

No Christmas without an Incarnation. No Salvation without an Atonement.

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[0 : 00] Philippians chapter 2 is where our text is going to be this morning as we take a break from our study in the gospel of John.

We focus on the incarnation of our Lord and what that means and why we have so much reason to celebrate that.

This time of year at Christmas. So Philippians chapter 2 verses 6 through 8 is going to be the text that I'm going to preach from.

I do want to go back up to chapter 2 verse 1 and read through verse 11. If you have a Bible, would you please take your Bible? If you don't have a Bible, there's a Bible in the pew.

Grab that. If you don't own a Bible, you can take that Bible with you home today as our gift. From our congregation to you in hopes that you'll continue to read the Word of God. Philippians chapter 2, if you'd stand with me as we honor the reading of God's Word together.

[1 : 09] Reading in verse 1 and going through verse 11. So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself.

By taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at 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.

[2 : 34] May God add a blessing to the reading of his words. Would you please be seated? In Acts 2, verses 42-47, that passage describes the joy, the love, the unity, and community that was enjoyed by the first Christians who were a part of the first church in Jerusalem.

This was soon after, if you remember, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, which had occurred just a short time after our Lord's ascension into heaven after his resurrection.

I want to read that passage with you. Acts 2, verses 42-47. Speaking of that first church, and it said, They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all as had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people.

[4 : 06] And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. The joy, love, unity, and community experienced by this group of believers and the selfless character that they exhibited caused them to have favor with the people.

Their zealotness for the purity of their congregation and their mission to advance the gospel by ministering and serving their neighbors resulted with their being highly esteemed within their community as the Lord continued to build His church.

We move to Acts 5, verses 12-14. Again, speaking of this church, it says that now many signs and wonders were regularly done among the people by the hands of the apostles.

And they were all together in Solomon's portico. None of the rest dared to join them, but the people held them in high esteem. And more than ever, believers were added to the Lord multitudes of both men and women.

How was this unity that they had achieved? They were devoted, we see, to the apostles' teaching and to their fellowship.

[5 : 30] And at the root of that teaching was the gospel, was the gospel of Jesus Christ, was the person and work of Jesus, who He is and what He had done.

And so they experienced this kind of supernatural community marked by unity, love, and joy. This community of believers, this church, had personified our Lord's instruction to His followers to be light.

A light in a world that overcomes darkness. Remember He said that in Matthew 5, verses 14-16. You are the light of the world, our Lord says.

A city set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

And so we see that was happening in this church in Jerusalem. And it had to be astonishing and perplexing to the unbelievers living in that same community as this church because they didn't see that same kind of unity in their community.

[7 : 00] They didn't experience that same kind of love and joy and fellowship and selflessness. That was all absent everywhere else apart from that church.

It was absent in their religion. It was absent in their politics. It was absent in their workplaces. It was absent in their marketplaces. It was absent in their homes.

It was absent within themselves. And don't we likewise observe that to be the case in our time? Especially right now in our nation at large.

Even in our local communities. We witness that people are divided. They are divided politically, socially, economically, racially.

We don't witness this same kind of love, joy, and unity in community apart from it being realized in the church.

[8 : 08] We don't see that outside of it in our world today. But, sadly, that same division that we see in the world can characterize the church of Jesus Christ.

And that same division is noticed as we look through Scripture, doesn't it, within early churches whose foundings are recorded in the Word of God.

Churches like the one in Philippi. There were issues in Philippi. The church was in conflict. There were grumblers.

There were disputes with one another that grieved God. Their conduct was unbecoming of the Bride of Christ. And so Paul, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote to them, exhorting them to be blameless, innocent children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation.

But what could he say to bring this divided church back into unity?

[9 : 32] Back to the joy, the love, and the selflessness that should mark a Christian community. And so what he does is he points them back to Jesus and primarily to his incarnation and his atonement.

He sets these two doctrines before their eyes that they could see them and hopefully recapture the community that they should have marked by love, joy, and selflessness.

The same character that our Lord had and displayed again in his incarnation and his subsequent atonement. Paul commands them here, this divided church, to consider how Christ became the God-man and what his becoming the God-man accomplished.

And so that leads us to our main idea this morning. Christian joy, love, unity, and community result from their having the mind of Christ as demonstrated by the events of his incarnation and atonement.

You know, a popular thing to do right now, and I know it is for my family, is to go and see the Christmas lights that are up.

[11:18] You may be even driving home from wherever you were with your family. It's dark out, and so you decide to take a trip through your neighborhood just to see how people have adorned their houses in celebration of Christmas.

And don't those lights have a drawing effect? We can't help but notice them. We can't help but look at them. As our nation is divided over political and social issues, in a similar manner, what a great opportunity for the church to display the light of Christ, to display the joy, the unity, the community that we have that they lack.

We shouldn't mirror their conflicts in our fellowship, but reflect the light of Christ that the gospel has shed on our hearts.

What an example and a testimony we have to share to the world as God's people. That though we are diverse in many ways, we have been united within the body of Jesus Christ, and collectively join our hearts and our minds in worship of Christ, in our pursuit to become more like Him and help one another become more like Him as well.

If that happens, the light of our Lord will shine brightly in you and through us.

[13:01] In Philippians chapter 2, the Apostle Paul sheds light on the events that transpired moments before Christ was born.

You may be familiar with the narrative of that day. Joseph and Mary on their way to Bethlehem. They're lodging in the manger because all of the inns were full.

The shepherds who visited him. The wise men who came much later on with gifts to honor Jesus. But here Paul gives us a behind-the-scenes look of this story.

He takes us from Bethlehem up into heaven. Where we see the story from heaven's perspective. From a theological perspective. What did it mean? What did it require? For God to become a man.

[14:10] And what was the purpose for his doing so? Understanding this truth and abiding in these truths, Paul says, will give you a like mind with Christ.

Which will strengthen and will deepen the joy, the love, the unity of our Christian community as we become that city sitting on top of a hill.

As we shine brightly sharing the good news of Jesus Christ. Who he is. Who he is. And what he has done. And providing us with the Christmas story from heaven's perspective.

The apostle Paul presents us with two timeless theological principles that when understood and applied to each believer will result in their having the mind of Christ.

Being like minded with Christ. Being like minded with Christ. Through their awareness of that salvation that they've received through him. That was secured by his coming and what his coming ultimately has achieved.

[15:31] And so the first timeless theological principle that Paul presents us with in this text is that God became a man. God became a man.

God became a man. The Bible opens up with the book of Genesis. Where there it describes God who has eternally existed as Trinity.

Three persons in one. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. The Bible begins with Genesis 1. 1-3.

Introducing us to God who exists in Trinity.

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.

And God said, let there be light. And there was light. In this passage we see the Trinity at work in creation.

[16:37] We have God the Father. We have God the Spirit. We have God the Son who is identified here as the divine word. And then from that book and that chapter onward as we go throughout Scripture.

That story unfolds. That understanding unfolds of who God is. As we get to John's gospel. And there John begins his gospel.

By echoing Genesis 1-3. Where there he fully discloses the second person of the Trinity.

This divine word. John writes, In the beginning was the word. The word was with God. And the word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him. And without him was not anything made that has been made. In him was life.

[17 : 37] And the life was the light of men. And then jump down to verse 14. And the word, this divine eternal word, became flesh.

And dwelt among us. We have seen his glory. Glory as the only Son from the Father. Full of grace and truth.

This act of God described by John here. Whereby God the Son took upon himself a human nature. Is called the incarnation. Incarnation comes from the Latin incarnitas.

Which means to make flesh. In Philippians 2, Paul explains what it meant for God the Son. This divine eternal word to add humanity to his deity.

He does so in verses 6-7. But before that, in verse 5. He exhorts. He encourages the Philippian believers.

[18 : 44] That they must follow Christ's example of humility. And that their following his example is what is going to ultimately resolve the conflicts.

And the division. And the bickering. That has taken place within their community. So that's why he points them to these two important understandings.

Of who Christ is and what Christ has done. Look at verse 5 again. And going through the beginning of verse 7. Paul says, Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

Who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. But emptied himself.

So here Paul states that when the Son, Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, the divine and eternal word through which all things were made and made for, added humanity to his deity, he left something behind.

[19 : 51] He emptied himself. And so that presents us with a question. Well, what was it? What was it that he left behind? What was it that he emptied himself of?

You know, church history is filled with debates over this very question. What was it that the divine word left behind or emptied out?

Notable among those debates was the Council of Nicaea, which took place in 325 A.D. There, Arius, a man, presented his claim, his belief that Jesus was the first and greatest created being. Thus, he denied Christ's deity and his equality with God. Standing in opposition to him was Athanasius, who thankfully ended up winning the day by defending this biblical position that Jesus is fully God.

He is of the same essence as the Father. And, you know, legend has it that at this council, attending this council, many bishops, one of them was a man named Nicholas, who eventually went on to be canonized.

[21 : 18] And Nicholas was so offended by Arius' claims that Jesus was not fully God, that legend says that he rushed him and either slapped him or punched him in the face.

Now, we can appreciate his zeal, right? But it's probably better not, there's probably better ways for us to handle the conflicts that we have in the church, right?

When we are righteously indignant, maybe striking another person in the face isn't the best way to go. But Athanasius was correct because he grounded his argument in the word of God.

Jesus did not leave behind his deity when he came in the flesh, when he was incarnated. And when you look at the original Greek in which this passage in particular was written, that's clear.

When Paul says in verse 6 that Jesus was in the form of God, that word form in the Greek has a nuance that our English translations, many of them don't capture.

[22 : 29] That word is morphe. And it refers to the essential being or nature of something. It refers to something's essence.

Now, when you look down in verse 8, Paul speaks again of Jesus. And there he says in verse 8, in my ESV translation, being found in human form.

Now, that in English, right, it's form in verse 6, it's form in verse 8. But that's not the case in the Greek. In the Greek, that word there in verse 8 translated as form is not morphe, but schematy, from which we get our English word scheme.

Schema refers to the external appearance of something. It is something that can change. I remember as a kid watching Ripley's Believe It or Not.

I think it was a book and then it became a show. And they had a character called the Lizard Man. And the Lizard Man was a circus performer.

[23 : 44] And he looked like a lizard. He had tattooed all of his body, including his face, to look like it was scaly. He had even had implants over his eyebrows and I think even on his shoulders to make them rough and rigid like lizard skin.

He wore contacts that were reptilian. And he even had an operation to fork his tongue to make it look like a lizard.

If anything, he did not appear human, right? His schema, his outward appearance was reptilian. But if you took a sample of his DNA, it would come back and it would be clear that this individual is a human. That's his essence.

That's his morphe. We can change the outward appearance, but we cannot change our essence, our being. It is essential that we understand here that Jesus existed in the morphe, the essence of God eternally.

[24 : 53] His essential nature and being were divine. Those were not things that he emptied himself of or left behind. And so having understood that, Paul goes on to say that despite this truth, Jesus did not count equality with God as a thing to be grasped.

Though this was true of him, he did not count this as something that he needed to grasp. And again, it's helpful for us to unpack the meaning of the original Greek.

The mental picture conveyed by this word is snatching or seizing or clutching something. Like going to a store on Black Friday, if you've done that.

And there's a product there. It's in limited supply. It's on sale. Either you really want it or there's a family member that really wants it.

And you've got to get that gift. And so you see it. You run to it. You seize it. You snatch it. You grab it. You grasp it.

[26 : 05] To make sure that everybody knows this is mine. I am laying hold of this object. I'm going to purchase it. And don't you dare try to take it from me.

That's not what's going on here. When Paul uses that word grasp. Jesus didn't have to snatch his equality with God. He didn't have to clutch it in fear as if it could be taken away from him.

It was his. It was who he was. It was his essence. His nature. So it wasn't his deity that he left behind. That was unalterable.

But there was something. And verse 7 mentions what that something was. Paul says, Jesus added a human nature to his divine nature.

He remained fully God but emptied himself of his divine privileges. He left the riches of heaven's glories to become the God-man.

[27 : 35] He left the beachside mansion in Malibu with a Ferrari parked in the garage to occupy a rusted-out camper van in some obscure town like Ludlow, Missouri.

He gave up his right to heaven's glory. He gave up his right to heaven's riches to become poor. To occupy human flesh.

And it wasn't a very glorious situation that he stepped into, was it? He wasn't born into a powerful or notorious family like Caesar's.

He was the child of a teenage girl. The stepson of an unassuming carpenter. He spent his first night in the world that was created through him not in a palace, not even in a house, but in a barn.

Laid in a manger. You know, if DHS saw such a situation, they would be tempted today to remove a child in that situation from their parents.

[28 : 54] He was born in Bethlehem. In obscurity. He set the riches of heaven aside to dwell amongst us as God with us.

In human flesh and form. He added a human nature to his divine nature. Two natures. One person. Now, many would think that if God came to the world, that he would come to be served. As a matter of fact, remember when Paul and Barnabas come to Lystra in Acts chapter 14.

They heal a man who had never walked before. And you remember the people's reaction to that? They thought they were gods. This is Zeus and Hermes. And so what did they do?

They rushed around to provide them with gifts. They wanted to offer them sacrifices. It was their mindset that if gods are here in human form, then we've got to serve them.

[30 : 05] And of course, they put an end to all of that before it could really begin. As they shared the good news of the gospel with them. But that's the way I think that people would react if they knew that God was before them in a human form.

They would jump into service of that person. Not expecting, I think, at all that God would be the one who would serve them.

But by becoming a servant of man.

There's a show. I don't know that it's on anymore, but Undercover Boss. I'm sure that you've probably heard of it. Maybe even watched it before.

And the premise of the show is that someone way high up in the corporation, whether they be the owner of the company or the CEO, disguises themselves, they leave their corner office, and they go down to where the regular working stiffs are working.

[31 : 22] And so they spend that day in the warehouse, boxing things, shipping things, whatever the case may be. But really, it's a ruse.

I think that that show is a way for those companies to be publicized and to tell a feel-good story that makes all of our hearts warm. But you know what happens after all of those cameras are packed up and that production crew leaves?

That boss goes right back up to his position, never really having left it as the CEO or the owner of that company. But when Paul says that Jesus in the Incarnation became a servant, he really did. He really did. He washed his disciples' feet. He touched lepers. He ate with tax collectors and sinners.

He sat down with the Samaritan woman. He taught. He healed. He was accessible to everyone, even the most lowly in society.

[32 : 37] Read the Gospels and you'll see over and over again, Jesus serving. He repeatedly spoke about his will being to accomplish his Father's will.

that though he was God, he served God. And he served him and us by not only becoming a servant, but a suffering servant.

Isaiah 53, 1-6, prophesy about our Lord's coming and his being the suffering servant of God. who has believed what he has heard from us. And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground.

He had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him. He was despised and rejected by men.

[33 : 51] A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised.

And we esteemed him not. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows. Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace and with his wounds we are healed.

We all like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, added flesh to his deity. He left the riches of heaven behind to become a poor, suffering servant.

[35 : 02] Like men, he could be tempted. Like men, he became hungry, thirsty, weary, sleepy, emotional. Like men, he could bleed.

And like men, he could die. Thus, as a result of his incarnation, he could atone for the sins of his people.

In Matthew chapter 20, the disciples were in conflict. The mother of James and John had dared to ask the question of Jesus.

Jesus. Will you allow my sons to sit at your right and your left in your coming kingdom?

And when that request was overheard by the other disciples, guess what? They were angry. They were indignant. There was conflict.

[36 : 12] How did Jesus address the conflict? How did he bring them back to unity? Well, he did so by doing what Paul has done for the Philippians in chapter 2.

By drawing their focus to his incarnation, his coming, and what his coming would achieve. Matthew 20, 25 through 28, Jesus addresses his disciples.

He said to them, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them and that their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you, but whoever would be great among you must be your servant and whoever would be first among you must be your slave.

Even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

So now having presented this truth, this timeless theological principle, Paul draws attention to the second timeless theological principle that when understood and applied by each believer produces Christian joy, love, unity, community, and it's this.

[37 : 36] God became man to save sinners. God became man to save sinners.

And being found in human form, verse 8, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

So now the focus shifts from the incarnation to the purpose for it, which was the atonement.

The atonement refers to the work Christ did in his life and death to earn our salvation. It is common this time of year to see nativity scenes, isn't it?

in homes, in front yards, sometimes on altars in front of pulpits, but the manger, the incarnation, The incarnation isn't the symbol that best symbolizes Christianity.

[38 : 43] It's the cross. The atonement shouldn't be seen as an afterthought to the incarnation, but the purpose for it.

There is no gospel without the cross. The incarnation and the resurrection are wonderful, but without the cross that links them, we would be totally without hope.

The child that was born away in a manger was the Lord of heaven who left behind his glorious position, adding humanity to his deity, assuming the place of a servant, coming to a world under the curse of sin, filled with sinful people and willingly, selflessly, enduring the pain and the shame of the cross.

where there for a time he gave up his favorable relationship with God the Father.

As on the cross, he who knew no sin became sin and was crushed by the righteous judgment of God against it.

[40 : 10] And he was forsaken until it was finished. The gospel is good news not merely because God became a man or that he taught us good things about how to live our lives.

The gospel is good news that Christ has dealt with our sin of which the resurrection is proof that it has been truly dealt with, that it has truly been overcome.

And so what makes the good news so good is the truth that Jesus suffered the penalty for our sin as our representative so that we will never have to suffer it.

1 Peter 2.24 Speaking of Jesus, he himself bore our sins in his body on the tree that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.

by his wounds you have been healed. Your perspective of Christmas changes when you get older, doesn't it? Remember as a kid you just couldn't wait.

[41 : 27] Those last few weeks felt like an eternity. Looking forward to what presents would be under the tree. But when you get older you become adults, you have children, grandchildren, nieces and nephews.

the perspective shifts, doesn't it? You can't wait to give. To see the joy that comes from that individual whom you are giving that gift to.

That's what's on your mind. That's what you're thinking about. You understand that it is truly greater and better to give than to receive. You see, God is a giver.

He loves to give, not to sell. John 3, 16. For God so loved the world that He gave the most precious thing He has.

His only Son. That whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. God the Father gave His only Son to die for you.

[42 : 39] The divine Word, the Son, became a man. Willingly, selflessly, He took the place of the guilty. As a man, He could die as God.

His sacrifice was sufficient to appease and to cover all of your sin. And so, emulation of Christ's life and teaching is only possible to those who have entered into a new relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ.

And the fact that He's come and what His coming has achieved in His resurrection. The God-man who substituted His life to save sinners.

sinner. The incarnation which led to the atonement which then we see leads to Christ's great exaltation. The humiliation of the suffering servant in His first incarnation will result and has resulted with His exaltation as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

Look at verses 9-11 again. Because the Son has done this, therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name so that at 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 the Father.

[44 : 16] You know, the Westminster Shorter Catechism explains the chief end of man and the chief end of man, I believe it explains well, is to glorify God and to enjoy Him forever.

Brothers and sisters, having been saved by Christ who humbled Himself enduring God's wrath for your sins, leaving behind heaven's glories and riches, adding humanity to His deity in order to become the suffering servant who willingly died selflessly for the sins of others, having received so great a gift, are we really going to divide over the color of the carpet in our sanctuary?

No. Are we really going to divide over minor theological minutia? Are we going to divide over our musical preferences?

Are we really going to come into this place and be primarily concerned with ourselves, with my needs, with my wants, with my preferences?

Are we really going to do that when we think about Jesus Christ and what He's done for us? the world needs the church to be like Christ, to play our part as members of His body of which He is the head, to be a different people, multigenerational, ethnically diverse, giving no preferences to anyone based on their socioeconomic status in the world?

[46 : 10] And the world as a result should see our unity here and be in awe of it because nothing unites people like the gospel.

Nothing unites people like Jesus Christ. We are very different, but what unites us is what we share. And what we share is the salvation that we have received through the God-man, Jesus Christ. And the encouragement here from Paul and to us today is that we can do this because He has given us His Spirit to indwell us.

We can have the mind of Christ. And the more that you and I dwell on the incarnation and focus on the atonement, we will be joyful, loving people, united, characterizing Christ in our community and displaying Him to the world.

world. The world needs the church to be like Christ. So let's do it. Three concluding remarks of application.

[47 : 37] And I'm going to address these both to unbelievers and believers. If you've heard this message and you realize that Jesus is the Christ, He is the God-man, that He was incarnated, that He atoned for your sins, you must first confess your sins.

Repent. Acknowledge that you have seen sin wrongly, that you are in judgment of the sins that you have committed against God, that the only one who can save you is Jesus Christ.

And confess your sins. Now for a believer, I know, I can speak for myself, I've been guilty of coming into this place and thinking that things are about me when they're not. I've been guilty of taking my focus off of the incarnation and the atonement.

And so for us, when that's the case, we likewise need to confess our sins. Lord, I've made it about me, forgive me, and help me to make it about you.

Which leads us to the second point of application, which is to call out to God. Again, as an unbeliever, having confessed your sins, call out to God. Call out to God to save you.

[48 : 49] As believers realizing the sin that we are in, the division that we have created or are part of, again, likewise, call out to God for help to give us the mind of Christ, to focus our minds and our hearts on what truly matters.

And then finally, concentrate on Christ. Concentrate on Christ. As an unbeliever who's now been saved, having confessed your sin, calling out to God, now you continue on, you concentrate on Jesus Christ.

You pick up your cross, you follow him. And the same is true for all of us. Man, during this time of year, it can be so easy to lose focus of what matters most.

Concentrate on Christ. And if we all concentrate on Christ, his incarnation, his atonement, we will be that city on the hill that shines brightly and brilliantly in a world engulfed in darkness.

us. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you that Christ has come, that he has been incarnated as God with us, that he willingly and selflessly and intentionally went to the cross, despising the shame because of what he knew going to the cross would achieve.

[50 : 21] Salvation for his people. Lord, forgive us that at times, even this time of year, as our thoughts should be on the incarnation, we get caught up in so many other things that just don't matter.

We lose focus of you and we concentrate on ourselves, our own likes, our own interests, our own desires. Forgive us, Lord God.

Help us to be united, loving one another, filled with joy as you keep our hearts and minds focused on Christ, his incarnation, his atonement, his resurrection, his imminent return, that we would not waste our lives, but live them to the fullest, giving Jesus all the glory.

We ask these things in his name, amen. Thank you.