

# My Reconstructed Family

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**Bible Text:** Luke 18:28-30  
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Let's go to Luke 18 as we continue going through the Gospel of Luke and in God's Providence he has given us today a text that beautifully unfolds right into the principle and the importance and meaning of the Lord's table. Luke 18, we'll look at verses 28 through 30. Luke 18, beginning in verse 28,

28 Peter said, "Behold, we have left our own homes and followed You."  
29 And He [Jesus] said to them, "Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, 30 who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life."

I've entitled this "My Reconstructed Family." The moment you're converted, God begins to reconstruct you. The moment you believe on Christ, justification is secured. You stand as just before God in the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ but at that moment, sanctification begins in your life. You begin to be made more Christlike. You begin to learn to love God and the treasures of heaven more than you love this world and the treasures of this world. You begin to walk by the wisdom of God revealed in Scripture rather than the emotions and the whims and the fallen wisdom that rules this world. You begin a reconstruction the moment you are converted. We know the laboratory for the reconstruction, the arena is God's local church. That's the centerpiece of how God grows us and matures us, reconstructs us.

But not only that, he made us as social beings. We are meant to dwell in harmony and in fellowship with a congregation, a family, a body it's called in Scripture. And from the moment you're converted, God begins to reconstruct your human relationships. He just begins to do that. New relationships are developed. New people are met and you begin to find out, "I have a connection with them spiritually that is so special and it is so wonderful." Then you find that old relationships often start fading. There doesn't always have to be an enmity or a hatefulness but you find some relationships begin to separate off. Sometimes folks do separate with a hateful spirit about your commitment to Christ but what God is doing is he is reconstructing you into a new family setting. It's always been this way. It always has been this way, is this way and always will be this way in true Christian living and in a true Christian church.

Let's look at the way the Lord teaches this in Luke 18:28-30. I. In this reconstructed family life I'm a part of, there is a downside. I might add, at least from our temporal human perspective, there is a downside. It's not a whole lot of fun. You remember the context: Jesus has been talking to a man who the Bible says is extremely wealthy. For this particular man, he pointed out the idol this man must release from his heart if he's going to be a follower of Christ and that was his wealth. The man could not do that, the Bible says, because he was so extremely wealthy. And then Jesus responds, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of heaven. It's like a camel going through the eye of a needle for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven." Then they responded and said, "Well, then who can be saved?" They believed in that day a prosperity theology of if you are rich it means you are God's people; you are blessed by God. So if the rich can't get in, nobody can get in. Jesus responded and said, "Well, what's impossible with men is possible with God."

So in the flow of that context now Peter speaks up and he says, verse 28, "Behold, we have left our own homes and followed You." Now, Peter wants to say, "We see what this fellow just did, the extremely wealthy man. He couldn't leave everything behind and follow you but we have done that." And Peter was right in a sense, he had indeed left all, at least all outward attachments to follow Jesus Christ. But I do think there is a problem here with Peter and it's the same problem you and I wrestle with in some degree or in some dimension. Peter may have left all outward attachments but he hadn't left all of his pride and there is real importance in that point. In verse 28, the New American Standard says, "Peter says, 'We left our own homes.'" It's the word "idios." The word "home" is not in the original. It just means "all that is distinctly mine, everything I have control over, I have put that aside to follow you, Christ. I have put it aside. My marriage. My children. My brother. My sister. I am committed to you, Christ. I have done it all."

You know, it is true we are all called to forsake all for Christ. Galatians 6:14 reminds us as Paul was writing to the church at Galatia, speaking of himself he said, "But may it never be that I would boast, except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world." So Paul says that was the philosophy he strived to live by, "If and when God calls me to sacrifice, do without for him, that's my goal. I have nothing of this world I want to hold to more than I want to hold to Christ." The Bible is not teaching you don't enjoy the common graces God gives us in this life. Don't try to be hyper-spiritual because it makes you non-spiritual. We do enjoy nice things and our families, etc. etc. but if Christ says, "That must go," then there is no rivalry. We're willing to crucify that and go with Christ.

Peter, I believe in this case, is still a work in progress. He is still being sanctified but let's not get the big head and always pick on impetuous Peter. We're the same way. There does seem to be some pride in Peter making this proclamation, "We have left everything to follow you." Peter would have been better saying, "Lord, we've left all we know but we don't trust our hearts. We may not be leaving some of it. We may be hanging on to things in our hearts," because really the heart is the matter here and Peter seems to have an idea of merit in his heart in telling the Lord, "We have left everything."

You know, for us today, we've got to remember that the difficulty in following Christ is not so much in leaving all but in leaving one's self. Asceticism is the putting aside of all the things around you that you might show your devotion to your God. I've told you many times about the man I learned of in India. You know, we have been to India a few times teaching in a seminary there. There is a man there who worships a pagan idol and he has refused anything of the world. He has even refused the right to walk for his god. Everywhere he goes he rolls. He's been rolling all of his life. Asceticism. But though he has given up all of that, you see, he's really doing it for himself. He's doing it so that he might gain by pleasing his god. Self is at the center of radical asceticism. But the Bible doesn't talk about that kind of giving up. The Bible talks about dying to self. It just means, "My will doesn't matter when I know Christ's will." Now listen to me: dying to self may mean wealth for you materially. Dying to self may mean poverty for you materially. I don't know. The Scriptures tell us God sovereignly dictates those things. And dying to self may mean somewhere in between for you. The point is, you die to self. Don't focus on a certain level of doing without material things to "check that box off, now I'm spiritual enough. I have denied myself enough pleasures," like the Catholic concept of Lent or something. "I'm going to give up all this stuff for my God." Look, you can't give up anything for your God. He's not impressed with anything you can give up. He wants you to die to self because it is self that is killing you. He wants you to die to self because it's self that's ruining you and robbing you of the pleasures of God. Die to self. It's different than giving up all and that's where we need to be.

Here's a way to know the difference: a man that is dying to self and is convinced God has led him to give up most of the pleasures of this world to serve God, he is equally happy with the man who has a lot of the pleasures of this world, who hasn't been called to do that. He's not all the time looking down and judging the brother who drives a nicer car or whatever it might be. I mean, all I know I was a lot more spiritual when I drove a truck with 150,000 miles than my new GMC pickup. But come to think of it, I'm just as spiritual now which is not much either time. Those things just don't make up spirituality and I think that's where Peter was. He was kind of hung up on, "Look at all we're doing in our giving up for the Lord Jesus Christ."

That's not really the point I want to bring out here. I think it's a secondary point but it is a point. Ephesians 2:8-9 sort of emphasizes what we're talking about here, "For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves," it's not anything you've worked or merited, "it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast." I can't help but think Peter is having a little boasting in this, "Lord, we gave up everything for you."

Now, look at verse 29, "And He said to them, 'Truly I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God.'" Then he goes on to talk about the upside. We'll get to that in a moment. Let's talk about this principle. This is a principle that's very thoroughly taught in the word of God. It's one of those things that good Bible students know but we don't think about, I think, very much and that is the principle that from the moment you're saved, God begins to take people out of your life and put new people in your life and sometimes that means even

the members of your own family. Jesus said here, "To follow me, some of you left, had to set aside, had to do without, separate fellowship with members of your own household." I think what we need to understand is that's typical in Christianity. Thank God it doesn't have to be that way. We should sure work in the other direction, amen? But if loyalty to Christ means losing the fellowship of even a dear family member, then that's God's work too. It happens.

In Matthew 8:22, Jesus was preaching and going along and a man said, "I'll follow you but," he said, "I want to bury my father first." Jesus very pointedly responded back, "Let the dead bury the dead." I think the Lord's point is, "Don't you understand, when you commit loyalty to me, that's greater than any other social relationship you have. That loyalty supersedes all the others and if and when that means you must no longer have a relationship with even a family member to be loyal to me, then that must be the case." The point is, "Let the dead bury the dead. This man is not regenerate. He is not a follower of mine and you've got to have your priorities in order." Now, the Lord is not walking the earth today. Is he telling people to make that kind of drastic commitment? I've never seen that but the principle remains the same.

Mark 3:31-35, let's look at that one also. It should be up on your screen. "Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent word to Him," that's Jesus, "and called Him. A crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You.' Answering them, He said, 'Who are My mother and My brothers?'" Wow, that's interesting. Verse 35, "For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother." He said, "You've got to understand something, I'm reconstructing human relationships," and he's not saying those people were not his relatives. They were on the natural level. We don't know exactly where they were spiritually, at least at this point, but he's saying, "The true brothers and sisters, the true new constructed family I have are those who do the will of God. That is, those who come to do the will of God by believing on me as their Lord and Savior."

Matthew 10:32-36, Jesus said, "Therefore everyone who confesses Me before men, I will also confess him before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, I will also deny him before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law and a man's enemies will be the members of his own household." Wow. It's a pretty heavy, isn't it? He's saying that when you come to faith in Christ, it's possible, it's not unlikely that even some of the very dear members of your own household will not want to be around you anymore. Brother Tom, I thought about you when I was preparing this. Brother Tom has got families members he loves with all of his heart but he will tell you and we have talked and prayed about it many times, "I have family members who are practically apostate and there is just not the fellowship anymore." It's not something he chose, it's just that his commitment to Christ doesn't gel with the direction they're going. That's not unusual. Jesus said that's to be quite expected. And as I thought about our church family, I thought about family after family after family after family who has spouse, friend, child and they are just going a different direction from Christ. What's

happening in all of this? Is it just only a downside? Well, it is to us humanly but you've got to understand God is doing something in all of this. He's reconstructing human relationships, putting you into an eternal glorified precious family called the church.

The Apostle Paul was often left shorthanded as those who co-labored with him from time to time would fall out on him as the going got difficult. In 2 Timothy 4:11, he wrote to Timothy and said, "Only Luke is with me." And previously he talked about a brother who having loved this present world had forsaken him. What is Paul's saying? He said, "As it went along, the rigors of ministry gets tough and some guys just bail out and the fellowship is broken." We know he had the same problem with John Mark at one time. Even when it comes to the marriage relationship, 1 Corinthians 7:15. I'm doing this to show you that this is all in the New Testament. "Yet if the unbelieving one leaves, let him leave; the brother or the sister is not under bondage in such cases, but God has called us to peace." Now, first of all he says, "If your spouse is not a believer, you do everything you can to keep that marriage. Everything you can, even to an unbeliever. And if that unbeliever consents to stay with you and you can stay committed to Christ and they say, 'I will support you in your commitment to Christ,' stay with them. But if they say, 'You must give up this Christianity and this devotion to Jesus or this marriage is over,' you lovingly say to them, 'I will do anything I can but I cannot deny Christ.'" He said, "You let them leave." We've seen that happen in our church. The downside. That's what I call this area, the downside.

Now, let's get back to these guys in this historical context of Peter and the apostles who, indeed, humanly had left everything but here's what you need to understand about these disciples in this day: they didn't just leave a loving Christian family back home who gave them up to go on mission with Jesus Christ. Now, some of us have been called to do that and that's difficult. It's painful in a way to let a child or whoever. The Ackers are here. Ron will tell you it's not easy letting a child go across the world to serve the Lord but at least we know where they are. We know they love Christ. We are one together in Christ on this. That's not what's happening here. These apostles, these disciples referred to here left in a much more difficult and deeper sense than that. To follow Christ in that staunchly legalistic Jewish environment likely meant that these men were losing a spouse, losing the fellowship of their children, their parents may have disowned them, likely lost their livelihood. Though we do know they went back to fishing after Jesus death, likely the Jewish community did not have converse with them like they did before. I mean, it just cost a lot. Remember when Jesus was taken to the crucifixion, Peter is hanging around in a crowd somewhere and a girl says, "Ah, you're one of those. You were part of the congregation of Jesus," and he cursed and denied it. Why? It was tough. That kind of rejection and separation and people turning from you wasn't very fun. They were likely considered traitors to their family, to their congregation in Israel, to their people, to their country. Now friend, few of us are called to this kind of heavy cross bearing. This is unique. We're not called to do that but, but, but, it is common for God to call you to give up the companionship of even a family member or a close friend as you just continue on to honor Christ and devote yourself to Christ. That's not unusual. That's part of the process usually. Now, we do everything we can to stop it, amen? But we cannot turn our backs on Christ.

I think one of the things that is significant and I meditated on this this week, I thought a lot of people loved Jesus because he would go to these towns and communities and feed everybody miraculously. He'd go to these towns and communities and miraculously heal thousands and so there was lots of positive enduring sentiment toward Christ but we know from the biblical text as it plays out but very few of them looked to him as Lord and Savior. He was the Lord and Savior of their food problem, not the Lord and Savior of their soul, or their health problem, not the Lord and Savior of their sinful souls. So we know they were not that many genuine disciples. Some were but not that many but there was an endearing affection for what a lot of people saw in Jesus and so had these apostles stayed in their communities and just been kind of outspoken about how wonderful Jesus was, it probably would not have cost them much. It probably wouldn't have cost very much to do that. But, now here's the key, are you strapped in? I believe this is a powerful insight: it's when they swapped congregations that all the trouble started. It's when they left the congregation of the synagogue in their community and went and joined the congregation of Jesus Christ that really shook the people up. "You are one of the followers of that Christ." And that's the way it is today. You can go about anywhere, well, it's not as easy as it used to be. It used to be in the south you could go talk fondly and affectionately and admirably of Christ, talk of your devotion to Christ and people means that you will be more unselfish, more loving, give more to the poor and you're a good guy to have around. But join up with a congregation that is serious about honoring Christ and watch how people begin to oppose you. Watch how people begin to come against you. Watch how people begin to talk. That's what happened here. They could have stayed in the synagogue, stayed in the community, talked endearingly of Jesus and it probably wouldn't have cost them anything. But when they left and left one collectivity to unite with another family God was constructing, it cost a lot and so it will in this age.

So there's a downside. It's not a fun thing to think about. I think about my own family and my past. I am converted at 19 and I remember what little family fellowship I had, I lost what was left when I committed to Jesus Christ. II. There is a downside but there is a great, great upside. A great great upside. It's not just great, it's a great, great upside. I couldn't find anything to explain it so I just doubled the word great. There is a great, great upside to this. Look at verse 30, what Jesus does in verse 30 is in this difficult exhortation where he says, "Yeah," you know, it's kind of funny Jesus didn't say, "Well, this is only going to be for a little while then everything is going to be perfect. All your family is going to be back, it's going to be fine." He didn't say that. He just said, "I have a better thing coming for you." So we have in this difficult setting, we have a wonderful blessing Jesus gives them in the form of a promise, verse 30, "who will not receive many times as much at this time and in the age to come, eternal life." Jesus said, "I've got this all taken care of. Don't worry about it."

So here Christ gives these disciples a certificate of debt and he gives you, child of God, he gives you, committed Christian, a certificate of debt. Jesus becomes their debtor not because he owes them anything, he becomes their debtor by promise. "I'm going to make sure you get paid back in this life and in the age to come." Wow, pretty good stuff. He says, "You will receive many times as much at this time." That means living for Jesus

Christ, though there are moments and seasons that break our heart and are difficult and challenge our faith, if we'll stay the course, stay in the boat with Jesus, stay anchored in truth, loving, compassionate, doing everything we can to include everybody we can, at the end of the day like these disciples saying, "If you must go another direction, I still love you. You're always welcome but we can't fellowship like we used to fellowship." I call this letting Jesus pick your friends because that's exactly what's happening. Jesus promised, "If that happens, I promise to do something real good for you."

1 Timothy 4:8 reflects this same principle, "for bodily discipline is only of little profit, but godliness," which is honoring Christ and living for Christ and according to the word of God, "is profitable for all things," notice this, "since it holds promise for," what? "The present life." Right now in this life, Jesus is going to come through and give you more, "And also for the life to come." Friend, listen to your pastor this morning: we have done something terrible in the conservative evangelical church, that is, we have done what we always do and I do it too and hopefully I don't do it as bad as I used to do it. What am I talking about that we do? We overcompensate. We have seen the excessive errors of the charismatic movement that God would give you this and this and this and they sometimes seem to teach that's all Christianity is about and we react against that as if God doesn't delight to bless his children with good stuff in this life. We got out of balance and we've got to wrestle to stay in balance because when Jesus talks about giving it back in this life, he includes house, material stuff. I can't promise how he does that. I don't know how much to which one but he has promised to do it.

Job in Job 42:10, at the end of it all, Job lost everything, all of his family, the Bible says, he "restored the fortunes of Job twofold." He doubled it back in this life. In this life and Job started a health and wealth ministry. Here's what the health and wealth boys need to remember: don't forget the first 41 chapters of Job. Amen. Willing to say, "God, whatever." And I tell you this all the time because I love these brothers and I want you to pray for these brothers but I counsel with young pastors all the time and they are where we were 25 years ago and it's tough and so many of them feel called to do something else and I keep saying, "Hang in there. Hang in there. Even in this life, even in your church life, God is going to bless you if you'll stay the course. Stay the course." 2 Peter 1:4 reminds us that God will not break his promises, "For by these He has granted to us His precious," notice the wording here, "and magnificent promises, so that by them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world by lust." So Jesus gives us these powerful promises that is the great, great upside to this whole process of God reconstructing the human relationships as you go on in Christ.

What does the world hold for us in contrast? We've got God's great and magnificent promises, what does the world hold in contrast? Well, the world holds faithfulness friends. The world holds broken promises. The world holds riches that makes itself wings and flies away. But God is the God of never failing covenant faithfulness, now listen to me, in this life and in the next one. In both of them. When you come to Christ, you begin this reconstruction of human relationships and God continues it on until the day you die. It's amazing to me how many people, how many families I've grown near and dear to and loved through the years and at some point along the way, they decided they couldn't hang

with me any longer and that's when the test comes. First of all, there is always something you can repent of and learn in those situations. But secondly, you can't compromise the clear teachings of Scripture to maintain relationships because if they leave your fellowship and sometimes in family settings it's just they get cold, it's just not like it used to be, what's happening there is God is moving them out of your life. That's Jesus reconstructing stuff for your good and for his glory.

You know, for 30 years, Jesus functioned on the earth like everybody else functions on the earth. For 30 years, every evidence we have, we have a lot but every evidence we have is that he basically was the son of Joseph and Mary and he had his own family like everybody else had their own family. He was referred to as the brother of these guys and the son of these 2 parents just like everybody else was but then after 30 years, something radically changed. The heavenly Father began him on his ministry, his mission of building a new family, the church, and from that point onward, he began to diminish the blood ties that he had to his natural family and then to began to exalt and emphasize the new constructive spiritual family that he was the head of and now part of.

Matthew 12:46-49, "While He was still speaking to the crowds, behold, His mother and brothers were standing outside, seeking to speak to Him." So his mother and brothers want his attention. I don't know about you, but even as an adult man, if my mom says, "Jeffrey Lee Noblit," she gets my attention. Well, his mom wants him. Verse 47, "Someone said to Him, 'Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside seeking to speak to You.' But Jesus answered the one who was telling Him and said, 'Who is My mother and who are My brothers?' And stretching out His hand toward His disciples, He said, 'Behold My mother and My brothers!'" Now, don't misunderstand, Christ was not being unnecessarily harsh to his blood relatives but that's the best thing they could hear because unless they get over that they are blood connected, they are going to hell. They need to get spirit connected to Jesus and he knows that. They've got to get it. It may be painful at the first, there may be a downside at first but if they will see that just being blood connected to him will not cure my sin problem and will not rescue me from the wrath of the heavenly Father, then they will go to hell. So he begins to emphasize the spiritual relationship God is constructing and not so emphasize the human or blood relationship.

I know when you reach stuff like this, at least in my heart and mind, I get worried about a few zealots who will get unbalanced here. You be careful now. You be passionate to love and care for your family, even those that are unsaved. This is only when they leave you because of your devotion to Jesus. Are you hearing me? They leave you. You welcome them with open arms, "You can come along with me as long as you want to come, as long as you will bear with me as I love Jesus. You may not love him but if you'll go with me, you're welcome to come. But if you tell me, 'I will not honor what the Scripture says in this area and if you honor it then we can't be together,'" then God is picking your friends. God begins to reconstruct things. Like Jesus said, "I'm getting new moms and new brothers and new sisters in Christ." That's the great, great upside. You find new mothers and you find new fathers. You find new sons and you find new daughters and you find new uncles and you find new aunts and you find new brothers and you find new



sisters. That's the great, great upside. I may have not had great blood relations with my family and to be honest, I blew it some in that in my immaturity and overzealousness as a young Christian but I have gained you.

I thought about it this week. You'll be terribly embarrassed. Brother Ronnie Martin is sitting back there. Ronnie and I have known each other for 35 years. I can't tell you the times I've been driving down the road somewhere a long way from home and I thought, "What if I broke down at 3 o'clock in the morning?" Ronnie usually comes to my mind. I know I can call him and he will get in his car and he will come and get me. And we don't hang out, he's just my brother. Well, we didn't grow up together, he's my brother in Christ and I could multiply that by hundreds across this room. Is that not a great, great upside? He said, "It may cost you some but you're going to get so much more in this life." So much more. I mean, I have so many people that love me and not just because I'm the pastor. As a matter of fact, if you start brown-nosing me, I'm going to preach on your sins more than anybody else's. It's not because I'm the pastor, it's because we're brothers and we're sisters in Christ. I don't know about you, but there's just something in that spiritual connection that's wonderful. It's just wonderful. It's a great, great upside, friend.

He mentions house too so there is a material side to this. I think one of the things is that in this age of violent persecution against Christians, many Christians were run out of their homes, run out of their towns and other Christians would let them into their homes, though, and they would gain a new home. I think it includes that but I think it also includes what Jesus said when he said, "Men will pour into your lap good measure, pressed down, running over." He's talking about material blessing. God just has a way of blessing you back materially if you've been faithful to him, now listen to me, and if you've given up materially just for his glory. Not to prove anything, not to show off how spiritual, just for his glory, God just has a pattern. I'm not giving you a promise but I'm saying God has a pattern of blessing back even materially. "Job's fortunes," the text says, fortunes, "restored back twofold."

Well, not only in this life will we get many, many times more, he says, "but in the age to come, eternal life." Hebrews 10:34, "For you showed sympathy to the prisoners and accepted joyfully the seizure of your property," now, aren't you glad that at least so far in America they're not taking our property away because we believe the Bible, "knowing that you have for yourselves a better possession and a lasting one." There is nothing wrong with living down here knowing we've got better up there. These Christians referred to in Hebrews 10 had lost their temporal homes for the faith but they knew they had greater heavenly homes awaiting them. They were like Abraham in Hebrews 11:10, "for he was looking for the city," definite article there, "the city which has foundations, whose architect and builder is God." You see, Abraham knew for certain that he had a better enduring city awaiting him in heaven.

Now, the reality of what we have in heaven, now listen to me, is in a parallel connected to how loosely we walk clutching what we have on earth. Are you with me? If you're holding this down here, hey, it's okay to enjoy it. God gives blessings but if you're

holding it too tight, it blocks your capacity to walk in the joy of what's waiting for you there. There's a real parallel there.

One final illustration, Jesus Christ walks the earth. He chose 12 men and they became very, very intimate. Jesus and his disciples. One of them was Judas Iscariot. Judas was the treasurer because he was the most trusted, more than likely. Then Judas comes up to Jesus at the end and he kisses Jesus to betray him to the leaders of the Pharisees. Why did he kiss Jesus? That's how close they were. That was a common greeting among men in this day that shows the intimacy and Jesus was illustrating for us, "Even I lose intimate fellowship to go on and do my Father's will. It cost me." Don't think that he's God incarnate so this didn't affect him. It was tough for him. That wasn't a fun thing to go through but he was willing to keep going on in his Father's will.

But wait a minute, does the promise hold for Jesus too? That there is better? Oh yeah, he went to a cross and there dying on the cross, he won the redemption for all his children. He was buried in the grave. He goes up into heaven and he sits down at the right hand of the Majesty on high where he never fails to faithfully intercede for those he died for and one day every single one that the Father has given Jesus, he'll lose not one, the Bible says, and we will all be there and he will have the most glorious, magnanimous fellowship and family you can imagine with him in heaven when the Lamb receives us, the reward of his suffering. Woo! That's good! That's good! It's a great, great upside to going through some downside in human relationships down here to stay faithful to God's will.

My goodness, that's good. And we in like manner as our Savior have to walk through some of the same stuff but, but now listen to me, the world, the devil and your flesh says, "No, no, no, compromise to keep them." That's the best way to damn their souls to hell. That's the best way. They've got to know the Jesus you love is worth losing fellowship if necessary. That will speak to their hearts that, "I need to get right with this Jesus, my friend, my father, my brother, whoever it is loves so much." Looking across this room, are there not a bunch of folks sitting here that at one time had real trouble with a family member because they were devoted to Jesus and you wanted to be a carnal worldling but because they stayed faithful, you now are brought to faith in Christ and love for him and love for his church? And you are part of God's work of reconstructing the family and reconstructing human relationships.

Now, we're going to take the Lord's supper. We'll do it after we present the members but we're going to take the Lord's supper. This is a special ordinance that we will take. It's an exclusively designed ordinance in that it's only to be shared in by those whom God has called out of the world to be in his family. It's an exclusive communion. Now, while it is inclusive of all people of all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic backgrounds, it's a inclusive of all of those, however, it is exclusive to those who are born of the Spirit of God and placed in the family of God by the Spirit of God. Now, I know there are folks visiting with us today and we tell those folks who are visiting, "First of all, you're welcome at any regular service to participate in all that we do but if you're here and you're not a born again follower of Jesus Christ, baptized and in good fellowship in a local church, then this

ordinance is not for you. It doesn't mean that we're better than you and we don't mean to exclude you, it's just that that's what this is. It's a communion of the new relationship that has been established by God's work through his Son Jesus Christ." So while it is an ordinance of the local church, we do invite guests who are believers in Christ who claim him as Lord and Savior to fellowship with us in the meal but those who are not should not do that yet until you come to that time that you know Christ is yours and you have been received into fellowship in God's family.