

Celebrate New Life

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[0:00] There we go. Sorry about that. It's a pleasure to be with you, and we always love just coming up and seeing the mountains up here.

It really is just a beautiful place. Travis, I want to say thank you to you. If y'all get a chance, make sure you thank Travis today. He's put so much work into helping me make sure we get slides and we can have this sermon flow.

He's been working really hard, and even with everything that's happened within the church. So just thank you, Travis. We really appreciate that. Now, today, I don't know if you realize, but the date, if you shorten it, it says 1-2-3, 1-2-3.

It's just a fun number. We have another 100 years before it'll happen again, but it's just a fun time to look forward to, New Year's. It's a time where we start to—oh, and guys, y'all can go ahead and be seated. I'm so sorry.

I should have said that. It's where we're going to celebrate the coming of the New Year. In almost every culture, we start to develop resolutions for being a better version of who we are.

[0:57] We'll look back at the highs and lows of the year. We'll look at those who we've lost. We'll look at the new births, the children that have come into our lives, and we'll be celebrating that. We'll remember big wins and maybe some big losses.

It's a time of reflection where tonight maybe you'll toast at midnight or, like I like to do, 9 p.m. and just, you know, it's midnight somewhere. I don't know the last time I stayed up till midnight. I've just gotten past that for some reason.

Perhaps you'll kiss your spouse, but we celebrate this day as we reflect back, and then we look forward to what is new and what is coming. But it's not missed that today this church is likely reflecting on a new season.

It's a season in the story of this church's life. You've experienced a lot of change. A lot's going on, and your beloved pastor, he's moved across the country. He's even started his new life.

I know you're like, Daniel, just don't make us sad. We're here for Sunday. But it's important we address this today. There's a new chapter. You've made a major decision that moves the kingdom of God forward, but it does so in a manner that kind of closes the book on Cottonwood Bible Church as its organization, as its structure.

[2:05] But I want to speak to it today because you've done great things, and you're going to continue to do great things. This isn't the end of the story. You need to process.

There's going to be some emotional time you need to take to process the mourning of this church as it is, as Cottonwood Bible Church. You can process the loss of your friend and your pastor, Jim, across the nation.

But remember, he's still alive, and we have telephones. But you cannot process and mourn the body of Christ because it's not dead. And you who are alive in Christ, you are not dying with this legally dissolving organization.

You are still alive, and Christ is still alive in you. My understanding is that most of you in this room are believers. You would call yourself saved and redeemed followers of Jesus Christ.

Christ. It means you identify just like the Ephesians that Paul was speaking to in this letter. And we hear from Paul today saying, If you really met Jesus, then you're a new man or you're a new woman.

[3:08] He told the Corinthian church the same thing. In 2 Corinthians 5.17, it says, Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, the new has come.

So today, if you're listening, we're going to discuss what it means to be a new man or a new woman. In Ephesians, he reminds us of the world we came from first. You'll see this in the first

verses.

Verse 17 says, Now I say this and testify in the Lord, You must no longer walk as the Gentiles do in the futility of their minds. And we talk about the Gentiles and the Jews a lot in Paul's letters.

This is not referring to Gentile people that are Christian believers who are not Jewish. This is strictly speaking of the pagan world in which they are Gentile for that sake. And there is a futility to how they live their life.

It says 18, We talked about this last week at Valley Life in John 1.10.

[4:13] He says, The world doesn't have what we have. The world doesn't understand the creator who gives them breath.

They live callous lives, darkened in their understanding because they don't have the light of life. It says they're alienated from the life of God. That means they're foreign to his ways.

And some would say, No, we have good morality. We have good ethics. Just like Christians. We just don't agree on everything. But God's way is so much more. See, the world, they love those who love them.

But God loves his enemies. Not only does he love them, he sends his own son to die on the cross to pay for their sins so that they cannot be enemies anymore. Therefore, the world feeds the hungry around the holidays.

And they'll feel good about it. But they're not caring for them. Throughout the year, they're not seeking to see them have success in life. And maybe even their motive is not to do something nice for that person, but to feel good about themselves because they can call themselves charitable.

[5:20] They can say, I gave my \$5 over at the Walmart to that guy who needed it. And I'm such a good person. Look at me. That's not how God is. Because God seeks the benefit of those he cares for.

They work hard to earn a big paycheck so they can get that promotion. Rather than as God would show us that we serve our masters and we honor God by working hard for them as we work for him. And we work so that we can earn enough to help those in need.

The world seeks freedom of religion for all. And God does. He gives us a choice to choose him. But God's choice is so that he can receive glory. And he's not dominating over us.

The world chooses to give us freedom because they don't want you to be able to say, You're wrong. If everybody has freedom of religion, then you can't tell me that I'm wrong for believing what I believe. And if you do, if a Christian person tries to draw them into the light, we're called bigots.

The world does not resolve to live as God would have us live. They enjoy sensual relationships. But they don't understand that marriage reflects the relationship between God and man.

[6:26] They don't understand the covenant promise of marriage. And they claim morality, but by their greed they pursue every kind of impurity and callously reject those who shine the light of life into their lives.

The world is dead. You are alive. Verse 20 tells us that. It says, But that's not the way you learned Christ. I think it's interesting it says learned Christ.

Like we would say you learned science. That means you study it and you spend time in it. First off, it shows us it's not saying that's how you learn church. It's not telling us that's how you learned Sunday school.

Or it's not telling us it's how you learned a program or a ministry. It's about how you learned Christ. So we can now know that Christ is the lesson. One, we must learn Christ.

But two, he's also the teacher. Christ is the teacher and we are taught by him. So we have to have a relationship with him to grow and to know him. Verse 21 says, Again, that's where you're going to find truth.

[7:30] Nowhere else. For those who have learned Christ, we're alive. And we are illuminated. We have the light of life. John 1 says, In him was life and the life was the light of men.

The light shines in the darkness. The darkness has not overcome it. If you are really saved by hearing and believing in Jesus Christ, then you should reflect Christ. See, reflection is an occurrence that happens when light passes through one object and it bounces off another.

And so Christ, being the light of life, his light shines through him into us and into our lives and we reflect him, no longer ourselves. It's why in Matthew 5.14 it calls Christians the light of the world.

If Christ is the light of men and we're the light of the world, it must mean that we have his light shining into this darkness. Matthew 5.16 says, See, we don't shine a light on ourselves.

The light shines on us and it reflects Jesus Christ in the darkness to this world. God gets the glory when we shine. So no longer do we live in death and darkness.

[8:42] That's our old self. And the old has passed away. You were taught to put off your old self when you learned Christ. I'm going to reread 20 through 22. It says, This speaking of putting off, they would know it well because they had layers of their robe and they were significant to their person and to how pure and how appropriate they were.

And so they put off this old robe, their old exterior cover. Remember, robes, the outer garment. It's the thing that everybody could see. So take that off.

Remove the way that the world has seen you before and put on the new covering. Don't display yourself. Display Christ, the old self. That is the old man.

Just like Adam from the Old Testament and from where we derive our sin. And Romans tells us, Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned.

For sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. We find that from the original sin, the original man, sin came into this world. But we can't.

[10:02] The verse doesn't give us an out to blame Adam. It says that for all men have sinned. We have sin in our life. That's the old self. Well, that's your former life.

And today I want you to remember that. And don't go back. Don't go back. The Bible describes one who returns to their former life as a dog returns to its own vomit. It says as a pig who, after washing herself, returns to wallow in the mire, in the dirt, in the filth, in the food that didn't make it into their mouth and into their feces.

That's not a description of something we want to be in. No one wants to describe themselves in this unclean fashion, in this nasty practice. That is the old self.

And so what I'm asking you to remember in this period of waiting specifically here is that you press forward. That you don't take a break. You don't press pause. This is not the end and we're waiting for the next thing.

This is happening. The war against sin on earth. The war for the salvation of our friends, our family, our mothers, our fathers, our children, our spouses. I don't know what situation you may be in.

[11:09] That war will not pause because Cottonwood Bible Church is not opening on Sunday.

Press forward. And the waiting might be hard. But go shine in the darkness. You are the light of the world.

We don't know how long it's going to take to prepare and launch a new church here. We're going to be caring for you in the meantime, but there will be a period of waiting. Don't wait to share the good news of Christ's love and sacrifice.

Today is somebody's last day on earth. Today somebody needs to hear about Jesus. And we can look at even the disciples. When Jesus had been crucified on the cross, what did they do?

They went and hid. A writer said they were sheltered in place and doing the safest thing they could, staying at home. Their whole world had been turned upside down and in a matter of days.

Life as they knew it was forever changed. And what once seemed unshakable was now uncertain. Don't go hide and wait. Your world's not turned upside down.

[12:07] The future is not uncertain for you. And Christ is the same today as he's always been and he still will be in all of the future. No matter what the name of this church is and no matter who's in it, Christ is still on the throne.

Almost said on the cross. Now he's off of that. That's what we're celebrating. Look forward to the coming church and the lives that will be changed. Be excited. Be happy. And find peace in Jesus Christ.

But until the next story unfolds, the mission is active and it's still the same. Go tell the world of Jesus. Live as the new man or new woman he has called you to be.

Verse 23 says, And to be renewed in the spirit of your minds. I chewed on this a little bit to understand, is this some overly spiritual idea that I need to consider? What I realized is it's just saying in the spirit of your minds reveals that the battle starts in a spiritual realm and it starts in the way we think.

The change starts in how we approach life with our minds. Start thinking differently then. Start seeing the world through God's eyes.

[13:14] Start hating sin. This is a big one. The old is dead and passed away. Let go of that. Don't put that robe back on. Don't try and wear both coats. Thomas Watson said, Start hating sin and start desiring the fruit of the spirit.

Verse 24 says, To put on the new self created after the likeness of God in true righteousness and holiness. It's not just about what you put off. It's about what you put on.

The change spiritually should bear fruit that's visible to the world around you. And the fruit of the spirit, it's mentioned earlier in Galatians, It says, But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Against such things there is no law, and those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. We see these words just display outwardly to the world around us.

They can see our patience. They can see our kindness. They will notice our self-control. They are visible to the world, although they started in the spirit of our minds. And don't miss it.

[14:31] It's the fruit of the spirit. Not the fruits of the spirit. I've been saying that my whole life until last month. I just learned this, guys. But it's the fruit of the spirit.

And I said, Well, how do you have the fruit of the spirit? But it's all these different things. There's multiple things that are there. It's because Jesus Christ is the fruit of the spirit. The fruit of the spirit is the evidence of the Holy Spirit working to make us more like him.

In the same way that we would look at a fruit tree, and we would see fruit form, it would show that there is a new life forming. And inside that fruit, there's seeds that we would hope would drop, and they would form, and new life would spring up from that.

New fruit should show in your life as you've had an encounter, as you learn Christ, that life should show, and you should show Jesus Christ to the world through it.

You don't even like the other stuff. So let the fruit of the spirit be the things you pursue, so that Christ may be glorified. Verse 25 says, Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbor, for we are members one of another.

[15:36] I also had to chew on this one. Is this for the world, or is this just speaking to Christians? Is it telling us to speak truth to ourselves? See, lying, it's easy to say, don't do that.

My mom's here today. As a kid, if I said, you're a liar, I'd get in trouble. I couldn't call someone a liar. But we know we tell people, don't lie. Nobody's values say, a good liar is what you really need. But see, lying in the scripture has revealed that it's dishonesty that causes division. And since we're all members of the same body, yes, it's true that we should share with each other in the church, in the body of Christ.

We should share in truth. But I don't want you to forget that the world is still living in the lie. That there is no Jesus Christ, there is no hell, and there's no heaven, there's no God, and their sins don't matter.

And they are also image bearers of Christ. So they need to be told the truth. In love and in grace, they need to hear it. Put away the falsehood in your life, in the church, and in this world.

[16:41] And verse 26 says, be angry and do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger. So you may have a justified reason to be angry. This word here, anger, is talking about an emotional response.

Just that your body has a provocation. It's not talking about developing more, and we'll talk about it in a second. So you can be mad at a child molester, but do not sin.

You can be mad about abortion, but do not sin. You can be mad about changes in the church, but don't sin. And you can be mad about your spouse, and the way they behave.

And guess what I'm going to say? But don't sin, right? Don't let the sun go down on your anger even. So not only to not sin with it, but there's a timeliness, that we need to address this thing.

We're teaching the young adults at Valley Life, as part of our residency program. And I had to confess to them that it's easy for me to address the problem. Me and my wife can have a conflict, and we address it.

[17:40] But her skill is that she can turn the switch off after that and say, okay, we resolved it. That is over. I'm Irish if it's not clear. That switch doesn't turn off so quick. It's more like a dimmer.

And it just drops it down. And I need some time to process. And I'm praying and asking God to change that in me. But I can still have an emotional response, but I've dismissed the issue.

I've let forgiveness be there where I need to be forgiven in our disagreement. I can forgive the other person where they need forgiveness. Don't let the sun go down on your anger. We asked our kids,

we said, our young adults in the group, why do you think this is so important?

And the things they came up with, the stewing can lead to making a mountain out of a molehill. It's unfair to have a conversation with somebody, to have an argument with them where you're telling what they said to yourself.

You never say the best things. You never give them the shadow or the benefit of the doubt that they would say the nice thing. You always give them the punch, and you come back with the zinger.

Don't do that.

[18:41] Don't let it sit here in your mind and soak and form sin. And you're not guaranteed tomorrow. So if today is a presence, then don't waste time being angry.

It's not worth it. It's not helpful to you. I get that things happen, or we feel it. We've got to learn to dismiss it and enjoy the time we have with the people in our lives. We need to enjoy the opportunities we have to share the gospel with the person at the bank or the person at the store who's not giving us the service that we prefer.

Or maybe even deserve that we've paid for. That time is valuable. But most importantly, God's word has told us to do not sin. Be angry, but do not sin.

It's not Christ-like. So if you feel anger, don't sin. Don't hold on to it. And don't let it become more than an emotion. Verse 27 tells us why. And give no opportunity to the devil.

When I was growing up, this verse always, the versions we used said, don't give the devil a foothold. And so a foothold's a place where a person's foot can be lodged to support themselves securely, especially while climbing.

[19:49] It's a secure position from which further progress can be made. The devil is trying to scale you. If you ask a climber the process of climbing, they'll tell you that you're actually using your arms to pull yourself to the wall while your legs are climbing up the wall.

You're looking for footholds to stand on to elevate until you can step to the next foothold. And they do that for stamina because the arms can't support as long as the legs can to make it up the wall. It's a climbing tactic. But it's the same thing the devil's doing. He's just looking for a foothold. And it's amazing what climbers can do. So you can imagine what the devil can do with just the littlest bit. A climber can put the little part of their heel, their foot, on the smallest little ledge and use it to elevate themselves, to get leverage on the mountain.

And the devil will take the smallest disagreement, the smallest thing that you will not release, and he will use it to get leverage on you in your life. So when the life whispers, be afraid. When life whispers, take a spiritual vacation.

When life whispers, you should be angry about this. Don't even entertain the thought. Call on your heavenly father and ask for his strength and his protection. Paul's given the Ephesians instruction and he shows the transformative power of salvation through Jesus Christ in his next verses.

[21:11] Verse 28, he says, let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

We see this not just about not sinning. It's about having a life that is transformed. The former man was a thief, and the new man, he's an honest laborer.

And beyond that, he's a laborer who works so that he can give to those who have less. Verse 29 says, let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such is good for building up, as fits the occasion that it may give grace to those who hear.

The former man uses words to destroy. The new man speaks in grace and truth for the edification of another person. So you might think of gossiping.

There's a difference when you're talking about somebody's problems and you're not talking to that person. So rather, instead of being a gossip, go to your wayward brother or sister directly to their face and confront them in grace and truth and love and hope that they would be restored to a right walk with Christ.

[22:22] Perhaps pointing out other people's flaws is something you do because it makes you feel better about your own insecurities. If I point out their flaws, everybody's gonna look there and they won't notice my failures, the things that I'm so afraid about in my own self.

Don't do that. That's not the evidence that would be shown by a character who's been truly changed by Jesus Christ, who's had an encounter with the authentic receiving of salvation.

Verse 30 says, and do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. The grieving of the Holy Spirit. Can we really make God sad?

See, the grieving can be deliberate or inadvertent act, but it's behaving in a way that's obstructing to our spiritual improvement. It grieves the Holy Spirit in the same way that a parent is grieved when his child behaves in a self-destructive manner.

I asked Cameron if I could tell this story and he said yes, but Cameron had gotten caught with his phone. I knew he had used it. He wasn't supposed to be using it and I gave him an opportunity to tell the truth.

[23:28] He was afraid of his actions and what he had done. It made him feel bad and so he told me, no, Dad, I didn't do that. I said, Cameron, I'm gonna give you one more chance. Please tell the truth. He said, I promised you. I didn't have it.

I said, Cameron, I've acted like I didn't know for sure, but I do know. Hand me the phone. And so he gave me the phone and we had to talk about how I was not broken about him having the phone. I was broken because my son and I have now been separated with trust.

We now have to question if in the future he were to say to me that a child did something to him and that child claimed that my son started it or did the thing to him instead. I explained how important it was to maintain our relationship, but I was grieved not because I was offended for myself.

I was grieved for my son because I wanted to love and have a deep relationship with him and we've worked on that. Thank you, Cameron, for letting me share in that story. I hope it'll empower other people to recognize in your own life how when we sin, the Holy Spirit is grieved because of how it hurts us, not God.

Spurgeon says that he's grieved for us mainly for our own sakes for he knows what misery sin will cost us. He reads our sorrows in our sins and he grieves over us because he sees how much chastisement we incur, how much communion we lose.

[24:42] He gave the example that the Holy Spirit grieving at that time, he said it would be like if you're reading your favorite fiction novel. In today's culture, maybe it's that you're playing your video game or you're watching TV too long, but you're telling God, I just don't have time for my devotions.

I don't have time to be spending in your word. Five minutes is all I can give you. We can spend hours on our hobbies and our interests. The Holy Spirit would be grieved not because we've been offensive, that we've not given him the glory.

The Holy Spirit would be offended or grieved because it's hurting us. We're missing out on a relationship with God. See, God's not asking to be a part of our lives. God is telling us to make him our whole life.

He wants us to be redeemed for the purpose for which we were created, to be image bearers of him and to give him glory. So the last two verses of four as he closes this part of the letter, they really just contrast the old man and the new man.

Verse 31 says, let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you along with all malice. Wait, Daniel, didn't you just say we can be angry? We just can't sin?

[25:49] That's what I was telling you. There is a difference in the words used. The first word just responds like an emotion. Anger is the provocation that something has happened, but there is an anger that we talked about which is where you hold on to something, where you see the anger and you dwell on it.

It's the disposition of staying provoked in the victim mindset. In other words, they all show a sinful disunity. Think of the word bitterness. It's a resentful spirit and it refuses reconciliation.

Wrath is a boiling passion against someone. Clamor is shouting and disagreement. And malice is the furthest thing, I feel, is the desire to inflict pain, physical pain because of your conflict.

Those words, they all present this nature of being self-defensing, self-centered. But the old man is dead, it said. We don't need to protect dead men.

And now it's Christ who lives in us and he doesn't need us to protect him. He is our protector. So respond instead in this way, verse 32, be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another as God in Christ forgave you.

[27:06] So when we remember how Christ didn't defend himself but rather laid down his life for us, Romans 5, 8, but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

His response to our sins should transform how we respond to the sins of others. Moses broke all ten commandments at the same time, literally. He smashed them. It was in response to the sins of the other people who he was leading.

God's reaction to Moses was not anger. It was correction and making it right. He said, get two more stones and I'll write it again. Moses was angry in a response to sin and then in his sin God responds with love and correction and in truth.

The law that Moses was supposed to carry those people was the grace that God was trying to give them. There's something else we were just talking about, the grace upon grace. In John 1, 16, it says, from his fullness we have all received grace upon grace for the law was given through Moses. Grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Mercy is not getting what you do deserve but grace is getting what you don't deserve and the law that we were given was grace.

[28:18] You see, the grace revealed to the people who did not know God the God that they had left. The law revealed God's character and who he is and what he wanted for his people and so it was the first grace.

It's not just that the grace upon grace is how deep the Father's love is for us. That's true. It is very deep. But see, Jesus Christ came. He was the grace in place of that grace because the law only showed, man, that we did not stand up to God's measure.

It showed the gap and it showed what we needed but they had to have faith that God would send his son and so Jesus Christ came and was the grace in place of grace to be in a right relationship with God.

He came and died on the cross for us. We just celebrated Christmas and we said, Emmanuel has come, God with us. It's the beginning of the end of the story of sin.

We celebrate his life now but in a few months we're going to turn around and we're going to celebrate Christ's death. Jesus Christ lived the life that we couldn't live. He died the death that we deserved and in three days later he rose again and he conquered sin and death.

[29:30] Jesus Christ is the light that darkness will not and cannot overcome. Jesus Christ is the only way. He is the truth. He is the life.

If you haven't received this offer today that Jesus Christ will stand in place for your sins, please make that decision today. Don't take it for granted. Your only part in receiving that is to repent and to believe.

Two steps. Repenting is not just admitting that you did it. That's easy enough. Repenting is confessing and turning from your sin. And so when you want to repent, you can't repent of what you can't confess.

You can't confess what you haven't grieved and you can't grieve what you haven't seen. So today, even if you're saved and you need to repent, you can ask God to open your eyes so that you can see and grieve the sin in your life and you can confess it and then you can turn away.

And then it says to believe. Believing that you had no hope for salvation other than Jesus Christ. Believe that Jesus Christ died and rose for your sins and that you now have eternal life through him.

[30:41] You have to believe it and carry it. Not to say, I think that happened, but live it. Believing will transform the way you live your life. For those who are believers, what do I want you to do?

What are the literal actions that I'm asking you to take? Don't go back. That's the first step. Don't go back to the old man. Don't put on the old robe. There's no purpose in that. There's no life in that.

That is darkness and there's futility to live like the Gentiles. Remember the words from a little-known band maybe you've heard of Journey. It says, don't stop believing. Hold on to that feeling.

And while we can joke, it's genuine that there is a need for you to remember. Don't stop believing the things that I said about Jesus Christ already occurred in your life and that he is still your Savior today.

Hold on to the feeling of joy and peace and the desire to glorify God with your life. Celebrate him daily. Worship him daily.

[31:42] And share him daily. Today, when you're making your New Year's resolutions, don't resolve to lose 20 pounds. Resolve rather to treat your body like the temple of God in your actions, in your food, in every manner.

Don't resolve to make more money. I would say resolve more to giving more of your money away and stewarding better the money you already have. Don't resolve to reading a number of books to have a new goal for that.

Resolve to spend more time in the good book, in the word of God. Say, yes, I want to be a better husband or a better wife. I want to spend more time with my children or maybe my neighbors.

I want to be developing relationships in my community that will open gospel opportunity. These are resolutions we should make. Resolve this year to his kingdom come, his will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

Let's pray. God, we thank you for this day. We thank you for the breath in our lungs, for the health to be here, for a church to be under the roof of.

[32:51] Lord, we thank you as we reflect back on who we were before you and we see the change that knowing you, learning Christ has made in our lives. Lord, thank you that we are not who we were when you found us in the field.

But Lord, we are clean and we reflect you and we are called sons and daughters. Lord, help us to live a life where we believe fully in our mind that you are God, that you died on the cross for our sins and that it is a transforming effect in our lives that we would go and take this good news to the world.

Lord, help our fathers and mothers and our sons and daughters, our teachers, our leaders in the community to receive you because we go out and shine the light into the darkness. Lord, thank you for the gift of dying on the cross for our sins.

Thank you for how your body was broken so that we could have life. You who had no sin and us who were nothing but sin. Lord, you redeemed us and you gave us purpose again.

You gave us a relationship with you because you love us. Help us to remember that daily. As we move forward in this next year, help us to pursue you deeper. And for Cottonwood Bible Church, Lord, I pray that you would help them to remember that this is not over.

[34:07] This organization, as it's dissolved from a legal standpoint, Lord, Travis said it best. The people are the church. They are the body of Christ. Help us not to pause.

Help us not to retreat or to hide, Lord, but to continue on in mission for your name and for your glory. In Jesus' name, amen. At this time, we're going to take communion.

We're going to do it a little bit of a valley lifestyle. So you're used to coming up and being led through the receiving of communion. What we're going to do is we have the communion for you here. And if you'll come up the center aisle, for anyone in the room who's a baptized believer, you don't have to be a member of the church, the Cottonwood Bible Church.

You have to be a member of the body of Christ, that church. But if you'll come forward, we have juice in the top cup and the bread is underneath. And you can receive communion. But if you'll come up the middle aisle, grab the two cups that are sat together and go to the outside aisles to return to your seats.

And then spend some time in reflection before you receive the communion. Pray and make sure your heart is right with God. Ask for forgiveness, confess, whatever you need to do to prepare yourself to be honoring Jesus with his sacrifice in this time.

[35:17] And so once you do that and you've prayed, you can go ahead and receive the elements at whatever time you're ready for it. And if you'll just stand, and once we see the room is ready, we're going to go and spend some time in worship and song.

So I'm going to invite you now for that. And thank you for having me here today. Thank you. Stay right there, okay?

Wait right back. Wait right back.