

The logo for Trinity Bible Church Dallas features the words "TRINITY BIBLE CHURCH DALLAS" in a bold, sans-serif font. The text is centered within a light gray rectangular background. Behind the text, there is a faint, stylized graphic of a cross with a vertical bar extending downwards, resembling a church steeple or a cross with a base.

T R I N I T Y
B I B L E C H U R C H
D A L L A S

The Sermon

Dr. Steven J. Lawson

Colossians 3:15-17

"A Christ-Centered Life"

July 23, 2023

TRANSCRIPT

Well, it is so good to be back with you, and I'm so excited to step back into Colossians chapter 2. Oh, you've moved on. All right, we're in Colossians 3. I'm anxious to look at this passage together with you today. I think you'll find it most helpful for your Christian life and very practical. So I want to begin by reading the passage, Colossians chapter 3, and today we're going to be looking at verses 15-17, 15-17. And I am so sharp I just turned to the book of Philipians. I knew it was in a different place on the page. Yeah, Colossians now, Colossians 3:15-17. Looks very familiar to me now.

This was Paul writing to the church at Colossae from prison in Rome. He writes, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God. Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." These are our verses for today, they are great verses. Let us go to the Lord in prayer.

[Prayer] Father, we have a great sense of anticipation as we now look at these words. We know they're inspired, they're inerrant, they're infallible, they're powerful. And we ask now by Your Spirit that You would unleash the truth and the power of these verses in our lives. I pray You would bless Your people here today. Lay Your hand upon me for good. Fill me with

Your Spirit, that I may be an able teacher and preacher of Your word. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. [End]

The title of this message is "A Christ-Centered Life," and in these verses that I've just read, the apostle Paul teaches us yet again that the whole of Christian living is centered in Jesus Christ. In other words, the Christian life is all about Christ. It's all about knowing Christ, and following Christ, and loving Christ, and adoring Christ, obeying Christ, serving Christ. Everything in the Christian life is rooted and grounded in the Lord Jesus Christ. Everything revolves around Him, because He is everything to us. If you have Christ, you have everything that you need to live a dynamic Christian life. You do not need for anything else to be added externally to your life. When you have Christ, you have everything that you need. You can be like the apostle Paul sitting in a Roman prison and live a dynamic life, because you have Christ in you as you sit in this prison.

In the previous chapter in Colossians 2:9, Paul makes a very strong statement that ties into what I'm saying: "For in Him" - referring to Christ - "all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form," - now verse 10 - "and in Him" - in Christ - "you have been made complete." You've already been made complete. You don't need a second blessing, you don't need a second work of grace, you need to simply experience everything that you received when you received Christ. There is nothing lacking in you except to grow in the Lord Jesus Christ, and every one of Paul's epistles really emphasizes this in different ways.

In Romans, Paul teaches us that we have all righteousness in Christ. In 1 Corinthians, we have all wisdom in Christ. Second Corinthians, all strength in Christ. Galatians, all freedom in Christ. Ephesians, all riches in Christ. Philippians, all joy in Christ. First Thessalonians, all holiness, or sanctification, in Christ. Second Thessalonians, all peace in Christ. I think we're getting the idea. And the book of Colossians, uniquely, Paul puts his arms around all of this, and just says you have everything in Christ, you have the total package in Christ. And so in light of this full sufficiency that we have in Christ, Paul now opens this up for us, especially in these verses that we're going to be looking at today.

As I look at verses 15, 16 and 17 - and I was looking at it a couple of days ago - there is an obvious common thread that just leaps off the page; and in verse 15, he talks about the peace of Christ; in verse 16, he talks about the word of Christ; and in verse 17, he talks about the name of Christ. And so the outline is very obvious. And I then looked at a MacArthur commentary, and there it is, the very same; he copied me, he copied me. But all that's to say is anyone who picks up a Bible and looks at these verses will see this dominant thread that runs through these three verses. And so Paul is really reinforcing that a Christ-centered life will be a Christ-ruled life, a Christ-governed life.

So let's begin in verse 15. The first heading I want you to see is, "The peace of Christ rules us." We see that very clearly in verse 15. He begins, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts." This peace of Christ, it means that Christ is the source of all peace. He is also the essence of all peace. When we receive Christ, we receive Him who is the Prince of peace; but it all comes from Christ. There is no peace to be found anywhere outside of Jesus Christ. This world will offer you zero peace. This world will only offer you anxiety, and frustration, and worry, and stress, and trials, and tribulations, et cetera; but in Christ, we have all peace.

Now the Bible uses "peace" in two different ways, and I want to take just a moment to explain this. There is objective peace, and there is subjective peace; these are the two elements of peace. Objective peace is the peace that Jesus has established for us with God the Father. Before we were converted, we were not at peace with God, and God was not at peace with us. We were hostile towards God, there was enmity in our heart towards God, "and God is angry with the wicked every day," the Bible says. There was no peace. But when Jesus went to the cross, He established peace for us in His substitutionary death. And we've already seen this in Colossians 1:20 that says, "Christ made peace through the blood of His cross."

So the warfare is over. "There is now therefore no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus." We are at peace with God. Romans 5:1, "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our

Lord Jesus Christ." And this objective peace, it is eternal peace, it never changes. But that's not the peace that Paul is addressing here in this verse, this is subjective peace. And subjective peace is the peace that Jesus gives to believers in the midst of their Christian life. As they go through difficulties and storms and trials, He gives to us a supernatural peace that surpasses all comprehension, and this subjective peace is in our hearts. And this peace, it increases, it decreases, it fluctuates, depending upon the manner of our life.

The first word here, "Let the peace of Christ rule in our hearts," the word "let" indicates that we're responsible to allow this peace to increase in our life. He says, "Let the peace of Christ," he says, "rule in your hearts." Now this word "rule" is a rare word. It's the only time it's used in the entire Bible, the only time it's used in the New Testament, and it means to act as an umpire who presides over an athletic contest like the Olympic games in the first century. When a runner leaves the track, he is to be disqualified; but if he will run according to the rules, and if he will have trained, and if he will win, then the umpire, or the judge, will bestow upon him a great crown, or a great prize.

And so what Paul is saying here is that we must let the peace of Christ act as an empire in our hearts, meaning arbitrate and render its verdicts in our heart; and when we step out of bounds and leave the track and disobey the will of God, there is a forfeiting of peace. When sin moves in, peace moves out. But if we will run the race that God sets before us, and with a pure heart keep the rules of the race which are in the word of God, there will be a great reward, and that reward is an increased peace. And so the moment we entered the Christian life, the moment we were converted, we entered into a new state of peace. The weight of sin, guilt, haunting memory of sin, was taken away, and the blood of Christ washed away our sins, and there came peace flooding into our heart and into our soul. But this peace now continues in our Christian life in different measures and in different degrees, and acts as an arbitrator, holds sway over our heart and presides over our hearts. The word "hearts" here refers to our innermost being.

And so this peace of God is a treasure that is worth more than ten thousand treasures that this world would ever give us. To have peace in the heart is a settled calm in the midst of the storms of life. It comes from trusting and obeying the Lord. And as we "trust and obey, for there is no other way," the hymn says, "to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey," that peace settles into our hearts in fullest measure. And so it's to be something of a moral compass for our lives, that as we do what is pleasing to the Lord, peace comes, even if it's a challenge, even if it's difficult. But when we go our own way, we forfeit all peace.

So he says, "Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts," – that is your responsibility, to let this peace be the umpire in your heart and affirm when you're going in the right direction, he says – "to which indeed you were called." Now this call is what is known as the effectual call. It is an irresistible call by God that lays hold of us and draws us into fellowship with His Son Jesus Christ. This call summoned us out of the realm of sin and death, and has called us and brought us into a new sphere, the realm of righteousness and life. And we were called into this peace. We were called into, really, the peace that only Jesus Christ can give to us. And let me read a verse, John 14:27. Jesus is in the upper room, it's the night before He is to be crucified, and knowing what will take place the next day, He had peace. How is that even possible?

Listen, Jesus said, "Peace I leave with you. My peace I give to you," meaning, "not a peace like what I have, but the very peace that is in My heart is the very peace that I leave with you and give to you." And in an argument from the greater to the lesser: if Jesus can have peace the night before He was crucified, surely this peace can take care of us when we go through the difficulties of life. I mean, for me to go to the dentist to have my teeth cleaned, they have to send an ambulance out to pick me up, I have to be blindfolded, I need gas. It's a traumatic experience for me. I need this peace as I go through life, just like you need peace as you go through life.

And so this peace must rule in our hearts as we were called into the experience of this peace, he says, "in one body." And the "body" here refers to the body of Christ. Colossians 1:18 makes that very clear. And it is the

true church, it is the universal church. Wherever believers are found around the globe they comprise the body of Christ, which is the sum total of all of the elect who have believed in Jesus Christ.

And then he adds, "and be thankful." Be thankful for God's call upon your life. Be thankful for this peace that He has given to you. Be thankful that you now are brought into the body of Christ and joined with other believers in your worship of Christ, that you now have this new identity as a believer in Christ. And so the peace of Christ, we must allow it to strongly rule in our hearts as we are living in a manner worthy of the Lord.

And so I want to ask you, "How sensitive are you to the rule of the peace of Christ in your heart? Are you immediately aware when you forfeit this peace? Do you quickly repent and confess your sin when this peace has left you? Do you experience this peace restored in your heart when you have made matters right with the Lord? To have the peace of Christ renewed in you is something the world will never know, and something that only you know as a Christian and as a believer in Jesus Christ.

So that's where Paul begins here. The peace of Christ rules us. That means it governs us, it directs us, and it controls us. But, second, as we look at verse 16, "The word of Christ rules us," not just the peace of Christ, but the word of Christ rules us. He says in verse 16, "Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you." Again, it's our responsibility to bring the word of Christ into our hearts and let it dwell within us.

When he says, "the word of Christ," he's talking about the word about Christ. Now the word about Christ is found in the written word; but the reference here I don't believe is to the actual written word of God, it is to the chief subject of the written word of God, which is Christ Himself. And so, "Let the word of Christ," - the message that centers on Christ - "let that richly dwell with within you."

"The word of Christ," - the word "word" means a saying or a statement about Christ - let that find a home in your heart. It's referring to the truth about the person and work of Christ. It's referring to the truth about the life and death of Christ, about the deity and humanity of Christ, the saving mission of Christ. It's the teaching about Christ. As you read your Bible, you need to be consciously aware of Christ. He is the hero of the Bible. He is the dominant subject of the Bible. On the road to Emmaus Jesus opened the Scriptures and showed those two disciples Himself in all the Scriptures. He is the overarching theme of the entire Bible.

And so he says, "Let the word of Christ" - about Christ - "richly dwell within you." It needs to saturate your life. You need to soak it up. The word "richly" means abundantly or extravagantly. And the word "dwell" is a word that means to find a home. Let the word of Christ move into your life and stay in your life. Let the word about Christ move in and take over every aspect of your life. Let it move into every room of your life. Let it control and govern your thought life, your work life, your home life, your church life, your recreational life. Let the word of Christ just so overshadow your life and dwell within you. How would you do that? By constantly reading about Christ, and studying Christ, and meditating upon Christ.

In fact, that's what he told us at the beginning of this chapter. If you would look at verse 1 in Colossians chapter 3. he says, "If you have been raised up with Christ," - that takes place at conversion - "keep seeking the things above," - Well, what's above? Well, the question is, "Who's above?" - "where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above," - that means set your mind on Christ - "not on the things that are on earth. For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God." So we are to have a preoccupation with Christ. He is to be the dominant thought in our minds. And as 2 Corinthians 10 says, "We are to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ." Christ must fill and flood our minds, and fill our hearts, and be the controlling factor in our lives. So this necessitates that we learn about Christ, and that we love Christ, and that we live for Christ. This is so very important.

And he adds, "with all wisdom," in verse 16, "with all wisdom." And wisdom deals with the application of the truth about Christ, how this works out in our lives in a daily practical way. Knowledge is the truth about Christ, wisdom is the application of that to our daily lives. It's insight into living, really. Wisdom means how to live in God's world in God's way; and at the heart of that is to emulate Christ in daily living.

A couple of decades ago there swept through the church kind of a cute little trend called WWJD, "What would Jesus do?" And that's really what wisdom is about. I mean, what would Jesus do in this situation? What decision would He make, and how would He live? It gets translated down to the practical affairs of life.

Now for the rest of verse 16, Paul just packed in so much that I need to help us sort this out. And what he is saying here is that when the truth about Christ, the word of Christ dominates our lives and richly dwells within us, it has an affect on us, and the affect is it makes us want to sing to the Lord. It stirs our heart. He ignites the fire down in our soul. And the word "singing" in verse 16 is the result of the word of Christ richly dwelling within us. A word of Christ saturated life will always be a singing life.

Now I need to help us understand how the rest of this verse 16 fleshes out. It really is describing when the church comes together, and we sing together, congregational singing as the body of Christ. And there is a twofold dimension to all singing. There is a horizontal dimension, and there is a vertical dimension; and the horizontal dimension, as we sing, we are ministering to one another, and we are teaching one another, and we are admonishing one another as we sing the words of the psalms and the hymns and the spiritual songs. We're encouraging one another, we are affirming one another, we are stirring the hearts of others as we sing.

But then there's also this vertical dimension, because ultimately, while we're teaching and admonishing one another, ultimately, we're actually singing to God and singing praises to God. So there is this dual aspect of

the word of Christ richly dwelling within us. It's going to produce this twofold effect. Now I want to walk through this twofold effect with you, and we'll start with the horizontal, how we affect one another as we sing in church.

So he says, first of all, "teaching." Do you see that? "Teaching" here is positive instruction in the Christian faith. And this teaching is found in the psalms, this teaching is found in the hymns, and this teaching is found in spiritual songs, which is to be deeply steeped in biblical truth.

So we teach one another, and we also admonish one another. And the word "admonish" has a multifaceted meaning. It means to exhort, and it means to urge. And so as we sing, we're actually urging and exhorting others to do the words of what we are singing. And the word "admonishing" also means a warning of danger if anyone strays away. So notice, he says that this singing, which involves teaching and admonishing, is to be directed to "one another." This refers to every member in the body of Christ, that every believer is to sing in such a way that you have a one another ministry to others who are hearing you sing.

Now notice what it is that we are to sing. There is to be a diversity in what we sing. "We are to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." Now let's talk about each one of these. "Psalms" refers to the Old Testament book of Psalms. It was the worship book, the worship hymnal, if you will, of the Old Testament, and it is a towering book that, by and large, is to direct our worship upward to God; very unique.

The book of Philippians is addressed to a church in Philippi, the book of Colossians is addressed to a church in Colossae, but the book of Psalms, by and large, is uniquely addressed to God in our singing to Him. The word "psalms" in the Greek means the pluckings, the plucking of a musical instrument, like a harp. A piano is just a harp turned on its side, a guitar is just a variant of a harp, that there would be musical accompaniment that would be with the singing of the psalms.

And "psalms" is mentioned first here because of its great importance. In fact, when you look at the Old Testament, which is made up of 39 books, the book of Psalms just towers over the rest of the Old Testament, and it towers over the entire Bible, really. Just one psalm, Psalm 119, is longer than 30 individual books in the Bible. Just one psalm longer than 30 individual books in the Bible, and it was to direct the worship of the people of God when they would come into the temple in the Old Testament. And there is such a variety of psalms. There are happy psalms, there are sad psalms, there are thanksgiving psalms, there are praise psalms, there are confessional psalms, there are kingly psalms, there are enthronement psalms, there are imprecatory psalms, and it just covers the whole gamut of life.

Charles Haddon Spurgeon who wrote *Treasury of David*, which is a verse by verse commentary of all 150 psalms, says, "I've never been so high emotionally in my Christian life, but that David was not higher than I am; and I've never been so low and discouraged and down, but that David is not lower than I am." And so what we see in the psalms is this full range of emotions. Calvin called it the anatomy of the soul, that no matter where you are in your Christian life, there is a psalm that speaks exactly to where you are, whether it's a time of triumph, or a or a time of adversity. And so Paul says to the church in Colossae, "You need to be singing the psalms. There needs to be this rich fullness to your corporate worship, and you're to have musical accompaniment with it."

And then there are the hymns. Do you see that next, "with psalms and hymns"? And what are hymns? Well, hymns are a doctrinal statement that is set to music. A hymn is theology written in a poetic structure, tightly worded in compact style where every word is just in the right place. And I'll give you an example of an early hymn that was sung in the early church; and we've already studied it, it's Colossians 1:15-20. That's a hymn. It's called "The Colossian Hymn," and Paul takes that and incorporates it into his writing of this book.

So they were already singing hymns in the early church, which are highly didactic, which are highly doctrinal, which are highly instructive. And even

since then as hymns are written, so many of them, first verse, "God the Father"; second verse, "God the Son"; third verse, "God the Holy Spirit"; fourth verse, "the whole Trinity." They're very systematically arranged, and it's doctrine, doctrine, doctrine being sung. That's a whole different genre of music and content from psalms. And psalms are known by the parallelism, and by the figures of speech, and the imagery.

And then he says, "spiritual songs." And though we are not exactly told what these spiritual songs are, I'm going to make an assumption that they would be more like today, praise choruses, which take a single truth, and through repetition drives that truth into the fabric of a person's soul. And so what Paul is saying, "When the church comes together, if the word of Christ is truly dwelling within you, it will be stoking the fires of your heart, and there will be an exasperated emotion that will ascend upward from your heart, and you will have to sing to the Lord." And you will sing to Him not in a monotone fashion or monolithic fashion. You're not going to just sing psalms, and you're not going to sing just hymns, and you're not going to sing just spiritual songs or courses. No, you're going to sing from each of these categories, and there will be a richness and a fullness to your corporate worship.

And he says, "you'll be singing with thankfulness." He says, "singing with thankfulness," grateful to the Lord for every line that you are singing, grateful to the Lord for every truth that you are lifting up to God. And you are ministering to one another. As you're joining your voices together, you are reinforcing in me, as I hear you sing these truths, "A mighty fortress is our God. Holy, holy, holy; crown Him with many crowns." That is being just tightened, the screws being tightened in my mind, in my heart. As I hear all of you sing that, it lifts my soul to want to do the same with you and to have the same affect upon you. That's why when you're not in church, you're missing a lot, a lot.

But there's not just this horizontal ministry that we have one to another, there is also this vertical ministry that we have upward to the Lord, which is the ultimate purpose of our singing. And so that's why verse 16 concludes, "in your hearts to God." In other words, not just with your

mouth, but it must arise from in your heart. There's an old saying, "What's down in the well comes up in the bucket." And what's down in the heart comes out of the mouth. And if your heart is on fire for the Lord, if your heart is strong towards the Lord, then there will be strong singing that will come out to God. And "God" here refers to God the Father. When he says, "in your hearts," it means heartfelt singing, it means wholehearted singing.

And so as we look at this, let me just try to put a bow around this and just give you five quick truths about corporate worship, corporate singing. Number one, it needs to be theologically sound. It needs to be truths about Christ and truths that teach sound doctrine. We're not to be singing the wisdom of the world in here, we're going to be singing truth about Christ and about God.

And then, second, intentionally varied: "psalms and hymns and spiritual songs." We cannot become one-dimensional. And so many churches become one-dimensional in their singing, and they're singing is identified as this or identified as that, and it ends up cutting out either young people from this or old people from that. No, there's to be a diversity in singing so that every age and every person can come to the same worship service and it is equally meaningful to everyone. I mean, you don't have a contemporary service and then you have a traditional service. Well, you've just divided the body of Christ. That's stupid. No, you need to have one worship service where everybody can get under one roof and sing together and be happy that they're there. Involves psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, which are undoubtedly choruses.

Third, is to be upwardly focused, meaning we're singing praises to God. We sing to an audience of one. "Is God pleased with this worship?" That's the question. Not, "Will unbelievers out in the community like our worship?" That's not the question. The question is, "Does God like our worship?" It is for Him.

And then, fourth, it is outwardly directed to one another. And we do have this mutual ministry, such that when you don't sing in church, you're

actually failing to minister to other people around you who need to hear your voice.

And then, fifth, sincerely felt. It must arise from the heart, not just going through the empty motions of singing, but to truly feel in the depth of your soul what you're singing to the Lord.

So let me ask you these questions. When we sing, do you sing? Do you sing out? Do you lift your voice and give praise to God? Real men sing. Do you? Young adults sing. Do you? Older adults sing. Do you? If Christ rules your life, you will surely sing. There's a place for a choir behind me, but the real choir is in front of me. We are to all sing to the Lord, and we will sing if the word of Christ richly dwells within us.

So this brings us now, finally, to verse 17, "The name of Christ rules us." So he begins by saying, "Whatever you do." Now that's the most comprehensive statement you could possibly make. The totality of your life: "Whatever you do, wherever you go," he says, "in word or deed." "Word" is what we say, "deed" is what we do. And so this refers to the totality of one's life. "No matter where you go, no matter what you do, no matter what you say," he says, "do all in the name of the Lord Jesus."

The word "all" gives us this comprehensive nature of whatever you do. Everything in life is to be done in the name of the Lord Jesus. What that means is everything that I do and everything that I say must be in alignment with who Jesus is, and what Jesus taught, and how Jesus lived – everything that I do. My whole, all my actions and all my conversations need to be in tight alignment with the holy character of Jesus Christ, and the flawless teaching of Jesus Christ, and the perfect life of Jesus Christ – everything I do, everything that I say. And this is another way of saying to live your life under the lordship of Jesus Christ, that the entirety of my life must be lived in the name of Christ, that there cannot be a detached part of my life over here that is not being governed and controlled and ruled by Jesus Christ. So He is the standard for everything I do and everything that I say.

This is in some ways a restatement of Leviticus 11:44, you'll recognize it: "You shall be holy, for I am holy. Be holy, as I am holy." It's so important, it's repeated again in Leviticus 19:2, again in Leviticus chapter 20, I think it's like verse 6. And then Peter quotes it in 1 Peter 1:14-15; it is that fundamental to our Christian life. And Jesus reinforced it in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:48, "You shall be perfect, as My heavenly Father is perfect."

That's setting the bar pretty high. God will not bring the standard down to our level where it is reachable, He keeps the standard at perfection, as holy as He is holy, and He gives us the Holy Spirit, and He gives us grace, to help enable us to make progress towards that standard, though we will never reach it in this world; yet, it is nevertheless God's will for my life and for your life. That, in a way, is what Paul is saying here, that whatever you do in word or deed, it must be done in the name, or according to the name, or in perfect conformity to the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And so he concludes by saying, "giving thanks," giving thanks for the grace that He gives to enable us to live in this manner, giving thanks for the forgiveness that He gives for when we fall short of this perfect standard. We're to be continually giving thanks. And that was the emphasis at the end of verse 15, "be thankful." It's the emphasis at the end of verse 16, "with thankfulness in your hearts to God." It's the emphasis at the end of verse 17 now, "giving thanks through Him to God the Father."

We are to be known as thankful people with an attitude of gratitude in our hearts and souls, always focused upon not what we don't have, but what we do have in Christ. And this thankfulness, he says, is to be expressed, "through Him," "Him" refers to Jesus Christ, who is the only mediator to God, who has opened up the only way of access to come before the throne of grace. So this thankfulness is to be expressed through Christ to God the Father. That's the way prayer works. That's the way worship works. It is to be directed to God the Father, through the mediation of the Lord Jesus Christ, who has opened up the only way to the Father. And it is to be directed and empowered by the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, who dwells

within us, and energizes our worship and our prayers to God the Father as they come through God the Son.

This is what it looks like to live a Christ-centered life. The peace of Christ ruling in our hearts and letting us know when we're out of bounds and when we're on track. The word of Christ richly dwelling within us to the extent that it produces a flame of praise in our hearts that we must sing to God; and as we do, we're teaching and admonishing one another in what we're singing to God. And that the name of Christ really becomes the determinative factor for everything that I do in my spiritual life.

There is a glorious simplicity about the Christian life and it's reduced to one word: Christ, Christ. He's is at the very center of your life. He is everything to your life. He is the example for your life. He is the teacher of your life. He is the Lord over your life. He is the Savior and the Deliverer of your life. He's everything.

And so as you walk in this world, you walk after Christ. If you do not know Jesus Christ, you do not know peace, you do not know how to live; you are on the wrong track, you're going in the wrong direction, and there will be devastating consequences that are awaiting you if you do not know Jesus Christ. But today you could commit your life to Christ, and you could exit the world, and you could come to Christ and enter the kingdom of God, and He would immediately give you peace. He would remove the weight of sin from you and pardon your iniquities. He would move into your life and bring you a peace that surpasses all comprehension. He would bring joy. He would bring gladness. Your problems and trials will not all go away. You may even have some new problems, but you will now have Christ to walk with you, and to enable you, and to guide you, and to direct you. And one day when you come to the end of life's journey, you will go to be with Christ in heaven.

And so if you've never believed in Jesus Christ, if you've never committed your life to Jesus Christ, I call you now this very moment to step out of the darkness and step out of the world, to take that decisive step of faith and to

come all the way to Jesus Christ, to entrust your soul to Him, to repent of your sins. So if you've never done this, today could be the greatest day in your life. Let us pray.

[Prayer] Father, as we now come to the Lord's Table, I pray that You would make this everything You desire it to be for us this day. Bless now us, Your people, in Christ's name. Amen. [End]

As you came in you should have received one of these plastic objects that has a little piece of bread and some grape juice in it; and if you can be finding that.

The night before Jesus was crucified, He gathered His disciples in an upper room in Jerusalem, and He instituted the Lord's Supper, which this represents. He gave to His disciples bread, and He told them that the bread would be a picture and represent His body that would be crushed and broken the next day upon the cross. And the Jews would represent His blood that would be spilled out and poured out upon the cross the next day for the forgiveness of sins. And He told His disciples that they were to practice this Lord's Supper until He comes again. And so He instituted this 2,000 years ago. We are still awaiting the return of our Savior from heaven. And until He comes, we will be faithful to His words, and we will take the Lord's Supper, which is to keep Christ, of whom we spoke today, to keep Christ at the very forefront of our thoughts and of our minds.

Now as you take the Lord's Supper, there are two requirements. Number one, you have to be a Christian. You have to be born again. And so if you are here today without Christ, we ask that you just watch. We're thrilled you're here, but you just watch us take the Lord's Supper. This is not for you, this is only for those who know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. And parents, you have to decide with your children, which of them actually knows the Lord, and which of them are just in the process of hearing about the Lord. But this is for Christians only who have been born again from above.

The second requirement is that you take the Lord's Supper in a worthy manner. That means you take it with humility and sincerity of heart, that your mind is all here, that you confess your sin and acknowledge to God where you have failed and ask for His forgiveness, that you come with a repentant heart. We are to be lifelong repenters and lifelong confessors of our sin. And so if you are one who's been born again, and if you are walking in humility before the Lord, then we invite you to take the Lord's Supper with us.

And so as we begin, you can remove the top from the bread part. And the bread, Jesus said, is a reminder of His body which was wounded and broken and crushed upon the cross. It was in His body that God the Father transferred our sins, and He bore our sins in His body upon the cross. He was nailed to the cross at nine o'clock in the morning, and at 12 noon the Father snuffed out the sun and covered the sun until the whole earth became pitch black; and it was at that moment that God the Father took all of our sins who would ever believe upon Christ, and the invisible hand of God laid them upon His Son and transferred our sins to Christ. And Jesus bore our sins in His body upon the cross, and He took away our sins. He was the scapegoat. He was the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. Our sins were laid upon Christ; and in that death, He took them far away from us. He's removed them from us as far as the east is from the west. He has taken our sins and placed them behind His back where He can see them no more. And it was in this body that Jesus suffered, that Jesus came under the heavy weight of the wrath of His Father, that should have fallen upon me and should have fallen upon you. It fell upon Christ and it utterly crushed Him. Isaiah 53 says, "The Father was pleased to crush His Son as the full weight of the Law of God that had been broken fell upon Christ."

The wages of sin is death, and so Jesus died in our place upon the cross in a real human body just like the human body in which you find yourself today. Hebrews 10 says, "The Father prepared a body for Him." And so the apostle Paul writes, "For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed 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.'" Let us do it together. And though it is a small little piece of bread, it reminds us of the infinite, eternal, enormous death that Jesus died on the cross for our sins.

Jesus then took a cup in that same night and He gave it to His disciples and explained to them that it represents the blood that He would shed the next day to make a covering for their sins. The Bible says, "Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin." There is only one agent that can purge your soul and remove the guilty stain upon you, and that is the blood of Christ. There is power in the blood of Christ to wash away all sin. God says, "Come, let us reason together. Though your sins be as scarlet, they should be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be white as snow." It is through the blood of Christ that all of your sins have been removed from you, and you now stand faultless before the throne of God.

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

This must seem to be strange to the world that we would do this. But for us, it tugs on our heart. It's at the very center of who we are and what we are, that we are believers in Jesus Christ, and we are believers in His saving death upon the cross as the only way by which we have access to the Father.

As I close the service, I close with a benediction. Receive the benediction, and then we will be dismissed. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all." God bless you.