

Our Joyful Deliverance

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[0:00] All right, we're going to keep slogging through parts of Ephesians. If you will open up to Ephesians chapter 2. I have a large task this morning, which is verses 1 through 22.

! And I cannot wait to begin it. Also, is there any way that I can have that traveling, that children's choir behind me travel with me wherever I go?

It's so precious and so encouraging. Like halfway through, I was like, I'm just going to run up and start preaching right now. It'll be Ephesians chapter 2, verses 1 through 22.

Title of my sermon this morning is Our Joyful Deliverance. Let me start my timer so I don't keep y'all too long. Ephesians 1. No, I lied.

Ephesians 2, 1 through 22. Our Joyful Deliverance. As per usual, I'll read the text, pray, and then we'll get after it. This is God's holy and authoritative word.

[1:08] And you were dead. In the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work and the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace you have been saved. And raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of work so that no one may boast.

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

[2:37] 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 preach peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near for through him.

We have both 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 built on the foundation. Of the apostles and prophets Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone in whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord.

[4:05] In him, you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the spirit. Oh God, would you help us this morning?

Take hold of all of these wonderful realities and be affected by them. Lord, help us in a more particular way, see the beauty of your redemption that you've given us.

Help us to love one another in a way that reflects your love towards us. Give us joy in the gospel this morning as I preach your holy word to these dear people.

Fill me with your spirit for you know my weakness and you know my need for strength. Give me joy and passion and clarity and strength and liberty to declare your excellencies.

Lord, you are so worthy. You are so worthy. So help us. Give us ears to hear.

[5:11] Give us hearts to respond. Give us emotions to experience joy. For your glory and for our good. Amen.

Eddie Hall came up from very humble beginnings. And some of you may know the name. A lot of you obviously may not. Eddie Hall is a strong man. I see someone flexing back there.

Yes, yes. He grew up not having much money. He got into a lot of trouble. Yet when he was 16 years old, he decided that he is going to become the world's strongest man.

And when he decided that, he changed the entirety of his life. He attained that feat in 2016 when he became the first person to deadlift 500 kilograms, which is 1,123 pounds.

The following year, he won the world's strongest man. And the way he did that is because the entirety of his life was transformed. He ate in training for the world's strongest man 8,000 calories a day.

[6:20] Trained for four and a half hours a day. Real quick, let's just look at two of his meals. His first breakfast, first meaning there's a second one after this. Four sausages, five slices of bacon, four eggs, baked beans, tomatoes, black pudding, four slices of toast, and a liter of cranberry juice.

That's before his second breakfast. His lunch was 16 ounces of steak, 300 grams of pasta, 300 grams of veggies, and a half of a family-sized cheesecake.

He states that in his training for world's strongest man, he did not miss a single training session, meal, or physical therapy session. He went to physical therapy six times a week.

Because of who he was, the world's strongest man, because of the goals set before him, he no longer could live the same way that he was. His relationships with his goals and his relationships with his family, friends, food, and a gym completely shifted because he was to become the world's strongest man.

Everything has changed. He cannot train the same, he cannot eat the same, and those around him are affected by what's transformed inside of him. And in our text, we see from Paul that the same thing must be true of us because of the transformative, resurrecting work of Jesus Christ.

[7:40] Our whole lives are changed. We can no longer be the same in relation to God, and we can no longer be the same in relation to one another. These two things, our relation to God and relation to one another, are permanently transformed because of the resurrection work of the gospel.

Because of what Christ has done, because he conquered sin, death, hell, and the grave. Through the gospel, God has created an unstoppable community that is held together by the blood of Christ, empowered by the Holy Spirit, and one that lives lives to the glory of the Father.

Paul again here is drilling into them their new identity as saints, that they've been reconciled to God, that this cosmic reconciliation not only affects their relation with God, but it spills out over into one another, killing the hatred between them.

Remember, Jews and Gentiles did not mix. Killing the hatred between them and being a force for godliness in their city. And this is only possible because, as Paul tells them, you are being built together by Christ and held together by the Holy Spirit.

And we need this as well. Everyone in this room is a new creation. Friends, you are not the worst sin you've ever committed. You are not the worst thought that has ever crossed your mind.

[9:03] You are a beloved and treasured saint. You are a citizen of the household of God and a member of this family.

We need this chapter because we often act like this chapter is not in our Bibles. We operate as if we are still dead and hopeless in our sins. We operate as if we are isolated and all alone and that there is no one who understands us.

As if Christ hasn't transformed everything for us. God has saved us from death in order to display his love, to reconcile us to each other and to create an unstoppable community.

And so, my hope for us is that we would have the courage to believe what the Bible actually says. We see these words. We understand what these words mean. And now it is up to us to have the courage and the faith to say, this is true.

What this Bible says is true of us right now. That we would take an iron grip on all of these promises and utilize them when we are tempted by the enemy to think that God would operate in any other

way than his mercy and love.

[10:17] To think that those around us would think others, other of us and less of us, that we don't actually belong, that we are not solidified permanently in the household of God.

Here's my main point this morning is that our relationship to God and to one another are permanently transformed because of the resurrection work of the gospel. Our relationship to God and to one another are permanently transformed because of the resurrection work of the gospel. So, this joyful deliverance transforms our relationship with God and with people. And we're going to look at this under two headings. Heading number one. What do we do? We relate to God through the comfort of the gospel.

We relate to God through the comfort of the gospel. Let me read verses one through three. And you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience, among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath like the rest of mankind.

Before we experience the comfort of the gospel, we must first face the reality of our depravity. We were dead. We were dead.

[11:41] We were dead. Not limping. Not hobbling along. Not doing okay. We were dead. Disciples of the devil, if you will.

Doing his bidding. Following his will. Giving into our fleshly desires. Caring nothing of Christ in his kingdom. Sinclair Ferguson states that Paul knows that the only way we can be brought to appreciate grace is if first we understand why we need it so much.

The gospel Paul preached sobers us before it satisfies us. We need the reminders in this text of our spiritual realities of who we once were.

Dane Ortlund wrote a book called Deeper. And chapter two is called Despair. It's one of the favorite chapters I've ever read in a book. And what he talks about in that chapter, he says, we have to, in order to understand and enjoy the grace of the gospel, we need to truly despair.

And he said, it's nuanced because we can't stop in the pit, right? But we have to truly, truly despair. We have to truly hate the flesh that wars against the spirit within us.

[12:56] We have to truly hate that our desires go against what God commands of us. That if we, if we were able to project every thought that we've had on the screen and list it through and read it through, that it would make us vomit.

Friends, we have to understand the holiness of God.

It's the only way our sin will affect us appropriately. God is not simply holy. He is holy, holy, holy, thrice holy.

There is none holier than him. When the apostle John saw a glimpse of him, he fell as though he were dead. When, when Isaiah was on his knees receiving the call, he said, I'm unworthy.

Woe is me. God is holy and we are not. One commentator writes, the gravity of their previous condition, however, serves to magnify the wonder of God's mercy.

[14:03] The past is not recalled because the emphasis falls on him, but in order to draw attention to God's mighty action in Christ. Dane continues in that chapter to say, we must truly despair so that the gospel remains as sweet as possible.

Possible. Once your enemy, now seated at your table, Jesus, thank you. Jesus, thank you.

Your blood has washed away my sins. Your blood has. But what do I need to do? Faith, simply believe, which is a gift from God anyway.

Jesus, thank you. Jesus, thank you. Thank you. And in response to that, we live our lives to please him.

And that can be done in joy once we remember what we've been saved from. Guys, the gospel is good news. And the reason, the way you can get excited and affectionate and be affected by this good news is to remember how bad you were.

[15:03] I was a bad little kid. I was terrible. I'm still a sinner. Even this morning, I could not even count the ways I've sinned and I wouldn't even be aware of it. And yet God knows every single one of them.

And it's just like, yeah, you're dead, but God being rich in mercy, which is coming up soon. We are real sinners with a real savior.

The gospel brings comfort. We relate to God, not from our depraved and dead state. We relate to God by those who are alive and been brought in as citizens and saints. The gospel brings comfort because of his love for us.

Read with me verse four. But God being rich in mercy because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ.

By grace, you have been saved and raised us up with him and seed us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages, he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace and kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.

[16:03] Are you kidding me? No, that's what's in the Bible. That is the authority under which I stand. It is God's word. He has declared that Christ has made us alive together. He's made us alive.

You were dead and now you're alive. We have been resurrected because of what Jesus has done. And nobody, nobody, nobody can take that away from you. If you stand today in the power of the blood of Christ as a saved, redeemed, redeemed saint, that is your identity forever, friend.

Nothing can take that away. You are a saint. You are beloved. You are holy. You are treasured. You are his. He's already stamped you with his image, meaning there is a particular love for you, crown of his creation.

And then there's a step further where he does not leave you where you are, but makes you alive. And that cannot be taken from you.

We are not left for dead. We were dead, but have been made alive. Our relationship to God has been changed forever. We don't approach him with a, with a, a fear that his wrath is going to come back towards us.

[17:11] His wrath is gone. It's been absorbed by the son. Therefore we go to him boldly. We boldly approach the throne of grace. Are you kidding me? No, I'm not.

That's why it's called a throne of grace. It is by the grace that we've received in Christ that we can approach him and say, God, I need your help. God, I am a sinner. God, would you forgive me? God, pour out your mercy. And he says, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes.

This is what we've received in Christ. This is who we are in Christ. We are the alive ones, the saints, the holy ones, the ones who are set apart for God's goodness.

God is rich in mercy towards us. For reason, it's helpful again here. He says this, the gospel truly reveals the deepest heartbeat of God toward us.

Jesus' work did not, nor did it need to, persuade an angry father to love his wayward children. The atonement is not a form of inner Trinitarian blackness. No, the father loved us and did not spare his own son for our salvation.

[18:12] The son loved us and did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. The spirit loved us and is not ashamed to indwell and sanctify us. These actions from our God are a bedrock of safety.

Peter O'Brien writes this, men and women outside of Christ were the objects of divine wrath, but God had mercy on them. We were dead, but he has made us alive with Christ.

We were in bondage to evil powers, but God has seated us with Christ in the heavenly realms. A completely new situation has arisen because he has taken every necessary step to reverse our condition of sin.

We are new and we are made alive. So listen, when you are indulging in habitual sin, giving into your flesh, giving into your petty desires, that snide comment that tears people down and makes you feel good about yourself, what's happening there?

Listen, track with me here. Oftentimes we will say there's personality things at play here. I'm just a sarcastic person. I'm wired this way.

[19:25] This is how I typically am. So here's the, here's my struggle. When you are acting out in your sin, you are actually operating outside of your identity.

You're actually operating counterintuitive to how God has made you alive. He didn't make you alive to stay back and be dead. That was the dead person's way of operating.

You are a new creation. What's the song? The old has gone. The new has come. What you complete is completely done. Christ has transformed us.

Who you are is rooted in celestial royalty. That's who you are. I love reformed theology so much. I love the joy of the doctrines of grace and how it transforms us.

But in the culture of reformed theology, I think we think that the more we can just stay down in the dumps about who we are and kind of self-flagellate ourselves, it means that we are being holier. [20 : 25] Stop and listen to me. What that does is it weakens the power of the gospel. You are new creations. You are saints.

That's how Paul starts his whole letter to the saints who are in Ephesus and are faithful. How? In Christ Jesus. When you are rooted in Christ Jesus, you're able to say, yes, I am actually of celestial royalty.

I am a majestic, redeemed member of the household of God, which means you ought to be dignified, demonstrating the fruits of the spirit, patient, loving, and loving in such a way that it exudes and overflows with the love of Christ.

You have been given such a love that your cup is overflowing into those around you. This is what the gospel does. And I think we can get so afraid of being like, you know, wishy-washy and being like, oh, I'm beloved by Jesus and everything's fine.

It's like, that's actually a bit more accurate. Like Christ really loves you. Later on, oh, that's tonight. We'll talk about the love of Christ this evening in a very particular way.

[21 : 31] We need these promises from God readily available to us, not in just how we assess our own selves, but when suffering comes into our lives. So we have seven children, but we've also had four miscarriages.

And each one felt more devastating than the last because it was like, again, Lord, another life lost. But in that suffering, we were able to be comforted because we were made alive in Christ, because we've been brought into the family of God.

And I remember each instance in particular how the family of God, the household of God, the saints that I've been forged into by the blood of Jesus Christ, cared for me and my wife and cared for my kids.

Because it hits different when the kids are excited about a baby and you have to explain. The baby's no longer alive, son. And I remember in particular, Joseph Stagora, one of the other pastors, came over with a box of donuts and just read a book to the kids, bringing some sense of normalcy in the midst of our devastation.

[22 : 57] What is that? That's the household of God loving one another out of an overflow of the love we've received from Jesus Christ himself. It is transformative to know that you've been made alive in Christ.

It is transformative to know that God is rich in mercy. It is transformative to know that his kindness overflows to us. Whatever your circumstance is, lack of finances, relational tension, anxiety, general hopelessness, apathy.

Sometimes what happens is people see how passionate I am. They're like, do I even care? It's like, yes, you do, right? But there's a form of apathy that actually is unhelpful.

These things matter for eternity. It's okay to get passionate about these things. And obviously, passion looks different.

I'm a loud person no matter what. But in your way, in the way that God has created you, what does it look like to be made alive and to be passionate and not apathetic towards the realities that are in this text?

[24 : 06] What does it look like to cultivate a joy in the reality that you are saved still? Are you kidding me? And what I love is the longer you walk with Christ, the more you see how much you needed to be forgiven.

And the more you appreciate that God has not given up on you and he loves you the same. The same. We can't increase God's love for us because it's already maximized.

There is comfort in this gift from God. Your life is a testimony to what it looks like to be loved and to belong.

You look at what's happening out in the world. You pick whatever hobby horse or whatever social problem is going on out there. Every single one of them is trying to find belonging and trying to find community and trying to say, I'm loved and I belong.

All of that is truly found from Christ himself. And you, when you're out in the workplace, you, when you're out with those people who are desperately searching for some type of community and love and joy and acceptance, you get to be a testimony of, actually, I found it.

[25 : 12] And it's right here in the walls of the church with these people. We are the family of God. But here's what we often do, right?

When we think about our life, think about what we've done, think about what we hope to do. To paraphrase Ray Orland, he says, our greatest achievements and moments of Christian triumph, we often write in the sand.

And our greatest regrets and mistakes are etched in marble. We're quick to remember our failings and we need help internalizing the truth of the grace and love that we've received in Christ.

Friends, that needs to be flipped. When Christ pours out his grace in a particular way and there's something joyful, remember that, right? The Ebenezer, the stone of help, look back and remember. One of the most common commands in scripture is remember, remember, remember, remember, remember.

Why? Because we're forgetful. Remember the grace that has come to us in Christ. Remember what he has done for you. God wants us to respond by having the unbelievable privilege and joy of our salvation and the news of the gospel infect everything that we touch.

[26 : 18] Every person we come in contact with, every thought that crosses our mind must be infected, if you will, with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jess Ray, one of my favorite songwriters, has a song.

And in the chorus, she says, and it seems too good to be understood. But it's not too good to be true. When we sit and we think and we contemplate the realities of what we've received in Christ and the realities of how we get to relate to God because of the blood of Christ, it does not make sense.

Oh, but it's true. That's why they call it the scandal of grace. So that is the first heading on which our joyful deliverance transforms. And the second is this. We relate to one another through the love of the gospel.

We relate to one another through the love of the gospel. This text matters because I think we can often neglect the communal implications of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

But Paul ties and links them together right here for us in his passage. The gospel resurrects us into a new creation and implants us into a new community. The gospel is the cure for loneliness.

[27 : 23] The gospel is the cure for our feelings of isolation. And when the gospel functions appropriately, we will truly recognize how deeply we are loved, both by God and by one another.

You are not hope to be, not eventually will become. You are members of the household of God and are formed together, built upon the foundation of Christ and empowered by the Holy Spirit.

I love the Holy Spirit. He gets things done. He doesn't rely on us and our willpower or our strength or our social skills to create a household of God.

It is by his spirit. It is by his power. We are united by blood and connected through the power of the Holy Spirit. But here is the lie that we often believe, that God is steadily growing weary and tired of us.

And others are as well. But the promises in here are for the real Christians, the one who speak the lingo and know what to say and have gone to seminary training or whatever it is, but not for ordinary Christians like me.

[28 : 31] Or that the community only comes through other common denominators. Well, we all went to this school or we did this thing together or they grew up together or they know each other from the past. And therefore, it makes sense.

Or they are the same ethnicity and that makes sense. And I'm kind of on the outside here. To that, God would say false, no, stop. The blood of Christ that flows through each and every one of us, that covers each and every one of us, has made us so united.

We are family. I could have grown up in the same house with an individual, even if I had a twin and we grew up and did the same things all the time.

And one of us is saved and one of us is not. If we find another believer, we will have more in common with that believer than the person we grew up with. That's the power of the gospel. We're talking about eternal matters here.

One million years of the new heavens and the new earth with God. And then some and then some and then some and then some and then some. Our minds can't even grasp the eternity of what we're discussing here.

[29:40] But we have to remember that Christ brought us peace, that Christ brought us near, that Christ brought us together. And we need to know this. And we need to remember how difficult this would be for the receivers of this letter.

Right? Remember, former pagans, witches, now they are Christians, Jews. So we've got Gentile-Jew relations, which were horrific and absolutely terrible.

They wanted nothing to do with each other. And Paul is saying, yeah, you guys are a community of people who have peace with Christ and a future in heaven that will be greater than anything you can read about or imagine.

And they're saying, what are you talking about? In verses 14 through 18, he talks about how the wall of hostility has been broken down and that there is now one new man.

Let me read parts of this section. He talks about them being brought near. For he himself, this is verse 14, Yes, there was hostility between us and God.

[30:59] We talked about that a lot last night. But there's also hostility between one another. Because sin is active in community. Because we are bringing the sin into the community. Right? Yes, we are a household of God.

Yes, the Spirit empowers us. But also, we are dragging and bringing stuff in. And it all mixes together. And it makes community difficult. Community is hard work. It's not just like, okay, well, we're indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

So we're chilling and everything's great. No, no, no. It takes effort. It takes forgiveness. It takes sacrifice. That's what we are called to when we are coming together to be united.

That's what life together looks like. Life together is actually really difficult. It's hard. Because we are sinners. And we love to sin. And we think other people will sin way worse than we do. When in reality, we have to remember the grace that has come to us from God must be poured out, overflowing to others.

Meaning, I need to be quick to forgive and quick to repent. And recognize that I need to repent in my relationships. I need to ask forgiveness in my relationships. Real quick, a quote from Peter O'Brien on the Jew and Gentile relations.

[32:05] He said, Jews and Gentiles who had been deeply divided and at enmity with one another are recreated in one new person. Nothing less than a new creation, an entirely new entity was needed to transcend the deep rift between the two.

It was affected through Christ's death. The new humanity is not achieved by transforming Gentiles into Jews or vice versa. It is an entirely new creation in Christ that truly makes peace.

And this commitment takes work. And we have to regularly work to reconcile.

I should share the story. And there was a person who I disciplined. We would meet and we would actually talk a lot about ethnic harmony and these different kinds of things.

And we walked through some books together. It was really helpful. And some things changed. One could say that 2020 happened. And this individual shifted hard.

[33:08] And it is one of the most painful texts I've ever received in pastoral ministry. There were slurs hurled against me. There were accusations made against me.

And it ended with, thank you for radicalizing me. I love being white. I see that text. I set my phone down.

And I weep. I don't respond. And about a year goes by. And I see this individual again. And I wasn't preparing for this.

I didn't know what to do. I was like, oh, he's probably going to come and accost me again. And he came up with tears in his eyes. And he said, I'm so sorry. I was just saying things to try and hurt you.

Will you forgive me? And this is, if I had planned a response, it probably would have been snarky. It probably would have been petty.

[34:12] Probably would have been very sinful. But the spirit took over. And I said, of course. I love you. And we hugged.

The only way that is possible. This is nothing of JT in that. That is the power of the Holy Spirit. And that power is what is uniting us in our community here. It's what's uniting Trinity Cambridge Church. That power transforms.

That power allows you to delight in fellowship. And watch movies together. And hang out and play cards at night. That power allows you to sit with one another in the midst of suffering.

And to put your arm around one another. And to weep with those who weep. And rejoice with those who rejoice. That power gives you strength to own your own sin.

[35:17] And say, I should not have said that. I should not have done that. I talked about the situation that was supposed to be private with this group over here. Will you forgive me?

And then what happens then is God does what he does. And makes beauty out of things that we can really mess up. In the midst of conflict with one another, we have to run to Jesus and see how he handled our cosmic conflict.

He went and he died for us. And therefore, since we've been brought near, let's engage with one another of the same love. This means that we ought to have a particular love for the church.

It means that we shouldn't be comfortable rolling our eyes at the church, pointing out her flaws graciously, and primarily being aware of her imperfections. We need to love the church like Christ loves the church.

That's another way we strengthen one another, right? Let's say Sean has an off week, which I don't think he does. But let's say that he does and you're out there getting lunch. Is that the first time you talk about the sermon?

[36:21] Like, ah, man, this was not his best work, or I didn't like this application. Or do you mostly say, what a gift it is that we get this type of teaching every week? Or when you hear someone start to critique and bring things down, which obviously critique is okay.

It can be done in a constructive way. Probably not at lunch with all your friends. Maybe send him an email. But what does it look like to go against that kind of like, because it's a fine line, right, of like wanting to improve things where they are, and also just like, I'm just going to pick at this and critique this thing.

And yeah, yeah, yeah, all this is good, but what about this thing? But what does it look like to have the spirit empower you to show the fruits of the spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness, goodness, self-control, all those other things.

Maybe I missed one. But what does it look like to apply those things to how you evaluate the church? Friends, there is so much good that happens. I am like, and this is like an extroverted dream, to just dive into the deep end of a church and to spend like a bunch of days with you guys and to get to know you.

And you guys are a sweet church. There is so much grace present in this room right now. And it's a gift from God.

[37:37] And what that ought to do is you ought to be like, how is this possible? Well, first of all, it's only possible because the son of God died. It's only possible because our sins are forgiven and he's made us new.

And in his kindness, he's brought us together. That's the only way it's possible. And then on top of that, it's like, this church is so good. We love the gospel. We are submitting to the word of God. These are graces that are not to be taken for granted. And so there ought to be a joy and a gratitude. You want a stronger community? Come in with joy and come in with gratitude. It transforms the way you see everything.

And when we've been rescued from what we needed to be rescued from, how can we not simply respond in joy and gratitude? It's like, are you kidding? We get to do this every week? I was talking to our church once on a Sunday and I was like, every Sunday feels like a Thanksgiving meal. It's like the whole family comes together. We get to feast upon the word of God. We get to see people that we love and feel like we haven't seen in a long time if there's been a particularly busy season. Every single week is Thanksgiving and we are smashing the food because we are just feasting on the gospel of Jesus Christ over and over and over again.

[38:46] It's such a delight. We are now, I'm going along. We are now, I'm going to move through this. We are now the household of God.

Right now, you are the house of God. Let's like, these verses are insane. Verses 19 through 22. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God.

Built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone. Which means it's unstoppable, by the way. The church is unstoppable because it's on the foundation of Christ himself.

In whom the whole structure being joined together grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him, you are also being built together into a dwelling place for God by the spirit.

Brand new supernatural community because of the gospel. Built on the love of Jesus. We are a living new creation that operates in an active community that is animated by the Holy Spirit.

[39:57] This is your community. So we ought to own it and pursue one another in love. Not just in the fun things, but also serving together, praying together, worshiping together, pursuing God together, building your life together towards God.

You are a dwelling place. Why dwelling place? Why is that significant? All throughout the Old Testament, people were fighting and desiring to be where God dwelt.

In the garden, Adam and Eve were not mourning the loss of all the fruit trees when they were kicked out. They were mourning walking with God.

The loss of that relational community of being in the dwelling place where God was. God's dwelling place used to be only in the temple. He would particularly put himself in the temple and that's where they would go to be with God.

Peter O'Brien says, it's changed now. You are the dwelling place of God. God dwells in you.

[41:05] The spirit is inside of you. Listen to these words. Peter O'Brien writes, the dwelling place was significantly used in the Old Testament of God's dwelling in the temple at Jerusalem and of his heavenly dwelling place.

Here in Ephesians 2, the temple is God's heavenly abode, the place of his dwelling. Yet that temple is his people in whom he lives by the Holy Spirit.

Believers on earth, recipients of this letter, are linked with the heavenly realm in and through the spirit of the risen Lord. You are a dwelling place. God is with you.

And Christ is the cornerstone. He will keep us. It is all built upon what he's done and who he is. It is not up to us to keep our salvation. It is not up to us to keep our hope.

We cannot lose him. Yes, we grip to Christ with all that we have, constantly readjusting our grip to be brought to the cross, which was the event that ultimately made all of these promises become our reality. But as much as we cling to him, his grip around us is even stronger.

[42:08] I'm sure you've heard a similar illustration in this kind of way, but we were just recently, about two weeks ago, at the beach, and my kids love the water. They would sleep in it if they could figure out how to do it. And one of my daughters is particularly spunky.

Her name is Carolyn. She's so sweet. She's crazy. And she sees these giant waves and she's just like, let's get them, Dad. I'm like, girl, like, okay. And she's like, but you need to hold me.

I was like, okay. And so I'm holding her and she's gripping me with all her strength. And we're getting smashed by these waves. But the reason she's not flying out into the water, into the unknown ocean, is not because of her grip on me, but it's because of my grip on her.

I am not going to let her go. And God is not going to let you go. He's going to keep you because he loves you.

He's placed you in the family of God because you are his. You are adopted and brought into the family of God. And you are precious to him.

[43:18] I feel like the Lord wants to pause for just a moment because I feel like if it was on an exam, we would all pass it.

But in the heart of your own hearts, do you believe that God loves you to this degree?

Or does your own self-assessment of your worth think that God would better spend his time loving those around me? Not that he hates you, just that others are a bit more deserving and that's okay.

That is a lie from Satan. And real quick, when Satan is lying to you and deceiving you, I've said this before, he doesn't show up in a red jumpsuit with horns and a trident.

He sounds a lot like you. It is your voice slowly whispering these things that you know aren't true.

But what we have to do is we have to look at what God actually says.

[44:30] And we have to reconcile what we feel and what we believe with what God actually says. And what God actually says is that it is because of the great love with which he loved us.

This is getting me very excited for this evening. One of my favorite verses in the Bible. Preview.

Paul calls upon the power of the Holy Spirit to do something in chapter three.

It is not to be strengthened for holy living. It is not to love one another in a way that reflects Christ's love. It is simply to understand the love of God.

It takes supernatural power to comprehend the uncomprehendable love of God. We have been brought near to God.

Let me end with Spurgeon. I promise I won't do this every sermon but these first two I will. He says, now I have stated that truth. I want you now to feed on it for a minute and draw the natural conclusions and feel the fit emotion.

[45:47] Beloved, if you are brought so near to God, what manner of lives ought you to lead? Oh, how we ought to love God who has made us nigh. A people near unto him.

How ought heavenly things and holy things to engross our attention. how joyously we ought to live too for with such high favors as these it would be ungrateful to be unhappy.

We are near to God. So let us live in light of these glorious realities together. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, thank you for rescuing us.

Thank you for seeing us in our dead state and not leaving us there but pursuing us in love. Thank you for your kindness towards us. Thank you for recognizing our weakness and not only rescuing us but bringing us into your family and giving us the family of God.

Thank you for that God didn't count, that Jesus didn't count equality with God a thing to be grasped but that he emptied himself. That he was obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

[47:02] and because of that we are now brought into the family of God. Give us joy. Give us gratitude. Give us the fit emotion, the proper emotion to respond to the truths that are in this text for your glory and for our good.

gratitude. Give us the fit emotion, the proper emotion to respond to the truths that are in this text for your glory and for our good. Listen, Jesus, let me pray. Amen.