and then jump down to verse 16. the priest shall bring her and make her stand before the Lord.

And so, from beginning to end, this matter is actually to go before the Lord himself, not human judges. Now, this tells us how serious the matter of faithfulness is to the Lord.

[20 : 38] You see, in Exodus chapter 18, we find out that Israel already has a human judicial system of some sort in place. But here, the Lord takes it upon himself to be their adjudicator.

Faithfulness in marriage is so important to him because it's the foundation for a well-ordered society. If everyone was busy committing adultery and having children out of wedlock, then society will be thrown into chaos.

But that's not what God wants. And so, this case is brought right before him. But the Lord doesn't just take seriously faithfulness, but also fairness.

And that's why, if the woman is innocent, she will be vindicated, and she can continue to have a normal, fruitful, stigma-free life. And so, I hope in all this, we're getting a picture of the beauty of God's holiness.

It's not a picture of self-righteousness, or joylessness, or legalism. Instead, because God is holy, he hates death with a greater intensity than us, because he is life itself.

[22 : 06] Because God is holy, he values people so highly that he wants to make sure they are not robbed unjustly. Because God is holy, he wants human relationships to be characterized by trustworthiness and faithfulness to one another, and for people to be judged fairly.

And that's what he wants our world to be like. And that's what he wants us to be like. Just imagine a holy people like this.

A people who are pro-life, advocating for the unborn, as well as for those who are already born, but who are in situations where they are almost like the living dead.

Just imagine the people who relate to each other, not in a quarrelsome way, but with a desire to see both harmony and justice. And just imagine the people who say to each other, I always want to keep my word, I want to keep my marriage vows.

Well, wouldn't that be a beautiful community? Well, that's how God wants to prepare us to be this beautiful, holy people, a bride fit for the groom.

[23 : 36] And in a sense, that's what the Nazarite vow in chapter 6 is all about. It's expressing a desire to be such a people.

The Nazarite vow was a promise where you gave yourself for a period of time in total service to the Lord. Some of you might remember that some men in Acts chapter 21 take such a vow.

It was a vow where you said, I want to grow in the beauty of holiness. And so that's why you have all these instructions. In chapter 6 verses 1 to 4, those who take such a vow have to abstain from alcohol or other fermented drink.

Not because wine was bad, but because it showed that you were voluntarily forsaking earthly pleasures. In chapter 6 verse 5, you can't visit the barber to cut your hair.

Because hair was a natural symbol for the life of a person. And if you let your hair grow without any human intervention, while you were presenting a picture of giving your life completely over to God.

[24 : 49] And then in verses 6 onwards, as we've heard already, those who take such a vow must not go near a dead body, since that would defile them.

And so it's a sign of their radical separation from the realm of death. It's a sign that they want to be holy, to be part of this realm of life, just as their Lord is holy.

and those who took Nazarite vows were also meant to be a reminder to the rest of the Israelites every day what they were meant to be, a holy nation reflecting their holy God.

And so that's what we need to remember. the Bible doesn't frame holiness ultimately as a negative. Don't do this, don't do that.

The Bible frames holiness ultimately as a positive. Be like God, be like Jesus. holiness. And as we seek to grow in the beauty of his holiness, yes, we will say no to certain things.

[26 : 05] For the grace of God, Titus 2 teaches us to say no to ungodliness. But we say no only because we want to say yes to being more like him.

It's just like when you get married, you're saying no to other women so that you can say yes to the special woman that you've married. We want to be like him in every sphere of life, from the bedroom to the social arena.

And so that's what holiness means, being more like our beautiful God. But here's the paradox that lies at the heart of numbers 5 to 6.

Even as we know that God is holy and we should be like him, we discover we're not. And so that brings us to reason number two why we should be holy.

Be holy because God can make us holy. Because God can make us holy. You see, ironically, over and over again in these chapters, God is describing situations about what must be done precisely because a holy God is coming into contact with an unholy people.

[27 : 33] In chapter 5, verse 1 to 4, God tells us what must happen when people are ritually defiled. In chapter 5, verse 5 to 10, God tells us what must happen when people wrong one another.

In chapter 5, verse 11 to 31, God tells us what must happen when there's suspicion and possible marital unfaithfulness. In other words, God assumes that unholy conduct and unholy attitudes is going to happen.

Either we're going to sin or be sin against. That's life in our fallen world. And that's true even in Numbers chapter 6.

As we've just seen, that chapter is all about how to take a Nazarite vow and how that shows holiness. And yet, it's interesting that if you were to look at what the majority of Numbers 6 is all about, it actually focuses on two things.

What happens if the vow is broken unintentionally? And what happens when the vow is complete? and actually, the details in those two things reveal to us that we actually can't be holy on our own.

[28 : 58] Let's take them one by one. You see, what happens if the vow is broken unintentionally? Suppose a Nazarite was minding his own business when someone drops dead in his presence.

That's the scenario that verse 9 paints. Now, it's not the fault of the guy taking the Nazarite vow, but his vow is still broken. He has come into contact with a dead body.

Transgression has occurred. And so, he needs to bring a sin offering and a burnt offering and start all over again. And so, the message is clear.

A fallen world means that sin will touch you in some way, even though it wasn't necessarily your fault. And even if you transgress unintentionally, blood payment is required.

God's holy standards cannot be compromised. And it's still the same today. None of us can escape the fact that we live in a fallen world.

[30 : 08] We live, as the Apostle Paul puts it in Romans 5, in the realm of sin and death. And so, that means nothing in this world is untouched by sin.

Yes, only people sin, but that doesn't mean our social structures cannot be twisted by sin. And so, we have to deal with sins after effects.

And it can get complicated. Let me just give you an example. Imagine that you're trying to get a certain work project off the ground.

And you know that included in the processing fee that you have to pay to the government is a hidden charge which the guy at the government pockets to release those documents that you need.

Everyone knows it, and it's not technically illegal. The department has just inflated the fee, and everyone kind of looks the other way. So, do you pay the headline fee, or do you refuse to do so?

[31 : 14] Well, let's say you refuse, but now the documents required are on hold because you didn't pay in full. Actually, the guy you're dealing with is quite sympathetic to you, but he says, sorry, I've got to follow orders from my boss.

So, you keep insisting that you need to go through another proper channel, and the person says, okay, and now you go to another department. But in that department, you discover that the culture there is to expect a little tip for their services.

Again, technically, it's not a bribe, but it's hard to classify what exactly that payment is. It's a bit grey. Meanwhile, you have a contractual obligation to your client to get that project going, and you're out of options.

So, what do you do? On reflection, perhaps, you do pay, reasoning that it's not extortion, it's not an illegal bribe to gain an unfair advantage.

It's more like a little gift to just help jump start the process. Now, what has happened? Did you personally sin?

[32 : 22] Well, we could debate. Perhaps you did. Perhaps you didn't. It's complicated. But clearly, the entire system has been structured to work has been twisted by sin in some way, and it's been so touched by sin that it forces us into these kind of complicated situations, even though we find it difficult to pinpoint exactly how sin has twisted that.

You see, the point is that everything in our world has been so touched by sin that it could defile us in ways that we had not anticipated. It could lead us to do wrong against God without us even realizing it.

And even if it's not intentional, well, that's not an excuse God says, we still need to be made holy. We need atonement.

So here's the problem. The whole world is infected by sin. But more than that, we ourselves are personally infected by sin.

We're naturally unholy. You see, come to our second scenario in chapter 6, and notice what happens when a person completes a Nazarite vow.

[33 : 44] In chapter 6, verses 13 to 20, the person couldn't just walk away with a certificate saying, service completed.

No, at the end of his Nazarite vow, he still has to make all kinds of offerings, including a sin offering in verse 16, symbolizing his need for forgiveness.

In other words, it's almost expected that he wouldn't have kept his vow in full. He would have sinned. In fact, think about the most famous person who took a Nazarite vow in the Bible, and that's Samson.

When we read about him in the book of Judges, what do we discover? He wants to climb into bed with a Philistine woman. Marital unfaithfulness check.

He deliberately goes to look at a dead animal's body out of curiosity. Defilement. Check. He enjoys a Philistine wedding feast, which would have included alcohol for sure.

[34 : 57] Enjoying worldly pleasures and breaking his vow. Check. Simply making a Nazarite vow won't make you holy. That's for sure.

we're naturally unholy. Samson is a picture of that. And all our willpower and all our resolve in the world will not make us holy.

So how can we be holy? Well, here's what Numbers 5 to 6 is telling us. To become holy, holiness needs to come from outside of us.

Someone needs to provide us the means to becoming holy because there's no way we can do it on our own. And here's the good news. God is going to provide it.

He's going to make us holy. For come down to the end of Numbers chapter 6 to verses 22 to 27 and this is perhaps the one section of Numbers that you are familiar with.

[36 : 02] Let me read it. 6 verse 22. The Lord said to Moses, Tell Aaron and his sons, this is how you are to bless the Israelites.

Say to them, the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord turn his face towards you and give you peace.

So they will put my name on the Israelites and I will bless them. See, God is going to bless us and notice what kind of blessing he has in mind.

It's not the kind of blessing where we have enough to eat or our health is good, although those are blessings too. But it is the kind of blessing where the Lord can make his face shine upon you and turn his face towards you.

For think about what Numbers 5 to 6 has been telling us so far. It's been reminding us all along that we simply cannot see God face to face just like that.

[37 : 11] We're just too unholy. But now God promises and notice this is a promise not a command that God will shine his face upon us.

Have you ever seen people's faces shine? You see it when you see a couple in love with one another and clearly enjoying each other's company. You see it when a child brightens up when his daddy comes home.

And you see it when that daddy sees his child delighting in the present that he has given him. And now God is saying he wants us to experience the blessing of that kind of relationship with him.

And for that to happen, we must be made holy. But how do we receive this kind of blessing? Yes, Numbers 5 to 6 shows us the impossibility of us becoming holy on our own.

But Numbers 5 to 6 also points forward to the day where God will do this in full. You see already in this section, in Numbers 5 to 6, he has already provided some means to ensure that his presence is with us.

[38 : 30] All those sacrifices, all those procedures that we've just read, is there to make sure that we don't get destroyed. But those means are temporary and inadequate because they don't bring us into a face-to-face relationship with him.

But now, a promise that was future for those Israelites is now fulfilled for us.

For one day, God entered into the realm of sin and death. And amongst other things, God in the person of Jesus went to the lepers, the ritually defiled, and he touched them.

He healed them. And so he made sure that they could be included once more amongst God's people. And remember that woman in the Gospel of Mark with the issue of bleeding for many years?

Well, she too was literally unclean, but she went to Jesus and touched him out of faith. Who knows, perhaps she subconsciously remembers number six. She has faith that this life-giving, disease-hating God, wants to bring wholeness to his people and restore their relationship to him.

[39 : 49] And so she touches him. And what does Jesus do? Instead of pronouncing judgment on her, he pronounces grace on her.

For Jesus, unlike Samson, was a picture of the perfect Nazarite. He was a man totally devoted to God, but he decided to experience the ultimate curse for us.

He chose to be alienated from God, taking upon our unholiness so that we will gain his holiness. This is how Hebrews chapter 13 verse 12 would say on the screen.

On the screen, Hebrews chapter 13 verse 12. And so Jesus suffered outside the city gate to make the people holy through his own blood.

Notice where Jesus is. He went outside the city gate. He went through what all those people who had the skin diseases, who had the contact with the dead bodies, went through.

[41 : 00] He was put outside so that we might be able to stand in God's presence. presence. And so today, we already enjoy the blessing of Numbers chapter 6.

But in a sense, this promise of Numbers 6 remains future for us. For we don't enjoy a face-to-face relationship with God right now.

But we will. Look again at Revelation chapter 21 verse 27. nothing impure will ever enter the New Jerusalem, nor will anyone who does what is shameful and deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

That's everyone who trusts in Jesus. We've been made clean. And when they do so, this is what Revelation chapter 22 tells us.

no longer will there be any curse. In other words, that's blessing. They will see his face and they will not need the light of a lamb or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light.

[42 : 24] The Lord God will make his face shine upon us. He will turn his face towards us and bless us. And so we need to hang on to him.

Jesus has given us a holy status. And today he wants to make us a fit bride for him. And so Numbers 5 to 6 also invites us to reflect in what ways can we grow in the beauty of holiness?

In what ways are we still lacking? Remember, Numbers 5 to 6 assumes that sin is still present in our world. And so we need to reflect how sin is still present in our lives.

And then we should follow the model in Numbers 5 verse 7. There, the person who has wronged the Lord and the other person has to confess their sin.

And so should we. We confess our sin to the Lord. But not only that, we should try to make restitution. We should try to correct what is wrong. Perhaps the day that involves going to another person and seeking his or her forgiveness, maybe even compensation of some sort, because you know that you sin against him.

[43 : 53] And above all, we keep pursuing Christ. Well, that's what holiness is about, remember? Not self-righteousness or mere rules, but putting on Christ in all his splendor.

And then we live out a life of praise. In Numbers chapter 7 to 8, which we didn't have a real chance to touch on today, that involves giving him our everything as a church.

That's the point of Numbers chapter 7. When you read Numbers chapter 7, you find all these repeated descriptions of tribe X and tribe Y and tribe Z giving offering A and offering B and offering C to the Lord.

And it's simply making the point that everything is being given to him. And in Numbers chapter 8, what we see is the Levites being purified for service.

No longer are they set apart from God, but now they are set apart for God. God has made us holy, a beautiful bride, and so we pour ourselves out in a life of praise to him.

[45 : 09] That's what it means to be a holy people. So church, be holy because the Lord our God is holy.

let's pray. Heavenly Father, we just pray once again that you will rob us of wrong notions of holiness.

Help us not to see holiness as self-righteousness or as joyless or even as legalistic, but help us to see holiness as something beautiful.

thankful. Thank you that the Lord Jesus went outside the camp, went outside the city gate, so that we can be made holy by his blood. And so help us to pour ourselves out in a life of praise to him.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.