

The Unexpected Arm of The Lord

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[0 : 00] Well, it's been pure joy this month of December to focus on the person of Jesus Christ.! So this is our fourth of four sermons on the person of Jesus.

And I've taken my cue from our confession of faith on who Jesus is. The last doctrine and focus today is that Jesus is not only truly God, he is also truly man.

And as that perfect mediator, the God-man, we get to see from this amazing Old Testament prophecy the work of our Savior, Jesus Christ. I'll read this trusting that it is God's inspired, inerrant, infallible, clear, and sufficient word.

It's his very own word for you and for me. Isaiah 53. Who has believed our report and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant and as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness. And when we see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him.

[1 : 02] He is despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, our faces from him.

He was despised and we did not esteem him. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement from our peace was upon him. And by his stripes we are healed.

All we, like sheep, have gone astray and have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

He was oppressed and he was afflicted. Yet he opened not his mouth. He was led as a lamb to the slaughter and as a sheep before its shearers is silent.

[2 : 05] So he opened not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment. And who will declare his generation? For he was cut off from the land of the living.

For the transgressions of my people he was stricken. And made them, and they made him a grave with the wicked. But with the rich at his death.

Because he had no violence. Nor was any deceit found in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him.

And he put him to grief. When you make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed. He shall prolong his days. And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand.

He shall see the labor of his soul and be satisfied. By his knowledge, my righteous servant shall justify many. For he shall bear their iniquities.

[3 : 07] Therefore, I will divide him a portion with the great. And he shall divide the spoil with the strong. Because he poured out his soul unto death. And he was numbered with the transgressors.

And he bore the sin of many. And made intercession for the transgressors. This is the word of the Lord for the people of God.

Thanks be to God. Please be seated. The grass withers. The flower fades. But the word of the Lord stands forever. Let's pray.

Oh Lord. This prophecy that we read. Fulfilled by Jesus Christ. Is so glorious. Our faith is so small, Lord.

We depend on your Holy Spirit. To take your truth. And help us to grasp it. We pray that you will do that, Lord. For Christ's sake. Help us to behold you more today.

[4 : 16] And to know you more truly, we ask. For your glory. Amen. Some of the most important things in life.

We cannot fully wrap our heads around. Let me give you a very simple example to begin with. I can't understand time. Realistically.

A point of reference in time. So when I say our nation is 249 years old. Wrestle with that number for a little bit for yourself. I try to put markers and try to imagine what that is.

But very quickly as that number gets bigger. I'm just lost. I have no point of reference. So when I tell you our nation. Think of all that's happened. You can study U.S. history for probably 12 years.

And keep going. And know it in detail. And that's just 249 years. You double that, kids. And we're right around 500 years. Can you imagine twice as much time passed?

[5 : 16] Twice as many events. Now listen to this. The passage we read. Which undeniably prophesies the work of Jesus Christ. 700 years passed.

Between when Isaiah wrote down these verses. And when God the Son veiled himself in the flesh. Truly man. And accomplished all that God had purposed. 700 years.

And yet we read it now. About 2025 more years later. And it's so close. I mean it's just so near and intimate. It's like we're there watching this happen before our eyes.

You see how this is such an important truth. And our minds are limited. But yet we can grasp it truly. And if you're able to grasp the work of Christ. In this glorious passage that we read.

And with God's help that we'll walk through. You can have assurance. That this is the Holy Spirit. Ministering his truth to you and to me. To give us eyes of faith. And I hope that the sermon today is really a worship experience for all of us.

[6 : 20] The application. Worship the Lord. As we read through these verses one more time together. The title of our sermon today is. The unexpected arm of the Lord.

The unexpected arm of the Lord. And I have six or so observations I hope to point out to you.

Number one. The Lord's promise to unsleeve his arm.

Should terrify sinners like you and me. The Lord's promise to unsleeve. To pull back the sleeve of his arm. It should terrify us. Because you and I are sinners.

And this image of the arm of the Lord. It comes from the passage itself. Would you please look at verse one. To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

Now this is a prophetic idiom. It's the Holy Spirit filling Isaiah. And helping him now to convey in words in Hebrew.

[7 : 22] This glorious vision and these words. That the Spirit is breathing out through him. And through his pen. What else does all the rest of the scripture say about God? John 1.18 says.

No one has seen God at any time. This is John 1. Pointing us to Christ. Who is the full glory of God. Yet it's also affirming that God is not seeable.

God is spirit. John 4.34. Luke 24.39. Spirit does not have flesh and bones. Colossians 1.15. God is invisible.

So when verse one of Isaiah 53 says. To whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? We take all of scripture into account to understand his meaning. And his meaning is that an arm of a king is what executes the will of the king.

It's God's action. And the action of God is going to be revealed. But even the way in which it's revealed will be unexpected. I believe that gets very closely at the meaning in verse one.

[8 : 33] Now when God reveals his will to this earth. Is that good news or bad news? We don't get good news until we first let the bad news push us low.

Look at verse six. All we. How many of us? All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned one.

We have turned everyone to his own way. See for all of us. To know this prophecy. God will unveil his will.

His action in human history. This should be terrifying news. Because God is just. He binds himself. To punish evil.

Because God is just. And he freely promises blessing. In a covenant. He is binding himself to also bless righteousness.

[9 : 32] Think of the opposite. It would be unjust for God to bless evil. And it would be unjust for God to overlook. Or skip over. Or brush under the rug. The rug.

That sin. And not punish it. So he must punish evil. And he will bind himself graciously. To reward righteousness. The reason all we like sheep have turned astray.

And every one of us has turned to our own way. It's part of a story that begins way before any one of us. It's because Adam disobeyed God. It's because Adam disobeyed God in the garden.

God gave Adam a promise of life for obedience. And curses for disobedience. And Adam representing all of mankind.

The human race. He sinned. And he brought us all under the curses. That deserve death. We are cursed by being into this line of Adam and Eve.

[10:33] And this curse permeates every aspect of who we are. We're cursed in body and soul. Inner man. Outer man. In the inner man we're born hating God. In the outer man our hatred for God comes out as sin.

Born out in our flesh. Through our words. Through our actions. We are born loving our sin. Seeking after our ways and not God's way.

And when God, the holy God, reveals himself to us, we're exposed. This has been what the buildup in all of this wonderful book of Isaiah. The very first chapter, Isaiah 1, 5, and 6, describes the people of God as covenant breakers.

He describes them as having a sick head and a faint heart. They're covered from head to toe in bruises and sores and raw wounds. This is the language of Isaiah describing our sin.

A sick head and a faint heart. That's the inner man. And the outer man like a leper. Full of sores and raw wounds. We are rotting both internally and externally under the curse of sin.

[11:46] Isaiah 1, 18, describes our sin as scarlet and crimson. We had a nosebleed in the family and the carpet, not just the rug, but carpet that you can't take up easily.

It's light gray. So the moment that blood, that dark crimson red hits the gray carpet, run and grab the hydrogen peroxide and squirts them on and start scrubbing.

And it's amazing how it bubbles up and you scrub and it comes out, you put more on. And sometimes it'll extract out of there if you get it quickly. But in the ancient world, to dye a piece of cloth scarlet or crimson, it was permanent.

That cloth will always be that color. You can never wash it out anymore. It's become part of the fabric. And that's what our sin is under the curse of Adam.

God cannot overlook our filthy, unremovable stains. Unremovable by our own efforts. We can scrub and scrub, put stuff on it.

[12:53] It won't come out. Because God is just and almighty, he must crush, he must pulverize his enemies, you and me, who are born hating him.

And he's an eternal, holy God. That's the only just response to creatures like us. So when sinners like us hear that God, the holy God, the creator, is unsleeving his arms, we should be in terror. We should expect his wrath. Amen. Well, here's the second observation. The Lord tells us that the revelation and life of his arm will be unexpected.

It will be unexpected for several reasons. First, where the arm of the Lord will spring up from is unexpected. Look at verse 2.

As a root out of dry ground. You picture dry ground in the Middle East, in the deserts. Nothing is going to spring up from that on its own. Dry ground refers to parched desert land where nothing should be able to grow, even with a lot of human help.

[14:08] And it's just going to spring up. The word root, it's a plant that's going to now have deep roots, gaining substance in a place where there's no substance to be gained.

It highlights the supernatural work of God to bring forth Jesus Christ into humanity, to sustain him just like a root out of dry ground against all odds.

Our Savior will grow and survive and fulfill all righteousness under these conditions within fallen creation.

Think of how our Lord Jesus was born into a poor family, a weak nation. His parents are sinners. His, you know, his adoptive father, Joseph.

All around him, a nation whose worship has been corrupted, who've lost sight of God's word. And yet he fulfilled all righteousness against all odds. A second way in which the springing up of this arm of the Lord is unexpected is in the form, the form in which he will enter creation.

[15:19] Verse two says, for he, this is the arm of the Lord, will grow up before him as a tender plant. In a botanical sense, it refers to a young, green, suckling shoot that draws its life from the main trunk.

It suggests something extremely vulnerable and dependent. See, the arm of the Lord could have come as a great cedar, already established and mighty, providing shade for all the nations.

But look at the humility of our Lord Jesus. He came into this earth like a fragile twig in the desert. That could have easily been trampled on and snapped.

As a tender suckling, God the Son, the person of Jesus Christ grew through the natural weak stages of human development. We have many, many children and parents, grandparents, aunts and uncles, older siblings.

You know what it's like to take care of a little child. And we also know how your little sibling is a sinner, such a sinner, right? Well, this is why our Lord Jesus had to, he came to fulfill all righteousness through every stage of life.

[16:30] His righteousness as a child covers my sin as a child. His righteousness as a teenager, with all the changes and the hormones in that hard stage. His righteousness covers all my sins as a teenager.

And so it goes through every stage. Our Lord Jesus so loves his people. And his righteousness to cover us is so complete. The arm of the Lord assumed a true human nature.

He's described as a man of sorrows. He assumed all of our common infirmities. I'd make you raise your hand, but every hand would go up.

If you've had an infirmity in the last month, we've got shoulders, backs, noses, fever. We've got so many infirmities, so many issues. And according to his human nature, Jesus suffered everything we have experienced.

He is acquainted with grief. Our Lord Jesus was not insulated from the troubles of this life.

Psychological, physical tolls of living in a fallen world, being sinned against, feeling the limitations according to his human nature that we feel.

[17:45] And he possessed a true human soul. See, a person is body and soul. And according to his human nature, Jesus Christ had a true human body and also a true human soul, the inner man, the inner life, and all the trouble that we know from this.

And even in his inner being, our Lord Jesus Christ was acquainted. He experientially knew, he was familiar with the full spectrum of human sufferings.

Truly a man of true sorrow. Well acquainted with grief. The word grief can be translated as sickness or malady of the inner person.

So our confession of faith rightly expresses God the Son took upon himself man's nature with all the essential properties and common infirmities thereof.

See how unexpected this arm of the Lord is and how he's revealed and how he comes to be God's Savior. He will enter this earth on a mission.

[18:56] But in the most humble and vulnerable way imagined. Beyond that, it's beyond anything we could imagine or expect. Except he did it.

The Lord tells us that the revelation in the life of his arm will be unexpected. Number three, the Lord also tells us that Israel and the world's reception of his arm will be unexpected.

The Lord also tells us that Israel and the world's reception, how they received him, was unexpected. The Lord says that Israel is the people of the book.

Israel knows the promise from Genesis 3:15. From the seed of woman, I will send my servant to crush the serpent's head. And all the prophecies that are piled up in the Davidic covenant.

He will come like a king, like David, to rule and to subdue the enemies. And he will sit on the throne forever and ever and ever. So that's the expectations of the coming Messiah. But it should have not been such a surprise because we also have verses like 2 and 3 of Isaiah 53.

[20:05] There is no beauty that we should desire him. And he will be despised. To despise something is to hate it.

It's not just to dislike it, but to deem him worthless and of no account. It's considering a thing to be nothing. That's the reception that the arm of the Lord would get.

He would be rejected by men. The word rejected, it means to be left off or to cease. Someone who people will cease to interact with.

Completely abandon and walk away. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. Israel, the world, and each of us, if we're left on our own without the Holy Spirit giving us faith, we are blind to the glory of Christ.

We don't see the wickedness of our sin. We don't see the righteousness that God requires of us unless the Spirit causes us to humbly behold that.

[21 : 13] And when we do, we see the glory of Jesus Christ, who we rejected, who we esteemed not. Revelation 22, 16 upholds the Jesus Christ that we know by faith, who completed his mission.

Jesus said, I am the root and the offspring of David. I am the bright and morning star. I am that shoot in the desert.

The root and offspring of David, truly man. And yet somehow I am God himself. The bright morning star.

No beginning, no end. God himself. This is the glorious Jesus Christ. He's the heavenly branch. Joint on earth now.

In his human nature. This language that we're given in Isaiah 53, describing, you know, agricultural images. We can take it to a point.

[22 : 19] I want to read more into it, but it's a metaphor given in this passage for us. And when a gardener grafts a branch into another stalk, the two pieces of this tree remain distinct.

The wood of the branch does not become the wood of the root, yet they share one life. Our confession of faith says that the divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ was not turned into flesh, nor was his humanity swallowed up by his Godhead.

To whom has the arm of the Lord Jesus Christ, God, man, to whom has he been revealed? If you look to Jesus today, look again and look again.

He's been revealed to you. The Lord has unsleeved his act, his will, his arm, and it's Jesus Christ. You and I who can behold him by faith.

We've had our eyes opened. And now veiled in flesh, the Godhead we see. And his spirit causes us, stirs us up to hail him, the incarnate deity, our Lord Jesus.

[23 : 36] So his reception was unexpected. Even more unexpected is the grace we receive when the spirit causes us to behold him by faith.

Number four, the Lord tells us that by his arm, a most unexpected exchange will take place. By this arm of the Lord who's been revealed to those who he gives faith, you're going to be able to now behold in the person of Jesus an exchange that is most unexpected.

I want you to listen in these next several verses for these words. He'll say he, and then he'll say for our, and then he'll say our, and he'll say upon him.

So listen for that. And what's being referred to is something that was ours put onto him, something that is his put onto us. Him bearing what was ours and us receiving what was his.

And the term for what's happening in these verses is to impute. To impute means to throw on, throw one thing onto another, to put or to charge, if you want to use an accounting term.

[24 : 52] So look with me at verse four. Verse five.

A transgression means to be, to be breaking the law. It means that you've, you've violated what God has command.

You've, you've made yourself unholy, profaned, defiled. And he was bruised for our iniquities. See the two things that happened to him, which we deserve are to be wounded and to be bruised.

In verse five, to be wounded is to be pierced through, to be bored through. And to be bruised literally means to be crushed, pulverized or crumbled into dust.

That's what you and me deserve. Describes the action of grinding grain into flour or crushing heavy stones down into sand.

[26 : 07] It implies a weight so heavy that the person beneath it, beneath that weight will be completely shattered. And this arm of the Lord was wounded and bruised and crushed for us because of our great sin, our iniquity, our transgression.

And by his stripes, we are healed. Do you need healing today? It's by his stripes and his stripes alone that we can be healed.

Verse six says the Lord. So God has laid upon him the arm of the Lord, the iniquity of us all. To lay on him means, means cause to strike him.

It paints a picture of our crookedness being gathered up and smashed at Jesus Christ. To violently collide into him.

It's the language of a lightning strike. Hitting its target with impact. The Lord laid on him the iniquity of us all.

[27 : 24] And what was his that he gives to us? Verse nine tells us in simple terms. He's blameless.

He's perfect. He's holy. He did no violence, nor was any deceit found in his mouth. He did no violence. His outer man never sinned, nor was deceit found in his mouth. And out of the overflow of the mouth, the heart speaks. His inner man, his soul was perfect and spotless. Loved God perfectly. What was ours was thrown on to Christ. Verse four says it was our griefs that he bore. Our sorrows that he carried. Verse five, it was our transgression. Not just little mistakes, but our rebellion against God. See, we know the law that God requires, yet we break it. We disobey God with a clenched fist toward his authority. In our iniquities, it's a perverse crookedness. [28 : 30] It's the internal bent of our human nature that makes us prone to wander away from God. What we deserve is chastisement and sickness. And God's justice requires specific judicial penalty for what we have done.

See the work of the Lord in this most unexpected exchange. Charles Spurgeon worshipped, marveling at this glorious exchange. He wrote, God's arm that might have crushed you was instead crushed for you. That's the end of Charles Spurgeon's quote. Amen. How unexpected and how glorious if we receive this as true for you and me. It's our sin that he bore. Therefore, it's his righteousness that we receive. Number five, the Lord tells us that his arm will suffer something most unexpected. Verse seven, he was oppressed and he was afflicted. [29 : 59] Yet he opened not his mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep before the shears is silent. So he opened not his mouth.

In our Bible study this morning, Mrs. Hartley pointed out how we are called sheep who went astray in our human nature. And Jesus now in verse seven identifies himself with us. The sheep opened not his mouth and was led like a lamb to the slaughter. He was taken as a prisoner for judgment. And who could have guessed what his future would have been? The verse eight is difficult. That's my best paraphrase of it. Verse nine, and they made his grave with the wicked, but the rich at his death. See, the arm of the Lord not only took on flesh for us and lived for us and let our sin be thrown upon him. [30 : 59] But then he also suffered for us on the cross. He died and was buried for us. The wages of our sin is death.

And this is the most unexpected thing that the arm of the Lord underwent for us. According to his human nature, he died. Verse 10 says, God made Christ's soul an offering for sin. What type of offering? The point of reference in Isaiah is the ceremonial law, the sacrificial system. The soul of Jesus Christ. A sin offering. Another name for it is a guilt offering. Under the old covenant Levitical law, full restoration was needed for this type of sin to be forgiven. And our Lord Jesus Christ fully satisfied God's justice. He didn't merely cover over our sin. He paid the debt in full, including the punishment due unto us. [32 : 06] Verse 5 says, it was the chastisement that we deserved was now completed by Christ so that we could receive his peace. We can have that pronouncement from God, the just God.

Go in peace. Your sins are fully satisfied. Satisfied. Satisfied. Our confession of faith holds us up. Christ, by his perfect obedience and sacrifice of himself, has fully satisfied the justice of God. So when God's law exposes our sin. And when we're so aware that our sin stirs up God's wrath as it should. Like the electricity in the dark clouds. Remember when the giving of the law at Mount Sinai came with thunder and pews of lightning. It was terrifying. It was terrifying. We need to remember that Jesus Christ has received that discharge. That wrath. [33 : 14] He was receiving in his body as our substitute. The full justice of God in our place. The Lord himself in Jesus Christ stood on the cross as a lightning rod.

By his sacrifice of himself. The storm of God's wrath against the sin of God's people has been fully discharged. The force of God's wrath against you and me who are in Christ has been spent. It would be unjust of God to pour out wrath on his people. It's been completely received and buried by Jesus Christ.

There's nothing left for those who are in Christ but peace. Blue skies. The shining face of the Lord. The sixth observation is that the Lord tells us the end for which his arm will work so unexpectedly. The end for which the arm of the Lord will do all this glorious work so unexpectedly. What's it all for? Look at verse 10. It pleased the Lord.

[34 : 35] It was a delight for God to accomplish his will, his eternal decree in the person of Jesus Christ. What's the end of it?

Well, God will prolong his days. This is a whisper that we can see now. This is referring to the resurrection. Jesus Christ rose from the dead and he lives forevermore.

And the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. Just as it was the pleasure of the Lord to accomplish his decree and his will and save a people to himself, all authority is put in the hand of Jesus Christ.

And the pleasure of the Lord will continue to prosper in his good hand. Verse 11 says, He, Jesus Christ, the arm of the Lord shall see the labor of his soul and be satisfied.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is satisfied to have you and me as his own. And it's described as a labor of his soul.

[35 : 44] That word labor, it's like the agonizing toil of childbirth. See, that toil of Christ's soul on the cross as he prays for his people.

It's bringing forth an everlasting inheritance. His spiritual seed, his children, his nation that he will adopt. The confession mentions that the seed, the spiritual offspring, it's all those who put their faith in Jesus and receive his work freely because it cost him so much.

And that's what we get at the rest of verse 11. It's by knowledge of the righteous servant that we receive this, that we are justified. By his knowledge, my righteous servant shall justify how many? Many, a great multitude, more than the stars of the sky. Yet it's not all. It's those who know him. It's those who have a knowledge of the servant.

It's those he purchased. For he shall bear their iniquities. All those who know God are justified.

[37 : 02] Why? Because Jesus Christ bore their iniquities. Verse 12 says, Therefore, I will divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong.

Notice the language here. God is satisfied with the work of Jesus. It's God's good pleasure to bless Jesus Christ, to give him the spoil of his conquest, to put the people, the reward that he purchased, into his own hands.

And who can pluck anyone out of the powerful hands of the arm of the Lord? Verse 12 tells us all that he did that secures us.

And just hear this to encourage you, to give you your assurance of salvation if Jesus is your Lord. Number one, you are his because Jesus Christ poured out his soul unto death.

To pour out your soul that way, it's to make naked, to empty, or to be stripped and made bare. He poured all of himself out in prayer to the Lord unto death.

[38 : 13] It's like turning a jar completely upside down until the very last drop is gone. And so he emptied himself according to his human nature of all life.

Number two, he was numbered with the transgressors. He says, I, as the arm of the Lord, as God himself, I will become their sheep, their substitute. Number three, he bore the sin of many.

Number four, he made intercession for the transgressors. It's Jesus interposing himself, standing in between, pleading, and offering his life.

Lord, look at my righteousness and account it to my people. And take their sin and pour it out on me. Verse 10 tells us it was Jesus Christ's great joy to do this.

He shall see his seed. This is the great end of his work. It's so that his people will be with him and he can delight and be satisfied in seeing us.

[39 : 23] Not only having us, you know, in the fields far away, but delighting in us, his people, seeing us. Brothers and sisters, maybe some for the first time today.

The unsleeving of the arm of the Lord, it should have been our worst nightmare. The coming of Jesus Christ should have been terrifying.

Instead, he came in the most unexpected way. He veiled himself in humility, in weakness, to show us the love and faithfulness of our covenant-keeping God.

Instead of bringing God's wrath and judgment to earth like he has every right to do, Jesus Christ came and revealed the grace of God for all who will come to him.

He is our only hope. In Jesus Christ, we put all our faith. We are his reward. Believe this.

[40 : 35] We are the spiritual seed of Jesus Christ. Let yourself trust this. You are God's joy.

Let this reality stir our hearts for him. We'd never dream to expect this, would we?

But by faith, we trust the promise. It's the Lord's great pleasure to redeem you and me and then to prepare you and me for himself and then to see and enjoy you and me in glory soon.

Don't you long for that day? Let's pray and thank him. Oh, Lord, we praise you for who you are and how you've revealed yourself to us, the person and work of Jesus Christ.

We worship you, Lord. Oh, Lord, our words can never come close to giving you all the glory that you do.

[41 : 43] What we can't say in our words, Lord, we simply breathe it out from our souls by the help of your spirit. We pray that you please receive this, Lord, as worship from your church, from your people, as a fragrant offering, Lord, going up to you by faith because of our mediator, Jesus Christ, the only man and the only divine mediator.

We praise you. Please apply this truth, Lord, to our lives this hour, this day, this week, and this year we ask by your power, counting on your help as we abide in you.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Well, it's a joy to see several visitors here today.

I was able to meet a few of you, and I hope to shake your hand afterwards and get to know you a little bit. We make it our practice to have the Lord's Supper every week. The Lord said, as often as you do this, so we try to do it often, and it's such a joy to reflect on him.

So baptism and the Lord's Supper are commands God has given his people in the New Covenant, in addition to the Ten Commandments. These are external signs by which the Holy Spirit communicates promises of God's grace, as we've just heard from Isaiah 53.

[43 : 15] And he gives us these visuals, you know, baptism, the Lord's Supper, we can see, we can taste and touch. It's because our faith is weak, and God is so kind.

He ministers to our weak faith through these sacraments. They represent Christ and his saving benefits. They confirm our participation in him.

And they visibly mark off from the world those who belong to his church. So when we take this, we're expressing our bond together in covenant with God and with his local body.

If you are a disciple of Jesus Christ, he calls you to, he calls you in love to give yourself to a local church. When you enter covenant communion with a local church, you joyfully embrace the spiritual care of your soul, which Christ has entrusted through the under shepherds in his church into that body.

And this is for our peace, purity, and growth as his children. The Lord's Supper is an ordinance designed for local churches like ours. The Lord is omniscient, and he knew we would be gathering today in his name in celebrating this.

[44 : 30] It symbolizes our shared commitment as members of Christ, our head, with him and with each other. When we eat this bread and drink this cup together, we proclaim the Lord's death and also our shared life in his body as his blood-purchased church until he comes again.

Taking the Lord's Supper is a privilege of membership and good standing at a church. It doesn't have to be this church. Because the practices of different places sometimes cause confusion about such matters, we invite you to speak with me for guidance about your situation.

And we urge you with God's love to obey what Christ calls us to as his disciples. If you are sincerely taking steps to obey what Christ has commanded, whether here or in another true gospel-preaching church, we invite you to please join us at the table today.

God's word gives us loving instruction as we come. In 1 Corinthians 5-8, we are warned to never approach the Lord's table harboring malice or wickedness in our hearts.

In 1 Corinthians 11, we are told that anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. To discern the body means to come without selfishness or divisiveness, after honest self-examination, and in unity with the body of Christ as it is expressed by your local church.

[46 : 02] These warnings are not for those who struggle against sin, but for those who refuse to repent and obey Christ. The sacraments perform their purposes in our lives to establish and increase our faith only when the Holy Spirit uses them to penetrate our hearts, to stir up our affections for God, and to guide our souls to receive again God's grace through Jesus.

And the gospel is pictured by the bread and the cup. So let's feast with sincere hearts together on God's grace to us, resting entirely on Christ, trusting in his mercy, and rejoicing in his finished work.

Here are a few verses one more time from the passages we've read today. Isaiah 53 and John 12. God promised, He shall see the labor of his soul and be satisfied.

By his knowledge, my righteous servant shall justify many, and I will give him the victor's reward, and he shall freely pour his grace upon his people.

The pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He poured out his soul unto death. He was numbered with the transgressors. He bore the sin of many.

[47 : 27] And Jesus Christ makes intercession for saved sinners. John 12, 44. Jesus cries out to you and me, you who believe in me, believe in him who sent me.

You who see me, you see him who sent me. I have come as light into the world that whoever believes in me should not abide in darkness.

Christ clothed in his gospel is lovingly set forth once again for you today, church. Please be served. Christ!