

We Will... Participate

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Preacher: Scott Liddell

[0 : 00] Thank you, Curtis, for praying and worship team, for leading us in worship, and a few housekeeping things to take care of before we get into the message.

First of all, thank you for praying. For my wife and I, as we were in Phoenix last weekend and we missed you, my wife had some meetings to go down there for work, and so I decided to join her just to remind myself what sunshine felt like.

And so, I appreciate you praying for us. We missed you. Secondly, this stool here is not a sermon illustration. It is just for me to provide some relief. I managed to injure my back a few weeks ago, and so don't worry, this is not a sermon illustration, so you don't have to think, how is he going to use that stool?

I wonder how that applies to the message. It doesn't. It's just relief. Third, if you're a guest with us today, we're in the middle of a sermon series where we're walking through our member covenant, and we have a copy of that on the resource board as you exit on this back wall over here in the hallway.

And the member covenant is articulating our understanding of what our responsibility to the Lord is, but also to one another, and that's the purpose of a member covenant, of what responsibilities do we have as a body of Christ together.

[1 : 21] And we've been walking through this member covenant. Today is the second to the last message. Next week, Pastor Jay will be teaching the last message of this sermon series. We'll come to the last member covenant aspect of our member covenant, and then we will go into a minor or a small, like a three-part Christmas sermon series that will begin the following week after that.

And then in the month of January, just so you know where we're at in the preaching calendar, we will begin preaching through the book of Philippians and get back into what we normally do is that it's preaching through a book of the Bible.

And so you can begin today or this week beginning to read the book of Philippians, familiarizing yourself with that book as we begin to look at that come the turn of the year in January.

But as for this morning, our member covenant that we are looking at states it this way. And on the back of your sermon outline card, I encourage you to follow along because that will be helpful for today's message in particular.

The member covenant that is not written on your card, but it's posted on the hallway back there, is we will participate in the gospel ministry through the preaching of God's word, the administration of the ordinances, the baptism, the Lord's supper, and the exercise church discipline.

[2 : 38] And so why the thrust of the message will be this, we are called to be disciples of Christ and as being called to be disciples of Christ, we're going to participate together in a few things.

In fact, there's a lot of things we do as a church, but what is at the core of our discipleship strategy here at fourth? Number one, I would say it this way, we're going to prioritize the gathering of the saints on a Sunday morning.

There's something that happens in when the church gathers in this room and other parts of the day that are so important, that is core to our discipleship strategy. Yes, there are men's huddles.

Yes, there are women's Bible studies. There are prayer groups that meet during the week. There's all these other things that we do, but at the core of our discipleship strategy, it's the gathering of the church.

Why? So your outline now reads, should read this, in order to grow as a disciple of Christ, we will participate through the preaching and the hearing of God's word, praying God's word, singing God's word, observing God's word and protecting God's word.

[3 : 43] That will be the thrust of the message today. So when we come to our first one, we will participate through as we grow as disciples of Christ through the preaching and or the receiving and the hearing of God's word.

Why is God's word so important? It is both central in our lives individually, but also together as a church corporately. Why is it that we see in God's word through the book of Acts, these men of God proclaim God's word, people are saved, people are transformed.

It is so important to our lives. The early church says was devoted themselves to the apostles teaching. Peter stands and proclaims God's truth and people are saved. Why is this so important? Well, Scripture tells us what is so unique about Scripture. You could say it this way, that something is what it is and therefore it does what it does.

The Bible is what it is, therefore it does what it does. There is a passage in Scripture that tells us what it is. For example, if I had a spoon here and I said this is a spoon and because of what a spoon is, it determines what it does.

[4 : 59] The function of the thing is determined by what it is. So it's a spoon. If it's a tire, you would use a tire differently than you would use a spoon and on and on we could go with this illustration. Well, what is the Bible?

The Bible thankfully tells us. So if you have a copy of Scripture, you can turn to 2 Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17, we'll find what the Bible tells us about itself as to what it is.

What is the Bible? Second Timothy 3, verses 16 and 17, read this. All Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training and righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.

The Bible is what it is. What does the Bible say about itself? It says that it is God breathed. What's interesting is this Greek word that is described here.

It is the only time that is found in Scripture where this word is specifically used. It is breathed out by God. Some Scripture translations say it is given by the inspiration of God or is breathed out by God.

[6 : 05] What do we gather? What are the implications of this word? What is the word if it is breathed out by God? What does that mean? What are the implications of that? Well, first, that originated from God, that this word of God that we have is been breathed out by God.

It is given by the inspiration of God. It originated from God. Therefore, the second implication is that it is the final authority for life and living.

It helps us answer the question, where does authority lie? Is culture the authority on how we should live our life and living? Is that where authority lies? Is myself the authority on what I think life should look like, how I should live my life, how I feel like I should live?

Who has authority? What has authority? God's word has authority. It is the final authority for life and living because it is breathed out by God. It is therefore also, if it is originated from God, it has authority for life and living, then also the implication is that it is to be obeyed.

God's word is to be obeyed. There's no greater authority. Therefore, Bible is to be obeyed. We could list a number of sins that we know to be sinful.

[7 : 17] Why do we know that to be sinful? God's word calls them to be sinful. Fourthly, the implication is there is power to God's word.

There is a divine power that accompanies his word. And fifthly, there is wisdom and knowledge behind it. God is behind it.

Therefore, this infinite God, there is wisdom and knowledge behind the one who speaks has wisdom and knowledge that it originates from.

Those are all implications from God's word being breathed out by God. Therefore then, if that's what the Bible is, then what does it do? Like a spoon. It is what it is.

Therefore, it has a function of what it does. The nature of the thing, that which is what it is, it determines the function of the thing. That's what it does. So what is this thing that is breathed out by God do?

[8 : 13] Well, it tells us. It's profitable for teaching. It's profitable for reproof. It's profitable for correction. It's profitable for training and righteousness. And ultimately, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good word.

Let's take each of those one at a time. It is profitable for teaching. That is to educate and to instruct for godly living and godly service. It's profitable for reproof.

This is to rebuke another with conviction, to convict of misbehavior or a false teaching, a false doctrine.

To correct or to rebuke to say this is wrong, that which you believe that leads to a misbehavior that you're exhibiting. Therefore it is also profitable for correction.

This is the positive. After rebuke, you say this is wrong. What is it to correct? The word correction means to restore to how it should be.

[9 : 15] To restore something to its original purpose or to restore something to its original condition. So after rebuke, you say this is wrong, but let me help you restore in your thinking what is correct.

So that's the word of correction. It's a positive provision as opposed to a negative provision. It is also profitable for training in righteousness, for instruction, to build up in paths of righteousness. And then ultimate enablement of scripture, because it is what it is, it does what it does, what is the word of god do, and it's the enablement for a man to be complete or that is to be mature.

One who is capable and proficient in life and living in his word. And another one who says that a man may be equipped for every good work. We all want to be useful.

You may be a useful person in God's hands at his disposal for his glory and his good. And so that's what scripture is and that's what scripture does.

[10 : 24] So the saints gather on a Sunday morning, we gather to hear God's word because we believe what it is, as God's word says what it is, is breathed out by God and it has those implications and is profitable for this way.

It does what it does and so we gather to grow as disciples of Christ and to hear God's word preached and proclaimed and taught in classes. This is absolutely critical to grow as disciples of Christ.

So when we gather, we will participate in the gathering to hear God's word. This beautiful word that raises the dead, stirs the idol, encourages the faithful, feeds the hungry, mends the wounded.

This is why we gather and this is what God's word is and what God's word does and so we will participate. We're agreeing in our covenant together to say we'll participate in both proclaiming and the receiving and the hearing of God's word.

It's absolutely important. Currently, we will pray God's word. If you have a Bible with you, please turn to Matthew chapter 6. We will not only preach and hear God's word, participate in that, but we will also pray the word of God.

[11 : 37] So something staggering I noticed a few years back when I was reading Matthew chapter 6.

You know one of those things, you read a passage and you think you've read it many times and then something stands out to you going, I don't know if I've ever noticed that before. This one happened to me a few years back.

I was reading Matthew chapter 6 and obviously there's a place for private prayer. So if we read Matthew 6, 5 through 6, we read this. And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites for they love to stand and pray in synagogues and at the street corners that they may be seen by others.

Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room, shut the door and pray to the Father who is in secret and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.

So there's a place for private prayer and the Lord is trying to emphasize, hey, don't be like the hypocrites, do it this way. So I would anticipate then just a few verses later the Lord's prayer reading a certain way, but it doesn't.

[12 : 47] And so let me, I'm going to deliberately misread the, misread this for effect, but now let's read drop down a few verses.

And this is how I would have anticipated then. So private prayer is so important. We just read that. So this is how I would anticipate this model prayer when Jesus is teaching his disciples how to pray. This is how I would have interpreted, this is how I would have expected then Jesus to teach his disciples how to pray. And I'm intentionally going to misread it to make a point.

So then he says in Matthew chapter six verses nine through 13, this is how I would have then anticipated hearing this model prayer. Verse nine, and then pray then like this, our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Forgive me this day my daily bread, forgive me my debts as I have forgiven my debtors, and lead me not into temptation, but deliver me from evil.

[13:52] Did you see how I misread that? He just emphasized pray privately. Don't do this thing publicly. And then he changes the pronoun use and says, but this model prayer is actually something that you're to do together.

Pray corporately, and he teaches his disciples to pray corporately, not just privately. So when he teaches his disciples to pray, pray like this, he uses these plural pronouns. Give us this day our daily bread. Give us, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

So prayer is this thing that we are to do corporately, not in addition to privately, in addition to privately, but also corporately. Jesus provides this model prayer and puts it in corporate use. Prayer is important. There's a few ways that I, when I look at the totality of scripture, prayer is how God's people respond to him and thankfulness and praise.

[15:11] We're to thank the Lord. Prayer is how God's people cry out to him for mercy and deliverance. Prayer is how God's people call upon him to accomplish the work of his kingdom.

So in short, prayer is how we actively demonstrate and articulate our dependence on the Lord. So if that's true, or since that is true, I should say, when we pray corporately, it's okay to pray in agreement. If you're the spirit of God and you agrees with what we are praying in scripture, how people pray and it is true and it rings of scripture and you say, yes, Lord, it's okay, quite okay to agree and say, yes, Lord, amen, so be it.

Yes, or a guttural, uh, is just fine too. I don't care. But it's okay to corporately prayer when one person is praying, praying with the person and say, yes, Lord, I agree with that.

So we preach, we will participate through the preaching and the hearing of God's Word. We'll participate through praying the Word. We will also participate in singing God's Word. If you have Bible, please turn to Psalm 96.

[16:30] Psalm 96 verses 1 and 2a. Psalm 96 functions, uh, you can think of the book of Psalms rather as like the original hymn book of God's people.

People wrote these songs and poems down, uh, songs and that's what is largely consisted of the book of Psalms. It functions as a microcosm that helps us highlight three reasons why we sing. I can find three and just one Psalm alone. Look with me in Psalm 96 verses 1 and 2. Look what God's people are encouraged to do. It says, oh, sing to the Lord, a new song.

Sing to the Lord all the earth, sing to the Lord and bless his name. We sing firstly as an act of worship. Notice where our singing is directed.

Oh, sing to the Lord, sing to the Lord all of the earth. Oh, sing to the Lord, bless his name. We are, we are directing our worship to the Lord.

[17:38] Years ago I participated in a prison ministry and I don't know, I had never been in prison before and, uh, for several years I would go to the prison out in Erie Heights.

It's a medium security prison and, and we would, I would be there and every Wednesday night I would go out and, and teach a little sermon, a little message of Bible study with the men.

And it was actually a very enjoyable time and something that occurred that actually shocked me was how loudly these men sang. I, I, I don't know what I was thinking, but I thought, here's a bunch of people who are down and out who have obviously lost a lot of freedom and who would be a little more quiet in their expression of worship.

That's what I honestly thought before I went in and, oh my goodness, was I categorically wrong. I was so surprised at how loud this room of men, inmates, convicted felons sang who are redeemed of God, knew their sin, understood their freedom in Christ, even though they were incarcerated for their crime, understood their forgiveness and they sang.

It shocked me. It was one of the loudest rooms I've ever been in, in worship. Now it could have been the cinderblock walls or something. I don't know, but there may be some other reasons, but I'm just saying I was so overjoyed.

[19:09] It caused me to want to sing out even more. They worshiped the Lord. Second, we sing as an act of worship, but we also sing to disciple one another.

Look with me in two, verse two, the second half of verse two, sing to the Lord, bless His name, tell of His salvation from day to day.

There is a horizontal aspect to worship when we sing. We sing to direct our worship to the Lord, but we are telling of His salvation to one another when we sing.

There is a horizontal aspect to this. I have grown in my understanding of this. I have neglected this understanding for many years to my shame. Just a few months ago, I actually was moved to do something with my understanding of this.

George is not here today. McCracken, he often sits down here in a wheelchair. He's a blessing. He's a retired pastor. He's a blessing to be around. You never hear the man complain.

[20 : 13] I love that man deeply. He has a privilege of mind to sit next to him and Joanne each Sunday. Joanne, who he often comes with one day, was not here.

I knew this about George, is that he has macular degeneration. He cannot read the screens. Here's a man who we're singing a song, and I recognize the song that we were singing is a little newer, and probably George didn't know the lyrics of the song.

I deliberately did something as I sat next to George. I wasn't standing, I sat next to George. I wanted my mouth to be an earshot of him.

I, yes, we have amplification. Yes, he can hear the words sang, but I also want to be someone who declares salvation of the Lord to him.

I have a horizontal responsibility to my neighbors to declare the salvation of the Lord. And George couldn't see the words.

[21 : 11] In case he couldn't hear, I wanted to be, I wanted to have a responsibility to George. I understood my responsibility to George and to one another to declare, what does the verse say?

Tell of his salvation day to day. And here's the thing. I knew of George's situation, but we don't know each other's situation.

You don't know how hard the week has been for your neighbors sitting next to you. You don't know what's going on. You don't know necessarily sometimes if the person's spiritual state, are they even saved?

And so when we sing, we have a horizontal responsibility to one another to tell of his salvation day after day. So I encourage us to sing out.

We have a responsibility to one another. And what kinds of things do we sing when we tell of his salvation to one another?

[22 : 13] What are the kinds and typical things that we read on the screen, the lyrics of our songs that we sing about one's faith in Christ? These are the effects of when we sing, that one's faith in Christ is strengthened.

One's appreciation for the gospel is deepened. One's allurements to sin is weakened. One's love for God is heightened. One's faith in God when we walk in, our trust in our Savior, our affection for the one who died for sin when we walked in should have been bolstered by the time we walked out if the only thing that we did was sing together.

Thirdly, so we see that we sing as an act of worship. We see that we sing as a way to disciple one another, but we also sing as a way to declare, to make a declaration of God to those without Christ, look with me in verse three, Psalm 36 verse three, declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all peoples.

We have no idea who is sitting around us and who is sitting in this room. Can you imagine being someone who does not know the Lord and they come to church one day and they observe all of you guys singing and they're thinking they are singing as if they mean it and they believe it.

They are declaring these things about their own sinful state and what God has done for them as if they believe it and they're singing out.

[23 : 50] What are we doing when we declare his glory among the nations? His marvelous works among all peoples. There is an evangelistic dimension to our singing when we sing songs of worship to him.

In Ephesians five, we don't have to turn there, but it says that we address one another in songs and hymns and spiritual songs, singing, making melody to the Lord with one's heart.

We don't know our neighbor's circumstances, so let us sing. One of the other things I'll just say is I have a privilege about once a quarter, three times a year to gather with churches, pastors and elders in the city of Spokane.

There are a bunch of men and there is just something about men singing that is just so beautiful and I want to just encourage men. Everyone goes to church and you always think I'm going to hear ladies sing.

It's just what ladies do. I know, I get it. But men are to sing as well.

[25 : 01] This is coming from a guy that I don't have a greatest voice. I don't even like listening to myself. I get it and I'm also a quiet person contrary to the role that I play.

I'm a softer spoken person. I don't care to share a lot. So I don't like attention and all that kind of stuff and yet I have been convicted about this role of what singing is and what our responsibilities are to both to the Lord and to one another.

And I have increased in my audibility when I sing to the Lord. And I just want to encourage men, please sing out.

Please sing out. Okay. We will participate in the preaching, the hearing God's word, praying God's word, singing God's word and now observing God's word.

We observe the word and how do we observe these things and what we call ordinances, baptisms and Lord's Supper.

[26 : 04] These are things that we observe. And why are they so important? We know that in Matthew 28, the disciples were told to go out baptizing individuals who came to faith in Christ.

And Lord Supper, these two ordinances that we call baptism and Lord's Supper are ways that we witness the gospel. When someone is baptized, what are they doing?

It is their public identification with Christ. They are publicly declaring their faith in Christ. And by faith, they are believed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sin. And they are publicly demonstrating, I have believed visually in his life. It's a portrayal, his death. It was they get dunked in the water and resurrection as they come out of the water.

I'm declaring, I have believed that internally spiritually for the forgiveness of sin and I trust Christ and I'm declaring it to you. And that proclamation of the gospel is good for the church to be reminded.

[27 : 05] There is only one way of salvation. And God is continually redeeming people and we celebrate that when we observe someone being saved. And we're reminded of what it is that it took for that person to be saved.

God drew that person to himself and they believed in the life, death and resurrection of Christ for the forgiveness of sin. And then it says, what happens after someone is baptized?

It says, in the book of Acts time and time and time again and they were added to the church that day. Or so many so thousands were added to the church that day.

We also observe the word through the ordinance of the Lord's Supper or communion. We often will call it. The church at Corinth had so many problems and turned to the book of 1 Corinthians chapter 11.

We're going to see this one together. The church at Corinth had so many sinful problems and among the problems that the church was divided, they lacked unity, there was pridefulness, there was selfishness.

[28 : 05] We read in 1 Corinthians 11 verses 17 and 18, we read this. But in the following instruction, I do not commend you because you have come together.

It is not for better but for worse. For in the first place, when you come together as a church, I hear there are divisions among you and in part I believe it.

And so there was divisions in the church at Corinth and their divisiveness was rooted in some form of classism and pride and people who had and they have not.

And there was pride. And so we read in verses 20, chapter 11 verse 20, we read this. And when they come together, it is not for the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, one goes ahead with his own meal, one goes hungry and another gets drunk.

What? Do you not have houses to eat in or drink in? Or do you have despised the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? And what shall I say to you?

[29 : 09] Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. Paul is calling their sin, they are gathering for the Lord's supper. Some are eating so much that those who have nothing go without.

Those who have much are getting in line first and those who have nothing don't get in line first and so the last in line there is nothing for them. Some are getting drunk with the wine that is provided, it is brought.

So Paul goes on. So notice how Paul addresses this division, this form of classism, this form of pride, this form of sin. What does he write to them about? The Lord's supper. So think about this when we take the Lord's supper.

How should we take the Lord's supper? Why is this good for us and our understanding and our discipleship for us to observe the Lord's supper? Read with me in verse 23. For I receive from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night that He was betrayed took bread and he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me.

And in the same way he took the cup after the supper saying, this is the cup of the new covenant in my blood, do this as often as you drink of it in remembrance of me. For as often as you drink, eat this bread and drink of this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.

[30 : 33] Whoever therefore eats of the bread and drinks of the cup in an unworthy manner is guilty concerning the body and the blood of the Lord. Let a man examine himself then and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup if anyone eats the drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment upon himself.

The Lord is shocking that Paul would address the church at Corinth, the sin at the church at Corinth by talking about the Lord's supper.

It is central to a health of the church that we observe these ordinances. They're reminded of what Christ has done for us, the high price that He paid to forgive sin and send His Son to die.

Many of you have a furnace or an HVAC system that has a central air furnace thing that provides air conditioning and heating in your home perhaps.

And what is good about those furnaces, they provide heating and cooling, that's great. But you need to change the furnace filter about once a month.

[31 : 39] Why do you need to change the furnace filter about once a month? Because it inevitably gets the dust, the cat or dog hair, the pollen, the pollutants in the air.

The furnace filter captures all of those pollutants so that it doesn't continue to spread it into your houses that pushes air into your home.

The Lord's supper is like a furnace filter, it's a checkpoint. And it gives us an opportunity, here we practice the Lord's supper once a month, we observe the Lord's supper once a month on the first Sunday of the month.

So you can anticipate it, but it's good for us to examine ourselves. We ought to do this daily, but it's good for the church to consider the high price that was paid for my salvation, to forgive me of my sin.

And Lord, if there's any wicked way in me, please, I want to be right with my brothers and sisters and the Lord before I observe this, and I want to be right with you with any sin before you.

[32 : 46] So I want to take this in a wordly manner. So the Lord's supper is integral for a church.

So as we're going to just grow as disciples of Christ, we want to participate in the preaching and the hearing of God's word, the praying of God's word, the singing of God's word, the observing of God's word through the ordinances, and lastly, to protect God's word.

And you say, Scott, God's word does not need to be protected. It's just fine on its own.

And there's a sense of that that is true, but I want us to read Galatians. If you have a Bible, please turn to Galatians real quick. Again, one of those times when I was reading God's word and I thought, I just saw something new.

And several years ago, I saw something that perhaps I had seen before, but it didn't stick out to me in the same way it did then. And in Galatians chapter one, verses six through nine, Paul is writing to the church of the Galatia, and he wants, and I want us to notice who he holds responsible for the turning away to a different gospel.

[34 : 10] Who does Paul address? Notice with me in verse six, I am astonished that you so quickly are deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning away to a different gospel.

Not that there is another one, but there is some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach to you, let him be accursed.

As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

Who is Paul holding responsible for this desertion of the purity of the gospel, the entire church? I would have suspected to read because the elders are responsible for the sound doctrine in a church and to weed out error.

The elders are responsible. I would have expected Paul to be addressing the elders specifically here, but he does not. He addresses the whole church. The whole church is responsible for protecting the gospel, the true purity of the gospel of Christ and not to let any error seep in with regard to that gospel.

[35 : 32] So it's a bit surprising to me for Paul to hold the entire church responsible for this. Secondly, so we're responsible to protect sound doctrine.

All of us are. Secondly, we're responsible to protect what grace does in a person's life. And that is, grace transforms a person's life.

And we're supposed to understand that and protect that witness that we have. So for example, in verse 2 Corinthians 5, 17, you can probably look at this one on the screen because we'll look at a different one later.

Or if anyone is in Christ, he's a new creation. The old has passed away. Behold, new has come. At salvation, believers have this new nature that they operate from.

The power of sin has been broken in a person's life at salvation. The grace of God transforms a person from now the inside out having given this new nature.

[36 : 31] And you think, okay, well then what does grace do? Well, I'm glad you asked the question because in the book of Titus, we've returned there, Titus chapter 2, we're going to read two verses.

So as we have this new nature, and the power of sin has been broken, we're to protect what grace does.

We learn what grace does in verses 11 and 12. For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions and to live self-controlled and upright godly lives in this present age.

So notice what grace does. It trains us. So it's verse 11, for grace has appeared, bringing salvation to all people. And so then what does grace do?

It trains us to renounce ungodliness. It trains us to renounce worldly passions. It trains us to live self-controlled lives. It trains us to live upright and godly lives in our present age.

[37 : 35] So then how do we protect what grace does this transformed life in a person's life? How do we protect the church? How do we protect one another with this understanding of what grace does, especially when we see someone not living in that way that grace is training us?

What if someone is sinning and is unrepentant in their sin? What is the church to do in that condition? And how does the church to protect itself?

This is when this is a beautiful gift that the church has been given and it's called church discipline. The Lord has given us this beautiful tool to invite its members to repent of sin and it's called church discipline.

I want to talk about church discipline in two ways here. One form of church discipline is what I call formative discipline. That is it's analogous to getting in shape. So if you want to run a race or something, there's a triathlon coming up, you want to eat right, you want to exercise, you want to get in shape and stay in shape in preparation for that race or just for life in general.

You want to, it's formative, it's a way to get in shape. So how then do we spiritually get in shape? How does this formative discipline look like to get in shape spiritually?

[38 : 59] Well, we spend time with the Lord. Much of the things that we're talking about today, the things that we're responsible for, time with the Lord quite privately to be in community where we hear the preaching and teaching of God's word.

We're leading and participating in small groups. We gather corporately. We observe the ordinances. We sing. We pray. All those things. Formative ways that we discipline ourselves, that we allow the Lord to work in and through us.

These are ways that we prevent risk from false teaching or from a public scandal worse, just the disunity and a whole host of other spiritual maladies can occur.

If we ignore these disciplines, let me give you an example. There's someone very close to me who has, for whatever reasons, in their life has stopped going to church.

They have just, they're done. And I'm watching this person's life and they're not progressing in their fate. There's roots of bitterness now that are showing up in the person's life and it's having effects in other relationships in them and around their life.

[40 : 15] They've ignored this formative discipline in their life that they have that is for their good. And if that were to continue in a person's life where they ignore the formative discipline in a

person's life that we all participate in, then we turn the page to corrective discipline.

This is spoken of in Matthew 18. This is not a sermon on church discipline, but I just want to touch on it here. You can find it in Matthew 18. But it corrects something that has gone wrong that is more serious.

So if formative discipline is like exercise, eating right, these kinds of things, the analogy, then what is corrective discipline? It's more like surgery.

It's more like surgery. It corrects something that has gone wrong so that something more serious does not get injured. And how do you do that spiritually? What does that look like spiritually?

This is when somebody may be rebuked and said, I'm sorry, sir, you're wrong. This is sinful, whether it be doctrine or whether it be a behavior. This is sinful.

[41 : 23] This is when we admonish someone. This is someone who may be removed from the membership role. This may be someone who is asked to please in that sinful state, please do not take the Lord's Supper.

We ask that when you gather, please do not receive the Lord's Supper. Because you would be eating and drinking in an unworthy manner, we want to spare you from that. Please don't do that. And then worse is when someone may no longer be welcome to worship with us. And it is all with the hope, though, that we see that person's repent of sin and return to the Lord and to the fellowship of the body.

Corrective discipline occurs when a person is unwilling to repent. That church discipline occurs when a person's sin is giving reason to call into question whether they may be even saved.

Why do you say that? Remember what grace does. It trains us. And if someone is not subjecting themselves to the training, it calls into question. We don't know if they're saved or not, but you're giving us reason to call into question whether that may be true or not.

[42 : 33] And so we're addressing you in that way. Neglecting corrective discipline can be deadly for a church.

No one likes the prospect of going under the knife or surgery. I don't know a single person who goes, I'm really looking forward to surgery. That's just a ton of fun. No one likes the prospect of going under the knife, but sometimes the knife is what saves your life.

The prospect of corrective discipline, especially when public is not pleasant, but unrepentant sin for those who continually cherish it are cancers in the body and must be removed.

If you look over to 1 Corinthians 5, there's a man in the church at Corinth, and Paul is shocked that this man is still there.

And Paul addresses the church in 1 Corinthians 5 because there's a kind of immorality that is being committed that even the unbelievers would find shocking and appalling. And Paul is thinking, and it's going on in the church.

[43 : 38] Get that man out. Why? Because they're... The witness of the church is being hindered by accepting such awful sin.

150 years ago, there was a Baptist pastor named John Dagg who wrote this, when discipline leaves the church, Christ goes with it.

And so Dagg recognized that neglecting discipline undermines the church's credibility as a witness. And when unrepentant sin festers among those who profess Christ's name, the church begins to misrepresent the gospel.

So church, our participating statement that we have in our covenant reads this. We will participate in the gospel ministry through the preaching of the word, the administration of the ordinance, the baptism of the Lord's Supper, and the exercise of church discipline.

Why? Because for all of us to grow as disciples of Jesus, we will participate through the preaching and the hearing of God's word. Hearing God's word, the singing of God's word, the observance of the ordinances, baptism, Lord's Supper, and the protection of the word, a false doctrine and wrong sinful living.

[45 : 04] And that's what we get to do as a church. It is healthy for a church to participate in these ways. And I'm so grateful to do this with you. Let me pray.

Father, thank you so much for this day. Thank you for the privilege to participate in what you are doing around this world and in this community.

Lord, we desire for the greatness of your name to be evident in our lives personally and our witness in this community.

Well we thank you for all the ways that we get to participate with you in the preaching and the hearing of God's word, the praying of God's word, the singing of your word, the observance of your word, and the protection of the gospel.
Thank you Lord for the ways in which we get to participate in what you're doing. We love you Lord. In your name, amen. Amen.