

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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Grace Unleashed

PART

12

TITLE

We Are Filled

SCRIPTURE

Ephesians 3:14-21



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It's great to see y'all this morning. My name's Thomas and I serve as one of the pastors here at Providence. A special welcome to any guests or visitors that made their way in this morning. So glad to spend the first Sunday of December with you. Can you believe it? It's here. So excited about it. As always, a special welcome to any guests and visitors, anyone joining us in one of our other venues, or via the livestream this morning. We're especially glad to have you with us. We're going to be in Ephesians chapter three this morning. If you have a Bible, I invite you to open up to Ephesians chapter three. If you made your way in here this morning without a Bible for one reason or another then, if you're in this room, you can look underneath one of the chairs in front of you. You should be able to find some spare copies of God's word laying around. If you don't have a Bible to call your own, we invite you to take that one, and we'd love for you to be reading it. We'll find another one to put there. We want you reading that one.

We're going to be reading in Ephesians chapter three this morning. Ephesians is in the right part of the Bible, not that there's a wrong part of the Bible, but the right, not the left, part of the Bible. We are looking for chapter three. Chapter numbers are those larger numbers that you see spread out throughout the text. We're going to study verses 14 to 21. Verse numbers are those smaller numbers set up to the left of the words that you see scattered throughout the page. Ephesians chapter three verses 14 to 21. While we're making our way there, just a brief word for us about the importance of this Advent season that's ahead and how it's really connected to the Lenten season with Easter. Depending on your religious or faith background, you might be familiar with the seasons of Advent and Lent. Lent, the season of preparation, usually kicked off on Mardi Gras, hello, and leading up to Easter where we really prepare our hearts to anticipate the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross and the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. That's the Lenten season leading into Easter.

Right now, we, as a church, we are in the season of Advent, preparing our hearts for Christmas. We have a number of resources available to you here at Providence that you can access via the website or the app, also, right out the back at Next Steps. When we're done in here, if you're looking for a Christmas devotional, readings to prepare your heart for Christmas, we have those available for you here. The real story of Christmas that Jesus came to be our sin substituting, sacrificing Savior, it's not really going to sound like good news. It's not going to be a good thing for you until you realize when we have great needs in our life, the season of Advent is intended to heighten our awareness and heighten that need as we get ready for Christmas. For today, we're in Ephesians chapter three. We will study verses 14 to 21 after a word of prayer. Let's pray together.

Father in heaven, we together, as God's people, we ask that you would strengthen our hearts and you would expand our minds so the things we know about you can become living realities in us. Father, we also pray for any man or any woman here this morning or a part of this message somehow that does not know you in a saving way, they haven't put their faith in you, they don't have the corresponding joy in their life, Father, we pray that you would grant the gift of faith and courage for people to put their faith in you today. Father, we pray that you'd strengthen your church and we pray that you would save people who are close. We ask for it in Jesus's name, amen.

Ephesians chapter three verse 14. I'll read. You follow along. Here we go. "For this reason, I bow my knees before the Father from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named. That according to the riches of his glory, he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being; so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; and that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth; and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now, to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or think according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen."

The author, what we're reading this morning, is a man named Paul. He is writing to a group of people living in the ancient city of Ephesus. He is writing to them to help them figure out what does it mean for them to live as God's people in an increasingly secularized culture. He just unpacked three chapters of incredible teaching, this theology that really works out. What does it mean for us to be in a relationship with God? What has God done to get to us? What is God still doing in the world? He is about to unpack three chapters about what it means for us to live as God's people in the world. He's about to spell out in detail things that we should do and things that we shouldn't do because we don't belong to ourselves, but we belong to another. We belong to God.

Right in the middle of these two sections, we have a prayer, the prayer that we get to study this morning. It's an interesting prayer because it's a prayer for the church. It's a prayer for people who already know God, who already love God. The apostle Paul is asking God to do some specific things in their lives. Among these things, just one or two we could look at, is we get a frame around what we're looking at this morning. Chapter three verses 16 and 17, there are two words referring to rooting and the founding of the church. God's people must have roots that sink down. He's talking to the church. He's like, "Listen, everything that we've just talked about, this is like the foundation of an incredible building."

Can we think of a foundation of a skyscraper? This is one that's actually being built in the city of Toronto where we have a church plant and we visit multiple times. I'll be taking a group of college students up here later on in March. This is a building that's going to be called One Bloor Street. You see this massive foundation going deep into the earth. This is a lot of Paul's picture for what's just happened for three chapters. Saying, "Listen, I need you to be rooted, church. I want you to be rooted. I want you to have a deep substructure that a lot of time went into it, a lot of time went into it, a lot of energy and effort has gone into it. You're not going to be able to see it from the top, but, man, when those storms come, when life continues to wear and tear on the facility, you will be glad that you spent time establishing yourself. You'll be rooted and grounded." A lot goes into the foundation. A lot has gone in to the three chapters that Paul just took us through. Now we find ourselves listening to the pastor, theologian, church planter man Paul praying for the church.

Throughout the Bible, people usually pray standing up, but here, there's something about the intensity of this prayer that warrants Paul to kneel down. Even when Jesus would talk about prayer and teach about praying, he was assuming that people would stand. Here, there's something about this prayer where Paul chooses to kneel. Paul kneels in order to pray that God's people would really get what follows. Paul could have prayed for anything for the lives of the church in Ephesus. We could pray for anything for our lives here at Providence. If you're like me, when you read this prayer, there's something about that maybe it just doesn't connect with what you thought was going to be prayed for. If you're like me, you think your biggest problems are financial, you think your biggest problems are relational or maybe physical. Here, we learn that our biggest problem, our biggest need as a Christian, is spiritual.

Paul says this is what you need. I could pray for anything for you, but I'm going to pray this for you because if you have the content of this prayer at work in your life, then you can face any of those other things with confidence. This prayer teaches us so much. It teaches us about God. It teaches us about ourselves. It teaches us what it means for us to be God's people in this world. Holding to those ideas as our outline, let's just walk through this. The first thing I want you to see is this. God can give Christians a full experience of salvation. These things that Paul is asking for here are all tied to and they're connected in our salvation.

If I could just clarify and zone in really specifically on just a few people I intend to speak to today, first, if you are hurting from one reason or another and, as you enter into this Christmas season and there's not as much to be excited about this year as there were past in years, and if you suffered some hardship, physical or relational in any way, and you're drawing near towards this Christmas season and you can just go on tell, man, you have a lack of joy, a lack of assurance in one way or another in your life, then this is for you. This is also for people who not necessarily are hurting, but are just kind of humming along in the Christian life. Maybe things are not too bad and not too great, but we're just here. It's another Sunday. We're thankful. Here we go again. If you could even hear this, this prayer is for you as well. It's for anyone needing a fresh experience of who they are in Christ and everything that's already theirs.

It's a really interesting prayer that Paul chooses to pray because Paul chooses for Christians to pray for things that they already have. It's fascinating. Let's just watch him do it. Paul, praying these things for the church, becomes a model prayer for how we as Christians ought to pray. The first thing he prays for is this. First, Christians pray for power, for Christ to settle in their hearts. This is what he asks for in verse 16 and in verse 17, "That according to the riches of his glory, God may grant you to be strengthened with power," there's the power, "in your spirit and your inner being so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith." You got to think about this with me. We already know from things that Paul has already written to us in this letter that Christians already have Christ dwelling in us. Do you remember chapter two verse 22? We learned that Christ is already dwelling in Christians. He's already in the church. Here's the prayer. That Christians would have power for Christ to settle down in our hearts.

Here's the second thing he asks for. Paul prays that Christians should pray for power to grasp the love of Christ. This is what he asks for in verses 18 and 19, "That you would have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ that surpassing knowledge and that you may be filled with the fullness of God." Here's the prayer. That you would have power to grasp or to know the love of Christ. This is what's interesting. In 1 John chapter three, we learned that you're not a Christian unless you know the love of Christ. Christians already know the love of Christ. Christians already know what it means to be loved by Jesus. Here's the prayer, I pray that you would have the power to grasp that very love. This is a knowledge that surpasses understanding. It's leading us towards experience. We'll talk about that in just a moment.

Here's the third thing that Paul prays for the church and it's a model that we ought to pray as well. "Christians, pray for power to be filled with the fullness of God." You see this in verse 19 down to verse 20. This is the end, "And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may," this is the payoff, "be filled with the fullness of God." But in chapter one, Paul already made it clear that all Christians are united to Christ. You're already connected to him. In Colossians 2:9 through 10, from the guy's same pen, he also wrote, "Christians are united to Christ." Here's the prayer, I pray that you, church, would have power to be filled with the fullness of God.

Once you get this, once you see what he's doing, a number of questions begin to come up. First, why is Paul asking God to give his people these things that God has already given to his people? Another question is: Why is Paul telling the church, who have these things, to go out and to go get these things? Once you see what's going on here, the implications are enormous. This has implications for how you understand God, how you understand yourself as a Christian, and how you understand what life is like in the world. Here's why. When we see what's going on here, it can change everything. What I need you to see is this. It's one thing to believe in and to know about the love of Jesus. It is another thing to experience and to walk in the love of Jesus.

Paul is focused on an experience of Christ in your innermost being. This doesn't disparage knowledge. Knowledge is actually foundational for this taking place, but that knowledge must be activated. It must be released in the Christian life. It's one thing to have ideas about God. It's another thing to have a relationship with God. It's one thing for, in your life with Jesus, to have seasons of following him and trusting him and depending on him and then have seasons where we get a little numb, we get a little calloused and we start to drift. We need those truths to become activated in us again to wake us up, to vivify us, and bring us back into a deeper relationship and dependence on Jesus. It's one thing to have these things. It's another thing to experience these things.

To illustrate, imagine that you once had a relative give you a large sum of money. This relative loved you so much that this relative went ahead and invested it for you in the best products that were out there. One day, you actually fell on hard times. There's something about your life to where you were growing spiritually cold, you were growing spiritually hungry, you were in a time of great need, and you needed incredible resource, but from life experience, you forgot what was already yours and already in the bank and what already had your name on it. You, because you forgot what was rightfully yours, you live your life in hunger and in cold and in poverty and in need when, all the while, you possessed tremendous resources that you never went to the bank to claim as yours and to have activated in your life through prayer.

That's the idea that's being talked about here. To say it another way, there are two ways to know that honey is sweet. You can know with the mind and rationality. You can also know with your tongue and sensation. The Psalmist says, "Taste and see that the Lord is good." It's possible to know things without being moved by them. It's also possible to know some things about God rationally, but not relationally. That's the idea that we're talking about here. In summary of this point, this is so important for us, church, because it is possible for us to miss the very things we have. Christians are prone to live lives of phoniness. We, together, you and me both, we are prone to live lives of shallowness and hollowness and this prayer is aimed at activating things that are already true in the life of a Christian so they make their way into the heart and it will vivify the Christian life. It will give your relationship with God a living and active dynamic where there's a sense to it where you might even feel like you're saved all over again. All that's really happening there for the Christian is the Christian is actually finally living consistent with who they really are.

Now, for this to happen, God has to overcome a number of things in the life of a Christian. That's the second thing I want you to see. God can overcome our weaknesses. Not just as this good news, that God can give Christians a full experience of the salvation that's theirs, to do this, God must then overcome a number of weaknesses that we have. Let's review the prayer again. This prayer is for the church and it's for power in three ways for Christ to settle in our hearts. Our hearts are super important. Our hearts are the control center of reality. Whatever foundational beliefs or faith assumptions we have are housed in the heart and it impacts everything else. The prayer for the church is that Christ, who already dwells in the heart, it's actually a different word than dwell, it's that Christ would settle in your hearts. Church, how many of us have Christ actually dwelling in us but we haven't given ourselves to the obedience of faith and grasping the grace that he expends for Christ to actually settle in us?

Second thing, he's praying for power to grasp the love of Christ. His love is limitless. Author of Hebrews in chapter two tells us we actually don't drift towards the love of Christ. We actually drift away from it even as the church, even as Christians, people who have been redeemed. Also, we're being prayed for right here to have power to be filled with the fullness of God. In the New Testament, fullness of God refers to a fullness of life. You know you've actually experienced God when you meditate on Christ and you think about who he is, you know you've experienced him if it shows up in how you're living your life.

From that prayer, we see at least three things about you and me that God's got to overcome for this to happen.

The first one is this. First, our redeemed hearts need to be strengthened. Our hearts are hard. Our hearts are small. That's why they're the target of this prayer. Yeah, our new heart, that heart of flesh that we received in salvation, that new heart, it needs strength and it needs expansion because we have an old nature that's raging inside of us. Our hearts need to be strengthened to handle the love of God. You know what this is like from your own life and in your own experience because, in every marriage, no matter how great it is, no matter how high that thing soars at, in every marriage, there's the inevitable comment between a husband and a wife. One looks at the other and says, "I know I'm married, but right now in this moment, I just don't feel it."

Why is that? Is that because you never made vows and promises before God, your family, and friends? No, you did that. Was that because you were never intentional in the relationship? No, I'm sure there's faithfulness to look back on. Is that because, in this relationship, there's not years of a shared experience with one and another that you could bring up in that moment and that you could talk about? Of course, it's all there. There's a history. Those things happen because we all have the kind of hearts that will forget. We have the kind of hearts that struggle to hold on. We have the kind of hearts that grow weak. We say, "I don't feel it because I don't experience your love in a way that delights me anymore." We actually have something going on in our hearts right here. No matter history would say we're married, we're in this thing, we have something going on in the heart at the moment that's struggling to believe it and live like it's true.

Paul prays not that we would understand the fact of Christ's love. Paul prays that we would experience the reality of his love. For that to happen, our hearts must be strengthened and we have to pray for this, church. Second thing we learn about ourselves, not only do our hearts need to be strengthened, our minds need to be expanded because the Holy Spirit is preparing your inner being so that you can grasp the love of God. Now, to grasp is not the same thing as merely to know. This idea, it has the idea, it's actually a really interesting word to put here, this idea of grasp, so that you can go get it, so that you can lock it down and make it yours. It's a Hebrew equivalent to words that you see in the Old Testament whenever it would talk about the actions that God's people would have to go through to make a city theirs. They would have to sack the city. They would have to plunder it. They would have to take over the city. Our redeemed minds need to be expanded if we are going to grasp, if we are going to lay hold of everything that God is and what he would have for our lives and through us as the church.

For that to happen, not only must our hearts be strengthened, but our minds must be expanded because God must come in and sensitize our hearts and our minds to truth so that we can have the kind of hearts and minds that can capture it. Some of you in here are going to have to help me with this. What I've learned from Google about photography is that before the iPhone, we actually had something called a Polaroid. Anybody raise their hand and testify? Is that true? Okay. Consensus. Before iPhone, there was Polaroid. How a Polaroid worked is it actually took these really special technical sheets of paper that were inserted in it. The paper, what made it special is that it was actually sensitized to light so that when the aperture collapsed and light came rushing in, whatever was on the outside was locked onto by the paper because it was sensitized so it'd be ready for whatever reality on the outside would come flooding in. Church, you and me, we need to pray that God would take our redeemed minds and he would expand them. Through that expanding, he would sensitize us to be able to handle truth and knowledge about him as it comes in.

See, failing to grasp the love of Christ is our default. We don't live according to who we are and we don't realize what we have because of our hearts. Martin Lloyd Jones, whenever he was counseling Christians who were troubled, he would ask a series of questions. He would ask the question, "Are you really a Christian?" The person would respond, "Well, I'm trying." Then, in the moment, Lloyd Jones would say, "Well, by your answer, you've shown me you don't understand the first thing about what it means to be a Christian because Christians aren't a trying people. We are people that have been loved. We have been pursued. We've been bought by the love and grace of Jesus. He makes us ours whether we're trying or not." Then, in that moment, the person would respond, "Well, no, no, no. I got that. I know that. Oh, yeah. I knew that. Justification by faith alone. I got it. No, no, no. That's there I am. I'm with you."

Think about what happens in this interaction. The response does not reveal that the person is not a Christian. The response reveals that the love of Christ is not at work in that person. The love of Christ is not operative. It is not having its way in the life of that person. The love of Christ is supposed to come in and revolutionize the whole self. Think with Paul's prayer again that our hearts and our minds could grasp the love of Christ. This prayer is needed because Christians do not default to grasping and locking onto God and his love for us. It's something that must be released and activated through prayer in our lives. Last thing on this point is that our redeemed dispositions need to experience what we already know. The experience is so great. No one has it all the time but it's real and it's possible and it's available. You can experience this in your own life. This is possible and available to you.

If I could just take you through church history and remind you or perhaps introduce you to just a few people, first, I'd like you to meet Dwight Moody, the Chicago minister who was walking the streets of New York City in the 1850s. He had been praying that God would give him more of God. Sounds like a familiar prayer, doesn't it? One day, in the city, he writes, "Oh, what a day. I can't describe it. God revealed himself to me and I had such an experience that I asked him to remove his hand from me because I felt like I would collapse under the weight."

The story actually is also told that when he was walking the streets of New York City, he actually someone's house or apartment that he knew so he went up and he banged on the door. He demanded a room for the afternoon so that he could have a place to experience God. Later today, if somebody comes banging on your door during nap time and they look kind of familiar from this morning, just let them in. Let them have a room because they probably got some of this going on.

How about George Whitefield? British Anglican priest. He often found that, praying at night, he had the most intense experiences of God's love that he had to ask God to stop it because he couldn't get any sleep. Staying up at night, asking God, "God, would you affirm this to me? Would you make this real to me? Would you open up my heart? Would you open up my mind? Would you help the things that I know of you to become more than just facts about you but something that I can really experience in my life?" How about Blaise Pascal, the French philosopher and mathematician from the 16th century? When he died, people found a diary entry sewn into his jacket pocket. It tells us about a time that he had from midnight to 2:00 AM in 1654 when he experienced the love of God in a word that he can only describe as fire. That night, this mathematician and philosopher who struggled with understanding God, the assurance of salvation, and if God ever really loved him, after this moment, never again doubted the love of God or the assurance of salvation, wrote down the whole encounter, sewn it in his jacket paper so it would always be right over his heart.

What happened with these people? Were they not Christians before? Maybe these are people that just didn't know God and this is just describing what it means for someone to get saved. Can you explain to me how Dwight Moody, one of the leading evangelists in our country's history, or George Whitefield, a British Anglican priest and revivalist, how they are the very people that lead the testimony talking about what it means to experience the love of God in this way? Now, this is something for all Christians. There can be a separation in knowledge and experience for all of us. All of us are at risk of forgetting who we really are and forgetting who God is making us into. All of us are at risk for looking at God and growing bored of him. All of us at risk or growing in a moment where we may never say it to another person, the thought we have in our hearts is that God actually isn't that exciting and there's better uses of our time.

Friend, pity on us. God is infinitely exciting. He has so much to offer. He can satisfy us in every way. The problem is never with him. The problem is with our hearts, redeemed hearts that are small. They need to be strengthened. The problem is with our minds, redeemed minds, that are narrow. We are finite, friend, and we can only handle a fraction and a little sliver of who he really is. Our prayers, our prayers ought to be, "God, you are infinite. I am not, God. Would you open me up so I can handle a little more of who you are? God, the walls of my heart are so small and they're so frail. God, would you do whatever you have to do to strengthen me so I can handle more of you in my life?"

These people, they were actually all saved as far as we know. Maybe Blaise, he can be a bit sketch, let's be honest, but with invited prayer, God activated truths in their lives at an experiential level. They began to live who they really were. They began to be in a reality who they already were positionally before God and truth. This experience of God is for everybody. It's for people of different cultures, of different temperaments, living in different times. We are all at risk of not embracing everything that is already ours because of Christ. Christian, you have so much available to you. Are you drawing on it or not? Remember, this is a prayer for the church. Paul doesn't ask for anything related to their physical circumstances. He asked for spiritual realities in their lives.

Before this kind of a message and this kind of a prayer could ever have a hint of having anything to do with being a prosperity gospel or a prosperity idea, we recognize that all of these things are spiritual and they supersede all of our other needs in the world. If we have these spiritual truths at work within us, then everything we face relationally or physically or socially in our lives, we can make it through it all. That's why this prayer falls between the teaching and the encouraging to action. The focus here is on God and what God can do in our lives. Even after salvation, church, we continue to need the intervening grace of God. God can provide us the power to grasp the love of Christ. If, church, we do grasp the love of Christ, then the third thing is true. That's this. That God can then do more than we could ever dream.

Friends, this is only something that's available to the church. It's only something that's available to people that have looked to Jesus and seen his offer of salvation as beautiful. They're banking their lives on him in faith. They've surrendered themselves to what it means to be his people. They're following him and obeying him with everything that they have. This is something given to the church. If we could notice in verse 20, it says, "So that we, more than we could ever dream." We need to know that knowing God is a community project. John Stott once observed it takes the whole people of God to know the whole love of God. If you really want to know God, you will really get involved in Biblical community and you'll become part of a church. We know if we do this, he is able to do more in our lives and through our situations and circumstances going ahead because he has already done more than we ever really can comprehend on the cross as he sent Christ to be the Savior of the world, as all the sins of the whole world were heaped upon him, and he willfully died as a sin substitute and a penalty and a payment for them all. Oh, he's accomplished more in that than we'll ever really know.

Looking back on that with faith and confidence, we're able to then look ahead and trust he can work through me in ways I may never guess as well. Don't ever underestimate the importance of what can happen through a husband continuing to be faithful to a wife. He can do more in that than you could ever dream. Don't underestimate the importance of what could happen as you step out in faith to share a word of scripture with somebody or to share your story with somebody or to call someone to repent in faith. Never underestimate what can happen as you give your time and you give your energy to go to an unreached place in the world where people don't know about Jesus.

Don't underestimate what our God, with everything he's already done for us, what he can do in a week, what he can do in a moment, what he can do with a single prayer. These are the truths.

Here's a few ways we live this out over the next week. First, let's honor the giver and give ourselves to prayer because God can do all of these things. Do you see it? The emphasis time and time again is on God and what he's capable of doing in our lives. Our prayers don't have to be long. They don't have to be short. The way I like to think of prayer, though, I'm not perfect with this, is one man once said, "I rarely pray for more than two minutes, but I rarely go more than two minutes without praying." When prayer ever feels complicated or we never really seem to get the words right or know how to connect to God in this way, it means we've lost the sense of what prayer actually is. Prayer is similar to thinking of a father who loves to hear the sound of his children come running to him at the end of a day when he finally gets home from the work. That sound of little feet pitter-pattering through the house and the toys and things being thrown every way because the children are eager to connect with the father again, that's God's heart towards us when we come to him in prayer.

Second, let's trust Christ and experience him anew. Aren't you glad that all of this is ours because he gives to us according to the riches of his glory? He doesn't give to us out of the riches of his glory, but according to the riches of his glory. Imagine a billionaire was going to give you some money out of his riches. If that billionaire was going to give to you out of his riches, he may choose to only give to you 10 bucks because that giving actually depletes who he is, but God doesn't treat us like that. God is the spiritual billionaire. God doesn't give to us out of who he is, where that giving actually depletes who he is, God actually gives to us according to who he is. He can manage to shove out millions upon millions upon millions of spiritual blessings upon his people. Let's trust Christ. Let's trust him. Let's trust him. If you've never trusted him before, let's trust him right now in this moment. Let's trust him, Christians, again in faith, in this moment, to experience the life that we have with him anew. We can't deplete him. You can't exhaust him. You can't wear him down and you can't wear him out because he loves to hear his children come to him in prayer.

Last, let's ask God to strengthen us to experience more of him. God will move in our hearts as we meditate on the love of Christ. We have weaknesses that we need God to overcome. Lo and behold, in this moment, at the end of Ephesians chapter three, you see divine sovereignty and human responsibility working together. You have things that are true of you that are only true of you because God has acted toward you in sovereign love. He saved you when you were an enemy. He saved you when you were far away. He's given you his name. He's given you his title. He loves you so much. Here we are, being told to go out there and to grasp and to take hold of with the hands of faith those very things that are already true of us in our lives. Here we are, seeing divine sovereignty and human responsibility working together. We call on God in prayer, which is a means that he's only established for us. God gives to us according to his riches. We reach out and grasp it with the needy hands of faith. God works in this to accomplish more in the world than we could ever dream.

If we get to the end of this and if you find yourself in a moment where you trust God more right now than you did 30 minutes ago, take heart. As we get to the end of this and you find yourself desiring for those things that you know about God with your mind to become living and active realities for you that change the way you live in your heart, if we get to the end of this and you find yourself thinking, “Man, I want that kind of life. I want that kind of an experience with God,” then take heart, my friend, because Jesus is very close. His grace is already at work. He is drawing you in. In addition to a sermon about God, we also get to enjoy the Lord’s Supper where we get to literally taste his goodness towards us. If I could invite our deacons and leaders to head to the back of the house, share just a few words with you that really set up the moment that we’re in together.

You see, we get to experience the love of Christ in a tangible manner through the Lord’s Supper because Jesus knew that his people were always going to be a forgetful people. Jesus knew that his people would always need tangible reminders of who he is and what he has done. That’s why Jesus has illustrated his love towards us with far more than just a book for us to have and read about and hope that works. He’s demonstrated his love towards us with a bloody cross where he went to die for the sins of the world; with an empty tomb where he lay for just a few night’s time; with a resurrection that’s been vindicated and testified by over 500 witnesses; and this morning, gratefully, with a supper where we get to remember with our senses today how much Jesus loves us and how much he is for us.

On the night that Jesus was betrayed, there was a meal. At the meal, there were a number of elements. We have the bread and the cup. In just a few moments, our deacons are going to serve us by passing these out. This is something for anybody that loves and trusts in Jesus and knows what it is to have a relationship with him. Listen, if there’s something about this morning to where you know, “Man, I’m just not there right now, but I want to get there,” if I could just encourage you to let this pass right now, to talk to one of our ministry leaders as soon as we’re done, and we’ll talk to you about what it means to have a relationship with Jesus.

What’s about to take place right here as we receive these things and pray before we take them together is this is a meal that the church is to enjoy together. With that, let me pray. Father in heaven, we do thank you for your word. Father, we thank you for revealing yourself to us. We pray that you would give us the faith to grasp who you are and how much you love us. As we have a few moments here to reflect on our lives, to confess any sin that’s a hindrance between us and you, Father, we pray that we’d see Jesus again loving us, even praying at your right hand for us. Father, we trust you for this in Jesus’s name, amen.



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