

Crazy Rich Worship (Col 3:16-17)

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Preacher: William HC

[0:00] Kia ora, today's reading will come from the King James Version. And above all these things, put on charity, which is the bond of perfectness.

And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which also you are called in one body, and be you thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching, and admonishing one another in psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatsoever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.

Kia ora, Billy. This is the word of the Lord. Let's pray. Father, help us to dwell in your word richly, even as your word dwells in us richly.

Help us to see what it is to share your word with knowledge and wisdom, to sing it with variety and depth, and to just be thankful in every situation as we've been praying about.

[1:49] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. It's Sunday. It's nearly 3 p.m., and maybe you're wondering.

Your body's kind of feeling a little bit on edge, you know. Are we done yet? Well, maybe it was last week, you know. It's Sunday, 9 a.m., and I don't know. Some of you, maybe you were scrambling to get to church on time.

How will I get a ride to church? Who will be hanging around later for groups? These have been some of our many gut responses, haven't they? There's been a lot of change happening to us and around us as we have been a church family on tour.

We've got two more weeks of our road trip left, but then there will still be prayerful decisions to come, things to decide. And far from a quiet summer, we've had the joy of welcoming lots of different visitors and guests and even family members from other parts of our church family. What a privilege. What a privilege to come week after week for worship. I hope we can remember that in the midst of all the change. What a privilege to come and to sit under the Word of God, to delight in what our Heavenly Father has to share with us.

[3:07] What a delight it is to worship. And worship is a topic close to God's heart, isn't it? In fact, we've already seen its importance as we walk through the story of Jonah the last two weeks.

You remember God sent Jonah on a mission, right? Why? Because 120,000 men and women in the great city of Nineveh did not worship the one true God.

As one pastor puts it, mission exists because worship does not. For Jonah and his countrymen, worship looked very formal, very specific.

It meant a life devoted to God as Jewish people throughout the week living for him. And then centered around weekly gatherings at their temple, their temple of Jerusalem, right?

Remember his prayer in the belly of the fish that we talked about in the Bible reading. But I will shout of grateful praise will sacrifice to you. For the people of God back then, worship was not just an 80, 90-minute appointment and then you move on to the next thing in life.

[4:18] These were all-in events. I want you to cast your mind on the week that Jesus, he marched into Jerusalem around 30-something A.D.

The crowds were there for their annual Passover festival. There were a lot of people there in that great city, wasn't there? And they were not there just to pop in for 80 minutes and head out.

No, worship was more than that. For days and weeks, they would be there. Worship, it's all of life under God's rule.

And it's centered around gathering together in God's dwelling place, celebrating with his people. That's the vision of worship that God gives us.

And worship is on my mind. It's on your mind as well this whole month. But at the same time, we have to face it. We are not living in Jerusalem, in the temple. It's 2026, the third Sunday.

[5:15] We are feeling all kinds of strains, balancing all kinds of commitments. Some of you are feeling lots of different feelings as the changes happen around you. Some of you are anxious about what happens next as a church family.

And so amidst all this, the simple question is this. What kind of worship will help you and I know Christ more in his presence in 2026?

What kind of worship will help you and I know Jesus better in 2026? Or if I could rephrase it with a borrowed phrase and how I titled my sermon, What does crazy rich worship look like?

Committed to God's word. Coming out from God's word. I think it looks like that passage that Billy, our brother, read just before. You see that? See that little instruction there? Listen to it again.

Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly. Right? What a powerful phrase there. Now this was instructions written to the church in Colossae.

[6:20] You and I have never met them, but we can give a little bit of background about them. But let me just start by saying this. If you ask the church of Colossae, right, can we survey you guys? What time do you prefer to worship and come on a Sunday?

I think they would have given you a strange look and thought, are you crazy? Because this was a people who lived in, you know, very outnumbered.

The church in Colossae, right? Tiny number of people surrounded by lots and lots of people who did not worship God. They lived in a wealthy, pagan city, renowned for producing cloth and textiles. Think of it as like, you know, the Milan of the ancient world, right? High fashion, producing all kinds of clothing and textiles. For the people who made them in the sweatshops, some of them probably came to the church of Colossae.

This was hard work. These were working class people mixing in with rich business owners of these textile companies. Maybe for these earliest Christians, the only time you could worship was probably after the workday was done.

[7:27] In the gaps, right? Before you had to get all your stuff and go out to the fields, for example. Most of them probably didn't have a choice when to worship. It was just a privilege to worship together.

And worship probably looked less like an afternoon service and an air-conditioned auditorium. How nice. It's more like small groups of believers. Maybe gathered at someone's house over prayer. Yeah? And praising together. Maybe just singing with your work colleague who happens to be a Christian as you're working, you know, on the cloths that you were meant to make. While all these non-Christian workers around you were looking at you and going, that's crazy worship that's happening here.

That's what worship was like for the people of Colossae. So why would the Christians at Colossae give their allegiance to King Jesus, whom they'd never seen in person, right?

They'd just heard about him, believed in him, and now they're churching together. Why would they do that? Well, we find out the answer a little bit earlier in the letter to the Colossians.

[8:29] So you've got your Bibles there. You can flick a little bit ahead if you want to see some of these references. Please take God's word for it, not my word for it. That's what I often say. And you see that for the Colossians, who is Jesus?

Jesus is whom in whom all the fullness of God dwells in, right? No ordinary guy. King of kings. And so he is worth worshiping, right?

He's not just done normal things. He has done extraordinary things. He has reconciled you, who were enemies, back to God through what he's done on the cross. And we're not meant to move on for this hope held in the gospel, right?

And so Paul is told the Colossians this, and then he builds it up. And then he says that actually in Christ, Colossians 2 verse 3, in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

You see that? That's the key, right? The crazy rich life is not found, right, in any label that you can buy today. It's not found anywhere in the world that you can travel to.

[9:37] It's not in Dubai. It's not in Bali. The crazy rich life is found in Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And the good news about what Christ has done, what Jesus has done for you on the cross, how he's made peace with you through what he did on the cross, this good news becomes the anchor, the hope for every person that comes to church.

And so it's in light of all this that Paul then says, given that you've died with Christ, verse 20, chapter 2, and then given that you've died of Christ, since then you've been raised with Christ, chapter 3 verse 1, then set your minds on the things above.

Seek higher ground as you worship together. All right? Start to live as if you are with Christ. All right? Put to death all those idols in your life that belong to your earthly nature, chapter 3 verse 5. Rid yourself, right, of the angry thoughts and words that don't honor God. Chapter 3 verse 8, right? And so on and so on and so on, right? To put, to rid, to sit. These kind of sound like kind of steps or routines at the gym, but they actually just flow out of the glorious message of Jesus Christ.

[10:59] This is the do's that flow after what God has done for you in Jesus. And Paul calls this specific message, what God has done for you in Jesus, he calls it the message of Christ here.

You see that in chapter 3 verse 16? The message of Jesus Christ. And it's this message that needs to dwell in us richly so that we can have a crazy rich worship life that God wants for us.

Okay? Easy enough, hopefully, to pick up on. I'm going to zoom in on that word dwell, okay? You see that word highlighted. In the original language, this word dwell was used to speak of God.

God dwelling, being present among his people. That was the hope of God's people, right? Would you come and live with us? And where once a holy God dwelt among a sinful people, but there needed to be conditions, there was a special tent set up, or a physical temple that had priests to make be go-betweens, now the Holy Spirit himself, right?

He now dwells in every believer. Now every person who follows Jesus is now a temple of the risen Lord, a place where God's Spirit dwells.

[12:19] Isn't that amazing? Because of Jesus now, God now truly dwells among us. And this word dwell, right, this idea of dwelling, God dwelling with us, this is the same idea that God wants his good news about Jesus, to dwell in us richly, to keep living in us, right?

And so that's why as Christians, we worship together, 2 p.m., 11.45, whenever, 4 p.m. We worship together not just to be entertained. We don't worship together just to have our needs met, right? Worship together is not free childcare. Worship together is not tell me a good story and then you give me something else. No. Worship together is so that the Word of Christ can dwell in you richly. Amen? And so if you hunger for God's presence this coming year, if you want to grow spiritually, if you are trying to seek God, then we want to listen in to these instructions.

This is formative. This will change your life and my life. And so I want to just zoom in on three points with the short time we have today, right? We want to let the message of Christ dwell among you richly.

[13:34] Well, here are three specific ways that rich worship will come to you in Christ. Well, firstly, it's through wise teaching, right? You see what it says, right?

Have a look at chapter 3, verse 16 again. Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom. Actually, in the original language, the word in all wisdom comes first, right?

So it could be like in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another. Wisdom, sometimes people think about, oh, wisdom is how long to run the service for or how do we direct your talks and your programs at kids or adults.

Sometimes wisdom, people think of it as, you know, how do we help people out, you know, in church so that they're not bored or they're not, you know, upset. I think, though, the context of this letter tells us that it's spiritual wisdom that God has in mind here.

All right? So through kind of the teaching that is spirit-led, that comes from the Lord himself, right? That's the sort of thing that we want to be proclaiming, prioritizing here at church.

[14:45] You see the words teaching and admonishing, right? Just before with all wisdom in our translation. Teaching and admonishing doesn't just come from the people up front.

It comes from you, right? I love how Irene modeled that for us. You read the scriptures to each other, right? That's probably what it looked like in the early church a lot of the time. And at the same time, we'll always aim to devote some time to explain God's word clearly, right?

Because not everyone has read this part of the Bible before. And not everyone knows how to read this part of the Bible so that it points to Jesus and not to, I need to try harder, which is not the gospel.

And so here at PCBC English, some of you know this, through the years past, we've not skipped the hard bits of God's word, right? And we've not skipped the long bits either.

It's in these spirit-breathed words, right? Whether it comes from Deuteronomy or Colossians or Jonah, that we see the Lord Jesus. And so we spend time, we pay attention to God's living and active word.

[15:51] And we do it together. We help each other out on the car rides home. We talk about it during the week. That's teaching and admonishing one another. Let me highlight again one another, right?

One another is a key phrase because it happens so much. It happens in the book of Colossians and actually in a lot of Paul's other letters as well. Very unlikely that this church in Colossae had, you know, lots of pastors and, you know, lots of other paid staff to help them out in church life, right?

Most of them probably had a different job as well during the week. And so keep that in mind as you think, who's the teachers here? Whose responsibility is it to admonish, you know, to call things out when it needs to be called out?

Preach the word, as Isaac reminded us a few weeks back in our combined service. Preach the word is not just for the professionals. It's you and I listening to God's word, thinking about it, and then telling someone else, right?

Or putting it into our conversations what we've learned. Or letting it shape your decisions. That's teaching and admonishing as well. And to do one another's well, actually, we need to know each other, right?

[17:04] So, practical thing, we need to have a relationship with each other, right? I could kid myself and say, you know, the more I talk to you up the front every week, the more you'll like me. That may not be the case.

I actually have to spend time going, hey, do you mind if we catch up for a coffee? Or, I'm not drinking much coffee this year, so it might be something else, matcha. Or, you know, do you want to come around for dinner sometime?

These are the little incidental ways that you and I, all of us, can be a part of, right? So, encourage, you know, when someone invites me to play tennis, or to talk about the sports, or to go shopping together.

This is where real worship happens. This is where teaching and admonishing goes ahead, isn't it? Yeah? So, keep that in mind. And remember, you can do it too. But it requires relationship.

But it also requires participation. Isn't it? And I know I'm preaching to the choir here. Maybe there's a few people who are on live stream and it's been hard to show up. I understand.

[18:07] But in general, to habitually skip worship, if you could make it. Or maybe to check out during the service on your devices. To slot church in between your ten other commitments in life on that day.

We want to be careful about that. Because it's going to be harder to do what Paul wants us to do here. What God wants us to do here. This one another life. Right? If we're not present.

If we're not going to stay it out. The discipline of pausing your weekend, whatever time of the week, the day it is, to worship with God, to meet with his people.

It helps us to realize what you and I were made for. Right? What did Jesus say to the devil? Right? When he was tempted. Man shall not live on bread alone.

Right? But on every word of God. You and I shall not live on just making bread, working for bread, preparing bread, eating it, selling it. But we need to live on the living word of God.

[19:10] And that comes through worshiping together. Right? Comes through this wise teaching that we are committed to hearing from and sharing with each other. Okay. Alright. Second thing.

Rich worship in Christ is going to come to you through careful singing. I thought about how to change it. Was it careful? Carefree? Carefilled? I don't know. I want to keep the word care in it because we want to be caring in how we sing.

In how we do sung worship together. I think back again to the Colossian church. They were surrounded by lots of different religions and beliefs. Lots of myths and speculations about God. Paul actually talks about them a little bit. The early church after them, they confronted, they were faced with all kinds of false teachings about Jesus especially. And actually many of these teachers, you can look up and Google the Arians later, they would use popular tunes.

Pop music as it were to teach their false message about Jesus. Alright? We don't have those songs today thankfully but we know that this was a big problem.

[20:14] People were saying, they're using all this music to try and lead our people astray. And actually, notice again, it goes, let the message of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns and songs.

Okay? Through singing. So what I'm trying to highlight here is that the teaching and admonishing and the singing and the worship and song comes together, right? Alright?

The teaching did not start with me picking up the mic. It started when Sister Irene said, let's hear from the Lord Jesus. Matthew chapter 11, 28. Do you see that?

That first 20 or so minutes of our worship service at work. So that's not me and God time. No. It's not just me and God time. Paul says it's teaching and admonishing one another time.

Right? And our songs teach. And so we use that opportunity. We be careful about picking the songs. We try and engage our children and say, here are some actions.

[21:17] We do it with our whole bodies. Right? Worship and song is less about, you know, you think about the TikToks that you see. People, you know, eyes closed, hands raised up.

No. Actually, this kind of worship, careful singing, actually looks more like me singing to you and then you singing to me and passing on the rich message of Christ together.

Alright? And doing that, singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord. There's a both-hand element, isn't there? But I want to emphasize that there is that one another aspect to worship and song together.

It says psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Right? Or songs from the Spirit. And so, look, we don't have access to what the church in Colossae had on their set list. But we do know there was variety, don't we?

Right? Dumb, dumb, dumb. Right? There's variety. Some of the songs they sang, they were straight from the Bible. God's songbook. 150 Psalms. You notice, actually, they don't always sing happy songs in the Psalms.

[22:22] They were songs of lament. Songs of, you know, asking God to bring his justice on earth. Songs of joy and sorrow. And then other songs seem to be songs that they were composed later, maybe even spontaneously.

You and I, we need to avoid the trap of thinking, worship isn't real or isn't right unless I've sung my favorite song. Or this particular song. Right?

Because what does Paul say? There's a variety of songs. There's a variety of songs out there that we sing to one another. But because of the way that we see these songs mapped out, there's also depth to those songs too, isn't there?

Let's say we sing the line, Your goodness is running after me. It's running after me. That's straight from Psalm 23, verse 6. That's so good.

Let's then also sing songs that help us remember Psalm 23, verse 3. He restores my strength. And what about verse 4 of that Psalm? Even when I walk through the darkest valley.

[23:26] Right? Variety and depth. Let's look for songs like that. Let's be a people that carefully sing together. Don't get me wrong. Simple

songs are great.

But not simplistic songs that miss out on the fullness of the message of Christ for us. So you can actually, you know, you don't have to be like a police about it, but you can actually ask good questions about the songs we sing together.

Or the songs that your friends sing together. Right? Ask each other, do these lyrics, these words, do they magnify God or do they make me the center of attention? You can ask, you know, one another, does this lyric that you're singing or this new song that's come on the radio, is it going to help all of us sing or just the people up the front?

You can ask, does it reflect Psalms, hymns, spiritual songs, the variety that we see in scripture? Or is it just kind of hitting kind of one note as if like, you know, someone was just playing the note C all the time?

That's worship, is it? No, no, no. We want variety and depth as we sing God's truths together. And you know what? It's okay that we have different preferences.

[24:37] But this is not a time of karaoke, is it? It's not what Paul says. It's a time to sing carefully, to teach and admonish one another. I love this quote I saw earlier this week.

Please don't fall for the lie that worship is you primarily expressing yourself to God. It's far more than that. It's God forming you into his image as you unload false teachings about the world today, about yourself, and download good teachings, good words about the message of Christ.

That's God forming you. Okay? And actually, practically, if this is true about worship and song, about singing, then please sing. So encouraged, actually, the past three weeks I've been able to hear from up front, you're singing so well.

You're singing to each other, right? I hope you hear that encouragement from up front or from other people. Please sing. I'm hearing children sing. I'm hearing adults sing. I'm hearing people sing in all kinds of levels of musical ability.

It doesn't matter, right? None of you are being miked. So just sing. Go for it. Enjoy it. Your singing could be encouraging someone else next to you that may not be able to sing in this season.

[25:50] So go for it. So if singing is wonderful, then go for it. And if singing is powerful, then fill your life with songs that will teach about the message of Jesus.

Right? I know that we're so personalized and individualized. Right? Sometimes people can walk into church even with their earbuds in. Right? And so you're here at church, and then your earbuds are taking you to a different world.

I want to encourage you. Join in. Right? And then take these wonderful, rich songs into your week. And maybe fasting from those songs that draw your heart away from the Lord Jesus.

Right? Crazy, rich worship. Imagine if it were said of us, I love how PCBCs sing. So loud and enthusiastic. So let rich worship in Christ come through wise teaching, through careful singing. And this is our last point. And it's very simple. Through thankful living. Thankful living. Have a look again. Whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus.

[26:52] Giving thanks to God the Father through him. This is a repeated theme. Okay? So it's not just Paul that says it here at this point. Be thankful.

In fact, be thankful because this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:18 says.

Right? Right? Sometimes we talk about what's God's will for my life?

What's God's will for my life? I don't know all the ins and outs. I do know this. Right? Give thanks in all circumstances. You can remember that one. I can remember that one. And all of us go through different challenges right now.

Right? Right? All kinds of things make life hard. Whether it's, you know, unwanted singleness. Whether it's unexpected school results.

Whether it's just problems at work. Incurable health concerns. We all have real worries. And yet, amidst all that in life, it can be hard, right, to forget that God's will for us is to give thanks as much as we're able.

[27:54] Maybe you're here and you're one of the few people who feel frustrated about church life at the moment. It's a complex family that we're a part of, isn't it?

But where we set our minds will shape our hearts. I'll say that again. Where we set our minds will shape our hearts. Right? Where you set your minds will shape your hearts.

And so, set your minds on things. Reasons to give thanks. We dwell on all the downsides all the time. We're going to be in trouble. But listen to Daniel Chan.

He's a pastor, a second-gen church congregation. Similar to ours, right? Okay? You've got, you know, older church, younger church, different languages. And listen a little bit to what he says. He says about his church, there's much to be thankful for in my church. Talks about how he has benefited from the wisdom of older, first-generation brothers and sisters who provide a different, yet still godly perspective on different issues in life.

[28:57] He's thankful for countless shared meals. He's thankful that, you know, church building may not look, you know, really polished and modern. May not have the latest tech, but, you know, but they have skilled cooks, a great kitchen, a heart full of love.

Evidences of God's grace are everywhere if you and I choose to look for them and see them. Imagine if people walked into this church, right? And they said, wow, people are so thankful here. People really appreciate each other. Imagine if you and I all felt this way. Wouldn't that be a taste of paradise? And so how can we cultivate this kind of thankful living?

Right? Again, more practical ways, right? I want to suggest three things. Pray it through. Pray until you start to give thanks. Because it's not easy, right? We actually have to undo some of our thinking, right?

Our worries to actually start to give thanks. We actually have to pray, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. And then we start to stop thinking about my will and what's going on.

[30:02] That's the Lord's prayer teaching us as well. Pray it through. I have a pastor that I've read before. I respect his advice a lot. He once said he will never put anyone down except onto his prayer list.

I wonder if you could do that, right? I wonder if someone's annoying you right now at church or in your family. Could you pray like this? God, thank you for so and so. Even though it was a really hard week and we had a tough conversation, even just yesterday and da, da, da, da, da.

God, thank you for this person. Thank you for, I don't know, their faithful service. Thank you for their willing heart. Thank you that we're one in Christ. See, start going.

Pray it through, right? Let your heart, your mindset change. Another practical way, put it down. Who journals here? Who writes diaries? Yep. You're on to something really good, okay? Journaling slows your thoughts down, right?

So you're not looking at brain rot all day. You're slowing down. You're actually, what am I thinking, right? As you write, okay? It's like the speed of writing helps you to go at the pace of what life should be like.

[31:08] And so journaling or notes on your phone, whatever way that you like to process things, use that time to start answering the question, God, what can I be thankful for? Come up with 10 things maybe later tonight, right?

What can I be thankful for? I guarantee as you start with 10, maybe you can get 20, maybe you can get more. And more. Practical ways as well, please point it back, right? We live in, I don't know, a cultural moment where it just seems like people are okay with gossip.

Gossip. Whether it's, you know, you know, did you hear what so-and-so said? Whether it's all messaged and so on. Turn that, if you are part of that circle, turn it into a thankfulness opportunity instead, right?

Use the word, I'm thankful for, dot, dot, dot, dot, and then just bounce that gossip right away. All right? Or just dissipate it. I was just reviewing kind of some of my thoughts recently.

I remember the scene, right? And this movie, Crazy Rich Asians. I'll just put this slide up. All right? I don't know. This is not really my thing. But the book, I think, is better.

[32:18] The whole premise of this movie actually started with a group of ladies reading the Bible together. Can you believe that? But the sad thing was that as they were reading their Bibles, right?

They were reading, like, Colossians 3, 2, actually, in the movie version. As soon as they read their Bibles, they're interspersing it with gossip about who's rich, who's not, what's happening in that

