

THE ROCK COMMUNITY CHURCH

1 Samuel 4:12-22

"Having the Right Perspective"

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Anaheim Hills, CA | RockCC.com

22:38

If you would please open your Bibles with me to 1 Samuel, chapter 4. 1 Samuel, chapter 4. Beginning in verse 12, this is God's holy, inspired, authoritative word.

22:59

A man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh the same day with his closed horn and dirt on his head. When he arrived, Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching for his heart trembled for the ark of God.

23:15

And when the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out. When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, what is this uproar? Then the man hurried and came to Eli and told him, now Eli was 98 years old and his eyes were set so he could not see.

23:36

And the man said to Eli, I am he who came from the battle. I fled from battle today. And he said, how did it go, my son? He who brought the news answered and said, Israel has fled before the Philistines.

23:51

And there has been a great defeat among the people. Your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead. The ark of God and the ark of God has been captured. As soon as he mentioned the ark, Eli fell over backwards from his seat by the side of the gate and his neck was broken and he died for the man was old and heavy.

24:14

He had judged Israel 40 years. Now his daughter -in -law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant about to give birth. And when she heard the news that the ark of God was captured and that her father -in -law and her husband were dead, she bowed down and gave birth for her pains came upon her.

24:34

And about the time of her death, the woman attending her said, do not be afraid for you have borne a son, but she did not answer or pay attention. And she named the child Ichabod saying, the glory has departed from Israel because the ark of God has been captured and because of her father -in -law and her husband.

24:56

And she said, the glory has departed from Israel for the ark of God has been captured. This is God's word. Let's pray. Lord, as we approach a heavy text, a difficult text, I pray that you would illuminate our hearts and minds. That we would hear what your spirit would speak to us through the teaching of your word. That we would be changed. That we would not be forgetful hearers. But you would search deep into our hearts and our lives.

25:41

Identify those areas where we need to repent. Identify those areas where we aren't bringing you the glory. Do your name and do a work here today in our midst. Help me deliver this text accurately for your glory and the edification of your people.

26:05

In Jesus' name, amen. So far in first Samuel, we see Eli has been, is the high priest. He's a judge. He has two sons, Hophni and Phinehas. Now back in chapter two, verse 12, we learn that these dudes were evil guys.

26:26

It says they didn't know God. They didn't know God. They abused their position as priests. They robbed Israel. They were sexually immoral men. And as we go through the Bible and the historical narrative here, we're coming between the season, the time of the judges, and we're transferring into the time of the kings.

26:52

And that's where we are in the history of redemption. And back in chapter two, if you would allow me, I'm going to spend a few minutes, just kind of go 30,000 foot view for a moment. Because as we go through each of these, these texts each week, we often look at the trees and then miss the forest.

27:12

And these aren't just a random series of passages kind of put together. There's a trajectory of what is going on in the narrative. There's a purpose. And so back in chapter two, verse 29, I have the passages up on the overheads for us.

27:34

We read this. God's speaking here. It says, Why then do you scorn my sacrifices and my offerings that I commanded from my dwelling? And honor your sons above me by fattening yourself on the choice parts of every offering of my people Israel.

27:56

First, take a second and hear God's tone there. Right. It is a tone of severity. It is a tone of authority is a tone of anger. Why do you scorn my sacrifices? Verse 30, Therefore the Lord, the God of Israel declares, I promise that your house and the house of your father shall go in and out before me.

28:20

But now the Lord declares far be it from me. For those who honor me, I will honor and those who despise me shall be lightly esteemed. Behold, the days are coming when I will cut off your strength and the strength of your father's house so that there will not be an old man in your house.

28:38

Verse 34. And this, and this that shall come to pass, shall come upon your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, shall be assigned to you. Both of them shall die on the same day. And I will rise up for myself a faithful priest who shall do according to what is in my heart and my mind.

29:02

And I will build him a sure house and he shall go in and out before me forever. So at the beginning of chapter four, God rejects Eli and his house in chapter two. Why? Because they're despising, they're using the ministry for gain.

29:27

They're insulting the holiness of God. They're regarding God as a common thing. They're treating God as the nations treated their idols with very low regard. And God steps in and says, no, you don't get to do that.

29:46

That's not how this is going to work. At the beginning of chapter four, we see the utter disregard for Israel that they have upon the ark of God. And they treat it as Pastor Drew said, like a common lucky charm. But they were battling the Philistines that are the antagonists of the story. We're going to interact with them a lot as we travel through these books. And during the first battle, they lost 4000 Israelites.

30:16

And confused by this, the elders developed a plan. What are we going to do in chapter four, verse 10 through four through 10. So the people sent to Shiloh and brought from there the ark of the covenant of the Lord of hosts, who was enthroned on the cherubim.

30:34

And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas were there with the ark of the covenant. As soon as the ark of the covenant, the Lord came, sorry, as soon as the ark of the covenant of the Lord came into the camp, all Israel gave a mighty shout so that their earth resounded.

30:49

And when the Philistines heard the noise of the shouting, they said, what does this great shout in the camp of the Hebrews mean? And when they learned that the ark of the Lord had come into the camp, the Philistines were afraid, for they said a god has come into the camp.

31:05

And they said, woe to us, for nothing like this has happened before. Woe to us, who can deliver us from the power of these mighty gods. These are the gods who struck the Egyptians with every sort of plague in the wilderness.

31:23

Take courage and be men, O Philistines. Lest you become slaves of the Hebrews as they have been of you, be men and fight. So the Philistines fought and Israel was defeated. And they fled every man to his home.

31:37

And there was a very great slaughter. 30,000 foot soldiers of Israel fell. And the ark of God was captured. And the two sons of Eli, Hophni and Phinehas, died. Tragic, tragic story. Now from chapter four begins a trajectory that takes us through chapter seven.

32:02

And in chapter four, we have the the battle of Aphek with the Philistines won. And then at the end of chapter seven, we have the battle of Ebenezer, where the Israelites victory. And then in between, we have what MacArthur calls the saga of the ark.

32:17

Right, the ark becomes the focal point of the story. Now the ark represents the presence of God. Now what was the ark? Pastor Drew explained last week it was a box covered in gold that was to be in the the holiest of holies in the tabernacle.

32:37

It had cherubim that oversaw the top of it and it was where the mercy seat where the high priest would come in and offer the sacrifices and the presence of God would dwell. And so in Israel it represented so much and primarily it represented God in their midst.

32:57

God was their God. And so between these chapters we have this this saga of the ark unfolding. And the last half of chapter 4 the ark is taken to Ashdod with the Philistines. In chapter 5 we have the story of God defeating the Philistine God Dagon and plaguing the Philistines all by himself.

33:22

Right? There's there's irony there. Right? Israel through disobedience the promise was: you disobey you're going to get taken into exile. But in this story Israel disobeys and who gets taken into exile?

33:39

The ark. Right? I'm used to teaching the high schoolers so feel free to to throw out an answer to a question. Right? The ark. God gets taken into exile. God defeats the enemies. Right? He's not moved. He's not worried. They place him in the temple of Dagon there. God isn't shaking in his boots. He just causes the idol to fall and break

apart. Right? Like he's not moved. Plagues go out. Then the Philistines freaking out about this.

34:12

Chapter 6 they return the ark on two milk cows and they sit the ark and and the cows through divine providence brings the ark back to Beth-shemesh. Right? If you're going to Israel with us we had a postpone it until next year. We're going to go to Beth-shemesh.

34:27

And the Levites took possession. It's sad that even when the Levites took possession it says in chapter 6 that they looked upon the ark. But they did so in a manner that was not permitted.

34:40

Right? That's again, that's the problem. That's the ongoing problem. They're not regarding God as holy. They're not regarding his word as authoritative and true. And they mishandle the ministry. They look upon the ark and God struck the people with a great blow.

34:56

And so Samuel calls the people to repentance, to put away their idols, to serve the Lord only at the time the people respond. But then that takes us to chapter 8. And this is where the drama, the irony sets in.

35:17

Chapter 8 the people show up. When they come back to Samuel, Samuel now comes back on the scene in verse 5. The people say, now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations. Appoint us a king to judge us like all the nations.

35:34

You see that as we read that we're supposed to be like, what? Like are you kidding me? You're the people that God with a mighty, the Philistines just confessed it. This is the God that plagued Pharaoh and the Egyptians with mighty plagues.

35:56

They confess it. They recognize it. Now the people of Israel are like, hey, we need a king like the other nations need a king. And there's the tragedy of the reality of the human heart in this. God is their king.

36:13

It says he's enthroned over the cherubim. He's there. He is king. But we are such idle-seeking and fickle people, aren't we? And so they demand a king. Verse 6, but this thing displeased Samuel when they said it, when they said, give us the king to judge us.

36:34

And Samuel prayed to the Lord. And the Lord said, Samuel, obey the voice of the people and all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them.

36:48

They regarded the Ark of the Covenant like the other nations regarded their idols. They regarded the Lord's rule over them as nothing. They wanted to replace him with a man. And this bird's eye view helps us see that trajectory.

37:12

Because these aren't just random stories put in there. There's truth here. There's, especially this text today we're dealing with, there's tragedy here. There's idolatry, there's sin, there's death, but the trajectory, even through their evil wickedness, idolatrous heart and demanding a king, God is going to show up and he's gonna provide a king.

37:39

It's gonna start through the man David, but then there's hope in David's greater son, who is Christ. Right, there's a problem of sin and death that we see throughout the whole events in the Old Testament that the Bible, the trajectory is that God, as king of all the earth, he demands perfect justice and righteousness.

38:09

And there's a sin problem. Right, you read this text, it's like this is so spent. As you go through the Old Testament, as you go through Samuel, you're like, we're here again, we just finished the judges.

38:24

Right, if you've studied the judges, you understand that cycle of just, okay, they're back in idol worshipping and sinning and doing all this stuff and God raises up a foreign nation, they come and judge them, right, and it's just this repeated, when is this going to end?

38:43

And guess what, when God gives them kings, every single one of them, you leave wanting. Right, you leave longing. And you see churches, there's often an arrogance within us. As we look back here and we think, well, I would have done it differently.

39:04

If only I was there, right, I would have behaved more accurately. Let me just say this church, if we're honest, we are the same, we're idol-loving people. The drift in our hearts every single day drifts towards idolatry, drift towards placing other things upon the throne.

39:30

And seeking to remove God. And we have these stories put our hearts in check. These stories remind us over and over and over again is that you are not on the throne, he is. And he will not share his glory with anyone.

39:48

He's a jealous God who reigns supreme over all. And he demands obedience. And so when the Israelites bring the Ark of the Lord into battle in chapter four, in the beginning of chapter four, this is not an act of true piety.

40:07

They're treating the Ark with disregard as an idol, as a lucky charm. They're adding God to a part of their life, hoping that that part would become better. Just as often so many people, they think of church, they think of what we're doing.

40:25

This is what I add to my life, just to kind of help fill in this gap. And church, that's not the God of the Bible. We don't get to do that with a God of the Bible. He's not a cherry on top of the Sunday that is your life that's completing it.

40:45

He is your life. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. What we need to do is recognize that and not act like the Israelites and say, we want a king like the other people do, but to fall on our knees, to lay prostrate before him and say, you and you only are king.

41:11

And as we get into this story, I want you to notice Eli's death and Hophni and Phinehas' death and the story of Ichabod. This is a tragic story. I'm not cracking jokes here this morning because the weight of this text is supposed to sit heavy upon our chests.

41:30

There's a weightiness, there's a seriousness to this text. And as I was reading it this week, there's an oddness to this text. There's something strange about it. I've titled this message, basically, "do we have our priority straight?"

41:49

Getting our priority straight. Because as we look through this text, the things I think that we often are going to regard as supremely valuable, this text puts in second place. And it's odd, you're like, well, that's strange.

42:08

And I want you to take note of that. So, We come now to verse 12, at point one we see an anxious judge, an anxious Eli. And a man of Benjamin ran from the battle line and came to Shiloh on the same day, with his clothes torn and with dirt on his head.

42:29

He was in mourning and we're going to find out when he arrived. Eli was sitting on his seat by the road watching. This is his, he's just, he's kicking it. For his heart trembled for the ark of God. His heart trembled for the ark of God. Anybody read that and think, okay, that's, that seems strange. As a parent, parents, if your kids are often battle, what's going to be on the top of your list of concerns? Kids, I don't care how pagan they are.

43:12

Right, but the author here, he brushes over that. There's like this, wait, he's sitting there, but he, the author mentions for his heart trembled for the ark. Why, because well, we just left the ark with these worthless men, these pagan unsaved sexually immoral men.

43:36

That's where the ark got left and we find Eli sitting here and his heart trembled for the ark. I think that's significant to the text. I think there's something there where, where, where the author's pointing out that there are things more significant in our lives.

44:00

And that's the glory of God. That's the things of, of God. It's not to downplay the kids, they're, they're part of this story. But over and over and over again, we're going to see

God through the ark take precedence, he's going to be the focal point of, of the, the narrative.

44:26

So he's concerned, his heart is trembling for the ark. And that just makes me, as I was thinking this, I go, that should convict us. There's something significant there. Do we, do we desire God to that level?

44:55

Right, when the trials and traumas of our life multiply, what is our heart's desire? Right, there's, there's a challenge in this text for us. Eli's heart was on the right thing and the author here is pointing that out.

45:14

There are priorities. There are trials, there are real things in life. But God's glory is what he holds above everything. And I wonder if we do that. I wonder if we do that. Or do we let the trials and the drama of our life block it out, distract us, get in the way.

45:43

Verse 14, when the man came into the city and told the news, all the city cried out. When Eli heard the sound of the outcry, he said, what is this uproar? Then the man hurried and came to Eli and told Eli.

45:57

Now Eli was 98 years old and his eyes were set so that he could not see. Then we come to part two of some horrible news. And the man said to Eli, I am he who has come from the battle. I fled from the battle today.

46:16

And he said, how did it go, my son? In other words, get on with it, boy. Now this unnamed Benjamin gives Eli four pieces of news, four pieces of information. Again, I think what's shocking in this is the priority in which he puts these things, the order in which he puts these things.

46:37

I want you to take note. Verse 17, he who brought the news answered and said, Israel has fled from before the Philistines. Point one, point two. And there was also been a great defeat among the people.

46:51

Point three, your two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead. Point four, the Ark of God has been captured. Now would we put those in that order? Right? Like it seems odd, doesn't it? From a human standpoint, your two sons are dead.

47:13

Like that to us, if we're parents in here, that's almost, that's like, that's enough to induce a heart attack. Right? And the drama of this text is that's not the focal point. That's not the focal point. He drops the one at the end that's not like the others. Israel's been defeated. They fled before the Philistines. Your sons are dead. And here it is, the Ark of God has been captured. Right? And it's like, that's the downbeat.

47:46

That's the drumbeat. That's the [sound effect], right? The music, you know, comes on the scene. It's strange. And why do I say that? Well, look, it says verse 18. Where we see this tragic end of Eli. It says, as soon as he mentioned the Ark of God, the author here says, it's almost like he skipped over.

48:15

Israel getting defeated and fleeing. Your sons dying. He says, here's the important part. The Ark of God has been captured. God has been taken into exile. The presence, what the daughter -in -law is gonna say, the glory of the Lord has departed.

48:32

That's the significant thing in the story. God has removed himself from our midst. And as soon as he mentioned the Ark of God, Eli fell over backwards from his seat by the side of the gate. And his neck was broken and he died.

48:51

For the man was old and heavy. He had judged Israel for 40 years. Now the mention of his weight is odd. And I think there's a simple reason. There's a couple reasons, but let me just point one. Remember back to chapter two.

49:05

God rejects the house of Eli because they're fattening themselves from the sacrifices. They're taking what is not theirs and they're gluttoning themselves and robbing the people. And as the author here, he goes, he was heavy.

49:24

There's this, there's this failure. There's this realization of 40 years of him being a judge over Israel comes to a tragic end. And he's reminded by the fact that he's heavy because he robbed from the sacrifices.

49:45

He did not regard God as holy. He did not honor him. He did not believe him. And he met a just end. He met a just end. Now, also if you've been paying attention, remember in chapter two, that God said Eli's sons were going to die.

50:06

They were going to die. The fact that Eli's sons died and Eli died is not the shocking point in the passage. That's the point where we look and we go, yes, that's what they deserve. Like God said, the day, do not eat that fruit of that tree.

50:28

The day you eat it, you shall surely die. For the wages of sin is death. Paul says in Romans chapter one, verse 32, though they knew God's righteous decrees that those who practice such things deserve to die.

50:46

They not only do them, but give approval to those who practice them. You see, beloved, oftentimes we err in not regarding the sinfulness of sin, of thinking it's no big deal. Whatever, it's not that important.

51:07

It doesn't matter that much. And we ask questions, well, how could God kill them? That's the wrong question. The fact that God killed them, the fact that God punished them, the fact that God brought judgment upon these wicked men that declares the righteousness of God, declares his perfect justice.

51:30

They had ample time and warning to repent. So don't for a second question the goodness of God. It was good that God did this. And as we read this text, we should breathe a sigh of relief. These evil men have been removed from leadership.

51:53

They've been removed. These ungodly men who perverted the ministry sexual immoral, abused the people, gluttoned themselves. And the stories focusing on them, but Israel, the people were just the same.

52:16

They were an idolatrous people just like their leaders were. That's the cycle that they go through over and over again. And so the death of these men in this story, it's tragic, but it's logical. It makes sense when you understand the history of redemption.

52:39

This is what God had promised, but that's not the emphasis of the text. The emphasis of the text is still the ark. It's still the ark. It's still ark focus, it's still God focus, it's still concerned, excuse me, with the glory of God.

53:02

When we come to our final point, the glory departs from Israel in verse 19. It says, now his daughter -in -law, the wife of Phinehas, was pregnant about to give birth. And when she had heard the news that the ark of God was captured and that her father -in -law and husband were dead, she bowed and gave birth for her pains came upon her.

53:26

And about the time of her death, the woman attending her said to her, do not be afraid, for you have born a son, but she did not answer or pay attention. And she named the child Ichabod, saying the glory has departed from Israel because the ark of God has been captured and because her father -in -law and her husband.

53:49

And she said, the glory has departed from Israel for the ark of God has been captured. R .C. Sproul would always say, look for the drama in the text. And as we read this, we come to Phinehas' wife. And you gotta pause for a second and be like, what?

54:11

What a sad reality, right? There's a pity here. What must this woman's life had been like? We remember back in chapter two, verse 22, it says, now Eli was very old and he kept hearing all that his sons were doing and all of Israel and how they lay with the women who were serving at the entrance of the tent of meetings.

54:42

Their sin was known by everybody. They were robbing the people, they were shacking up with the ladies at the tabernacle. They were evil dudes and this lady's married to one of them. The shame of walking through the marketplace, the home life.

55:00

And now she's pregnant. There's tragedy here. This poor woman had a cheating priest husband who was harming the people. Everybody knew her business. Everybody knew because Samuel had already prophesied that the house of Eli was coming to an end.

55:24

And she names her son, Ichabod. Once again, proclaiming what the story regards as significant, God's glory departing from Israel. You see, that's the drama of the text. God was not honored and he removed his presence.

55:42

And as we read the Old Testament, we see this cycle over and over and over again. We were created to be in perfect fellowship with God. Sin entered the world and death through sin. It was promised. And as we read the Old Testament, we see this cycle of sinners, which were all in that category, failing over and over and over again.

56:14

And God removing his presence from them to the point where we feel this longing, we feel this weight, where like, when is this going to be over? So I think that's the tension we're supposed to feel as we approach this text.

56:35

So great, we have another story of failure, another story of death entering in, another story of God removing his presence and his covenant blessing from the people. When is this going to end? And we get to John chapter one, verse 14.

56:56

John writes, and the word became flesh and dwelt among us. And we have seen His glory, glory is of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. You see the trajectory of these events is we could sit here and we could be angry at God and how dare God judge these people and pour out righteous judgment.

57:24

They deserve to die. Wages of sin is death. We could sit here and we could be angry with God. Or we could see the big picture of what God was doing. And bringing about a people and bringing about a nation and bringing about a king, bringing about a priesthood, bringing about all the things that these people perverted to bring about the greater king and the great high priest, Christ, the greater one, that tabernacle among us, the greater mercy seat, the greater everything.

58:02

And if you want to shake your fist in the face of that one, I leave you with no hope. I leave you with no hope. Jonathan Edwards is famous for praying this simple prayer, Lord stamp eternity on my eyeballs.

58:23

I was reading over this text this week. That's the quote that kept coming to my mind. Lord stamp eternity on my eyeballs. Doesn't that kind of represent what this text, like this undercurrent of this text?

58:37

There's so much tragedy and drama going on, but there's this concern of the author, the regard for the glory of God in the eternal things. Stamp eternity on my eyeballs. What would that look like? That have eternity stamped on our eyeballs?

58:54

Well, there would be a reality of heaven and hell. There'd be a reality of eternal judgment upon the unsaved, upon those who are following in the manner of Hophni and Phinehas, in the manner of the ancient Israelites, sinners who deserve, as Paul wrote, deserve to

die, deserve to stand before the perfect judge of all the earth and give an account for every sin that was ever committed.

59:33

Having eternity stamped on our eyeballs would be having a clear reality of that. The opposite is true too, having eternity stamped on our eyeballs for those of us that are in Christ as a confidence assurance of the hope of glory, that our God, our King, sits enthroned above the cherubim, as it says.

59:55

He's not moved by the drama of this world. He's in absolute control of absolutely everything. And we could sit now in peace in assurance knowing that our God reigns. There are significant and radical things we're going to face in this life.

01:00:22

The loss of a child, the loss of a spouse, a loved one, a diagnosis from a doctor. And all of these things, all of these things need to be placed within the context of a God - centered conviction. Need to be placed as Edwards prayed, stamp eternity on my eyeballs.

01:00:48

These things are real. These things are true. They're gut -wrenching, heartbreaking, painful. But there are more important things. There are more important things. You see, God will wipe away every tear.

01:01:07

He will deal with every sin. He will take care of every single detail. And for us, we sit back and we should breathe a sigh of relief and say praise the Lord, because I don't have to. Because I'm just going to mess it up just like they did.

01:01:25

And I could sit and I could breathe a sigh of relief and say, our God reigns. He's the one that goes before. He comes after. He is the one who sits in absolute glory, who came down and tabernacled among us.

01:01:45

If you don't fear Christ today, if you're not in Christ today, I offer you no hope. I only promise you there will come a day when you stand before the Holy One of all the earth and you will give an account for your life.

01:02:02

And every sin you've ever committed will be laid out and your only answer is going to be guilty. Your only answer is going to be guilty and the punishment will be delivered. Eternal punishment, separation in hell, the wrath of Almighty God.

01:02:30

But the promise, the promise of the cross, the wages of sin is death, the promise of the cross, the promise of Christ. There's hope, there's so much hope. We have a great high priest. We have one who stepped out of heaven, put on flesh, lived a perfect, righteous life, perfectly obeying the law on our behalf, died a perfect death.

01:03:00

Just look to him, repent of your sins. Come before him, confess your sins, recognize that you're a sinner before this God. Confess your sins, turn from them, look to Christ. And the promise is, this is the simplicity of the gospel.

01:03:22

The promise is he will forgive you of all your sins and he will cleanse you from all unrighteousness. That you will stand before him today as perfectly righteous and holy as Jesus Christ. Your sins completely atoned for under the blood of the cross.

01:03:43

Now I'll leave you with 1 Peter chapter one, verse three through nine says this. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. According to his great mercy, his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead.

01:04:07

Right, what's been the problem? The wages of sin is death. What did Christ do? He conquered death. So we could sit here in absolute assurance, right? Through the resurrection of Christ from the dead to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, unfading, the glory won't depart.

01:04:29

It's not gonna be removed. Kept in heaven for you who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last times. In this you rejoice. So now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials.

01:04:49

So that the tested genuineness of your faith, more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire, may be found to result in the praise and the glory and the honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.

01:05:06

Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your soul.

01:05:22

You see, church, that's what Christ has done for us. That's what Christ has done for us. He secured heaven for us. He secured glory for us that won't be moved. It's undefiled, it's unfading. It's kept in the power of God.

01:05:38

He's done that for us. As we approach communion this morning, we get that wonderful privilege of remembering what Christ has accomplished on our behalf. Now church, communion is not for everybody. This is not an open invite to come to the table and take these elements.

01:06:01

This is for believers. You've placed your faith in Christ. This is for you. The Bible speaks of great danger. Those that approach these elements flippantly. Don't be like Hophni and Phinehas, who regard the things of God as a common thing.

01:06:20

When you walk to these tables and you take the elements, there's nothing special about the elements, but they represent the body and blood of Christ, the blood of the new covenant, his body on the cross.

01:06:35

We take and we eat in remembrance of him, looking back upon what he's done, with anticipation, looking forward to the marriage supper of the Lamb, to the day when our salvation is complete and we sit with him in glory.

01:06:52

That's what we get to partake of today. And so churches, you take a moment. I want you to think. I want you to pray, is there sin in your life? Right, one thing this story tells us is God doesn't tolerate sin.

01:07:16

When there's sin in the camp, it must be dealt with. Turn from your sins, repent, confess your sins to Him. Confess your sins to Him right where you're at. Then come and take and eat. Enjoy the fellowship you've been invited into by the King of all the universe.

01:07:37

Let's pray. Lord, we're so grateful for what you've accomplished on our behalf. As we've finished up this text, what a heavy, heavy text. Not a fun text to teach. There's a weightiness to this text. There's a longing, there's a frustration that we should be left with.

01:08:13

We are a fickle people, we are an idol-worshipping people. And every single day we need to check our hearts so God searches, try us and know us, see if there's any wicked way in us and lead us in the way of everlasting.

01:08:27

Where we have failed you, where we have not honored you accurately, where we have abused your glory, misrepresented you. I beg for forgiveness. Forgive us. And I rejoice in the fact that we don't sit here condemned today, but we sit here in the full freedom of the righteousness of Christ.

01:09:01

We will never be more forgiven than we are now. Your salvation is complete, held for us in the high courts of heaven. And we look to that, we look to that. And in faith, we live out this life. So come and meet with us now as we close this service, as we partake in these elements.

01:09:26

That's in Jesus' name, we pray. Amen.