

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

10.05.2026 | When God Opens a Door | Acts 8:26-40 | Dr. Ben Day, Senior Pastor

If you have a Bible this morning, I want to invite you to turn with me to Acts chapter 8. I mentioned earlier that we're getting back to our study in the book of Acts. The last five weeks we took a break just to kind of consider more intentionally our call to be witnesses right here in our Jerusalem. We're back in the book of Acts for five weeks and then after five weeks we're going to be in our Advent series right around that season. And so looking forward to jumping back into Acts with you. The way that we've been approaching this book is really just considering how the spirit of God and the word of God worked in and through the early church. And we're doing that because we believe that that same spirit of God is at work today. The same word of God is still as powerful today.

The spirit and the word still want to work in and through the church. And so we're not just studying Acts as history of what happened in the early church, but we're considering how this still happens in the church today. How we can apply this to our lives. You might remember that before our five week break we left off in Acts chapter eight. In Acts chapter eight we saw the spread of the gospel begin to go beyond Jerusalem. So in Acts chapter one Jesus told his disciples you'll receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you and you'll be my witnesses in Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth.

And what we saw for the first seven chapters of Acts is that mostly the witnessing was happening in Jerusalem. And then in Acts chapter eight largely because of persecution the gospel begins to spread to Judea and Samaria. And we saw that nothing can stop the spread of the gospel. Persecution, ethnic and cultural barriers, nothing can stop the spread of the gospel. And that leads us to our passage this morning. As we pick back up in the book of Acts and we come to Acts chapter eight we see the gospel continue to spread. We see the gospel continue to spread to new people groups to cross more cultural barriers because nothing can stop the spread of the gospel. Nothing can close a door that God opens. Today we see really clearly God opening a door.

We see a man named Philip being faithful to walk through that door that God opened. So I want us today to consider what doors is God opening for us. How can we learn from Philip's example to be faithful to use those opportunities and walk through those doors? You might remember Philip. We saw him a few chapters back in Acts chapter six and we saw him most recently in Acts eight. He was in Samaria spreading the gospel, seeing the gospel spread to new people and now God calls him to go to a new place, this time not to reach many but to reach one person. Let's see what happens when God opens a door.

Acts chapter eight, I'm going to read our text for us this morning which is verses 26 through 40. Luke writes, now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, rise and go toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza. This is a desert place. And he rose and went and there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all of her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot and was reading the prophet Isaiah. And the spirit said to Philip, go over and join this chariot. So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, do you understand what you are reading? And he said, how can I unless someone guides me? And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him. Now the passage of the scripture that he was reading was this. Like a sheep he was led to the slaughter and like a lamb before its shearer is silent so he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation justice was denied him. Who can describe his generation for his life is taken away from the earth. And the eunuch said to Philip, about whom I ask you, does the prophet say this? About himself or about someone else? Then Philip opened his mouth and beginning with the scripture he told him the good news about Jesus. And as they were going along the road they came to some water. And the eunuch said, see, here is water. What prevents me from being baptized? And he commanded the chariot to stop and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. And when they came up out of the water, the spirit of the Lord carried Philip away. And the eunuch saw him no more and went on his way rejoicing. But Philip found himself in Azatas and he passed through and preached the gospel to all the towns until he came to Caesarea.

When I was in college at LSU, I spent one weekend participating in a campus outreach to international students. This campus ministry put on this event to try to welcome international students to America, try to teach them some about the Louisiana culture that they now found themselves in. But we're also very explicitly just trying to teach them

about the truths of Christianity. Many of them came from countries in which Christianity wasn't a predominant religion and had really no clue about the truths of Christianity. And so we were just very open about teaching them about American culture in general and then specifically what we believed as Christians. And in one of the nights, we gathered in small groups and we used these cards that a crew, a campus ministry organization, has put out called solarium cards. None of you have ever seen this resource before, but these cards, they just have a bunch of different pictures on them. And what you do with the cards is you put out some of the cards, all these different pictures, and then you ask intentional questions.

And then you ask people to point to a picture that they think best represents their answer to that question. And you ask them if they want to share more about it. It just opens up conversation. Some of the questions were just about people, about who they were, how they were feeling, where they came from, their families, their background. But some of the questions were intentionally spiritual. And I can remember one of the times we asked, if you had to describe your view of God, which picture would you choose? And one of the international students pointed to this picture of a door that was kind of clearly closed and maybe even locked. And the person said, "I feel like there is a door between me and God that is locked and I need someone to open it for me."

Later we asked people to describe their kind of view of spirituality or how would they talk about their spiritual lives. And one person chose this picture of like a chain. And they said that they felt very weighed down spiritually and they wished that they could be free of this weight. It felt like the spirit was just tossing me softballs and I was just getting ready to knock them out of the park. I had never had such a clear opportunity to share the gospel with people. It was really clear to me in those moments that God was opening doors. Now we didn't see thousands of people get saved during this weekend, but it did show me that because I made myself available, God gave me an opportunity to share the good news of Jesus with someone.

Now imagine, think about if I had not given up my time that weekend, if I had not taken the time to just ask questions and get to know new people, I might not have ever seen this opportunity. But just because I was willing just to be a part of an event that someone else was putting on, God used it to open up a door for me to have gospel conversations. That's what I want us to take away from this story this morning. I know you read this story and you might think, "Well, that's never going to happen to me." And you're right. This is a very unique instance. But like we've said throughout our study of Acts, Acts wasn't written to show us how it always is supposed to look. Acts was written to show us how the Holy Spirit and the Word of God work in and through the church. And believing that the Spirit and the Word still work in and through the church, I think there are principles that we can learn from this story that we can still apply to our lives today.

Yes, it won't always look exactly like this, but I believe if we will make ourselves available, I believe if we are willing, the Spirit will guide us to doors that He is opening. The Spirit will bring us to opportunities that He is presenting, people that He has been preparing. And we will see that the Word of God is powerful to change lives and to bring people into the family of God. If we're willing and available, I think we'll see the Spirit guide us into these open doors and opportunities. We'll see the Word is still powerful and people can be transformed and brought into the family of God. That's just what I want you to see this morning as we walk through this passage. To help guide us through this story, I've just got this kind of outline that breaks down the sections and kind of the characters of the story for us. So just to kind of give you some hooks to hang our thoughts on as we go throughout, we'll just walk through that outline together. And the first part of the story that I want you to see is the guiding spirit.

The first part of the story that I want you to see is the guiding spirit. That's the first thing you'll see in your notes. That's the first thing that we'll have up on the screen. Maybe? We've got a great person running in Pro Presenter today. All right. The guiding spirit. God's sovereignty is all throughout this passage. God is guiding from beginning to end what's happening in this story. From the very beginning to the very end. You see Philip brought here kind of by miraculous means and you see Philip taken away and everything that happens in between, God is sovereign and he is over what is happening. Verse 26, it says that, "Now an angel of the Lord said to Philip, 'Rise and go down toward the south to the road that goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.'" This is a desert place. So if I remember again, Philip was up in Samaria and he was sharing the gospel with people there. And then the spirit tells him through an angel to go down to this new place.

Now, just to kind of help you visualize this, I think we have a map, but I'm not really confident in what's going to show up on the screen at this moment. So, okay, there we go. All right. So, here we go. The... Philip, I don't know if you can... well, you can see. I know it's kind of small. I tried to get the best map I could. He's up in Samaria, which is kind of towards the top of that picture. It's in the north. And he's told to go down past Jerusalem to the south, a road that would bring him to Gaza. That's in the bottom left of the picture. So here's this desert road that Philip is led to by the spirit. So, just kind of give the picture. He's gone all the way from Jerusalem up to Samaria because of persecution. He's sharing the gospel there. And now the spirit decides to guide him away from where all this ministry is happening to a particular place and to a particular person. Spirit leads him away from much ministry to reach one person. This was a divine encounter. God wanted Philip to reach this person because the gospel is about to go through a new group of people, cross a new barrier. So the spirit tells him through an angel to go to this place. This is where he'll meet this person. But then the spirit actually tells him what to do. Verse 29, "The spirit said to Philip, Go over and join this chariot."

Now, I know what you're thinking. If the spirit was to be so clear with me to tell me where to go and what exactly to do, then I would obey. But the spirit's never been this clear with me, and so it just makes it really hard. Again, this is a unique story. I'm not saying this happens all the time. But I do think the Holy Spirit is still alive. He's still active. I do think he's still guiding us. I think so many times he's speaking to us, and we're just not listening. I mean, maybe it's not so clear as to where exactly, as if he wants us to stand at this intersection or meet this person or do this exact thing. But sometimes I do believe he is guiding, and maybe we just missed him.

I mentioned last week, as we ended our series on thinking about being witnesses in our Jerusalem, on continuing steadfastly in prayer. But sometimes when we pray, I think it alerts us to what the spirit is doing, what he's calling us to. I think there are times that we miss the prompting of the Holy Spirit because we do not listen. We do not take the time to pray. Would you take the time this week to just spend a few moments in prayer, asking the Spirit, "God, where do you want to lead me? Where are you opening a door that I can walk through?" I love when I talk to people and they tell me, "I really felt like God was leading me to this place." Not because I think we always get it exactly right, but because I love that people are seeking to listen to God. I love when somebody says, "I felt like God was telling me to talk to this person." Not because that's infallible, sometimes you might have gotten it wrong. But at least love that we're seeking to talk to people about God.

Would you just try to listen to the Spirit some more this week? Think about what he is calling you to, who he is calling you to, where is he opening the door? Would you listen to the guiding Spirit, and then would you be willing to walk through that door? So here's the second part. I think we've totally lost the screens at this point, so you've got to really pay attention. The second part, after the guiding Spirit, is the willing servant. There's a Spirit who guides, who leads Philip to a place and to an encounter, but then there has to be a willing person to participate in this. Philip is the willing servant. We saw Philip willing back in Acts chapter 6. He was willing to serve tables at the church. There's a group of widows being neglected, and Philip was one of the people they appointed to take care of these widows who were in need.

We saw Philip in Acts chapter 8 willing to serve Samaritans. He was healing them, he was ministering to them, he was sharing the gospel with them. Now, here is Philip, again, ready and willing to serve. Think about the calling that's placed on his life. He is told to go from this place where he's doing all sorts of ministry to this new place, a desert road. Seems to be out of the way for him, but yet, not knowing where he's going or who he's going to meet, he finds this interaction because he was willing. It says, "When the Spirit tells him to go to this desert road, he rose and went." To me, Philip is like the antithesis of Jonah. Remember when God called Jonah? Jonah rose and went the opposite direction. Like he ran from God. He did not want to be a part of what God was doing, of reaching those people. Philip didn't know who he was going to be called to reach, but he was willing to go.

Do you have that type of willingness in your life? Let me ask you this. Are you interruptible? Like is your schedule set up in such a way that the Spirit, even if he did tell you to go somewhere, you wouldn't have the time to listen to him? Is your budget set up in such a way that even if God told you to give some more, you wouldn't be able to hear him because you've already made your plans? Philip is willing to listen to the Spirit and he responds in obedience. Is this true of us? What if God is calling you to change something about your schedule so that you've got more time to make him known to people, to serve him? Would you be willing to do that? What if God was telling you to redo something the way you

handle your finances so that you've got more opportunity to be generous with those who are in need? Would you be willing to do that? Philip here is willing to take this opportunity that God has given him. He goes to the place where he's told and then the Spirit tells him, "Go up to this chariot." It says in verse 30, "So Philip ran to him, heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

When it says Philip ran to this chariot, I think it's because the chariot was moving and he had to physically run to catch up. Now probably the chariot wasn't flying down the road. It doesn't seem like this Ethiopian was on some quest that he's trying to get there in a hurry. It's probably like the oxen or whatever is pulling him. It's on like a very slow pace. But still Philip's got to do something kind of awkward. He's got to kind of jog around inside this chariot and say like, "Hey, do you understand what you are reading?" Here's a man that probably looks nothing like Philip. Here's a man with status and wealth, probably no shared background, but Philip is willing to listen to the Spirit. He's willing to listen to this man. He hears that this man is reading from the Bible, from the prophet Isaiah. He's able to just engage him. Are you willing to do that?

Now listen, maybe you're not the most outgoing person. You think I could never just strike up conversation with someone like that. I can relate. I feel like I struggle in a similar way to just jump in on a conversation with somebody, kind of butt in when they just seem to be reading to themselves. Who am I to just ask them if they can understand what they're reading? But when the Spirit prompts you, it's not just a matter of personality or gifting. Oh, is this something you're comfortable with? It's a matter of obedience. God told Philip to go and to engage this man, the chariot, and so Philip did it. If you'll listen to the Spirit and he calls you to do something, you can't just brush it off because you're not comfortable with it. This is not something you're used to doing. We've got to be obedient to what the Spirit is calling us to do. Maybe just start like Philip and just ask questions. Just be curious. Don't feel like you need to show up with the right answer. Just try to understand somebody. What are they reading? What do they believe? What are they walking through? Just ask questions. Get to know the person. Maybe you'll find that God's opening a door for you.

Probably not every time. Sometimes you ask questions and the conversation falls flat. There'll be times when you engage somebody and it doesn't lead to a gospel conversation. But I can guarantee you there'll be times when it does. Like me with the solarium cards, there'll be times when it's just clear that God's opening a door because he's leading someone to seek him. That's the third part of our story. You've got the Spirit who guides. You've got this willing servant of Philip. And then third, you've got the humble seeker. Third part of our story is this humble seeker. I mentioned earlier that the Spirit was guiding Philip to this encounter, but that's not where the Spirit's guidance stopped. Philip was guiding this Ethiopian man to be seeking the truth. In fact, it's clear that the Spirit had been guiding this man for a long time. We read in verse 27, 28, "As he rose and went, there was an Ethiopian, a eunuch, a court official of Candace, the queen of the Ethiopians, who was in charge of all her treasure. He had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning, seated in his chariot, and was reading the prophet Isaiah."

So we're told that this man's an Ethiopian. Now, most likely in this time, it's not talking about the exact country of Ethiopia that we would have today. The region of Ethiopia at this time was probably a little north of that, probably where Sudan is today. You've got this man who's from North Africa, probably a black-skinned man, looking very different from Philip, riding in his chariot. Now, he's gone all the way to Jerusalem to worship God. So we know that he has been seeking this God of Israel for a long time. The Spirit has been preparing this man's heart for a while. We're told that he is the chief treasurer, the queen of Ethiopia. What that means is he is the CFO of his whole nation. I mean, he has got a position of power. He's got influence. He's got money. He's got a scroll of Isaiah.

I don't know if you know this, but I don't think there was lots of those just floating around back then. Like, they probably had them in synagogues, but I don't know how many people own scrolls of Isaiah personally. This man probably has lots of means, lots of resources, lots of wealth. We're told that he's a eunuch. That's probably because of his high position in the queen's place. A eunuch means that he's not able to have children. That's probably something that was done to him to make sure he didn't try to steal the throne, have some line of his own take over Ethiopia. And as this man is reading the Bible, Philip comes and he asks him, "Do you need some help understanding?" That's kind of a presumptuous question. Think about how this man could have responded. "No, actually, I don't need any help. I haven't gotten to where I am in my position of power without being smart. I can figure this out on my own." He could have said, "Listen, I'm in a chariot. You're walking. I don't listen to people who aren't in chariots."

But Philip asked him, "Do you need help understanding what you're reading?" And listen to this humility of this man. He said, "How can I unless someone guides me?" And he invited Philip to come and to sit with him. See the humility of this Ethiopian man, traveling all the way to Jerusalem to worship the God of Israel, reading through the prophet Isaiah, seeking to understand. Now, this divine encounter, man shows up, asks him, "Do you understand?" He said, "Well, how can I unless you help me? Get in the chariot with me. Help me understand." Listen, I'll tell you, I'm often impressed with the humility of people who aren't Christians, who come to church and be willing to listen to a sermon. I know I'm not that good of a speaker, that you're just going to be drawn to want to listen to me for 30 minutes or so. I mean, the Spirit must be doing something in your life to make you humble enough to come and to listen to something you're not sure you believe.

Man, if you're here today and you're not a Christian, I just want to commend you for that. Thank you for being just humble enough to come and to listen to what God's word has to say. I pray that you would have an experience like this man did, that because you're humble enough to hear what God's word has to say, and you're maybe humble enough to consider someone helping you understand it, that it would lead you to the message of the Bible. The message of the Bible is the message of the Savior, and that's the fourth part of our story. The Spirit guides Philip because Philip is a willing servant. He follows. He follows the Spirit to a man that the Spirit has been preparing, a man who is humble enough to say, "Why don't you get in the chariot and help me understand what I am reading?" What is he reading? Well, he's reading from the prophet Isaiah.

I don't think it's any coincidence as to what he was reading. Isaiah's a long book. It must have been a very long scroll. And he comes to this part that is a prophecy. Listen to the words that he was reading. It says in verse 32, "Now the passage of Scripture that he was reading was this, like a sheep he was led to the slaughter, and like a lamb before its shearer is silent. So he opens not his mouth. In his humiliation, justice was denied him, who can describe his generation, for his life is taken away from the earth." Now, if you're familiar with the Bible at all, you might recognize this prophecy. These are some well-known words from the Old Testament if you've been around church before. This is a prophecy that Christians now understand to be applying to Jesus and his sacrifice. But at this time, there was actually a debate about who is this prophecy speaking about. Some people thought maybe it was about the coming Messiah, but some people thought it wasn't about the Messiah at all. Some people thought maybe it's about Isaiah. Some people thought it was maybe about the nation of Israel, who's often described as a servant of the Lord. So when this man asks Philip, "Who is this passage talking about?" The prophet or another, he's asking a legitimate question that many people were debating in the day.

But he's probably also asking a very personal question. Think about this prophecy, the words that we just read, how they might hit this man who is a eunuch. This man who's a eunuch reads a prophecy about a man who is going to be slaughtered and humiliated. We read that his life is taken from the earth, and it says, "Who can describe his generation?" What that probably means is he has no descendants. There's not going to be any generations after the suffering servant. He's got no kids, no offspring, and his life is taken from the earth. Do you think that might resonate with a man who's a eunuch? And here's a man with all sorts of power and wealth and position, but yet, he recognizes he's not going to be able to have children. He's not going to be able to leave a family line. When his life is taken from the earth, he is going to be left without a generation after him, just like this man he's reading about.

When he asks, "Who is this man?" I think he's asking a personal question because he feels like he can relate to what is being described there in Isaiah 53. And I don't think this is the first time he's reading it, as if he's just skimming through Isaiah and just happens to come to this part. I think this was something he was probably reading over and over, seeking to understand. And that means he probably read the words that were shortly after where Luke stopped quoting. Isaiah 53.10 says this, "Yet it was the will of the Lord to crush him. He has put him to grief. When his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring. He shall prolong his days. The will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand." Isn't that interesting? How does a man who his life is taken from the earth, how has his days prolonged? How does a man who doesn't leave any generations behind, how does he see his offspring?

What this Ethiopian eunuch is seeing is that there's a man who can identify with him in his pain and his brokenness, but is also a man that can give him hope. What is this prophecy speaking about? And Luke tells us, in verse 35, "Philip

opened his mouth, and beginning with the scripture, and he told him the good news about Jesus. He told him that this prophecy was true and that it had been fulfilled, that there was a man named Jesus from Nazareth, that he could identify with this Ethiopian eunuch in his pain, in his greatest longing, in his greatest need. That like this man, he was killed without having any descendants, without having any children. And yet, he rose from the dead, and now sees his children as they come to faith." You see what the good news tells us of Jesus, it tells us that Jesus, in his death, meets each one of us, in our brokenness, in our hurting, in our needs that we can't meet on our own. This man was powerful, he had money, but there was something in his life that was still missing.

Same is true for each one of us. Whether it's choices that we've made or things that have been done to us, all of us find ourselves in a position of having needs that we can't meet on our own, areas of longing that we can't satisfy, hopes that feel dashed and unfulfilled. And there is a man who died on the cross to meet you in that very place. He took on your sin, he took on your shame, he took on your brokenness. And when he rose from the dead, he did so to give you hope that that need can be met, that longing can be satisfied, that brokenness can be healed. See, because this Ethiopian eunuch was humble enough to listen to the Word of God, listen to a person explain it to him, he found the hope that is in Jesus Christ.

Would you be willing to hear that message today? If you're here this morning, you're not a Christian, I'm just so impressed that you're here, your humility to just listen to what Christians believe. I pray that it would not just be a humility to listen, but I pray it would lead you to find hope in Jesus. Would we be people like Philip who are willing to open our mouth and tell of the good news of Jesus? Do we believe that this message still meets people in their greatest longings, in their greatest hurts? Do we believe it still gives people a hope that they can't find on their own? Are we willing to share this? Are we willing to use the Word of God? I mean, it's the Scripture that points this man to Jesus. So many times I think we as Christians today are somewhat ashamed of the Bible. We're trying to talk about things other than the Bible because of some parts in here that we think are going to hit people the wrong way.

The Word of God still meets people where they are, it still changes their lives. I could speak about people that I know here in California who said that they just met God, and came to faith in Jesus simply by sitting in their room and reading the Bible. I could tell you stories of people in different parts of the world who say their whole goal is just to try to get Muslims to read the Bible with them. Because what they've seen is that the Word of God is still powerful. It's still changing lives. Will we believe that? Will we, like Philip, just open up our mouths and tell people the message of the Savior? Philip explains the gospel to this man. This man believes. And then it's time for him to obey because he has been saved. This is the last part of our story, and that is the obedience from salvation.

Spirit guides this willing servant to meet this humble seeker. He proclaims the message of the Savior, and that leads to salvation, to an act of obedience. So far throughout the book of Acts, we've seen that when people believe in Jesus, the natural response is to be baptized. Acts chapter 2, Pentecost, Peter is preaching the gospel. People say, "What must we do to be saved?" He says, "Repent, believe, and be baptized in the name of Lord Jesus." Baptism is this next act. In Acts chapter 8, as the gospel is going out into Samaria and Philip's preaching there, it says that many believed and were baptized. Baptism follows salvation. Same thing that happens here. Verse 36, "As they were going along the road, they came to some water, and the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What prevents me from being baptized?' And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip in the eunuch, and he baptized him."

Don't you just love this man's question? What's stopping me from getting baptized? This is an act of obedience. What he is saying here is that his hope is not in himself and his money, his power. His hope is in Jesus. What he is doing is he gets baptized as he is saying his allegiance isn't actually to Queen Candace or anybody else, it is to King Jesus. This is a powerful act for him to be baptized. It's the first thing that Jesus tells us to do when we go and make disciples. As people believe, they profess faith in Jesus. They respond with this obedience of being baptized. Now notice I said it's an obedience from salvation. It's not an obedience for salvation. This Ethiopian eunuch was saved whenever he believed in the good news about Jesus. But how does he respond to that with obedience? Jesus said, "Be baptized." And so that is what he does. This humble seeker has become an obedient believer in Jesus. He is now baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus, professing his hope and his allegiance to Jesus.

Now I know what you're thinking. Well, again, this is just Philip and this man. Sometimes people, they want to put off baptism because they're afraid of getting up in front of a lot of people. They say, "Listen, this is just Philip and one man. Pastor, why don't we just go find a place and you just baptize me? I don't have to be around a lot of people." Well, first of all, you don't know who's passing by on this road as this happens. But secondly, I just think it's such a beautiful picture that here is Philip. Here's an Ethiopian. They probably look so different. They come from such different places. They have such different backgrounds, different economic statuses. And yet they're in the water together. Why? Because when you trust in Jesus, you're not just brought into communion with God, but also with other believers. I love when someone is baptized here at our church, the way that our church family cheers them on and welcomes them into the family. What we are saying is that you are not just baptized to be in a relationship with God, but in a relationship with us as well. You are now part of this community.

I love that our baptisms are public before people so that we might identify with each other. This is what we do when we are baptized. The question shouldn't be, "Do I have to get baptized?" It should be, "What's stopping me from getting baptized?" I think the same is true as we come to the table. The Lord's Supper is an act of obedience from salvation. We don't come to the table believing that this is what saves us. No, but we've been told by Jesus to do this often in remembrance of Him. What we are saying is that our hope is not in and of ourselves. It is in Jesus Christ that in His broken body and His shed blood, He met us in our deepest needs, our greatest hurts. When He rose from the dead, He gave us hope. Those longings can be fulfilled. There can be healing in every part of our lives. We come to the table not just to go through the motions, but to celebrate that we are in communion with God and with each other. So this morning I pray that as you come to the table, one, I hope that you'll make it personal.

I hope you'll think about what is your greatest need? How has Jesus and His death met you right there? Where's your greatest hurt? How has Jesus and His sacrifice come to you in that place? How has His resurrection given you hope? How has the new life in Him given you an ability to walk in a new way? Consider that and then come to the table with your brothers and sisters and celebrate that we have been brought into the family of God by His grace. Then go out from here and share this message with others.