

Ephesians
The Implications of Christ's Plan for the Church (Part 1)
Ephesians 4:14-16
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We find ourselves in Ephesians 4 in a section on preserving the unity of the church and, Lord willing in the next two weeks, we'll finish that section up and move on to the next paragraph. But we're looking at the section that begins in Verse 7 of Chapter 4 and runs down through Verse 16. The main point of this section is that Christ has a plan for His church. And when Christians work together, carrying out that plan, it encourages and stimulates unity in the church. It preserves the unity. That's what the overall paragraph is about.

Last week, we saw the goal of Christ's plan for the church in Verse 13. The goal of the plan, we discovered, is that we would have unity in doctrine - that is, the fundamental doctrines of the Christian faith, that we would have unity in our devotion to Jesus Christ and that we would have unity in our likeness to Jesus Christ. And we all will reach that goal, but only in perfection when we die or when Christ returns. Until then, the plan is in place.

This morning, I want us to continue our way through this passage and we're gonna be faced with the practical implications of Christ's plan, the practical implications of Christ's plan. And it begins in Verse 14 and runs down through Verse 16. Let me read this last part of this section to you. Here are the practical implications of Christ's plan for His church. Verse 14: "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried out by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love."

Now there are two important points in that section that I just read for you that are not immediately evident in our English translations. In particular the NAS here and probably in a number of other translations, it looks like a new sentence begins in Verse 14. But in the Greek text, Verse 14 is part of a larger sentence that begins back in Verse 11 with the words "And He gave". The other important thing to note is that the words that begin Verse 14, "As a result", you

can see there's a little, footnote there in the NAS. And if you look over in the margin, it's literally "so that we will no longer be". It's often used, this "in order that" or "so that" is often used to speak of the response that God wants to see from us.

So, putting all of that together, let me show you how we could literally translate this section. You go back to Verse 11: "And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastor-teachers for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ (now skip down to Verse 14) - so that [or in order that] we should no longer be children." Our Lord intends that His plan for the church change us, that it grow us up. And while these verses, Verses 14 through 16, are not in the form of a command, practically in the flow of Paul's thought, that is their essence. This is something we are to do. In Verses 14 to 16, we discover the practical implications of Christ's plan for His church.

Now the implications are both individual, for each of us, and the implications are corporate, for us as a whole, the entire church. This morning, I just want us to look at the individual implications of Christ's plan. And we see the individual implications in Verses 14 and 15. These two verses are addressed as it were to each of us as individual Christians. "As a result, [Paul says, or in order that, he gave these gifted men, he put this plan in place] in order that we should no longer be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ."

Now when we get to Verse 16 next week, we'll discover that it's about the church corporately, the entire church. But these two verses are about us as individuals, about each of us and our growth in Jesus Christ. And buried in these two verses are several clear and compelling implications of Christ's plan on our own individual spiritual development. There are at least four here - and we're gonna look at several of them this morning - at least four implications about our own individual spiritual development and growth.

The first implication that I want you to see is this. Every Christian begins the Christian life as a spiritual infant. Every Christian begins the Christian life as a spiritual infant. Now that may seem obvious, but I think when we're done, you'll see that we don't often think of the implications of this. But it's true. Paul says that all Christians are at one time children. In fact, he even includes

himself. He says that “we all should no longer be children”. We are no longer to be children. The Greek word that’s used of “children” here is used in the Scriptures of both infants - physical infants, those newborn, toddlers - all the way up to children to the age of puberty. So, we’re talking about children who have not yet reached physical maturity. And this word describes not only physical age, but when it’s used even of literal children, it’s talking about the things that come with that age – ignorance, gullibility, inexperience. There’s sort of a collection of attributes that belong to that age. And Paul likes to use this analogy of children as one of spiritual immaturity.

Now we need to understand that this is a reality. What did Jesus say to Nicodemus? You remember in John 3? In John 3, this leader of the Jews, this teacher comes to Jesus by night, and he doesn’t ask a question that Jesus answers. Jesus, or let me put it differently, Jesus answers a question that he didn’t ask, but that he was thinking. And He says this to him: Listen, if you want to get into God’s kingdom, you need to be born again. You must be born spiritually. You must come into the kingdom as a baby as it were. Becoming a Christian is like being born spiritually. When someone comes to Christ, that person is just beginning life.

You see this in a number of places in the New Testament. You remember the famous passage in 1 Corinthians 3 where Paul is chastising the Corinthians, telling them they ought to be beyond spiritual infancy, but they’re not. 1 Corinthians 3: “And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ. I gave you milk to drink, not solid food; for you were not yet able to receive it. Indeed, even now you are not yet able.” He’s chastising them. He’s saying: This is ridiculous. You ought to be beyond your spiritual infancy now. But the implication is that we all come into the Christian life and experience (as what?) as infants, spiritual infants.

This same image Peter uses in 1 Peter 1. He talks about us being born again, Verse 23 of 1 Peter 1: “you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word of God.” So, you’ve had this new birth. You’ve just come to life. Therefore, Chapter 2, Verse 2: “like newborn babies, long for the pure milk of the word, so that you may grow in respect to salvation.”

The New Testament writers make it clear that when we come to faith in Christ, we enter the kingdom as newborns. We become like spiritual infants. In 1 John 2, John lays out a progression of spiritual growth and he talks about the little children and then the young men and then the spiritual fathers. That is the progression that we all take. Understand that when you became a Christian, whenever that was, you entered into the spiritual world as a spiritual newborn.

But in what way are immature believers like children? Why does he use that analogy? In what way are immature believers like children? What is the point of similarity? That brings us to a second implication here of Christ's plan on our individual spiritual growth. Not only is every Christian beginning the Christian life as a spiritual infant, but secondly, every immature Christian, every immature Christian shares two primary characteristics of children. Every immature Christian, that is every Christian who is either from the state of newborn up through adulthood, shares certain characteristics with physical children and that's why the analogy's used. In Ephesians 4, Paul compares immature believers to children because both physically immature people and spiritually immature people share two common characteristics. They are personally unstable, and they are easily deceived, personally unstable and easily deceived.

Notice first of all, they are personally unstable. And his description of this, by the way, is graphic. Look at Verse 14 of Ephesians 4: "As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves", tossed here and there by waves – being thrown around back and forth by the waves of the sea. The image is that of a small boat that has come into a storm and is being violently tossed back and forth by the tempestuous sea.

Now I don't know about you, but I've never been on a small boat in that kind of circumstance. The closest I've come is on a massive cruise ship and that was close enough. When I was at *Grace to You*, I was responsible for the annual *Grace to You* listener trip. And several years, we sponsored cruises and people would come from all over the country and even the world, join with us, have their vacation, but enjoy some good Bible teaching and we would get to know them and they us. And one year that we went to Alaska, we came out of the, the normal passage there, the inside passage, and we hit the open waters of the Pacific and we found ourselves in the middle of a storm. And it was a pretty good storm. It was incredibly windy and the waves, we were told by the captain, were between 25 and 35 feet. Now just to put that in perspective, if you

stand outside this worship center and look up at the roof line, that's 24 feet. So that was the baseline of the waves of the bottom of the crest of the waves. And the highest waves approached 10 feet higher than that. Even in that massive ship, we were tossed around pretty good. Most people on board got seasick. In fact, there were only one night, there were only about 30 percent of the passengers who could actually physically go to the dining room and attend dinner which really made it a good time for those of us who had iron stomachs and were able to enjoy. I had a feast that night. I felt sorry for my wife. She was back in the room, but we enjoyed dinner, the few of us that were able to make it.

Imagine what it would be like though to encounter those same kinds of seas in a small first-century boat. You would have absolutely no control. You would be completely at the mercy of the wind and the waves, carried wherever they took you. Paul knew what that was like, didn't he? As he writes this letter to the church in Ephesus, he sits in a Roman incarceration, probably his own rented quarters according to the end of the book of Acts - his own rented quarters, but under the control of Rome accompanied by a Roman guard. But he writes this letter having experienced this very phenomenon he describes here because remember the end of the book of Acts tells us how he got to Rome. You remember the shipwreck? You remember that for 14 days in that little ship they were carried along on the Mediterranean by this violent storm? They threw everything overboard. Everybody's sick, they didn't eat for 14 days - pitched everywhere. And when Paul wanted to describe spiritual immaturity, he could think of no better picture than a boat that's tossed around the ocean by the waves.

That's exactly how unstable, immature believers are. They are easily thrown around and confused by various outside influences. Martyn Lloyd-Jones gives a very insightful little list of this instability and what it looks like both for physical children and spiritual children. Listen to his little list. He says first of all, they're fickle. This instability means they're fickle. In a moment, they can change from laughter to crying. You ever experience that with your kids? From loving something to hating something - they're in a constant state of change. One of the greatest tests of wills I ever had with one of my daughters was when in one day's time, she went from loving cheese that we told her to eat for breakfast, to hating it and making that a test of wills. Children are like that. They are impulsive. Their instability not only means they're fickle, but they're impulsive. They lack self-control. They're driven by their feelings and their moods.

Lloyd-Jones goes on to say they're also prone to react excessively to what happens. They either love it or they hate it. There's no middle ground. A toy breaks and it's the end of their little world. They're like the waves in a constant state of agitation – first this way and then the other. They hold their views, Lloyd-Jones says, violently and yet they tend to change from one extreme to the other. They can be dogmatic about this position this moment, easily convinced of another position and suddenly, just as dogmatic about the other position they're now holding. That's true of physical children. It's true of the spiritually immature as well. So as spiritual children then, we are unstable, we are personally unstable, carried around by the waves, easily susceptible to outside influences, open to constant, impulsive, fickle change.

There's another characteristic that physical children and spiritually immature people share. Not only is there this personal instability, but they are easily deceived, easily deceived. Notice Verse 14 again. He says not only are they "tossed here and there by waves", they are also "carried about by every wind of doctrine." Doctrine is literally the Greek word for teaching – carried about by every wind of teaching. Because they lack the knowledge of the faith, their entire direction in the Christian life is changed by the next gust of wind, the next teaching to which they are exposed. It might be their own idea, but more often it comes from someone else's teaching. It might be just some ridiculous interpretation of the Scripture, but more often it's outright error. The goal, as we found last week, is to arrive at the unity of the faith, united in the fundamentals of the faith. But there are many waves that will carry you far away from that destination.

Shortly after I moved to Texas, I had a man out to give me a bid on some work that I needed done at my house. And the best I could tell from my conversation with him, this man was in Christ. But as I got to talking with him, he kept quoting all of these false teachers. He kept quoting Ken Copeland and Kenneth Hagin and he mentioned several others and I did my best to sort of redirect him back to the Scripture, but it was clear to me that he was being tossed here and there and he was being carried about by every wind of teaching. The latest guy he heard on the radio tossed him here and brought him over here in a new direction and then he'd hear this new teaching that would take him this direction. He was easily deceived and that's true of all those who are spiritually immature.

What makes children, both physical children and spiritual children, easy to deceive? Well again, Lloyd-Jones has a very helpful and thought-provoking little list under this issue of easy to deceive. He says here's why children are easy to deceive. They are proud and self-assured. They overestimate their own knowledge and ability. They're ignorant. This is why a child can be so easily deceived. You talk about taking, easy as taking candy from a baby. It's because they lack a knowledge of the world and how it works. There's this basic ignorance. They have a natural dislike of being taught. They're drawn to the new and the novel. You see, children have inherently no real sense of value. They have to be taught value. They are typically drawn to a shiny penny rather than a dulled silver dollar because it's new and it's exciting and it's shiny.

Lloyd-Jones says both physical children and immature Christians enjoy entertainment and excitement. That's why our children are sometimes excited to see their parents leave or to see that doting relative come because that doting relative is a lot more fun, a lot more entertaining, a lot more enjoyable. The same thing can be true for the spiritually immature.

And Lloyd-Jones' last little point in his list is that both physically immature and spiritually immature people are susceptible to showmanship. You know, when I read this, I thought Lloyd-Jones was a prophet ahead of his time. Listen, listen to this and see if this doesn't describe so much of the church today. He says, "The bigger the show, the more the child is likely to believe it. Because he lacks knowledge and the ability to discriminate and to understand, he tends to be seduced by the spectacular, the big, the gaudy - anything which is done in a self-confident manner. Showmanship always appeals to children." That's true physically and it's true of the spiritually immature as well.

Where do these waves of teaching, these winds of doctrine, come from? Well, sometimes they may come from well-meaning, but confused Christian leaders – trends like *The Prayer of Jabez* or *Wild at Heart* or whatever the latest thing is, the latest fad. If you've been a Christian for a while and if you've grown up in Christ, you've seen that there are these trends and fads that come and go in Christianity. Some are more harmful than others, but you've learned to just ignore them because you've become stable in what you believe so you're really unaffected by them. You realize they'll be here today; they'll promise this great change and they'll be gone tomorrow, and nobody'll even remember after a couple of years. But immature believers are

redirected by every new teaching, every new trend. They uncritically accept whatever is shared with them. So sometimes, well-meaning Christians can be the cause of this instability.

But here in Ephesians 4, Paul is not concerned with those influences that come from well-meaning Christians. He's concerned about a particular destabilizing force – false teaching that comes from false teachers. And that brings us to the third implication of Christ's plan on our individual spiritual growth and it's this. Satan works to take advantage of our immaturity. Satan works to take advantage of our immaturity. Immature Christians are carried about by every wind of doctrine. And Paul says in Verse 14 that these changing winds of doctrine come, notice what he says, “by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming.” Paul is talking about false teachers and notice how he describes them. The word translated “trickery” is a very compelling word. It's a word from the Greek word for dice. It refers to sleight of hand. It's not the kind of innocent card trick that one child plays on another here. He's talking about the trickery of deceivers and frauds – people out to get something from you, people who play with loaded dice.

By choosing this word, by the way, Paul is implying that like most sleight of hand frauds, false teachers are in business primarily for one reason – their own financial benefit. Notice what he continues. He says: “by trickery..., by craftiness in deceitful scheming.” The word “craftiness” speaks of devious, malicious cunning. It literally means the willingness and ability to get your own way whatever it takes. It's used of what Satan did to Eve in 2 Corinthians 11:3. We read: “the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness” - the willingness and ability to get your own way whatever it takes.

In 2 Corinthians 4:2, Paul contrasts his own approach with how the false teachers act and, in so doing, he gives us insight into how false teachers function. Listen to this. 2 Corinthians 4:2. Paul says: “we have renounced the things hidden because of shame, not walking in craftiness [there's our word, Paul says I don't minister in craftiness. I'm not into this devious cunning trying to get my own way at your expense] or adulterating the Word of God.” There is the favorite message of false teachers – adulterating the Word of God. The word “adulterating” means to cause to become false by distorting something. They adulterate the Word of God.

Now back in Ephesians 4:14, notice the last phrase: “with regard to the schemes of error” is literally how we could translate it – by craftiness with regard to the schemes of error. False

teachers are frauds who, for their own financial advantage, trick people into buying schemes of error. By guile and deception, they sell schemes of error and the spiritually immature are always buying. They are especially susceptible to this deception.

Folks, I've been struck this week by how often this warning occurs in the New Testament. It occurs over and over and over again because as Christians, we tend to be (what?) gullible. Christians are some of the most gullible people in the world and we can be open to anybody who says, "I love Jesus". But the New Testament warns us again and again, don't believe it!

Let me just show you a few examples. Turn with me to Acts 20. Acts 20:30. Paul's talking to the Ephesian elders the last time he sees them, and he says this to them and it's, it's shocking. Verse 29: "I know that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; and from your own selves men will arise, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after them." Paul says listen, there are gonna be people that come in from the outside selling false teaching. And there are even gonna be people that are a part of the church who begin to teach and distort the truth. You gotta be on your alert. This was the Ephesian church, folks, where Paul was essentially the pastor for 18 months - a church he founded, elders he picked. And yet he says: Beware, it's gonna happen. I know it's gonna happen, he says.

In Romans 16, Paul breaks into the middle of his expression of love for all of these people with this same sort of warning. Romans 16:17: "Now I urge you, brethren, keep your eye on those who cause dissensions and (stumbling blocks) contrary to the teaching which you learned, and turn away from them. For such men are slaves, not of our Lord Christ but of their own appetites; and by their smooth and flattering speech they deceive the hearts of the unsuspecting." Stay on your guard, Paul says. Those who are unsuspecting are gonna be deceived. They're smooth.

In Galatians 1, Paul warns the churches in Galatia about this and they've already, they've already bitten. Verse 6: "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you [agitating you] and want to distort the gospel of Christ." Paul says there are people in your churches there in Galatia, churches I founded, who want to distort the gospel. Be on guard. Be on the alert. You're buying into error.

Peter makes this same point in 2 Peter. He devotes an entire chapter to false teachers - Chapter 2 of 2 Peter. He begins like this: “But false prophets also arose among the people [that is, in the Old Testament times], just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.” Be on guard, it’s gonna happen, Peter says, as he writes to those who were scattered because of the persecution.

Our Lord’s half-brother, Jude, writes an entire letter telling us to beware of the pretenders. And he begins like this in verse 3: “Beloved, I wanted to write to you about our common salvation, but instead I felt the necessity to write to you appealing that you contend earnestly for the faith [that is, the body of truth] which was once for all handed down to the saints. [Why?] For certain persons have crept in unnoticed...” You get the idea? It’s stealthy. Nobody will walk into this church with a sign across their chest that says: “False Teacher”. Nobody is gonna be on television with a sandwich board that says: ‘I am a “False Teacher”’. They creep in unnoticed. And he says: “those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness [into antinomianism, do whatever you want] and they deny our Lord.” By the way, false teachers almost always are off on the doctrine of Christ and that’s why you see that come up so frequently.

Do you get the point? Beware of false teachers and false teaching. It is everywhere. Why? Well, it’s important to understand that false teachers are not the ultimate source of their false teaching. They are not the ultimate source of their schemes of error. They may appear to all come from men, but the ultimate source of all false teaching is (whom?) Satan himself. In fact, the only other place this word “schemes” occurs in Scripture, “schemes of error” - the only other place it occurs is later in Ephesians 6: 11 where it’s called “the schemes of the devil”.

Peter O’Brien writes: “Behind false teaching are not simply men and women who pursue their unscrupulous goal with a scheming that produces error. There is also a supernatural evil power who seeks to deceive them with devilish cunning.” Folks, Satan’s primary agenda in the world is religion – false religion to keep people from the truth of the gospel and once they’re in the gospel, distorting the faith in order to confuse and deceive and mislead and to thwart. You remember in 2 Corinthians 11, we’re told that the Satan, just as the false apostles, transforms

himself into what? He's a transformer. He changes himself into an angel of light - that is, a messenger of truth. If Satan were to walk in here this morning, he wouldn't look like most pictures of him. He would look like a wonderful Christian person here to tell us the truth. Constantly, we're warned of this, so it becomes important to guard and protect those who are spiritually immature and for those who are spiritually mature to grow up so that they're no longer children easily confused and misled by trickery and schemes of error.

We'll talk about how you can grow up next week, but today we've seen the first three implications of Christ's plan on our own individual spiritual growth and development. Number one - every Christian begins the Christian life as a spiritual infant. Number two - every immature Christian shares two primary characteristics of children. They are personally unstable, and they are easily deceived. And number three - Satan works to take advantage of our immaturity and we must be on guard.

Now folks, as we finish our time together this morning before we take of the Lord's Table, there are a couple important lessons from what we've learned I just want to call your attention to, couple important lessons to bear in mind. Number one - we should never equate life maturity or social and mental maturity with spiritual maturity. There is a tendency to assume that as someone becomes a Christian and that person is older in life, that person has more experience, that person has some other human advantage - maybe they're wealthy, maybe they're famous, maybe they've been more successful - there is a tendency to assume that they can be more quickly thrust into positions of influence and leadership within the church. The worst examples, of course, is when somebody famous comes to Christ. There's a sort of mad rush to push them into positions of leadership and influence. But it doesn't matter how much life experience someone has. It doesn't matter even how often they've been exposed to the Scripture. Every one of us comes into Christ's kingdom as a spiritual newborn. Remember, it was Nicodemus, a leader of Israel, a teacher of the Law, that Jesus said you need to be born again, you need to start all over.

There's a second lesson much more practical to us. We must constantly be on guard against false teaching. We must constantly be on our guard against false teaching. Folks, be careful who you open yourself up to, what radio teachers you listen to, what TV preachers you watch. There are very few that are Biblically solid and many of them actually teach heresy. Many are undoubtedly

false teachers who are merely looking to pad their wallets and build their empires. Be careful what Christian books you read. There was a day when Christian publishing companies were publishing really only fairly solid Christian books. That is no longer the case. Several of them are owned publicly, traded on the Stock Exchange and they're often driven by the bottom line. They will publish whoever it, will bring in the money. Thomas Nelson publishes both Benny Hinn on the one hand and John MacArthur on the other. Be careful.

On one end of the spectrum of false teachers, there are the gaudy deceivers – the TBN, Benny Hinn crowd. In some ways, they're not the most dangerous because on the other end of the spectrum are the erudite, academic intellectuals with their cosmopolitan dress and their smooth postmodernism pushing the latest academic, intellectual drivel. Some of them, like Brian McLaren for example of the Emergent Church Movement, use publishing and conferences to spread their deception. Others of them stand in some college with a Christian heritage to which we send our children, and they pretend to love Christ. They say they do, but they are really wolves in sheep's clothing because they spend the rest of their academic careers trying to undermine the faith of those young people.

Beware! Jesus Christ our Lord and His apostles told us there would always, always, always be false teachers and they would be stealthy and crafty, and they would creep in unawares and unnoticed. They would come from the outside and they would show up inside.

Number three – we must be patient with people, a third lesson from this study. We must be patient with people. Don't expect spiritual infants to act like spiritual adults. Sometimes we get exasperated with those who are young in the faith. "Why don't they get it?" I mean, it seems so easy to us. Sometimes we get impatient with our own spiritual immaturity. You know, it's a whole lot easier to keep this in mind when we're dealing with physical immaturity. We're rarely tempted to see a little child crawling around on the floor and expect that child to act like an adult. Their physical size is a constant reminder that they are still young and need to develop. But there's no external reminder, there's no tag that Christians wear that says: "I'm a spiritual newborn" or "I'm a spiritual child" or "I'm a spiritual adolescent". So, we have to constantly remind ourselves to be patient. The people around us are at various levels of spiritual maturity and it's not seen in their physical appearance, but in their spiritual responses. Ask yourself this

question. Are they personally unstable? Are they fickle? Are they impulsive, driven by feelings and moods? Do they react excessively? Do they hold views violently? Are they easily deceived? Are they proud and self-certain of their views? Are they ignorant? Do they not like to be taught? Are they drawn to what's new and novel? Do they want entertainment and excitement? Are they susceptible to showmanship? Then they're spiritually immature whatever age they may be. Be patient.

Remember as we learned last week that every Christian will one day meet the standard. What's the standard? Christ's likeness – fully embodying the moral character of Jesus Christ. And that will happen (why?) because He bought it for us at the cross. That's really what we celebrate in the Lord's Table – the reality that “He has released us [as Revelation 1:5 says] from our own sins by His blood.” He's freed us so that we can grow into likeness to Christ. May God help us no longer to be children, but to grow up. Let's pray together.

Our Father, we thank You for the powerful reminder of our Lord, of His incarnation, of His sacrificial death in the place of sinners, of His resurrection - that He said to do this until He comes. He's no longer dead, but rather arose from the dead and is alive and someday will come for us.

And Father, we thank you for the reminder as well in this wonderful celebration that there's an eternity that awaits us because He Himself promised on that very night that He would someday do this again with us in His kingdom. Father, thank You for this wonderful ordinance. Seal it to our hearts. God may even this reminder help us to grow in our maturity and in our likeness to Christ. For it's in His name we pray. Amen.