



Series: Colossians: Before All Things

Date: February 11, 2024

Speaker: Brett Bouldin, Students Pastor

Text: Colossians 3:12-4:2

Title: Live for Jesus

Good morning, Mercy Church! My name is Brett, and I am one of the pastors on staff here. I am excited to be preaching the word to you this morning. If you have your Bibles, you can take them out and flip over to **Colossians chapter 3**. For the past five weeks, we've been in this series called "Before All Things" – going through the book of Colossians and talking about this big idea that Jesus is not someone who we as Christians just tack onto our lives and continue to live however, we want. No, what we see have seen through this book is that Jesus is worthy of our entire lives – he is someone

whom Colossians 1:17 says comes BEFORE ALL THINGS and He's to be in first place in every single area of our lives.

In our text today, we are going to continue with that theme. We're going to see that as believers, Christ is to have first place **in our relationships with others** – specifically in our church, in our homes, and in our workplace.

Now I want to say up front... You need to put your seatbelt on for this one because this is kind of "hot topic" sermon. We've got some big topics to cover. We're going to be talking about submission, we're going to talk about parenting, and we're going to talk about slavery. As the student pastor here and as the parent of an 18-month-old, I am an expert in all of the subjects, so lock in.

There's a verse right in the middle of our text today that summarizes the main idea of our passage well – it's Colossians 3:17 and it says: **And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

Whatever you do – in word or deed – Christ is to have first place. In other words, church (and this is the main point of the sermon today), **LIVE FOR JESUS**. Super simple concept, nothing fancy about it. But what we are going to see is that





the call for every Christian is to live their lives for Jesus. He is to have first place.

As we have seen throughout this series, the way the Apostle Paul, who's the writer of the book of Colossians, makes his arguments is he does it through a logical progression of thought. He starts somewhere and then he begins to build out his idea.

And today we're going to see him build out this idea of living for Jesus by saying that if we are going to live for Jesus, then it has to start in our hearts. That's the only way it's going to work.

It kind of reminds me of the movie *The Grinch*. Raise your hand if you've seen it. If you haven't you need to watch it – it's iconic. Maybe the best Christmas movie. And y'all, I'm talking about the 2000 Jim Carrey one because let's be honest that's the best one.

But you know the story – the Grinch is a mean old man (or whatever he is) who hates Christmas and steals kids' presents. He was the worst. And what was at the root of that hate for Christmas was that his **heart was two sizes too small**. As the story goes, the Grinch steals all the presents from the people of Whoville, he takes them up to the top of Mt. Crumpit with the plan to dump them and ruin Christmas for everyone. And then he hears a sound... it's the sound of Christmas songs

being sung by the people of Whoville who had just had their Christmas stolen. They still had their Christmas spirit. The sound of those songs reaches the ears of the Grinch on Mt. Crumpit and all of a sudden, his heart starts pounding! A pain rushes through him. [\(show picture\)](#) The Christmas spirit breaks through his heart and it starts to grow! And right there on that mountain, the Grinch's heart grows three sizes. All of a sudden, with this new heart, he rushes down Mt. Crumpit, he returns all the gifts, and the rest is history.





A changed heart changed everything for the Grinch. When his heart was two sizes too small, he aimed to ruin Christmas. When his heart grew three sizes, everything changed. His heart needed to be changed for his life to change. In the same way, the heart is at the center of living the Christian life. One theologian explains it like this: “just as the engine powers the vehicle, so the heart drives all that we do. The heart is the motivation headquarters, the central animating core of all our longings, fears, and actions.”¹

Like the Christmas songs that came up and changed the heart of the Grinch, if you’re going to live for Jesus in the church, the home, and the workplace – you’re going to have to first have a heart that’s been changed by the Gospel.

So, let’s talk about what that looks like. For you note-takers, here’s where we are going with this sermon. We’re starting by talking about a heart changed by the Gospel, and then we’ll move to living for Jesus in those three relationships – the church, the home, and the workplace. Four points. Sound good? Let’s go.

¹ Dane Ortlund, “The Secret to a Fruitful Christian Life”, The Gospel Coalition, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/keeping-heart-john-flavel/>, accessed February 9, 2024.

So, here’s the first thing:

If you’re going to live for Jesus, your heart has to first be changed by the Gospel.

Beginning in Colossians 3:12, here’s what our text says:

12 Therefore, as God’s chosen ones, holy and dearly loved...

Ok, let’s stop right there before going on any further. Paul starts with words that get right to the heart of the Gospel and to the identity of those who have had their hearts changed by it.

He writes,

“...as God’s chosen ones...holy and dearly loved.”

Y’all – we can’t miss this. These are words that we need to dwell on every day for the rest of our lives and never get tired them. They reveal the mystery of the Gospel message which is that since the very first moment that you and I could choose between obeying God and denying Him, we denied Him. But



God in his mercy and grace towards us chose us despite our rebellion and made us His sons and daughters who He now calls holy and dearly loved. That's crazy!

I've been reading this book about the "cross-centered life" and there's an illustration that really stuck out to me this past week, and I think it sheds some light on this on the absurdity of God choosing us.

In one of the chapters the writer talks about the account of Jesus going to the cross and the question is "who do you relate to in that story?" Maybe you relate to Peter who was weeping bitterly because he had just denied Jesus three times. Maybe you relate to Mary, the mother of Jesus who experienced unimaginable pain as her son suffered. Who do you relate to?

The writer goes on and says, "let me tell you who I (relate to). I (relate) most with the angry mob screaming, "Crucify Him!" He writes, "That's who we all should identify with. Because apart from God's grace, this is where we would all be standing, and we're only flattering ourselves to think otherwise. Unless you see yourself standing there with the shrieking crowd, full of hostility and hatred for the holy and

innocent Lamb of God, you don't really understand the nature and depth of your sin or the necessity of the cross."²

The Gospel message is that we were the ones spitting out curses to the Son of God as he went to the cross – and because of that you and I both deserve nothing but death and eternal separation from God. And yet – Jesus looked down at us from the cross with compassion in his voice and said I choose **you**. I'm going to die for **you**. I forgive **you**. I love **you**.

Jesus went to the cross in our place. He died for our sins. And three days later he rose from the grave and defeated sin and death. And y'all if you have placed your faith in Him then that means that circumstantially.... Right now... **you are a redeemed and chosen child of God, holy and dearly loved**. That's your identity in Christ.

And it's only when we understand this that identity that our hearts will change to want to live for Jesus, because we recognize that we deserve nothing, but that Jesus has given us everything.

Paul continues, **12 Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and dearly loved, put on compassion, kindness, humility,**

² C.J. Mahaney, *The Cross-Centered Life*, (New York: Multnomah, 2006), 87.



gentleness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and forgiving one another if anyone has a grievance against another. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you are also to forgive. 14 Above all, put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. 15 And let the peace of Christ, to which you were also called in one body, rule your hearts. And be thankful.

You may recognize this language of “put on” from last week’s sermon. If you weren’t here, Pastor Spence talked about how if you have believed the Gospel, then you have been “raised with Christ” (that’s Colossians 3:1) and have been given a new identity as a child of God. The old sinful self has died, and you’ve been made new. Clean slate.

And now the call is to “put off” the old self – your old sinful and wicked ways – to put those things to death and to “put on” the new self which is a life of obedience to Jesus. He said it’s kind of like putting on a fresh pair of Jordans that we have to learn how to walk in.

And y’all the good news of the Gospel is that these proverbial Jordans have been completely provided for you through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Every single one of these virtues that we just read was perfectly modeled for us by Jesus and they’ve now been given to us through his Spirit who lives in us.... you just have to be willing put them on.

- He’s provided compassion for you, so you can put on compassion.

- He’s provided kindness for you, so you can put on kindness. • Humility, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, love.

He’s provided all of this to us. And he’s done all of it when we didn’t deserve a single bit of it. We deserved wrath, condemnation, judgement. But instead, we received mercy. And y’all THAT – that recognition is what will change your heart like it did the Grinch. That’s the engine behind a life lived for Jesus. Your heart has to be changed by the Gospel. And when it’s changed by the Gospel, these virtues will overflow, and it’ll spill over into your relationships with others. It’ll spill into your relationships in the church, in the home, in the workplace.

And look at verse 15 – what comes with a heart that’s been changed by the Gospel is peace and thankfulness. A peace that surpasses all understanding and a thankfulness that you’ve been counted worthy to be a child of God.

If you’re going to live for Jesus, you have to first have a heart that’s been changed by the Gospel.

Let’s take a look together at what it looks like in relationship with others.

The first thing we see in our passage is what it looks like to **Live for Jesus in the church.**

16 Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you, in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with



gratitude in your hearts. 17 And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

This is really cool because all of a sudden, it's like Paul opens the doors of the early church on a Sunday morning and we get a glimpse of it.

There are a couple of things that immediately stand out.

The first thing we see is that the word of Christ was central to the church's worship. He writes, "Let the word of Christ dwell richly among you..." (v. 16) Notice here that the primary focus for the early church on a Sunday morning isn't the relatability of the preacher, it isn't the type of music that's played or the extravagance of the worship center – **it's the message that is being proclaimed.**

If we are going to live for Jesus in the church, then Word of God among us must be the **top priority**. That's why at Mercy Church one of our core values is "We Keep the Gospel at the Center." Any time you come here, we are going to make sure of two things

1) That the Bible is preached 2) That the Gospel is clear.

This is the duty of any faithful church that's living for Jesus.

And so, a question for you is – are you coming to church on a Sunday with the joy and anticipation of hearing from God's word, or are you more concerned with secondary things? You may have heard this colloquialism – are you more concerned with the color of the carpet (or in our case here the color of

the concrete floor)? Or are you more concerned if the Word of God is being faithfully preached, which is what actually what has the power to nourish your soul and grow you to maturity in Christ?

Maybe you're in the process of looking for a church to belong to right now and you just so happened to stop in here this morning. I want to urge you as you are looking for a church to look for one that faithfully preaches the word of God. This is a distinguishing mark of a church that is faithfully living for Jesus.

The next thing we see from what Paul writes is that living for Jesus means in the church that every person plays a role. He writes that the church is to "teach(ing) and admonish(ing) one another through psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." (v.16)

There's action on the part of the congregant. If we're going to live for Jesus in the church then we can't have a "come to church and be fed for the week" mentality, which is so common in our culture today. We have to have a "come and serve" mentality. As we see in this text, the people, not just the pastor, were to teach one another and admonish one another. In this specific context, they were to do that through corporate worship – singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs.

Y'all – just last week I was at our Northeast, and we were singing "King of Kings." As I'm singing, I hear this couple beside me a few seats away belting to the top of their lungs, "Praise the Father, praise the Son, Praise the Spirit three in one." I



look over at them and their hands are raised in the air, and they are singing with everything they have with gratitude in their hearts to God. You know what happened to me, one of the pastors, at that moment? It brought tears to my eyes and led me to worship the Lord. Just a couple of regular ole' congregants of our church leading a pastor to worship and teaching him to worship through singing praises to God. That's a picture of what living for Jesus in the Church looks like. Everyone plays a role. Everyone comes and says, "I am here for God and His people" rather than saying, "I am here for me."

Paul goes on to write, **17 And whatever you do, in word or in deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.**

Church, would we be a place where we strive together to put Christ before all of our words and deeds – and would we be a place where we are thankful to God for the opportunity to even do so?

That's what living for Jesus in the church looks like.

Gotta keep moving. The next thing we are going to see is what it looks like to **Live for Jesus in your home.**

In verse 18, Paul writes, **18 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19 Husbands, love your**

wives and don't be bitter toward them. 20 Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not exasperate your children, so that they won't become discouraged.

Four big things we see here: Wives, Husbands, Children, and Parents

Paul begins with wives by instructing them, "Submit to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord." (v.18)

Alright – here's one of those hot-button topics. Y'all, right from the jump I want to acknowledge that this word "submission" has been abused and misused so many times in and around the church. It's likely that as some of you hear this instruction from the Apostle Paul, you cringe a little bit. And some of you have a really good reason to cringe. But whether you are married or not, whether you are a man or woman, I want to tell you a simple truth about biblical submission. It's this: **God has ordered the world for everyone to submit to someone, and God's order for the world is good.** Let's flesh that out for a second. So, this word "submission" is the Greek word **ὑποτάσσω** (*hupotasso*)³ and it's a military term meaning to rank under or to subject oneself to someone else. And what we see throughout the scriptures

³ ὑποτάσσω (hupōtassō) All Greek definitions taken from Logos Bible Software and *The Strong's Concise Dictionary of the Words of the Hebrew Bible and the Greek Testament*.



that in God's infinite wisdom, he saw fit that it would be good and right for every person to have to submit to someone. It would result in flourishing societies, it would result in flourishing churches, it would result in flourishing homes, and it would result in flourishing individual lives.

A few examples of this are that throughout the scriptures is that both men and women are called to submit to:

- The leadership of the church (Hebrews 13:17)
- The governing authorities (Romans 13:1, 1 Peter 2:13, Titus 3:1)
- To God! (James 4:7)

It's really important to note that submission has **nothing** to do with dignity or value before God – as Christians, we believe that men and women have equal dignity and value before the Lord and that both of them have been created in the image of God. Both play indispensable roles in the home and in the church and God's plan has and always will be to use both men and women to advance the Gospel throughout our world.

And so, when the "submission" is used to try and strip dignity from women, it's both terrible shepherding and it robs God of his good design that He's created for the world.

It's only when there's an understanding that submission is not just for wives, but for everyone, that this order created by God can be seen for what it is, which is beautiful and right and good. It leads to flourishing.

And what we see in this text is that one of the spaces where God saw fit to have biblical submission was in the home. Ephesians 5:32 tells us that marriage is a wonderful mystery that points us to Christ and the church. And within biblical marriage, the husband is the head of his wife, just as Christ is the head of the church.⁴

And so, just as the church submits to and follows the leadership of Jesus, wives are to submit to and follow the leadership of their husbands. And in so doing, they paint a profound picture of the Gospel. It's a profound picture of the Gospel because it shows love and trust for **God and His purposes** so much, we are willing to lay down our lives and pick up His because His purposes are greater than ours and because He loves us even more than we could love ourselves. Biblical submission in the home puts the gospel on display and it's for the flourishing of both wives and husbands.

Now one thing I need to say is that Paul also writes, **8 Wives, submit yourselves to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord.**"

There are some instances in which submission is simply not fitting to the Lord— specifically instances such as abuse or neglect. If this is ever the case, then priority number one is that you need to do whatever you can to get safe. I want you to know that we as a church love you and are ready to help you. In fact, we are going to have pastors and female staff members down front, and we will do whatever we can to help you. And if you're not ready for that then I want to plead with

⁴ Ephesians 5:23



you just to tell someone. You are made in the image of God and what is fitting in the Lord is for you to be treated as such – you do not have to submit to an abuser.

Paul continues to husbands – **19 Husbands, love your wives and don't be bitter toward them.**

Husbands, remember what we just talked about from Ephesians 5? Your marriage represents Christ and the church, and you have been given the responsibility to love your wife as Christ loved the church. I've heard Pastor Spence describe it this way – you may wear a crown, but it's a crown of thorns. Christ gave up his very life for the church and so the call for you is **to first submit to Christ** and then to give up your very life for your wife. Her needs above yours. Her heart the number one priority of your life after your walk with Jesus. This is going to mean rejecting passivity, accepting responsibility, leading courageously, and investing eternally into your bride.

Husbands and wives, this is no small calling for either of you. But I promise you if you fight to live for Jesus in the home, it's one of the strongest Gospel witnesses to a lost and dying world. I've seen on multiple occasions couples that want nothing to do with God or the church see a marriage that has the Gospel at the center and say, "I don't know what it is, but I want our relationship to look like **that.**" It's a powerful testimony.

Paul continues in verse 20, **"Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21 Fathers, do not**

exasperate your children, so that they won't become discouraged."

This speaks to both children and parents. First, children – listen up. I'm speaking particularly to middle and high schoolers because you're the youngest people in the room. Listen to this – You have been called by God to obey your parents or the guardians that He has placed over you. Period. If you are listening to this sermon right now, then you probably have at least one parent or guardian who is doing everything they can to love you and point you to Jesus, and when you disobey them (unless they are telling you to do something that directly opposes God) you are not only disobeying them, but you are also disobeying God. My challenge to you is be thankful for them and make it a point TODAY to tell them that & to obey what they are ask you to do. This is what living for Jesus in the home looks like for you. And it's not easy, but it's God's command. To parents, this passage also points to the fact that there is a responsibility on us to raise our children up in the ways of the Lord (Deuteronomy 6 talks all about this). As their call is to obey us, we should be making sure that we are pointing them to Christ and training them to see that their ultimate aim in life is not obedience to us – it's obedience to Christ.



Fathers, part of this is not exasperating your children. That word exasperate means to cause irritation or annoyance to.⁵ Now I can tell you right now as a father of a 17-month-old I can see why Paul put this verse right here. It's hard, y'all! Parenting makes me want to pull my hair out sometimes. You should have seen me trying to right this sermon this past week. I'd get to typing and all of a sudden, I hear, "UP, UP!" So, I pick her up and then "DOWN, DOWN!" And my natural disposition is to respond in anger and exasperate my daughter if she's acting up.

And y'all – The longer I work in student ministry the more I realize this is even harder with raising teenagers. I was just talking with some parents this week and a mom said to me, "I don't think there's ever been anything harder in my life than parenting a teenager." That's real.

If you're in the throes of parenting right now, I want to give you two encouragements as you read these commands from scripture:

1. Shameless plug here, but we have a student ministry here and our goal is to partner with you as you parents, so we are here to help in any way we can. Get your student plugged in and let us walk alongside you!
2. Remember your identity in Christ. Remember that **you** are God's chosen one, holy and beloved. It's because you have received mercy from Jesus that you can put

on mercy towards your kids when you want to explode. It's because you have received compassion from Jesus when you least deserved it that you can put on compassion with your kids when they least deserve it.

We need the Lord to help us, but may we strive together to live for Jesus in our homes! Jesus is worthy of this, and it is for our good when we do it.

The last thing we see from Paul is what it means to **Live for Jesus in the workplace.**

Heads up, another hot button topic coming.

22 Slaves, obey your human masters in everything. Don't work only while being watched, as people-pleasers, but work wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord. 23 Whatever you do, do it from the heart, as something done for the Lord and not for people, 24 knowing that you will receive the reward of an inheritance from the Lord. You serve the Lord Christ. 25 For the wrongdoer will be paid back for whatever wrong he has done, and there is no favoritism.

4:1 Masters, deal with your slaves justly and fairly, since you know that you too have a Master in heaven.

⁵ <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/exasperate>



Alright so obviously when we look at this passage – we’re drawn to the word “slave.” What is the world is going on here and what is Paul talking about? Pastor Spence spoke about this in our series on Ephesians because it’s referred to in that book as well – this relationship between slave and master that Paul is referring to is so far from what you and I think of when we hear those terms. The chattel slavery that existed in America is something that the Bible condemns as wickedness⁶ and this slavery mentioned here is more like indentured servitude. It was where someone would **voluntarily** sell themselves into service in order to work off a debt they owed. It was a socio-economic reality during this time and given the fact that Paul includes this in his letter, there were likely both slaves and masters in the congregation of the Colossian church. And Paul is showing them how to live for Jesus within those roles that they had.

The closest thing that we have today in relation to this would be the workplace. Where we are working under someone, or in terms of the master to the slave, where we are having people work under us.

There’s a few things that we need to take note of. First, we see a command for the worker who is working under someone. So, this applies to anyone in here who has a boss.

⁶ Spence Shelton, *Ephesians 5.21-6.9- “What Can I Do to Serve You?”*, Mercy Church,

Paul says, “Don’t work only while being watched... but work wholeheartedly, fearing the Lord.” (v. 22)

Question for the room: is this how you see your work? Do you work the same while no one is looking versus if your boss is right there watching you? I think most of us, if we’re being honest, would say no to this. This is a reality check for all of us. Y’all how we work when no one is looking is a direct representation of a heart that’s been changed by the Gospel. And in a world where evangelism at work is often prohibited, one of the ways that you and I can bear witness to the fact that we’re followers of Jesus is by working hard for the glory of God. Going back to Colossians 3:17 – whatever you do, in word or deed, do all things in the name of Jesus.

And maybe you work from home so bearing witness with how you work doesn’t really matter anyway since no one is there to see it – fair point. But look at what this text says – it says, “do your work as something for the Lord and not for people.” (v. 23)

This goes back to a heart that’s been changed by the Gospel. If you know what God has done for you to make you His son or daughter, then it is out of a response for him that even in the mundane and menial tasks of our jobs we choose to work really hard for His glory. You are working for the Lord who has

https://mercycharlotte.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/11/Sermon-Manuscript_Ephesians-5.21-6.9_Spence -Shelton_11192023.pdf



saved you and the text tells us that there is a reward and an inheritance for those who see their jobs as such.

This text also speaks to those who have people working under them, Paul writes, “deal (with them) justly and fairly, since you too have a master in heaven.” (4:1)

Bosses, supervisors, business executives – as you read this passage does this define how you treat those reporting to you? Do you rule equally, justly, and fairly as the Lord would have you? Or do you show partiality? Do you lead as someone who thinks that they are actually the ones in charge?

This passage reminds us that no matter if you are the CEO of a Fortune 500 company or the low man on the totem pole, we’re not the ones in charge, y’all. God is. And we are all are under His rule and reign, deserving nothing that we have. And one day every knee is going to bow, and every tongue is going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.⁷ And so our call is to recognize that and to work in light of that truth.

Y’all, your workplace is a mission field. There are likely so many people in your company who don’t know Jesus and God has given us instruction on how we can take steps towards seeing them come to know him – work hard for His glory. Remember who you are ultimately serving. Live for Jesus in your workplace. And watch what the Lord will do. Jesus is worthy of it.

⁷ Philippians 2:10-11

Conclusion

Y’all – All of this goes back to what we talked about at the beginning: The heart.

Has your heart been changed by the Gospel? What is your identity? If you have placed your faith in Jesus, then you can rest assured that you are God’s chosen and beloved son or daughter. Despite your sin, despite your rebellion, he chose you and has promised you the gift of eternal life.

It’s only out of that identity that we will be able to live for Jesus in the relationships of our lives. If we try to do it in our own strength, all of it will just be a drudgery. But if we have that secure identity in Christ, those things become a joy to us because we are simply serving our faithful God in the spaces where He’s called us.

So where is your heart? Have you been operating in your own strength? The call for you is to remember what Christ has done for you and to put on that new self this week. Walk in confidence as a child of God.

Maybe you’re in here today and you can’t confidently say that your identity is Christ. I want you to know that there’s an invitation for you to have that change today. The Gospel message is that Christ Jesus has gone to the cross and died for your sin, but he’s been raised back to life and has defeated sin and death. And the Bible tells us that if you would turn from your sin and place your faith in Jesus, He’ll save you from your



sins and adopt you into His family. He'll change your identity to a son or daughter, and you can begin to live for Jesus today. I want to invite you to turn from your sin and place your faith in Christ. You can start living for Jesus by simply saying to him, "Jesus I believe in you and I'm ready to turn from my sin and follow you."

I promise you there's nothing sweeter than living for Jesus. I urge you to make that decision right here and right now. Church, may we be a people who live for Jesus in our church, in our homes, and in our workplaces.

Let's pray.

As a response to what we just heard, we are about to take communion. Our teams will begin passing the elements, and we ask that you hold those elements because we will be taking them together. Communion is a meal reserved for people who profess salvation in Christ. If that's you, this meal is for you. Please don't take it if you are unsaved, unrepentant, or unsure. Because if you do, you will eat and drink judgment on yourself. We want to caution you. Instead, we encourage you to pray about the sermon and consider the cross of Jesus. As I mentioned in my sermon, there will be pastors and staff up front after communion and we would love to talk to with you about taking your next step in following Jesus. For those who know the Lord, we're going to take the elements together. But before we take, I also want to warn you. The scriptures warn us to examine ourselves before we take communion. So, I want you to sit for a few moments

and examine your life, and you may need to repent before you take it. I will give you a moment before we take those together.

As the elements are passed, I want to explain what communion is for those who are new to church. Communion is a sacred meal that was instituted by Jesus Christ before he went to the cross to take on the sins of the world. Communion is symbolic. It symbolizes his body and blood, given for the forgiveness of sins. The cup represents his blood shed for us and the bread represents his body which was given for us.

Brothers and sisters, take a couple of moments to pray and reflect before we take the elements together. (wait about 30-40 seconds).

Church, when the Lord was sitting with his disciples, he passed around the cup of wine and said this my blood that will be shed for you. This blood covers your sins and the sins of the world - **Church, take and drink**. Then the Lord passed around the bread and said this is my body that was given for you. Christ's body was bruised and beaten, and killed. But praise be to God, for his resurrection three days later. In the hope of the resurrection – **Church, take and eat**.

If you're able, will you stand and join me in prayer? (Pray and stand people).

