

We're going to be in Ephesians chapter two this morning, verses 11 through 12. Pastor Spencer covered the first part of the chapter last week. And as we pick up here, I just want to give you this greeting. It has now become one of my favorite verses and a greeting for just every service. Grace, mercy and peace will be with you from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of the Father, in truth and love. That is from two John, the first chapter, which is only one, and the third verse. And we studied that book before we left towards the end of May. And I bring that verse up one because I love it. It always talks about three pillars that we're going to talk about this morning. Grace, mercy, and. And peace. And these three pillars are found throughout the Gospel of Ephesians, but especially here in Ephesians chapter two. And Paul always references these three things. If you open any of his epistles and read in the first one to seven verses, he will mention grace and mercy or grace, mercy and peace, or grace and peace. And then he closes them with grace and peace. John opened his epistles with grace, mercy and peace. And so how important they are. And we saw last week God's mercy not giving us what we deserve in verse four, but God, who is rich in mercy, we saw his mercy. And Pastor Spencer did a great job of defining what mercy is. And then we see God's grace. It is because of God's grace in verse eight that we have been saved through, through faith, God's unmerited favor giving us what we don't deserve. And this morning we're going to see God's peace through Jesus Christ. See, salvation is by faith in the person of Jesus Christ. Faith that Jesus is God revealed in the flesh through the virgin birth. Salvation is by faith in this life, in his life and in his works, his death, his burial, his resurrection and his ascension, and his ever interceding for us in heaven. And we'll see that again this morning throughout this chapter. Ephesians is one of my favorite books, and I love it because. And Paul does this as well. I mean, he does this through many of his books, but he divides the book into two parts. And in Ephesians, the first three chapters are all doctrine. They're teaching. They're telling us who we are, what we have in Christ. It tells us what God has done through Jesus, who we are because of Jesus and what we have because of Jesus. But then the last three chapters are about duty. So doctrine and duty. Duty is our response. I'm not talking about works, because what did Pastor Spencer talk about? What does the verse talk about in verse 9? Not by work of righteousness, which we have done. You see, duty is a response because of the work of Jesus Christ, because of what God has done, because of who we are in Christ, because of everything we have been given. Our response should be certain things. To live a godly life. It's not obligation or works, but a genuine response to God's goodness. So last week in the message Death to Life, we saw what we were before Christ. What were we before Christ? Dead. He says, you were dead. We weren't physically dead. We were spiritually dead. We were apart from God, dead to God and the things of God. Being spiritually dead is separation from God in this life and the next. Romans 12:3 tells us that we have been given a measure of faith. And Pastor Spencer again talked about that last week, how we've been given

this measure of faith. And I love the analogy he used. And he says, what are you doing with that faith? What are we doing with the faith? That measure of faith that God has given us, is it being wasted or is it growing? Are we going deeper into the things of God and growing into those things? And again in verse 19, none of this is by works. It's not by any action that you can do. It's not by anything that we can do. It's not church membership. It's not baptized. If you were baptized as a child, you're not good to go, right? If you've been a church member all of your life, you're not good to go. It is by faith in Jesus Christ. We're going to take communion. It's not in taking communion. It's a response. It's not in giving to charity. It's not even in morality. The only action we can do is to believe in our heart and confess with our mouth that Jesus is saved according to Romans 10, 9, 10. So the first 11 verses dealt with what we were. What was that? Oh, yeah, dead. We were dead. And how by God's grace and mercy, we have been made alive through faith in Jesus. These next 12 verses we're going to cover this morning deal with where we were. We have what we were and where we were in our spiritual dead life. Before Christ, our life was one of chaos and turmoil. But now Jesus brings peace with God and with others. So as we get into this ver. This rest of this chapter, let's stand and read Ephesians 2:11 through the end of the chapter Ephesians 2,11. Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh, who were called uncircumcision by what is called circumcision, made in the flesh by hands, that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus, you who were once far off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in his flesh the enmity that is the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in himself one new man from the two, thus making peace, and that he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. And he came and he preached peace to those who were afar off and to those who were near. For through him we both have access by one spirit to the Father. Now therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. Father, we thank you for the word today. We thank you that Jesus is our peace. We thank you that you have broken down all the walls that separate us from you and from one another. And so, Father, we pray that you'd fill us with your spirit this morning. May we hear from you. May we walk out of these doors different today. And we ask this in Jesus name. Amen. You may be seated. Scripture often compares. Before and after. We'll read verses of what we were, and then we'll read verses of what we are. And that's a before and after. And we see

that in this text throughout the Bible. It's also called out of and into. What we've been taken out of and what we have been placed into. Again, you were dead. God made us alive. Out of and into. We'll see that again throughout this text. Our first point this morning is where we were in verses 11 and 12. We just read that. And it's interesting that in verse 10, Paul explains in the first Excuse me, the first 10 verses, Paul explains salvation for all people. Everybody without Christ is dead and trespasses and sins. But God through Jesus Christ and faith, makes a person alive. Doesn't matter who they are, but in these two verses, Paul references us, the Gentiles, and compares us really to the Jews, which throughout the Old Testament are God's chosen people. Much of the Old Testament is about Israel and the Jews. And so here in verse 11, he says, Therefore remember that you, you Gentiles, once Gentiles in the flesh, who are called uncircumcision by what is called circumcision, made in the flesh by hands. Gentiles were looked down upon by the Jews. They were God's chosen people. And they knew it, and they thought it, and they said it, and they acted that way. They thought they were better than everybody else. Now he talks about the flesh here. He says they Gentiles in the flesh. And he says, made in the flesh by hands. Flesh speaks of the human man in contrast to the spiritual man. And this whole thing about circumcision, we'll just talk about it for a minute. The Jews who were considered circumcision called us Gentiles uncircumcision. And Paul notes that that was made by hands in the flesh. The Jewish circumcision was a sign that they were God's chosen people. But that didn't make them righteous and holy. It just showed who they were. Circumcision had two purposes. Physically, to separate them from other people. It was an identifier. And then second of all, spiritually, as a sign of holiness, they were to be a holy nation. They were to be the avenue that brought faith and Christ to the world. What did he tell Abraham? In you, all the families of the earth would be blessed. But the Jews thought they were a special people, and they were. But circumcision was a sign that they belonged to God first of all, and that they were to be cutting off the flesh in their lives daily and living godly lives. In the analogy of today, we are to be daily cutting off the flesh and living a righteous life before God. And the fact that a Jew had received the physical mark of the covenant of circumcision was no proof that he was a man of faith. It became a very legalistic thing for them. In Romans 2:25, Paul writes, For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law. But if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted circumcision? And will not the physically. Not the physically uncircumcised if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even your written code and circumcision are a transgressor of the law. For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly. Nor is circumcision that which is outward in the flesh. But he is a Jew who is one inwardly. And circumcision is that of the heart in the Spirit, not in the letter, whose praise is not from men, from God. You see, it was to be a sign that they were separated unto God. And we as

believers are. Are to bear that same sign, a separated life unto God. It's not in keeping laws and ordinances and things like that. And so he talks about this right off the bat. He says, you, the Jews misunderstood. They misrepresented themselves. They thought they had an advantage because they were Jews, which is true. But they also thought they were better than the Gentiles, which was false. And how many of us think that we are okay with God because we were born in a Christian family? Or again, we were baptized as an infant, or we're church members, or we're moral. Paul again writes in Romans 3:1,3, what advantage then has the Jew? Or what is the prophet of circumcision? Much in every way, chiefly because to them were committed the oracles of God. You see, the Jewish nation was the avenue to bring Jesus to the rest of the world. But instead of boasting, they were to be a blessing to the Gentiles, and they missed it. And again, we must be careful in thinking that our spiritual position somehow makes us better than others. So I just want to leave you with this thought. Having Christ doesn't make us better. It should make us different. Should make us different in how we live. So he starts off by saying, you know, you were thought of very poorly by the Jews. And in verse 12, he goes on to say, and at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. This verse shows us where we were before salvation and being raised from the dead. This is where really every unsaved person is. And he goes through really a list of, I think about five things. He says, you are without Christ, no hope, lost, no peace, following idols and false worship. And let me tell you, everybody worships something. Everybody worships something. And without Christ, our pursuits are innumerable of what we pursue and what we seek after. He says, you were aliens from the commonwealth. That means without citizenship. You see, they weren't part of the Jewish family. They weren't part of this chosen people. A Gentile could become a proselyte Jew, but he would never be born a Jew. You see, without citizenship, without a country, he says without covenants. God had made many covenants with the Jews. If you read the Old Testament, there's covenant after covenant that God made. And he never made covenants with the Gentiles. The Gentiles were to be blessed by the Jews. But again, that never happened until Christ and Paul going out to the Gentiles. He says, you were without hope. Without Christ leaves us without hope. Philosophies, traditions, religion, all of these things are empty and they cannot help you. Only Christ can help us. Without hope. I often ask the question, if you had to pick one word about the Bible, what would your word be? And everyone will have a different word. Some will say love. Mine is hope. See, this Bible gives me hope. Life in Christ gives me hope. And then he says, you are without God. And let me just say, it doesn't matter how religious you are, it doesn't matter how moral we might be without faith in Christ, we are without God, we're without God. And man has a great history of religion and even morality in some cases. But without Christ, we're without God. It's just then religion, it's just false idols and things

like that. And man's history is not one of worshiping God and then falling away is not one of, excuse me, of worshiping false gods and then finding the one true God. It's. It is rejecting the true and living God and going and following false things, false idols. So that's where we were in a life of chaos and hopelessness, distant and separated. Now let me just say, in Christ there will be trials, there will be pain as disciples. But by our faith in God, it should not be chaotic. Your life should not be one of chaos. As believers, our lives should be a stark different from those who are without. I remember as the years I served as a chaplain with the Valencia County Sheriff's Department. I was in many, many homes after a death had occurred. And you could tell who was with and who was without by the chaos of or the peace that was there. Again, it was still trials, it was still pain. Even in our own life, as you know, we lost our dog. There is still pain, there is still sorrow. But you know what? There's peace and there's hope. Our second point this morning is peace is only available through the peacemaker in verses 13 through through 17. We hear a lot in TV today. Peace through strength. Well, peace comes through the strength of the one who is giving the peace. And the one who's giving us peace is Jesus Christ. Peace is only available through the peacemaker. I mentioned that Scripture often gives us a before and an after, or an out of and into. I was dead, now I'm alive. I was in darkness, now I am in light. I was in anxiety, now I am in peace. And how we move from before to after, or out of one thing to another, is the work of the Trinity in between the before and the after. It's the work of God. It's the work of Jesus. It's the work of the Holy Spirit. Let's look at verse 13, which I am going to title. It is gracious intervention. He says, but now in Christ Jesus. You were once. You once who were afar off, have been brought near by the blood of Christ. This is gracious intervention. I love the buts in the Bible. Now, Pastor Spencer made fun of me last week because he thought I made a slip in quoting a scripture a long time ago. But Psalm 78:39 says he remembered that we are but flesh. No, it says but flesh. But I say we are but flesh. Okay, it's all about how you articulate it. I love the buts in the Bible. What did verse five says? We were dead in trespasses and sins. We were in a life of flesh and lust, fulfilling desires of the flesh. We were by nature children of wrath, just as others. But God. But God intervened, who is rich in mercy because of his great love, which he loved us. And he, those of us that were dead, he made alive in Christ. You see, God intervened. And now we see in this verse where we were who we were. We were without Christ. We were with aliens, strangers without God, without hope, put down by others. But now. But now in Christ Jesus, you see, death to life and peace to chaos, or chaos to peace is all the work of the triune God. Here's the full picture. What we were, what God did, and what we now have. Titus 3:3 8 says, for we ourselves were also once foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving various lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another. So that's what we were before. And then look at this verse, verse four. But then the kindness and the love of God, our Savior toward men appeared, not by works of

righteousness, which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out to us abundantly through Jesus Christ, our Savior, that having been justified by his grace, we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life. This is a faithful saying. And these things, I want you to affirm constantly that those who have believed in God should be careful to maintain good works. These things are. Are good and profitable to men. Now, I tried to emphasize several words in reading that. But what does he say? He says, here's who we were. But then God, God our Savior. He appeared. And again, not by works, just like Paul is saying here in Ephesians. Not by works of righteousness we have done, but by his grace and mercy, washing us by the Holy Spirit. God, Holy Spirit, Whom he poured out to us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior. So it says, God our Savior. The Holy Spirit. Jesus our Savior. So I have a question for you. Is God our Savior? Or is Jesus our Savior? Or is it the Holy Spirit? And the answer is yes. Yes, there's one God in three persons. Praise the Lord. Notice we are brought near by the blood of Christ. There's only one way to salvation. That's through Jesus Christ and the blood on the cross. As we get into verse 14 and we see the peacemaker, for He Himself is our peace, who has made both one and has broken down the middle wall of separation. Let me tell you, Jesus is the only one that can bring peace in your life. Jesus is the only avenue of peace. First, he made peace between the Jew and the Gentile. He says he broke down the middle wall of separation and made the 2 1. What he's talking about, he made the Jew and the Gentile one people. He broke down every wall of separation. You see, the Temple had outer walls that the Gentiles could be in, but they couldn't go into the the Temple. They could only be in the outer court. And the Jews could be inside the temple, but only the priests could go into the Holy of Holies. But when Christ died on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn and all the walls were broken down. And now both Jew and Gentile have full access to the throne of God through Jesus Christ. He's broken down every wall, making peace. Second, he. As we get into verse 15. Excuse me, 16. 15 and 16. Christ ends enmity. Enmity is hatred and hostility and animosity and friction. You see, the Jews had a hostility and a friction to the Gentiles. And I wonder sometimes if we don't have a hostility and a friction to the unsaved and to those that are. You know, I gotta be honest here. This isn't in my notes. But you know, sometimes when I watch the news and I hear some people talking about some things, I said, man, they are vile. They are sinners. God should just take them out. You see? Do we have a hostility to or do we pray for God? They need you. They need you. In verse 15, having abolished in his flesh the enmity that is in the law of commandments contained in ordinances, so as to create in himself one new man from the two, thus making peace. See, Christ, Death fulfilled the law and its requirements. Both Jew and Gentiles now lived by grace and not by law. The law was good. Don't get me wrong. The law of God is perfect. But it is impossible for us to keep the law. And the law was, the Bible tells us, was our schoolmaster to bring us to Christ and say, I can't

keep the law. I need. I need help. And Jesus enters the scene. It was to show our need for a savior that could make us righteous. Faith in Jesus is what makes us righteous. Christ ended the enmity between the Jew and the Gentile, making them one, both coming through Jesus Christ. You see, peace happened by Christ making one new man, which is now what is called the church. Not the church, Christian fellowship, but the church of God throughout the world. In verse 14, we see 16. Excuse me. More importantly, we see that Jesus ended the enmity between man and God. What does it say? And he. That he might reconcile them both to God in one body through the cross, through thereby putting to death the enmity. You see, Christ came to reconcile both Jew and Gentile, male, female, bond and free, rich and poor, healthy, sick, all men to God. And when I say men, I mean men and women, all people. You see, he came to reconcile all of us to God. He came to make one body, the church, the body of believers. It's no longer Jews. We don't try to become a Jew. We've become part of the church of Jesus Christ. And notice where peace comes from. It comes through the cross. Peace is through the cross. There's only one way to be reconciled again. What did verse 13 say? But now in Christ and in his blood, that's the only way of reconciliation. And Christ put enmity to death. Then why is there so much of it that exists? You know, we're living in a world where there's a lot of enmity going on. You see, the death of enmity here is between God and man. And it's only through faith in the work of Jesus. And there's much enmity in the world because man refuses to submit to God. You see, if there is turmoil and chaos in your life and an enmity with others, it's because you're not submitting to God and His Word. I heard while we were off at another church, I heard it said that when God speaks to us, there's two words, no, Lord, and we have to cross out one of them. When God speaks to us, we either have to say Lord and cross out no, or we have to cross out Lord and say no. Which is it that we do? We see we need to be saying, yes, Lord, you're the Lord. You're the King of kings and the Lord of Lords. So the truth is, when you are at enmity with God, you will be at enmity with everyone else as well. And let me just say, if you're at enmity with God, your life is going to be a life of chaos and struggle and pain. Moving on to verse 17. And he came and he preached peace to you who were afar off and to those who were who were near. You see, the message of peace is for everyone. Christ message is for all, all to have peace with God. It's the same message for everyone. John 1:12. You remember that from our study of John, right? In the first chapter, John, verse chapter one, verse 12 says, but as many as received him, to them he gave the right to become the children of God to those who believe in his name, who are born not of blood, nor by the will of the flesh, nor the will of man, but by God born of God, when we receive him, he gives us the right, the privilege to be a child of God. We were once far and now we've been brought near. We've been brought into the family of God. And it says there that even those who thought they were near, he brings them in as well. There is nothing that will take you from chaos to peace like knowing you have peace with God. You've been reconciled through faith in the cross. And

then notice, he says, you will have peace with others. As disciples, we are to be peacemakers. Matthew 5, 9 says, Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called sons of God. A lot of times we don't have peace in our lives because we are not leaning on the One who can give peace. And we are to be peacemakers. We're to be peaceful. Peaceful in our families, in our homes and our marriages, and in the church. As Christ has made peace for us, we should be peacemakers with others. Being a peacemaker requires a heart change. I find a lot of times what happens, we fight. We make up and we fight again, right? We fight. We don't make up. And we fight some more, and then we fight again. Fights really are a lack of peace. And they come from our own selfish desires. I like what it says in James, Chapter four, verse one. He says, where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure, that war in your members? You see, we fight in order to convince others of our way that it's right. I am right, you are wrong. You need to do it my way. But being a peacemaker is allowing God to work in you and to change your heart. My wife and I. My wife is such a blessing. But from the very beginning we said, okay, if there's a conflict, we're going to pray. And you know what we're going to do? I'm going to pray for God to change my heart. I don't pray for God to change her heart. I change for God to change my heart. And as we both pray to change our heart, then God moves in our hearts and he gives us peace and we get an answer and we can move on. So pray and ask the Holy Spirit to change your heart and the heart of the other party. And guess what? Show grace. I love what Matthew Henry. He was a pastor in the 1500s. Matthew Henry said, there is no peace without grace. So if there's no peace, think of grace. Our last point this morning is where we are through Christ. So we saw where we were. We have seen what Christ did. He brought peace. And now where we are. Verse 18. For through him we are both. We both have access by one Spirit to. To the Father. You see, through Jesus Christ, we have access to Christ, to God, through the same Holy Spirit that works in all of us. It is the Holy Spirit that brings peace and helps us to be peacemakers. Verse 19. Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of. Of the household of God. Notice the contrast. Compare it with verse 12 and verse 19. Where we are now, where we were, we were without Christ, but now with Christ. Before we were aliens and strangers. Verse 19. No longer strangers, but fellow citizens, part of the family. In verse 12, we had no hope. And now we are called to one hope. We'll see this in Ephesians 4. We all are called to the same hope in Christ Jesus. The Bible is full of hope. I love the hope that we find in Scripture. And that's why it's my favorite word. If I had to define the word of God, it's hopeful because it's full of hope for us. As I mentioned before, we lost our daughter. But you know what? I have peace and I have hope because we're going to see her again when we gather around the throne and worship Jesus. Verse 12 says, we were without God. And what do we have now? Access to the father. In verse 18, we have we were without God and now we have full access. Hebrews tells us that we can come boldly

before the throne of grace to find help in time of need. Access to the Father now through Christ. Instead of one nation, we are one family. And every saint, every redeemed one, is part a member of the family of the household of God, the church, all believers, all Bible teaching, churches should act as one family. We are all one family in the household of God. It says there in verse 18, we are the household of God. Saints and members of the household of God. But do we act like it? Well, I don't like that member. That member rubs me a little wrong. Well, that member challenges my faith. That's a good thing. Well, that member hurt me. You know, I don't believe the same as that member. But can we major on the majors and minor on the minors? What? There is one God, there is one Savior, Jesus Christ, There is one Holy Spirit. And being part of the household of God has some responsibilities. Are we doing our part in the household chores? Are we part of the. Of the household? I think being part of the household is. I think it's. And I bring this up a lot. Fellowship, communion, being together as a family. That's why we gather together. And I know it's not always possible, and we welcome those who are watching online. But I encourage you, if you can, to come and be in family, be in communion with one another, helping with the household chores. The body of Christ is a place of giving and serving of other people, not just taking. So the question is, are you contributing to the body or are you sucking from it? Yeah, I use that word in church. I'm sorry. As we move on in verse 20. Having been built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are building or being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit. You see, the church is a building where Christ is the cornerstone, Jesus is the foundation. He said upon this rock, speaking of himself, I will build my church, and the gates of hell will not prevail against it. You see, he is the foundation of the believer. He is the only foundation worth building on. And it's on that foundation that no matter what's going on around us, the earth may shake, the rocks may crumble, the floods may come, the rains may come down, but we're solid upon the rock. Christ Jesus, the only foundation worth being on. First Peter 2, 4, 8, says, Coming to him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up. A spiritual house, a holy priesthood to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore, it is also contained in Scripture. Behold, I lay in Zion a chief cornerstone, elect, precious. And he who believes on him will by no means be put to shame. Therefore, to you who believes he is precious, but to those who are disobedient, the stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone and a stone of stumbling and a rock of offense. They stumble, being disobedient to the word to which they were also appointed. You see, we as believers are on the rock, Christ Jesus. It is a firm foundation. It is a precious stone. Jesus is precious. And if you reject the stone and you get off the stone of Christ and you go your own way, it is a stumbling stone. It

is a life of chaos and not of peace. But when we put our faith and trust in him and we stay there and we trust him, no matter what's going on in our lives, whatever pain and suffering we're going through, we have peace and we recognize how precious Jesus is. Is he precious to you this morning? I challenge you to think about that. What foundation are you standing on? The rock or something else? The foundation of the believer is Christ. Are you on that precious foundation? The foundation of the church is Christ. And are we building on that foundation? As we wrap up in verses 21 and 22? The church is the holy temple. Every believer fitting together becomes the holy temple of the Lord. You see, God no longer dwells in a building. The Jews had a physical temple where God dwelt. He now dwells in the hearts and lives of his children, of his people, those who were near and those who were afar off. He dwells in us, his church. And how is that done? Notice again in verse 18. By one spirit we have access to the Father. And in the end of verse 22, dwelling place of God in the Spirit. I mentioned the three pillars in this chapter. Grace, mercy and peace. And those are all brought about in our lives by the triune God, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. For practical Application. I want to leave you with these things this week as you leave, as you go out. We're going to celebrate communion in a minute, but spend time this week meditating on what God has brought you out of and where he has brought you into and the work that he's done to get you there. Don't dwell on the past. You know what, we've all made mistakes. We've all blown it. As we come before the Lord in communion, we are to cleanse our hearts and minds or to take care of those things where we have blown it. But thank God today for what he's done and what he's going to do. I remember somebody saying, I hope I can get it right. I'm not what I was, and I'm not what I'm gonna be. I'm not where I need to be. I'm not where I'm gonna be. But thank God I'm not where I was. You know, every one of us in this room today can thank God we're not where we were. And that was a life of chaos, and now we have a life of peace. Speaking of peace, are you a preacher of peace to those who are far off? And I would ask that you just ask the Lord to bring one person in your life today to minister to them, just to communicate what God has done in your life and the peace that he's brought to you. And then I would challenge you. Are you involved in the household of God? As we've been away and I've been praying, I'm seeking God for more ways to get every one of you involved in the work of the Lord here at Christian Fellowship and in our community. And so, you know, looking for ways to be involved, to fit together in the temple of God. Amen. Amen. We're going to take communion at this time. Debbie's going to come up and play some music, lead us in worship. One of those things, I guess. The whole team, actually. And while I do that, I have a couple men. I'm going to ask these men to come up and they're going to pass out the elements. Go ahead, guys. Come on up and grab those. And instead of you coming up today, these wonderful, handsome men are going to deliver the communion elements to you. And as we worship, take some time to remember what God and Jesus has done for you. Death to life, chaos to peace. Remind yourself of where you

were, what he has done, and where you are now because of Christ. And then again, repent of sin or areas that you may not have surrendered properly. So that you can move forward in your faith. Amen. Let's worship. Desire to honor you, Lord, with all my heart I worship you. All I have within me I give you praise. All that I adore is in you, Lord. I give you my heart, I give you my soul. I live for you alone. Every breath that I take, Every moment I'm awake, Lord, have your way with me. This is my desire to honor you, Lord. With all my heart I worship you. You. All I have within me I give you praise. All that I adore is in you. You, Lord. I give you my heart, I give you my soul. I live for you alone. Every breath that I take. Every moment I'm awake. I forgot to tell you two things. One, wait for one another, but I think you knew that already. And two, we have new bread and it's gluten free. So if you have gluten issues, you can know that. Now, we're on board our communion this morning. And what I want to emphasize is right out of our text today in verses 13 through 16, that but now in Christ Jesus, you who once were afar off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. That's why we celebrate the blood of Christ is because we were once far off and he has brought us near. What a blessing. That's what this cup represents. The blood of Christ that was shed for us, that was given upon the cross that he might make peace between us and God, as it says in verse 16, that he might reconcile us to God in one body through the cross, thereby putting to death the enmity. See, he was put to death so we could be brought to life. And that's why we celebrate communion. And he has made peace with God for us. In Matthew, at the passover meal that Jesus partook of with his disciples right before going to the cross and making peace with God and bringing us who were afar off. He took the bread and he blessed it and he said, take, eat, this is my body. And then he took the cup and he gave thanks and he gave it to them, saying, drink from it, all of you. For this is my blood of the new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Remember, all the covenants were for the Israelites. Guess what this covenant is for all of us. What? A great covenant, right? This is a new covenant which is shed for many for the remission of sins. Father, we thank you for this cup that represents the shed blood of Christ on the cross for my sin. And this bread that represents your body that was broken on the Cross that was pierced for my transgressions, that was that died for my sin took my place, thereby making peace between me and you. God thank you for it. And we ask this that you bless it now in the mighty name of Jesus. Amen. Let us eat and drink together. He says in verse 29. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink of it new with you in my Father's kingdom. There is a day coming soon where we are going to be in heaven with Jesus. He is coming back for us. And we will once again with Jesus partake of this bread and cup. What a blessing. And it says. And when they had sung a hymn, they went out of the Mount of Olives. This week, as I have been preparing for this service, there is one song that has come to mind. My good friend Sal is going to come up here and help me lead us in this song. And the song is Great Is Thy Faithfulness. Now, I love the

hymns, and the hymns have such a great message. I'm going to tell you about this hymn. It's just going to take a second. But this hymn, Great Is Thy Faithfulness, was written by Thomas Chisholm in 1923. It is 102 years old. He was born in 1866. And at the young age of 27 he put his faith in Jesus Christ. And guess what? After he did that, he became very ill. He became a Methodist preacher, but he became very ill and his illness led to severe financial stress. And it was in after years of sickness and financial stress, he sat down and he wrote this song. Great Is Thy Faithfulness. And the third verse, which we're going to sing, we're going to sing the first and the third verse along with the chorus. The third verse really talks about what this communion, what this day was all about. Let's stand together and sing. Sal, come up here and join me. He's got to give me the pitch. Great is thy faithfulness O God, my Father There is no shadow of turning with Thee Thou changest not thy compassions they fail not as thou hast been Thou forever will be Great is thy faithfulness Great is thy faithfulness Morning by morning new mercies I see All I have needed thy and hath provided Great is thy faithfulness Lord unto me Pardon for sin and the peace that endureth Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide Strength for today and bright hope for Tomorrow Grace with 10,000 beside great is thy faithfulness Great is thy faithfulness Morning by morning new mercies I see I have needed thy hand have provided is Great is thy faithfulness Great is thy faithfulness, Lord Is thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me as you go out today, remember pardon for sin and peace that endureth. Blessings are yours and 10,000 more go out and be blessed in the Lord.