

I Am A Bride

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[0 : 00] Well, I'd like us to turn together to Revelation chapter 21. And tonight we are coming to the end of a series that we've been doing in our evening services called The Christian's Identity.

And this series has been aiming to just look in more detail at some of the concepts and terms that the Bible uses to describe our identity as followers of Jesus.

And here's a summary of the things that we've gone through. We started looking at, under the heading, I'm a child. Then we went through, I'm an exile. I'm a saint. I'm a branch.

I am an athlete. Tonight we've come to our final part and we can read again Revelation 21 verses 1 to 2. Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth.

For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away and the sea was no more. And I saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

[1 : 07] And our title comes from these words. Tonight, our heading is, I am a bride. Now throughout this series, we have been using a diagram to help us.

And the diagram is made up of three parts, emphasizing the fact that our identity is shaped by what God thinks. He is our Creator. He defines who we are and our identity comes from Him.

And that's true not just of God as our Creator, but even more so as God our Savior. And that's where our identity needs to be rooted. And from that, what we think should be shaped and also we want what other people think to also be shaped by that.

But the reason why this diagram is so important is because it's so easy to get these arrows the wrong way around. And we've said this many, many times, sometimes we ground our identity in terms of what we think.

And that's a very, very dominant influence in our society today, where really the root of our identity is what we feel, what we see inside of ourselves.

[2 : 14] And sometimes, though the influences can be more external and what other people think can dominate our identity. And that can be particularly influential in a negative sense, where we feel maybe judged by others or excluded by others or criticized by others that can have a hugely negative effect on our own self-esteem and on our sense of identity.

And the danger is that when the arrows are going this way down here, the arrows can start going this way up here. And what that results in is our own opinions or our own experiences of other people can shape what we think of God.

And that can very often lead to misunderstandings. And there's lots of different examples of that, but perhaps if you have a bad experience with friends who you feel maybe don't particularly like you or there's aspects of your character that they've criticized or for some reason they want to keep your arms length, then it's so easy to think that that's how God thinks as well.

And we can project our experiences onto God. That can happen negatively. It can also happen positively. We can maybe be around people and they're like, well, we don't care what you do. And we can think, well, neither does God.

All is fine. The key point is that all of these red arrows pointing the wrong way have got to go. We've got to make sure that the arrows are pointing in the right direction.

[3 : 32] We want our identity to be grounded in what God reveals in Scripture. And so we've been asking three questions as we've gone through this series. What does God think?

What should you think? And what do we want others to think? And that's been a really helpful framework for us. But I'm going to pause those questions until the very end. We're going to actually come back to them when we share the Lord's Supper together after the sermon.

Before we reach these questions, I want us to maybe take a step back and to think a bit more broadly. We read from the very beginning and from the very end of the Bible, which means that we are straight away thinking about big questions of origin and of destiny.

And what I want us to think through a little more is in terms of where we've come from and where we're going. And all of that, I hope, will help us understand more what it means when the Bible says that you are a bride.

But as we do that, I think it's important to begin by saying that this title, I'm a bride, can immediately raise stumbling blocks for people in terms of how we relate to this imagery that's being used.

[4 : 47] And some of these stumbling blocks can be among the most controversial in terms of our society today, but also some of the most sensitive in terms of the things that we have encountered in our lives.

So I want to just mention three stumbling blocks that this can provoke. Some people might see that phrase, I'm a bride, and immediately say, well, I'm not a woman. And that's obviously what men hear.

Every man listening would perhaps instinctively say that. But I don't need to tell you that the issue is even broader than that now, because we are in a period in our culture, our cultural history, where that kind of simple categorization of humans as men or women is now not that simple at all.

And the rapid emergence of transgenderism in recent decades means that there are many people who don't think in terms of those categories now, or there's many people who may be born biologically female, but who may say, I'm not a woman.

Or on the other side, people who are born biologically male, but they think they're sense of identities that I'm a woman, but they then need medical intervention to make their bodies align with that non-physical sense of identity.

[6 : 03] That's a massive issue in our culture today, and you are all aware of that. And for everybody affected by that, it can be a huge area of distress and struggle and difficulty.

And we now have this period where gender is seen by many people much more in terms of a spectrum. And even the question, what is a woman, is a huge point of controversy in our society. So all of that raises questions that we see people around us struggling with in terms of their identity. That's one of the stumbling blocks. But it's not the only stumbling block.

Other people might read that phrase and say, well, I'm not a bride. And for many people, that's a big struggle in the sense that although some people are single and are very comfortable and fulfilled in a life as somebody who's single, other people are not.

And other people experience a huge pile of heartbreak because they've not been a bride yet. And of course, the same is true for many single men who have the same longing in their hearts.

[7 : 19] But there's maybe even one more stumbling block that people maybe hardly ever talk about. And it's that some people might be thinking, well, I am a woman. I am a bride, I got married, but I'm not actually that happy.

And things are not the way I dreamt they would be. And that's the experience that many people have. Some people's marriages are strained.

For some people, they end up in very distressing situations where they're treated very badly or betrayed in a way that's awful. But for other people, the couple might treat themselves very well, but life just brings a whole pile of sorrow and heartache for them.

And then there's many people for whom the problem is not that you didn't get to have a wonderful marriage. The problem is that death has robbed you of the person you loved so much.

And for all of these reasons and for more, the phrase, I'm a bride is possibly the most sensitive and potentially the most controversial of all the topics that we've looked at in our series because it risks offending the mood and mindset of the culture around us.

[8 : 39] And it risks highlighting some of our deepest and most private struggles and sorrows. Yet at the same time, in terms of thinking about our identity as Christians, I think this title is the most beautiful and I think potentially the most important for us to understand.

I think I said that at the start, I said, child is most important. So, well, it's impossible to pick. But this is so it's certainly important. It's definitely the most beautiful.

But in order to understand that more, we need to think about where we've come from and we need to think about where we're going. And the big lesson I hope we'll learn is this, your life right now is not the main event.

In other words, this life is not your big day. And it's so important for us to think about that because the whole world thinks that it is and we can easily follow their lead.

We think that this life is the banquet which we have to feast at. So we have to make the most of everything that this life will offer us. We can think that this life is the moment when I get to wear the dress in the sense that where I get to be the person that everybody will admire and everybody will look up to and think, wow, look at them.

[10:07] Or we can even think that this life is the night where we need to find intimacy and fulfillment and connection. For so many people, the big goal in life is just to think this is the time when my dreams have got to come true.

But one of the most important truths that the Gospel teaches is that this life is not your big day. And as I say that, I'm not saying that this is not God saying, you know, yes, you're in the midst of heartbreak, but get over it because you know, this life is not the main event.

That's not what the message is. The message is God saying, I know that your life right now is hard. And I know that it has brought a lot of sorrow.

But this is not your big day. I have got something amazing waiting for you. And recognizing that and thinking in those terms is so crucial if we're going to have a right understanding of our identity as Christians.

So let's think a little bit more in terms of where we've come from. The imagery of a bride that the Bible presents is rooted in the framework of marriage, which in biblical terms is tied to the fact that humanity is created as male and female.

[11:39] And the key verse there is in Genesis one, God said, let us make man in our image after our likeness and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and every other creeping thing that creeps on the earth.

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God, he created him male and female. He created them. Now there's a huge amount of important theology in those verses.

What I want to focus on is the fact that it is absolutely explicit that humanity as male and female together that bears the image of God.

That's one of the key emphasis that's being made. In other words, that male-female balance in humanity is teaching us something crucial about the nature of God our Creator.

And that's incredibly important to remember. All the very best attributes of men, all the very best attributes of women, all come from God and they all reflect him.

[12:43] And that's especially important to remember because as you read through the Bible, you will find that God is often spoken about in language that is predominantly masculine. So it's masculine pronouns that will be used for God, often the imagery that's associated, it's used to describe God as associated with masculinity.

But that's not the only type of descriptions you have of God. And there are many, many points in the Bible where God is depicted in language that is much, much more associated with the nature of women.

And perhaps the most famous of all is when Jesus spoke of wanting to gather Jerusalem under his wing as a hen, gather his brood, a beautiful maternal language.

And it's incredibly important to remember from that because a lot of people will maybe sort of label Christianity as being maybe patriarchal or focused on men or things like that.

The Bible is absolutely clear. In fact, it's clear on the very first page that everything that makes a woman a woman comes from God, from his design and his purposes.

[13:54] Now, again, there's loads we could say about that. But the thing I want us to notice is that one of the things that's been taught here is that the difference between male and female in humanity combines to bear the image of God.

So the differences combine to bear the image of God. In other words, in that united single human race that we're all part of, there's a diversity that enriches who we are.

And that united diversity speaks to us about God because that's exactly what lies at the heart of the nature of God as he's revealed in the Bible.

The biblical doctrine of God is grounded in the doctrine of the Trinity. And that's a doctrine that combines unity and plurality, simplicity and diversity.

And it's so important to understand that because often humanity will gravitate towards one or other of these. And we do this in lots of different areas, so particularly in relation to life's big questions. [15:13] In religion, in general terms, people will gravitate either to singularity or plurality. So you'll sometimes have some religions that are focused on a singular isolated God, whether that's the very kind of narrow monotheism of Islam that denies the Trinity, or whether that's the kind of pantheism that says, you know, the universe is all God.

Other people, though, gravitate to plurality, so you've got some religions that've got thousands of gods. And you see that both in Greek and Greco-Roman religion, you see that in Eastern religions. But it's not just religion that happens, it happens in science as well. And when science reaches the kind of limits of what you can measure and it starts thinking about what the various hypotheses are that can explain reality, some will gravitate to singularity and say, well, this one universe is all that it is.

Others, though, will gravitate to plurality and so much so you have the multiverse hypothesis that postulates that there are an infinite number of universes.

And today, we see the same thing in relation to gender. And so some would argue that we should stop categorizing people just as male or female.

[16:32] And some would argue that there's maybe a multitude of options instead of just two. And so humanity gravitates to this, singularity, plurality.

The doctrine of the Trinity is beautiful because it maintains both and it keeps us from falling into either of these traps because it tells us that one ultimate reality is one.

There is only one God. But within that God, there is more than one. There is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And I think that a helpful word to describe that is the word harmony. That word harmony is describing an enriched unity, a unity that has been enriched.

Now, I'm going to do a very unusual form of illustration and I'm going to commission the help of Tom because he has to sit at the piano to do this. So Tom needs to help me with this illustration.

[17:32] In music, one single note is OK. So as long as the sound desk is on, we should hear Tom. So just play a C. There you go. C, hmm, you can all have it. C, that's OK.

Not bad. 12 notes altogether. Not so good. A three note chord.

C, beautiful. Beautiful. Now, that's not a perfect, there is no perfect illustration of the Trinity. So please don't go away saying, oh, Tom has illustrated the Trinity by playing a chord.

That's not a perfect illustration at all. But it raises a really important point that within that one chord, there are three notes that harmonize beautifully.

And I do think it's interesting that in the world created by the three in one God, at the heart of music lies the three in one chord. I think that's another glimpse of our creator.

[18:32] The key point is that God is not an isolated singularity. He's not just this one isolated being of whatever. What the Bible reveals is that God is a beautiful harmony, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

And of course, that's hinted at in that word there, when God says, let us make man in our image.

And if all of that's true of God, then it's not surprising that in the diversity of male and female in humanity, we see a key part of God's image being displayed.

And that's why we recognize and maintain the fact that the male and female balance in humanity is crucial. And yes, a lot of people have moved away from that today. We're not prepared to move away from that.

We will maintain what is revealed on page one of the Bible and what we believe has shaped the whole of human history. And it's so important really, as you think of it, that to remember that although today many, many people don't live according to the male, female binary, every single human being exists because of it.

In other words, you know, people may choose a lifestyle and identity that moves away from that and that's fine. But another generation of human beings cannot exist without this.

[20:05] And you'll all be aware that a lot of scientific advancement allows people who've made different choices to us to still be able to have children.

The key point is that all of those things are necessary because they're trying to get back to the male and female binary that the whole of human existence and survival depends on. People don't live according to it.

Everybody exists because of it. And so it's crucial to who we are. But you might be asking yourself a question. If we bear the image of the triune three in one God, why aren't there three genders? And if God is Trinity, why is humanity binary? Well, I think that the reason for that is because the binary category of male and female is not just teaching us about the diversity and unity of the God that we've come from.

In fact, that's not the primary thing it's teaching us about. It has even more to teach us about where we are going.

[21 : 21] A lot of people might ask the question, what's the point in marriage today? For many people, that kind of biblical concept of a formal institution that sets a boundary around sexual intimacy and which obliges people to a lifelong commitment.

Today for so many people, that just seems unnecessary for some people. It just seems weird. What's the point of doing that? What's the point of tying yourself into one relationship for your whole life?

What's the point of preserving your virginity until you get married? What's the point of having this formal status of bride, groom, husband, wife? Why bother with it all?

And a lot of people feel like that. And that's why a lot of people don't bother with it all. And again, there's loads we could say about that, but again, I want to highlight one key point that I think we can easily miss.

What we can easily miss is the fact that in the Bible, marriage is pointing us forward to the ultimate destiny of humanity, to the ultimate destiny of all those who trust in Jesus.

[22 : 38] And part of the reason why we know that is because marriage is spoken of at the very start of the Bible and at the very end, it's all pointing us forward to what God is trying to achieve.

And one of the things that we need to recognize there is that from the very beginning, a difference is being set before us in terms of men and women and in the roles that they have in marriage.

Now I'm a little bit hesitant to talk about this because when we start talking about the roles of men and women, it's impossible to say things that aren't easily misunderstood or at times maybe offensive.

And I think that's part of the reason for that is that we all speak about this topic through our own, the lens of our own culture and our own experience and people can interpret things in different ways.

And you'll know of lots of examples.

I can think of one woman I know who absolutely loves having the car door open for her. And for her, that's a sign of being cared for and loved and respected.

[23 : 38] I can know another woman who absolutely hates having the car door open for her. It's like an insult. And so the same thing can be interpreted in different ways. So if I say anything that you're like, please just focus on the main point that I'm trying to make.

And I hope that you just speak about this in a way that's sensitive and helpful. Each unites the distinctives in men and women into something beautiful.

And within that beauty, there's a difference in roles between a husband and wife. Now as soon as I say that 100 stereotypes will pop into your head and the vast majority of those stereotypes will be cultural rather than biblical.

However, there are some biblical differences. And it's important for us to think about these and I want to suggest that the differences are captured by two little words in Genesis 2.

The word help and the word hold. Help and hold.

[24 : 51] A woman gives help to her husband. Now before that offends every woman in here, just remember that it's the men who need help.

The woman helps. Now that in biblical terms is a picture of purpose and capability and usefulness on the part of women.

In fact, this is where I may be being a wee bit controversial, but I'll just do it anyway. I think there's a really important sense in the Bible that speaks about the providing role of women.

We will often think particularly in our kind of historical culture here that it's the man's job to provide. But if you look in the Bible, there's a really, really strong emphasis I think on the providing role of women.

One thing for one second that the biblical image of a woman or a wife is just to look pretty and be at home making dinner and having children. If you read Proverbs 31, you can read that when you go home.

[26 : 01] It gives you a biblical description of a wife and it's one that's full of industry and initiative and courage and wisdom and economic success and hard graft and strength of character.

And that's a beautiful description of what God has made and what he calls all women to be married or unmarried. And so work, skill, industry, bread winning, it's not confined to men in the Bible.

And our cultural lens can again easily misguide us. And even in our own context, it can misguide us because a hundred years ago here in Lewis, all the women or virtually all the women I think would have been at home.

And yet I think it's probably true that that would have involved as much, if not more, physical labor than what being on a construction site today would involve. And likewise, maybe a hundred years ago, a woman would have provided warmth for her family and community by cutting the peats and taking them home.

Today, a woman might provide warmth for her family and community by designing and installing an offshore wind farm. I think both are biblical.

[27 : 10] Both are examples of women doing things that are incredibly helpful. So the woman helps her husband.

A man holds his wife. Now that's not in terms of restricting. Please don't misunderstand that. And I don't think it's even in terms of like a romantic embrace either.

But I think it's in the twofold sense of being united to her and of highlighting his responsibility to protect her. And in doing that, he steps into the leadership role that his father had.

And you see that in verse 24, a man leaving his father and taking up his leadership role in taking his wife and holding her. The husband holds.

The bride gets held. And in the sense of being loved and protected and kept secure. Now that security in biblical terms is always to grant freedom, never to take it away.

[28 : 16] And you don't need to think hard to see that security gives freedom. It doesn't take it away. Now you might not resonate with the choice of words that Genesis uses. That's okay.

And it could be that you associate things with that word that the Bible doesn't. We might think helper sounds a bit inferior. The Bible doesn't think like that. The Bible uses that word to describe God.

And we might think being held sounds restrictive. The Bible doesn't think that. It's simply telling women how precious they are. And of course, there's lots of overlap and potential overlap in these terms.

And the union of a husband and wife and marriage is not one which has this very mathematical you do this, but I'll do that, but it's very much work and responsibilities that are shared.

But the Bible does lean in either direction in terms of where primary responsibility lies. The Bible leans towards highlighting leadership, responsibility, duty of protection and care onto the husband.

[29 : 18] And the Bible leans towards highlighting usefulness and preciousness and ability to be a blessing to others onto the woman.

And I think that if we take away these distinctions and if we minimize these emphases, then we lose something of the beautiful harmony that the biblical understanding of male and female offers us.

And so those balances, I think, are important to remember. But as I said, there is always potential for overlap. However, there is one area where the Bible makes the roles absolutely clear.

And this is the most important one of all. The Bible makes it clear that a husband needs to be ready to die for his bride.

And that's captured in the beautiful words of Ephesians 25. Husbands are told to love their wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her.

[30 : 22] The husband needs to be prepared to die because a bride is worth dying for.

And I heard this expressed very powerfully by somebody who has a fear of conscription. Somebody I heard speaking about this who said, you know, that hates violence, hates war, hates all that kind of stuff.

And kind of the person for who just, you know, you think of generations before us who all had to sign up to the army, all had to leave. And for this person, it'd be like, that's just one of the worst things imaginable.

But yet the person said, I hate all of that. I hate the thought of all of that. But if I imagine that joining the army saves my wife, I'll do it in a heartbeat.

And he said, that doesn't tell you that I'm a hero. It tells you how precious she is. And what are the implications of this?

[31 : 33] Does it mean that all men need to recognize the biblical call to be strong leaders, brave defenders of your families? Yes, that's that's a good lesson to learn.

Does it mean that all women are to recognize their worth and value and importance in terms of contributing to their community and society? Yes, definitely. All of that's true. But it's not the key lesson about identity, because all of that stuff is about this life.

And this life is not the main event. This is not your big day. So some of you here, most of you here may be very secure as a man or as a woman.

Some people aren't. You might be very comfortable as somebody who's single. You might be heartbroken. You might be very happy in your marriage.

You might be struggling a wee bit. You might feel very loved. You might feel very unlovable.

[32 : 40] Whatever you're feeling, this is not your big day. The big day is eternity.

And as this verse tells us, marriage, husbands, wives, male, female, everything that the Bible is telling us is all about Jesus.

That's what it's all pointing to. And it's telling us that in terms of eternity, if you are trusting in Jesus, if you're a Christian or if you become one, you are all His bride.

Men and women together, the church, we are the bride of Christ. That's what Revelation 21 is talking about.

And that means that the very best biblical picture of a husband is telling you about what Jesus will be for you.

[33 : 47] And the very best biblical picture of a wife, of a woman, is telling us what we are to Him.

That means that you are so precious. It means that you are so safe.

He is holding you. He's never going to let you go. That means that He is delighting over you. And the happiest bridegroom that you can imagine is just a glimpse of the joy and delight that Jesus has over you, His bride.

And it means more than anything that you are loved. You are so loved by Jesus. And because of that, the bride of Christ will never be overlooked.

The bride of Christ will never be second best. The bride of Christ will never be cheated on. His love is never going to grow cold. And perhaps most amazing of all, the bride of Christ will never be widowed.

[35 : 07] The bride of Christ will never be widowed because the bridegroom's already died. And He did it because your bridegroom really does think that you're worth dying for.

All of our marriages begin with joy and end with death. With Jesus it's the other way around.

It begins with His death on the cross and it will culminate in eternal joy when He will take us, His bride, to be with Him forever.

And that's why it's so amazing for us to be together as two churches tonight because we're not two churches. We're one church, we're one bride. And we share that with every other brother and sister throughout the world.

I've been saying the whole sermon that this life is not your big day. Do you know the real reason why this life can never be your big day?

[36 : 24] It's because it can never be big enough for everything that God wants to be for you, for everything that God wants to do for you, for everything that He wants to give you.

Only eternity is big enough for Jesus to love His bride as much as He does. This life is not big enough for everything that your bridegroom has promised you.

So if you are a Christian, if you become one, then you are His bride and He will hold you now and He will hold you forever.

And I guess for anyone who's maybe not yet sure who you stand, that's the key spiritual question. Are you willing to be held? Are you willing to fall into His arms?

[37 : 33] Because He's holding them for you, holding them out for you again tonight. Amen. Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we thank you so, so much for your incredible love and for the amazing privilege of being your bride.

Help us all to understand that more and help us all to find our identity and our security, our hope, our joy, our peace in you.

Amen. I'm going to read from 1 Corinthians chapter 11, just where Paul recounts for us when Jesus established the Lord's supper for His church, for His bride.

But I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread, and when He'd given thanks He broke it and said, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me.

[38 : 54] In the same way also He took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. Let's pray and give thanks. Father, we thank you so, so much that we can share this moment together where we have an ordinary bread and wine, but being used for something so special where we can see and taste and touch a physical reminder of everything that you have done for us through your Son, and whereby we can be fed and nourished by you, our loving Father, where Lord Jesus, we can know you more closely as our perfect bridegroom, and Holy Spirit, where we can know your comfort and presence more and more.

We pray, Father, that you would bless us as we share this time together. We thank you that we're able to do this, and we thank you for everyone here. And as we rejoice in the reality of a relationship with you, we also rejoice in the reality of a relationship with one another.

And we lay aside anything that we maybe have against one another or anything that has upset us or anything like that. We just forget it, Lord. We lay it aside and we come to you and you in a bond of love and fellowship and togetherness.

We pray that we would go on closer to one another and closer to you. And so we pray that you would bless us all, build us up in faith, and especially for any here who maybe have felt that they've struggled and stumbled along in recent days or weeks.

[40 : 49] We pray that you would just remind them of how much you love them and that you're holding them. And also we pray, Father, that every one of us would come to know you if we haven't yet already, and every one of us would be able to take the next step that you want us to take.

And so we pray that you would bless us and bind us together and be with us as we share this supper together just now. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, I said I wanted to come back to your questions that we've used throughout this series and I'm going to just go through them, but I'm going to go through them backwards as we share the Lord's supper together.

What do we want other people to think as we do this? Well, I think there's a couple of things we want others to think, not just as we share the Lord's supper, but as we go through our lives as Christians.

What do we want them to think? We want them to think that we are captivated with our Savior. And we want them to think that we are captivated with Jesus, that He's just the one we love, the one that we want to live for.

And we also want them to know that spiritually we're spoken for, in the sense that He's the one that we're loyal to. He's the one that we're going to follow.

[42 : 16] And that at times will mean that we don't follow others where they might want us to go and we do that because we're spoken for.

And we want to remain faithful in every part of our lives to our Savior. We want other people to see us and to think that they are captivated with Jesus and they're faithful to Him because they're spoken for.

What should you think? Well, you should think about where you've come from, that you're made by God, made to bear His image.

You are His handiwork. But you should also think about where you're going. The fact that Jesus wants you with Him forevermore and He died to make that possible.

And as we think about where we're going, we're remembering that this is not our big day. And that's why Paul can say that we're showing forth the Lord's death till He comes because we are looking forward with so much excitement for that day when all our pain and sorrow and heartbreak and loneliness is gone forever.

[43 : 49] Think about where you've come from. Think about where you're going. And what does God think?

God looks at you as you share the supper together tonight and He thinks, I love my bride. And that broken bread is telling you about Jesus, our bridegroom's body being broken.

And that wine is there to tell us about His blood being shed, all so that you could be His, that you could be with Him forever. What does God think?

He looks at you as I love you. I love my bride so much. And because of that love, Jesus went to the cross and on the night that He was betrayed, He took bread and after giving thanks, He broke it and He said, this is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And in the same way, He took the cup after supper saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

[45 : 19] Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

Now as we share the supper together, I'm delighted that Neil and Douglas are going to share the bread and the wine to the congregation.

It's so lovely that we can just share in that together as elders from both congregations. Neil will pass the bread along and then Douglas will pass it to the next row so you can just remain in your seats.

Regarding the wine, you may have seen on the notice that round the edge in the silver cups, it's non-alcoholic and then in the glass cups in the middle, it's wine that contains alcohol and the bread is gluten free as we usually have.

So I'll pass to Neil and then if Douglas you come forward and just you can wait at that side and make your way down. Thank you.