

Church Membership and Discipline – Part 2

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[0:00] Let me ask you to take out your copy of God's Word and turn with me to Colossians chapter 1. Colossians chapter 1 and the text that we're going to begin with this morning in verses 15 through 20.

! This was precipitated by the present state that we find the church in, in the pandemic in America, conversations being had amongst the elders of CSC, and the final two verses of the aforementioned text in Ephesians chapter 4.

So I'm just going to read those two verses, Ephesians chapter 4, verse 15 and 16. Speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

And I told you that we had this sense and saw the reality that we are struggling in this time because the body feels, and in many ways is, disjointed.

We're not joined as we ought to be, but we're disjointed as we're unable to welcome new members through the ordinance of baptism, and that we are unable to affirm our members' faith and discipline our members through the ordinance of the Lord's Supper.

[1:39] I work to prime our consideration today by making a case to you concerning the importance of church membership and church discipline. If you're uncertain about either of these doctrines, I want to encourage you to study them.

Listen to the recording of last week's teaching. There's many other better teachers than I that speak on this very matter. You can find those things. Read a good book like Church Membership.

This is a little book by Jonathan Lehman. There's a bunch of copies out there in the book note if you'd like to pick up one of those. And, most certainly and most importantly, read the Bible with a mind toward what it has to say on the matter.

What does the Scripture say about us? We so often read the Bible, right, highly individualistically. What does the Scripture say to me? We forget altogether that most of the Bible was written to people, right, to groups of people.

So look at the text in that way and begin to understand it, I believe. Rightly. But this morning we're going to begin with Colossians 1, verse 15 and 20.

[2:43] Again, doing the atypical thing where we're going to depart from the text largely. But I want to begin here. Colossians 1, beginning in verse 15. Jesus Christ is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.

For by him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through him and for him.

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. And through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

What a wonderful, what a glorious text this is. If you've been around for a while, you know that the vision statement for our church is largely based out of this very text.

[3:44] It has been a special text to me, a guiding text to me across many years. I went to go pull some notes out of sermons that I've preached on this text, and realized that across the years I've preached four sermons on this text, which is, again, very atypical for our church.

So it's been a go-to. Now it is important to know that verses 15 through 18 of this text are thought to be a cosmic, Christological hymn. Many scholars believe that Paul is citing a modern hymn or confession in his day, something that the church at Colossae would have already been familiar with, and then he goes on to make some further points as a result.

Even more important to know is the focus of this cosmic, Christological hymn, the preeminence or the supremacy of Jesus Christ.

The last part of verse 18 says that in everything he might be preeminent. So be preeminent means to be supreme or first in all things.

Paul also states this reality in Philippians chapter 2 beginning in verse 9 and following. God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[5:13] This is the great aim of the gospel of Jesus Christ, right? This is the great work that's happening in our world right now. Paul tells us in this text that Jesus is the visible expression of God, that the world was created by him and through him and for him, that he is more important than everything, and that he's holding it all together.

And that he crowns all of these declarations with the truth. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that or so that in everything he might be preeminent.

So Jesus is the head of the body. This has been my most constant meditation, right? This phrase in this verse over the past 12 years that our church has existed, right?

Jesus is the head of the body, right? There is so very much that could be said about this. There's basically a single thing that I want to say about it this morning.

There's just oodles that could be unpacked from such a phrase. He is the head of the body. There are many metaphors in the New Testament used to describe the church.

[6:33] It's called a family, a kingdom, a vineyard, a flock, a building, a bride, and many others. But none is more helpful in our understanding of its form and function than that of a body made of many parts with Jesus Christ as the head.

This metaphor helps us to see the church as a living organism, right? Inseparably tied together with life and mission by the living Christ.

He controls every part of it. He coordinates together the diversity of gifting and ministry for the sake of his name. Jesus does not merely save the church, but he is the head of the church also, giving it life and direction.

And this is true of the church universal, right? The church that transcends time and space, like all those who have ever and all those who will ever believe in Christ.

Jesus is the head of that church. This is true for the church invisible, right? All those in Christ all over the world now, everybody, everywhere.

[7:43] We can't see all of them, but yet Jesus still reigns over them. And it is true for the church visible. This is what we would call the local church, right?

When people who claim to be followers of Christ gather together to make particular declarations together. Christ resides over us, and he gives to us our very life, and he gives to us direction.

Jesus is the beginning, you see, in verse 18. He's the originator of the church, right? The word there, Greek word for beginning, has a two-fold sense of both source and primacy.

So he is the originator. It comes from him, and he is the most important. He is over and above the church. In Ephesians 1.4, Paul states that God chose us in him before the foundation of the world. He is the firstborn from the dead. Of all those who have ever been raised or will ever be raised from the dead, he is of the highest rank.

[8:58] The most important. The supreme. The preeminent. So Jesus is the preeminent head of the church. The church universal and invisible.

But importantly for our thoughts this morning, he is the preeminent head of the local church. As previously stated, he gives to us life and direction. He has ordered that we should function in particular ways in order to display his glory amongst all peoples.

This ordering comes from nowhere but the scripture. We have been given a book by which we are meant to order ourselves.

The Bible is sufficient to guide the church. It is sufficient to answer the questions we have about the governing of the church even in a time such as this.

Do we believe that our God is so weak that he couldn't see the technology that we would have at our fingertips in a day such as this? Could he not have sent Christ in this day and taught us how to most appropriately use the internet to spread the gospel of Jesus Christ?

[10:07] I'd suggest that he knew exactly what he was doing when the scripture was written in its time and that it is in fact sufficient to guide us in a time such as this.

With that, allow me to give you a definition of the local church. I will repeat this for you if you'd like to write it down. The local church is a community of believers that gathers regularly around the person and work of Jesus Christ.

That rightly preaches the gospel and that rightly administers the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. There is, of course, a lot to unpack in this simple definition.

And there is so much more involved in a robust ecclesiology. There's lots that can be said about what the church is. Right? We've been doing Sunday evening school for a while and I taught a course, a six evening course.

It's about six hours of me talking. Right? There's lots and lots of content. And I felt like still we only touched on all that could be said of the church.

[11:07] But for our purpose this morning, this definition, I believe, will serve us well. So let me repeat it for you again. The local church is a community of believers that gathers regularly around the person and work of Jesus Christ.

That rightly preaches the gospel and that rightly administers the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. Now from this little blue book that I held up to you a moment ago, Jonathan Lehman's book on church membership, he said this.

The local church is not a club. It's where we Christians go public to declare our highest allegiance. It's the outpost or embassy giving a public face to our future nation.

So how is it that Christians are declared citizens of our future nation? If we give this some application in our present day, you don't get to just walk across a border and declare that you're a citizen of a country.

Right? If I were to travel to Europe, I can't land in London, walk out of Heathrow, I think Heathrow, and go, I'm a British citizen. This would be laughable.

[12:18] There's a way that we become a citizen of a particular locale and don't, are excluded from being able to do such a thing. So how is it that Christians are declared citizens of our future nation?

I would argue, I would suggest to you, and the Bible teaches that through the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper. This is the way that this takes place. Baptism is the sign that accompanies a professing Christian's entrance into the kingdom.

And the Lord's Supper is the sign that we remain citizens of the kingdom or, in some tragic cases, are declared outside the kingdom. Baptism is the initiating sign and the Lord's Supper is the renewing sign.

Now, it's very easy, it's quick to start to run this kind of thing through your mind from your experience with baptism and the Lord's Supper. And much of the way baptism and the Lord's Supper is done in the American church today is not proper, not well administered.

And so I would suggest to you that you try to set the experience aside in each and every case. But this morning, certainly, to think about what is it that the Bible teaches about these two ordinances.

[13:33] Both of them are meant to be done within the life of a local church. The church baptizes and the church administers the Lord's Supper.

And it does so in order to declare who is inside the church and who is outside the church. This is a massively important thing that the church does.

In 1 Corinthians 5, verse 12 and 13, Paul wrote, For what have I to do with judging outsiders? Is it not those inside the church whom you are to judge?

God judges those outside. So Paul called upon the Corinthian church to judge those who were inside the church, not those who were outside. Right?

They had to make a distinction there. Who is inside and meant to be disciplined for holiness. Who is outside and is under God's judgment.

[14:30] Right? They were responsible for the testimony of those who belonged to the church, not those who didn't. This passage makes no sense if the Corinthian church didn't have some public formal means by which the church identified themselves with individuals.

And some public formal means by which the church disassociated itself from individuals. The church needed to be doing this work. Some way, somehow, they have to identify or disassociate. Right? Declare inside or declare outside. Are we just left to figure that out on our own? Or does the Bible say something to us about this? Does it give us some direction for this?

Of course, I would argue, yes. Yes. Of course, it does. Because it's sufficient for the task. Last week, I read these two passages.

But they're still so pertinent today that I want to read them again. Matthew chapter 16, beginning in verse 13 and following. Now, when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, Who do people say that the Son of Man is?

[15:41] And they said, Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. He said to them, But who do you say that I am? Simon Peter replied, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

Right? This is massive. This is such a significant moment in the life of Jesus' ministry. Right? They're finally getting it. Right? The apostles are finally beginning to understand who it is that he is. And, of course, we know just after that they completely misunderstand that Peter rebukes him for saying he's going to be crucified. But they're starting to have the lights turned on. And Jesus says, beginning in verse 17, Blessed are you, Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Right? He says on this truth, right, the fact that he is the Christ, the church will be built on that.

Right? He is the cornerstone on which the church is built. Right? This is a massively significant thing that he says. And right after this he says, I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.

[16:53] And whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven. And whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. So Jesus says, right, the church has a work to do.

Right? It's going to go forth into the world. There's kind of a military conquest language taking place here. So the church militant goes forth to take captives for the kingdom.

Right? Sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Lovingly leading people to relationship with him. And he says, the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church.

And then he tells Peter, he will give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. What? As the church goes forth, declaring the gospel.

Keys? What are we doing with keys? Are we unlocking the gate? What's happening here? We begin to understand it as we read on in Matthew chapter 18.

[17:51] You see this process of church discipline. Right? This laid out four step process. It begins in verse 15. It goes down through verse 17.

I'll spare you a reading of it once again as we looked at it last week. But then in verse 18 he says, Truly I say to you, whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven.

And whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven. So to have the keys of the kingdom, to use these keys is to bind and to loose.

Right? To declare in and to declare out. And this is an authority under Christ's authority, under the scriptures authority, that's been given to the church.

This is an extremely important work that the church must do if we're going to find the church faithful. Baptism is where faith is publicly declared.

[18:54] Acts chapter 2, verse 38 through 41. It's the day of Pentecost. Peter said to them, Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name

of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit for the promises for you and for your children, for all who are far off. Everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself. And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them saying, Save yourselves from this crooked generation. So those who received his word were baptized. And they were added that day about 3,000 souls. Right? So they hear this proclamation of the good news.

They believe it and they are baptized. When people are converted, they ought to be baptized and welcomed into the fellowship of a local church. Whether to the Jerusalem megachurch found on the day of Pentecost.

We see this in Acts 2. Or to a small church in rural North Georgia. If we are going to live as a Great Commission people, we're going to be a baptizing people.

[20:02] The apostles do this on day one as the church is founded. Right? People make a public declaration that they belong to God and therefore together.

Saved as a people for the glory of God. And so as we go out into the world to do that very same thing, we're going to be on this Great Commission work that God has launched the church on. We're going to also be a baptizing people. Classic text. Matthew chapter 28. Beginning in verse 18. And Jesus came and said to them, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And I just find it so interesting that verse 19, Go therefore and make disciples, has so much work in it.

There's so many things that could be said about what that means. And the second half of the verse gets as much attention, right? Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

[21:06] Spirit teaching them to observe all that I've commanded you. And behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. I think that Jesus here is tying the work of mission to the world, to the life of the local church.

What does Paul say that Jesus is the head of in Colossians chapter 1 and verse 18, right? In Matthew chapter 28, Jesus says, All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. And then he says in verse 20, right? I am with you always to the end of the age, right? Because I rule, I rule with you. I will empower your mission.

What does Paul say that Jesus is the head of in Colossians 1 and verse 18? The mission sending organization? The campus ministry? Can he use those things? Absolutely.

Is he the head of those things? In a sense, yes, because he's the ruler of the universe. But specifically, he is the head of the church. He intends to use it in a very particular way.

[22:09] His authority accompanies us as we evangelize the wasp world and welcome people into the kingdom of God through baptism and church membership. This is a key that he has given to us to use for this very good work.

So baptism does this. It declares this. And when we baptize as a church, right? We're giving that affirmation. Yes, we believe your profession of faith is credible and we welcome you in to the kingdom.

The Lord's Supper is where faith is repeatedly declared. Luke chapter 22, verse 14 through 20. You may enjoy turning with me to this text.

Beginning at verse 14. And when the hour came, Jesus reclined at the table and the apostles with him. And he said to them, I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

This is the moment Jesus is taking the Passover with his disciples before his arrest and crucifixion. And the Passover meal, traditionally, as it was instituted in Exodus chapter 12.

[23:19] You remember the Israelites are huddled in their homes, right? They have killed the spotless lamb. They have spread the blood on the doorpost so that the angel of death would not take their firstborn, but would take the firstborn of the Egyptian people.

This is the way this meal was celebrated. It was a family meal. It was a quiet meal. It was a meal of celebration for God's deliverance. But it was done in this way, remembering that night before they

were sent out of Egypt.

It was a family meal. And Jesus says something so significant in verse 15. I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

This ministry was three, three and a half years, right? We don't see any breaks in the narrative where he goes back home and spends time with his family. But it would seem that he had not yet had the Passover meal with these disciples, right?

He's longed to do it, right? And here he does it with them. And I suggest to you that he is reorienting, as he does in other texts, the idea of family.

[24:28] Who are those that we come together and celebrate deliverance with? He goes on, verse 16. For I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.

And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he said, take this and divide it among yourselves. For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes. And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, this is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. So when we take the Lord's Supper, we remember and we declare what Jesus has done, right?

That perfect life, that sacrificial death, that resurrection, his ascension, his soon coming, right? All of those things are wrapped up in what we're remembering together as we remember his body broken and his blood spilt.

We remember what he's doing now as he's saving a people, as he's called us together as a church for that work. And what he's promised to do, right?

[25:39] That one day, verse 16, he will eat with us again in the kingdom of God. So this work is meant to be done together.

We're supposed to be a church, right? Whoever those people are that we've constituted together should come together to do this affirming work or, in those very sad cases, that dismissing work of excluding somebody from the meal because they're showing themselves not to be in Christ.

That's why Paul writes in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, beginning in verse 17. This is scathing.

Why was it not the Lord's Supper that they ate? Surely there was bread and wine, right? They were calling it the Lord's Supper. Why was it not the Lord's Supper? If you read on into chapter 11, it's because some of them were showing up and they were going ahead and they were eating without others, right?

Those who couldn't join because they were coming later on. So it wasn't the whole church, right? It was a church meeting. It was a gathering of the church, but it was excluding some.

[27:08] Not because they decided not to come, but because they simply couldn't come. Similar in our time. Not that we're taking the Lord's Supper, but this is why we're not taking the Lord's Supper.

Prior to that in 1 Corinthians, Paul wrote chapter 10, verse 17. Because there is one bread, we who are many are one body, for we all partake of the one bread.

This is why non-church gatherings of believers should not take the Lord's Supper. This is why the campus ministry shouldn't take the Lord's Supper, right?

This is why I used to. This is why I no longer support doing it at a wedding where the couple, it's sweet, but it's not the Lord's Supper. That's not what it is that's happening up front. Or inviting others to participate in that kind of thing because we're not a constituted church.

We haven't said, this is an affirming work. I believe that you're in Christ and you believe that I'm in Christ. And we're taking this together to remember what he has done on our behalf.

[28:11] So in this strange time, if our church cannot gather to weekly declare by baptism a professing Christian's entrance into the kingdom and administer the Lord's Supper as the sign that we remain citizens of the kingdom or in some cases declare someone outside the kingdom, what are we to do?

What are we to do? I said to you last week, I think I was, I like to call myself a realist, but many of you might have framed me as a pessimist. When the pandemic started, I thought mid-July, 1st of August.

We're not going to be able to meet as a whole church together until then. This thing is going to drag out. Now, I'll tell you honestly, I was guessing. That was my gut. And here we are, mid-July, and it's still dragging out.

Now, if you're on one end of the spectrum, we know there's a spectrum, right? Probably all of you who are here in person are more on one end of the spectrum than those who may be joining us on Zoom, right? But there's a spectrum of what is understood about this.

And I'll just say, frankly, we are all kind of guessing, right? Some of us are going to be right in the end. I don't know. I really don't know. If you're on a far end of that spectrum, and this is all just conspiracy theory, then this thing lasts until at least November, right?

[29:32] If you're on the other end of the spectrum, and this is a genuine health crisis, right? Then flu season's coming. It's on its way. Things are going to get cold again. There's not a...

I mean, the earliest proposed vaccine I've heard is by the end of the year, which just seems crazy to me. So possibly longer than that, like wherever you're at in understanding of what's happening here, right?

Apart from some miraculous work of God, whether in perception or reality, this thing's sticking around for a while. So what do we do? Certainly God would not be pleased with us placing the work of the church on hold for a long duration, right?

He declares the gates of hell will not prevail against the church, but coronavirus will? I don't think so. I think he'd be pleased in that way. And your elders are believing that we have reached the long duration point.

And we're asking the question, if we just keep kind of crippling along here, we just kind of keep stumbling our way week to week to week to week, are we going to get to December and look back across nine, ten months and think, what would we have wanted to do different?

[30:45] Would we have rethought the process? And that's where we find ourselves. That's what I was working to prime you up for last week and hopefully continue to feed healthy biblical thinking into this week.

What are we to do? So with a lot of meeting, a lot of prayer, your elders have arrived at what we're going to do, at least for the time being.

We believe that we should still obey. We're still in the category of obeying civil authority, provided that does not command us to do something expressly forbidden in the scripture or forbid us from doing something expressly commanded in the scripture, right?

See Romans 13, verses 1 through 5, right? We still think we're in that place where we ought to be listening to the requests of our governor.

If you have any desire to read it, I have the 41-page executive order that expires on August 1st, right? It's constantly expiring on us. But this is the current status of what they're asking of us.

[31:51] And I think I've kind of pitched it around as a request. It's not really a request. It's law, right? It would be a misdemeanor to... I'm also breaking it because I'm a diabetic and they say that diabetics shouldn't be with people.

So, but we're going to work at obeying the spirit of it, at the very least, right, to try to be obedient to Romans chapter 13, verses 1 through 5.

With that said, CFC's elders believe that we should not neglect meeting as a church for the preeminence of Christ among all people. So, Hebrews 10, verse 25 is an operation there, right? And we think that we're now can get very easily, at least to a point, where we're neglecting to gather as the church because of the strangeness of the time.

And this makes us uncomfortable. Your elders believe that we need to be able to gather together the entire church for the sake of baptism and the Lord's Supper.

[32:51] But that this is impractical if we are to obey the governor's order, right? Are you feeling the tension that we feel, right?

So, what are we to do? I'm going to tell you what we're going to do. I'm not just going to leave it hanging for you. I'm going to tell you what we're going to do, right?

We're going to, starting next Sunday, we're going to consolidate the members of our church into four groups. Hear that? Clearly not churches. Four groups, right? Each of these groups will be given leadership by at least one elder.

These groups, right, provided that people are able and willing, will gather weekly for scripture reading, prayer, singing, and a teaching slash discussion of God's word, right?

We're hoping that these groups will be more accommodating to some of those who feel less comfortable gathering together at this point, right? So, we may be able to find some ways to include some people that may not feel that they can be included at the moment, but we would certainly like for them to be included.

[33:56] As an example, Clay Naylor is planning on being a part of one of these groups. Maybe not immediately, but with some time and sorting out some details with those people, he'd like to join them. He's joked about sitting behind, if you've been to Doug Hitchcock's house, but behind the glass door to Doug's office while everyone else is out on the porch.

It was a joke, but we all got a good kick out of it. So, this is what these will do weekly as they gather together. The people in these groups will work to love one another and meet one another's needs and to share the gospel with their neighbors, classmates, coworkers, family, etc.

Right? We'll go and be on mission together. And I know that you guys have not stopped doing this, right? But we're going to continue to press that together, right? We're going to invite people to come.

Like, come. Yes. Make professions of faith in Christ. Come and join a group of people who are trying to be obedient to the scripture. And then, once per month, we will call all the church together to have a members meeting where we will do the work of baptism and the Lord's Supper, possibly some administrative stuff.

Welcoming new members, affirming current members, and, Lord forbid, seeing members out.

Right? We will have to do this in a way that is consistent with the current, whatever the current executive order is.

[35:16] So, it'll be outside. It'll be odd. Again, joking. But maybe not. I may be standing in the back of a pickup truck with a bullhorn. I don't know how exactly we're going to pull this off.

But we're going to find a way to pull it off because we think it's too important not to. Right? So, we're going to be working at that together, inviting each and every member of our church to come in a way that each and every member should be able to come so that we can do this very important thing.

I intend to send out a plan this week on Slack outlining the specifics of this plan. Right? Some of those specifics still need to be determined. Right? So, I know even as you have questions in the moment, we're still trying to sort some of the details out about how exactly we'll pull all this off.

So, I just want to say to you, pay attention to Slack and be in prayer for your elders as we work those details out. So, this is the way we're going to work at pressing on together.

In a moment, I'm going to pray for us and then we will be led in a number of songs. Reese is going to come and lead us. Upon your dismissal, I would like for you to take some time to discuss last week's teaching and this week's and the plan that I've just stated.

[36:27] Right? In its very basic form. And I'd like you to field questions. And if you have questions arising through your discussion that you just don't feel like you can answer, that's reasonable.

I'm sure there's a lot of questions. You'll go, hmm. Like, what could possibly be the solution there? I really, really want you to send those questions to me. Clay, I think, really wisely suggested that we put together a, like, frequently asked questions document.

Just anything that we can anticipate that you guys might have thoughts, concerns for. And I could guess at all of those. But I think it would be better if I'm seeing consistent questions.

Right? Just help me to say, yes. I understand. That's a concern. I want to very carefully help address that question. So send those questions directly to me. We'll address them in due time, likely this week.

And we'll look forward to next Sunday doing this all a little bit different. Right? This matters. It is important. Right? Jesus Christ died for the church.

[37:28] He has a people to redeem that he fully intends to redeem. Right? The coronavirus has not slowed this down. But we as a church want to be involved. Right? We want to be caught up in his purpose in the world.

And so we want to think carefully. Right? We want to act biblically to do this, even in this very strange time. So join me in prayer.