

**Sermon Title: The Starting Point, On Mission, Week 5**

**Preacher: Greg Lavine**

**Date: February 1, 2026**

**Sermon Questions:**

1. Consider the growth of the early church from under 120 to 20,000 in a little over a month's time. Talk about and pray for ways to see God's kingdom expand in Tucson and your lives.
2. In Acts 2:42-47 the church devoted itself to four things ... what are they?
3. How can you increase your devotion to the bible? Why is this important and what would that look like in your life?
4. How can you increase your devotion to fellowship? Why is this important and what would that look like in your life?
5. How can you increase your devotion to communion? This one is the only point here that is not celebrated at home. It is a sacrament of the church. But, why is this important and what would this look like in your life?
6. How can you increase your devotion to prayer? Why is this important and what would this look like in your life?

**Transcript**

As we walk through this series, we're bringing it to a close today on mission. And it's possible that along I've gotten this question over and over. So we're walking through, cultivate a community that enjoys God and transforms the world through the gospel. And I've been asked numerous times, well, I'm interested in my purpose, in my mission. And we're going through kind of the church's purpose or the church's mission.

How does that become more personal to me? And while there are certainly callings we have in our individual lives, I can't overstate this. It is not possible for an American to overestimate the corporate nature of our mission and our calling. We individualize things so much. We think the most intimate times we have with the Lord, that the most sincere times we have with the Lord are alone, that our most intimate prayer time is alone.

Our most intimate time in His Word is alone. Even in a corporate sense, oftentimes in singing, we sing to the Lord, but we close our eyes to block out all the other people. So it's just me and God.

And we miss an enormous teaching of scripture, of the blessing, of the corporate nature of our calling in Christ. It is not possible to be on mission for Jesus, pushing back darkness, shining light, making a difference in this world alone. Our calling, our mission, has a corporate nature to it. We're going to see that unfold, specifically in today's passage. We've walked through each element, cultivate a community that enjoys God and transforms the world and through the gospel.

And this morning, in a sense, we're gonna go back to the starting point of the whole thing. If you said, when in church history was the mission of the church the most profound? When in church history was the purpose of the church the multiplication of the church? When did it explode the most? And that's clearly at the very beginning.

So we're going to go back to that beginning point. We're going to see the growth of the church, but then we're going to dwell in some of the principles that that church dwelled in our church. And so all the way back to the beginning at the resurrection of Jesus Christ, you could ask the question, how many believers were there on earth? It's hard to say an exact number. We know that that number is less than 120, and it's probably around 20.

When Jesus died on the cross, the disciples were scattered. It was only John and a few of the women left. By the time he rose from the dead, the disciples were gathering and there was a group of around 20 or so. I say less than 120. Because at the ascension of Jesus Christ, in Acts chapter one, we read these words, verse 15.

In those days, Peter stood up among the brothers. The company of persons was in all about 120. The disciples were around 120 people. Now, just within a short amount of time, that number grows to around, I would guess, 750. And I say that because in the 40 days that Jesus walked to the earth after the Ascension, for 40 days he appeared.

We read in First Corinthians 15, to over 500 brothers at one time. And so you take that number, you add the 120. Maybe we're as high as 750. And then just 10 days later, from the Ascension. So 40 days after the Resurrection to 50 days after the resurrection, there is a Jewish festival of first fruits.

We call it Pentecost because of the 50. And on that day, 3,000 people came to Christ. In Acts chapter 2, we read this in verse 41. So those who received His Word were baptized. And there were added that day about 3,000 souls.

So now you have numbers at least over 3,000, maybe as much as 3,700 or something. If you add those numbers together in rough formula, and then we don't know exactly how long, but about two weeks later, within that rough time frame, that number explodes to 20,000. In Acts chapter 4, verse 4, we read these words, but many of those who had heard the Word believed,

and the number of men came to about 5,000. And if there's 5,000 men, you add women and children, the entire of the community, you have at least around 20,000. So how do we go from 20 to 20,000 in just a short time frame of less than two months?

It is an explosion of the Church being on mission and on purpose. And right in the middle of that explosion, right in the middle of that purpose and mission, there is a statement about the Church, which is the most fundamental passage in all of the Bible, which describes what the Church ought to be about. We're going to walk through that passage and then dwell there in the passage. There's very clearly four principles that the Church is anchored in. So right after the verse of the 3000 coming to know Christ, it begins with these words.

This is Acts chapter two, beginning in 42. And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and the prayers and awe came upon every soul. And many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as any had need.

And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes. They received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number, day by day, those who were being saved. I would suggest for you that if we're going to talk about living on mission, living in the purposes that God has for us, we can camp in this passage and glean an enormous amount of truth over the four principles it spells out just in verse 42. Back to that verse it says, and they devoted themselves.

List four things. The very first one to the apostles. Teaching. They devoted themselves to the Word of God. They devoted themselves to the Scriptures.

They devoted themselves to the apostles. And in fact, there's one of the groups of people at this time. They're called the Bereans. They're recognized and celebrated because they celebrate the Word so much. It talks about them receiving sermons with great anticipation, but then balancing it in the Word of God.

This is out of Acts, chapter 17, verse 11 says this. Now, these Jews talking about living in Berea says these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica. They received the Word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. In other words, they received sermons with eagerness. They're sitting on the edge of their chairs, taking notes and engaging in the Word of God.

But it doesn't just stop there. It's not that they're eager for sermons. They take that. And then on a daily basis, they're going into God's Word to make sure that the message aligned with this.

May it be that we know at New Life.

It doesn't matter if it's a sermon, if it's a teaching and a Bible study, or a group or a small group, any group, any class that you're ever in at New Life, the only authoritative thing you will ever hear is from this holy Word. It's from this Word. If you ever hear a sermon or a teaching that does not come out of this scripture, throw it away and talk to the elders to bring correction. Because it's not okay. We don't speak opinions.

Opinions don't pierce the darkness of the world and shine light. It is God's breathed Word, His Word. And the church devoted themselves to this Word. May it be that the Word of God infiltrates every aspect of the church. We have a core value statement as a church saying the Bible is our source.

It's Our source. It's the foundation behind every teaching. I mean, are there illustrations and stories to try and help us understand it? Yes, and that's fine. But the only authoritative thing, the only thing you should ever hear in this church that causes reflection to change life is out of this word.

It is God's breathed Word. They devoted themselves to this Word. There's a reason we are called New Life Bible Fellowship. It is foundational to who we are. And it's not just us corporately.

Somehow, the sermons or a Bible study or a small group that you're a part of. It ought to be that we're a people devoted to the Word of God. Saying, how can the Word of God be a more intimate, beautiful part of my relationship with my spouse? How can the Word of God be a more active, living, breathing part of my relationship with my children? How can the Word of God be a more intimate, active part of my relationship with my neighbors, with my co workers?

If I'm a student in college or school at any level, how can the Word of God govern me, guide me in history class, in science class, in music class? Like, how can the Word of God be a more active part of our lives? Now you could say, okay, so we're talking about being on mission, pushing back darkness, shining light, making a difference in this world. How can just spending time in the Word do that? It seems.

Seems counterproductive. It seems like we should be out there doing something, not just diving internally into the Word. Let this be a reminder, we'll get this a few times in this passage. There is no human being listening to this message that's going to change the world. None of us.

There's no human being listening to this message that's going to save a single soul. There's no human being that's going to push back darkness and shine light. There's no human being that's going to bring about transformation. All of those things are God things. It's God who is going to

save souls.

It's God who's going to expand his kingdom. It's God who's going to push back darkness and shine light. We are just vessels for that to happen through. So we are utterly dependent on God. So our mission starts with a foundation of him being dependent on His Word is to be dependent on Him.

So I don't know of a tool that more illustrates this than a chainsaw. So number one rule of using a chainsaw. I just did a bunch of chainsawing, so it's fresh up on my mind. Number one rule of using a chainsaw. Let the chainsaw do the work.

If you put muscle into a chainsaw, it's dangerous. You come up and you put muscle and you start pushing in. You start pushing into a log or a tree with a chainsaw, chances are you're going to bind the chain and it's going to kick back on you. It's a dangerous thing. That's where all the little scars come from.

But you can't do it. The number one rule. Let the chainsaw do the work. Let the chainsaw do the work. So this is a hokey illustration, perhaps.

I just got a new toothbrush. I'm an electric toothbrush guy. I just switched brands because there was a big sale for Black Friday kind of thing. So I just got a new toothbrush. And it has an alarm on it.

It has a little light up at the top that turns red if I'm pushing too hard. So the goal is that you get the toothbrush doing the work on the teeth as you go. And the light should never turn red. It turns red at least five or six times. Every time I brush my teeth, I think.

Cause I went to the school that says, you push on. The harder you're pushing and working, the cleaner your teeth are gonna become. I do that with a floss. I'm constantly. And there's a rule says, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa, whoa.

You're actually hurting yourself. Let the toothbrush do the work. You don't have to press that hard. There is a principle of making a difference in this world and living on mission. It is God's work through us, not ours.

The more muscle we put into the equation, the more we mess it up. It is letting God flow through us. And so we come to the word to say, God, we want to be a people devoted to your word. We want to be households devoted to your word. I want marriages devoted to your word.

I want parenting devoted to your word. We're never going to change this world if we have a

mindset that somehow we are the knights in shining armor that get on our white horse and we go out there to make a difference on our own.

We're not knights in shining armor riding white horses. We are vessels of God's grace. And the way in which to live on mission is to be dependent on God. And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. It's where it starts.

The verse goes on. And they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching number one and the fellowship number two. The fellowship.

One of the ways that we discern a healthy church around here is by fellowship. So if a worship service comes to a close and everybody runs out the door on their way to their next place, it's an enormous sign of unhealth to us. If that happens after a worship service, we're quick to evaluate, all right, what's going on that everybody was racing out. If after a worship service, there's groups of people planning. There's a group over here praying for someone, there's a group over here planning on getting together for dinner, there's a group over here planning their super bowl party and how they're gonna reach out to some others.

That is church. That's fellowship. It's a corporate thing and it's beautiful when people hang out. So last week we had worship service and then we had the India Information meeting. The India Information meeting went from 12:30 to 1:30.

It was 3 o' clock and people were still. I was one of them people just still hanging out in groups here. And I just, I rejoiced. It's healthy. It is community.

And it is a good thing. They devoted themselves. They devoted themselves to fellowship. Why is it that you hear all the time, hey, groups are starting. So.

So this week, Wednesday, I don't. So Wednesday night is a group launch of some form. I don't know the time. You'd have to look that up. Show up at 4 o'.

Clock, it's after that so you'll be on time. If you show up at 4, it's group launch. Why. Why do we say that so much? Because coming to church, sitting in a row and looking at the beautiful bald heads sitting in front of you from back, that's not community.

It's lacking the context. If you're watching online right now, there are a thousand reasons why watching online can be a good thing. Maybe you're checking out church, maybe you're traveling, maybe you're sick. And it's possible that you are not able to come to church. And if that's the case, please reach out to us because we would come visit you.

Church involves fellowship. It is people. It is a fellowship, a gathering together. So next week,

I've gotten the question numerous times. Next week, if you show up at 10:30, you're going to miss.

We're meeting at 8:30 here. So the plan next week is we meet at 8:30 here, we're going to pray and then we're all caravanning or hopping in the bus over to Coyote Trails Elementary School where we are putting in a track and painting and doing like six projects. I don't know what they all are. And I get asked, why aren't you gonna do church? Like we're doing church?

It looks a little different. It looks a little different. You say, well, why? Why would you do church different? There's a thousand reasons with outreach and making a difference and helping out.

But I will say this fellowship is one reason why I can go to every single year we have done it. I can go last year. Last year, I was in the cafeteria most of the time and I was writing notes to all of the teachers and such. And sitting across from me were two, like, young adult high school people that I knew about casually. I heard their testimonies, we heard family things.

We shared back and forth. Like, I know them because of sitting down last year. I can go back to the year before painting and doing these planter boxes. There was a couple that had been at New Life, I don't know, like years they had been at New Life. I knew their faces super well.

I'll confess. I didn't know their names. That's a weakness in my life sometimes. So I was able to go, hey, like, how are you? But I couldn't say like, hey, Julie, how are you?

Until that day. Because there's something about painting together and doing planter boxes together and sharing some history together. You get to know each other. This church devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship. And it's not a small thing.

In fact, in the passage, fellowship is expounded on more than any other of these principles in verse 45. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing to people the proceeds to all as any had need. Verse 46. Day by day attending the temple, they broke bread in their homes. They had meals together in their homes.

I'm a firm believer that it is godly to get together for ice cream in people's homes. I think I would change. Well, bread is good too. I like bread. But ice cream is.

That might be. I tease, because that's my. That's how I'm wired. It's just good. It's good to gather together in fellowship.

This church was devoting themselves to the apostles teaching and to fellowship. And we ought to examine ourselves. How can I in my marriage devote myself to fellowship? How can I in my parenting, my household devote ourselves to fellowship? How can I with other students, how

can I with friends, how can I with with neighbors devote myself to fellowship?

It's not that easy. It doesn't just happen. You have to plan. You have to have three or four kinds of ice cream. In the freezer at all times.

You have to look at the schedule and say, all right, so like next week on Wednesday, we have nothing at night. Who can we invite over? What does this look like? They devoted themselves. They devoted themselves back to verse 42, and they devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread.

Now it's possible to take that phrase, breaking of bread, and think that it's simply sharing a meal together later in the passage. It clearly is in verse 46, that they attended temple and they broke bread. Bread in their homes, receiving food. The difference here is in this list. It's in contrast to fellowship.

It's not describing fellowship. They devoted themselves one, to the apostles teaching, two, to fellowship, three, to the breaking of bread, to communion. To communion. If devoting ourselves to fellowship is cultivating a community and devoting ourselves to the apostles teaching is enjoying God, Devoting ourselves to communion is the gospel. It's fixing our eyes to be Christ centered, To be gospel centered.

To be death, burial and resurrection centered. To acknowledge that my righteousness and my holiness is not based on what I do, it's based on what Christ did for me. A negative possibility in today's message. By the end, we'll talk about this more than once, but is to start to feel guilty that, well, I'm not in the word enough or I don't have fellowship enough and we can feel guilty. This is a guilt free zone.

All the time, it's a guilt free zone. Conviction is okay. Guilt is not.

What is it? To come before Jesus and receive his death, his burial, his resurrection over and over and over and be devoted to it. One of the heirs of the Reformation. So the Reformation is when the Protestant church broke away from the Catholic Church, one of the heirs of that season. And it's confounded by not only the Reformation, but after the Reformation, you have the age of enlightenment and the age of reason following.

One of the errors of the Reformation is, prior to the Reformation, in the center of every church, center of every church was an altar. And on that altar was communion. It was center stage the mystery of God, of causing bread and juice to become for us the body and blood of Christ and to receive in us, to receive into our bodies his death, his burial, his resurrection, his body broken, his bloodshed. That was center. And in the Reformation, the altar was moved over essentially and the pulpit became the center.

Prior to that, the pulpit would have been off to the side in every church you'd visit. But the pulpit now, I'm not against the pulpit. I'M a preacher. You could say, I like preaching. I like the word Christian.

Go back to the first principles. They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. I'm not against the Word, but it is both. It is the Word and it is the mystery of God making himself present. God is everywhere present in all places.

He is not more present in communion than he is when you clean your pool.

But he gave it as a sacrament to say, well, I am not more present. I will manifest myself. I will become tangibly present in a way that you can feel and receive more than in other things when you come before me in communion. Luther was asked about the nature of communion and he used this illustration. He said, if you take an iron poker and you stick it into a fire, you can let it sit there long enough that the poker itself turns blazing red.

You can pull it out and it is bright, bright red. Now, at that moment, that poker is still iron. It has not become something else. All of its properties remain iron. But if you touch something with it, it burns because it has taken into itself some of the properties of the fire.

It is not fire, it is iron. But it has taken the heat of the fire in it. So too, communion. We're going to take communion today, and when we do, it's going to taste like bread and juice. Stale matzo and juice.

That's what you're getting.

But it's not matzah and juice. Spiritually, it becomes the body of Christ broken for us. That we gaze up at the cross and we see the suffering of Christ and know that he is suffering. And because my sin is holding him there, my sin is in him, so that he is paying my price. And his body is broken for me.

And he gives us this bread to receive that his blood was shed for me. He gave up his blood. He gave up his life for me. And when I drink of the cup, I drink spiritually, like that iron poker having the properties of fire. I drink spiritually juice that is spiritually the blood of Christ shed for me.

Communion, they devoted themselves. I don't mind sharing with you. I don't know when or if this will come to pass, but a discussion amongst leadership for the last handful of months has been so right now we take communion like every five weeks, roughly five to six weeks. And we're talking about taking communion every other week. You say, why would you take

communion that often?

Just an attempt, say Jesus, we want to be and do everything we can to be a more Jesus centered church, to be a more gospel centered church, that everything we are would rest in what you have done for us, not what we do for you. Your death, your burial, your resurrection. That, that is the power of righteousness, the power of holiness, the power of sanctification, the power of salvation in my life. And so we're just contemplating it at this point. And now you can be a part of the discussion and, and let us know.

And they devoted themselves back to verse 42, to the apostles teaching and the fellowship and the breaking of bread and the prayers. This is similar to the first one. It seems like praying would somehow be holding us back from getting things done, but it's not the case. Prayer is the embodiment of our dependence on God. Jesus lived a praying life.

So Jesus is God. But he emptied himself of attributes of his deity to add to himself humanity. And he was born as a human being. And he lived this life depending on the Father. In prayer, they were talking to each other constantly.

You see it in his ministry all the way through. He is constantly talking with the Father, doing what the Father tells him to do, constantly watching the Father. But even in the midst of that 41 times, he withdraws in the Gospels to desolate places to pray. And six of those times specifically, early, early in the morning, while it's still dark, or praying all through the night. Mark chapter one, verse 35.

And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place. And there he prayed. In the midst of all of his intimacy with the Father, all of his conversations with the Father, he still, he still had specific, devoted, dedicated prayer times with the Father. In chapter five of the Gospel of Luke, it says this in verse 16. But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray.

It was his habit to withdraw to desolate places and pray. He regularly withdrew to desolate places and pray. This was a pattern of his life. He would withdraw to desolate places and pray. Jesus, his ministry depended on it.

You flip the page in Luke chapter 6, a similar passage in those days, verse 12. In those days he went out to the mountain to pray. And all night he continued in prayer to God.

His public ministry that's written about lasted not much over three years. In three years time there are 41 references to him withdrawing to a desolate place. There's six references as to a regular habit of him going to a desolate place, praying all through the night. I don't want to be trite with it. I'll just say if Jesus found it beneficial in his dependence on God to pray, perhaps

we would do well, to do the same.

This is not to make anyone feel guilty. I get the tension here. We just got back from India. Every time I go, I am humbled in this arena. So when we go to India, one thing we bring is a theological education.

They don't know Hebrew, they don't know Greek, they don't have an educational system where they have studied scripture in a similar way to us. And so bringing teaching out of God's word is one of the things we can bring. However, if we're talking about what it is to live by faith in the midst of persecution and suffering, then we sit down with our mouths closed just to learn. And if we're going to talk about an utter dependence on God in prayer, we just close our mouths and learn. It's not fair to compare our cultures.

They don't have cars, they don't run errands, they live fairly simple lives. But when you talk to them, they pray and fast at least one day a week. They pray and fast at least in addition to that for a four day period every month.

Their prayer life on a daily basis is humbling. I fast two, three, four times a year.

They fast every week, four days every month.

Now this isn't a guilt producing thing, but it is a good time to reflect. Lord, how ought I to be more devoted in prayer? How can we as a church make sure that in small groups and in gatherings we are praying? Lord, how do I have prayer Prayer be a more intimate part of my marriage? Please hear me.

I am anti guilt. I hope you hear that.

But when I meet with couples for counseling, it is exceedingly rare that they have any measure of intimacy of prayer life together. I mean maybe a little bit before meals and stuff, but not actually having a prayer life together. I don't say that to produce guilt.

I'm just saying we ought to apply this. God, how can I live a more devoted life in prayer? How can my marriage be more devoted in prayer? How could my parenting have have more of a saturation in prayer? How does my relationship with my co workers and with my neighbors have a saturation in prayer?

How do I go to school and gather together with friends in prayer? How does prayer become a bigger part of my life? These are questions that we have to ask if we want to push back darkness, if we want to make a difference in this world. You wake up on a daily basis. This world is so broken, it has brokenness leaking out all over the place.

If you want to make a difference in this world, if you want to shine light and push back darkness. If you want to see the kingdom of God expand and grow, I would suggest to you that this is a good foundational place to pray. God, make me more devoted to your word. To fellowship, to communion, to the cross, to prayer. This is the foundation by which revival is born.

So how do we apply this? It might be the easiest sermon you've ever heard to apply. I have four points. Pretty clear. Just one verse is all you have to remember to go back and read it.

Just to walk through those again. What is it to be devoted to? The Bible. I read the Bible in different ways.

In a study mode, I will translate Hebrew and Greek. In a sermon mode, I land in the ESV Most of the time. That's the base translation we use. If I want to read just devotionally, I want to protect my mind from going to sermon ideas or teaching things and planning. I use the message.

It's not really even a translation. It's more of a paraphrase. It doesn't have verse, numbers or that kind of thing. It is refreshing to me, however, because I can go to it and I'm not planning a lesson. I can just read and be with Jesus in His word.

I would suggest to you that we ought to be creative and be thinking, lord, what are ways I could make some goals this week? Don't make it out. Don't say I'm going to read the word 100 hours this week. Like set realistic goals. But Lord, what would it look like for me to live more devoted to the apostles teaching this week to fellowship?

What does it look like to carve out time for fellowship together with other brothers and sisters? What does it look like to carve out time for fellowship together with neighbors, with co workers to go deeper into relationship? What does it look like to make sure in church I'm not just sitting and looking at that head in front of me, but I'm engaging in relationships. What does it look like for me to make that a priority and have the margin to do it? What does it look like to be devoted to communion?

This one's a little different than the others in that I believe communion is a sacrament of the church. And so it's not something we necessarily do at home. But a part of this is just being fixated on the gospel, fixated on what Jesus did for me, fixated on my holiness and my righteousness and my Christian life not being what I give to God. Here's a danger of this message. We could, if we just took prayer and we lined everybody up, we took People in the room who pray the most, like These people, pray 18 hours a day.

They're standing at this end. And then people over here, these are people that don't pray at all. I mean, you know, really, they zero. They go through the week, and it just doesn't happen.

Those that pray 18 hours a day are no more holy than those who pray zero.

And if you pray five minutes and you have a special day and you pray 10 minutes, you're not more holy, you're not more righteous. We do not make ourselves more holy. The gospel, the focus on communion, it reminds us of that, and it anchors us in the righteousness of Christ God. How can I be devoted to the Word? How can I.

How can I be devoted to fellowship? How can I be devoted to communion? And finally, how can I be devoted in prayer? What does it look like to have prayer be a more meaningful, impactful part of my relationships and my life? If we want to push back, I almost fell over.

If we want to push back darkness, if we want to shine light and make a difference in this world, we've got to start here. We have the privilege this morning of closing by coming before the Lord's Table.

When you came in, there are communion elements up front on two tables, and in the back on two tables. And under this window, there's gluten free. Please. If you did not grab communion elements, go ahead and get up and grab communion elements. And if you're at home, I would invite you to go get whatever communion elements you would have.

There's nothing sacred about the matzah or the cup. I will share this. The Lord's table communion is open to anyone who is surrendering their life to Jesus. So if you are a Christian and you've already surrendered your life to Christ the Lord, Lord's table is open. If you're listening to this message and you've never taken that step, but somehow the Holy Spirit is touching you today, and you're wondering if you are crying out for Jesus to be your savior.

Come. Come to the Lord's table and receive.

I will share with you. My plan is we'll grab our communion elements and we'll sit down. I don't want anyone to. To stop now like I'm gonna. If you're in line and you turn around, I'm gonna see it.

I would like to take communion with fellowship around it. Now I get. I say that, and instantly, half of the people in this room, their palms just went sweaty, and they thought, all right, this was a bait and switch. It was just Jesus and me. And now what is he saying?

Once we have the communion elements, I would invite just to turn. Maybe it's someone sitting down the row, maybe someone behind you or in front of you. I would like us as people of God,

to make sure there's not anyone in the room that is left out. We might move around a little and just gather in some small groups to take communion together. So take just a minute and move around, turn around, form some groups.

We'll walk through the elements in just a moment. But just to make sure everybody's connected at least a little bit.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, And after giving thanks, he broke it.

And he said, this is my body broken for you. We are to take and eat this in remembrance of him that he was broken for our sins, that he paid the price for our sins to die in our place. And so if you're comfortable, I would invite you just to pray in your groups. If you are not comfortable praying out loud, that's fine. You can pray quietly, pray in your groups over the body of Christ broken for you.

And then in just a moment, I'll close that in prayer together and we will receive the bread.

Sa.

We'll leave some time for unfinished prayer discussion later. But let us receive the body of Christ broken for you and broken for me.

Likewise, on that night, Jesus took the cup. He said, this is the cup of the new Covenant poured out in my blood for the forgiveness of sins. Now, in the Corinthian Church, there's a time recorded in chapter 11 of the church not taking communion properly, and they actually got sick.

This isn't just a cup. It's not just juice spiritually. This is the blood of Jesus Christ shed for you and me. He took our sin, and in order to fully make the payment for our sin, he gave up his life. His blood was shed.

And so there's power. There's power in the blood to wash away sin, to wash away guilt, to wash away condemnation. There's power in the blood to make you and I holy.

And even as we take this, we receive his bloodshed. Take a moment to pray together in your groups or circles, and again we'll close together and share the cup together.

Sa.

The blood of Jesus Christ shed for you and for me. Let's receive the cup together.

Lord Jesus, what you did on the cross, leaving our sin behind in the tomb, is more than we can grasp. But I pray that you would open the eyes of our heart and our mind to receive, to walk in your death, your burial, your resurrection, even this week. May your power flow through us to push back darkness, to shine light, to make a difference in this world. In the precious name of Jesus, we pray. And everyone said amen and amen.

Let's go ahead and stand as we close in song.