Let us pray,

Lord, guide us to see that you desire relationship with us today, not tomorrow.

Amen.

What are we willing to do to let God know that we have accepted God's Grace?

What have we done in response to the promises that we have acknowledged in our baptism?

This is not a dig at anyone, I put myself in this issue as well.

But I feel that as a culture, and even a church culture, serving Christ has lost its priority.

There is so much that is demanding our attention.

So much that makes us feel that if we don't pay attention to X, Y or Z that we wont have a future.

There is this urgency in current American culture especially around sports, extracurriculars, and even academics that if we

aren't the best, or if we don't dedicate our entire lives around this one thing, then we wont be successful.

So many of us are conditioned to believe that sports, extracurriculars, academics, etc are more important to our futures than they really are.

Now, please do not misunderstand me.

I am not saying that they are not important.

It is important to have fun, it is important to be a part of a team, it is important to learn and grow in our understanding of this world.

Personally, music is very important to me.

I dedicated a huge chunk of my life to improving my skills on trumpet.

And it is good to be good at things.

But the lesson that I learned, and the lesson that Jesus is trying to teach us, is that we should make sure that our priorities are aligned to the correct thing.

As a Pastor, you can probably see where I am going with this.

Jesus should be our main priority.

Christ centered community should be our priority.

But increasingly in America, this mutual loving community is slowly dying.

This is not to say that Church is perfect.

It most certainly is not.

We are imperfect people, who say and do things that hurt each other's feelings.

But what Church does that other parts of society do not do, is remind us of what is truly important.

Relationship with the creator, savior and sustainer of the universe and each other.

This relationship with God is not something that is done behind closed doors.

The more we pray, the more we worship, the more we read scripture, the more we learn about God, we start to understand that true devotion to God is done in community.

God didn't give his promise to an individual, he gave it to the people of Israel and later the entire human race.

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When church is done right, all people are truly welcome into this space.

When church is done right, there is no need to prove our worth, because worth has already been given to us.

But intrinsic worth, unfortunately, can be easily tossed to the side.

With sports, extracurriculars, and academics and all other things that require a level of skill, one is only welcome on the team if they are good enough.

And it can feel great when you are the one who made the team, or earned the degree, or is able to perform on prestigious stages or with popular groups.

But what about those who never make teams?

What about those who don't excel at academics?

What about those who never find themselves better than other people at anything society deems noteworthy?

Where do they belong?

They belong with Christ, at church, in community.

We all belong with Christ, at church and in community.

But so often we reject this gift.

We reject the gift of inherent worth.

We reject the gift of community.

We reject the gift of grace and mercy.

And we think that we can push off these gifts until tomorrow, until next week, until next year.

Thinking this type of community will always be here.

But what too often happens is, we push them off so long, that we forget how important they were, and they die.

When Jesus said that he did not know those who were not prepared, he wasn't trying to be nasty.

What he was trying to say, is that they never desired to have a relationship with him.

They never showed up.

They never showed interest in him, until it was too late, until the lights turned off.

Don't wait until it is too late to join in on the community of believers.

Don't wait until life becomes so difficult that you scramble to find a community to help you out.

This sermon can sound a little harsh, but it isn't meant to be.

What I am trying to get across is that so many of us want to find a place where we are wanted, loved and cared for.

And what I am trying to say, is that that place is here.

Christ wants you in his church.

I want you in this church.

Everyone around you wants you in this church.

You are a beloved, desired, and sought after member of this eternal community.

That doesn't mean that we wont hurt each other sometimes.

Of course we will.

When one is in community, hurt feelings are a guarantee.

But community, especially a christian community when done right, is also a group of people trying to express love, forgiveness, mercy and grace.

So to sum it all up, Christ needs you, I need you, the church needs you.

Not because you are the best, or the most talented, but because you are who you are.

Because you are worthy because Christ made you worthy.

May we continue to show up, may we continue to make God a priority, may we learn to live life understanding our worth, God's promises, and our place in God's eternal kingdom.

Amen.