

Brought Near by the Blood of Christ

Ephesians 2:11-19

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Scripture readings prior to the sermon:

Genesis 3:1-13, 22-24; Hebrews 4:14-16; Hebrews 10:19-23

Good Morning!

So, we here at Abiding Grace Church have been at this for just shy of five months now, and except for a couple of sermons, we have been consistently plowing through Paul's epistle to the Ephesian church...and we find ourselves this morning in the latter portion of Ephesians chapter 2 again.

Before we dive into this morning's text, I want to take a couple of minutes to sort of reset us, as it were...to talk a little bit about why the Elders chose this epistle in the first place as the trailhead for our journey together here at Abiding Grace Church. We haven't really talked about this before, and perhaps some of you have been wondering... The reason is simple, really:

We – all of us – are off to plant a brand new church here in the middle of Pleasant Hills, and what better way to start a new church than to take some time...at this rate, maybe a year's time ☺...to take some time to study and to be blessed by the Apostle Paul's great treatise on the church: Ephesians! That's what this epistle is: it is Paul's summary of **what the church is** in the form of a letter – probably a letter that was meant to be read at multiple locations to different congregations in and around the city of Ephesus.

Turn with me, briefly, to the beginning of Ephesians. It's interesting, really, to watch the development of Paul's thought here early in this letter... Look at the greeting at the very beginning of Ephesians, chapter 1, verse 1:

*Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God,
To the **saints** who are in Ephesus, and are faithful in Christ Jesus:*

Skip down to verse 15:

*For this reason, because I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus
and your love toward all the **saints**...*

And quickly down to verse 18, where Paul is praying that:

*...the eyes of [their] hearts [would be] enlightened, that [they] may
know what is the hope to which [God] has called [them], what are the
riches of [God's] glorious inheritance in the **saints**..."*

Saints. Saints. Who are the saints? Well, back on November 10th, Pastor Mike preached a sermon from Ephesians 1:1 entitled, "All Saints." And in that sermon, he talked about who the saints are...and I commend that sermon to you. As a reminder, the word "saints" is derived from the Greek word *hagios*, and it means persons – **individuals** – who are consecrated, or set apart, to God as holy and pious.

Who are the saints? Well, all those who have repented of their sin and trusted in Christ and Christ alone for their salvation are...saints. If you are saved, then you are a saint! And **that** is a wonderful thing!

But Paul's focus begins to turn in verses 22 and 23:

*And he [God] put all things under His [Christ's] feet and gave Him
[Christ] as head over all things to the **church**, which is His [Christ's]
body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.*

Church. Church. **What** is a church? We all have lots of thoughts about what a church is, don't we? Many of us were raised in a church, and many of us have spent our adult lives going to church... We hear the word "church," and our thoughts begin to swirl... And I'll bet for the most part, each of us is thinking something a little different...

Well, I remind you this morning that the **church** was God's idea, and so we – together – as a **church** – are digging into this letter of Paul's to the **church** in Ephesus to find out just what a **church** is. And we're getting there...slowly ☺...but we're getting there!

I said just a minute ago that being a saint is a wonderful thing...and it is! But being a church is truly an **awesome** thing! You see, the saints are **individuals** set apart unto God, redeemed and forgiven by God. But the **church**! The **church** is a group of saints...but not just any kind of group: we are a living organism; we are the spiritual body of Jesus Christ on this Earth; Paul says in Ephesians 3:3-6 that the church is a **mystery** revealed only **through the Gospel**! O, church, know this: The church is an **awesome** thing!

Let me give a quick analogy...

What if I were to ask you, "What is a country?"

Is a country just a book full of laws and codes? Is a country just a plot of land on the atlas in your middle school history teacher's classroom? Is a country just a group of individual citizens all in it for themselves?

Back in February, many of you, I'm sure, took the opportunity to watch the 2014 Winter Olympic Games in Sochi, Russia. It was a time for sports, and sportsmanship...and cheating ☺! Just kidding... kind of...

Anyway, what if during one of the primetime interviews with one of the American athletes, the commentator would have asked, "So, what are you really here for? What was all of the training and discipline and sacrifice really about?" And the athlete looked straight at the camera and said, "Me! What I do is about me! It's all about me!"

But, they don't say that, do they? No, they are there for their country...as a representative of something bigger and more glorious than a book full of laws, a plot of land on a map, even a mere collection of individual citizens...

And you can't define it, can you? ☺

I mean, what is it that makes you cry when Old Glory is raised above the podium and the Star-Spangled Banner begins to play and... I mean, what is that, that wells up inside of you?

But we're not here for a Civics lesson, are we? No.

We're here to learn from God's inspired word what it means to be a **church**. As we learn and grow together through this epistle, Paul is going to tell us what a church is, and how a church functions.

One final thing – and all of this has been the introduction to the introduction, just so you know ☺ – you may have noted that a lot of the messages in the early part of Ephesians have been deeply doctrinal and theological. Frankly, that's because Ephesians itself begins with deeply theological and doctrinal truths about the salvation that we have in Christ; and here at Abiding Grace Church, the point of our sermons is the point of the text. So, we have indeed been plowing. In fact, as you read Paul's other epistles, you will find the same thing; did you know, for example, that the first command in Paul's letter to the Romans doesn't come until chapter 6?! And the command there is to "consider" – to "think" – at that! ☺ Don't act (yet)! Think!

So, rest assured, we are getting to application! Once the doctrinal foundation has been established, the Holy Spirit of God will help us to build our house – our **church** – **His** church – into the image of Christ as we live out our daily lives in this world. In fact, today's sermon will build on and apply the doctrinal truths that were articulated in our last sermon from Ephesians.

Three weeks ago, Pastor Mike led us into the birth pangs of the answer to the question, "What is the church?" We were in this latter portion of Ephesians 2, and before I do a quick summary of the important points from that sermon, let's read through the text together again.

Ephesians 2:11-19:

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called "the circumcision," which is made in the flesh by hands— remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in His flesh the dividing wall of hostility by abolishing the law of

commandments expressed in ordinances, that He might create in Himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace, and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility. And He came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God

So, let's quickly provide a...

Summary of the Previous Sermon from Ephesians 2

So, we were able to get some perspective on what Paul is saying here in this passage, but to do that we had to go all of the way back to the book of Genesis and to the covenant – or binding agreement – that God made with Abraham. This covenant included the promise that Abraham would be the “father of a multitude of nations”; in Genesis 15:5, for example, God took Abraham outside of his tent at night and said:

"Look toward heaven, [Abraham,] and number the stars, if you are able to number them." Then [God] said to him, "So shall your offspring be."

This covenant that God made with Abraham, we saw, was sealed, or ratified, by the covenant sign of circumcision: a sign of remembrance that God would not fail in His promises to the man, Abraham, and his offspring.

Also, in Genesis 17, God promised to provide Abraham with a son, Isaac when he and his wife, Sarah, were old...like, very old! Today, we think that when a woman is in her mid-to-late-thirties, that is a high-risk pregnancy! Well, Abraham was 100 years old, and Sarah was 90 years old, when Isaac was born!

So, Isaac – the “son of promise” – was born to Abraham, and then Jacob was born to Isaac and Rebekah; Jacob’s name was changed to Israel, and the man, Israel (Jacob), became the father of twelve sons who eventually became the nation, Israel.

Now, once we get to the New Testament, the Israelites – that is, those people who were descended from Abraham, through Isaac, through the man, Israel (Jacob) – are most commonly referred to as the “Jews.” And as Pastor Mike noted, if you weren’t a Jew, then you were a...Gentile. And because the Jews were descended from Abraham, they were commonly referred to as “the Circumcision,” whereas the Gentiles – everyone who was not a Jew – were commonly referred to as “the Uncircumcision.” Look at verse 11... Paul says to the Ephesian church:

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called "the circumcision," which is made in the flesh by hands...

Now Paul tells these Gentile Christians – who, recall, were saved back in verse 8 “by grace through faith, not by works” – Paul tells these Gentile Christians to remember... Remember what? Verse 12:

...remember that you were at that time (that is, before their conversion) ...you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Sounds bad, right? Well, it is bad. We’re going to talk about how bad the predicament of the Gentiles was in just a few moments...

But as I wrap up this summary from the previous sermon, let me make the big point that Pastor Mike made, and that is: that the **church** (here we are again...) – the church is the new, true Israel of God, and that the ethnic distinctions between the Jews and the Gentiles have now been completely annihilated...how? By Christ’s finished work on the Cross at Calvary whereby He shed his precious blood so that “all men” – both Jews and Gentiles, you and me – can be saved from God’s wrath **against** our sin and redeemed out of our slavery **to** our sin! Through the Gospel of Jesus Christ, all men – **Jews and Gentiles alike** – become members of the **one body**, the **church**: the body of Christ Himself! In chapter 3, verses

3 through 6 of Ephesians, Paul tells us that this is a great mystery now revealed...and that was the point of the last sermon. (Right, Mike?)

Glorious, glorious truth here... And we're going to build on that today as we dive in again... Let's re-read verses 12 and 13. I'm going to focus on verses 13 and 18 today – they provide a kind of “sandwich” around verses 14 through 17 and make a similar point – and the plan for now is that we will come back to verses 14 through 17 later. OK...verses 12 and 13, Ephesians chapter 2:

*...remember that you were at that time **separated** from Christ, **alienated** from the commonwealth of Israel and **strangers** to the covenants of promise, having **no hope** and **without God** in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were **far off** have been brought near by the blood of Christ.*

Let's try and get our hands around:

The Distance between Men and God

Do you see those two little words in verse 13: “far off”? “...you who were once **far off**...” Let's ask the question: “Just how far off were the Gentiles from God?” What is the distance – and I mean spiritual distance, here... Of course, God is everywhere; I am not talking about physical things. What is most important is that we understand just how spiritually “far off” men are from God.

Earlier this hour, Brother Scott read for us a portion of Genesis 3, which details for us the Fall of Man into sin. And at the end of Genesis 3, after Adam and Eve have eaten the Forbidden Fruit, and after God Himself has cursed the serpent, then the woman, then the man, God says:

*"Behold, the man has become like one of us in knowing good and evil. Now, lest he reach out his hand and take also of the Tree of Life and eat, and live forever– " therefore the LORD God sent him out from the Garden of Eden to work the ground from which he was taken. He drove out the man, and at the **east** of the Garden of Eden He placed the cherubim (cherubim are powerful winged angels) and a*

flaming sword that turned every way to guard the way to the Tree of Life.”

This is our first hint at the separation of men from God... Yes, what is being described in this historical event – this expulsion of mankind from the presence of God – what is being described is indeed a **physical** expulsion from the Garden of Eden, but it is also – we must understand – a **spiritual** expulsion – a spiritual separation – as well! How do we know?

Well, just a couple of chapters later, in Genesis 6, the Bible says that:

The LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and it grieved Him to His heart.

Do you see that? The God of the Universe is good and righteous and holy! “...the **wickedness** of man was **great!**”

Every intention of the thoughts of God’s heart is pure and perfect! “...every intention of the thoughts of man’s heart was **only evil continually.**”

Perhaps you’re thinking to yourself, “Well, that’s just those people who were living before the Flood...”

OK, let’s fast forward a bit...

What about Israel? God’s chosen people, right? Surely they’re not **that bad...**

In the book of Exodus, God sends Moses down into Egypt where the Israelites are suffering under the weight of slavery from Pharaoh, and God through Moses redeems them out of Egypt – through the Red Sea (you remember the movie, the Ten Commandments, right? 😊) – they come out of Egypt with riches that the Egyptians gave to them, and with God Himself leading them by cloud during the day and by fire during the night.

And then God gives them **every advantage.** What do I mean?

In Romans 3:1-2; Paul says that Jews had a **huge** advantage over the Gentiles, and then in Romans 9:4-5, he summarizes that advantage by saying:

...to [the Israelites] belong the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises. To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ who is God over all...

Time does not allow me this morning to draw out each of the items in this list...that's for another time, perhaps, as the Holy Spirit leads. But for now, please understand that when God entered into a special covenantal relationship with the Israelites (in Exodus 20), He – God – was condescending in such a way to make clear to us that **if anyone had a chance to work their way back into a right relationship with God and bridge the chasm between God and man, it was the Israelites!** Do you see that? Listen:

- God rescued them from their pagan oppressors in Egypt.
- He guided them through the wilderness.
- He brought them into the Land of Canaan.
- He gave them victory over the pagan peoples (yes, the **Gentiles**) that were living there.
- He gave them houses that they did not build and crops that they did not plant.
- He gave them the Tabernacle and the animal sacrifices so that they could worship Him rightly.
- He gave them the Law to live by.
- He promised them that if they would live by the Law, He would bless them beyond their imaginations.
- He even warned them repeatedly that if they didn't obey, He would punish them.
- And He planted **Himself** right smack dab in the middle of their nation!

And...? Did they obey? With all of these advantages – advantages that we Gentiles **did not have** – did the Israelites obey God?

Of course not!

In fact, the rest of the Old Testament is a testimony to the fact that God's own people – the ones He had called through Abraham and had rescued from slavery from Egypt – God's own people did not **obey** Him, did not **honor** Him, did not **worship** Him as He ought to be worshipped!

And if they could not do these things, friend, what hope do we have?

I want you to see something else this morning (and may the Holy Spirit open our eyes to see this): Even though the Jews had all of these advantages with respect to their relationship with God – it is **so clear** from the Bible that **even the Jews** were separated from God... Stay with me here.

As part of your bulletin this morning, I have provided a couple of pictures. On the front side, there is a picture of the Jewish Temple Complex during the time when Jesus walked the Earth. On the lower-left-hand-side of that picture, there is a red asterisk near a small paragraph, which essentially describes the existence of a low, latticed screen – this is the “dividing wall” that Paul talks about in Ephesians 2:14 – a wall that prohibited the Gentiles from coming near “where God was,” inside of the Temple building itself. We see again Paul's imagery of the **Gentiles** being “far off.”

If you flip the sheet over, however, you will see a cutaway version of the Temple itself, and right in the middle of the cutaway you will see a “massive curtain” – or **veil** (veil, remember that word) – which separated the Holy Place (to the right of the curtain in the diagram) from the Most Holy Place (to the left of the curtain) where God Himself resided.

Now, follow me here... The very first version of this Temple – the place where God would make His home on Earth and live among His redeemed people, the Israelites – is called the Tabernacle, and it is described in great detail in the book of Exodus. What I want to point out this morning is one very short excerpt from the description of the Tabernacle from Exodus 26, verse 31; this is a description of the **veil** that separates the **Israelites** from God. God is talking to Moses about the construction of the Tabernacle, and He says to Moses:

“...you shall erect the Tabernacle according to the plan for it that you were shown on the mountain. And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns and fine twined linen. It shall be made with cherubim skillfully worked into it.”

Do you see that? A veil – a curtain – that separates man from God (facing east, by the way ☺) – that has cherubim woven into it... Genesis 3, anyone?

You see, even in the design for the Tabernacle, God has indicated that all men – Jew and Gentile alike – are separated from Him. Three weeks ago, Pastor Mike noted this from Romans 3:22-23, verses that many of you know by heart:

...there is no distinction: for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...

All have sinned, Jew and Gentile alike. All have sinned. I have sinned. You have sinned.

And like the sin of Adam and Even in the Garden of Eden, our sin separates us from a holy and righteous and good God.

This is our plight. In ourselves...we are not even close.

Enough plowing for today. Let's finally get to the sermon title: how we are...

Brought Near by the Blood of Christ

And let us finally come to one of the greatest words in all of the Bible. I mean, if you asked me what the greatest word in the Bible is... “Say, hey, Brother Steve, what’s your favorite word in the Bible: justification? Or propitiation? Or expiation? Or grace? Or mercy? Or...love? What say you?”

You know what I might say? I might say, “The word: ‘but.’” B-U-T.

I want you to know this morning that the word “but” is a Gospel word! Let's read again our text for this morning's sermon. I'm going to read Ephesians 2:11-13 and then verse 18, and when I get to the end of

verse 12, I want you to feel the weight of the sinner's separation from God...and then we'll get to that glorious word at the beginning of verse 13, so that we can **rejoice** in the Gospel together. Here goes...verse 11:

Therefore remember that at one time you Gentiles in the flesh, called "the uncircumcision" by what is called the circumcision, which is made in the flesh by hands-- remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world... (Do you feel that...distance?)

***But** now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ... (verse 18) For through Him we both (Jew and Gentile alike) have access in one Spirit to the Father.*

O, this is glorious...do you see it?

You know, most people in the world today – especially here in the West – they just assume that they have access to God anytime they want, anywhere they want, don't they? There's a church on every corner, and "God is my co-pilot" bumper stickers, and Family Christian bookstores that anyone can walk into to buy a card or a candle or whatever – there are books in there somewhere, I have heard... ☺

But the point is this: most people take this access to God for granted; **they just assume they have it**, like God is somehow obligated to draw near to them whenever they feel like talking to Him or whenever their lives are in shambles usually from the result of their own sinful decisions and lifestyles. Listen, church: **it is not true!** God is not obligated to draw near to anyone. God does not hear the prayers of just anyone. (Use that line the next time you're in an evangelistic situation – I have. That's why my nose is crooked. Just kidding! ☺)

Look again at verses 13 and 18:

*But now **in Christ Jesus** you who once were far off have been brought near **by the blood of Christ**... (verse 18) For **through Him***

we both (Jew and Gentile alike) *have access in one Spirit to the Father.*

Let's go back to the Temple in Jerusalem. We saw earlier that in the Temple in Jerusalem in Jesus' day there was a massive curtain – a **veil** – that enclosed the Most Holy Place where God resided. And we saw that this veil was derived from the veil that was created for the original Israelite Tabernacle, which itself had cherubim sewn into it as a reminder of man's expulsion from the Garden of Eden due to sin and the resulting separation from God's presence.

(You know...it's like this whole story was put together from the very beginning, don't you think? 😊)

Now, Jesus – the divine Son of God – comes to Earth; He lives a perfectly righteous life in total obedience to the commands of God – the righteous life that God demands, the life that you and I cannot live – He lives a righteous life, and He is put to death on a Cross at the hands of...**both** the Jews and the Gentiles...

And as the righteous, divine Son of God is hanging there on that Cross – suspended between heaven and earth, the gospel of Matthew¹ says:

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying... "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, "This man is calling Elijah." And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to Him to drink. But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save Him." And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit.

*And behold, the curtain of the temple was **torn in two, from top to bottom.***

¹ Matthew 27:45-51a

Look again closely at verses 13 and 18 of Ephesians 2:

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been **brought near** by the blood of Christ... (verse 18) For through Him **we both (Jew and Gentile) have access** in one Spirit to the Father.*

The veil...torn in two. By the way, this veil in Herod's Temple was 60 feet tall. Can you imagine that? And it was one piece of heavy, elaborate fabric. This was a **massive curtain!**

Now, who is the only one who could grab such a massive curtain and tear it completely into two pieces?! That's right...only God could do such a thing! Did you hear it from Matthew: not only was the veil torn in two, but it was torn in two **from top to bottom!** **By** God, **from** God to man!

Jesus dies...spills His blood on behalf of sinners, and we who were separated from God – “far off” – now have access – **full, unhindered access** – to God...if only we will be washed in that same blood.

Let me wrap up, here.

At the beginning of the sermon, I told you that today would be application. Well, here goes...this is for us, church.

If you have repented of your sin and trusted completely in the work – the death – of Christ on the Cross, then you are no longer “far off.” And you are not even like the Jews of the Old Covenant, who needed a High Priest to go into the Most Holy Place once a year, every year, carrying with him the blood of a bull or goat.

Earlier, Brother Scott read from Hebrews 4:

*Since then **we** have a great High Priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a High Priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. **Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace**, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

The veil has been torn in two by God Himself, and because Jesus shed His precious blood for us, we now can with confidence draw near to the throne of grace. Little ol' me, and little ol' you. I'm no priest, neither is Pastor Mike, and neither are you – at least in the sense that you need me, or I need you, to mediate each other's relationship with God! But we have a **great High Priest – Jesus, the Son of God – who has gone into God's presence on our behalf so that we – even the Gentiles! – can now come to God with confidence.**

Brother Scott also read from Hebrews 10. I won't read the whole paragraph here again – I ask you to go out of here today and read it and meditate on it and rejoice in it on your own – but suffice to say this: What you will find there is another exhortation from God's word to draw near to God through the curtain – through the veil – which is Christ's flesh, ripped open and broken for us: the **church**.

One final word: What does it mean to “draw near”? This is not high theology, brothers and sisters. Here is some simple application: a few pictures to help you as you seek to draw near to God through Christ.

Picture a daughter, say, 11 years old, who has just finished her first performance in the school drama. And after the play is over, she sees you... and she runs over to you... and she looks into your eyes with a big smile... because she knows that you – her father – are about to shower her with love and acceptance and joy... And why? Because she's your daughter... Not because of what she's done, but because of who she is. She's your daughter...plain and simple.

Picture a son, say, 9 years old, who has just spent himself in the big hockey game. And after the game is over...you can finish the story, right? Did he win? Did he score? The father doesn't care. A father looks with affirmation and love and acceptance on his son just because... he's his son. That's all.

Picture a husband... You remember, back in the “old days,” when they would let people into the airport terminals, right? Almost 15 years ago, now, but you know the scene: husband getting off the plane and coming into the terminal, and wife running into the arms of her husband, not really caring who was around and how embarrassing the whole thing was! 😊

Church: We are washed in the blood of Christ, and because of that, we are the **sons and daughters of God!** We are the **bride of Christ Himself!** And anyone – anyone – washed in the blood of Christ can draw near to Him: anytime, anywhere. So as sons and daughters of God – as the wife of the Son of God – let us draw near to God in full confidence, in full assurance of faith, knowing that He has nothing left for us but mercy and grace and love and acceptance through the blood of our great Savior, Jesus.

Let's pray... [PRAY]

As we prepare to celebrate Communion, let us briefly meditate on...



No Longer Strangers and Aliens...But Members of the Household of God

Let's look briefly again at verse 19 of Ephesians 2.

So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God...

This verse is obviously tied back to verse 12, where Paul had declared that prior to their becoming Christians, the Gentiles were:

*...**separated** from Christ, **alienated** from the commonwealth of Israel and **strangers** to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world...*

Brothers and sisters: This is what we were before God saved us. This is what we were before we repented of our sin and trusted in the finished work of Jesus Christ on our behalf.

Look at the end of verse 19 again. The Bible calls us not just saints – although we are certainly that! – but the Bible calls us members of the household of God. Do you know what that is? That is the **church**.

And I ask you this morning, what do members of a household do together most often? You got it...

They share a meal.

And that's what we're going to do here right now. The Lord Jesus Christ gave us – His brothers and sisters – a meal to remember Him by. I note here this morning that this is indeed a meal for the brothers and sisters of Christ, for those who have been washed in His blood – and the evidence of that is that you have repented of your sins, you have placed your whole faith and hope in His atoning work on your behalf, and that you are even now delighting in God as a child delights in a father's approval, **bearing fruit** that is in keeping with repentance and faith.

Let's examine ourselves in these next few moments of silence. If these evidences can be found in your life – evidence of repentance and a living faith in the Son of God – then you are most welcome to join us in this meal this morning as fellow members of the household of God.

...on the night when He was betrayed [Jesus] took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it, and said, "This is My body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me."

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

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

Let's pray... [PRAY]