

Sermon Transcript

07.05.2026

Hebrews 11:13-16

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- Good morning. Please open to Hebrews 11. We'll be in vss. 13-16.
- As we begin, I want to tell you a story from seminary. It's a story about a guy named John, though that isn't his real name.
- John & I met right around the time I started seminary & our lives overlapped in various ways. We were members of the same church. We worked together at the same Starbucks & we were both students at Dallas Theological Seminary.
- In fact, John joined the community group that I was leading and he and I were in the same spiritual formation group in seminary and shared about half of our classes.
- Pretty much no matter where I was, whether at work, school, or church, we intersected paths. Which meant we were either going to become friends or he would be my villain origin story.
- And pretty early in the friendship, I learned that John struggled with homosexual desires.
- And for the first year of seminary, he seemed to struggle fairly well. He fought those thoughts and urges and walked in accountability and community.
- Until one day he didn't. He quit seminary, quit the church, and eventually moved away from Texas in order to pursue a new lifestyle.
- But before he moved, I talked to him to plead with him to reconsider. I laid out what Scripture says about homosexuality and the cost of unrepentant sin. I pointed out the folly and sin of his decision and called him to repent. I reminded him that as a member of a church and a seminary student, he knew better because he knew the truth.
- And his response was heartbreaking.
- He said in effect, I've tried to fight this for years and God hasn't helped. He's not been faithful, He's not fulfilled His promises. I'm tired of doing my part. I've suffered long enough.
- And that was the last time we ever spoke.
- But maybe you've felt like that. I'm tired of fighting for this marriage. I'm tired of working through this conflict with a friend or co-worker. I'm tired of struggling with this sin. I'm frustrated by the pain of loss or cancer or whatever. I feel as though God has forsaken me, been unfaithful to His promises.
- If so, this passage is for you; because that feeling, that frustration or apathy or bitterness or whatever is a ripe environment for the kind of apostasy that John committed and the kind of falling away that the author of Hebrews has been warning us about.
- How can God be faithful and yet His promises remain unfulfilled? That's what we'll talk about this morning. So let's pray and we'll dive in.
- Prayer: self, others, me.

- If my count is correct, this is our 45th sermon in the book of Hebrews. We've got just about 15 more so that puts us right around the 75% mark.
- And so by now if I ask you to sum up the book with three words, you would confidently say: Christ is better.
- Christ is better than the angels in chapters 1 and 2. Better both in His deity and humanity. Better than Moses in chapter 3. Better than Joshua and the promised land and the Sabbath in chapter 4. And in chapters 7-10, He's a better priest who has offered a better sacrifice in a better sanctuary to fulfill a better covenant based on better promises of better rewards.
- That's the through line, the organizing principle of the book. Christ is better, greater, superior.
- And if He's better, why would we drift? Why would we fall away?
- As we've talked about before, all sin entails a rejection of the supremacy of Christ. At least in that moment, we believe the lie that sin is better.
- But in the context of Hebrews, the concern isn't just generic sin, but rather the particular sin of apostasy.
- As we've talked about, the word of God is clear that God's elect will persevere, but one of the ways in which God preserves them is by means of warnings. Warnings of the danger of drifting and falling away. God uses those warnings in order to grant us endurance.
- In other words, for those whom God has granted eyes to see and ears to hear, those warnings produce the intended result. They take effect in the elect.
- And those warnings were what the Hebrews needed and what we need.
- The enemy is portrayed as a roaring lion, prowling about, seeking someone to devour. Sin itself is pictured as crouching at our doors, seeking entrance.
- And one of the primary strategies to defeat the enemy, whether external or internal, is reflection upon the superiority of Jesus Christ.
- Why do we come back almost every single week and revisit this theme? Why are we spending so much time recapping Christ's supremacy? Because it's God's appointed means of battling discontentment, discouragement, despair, and disbelief.
- If all sin ultimately boils down to belief in the supremacy of sin, then we need constant reminders that Jesus is better.
- Every whisper of temptation diminishes Christ's glory and exaggerates sin's satisfaction. So the way to fight the lie is by constant reminder that Christ is better.
- In other words, the sweeter we realize Christ is the more bitter we'll taste sin to be.
- And if we believe that Jesus is sweeter and better, then we'll draw near as we saw in chapter 10. The will always inclines toward whatever it perceives to be the greatest inducement. The will is like a scale and chooses whatever it holds to hold the most value. So, if we believe that Christ is better, then we'll draw near to Him. Because we naturally seek what we most value.
- But if we believe that He isn't better, that He isn't worth it, then we'll drift, or, to use the language of chapter 10, shrink back.
- So those are the 2 paths that are held out & the author transitions in chapter 11 to illustrate how faith draws near and perseveres by means of example after example after example from the OT.
- So far we've seen a semi working definition of faith.

- *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen. (Hebrews 11:1)*
- Furthermore, as vs. 6 says, we've seen that
 - *And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. (Hebrews 11:6)*
- And to evidence that the author will list a litany of OT saints who demonstrate faith, and in particular, faith in the midst of suffering and difficulty. So we've looked at Abel, Enoch, and Noah. Then last week we picked up the narrative with Abraham.
- He'll be the subject of next week's text as well, but this week the text provides almost a parenthesis as the focus moves from Abraham in particular to the patriarchs more in general. Last week we saw that Abraham lived a nomadic lifestyle as a sojourner in the promised land. He didn't build a city or a house with foundations. He dwelt in a tent as a sign that He didn't fully possess the promised land.
- In fact, Abraham died without ever fully receiving what was promised. That's what the author will talk about today so let's look at vs. 13.

These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. (Hebrews 11:13)

- Now, by saying these all died, the author is speaking generally, not literally since obviously he's just emphasized the fact that Enoch didn't die. But with the exception of Enoch, all of the other patriarchs died and one of the distinguishing marks of those mentioned is that they each persevered. They died in faith. In other words, they didn't shrink back or drift away. They held out until the very end.
- That will be noteworthy when you consider the next point. They didn't receive the things promised.
- Now, this will be such a significant point for the author that he'll return to it at the end of the chapter. Look at 39-40
 - *And all these, though commended through their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had provided something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect. (Hebrews 11:39-40)*
- We began to talk about this last week. As we read in vs. 9. Abraham
 - *...went to live in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. (Hebrews 11:9)*
- You may recall that Abraham didn't own the land. In fact, the OT itself highlights Abraham's identity as a sojourner in multiple stories. For example, when Sarah dies, he has nowhere to bury her so he approaches the Hittites and asks to buy some land saying:
 - *I am a sojourner and foreigner among you; give me property among you for a burying place, that I may bury my dead out of my sight. (Genesis 23:4)*
- So Abraham is just a sojourner in the land that God had promised him and that wasn't just a temporary arrangement. When Abraham dies, his status vis a vis the land hasn't

changed. He is a sojourner his entire life, never dwelling in a land of his own possession though that very land had been promised to him.

- You may recall, that we saw a similar phenomena when we preached through Judges a couple of years ago.
- In the book of Joshua, we read this:
 - *Thus the LORD gave to Israel all the land that he swore to give to their fathers. And they took possession of it, and they settled there. And the LORD gave them rest on every side just as he had sworn to their fathers. Not one of all their enemies had withstood them, for the LORD had given all their enemies into their hands. Not one word of all the good promises that the LORD had made to the house of Israel had failed; all came to pass. (Joshua 21:43–45)*
- So they have possession and yet when you begin Judges you see that there were still large pockets where Israel hadn't driven out the people and thus didn't fully possess the land.
- Did the Israelites possess the land or not? Well, yes and no. They experienced a foreshadow of possession that would ultimately only be fulfilled in an eternal eschatological hope.
- As we talked about last week, this points to a larger kingdom theme that we see in Scripture that theologians call the already, but not yet.
- There is a sense in which we are already saved, but a sense in which we are not yet saved. There is a sense in which Christ is ruling and reigning as our eternal king, but another sense in which His reign hasn't fully consummated.
- That's not a contradiction, that's the already, but not yet.
- Likewise, Abraham lived in the land, God's promises were being fulfilled, but at the same time those promises pointed beyond the immediate fulfillment to illuminate a greater and more ultimate consummation.
- He didn't fully receive what was promised. Even in the promise of an offspring. That promise wasn't ultimately exhausted in Isaac, but rather pointed forward to another offspring. As Adam and Eve were promised an offspring who would crush the head of the serpent or David was promised an offspring to sit on the eternal throne. There is a sense in which Seth or Solomon kept that promise alive, but they weren't the ultimate referent. As Galatians 3:16 says:
 - *Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. (Galatians 3:16)*
- So yes, there is a sense in which Isaac fulfills the promise of a son, but another sense in which that promise points beyond Isaac to Jesus.
- We see this also in John where Jesus says:
 - *Your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day. He saw it and was glad. (John 8:56)*
- Did Abraham see it or not? Well, yes and no. He saw the shadow and even the shadow was a cause for joy, as even a glimpse of the fringe of God's glory lit up Moses.
- So you can think of the patriarchs receiving a kind of down payment on the promises. Abraham lived long enough to live in the land, but not possess it. He lived long enough to see the birth of Isaac and even Jacob, but certainly not long enough to see his

offspring like stars in the heavens or like sand on the seashore and certainly not long enough to see the ultimate seed who is Christ.

- So the author says that rather than receiving what was promised, they saw & greeted from afar.
- That reminds me of Moses who never entered the promised land, but before his death stood on the mountain and looked out over it.
- As Peter writes
 - *Concerning this salvation, the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully, inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories. (1 Peter 1:10–11)*
- And this then provides a contrast for us. The faith of the patriarchs enabled them to see what was yet unseen, faith is the conviction of things not seen, after all, but they saw it dimly, they could just catch a glimpse of it whereas for us, this side of the new covenant, our experience is profoundly different.
- We don't see from afar, we are beckoned to draw near to a city which we already inhabit in a sense. Like the patriarchs, we don't see Jesus, but unlike the patriarchs, the Jesus we don't see has at least been revealed so the shadow has been eclipsed by substance. We may not see Him physically, but spiritually we have a much clearer vision of His person and work.
- That's why chapter 2 warns us against drifting by saying, if falling away from the word of God spoken through the prophets was bad, how much worse to fall away from the word itself? If there is a consequence for rejecting the shadow, how much worse for rejecting the substance?
- In other words, if Abraham and the prophets saw from afar and yet believed, we have no excuse to drift since we have seen a much clearer fulfillment of the divine promises.
- The patriarchs didn't fade away into cynicism and frustration and disbelief even though they never fully possessed the land. Rather, they died in faith.
- Let's keep going. Vss. 14-15.

For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. (Hebrews 11:14–15)

- Look at the phrase people who speak thus. What's that mean? Who's speaking and what are they saying? Well, if you go back to vs. 13, it doesn't seem to make sense until you look at the word acknowledge. That word in Greek is formed from two words meaning to speak the same thing.
- We've seen a related word a number of times in Hebrews. For instance, 3:1
 - *Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession... (Hebrews 3:1)*
 - *Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. (Hebrews 4:14)*
 - *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. (Hebrews 10:23)*

- The same way that we confess our faith, so these patriarchs acknowledged or confessed theirs. And in particular, there are two sides of the confession.
- First, as we saw in the previous verse, they acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles.
- Second, as a consequence of that, they acknowledged that they were seeking a homeland.
- Now, when we tend to think of longing for a homeland, we think of going backwards.
- In a couple of weeks, Nolan's *The Odyssey* will be released. If you recall the story, the plot turns on Odysseus' desire to return to his family and his native Ithaca. Or in *Gladiator*, Maximus wants to return to Spain. Or in the prophetic books, Israel longs to return from exile.
- But notice that wasn't what the patriarchs did. They weren't looking back, but forward. Abraham doesn't go back to Ur or even Haran, he keeps sojourning by faith in the land.
- Now, one of the motifs we've seen in the book is the analogy between the church and Israel. The author constantly compares the temptations and struggles of the first century generation of believers, to those in the OT and in particular with the generation in the wilderness who was unable to enter the promised land.
- So think back to that generation of Israel. They're strangers in a strange land, having lived in Egypt for hundreds of years. And as they progress towards the promised land, they not only grumble and complain, but do so in a way that shows that they actually long to return to Egypt. They say, oh, we had melons and cucumbers back there, if only we could go back. That's up with the Luka trade or worst of all time. Back to slavery for some cucumbers.
- But that's what sin does. As God complains in Jeremiah, my people have forsaken a fountain of living water for broken cisterns that can hold no water. We trade a birthright for a bowl of stew. We trade garden of delights in paradise for a single forbidden fruit.
- We trade intimacy with our spouse for an image on the internet. We trade our job and salary for a few bucks that we skimmed off the top. We trade a lifetime of freedom for a fleeting moment of crime. Sin is always a tragic exchange.
- So the authors point is like a complex syllogism. You can express it like this:
 - If A, then B.
 - Not B, therefore not A.
- Let me give you some examples of this kind of logic.
 - If its raining, then the ground is wet. The ground is not wet. Therefore, it is not raining.
 - If I were winning the argument, I wouldn't have started Googling things in the middle of it. I started Googling things in the middle of it. Therefore, I am not winning the argument.
 - If church membership were easy, there wouldn't be 59 one another commands in the NT. There are 59 "one another" commands. Therefore, church membership is not easy.
 - If Israel trusted God's promises, they wouldn't keep asking to go back to Egypt. They keep asking to go back to Egypt. Therefore, they do not trust God's promises

- The author is saying, if the patriarchs were driven by a love of a former homeland, then they would have returned. Since they didn't return, we can assume that a former homeland wasn't the goal. Abraham never once packed up and headed back to Ur.
- In other words, we know that the patriarchs were seeking something, but what were they seeking?
- The author says that their perpetual dissatisfaction, the perpetual unfinished aspect of the promises, points to some deeper reality.
- To quote Augustine, in the opening words of his confessions:
 - "You stir man to take pleasure in praising you because you have made us for yourself and our heart is restless until it rests in you." (Augustine, Confessions)
- They were restless in the promised land because the bare land by itself couldn't fulfill their deepest longing for rest.
 - *For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.* (Hebrews 4:8)
- Or as C.S. Lewis writes:
 - "The Christian says, 'Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex. If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.'" (C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity)
- In other words, what both Augustine and Lewis and the author of Hebrews are pointing to is the idea of an unfulfilled longing that exists in humanity. And rather than being a source of frustration, this should be a motivation to seek greater fulfillment.
- The fact that Abraham was a sojourner in THAT land must evidence the existence of another land lest God be unfaithful to His promises.
- The same is true for us as well. The same way that returning to Ur would have provided a degree of satisfaction to Abraham. Or returning to Egypt would have perhaps provided a degree of satisfaction to the Israelites, likewise returning to our sins promises fulfillment, but it can't ultimately satisfy because the desires God gives are ultimately created to only be fulfilled in and through and by and for Him.
- Or, to take the first-century audience. They feel like sojourners and exiles. They are being persecuted. Some are being imprisoned, goods are being plundered. That will make you feel alienated. And yet the only way out is through. Turning back isn't an option because there is no ultimate hope in going backwards.
- So by acknowledging that they were sojourners in the promised land, the points to a more ultimate land.
- What was that other homeland? We'll see that in vs. 16.

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. (Hebrews 11:16)

- You know that Christ's supremacy or superiority is the unifying theme of Hebrews. Christ is better is the message of the book.

- And so the word better becomes a breadcrumb that leads us through its pages, chapter by chapter. Of the 19 uses of the underlying Greek word in the NT, 13 of them are in this book which shows just how important the word is to understand the author's point.
- We first encounter the word in chapter one though its translated as superior rather than better.
- So look at all of these:
 - 1:4 having become as much superior to angels...
 - 6:9 we feel sure of better things – things that belong to salvation
 - 7:7 the inferior is blessed by the superior
 - 7:19 a better hope is introduced
 - 7:22 Jesus has become the guarantor of a better covenant
 - 8:6 the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises
 - 9:23 the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these
 - 10:34 you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one
 - 11:16 they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one
 - 11:35 they might rise again to a better life
 - 11:40 God had provided something better for us
 - 12:24 the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel
- That's 12 verses, which seems symbolic especially in a book to Jews, but I don't actually think the number itself is significant given that there are actually 13 uses in those 12 verses. More important than the number is just seeing how pervasive it is.
- In fact, the verses kind of form an outline of the book
 - Better Person (chapters 1-3)
 - Better Salvation (6)
 - Better Priesthood (7)
 - Better Covenant (8)
 - Better Sacrifice (9)
 - Better Possession (10)
 - Better Country (11)
 - Better Resurrection/Life (11)
 - Better Blood/Word (12)
 - According to the text, everything is better in Christ because Christ Himself is better.
- So here the reference is to a better country. We'll see this expounded in chapter 12 where the author will talk about the heavenly Jerusalem, the new Jerusalem.
- We saw this referenced last time as it was said of Abraham
 - *For he was looking forward to the city that has foundations, whose designer and builder is God.* (Hebrews 11:10)
- As the text will go on to say, we need a city with foundations that cannot be shaken. Think of the images of the recent earthquake in Venezuela. Now, imagine that country could not be shaken.
- That image of a city that cannot be shaken is a picture of security. That's why the patriarchs could never find ultimate eschatological rest in the promised land. Because

that land was always shakable, always precarious, vulnerable to invasion and desolation and famine.

- But why was it vulnerable? Because the Old Covenant itself was flawed. If that sounds heretical to you, go back and read Hebrews, the author says it himself. For instance,
 - *For if that first covenant had been faultless, there would have been no occasion to look for a second.* (Hebrews 8:7)
- As we've seen in the book, the Old Covenant was flawed not because of some fault in the covenant itself, but because of man's innate inability to keep it. The law demands obedience, but doesn't provide the means to obey because it doesn't actually overcome sin. Rather, it actually exacerbates sin as Paul says in various places. The law commands, but doesn't actually renew the heart.
- So we've mentioned this poem before: run John run, the law demands, but gives me neither feet nor hands, far better news, this gospel brings, it bids me fly and gives me wings.
- The New is better than the Old at least in part because the New carries with it the promise of divine enablement and empowerment.
- So among the various reasons that this country is better, this eschatological promised land is better, is because it is built on better promises.
- Israel was always subjected to the possibility of exile. That was built into the covenant. As long as Israel was faithful, the land was plentiful and their enemies were defeated and they dwelt in the land, but as Israel rebelled, the land responded in fulfillment of the curses of the covenant, ultimately vomiting Israel and Judah out in Exile.
- But that isn't the case in the better country. That country is marked by security and certainty. In that sense, this is even better than Eden. Our hope isn't a return to the garden but something better than the garden. As great as the garden was, Adam and Eve could and did fall and were exiled, but our inheritance is infallible because it doesn't rest on our future performance, but rather Christ's finished performance.
- At His death He said tetelestai, and He meant it.
- So this is a better country because it is eternal, its infallible, its unshakeable, its heavenly. By that the author doesn't mean that we live in heaven, but rather, heaven descends to earth as the earth is renewed to become a proper dwelling place for God and man.
- So this is what the patriarchs and even we ourselves long for, yearn for. In fact, creation itself groans for this as Paul writes in Romans 8. Creation and creatures experience the groaning of birth pangs waiting for this consummation.
- And for those who yearn in faith, God is not ashamed to be called their God.
- This might remind you of 2:11 which said
 - *For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers...* (Hebrews 2:11)
- This statement that God is not ashamed is a deliberate understatement. Kinda like when we say "that's not bad" we mean that's pretty good. Or if we say that was no small accomplishment, that typically doesn't mean it was a medium accomplishment, but rather pretty large.
- So, God is not ashamed means more than just unashamed, it means proud. Some of us really need to hear that this morning. You've blown it again. Your marriage is on fire,

you've succumbed to temptation, you yelled at your kids, you can't find a spouse, you can't find a job, you've squandered various opportunities.

- Yet, if you trust Christ, if you're remorseful and repentant, if you believe that Christ is better, God is not ashamed of you, He's proud to be called your God. Yes, He commands you to repent. Yes, He has expectations of you. Yes, there are consequences to your sin.
- But the same way that I am absurdly proud to be the father of Larken and Canon, my pride and joy, so God is proud of us. I don't mean this in the self-help, therapeutic man-centered sense of you are awesome. No, you aren't awesome. That's the glory and irony of the gospel. You are wicked and evil and depraved, but God loves you.
- The gospel walks the line between two lies.
 - First, that you are good enough and smart enough and pretty enough for God to love you. That you are inherently lovable. That's the first lie.
 - The second is that you are too bad, too dirty, too dumb to love. In reality, as another pastor has said, you are more sinful than you can possibly imagine and yet more loved than you can possibly fathom. That's the sweet spot of the gospel.
- Not using God's love to boast in self, but also not using the reality of our sinfulness to deny God's love.
- He's not ashamed to be your God, not embarrassed that you are His child.
- And as evidence of God's pride in His people, He has prepared for us a city. In other words, if God wasn't proud to be called their God, He wouldn't have designed a city where He will dwell among us.
- And that's the ultimate desire. The ultimate desire isn't the country or city itself, but the fact that what makes country and city better is the presence of God. As John Piper says, the good news of the gospel is that you get God.
- According to Mark, Jesus appoints the disciples so that they might "be with Him." And in 1 Peter, the purpose of Christ's death is given that He might "bring us to God."
- So our ultimate destination is the dwelling place of God. And until then, we too are sojourners. As Peter writes:
 - *Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. (1 Peter 2:11)*
- Or as Paul writes, our citizenship is in heaven. But what does this mean? Perhaps you've heard the phrase that someone is too heavenly minded to be of any earthly good and sometimes that caricature fits. Some Christians have mistakenly applied the idea of our heavenly citizenship to abdicate their earthly responsibilities, to just circle the wagons and hope Jesus comes soon, but that isn't the way the Church has traditionally thought of the role of Christians.
- Rather, Christians have historically built universities and hospitals and civilizations. It was Christians who ended the slave trade, Christians who established the idea of universal human rights, who promoted literacy, and engaged in charity, who took care of the sick during plagues, and rescued children from death.
- As C.S. Lewis writes in Mere Christianity
 - "Hope is one of the Theological virtues. This means that a continual looking forward to the eternal world is not (as some modern people think) a form of escapism or wishful thinking, but one of the things a Christian is meant to do. It does not mean that we are to leave the present world as it is. If you read history

you will find that the Christians who did most for the present world were just those who thought most of the next.” (C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity)

- In Jeremiah as the Israelites are in exile and longing to return to Israel, God says to seek the good of the city in which you live.
 - *But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the LORD on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.* (Jeremiah 29:7)
- This must have been a shocking command to the Israelites. And notice the reason, in its welfare you will find your welfare.
- That’s why 1 Timothy 2 tells us to pray for our leaders:
 - *First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a peaceful and quiet life, godly and dignified in every way.* (1 Timothy 2:1–2)
- The goal is a peaceful and quiet life, but that comes even through a degree of political engagement. Through prayer for governmental authority. That’s a theme we see throughout Scripture as evidenced in the lives of Joseph and Daniel who counseled kings and John the Baptist’s rebuke of Herod and Paul’s proclaiming the gospel to Roman and Jewish authorities.
- So, yes, we are exiles right now, but like Abraham, the land in which we sojourn will eventually be our inheritance so we should be all the more passionate about protecting and preserving it, which is apropos on July 4th weekend and the celebration of 250 years as a country with flaws, but worth fighting for.
- There is a better inheritance, a better hope, a better country. But our job is not to circle the wagons and wait, but rather roll up our sleeves and get to work in the here and now. Get married, have children, pray for the country, get involved in politics, evangelize the lost, disciple others, change the culture, do good works.
- Not as a substitute for faith, but as an evidence of your faith.
- And as evidence of that faith, don’t give up. Don’t grow weary of doing good. Don’t go back, don’t drift. But keep walking, keep going, keep believing. Because Christ is better and God is not ashamed to be called your God.
- Let’s pray.

Communion

- Fence table
- One of the things we talk about a lot is the multi-faceted nature of communion.
- This meal calls for both introspection as we consider our sin and repent and also looking outward as we consider Christ.
- It calls us to a vertical gaze upwards to heaven and a horizontal gaze as we consider our communion with each other.
- But it also has a temporal focus. It points us both backward to Christ’s death and resurrection and also forward to His return. Even in the institution of the meal, Christ mentions a future fulfillment. He says, I won’t drink this again UNTIL the kingdom. That UNTIL is a future promise.

- As Abraham was motivated by faith in future grace so this meal is a promise of future grace.
- So this meal is an objective sign of God's love.
- So as we partake this morning, I want us to consider that objective promise. A promise that God loves us, that He is for us, that He has done all that is necessary for our life and joy.
- So take a second and think and pray and thank the Lord and we'll partake together.
- On the night...