

2026-10-04 - God's Presence on the Pilgrimage to Glory

Exodus 13 vs 17-22

Good morning, church. It is a joy and a pleasure to be here with you this morning. As we begin our worship service, we will begin with our call to worship. So if you please rise as you are able for the reading of God's word. Our text this morning will be Psalm 16. Hear now the word of the living God.

A Mikhtam of David. "Preserve me, O God, for I take refuge in You. I said to the Lord, 'You are my Lord; I have no good besides You.' As to the saints who are in the earth, they are the majestic ones in whom is all my delight. The sorrows of those who have bartered for another god will be multiplied. I shall not pour out their drink offerings of blood, nor will I take their names upon my lips. The Lord is the portion of my inheritance and my cup; You support my lot. The lines have fallen to me in pleasant places; indeed, my heritage is beautiful to me. I will bless the Lord who has counseled me; indeed, my mind instructs me in the night. I have set the Lord continually before me; because He is at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my glory rejoices; my flesh also will dwell securely. For You will not abandon my soul to Sheol; nor will You allow Your Holy One to undergo decay. You will make known to me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; in Your right hand there are pleasures forevermore." (Psalm 16:1–11).

This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Pastoral Prayer

Please join me now in our pastoral prayer as we come to our living God.

Father in heaven, we do praise You and acknowledge that Christ is indeed worthy. And that God, as we ran our hell-bound race, indifferent to the cost, You looked upon our helpless state and led us to the cross. And God, we beheld Your love displayed: Christ suffered in our place, and He bore the wrath reserved for us, so now all we know is grace. God, we praise You, and we know that all we have is Christ.

So Father, we renounce this morning any form of self-salvation. God, we did not seek after You. We had no inclination toward the way of salvation. For Father, we ran the race toward hell, and we did not take the wages of our sins seriously, and we were entirely indifferent to the cost. And all our thoughts were wrapped up with the world and trivialities, and we simply did not care about how much sin offends the holy and righteous God. We were in this dead and helpless state, God, and You owed us nothing and did not have to intervene. But we praise You, Father, that You regenerated our hearts and opened our hearts to respond to the gospel. God, we know it was not us; it was Your work that brought us to Christ, and You did not lead us to our own works. You don't tell us to work hard and to earn our salvation. God, You lead us to the cross, where we see Christ dying in our place and bearing the wrath we deserve. It was all Him who bought us salvation. Christ alone is our salvation. It is entirely Christ alone.

And so God, we reject this morning works-righteousness. We reject false religions that diminish the cross of Christ. We reject any reason to boast of our salvation, and we say, "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to the cross I cling." God, we bring nothing to You except our filthy rags and our unregenerate hearts and our cold indifference. God, we have nothing to offer You. We were impoverished; we were bankrupt; we were dead. God, what could we do to contribute to our salvation? God, all we have is Christ; all we have is Your grace. So we pray, Father, that You would forgive us for robbing any glory from Christ in the work of salvation. Forgive us even as Christians for not continually relying upon Christ in our sanctification and our growth in holiness and in bearing the fruit of good deeds. God, we still need Christ every day. God, yes, You have given us the Holy Spirit. You have made us born again. But God, forgive us if we rely upon ourselves to do anything good in this life. God, we cast ourselves upon Christ again and again and again, and we know we can find grace to help in time of need again and again in Christ.

So God, we pray for the unbeliever then this morning—any child or teenager or parent or friend, coworker, neighbor, someone who simply came by themselves. God, we see them running their hell-bound race, completely indifferent and nonchalant as they laugh and smile over the pit of hell. God, we pray that You would look upon their helpless state and lead them to the cross, that You would slay any self-righteousness, any sense that they can cover for their sin or work their way to Your favor, and that they would rely upon Christ alone for salvation.

We also pray for other local churches in the area, and we ask that You save souls this very morning. We lift up to You Golf Road Baptist Church in Des Plaines and Lagos Baptist Ministries in Niles and ask that the word of God would continually be preached with unction and faithfulness and that the Holy Spirit would pierce the hearts of men and women in their congregation so that Christ's work on the cross would be glorified.

We pray also for our local magistrates, and we lift up to You this morning the 2026 midterm election. And God, we do lament the incompetence and sinfulness of Governor Pritzker, who justifies the slaughter of innocent human lives in the womb, who celebrates the Creator-denying and demonic ideology of the

LGBTQ+ people, and who fully supports the society-corroding ideology of critical race theory. God, our state deserves nothing good from You, but we do pray for a new governor, and we ask that You remove the scales from Pritzker's eyes and bring him to saving faith in Christ.

We also look up to You the nations. God, Christ said when He is lifted up from the earth, He would draw all people to Himself. So we pray that You would draw people to Himself from all nations. And we continue to pray for Venezuela and its post-Nicolas Maduro world. We know the economic crisis that they have suffered, the food shortages, the inflation, the lack of drinking water, and even electricity at times, and we pray that You would give them stability. But more than that, we pray that You would draw sinners to Christ through repentance and faith. And we pray, Father, for laborers in the field there in Venezuela. We think of David Arajo and John Munoz and Johan Rosales and Luis Munoz and Nestor Juarez and Plinio Orozco, who serve God with Harpan Missionary Society. God, we ask that You do a mighty work in Venezuela through these men.

Lastly, Lord, we do look back to our congregation and pray that You would save crumbling marriages, reconcile broken friendships, provide godly spouses for those seeking to be married, that You raise up the next generation of faithful Christians among our children, that You would open the wombs of those seeking to have children, that You would heal the sick and the injured, and that You would glorify Yourself in the preaching of Your word. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen. Amen.

Worship in the Word

Grace and peace from God our Father and Jesus Christ, our risen, ruling, one-day-soon-returning Lord, the only Savior. Brothers and sisters in Christ and friends, it is good to be with you on this Lord's Day. My name is Brandon. If I've not had the joy of meeting you yet, I'd love to meet you in the lobby afterwards. I serve as one of the elders at Christ the King Reformed Baptist Church and the senior pastor there. It's my true blessing and joy to welcome you to Cornerstone and Christ the King as we are combining our services these next few months together with the prayerful hopes of the Lord perhaps doing more amongst our congregations long-term for the praise of His glory.

One wonderful opportunity we have on this Lord's Day is to hear from a dear brother in Christ who is training for pastoral ministry. He's in his last year of seminary at Mid-America Reformed Seminary, and he is a dear brother in Christ, and his wife, sister Emily, is a dear sister in Christ. They came to our church while they were still students at Moody and not even married at the time, just courting together. And it was a great joy and delight to have them come and join us and just be so hungry for the word. And we just have been so blessed by both of them. We thank the Lord for both of you so much, Jared and Emily. You guys have been such an encouragement to us. They were not with us this summer, though, because Jared was actually up in Rockford at Grace Reformed Baptist Church with our brother, pastor, friend J.T. Dales, and he was doing and fulfilling his second pastoral apprenticeship up there. So a number of you have not had the opportunity or privilege to meet them yet, but please do greet them. You're going to be encouraged by this brother today as he opens up God's word momentarily for us here.

In Matthew 9, the Lord Jesus says this. He says, ***"Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. Then He said to His disciples, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest.'"*** (Matthew 9:36–38).

And we have been beseeching as a church family that the Lord would raise up workers for the harvest. And two such workers are our dear brother Jared and dear sister Emily. We thank the Lord for you strongly and are so encouraged by you. And so I'm going to welcome them up now. Let's give them a warm welcome and have our brother Jared come up here. I'm going to pray for both of them, and I want to introduce you to them because you will see them a lot around here, and they're such a core part of Christ the King. And I'm going to pray for them very briefly, and then Jared's going to open up the Scripture and preach the word for us. Let's pray for them.

Father in heaven, I trust You with Jared and Emily Strong. I pray for them in their last year here in Jared's seminary studies. Thank You, God, so much for this dear brother and dear sister. Thank You, God, for the call that You have on their lives and ministry. I pray, Lord, that our local church families at both Cornerstone and Christ the King would encourage, bless, and equip them, Lord, to the praise of Your glory. So thank You, God, so much for the Strong's. We entrust them and their future ministry to You and pray, God, that today, as Brother Jared opens the word, we would be attentive to Your word, that You do a mighty work through Your Spirit to glorify Yourself and make us more like Christ. We pray this in Jesus' name, and all God's people said, Amen.

Exodus 13 will be in verses 17 through 22. Exodus 13:17 through 22. You could rise for the reading of God's word. And again, Exodus 13. And also the sound, if you could lower it a little bit—it's a little loud—that would be appreciated. So again, Exodus 13. Hear now God's word.

"Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, 'The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.' Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt. Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, 'God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you.' Then they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people." (Exodus 13:17–22).

This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. You may be seated.

You now join me in a word of prayer. Great and Heavenly Father, we desire this morning to taste and to see that You are good. Lord, there are some of us here who desire that, Lord, after a week of thirsting and longing for You. God, there are some here who have not tasted that You are good in a while—for months, for years, Lord, even. Lord, there are some who have not tasted that You are good ever in their lives, God. We pray that this morning we would all taste and see that You are good, that we would see You are good in the face of Jesus Christ and His death, His resurrection. We pray and ask for Your Spirit, that You would pour out Your Spirit this morning, that we would see more clearly our Savior and the hope that You give us. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

We are all on a pilgrimage somewhere. We're all on a pilgrimage going somewhere. We have aspirations; we have hopes; we have dreams. Where are you heading this morning? Where are you heading? And how are you getting there? Where are you heading and how are you getting there?

You may have different aspirations and dreams. Maybe you want—you're living your life for fame, building yourself up in the workplace, gaining that higher position, power in your business. Or maybe you're living for pleasure. Or maybe you're living for a sense of belonging in this world, or you're trying to find your identity and you're trying to find belonging in a certain group, so you're heading towards that identity. Maybe you're longing for the ideal family with a big house and many kids, a relaxing retirement where you can travel the world. There are many things that we have hopes for, that we have aspirations for. But the Bible gives us one comprehensive hope to guide our whole lives. The Bible shows us the hope of the new heavens and the new earth. We just sang about it—the hope that Jesus Christ gives us. And this hope is one to govern all of our lives. There's no area of our life that is not to be governed by this hope. Because we're on a pilgrimage, and everything we do in our lives is towards that end of gaining eternal life with Jesus Christ—the new heavens and new earth, which are beyond comprehension; we cannot even begin to imagine.

I think our text sets that before us, but it also answers: How do we get there? How do we get to this grand hope? It both reorients us towards this hope and it tells us how do we get there. So I hope to look at that this morning in three points. But first, our main theme: What is the theme of this sermon? It's this. The main theme: Look in dependence on the triune God alone on your pilgrimage to glory. Look in dependence upon the triune God alone on your pilgrimage to glory. We're going to see this in three points—three reasons why we need to look to God in dependence. We'll go through these three points.

First Point: He Prepares the Route to the Promise

First point: Look in dependence to the triune God alone because,

1. He prepares the route to the promise. (vv 17-18)

He prepares the route to the promise.

Now in the book of Exodus, we've come to really a transition in the book. We've been going through the plagues of God seeking to deliver the people of Israel from their captivity, from their slavery in Egypt. And now we're transitioning. We had in the last few sermons commands on what they're to do as they're going into the land of Canaan. We saw last week that they consecrate the firstborn. And before that we saw that they're to, when they get into the land, practice the Passover—the meal from that which God delivered them from Egypt through the Passover lamb, by which God brought judgment upon the Egyptians and salvation to Israel. But now we're transitioning into Israel's wilderness sojourning. Where are they going? They're going to the promised land. And this is central to the whole of the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible, and to Exodus.

Earlier in Exodus, we're reminded of the promise in 6:4–5, where the Lord says, ***“I also established My covenant with them, to give them the land of Canaan.”*** So it's reminding us that God is bringing them into the land of Canaan, the promised land that God promised to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. And so we're transitioning here as Israel goes into the wilderness, but before that we're given these brief instructions or these brief points.

And so again, the first point we see: three things we need to know as Israel is going into the wilderness. First point: He prepares the route to the promise. And so they know that they've been promised the promised land. How do they get there? Well, if you look in verses 17 through 18, it says this.

“Now when Pharaoh had let the people go, God did not lead them by the way of the land of the Philistines, even though it was near; for God said, ‘The people might change their minds when they see war, and return to Egypt.’ Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea; and the sons of Israel went up in martial array from the land of Egypt.” (Exodus 13:17–18).

And so we see here that God is preparing the route. God is preparing the route, and He doesn't give the quickest way. Some of your Bibles may have maps in the back, and it traces Israel's

journey out of the Exodus into the land of Canaan. And if on the map you have Egypt down here, and the straightest route is up by the way of the sea, straight up to Canaan. But here you have the land of the Philistines, as we see here. A straight route—the quickest route would be to go through the Philistines. We see the Lord says He's not leading them through there because He knows Israel. He knows their weakness. And yet we're going to see the route is rather down and back up. It's twice as far. The route that God leads them is twice as far. It's not the quickest route. But from the route that God gives, I think we learn two things. We learn two things from this.

First, that the Lord is foreshadowing the Exodus that is to come. If you notice in verse 18, it says, ***"Hence God led the people around by the way of the wilderness to the Red Sea."*** If you know the book of Exodus, that is where God leads the people, and Moses splits the waters, and they go through, and the waters crash down upon the Egyptians as they're chasing them with their armies. And so at first, God is foreshadowing the Exodus. He's about to display His glorious power, His majesty, to save Israel in a climactic moment. And so it's foreshadowing that. And we'll get to that later in some sermons in the future. But if God is foreshadowing, He's about to display His awesome power.

But also, we see that God knows His people's weakness. He knows their weakness. And how does He deal with them? He deals with them graciously. He deals with them kindly. Because again, verse 17, ***the Lord says the people might change their minds when they see war.*** Because if they go through the land of the Philistines, they're going to see war, and they're going to be fearful. The Lord knows the people. In the book of Exodus, they've been enslaved. It hasn't been long since they've been enslaved doing hard work. They probably have not yet recovered. They're probably tired. They're probably worn out because of the hard slavery that they were under. And the sight of war is not going to encourage them, but rather it will instill fear. And the Lord knows—the Lord knows the people. And He deals kindly and graciously with them. He knows that even most of these people are going to fall in unbelief later on. And yet still the Lord knows that if He leads them straight to the land of Canaan, that fear will strike them.

As Psalm 103 says, ***He knows that we are dust.*** God knows that we are dust, and ***He does not deal with us according to our iniquities.*** And so too here we see something of the kindness of God—that God is not dealing with Israel, a people who have grumbled against Him, with harshness, but He knows their weakness. He's about to show them His power in delivering them through the Red Sea to strengthen their faith. So the Lord deals kindly with them.

The same for us. How do you think God deals with you? Temptation is when we see trials, when we see suffering, when we see hard things in our life, we think God is dealing harshly with me. We're reminded here: God does not deal harshly unnecessarily with His people. That God knows our weakness. He knows that we are dust. He knows even our sin. As the Bible says, He's not going to lead us into temptation that is more than we can handle. So we learn something about the Lord here—that God is kind. He deals with us graciously, even through heartache, even through trials. That God is dealing graciously with us. He looks upon us in love. He's seeking to strengthen our faith. He knows that we are dust. We need to be reminded of that over and over as we go through our life—that God does not deal harshly with us if we are in Christ, if we are His

sons and His children. We see the kindness of God, His love, His graciousness in the way that He deals with us. Amen. So how do you think God deals with you? He deals kindly; He deals graciously if we are in Christ.

So we see that the Lord prepares the route. He knows what He's doing. He's leading them the long way, and yet God has a purpose. At the end of verse 18, we're shown that the people of Israel went up in martial array—it's a military term—that they as an ordered army are ready to head out further into the wilderness. And yet we know that God is preparing the route. The route is prepared.

Second Point: He Reorients Us Toward the Promise

We have an important point in verse 19. We must look in dependence to the triune God alone because He prepares the route to the promise.

2. He reorients us toward the promise. (vs 19)

So look in dependence to the triune God because He reorients us towards the promise. Look with me at verse 19 in your Bibles. What might seem to be just a brief, unimportant note is really very important for this text.

Verse 19 says, ***"Moses took the bones of Joseph with him, for he had made the sons of Israel solemnly swear, saying, 'God will surely take care of you, and you shall carry my bones from here with you.'"*** (Exodus 13:19).

Why would Moses include this in the text? Why would Moses include to carry the bones of Joseph? Joseph had died years ago. Why would Moses include that they're on this journey into the wilderness, the land of Canaan, that Joseph's bones are going with them? Well, really, this is a central point that comes up again and again in the Pentateuch, in the first five books.

If you think, how does the book of Genesis end? It ends with what we see here. Joseph, we see in Genesis 50:24. It says, ***"Joseph said to his brothers, 'I am about to die, but God will surely take care of you and bring you up from this land to the land which He promised on oath to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.'"*** And it goes on: Joseph makes his brothers of Israel swear that they will take his bones with them. But why does Joseph mention this? Why is Joseph so adamant that his bones go to the promised land when God delivers the people from Egypt? Well, for Joseph, Egypt was not his home. Egypt was not the home of Joseph. Think about all that Joseph had. He was second behind Pharaoh. He had riches. He had all that he could ask for in Egypt. He had pleasure. And yet Joseph did not find his home there. He did not find his home in Egypt where earthly glory dwelt. Rather, he looked to the promise of God. He looked to the fact that God was going to deliver Israel and bring them to where God had promised. That his hope is centered in the covenant that God made with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, that God would bring them into the land. And that this is central to the whole of these first five books of the Bible—this promise. And Joseph is setting his hope in that. He's setting his hope.

And later in Exodus, in 16:3, we'll get to this in the sermon series, but Egypt is identified as a place of temptation, as a place of pleasure, of worldliness. If you just turn a few pages to Exodus 16, in verse 3, it says, ***"The sons of Israel said to them, 'Would that we had died by the Lord's hand in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the pots of meat, when we ate bread to the full; for you have brought us out into this wilderness to kill this whole assembly with hunger.'"*** (Exodus 16:3). You see the people of Israel—they're tempted to go back. Why? Because it's a place where they were filled with food, where they, even though they're in slavery, they could have all the food that they could want—meat and bread. And while they're in the wilderness going to the promised land, they forget of where God is leading them, and they're tempted to go back. And so Egypt is seen to be further on in Exodus a place of temptation, a place of pleasure. And Joseph's profound faith here is given as a reminder to the people of Israel not to look back to Egypt, where Joseph had all his glory, but to look ahead to the hope of the promise.

Hebrews 11, in the great hall of faith, includes Joseph. It says, by faith Joseph made his people swear that they would take up his bones with him. That here we see an act of faith at the end of Genesis, and here Moses is reminding the people that your home is not in Egypt; it's not in this present world, but it's actually in the land of Canaan. Actually, it transcends the land of Canaan. That it's far more than merely this plot of land in the land of Canaan. It's far more because for the people of Israel, the promise in the land of Canaan represented to them fellowship with God. It represented to them dwelling in the presence of God. That's this whole theme of the Bible: How does man dwell with the holy God who has been estranged from the Garden of Eden? And Canaan is the place where they look in hope, and they're looking at the fact that God is going to dwell with us there. It's not merely about the land. It's not merely about getting to this plot of land. But it's about far more—that Joseph looked in hope knowing that he would be raised in the land of Canaan, that he would be raised again. So here we have a reorientation to what really matters.

So brothers and sisters and friends, where is your hope oriented? Is it to heavenly glory? We're no longer hoping in the promised land of a land of Canaan, but we're hoping in the new heavens and the new earth. Is your hope set there? Or is it in the Egypt of this world? Temptation is to find hope in this present world. Some of you who do not know Jesus Christ—you reject Him. You're here to maybe see what Christianity is about, what church is like, but you reject Christ. You've never given your life to Him. You've never repented. And like Israel, who were later tempted on their sojourning, the pleasures of Egypt are all-consuming to you. For you, the world is where your hope is. You don't live in light of eternity. You're not living in light of that. There's going to be a day when you will stand before the Almighty Holy God and give an account. But rather you live for yourself; you live for your work, making the most money, getting in the most hours; or you live for trying to feel some sort of significance in this world, some sort of identity in this world. And in doing that, you're denying God. Because God made you for Himself; He made you for something greater, and yet in sin we turn to this world. We don't look to the hope that God offers to us, but we love rather this world. We love Egypt; we love its pleasure. And so the whole of our life is grounded in that—in this world.

In the Bible, Jesus gives us an illustration of the rich man and Lazarus. Lazarus is a man who was really homeless; he suffered on this earth; he had probably no friends, no one to care for him. And you have this rich man, and you expect from a worldly vantage point you would want to be the rich man. He's living a good life. He's living in pleasure. He's living with all that he could want. Who would want to be Lazarus, this poor man with nothing? And yet Jesus in this story points to the end. What is the end for these people? It's the rich man who denies God, who finds his treasure in this world, who's cast into hell. And it's rather Lazarus who's in heaven in joy unspeakable in the presence of God. And if you are apart from Christ, you may not be rich, you may be rich, but if you are apart from Christ, your end is the same as the rich man in that parable—that you may have pleasure on this earth, you may have riches, but you will end in an eternal hell where there is torment, where there is nothing, where all you have on this earth will fade away. And yet for the Christian who is denying this world, who is following Christ, joy unspeakable is before them. And that joy, this glory of the hope of the new heavens and new earth, if you are outside of Christ, is offered to you today. That Jesus Christ has purchased glory for you. How is it that man could dwell eternally with God? It's through Jesus, His work, His sacrifice, and His resurrection. It's through believing upon Him, repenting of your sin, repenting of your love for this world, and denying yourself to follow Him. So if your hope is in this world, if you are loving the treasures of this world, Jesus Christ offers you eternal life where Christ is, where you will dwell with God. Believe upon Him, trust in Him, turn from your sin to Christ.

Some of us, though, our hope is in heaven, but we need to be reoriented. Some of us know that heaven is before me; you're sojourning to eternal life, but still temptation remains. Egypt lures at your heart, trying to capture your affections. Maybe in life you've become dissatisfied with what God has given you, and you're seeking satisfaction elsewhere. But I set before you this glorious hope that we need to be constantly reminded that heaven is before us, that all of life should be oriented towards heaven, towards following Christ. And when we see the hope of heaven—the fact that that is where my Savior dwells, that is where I'm going to dwell with Him—then all the things of this earth fade away. John Newton has a wonderful hymn. He says, "Fading is the worldling's pleasure, all his boasted pomp and show; solid joys and lasting treasure none but Zion's children know." None but Zion's children know the people of God know lasting joy and solid joy and lasting treasure. It's when we see that, it's when we gaze upon it, when we gaze upon Christ that our affections are drawn towards heaven. And that this world becomes nothing to us. And though we enjoy it, we know our hope is not here.

So we've seen that God is preparing the route for Israel. We've seen that He reorients us towards the promise. These are two reasons we must look to the triune God alone.

3. He Goes with Us Toward the Promise (vv 20-22)

But our last point: Why must we look in dependence to the triune God alone? How do we get there? How do we get to the promised land? We must look to God because He goes with us toward the promise. He goes with us toward the promise. We see this in verses 20 through 22. Would you look there in your Bibles with me?

Verse 20 says that they set out from Succoth and camped in Etham on the edge of the wilderness. ***“The Lord was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night. He did not take away the pillar of cloud by day, nor the pillar of fire by night, from before the people.”*** (Exodus 13:20–22).

All along in the Bible, we’ve seen that it is God the one who has been acting. It’s God the one who makes promises, who covenants with His people. It’s God the one who delivers Israel out of Egypt. And so too here, God is continuing to act. He’s continuing to guide His people. And in the background, in the ancient Near East, in the pagan myths of the gods that the pagans worshipped, their gods never actually showed up. That they may point to nature and creation and say, “There we see the gods reacting or doing something,” but they never actually showed up. But here we have a stark contrast. The Lord of Israel, Yahweh, is the God who shows up. And we see this in the pillar as the Lord goes before them.

And in the Bible, amongst the people of Israel, God has been revealing Himself in impermanent ways. Think about earlier in Exodus, the burning bush, where God for a little appears to Moses and then goes away. But through Scripture we see more and more of a permanence, where God is permanently dwelling with His people. And here we have something of that, as the pillar is day and night leading this people through the wilderness. And we have this pillar that is going before them, this pillar that stands ahead, that is going before them, that is of cloud mixed with fire so that at night they can see this cloud of fire. It would have been an amazing sight.

From this we learn two things. As we see that the Lord is going before them in a pillar, we first see that it is absolutely necessary that God goes with His people. That God is the one who has saved them, and God must go with them. Because without Him, Israel is weak. They are frail. Later in Exodus, in Exodus 33, as Israel is rebelling and God says, ***“I’m going to take My presence from among the people; I’m not going to go with you,”*** Moses says, ***“If Your presence does not go with us, do not lead us up from here.”*** Because Moses is seeing: Lord, You are the one who has brought us here. You must continue to go with us. Because if You don’t, we’re going to fall. We will not be distinguished from the other nations. Lord, the thing that distinguishes us is that You are here with us. So it was necessary for God to go with them.

But also we see that this pillar represents God’s presence. It represents God’s presence. And I mentioned from more impermanence to permanence. We’re seeing that here. And there’s the fact as well that there’s the already and not yet—that God is already dwelling with Israel, and yet He’s leading them towards something greater, a greater dwelling where God dwells with His people. We see this is a theme throughout Exodus. At the end of Exodus, in Exodus 40, that pillar that is going with them, as the tabernacle is built, the pillar, the cloud, falls into the tabernacle to show that God is dwelling in their midst. And as Scripture goes on, as the temple is built in the Holy of Holies, that’s where God permanently dwells with His people. And so it represents God’s presence—that already He is with them and yet He’s leading them towards something greater.

And yet something far more is promised in Scripture than just God dwelling in a tabernacle. Because we see that the Lord doesn’t merely come in a cloud to dwell with His people, but God

comes as a man. He comes. The Son of God comes in Jesus Christ, who tabernacled among us. Jesus comes and He comes and answers the question: How does fallen man dwell with God? Jesus comes and dwells with man and offers up the perfect sacrifice to cleanse us from our sins, to make us pure, to make us righteous, to make us holy. And Jesus comes and brings us into that. He brings us into the presence of God, and He is sanctifying us so that we might be more and more fit for the presence of God. See this through all of Scripture.

And Christ as He ascends, Christ doesn't merely leave us to ourselves. He sends the Spirit to dwell with us. In Romans 8:9, we actually see Jesus Himself equated with the Spirit. In verse 9, it says, ***"But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him."*** But then he goes on to say, Paul: ***"But if Christ is in you..."*** We see Jesus dwelling with us and the Spirit dwelling with us being equated—that if the Spirit is with us, Jesus is with us. And that Jesus has poured out His Spirit upon us that God might dwell with us and go with us towards the promise, heading towards the hope that we have.

To Revelation, as Revelation 21:22 says, in the new heavens and the new earth, John says, ***"I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb."*** (Revelation 21:22–23). That's where we're heading. That's what the land of Canaan is representing—the place, the new creation where God permanently dwells with His people, where sin will be eradicated, where there will be no temple. And that though we have the Spirit now, though we taste part, we taste glory now as the Spirit dwells with us, as the Spirit works in our hearts, showing us the love of Christ, the love of God for us, we have a foretaste, yet more is coming. In a new creation where God will dwell with us for eternity. Where God will dwell with us and He will give us those solid joys, those lasting pleasures that do not fade away. That is where we're going. God has given us His Spirit. He's given us Christ to go with us towards that. What a glorious reality.

And yet we still have need of endurance. Just as Israel is sojourning as pilgrims to heaven, they had to endure. They had to persevere. And so we too are not there yet. But we too are heading towards the promise, but we need to endure. We need God to go with us, to lead us, and to be present with us. And there's a fact that we already are indwelt by the Spirit of God, but we more and more need to walk in the Spirit. As Galatians says, ***keep in step with the Spirit and do not gratify the desires of the flesh.*** That we as Christians need to be led by the Spirit. We need God to go with us. We need to put ourselves in the way of the working of God and the working of His Spirit. Because we can still quench the Spirit. We can be tempted by Egypt by loving this world. And so we need the Spirit of God to work in our hearts. So we do not put ourselves in the way of the working of the Spirit? Where does the Spirit work? He works in the gathering of the saints on Sunday. He's working as we pray to God. And if we neglect that, we're going to begin to lag behind. We're going to feel the flesh. You might wonder: Why in my Christian life am I feeling the flesh pulling on me more and more? Maybe you're neglecting the means of grace that God has given you. Maybe you're not putting yourself in the way of the Spirit. That it's like those at the airport, those moving walkways that make you go really fast. It's like that—we must put ourselves in the way of the Spirit working so that we progress in the Christian life. If not, we're going to begin to

lag behind. We'll feel the weight of sin; we'll feel worldliness grip our hearts if we do not put ourselves in the way of the Spirit.

And when we begin to realize this—that we are weak, we are dependent, we can do nothing in ourselves—then church no longer becomes something merely where we can go once a month to retain our membership. Prayer is not something that is just an add-on to the Christian life, but is essential. Because we see: If I do not go to church where God is ministering to His people, if I do not pray, then I will lag behind; then I will fall short. And the hard truth is that the reason some of us are not as mature as we ought to be in the Christian life is because we do not put ourselves in the way of the Spirit. That we do not give ourselves to the means that God has given us. He's so graciously given us these things. We are freed to come to church and to pray and gather on Wednesdays. And when we begin to see that we are dependent, those things aren't merely something that we have to go to, but we see we need them. I need to be there because that is where my soul is stirred. That is where I have a foretaste of heavenly glory. We need to constantly put ourselves in the way of the Spirit working. We need to be led by the Spirit. It's a wonderful reality that the Spirit indwells us, but we must more and more be led by the Spirit, walk in step with the Spirit, delighting in God's Word where He guides us, where He leads us—where He leads us to the path of glory.

So dear friends, we are a weak and needy people. We are people ever dependent upon God. We are people who, left to ourselves, would fall into the most grievous of sins. So we need to look to the triune God. We need Him. We need Him to guide us. He prepares the route. He reorients us towards glory. And He goes with us. He gives us His Spirit. We need to look in dependence upon the triune God because we need Him in the Christian life. And praise God that He is faithful. He is faithful to give us His Spirit. He is faithful as we put ourselves in the way of the working of the Spirit to encourage us, to get us to glory. He will not leave us. He will not fail us. And even when we do fall into sin, when we're lagging behind, He comes behind us and leads us on, encourages us, and leads us to glory. He does that as well in the Lord's Supper. He shows us Christ as we eat the bread, as we drink the cup. He's continuing to push us on to glory, and so may He do that this morning.

Let's pray.

Gracious God and Father, we confess that we are weak; we are needy. Lord, we need Your Word; we need Your Spirit. We pray that You would pour out Your Spirit upon us. Lord, we thank You that You have caused us to be indwelt by the Spirit, that Christ has poured out His Spirit upon us. We need to be filled. Lord, we need more of the Spirit. And You say, "Anyone who asks will indeed surely receive the Spirit." Lord, we pray for that. We pray as we partake of the Lord's Supper that You would do a work in our hearts, that we would see the hope that we have in Christ, the glory that He offers to us, that You would encourage us on to persevere, to have our hope set upon heaven. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

The Lord's Supper

Brothers and sisters in Christ, we do come now to the joyous time of Thanksgiving when we get an opportunity to partake of the Lord's Supper together. There are two ordinances that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ instituted: baptism and the Lord's Supper. And these were appointed by our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, who is Himself the only lawgiver. And these two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, are to be continued in His church to the end of the age.

The Scripture goes on to very clearly speak about the understanding in 1 Corinthians 11 of how we partake of the Lord's Supper. We read the following, 1 Corinthians 11: ***"A man must examine himself, and in so doing he is to eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he who eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgment to himself if he does not judge the body rightly."*** (1 Corinthians 11:28–29).

In the context of the church in Corinth—a small church of about 60 or so people, perhaps; that's what some scholars conjecture—a small local church gathering of brothers and sisters in Christ plagued by many doubts, plagued by many sins, and yet called to partake of the Lord's Supper and to look unto Christ and to find in Jesus Christ that great Mediator, that great sacrificial Lamb who was for sinners slain. This is a meal of remembrance where we look back on what Christ did on the cross through His bloody sacrifice. It is also an opportunity when we gather and receive by faith the bread and the cup to renew our covenant to the Lord, the covenant-keeping faithful God of heaven and earth.

And this is an opportunity for all believers. This is only for believers, but it is open to all believers who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of sins. And before you think, "Oh, that is certainly me," let me just urge you to understand the gravity of this in terms of what the Scriptures teach. A believer in Jesus Christ is one who has sensed the weight of their sin, and that contrition, that remorse, that repentance for sin has been not just an act, but has been something that is truly believed and felt in one's spirit and heart. You know: God is the Lord; I am not, and I have sinned and rebelled against this holy, holy, holy God. You also are one who now by faith is walking on this pilgrimage, being led by the Lord, and you have trusted in the Lord. You are one who has not been ashamed to go public with your faith in Jesus Christ. You've been baptized as a believer. So this is a meal for true Christians who've gone public in their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, who trusted Him for the forgiveness of sins. If you're here today and you trusted the Lord Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, praise God. Praise God sincerely. The next step, my friend, is to be baptized. We want you to be baptized as a believer. That's vital. And then as we continually gather, we regularly partake of the Lord's Supper together.

The Scripture also says that we are called to be at one with one another. And so we don't partake in a worthy manner if we gather here and we are not in good relationship with brothers and sisters in Christ. If you have something against a brother or sister in Christ, the Lord says to refrain and to go and be reconciled to your brother, to your sister, to make things right, to say, "Brother, I'm sorry I have this against you. Sister, I'm sorry I have this against you." And you humble yourself before the Lord and make things right. This is an opportunity to renew the fact that, yes, God has saved us by His grace and we thank Him for that, but also to gather together as the body of Christ

under the blood of the Lamb as one. And this is a gift from the Lord, an ordinary means of grace, as Brother Jared said, to strengthen our faith on this pilgrimage with one another. The Lord would not have in the body of Christ any bitterness, any division. The Lord would have oneness in the body of Christ—unity under the Lamb who was for sinners slain.

I'm going to pray in just a moment, and then after I pray and partake of the elements, everyone will be served, and then we will partake together after everyone has been served. Let me pray and entrust these elements in this time to the Lord, and as we do so, let us thank the Lord for this great sacrificial death of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ who has reconciled us to God.

Almighty God and merciful Father of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we thank You, we thank You, we thank You for the reconciling work of Jesus Christ on the cross. Lord Jesus, thank You for coming and shedding Your blood and going willingly to the tree to not only reverse the curse but to forgive our sins, our personal offenses against You. God, we marvel that You would reconcile sinners like us to You, and we pray, God, we would never lose our awe at that amazing reality—that You are the God who saves, the God who seeks sinners. And in this opportunity we have now to joyously partake of the Lord's Supper, strengthen the faith of all gathered. And please do, as Brother Jared just said, this reorienting work in all of our lives, reorienting us to glory in this place where we are in the already but not yet, longing for glory, longing for the new heavens and the new earth, when we will feast in the house of Zion, when we will be with You forever—the Lord who has saved us and kept us and sustained us, the Lord who has granted to us faith. God, thank You for the bread. Thank You for the cup. Thank You for the shed blood of Jesus symbolized and represented in the cup. Thank You for the body of Jesus given for us and represented in the bread. God, we are amazed that You call us now to by faith partake of these elements, that we can meet You and You meet with us here. And God, please do a mighty work to unify us together now under the Lamb who was for sinners slain. Thank You, Lord Jesus, for the sacrificial death of Jesus, that final ultimate sacrifice, that there is no other sacrifice needed. Thank You, God, for Jesus. Thank You, God, for this opportunity to come as brothers and sisters before You. And so strengthen our faith now, we pray, for Jesus' sake, and all God's people said together, Amen.

The Apostles' Creed

For hundreds upon hundreds of years, the true people of God have affirmed their faith in the Lord through the Apostles' Creed. The Apostles' Creed is something that summarizes biblical truth. It is something that is given and should not be a threat for those of us who are Bible-believing evangelical Protestants but gladly received and compared with Scripture. It is an encouragement to our faith, and this is the most ancient version of that. The words will appear on the screen momentarily. And this is what Christians believe in summary form.

Christian, what do you believe?

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. On the third day He rose again. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty, from where He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

On the night that He was betrayed, the Apostle Paul states very clearly, ***“For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is My body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’”*** (1 Corinthians 11:23–24).

We see in Holy Scripture in the exact same text of God’s word concerning the cup: ***“In the same way He took the cup also after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’”*** (1 Corinthians 11:25).

Father in heaven, as we gather together as Your people under the blood of the Lamb, we thank You for the body of Jesus given for us. Now we praise You that the wrath that our sins deserve—the righteous and holy wrath of Yours, the God who is the Creator and the Judge—was spent against our sins on Jesus. We praise You for the fact that Jesus took our penalty and paid it in full as that wrath-absorbing Substitute. God, we are amazed that You would, by the sacrificial death of Jesus, reconcile us to You, that You would do all of this and provide for us. And so God, we stand as those who are recipients of Your grace; we marvel at Your goodness. We thank You and we praise You and ask, God, that we would today be renewed and refreshed to follow You more faithfully, longing for Your kingdom and seeking first Your kingdom and Your righteousness, God, from faith under the blood of the Lamb who was for sinners slain. We pray this in Jesus’ name, and all God’s people say, Amen.

Closing Commission

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ, we are blessed with a commission, an opportunity to declare to a world full of sinners lost and desperate without hope and without Christ that Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life, that He will reconcile you however far you think you are from God, and He will do so today. We’ve been entrusted with that. And if you’re able to join us, we’re going to have an opportunity to do some street evangelism later this afternoon. You can meet in the family room at 12:30 over there. We’d love to have you join us for that as we herald and share this good news that Jesus Christ saves sinners with the world in need.

Go with this word from 1 Corinthians chapter 1. Brothers and sisters in Christ, where we read the glorious reality and the call upon our lives: ***“[You are] waiting eagerly for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, who will also confirm you to the end, blameless in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, through whom you were called into fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.”*** (1 Corinthians 1:7–9). Amen.

Scripture References (in order of appearance)

- Psalm 16:1–11
- Matthew 9:36–38
- Exodus 13:17–22
- Exodus 6:4–5
- Exodus 13:17–18
- Psalm 103 (allusion: “He knows that we are dust”)
- Exodus 13:19
- Genesis 50:24–25
- Exodus 16:3
- Hebrews 11:22 (allusion)
- Luke 16:19–31 (parable of the rich man and Lazarus)
- Exodus 13:20–22
- Exodus 33:15 (allusion)
- Exodus 40 (allusion to the cloud filling the tabernacle)
- Romans 8:9–10
- Revelation 21:22–23
- Galatians 5:16, 25 (allusion: walk/keep in step with the Spirit)
- 1 Corinthians 11:28–29
- 1 Corinthians 11:23–25
- 1 Corinthians 1:7–9