

# 1 Corinthians 14:13-25

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, let's go back to follow. That was great. Thanks, guys.

That was really awesome. Well, good morning, friends. It's going to be with you all. It's going to be back for vacation. Thanks for all of you who were praying for me and my family while we were away for the holidays.

If you're new with us this morning, this is a part of our service. We spent some just dedicated time devoting ourselves to reading and learning and hearing from God's words. We're just together. Our sermon text is found in 1 Corinthians chapter 14 this morning.

I invite you to turn that with me. That's page 960. I'm ready for you. 1 Corinthians chapter 14.

1 Corinthians chapter 14. Our focus today is going to be on verses 13 through 25 of this chapter.

[ 1 : 02 ] But let's start reading actually in verse 1. Just to get the context. So we'll read from verse 1 to verse 25. Let me read this verse. All right. So this is the church in Corinth and the Bible.

1 Corinthians chapter 15.

Now I want you all to speak in tongues, but even more prophesy. The one who prophesies is greater than the one who speaks in tongues. As someone interprets. So that the church may be built up.

Now brothers, if I come to you speaking in tongues, how will I benefit you unless I bring you some revelation or knowledge or prophecy or teaching? If even lifeless nutrients such as the food or heart do not give distinct notes, how will anyone know it is void?

And if the bugle gives an indistinct sound, how will you get ready for power? So with yourselves. So with yourselves. And with your tongue, if you utter speech that is not intelligible, how will anyone know what I said?

[ 2 : 23 ] For you will be speaking into the air. There are doubtless many different languages in the world and none is without meaning. But if I do not know the meaning of the language, I will be a foreigner to the speaker.

And the speaker a foreigner to me. So with yourselves, since you are eager for the manifestation of the Spirit, strive to excel in the building of the church.

Therefore one who speaks in the tongue should pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in the tongue, my spirit prays, but my mind is unfruitful. What am I to do?

I will pray with my spirit, but I will pray with my mind also. I will sing praise with my spirit, but I will sing with my mind also. Otherwise, if you give thanks with your spirit, how can anyone in the position of an outsider say amen to your thanksgiving, when he does not know what you are saying?

For you may be giving thanks well enough, but the other person is not being God's God. I thank God that I speak in tongues more than all of you. Nevertheless, in church I would rather speak five words with my mind than rather instruct others.

- [ 3 : 35 ]     That ten thousand words in a tongue. Brothers, do not be children, but be infants and people. But if you think of being children.
- And the law is written, By people of strange tongues, by the lips of foreigners, that I speak to this people, and even then they will not listen to this person. Thus tongues are a sign not for believers, but for unbelievers.
- Well, prophecy is a sign not for unbelievers, but for believers. If, therefore, the whole church comes together, and all speaking tongues and outsiders and unbelievers enter, will it not say that you are out of your mind?
- But as well prophesy, and an unbeliever out of his letter enters, he is convicted by it. He is called to encounter it. The secrets of his heart are disclosed, and so falling on his face he will worship God.
- And pray that God is willing. Let's pray for God. Let's pray for God.
- [ 5 : 04 ]     And he would help us through this passage to know what it means to genuinely worship and talk about the church we are going to know about. Lord, help for our sake, for the sake of others, for the sake of your sake.
- Probably we have to say some Jesus. Well, 1 Corinthians 14. Here we are. So this is one of the longest chapters in the New Testament that deals explicitly with the topic, not just of spiritual gifts, but also of the topic of the worship gathering of the church.
- Throughout the New Testament, we get little pieces, little pictures here and there. This chapter is the longest, the most sustained treatment of what we might call a corporate gathering of the church.
- The particular needs and problems of the particular church in Corinth at the time. And it seems, on the surface, as we just read, it seems to be all about speaking in tongues and prophecy, right?
- Now, Pastor Greg dove into the nature of those two spiritual gifts last week. So we're not going to spend a lot of time kind of rehashing that this morning. You can grab that sermon from the website online, or you can come talk to me afterwards if you have particular questions.
- [ 6 : 19 ]     I'm happy to talk more about that. But today, what I want to do is, I want to look at one of the underlying priorities or principles that Paul emphasizes here when it comes to our worship together.
- What's going on underneath the heart of Paul's discussion of speaking in tongues and prophecy? And the big priority that comes out here is the importance of intelligible worship.
- The big problem that Paul has with speaking in tongues in the gathered church service, at least if there's no one to interpret that is, is that it's completely unintelligible to the people who've gathered.
- No one understands a word of what's being said. Now, remember last week, we said that the gift of speaking in tongues was the spirit-given ability to speak words of prayer and praise and thanksgiving to God in a language unknown to the speaker.
- And you notice throughout this chapter that Paul doesn't disparage that gift in and of itself. But he says when the church gathers together, he wants them to strive to prophesy all the more instead.
- [ 7 : 33 ]     And again, as we said last week, what does it mean to prophesy? Well, prophecy was the spirit-given ability to speak words of encouragement and upbuilding and consolation with a particularly keen insight into the needs of the moment.

In other words, if the spiritual gift of teaching is the ability to systematically expound what's true for all Christians in every place and time, it would seem that the spiritual gift of prophecy is the ability to apply that truth with poignancy to the needs of a particular place and time.

So prophecy in the New Testament isn't really essentially about predicting the future, which is what we often think of with that word. No, it's about applying the truth with spirit-given insight into our context, into our needs today.

And so for Paul, you see, it's critical that what we do and what we say when we gather on Sundays is above all intelligible, understandable to those who gather.

Look again at verses 14 through 15 of our text. It's not just enough, Paul says, to have something move us in our spirit. It has to be something that we understand with our minds.

[ 8 : 52 ] A powerful emotion, a gripping experience, they're great to have. But just those things alone aren't enough, especially when the church is gathered together.

It has to be something intelligible, something we can enter into, not just with our spirit, but with our minds, with our understanding as well. So I want us to consider the importance of intelligible worship this morning.

In verse 20, Paul even goes so far to say that what it means to be mature in our thinking about corporate worship is to understand just this fact. So let's look at this issue of intelligible worship.

And first, before we dive into all the reasons Paul gives for it, it's worth considering how worship can become unintelligible for us today. I have never been to a church service at Trinity where there are so many people speaking in tongues at one time that the whole service was gobbledygook and people said, you're out of your minds.

So it doesn't seem like we have the exact same problem that the church in Corinth had, right? However, the issue of unintelligibility is still one that we all actually face.

[ 10 : 02 ] It's a danger to every church and every time. And it manifests itself in a lot of different ways. You know, historically, before the Reformation, there were long stretches of time when a typical church service was held in a language that no one actually spoke.

The medieval Latin mass meant that most Christians knew nothing of what was being said in worship for generations. You know, the fact that we have Bibles in our own language and hold services in our own language is a huge blessing and not one to be taken for granted.

But again, today, most of us probably won't have trouble finding a service in English or in our typical tongue. Although we should be sort of especially sensitive to those in our midst who are from different parts of the world and who struggle to understand English.

And we need to strive to be clear when we're interacting with them. But what are some other sort of maybe more dangers that are closer to home for us that make our services unintelligible?

Well, I think a bigger danger for us, if we're not careful, is that the vocabulary or the words that we use can make our service feel unintelligible at times.

[ 11 : 19 ] And you know, this doesn't just apply to using sort of big, long, sort of standardized test type words when we're preaching or praying or sharing or doing all these things.

Of course, that's one danger. But you know, there's also the danger of using what we might call Christian speak that is actually completely unintelligible to the people who gather for worship.

I remember my dad growing up, whenever we would take a car trip, would get us boys together and he would pray that we would be surrounded by a hedge of protection.

I had no idea what a hedge of protection was until I was like in high school. What does that even mean? And there are all sorts of other words and phrases that we use that are sort of just insider language of Zion lingo that no one really understands.

But you know, it's not just big, long, vocabulary words or Christian lingo that can make our services unintelligible. I think there's a way in which maybe if we're not careful, the songs that we sing can make our services unintelligible.

[ 12 : 31 ] And it doesn't just apply to the lyrics that we sing. What if we were to pick songs where the rhythm was so complicated and unfamiliar, so syncopated, that it made it almost impossible to sing together as a congregation.

And you know, that applies not just to some really beautiful classic hymns, but a lot of contemporary songs too. With the other worship leaders, we listen to a lot of great music and sometimes we listen to a song and we think that will be impossible for us to sing together because the rhythm is so unfamiliar and so foreign and so unpredictable.

Or, you know, there are a lot of songs where the range, that is how high the notes go, is so big that we can't possibly sing it together either. I think there are even songs where the style makes a song practically unintelligible and maybe I'm going to step on a couple toes here.

But you know, it's not that we don't understand the words, but sometimes the style of a song is so outdated that we can't actually sing the words with the right meaning. There's a reason why we don't sing Shine Jesus Shine anymore.

Or Lord, I lift your name on high. Because stylistically, they're just so foreign and so out of place. But how else might our corporate worship become functionally unintelligible today?

[ 13 : 53 ] What about our order of service? The sort of way in which we structure our times together. I remember visiting an Anglican church in college and it was this small, super welcoming congregation that preached the gospel.

They loved Jesus. It was a good church. But you know, on my way into the sanctuary as the service began, they handed me three books. It was a book of common prayer and a hymnal and a hymnal supplement.

So there I was. I marched into my pew and sat down. And in order to follow the service, I had to flip through the pages of these three different books trying to find what words to say when and which songs to sing where.

And needless to say, as a newcomer, I was completely about two steps behind everyone else all the time. As a newcomer, I was practically an outsider and the service was almost unintelligible to me.

Now, that's not to sort of just bash on liturgical services because honestly, friends, the flip side of the things can happen even in the most casual sort of non-liturgical service. Things can just sort of charge through seemingly without any rhyme or reason.

[ 15 : 03 ] And if the service leader and worship leader don't explain what's going on, the service can be quite unintelligible. Well, I'm sure that we can think of lots of other ways that our times of corporate worship could become unintelligible today.

And I hope you see that it's not just a first century problem or a speaking in tongues problem, but it's something that every church has to be mindful of. But coming back now to 1 Corinthians 14, the second big point I want us to consider is the question of why.

Why should we strive for intelligibility, for being understood? Why does that need to be a huge value for us in our worship gatherings?

I mean, think about it. After all, the people who spoke in tongues at Corinth were probably having really powerful experiences of God. Paul doesn't question the fact that that was probably the Holy Spirit working in them.

A very powerful experience of God. And isn't that enough? Isn't that what we really want? After all, to really get a deep sense of God's presence in our midst?

[ 16 : 20 ] To see Him maybe even visibly show up in these particularly visible manifestations? In the last section of Mere Christianity, C.S. Lewis tells the story of a hardened Air Force officer who approaches Lewis after a talk that he gave.

And this hardened Air Force officer tells Lewis of a powerful experience that he had had of God. The officer told Lewis, he said, I felt Him. That is God.

I felt Him out alone in the desert one night. The tremendous mystery. And then the officer goes on to tell Lewis that because of this powerful experience, he didn't believe and he didn't think he had a need for any of the doctrines or dogmas of the church.

He'd experienced in his mind the real thing and he didn't need all that intellectual, intelligible, mumbo-jumbo. Now, of course, there are all sorts of problems with that, right?

But sometimes in our worship gatherings together, we can functionally act the same way. It doesn't matter what I think. The content doesn't matter.

[ 17 : 29 ] What matters is the experience. What matters is that I'm feeling drawn to God. But Paul's going to give us three reasons here why we need our gathered worship to be intelligible.

First reason is this. Because intelligible worship engages the whole person. Look at verses 14 and 15 again. Paul says, if I pray or praise or give thanks with my spirit only, he says, my mind is unfruitful.

In other words, a whole aspect of what it means to be human is left out. But you see, friends, that's not how the worship of the one true God is meant to be.

God created you and I as whole integrated persons with a body and a mind and a heart. God wants all of us engaged in that worship.

And if our worship is unintelligible for whatever reason, then our minds can't worship God. And we can't be renewed in the image of God in the way, in the full way that God intends.

[ 18 : 53 ] Now, of course, God transcends our rational capacities, right? Greg touched on this last week. We could never with our human minds fully comprehend God.

But just because God exceeds our understanding doesn't mean we can't understand anything about God at all. You know, there's plenty that my three children don't understand about me and Beth, right?

Especially Owen as he sits in his high chair and just slams the Cheerios off of his tray in sort of nine-month-old glorious freedom. There is so much that my kids don't understand and don't comprehend about us as adults, as parents.

But, I think what they do know about us is true. That Beth and I are their mother and father and that we're their parents and that we love them and that we intend good things for them even if they don't understand why or how.

It's the same with us in God, you see. We'll never plumb the depths of the infinite beautiful majesty that is the God who made us and yet in God's grace he reveals himself truthfully to us so we can understand.

[ 20 : 16 ] And at this point it's worth pointing out that when we talk about intelligible worship of this great supreme God, that certainly doesn't mean it's watered down or oversimplified.

You know, if we're going to pray and praise and give thanks and build each other up with our minds as well as with our spirits, we certainly can't check our minds at the door when we come in.

Of course, there are going to be things that we don't quite understand at first, whether as new believers or people exploring Christianity or as people among us who've been believers for a long time, there are still truths that we're wrestling to grasp.

But our services should strive not to sort of avoid those things or water them down but to make them as clear as we can. You know, that's one of the reasons why we don't shy away from using important theological words at Trinity.

Words like justification or sanctification or propitiation. Now, you might be here and you have no idea what those words mean and that's okay.

[ 21 : 25 ] Hang around a little bit longer, we'll explain them and they'll become beautiful truths for you. But you know, we can't shy away from these things. They're worth learning. The concepts that are contained in those words are worth exploring and understanding and we want to do our best as they come up in worship to explain them and make them intelligible so that we can grasp them not just with our spirit but with our minds.

And so the beauty of verses 14 and 15 here is that real, mature, corporate worship calls for our whole selves, you see.

Spirit and mind and body too, Paul would say. Nothing gets left behind in our worship of God. The worship of God is not something we just partition off in our quote unquote spiritual lives over here.

No, it's all of ourselves. And in fact, friends, isn't that what stands at the heart of Christianity? The fact that nothing about our humanity gets left behind.

Jesus Christ, we profess, is fully God and fully human. In the redemption that he brings, there's no part of us as humans that gets left behind.

[ 22 : 46 ] Jesus took on a full human nature so that he might renew and redeem us as fully humans. He's taken up the whole of us, mind and body and spirit, everything, so that it might all become renewed.

And isn't this what Jesus himself was talking about in our reading from John 4 earlier that Susan and Ivor read for us? That true worship worship, the worship of the true God is worship in spirit and in truth.

It involves our affections and our understanding, our spirit and our mind. Because God created both and he became incarnate in both to rescue us and he intends for both through his Holy Spirit to be involved in the worship of him.

So that's the first reason. Paul quickly moves to another reason why intelligible worship is so vital for the church. Not only does it make us whole human beings, but second, intelligible worship is vital for us because intelligible worship builds up fellow believers instead of alienating them.

It builds up the church rather than breaking up the church, you see. And you see that in verses 16 through 19. When Paul talks about here anyone in the position of an outsider, most commentators say that Paul isn't actually talking about an unbeliever who's come in, but he's talking about the fact that there might be believers, Christians, who are made to feel like outsiders in their own church because they don't understand what's being said.

[ 24 : 30 ] they're being alienated from their church family, from their own body by the fact that worship is being just washed over by unintelligibility.

In many ways, that was me fumbling with my book of common prayer and hymnal with my Anglican friends, unable to sort of keep up and feeling like an outsider. But you know, more to the point, if we aren't striving to use intelligible, substantive words in our worship, the whole point for Paul is lost.

Do you see what Paul is saying here? This is so critical. What is it that builds us up in the faith? What is it that instructs us? What is it that causes us to grow?

What is it that we're meant to be doing when we get together? What is it that causes us to be built up? not mere experiences, no matter how powerful they might be.

But Paul says words, intelligible, applicable, gospel-filled, spirit-filled words.

[ 25 : 49 ] And then Paul says something quite shocking. He says, given the choice between saying five intelligible words and 10,000 words in a tongue, which would be an incredible personal experience of the spirit, would it not?

Paul says, in church, when we're all together, I choose five words every time. You see, friends, striving for intelligible worship is important because the nature of corporate worship, corporate worship isn't ultimately about me as an individual.

Corporate worship is about glorifying God and building up my brother and sister in the faith. How many times does Paul say in this chapter, let everything be done for building up.

It's all about serving the church and building the church. That's why you're getting together, to build one another up. And of course, once we get those two things straight in our mind, that it's about seeing God for who he truly is and building each other up, then worship is also about being humble enough to recognize our need personally to be built up in the faith too, that we need each other to be built up.

Of course, we all come on Sundays looking to be refreshed, to be fed spiritually. We're all coming hungry for a word from the Lord. Yes, that's a good thing. But friends, we're not just here for ourselves.

[ 27 : 26 ] This isn't 200 people having a private experience of worship. We're here to build others up. And you know, this is true so much so that if given the option on Sunday morning between on the one hand, having a private, utterly transcendental religious experience where God pins you to the pew in rapturous delight of his infinite excellency.

And on the other hand, speaking five encouraging words to the person in the pew next to you, Paul says, I pick that one every time. Now friends, I don't know about you, but that's a challenging word.

I'd love to show up to church and be pinned to the pew in rapturous delights of infinite ecstasy about the God who saved us. Wouldn't you? I hope that happens.

But Paul says, no, my primary motive for being here, yes, is to delight in God without a doubt, to worship him and say he's truly among us, but I'm here to build other people up.

And that's challenging because I don't know about you, but I don't feel that way most Sundays. And I'm up here preaching. Most Sundays, aren't we thinking more about our own selves, what's in it for me than I am thinking about others?

[ 28 : 57 ] And you know, if we're honest, if I'm honest, there's part of me that actually kind of likes unintelligible worship.

think about it. I kind of like unintelligible worship, at least if I'm on the inside, if I'm the one who's in the know, if I'm feeling like I'm in the inner circle.

I like hanging on to the sentimental feelings that this old hymn gives me even though no one around me understands it. I like, feeling safe in the traditions and the ways that we've always done it around here.

Even though no one understands why and it's completely unintelligible to newcomers and it practically obscures the gospel. And above all, friends, although we'd never say it this way, don't we love the way that being on the inside of something that other people don't understand, don't we love the way that that feeds our pride?

to think that we've got something that someone else doesn't and it sets us apart. We know the lingo, we can speak in the tongue, we can hit the high note of that crazy hymn, and it makes me look good.

[ 30 : 24 ] Friends, how wretched we are. How broken we are that we come to worship with these kinds of feelings and motivations. Christians. But don't you see that this is what the gospel actually rescues us from?

That there's good news for us. Because God has done something that will get you to trade your love of self and love of praise and to trade your pride so that you actually start to think about others and you start to think about coming and caring more about what's going to build them up.

What has he done? Well, friends, when we see what Christ has done for me, when you see what Christ has done for you, you see, God made himself intelligible to us.

The infinite God that our minds could never grasp. God, the God that because of our sin, we could never understand. This God has made himself utterly known to us.

And at the most incredible, infinite cost. Long ago, at many times, and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, the writer of Hebrews says. But in his last days, he's spoken to us by his son.

[ 31 : 53 ] Jesus Christ came and didn't just reveal who God was to us, but died on a cross for us so that our sins could be forgiven, so that our minds could be renewed, so that we could actually be in a relationship with God, so that God wouldn't be a mystery to us anymore.

Someone that we feel like we're groping and grasping after, but someone who could be in our very midst. You see, friends, when Christ took on human nature and lived a perfect life in your place and died on a cross, the death you deserve to die, and rose again on the third day and ascended to the Father and where he stands now, interceding for all who believe, all this Christ has done for us, for those who trust in him.

And if Christ has done that for me, if I have fellowship with God through Jesus by grace, if he's come, and made himself known to me, and I'm in a relationship with him, then why in the world do I need to have my pride inflated or my traditions preserved?

Why do I need to be on the inside of something that other people can't get? Who cares about that stuff? We know God and he's made himself known. And I can lay down my life for others because I have a life in Jesus that nothing can take away.

I actually care more about speaking five words to others than having the most amazing spiritual experience. I've got every blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, Paul says. Why do I need more?

[ 33 : 24 ] They're good to have. Don't get me wrong. But you've already got the most precious thing. Because Christ has gone out for me, I can go out for others.

You see, this is the very logic and nature of the gospel that works itself out in our corporate worship. So friends, let me encourage you, let me challenge you that when you come on Sundays, pray for two things.

Pray that our services are on, that they are intelligible to those who gather. Pray that they will be intelligible to you and intelligible to the people next to you. And also pray that God will give you intelligible words, upbuilding, encouraging, consoling words to speak to one another.

Let's wrap up by looking at the third and last reason why intelligible worship is so important. We'll do this briefly. In verses 20 through 25, here it is, this third reason. We see that intelligible worship is critical to our gathered worship because a because ultimately that is what changes unbelievers hearts instead of hardening their hearts.

In other words, Paul has just shown us the value of intelligible worship for our fellow believers. Now he wants to say and point us to the fact that there's value in it, inestimable value in it for unbelievers and outsiders who attend our worship gathering.

[ 34 : 55 ] Verses 23 through 25 are pretty clear. If an unbeliever shows up and he or she can't understand a word of what's being said, they're going to say, you're out of your minds and their hearts are actually going to be hardened to the gospel.

As a side note, when Paul says in verse 22 that tongues are a sign for unbelievers, this is probably what he means.



In other words, Paul seems to be saying here that uninterpreted tongues can actually function not as a positive sign meant to lead to unbelievers conversion, but as a negative sign.

As a negative sign, just like the quote in verse 21 from Isaiah 28, a negative sign that they're alienated from God in their refusal to believe in him. Unintelligible worship actually can function as a means of communicating to unbelievers that they're separated from God and to just confirm them in that unbelief.

But on the other hand, Paul says, if an unbeliever attends the service and he or she can understand what's being said, then the Holy Spirit can bring genuine conviction of sin and genuine conversion to the worship of the true God and they'll declare that God is really among you.

[ 36 : 21 ] What a difference. Instead of declaring that Christians are out of their minds, people will come and declare that God is really among you.

That the God that we hunger and thirst for is found, not in some experience, but right here in the gathered church.

Again, this is probably what Paul means in that confusing verse in verse 22 by saying that prophecy is a sign for believers. Unlike tongues, prophecy on the other hand serves as a positive sign that God has restored believers from their exile and sin and again dwells in their midst.

A blessing that even unbelievers come to recognize and declare. And so if we were to sum it up, we need to say that intelligible worship is critical for our mission as a church.

If we want unbelievers to come to know God and worship him, then our worship has to be a message that people can understand. After all, friends, isn't it true that it's the message of Christianity that sets it apart from everything else?

[ 37 : 33 ] You know, it's interesting that in verse 23, this expression, out of your minds, which could mean just that these people are crazy, could also be used as an expression describing ecstatic pagan worship in the first century.

When the cults gathered together, they would sort of have these experiences and they would be out of their minds as the sort of whatever, the gods descended amongst them and they started to do their thing.

In other words, Paul could be saying, look, if unbelievers show up and you're all speaking in unknown tongues in ecstatic, disorderly ways, unbelievers are just going to think that Christianity is just one more religious option on offer in the pluralistic market just like all the rest.

They're not going to see anything different. And friends, that can be true of us today too. If we downplay the content of Christianity and in our worship make it seem like just one more option to make you feel good and live life in a more balanced way and find more inner peace.

In other words, if we emphasize the experience over the message, then friends, what we're doing on Sunday mornings is just going to seem like any other spiritual option among all the rest that people can find.

[ 39 : 05 ] After all, every religion, every spirituality promises peace, doesn't it? Every spirituality offers a more well-adjusted approach to life. And some of them, if you devote yourselves to it, might actually give you a little bit of that.

But friends, that's not the center of what Christianity is all about. First and foremost, Christianity is not a method for making your life more calm and giving you inner peace.

It'll get you there. But before any of those things, Christianity is not a method. It's a message. It's news. It's an intelligible message with content and concrete shape about what God has done for us.

It's something utterly and completely objective. The reason we're all looking for inner peace and calm is because we know that something isn't quite right.

We don't feel comfortable in our own skin, do we? Exactly. We feel out of control, don't we?

[ 40 : 23 ] If we sit still long enough to actually listen to our life, we feel like we're almost going off the rails. Why?

Why do we feel so out of joint in this beautiful world? Friends, the reality is, the secret of your heart is that you're alienated from the God who made you.

That there's a fundamental spiritual problem in your life. That the vertical axis that you were created to have with God has been broken and now all of the horizontal things have gone to smash.

We're in exile from God because of our sin. That's what's wrong. But the content, the message of Christianity is that God himself has gone into that dark exile and that mess and he's paid for our sins and he's brought us home.

And that, friends, gives us a peace with God that is lasting and real and true. And no matter how crazy your life is on the outside, it's firm and secure because Christ did it.

[ 41 : 52 ] In a minute, we're going to take the Lord's Supper. And the Lord's Supper is a sign, it's an act, it's a practice that Jesus himself instituted in the church in order to make that message of what he's done all the more intelligible to us.

Jesus was a very good teacher and he knew that sometimes we needed things we could hold and see and smell to drive the point home. This is broken bread and a poured out cup signifying the broken body of Christ for our sins and his spilled blood poured out for our forgiveness.

But at the same time, at the same time as this meal speaks of Christ's death, it's also just that, a fellowship meal.

To tell us that because of what Jesus has done, we're now welcome at God's table and we're welcoming God's kingdom. Not as strangers or foreigners or outsiders.

But through Jesus, God welcomes us as friends. And even more than that, God makes us his daughters and his sons.

[ 43 : 13 ] We become his family around this table. That's what we're saying. That's what we're signifying. So in a moment, we're going to ask some folks to come up and we're going to help pass this out, the bread and the cup.

And it's actually a moment for all of us this morning to respond to the message of the gospel. If you're already a Christian, if you've admitted that your sins deserve death, if you've believed that Christ died in your place and rose again, and if you've committed your life to him as Savior and Lord, then you can take this bread and this cup in humility and joy for what he's done for you.

And you can remember that your sins are forgiven and you're a part of God's family now. Let me say as well that if you're trusting in Christ and you've not been baptized, maybe that's you and you're already taking communion because you can say, yeah, I put my trust in Jesus.

If you've not actually been baptized, let me exhort you today to decide to pursue baptism. Talk to me after the service and we can talk about next steps to becoming a public follower of Jesus through the ordinance of baptism.

Lastly, let me just say as we come to the table that if you're not a Christian, then this is the moment for you to decide what you're going to do with this intelligible message of Christianity.

[ 44 : 31 ] If you're here and you're not a Christian, instead of taking the bread and the cup, use this time to pray and ask God what next steps look like for you. Maybe you're still not exactly sure what it is Christians believe.

You need some more content because it's still really new to you and you have some holes you want to get filled in. Or maybe you actually have some questions and doubts about what it is Christians actually believe and you want to get some clarifying sort of conversations going on.

Friend, if that's you, let me encourage you to talk to the friend that you came with. Come grab me after the service. I'd love to talk to you more about that. And we can point you in the direction of some good resources to help you on your spiritual journey and figure out where you stand with Christianity.

But perhaps this morning you're ready to not just explore Christianity but to place your trust in Christ. To actually open up your heart before God like this text says.

And place your trust in Jesus Christ as the one true God who rescued you from your sins. If that's you, then let me encourage you with these words of Jesus. Jesus said, behold, I stand at the door and knock.

[ 45 : 47 ] If anyone hears my voice and opens a door, I will come into him and eat with him and he with me. Friends, you can take hold of that promise this morning.

Let's pray together. Let's pray together. Let's pray together.