

# 40 Days of Fitness

A daily devotional by Rev Garry Hardingham

## DAY 40 – Worship!

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers and sisters, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

Romans 12:1-2

Over the past few days we have looked at what giving means for us in a post-tithing church. Let's explore this from the nihilistic point of view. Since we are not required to give a certain amount, what does that mean if we don't give at all? If giving is not prescribed then what about the rest of our relationship to God and each other?

As we have seen over the past forty days, the God we worship is a God of Grace, a God who chooses that life be created and recreated in order to serve His purposes for all of creation to exist. While God, through His church, calls all creation to worship Him, it is abundantly clear that the God who chooses to be in relationship with us demands that we only respond with the minimum of belief. (John 3:16)

But to just believe is to deny to one's self the enormity and privilege that comes with being a child of God. It is in this attitude then that can either choose to ignore God, His purposes and His desire for salvation of all creation, or we can respond with who we are as a worshipping community. The pattern of Christian existence and, by extension, Christian giving is not one of box-checking and obligations. It is a daily lifestyle of kindness and generosity flowing from the Spirit which dwells within us.

When we give to our church, it is because that is where God has led us and we want to be a part of the good work he is doing there. If we simply give an obligatory dollar amount on Sundays, but then walk out and live ungrateful lives Monday through Saturday because we have 'met our obligation', we have missed the point entirely. God deserves all we are, not just a dollar amount once a week.

My hope is that in this series of devotions, you have come to know more fully who God is, why God is so gracious and how the church plays a fundamental and, indeed, a critical role in God's plan for the world. To be part of a worshipping community of faith is to commit, not just some of who you are, but *all* of who you are.

When I became ordained, I knew that my ordination was not about just preaching on a Sunday, but about how I was called into both the particularity of my ministry and the universality of God's church. Not to seek glory or respect, or financial gain. But to commit my life to serve the God who called me through my service to the church, both locally and across the world. And in this ordination, I have found both deep wounding heartache and indescribable joy because the church God calls me to is filled with every type of Christian there is, all struggling to make sense and find their way more fully to God's presence. Because, we are all human. And we stand in the midst of an ultimately unknowable God of Grace who, nevertheless, continues to reveal himself not only in and through His Son and the Holy Spirit, but also in the revelation of His church.

So, in the face of such a God, be generous. Not just of your heart and time, but in your giving as well. For the God of the universe has, in His ineffable condescension chosen to love you with a love that nothing can compare. And His Son, His Spirit, and His church, that witnesses to this great love, are here for one thing alone...your salvation. And if anything is worth more than that, please send it to me.

### PRAYER

Lord,

We never chose you. You have chosen us.

We often lose our desire for You. You never stop desiring us.

We are greedy and mean, You are generous and lavish.

We deny You, You accept us.

We persecute and deride You, make fun and belittle You.

You count us amongst Your own and judge us only through forgiving love.

May we lose ourselves in You so that we made me made anew

And never forget to accept or tell of Your love.

In Your precious and loving name. Amen