Sermon Transcript
11.01.2026
Hebrews 13:22-25

******This is a working manuscript and is not an exact transcription of the sermon. Actual audio content may differ slightly from these notes.******

- Good morning.
- Please turn in your Bibles for the last time together, to the book of Hebrews for our 60th and final sermon in the book. We'll be in chapter 13, vss. 22-25.
- For those who may be wondering what is next, check your email as we set out a message about that on Friday. If you didn't get it, talk to Ryan Spencer to make sure you are on the list.
- As we come to the end of 18 months in 1 book, I want to think about the importance of endings. Imagine watching a movie with some sort of crazy twist ending & then turning it off before the big reveal. I won't ruin any movies for you, that's typically Ed's job, but you know the ones: the 6th Sense, Planet of the Apes, the Usual Suspects, the Prestige, Shutter Island, Scooby Doo.
- Those endings are essential if you want to know the meaning of the film.
- Some people love to know how something ends. They get a book and skip to the end to see how it wraps up before deciding if they want to read it. I call those people cheaters. You can call them chronologically challenged or readers with literary commitment issues.
- Others don't want any spoilers. Try to tell them how a movie ends or a Cowboys score and they'll turn into a kid with their fingers in their ears, screaming la la la…
- But when it comes to the Bible, we have a tendency to get tired and give up far too early. We just kinda skip over the concluding section of books. After all, we've got through the good stuff right?
- What's left? So and so said hello. Tell him hi back.
- Do we really need to spend an entire Sunday morning hearing that? Is that really gonna change your life.
- And my answer is yes. You know why?
- Because I happen to believe that 2 Timothy 3 is true.
- When Paul writes:
    - *All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.* (2 Timothy 3:16–17)
- I believe him. If Hebrews 13:22-25 is scripture, and it is, then it is by definition inspired by God and therefore profitable, useful, beneficial, good, authoritative.
- IOW, think of this text as a fishing pond. The owner of the pond says, there are some big fish in there. And they're hungry. But its your job to catch them. There's a feast below the surface.
- Whether I do a good job this morning in helping you to see the teaching, reproof, correction, and training in righteousness remains to be seen, but the point is that the passage is pregnant with revelatory power for us. There's nutrition in this text…a rich table spread out before us.
- So I want us to approach it with anticipation, with expectation. The whole message of the book is to persevere, don't give up, don't give in…so that's my message this morning as well.
- Don't look past this yet. Sit in it for just a few minutes more.
- We see this all the time in sports. A team is so focused on next week's game that they take their eyes off their current opponent, but I don't want us to do that because there is something for us to hear this morning in this text.
- Nothing in Scripture is irrelevant or superfluous. Its all good.

- We just have to see it. So to that end, let's pray along with the Psalmist who writes:
    - *Open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law.* (Psalm 119:18)
- Its here. There is wonder to behold. May we have eyes to see and ears to hear. Let's pray.
- Self, others, me.
- I can't very well conclude a series without a reminder of where we've been.
- So let's set the scene. The context.
- The message of Hebrews is the glory of God in the supremacy, sufficiency & superiority of His Son.
- Christ is better is the bell we've rung just about every single Sunday over the past 18 months.
- Christ is better than the angels in chapters 1 and 2. Better than Moses in chapter 3. Better than Joshua leading us into a better land and better rest in chapter 4. Better than Melchizedek in chapters 5 and 6.
- But in chapters 7-10 we see the real heart of the book showcases that Christ is a better priest who has offered a better sacrifice in a better tabernacle in augurating a better covenant on the basis of better promises.
- Better hope, better covenant, better promises, better sacrifices, better possession, better country, better life, better word.
- 13 out of the 19 NT uses of that word occur in this one book.
- And because Christ is better, it would be utterly foolish, futile, and even fatal to reject Him.
- To choose the shadow over the substance.
- Rather than drift or fall away, we're implored to hold fast, to draw near.
- To draw near to His throne of grace.
- As 4:16 says:
    - *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* (Hebrews 4:16)
- As we talked about a year ago, the fact that God's throne was associated with grace is incredible because the typical connotation of the throne was judgment. Think of the prophet seeing God seated on his throne in Isaiah 6 and saying, woe is me, I am undone.
- Why? Because God is holy. And so a holy God on a holy throne is a threat to unholy people.
- But in describing the throne as a throne of grace, we see the heart of Hebrews which is that we have been effectually cleansed, perfected, sanctified, made holy by the blood of Christ.
- So what was formerly a threat is now a joy. A throne of judgment is a throne of grace.
- So we draw near to God, and not only to God, but also to each other.
- We've seen that this isn't a solo individualistic endeavor.
- We are told to draw near and to not drift, but Hebrews has repeated over and over again that this can only be accomplished together.
- For example, in Hebrews 10:19-22, we read this
    - *Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain, that is, through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.* (Hebrews 10:19–22)
- Notice the same language as in chapter 4. Draw near with confidence.
- But keep reading.
    - *Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, not*

neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near. (Hebrews 10:23–25)

- Notice the communal element. We stir up each other and encourage each other and meet together. In other words, God hasn't merely said, you individual Christian see to it that you individual Christian draw near, but also bring your brothers and sisters. See to it that they make it as well.
- Imagine if Samwise had left Frodo behind and made it all the way to Mordor by himself. Could he have confidently said, I did my part? I got here. Of course not. Why not? Because his mission was to make sure Frodo made it. Well, likewise, your mission isn't just to make sure that you make it, but also to make sure I do, and the Gabas, Suthers, Phaups, Natalie, Mark, even Jared Hulcy.
- And its really hard to do that on the fringes. That's why last month in TEC we talked about the importance of prioritizing the weekly gathering and this morning we talked about the necessity of meaningful membership in a local body of Christ.
- Because you cannot fulfill your responsibility to a body without a body.
- Try it. Try to love another without another to love. Try to serve another without another to serve. You literally can't do it. Dozens and dozens of commands are impossible for you to fulfill on your own and some of them can't even be obeyed sporadically. Many of them require regular and consistent relationship.
- For example, in chapter 3:12 we read this
    - *Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.* (Hebrews 3:12)
- Notice, that's the theme. Don't fall away, but instead hold fast.
- But how is that accomplished? Keep reading
    - *But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.* (Hebrews 3:13)
- Notice not only the communal element of exhortation, but also the rhythm and frequency in the phrase: every day. That implies regularity, consistency, relationship, that isn't casual and cavalier. That takes commitment. Which all presupposes the church.
- A Christian without a church is like Voldemort without a body - stunted, deformed, disordered, and relatively weak.
- I mention that because although it isn't a dominant key in today's passage, we'll see a little hint of the importance of community in our text.
- So with all of that in mind, lets look at our passage starting in vs. 22.

***I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly.* (Hebrews 13:22)**

- Just a minute ago we read Hebrews 3:13 where the author says to exhort one another every day. That word exhort in Hebrew is parakaleo. Guess what the Greek word translated as appeal is here in chapter 13? Parakaleo. Same word.
    - I appeal. I urge. I implore. I exhort you.
    - In other words, I'm putting my money where my mouth is. I'm doing to you what I'm telling you to do for each other.
- Why? Because you are brothers. Notice that word.
- We've seen that theme in Hebrews before. The importance of the covenant community as a family. Back in chapter 2 we read this:

    - *For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, saying, "I will tell of your name to my brothers; in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise."* (Hebrews 2:11–12)
- Because we're members of the same family, we should not give up meeting, be hospitable to 1 another, serve & sacrifice for 1 another, remember those in prison, & exhort 1 another.
- Inevitably whenever someone has a weak connection to the church, they have an anemic ecclesiology in which they really don't consider their fellow believers to be brothers and sisters. Acquaintances, friends even, but not siblings. That's much too close, that demands far too much.
- And that's the problem. We don't want relationships that infringe upon us. We want easy friendships, casual relationships. We don't want to have to get up in the middle of the night or give up our money or sacrifice our comforts. We don't want to be challenged and corrected and confronted and convicted. In short, we don't really want the church to be the church. We want church to be just a place I go whenever I feel like it…kinda like a gym.
- We may like those next to us in the pews, but we don't love them, and certainly don't think that we need them. If that's you, you can't really resonate with the imagery of the family or the body of Christ in which Paul says, the eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you.
- If you're trying to pursue Christ without pursuing His body, then you're effectively calling him a liar. Christ says, you can't say, I have no need of you and you say, yeah I can.
- These familial and anatomical images are some of the dominant depictions that God uses to help loosen our enslavement to self, our atomistic bonds. To free us to love and serve others. To free us from our narcissistic self-absorption.
- The author is saying, I exhorted you, my brothers and sisters to exhort your brothers and sisters and now I'm exhorting you to bear with my fraternal word of exhortation. And yes, the word exhortation there is the same root as parakaleo.
- That phrase word of exhortation is used one other time in the NT.
- In Acts 13 Paul and Barnabas are in Antioch and they go into a synagogue and we read this:
    - *After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent a message to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have any word of encouragement for the people, say it."* (Acts 13:15)
- And Paul responds by preaching a sermon. That's what a word of exhortation is.
- Hebrews isn't a systematic theology. It isn't a theological treatise or essay, it's a literary sermon. And as a sermon, its intended to move the readers.
- To move them to do what? To know, love, and obey the word of God.
- That's the point of a sermon. To understand what God is saying in the head, to treasure it as good in the heart, and then to respond with the hands in worshipful obedience.
- That's what the author is urging them to do. To hold fast. To stay firm. To persevere, to endure.
- He's warned them against apostasy & urged perseverance & comforted the suffering & summoned to faithfulness. It comforts the afflicted & afflicts the comfortable in other words.
- Will you bear with this word? Will you persevere? Will you endure to the end. Not just the 4th quarter or 9th inning, but all the way to the final out, the final whistle, the final word.
- Why must you bear with and endure? Why does he choose that verb? A word that signifies struggle and hardship. Well, because its been a hard word.
- With severe warnings about the dangers of apostasy. And dense passages about Melchizedek and the architecture of the tabernacle. And convicting texts about God's loving, but hard discipline and our need to discipline ourselves for the sake of godliness.

- So yeah, the journey through these pages takes some endurance, some fortitude, some gumption. Congrats for making it through the past 18 months. Not all have.
- Its been a challenging word, but a relatively short word. After all, he says he's written briefly.
- Now, some of you say, I beg to differ, there aint nothing brief about it, but brevity is relative.
- For example, if I recommended a movie and said that it was 10 hours, there's no way you would watch it, but if I recommended a limited series that was 10 episodes in 1 hour segments, some of you would binge watch it this weekend.
- Nowadays if I have to wait 3 or 4 seconds for something to load on my computer, I'm stressed out, but I remember the days of dial up when every single time you wanted to get on the internet you experienced 60 seconds of telephonic screeching like some sort of digital exorcism.
- So brevity is relative.
- Why does the author mention the brevity at all? Well, its something he's already implied elsewhere. For example,
    - *About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.* (Hebrews 5:11)
    - *…Of these things we cannot now speak in detail.* (Hebrews 9:5)
    - *And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets…* (Hebrews 11:32)
- Here's the point: as comprehensive as Hebrews is, its not exhaustive. How could it be in speaking of the supremacy of Christ? The glory of Christ. The authority of Christ.
- This reminds me of what John writes at the end of his gospel
    - *Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.* (John 21:25)
- IOW, Christ is inexhaustible, infinite, eternal. So, yeah, in expounding His superiority and supremacy, this is a very very very brief word. The author spent 13 chapters, we've spent 18 months. He could have written a trillion chapters and we could have spent eternity expounding all of the contours of Christ's person and work and we'd barely make a dent.
- How could we when the subject matter is eternal and infinite?
- As Job 26:14 says
    - *Behold, these are but the outskirts of his ways, and how small a whisper do we hear of him…* (Job 26:14)
- Everything in here is true and good, but its but the fringes of Christ's glory. That's the nature of infinity. We've spent 18 months learning about Him and are no closer to the end than when we began.
- So bear with this word because even this is good.
- It may not tickle your fancy or entertain you or satisfy your flesh, but its good. There is meat left on the bones if only we'll endure.
- Let's keep going. Vs. 23.

You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon. **(Hebrews 13:23)**

- Every time I talk to my mom on the phone she'll give me the Baytown scuttlebutt. That's where I'm from BTW, Baytown, TX. So she'll tell me about old neighbors that have died or so and so has cancer or had a baby or whatever.

- Most of the time that will accompany some sort of prayer request. Well, that's what I think of this statement about Timothy. Perhaps the church had been praying for his release so the author gives them the latest update.
- We have no reason to assume this is anyone other than the Timothy we know from the rest of the NT as a companion of Paul & that's the scholarly consensus so let's make sure we all remember who he was.
- We went into a bit more depth when we preached through 1 Timothy when we planted the church 4 years ago, but by way of reminder, Timothy was converted through the influence of his mother, Eunice and grandmother named Lois.
- Paul first encountered him in Lystra and since he was the son of a Gentile father and Jewish mother, he was circumcised before accompanying the apostle on his journeys.
- And he quickly became one of Paul's closest missionary coworkers. He's mentioned as a co-sender of multiple letters & was himself the recipient of 2 canonical letters. He ministered with Paul in places like Corinth, Thessalonica, & Philippi & was later mentioned in Rome & Ephesus.
- So Timothy is a big deal. About as close to apostolic influence as a non-apostle can be.
- And though we don't have any other explicit record of Timothy being imprisoned, it seems like he has recently been imprisoned and released.
- BTW, this reference to Timothy is one of the reasons that many people think that Paul was the author of Hebrews or at least that the author was someone in the Pauline circle like Barnabas or Apollos or something. If you want to hear some of those theories, go back and listen to our first sermon.
- In the 3rd century, Origen said
    - "But who wrote the epistle, in truth, only God knows." (Origen)
    - And after 18 months of living in the book, I'm no closer to an answer.
- Why he's in prison, who wrote the book, to whom was it addressed, did the readers know Timothy personally or merely know of him by reputation?
- As with so many of the background matters in Hebrews, we don't know. And if we don't know, then we need to be content with not knowing given our understanding of the perspicuity of Scripture.
- What does perspicuity mean? Well, ironically, the perspicuity of Scripture refers to its clarity. That's ironic because no one knows what perspicuity means. But it means clarity.
- And when it comes to clarity, the point is that everything we need to know is sufficiently clear.
- Here's the definition from the Westminster Confession of faith
    - "All things in Scripture are not alike plain in themselves, nor alike clear unto all. Yet, those things that are necessary to be known, believed, and observed for salvation are so clearly propounded, and opened in some place of Scripture or another, that not only the learned, but the unlearned, in a due use of the ordinary means, may attain unto a sufficient understanding of them." (Westminster Confession)
- Notice not everything is equally clear. In fact, clarity doesn't mean that nothing is hard to understand. Scripture itself affirms that.
- Look at 2 Peter 3:15-16
    - *And count the patience of our Lord as salvation, just as our beloved brother Paul also wrote to you according to the wisdom given him, as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.* (2 Peter 3:15–16)
- The Bible itself says there are some things in here that are hard to understand.

- As has been said, Scripture is like a river which is deep enough for an elephant to dive below the surface, but shallow enough for a child to wade in its waters.
- All that is necessary. All that we desperately need to know is sufficiently clear.
- So Timothy has been released and the author hopes to come with him to see the readers in person. That's a theme we see in many epistles. A reminder that these are real people with real lives and real stories and real desires. They have friends and families. They long to see each other face to face. They aren't faceless names on a page.
- The gospel was incarnated into history into the lives of real people with lives and loves.
- Again, the church is a body, a family.
- Let's keep going. Vs. 24.

***Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings.* (Hebrews 13:24)**

- This too is a familiar epistolary greeting. Most epistles end with some sort of list of greetings. Sometimes more specific in naming individuals, sometimes more generic.
- Here the author refers once again to the leaders. We've seen multiple references to them over the past few weeks: remember your leaders, obey and submit to them, and now greet them.
- But not only them, also all the saints.
- Or literally, the holy ones. That's what a saint is. Literally, one who is holy.
- Now in Catholic theology, that's a special type of person. A particularly venerable individual, the Delta force of Christians, the best of the best, the spiritually elite.
- But according to Protestant theology a saint is a general reference to anyone who is in Christ.
- That's what the whole theology that Hebrews has established. Remember what Christ's priestly ministry has accomplished. A better sacrifice has affected a better salvation, an effectual salvation. What the law could not do, Christ has done.
- He has perfected His people. As we read in chapter 10
    - *And by that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.* (Hebrews 10:10)
- That's true not just for some special class of Christian, but for all who are in Christ. If you are in Christ then you are sanctified. You are positionally set apart, consecrated, and purified.
- We have been sanctified, that is made holy, perfected through Christ. We haven't yet experienced the full implications of that due to the already, but not yet nature of salvation, but the die is cast, all that is His is ours. We are perfected. We are holy.
- So greet all the saints, means, greet the church. Rather than listing out a bunch of names he just covers it with a blanket greeting. Greet your brothers and sisters in the common faith.
- And then he says, btw, some people want to say howdy to you as well. Namely, those from Italy.
- This could be taken a couple of ways.
- It could mean that the author is in Italy and those who are with him send greetings.
- Or it could mean that some from Italy have left, perhaps when many Jews and Christians were exiled from Rome by Emperor Claudius in 49AD.
- In that case they have eventually hooked up with the author in some other city and they're writing back home assuming the author is writing to a church in Italy.
- Again, we don't have enough information to go beyond speculation as to which theory is best, but I'd put my money on the latter explanation. It seems more likely to me that these Romans are sending greetings back to their homeland.

- But, again, in cases where Scripture doesn't give us enough information to figure something out, we have to conclude that it isn't something that we need to know…which takes a certain modesty on our part to confess. It takes hermeneutical humility.
- God hasn't told us everything we might want to know, but He has given us all that is necessary for life and godliness, for trusting and obeying Him fully. And part of trusting Him is trusting in the sufficiency of His word. Trusting that He has given us all that we need to know.
- So let's keep going. Vs. 25

***Grace be with all of you*. (Hebrews 13:25)**

- We could do an entire sermon on this one verse. We won't, but we could. I know some of you already feel like I'm milking these last couple of sermons, but there's just so much here!
- You could literally do an entire sermon on the first word of this verse. Grace. We could spent hours and days unpacking that and wouldn't exhaust it, though I'm sure we'd be exhausted.
- We won't be able to fully unpack this, but I want to at least try to ring it out to get as many drops as we can, to make sure there is no meat left on the bone.
- So one interesting thing to note is that typical secular epistolary convention was to begin a letter with greetings, but that would typically involve the word charein.
- For instance, when a military commander writes to the governor in Acts 23, he writes:
    - *Claudius Lysias, to his Excellency the governor Felix, greetings [charein].* (Acts 23:26)
- Charein originally meant to rejoice. It would be like saying hope you are well or something, but over time it lost that meaning and just functioned like a conventional greeting.
- Kinda like goodbye originally meant God be with you, but eventually lost that religious connotation & just became a cultural expression. So charein became the common Greek custom.
- But Paul and other biblical authors change it from charein to charis which means grace.
- In other words, they take a standard greeting and infuse it with theological importance.
- And though the word grace doesn't saturate Hebrews, the concept certainly does and we see it a few significant times. For instance,
    - *Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.* (Hebrews 4:16)
- So the goal of the author is expressed in Hebrews 12:15 as
    - *See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled…* (Hebrews 12:15)
- Although the word isn't dominant, the necessity of grace is front & center. The entire book of Heb hinges on grace because creation and redemption themselves hinge on the grace of God.
- What is grace? It is unmerited favor. Or, to put it more bluntly, its actually demerited favor. It isn't just that you haven't earned God's favor, but that you have actively worked against it. You've run hard and fast in the exact opposite direction. That's what depravity entails. You aren't a passive spectator in cosmic rebellion, you're an active participant in the protest against God.
- You were by nature a child of wrath, evil, wicked, dark, depraved, a lover of self and hater of God.
- But Christ as Ephesians says. By grace you have been saved.
- So oh to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be.
- And this call for grace functions like a benediction which we talked about last week. Remember that a benediction is more than a prayer, its a promise. It is a declaration of divine intention.

- That's one of the significant features of Paul's letters in particular. They all begin and end with grace. Grace is the bookend, the inclusio which frames the letter because the letter itself is grace.
- The fact that Hebrews doesn't begin with a grace greeting is one of the reasons that many argue against Pauline authorship. Regardless, the letter ends on this note of grace.
- And grace functions as a promise in the life of a believer. Again, this is a benediction…a blessing.
- This relates to something called speech act theory which tells us that God does more than just tell us propositional truth with His words. He creates, restores, redeems, & curses by His word.
- He says, let there be light and there is light. His speaking is effectual. It does something. It isn't impotent or anemic.
- As an illustration of this, think about the power of the words of a pastor officiating a wedding. When I proclaim the words, I now pronounce you husband & wife, something happens with those words. A sexual act which an hour earlier would have been immoral is now good and right. Suddenly, seemingly magically. Why? Because those words did something. Or, we could say that God did something thru those words. At least in the eyes of the state and the witnesses, they are now actually united and thus welcome to partake of the marital bed to consummate the union.
- Likewise, God does things with His words. We call this the efficacy of His word & see it in places like Isaiah 55
    - *For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.* (Isaiah 55:10–11)
- This all might sound really academic to you, so let me bring it down a bit. Bottom line, when the author writes, grace to you, he means it. He isn't just being polite or customary. He is blessing the readers.
- He is speaking theologically and pastorally.
- The ending of Hebrews is personal. Timothy is coming. Greet the leaders and saints. The Italians greet you.
- But its also pastoral and practical. Practical in the sense that nothing is more practically necessary than grace.
- He is reminding us that all of God's works towards us are grace. After all, He's promised to work all things for good, which is grace.
- All that you have is grace if you are in Christ. Your family, your church, your freedom, the ability to read this letter and sit among the saints this morning, the coffee you drank and eggs you ate, the desire to sing of grace, the weather, your heartbeat and breath, your job and talents, the hardships and discipline, the rebukes and correction, the encouragement and exhortation. All is grace. All is good. All is designed by God to draw you to worship, to conform you to the image of His Son.
- To encourage you to draw near rather than flee.
- The grace of the new covenant that cleanses you from all sin, the grace that works out your sanctification, the grace that keeps you from apostasy, the grace that tethers you to community, the grace the progressively transforms your affections and actions, the grace to fight to believe that all you have is grace, all of that is yours in Christ. All of that is a downstream implication of the new covenant reality ushered in by Christ's life, death, and resurrection.

- Grace is the sphere in which we exist, its the air we breathe and the food we eat, grace is what tethers us to the one in whom we live and move and have our being, the Father of all good gifts.
- And so Hebrews ends where it began, with a reminder of our need. What do we need? We need grace. We need the one who is, to use the language of chapter 1, the heir of all things, the radiance of God's glory and the exact imprint of His nature. The one who had made perfect purification for sin and sat down at the right hand of God. Who sat because the work is done. Who sits until the day He'll return and make all things new.
- Grace to overcome temptation, grace to draw near to Christ, grace to not stop meeting together, grace to love the body, grace to be charitable and hospitable, grace to repent of sin, grace to believe that Christ is sufficient, Christ is supreme, Christ is better.
- So grace to you, Christian. Amen. Let's pray.

Communion

- Fence table
- Well, as we wrap up the book of Hebrews and in light of its emphasis on community, I want to take another opportunity to stress the corporate nature of communion.
- As we've often said, this meal isn't only about our vertical communion with God, but also our horizontal communion with each other.
- We see that emphasis for example in 1 Corinthians 10:17 where Paul writes:
    - *Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread*. (1 Corinthians 10:17)
- Unfortunately, because of our size, it is logistically difficult for us to see that unity in this meal. We don't have one loaf or one cup so I have to talk about it.
- And we wait and all take it together in order to stress that emphasis.
- But another thing we occasionally do is try to draw that meaning to the forefront of our minds by having us look around.
- So in a second I'm going to encourage you to look around at the body. Make eye contact. Actually look at the faces of the men and women that are around you. And as you do so, pray for your heart to feel what your mind knows to be true and for your hands and feet to do what is true.
- Pray for the unity of the body. Pray against any work of the enemy to divide the body. Pray against bitterness and grievances and resentment and dissension.
- Ask the Lord to help us to live out His will for our unity as a body.
- I know this makes some of you uncomfortable. Some of you each time we do this make eye contact with exactly one person. I guess that's better than none, but I want to encourage you to spend a good 10-15 seconds doing this. Embrace the awkward. Its good for us.
- The word should make us uncomfortable.
- So take some time to look and think and pray and then we'll partake together.
- On the night…