

Title: The Church's Hope

Text: Various Texts

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Good morning. It's a great joy to be with you here today and it's been nice to be here this weekend. I love coming to the country. I had marked off yesterday one of my bucket list and that was I got to ride with Matt in his big case tractor planting corn and I've often said if I weren't a pastor I'd love to be a farmer. I know I would be a very bad farmer, so I have not done that, but I always enjoy the farm and it's great to be here with all of you.

Many of you I've met before and some of you have gone to Mexico with us particularly last year and we have enjoyed having you join with us and thankful for Mike and Diane and for their hosting us this weekend and for a friendship with them that goes back many many many years more than either one of us want to remember.

Back in 1990 at our church I wanted to begin a Bible conference where our people could learn that we're not alone in things that we believe about the scriptures and the sovereignty of God and the salvation that is ours in Jesus Christ. And so, I started that and the first speaker we had was Dr. John Gerstner. You may not know of him, but he was one of the mentors of R.C. Sproul. I had a professor in seminary named John Sproul and I get those two mixed up, but we had him and the next year we had James Montgomery Boice. A few years later we were privileged to have Sinclair Ferguson to speak for us and then a few years after that we had Jerry Bridges. And last year, I think you had Mark Webb. Was he here last year? And we've had him a couple of times, but we have been so blessed over the years to have conference speakers that we've had for these now 36 years. And a lot of my pastor friends says how did you get some of those guys? I said, well I just wrote them a letter and they offered to come. And but God has been so kind and gracious to us to have enjoyed that conference for these many years. But I'm on this side of it now. I've never really done this before to be actually to be here to speak for a conference so I'm very humbled by your invitation and so very thankful to be able to be here with you.

The theme that was given to me is the church and the theme for this weekend is loving what Christ loves. For a believer I think we will be growing in grace to love what Christ loves. And I invite you to turn your Bibles to Ephesians 5 where we are told what Christ loves. And that is that he loves his church. He loves his church. And if we love Christ, I believe it will be a characteristic of a believer's life that he will love what Christ loves. Follow as I read beginning at verse 25 this is in the context of Paul giving instructions about family and marriage and it is here that we have a treasure chest of truth about Christ's love for his bride.

Ephesians 5:25, "Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and he gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his

wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. 'And therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.' This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband."

Will you join me in a word of prayer.

Father, we thank you today that by your doing we are in Christ Jesus who has become to us wisdom from God and righteousness and sanctification and redemption. Thank you for the union that exists between our Savior and his people. Thank you for the love with which you loved us. Father that you spared not your own son, but you delivered him up for us. We thank you Lord Jesus that you willingly laid down your life for your bride, gave your very life as an atoning sacrifice that we may be reconciled to our God the greatest and the best of all beings. And we humbly thank you for that today. And we ask now I ask that you will be pleased to give help in the preaching of your word and also in the hearing of your word by your spirit.

And we ask all of this that the glory of Jesus Christ and in his name, we pray amen.

Just by way of review if you were not here, we over the last two days have been considering this theme of the church and loving what Christ loves. And we looked first of all at the church's glory. The church's glory. What a glorious thing to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ. And we saw that there is only one thing that Christ promised to build, and it is his church. Among many things that Christ did central to all of it is he builds he said, *"He will build his church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it."* And it's glorious for that reason, but it's also glorious because it is Jesus Christ himself who laid down his life for the church.

In all the world God owns everything, the whole universe but there is one thing only one thing that God has ever purchased. Have you ever thought about that? There's only one thing that he has ever bought, he's ever purchased and that is through his son Jesus Christ he has purchased to himself a people from every nation tribe and tongue. And they have been purchased at a great great price. And we're going to be talking about that this morning. But the church is, she is, glorious and there are many things for which we can be thankful to be a part of the church.

Secondly, we talked about the church's mission. Her mission in three E's. There's exaltation, there is edification, there is evangelism. And what a joy it has been to be with you here this morning to worship with you and to hear you sing. And what a blessing to lift up the name of the Lord our God. What is the chief end of man but to glorify God and enjoy him forever? And we do that when we worship together. We want to glorify God and at the same time we are enjoying who he is for us. And so, there is exaltation but there is also edification. The body of Christ is where we are to build up one another to edify one another and that is a responsibility that we have. And then there is evangelism locally and globally. God

saves people from the pew, and he saves them from the pig pen. And we are thankful for being able to be those who herald the very word of God and the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And then yesterday afternoon the last session we talked about the church's ministers. The church's ministers. Who are the ministers in the church of Jesus Christ? Well, there is a sense in which it's your pastors, your elders, but I'm looking here at the ministers of the church of Jesus Christ. He has given to each of us if we are in Christ he has given us a gift and that gift is to be used or we should say a gift, or gifts and those gifts are to be used to minister to others. We are called to be ministers. We are called to follow after our Lord Jesus Christ who was among us as one who served. Jesus said, *"I did not come to be served."* It would certainly be right for that to be the case. *"I didn't come to be served but I came to serve and to give my life a ransom for many."*

And we are here today because Christ the Lord of glory, the Son of God, took upon himself flesh and blood entered into our world, and he came, and he served us. And he didn't just do that two thousand years ago. He continues to do that. He is seated at the right hand of the Father right now and he is ever living to intercede for us. And we ought to be reflecting our Savior. We ought to be those who are serving one another with gifts that God has given to us. Serving in the body of Christ, building it up, to become one mature man in Christ that we're not tossed to and fro. And we are to be serving in that way.

Matthew 25 Jesus talks about that day when in the great judgment *"he's going to separate the sheep and the goat.... And he will say to those on his right hand to those who are sheep enter into the kingdom that has been prepared for you before the world ever began. For you fed me when I was hungry, you gave me a drink of water when I was thirsty, when I was a stranger you came and you visited me, and when I was in prison you came and visited me, when I was sick you came. And those who are the sheep will say, 'When Jesus did we ever see you sick or hungry or thirsty?'"* And you remember what he said? *"And as much as you did it unto the least of these my brethren, you have done it,"* what, *"unto me."* *"Done it unto me."* You have the opportunity to be a servant in that way. As you serve one another you are serving Christ. You're serving his bride and so we are all called to be ministers.

Why don't I conclude this morning with the fourth topic, and it is the church's hope. The church's hope. We have a glorious hope and a glorious destiny as the people of God. And sometimes as we look at the church, sometimes it can be a discouraging thing. We look at the world around us, we wonder you know if the church is really accomplishing anything. And sometimes we can be discouraged. And we can be discouraged in our own lives but there is a glorious destiny that is set apart for the church of Jesus Christ. Here in Ephesians 5 Paul refers to this relationship that exists between Christ and his people. In various places in the New Testament the church is the church. They are distinct people the ekklesia, those who have been called out by the grace of God. And they've been made a part of a new community, a new group of people, the church and they're a family.

We are brothers and sisters. We have an elder brother. His name is Jesus Christ. And there is also the church that is the household of God. It is the church of the living God. This is where God makes his home among his people. He dwells with them and in them. The church of Jesus Christ is a flock. Jesus is our

great shepherd, and we are his sheep. The church is a building and built upon the foundation of the apostles and prophets. Jesus being the chief cornerstone. And we are living stones that are being built up in this spiritual house where we offer up spiritual sacrifices to our God.

But one of the most beautiful of all of the illustrations of the relationship that exists between Christ and his people is what we find here in Ephesians 5. The relationship of the bride with her bridegroom. Paul says here that we are the bride and Christ is the bridegroom. And in a sense the whole Bible is a story that is leading up to a great wedding banquet. And it is a story that is speaking to us about a people that have become the bride of the king, and we are awaiting a day where this great banquet will take place. An eternity past the father had given to his son a people to be the bride for his son who is the king.

As we think of Jesus he fulfills three offices for us. He is a prophet. Why do you and I need a prophet? Because we are foolish and ignorant and thank God we have a prophet, but we also have a priest. And why do we need a priest? Because we are sinful, and we are guilty, and Christ is our great high priest. But we also have a king. Why do we need a king? Because we are so helpless, and we are so needy, and Christ is our king who subdues us unto himself as our king and he rules over us, and he will overcome every one of his and our enemies. And the father has from eternity past, he has given to his son a people to be his bride. To be the bride of this great king.

But you know when we think about those people that were given to him which Jesus talks about in John 6, *"The Father has given to me a people."* *"And these that he has given to me I am going to give them life eternal life and I am going to raise them up in the last day and in that day not one of those will be missing."* So, the father has given to his son a people that no man can number but these are not the people we would think that you would give to your son for a bride. When you look at the scripture and it speaks to us of what we are as fallen sons and daughters of Adam. As we think of the bride that was given by the father in this, what we could call an arranged marriage, she is not someone that you would be looking for yourself to marry. She is not the kind of girl that you would want your son to marry.

She is one who has fallen in Adam is unfit she is defiled, she is unlovely, she is unworthy to be the bride of this great king. But Jesus's mission as he was sent into the world by his father was to come and to raise up and give eternal life to a bride like this. A people like this defiled by their sins and to bring about a salvation and to make her to be lovely and beautiful and fit for his presence. And so out of love the father gave this people to Christ as his bride. And out of love for his father and love for his bride Jesus undertakes everything necessary to make us all together lovely. It's a wonderful story and the Bible is moving in this direction in the last day when this will all come to pass when there will be this great wedding banquet at the end of history.

And so, Paul as he's speaking to husbands in verse 25 says, *"Husbands, love your wives."* How? Husbands here is a high calling for us. *"You love your wives, even as Christ loved his church and he gave himself up for her."* This was really good news in the first century for a woman if she had a Christian husband. To hear Paul say, *"Husbands you love your wife as Christ loved the church."* And that is a high calling for us but what I want to see here is that it is Christ who is the one who loved the church and the one who gave himself

for her. This word gave himself up, gave himself for her, is a word that means to deliver over, to give into the hands of another.

And it's used four times interestingly enough in the Passion Week. This very word to give over, to deliver up, it's used first of all of Judas. It was Judas who delivered up Jesus to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver. It was the chief priests who delivered up Jesus over to Pilate to be crucified. It was Pilate who delivered up to the soldiers Jesus so that he would be crucified. He delivered him over and it was the soldiers who delivered up Jesus to the cross to be crucified. But the amazing thing is that the same word is used here of Jesus and the same word is used of God the Father.

In Romans 8:31 & 32 we have this amazing statement, *"If God is for us, who could be against us?"* It's an amazing statement that God is for us. But then he goes on to say this, *"If God did not spare,"* and that's a reference I believe to the Father, *"if God the Father did not spare his own Son but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him give us all things?"* But it was the father who spared not his own son and he delivered him up. And the point is, there he was delivered up to the cross to bring about our redemption. But here it is now used of the son that he gave himself up. He delivered himself up to the cross. For the sake of his bride, he gave himself up. And we see here the great love of the bridegroom. That he loves the bride. Those given to him by his father. And we see it in his self-denying sacrificial love that he delivered himself over to the cross on her behalf.

We read in John 10 in that chapter that speaks about Jesus as being the great shepherd of his sheep and Jesus says there, *"I am the good shepherd. And the good shepherd gives his life for the sheep.... My father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down."* So, we might ask the question who delivered Jesus up to be crucified? Was it Judas? Was it the chief priest? Was it pilot? Was it the religious or was it the soldiers? Was it the Father or was it Jesus? Yes, all of the above. But ultimately it was the father, and it was the son who willingly gave himself.

This is kind of a Genesis 50:20 of the New Testament. You remember Joseph. You know he said to his brothers, *"what you meant for evil, God meant for good."* And here it is, what these men meant for evil, Judas and the chief priest and pilot, what they all meant for evil God meant for good. So, the ultimate cause of all of this behind it is the sovereign hand of God accomplishing the redemption of a people who are the bride of Jesus Christ. So here is Acts 2, Peter telling us that this man you delivered up with wicked hands to be crucified but he was delivered up Peter says by the determined counsel and the foreknowledge of God. But it was also Christ who delivered up himself for his bride. He purchased her and we see this morning the glory of our bridegroom who loved us in this way.

Paul goes on to tell us he gives us here two purpose statements. In verse 26, *"He gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word."* And so here we see that Jesus offered himself up that she might be cleansed, that she might be washed, that she might be clean because from the top of our head to the bottom of our souls there is no soundness in us only sin and defilement. But here is Christ who first of all delivers himself up that he might sanctify her. That she might be set apart.

This is a word that is used often in the Old Testament of things that were sanctified. They were set apart from common use to be used in the service of God and in the temple and in the tabernacle. So, there were holy pots and pans that were used in the service in the tabernacle. There was incense that you could only use for in the temple. These were sanctified. They were set apart from common use to a special use. And it is Jesus Christ who has set us apart to be his own special people, to be his bride, to be his possession, and as it were Jesus says I take you to be my wife. And I do everything necessary to sanctify you and set you apart to that end.

And then he talks about being cleansed and being washed. She's dirty, she's defiled, she's morally unclean. We have all broken the law of God in numerous ways with our God belittling sins, our idolatries, our sins of omission, our sins of commission. In the book of common prayers, I love that line it says Lord forgive us for we have done the things that we ought not to have done and we have not done, or we have done the things we shouldn't do, and we have left undone the things that we should do. Sins of omission. Sins of commission. We're like sheep going our own way living our life for ourselves in defiance of the very God who made us, who created us. But here is Jesus who brings about a cleansing to make pure, to make holy, to cleanse from wickedness and defilement. Sins pollution.

About ten or twelve years ago I got a picture of the gospel from my neighbor. One of my neighbors came and knocked on my door and he said Kevin you need to come across the street we need help. And my elderly neighbor, he was probably in his middle to late eighties and his wife was in the hospital, he was home alone. It was a fall day. And he was just out in his backyard look walking around and observing things in his backyard. And he came up to a septic tank and was standing on top of it. Probably checking it out. It was a very old septic tank and as he was standing there the whole top of the septic tank broke. He went down into his own septic tank and there was a piece of concrete that lodged his leg against the wall. He couldn't do anything, and he was up to here in his own excrement. And he was there for about an hour and a half before our neighbor even found him. He probably would have died had that not been the case, but I went over there and saw this picture. And within a short time, the police were there, the fire department was there, the rescue group.

It was a big scene and even the news. This got out to the news and there were these many stations there recording all of this event and it was all on the nightly news. Must have been a slow night for news but that was what was on the news. And during this as they came to help him, there were two men that had on these asbestos white suits. And after they had pumped out the septic tank these two men went down in there and they brought him out. And I thought what a beautiful picture of the gospel.

Jesus Christ the sinless son of God, wholly innocent and undefiled came down from heaven, he entered into our septic tank. We were defiled, we were unclean, and he came to set us apart to himself. To cleanse us and to wash us to be a fit bride. What can wash away my sins nothing but the blood of Jesus Christ. And so, this is this process of Jesus as our great bridegroom who comes to clean us up. To make us fit for our holy God and also to begin this work of sanctification in us in washing us through his word. Jesus prayed Father sanctify them with your truth. Your word is truth. Sanctify them. Make them to be holy. And

we are involved in this progressive sanctification and that's the result of the work of our Savior the Lord Jesus Christ.

But the second purpose that we see here is that he has set us apart and he's purified us. But finally for this purpose. Verse 27, *"so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish."* And this has a forward look. This is the glorious destiny of the church of Jesus Christ. That he's going to present that bride in the last day to be there spotless and clean fit for the marriage feast of the lamb. The customs in the day of Christ for marriage was first of all a betrothal. It's kind of like our engagement when some couple gets engaged there's a ring that's exchanged and they're committing themselves to one another. But in the betrothal, it's a little more binding. There would be witnesses. There would be terms of the marriage that would be accepted and there would be witnesses to this and it was really a legally binding kind of agreement.

Paul said in 2 Corinthians 11:2 that, *"I have betrothed you to one husband, and that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."* So, there was the betrothal and then there was this interval between the betrothal and the actual wedding. There would be a payment of a dowry to the bride, to the father of the bride, and we know that we have been bought with a price. A great price. And this is the only thing that God has ever bought. It is his people through the blood of his son. But then there was a preparation, a procession with a view to the wedding feast. The bride would prepare herself in her home and the groom would come with his groomsmen and they were adorned, and they would come to the bride's house. And there would be this festive mood and they would all then go for this great wedding feast, the wedding banquet, and sometimes it could last up to seven days.

So, as we think about that we are now in the interval between the ascension of Christ and his return. Because Jesus said, *"I'm going to prepare a place for you, but I will come again and I will receive you unto myself, that where I am there you may be also."* He loves his bride, and he longs for his bride to be with him. And so, we're in that interval in between. We're in the already and the not yet. We are looking forward for the coming of our great bridegroom and his coming to receive his bride. And so, when that takes place Paul says, *"that he will present the church to himself in splendor."* In splendor. New King James says, *"he will present her as a glorious church."* The NIV says, *"he will present to himself a radiant church, she will be seen in all of her glory and beauty on that great day."* It will be a royal wedding.

Some of you here may remember the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana. As I've gotten older a lot of my illustrations the younger people don't really know much about that but some of you remember that was the wedding of the decade. And this great wedding and all the pomp and circumstances with that. Here is this great wedding feast when the bride will be presented, and she will be seen in glory and in beauty. But that's not what she was when she was given by the father to his son. She was anything but that. But here is a bride that has been made pure. She's been cleaned up. She's been made glorious. And she will be presented in that day having removed every spot, every blemish, every wrinkle. As Samuel Stone wrote in his hymn, from heaven he came and sought her to be his holy bride and with his own blood he bought her and for her life he died.

When we get to the book of Revelations as it looks to the future and we will see our great king, he will overcome all of his and our enemies. And there will be that great Babylon that has fallen. The great city of man that is opposed God, has opposed his Christ, his anointed one. This great Babylon will fall and there will be singing. Hallelujah for the Lord God omnipotent he reigns. And John the apostle who writes this, he says, *"he heard this great voice like peals of thunder.... Let us be glad and rejoice and give him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and his Wife has made herself ready.... Blessed are those who are called to the marriage supper of the Lamb."* Here is the consummation of all of history, the bride is presented in all of her glory, and she meets her bridegroom. And she is a beautiful, beautiful bride adorned in jewels, in righteousness because of her bridegroom her beauty is a derived beauty. It has come to her by the grace of God through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And our brother read for us from Revelation 21 a beautiful passage of the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God. *"And again, we hear a voice, 'Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men. And he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and he shall be their God.'"* And Revelation 19 we have this wonderful marriage feast of the lamb and it's unlike any other wedding banquet.

I went online this week just to find out what is probably one of the most expensive weddings ever and I found out it was in I think back in 2016 in Moscow of all places. There was a Russian heiress and there was an oil man who was an oil heir to a vast fortune. And this couple was married in Moscow and this wedding cost a billion dollars. It kind of made Prince Charles and Diana's wedding pale in comparison. It was only 48 million dollars.

But this wedding feast surpasses them all. By God's grace if we be in Christ, we will be this is our destiny the church now we have a lot of warts, we've got a lot of blemishes, but God is at work in his people, and this is our glorious destiny. We should be ushered into the presence of our God, and we shall see our Redeemer face to face. And John writes he said this, he said, *"Beloved what amazing love we have received that we should be called the sons of God."* And we know not what we're going to be but when we see him, we shall be like him. This progressive sanctification, this work that Christ is doing in us by his spirit to make us progressively more and more holy, more and more like Christ, more and more beautiful it will finally be accomplished in that day. When we see him, we shall be like him. So, here's our bridegroom who has loved his church. And it's really a Cinderella story isn't it but it's not a fairy tale. This is true, this is what Christ is going to do for us and will do for us and all of his history is leading in that direction.

So, as we close this morning, what a glorious privilege it is to be a part of the church of Jesus Christ. And how did we get in? It was all of grace. God has translated us out of the kingdom of darkness into the kingdom of his own dear beloved son and we are accepted in him. Years ago, one of our conference speakers after he had been with us and stayed with Jackie and I, my wife, I'm glad she's here with us this weekend but after he stayed with us, he told me on his way out, he said Kevin you married up. I said why I knew that, and most men do. But we married up being joined to this one who has redeemed us and who saved us.

And when I got married to my wife there's really an illustration even in this of the gospel. When we think about the gospel there's a great transaction that has taken place. Our sins were put to the account of Christ when he died on the cross. And to the believing sinner Christ's righteousness has been given to us and we are clothed in his righteousness. When I got married to Jackie, I was finishing up seminary. I had gone to Cedarville, and I had some college debt from Cedarville. I went to grace seminary. I had accumulated some more debt while I was there, and I didn't really have much to my name. I had no car and I had clothes on my back, and I had a lot of debt. On the other hand, my wife Jackie as we were getting ready to get married, I was going to become her husband and she had money in the bank. She had a house full of furniture and she had a brand new 1980 Datsun 280zx sports car. Yeah, people question me why I married her but that wasn't the reason.

But when we stood before my father who married us and we both said I do, suddenly all of her debts all of my debts became her debts which she helped me to pay off. But suddenly I became a part owner of a brand-new sports car. I did marry up. We have all married up. Jesus has taken our sin debt he has borne it in full and he has given to us his perfect righteousness whereby we stand accepted in the beloved. And so, what a glorious privilege. What amazing grace that we have received in Christ.

But we're reminded as husbands especially we are to reflect Christ. We are to love our wife as Christ loved the church. And Paul says here that *"he loved her... and he nourishes and he cherishes her and so it is with Christ in his church."* And so, it should be with us as husbands. And our marriages husbands and wives are to reflect this great marriage. It's interesting what Paul says at the end of Ephesians 5 here. He says in verse 31, *"Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh."* This is the beauty of a God ordained marriage, is they become one. But then he says this, *"This mystery is profound, for I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church."* Our marriages if you're in Christ, your marriage is to be a reflection of the relationship that exists between the bride and the bridegroom.

Husbands loving your wives, your wives loving your husbands and submitting unto them as unto the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's to be seen and revealed in our lives and even in our general conduct. We are to live as those who belong to Christ. But also, we need to remember as we live in this fallen world that we are in transition. We are not home yet and there's still a lot of work to be done in us so that we are called to grow in grace and the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

We can sometimes again become discouraged. It can be discouraged in our own life and sometimes in the church. And I love these words from Robert Murray M'Cheyne, he said, for every one look that you take at yourself, take ten looks at Christ. You ever get discouraged when you look within yourself, I know I'm not who I should be, and I need to make more progress and you can become obsessed in that. But remember one look at self but take ten looks at Christ. Who he is for you, your great bridegroom. And we can say that about the church. For every one look that you look at the church take ten looks at Christ and what he has promised to his people, to his bride, to his church.

Dustin Bengé wrote in his book, it's a little book on loving what Christ loves and I would really recommend that to you, he said the church is beautiful because the lens through which Christ regards her is his cross. Christ sees us through the cross. Ultimately the cross of the Lord Jesus Christ makes her beautiful. It is his sacrificial substitutionary sinless blood that washes her garments as white as snow. The cross of Christ makes her beautiful not only inwardly by justification but also outwardly through sanctification. From the giving of second birth to final glory the righteousness of Christ creates a beautiful bride, a beautiful bride.

What a wonderful hope that we have that Christ will not fail in his mission. I will build my church and all that the father has given to me they're going to come to me. I'm not going to lose a one of them and I'm going to raise them up in that last day. Not one will be missing and there will be this great marriage feast of the lamb. That is our destiny. That is the great glory of the church. And brothers and sisters if we love Christ, we will love what Christ loves and he loves his church.

Now you may be here this morning and you're not a follower and you're not a lover of Christ. I would beseech you to be reconciled to God through this one. The only name given under heaven where you can be saved, cleansed from your sin, reconciled to a holy God and be a part of that great marriage feast that is one day going to take place. Might you run to Jesus Christ turning from your sins, casting the full weight of your soul upon him to save you as he promised to do. Everyone that comes to me, everyone that comes to me no matter how sinful, how vile, *"everyone that comes to me I will not cast him out."* Might you run to Jesus Christ and be found in him.

I often say as a preacher I'm just one beggar telling other beggars where to find bread and it's found in Jesus Christ. May you run to him. I thank you for having my wife and I here this weekend. It's been our joy to be with you and it's a great privilege to be among God's people here to get to know you better. And I pray for you that God will increase his work in you your love for Christ and your love for one another that you might give your heart and soul to love Christ by loving his church being the people that God has called you to be.

Will you pray with me.

Father, I thank you today for the gospel. I thank you for Jesus Christ who's the Savior and the friend of sinners who sat at table with tax collectors and harlots and sinners. We thank you that your church is sinners who have been redeemed by the blood of the lamb. Thank you for your grace that has brought us unto yourself and thank you for the privilege of being part of the church of Jesus Christ. Lord, may you bless this church here, Grace Chapel. May you make your face to shine upon her. Might you bless her mightily I pray. Thank you for this time we've been able to look at our great bridegroom and I pray that we take great hope in who he is for us this day.

And I pray it for his glory and his honor, amen.

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