

The Letter to the Galatians: Liberation From a Legalistic Heart || Part 5 || Galatians 1:13-24

Title: A Former Life, Transformed

Central Idea of the Topic: When God changes a person with a work of his grace – it will manifest itself to others.

Specific Objective of the Topic: My hearers will consider the work of God’s grace in their lives and seek to worship him for it and live out of it.

Move music – ushers passing out Bibles/note sheet/pencils

If you would please – open your Bible to the first chapter of the letter to the Galatians. We have a comparatively large text to go over this morning as we close out chapter 1. We’ve gone over 12 verses in 4 sermons and I have been assigned 12 verses for 1 sermon this morning! So we’re picking up the pace here a little bit. And we do have a lot to cover, so let’s not waste any more time.

Before we read the passage, **let’s pray first and ask God to bless our time in his word.**

The reading of God’s Word in Galatians ch. 1 beginning at verse 13.

[13] For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. [14] And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. [15] But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, [16] was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; [17] nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

[18] Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. [19] But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. [20] (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) [21] Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. [22] And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. [23] They only were hearing it said, “He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.” [24] And they glorified God because of me. (ESV)

That ends the reading of God’s holy, inspired, and sufficient word, amen.

Okay. So what we have here is a continuation of the Apostle Paul’s self-defense. It is a self-defense of his ministry, AND a self-defense of the gospel that his ministry hung upon. The letter to the Galatians is what we might call a polemical epistle or letter. Polemics is something that every serious Christian must engage in at some point because we live in a world that is opposed to the Lord. We live in a world in which false teachers abound - so polemics is something that we are compelled to engage in, when necessary. Merriam Webster’s Dictionary defines polemics as – “an aggressive attack on or refutation of the opinions or principles of another.” And certainly – the Apostle Paul is aggressively refuting his opponents

here in this epistle. In our text for this morning, he vows before God that he speaks the truth. Later – in Galatians 5 – Paul is going to say that he wishes his opponents would “emasculate” themselves – and I’ll gladly leave that for Pastor Nick to explain.

So, there are two things that Paul’s opponents are going after. 1. The content of the gospel message. This defense began in verses 6-10 which we have already covered, and then he’s going to pick it up again with much detail in ch.2:15 and carry it to the end of the epistle. And what he has been establishing is that the gospel he preaches is God’s gospel. It’s not his. He hasn’t changed it. It’s not something that he has made up. There is one gospel message from God. One true religion. One God. We talked last week about how mankind comes along though and creates his own religions. He makes up his own gospel. He changes or tweaks the true gospel – for a myriad of reasons – possibly control – possibly some ethical reasoning or conscious assuaging – but at the root of it all – is a hatred for God. A hatred of his offer of grace. You see – everyone actually knows that the God who has revealed himself in Scripture is the Creator and Lord of all. In a way – there’s no such thing as Atheists even. Romans 1:18 says – “for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteous of man, who by their unrighteousness, suppress the truth. It’s not that the truth of God isn’t known – that general revelation is hidden from us. It’s not. It’s plain to us but mankind, in its sin suppresses the truth. We commit to memory John 3:16 and we should because it’s a wonderful verse that tells us about the gospel. But we also need to know 3:18 which says “that he who does not believe is condemned already, BECAUSE he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.” You see – we should be already believing, but we are born dead in Adam. When he sinned in the Garden – the penalty of that sin was imputed to us because we were in him. He represented all of mankind. In theology – we call it federal headship (covenantal relationship). We are united to him in his deadness – condemned when he sinned, and we need to be made alive and united to Christ – the second Adam. We need to have Jesus as our federal head and his righteousness imputed to us. And it’s a work that only God can do. And it’s God’s gospel of grace – in whom all three persons – Father, Son, and Spirit – are involved in. The Father elects us in Christ to be holy and blameless. The Son lives, dies and lives again for us, and the Spirit applies this work to us through faith alone, by grace alone, in Christ alone. And so we cannot change God’s gospel. That’s what Paul’s opponents have done though. We are called to declare this message, not change it. I’ve heard it likened to the relationship between a kitchen, a waiter and a customer. We are to be like waiters. God is the chef. He’s the kitchen staff even, and there’s only one thing on the menu. And it is the waiter’s job to bring out what the chef produces. Waiters don’t change the order. They don’t re-arrange it – in a good restaurant at least. They don’t add food to it. They don’t cook it some more. They don’t take ingredients out of it – they just deliver what has already been prepared.

So, we are to be like waiters who take what is already prepared and deliver it. We don't tamper with the gospel. And so Paul is defending the content of the gospel message.

And then secondly – Paul is defending his ministry as well, because they are intrinsically connected. Here he is defending his character and how it is that he received this gospel and then how acted upon it. And this section begins at verse 11 and continues through 2:14.

Why is Paul on the defensive like this? Why is he offering this detailed defense of his ministry in chapter 1 and 2? Who are these opponents of his? Well, according to verse 7 we read, "there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ." But in order for them to change the gospel, they had to discredit Paul's gospel, who had founded these churches in the region of Galatia and taught them the gospel in the first place. It doesn't take too much reading between the lines to see that the people in verse 7 were calling into question Paul's apostolic ministry. We'll find out that they were basically wanting to hold onto elements from the Old Covenant and then apply them to the New Covenant. And that's a grave error. The OC was filled with types and shadows that pointed to Christ. But it never promised eternal life and so to mix in a requirement to be circumcised (5:2) and to keep the ceremonial laws of the Old Testament (4:10), was to impose a legalistic and meritorious component onto the gospel – which in turn means – it's no gospel at all. These were probably Jewish Christians (in the loose sense – by that I mean in name only and not actually united to Christ) who had come from Jerusalem (like the men mentioned in 2:12) and who claimed to have James and Peter and John (the pillars of 2:9) as their authority. For them Paul was an imposter who stood in contrast the other 11. He had not been with Jesus in his earthly ministry; and now here he was starting churches in the name of the Messiah but telling Gentiles they don't have to be circumcised or keep the feasts.

So these opponents - who most people identify as a group called the Judaizers - have gone out to set the Galatian churches straight. Paul may claim to be an apostle, but he is not really one they say; he may claim to preach the true gospel, but he only has it secondhand from the true apostles, and his version is seriously flawed they say. And now he will continue his defense of the gospel and his apostolic ministry by pointing to his previous life. So, he says in Galatians 1:13–14

[13] For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. [14] And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers.

Paul was a man whose reputation preceded himself. He knows very well that these Judaizers know of him and what he was like before he met Christ. And so he points out just how "anti-Christian" he was in his former life. They were aware of it. They HAVE HEARD of his former life

in at least 2 ways and both of these realities should color the way they view his apostolic ministry. You see – it wasn't that he was just mildly opposed to Christianity. He wasn't some relativist. He didn't have his truth – and then simply accepted that everyone else had their own truth. He wasn't like Pontius Pilate who questioned what is truth. No in Paul's mind at that point – Judaism was the truth and Christianity was a gross perversion of the truth. Before God changed him on the road to Damascus – Paul viewed Christianity as a threat worthy of severe violence and force. It's not like he just wrote blogs opposing it – his goal was to exterminate it! As we read in Acts a few weeks back– he was out on the streets leading in arresting and putting Christians to death. He was violent towards Christianity. He tried to destroy it. Acts 8:3 says that he ravaged the church. Acts 9:1 says that he was breathing out threats and murder against the disciples. And they knew this fact. It is beyond a shadow of a doubt that the Paul who evangelized the region of Galatia and set up churches there – is a much different man than the one who did everything in his power to eradicate the church of God. That's his first point.

His second point is also something that they – coming from Jerusalem – would be well aware of. It's his religious pedigree so to speak. We might think of it like this I think – v.13 was the fruit of what he says here in v. 14. And that is that he was advancing beyond those of his age. Essentially – he's the head of the class. He's the one most likely to get the promotion. And the reason for it is because – he was extremely zealous for the traditions of his fathers. The traditions that he mentions here aren't the elements from the ceremonial and judicial laws contained in the Old Covenant. What he has in mind here are the extra biblical rules contained in the Mishnah and the Talmuds. They were these instructions -that were imposed on top of Scripture that supposedly defined what God's people were like – but they went beyond what God had said and contributed to the Spiritual blindness of the Pharisees and the people of that time. He elaborates more on this in the epistle to the Philippians. Keep your finger here in Galatians but turn a couple pages forward to Philippians 3 so you can follow along as I read... Let's begin at v. 2 - Philippians 3:2–9 [2] Look out for the dogs, look out for the evildoers, look out for those who mutilate the flesh. [3] For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh—[4] though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also. If anyone else thinks he has reason for confidence in the flesh, I have more: [5] circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; [6] as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.

How lost he was at that point. He was sincere, but he was so lost. You can see all the confidence he had, was in himself. His religious pedigree was the source of his pride. He felt he was righteous under the law – by his own actions. How different of a man is that – than the

one who is writing the epistle to the Galatians. In Galatians 2:16 he says..... How different is the Paul who put all his stock in Judaism compared to the Paul who wrote a significant chunk of the New Testament. So his self-defense is building steam. It's making sense. Now – there are at least 3 things I think we should take out of this text.

1. No one is too sinful for God to change. Look at the former life of Paul. On paper – we would have to admit that the likeliness of him converting to Christianity was miniscule. He wasn't what some people would call a seeker, or open to the faith if such a thing even exists. He was as far as possible from Christianity as anyone could be. He thought he had salvation and at the same time – he was killing anyone who affirmed and promoted the true way of salvation. He's the type of person that one might think they were wasting their prayers on – but that is the EXACT wrong way think. That God would save one who thought Jesus was a false teacher – so much so that he murdered the bride of the Christ – should encourage us to not give up hope for our lost friends and family members. I know the temptation is to think that someone is just too sinful to ever become a Christian. That they have said “no” to many times to the offer to repent and believe in Christ. Or that they need to clean up their lives a little bit before they can have faith - but the testimony of the Apostle Paul tells us those things are wrong. God didn't need Paul's permission – he came into his life while he was on the way to persecute Christians – and made him alive in Christ. He regenerated him. He caused him to be born again – and Paul's life was changed. So don't give up praying for the lost. Salvation is of the Lord. Our hope is in him to save the individual – not in the individual to change themselves.

2. To advance in Judaism (or any other religion for that matter) is to die. It is common today for people to say something like – ‘oh, well so and so is a pretty good person and even though they are not Christian – they seem to be spiritual – and I think I'll see them in heaven.’ That can't be further from the truth. The Puritan Thomas Boston once wrote – “till men have faith in Christ, their best services are but glorious sin.” To travel in any direction other than the way, the truth and the life – is to go in the exact opposite direction of salvation. That's not to say that a person can advance so far in a false religion that God can't save them – Paul's testimony tells us that's not true. But what is true, is that there is one way of salvation. And it is in Christ alone. And this is especially important when we think of modern Judaism. God doesn't have two people and two ways of salvation. The nation of Israel is not God's people any more than any nation is God's people. That doesn't mean that politically – we can't be friends or anything like that. But it does mean, that they need the gospel. Notice what Paul said in v.13. That while he advanced in Judaism – he persecuted the Church of God. The word translated for church is ekklesia which simply means a group of people. The context tells us that this is a group of people who belongs to God in unique way. And guess what – while he was in Judaism – he persecuted the people of God – meaning – those in Judaism aren't the people of God in that

sense. God's people – those that have salvation - have always ever been those who were sealed with the Spirit – being born again and united to Christ in faith. Before the cross – it's like they were saved on credit – as evidenced through their faith on the promise of God's future atoning work for them. After the cross – it's like we are saved on debit – trusting in the actual provision that God has made. The church (those that are truly saved in the church) doesn't replace Israel as the people of God, but it is the continuation of what we might call true Israel or what Paul will say in Galatians 3:7 – “those with faith are the sons of Abraham.” That doesn't necessarily mean that God is done with ethnic Israel. There are many brothers and sisters who believe that he is going to restore Ethnic Israel in the future – we don't have time to get into that today – but one thing I know for certain is that if he does – it will be through Christ. For he is the only mediator between God and man.

3. Those that God saves are right to say that they have a former life. The power that is present in God's gospel in Christ is the power to transform our current life into a former life. It holds the power to remake... Regardless of how you've come in, regardless of how you've walked in here today, the offer on the table in God's gospel is you don't have to leave like you came. That if you truly go to him in faith – repenting of your sin and trusting that Jesus died for your sin – your salvation will be certain..

You can, once you receive the gospel offered, talk about your life as a *former* life, regardless of what it's filled with, regardless of how you came in. The offer on the table is to have a *former* life.

Let's consider the next line of Paul's defense of his apostolic ministry. Galatians 1:15–17

[15] But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, [16] was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; [17] nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.

This next line of defense is an appeal to the sovereign and gracious nature of God's call of him to be the apostle to the Gentiles. That's verse 15 and the first part of v. 16. In a previous sermon – it might have been the first one in this series – we learned how it was that Paul, or Saul if you like, was converted. How it was that he was traveling with his companions sometime after Christ's ascension – when the Lord himself appeared in a flash of light, blinding him to signify that he was spiritually blind before, and ultimately saving him at that moment. Paul wasn't seeking Christ. He was persecuting Christ. Martin Luther in his commentary here notes that “the knowledge of Christ and of faith is not a human work but utterly a Divine gift.” And so we might be inclined to think that this event on the road to Damascus is the beginning of God's plan for Paul. But we would be wrong. You see – the plans that God has for his

creation which unfold through providence begin not in time – but before time even. It's not like God was reacting to the news of this man persecuting his church and so he acted and prevented it by saving Paul. That's not right at all. God chose, or purposed to use Paul to be a light to the Gentiles before he was even born. He was set apart for this task. Paul isn't saved, isn't redeemed, because he is bringing something to the table. It wasn't because of his ability to be zealous, his ability to walk in Judaism, that actually saved him. It was because God is gracious. It was because God had a plan. And let that be our hope in all things as well. That God is not out of control, but that he is fully in control. John Calvin comments, "We owe it to the goodness of God, not only that we have been elected and adopted to everlasting life, but that he designs to make use of our services, who would otherwise have been altogether useless, and that he assigns to us a lawful calling, in which we may be employed."

So Paul wants these Judaizers to know that it is God who is behind his ministry. Who is employing him in the words of Calvin. It is God's gospel. It came to him from God. And this plan was birthed in the mind of God before Paul was even born. Further – they would be well aware of the specific language that Paul is using here. This phrasing that Paul uses here alludes to the call of Isaiah (Isa 49) and Jeremiah as Prophets. Jeremiah 1:5 [5] "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations." And so just like Jeremiah was appointed to the nations as a prophet – Paul is saying that he has been appointed by God to be an apostle. Interestingly enough – the same word that is used to translate nations in Jeremiah 1 in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) is the same word that we see translated to Gentiles here in Galatians 1. About Paul being called to the Gentiles or to the Nations – were going to consider that in detail next week, or the week after.

Next – we note that Paul was called by God's grace. Again – it wasn't because Paul was something special that God called him. It's because God is gracious. God would have been within his right to send fire and sulfur down upon Paul on the road to Damascus. No one would think that God was unjust in that – after all – Paul was on the way to murder people who love God. But instead – God the Son comes down from heaven in white hot light of his holiness and chases away the darkness in Paul's life. It's not what Paul deserved. And this is the same for everyone. Ephesians 2:8-10 says – for by grace you have been saved through faith and this is not your own doing, it is the gift of God, not a result of works so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand. And it should make perfect sense that God prepares good works for us to do beforehand when we consider that Paul was set apart from before he was born. This call that Paul references here was effectual. In other words – it caused something. And what

specifically – that the Son was revealed in him so that he would be commissioned to the Gentiles. It pleased God to save Paul and use him in other words. Such is the power of grace.

Now, Paul takes this sovereign purpose of God in his life and then comments that – “[he] did not immediately consult with anyone; [17] nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus.” So you remember I hope – the Judaizers are claiming that Paul learned the gospel second hand from the apostles. But Paul’s response is that can’t be the case. Again – we went into some of this back in the first lesson through Galatians I believe. But when Paul was saved – he didn’t hang around to learn from the apostles. He started preaching Christ in the synagogues. And then he leaves Damascus and heads to Arabia for 3 years. We don’t know what happens there. It’s one of those things that Scripture is silent on. Was he receiving further divine revelation. Maybe? Was the Holy Spirit helping him to see Christ in the Old testament? Was he preaching Christ and him crucified for the sins of man? Certainly. So there’s no way that Paul could know the gospel secondhand from the apostles. It came firsthand – from Christ.

Now of course – the Apostle Paul is a unique individual in the story of God’s redemption. He immediately goes out and starts preaching. That’s not normative. He even tells Timothy that when he appoints an elder – to not lay hands on a man too soon – that he needs to be tested first. But there was none of that for Paul. He just goes and starts preaching. So, there is discontinuity and continuity between his story and ours. We are saved in the same way – God’s sovereign grace causing us to be born again. But we aren’t saved in the same way because God doesn’t reveal himself to us in a flash of light. The Apostle Paul was saved and called to preach Christ to the nations. Now, when we are saved – we aren’t called to be apostles – most of us aren’t even called to vocational ministry but we are called to serve the Lord wherever we are. We are called to declare his glory where we live. We have the privilege to share Christ with those around us. We have the privilege to call others to repentance. We aren’t to beat people over the head with the gospel – but at the same time – we have to do more than live out the gospel. We have to use our words and we must declare God’s gospel before others. And I know that isn’t easy. But remember – we have a gracious God who saved us in Christ Jesus to do good works that he prepared beforehand. He gives us the strength and the grace that we need to be obedient to him.

Now let’s consider this last portion of his defense in chapter 1. It picks back up in v.18
Galatians 1:18–24

[18] Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas (that’s Peter) and remained with him fifteen days. [19] But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord's brother. [20] (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) [21] Then I went into the

regions of Syria and Cilicia. [22] And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. [23] They only were hearing it said, "He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy." [24] And they glorified God because of me.

So Paul is tightening his case further here. You may have heard the phrase – the devil is in the details – well – he is being specific here so as to say that the truth has his boot on the throat of the devil. Here are the details. And there's no way that he could have misunderstood the gospel from the apostles, and then taught the Galatians wrong, because the details show that he didn't really interact with them at all – until after he had already been preaching the truth for a long time. And by the time he gets to meeting with the Apostles – he spends 15 days with Peter. Not a long period of time by any stretch. I mean – have you read the letters of Paul? There's no way that 15 days of - even intense training from Peter – could produce these letters. They have the finger prints of divine revelation all over them. They are hard for the other apostles themselves to understand. Peter himself says that. 2 Peter 3:15–16

[15] And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, [16] as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.

So 15 days is not enough time. These Judaizers don't know what they're talking about. He didn't even see the other Apostles, but he did see James, the Lord's brother. And he'll mention him again in chapter 2. Then – we have the parenthetical statement. He makes a vow – he puts his integrity on the line. He's telling the Galatians that they can check with Peter and James if they don't believe him. And then after being in Jerusalem for a short time – he started traveling again doing what he did – preaching the gospel to the nations.

Then, in verse 22 Paul says that the churches in Judea do not know him personally. The point here is this: If Paul had been a student of the apostles in Jerusalem, these are precisely the churches where he would have worked. But they don't even know him. They know of him, but they don't know him. Therefore, the whole attempt of the Judaizers to discredit Paul's apostleship is a failure. On the basis of evidence which the Galatians could check out, Paul makes a compelling case that his 180° turn from persecutor to apostle can only be explained by a revelation and commission from Jesus Christ. This his testimony is the only thing that makes sense. Therefore, his *apostleship* is "not from men or through man" (as verse 1 says), and his *gospel* (as verse 12 says) "he did not receive from man, nor was he taught it, but it came through a revelation of Jesus Christ." Therefore, the point of verse 11 is well established: "This is not man's gospel." It is God's gospel: good news that comes from God. And why is this

all important. Because the glory of God is caught up in it. Paul's not saying all this – that his message is from God and not from man so as to boast in himself. His aim – his goal – his desire is that God is glorified in him. That's the fuel for his zeal now. It's not that he would advance beyond the others. But it's so that the God who loved him, and gave himself for him, would be glorified.

May that be the reason that we do all that we do as well. And now we are going to do something that certainly glorifies God. We are going to observe the ordinance of communion together.

*****The Lord's Table*****

Now, why is it that the Lord's Supper glorifies God? Well – it is because it focuses our attention on the work of Christ for our salvation. It's there on the cross where God proves beyond a shadow of a doubt his love for his. It's there on the cross that we see some of the attributes of God meet uniquely. His holiness, his wrath. His love for his creation, his hatred for sin. His justice. His wisdom. It is a means of grace for us. That means that it is a way that God blesses us and strengthens us because he is active in our participation through faith. And of course, it is – it's causing us to remember how it is that we even have faith – it's telling us of the length that God went to redeem us.

Also, this Table that we partake in is a reminder of the covenant promises of God to us. Those promises from God that we have in Christ.

Mark 14:22-25

[22] And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." [23] And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. [24] And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. [25] Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God."

So that tells us something. The Lord's Supper, or communion is not for everyone. It's only for those that are in covenant with God for salvation. If you are one that it's not for, as I'll explain – let this be a learning moment for you. Talk to those next to you about it. Parent's, teach your children what this meal means, and what it signifies. SO -

- The Lord's Table is for every person who is in the New Covenant – in other words – for everyone who is trusting in Jesus for salvation. Also – if you haven't been baptized, then I would encourage you to not come forward and take communion today. Now why do I say that? Obviously – you don't need to be baptized in water to be saved. The reason is because our society has bread a culture of easy believism where people are told they are saved for any number of reasons, but haven't really experienced the new life in

Christ. And so in many churches, you have people who prayed a prayer, or walked an aisle, or who have simply grown up in the church, but who never really took Christ and his claims seriously. And have for that reason, never been baptized even though the opportunity for it has been before them many times.

- Now, if the Lord has saved you but there hasn't been an opportunity for you to be baptized yet, and your plan is to be baptized as soon as you can, then please do partake of this ordinance. But if you're considering yourself a Christian, and since being saved, you have neglected to be baptized – then this covenant meal might not be for you. There is something there and you should discuss this matter with an elder – with a pastor. The apostle Paul offers warnings in 1 Corinthians to not take this meal in an unworthy manner. That's why we should examine ourselves before taking part in it – why – because in that examination we are making our calling and election sure so that we take this meal in a worthy manner. And taking this meal in an unworthy manner, 1 Corinthians tells us makes you guilty of the blood of Jesus. So it's only for who are in the New Covenant.
- With that said, you don't have to be a member of this particular church to observe Lord's supper this morning – but a simply a member of the church universal – someone who has been born again, has been baptized upon that profession and is therefore trusting in Christ for salvation.
- And there is one last instructive word that I would offer. The Lord's Table isn't for people without sin. Taking communion in a worthy manner doesn't mean that you have to be perfect. As God's covenant people – we will struggle against the flesh until our death, or until Christ returns. And it is not your obedience which makes you right for this holy ordinance. Do you realize what makes you worthy to partake of this covenant meal? It is Christ. It is his perfect life. It is his love for you – that he has redeemed you and justified you and is continuing to sanctify you. If you're trusting in Christ for salvation, and you find yourself struggling against some sin, I encourage you to repent once again of that sin in our time of examination and to observe this means of grace in the knowledge and joy of God's faithfulness.

So at this point, I'd like to invite the worship team up. They will be leading us in a song while we observe communion. And while they lead us in that song, which we should all take part in singing as well – you will have opportunity to come up and take a piece of bread and also a cup

of the fruit of the vine. The bread represents the body of Jesus that was crushed for us. The cup represents his blood that was shed for us. You'll take both – coming down the center aisle here and then returning to your seat along the wall. You can partake of each element as soon as you come up and get it – or you can take it back to your seat and eat and drink it there – wherever feels best for you. Just know, we won't do it all at the same time.

Before we read Scripture together and before I ask God to bless the elements, we're going to spend some time in silent prayer. (explain why.) And then after about 60s, I'll pray outload and thank God for the elements.

Let's all examine ourselves in silent prayer...

So what we are about to do, is to fulfil what is written- and I have the notes on the screen that we might all read it together. So – please read with me -

1 Cor. 11:23-25

²³ For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; ²⁴ and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, "Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

²⁵ In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me."

Amen.

So let's stand and worship our God through song, and when you're ready – come down the aisle to take the bread and the cup. Just know there will only be one song to do so.