

# Ministry of the Holy Spirit

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[ 0 : 00 ] So I'm good to be with you preaching from a pulpit that looks like Jesus himself built. It's good to be with you. I'm going to treat you just like Beaufort this morning.

Man, this is not a TED Talk. We're not here to entertain you. This is a time to engage and to lean in. Lunch plans will come, all that. Man, this is a time where we can lean in for what God may want to say or do or confront.

And so let's lean in together, all right? All right, we're going to continue in this series through the book of 2 Corinthians.

Man, we're five weeks into it now. You guys have likely already covered a lot of the context, but I think particularly context with this letter is important. And so if you have not been here, just a little bit of recap and a little bit of context to what's going on.

Paul, this famed apostle, he had planted this church somewhere around 50 A.D. approximately. It was, yeah, an emerging city.

[ 1 : 00 ] Rome was the great city of the day. Lots of culture and commerce and art and literature, business coming out of this city. It was a city with lots of different ideas and mindset emerging amongst it.

It had a lot going for it, and then the gospel emerges, and this small church and group of believers began to be spiritually formed.

And we know in 1 Corinthians, he says in my previous letter, so 1 Corinthians and 2 Corinthians, as we know of them, actually are not first and second letter. 1 Corinthians was likely his second letter. There was two, maybe three letters written in between. And then comes the book of 2 Corinthians. And this letter is unique in the fact that it is extremely personal.

It's extremely vulnerable. It's extremely emotional. It's not the organized didactic truth and doctrine that we've come to know from the majority of Paul's letters. It's this, yeah, much like the book of Psalms.

[ 2 : 00 ] It's this emotional outpouring of a lot of the stuff that he's going to. A lot of the mid-century theologians believe that from a canon standpoint, this actually doesn't belong in the New Testament because it's so different from his other letters.

But I love in God's sovereignty, he has allowed 2 Corinthians to be a part of Scripture because we get to see so much of Paul's confidence in the Lord. We get to see so much of the famed apostle. And so his relationship with the church in Corinth was complicated. They, yeah, he had visited them and then was not able to visit them again when they wanted him to.

There was an offense taken because their preferences wasn't met. We talked about that the first and second week. There was just a lot of stuff going on by way of other voices starting to come into their lives.

Later in the book, he calls them super apostles. These other teachers from the East had become, yeah, more well-known, were gaining more traction among the people. They were beginning to refute much of what Paul was saying.

[ 3 : 02 ] And at an even deeper level, they were beginning to refute Paul himself, that he was just ordinary, that his life was marked by affliction, so therefore the Lord may not be with him. And so Paul, in his wisdom and his brilliance, actually is writing in that.

And this letter of 2 Corinthians is him refuting and shaping and discipling them in this context of complexity and layers.

And so we've been looking at it for the past few weeks. And, man, what an incredible thing that we've got to look at. Last week, Paul looked at this triumphal procession and how Jesus actually shows the opposite type of strength in this upside-down kingdom.

And hopefully you guys were able to look at that. And so he begins to continue today in that. So I want to look at it. It's kind of my lane to preach for an hour over two verses.

If I had my way, that's what I would do. But I have been assigned to a whole chapter today. And so, man, this chapter really talks about three things. I'm going to give you them all up front.

[ 4 : 09 ] One is God's strength versus our strength. And we're going to look at that. Then Paul really goes into a whole section on New Covenant, Old Covenant theology. And then in the later parts of this passage, Paul lands by talking about the freedom in the Spirit.

And so if this feels like I'm kind of talking about a few different things today, it's because I am. It's because I'm trying to honor the text that's been given to me. And so I want to read.

If you have your Bibles, we're going to be in 2 Corinthians chapter 3. I'm going to read from the ESV. We're going to read the whole chapter.

And then we're going to pray and continue. If you guys are ready, a nice, wholehearted amen. Amen. All right. All right. 2 Corinthians chapter 3.

Are we beginning to commend ourselves again? Or do we need, as some do, letters of recommendation to you or from you? You yourselves are our letter of recommendation, written on our hearts to be known and read by all.

[ 5 : 12 ] And you show that you are a letter from Christ delivered to us, written not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God. Not on tables of stone, but on tablets of human hearts.

Such is the confidence that we have through Christ towards God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything is coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God.

Who has made us sufficient to be ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter, but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Now, if the ministry of death carved in letters on stone came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end.

Will not the ministry of the Spirit have even more glory? For if there was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed in glory.

[ 6 : 12 ] Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all because of the glory that surpasses it. For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory.

We're going to talk about that. Since we have such a hope, we are very bold. Not like Moses, who would put a veil over his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what is being brought to an end.

But their minds were hardened. For to this day, when they read the old covenant, the same veil remains unlifted. Because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts.

But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now the Lord is spirit. And where the spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image. From one degree of glory to another.

[ 7 : 17 ] For this comes from the Lord who is the spirit. Thank you for sticking with me. Let's pray one more time, guys. Lord, we thank you for your word. We know that it is a lamp into our feet and a light into our path.

We know that, yeah, we do not want just to learn more things about you. We want to know you deeper. We want your will to be unfolded in our lives, Lord.

And so you know what everyone in a crowd this size has walked in here with. And you know what they will leave with. I don't know that, but you do. And so, living God, do what only you can today in our hearts.

And we honor and make this moment about you. In Jesus' name, amen. Amen, amen. From the beginning of our scope into the scriptures, people have had the propensity to follow impressive leaders.

There's something deep in us that finds rest and safety in someone who we measure to have the answers and solutions to our problems.

[ 8 : 29 ] Men and women who can exude and relay confident ideas and who can eloquently represent collective culture have always been attractive to the human spirit.

Through the ages, the strong and the mighty, the brilliant and the articulate have taken center stages of our political and cultural platforms.

The error, though, in this nature is how we view strength and gifting is ever-changing and often short-sighted.

What we want is not always what we need. And who we push to the front is often who God wants in the back and vice versa.

And so, as we begin this morning, I want to highlight a few things that have become more and more clear in this first part of this vulnerable letter from Paul.

[ 9 : 27 ] Paul is compassionately and wisely leading them towards what's truly important for their spiritual formation and for their missional effectiveness as a church.

Particularly in this culture that they are in. On their end, the people of Corinth were giving into the cultural momentum that was trending them towards only accepting and following men of great credentials and impressive talents.

Men with mighty resumes and men with awe-inspiring speaking skills or leadership pedigree were gaining traction among the people. The outward gifts were slowly held with more weight than the intention or the condition of the heart.

Therefore, they were questioning Paul. They were questioning his unimpressiveness, comparing him to the emerging orators and leaders of the local culture.

We've been talking about this for several chapters now. Just how the humility in which Paul has responded to this. You ever tell someone a story and they always just have a bigger story, right?

[ 10 : 40 ] You tell them you have a 25-foot boat. Well, they tell you they used to have one before they bought their bigger boat. You know, Paul had this like mic drop, do you even lift bro, like resume, right?

I mean, he was confronted by Jesus himself. His name was changed by Jesus himself. He was given a depth into the heavens that few has ever been given. He was put on commission to go and preach to the Gentiles.

There was no one that had more credentials and had more impressive things to brag about than Paul. But he has humbly responded again and again by pointing them away from himself and went back towards Jesus.

Paul has responded to this by speaking into the reality that Jesus himself calls us to a life of triumph through servanthood, not through conquest by strength.

And he tied it to these great Roman parades last week that you likely studied in length. Now, his response continues in this chapter in the same spirit, but he is now unfolding their need to see the old and the new covenant properly as they mature in their early walk.

[ 11 : 52 ] You see, if the devil can't make, yeah, if the devil can't take your soul, he will take your effectiveness any way he can. He will offend you in order to advise you, in order to kill you.

He doesn't want to just inconvenience you. He wants to kill you. And even when you're dead, he's not done. He will confuse you. He will distort your gospel. The devil has lots of schemes.

Most of them are built around lies. And one of the ways that he will distort the heart of a believer is he will distort what the gospel is truly about. We have seen little versions of the gospel for millennia. And all of them have a little nugget of truth, but then they are distorted in other ways. So they are oftentimes impressive. And if you can lead me, if you or me can be led down a road that allows our ministry effectiveness and our spiritual identity to come from our own strengths or our own talents or our own ideas or the strengths and talents and ideas of our leaders, then we can be led astray from the true power.

And the anointing that can be found in the Spirit's work. Someone say amen. I was talking to someone that was very close to me that, yeah, they live in Tennessee.

[ 13 : 11 ] And this is just a few weeks ago. And they were just, yeah, bragging for a long time about how impressive their church was. And man, it's like, I'm a pastor. I want to hear about great things the Lord is doing.

But the more they talked, the more I realized that this was a different type of impressive. And they just went on and on about this and that. And the gospel was never mentioned.

And meanwhile, I know this person pretty well. They happen to be extremely spiritually immature.

And you could tell, just the longer I listened to them talk, that their complete identity was in the things that their church was doing, not in the Spirit's work going on in their own heart.

And I had the privilege of actually visiting that church. And man, I'm not knocking any other churches. I rarely talk about other churches in sermons. But man, there was a lot of lights and a lot of smoke and a lot of things going on.

But I never once heard the gospel. And man, it's just so easy to place our identity in things that seem so right and so religious.

[14:11] They're actually apart from what the Spirit might actually be doing in your heart. And Paul is beginning to see something. And he's trying to catch it while it's small with this early and immature community. And that's why Paul begins this passage by saying, are we beginning to commend ourselves again?

Right? I mean, or do we need as some do letters of recommendation to you or from you? He's saying you yourselves are our letter. You, the fact that you exist, the fact that you now are following the Lord, even though maybe you're missing some things, maybe you're still immature, you yourself are the proof.

And I love this aim here because he refused to give in to their small thinking and defend himself, but rather point them to a higher place and show us that our spiritual formation should be measured by the work of God, by the work God is doing in us, not the religious activities around us.

And there's nothing wrong with religious activities if they're an expression of what God is doing. But if not, they're just, we're just going through the motions. You can have good leaders and even go to a decent church, but your heart can be far from God.

You can be under good teaching, but not being changed by the spirit. You can be in a healthy community group, sometimes for years, but be distant from any real vulnerability and fellowship.

[15:34] We can learn all the right things to say and the right ways to pray. We're getting really good at it at times. We can give with our hands, but our hearts are not growing in generosity. We can have excellent attendance records, but still be cold in Christ.

And Paul is showing us that proximity to activity does not always equal maturity in community. Revelation 2 shows us this with the church of Ephesus. Jesus reveals to them, they're doing so many things right.

You're refuting doctrine. You're rebuking the evil one. There's so many things that you're doing, but yet you have forgotten your first love. Study it for yourself. Repent from the ways in which you have fallen.

I mean, before he gets to that verse, that looks like a church I want to join. It's like, come on, these guys are doing it right. They're all these things, but yet they are in threat of losing God's blessing on them because they have forgotten what's most important.

Church, hear me. We do not want just good spiritual attempts. We want to hear from God. We want to see him. The idea is to not measure yourself by the people leading you or the people around you, but by the voice of God in you and the Spirit's work through you.

[16:46] The reality of our ability to church shop and pick our favorite preacher, a kids' ministry, a coffee selection, none of those in themselves are bad in every way, but is by all standards a construct of the West and of the modern affluent world.

The vast majority of Christians in much of the world that live in developing nations and tribes and small regions are grateful to even find a Bible-centered, gospel-centered church within hours of driving or walking distance, especially one with some impressive worship band or gifted creative team.

Are they somehow subject to less maturity opportunity or less of the Spirit's activity because of it? By no means. In fact, if you have did any traveling to remote parts of the globe where impressive churches or leaders are rarely found, you will often find an overwhelming work of the Spirit working in and through different people groups.

God likes to dwell where hearts are humbled, and hearts are submitted to Him, not where impressive people reside. His greatest work is often found in the most unimpressive of places and with the most unimpressive of people.

It's not about your level of gift or the power of your talent, but rather about the closeness of your heart to the fragrance of the King. We learned about this last week, the aroma, this amazing picture, that oftentimes what you smell like is indicative of who you've been close to.

[18:22] That's where the real power is. The anointing is in the oil of the Spirit, not the jar that holds it. You can have a fancy jar with no oil in it, or you can have an unimpressive, dirty jar filled with the most precious of heaven's anointing.

And Paul gets this. This is his mindset. This is where his confidence came from that he operated out of. In the next verse, he says this very thing, such is the confidence that we have through Christ towards God, not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything is coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of the new covenant.

It's a beautiful thing. It's freeing when you begin to get that. Paul then goes on to a large portion of Scripture here, and it begins to unfold some complicated, even controversial doctrines.

This almost deserves a sermon within itself. I want to read it. I just want to tell you, too, if you have any super complicated questions or conversations you want to have, Jesse and Bear, they love to have those.

They love to be emailed late at night. Read this with fresh eyes with me. Verse 7. Now if the ministry of death, carved in letters on stone, came with such glory that the Israelites could not gaze at Moses' face because of its glory, which was being brought to an end, will not the ministry of the Spirit have an even more glory?

[ 19 : 59 ] For if God was glory in the ministry of condemnation, the ministry of righteousness must far exceed it in glory. Indeed, in this case, what once had glory has come to have no glory at all because of the glory that surpasses it.

For if what was being brought to an end came with glory, much more will what is permanent have glory. Since we have such a hope, we are very bold, not like Moses, who put a veil on his face so that the Israelites might not gaze at the outcome of what was being brought to an end, but their minds were hardened.

For to this day, when they read the Old Covenant, that same veil remains unlifted because only through Christ is it taken away. Yes, to this day, whenever Moses is read, a veil lies over their hearts.

But when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. Now, if you are new to the Bible and certainly new to New Covenant, Old Covenant language, this can be very confusing to what Paul is even talking about.

This is dense even if you're very versed in the word. What is Paul saying here? And allow me just to attempt to explain it. You see, a covenant is an agreement that God makes with man.

[ 21 : 12 ] And the original was made on Mount Sinai. And this amazing glory that God had even revealed himself. He talks a lot about that. It's glorious that God even revealed himself at all.

That he showed us what he was like and what his standards were. He shared a little bit of his intent. It was wrapped in a lot of mystery. It wasn't completely revealed yet. But he shared a lot more of his standards.

This is what's known as the law. And in this first covenant, Moses went up onto this mountain called Sinai. Many of you know the story. He was up there for 40 days. He had a few attempts with it. He came back down with these Ten Commandments that represented the law. What's interesting about this is while he was up there, God, the whole story within himself, allowed him to see the backside of him so his face was glowing.

And he veiled it because that glow was fading. Well, this is indicative of a lot of things. And there's a lot of different scholars that will debate on why Moses was doing this.

[ 22 : 12 ] But Paul seems to have a central aim as he is trying to remove them from an old thinking that was and show them that this was not the final covenant. That just like this covenant was good, it was not the final one.

It was fading just like Moses' face. And he was showing them that this is, yeah, this new covenant is built around something different. So at its heart, this statement to the people of Corinth was one to warn them of basing any spiritual identity around their own righteousness and around their own righteousness to find their identity ultimately in Christ's righteousness.

And so here is the heart of the two differences. And this is by far the longest sermon point I've ever had in 15 years of preaching. But I wanted to really derive a dense scripture and give you an understanding if you're learning new and old covenant theology.

Lean into this with me. Old covenant success can only be had by disciplined performance and moral robustness. And it's measured.

It's measured only by the ability to keep God's laws and keep God's commands. By nature, this is impartial. This isn't bad, it's just impartial.

[ 23 : 34 ] New covenant success is had by faith alone that Jesus' work on the cross was enough. And it's also measured.

But it's measured only by identifying more and more in Jesus' position before the Father. And that by nature is complete. And so when you look at this language and you look and he's saying, listen, there's nothing wrong with Moses.

There's nothing wrong with looking at this. There's nothing wrong with seeing that there's glory in the fact that God revealed even at all. But that was not the ultimate revealing. Moses' face may have shined for a moment, but Jesus' face has shined for eternity past and will for eternity future. Moses may have been the messenger of truth for God's law, but Jesus said that he was the truth and the complete fulfillment of the law himself. The law delivered by Moses will only ever allow us to see our inability to measure up to God's standards and therefore our faces stay veiled like a wife that can never see her groom and like a groom that can never see his bride fully.

But in Jesus, our hope is not in our ability at all, but in his. And therefore, in this miracle, we can stand before God with an unveiled face.

[ 25 : 00 ] And it culminates this whole passage in the middle of this scripture with verse 16. He said, when one turns to the Lord, the veil is removed. It is hard to describe what a difference this makes for us as we set out to follow Jesus.

When we operate out of rules and regulations only, we become religious robots. But when we operate out of God's grace and desire, we become delighted servants.

When I was younger, I had chores, like probably many of you. And my dad, he was a hard worker. He would get up oftentimes before I would awake. And he would, did I get it? I got like three people in the front where I was telling me.

I would get up oftentimes before, or he would get up before I would awake. And yeah, he was a builder. We would move every few years. He would build a house. We would live in it. We would move.

[ 26 : 02 ] And yeah, as I got a little bit older, 10 or 12 or so, I began to realize there was just a lot of stuff around the house that he was not able to get to. And I remember thinking to myself one night, I'm going to, I'm going to bless my dad.

I'm going to get up tomorrow morning. I didn't have school that day. And there was some mold on this back part of the property that I know he was wanting to get removed. And I had kind of secretly had my mom get me the right materials and tools to help him.

And I was going to mow the yard. I had figured out how to use the mower. I was so excited for him to come home and to know it was done. I got up early waiting for him to walk out. He always walked out around the same time.

And as I walked into the kitchen, he was still there. To my surprise and to his, he was writing a letter. And he looked up and he said, oh, I was just writing the letter before I left. And before I even had a chance to say anything, he said, before I get back from work today, I want to see this yard mowed and I want to see all of this mold pressure washed and scrubbed away.

I noticed out in the garage you have the right stuff for it. And it's like, man, all of the joy and the freedom to, yeah, to do something great was removed in that moment.

[ 27 : 18 ] And man, we laugh, but I think that's a little picture of new and old covenant. There's just something in a freedom when we get to do something because we know we're loved versus doing something so that we will be loved.

And Paul is getting at that. They have a lot of voices beginning to lean in. They have a lot of performance and impressive culture beginning to leak into their theology. and he's catching it while it is small and he's reminding them it is great that you admire Moses.

It's great that the Lord has revealed, but look at what Jesus has done. And I find it no surprise that Paul then lands this plane in chapter 3 with the most beautiful language of this chapter.

He begins to show them how they see this new covenant and how it relates to them and the Spirit of God is a direct tie to their and therefore our personal freedom.

Look at these last couple of verses. Now the Lord is the Spirit and where the Spirit of the Lord is there is freedom. He ties them directly together and we all with unveiled face beholding the glory of the Lord are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another.

[ 28 : 37 ] For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit. Now I find it fascinating that Paul is writing to a group of people who are being led astray, who are being confused and offended, who are hurt from him not visiting them and he is writing to them about freedom.

Of all the things that a misaligned and an impartial gospel can do, the stealing of your mental and spiritual freedom has to be at the top of the list. Paul pushed past all of the insults that were being hurled at him, all the questions that were arising, all the offenses taken and seized as for what is really going on here.

These people didn't have a leadership problem, they had a freedom problem. They lacked deeper understanding and perspective of what was really going on among them.

In this case, they were blinded by the impressiveness of man and therefore bound by it. Paul highlights two things that the Spirit does and man, this is almost a whole sermon within itself but just as I begin to close, just two things he highlights here.

One, the Spirit gives freedom to see. He ties it directly where the Spirit of the Lord is there. There's freedom we then can behold verses 18a. This is the sight of the Lord.

[ 29 : 58 ] This is literally seeing the Lord for who he is and him allowing you to see what he is doing. It goes both ways. How many people know that there are some things that only the Spirit can show you?

They are so nuanced and so layered and if you lead people long enough or if you're in charge of anything with any type of complexity, sometimes what you need is more than a chart or a graph or a pros and cons list.

You need God to show up and show you what's going on. This is what the Spirit can do. It allows you to see what only God can see and see what he is doing. The church at Corinth was seeing a leadership dilemma that was stunting their faith and growth.

They were feeling an offense from not being visited when and how they wanted it. Paul saw something different. He saw a spiritual blindness that was keeping them held hostage. You can have two believers going through the same situation and they can have two different views of that same thing.

How many people know that's true? So one, the Spirit gives this freedom to see, to behold. This is the sight of the Lord but also the Spirit gives freedom to be changed or to change.

[ 31 : 06 ] Verses 18b, conformity to the Lord. This word transformed so we can be transformed.

There is a, yeah, this is a freedom to grow in the Lord and who he is by making you more and more into his will.

You know, the Lord will oftentimes reveal to you something first and then you're going to need to go through a work in order to step into it. It's not enough for him to just reveal it. There's oftentimes a work in your heart that has to happen and it's only the Spirit that allows this change to happen to conform to his will.

This is what Paul is getting at. So if you've ever been hurt, I just want to land by saying this. If you've ever been hurt or confused by a leader that you thought you trusted or a community that you thought had your back and right now you only see offense and you only feel hurt, man, I got compassion for you.

If you've been in, yeah, if you've been in church long enough or following the Lord long enough, that is likely at least a little bit of your story. But God might be just wanting you to see things a bit more deeply in this season.

If you will allow the process to happen, God can use that for your maturity. You can remain bitter for years and allow it to stunt your growth and effectiveness or you can know at times and oftentimes the people that hurt us are less bad and more blind, dealing with their own things that are often unforeseen to our own eyes.

[ 32 : 45 ] And through the Spirit of God, you can offer forgiveness and welcome healing, knowing that your identity is fully and finally in Christ's work, not in the misleadings or the impressiveness of man.

Heroes have a way of becoming strangely human when we get close to them. Have you ever been guilty of following impressive or outwardly gifted people only to realize when you got closer they were not as they seemed?

You can carry that bitterness with you for decades and allow it to make you a cynic and allow it to make you into a guarded soul or you can widen your gaze and deepen your heart that men and women, even with the most impressive gifts, are broken and will oftentimes let you down.

One of the best local church pastors I know is sitting in front of me right now. He will eventually let you down. Don't put your trust in Jesse, put your trust in Jesus. There's no one who lived that we can trust more than him.

The spirits help to see and the spirits help to change our hearts in order to move past these situations and these events into what God has for us next is the very thing Paul is showing us here so we can experience freedom.

[ 34 : 03 ] And so I'll just close by saying this, church, don't let another day pass without stepping into God's best for you. Despise a life that God is not working mightily on your behalf.

He wants to speak and he wants to move, he wants to prophesy, he wants to heal, he wants to confront and reveal. Yeah, he wants to work wonders through ordinary people and he wants to work miracles through unimpressive communities.

Amen? Let's pray. Lord, thank you so much that we get to return to your word again and again and you always have, yeah, manna for us.

And so, Lord, I just pray that this morning, yeah, that you, you do what only you can in our hearts. If there are marriages that just need to have a walk in the park today, a serious talk without the kids around, to clear the air, Lord, I pray that you give them the grace and the ability to do it.

If there is a text message of forgiveness that needs to be sent, a voicemail that needs to be left for something that they've been holding on for far too long, I pray for the grace and the ability to do it.

[ 35 : 25 ] Lord, if there is people among us who are here in person but their spirit is closed and numb from years of misconduct and misleading, they love you so much but they can't find themselves to trust again.

I pray for a special grace, a grace that leans in again to what you have, that people are flawed, that oftentimes leaders are impartial but you are not.

And so, I just pray right now just for a breaking of bondage, for a breaking of chains, for a unity, we want to be more than just present, we want to be leaning and open to you.

And so, Lord, I thank you for all you're doing through this series and we thank you for this great letter from the famed apostle in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Hey, I'd like to take communion with you. If you have one of these. I don't know how you guys roll here in New Bern but in Beaufort we do this almost every week.

[ 36 : 35 ] Those of you who can get the wafer out are the most skilled among us. Towards the end of his life here on earth, Jesus gathered the men around a table and he said, we're going to break bread.

We're going to drink of this wine. this is a special meal and this meal is all about remembering. We don't just do this because it's Sunday morning and this is the south and this is what my mom did so this is what we're doing.

We do this in this special posture of remembrance. So much that we've talked about today can be found in this. You see, there was a debt that needed to be paid that we could not pay on our own. And even though Moses delivered the tablets and ushered in a sacrificial system in which we can study and see was a solution partially down the road of God allowing one thing to be sacrificed for another and blood to be spilt for the sake of atonement, ultimately it was a system that needed perfection.

And Jesus came as this ultimate sacrifice, Emmanuel, God with us to pay the price that we could not pay, to reach down to the pit that we had dug for ourselves.

[ 38 : 03 ] He did what we could not do. So he put a cross on his back and he marched up a hill in that beautiful but terrible hill called Calvary. And on this day, this wonderful day, this amazing thing happened.

He took our place in the grave so we could take his place in heaven. This beautiful exchange is no longer the face of Moses or the covenant of Moses that we trust in but we now can look to this covenant we now have in Jesus.

So we take this, we take it in remembrance. There's two parts. One, there's bread. In this case, a side little cracker. And it's not as good as sitting around the fire with Jesus all those years ago. It's not as good as it'll be in heaven one day, but it's what we have right now. Amen. We take this in remembrance of him. And so with that, take the bread. So many different ways to explain communion, I think, that are helpful.

in the wine, in this case, juice. It really is a picture of life. Any living thing that has blood, when it loses its blood, it loses its life.

[ 39 : 24 ] All those years ago when the blood rolled down his knee and onto the dusty ground, I like to think that one portion of it had my name on it, and one portion of it had your name on it.

And we take this, we take this in remembrance of this life that is to come. This amazing life that was bought for us, not from our performance or our impressive gifts, but the fact that we can lay down and know that Jesus went before.

We take this, that even one day, whether you are eight or 80, heaven is coming really quick. And I just say soberly, if you do not know the Lord, I would consider him.

If you are in a position now where you are not in right standing before the Lord, this is as good as it will ever get. That's a sobering statement.

For those of you who are in the Lord, no matter what you're going for and what you're going through, this is as worse as it will ever get. As we take this, both the life we have now but the life to come, taking remembrance of him.

[ 40 : 30 ] It's an honor to be with you guys. Love y'all. I think we're going to sing one more time when you're ready. Thank you.