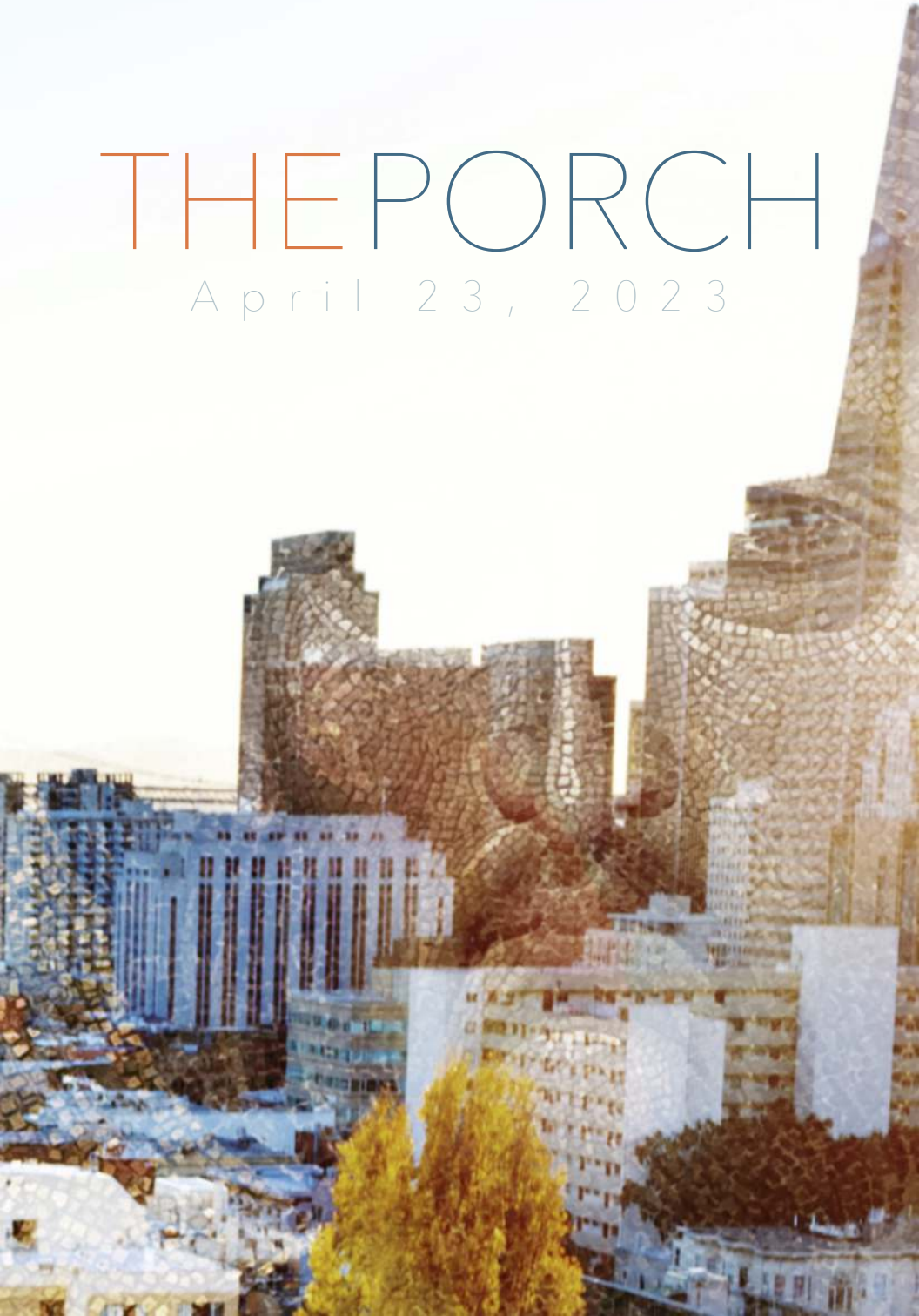


# THE PORCH

April 23, 2023



## About Our Liturgy

We are all creatures of habit. Habits and rhythms shape who we are. Our Sunday gatherings are designed to help us press the story of Jesus into our souls and change who we are by repeating that same story over and over again.

Every week we gather to remember and celebrate these same old gospel truths: that we are sinners but we have a great savior. That the death and resurrection of Jesus brought his kingdom here. That we have been adopted into the family of God. That he has called us to love each other and our city. That we were created for a perfect world, and that this world is not all there is.

So we invite you to participate with us as a group of imperfect people who tell the same story over and over again, the story of King Jesus.





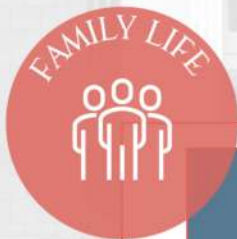
## Call To Worship

### Singing

\* The American author David Foster Wallace wrote, "In the day-to-day trenches of adult life, there is actually no such thing as atheism. There is no such thing as not worshipping. Everybody worships. The only choice we get is what to worship." This is a powerful statement from a man who was not a follower of Jesus. He was 100% correct. We all have something at the center of our lives. Something that we believe will make us happy. Something that will fulfill us. Even those who follow Jesus often find that we are serving idols, something that ultimately won't fulfill us.

The gospel story tells us what will: Jesus Christ. Only he can fulfill us. Only he can redeem us. Only he can heal our deep spiritual wounds. Only he can give hope. Serving him as king is why we were created. This is why we open our gatherings with worship. Music touches our souls in a way that nothing else can. And so we use music as the people of God have done for thousands of years to remind ourselves that we serve an amazing King and that only he should be at the center of our lives.





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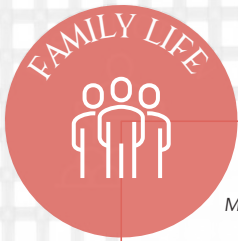
\* One of the beautiful facets of the gospel is how it brings all kinds of people together (Galatians 3:28). We are God's people. We are called to live our lives together and to love one another. In this part of our gathering, we celebrate this truth. We pray for each other. We chat while getting coffee and tea. We talk about what's going on in the life of the family.



Chapter 4 & Morality Articles on  
Wednesday, April 26







## Prayer

*Monthly Schedule*

**Week 1:** We read a prayer from church history.

**Week 2:** We take requests and pray for each other.

**Week 3:** Congregational Prayer.

**Week 4:** Praying the Psalms.

**Week 5:** We take requests and pray for each other.

## Coffee

This quick time of greeting isn't a break in the worship but rather a continuation of our worship. Take five minutes to grab a cup of coffee and say hello to someone you haven't met yet.





## New City Catechism

**Question 18:** Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?

**Answer:** No, every sin is against the sovereignty, holiness, and goodness of God, and against his righteous law, and God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them in his just judgment both in this life, and in the life to come.

**Question 19:** Is there any way to escape punishment and be brought back into God's favor?

**Answer:** Yes, to satisfy his justice, God himself, out of mere mercy, reconciles us to himself and delivers us from sin and from the punishment for sin, by a Redeemer.

\* 2 Timothy 3:16-17 says, "All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." God's word is precious. This time is less about the words of the preacher and more about the words of God. So here at The Porch we usually go through an entire book of the Bible verse by verse. We want to soak up the truth. We want to see Jesus on every page. We want to know the gospel better than we did yesterday. When that happens, we will be more loving, more humble, more hopeful, more joyful, and more blown away by what we learn about our King.



## Scripture Reading | Peter 1:18-23

You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, **but with the precious blood of Christ**, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times **for the sake of you who through him are believers in God**, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, **so that your faith and hope are in God.**

Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, **love one another earnestly from a pure heart**, since you have been born again, not of perishable seed **but of imperishable**, through the living and abiding word of God.

## Ezekiel 12 | More Drama

**Ezekiel 12:1** The word of the Lord came to me: 2 “Son of man, you are living among a rebellious house. They have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious house.

3 “Now you, son of man, get your bags ready for exile and go into exile in their sight during the day. You will go into exile from your place to another place while they watch; perhaps they will understand, though they are a rebellious house. 4 During the day, bring out your bags like an exile’s bags while they look on. Then in the evening go out in their sight like those going into exile. 5 As they watch, dig through the wall and take the bags out through it. 6 And while they look on, lift the bags to your shoulder and take them out in the dark; cover your face so that you cannot see the land. For I have made you a sign to the house of Israel.”

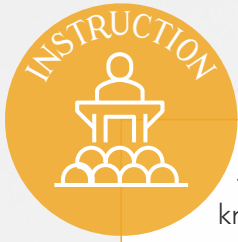




**7** So I did just as I was commanded. In the daytime I brought out my bags like an exile's bags. In the evening I dug through the wall by hand; I took them out in the dark, carrying them on my shoulder in their sight.

**8** In the morning the word of the Lord came to me: **9** "Son of man, hasn't the house of Israel, that rebellious house, asked you, 'What are you doing?' **10** Say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says: This pronouncement concerns the prince in Jerusalem and the whole house of Israel living there.' **11** You are to say, 'I am a sign for you. Just as I have done, it will be done to them; they will go into exile, into captivity.' **12** The prince who is among them will lift his bags to his shoulder in the dark and go out. They will dig through the wall to bring him out through it. He will cover his face so he cannot see the land with his eyes. **13** But I will spread my net over him, and he will be caught in my snare. I will bring him to Babylon, the land of the Chaldeans, yet he will not see it, and he will die there. **14** I will also scatter all the attendants who surround him and all his troops to every direction of the wind, and I will draw a sword to chase after them. **15** They will know that I am the Lord when I disperse them among the nations and scatter them among the countries. **16** But I will spare a few of them from the sword, famine, and plague, so that among the nations where they go they can tell about all their detestable practices. Then they will know that I am the Lord."

**17** The word of the Lord came to me: **18** "Son of man, eat your bread with trembling and drink your water with anxious shaking. **19** Then say to the people of the land, 'This is what the Lord God says about the residents of Jerusalem in the land of Israel: They will eat their bread with anxiety and drink their water in dread, for their land will be stripped of everything in it because of the violence of all who live there.'



20 The inhabited cities will be destroyed, and the land will become dreadful. Then you will know that I am the Lord.' "

21 Again the word of the Lord came to me: 22 "Son of man, what is this proverb you people have about the land of Israel, which goes, 'The days keep passing by, and every vision fails'? 23 Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says: I will put a stop to this proverb, and they will not use it again in Israel.' But say to them, 'The days have arrived, as well as the fulfillment of every vision. 24 For there will no longer be any false vision or flattering divination within the house of Israel. 25 But I, the Lord, will speak whatever message I will speak, and it will be done. It will no longer be delayed. For in your days, rebellious house, I will speak a message and bring it to pass. This is the declaration of the Lord God.' "

26 The word of the Lord came to me: 27 "Son of man, notice that the house of Israel is saying, 'The vision that he sees concerns many years from now; he prophesies about distant times.' 28 Therefore say to them, 'This is what the Lord God says: None of my words will be delayed any longer. The message I speak will be fulfilled. This is the declaration of the Lord God.' "

**Ezekiel 11:19** "And I will give them one heart, and a new spirit I will put within them. I will remove the heart of stone from their flesh and give them a heart of flesh,"

**Ezekiel 12:2** "Son of man, you are living among a rebellious house. They have eyes to see but do not see, and ears to hear but do not hear, for they are a rebellious house.



**R. C. Sproul** "There is no doubt that God wants His worship to have form, so the question is not whether we will have a liturgy or not. The issue is whether the liturgy is biblical in its content, and ultimately, whether we are using the liturgy to worship in spirit and in truth. No matter what the liturgy is, whether it's a plain liturgy, a simple liturgy, or a complex, highly symbolic liturgy, it can be formalized and externalized so that it is corrupted to the point that God despises it. As we seek out the forms of worship that please God, we must be vigilant lest we fall into formalism or externalism."

**Philip Graham Ryken** "What will transform us is not information for the mind but formation of the heart through the liturgy of the church."

### *Application*

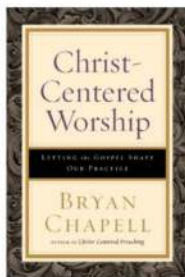
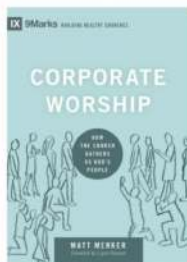
- 1 - Think about the value you place on Sunday gatherings.
- 2 - Don't judge church on the emotional impact.
- 3 - Don't come to a concert. Come to a banquet.

**Mike Cosper** "We have to see that there's a difference between a service that's compelled by a hunger to display the gospel and a service that's compelled by a desire to stir emotions through other means. We also have to see that the church needs to be equipped for more than emotional catharsis."



**Mike Cospers**, “Theologian Jeremy Begbie calls the gathering an “echo from the future,” a foretaste of something we’ll see come to fruition when Christ returns and all things are made new, a not-yet life that we taste in part already. Today, we gather in exile, in the world but not of it, but one day the exile will end. God will rebuild creation, and not one corner of it will be stained by sin and rebellion. Until then, we have these momentary and imperfect glimpses and foretastes as we gather, hear the Word, and respond together. As flawed and imperfect as these gatherings are, they’re the most truthful moment of our week, an outpost of the kingdom of God and a foretaste of eternity.”

#### *For Further Reading:*





## Singing

\* In the sermon we listened to the gospel preached. Here, we respond with worship. We sing the praises of the God who has saved us and given us hope.



## Confession & Lament Communion Singing

\*The gospel is not the story of what we do to earn God's love. The gospel is the story of what God has done to bring us back to life. The problem is that we are forgetful and we all constantly slip into moralism where we think that we need to live a certain way to earn God's love. This is the time in our gathering where we intentionally confess our sin and take communion to remind us of the grace of God. We remember that we are not redeemed by doing anything. We are redeemed by the death of Jesus in our place.



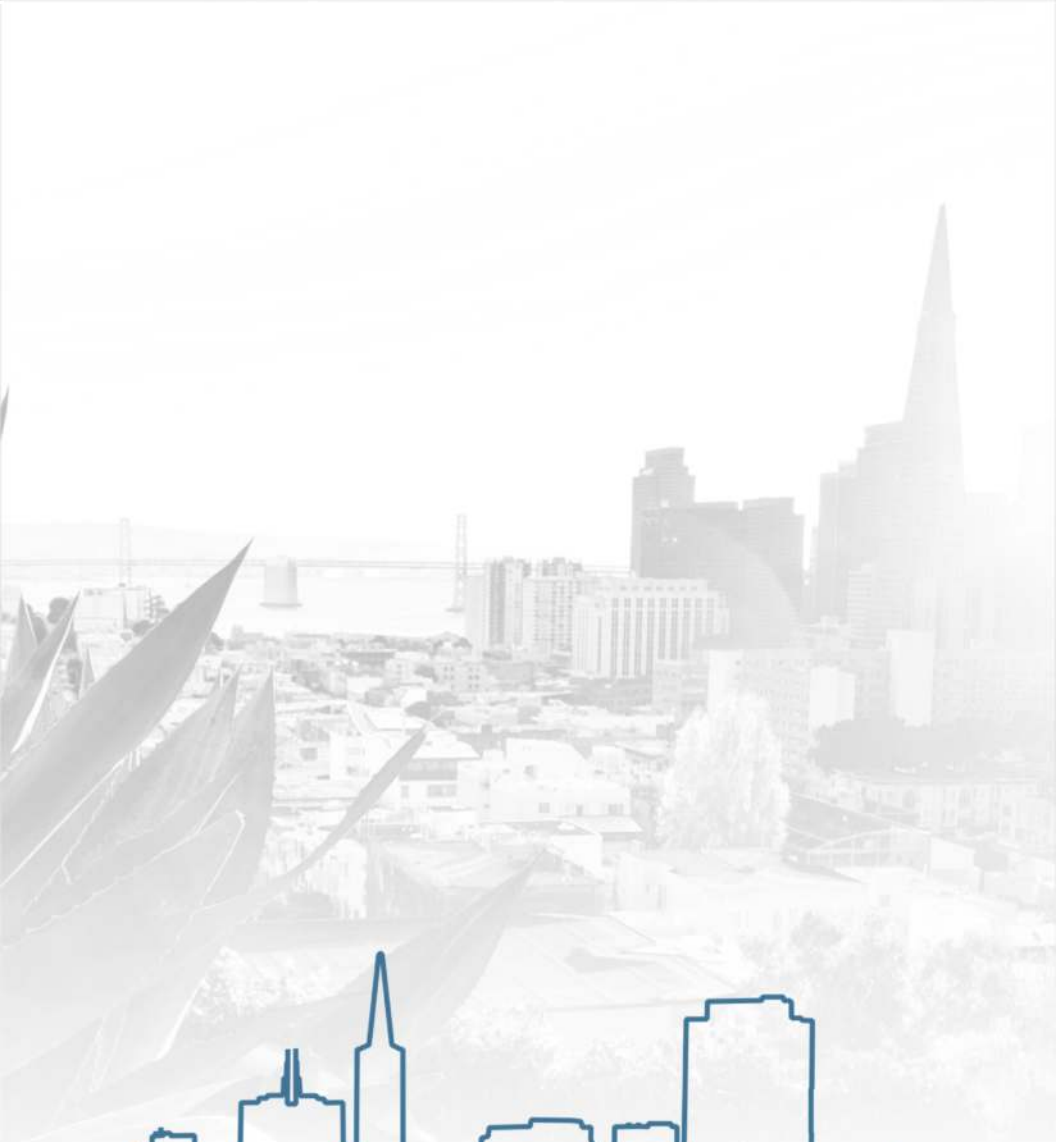
## Benediction

### Romans 15:5-6

⁵ May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, ⁶ that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

\*We are not just followers of King Jesus for a few hours on Sunday morning. We are ambassadors of his kingdom everywhere we go. With our families. At work. With our friends and neighbors. So every week, we finish our gatherings by remembering that we represent him everywhere we go and that we are called to radically love people so that they see him in our lives.





**THE PORCH**  
FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

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