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The Promised Holy Spirit

John 16:1-11

Prayer: *Father, I just again, I thank you for your grace, I thank you for your goodness, I thank you for this wonderful blessing of just Sunday, of corporate gathering, of being able to gather together and offer up praise and thanks to you for what you've done for us on the cross. Lord, this morning, I pray for your Holy Spirit. Without your Spirit's power, we can't even begin to explore the depths of the gift you've given us. And so I pray that you would give us that gift, that you would enable us to understand your word as we look into it and that you would again make it of permanent value. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.*

Well again, this is the first Sunday of the month and again, this is the Sunday we remember Jesus and his cross. And as you know, Jesus on the night before he died he met with his disciples and there for the last time he celebrated a Passover supper with them. It's detailed in Matthew 26. It says: *Now as they were eating, Jesus took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body."* And he took a

cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink of it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom." Jesus took bread and he took wine and he offered them up as symbols of his flesh and of his blood and then he asked the disciples to symbolically eat the bread and drink the cup. He then asked them to repeat the remembrance of this sacrifice on a regular basis, and this is what we call "the Lord's table." And we celebrate the Lord's table once a month, and we do it by meditating on what the Lord Jesus Christ did for us on the cross, we do it by examining ourselves, asking God's Holy Spirit to point out areas in our lives where we have sinned, where he's convicting us of sins, by confessing those sins and then by participating in the elements. John 6:53 says: So Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you."

Well, you probably know we've been following the life of Jesus and we've made it to the 16th chapter. Jesus is going away. He's spent the previous two chapters preparing his disciples for his departure. And he spent a good deal of time speaking about fruit bearing and the coming of the Holy Spirit even though he knows that

his disciples cannot really grasp what it is that he's teaching them because that only comes through the power of the Holy Spirit who has not yet come to them. So Jesus is basically explaining to them a good news, bad news scenario. And the bad news is that he's departing but the good news is that his departure is going to set the stage for the arrival of the Holy Spirit. *John 16:7* says this, this is Jesus's words, he says: *"Nevertheless I tell you the truth. It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you."* So we ask what could possibly be better than Jesus himself actually walking with the disciples? Well, how about God himself taking up residence inside you? You see, Jesus was a physical presence but he was a presence outside of the disciples, and the Holy Spirit is God himself come to live inside us. *1 Corinthians 6:19* says: *Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit who is in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own? For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.* So Jesus is telling his disciples that they need to wait for the Comforter, wait for the Spirit who would enter them and give them this direct connection to the unlimited power of God himself.

And Jesus is starting off this chapter with bad news. He tells the

disciples that things are going to get considerably worse and now Jesus is including the disciples in this same prophetic message that he had for himself. If you remember as we've been going through this book of John how careful Jesus was again and again to tell the disciples precisely what was going to happen to him, that he would be arrested, that he would be flogged, that he would be crucified and then rise from the dead, and so he told them these things so that when it did begin to unfold, that they would understand that he was still sovereign, that he was still in charge of the events that appeared to be totally out of control and that they're exactly unfolding as they should be. Well, now the disciples themselves were going to start to experience some of the rejection, some of the hatred that had been reserved only for Jesus. And Jesus is telling them ahead of time so that when it does unfold, they're going to recognize in their lives what already had taken place in Jesus's. This is what he says in *John 16:1-4*, he says: *"These things I have spoken to you, that you should not be made to stumble. They will put you out of the synagogues; yes, the time is coming when whoever kills you will think that he offers God service. And these things they will do to you because they have not known the Father nor Me. But these things I have told you, that when the time comes, you may remember that I told you of them. And these things I did not say to you at the beginning, because I was with you."* See, when Jesus was still with them, the

focus of bitterness and anger and hatred was not the disciples, it was Jesus. But Jesus knew that as soon as he left, that focus was going to shift and that they, the disciples, would now become the object of their hatred. It's stunning to realize that Jesus's own execution is looming and all he can think about is the disciples. Would that that concern would be reciprocated by the disciples but that was not to be, at least not this side of the resurrection. I mean, all the disciples could think about was themselves and how Jesus' departure was going to affect them. Listen to how calmly but effectively Jesus rebukes their selfishness. This is what he says in *John 16:5*. He says: *"But now I am going to him who sent me, and none of you asks me, 'Where are you going?' but because I have these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart."* All the way back to *John 14* Jesus has been telling the disciples that he's leaving, that he was going to prepare a place for them. But all they could think about was not Jesus and where he was going but what would become of them once he had left. I mean the disciples were exhibiting separation anxiety. That's perfectly appropriate for infants but it's very disappointing in adults that you've been living with for three years. I mean they really -- they didn't much care where Jesus was going or why. They were just upset that he was leaving. And Jesus accepts that they're still operating on the level of infants and he says this in *John 16:7*, he says: *"Nevertheless, I tell you the truth: It is to your advantage that*

I go away, for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you. And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment."

Now the disciples could not have realized it at the time but Jesus was offering them something of infinite value. What he was doing was giving them the power first to believe in the gospel; secondly, to understand who God was; and thirdly, to understand God's own plan to rescue his children. *John 16:8* says this: "And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged."

The first thing that the Holy Spirit is doing in this is he is convicting us of sin. But understand, it's a very particular sin that the Holy Spirit is dealing with here. I mean, you can almost say this is the unforgivable sin because this is the sin that is the source of not having any other sins forgiven. It's the sin of unbelief. He says in verse 9: "Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me." You know last week we talked about *John 3:16*: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son"

and how everybody loves that verse and everybody loves to read that verse and how so seldom they decide to read on to *John 3:18*, which clearly states that unbelief is not only a sin but it is a sin which will send you straight to hell. *John 3:18* says: "*Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only Son of God.*" See, unbelief is a sin, but it's a sin that Jesus paid for on the cross. Now understanding how that works itself out becomes a little bit complicated. You know, we are to love the Lord with your heart and your mind, your soul, your strength, this is the part where you're supposed to love the Lord with your mind and people just don't like to do that. We call that "theology" and most people think that's icky. Sometimes you have to work at it. Some of this stuff is not the easiest thing. So let me just discuss this issue. This is the issue of unbelief and the atonement of Christ, and this very issue has two very different theological views that center around the nature of the atonement, of what it is that Christ did on the cross. One view says that Christ's death paid in full the penalty for sin everywhere for everyone. That's the unlimited atonement view. And folks point to scripture that certainly seem to support that. *1 John 2:2*, says: *He is the propitiation for your sins, and not for ours only but also for the sins of the whole world.* Now they conclude that Jesus's death has paid the sin debt for everyone everywhere. And

on the surface I would certainly agree that it seems to point like that, but understand what John was doing when he was writing his gospel. He was writing to a people who saw his atonement as a particularly Jewish thing, something that was limited to the nation of Israel. He knew that was terribly mistaken and he was speaking against that, describing the atonement and its effect in terms of its quality, not in terms of its quantity. And what he was saying in that scripture is that Jesus's propitiation is for everyone, not just the Jews. It wasn't just for Jews, it was also for Greeks. It wasn't just for men, it was for women. It wasn't just for free men, it was for slaves. In other words, Christ's death applies to all types of people everywhere in the world but not necessarily to every last person in the world. See, the unlimited view believes that Jesus paid the sin debt for everyone everywhere and the key to unlocking that payment is whether or not you choose to believe in it. It holds that Christ paid it all but whether or not it applies to you depends on whether you believe in it. My problem with this view is that our text this morning clearly labels unbelief as a sin. Verse 9 says: *"Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me."* So here's the point, here's the problem, if Christ's death paid for all sin everywhere for everyone, that has also got to include the sin of unbelief and that must mean that everyone's sins have been paid for in full including unbelief and guess where that leads you? Everybody's going to heaven. I mean, if the very sin

that condemns you already is unbelief and Christ has already paid that sin on the cross, how does that not lead to universalism? And furthermore, if hell does exist under this scenario, and let's say I'm going to hell for my unbelief, well then I wind up paying an eternal debt for my sins that Christ also paid on the cross. And even our American justice system, as flawed as it is, sees that as cosmically unjust. We have a term we call "double jeopardy." You can't charge a person twice for the same sin. Well, the other view, my view is that Christ's death was much more targeted, that his atonement paid the price in full for his sheep. And the scripture that I base that on is *John 10:11*. Jesus says: "*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.*" Now this view is sometimes called "limited atonement" or particular redemption, meaning that the redemption of Christ was guaranteed because it was applied to those who were chosen by God before the foundations of the world. See, this view says we were all so terribly lost, so radically lost that none of us, none of us is capable of any belief in Christ without the presence of the Holy Spirit. It says that God targeted and fully paid for the sins of his sheep including what our text this morning clearly labels, the sin of unbelief. You see, we believe that we were so radically dead in our sin that we were incapable of any movement whatsoever towards God, including belief. We believe that God in his mercy reached down to this vast pool of unbelievers and by his grace

gifted them with faith. We quote *Ephesians 2:8-9*: *For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.*

I think one of the best commentaries on this was made by C. H. Spurgeon who died in 1892. He was considered the prince of preachers but he rejected the idea of unlimited atonement. And this is what he said. He said: "The Arminians say" -- that's folks who among other things believe in unlimited atonement -- he says, "The Arminians say, Christ died for all men. Ask them what they mean by it. Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of all men? They say, 'No, certainly not.' We ask them the next question -- Did Christ die so as to secure the salvation of any man in particular? They answer "No." They are obliged to admit this, if they are consistent. They say 'No; Christ has died that any man may be saved'" -- and there's this gigantic word -- "'if' and then follow certain conditions of salvation. Now who is it that limits the death of Christ? Why, you. You say that Christ did not die so as to infallibly secure the salvation of anybody. We beg your pardon, when you say we limit Christ's death; we say, 'No, my dear sir, it is you that do it.' We say Christ so died that he infallibly secured the salvation of a multitude that no man can number, who through Christ's death not only may be saved, but are

saved, must be saved, and cannot by any possibility run the hazard of being anything but saved. You are welcome to your atonement; you may keep it. We will never renounce ours for the sake of it." See, Jesus clearly told his disciples: "*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide.*" And he also chose us. You know, he said, "*Many are called but few are chosen.*" And those whom he chose, he first gave this gift of the spirit to. And this spirit is still at work today convicting those that Jesus has chosen of the sin of unbelief. I mean I look at myself, I went from a mocker and a blasphemer almost instantly to a believer. It was nothing from me. It was a gift of the Holy Spirit.

Well the second aspect of this gift that Jesus is describing to the disciples, the gift of the Holy Spirit's work is, as he says, for righteousness sake. This is verse 10. He says: "*Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer.*" You see, at this point only Jesus knew precisely what was in store for him. Only Jesus knew the depth of the hatred that men had for his perfection, for his holiness. And how determined they were to make a statement declaring that Jesus was anything but holy, anything but glorious. And every single thing about Jesus' arrest, his trial, his beatings, even his execution was designed to declare what Satan was determined to declare and that's that Christ

was certainly worthy of no adoration whatsoever and no glory, that he was wicked, that he was a blasphemer, that he was worthy only of disgrace. It was not by accident that Jesus was not only given the most painful death that you could experience but also the most disgraceful. I mean it's not by accident that the King of the universe was not only beaten to a bloodied pulp, but that he was stripped naked and put on display between two convicted criminals. That was to further the notion by guilt by association that Jesus was no different than any other common criminal. And when the religious leaders mocked him, they considered Jesus to be the very bottom of the barrel honor wise. And from their perspective, this was a victory that was well worth gloating over. I mean, this man actually claimed that he was God. And now here we have God's own servants reducing him to this naked bloodied spectacle hanging powerless before them nailed through his hands and his feet. So these priests could say not only to the crowd but to the universe: *"He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, 'I am the son of God.'"* And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way. See, understand, Jesus is speaking to the disciples about the role the Holy Spirit is soon going to play concerning righteousness. And the righteousness that Jesus is talking about was his total

acceptability by God of his sacrifice. Yes, he would be subject to incredible disgrace, but no, it would not be to his ultimate dishonor, it would be to his ultimate honor, because the very declaration of his so-called wickedness deserving of death was in fact the greatest demonstration of righteousness the universe has ever seen. The proof of Jesus's ultimate righteousness was his acceptance by and his going to the Father and that came because of the resurrection which came because Jesus's sacrifice was accepted. Hence Jesus could say of the Holy Spirit's role in verse 10:

"Concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer."

And finally, Jesus tells the disciples that the Holy Spirit will enlighten them as to the true nature of what really took place at the cross. The fact that at the cross, the ultimate judgment took place and it was a judgment on Satan. Verse 11: *"Concerning judgment because the ruler of this world is judged."* See, the cross is the place where the ruler of this world was officially judged and here is how. Again, this is a little theological work we need to do. There's a text that we often reserve for funeral services and it's a description of how the ruler of this world was judged at the cross. You're probably familiar with *1 Corinthians 15:55* which says: *"O death, where is your victory? O death, where is your sting?"* *The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is*

the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. You see, Paul says that death comes from sin and that sin comes from the law. For all practical purposes the law was a lot of material but for all practical purposes we can just reduce it this morning to the ten commandments. And this all goes back to the Garden of Eden where we as a people lost our perfection. You see, when Adam and Eve sinned, they passed down that imperfection to every one of their offspring including you and me. We are now imperfect creatures by nature. God is holy and we are not. And the reason why God says: "The power of sin is the law" is because the law is a representation of who God is. The law paints a picture of God's holiness. It is his holiness on display. And since we are now fallen creatures, we have this nature that is now bent towards sin and so we now see the law or the ten commandments as a curse instead of a blessing. The reason why the law has so much power over us is not that the law is sinful, says Paul, but that it shows us that we are sinful. I like to put it this way, I say the purpose of the law is to coalesce a sinful attitude into a sinful action. Again, this is a matter of loving God with your mind. This is a matter of -- this gets a little deep here. I'm going to read you *Romans 7:7-11* and you have to concentrate on this. Listen to what Paul says. He says: *What shall we say? That the law is sin? By no means! Yet if it had not been for the law, I would not have known sin. For I would not*

have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." But sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, produced in me all kinds of covetousness. For apart from the law, sin lies dead. I was once alive apart from the law, but when the commandment came, sin came alive and I died. The very commandment that promised life proved to be death to me. For sin, seizing an opportunity through the commandment, deceived me and through it killed me. That's not easy to grasp what he's saying there, let me just admit ahead of time, okay? But what Paul is saying, he's saying by nature I am a rebel and I have inside me this attitudinal desire to rebel against God. And that alone is enough to separate me from God. But God brought forth this thing called the law and he brought it forth to demonstrate just what that attitude inside us was and he did it in order to coalesce this free-floating attitude of rebellion into some serious actions that you can put your finger on and say there it is. I mean, listen to what Paul is saying in Romans 7, is that not until he saw a commandment that said "You shall not covet" did he ever even think about coveting. As soon as he saw it, that attitude of rebellion in him leapt to the forefront and he found himself coveting. It just needed a written commandment to make it express itself. I mean let me put it another way. There's nothing that would make me want to step on a patch of grass than a sign right there that says what? "Keep off the grass." As soon as you see that sign, the

rebel within me says, "Let's see if you can stop me from stepping on the grass." And this is what God is saying, this is what Paul is saying that the law had done to him, it coalesced his sinful attitude into a sinful action that allowed him to see how wicked he really was. This is what he says, he says: *"I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet.'"* You see, the law was designed to show all of us that we have this rebel attitude that's now firmly entrenched with us since birth and that we're hopelessly enslaved to it. And when Christ went to the cross, he took all of the penalty that the law could muster and he paid it all so that now when we come before God acknowledging our hopeless condition, that we were once slaves to this attitude that expresses itself through lawbreaking God can say in *Colossians 2:13*: *And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.* See, what God is saying here is that the world and even the disciples look at the cross and they saw this overwhelmingly disgraceful defeat. God looked at the cross and he saw Jesus taking every one of the demands of the law which demand that we be perfect at the price and penalty of eternal condemnation, and he

saw Jesus take all of those demands and nail them right through his flesh into a tree. Once he said, "*It is finished,*" then all of the demands of that law were done away with. They were fully paid for, not by you, not by me but by him. The enemy thought that he had won the greatest victory the universe had ever seen. In fact, he had suffered its greatest defeat. See, the resurrection proved that Satan's power over us was gone, that it was over. As *Colossians 2* said: *He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him.* What Jesus is telling the disciples is that the ruler of the world is going to be judged at the cross and guess what? Jesus wins. As Lauren Daigle put it: "With mercy strong to carry shame and nail it to a tree, you alone have the power to redeem." Now having redeemed us, he gives us this gift of the Holy Spirit. Again, it says this, this is Jesus's words, he says: "*And when he comes, he will convict the world concerning sin and righteousness and judgment: Concerning sin, because they do not believe in me; concerning righteousness, because I go to the Father, and you will see me no longer; concerning judgment, because the ruler of this world is judged.*"

As the elders begin to distribute the bread, I'd like us to just take a moment, think a little bit about the theology that we're talking about this morning and consider the gift of the Comforter. As the bread is being distributed, I want to read to you the

warning that God gives about communion. He says this in 1
Corinthians 11:28, he says: *But let a man examine himself, and so
let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and
drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to himself,
not discerning the Lord's body. For this reason many are weak and
sick among you, and many sleep. For if we would judge ourselves,
we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened
by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.* I say
this all the time that communion is an extremely serious
undertaking and to enter into it in an unworthy manner is to
literally court disaster. So I plead with you if you are not
absolutely confident that you are a child of the King, if you
haven't by faith trusted in Christ as your Savior or if you first
need to be reconciled to your brother before you bring your
sacrifice before the altar, please just pass the elements on.
Nobody's going to start thinking you're a sub Christian Christian
or there's something wrong with you. But on the other hand, we can
make the mistake of thinking that unless we are spotlessly perfect
we have no business receiving communion and that, too, can be a
mistake. See, being a child of the King doesn't mean that we don't
sin and it doesn't mean that we never fail. What it means is this,
we recognize that salvation is a gift just like what Jesus is
offering the disciples, it is a gift. And it's a gift that no one
is ever capable of earning. As I quote Dane Ortlund, he says, "In

the kingdom of God the one thing that qualifies you is knowing that you don't qualify, and the one thing that disqualifies you is thinking that you do." But you know, this also means that when we do fail we are aware we've sinned because God's Spirit is inside us, God's Spirit is convicting us, and so it grieves us and we grieve as children of the Father and we know that we have a Father who longs to cleanse and forgive us, because God says in *1 John 1:9*: *If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* So being a child of the King doesn't mean that we are without sin. What it does mean is this, it means that when we do sin, we understand we have an advocate, somebody speaking on our behalf, somebody who appears before the Father. In *1 John 2:1* it says: *My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father -- Jesus Christ, the Righteous One.* Because we have Jesus's righteousness and not our own, we are now free to eat at his table. So if you love your Lord, don't deny yourself the privilege that he purchased for you. You know, he lived the life that we were supposed to live and then he died the death we all deserved to die in our place so that we could be made worthy of heaven.

I want us to ask our self this morning, do I realize the gift that King Jesus has given me? *1 Corinthians*, the 11th chapter, 23rd

verse says this: *For 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."* So take, and eat.

Would the elders begin distributing the cup as well. Now as I said, most of what we've been discussing this morning is theological and it's wonderful to look into the height, the breadth, the width, and the depth of the love of God in Christ, but if information is all that you gain from the Comforter, then you pretty much lost the point of everything. You see, Jesus promises his disciples and through his disciples he's promising us that God himself is going to come and live inside us, that he would literally change our heart's desire, that he would remove from us the heart of stone that all of us had from birth and that he would replace it with a heart of flesh. *Ezekiel 36 says: And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.* Do you know what that means? It means that if the Spirit of God has really come to live inside you, you are a brand new creature. You are radically different. The Spirit of God now lives within you.

You have a passion to walk in his statutes. You are incredibly careful to obey his rules. I mean the heart that was in Christ is now in you and so the desires that were in Christ are now in you. I mean Christ was not offering his disciples a Ph.D. in theology. He was offering them the Comforter who was going to radically change the way they saw themselves with regard to sin, with the way they saw Christ with regard to the righteousness, and the way they saw this world and the enemy of this world and how he was to be judged. You see, everything about them was going to change, because God, the very same God who caused Mt. Sinai to shake and tremble when he descended to Mt. Sinai, that same God was going to take up residence inside them. That's a radical transformation that completely undoes my previous thinking about myself, my God, and my world.

2 Corinthians 5:17 says: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. But here's the scary part. See, the new will never produce lukewarm followers who are constantly wondering what is the least Christian I can be and still get into heaven. The new doesn't ask how much can I love this world and still somehow manage to squeeze into those pearly gates. You see, these new creatures in Christ now have Christ as the number one passion in their lives. They have radically reoriented compasses that now point them first and

foremost at Christ not because they have to, but because now they want to. Christ is in them so he is their passion. You say how could he not be? I mean, God himself is now alive in their hearts. I say this very frequently but I'm especially burdened to say if that passion that I'm speaking about is completely foreign to you, if Christ is not the passion of your life, if he's not what makes this life worth living, then you need to doubt whether or not what Christ was offering his disciples has been received by you. I mean, if the closest you ever come to the kingdom of God is coming to church each week and to hear some songs and a nice talk about Jesus, then you would have every single reason to think that the Comforter has not yet entered into your life. I mean, this is communion Sunday. This is the day that we set aside each month to ask our self hard questions. Paul asked of us one of the most difficult questions in *2 Corinthians 13*. He says this, he says: *Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves.* Here's the question. *Or do you realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you -- unless indeed you fail to meet the test!* Now you got to notice what this test consists of. It's not a list of religious things that you have to do, it doesn't matter whether you belong to this church or that church, whether you've been baptized, whether you attend regularly, whether you tithe or not. It's a much simpler test. He's asking you one simple question. Is Jesus Christ in you? I can't give you a list

of rules that make you into a new creature. About the only thing that I can do is point at what new creatures look like and say, that's what that looks like. I want to do that right now.

I came across a video this past week. It was a singer in a band, it was a band: We Are Messengers. Anybody ever heard of them, We Are Messengers? A couple. It was an article in *Fox News*. The article that caught my attention, the headline of the article read this, it said: From 'Blasphemer' to Follower of God. We are Messengers' Darren Mulligan details his journey of faith. Of course, I'm very interested in hearing that. And so he was asked, it was just a quick clip on *Fox News* and he was asked the question: Are you a Christian artist? I wanted to just show you if you could take a look at what his response to that was.

Thank you. He concluded this, he said, "Everything I do is imbued with His goodness. The fact that I can breathe today -- I'm a Christian breather." I love that. "I don't deserve to have breath in my bones but He said, 'You can breathe today, Darren.' And he said, 'You can go and hold your wife's hand today.' So I'm a Christian hand-holder and that's a stupid thing to say, but that's the truth." You know, I don't know a better way to describe what being filled with the Comforter is like than that. You see, if the Spirit is in you, then everything you do is filtered through the

wonder that you just saw. And what you're saying to yourself is I'm a Christian mom or dad or husband or wife or student or teacher or carpenter or cop or doctor, lawyer, president, lover, whatever it is you want to say, I don't deserve to have breath in my bones, but by the gospel, but by the grace of God, I can breathe today. Do you have that wonder inside you? That God's amazing grace would actually save a wretch like me. Are you a Christian breather? Can you thank him for every breath?

Paul says: *Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you -- unless indeed you fail to meet the test!* I got good news for you if you fail to meet the test. If you hear God saying to you, "That's not the case for you," you can change that today. You can change that this morning. You can still ask for what David asked in *Psalms 51*. This is what he said. He asked God to: *Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors your ways, and sinners will return to you.*

Take some time this morning and just ask yourself: Does the Comforter live within me? And if God is telling you "no," then all

you have to do is ask. Take some time.

1 Corinthians, the 11th chapter, the 25th verse says this: *In the same manner He also took the cup after supper saying, "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, this do as often as you drink it in remembrance of Me."* So take, and drink.

This is the part where we do head, heart and feet, where we speak about some of the practical applications of what it means to remember Jesus. And one of the things that I wanted to say just in introducing this, this one section is just to make the statement that obedience is local, it's not global. It can be global but it's almost always local. And I want to explain what I mean by that by first giving you a report about Janice. Janice is home right now and she's extremely weak. I don't know if any of you spoke to her, you saw that she could barely catch her breath just by speaking. So she's home but she's got a ways to go before she's really back on her feet and it turns out that the doctors who were around her situation realized that she was actually very close to death. She didn't realize it but she was in extremely bad shape. So she's doing much better now and I just want to report how gratifying it was for me to go there and the first time that I went there, I had to almost stand in line with almost all of the Grace Fellowship people that were there bugging her. That's a good sign.

It's a good sign that the people in this church care. And I have no doubt that the collection is going to represent that as well.

But here's what I mean by saying that all obedience is local, it's almost always local and not global. I just want to talk to you about a little bit of a conflict that I had just concerning Janice and concerning what took place and this was back a week and a half ago or last Friday at the talent night because we found out that Janice was sick that Friday night because Teresa approached me and said, "I have two big problems," and she said, "Janice is in the hospital, she's not doing well, and I need a ride to the airport because Janice was going to take me." She's going to Vienna for a month, and she needed a ride. So I'm sitting there in the pew and the first thing I'm thinking of is, "Oh, I don't want to go to Newark, I don't want to go to Newark. Who wants to drive to -- " I'm being honest with you. I'm telling you exactly what's running through my mind. And so I'm thinking and I'm having this little wrestle back and forth, and I'm hearing in the back of my mind, Isaiah: "Here am I, send me" and hear me saying, "Oh, please don't send me" and I'm just talking about -- the point here is that by the end -- so I made the announcement, Teresa came up to me afterwards, and I said, "When do you need this ride?" She said, "Sunday." Oh, I'm doing the Lord's work. I'm good. So I don't -- so but after I felt the pressure of that lift, I thought, you know,

what's it with me that I'm having this thing where, you know, God, if you say, you know, if somebody comes up and ISIS puts a gun to your head and says, "Deny Christ!" Oh, I'll never do that, but I don't want to go to Newark. It's -- here's the point. Is what God is trying to tell us is that what matters, obedience -- the obedience that matters is not this global thing. It's a local thing. It's not here am I, send me, and some great thing. It's are you willing to go to Newark? And here's the neat thing, you know, Louise right away said, "Yes, I'll go." And Ella Mae said afterwards, "hey, I'm willing," and Joanna asked and a number of people just stepped up and said, yeah, let's do that. So I think that's a wonderful thing.

And I want to use that to kind of just tell you some of the things that are happening even now. I got a -- an email from my brother, my brother goes to church in Mendham, New Jersey and he was approached by a pastor, by one of his pastors in Mendham, and he said, I understand your brother pastors a church in Port Jervis. He says, "Yes." Well it turns out, long story short, there's a woman who I had a lengthy conversation with yesterday who met a gal named Carol and her daughter Serena at a Joni Erickson camp 14 years ago -- this one who lives in Morristown and has been coming up here every month to just visit this woman who lives in Port Jervis, right down the street, who is -- she suffered TBI in a car

accident and her daughter's got cerebral palsy. So I'm thinking the paint isn't even dry on what we've done to this church and God is saying, "All right, let's get going." We got places to go, we got areas of ministry that we can move into. And so just in chatting with this woman, I just said -- she said, you know, this gal is basically house bound. She used to live in Middletown, she went to church in Middletown, she moved to Port Jervis. In fact I just saw it, as you come into Port, as you go around there's a white house with yellow shutters and it's got a black railing that goes all the way up into the house, that's so she can get up there. And I just thought, well, this is amazing. This is something that God is offering and the first thing that she said was this is not an easy person, these are not easy people and you're going to find if we're going to move in this direction, you're going to be challenged, you're going to be challenged because handicapped people are sinners just like everybody else. They've got issues just like everybody else. And I don't think God had us do this just for Aedan, as much as I love Aedan, I think God has big plans for everybody in the handicapped community and I think Aedan was kind of the catalyst that got us started. But one of the things this gal said is, you know, would there be anybody in your church who would be willing to strike up a relationship with this couple? They live right down the street. And I said we'd have to work out some of the details of how we'd even be able to get somebody like

that here. But I was just putting all of this in context with what I was thinking of when God was saying don't focus on these global things. Focus on what I want you to do right here. If I want you to go to Newark, go to Newark. It's not that big a deal. And here's the thing. The more you practice the little things, the more you practice local obedience, the easier it gets, the more it becomes normal. God says if you're faithful in little things, you'll be faithful in big things. If you're not faithful in little things, you're not going to be faithful in big things.

So I'm issuing this challenge if anybody feels led to just connect, this woman is going to -- this woman Marilyn is going to come up at some point and bring Carol and Serena to church, maybe the end of April, we don't know, but I would -- I'm just challenging somebody, if God is saying, hey, I want you to strike up a relationship with this gal right down the street because we're moving in that direction, just see me and let's take it from there. But just from the standpoint for all of us, just remember obedience is local, not necessarily global. Let's pray.

Father, I just want to thank you for your grace, I thank you for the gift. I thank you for Steve and all the work that's been done and now that we have this incredible facility that can accommodate all of these folks, Lord, I just -- I'm just thankful that you are

in the business of putting it to work and wanting it to do more than it is and wanting it to be used to bring to those people who may not have had the opportunity before to be in a place and hear the gospel and yet I don't want our lack of obedience to hinder that in any way. And so I pray for each and every one of us here this morning that you would just continue to work in our lives and continue to give us that sense where we're just amazed that we're Christian breathers, that every single breath that we have is a gift from you and that we would want to be able to return that gift in spades. And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.