

# The Eagles and the Vine: Ezekiel 17:1-24

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[ 0 : 00 ] So please turn with me to Ezekiel chapter 17, it's about halfway, a little more than halfway through your Bible, in terms of placing. But here's what I would love for us to consider this morning.

I think the Lord's going to speak His Word by His grace, but I want to ask us a question. What is a promise?

What's a promise? And have you ever made one? We're going to talk this morning about the weight of promise-making and promise-keeping.

In this text, the Lord really stirs up images of oath-making, vow-making, and covenant-keeping. And I think that the important piece for us, right off the bat before we jump into the text, is to consider already at the outset, am I someone who makes promises, and am I someone who keeps them? Maybe you're a spouse in here today, and you're sitting across from your spouse. Maybe you're a mother or a parent, and you're sitting with your children.

[ 1 : 22 ] Or maybe in some other context, you find yourselves in a position where you have made promises to others. In that place that you find yourself in today, whether it be one of those three stations or another, consider the place of promise that you are in as we jump into our text.

I think it'll do us all wonders as we try and apply God's word this morning. So here's what we're going to do. It's a long section. Ezekiel 17, 1 to 24.

I'm going to read this text with you, but we're going to break it down as we go. I think it's going to be most helpful for us to see the context of what's laid out in front of us in this chapter as we move through it, instead of reading it all at once and then going back.

So let me set the stage a little bit. We're in Ezekiel. We've already been in Ezekiel once with another parable. And let me remind us of the context of Ezekiel. Ezekiel is one amongst many exiles.

And he's part of the southern kingdom of Israel at this time, Judah. And they are in a place where they have been taken into captivity, or at least some of them, about three waves of captivity that work through Judah.

[ 2 : 33 ] And the first wave has happened. He's part of that initial group. They're in Babylon. And as Ezekiel writes this letter, he prophesies on behalf of the Lord to God's people that they would repent of their sin and continue, or excuse me, refocus their faith on God as the one who can deliver them.

So they're exiles. What does it mean to be an exile? Put simply, an exile is someone who's far from home. An exile is someone who is in a place that they ought not be. Judah should not be.

Away from the promised land, they should not be far from God, and yet they find themselves there in this context. So, from that place, Ezekiel in chapter 7, by the Lord's inspiration, gives them a parable.

So let's read just the first two verses here. The word of the Lord came to me. Son of man, propound a riddle and speak a parable to the houses of Israel.

Who's speaking? The Lord is speaking. I mean, this is a good reminder for us that in all prophecy, God is the author. God is the speaker. And he gives, by his grace, by his power, the words to a feeble person like Ezekiel to speak on his behalf.

[ 3 : 55 ] But the words are the Lord. So the Lord speaks, and here's what's interesting. He doesn't beat around the bush. The Lord doesn't confuse them or get them to guess. He just says it outright. This is going to be a riddle, a parable that I want you to hear and then try and figure out.

We've talked before, why does the Lord teach in this way? It's the same way that Jesus often teaches in the New Testament. The purpose of a parable is to invoke the hearer to put the pieces together, thereby using their mind that God gave them and using the heart that God gave them.

to have to wrestle with the fact that God is speaking a truth. He wants us to engage with his word. So, he uses parables.

Let's read verse 3. Say, Thus says the Lord, a great eagle with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar.

So, here's how the riddle begins. There's a great eagle. An eagle, just like the lion as we've seen before, is an ancient day symbol of strength and splendor.

[ 5 : 15 ] Even today, I would argue that if you look at the animal kingdom, you look at the birds of the air, the wilderness, or excuse me, the wildlife that is the air, you're going to look and say an eagle is the king of the birds.

At least that's what we thought here in America. If you didn't know this, when we were forming, Benjamin Franklin, wise, great, brilliant man, said, the turkey should be our national bird.

They're everywhere. And thanks be to the Lord that someone named Thomas Jefferson said, a turkey? Oh, the turkey, rich in majesty and power.

No, Thomas Jefferson said, we got bald eagles too, Ben. We will be a nation of bald eagles. And thus, the eagle is now donned on all of our currency and elsewhere.

Fun fact. But why? Even in the 1700s, there's an understanding that the eagle is a picture of strength, splendor, fortitude, success, and power.

[ 6 : 21 ] So here's what the Lord does. He uses this image, this understanding they would have had about an eagle, and he says, there's two eagles in my parable. We're going to read about the first one. Here's what the first one is described as, with great wings, long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors.

Who might this eagle represent? And we're going to have to ponder that in the history of Ezekiel's day. Here's what we know.

There's a great eagle that has incredible amount of color. And here's what happens. The eagle goes to Lebanon, a place where there are massive trees called the Cedars of Lebanon.

And he comes to Lebanon and he rips off the top of the tree and then it says in verse 4, he broke off the topmost of its young twigs, so from the top of the cedar, the top twig, two talons, maybe that's how it works, and carried it to a land of trade and set it in a city of merchants.

What is this eagle doing? This is bizarre. Verse 5, Then he took the seed of the land and planted it in a fertile soil and he placed it beside abundant waters. He set it like a willow twig and it sprouted and became a low-spreading vine and its branches turned toward him and its roots remained where it stood, so it became a vine and produced branches and put out bows.

[ 7 : 41 ] Okay, eagle. Okay, Lord. What is it that you wanted Judah to understand here? Well, we are in a historical book which means there's a historical context.

The first eagle with great wings, long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors is Babylon, the great nation, the fearful nation led by King Nebuchadnezzar, a huge figure in the Bible.

And at this point in history, Babylon is the world power. Babylon, is the nation that conquered all others. And the only nation of prominence at this moment that's nearby is actually Egypt to the south.

And we're going to see them in a minute. But Babylon is the great eagle that all would have said, whoa, wow, look at Babylon. So here's how this first section breaks down.

Verse 3 tells us that the first eagle is specifically not just Babylon but perhaps even King Nebuchadnezzar. And here's what King Nebuchadnezzar did in actual history that's echoed in the parable.

[ 8 : 47 ] He came and subdued Israel and he took a group of deportees captive, the first group of three that he would take. And that's what's described as the top of the cedar.

This eagle, Nebuchadnezzar, comes into Israel and rips off the top of the tree and says, look at this top. Here's how I imagine the top of the tree. Maybe you're at home during Christmas and you're setting up your tree.

Does anybody have artificial trees? We have an artificial. I like real trees. Maybe we'll go back to that at some point but my wife does not like the needles. So we have a fake tree and you put the pieces together.

And how many pieces are there in ours? Three. Maybe yours has four or five. But here's what every artificial tree has. What's the best part? Oh, we set it all up. Everything's ready. Oh, the top piece and you put it on top.

That's how I imagine this. And I think that's the image we're meant to get. Just the top is ripped off. Here's what Nebuchadnezzar does. He takes this first group of deportees, the same group that actually included the wise men, nobility, and leaders of Judah, Daniel's group.

[ 9 : 52 ] Remember him? This is Daniel's group. Just the top of the top. Nebuchadnezzar takes them all and goes to Babylon. That's the top of the cedar.

But not just that. The text says this, the parable, he broke off the topmost of its young twigs. Okay, so now he's taken the top and he's ripped off one specific little piece or one branch. That branch was King Jehoiakim.

He's called the young sprig here. And here's what the king did, Nebuchadnezzar. I'm going to take them into captivity and I'm going to take their king and he's going to go with me to Babylon and we're going to treat him nicely but we now have the king of this nation.

That's not all the parable says. The land of trade and the city of merchants is definitely Babylon at this time. Wealthy, merchant town. But then, verse 5, then he took the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil.

This is a reference to what, politically speaking, Nebuchadnezzar did next. We have their king and here's what we're going to do. The seed of the land refers to one amongst them, an actual Israelite.

[ 11 : 01 ] His name was Zedekiah and Nebuchadnezzar took Zedekiah, looked him in the eyes and said, you will be my servant in Judah. Zedekiah agrees.

He takes Zedekiah and he puts him as king in Judah. Plants it in fertile soil. So then it says this, he placed it beside abundant waters. He set it like a willow twig and it sprouted and became a low spreading vine.

Its branches turned toward him and its roots remained where it stood. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out bows. Do you see how it says it thrived but it turned toward him which is an image, a parable of this that King Zedekiah was set in place as a puppet king.

You will do whatever I say but you're back in Judah. You understand? Yes. Zedekiah agrees and it turns toward him meaning all of the blessings of Israel and Judah are now going to go back to Babylon.

Babylon. That's what it signifies with the branches turning toward Nebuchadnezzar. But now we move on to the second piece of the parable. Verse 7. And there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage but notice this eagle doesn't have the same description.

[ 12 : 11 ] It's still a great eagle with great wings and plumage but it doesn't have rich colors. So it's a little less grand and this would be the Pharaoh of Egypt.

This is the second power, the Pharaoh of Egypt. And here's what happens. Immediately we're told that the vine in a referent back to Zedekiah who's already been planted that vine that was planted by Nebuchadnezzar to serve Babylon it says this bent its roots toward him the second eagle and shot forth its branches toward him from the bed where it was planted that he might water it.

Which is a symbol of this. The vine Zedekiah and Judah back home they see what's going on and they go look there's Egypt they've got some power we can go to them let's put our branches toward them instead and plead with Pharaoh to give us an army that we can go conquer the Babylonians with.

Actually a pretty foolish decision by Zedekiah as we'll see in a minute. In verse 8 it says this it had been planted on good soil by abundant waters that it might produce branches and bear fruit and become a noble vine but it wasn't planted by Pharaoh it was planted by Nebuchadnezzar.

So now let's read verse 11 to 15 what's going to happen to Zedekiah? He's going to the Egyptians. Then the word of the Lord came to me say now to the rebellious house do you not know what these things mean?

[ 13 : 40 ] Tell them behold the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem and took her king Jehoiachin like we talked about and her princes and brought them to Babylon and he took one of the royal offspring and made a covenant with them putting them under oath.

Oh. So the agreement that Zedekiah would be the puppet king is not just a verbal agreement there was an actual oath made. An agreement that is deeper than just sure I'll do it.

The oath here is referred to in verse 14 as a covenant. I'll talk about that more in a second. Verse 15 but he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt that they might give him horses and a large army.

Here's what the Lord says will he thrive? Can one escape who does such things? Can he break the covenant and yet escape? And here's where we are in history when Judah would have received this text Zedekiah had turned to the Egyptians but nothing else had happened yet.

So here's what the Lord is predicting what's going to happen. This king was supposed to be in agreement with Nebuchadnezzar they made a covenant together and he turned to another nation to deliver them.

[ 14 : 53 ] Here's what the Lord says is going to happen verse 16 to 21 for them it hadn't happened for us we already know how history plays out. Verse 16 as I live declares the Lord God surely in the place where the king dwells who made him king that's Nebuchadnezzar whose oath he despised whose covenant with him he broke in Babylon he shall die.

Speaking of Zedekiah Pharaoh with his mighty army and great company will not help him in war when mounds are cast up and siege walls built to cut off many lives he despised the oath speaking of Zedekiah in breaking the covenant and behold he gave his hand and did all these things he shall not escape therefore thus says the Lord God as I live surely it is my oath he has despised and my covenant that he broke I will return it upon his head I will spread out my net over him and he shall be taken by my snare and I will bring him into Babylon and enter into judgment with him there for the treachery he has committed against me and all of the pick of his troops shall fall by the sword and the survivor shall be scattered to every wind and you shall know that I am the Lord I have spoken okay this is great Eric what's the point why are we reviewing this random historical event of this random king with this random nation what's the point this is pretty boring you may be thinking that because when I was studying this

I was getting there like what what is going on but actually I think there's a lot for us here this morning yes we just reviewed a lot of history but I think this history has a lot to teach us why is Judah headed towards rebellion in the first place because the covenant making God who said I will be your God and you will be my people I will love you and you will obey me made the covenant with Israel they agreed to it and entered into it but they broke the covenant so the Lord and his mercy but also his judgment sends them into exile because they broke the covenant and what we see here is Zedekiah breaking the covenant all over again not just one but multiple and here's what happens in verse 9 and 10 as we saw earlier the Lord said will this king who is planted will it thrive will it not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it in other words the east wind is Babylon who is literally to the east of Judah and the Lord predicts which comes exactly to pass that Babylon will come back and strike Jerusalem this is the great destruction of the city of Jerusalem that the Bible speaks about over and over again that Jesus himself refers to multiple times because of King Zedekiah breaking the covenant with Nebuchadnezzar and the covenant with the Lord Babylon would come back to Judah and utterly destroy Jerusalem down to the ground the temple that Solomon built being stripped of every stone and burnt to the ground nothing remains in Jerusalem after Babylon comes and has their way so let's review something the word covenant is mentioned I think four times in this text what is a covenant?

biblically speaking a covenant is an agreement between two parties now let's talk about a vow a vow is a promise made to someone else or another person a vow would be something like this I will give you dessert if you eat your vegetables I'm going to do that for you okay I'd like you to do something for me but I'm going to do this for you a vow would be I will be at your game tonight I'll make it a vow might be something like once you graduate from college I will talk to this person who will hire you for a job a one way promise a declaration of something that I will do for you now here's where a covenant can come in when the other party vows back to me and we come to an agreement on something it takes two vows pledged together to make a covenant as the bible would use it so when we see the word covenant here I think we have to understand this is bigger than just a simple

[ 19 : 49 ] I'll do that for you a covenant is a big deal in the bible when I was a kid me and my brother Chad this is a true story we watched my dad who's coached basketball for 35 years now I believe and we would watch my dad coach his team and I was just getting close to high school I'm going to be on this team eventually someday my little brother Chad's a lot younger but we watched as this incredible team rose up won a state championship in 2009 my dad's first and they played this team called Horizon Christian and on this team there was a 6'6 freshman I think he's probably 230 pounds was the best player in the state everyone thought he was that good I think my brother was better than him but his name was Jordan Tebbit and this player was incredible and we would

just marvel at this guy wow this is amazing projected to go D1 full ride every year of his high school career we would watch this guy and as soon as the state tournament was over they lost in the championship to my dad's team have to throw a shout out to my dad after the state tournament was over me and my brother

Chad entered into what I would say the bible might consider a covenant here's what we did oh he's going to the NBA that guy's totally going to make it to the NBA he's amazing Chad's like no way he's not going to the NBA he's totally going to the NBA so we put our money where their mouth was my parents did not know we did this until afterward we made a written contract \$100 which neither of us really had that if he makes it then I win \$100 if he doesn't then Chad wins \$100 and there was someone in the gym that saw us doing this who wrote his name down as a witness like an adult it's amazing we had this piece of paper we forgot about it for years years and years go by Jordan Tebbet did not go to the NBA or even get close I forgot about it Chad says hey Eric you still owe me \$100 what so he pulls out the paper and goes look there it is clear as day I signed my name on the dotted line it is a binding contract that is a covenant no joke

I took the paper I found the guy who was the witness and I showed him I am paying him \$100 I am absolved of this commitment I gave Chad \$100 it is over the covenant is finished now is that really a covenant no but it paints the picture that it is two sides two parties and here is what I want us to see before we get to the best part of the text Zedekiah is a covenant breaker I praise God for Chad that reminded me that I had entered into that agreement as silly as it may sound it is a really big deal to God that our actions match our words when we say we will why because it is a reflection of him God the covenant maker and covenant keeper he thinks very highly of keeping one's word because he always keeps his word here is what we see

Zedekiah is a covenant breaker in this instance I want to remind us just quickly of some of the covenants of scripture there is a great book written by a guy named Richard Aberbeck who describes covenants this way he says covenants are permanent promise and ongoing obligations great way to describe the covenants the Lord makes in the Bible first we have a covenant made to Abraham and here's the permanent promises given to Abraham I'm going to give you numerous descendants I'm going to give you a land I'm going to bless you and those who bless you will be blessed those are the promises that the Lord gives to Abraham I will do these things they're permanent but here's the obligations that he gives to Abraham on his end of the covenant trust me by following my leading and walk in righteousness there's a second or another covenant called the Mosaic covenant in this covenant the Lord speaks to Moses the leader of God's people and by proxy to the people and here the promise is given to Moses this is the covenant you are chosen and sanctified and I've set my love on you that's a promise another promise provision

I will provide for you and be the one that meets all your needs another promise that in this covenant I will be faithful in my love to you here's the obligations given to Israel and Moses on their side of the covenant remember that I'm faithful and keep my commandments there's another covenant called the Davidic covenant in this covenant the Lord speaks to a man named David and his royal line forever and he says this I'm going to give you an eternal king from your line and I'm going to give you an eternal kingdom through your line here's the obligation that the Lord the one obligation on David trust me and believe that I will do it second Kings chapter 24 says this Zedekiah was 21 years old when he became king and he reigned 11 years in Jerusalem his mother's name was Hamadol and he did what was evil in the sight of the Lord listen to this according to all that Jehoiakim had done for because the ing of the Lord came to the point in Jerusalem and Judah that he cast them out from his presence Zedekiah rebelled against the king of

[ 25 : 27 ] Babylon two covenants that Zedekiah breaks that are big deal to the Lord first he breaks the covenant with Nebuchadnezzar we are told that by oath I will serve you and by oath Nebuchadnezzar says you will be my servant and I will bless you and have favor on you as long as you follow your covenant Zedekiah breaks the covenant with Nebuchadnezzar but not only that here's what's far worse look at verse 19 again with me the Lord switches from he broke the covenant with Nebuchadnezzar which is appalling to me that anyone would break their word is absolutely an abomination to me why because the Lord keeps his word he's upset about that but look at verse 19 therefore thus says Lord God as I live surely it is my oath that he despised and my covenant that he broke it's not just that Zedekiah broke a covenant with Nebuchadnezzar he also broke a covenant with God why because we know that Nebuchadnezzar made him swear the oath to God but not only that

Zedekiah did evil was in the sight of the Lord and did not believe in God Zedekiah turned back on the very covenant that God gave Abraham and Moses and David he broke all the obligations of those covenants we just went over Zedekiah is a warning to all of us that we have all transgressed God's law by virtue of being born on this planet made by a loving creator we are obligated to follow his ways and obey his commandments to seek him with all of our heart soul and mind but the reality the Bible paints is very clear is that we have not done that that we have not obeyed God that we have broken his covenant with us as Zedekiah breaks his we have not honored our maker instead we have turned to man-made religion I make the gods

I serve the gods I make and I choose what's right and wrong that is the evil rebellious covenant breaking spirit of fallen mankind you and I that's the bad news Zedekiah should be a mirror for us have you made promises to others have you entered into a covenant with others in any way shape or form the spirit of Zedekiah should be warning us that to break covenant is one of the most egregious offenses against a holy God so much so that he allows his beloved people Israel to go into exile and even Zedekiah to go into exile after his sons are killed in front of him and his eyes are gouged out he's sent to die in Babylon that's his fate there is no mercy for covenant breakers in God's holy economy that's the bad news here's the good news and I'm excited for this let's finish our chapter look at verse 22 thus says the Lord

God I myself will take a sprig the parable is not over from the lofty top of the cedar and I will set it out I will break off from the top most of its young wings a tender one and I myself will plant it on high and lofty mountain on the mountain height of Israel I will plant it that it may bear branches and produce fruit and become a noble cedar and under it will dwell every kind of bird and its shade of branches of every sort will nest and all of the trees of the field shall know that I am the Lord I bring low the high tree and make high the low tree dry up the green tree and make dry the tree flourish I am the Lord I have spoken and I will do it here's the good news church we are covenant breakers but God is faithful to give us a covenant keeper one who will take our place as those who should have and must fulfill the obligations of the covenant but instead of us who break it willingly and break it repeatedly this person is going to come and never break covenant always obey always fulfill always make the promise true and the word we just read speaks of this person and as Judah would have received this message they definitely would have said this is Messiah this is the one who's going to come and free us in the Old Testament the imagery of Messiah I'm going to use a term here the Old Testament describes the Messiah in timber terms what I mean by that terminology of trees is all over the Old Testament when referring to Messiah we see images of shoots and stumps and branches and roots that all point to the picture of Messiah in fact all of these are encapsulated in one verse 11 11 11 1 listen to this there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse and a branch from his roots shall bear fruit wow got it timber terms we get it in other words when Judah and Israel were to receive images and messages that contain these timber terms it's almost a cue for them to turn on oh we're looking for

[ 31 : 36 ] Messiah here what's going on so here's what the Lord does in our text today we have a tender twig the eagles took their twigs and planted them where they wanted and fell apart but here's what the Lord does in this image he takes a tender twig from the same branch Israel is the cedar takes it holds it and he plants it just like the eagles did but where does the king of all the universe God plant this tender twig he doesn't plant it on the ground he plants it on the highest mountain and the tallest place Mount Everest is not tall enough for this twig to be planted the mountain likely being referred to here is a mountain called Mount Zion which is a beautiful symbolic image of God's reign and rule and eternal dynasty over all things created and on that highest peak cosmic peak that's where this twig is going to be planted but I love the term tender twig because here in this image we have perhaps a glimpse into what we call the hypostatic union of

Christ which is a fancy way of saying his dual natures made one his divine transcendent nature fully God perhaps represented by planting on the high and lofty mountain a place that only God can ascend Jesus Christ was fully God not part God not sent from God not created by God he is and was and always will be God Jesus the Messiah and as such this twig is the only twig that could ever be planted on this lofty divine mountain it's Jesus God incarnate which is the second piece his human feeble fully man nature which perhaps is why we see the term tender young twig that are his humanity as frail as he was in that human body capable of marring capable of going on a cross and being pinned capable of bleeding does

God bleed that was the great question posited in the movie 300 do gods bleed here's the great revelation that God gives not some movie director here's the great revelation that yes God bleeds and that is Jesus that is his humanity this tender tender twig represents Jesus in all his fullness of humanity and divinity and he is your covenant keeper church which is why the Lord takes this one and sets it on the highest mountain because unlike the other shoots that kind of grew up notice they were just a vine not a full tree vines that pointed toward whoever they wanted to do something for them I want this person to do something for me so I I'm going to act and behave towards them that's what the other kings did Zedekiah but here's what this shoot does it goes straight up even higher and branches out not to receive and to manipulate others but this shoot grows up that others might have benefit blessing and joy look at the image with me on the mountain

I will plant it it!!!! every kind of bird in the shade of its branches every sort will nest Jesus in the book of Matthew talks about a mustard seed that is tiny and gets planted but when it grows up there's a massive glorious beautiful kingdom tree that all of the nations all of the birds of all the nations come and nest in he was directly quoting this who is the tree who is the one that brings about this amazing joy for everyone it's the covenant keeper see God elevates to the highest place the one who has upheld his covenant something you and I could never do a couple applications for us this morning first be slow to make vows hopefully this one came across quickly early in the text Ecclesiastes chapter 5 verse 4 says this when you vow a vow! to God do not delay paying it for he has no pleasure in fools pay what you vow it is better that you should not vow than you should vow and not pay Jesus says something similar in Matthew 5 he says let your yes be your yes your no but your no in fact be very very careful don't even do it that's how serious God takes vows number two keep your vows one be slow to make vows number two keep your vows we are still in a position where we make vows and we have to make vows in order to keep God's word but here's what I want to encourage us with everyday faithfulness whether they be small or big vows that we make let's keep them let's reflect the nature of God to make and keep promises back to one another something as simple as parents promising that dessert after veggies follow through on that if they eat the veggies hey we'll go to the park after school I promise follow through on that hey maybe your kids are in high school you can go to your friend's house after you finish your homework follow through on that whatever it may be parents whatever it may be co-workers if you promise to do something follow through even if it's inconvenient even if it costs you because it's the very nature of [ 37 : 54 ] God we are risking the image that we present out to the world if they see falsehood in us and an inability to keep promises they may think God is the same so keep our vows I've actually had to learn this lesson my wife I heard her once on the phone jokingly saying to a family friend or relative she said oh when Eric says he'll be home at five I always add 15 minutes but every time he gives me I add 15 minutes because I know he's just late all the time and that's just I figured it out I've made it work but yeah it's kind of funny isn't it I heard her saying that and it killed me inside why because my word is not able to be counted on as simple as I have to add time because I know Eric's always late it wrecked me and I'm not perfect but I have since then told her I will be home at 5:15 trying to match the word and the action because it's a big deal to me even though it wasn't a big deal to her

Eric I was just kidding it's not a big deal to me it's a big deal that I would follow through with the vow I made what are some vows or covenants that we've made together in the practical sense well wives and husbands I hope you realize that by making the vow you made on your wedding day that you actually covenanted with your spouse this is no small thing to having to hold from this day forward better or worse richer or poorer sickness and health love and cherish forsaking all others keeping myself only for you so long as I live if you said something even remotely close to that on your wedding day you covenanted with that person and God is honored when we keep our covenants sacrifice your pride daily serve your spouse daily that is your covenant duty and when covenant is kept blessing is had how about one another community here at Lampson we believe in covenantal community we believe in entering into an agreement where we say we will do these things not just let's just say that we're going to do them but we actually have said them to one another

I will do this for you Josh and you will do this for me do we agree on that yes we do why because the Bible tells us to do these things listen to these commands the total the vibe of these one another's is covenant vow because there's blessing in this love one another be devoted to one another honor one another live in harmony with one another build up one another be like minded to

one another accept one another admonish one another care for one another serve for one another bear one another's burdens forgive one another be patient for one another speak with truth to one another be kind and compassionate to one another speak with psalms hands and spiritual songs to one another submit to one another look to the interests of one another bear with one another teach one another comfort one another encourage one another exhort one another and that's only half of them one another is reciprocal that we would do them together and then number three finally dwell in the shade of the covenant keeper the gospel demands that we recognize our covenant breaking hearts that we have said to God you are my creator you love me you made me to be satisfied in you and only in you and I say no that's what recognizing our sin looks like that's what repentance requires that we would break down break down from our pride and from our man-made religion and we would look to God and recognize

I have transgressed your covenant but secondly rest in the covenant keeper's work Jesus Christ lived perfectly we say at this church that implies that he kept the covenant and it necessitates that he kept the covenant of God every law every requirement every single thing that the Lord obligated Israel to do as part of their covenant Jesus did and only Jesus did so rest in that covenant keeping work when Jesus died on that cross he said these words it is finished rest in the inn is finished if you are here today and you tend toward legalism don't place yourself back on the obligations of the law your covenant with God is not to pursue the law but to pursue God himself and also God's covenant with you is not to obtain what you can do for him through obedience but to obtain you yourself Jesus knew this he stepped into a pharisaical world in which legalism was the means to obtain life and joy Jesus fulfills the law and where we could not that we might be free from the obligations of the law to serve God with a whole heart you are freed not by your works but by Jesus works and for the I'm a failureist the opposite of the legalism spectrum Jesus fulfilled your covenant for you don't live and abide in shame and failure instead look to Jesus who accomplished all for you and this leads us to the blood covenant in a moment we're about to take the Lord's supper and in this attempt to segue into that I want to encourage us to remind ourselves of this final covenant given by God to his people in Jeremiah chapter 31 the Lord promised a new covenant made with his people in which the following things will be true

[ 43 : 53 ] I will put my law with them here are the promises I will write it on their hearts I will be their God they shall be my people and no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and his brother saying know the Lord for they shall all know me from the least of them to the greatest declares the Lord for I will forgive their iniquity and I will remember their sin no more that is a promise we can hang on to so too in Luke 22 it says this Jesus Jesus took a cup and when he had given thanks said take this and divide it among yourselves for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes and he took the bread which he had given thanks and he broke it and gave it to them saying this is my body which is given for you do this in remembrance of me after he had eaten and taken the cup he said this this cup has been poured out for you as the new covenant in my blood here's the final promise of God's covenant making character

I will forgive your sins that's my promise just like when I tell my girls at the top of the stairs when I leave for the day I will be back tonight promise that I can't even guarantee the Lord looks at his church and says I will forgive your sins do we trust that he's coming back to do that that's what Jesus just promised I'm going to forgive your sins but did you hear the one obligation in there church it's actually an obligation right there here's what it was do this in remembrance of me literally the final covenant here's the promise I'm going to forgive your sins and here's the final obligation remember Jesus that is your side of the covenant now we remember Jesus Christ the great covenant keeper who because of his faithfulness and loyalty and perfection before God chooses to be that lofty cedar on the mountain we rest under his work like birds in the branches so let's fulfill our loving obligation together as a church by remembering Jesus and taking the Lord's supper together together and together and together and together!