

Who Called This Meeting?

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[0 : 0 0] You can turn with me to 1 Timothy 3 for a scripture reading this morning. There's just moments where God seems to slow things down, and we're mindful of the fact that we're not just a group of individuals that have come into a room today to do something, but we are a group of people that have been redeemed by Jesus and that He has brought together.

So you're probably wondering why I called this meeting, all right? You ever said that before? It's a good thing to say if you're in an awkward moment at a place. My friend Jake, when we started the church, that was one of his favorite jokes.

Anytime we were in a group of people and he didn't know what to say, he would say, so you're probably wondering why I called this meeting. Last night we were the guests with the Gibbies at a gala for Beacon of Hope at the Avalon.

It was a really nice place and I often feel out of place if I'm at a formal event, and it was the hardest thing for me not to hold back and just say, so you're probably wondering why I called this meeting, all right?

It's a pro-level dad joke, all right? And if it makes things better or more awkward, but that's what we're trying to accomplish, right? So you're probably wondering why I called this meeting. But you know, the fact of the matter is, I didn't call this meeting.

[1 : 0 9] This meeting right here was called by Jesus to meet today, and I love that. And that's what makes it so special for us to gather together. I'm going to reminisce a little bit here for a second with some pictures.

We have so many pictures. We didn't in the early years of the church, but then everybody got smartphones and now we're all photographers. And so the amount of pictures that are produced, there are probably more pictures produced today than the first five years of our church.

And there's no real rhyme or reason. These are just some pictures that we're going to have a slideshow during lunch and afterwards before you came in. You saw some of them. But these are just a few that I collected that I wanted to share with you today.

Some I go looking for. This is the first one there, Thatcher, if you'll put it up. I always want to go see the first room that we met in. There's no pictures of us meeting in the Pearson's basement up in the northern part of the county.

But this is the first one that we had where the charter was signed and in those early days. And then I always want to see the next picture here. This is Miguel being baptized. First teenager that I met in the town before we even, the church was started.

[2 : 1 6] And you know the day he's in Columbia and getting to see Michael Shane. And then Catherine on the phones, all right? And Catherine, we called I think like 50,000 people when we got here.

How many? 80. Even better story, all right? And you say us preachers exaggerate, all right? 80-something thousand people and we just said, hey, we're here in the city to share Jesus with you.

We made tons of calls. And then the Pearson sisters singing Jesus and Kristen on the piano are two consistent things we've had in this church all those years. And so I always go look for those pictures.

But then there were some that surprised me. Like, for example, I see Lauren Carpenter as she is there in the very first service and I had forgotten that. How old were you, Lauren, 17 years ago?

You were 10? 10 years of age. And now she's the mother of three, almost four, and administrative pastor's wife. And then another big boy I didn't realize. I forgot about the green room we're in.

[3 : 14] Now, this next one will really surprise you. This is Thatcher and Greg together, all right? And I'm so happy Lamar and LaTosha are here with us today.

But this must have been, like, right before Greg hit his growth spurt because he didn't look – I don't remember him looking like a kid because he hit, like, six foot. Like, he gave me – in sixth grade, he gave me his shoes that he had outgrown one time.

And so this is right before he became grown. And I was really shocked by that one. I find that it's funny. So that's – here's Luke holding Selah. And I said we're going to reenact some of these pictures today, but I don't think Selah would like that one.

I was shocked by that one. And then there's some that I just love. They bring – this is us teenagers meeting at the hub in the basement there, studying the Bible and expound. Then a Bible study that's been going on for almost the 17 years, maybe 14 years on Monday night.

It started out at the Littlefields, and now it's at the Mises and moved its way over to the Malcolm Sum. But it continues meeting, and I'm so grateful for it. It's been a help to our young men. So many here, we were praying over Jake Cherry as he was headed off to the military.

[4 : 24] I know the Cherry's are here. Where are you at, Cherry's? I want to see you back there. All right, in your spot with Lamar and Natasha back there. I forgot we had prayed over him before he left. Such a special moment, and I'm grateful for the reminding.

And then next picture here, this is before we moved to this building. We were not even on our property, okay? I remember we couldn't meet on this property. We was right off the side of it looking in where the property is going to be and the groundbreaking.

And then a lot of weddings we've had. We've had a lot of wedding cakes together. Here's Nate getting his hair combed by his mom before the wedding. And then new weddings. And then with the Fricks, we celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary just a few years ago.

And here, a lot of things just so very grateful for. And some hard times we've had as a church, all right? Like our men's softball team, all right? That only wins if the other team forfeits.

But we just keep showing up. So we've been through great times together. And then this happened, all right? And then some things are just kind of a glimpse of the future. Oh, well, then some things stay consistent as well.

[5 : 27] He's not on the softball. That's not from softball. That's just from Micah working all the time. Things that make me grateful. People like this is always serving in the way that what they do. Next picture here is a renewal that we gave made mention of.

That's something over the last year that's formed in our church. It's such a blessing that's happening. And then this picture is like, give me a glimpse of the future. Lauren's daughter, Winter Rose here.

And she was 10 years old when the church started. Winter is not 10, but she's headed there very quickly. And then this last picture, which I took this morning. No, I didn't. This was a few weeks ago.

And it's just us gathered together. Some of you younger people and some of you older ones that are hip and you stay up to the current trends. There was a video that went around not long ago where this young man, he kept eating corn.

And he just kept saying, can you imagine a more beautiful thing? You know what I'm talking about, Luke? Can you imagine a more beautiful thing? And when I see this picture, I just think, can you imagine a more beautiful thing?

[6 : 24] And God's people assembled to worship and sing about a good and gracious king. And I just love it. This morning, Brady called me from Turkey, shared with me about a man who gathered today for their service.

Because they gather on the first day of the week to worship Jesus as we do. And Dustin was supposed to preach, but Dustin got sick and some things got moved around. And he just said, I just decided to tell why I love Jesus today.

And a man who was a Muslim now belongs to Jesus. And he shared that with me today. I'm so very grateful for it. So today I want to share with you, we have a special in a moment, just why this meeting that we have weekly is so very important.

Who called this meeting? Why was this meeting called? And the answer was by Jesus. And it was so that he would be worshipped and known. If you look up online, why would people go to church and what were reasons for it?

You're going to get some. Some will come out of duty. They assume that they'll get on God's good side if they show up enough, if they check in. And then others come with socialized or teach their kids morality.

[7 : 29] Some crave an emotional high to help carry them through the week. Some seek intellectual stimulation or ethical instruction. Some of you, very few of you, Greg may believe that people come for the coffee, all right?

But that's not it or the Krispy Kreme. And that may be the case at places, but it's most certainly not among you. So if we're doing the street interview and we're asking people, you know, why is church important to you?

Why is it important to go? If in the street interview we went to the Apostle Paul, this is how he would answer in 1 Timothy chapter number 3, verse 14, 15, 16. This may be how he'd answer.

But this really gets to the heart of what's happening here. These things ride I unto thee, hoping to come unto thee shortly. But if I tarry long, that thou mayest know how thou oughtest behave thyself in the house of God, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and ground of the truth.

Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on the world, and received up in the glory.

[8 : 34] We want to spend some time in this passage today talking about the wonder of this meeting in which Jesus has called. Heavenly Father, I thank you for this chance to meet once again, Lord.

You have shown yourself faithful time and time again among this church family. And Lord, what we do today, it's unique. And Lord, it's only possible because of the gospel.

Lord, we are living out the results and the implications of Jesus Christ dying for us. Father, you are the one that gathers people. Lord, I'm so grateful for the group that you have gathered here in Alpharetta, Lord, for my church family, where they have ministered to me.

Father, you know my heart. You know that I consider it, Father, just the greatest of joys that you would allow me to be the pastor. But Lord, beyond that, I am grateful to be a member with these people and meeting together, instructing the next generation and worshiping you.

Lord, we come today to make much of you. In Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Lord, you are greatly to be praised, And your faithfulness surrounds you, As all of heaven stands amazed, And creation bows before you, Lord, we bow before you.

[10 : 21] There's only one who is worthy, Who overcomes, who will never fail, Light of the world everlasting, Jesus, you are Lord of all.

For all your promises are sure, And your name is our strong tower, And now salvation is secure, Through the cross forever, There's only one who is worthy, Who conquered death and who rose again, Light of the world everlasting, Jesus, you are Lord of all.

So let our praise build an altar, Christ forever and no other, Jesus, your name is the banner, Jesus, your name be the banner, Jesus, your name be the banner, For all our promise, Great in mercy, Great in power, Great in power, Christ forever, What a Savior, Jesus, your name be the banner, over us.

There's only one who is worthy. Who is our King? Who will come again?

Light of the world, everlasting. Jesus, you are Lord of all.

[12 : 42] Jesus, the banner over us. That's wonderful. Before we get back to 1 Timothy, I'd like to take you to the last two verses of the book of Mark.

The last two verses of the book of Mark, my heart is full every time that I read this passage. In Mark chapter number 16, in verse 19 and 20, it says this, And then after the Lord had spoken unto them, he was received up in heaven and sat on the right hand of God.

He being Jesus, after the resurrection, after the 40 days, says that he ascends up into heaven and he's on the right hand of God. But in this next verse, verse number 20, and it says, And they went forth and preached everywhere, the Lord working with them and confirming the word with signs following.

Amen. And so, I remember when I first saw this and I was thinking, did I miss something here? I thought I saw that Jesus had just ascended up into heaven and he's now sitting on the right hand. Now the next verse says, They went forth and him working with them.

If you're in the book of Mark and you turn to Acts chapter number 1, we know that is the acts of the apostles or maybe more appropriately, say the acts of the Holy Spirit working through the church.

[13 : 59] We are the them in which that the Lord is still working. That he's working in and through us today. And then we get to Acts chapter number 1 as they are waiting.

As Jesus ascends into heaven and he says, In like manner he will return. In the song that was just sung, we rejoice in that knowing that our king will return. And then they're gazing and then they're told that they need to go and be busy about the work.

But they wait and they decide they're going to meet together in the upper room knowing that there's no value, there's no reason for a church to move forward unless they are being empowered by the Holy Spirit.

Then we get to Acts chapter number 2 verse 1. It says, And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all in one accord and in one place. I think back over 17 years in our anniversary services.

Think about the first service that we had. I didn't sleep the entire night. Last night I did sleep. So that's good. All right. That's progress, I believe. And some of the things that were happening and everyone brings something different.

[15 : 00] Think about the early church and as they look back and they think about their early meetings. They think about the time that they met with Christ and then they think about the resurrection and then they think about meeting again and the memories they would have of the upper room together and being in one accord and doing the work in which God had given them.

I have a story here for you. I know a few of you in here speak a little Italian so I apologize in advance for how I say these names and the rest of you will probably just get hungry for Italian food which is what happened when I read the story.

The great composer, Giacomo Puccini, whose opera is number around the world was stricken with cancer in 1922. He was determined to write his final opera but he was very sick but he persisted and he said if I do not finish my music my students will finish it.

That's where I believe we have a picture here of the opera room in Milan. And so 1924 Puccini was taken to Brussels to be operated on and he died there two days after his surgery.

But his students did finish his final work and in 1926 in the gala premiere that was held in Milan underneath one of his favorite students they played this opera.

[16 : 16] And it played and as it was going and then it abruptly stopped and then the conductor looked out among the people and he said thus far the master wrote but he died.

And he sat there quietly for a moment. Then he picked up the baton once again and he cried out but his disciples finished his work and then he finished the opera that was there.

Our master died and was raised from the dead and sent it to his father leaving us the most important task in the world finishing his work to proclaim his great salvation among the nations to do it each one of us commit ourselves to a living relationship with our living God and we commit ourselves to know and live by and defend God's word and truth.

Unlike the composer who did not have any choice our savior laid down his life as we've been studying in Luke he headed to the cross he knew that where he was going and the time that was appointed unto him and he left the commission and a command to a group of people there the first church and they've handed it to generation after generation where Christ has given it to his word from generation after generation.

We see example the first church in Colossians 1 5 it says in Colossians 1 5 that they as it was in all of the world they bring forth fruit and then in Colossians 1 28 it says warning every man then on Romans chapter number 8 it says your faith is spoken out throughout all the world and so the churches of the first century took their commission as from the Lord and they did as they were commanded and they provide a wonderful example for us as we look.

[17 : 56] This is the church for this generation we have responsibilities to a location we have responsibility to a time and that we continue in what's been going on for 2,000 years.

Outside of the gospel I don't believe there's anything that I enjoy speaking about more than the church. It is the result it's an implication of it. So what exactly is the church? If you're a brand new Christian some of you became Christians later in life and so your first time reading through the Bible you didn't know what was on the next page and you have a curiosity about you which every one of us if you grew up in church we need to have as returning the pages and so you might read in the Bible and you get to Matthew 16 18 and it says upon this rock I will build my church and so the gates of hell will not prevail against and you conclude that the church is something broad and comprised of vast numbers of members around the globe and over centuries of time but then you get to Matthew 18 17 not long afterwards and you see something where it says and he says tell it unto the church which lets you know that the church is in fact a specific group of people located in one place maybe turn the epistles see with Apostle Paul which way does he speak about the church and he would say in one moment come together in the church as an assembly but then the next he'll say something like so some in the church first apostles secondary prophets and teachers and it seems something bigger than just a location and a group of people meeting in a place in the New Testament 114 uses of the word in which we have for church and ecclesia a couple times it's just used as an assembly or a gathering a riot alright where people would speak about people just got together in Acts 19 and it was the word being used about a riot or a group of people another time that you see it's Old Testament references it's about a group of people that were gathered a congregation in about 109 occurrences we have the word church sometimes it's in a general use like we've read in 1 Timothy where it says if I tarry along oughtest behave thyself in the house of God it's in a general use just like if the media it says that the liberal is waging war upon the family that doesn't mean that it's some universal or invisible family but it's of course it's a family generally that represent the idea of all families right then you have a future use of it this future use of assembly we read in Ephesians 1 the way in which

God can see that we are already when we receive Christ we're already seated among the heavenlies he sees us in an assembled manner in which we don't but the vast majority of those references over 90 of them are going to be a concrete location like 1 Corinthians 16-19 where it says the churches of Asia salute you that's the most common way that you're going to see the word churches used in the Bible because when the Bible is writing it's writing from the perspective that the apostle Paul would be able to see or that I you or I would be able to see to tell somebody to go to church or let me do something inside of the church but sometimes we get an opportunity to see from a heavenly perspective we get to see the church as it will be assembled someday and we can spend more time in that but I want you to see in every in each reference of that what we find is so important and what we believe is important for you to see here is a church if a church never meets it's not a church at all which means what we're doing right now is an important part of our identity assembling

I can't do it but I remember my grandma showing me this is a church and here's a steeple and here's all the people and so one of the things that you might have learned about that was a church is not a building I do appreciate this wall and this wall and that back wall as Stephen said and I really do appreciate it this place is special to me because this is the place in which my church family meet together so this room is very important to me as the meet when we met in a warehouse it became important to me now that we meet there we don't meet there anymore the building doesn't mean much to me alright they can do whatever they want in that building because when we left it it just became another building but as we meet here this place becomes important and you know if maybe you don't know this I'll share it with you we meet on the first day of the week in Acts chapter number 20 it says upon the first day of the week when the disciples came together to break bread Paul preached and was ready to the part of the morrow and then later on Paul encourages them on the first day of the week to bring their offerings together together and then by the book of Revelation there's a term that's used that says

I was in the spirit on the Lord's day a reference to this day the first day of the week and so it's a wonderful thing in Turkey they were meeting on the first day of the week the group of believers were and somebody came in the day and they said who called this meeting and Brady was able to tell them Jesus did and you can be part of it and so it's important yes it's important to know that a church is not a building but never don't underestimate the value of us being together assembling this is assembly this is the church and it should matter to us so you can ask a lot of people so some of you may be familiar with chat GPT and you're probably wondering how long it was going to be before I brought it into a message alright chat GPT it's a type of Google it's an artificial intelligence and so instead of just asking where's the best Chinese food in town you can ask other questions and get it in paragraph form I have a picture of it hope they'll be able to show you but I asked chat GPT where asked the question what is why does the church gather weekly alright so I asked

[23 : 37] I had a conversation with a robot a couple weeks ago and I said why does the church gather weekly and some of the answers that it gave were worship the primary reason for gathering weekly is worship for community another reason to gather weekly is to foster a sense of community and I made a little note here that says that could have been done better alright we don't foster a sense of community we are not like a family we are a family we're an organism not an organization I know this sounds small but it's very important and education gathering weekly provide opportunities for Christians to learn about the faith it's happening in this room and in other rooms accountability we provide a level of accountability for other Christians and so it gave a pretty good answer here so at this time Zach I would like for you to take minutes on this alright I would like to go have a motion and a second that you never replace the pastors of this church with artificial intelligence or robots alright can I have a first thank you coach second alright thank you very much alright so someday I imagine our great grandkids are going to look at the minutes of this date and they're either going to say one or two things they were really ahead of the day making this decision or they were crazy alright and so

I don't would want to be replaced by artificial intelligence or a robot but it was a general understanding it gave good answers of the reasons that we meet as a church but let's let the word of God answer it which is what we should be known for is letting the word of God answer questions like this why is it so important that we meet together who we are determines why and what we do who we are determines why and what we do we don't go to church to worship but we worship because we are the church we are the church 1st Timothy chapter number 3 verse 14 through 16 I read earlier but it says I hope to come to you shortly know how thou oughtest behave in the house of God church of the living God pillar and ground of the truth and in this next verse number 16 it talks about how God was made manifest in the flesh how Jesus is the incarnation the manifestation of God and knowing Christ we know our creator we know

God they said we wish you could just pull back the clouds one disciple said I just want to see God he says if you've seen me then you've seen the father and we're told that this verse 16 comes from a hymn that the early church would have sung and it's so full of doctrinally rich truth because in our singing we are learning and growing about the goodness of our God this mystery of godliness refers to the incarnation of God that he came here lived the perfect life and then we have six lines of just rich theological truth as you look at it it says that he was manifest in the flesh this speaks of the pre-existence of Jesus that he is eternal he wasn't created in the manger he was but he is eternal co-existent God then it says justified in the spirit the fact that God didn't raise Jesus from the dead proves that he is the righteous one that he was raised again and proving that he is

God seeing of angels at his birth he was proclaimed and then as his resurrection as we continue through the book of Luke we will see that preached among the Gentiles Jesus gave a commission to go into the Gentiles and to all the nations and that's what was happening at that time believed on in the world belief is the means in which this gift is received and they're received up in the glory where he is sitting on the right hand waiting to return in the manner that he was taking the six lines right there in verse number 16 that is so rich about truth that we all know and that we rejoice in so much of the truth we sing you could just draw a line to one of those statements in that verse because it's something in which we we hold up and that's what it says in verse number 15 the church reveals Christ to this world but Terry Long know how they'll behave in the house of God so the house of God we're not just the collection of individuals who happen to meet at the same spot every week the worship instruction but we have become the family of God this implies a relationship that he has made we are the house of God living stones have been brought together and he is doing an incredible work read a story about a missionary in Papua New Guinea and he was on one side of the island and he said

I want to travel to the other side of the island what is the best way to do this and the man speaking the local man he said well if we go this way then we can see some of my friends that work out near the marina and we can talk to them but if we then if we go through the village then I can see some of my family and we can talk to them but there's another way in which we can go and we can see some friends I haven't seen in a long way and the man said just tell me what is the best way and he said well it depends what people do you want to see and he realized that he was thinking best which was the quickest way and this man in Papua New Guinea was saying what was the way in which I would develop the most important and meaningful relationships was the best way and that's what God has done God has designed the church in such a way that the best way it may be a slow way but it's a way in which we have meaningful relationships I can make some announcements guys we can make all day long and y'all don't seem to remember them okay we announced a couple weeks ago there's no Sunday school no life groups today none of y'all showed up at 930 alright it was like we got that one alright we slept in a little bit but some the few that did show up a little bit later we had conversations

[29 : 21] David Rackley showed me a journal that he had 10 years ago that he's been filling with scripture and that the one that he has now that he's filling with scripture that was wonderful that was a moment in which I was stirred in my heart that I was provoked to good works that I saw how God had changed the life of my friend David Rackley there that's the best way if it wasn't the quickest way to the donuts this morning David it was certainly the best way for me and you to walk there it's a house of God it's wonderful another thing the church that speaks of our relationships one to another the church of the living God that focuses on our relationship with God we're an assembly of people who have been called out not just from sin but unto God he is the one who has called this meeting we are distinct from this world and then third expression here is the pillar and ground of the truth all those truths that are read in verse number 16 all of those truths are absolute but they're completely independent of us he did all the work he is the one who has died he is the one who offered himself a ransom for this entire world and he is the gospel we share that truth is absolute but it's independent of us and all we can ever do is just hold it up for this world to see as I said the church is a distinct event that's why in verse number 14 it says

I hope to come to you shortly at other times in first Corinthians he'll say yet in the church he'd speak about in that manner in the foyer maybe with your kids you may make the joke and you'd say hey don't lie we're in church right we're inside of the building we can't lie here in the church it's a little bit better in the parking lot it's okay when you get to Kroger alright about three mile radius around this place that we're not supposed to do anything and so all of us say well we know that's not true God's just aware of us when we're at home as we are here but I want you to see that there's something very special about being gathered together throughout the Bible it's very important it's very special that what we're doing is a distinct event young couples in here starting to raise a family one of the most counter cultural things you can do is become an engaged member of a faithful local church this is a distinct thing that we're doing then we're told that we should all meet together in Acts chapter number 5 the church had grown tremendously as they go around preaching the resurrection in Acts 5 12 it says and they were all in one accord in Solomon's porch not in one vehicle if you drive a Honda Accord alright but they were all in agreement alright they were all in unity there in Solomon's porch the church had gathered together in one place it was distinct from this world and we should meet together in one place and then the reason we must meet is because there's things that are given to us we're told to teach one another and admonish one another to sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs reading scripture publicly encouraging one another we all saw the great challenges a few years ago to years ago to live out our lives together as a church that wasn't able to get together it just didn't function because that wasn't the way that it had designed there's an emphasis on the assembly what we're doing right now is highly important he goes on that tells us that we grow and we make decisions together as a church 1 Timothy 3.15 talks about how we behave ourselves in the house of God and learning how that is to happen sanctification in our lives is a community project sanctification is a community project we should consider one another

Hebrew says we consider one another we think about one another we provoke one another unto love and the good works we exhort one another we should do that daily and so the spiritual disciplines such as church attendance it does not make you more precious to God but it's making God more precious to us our attendance today is not to be loved more by God he saw you when you're an enemy of him he saw you when you were not aware of him he saw you when you had no thoughts of him and he loved you but what it does when we come together is it makes him more precious to us that moment when we were singing about a good and gracious king my heart was filled to a place it's so good it should happen together when my wife and kids are gone and they're traveling this by me some of you other men may relate you have a big family if I go eat by myself at Mackey Sushi I can eat pretty cheap and I can eat whatever I want compared to my family right and so it's nice you go out by yourself and you're like hey this is a pretty cheap meal because there's not five other people eating here with me three teenagers and it's nice sometimes to have a meal like that but it's not the same as our family getting together and sitting at the table

I have to eat when we're separate or I won't live but there's something special about being together I have sung that song A Good and Gracious King probably a little more off key when you're not around and a little bit louder and I loved it but there's something unique and special about when God's people gather together and so we come here and we don't become more precious to God but as we worship together he becomes more precious to us and we grow together Bible tells us that we bring things before the church and we make decisions together there's an authority that God has given us as a church that he has not given to any individual member of the church here together we meet we grow we make decisions and we move forward we make decisions about not replacing me Greg or Bo with robots we make big decisions like that alright we make other decisions we come to the Lord's table we share Christ we see baptisms as there's several baptisms planned over the next couple weeks and so before I pray

I'm going to give you a moment I'm just going to give you a moment to pray in your seat and pray that you'll communicate with the Lord we'll pray to the Lord and you'll express to him your love for what he has done your love for an opportunity I don't have to tell you this you get told this all the time there's many parts of the world that cannot fill a room like this with a mountain of believers in that town or city or wherever it may be but you've been blessed with this with these relationships you've been blessed with people that want to teach your kids the same things that you're instilling into their lives as well it's a wonderful thing and so what makes assembly such an important part of our identity in conclusion I'm going to give two things one is the assembly makes the church it's visible to itself we've been asked afterwards that we're going to go outside and it's freezing out there right and we're going to take a picture together real quick and then come in and have fried chicken because one of the ordinances of a Baptist church right that's one of the things that we do we have a meal together and then maybe share some testimonies afternoon and continue in this verse just for a few minutes but we become visible together it's special if you try to you want to have a family picture together when Mark and

[36 : 40] Amy come in from the mission field it's always a big deal to my wife that we get together to get a family picture because it's just important to us to all be standing there for that moment just remember this is who we are it's so important that we need to do this weekly and as the Lord is going to return we should do it even more often and so the assembly makes the church visible to itself but not only does the assembly make the church visible to itself but it makes the church visible to the world Ephesians 3 10 to the intent that the now unto the principalities and powers and heavenly places might be known by the church the manifold wisdom of God God wants his people to be known and to be marked off he wants a line between the church and the world so there's some ways in which that happens through baptism we identify with the name of the Father the Son the Holy Spirit we identify with our union in Christ and death and resurrection in April the 2nd in the evening when we'll meet for the Lord's Supper we'll proclaim the death of Christ and we'll say that we are now in Christ as believers that's what's called this meeting together he is the one that gathers people those that are in Christ come together with others that are now in Christ and so there is no more urgent issue in all of your life than ask yourself in your soul and in your heart am I included in Christ and may this be the place that you feel at home for those that are in Christ and those that aren't in Christ may this always be a place that seems to be out of step with the rest of the world but may be a place of people that it says there's something unique and special about that place there's something about the way those people worship that is unique and distinct and I want to know about it

God's been so good to us there's many wonderful churches meeting all throughout this county all throughout the state but we have we are blessed this is a church family in which he has put you and I in together and he's the one who's called this meeting and he's done it in such a wonderful way and my heart is so very grateful for what he has done it is a gift he has given all of us until he returns that this is the way in which we get to serve and worship him and I'm so very grateful it's time to go to go and worship him to■ and worship him as ■■■■■■ as Johnny if it's sacak sonica they're not they're not holding him and trembling but he makes like you they're not trying to queen and swear they're not even to■ and pray and pray and pray well and pray and say he's got you and pray saying