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Acts 13:13-41

Pastor Larry Adams

The Good News Multiplied

Hi Everyone. My name is Larry Adams and I want to take a moment to thank you for reading this message. At Golden Hills we are committed to exalting Jesus and preaching the Word. Your downloading of this message is a great encouragement to us, as we know that our ministry is going out to spread God's Word all over the world.

We want you to know, too, that in no way do we intend these messages to be a replacement for your involvement in a good local church, where, sitting under the authority of pastors and other teachers, you can learn to worship, grow and serve and be engaged with a body of believers where you can grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ.

We realize also, that some of you may be in areas of the world where there is no local church. Therefore, we hope these messages you are using, to gather with your family or other believers, or people from the community that it will be a great encouragement to you, as you hear God speak into your life, helping you to become disciples who are true, reproducing followers of Jesus Christ.

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If you have your Bible today, I'd like you to turn with me to Acts 13. We are continuing on in our series, *We are Multiplied*. Phil and I have broken down the book of Acts into three sections: *We are Witnesses* (the first part, learning about how the witness is established). It will be ending in the Fall, Lord willing, with *We are Sent* – seeing how each of us is sent by God with this amazing message of good news. Well, now, we're right in this section, talking about *We are Multiplied*, seeing how the gospel went from a few to the gospel that was spread by the many. Last week, Phil shared with us about the beginnings of the first missionary journey, how Paul and Barnabas were sent out in the power of the Holy Spirit. Now, we're going to see this ministry extends, going north into the mainland, into what today would be Asia Minor. Here is how we pick up the story of Paul and his companions as they are travelling from Cyprus to the mainland, in Acts 13:13-41 –

¹³ From Paphos, Paul and his companions sailed to Perga in Pamphylia, where John left them to return to Jerusalem. ¹⁴ From Perga they went on to Pisidian Antioch. On the Sabbath they entered the synagogue and sat down. ¹⁵ After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the leaders of the synagogue sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a word of exhortation for the people, please speak."

¹⁶ Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! ¹⁷ The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; ¹⁸ for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; ¹⁹ and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. ²⁰ All this took about 450 years.

"After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. ²¹ Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty

years. ²² After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

²³ "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.

²⁴ Before the coming of Jesus, John preached repentance and baptism to all the people of Israel. ²⁵ As John was completing his work, he said: 'Who do you suppose I am? I am not the one you are looking for. But there is one coming after me whose sandals I am not worthy to untie.'

²⁶ "Fellow children of Abraham and you God-fearing Gentiles, it is to us that this message of salvation has been sent. ²⁷ The people of Jerusalem and their rulers did not recognize Jesus, yet in condemning him they fulfilled the words of the prophets that are read every Sabbath. ²⁸ Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹ When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

³² "We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus. As it is written in the second Psalm:

"You are my son;
today I have become your father.'

³⁴ God raised him from the dead so that he will never be subject to decay. As God has said,

"I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David.'

³⁵ So it is also stated elsewhere:

"You will not let your holy one see decay.'

³⁶ "Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. ³⁷ But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

³⁸ "Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

⁴¹ "Look, you scoffers,
wonder and perish,
for I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe,
even if someone told you."

Father, it is amazing indeed, what You have done. We are remembering today at this Communion table. We have received a message of good news, the promise fulfilled. Salvation has come. You want

that message multiplied here and around the world. May we be as faithful in multiplying the good news as those who came before us, until all nations believe. And we'll thank You, God in Jesus' name, amen.

There is a Mercedes-Benz commercial that shows this beautiful car with a crash dummy inside. They race it forward at tremendous speed, into a solid concrete wall, crushing the front of the car. But the passenger compartment remains intact. Right at that moment, a voice comes on, asking a company spokesman why they do not enforce their patent on the Mercedes-Benz energy absorbing car body, a design evidently copied by other companies because of its success. The company spokesman simply replies, matter-of-factly, "Because some things in life are just too important not to share."

People, that's the gospel. The greatest message God has ever given to us. It's a message that is just too good and too important not to share. It is the message, the only message, by which if people believe it, they can be saved from their sin.

The gospel is a message of the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus. It is a message of the kingdom of God and how God is working to restore all things that were lost in the fall. It is the good news of salvation offered to all who believe God and receive Christ. It's a message that God wants multiplied because it is good news for all people.

That's the good news Paul and Barnabas were sharing when they went out on their first missionary journey. Remember what Phil was sharing with us last week from Acts 13:4-5 –

⁴ The two of them, sent on their way by the Holy Spirit, went down to Seleucia and sailed from there to Cyprus. ⁵ When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the Jewish synagogues. John [Mark] was with them as their helper.

Now, on Cyprus, you remember, they were opposed by Elymas, the sorcerer, who was standing in the way of the gospel message. God struck him blind. Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Paphos, sees all this, the Bible says, and then he believed the teaching and gave his heart to the Lord. Powerful times on the island of Cyprus.

Now, God is going to move them on. Paul, Barnabas and John Mark and the rest of their team sail due north from that island in the Mediterranean back to the mainland. They land in Perga, and there is where John Mark leaves them. We're not told why. Only later do we learn that Paul was questioning John Mark's commitment and his courage. John Mark leaves. Paul and Barnabas travel north, inland, due north about 100 miles to a place called Pisidian Antioch, a beautiful city that you would love to be a part of, on a major Roman road, 3600 feet above sea level. Beautiful trees, studded with glistening lakes. It must have been a destination. Paul and Barnabas and their entourage arrive there, and go into the synagogue, made up of Jews and God-fearing Gentiles. They sit down and become part of the service. At the end, the synagogue ruler sends a message – brothers, if you have an exhortation for us, speak it. Well, Paul, not one to miss an opportunity, stands up. He waves with his hand and begins the first of what will be three missionary sermons in the book of Acts. In this message, he retells the good news that is for all people. The message of good news that God wanted multiplied among them and multiplied through us. As we are reminded in Acts 13, God has called His people to multiply the message of good news in Jesus Christ.

What was the good news they were multiplying? Paul said, the fulfillment of God's promise in Jesus has come. The promise of salvation through Jesus is here. The gospel, good news, is that God has fulfilled His promise in Jesus. That's why he wrote the way he did (vs 21-23) summarizing Israel's history, he brings it down to this in vs 21:

²¹ Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. ²² After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'

²³ "From this man's descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.

Vs 32: ³² "We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus

Quoting from Isaiah in vs 34, "I will give you the holy and sure blessings promised to David."

The promised Messiah is Jesus and He has come. But there are a lot of people who don't know that, or even believe it.

I was reading a piece from a Jewish magazine called *The Moment*. The editors asked prominent Jews – actors, lawyers, teachers, professors, rabbis and writers – this question, *What does the concept of Messiah mean to you today? As a Jew, what does the concept of Messiah mean to you today?* Their answers were all over the barn. Listen to just a few of them:

Amos Oz, Jewish novelist: "He may be around the corner, but that's where he should always be, in the Jewish tradition. Sitting idly, waiting for the Messiah is a sin.

Rabbi Peter H. Schweitzer: "Years ago, a popular evangelical bumper sticker read, "I found it." The Jewish version would read, "I'm still looking for it."

Deb Margolin, Jewish playwright and professor: "Most people think the Messiah has already come, but Jews are waiting. It could be anybody ... It's a very sexy idea. There's a blind date with the sacred that awaits you at any moment."

Ruth Messinger, CEO of Jewish World Services: "The Messiah doesn't connote that some entity, deity, or even will suddenly arrive and change the circumstances of our lives ... That's a notion of childhood wish fulfillment."

Jack Dann, science fiction writer: "Twenty years ago I would have said that the idea of a messianic message was dying out in the popular culture, that it was being overtaken by a more sophisticated secularism. Obviously I was mistaken. More and more people seem to be embracing the idea that a Messiah will appear to fix everything."

There is a wide divergence among Jews about the Messiah. But there shouldn't be. God promised a Messiah would come. Some believe it's a childhood fantasy. Others are still waiting. They're thinking that a Messiah may yet come, but the good news is this: He already has and His name is Jesus.

That was the heart of the message that Paul was proclaiming at the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch. God has kept His promise to bring a Messiah and His name is Jesus. That's why Paul said ... (Acts 13:16-23, 32-33) –

¹⁶ Standing up, Paul motioned with his hand and said: "Fellow Israelites and you Gentiles who worship God, listen to me! ¹⁷ The God of the people of Israel chose our ancestors; he made the people prosper during their stay in Egypt; with mighty power he led them out of that country; ¹⁸ for about forty years he endured their conduct in the wilderness; ¹⁹ and he overthrew seven nations in Canaan, giving their land to his people as their inheritance. ²⁰ All this took about 450 years.

“After this, God gave them judges until the time of Samuel the prophet. ²¹ Then the people asked for a king, and he gave them Saul son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, who ruled forty years. ²² After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: ‘I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.’

²³ “From this man’s descendants God has brought to Israel the Savior Jesus, as he promised.

³² “We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus.

The Messiah has come; His name is Jesus.

Do you remember what God had said to David (2 Samuel 7:11b-16) –

¹¹ “The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: ¹² When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. ¹³ He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. ¹⁴ I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. ¹⁵ But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. ¹⁶ Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.”

When you read that, it sounds a bit confusing. If this is talking about Jesus, when does He do wrong and get the floggings of men? Jesus never sinned. Well, there is a lot more going on than that. When God is revealing to Samuel what he is to tell David, he tells David, Look, I’m going to build a house for you, a dynasty. Through that are going to come a series of kings. In the Jewish tradition, the kings were considered the sons of God. God even called them that. He said, David, through your line, I’m going to bring a son. He will be My son. Speaking of Solomon initially, but all the kings who would follow – some of them will obey Me and some won’t. When they do good I will bless them, and when they do wrong I am going to chasten them. But I want you to understand this: your dynasty, your house, your kingdom is going to be established forever, because through you I am going to bring One who will be My Son par excellence. In fact, He will be great David’s greatest Son. He will be the Messiah, the Promised One. The promise was stated again by Isaiah (11:1-5) --

A shoot will come up from the stump of Jesse [Jesse is David’s dad, David is the stump];
from his roots a Branch will bear fruit. [Jeremiah later identifies Jesus as the branch that comes from David, the stump of Jesse]

² The Spirit of the LORD will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the LORD—

³ and he will delight in the fear of the LORD.

He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes,
or decide by what he hears with his ears [why not? because He will see all things and know all things];

⁴ but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth [His word];

with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.
⁵ Righteousness will be his belt
and faithfulness the sash around his waist.

Now watch what Isaiah says in chapter 12 – he goes on to say (12:4-6) --

⁴ In that day you will say:

“Give praise to the LORD, proclaim his name;
make known among the nations what he has done,
and proclaim that his name is exalted.

⁵ Sing to the LORD, for he has done glorious things;
let this be known to all the world.

⁶ Shout aloud and sing for joy, people of Zion,
for great is the Holy One of Israel among you.”

Hear what Isaiah is saying? The promise is going to be kept. The Messiah is going to come. He will be from the line of David. He will be for all nations. When you come to know this truth, I want you to multiply it! I want you to go out and proclaim His glory over the whole world. That’s what Paul was doing. That’s what you and I are called to do.

So when Paul gets up in the synagogue at Pisidian Antioch, he begins his sermon and unfolds it with the four-point confessional summary that epitomizes the essence that every Jew’s hope and faith was rooted in. So Paul says, 1. “God is the God of His people Israel” 2. He chose Abraham and the patriarchs for His purpose. 3. He redeemed His people from Egypt and He gave them an inheritance, a promised land of blessing and abundance. Every Jew in the synagogue would have been bobbing their head, yep – that’s what God promised. Then he drops the bomb in vs 23 – 4. From this man’s descendants, God has brought Israel the Savior, Jesus as He promised. It’s the good news.

You and I have a four-point confession of the good news. Paul reiterated it everywhere he went. We have it recorded for us clearly in 1 Corinthians 15:3-8 (look for the four points) –

³ For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.

You and I have a confessional message that every believer holds to. That’s a message that saved us when we believed. It’s the message God wants multiplied. This is why Paul was proclaiming in Acts 13:28-33a in his great message to Pisidian Antioch –

²⁸ Though they found no proper ground for a death sentence, they asked Pilate to have him executed. ²⁹ When they had carried out all that was written about him, they took him down from the cross and laid him in a tomb. ³⁰ But God raised him from the dead, ³¹ and for many days he was seen by those who had traveled with him from Galilee to Jerusalem. They are now his witnesses to our people.

³² “We tell you the good news: What God promised our ancestors ³³ he has fulfilled for us, their children, by raising up Jesus.

He raised Jesus from the dead! People, this is the good news that we remember every time we come to Communion. God’s promised Messiah, the savior of the world was not a myth. He is not a false hope, not a legend. He is not a childhood story. God’s promise of a Messiah has been fulfilled. A Messiah has come. He lived. He died. He rose again. He appeared. His name is Jesus. He is saving people who believe in Him, and you and I have been called to multiply the good news of His coming.

And not only that Jesus is the fulfillment of God’s promise, but the good news is that the promise fulfilled means salvation through Jesus. Paul said (Acts 13:36-41) –

³⁶ “Now when David had served God’s purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep; he was buried with his ancestors and his body decayed. [Karla and I have stood at the tomb of David. In fact they had moved part of his coffin. They were doing a remodel or something. I’m glad they didn’t open it, because I read that it had decayed. I didn’t want to see that!] ³⁷ But the one whom God raised from the dead did not see decay.

³⁸ “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses. ⁴⁰ Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

⁴¹ ““Look, you scoffers,
wonder and perish,
for I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe,
even if someone told you.””

On August 7, 2007, Barry Bonds hit homerun number 756. It was officially the homerun that broke the record of the homerun king, Hank Aaron. But the problem, most of the talk about the new record was whether or not it should really count. Because allegedly Barry Bonds had been using performance-enhancing steroids that may have made the record tainted. So, people said, if his name goes in the record book, it should be accompanied by an asterisk. The asterisk of course means that the record is sort of a record, sort of a foot-noted record. The asterisk means that the record is tainted and probably doesn’t belong at all. Craig Brian Larson, editor of PreachingToday.com (7-2-08), in response to Barry Bonds’ record and the asterisk wrote:

Having an asterisk by your name is actually something we all should be able to identify with. Scripture talks about the Book of Life, in which the names of each believer is recorded. With all the sins we have committed in this life, you would expect that each of us would have an asterisk by our name in this all-important book. Tainted. Don’t really belong.

But so great is our justification in Christ, so perfect is His work on the cross, so just is God is justifying you, that in the Book of Life there will be no asterisk by your name. Because of Christ’s atoning work on the cross for you, you truly belong in the kingdom of God.

You are forgiven. Your sins are wiped out. Your name is in the Book of Life because you belong in Christ, to be there. That was the good news Paul was proclaiming to the people of Pisidian Antioch. He said (vs 38-39)

³⁸ “Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. ³⁹ Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.

Through Jesus, the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Forgiveness – it’s the word “aphesis.” It means “the release.” When you believe God and receive Jesus, you are released from the law curse and your sins are forgiven. Through Him, everyone who believes is set free from every sin. I don’t want to over dramatize this, but that is very good news for a sinner like me, who has no business at all being in God’s kingdom – no right to stand here and tell you anything, except by God’s grace that saved me when I believed the message. The same message that has saved man of you. And the same message that is still saving people when they believe it. We’re saved from every sin. Through Jesus, a justification has been given to you. I love this! It’s judicial. It’s settled. Justification means to be declared by God to be righteous in His sight. It’s a judicial act by the ultimate judge, that before God’s bar of justice, you, who by faith, are covered in the blood of Jesus, are now declared to be righteous in God’s sight. It’s exactly the message of good news Paul was proclaiming to the Romans and anyone else who would listen (Romans 3:21-26) --

²¹ But now apart from the law the righteousness of God has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented Christ as a sacrifice of atonement, through the shedding of his blood—to be received by faith. He did this to demonstrate his righteousness, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his righteousness at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus.

God couldn’t just let this thing go. We have sin. We broke His law. God is just. He can’t just let it go. The wages of sin is death. So Jesus took our sin on Himself and He died. When He died, He met the full demands of God’s law. With the full demands of God’s law met, now God is just and justified to declare us righteous, when we have come to Him through faith in Jesus Christ. There is no other way.

People who tell you all religions are the same, it’s ridiculous. Absolutely ridiculous. It’s a smoke screen to keep people from the truth.

You are justified freely, Paul said. It’s written in the present, continuous tense. What is powerful about this is, it means this justification that God has given to you now continues through you to others who need to hear it. That’s why it says (Romans 5:1), “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” And there is a change of tense there. You have been justified (eros tense) meaning there was a definite time when each person, upon the exercise of faith, was justified before the bar of justice and declared righteous by God. If you are a Christian today, that’s you. And that’s the message God wants spread and multiplied amongst all people.

Romans 8:1-2: “Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death.

Paul tells them that day in the synagogue. The law of Moses couldn’t do this for you. The law of Moses could only point the way to the One who could. And I’m here to tell you the good news: the One who could, has! And His name is Jesus and He is offering forgiveness of every sin – if you’ll believe in Him.

But don't make this mistake. Don't make the mistake that Jews and others made in the past. (Acts 13:40-41 –

⁴⁰ Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you:

⁴¹ “Look, you scoffers,
wonder and perish,
for I am going to do something in your days
that you would never believe,
even if someone told you.”

Take care that what the prophets have said does not happen to you. He is quoting from Habakkuk 1:5. Habakkuk was the prophet who announced to Israel the destruction that was coming upon them by Babylon. And Habakkuk tells them, you're not going to believe what God is going to do. That's why you are going to perish. God is going to bring a nation more wicked than you (the Babylonians) to chastise and discipline you, and eventually use that to bring you back to Himself. The people said, we don't believe it. God said, I know it. It's so great, you won't believe it.

So Paul says, don't make the mistake you made in the past. When God tells you something, believe it. When He tells you a promise is fulfilled, believe it. When He tells you Jesus is the only way, believe Him! Don't make the mistake. (applause). But it's so great, there are people who won't believe it.

Karla and I were sharing yesterday with a 96-year-old lady. I won't give you all the circumstances. This lady we met a few weeks ago. She says to me, I know my time is short. I have no hope. I'm afraid to die. So I spent some time sharing the good news with her. I told her who Jesus is. I told her what Jesus has done. He loves her, died for her, rose again. If she will put her faith in that, He will forgive her sins and she'll have eternal life, so she doesn't have to be afraid. She sat there like, wow! That is good news. But that's not what she said. She must have thought it was so good, it can't be true because she said to me, I want to believe that, but I have to be honest, I don't.

Paul said, don't make that mistake. When God tells you the Messiah has come, He has come. When He tells you His name is Jesus, it's Jesus. When He tells you that if you believe in Him, you'll receive forgiveness of sins – every sin, and be justified in His sight. Believe Him.

Do you believe Him today? Do you believe Him today? Because if you don't, you can. If you ask Him to save you, He will. If you've already believed it, you've believed the greatest message ever given. God wants it multiplied. Some news is just too important not to share.

This is the good news we remember every time we come to Communion. That God loves us, He gave His Son to pay our price. It's like God is saying, look, I know this news is crazy and you're going to have a hard time believing it, but here it is: I loved you so much I killed My Son to save you from your sin. Every time we eat this bread, we remember that. Every time we drink this cup, we remember that God has fulfilled His promise. Messiah has come. With the coming of Messiah, believing in Him, our sins are forgiven.

Jesus said, “This bread is My body and this cup is My blood. Whenever you eat this, remember Me.” And remember the good news that through My death, burial and resurrection, you are forgiven. That's good news I want you to multiply. Some news is just too important not to share.

God, thank You for this reminder. I don't know what that dear lady is going to do with what I shared with her yesterday, but You know. Now I know she has heard it. But there are so many others around the globe who haven't heard. That's why You've called us to multiply the good news. In every opportunity, in every place with every person and every way, may we, like Paul, Barnabas and the others, be unashamed of the gospel. May we share it in ways and help people to see, Messiah has come. He is the Savior of the world. As we eat this bread and drink this cup, may You be honored today by our remembrance. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.