

When We Are Afraid of Being Known

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Date: 13 September 2026

Preacher: Dave Nannery

[0:00] Well, good morning. My name is Dave Nannery, one of the pastors here this morning, and it's my pleasure to bring God's word to you. Let me begin with prayer as we commit this time to the Lord. Father, I know that I am an inadequate vessel, an inadequate channel of your word.

I ask, Lord God, that regardless of the weakness of myself and the weakness of those who hear, many of us come distracted, overwhelmed, minds occupied elsewhere. Lord, may we bring all of these things, set them before you, and then listen to what you have to say. Give us eyes to see, give us ears to hear, and give us hearts to understand.

The message you have for us this morning that shifts our whole way of looking at life, looking at other people, looking at ourselves. I pray this morning that we may sense that you are both a God to be feared and also a God to draw near to, to receive help in our need.

Humble us this morning. Make us more dependent on you, we pray. Amen. Amen. Well, I've preached on the subject of the fear of man on several occasions over the last 11 years of serving here as a pastor at the church.

[1:35] And the reason I keep coming back to the subject, and as long as I'm with you, I'm going to keep coming back to the subject, is because when we are afraid of other people, when we're anxious around other people, when we're controlled by other people, when we're needy for other people, it is a root cause of so many problems in our life.

And I see this again and again and again in counseling. One of the books I most recommend when I'm counseling people, most frequently recommend, is a book called When People Are Big and God Is Small.

And the reason for that is if you have a struggle with that problem, you are not alone. It is a universal human struggle.

And so I thought it would be helpful to return to Luke chapters 11 and 12. And when I say return, I actually preached on these 11 years ago, back when I was candidating as pastor here at SBC. So if some of you are listening to the sermon, you're like, hey, this sounds familiar. You have an amazing memory. Okay, so let me know if you're that kind of person, because I want to take advantage of that amazing memory in the future.

[2:51] But I just figured I need to hear this again. I know we all need to hear this again over and over and over. And so a good place, I think, to jump into today's scripture is with a question that, you know, I guess it's a bit of one of those icebreaker questions we all hate, right?

You know, you meet a bunch of new people. Let's do some icebreaker questions. Everyone's like, oh, no. If you could have dinner with any one person in history, who would it be? If you could have dinner with any one person in history, who would it be?

Now, if you grew up in church, if you were a good little Sunday school kid, you know what the correct answer to that question is. What is it?

It's Jesus. Okay, yeah. We all think it would be great to have Jesus for dinner. And you know what? So did one of the Jewish religious leaders of Jesus' day.

He thought this would be a great idea to have Jesus for dinner. One of the Pharisees, he must have been hearing Jesus teach. And for whatever reason, he decides he's going to invite Jesus over for a dinner party.

[3:55] And it goes sideways really fast. Almost from the start, this dinner party becomes possibly the most awkward dinner party in biblical history.

At least the most awkward one that doesn't involve, you know, somebody getting killed. So at least that, we've got that going for us. So just be warned, if you invite Jesus over for dinner, he might make it awkward.

We're going to start with the story of the awkward dinner party. It's going to begin in Luke chapter 11, verse 37. And I'll read through Luke chapter 12, verse 3 to take us through the aftermath of what happens.

And you can find all this in page 870 in the Bible's Russia's handout. So page 870, starting in Luke chapter 11, verse 37. While Jesus was speaking, a Pharisee asked him to dine with him.

So he went in and reclined at table. The Pharisee was astonished to see that he did not first wash before dinner. And the Lord said to him, Now, you Pharisees, cleanse the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside you are full of greed and wickedness.

[5 : 12] You fools! Did not he who made the outside make the inside also? But give as alms those things that are within. And behold, everything is clean for you.

But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe mint and rue and every herb and neglect justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without neglecting the others.

Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seat in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you! For you are like unmarked graves and people walk over them without knowing it.

One of the lawyers answered him, Teacher, and saying these things, you insult us also. And he said, Woe to you lawyers also!

For you load people with burdens hard to bear, and you yourselves do not touch the burdens with one of your fingers. Woe to you! For you build the tombs of the prophets whom your fathers killed.

[6 : 20] So you are witnesses, and you consent to the deeds of your fathers, for they killed them, and you build their tombs. Therefore also the wisdom of God said, I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and persecute, so that the blood of all the prophets shed from the foundation of the world may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who perished between the altar and the sanctuary.

Yes, I tell you, it will be required of this generation. Woe to you lawyers! For you have taken away the key of knowledge. You did not enter yourselves, and you hindered those who were entering.

As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, lying in wait for him to catch him in something he might say.

In the meantime, when so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another, he began to say to his disciples first, Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light, and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops.

[7 : 53] This is God's word to us this morning. Now, let's go back to the aftermath of that incredibly awkward dinner party.

Right? Imagine yourself sitting there as Jesus is saying all these things, looking around at the looks on everybody's faces. The religious leaders, the Pharisees, the scribes, the lawyers, these titles for these religious leaders, they are very upset, very angry, because of what Jesus said that exposed them for who they are.

And so, they try to bring down this now enemy of theirs, this guy who saw through their wonderful, righteous exterior, and saw what was happening in their hearts.

Luke tells us in chapter 11, verse 53, how they intend to bring Jesus down. As he went away from there, the scribes and the Pharisees began to press him hard and to provoke him to speak about many things, lying in wait for him, to catch him in something he might say.

Now, if you want to bring down someone who is a threat to you, someone who has exposed you publicly, there are several ways you can do it, and most of them involve getting at that person's reputation.

[9 : 19] You can spread rumors and gossip about this person. You can publicly denounce them in speech and writing. You can try to intimidate this person by threatening him or someone that he loves.

You can straight up try to kill him if all else fails. And throughout the Gospels, throughout all of these biographies of the life of Jesus, all of these things do happen.

That is how they go after Jesus. But in this instance, that's not the tactic that the Pharisees and the scribes decide to take. Here, they're a little bit more clever than that.

Remember, these are very, very smart men. They're probably smarter than almost anyone in this room, myself included. And they're very good at politics. Instead of trying to shut Jesus up, they're going to try to use the tactic that maybe a clever guard at the border would use or a police interrogator would use with a suspect.

They would get him to talk. Get him to talk more. Press him to speak more and more and more. Ask him questions. Try to get him to talk and say something.

[10:31] What about this controversial issue, Jesus? What do you have to say about that? You know, why don't you just say that out loud for everybody to hear? They want Jesus talking and talking and talking and what they're doing is they're laying a trap.

These religious leaders are good students of human nature and they know the lesson of Proverbs 10, verse 19. When words are many, transgression is not lacking.

But whoever restrains his lips is prudent. So this is a verse challenging all the yappers among us, right? That when we talk and talk and talk and talk and talk at some point something comes out that is not wise, that may be sinful.

And these men have already decided that's the kind of guy that Jesus is. This man is deep down an evil man. Remember last week how BK talked about how many of them had concluded he must have all this miraculous power.

He must have this from Satan. So all they need to do is get him to speak more and eventually he's going to slip up and something that Satan would say is going to come out. And then it'll be all over for Jesus and his disciples.

[11:45] Because take a look at 12, verse 1. Look at the way that Luke describes the crowds that have gathered to hear Jesus talk. Luke says, so many thousands of the people had gathered together that they were trampling one another.

This is not, you know, a nice gentle scene and a painting. You know, the picture is this beautiful pastoral scene and all the people calmly sitting around with adoring eyes looking at Jesus as he teaches.

This is a madhouse. This is a scene from Costco on the final Saturday before Christmas. There are thousands of people jammed into one place, literally trampling on one another, pushing and shoving and competing to get near Jesus.

This is a chaotic and volatile situation. The wrong word will turn it into a riot. A few wrong words from Jesus to provoke the crowds and they turn on him and they trample him and his disciples.

Maybe the religious leaders have planted some people in the crowds who are waiting and ready to turn everyone against Jesus once he says the wrong thing. They're counting on it. They think they can turn the mob against him.

[13:08] And maybe the next person to get trampled is Jesus. Or maybe his disciples. So Jesus, he understands what is happening here.

He is a man of wisdom and he knows that right now he is a marked man. He knows that the Pharisees want to see through him. They want to expose him as a fraud.

Jesus knows what it is like to have enemies. He knows what it's like to have people who want to see through him and expose him. Do you know what that feels like?

Maybe you can name a specific person in your life who seems to be out to get you. Maybe there's someone who always seems to be probing you and examining you even interrogating you and they're just waiting for you to say the wrong thing so they can jump all over you.

You feel stressed out. You feel on edge all the time. You're watching every word you say because anything you say can and will be used against you in their court of law.

[14:18] The reality is the more faithfully that you and I follow Christ the more likely we are to rub coworkers and family members the wrong way even if we don't mean to.

The more likely we are to be targeted by others. Not by everybody but by a few select people oftentimes. If that's never happened to you I'm convinced that at some point in your life it will.

There are people who want to see through you and humiliate you. There are people who want to see through you and humiliate you. If you're not experiencing that yet just wait. Maybe that's something you've felt in the past.

Maybe it's something you'll feel in the future. And for some of you maybe you're feeling it right now. They're waiting for you to screw up so they can pounce. That's a scary place to be.

Now maybe you have one or two people in your life who are wanting to see through you and humiliate you but maybe the truth is that maybe for some of us here you feel that way about just about everybody.

[15:21] You're worried about all the eyes on you that anyone would see through you and expose you for who you are. And if you don't feel that way now why don't you come up here and stand up in front and try to deliver a speech.

Do you ever get stage fright? Do you ever feel in your work or in other situations like you're an imposter or a fraud?

Do you ever feel like there's something dirty that you're hiding from the people sitting around you? Do you ever worry that people are going to find out that you're deep down really incompetent or that you're not a good person?

Do you ever find yourself worrying what if people find out what I'm really like underneath? What if people find out what happened to me when I was 13? What if people find out what I said to my kids this morning?

What if people find out what I did when I was alone last Friday? Have you ever had a thought like that? I have.

[16:32] And one of the ways that I've handled it one of the ways that we often tend to handle it is we try to find better ways to hide. We withdraw into pleasures and entertainment.

We put up walls to protect ourselves. We keep our distance from people. We put on a cheerful face in public and say and do the right things but in private we're a different person.

We live two lives a public life and a private life. Clean on the outside dirty on the inside. because when the eyes of other people are on us we feel we have to put up a presentable image.

We feel we can't let them see who we really are because their judgment feels overwhelming. Their judgment feels powerful. People feel big. And the funny thing is when people feel big God feels small.

And that's why Jesus gathers his disciples around him in the middle of this crazy, volatile, dangerous situation. Jesus is like a quarterback bringing his teammates in for a huddle.

[17:44] Sorry, it's the week one of the NFL season so I got that in my mind. So the quarterback brings them in. They need some words of help. And I want to put you put yourself in the shoes of Jesus' disciples here.

These Pharisees, these powerful and influential religious leaders, they're way more educated than you. They have way more power and influence than you. And they have been hounding Jesus.

And perhaps they're even in fact in other situations they're hounding you. They're hounding you as the disciples trying to catch you all in saying the wrong thing. And they are here right now just waiting for that right opportunity to turn this whole mob of thousands of chaotic people against you. And so when Jesus pulls you into the huddle and he begins to speak to you in an urgent tone of voice, what do you expect him to say? What's he going to say to you?

Well, I don't know about you, but here's what I would expect Jesus to say. Beware of the Pharisees. Watch out for those Pharisees. Don't say the wrong thing in front of them. If they hear what you say in secret, they're going to broadcast to the whole world.

[19:01] That's the threat assessment that you and I might expect. The biggest threat here is from the Pharisees. But Jesus, he's wiser than that.

He's wiser than you and me. He can see, we're just narrowly focused on one threat, but Jesus, he sees all threats. He sees things not from an earthly perspective, but from a heavenly perspective. And Jesus is not terribly worried about the enemy without, as dangerous as they are. Jesus is much more concerned about the enemy within.

Look at what he tells the disciples at the end of 12, verse 1. Chapter 12, verse 1. Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

So Jesus doesn't tell us to be afraid of what your enemies can do to expose you. He doesn't talk so much about, you know, don't give them anything that could expose you.

[20:02] There may be wisdom in that. The Bible has wisdom for that. But Jesus wants their eyes fixed on the biggest threat. He says, be afraid of becoming like your enemies.

Be afraid of this thing called hypocrisy. Hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is a word that meant acting. It meant putting on a mask, presenting a different face than what you really are.

And Jesus says, hypocrisy is contagious. If you are, you could become like your enemy. That's actually one of the greatest dangers when you have an enemy is it's very easy to turn into them, to become the mirror image of them.

If you are fearing and fretting and obsessing over these people who are out to get you, you may very well catch the disease that they have got. So be afraid of acting as though you were someone holy and good when you're not.

Be afraid of washing the outside of the cup and dish but leaving the inside full of greed and wickedness like the Pharisees. Yes, there are people who want to see through you and humiliate you but the greatest danger is what's hiding in your own heart.

[21 : 23] The greatest danger is what's hiding in your own heart. The greatest danger is hypocrisy. And Jesus says, beware of it because it is the leaven of the Pharisees.

Now, there's an irony there because remember, the Pharisees are the ones trying to get Jesus to speak and expose what is inside of his heart.

They're convinced that Jesus is the hypocrite. They're convinced that Jesus is the one who is rotten inside. Oh, how often when we have a deep problem in our hearts, we often look at other people and are convinced they're the ones with that problem.

The Pharisees project their hypocrisy onto Jesus. They're in denial about what Jesus told them in chapter 11, in denial about their hypocrisy. And so they don't even realize their attempts to trap Jesus are never going to succeed because unlike them, there is nothing for Jesus to hide.

Who Jesus is on the outside is who he is on the inside. Jesus is holy through and through. He is pure. He is spotless from head to toe, from the outside all the way to the inner core of his being, all the way to his heart.

[22 : 40] He is a man of pure integrity. He is the only man of pure integrity. No matter the situation he's in, no matter how much they get him to talk, what is going to come out of him is always going to be good and right and true and wise.

But Jesus is concerned for his, he's not concerned for himself here, notice. He's not worried about himself. He is concerned for his disciples. He's concerned for you and me.

He cares about us because he knows that you and I, we're not like that. We're not spotless like Jesus is through and through.

Jesus is the wisest man who ever lived and he has piercing insight into the very core of who we are and so like a surgeon with a scalpel, Jesus loves us enough to give us the hard truth.

He knows there's a cancer inside of our hearts, inside of our thought processes, our emotions, our will and he calls this cancer hypocrisy.

[23 : 49] He's putting on a mask. He calls it the leaven of the Pharisees and that leads us to the question, why does he call hypocrisy leaven? Why is he calling it baker's yeast that you put into bread?

Well, now is the moment that I can finally, after all these years, tap into the things my mom taught me about bread making when I was younger and that I have not used in my adult life. If you have ever made bread by hand, then what Jesus means is very clear to you.

A little later in Luke chapter 13 verse 20, Jesus again uses leaven, uses yeast, as an illustration and this time Jesus uses it in a positive way.

He says, to what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour until it was all leavened.

So what the woman in this parable is doing is she's taking a little pinch of leaven, a little pinch of baker's yeast and she is kneading it and working it into a huge batch of dough.

[24 : 57] The batch of dough in this parable is 40 liters in size. So she's a serious baker here. And that little bit of yeast disappears into the dough, gets kneaded throughout the dough.

It looks like it's gone. If you don't know anything about baking, it looks like it can't make a difference. But what actually happens is that as she kneads the flour, as she kneads the dough, that little pinch of leaven works its way, is mixed throughout the entire batch.

The yeast spreads and then it multiplies and then it grows as the dough sits. And as the yeast metabolizes that dough, it produces bubbles and that bubble causes the bread to rise.

The entire batch of dough will rise because of a little yeast that worked its way throughout the entire lump of dough. That's what leaven does. It changes the shape of every loaf.

And so when Jesus calls hypocrisy the leaven of the Pharisees, what he's saying is that there's evil, there's sin, there's hypocrisy that's hiding inside your heart, inside my heart, and we try, we think we can hide it, like maybe if I need things around, I can spread it out and hide it from the people around us.

[26:06] We can construct our life so that no one sees it. It's only a little pinch, it's manageable, but we let it linger. We continue saying the right things in our public lives, but in private, we allow the shameful actions and attitudes to stay with us and we think we can keep it under control.

But the thing about hypocrisy, it doesn't stay under control any more than yeast, any more than bread with yeast in it will stay flat.

It's going to rise. It's going to grow. It's going to spread throughout the dough and it's going to work our way throughout our entire being. The greatest danger is what's hiding in your own heart.

You and I, I'm afraid that sometimes we think we can manage our hypocrisy, but we can't. We can't contain it.

We can't control it. It's going to work its way throughout our entire system and in his letter in 1 Corinthians, Paul says it tends to work its way throughout a church too, not just through individuals, but through families and churches.

[27:13] And Jesus explains to us why this is so dangerous. In Luke 12, verse 2, nothing is covered up that will not be revealed or hidden that will not be known.

Therefore, whatever you have said in the dark shall be heard in the light and what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. Now, my first instinct when I read this is, well, maybe I'll tone that down a bit.

Maybe Jesus means only a few people will find about my private life. Only a few people will know what I've said and done in the dark. But Jesus leaves no room for misunderstanding because his final statement is, what you have whispered in private rooms shall be proclaimed on the housetops. What is private, everything that is private will be made public. There is no hemming and hawing. No watering this down. There is a day coming that God is going to one day expose all that we have said and all that we have done for the world to see for better or for worse.

The Bible is clear on this again and again. Sometimes we get a sneak preview of that in this lifetime. God brings things to light in time. Here in this present age, we've seen that sometimes happen.

[28:35] If it does not happen in this lifetime, in its fullness, it is going to happen when we stand before God to be judged by him because on that day, God will ensure that the world will see that his judgments are just and right.

Man looks on the outside of the dish but the Lord judges the inside, the heart. So who we are is revealed by our words and who we are inside is revealed by what we say in secret, including the inner secrets of our heart.

So when God reveals our secret words, would they not condemn us? The sobering truth is that God knows who you and I are right now. You see, Jesus is not worried that our enemies, our human enemies are going to expose you and me as frauds.

He's not worried whether you think you're a fraud, whether you think you're exposing yourself. He's concerned that what God sees in you, he's concerned that you will stand before God and be revealed.

Yes, there are people who want to see through you and humiliate you but the greatest danger is what's hiding in your own heart. So fear God who knows who you are. Fear God who knows who you are.

[29:53] Fear God who is big, who is omniscient, who sees everything and knows everything and reveals everything. Don't fear other people. They're really small.

They're this big. What they can do to you, what they can do to reveal you is nothing. Now, how is that good news?

That sure probably does not feel like good news. Isn't this just the same problem but much, much worse? If other people might expose us, how much worse to hear that God will expose us for who we are.

When we are afraid of being known, Jesus' words don't seem very comforting at all. I think if we're looking for something that helps us, that makes us, gives us a sense of help and gospel comfort, it's to look not just at what Jesus is saying but what he is doing.

Do you notice the way Jesus is behaving in this account of his life? Do you notice how fearless he is? Isn't that interesting? Everybody around Jesus is afraid.

[31:08] The Pharisees are afraid. They got exposed by him. His disciples are afraid. But Jesus is fearless. There's a saying, those who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

Right? Jesus is not afraid of throwing stones. He is not afraid of critiquing the religious authorities that hate him. Why not? Because he doesn't live in a glass house.

Because he has a pure heart. Because he is a man of integrity through and through. He is a man who is without sin. That great high priest that Chris read about earlier who is both without sin yet able to sympathize with us in our weaknesses.

And you see him sympathizing with the disciples and their weaknesses while at the same time himself being pure and spotless. And you can see all this in the way he communicates.

Jesus isn't watering down the truth for his disciples. He's not just trying to make them feel a little bit better, to give them a little bit of relief. And you see Jesus, he's not playing political games back at the Pharisees.

[32:13] He's setting that perfect example of a man who is not a hypocrite and doesn't play hypocrite games. Jesus' words are coming out of his heart.

And he has a good and loving heart. The words are confrontational, but they are for the good of those who hear them. He's saying woe to the Pharisees.

Alas! Warning them. Calling them out for their good. He is warning the disciples for their good because he cares about them.

Jesus will always tell you the truth like a good surgeon. He will always tell you the truth even if no one else will. And the truth is, if you and I are left to ourselves, if all we have to have is ourselves and our own merits and who we really are deep down, if that's who we're left with, we are in great danger of being exposed, of having our secret thoughts and attitudes and words and actions being revealed and it won't look good for us on that day of judgment.

And so all we can do is we can turn to God, the judge, on that day and all we can say is, my only refuge, my only security, my only place of safety, when I am revealed, when I am exposed, my only refuge is Jesus.

[33:41] I cast myself on his mercy. Please, when you look at Jesus, oh God, when you look at him, see, when you look at me, see Jesus instead.

When you look at me, see that perfect man, the God-man, standing in my place, perfect in truth, perfect in love, perfect and wonderful and full of integrity through and through.

let Jesus be for me the man that I cannot be so that I can stand before you without shame. Oh God, I receive your perfect gift of Jesus' righteousness, the gift that God has given to us.

To be a Christian means you do not stand on your own merits. You stand on the merits of Jesus Christ. when you are exposed, you can say, yes, that's who I am, but I have Jesus right next to me and I'm with him.

Look at him. He's with me. That's the pathway of hope. When you fear the Lord, God is big and people are small and when God is big, that means Jesus is big and his goodness is big and that is the way to life.

[35:10] Fear God who knows who you are and trust God for giving you his son. Trust God for giving you his perfect son. So there are two ways to live.

On the one hand, you and I can fear man. We can fear other people. We can hide our true selves from them. We can live the hidden life of a hypocrite and at the end of the road there will be a complete undoing of all the defenses that we have built, all the psychological walls and devices we've put up, all the smoke and mirrors that we have placed to hide who we are.

That is the outcome. The other path that we can take is that we fear God. not the fear that is a slavish fear that causes you to cringe and run away and hide your face, but the fear in which our gaze, our eyes are fixed on the one who is bigger, the one who far outweighs us in power and significance.

And because you and I fear the God who He already right now sees us for who we are, we're not afraid anymore to be honest, to be authentic about who we are because it is a wonderful thing to be fully known and fully loved.

To have Jesus look at you, His disciples and say, I know who you guys are and I love you and so I'm going to help you. To have Jesus look at you and say, I know who you are and my heart is for

you.

[37:02] We repent of our hypocrisy and our hiding because of that. We think about this passage of Scripture we've seen today and we realize that because God, His heart was to give us His Son, Jesus Christ, to speak these words to us, oh how He has loved you and me so much that He sent His Son to warn us of the danger of sin.

He sent His Son to rescue us from our rebellion against Him. He sent His Son to deliver us from that crippling fear of man that controls us.

He wants you free from that. He wants to set you free. And we marvel that Jesus gave His own life for us dying on the cross, taking the punishment for all of that sin and all of that evil in our hearts, taking all that shame on Himself and He conquered sin and death and shame itself by rising again to new and glorious life, a life free from shame, a life of glory and honor.

And so we realize I'm with Jesus now. I'm going to be okay. So expose me all you want and I will say again and again, I am with Jesus Christ, my Lord.

He is risen from the dead and He is Lord. So look at Jesus. Jesus is where my value is, where my worth is. He is my treasure and my glory, my life is hidden with Christ in God and when Christ, who is my life, appears, I'm going to appear with Him in glory.

[38:47] So I'm okay. And so as we fear the Lord, as we stare into His glory, as we consider all that He has done for us, it changes us.

You can't do that without it bit by bit from one degree of glory to another changing you because you become what you behold.

You behold the Pharisees, you become like them. You behold Jesus, you become like Him. Where our eyes are fixed is where we are headed. We become holy like He is holy.

Our words become pure and wise because they are the overflow of a heart that is becoming pure and wise. And so we are freed not only from the penalty of sin, but from the power of sin over us and we have hope that we will be freed one day from the presence of sin altogether.

And if that is a life you want to live, you're in the right place. God has brought you here to save you from judgment, to rescue you from shame.

[39:52] If you want someone to pray for you or talk you through what you're feeling right now after this, please come to me or come to one of our elders after the service to Chris or Clay or Andy.

We'll be happy to pray with you, to talk with you, to help you. When we're afraid of being known, of being exposed, remember, God is big, people are small. So fear God and trust Him for giving you His perfect Son.

Let me pray for us. Almighty God, as we prepare to receive communion as we head to this table, we are sobered.

We cannot make ourselves worthy to sit down at dinner with you. And Lord, we are going to about to have a dinner party with you, but it's going to be a much better one.

one where we see that your body was broken, your blood was shed for us. When we physically reenact that, when you receive the blessings of that covenant relationship you have with us, I pray that this may reassure us that if God is for us, who can be against us?

[41:19] Reassure us again and again, Lord, of your promise, of your hope, and that you are coming again. Lord, we pray that, I pray that, if we, if anyone here has been cut to the heart by these words, Lord, may they take that seriously, seek help, seek wisdom.

If anyone is afflicted by shame, may they long for the honor and the hope that Jesus Christ can give them. Lord, let us not look inwardly and obsess inwardly.

Let us not look at other people and obsess about them, but let us look to you, the one who is perfect and wonderful in all his ways. Amen.

Well, now we are going to continue our worship by taking communion, taking the Lord's Supper together. This is an opportunity for those who have put their faith in Jesus Christ, who have made that, who have expressed that faith publicly through baptism to come and enjoy.

Now that we have entered this covenant relationship with God, marked it out publicly, to now publicly come and receive this good news, to receive this blessing, this meal that Jesus instituted for us.

[42:47] So if that's you, then we welcome you to come forward and to take part in eating and drinking. So what I'll invite you to do is, after I've said these words of institution, come up the center aisles, take the bread, take the cup, go around the outside aisles and return to your seat, and then

once everyone has taken that and returned to their seat, then we will all eat and drink together.
So let me read these words that the Apostle Paul gave. He says, I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus, on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body, which is for you.
Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, also, he took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.