

Head-Coverings in Worship Part 8

by Milton Vincent

Paul's explicit teaching on head coverings is fully applicable to us today, and we should not make assumptions about cultural practices guiding his instructions.

Duration: 1:11:10

Scripture: Proverbs 3:5-6, Matthew 6:33, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 11:2-16, 1 Corinthians 16:20, Ephesians 6:18, James 1:22

Topics: "Head Coverings"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the topic of head coverings in today's society. They provide materials for both the morning and evening sessions, focusing on why head coverings are still relevant today. The speaker emphasizes the importance of obeying God's word without questioning or doubting His instructions. They highlight that even though Paul only mentions head coverings once, he dedicates 15 verses to the topic, indicating its significance. The sermon encourages believers to have a heart of obedience and to prioritize God's commands above personal preferences.

Transcript

OK, good evening. Class is in session. And folks, what we're going to do is try to jump right into what we are going to try to do tonight.

We have a lot of ground to cover and don't want to have this go too terribly long because we want to allow time for fellowship afterwards. And if you did not receive. Here's the deal.

First of all, if you were not here this morning or if you were, but you really need another copy. Go ahead and raise your hand. We've got a few left over from this morning.

That's not the material for tonight, but this morning's material. The title of it is our head coverings for today. Does anybody need that? You do raise your hand.

There's one back there and some up in the balcony. And then how many of you that the title of the material for tonight is. Why do so many people say that head coverings are not for today? How many of you need that? It's 10 pages.

OK, if you need this evening's material, go ahead and keep your hand up. Jack needs one. OK, what we have done.

If you happen to be visiting with us, what we got. OK, who has this morning's materials? I mean, no. Who's passing out this morning's materials? Are we out? OK, so we're out and that's OK.

We can get it to you maybe afterwards, but we're not going to spend a lot of time in this morning's material. So if you don't have that, that's OK. As long as you have the materials for tonight.

That's the important thing. No. Oh, you have one from he's got this morning's material.

Somebody over here who doesn't have this morning's material. Go and raise your hand. OK.

All right. Well, this morning, what we what we have been doing, if you've been visiting with us or if you are visiting with us tonight, as we're dealing with First Corinthians, chapter 11, verses two through 16, a passage of Scripture that we have to deal with in order to say that we are doing a study through First Corinthians. But it is a passage that has not made my life or anyone's life in this church any easier.

But nonetheless, we're trying to be faithful to it. And this is the eighth message that that I'll be preaching on this particular passage. And we have at least two more to go.

And this morning, what we did was I tried to walk you through at least my own thinking process regarding the the question of our head coverings for today. In other words, as Paul's explicit teaching regarding head coverings, telling men that they're not to cover their heads, telling women that they are to cover their heads, is Paul's explicit teaching in First Corinthians, chapter 11, verses two through 16 applicable today? And I tried to walk you through my own reasoning process. And that is primarily and very basically that none of Paul's arguments are drawn from cultural practices of the pagan world of his day.

Instead, number two, all of his argumentation are based on realities that transcend temporary cultural norms. They're very significant theological argumentation going back to creation, the structure of relationships in God's economy, angelic beings, nature and church custom. And in addition to that, if you go to page 15 from this morning's material, I also have considered the fact that Paul is not telling women to just wear head coverings wherever they go or all the time.

He is only giving men and women instructions with regard to head coverings when they pray and prophesy. And to my way of thinking, that's a pretty narrow instruction to give. If Paul was, after all, only being guided by the cultural practices of his day.

The fifth consideration is that whatever Paul is telling the Corinthians to do, verse 16 makes it clear that this was the practice in all of the churches throughout the Roman Empire. That would include Jerusalem and the Church of Antioch, Galatia, Philippi, Berea and on and on the list can go. And Corinth.

This was the practice of all of the churches, not just something Paul is telling the Corinthians to do. Also, number six here on page 15. I told you that the evidence from history is that it would not have been uncommon at all for a woman to appear in public without a head covering.

In fact, the images that have been found, most of the images that have been found dating back to the first century, images of women show them with their heads uncovered. And so that I'm not giving you that piece of information to say that women didn't wear head coverings in Paul's day. They did.

And it was common. However, it was not as common as many of us may tend to assume. It would not have been unusual or even scandalous for a woman in the Roman Empire or in a Grecian city to appear in

public without a head covering.

And I told you this morning that I would show you some of the the images of. That have been found by archaeologists. This is an image.

Hopefully everyone can see that from about 50 to 25 BC. And you'll notice that it's a woman who is not wearing a head covering. This is an image of a of a woman in the late first century, and she's not wearing a head covering either.

Here is another woman right there. And she's not wearing a head covering. In fact, here's a side view of that same woman.

And this is the late first century BC. So it would have been right around the time of the birth of Christ. This is a first century image of a Roman woman, and she's not wearing a head covering.

And then look at this one. Look at the dew on this lady. That was a very popular fashion in this day.

It probably involved the use of a wig. But nonetheless, this one is the late first century. And I don't know what these ladies did if they sat there for like hours while the sculptor got everything just right.

It was very different than us posing for a picture today. Look at this dew. This is around 80 AD, and almost certainly that's the use of a wig.

You may think that's a head covering right there. No, that's actually hair. Either her own hair or a wig.

And wigs were very common in this day. Here's a hairstyle. This is a lady from somewhere 90 to 100 AD.

And she's not wearing a head covering. And there's an interesting hairstyle there. This next one, this is actually a painting in the late first century of a Roman woman.

You can see jewelry and a necklace, but also her hair. And she's not wearing a head covering. And let me see.

Here are a couple of women wearing head coverings. That's an interesting head covering there. And then this is another one.

This is around the end of the first century BC. A woman doing some work, and you can make out the fact that she's wearing a head covering. And this first image here is like AD 57 to 59.

And it's a very simple hairstyle, but she's not wearing a head covering. And then this is a woman who very likely was Messalina was her name. And who was actually a very immoral woman and was infamous for that.

But nonetheless, here she is. And in this case, she does have a head covering. So these are just some of the images that I've gotten my hands on.

And there are times where you see women wearing head coverings. But the majority of cases from my own research, and then also some of the scholars that I quoted from this morning, most of the time women are depicted with their heads uncovered, indicating that it was not at all unusual for a woman to appear in public without a head covering. Also, as we continued this morning, consideration number 7 on page 16.

You know, one of the mistakes that people often make is they say that, well, the cultural practice in Paul's day was for men not to cover their heads and women to cover their heads. And so Paul is basically, everything he teaches in 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16 is exactly what the cultural practices were. And so that's his real motive.

Well, the big problem with that is that in Paul's instructions to men, Paul is teaching the exact opposite of the cultural norm of his day. In fact, the custom for Roman men, as we saw this morning, was when they were involved in a religious or devotional exercise, what those men would do is they would cover their heads. They would pull their toga up over their heads.

And I mentioned this morning, quoted from one of these scholars about the image of Caesar Augustus, most of the images that we have of him today are with his head uncovered. However, when he is involved in a religious exercise, he is always depicted as having a head covering. And let me show you, this is the image that was actually found in Corinth of the emperor.

And you can see that he has his head covered. You can see his ears, though, so it's behind his ears. You'll notice his arms are missing, but his arms obviously were not hanging down to his side.

They have found almost exactly similar images of Caesar Augustus in this exact posture and with the arms intact. And in those images where his arms are intact, he has a bowl in his hand for pouring out a religious libation. But this is an actual image of Caesar Augustus that would have been somewhere on public display in Corinth at some time during the first century.

Here's another. This is going to be a toughie, but this is an actual Roman coin. You've got to look at this real closely, but this is actually an image of the emperor, Caesar Augustus.

And if you looked real closely, he has a crooked staff in his hand. And that was a religious symbol, meaning he was engaging at that moment in a prophetic exercise. And so he's involved in a religious exercise here on this coin.

And if you look closely, you can see that the emperor is wearing a head covering there on the coin. So hopefully that's clear enough. Here's another image of someone with a head covering.

And it's not real clear, but you may look at that and go, that looks like a lady to me. That is a man. And historians have studied this.

And if you take a close look anatomically at this figure as well, it's obvious that it is a man. And it was found in a setting where the indication is that it is an image of a man bringing a sacrifice. And as you can see, his head is covered.

So the overwhelming evidence from not only literary sources, but also from coins and from statuary images and friezes and so forth, the overwhelming evidence is that the custom for men in the Roman Empire, and keep in mind Corinth was a Roman colony, was for men to cover their heads when they were involved in a religious exercise. And so when I consider that and I consider the fact that the custom for men in the Roman Empire was to cover their heads. However, Paul tells men to do the exact opposite of that.

How can I look at that fact and conclude anything other than that if Paul were speaking to the church today, he would totally disregard the fact that women don't wear head coverings today. He wouldn't even

consider that. He's not being guided by cultural norms.

He would be guided by apostolic tradition as God had led him and the other apostles to instruct the church in this matter. But if you weren't here, get the tape from this morning where we interact with them with that on a deeper level. Go to page 18 where I'm not going to read all these commentators.

I just want to read from a couple of them that I think are very significant on page 18. The first commentator is Ben Witherington, the third. And look at what he says.

The text, in other words, the text of 1 Corinthians 11, raises a number of questions for us. First, why does Paul want to maintain for women, but not for men, the Roman practice of covering the head when engaging in a religious act? The bulk of his argument is taken up with providing a theological rationale for this. The theological rationale is not brought in as an afterthought to prop up an argument primarily grounded in custom or in nature itself, but rather the reverse.

Paul appeals to nature and to church custom because he's pulling out all the stops in his closing arguments to forestall objections on any other possible grounds. Paul is not simply endorsing standard Roman or even Greco-Roman customs in Corinth. Paul was about the business of reforming his convert social assumptions and conventions in the context of the Christian community.

They were to model new Christian customs, common in the assemblies of God, but uncommon in the culture, thus staking out their own sense of a unique identity. Now skip the next brief quotation and then look at the following one. In view of the argument about both men and women and head coverings, it is likely that both, not just women, were creating the disorder in Christian worship.

In light of Roman practice, it is very believable that some Christian Roman males were covering their heads when they were about to pray or prophesy. Paul is not interested in baptizing the status quo or normal Roman practice. He is setting up new customs for a new community, and these customs are deeply grounded in his theological understanding of creation, redemption, their interrelation, and how they should be manifested in worship.

And what this guy says is just so right on. The next is from Bruce Waltke, and I won't necessarily quote from that, but go to number three, the quote from S. Lewis Johnson in the Wycliffe Bible Commentary. I read this to you guys about a month ago.

Let me just read it again. He says, some say that the custom was peculiar to Corinth, but Paul's words, neither the churches of God argue against this view. Still others insist that the custom is not to be applied today.

It should be noted, however, that each of the reasons given for the wearing of a veil is taken from permanent facts lasting as long as the present earthly economy. Paul did carry his point, for early church history bears witness that in Rome, Antioch, and Africa, the custom became the norm. In the final analysis, the hat or veil is not the important thing, but the subordination for which it stands is the important thing.

But then he says the presence of both is ideal, and I really like the heart in which he expresses that. Let me see if there's any others. Go to page 20.

Look at number eight, Charles Ryrie. Women should be veiled or covered in the meeting of the church, and men should not. Paul's reasons were based on theology, the order of creation, and the presence of

the angels in the meeting.

None of these reasons was based on contemporary social custom. Go to number 11. This is from Thomas Charles Edwards.

He says it is remarkable that the injunction to men to pray uncovered and to women to pray veiled is peculiar to the Christians. Among the Greeks, men and women prayed bareheaded. Plutarch says the Romans worship with the head covered.

We must therefore suppose that what we have here is an example of a distinctly Christian observance that the man should pray without a headdress and the woman veiled. And then one other quote from R.C. Sproul in his Table Talk magazine. He says throughout 1 Corinthians 11, Paul refers to creation to prove his point concerning the general principle of the subordination of women and the symbol of authority that should be placed upon her.

Nowhere does he give cultural reasons for his teaching. Paul points us back to God's established order in nature. Whenever a teaching in scripture refers to creation ordinances, that teaching is binding for all culture in all ages.

The forms may change, but the substance concerning symbols and principles remains the same. This is true in the case of head coverings, just as it is true in the case of marriage and deviant behavior such as homosexuality. Very well said.

I've not quoted from all of them, but I would encourage you guys, if you have not already, to read from some of these commentators who I think give some pretty good explanations of the very things that we've been talking about in dealing with this passage. But anyway, that at least walks you through what my own thinking process has been as I have arrived almost unwillingly at times to the conclusion that Paul's explicit teaching on head coverings is fully applicable to us today. Well, what I want to do tonight is to try to see how far we can get in the next packet of information.

And that is to address the issue of why is it? If head coverings are for today, then why in the world do so many people, why do so many godly Christians, why do so many people in the church say that Paul's specific instructions are not for today? I think we would be remiss if we didn't at least try to walk through these. And let me just try to walk you through some of these. Please understand, guys, whatever their reasons are, they're not derived from the text of 1 Corinthians 11, verses 2 through 16.

There's not a commentator you're going to read that's going to say, aha, see here in verse 8, it says this. And that's why I believe that head coverings are not for today, because Paul teaches that they're not for today here in this passage. They don't point to anything in the text of 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16.

So if their reasons are not drawn from the text, that doesn't automatically make it wrong. But we do need to ask, where are their reasonings being drawn from? And let me try to explain this to you. Number two here on page 21, many make two convenient cultural historical assumptions, neither of which bear up under closer scrutiny.

We talked about this about a month ago. The first assumption that many people make is that what Paul advocates in this passage was the cultural practice of his day. Many people make that assumption.

Well, when Paul tells men don't wear a head covering, when he tells women to wear a head covering, everything he's teaching there is totally consistent with what the cultural practices of the day were. But we've seen that's an assumption that's wrong because in Paul's instructions to men, as we've seen, he's teaching the exact opposite of what the custom was in the Roman Empire. So that assumption does not work, and it does not bear up under closer scrutiny.

There's a second assumption that people make, and that is, let's assume that what Paul teaches in this passage did conform to what the cultural practices were. Even if that were the case, that still doesn't mean that that must have been what's guiding Paul. Back in Paul's day, it was not the custom for women to teach men.

Paul in 1 Timothy 2 happens to teach something that was consistent with the culture, but would any of us say that that's what was guiding him? Culture was what was guiding him? No, creation truths were what were guiding him. So even if it's not true, but even if what Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 11 was exactly what the cultural practices were, you're still making a leap to assume that that must have been what was guiding him. And so the second assumption is that the cultural practices of the day served as a guide for Paul's instructions regarding head coverings.

My response is this is nothing more than conjecture. There's nothing in the text of 1 Corinthians 11 through 16 that would suggest this, and if this were the real reason that lay behind Paul's instructions, he was perfectly capable of saying so as an eloquent and as an inspired writer of Scripture. Now, folks, let me show you an example of someone who does make these assumptions, and that is John MacArthur in his commentary on 1 Corinthians.

Look at the quote here. Now, he's commentating on 1 Corinthians 11, verse 4, where Paul says, if a man has something on his head, he's disgracing his head, and so a man should not do that. Look at what MacArthur says.

The context here of verse 4 implies that in Corinth, such a head covering would have been completely ridiculous for a man and completely proper for a woman. Now, he's making an assumption there. He then says, generally, it was regarded as a disgrace for a man to worship with his head covered.

Now, he's teaching you something that he believes is true about the culture and the history of Paul's day, and that is that generally it was regarded as a disgrace for a man to worship with his head covered. And now, based on that historical, cultural piece of information, he then says, it seems therefore, because of this information I just stated, it seems therefore that Paul is not stating a divine, universal requirement, but simply acknowledging a local custom. His conclusion that it's not for today is based upon a flawed historical assumption.

And his flawed historical assumption is that it would have been ridiculous for a man to wear a head covering in Paul's day, and it was a disgraceful thing. That's how everyone would have viewed it. And so because of that, MacArthur says, I believe that Paul is merely acknowledging a local custom.

However, look at the page here. Notice in the following quote how MacArthur reverses his explanation of the cultural practices, yet fails to acknowledge the ramifications of such a reversal. This quote is taken from his notes in the MacArthur Study Bible that was published in 97.

So 13 years have gone by, and notice how MacArthur updates his cultural, historical assumptions. Now, commenting on verse 4, he says, literally, having down from the head, as his translation of the expression, something on his head, and he then says, this is probably a reference to men wearing a head covering, which seems to have been a local custom. Now, that's different than what he said in his commentary.

Does everyone see that? Now he's saying that it was the local custom for a man to cover his head. And so basically, MacArthur would agree with what I was saying this morning about the custom for men in the Roman Empire of wearing head coverings when they were involved in a religious exercise. He then says, Jews began wearing head coverings during the 4th century A.D., although some may have already been wearing them in New Testament times.

Apparently, Corinthian men were doing the same, and Paul informs them that it is a disgrace. And now, amazingly, he then says, Paul is not stealing a universal law from God, but acknowledging a local custom which did reflect divine principle. I would encourage you guys to underline the words local custom there near the end of the quote, and then you see the words local custom at the beginning of the quote, because those are very important code words there.

But guys, look carefully at what MacArthur is saying in this last quote. Number one, it seems to have been a local custom in Corinth for men to wear a head covering. All right.

I'm not stretching anything. That's exactly what MacArthur says. And then he says, number two, some Jewish men may have been doing this as well.

And then number three, some Christian men in the Corinthian church were doing the same in wearing a head covering. And now number four, top of page 22, Paul tells the Corinthian men that to wear a head covering. Everyone turned.

OK. Paul tells the Corinthian men that to wear a head covering, which seems to have been the local custom, is a disgrace. All right.

Now, according to John's own explanation, the local custom seems to have been for men to wear a head covering. Corinthian men were doing that, and that was the local custom. Paul tells Corinthian men that it's a disgrace.

So Paul is actually telling them in the Corinthian church, if you do what the local custom is, it's a disgraceful thing. Now, look at MacArthur's conclusion, and I don't understand this. He says, Paul is not stating a universal law from God, but acknowledging a local custom.

My question to him would be, if according to your own explanation, Paul has just told men not to practice the local custom, then how can you say Paul is merely acknowledging a local custom? Does everyone see that? But at least I take this kind of as a compliment to the research that I've done, that MacArthur himself incorporates some of this historical information in his MacArthur study Bible that is more recent than his 1984 commentary. And he himself acknowledges that it was, it seems to have been the custom for men to cover their heads. Paul tells Corinthian men, don't do the local custom.

But I don't understand how MacArthur then says Paul isn't stating a universal law from God, but acknowledging a local custom. But nonetheless, I cite this as an example of a godly commentator, a substantive scholar in his own right, who makes some flawed historical assumptions. And the first assumption is that what Paul advocates in the passage, that's what the practice was in his day.

And making that assumption, the second assumption is that must have been what's guiding Paul all along. And he's not teaching some universal law from God, he's merely acknowledging what the customs were. So this is an example of that.

And so this is how many people, folks, especially lay people who've not studied it, you bring the subject up to them and their first response is, ah, it was just the custom. And my question is, what research have they done? How did they arrive at that conclusion? That is a very convenient conclusion to arrive at. Because if you can arrive at that, then you can dispense with the passage.

But from the research that I've done, as much as I would want to, as a part of me would want to, I cannot agree with those cultural assumptions because they're not borne out by history, nor are they borne out by the text of 1 Corinthians chapter 11. Well, there's a third consideration. There's a third concern or reason that people have for thinking that Paul's instructions are not to be implied today.

And that is this on page 22. Some might be troubled over the fact that what Paul teaches in this passage is taught nowhere else in Scripture. And they ask, how important is an issue that is mentioned only one time in Scripture? And some say, this is the only thing I've ever said on it.

And so, you know, why take this so seriously? And my response to this, there's really kind of two issues here. First of all, is this an important issue? The second issue involved in this concern is that, you know, it's only taught one time. And some people have a problem with that.

Well, letter A, we all would wish that what Paul teaches in 1 Corinthians 11 was affirmed elsewhere in Scripture. However, we have to ask ourselves, how many times does God have to teach something for it to be binding upon our consciences? Do we show God respect when we say, Lord, if you say it four times, then I'll take it seriously. Or five times, then I'll take it seriously.

But if you just say it one time, I'm not going to take it seriously. You know what? I think those of us who are parents, we have children who do that to us all the time. Amen? And we don't want to do the same thing to God and say, well, if you say it more than once, then I'll take it seriously.

No, all God needs to do, if we really love Him and want to obey Him, God, just say it one time. Just give me the word and I'll just do whatever you say. And folks, letter B, even though Paul only teaches about this one time, Paul does give 15 verses to this particular issue, indicating that it was of some importance to him.

Letter C, Paul states in verse 16 that the practice of head coverings was the custom in all the churches, indicating that this must have been a subject that was widely taught and practiced in all the churches. Additionally, in verse 2, Paul indicates that the head covering issue was a part of the apostolic tradition that he himself had taught the Corinthians when he was with them in person. So 1 Corinthians 11 through 16 is at least the second time he's taught the Corinthians extensively on this subject.

We also know then Paul would have taught all of the churches that he founded on this subject. So this is not the only time Paul's ever talked about this. It just happens to be the only time that we find it in God's good providence in the pages of Scripture.

And also, letter D, and I touched on this last Sunday night, we want to be very careful before we go writing this off as being unimportant. You know, come on, it's just a piece of cloth on a head. I mean, what's the big deal? But folks, all of us would agree that our number one calling in life is to honor Jesus Christ and to

glorify God, right? Are we all agreed on that? That's our number one passion in life.

And do you realize Paul brings both of those things to bear on the head covering issue? Look what I say in letter D. I think we would all agree that glorifying God is to be our highest calling and ultimate pursuit. Consequently, none of us would ever think that something which affects the glory of God is unimportant, would we? Yet Paul actually teaches that a man who prays or prophesies with a covered head disgraces his head. And who's his head? It's Jesus Christ.

It is also clear in verse seven that Paul views the glory of God as a major consideration in the matter of head coverings. Can we look at such considerations and say that this issue is really not all that important? If we speak thus, we are disagreeing with Paul himself, along with the Holy Spirit who inspired this passage. If we value the glory of God and the honor of Jesus Christ, we must treat Paul's instructions with the same seriousness which he attaches to the issue.

And not just the issue of glorifying God and honoring Jesus Christ in the presence of the body of believers who may see a woman wearing a head covering, but even before the principalities and powers glorifying him. Incidentally, top of page 23, in 1 Corinthians, Paul treats the head covering issue with more gravity than the issue of water baptism. In 1 Corinthians 1, Paul expresses relief that he did not baptize many of the Corinthian converts and then states, Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel.

Yet, Paul gives careful, extensive, and methodical treatment to the head covering issue. Any objective reader of 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16 would never get the impression that the head covering issue was unimportant to Paul. In fact, at least in 1 Corinthians, he advocates it more strenuously than water baptism.

Now, my point is not to say that head coverings are more important than baptism. I'm just saying that I can't go the way of some commentators who read 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16, all of these verses, and say, it just doesn't seem like Paul's real passionate about this. I mean, there's actually an evangelical commentator that I read who says that.

It just doesn't seem like he has a lot of passion for this, and not nearly as much passion as he's going to have for the Lord's Supper issue that he talks about later in the chapter. And my response to that would be, excuse me? Paul's talking about the honor of Jesus Christ, the glory of God, angels, and theological argumentation. He's bringing all of these things to bear and giving this much ink to this issue.

There's no way that an objective reader could look at that and say, it's not an important issue. It wasn't even to Paul, and so it should not be to me either. And so, even though it's taught only one time, folks, how much do we love God? And how many times does God have to say something before we will heed his word? A fourth concern that people have is some fear that if Paul's teaching on head coverings is fully applied today, too much attention will be given to the symbol rather than the substance which the symbol represents.

That's a valid concern. If people start wearing head coverings in our services, you know, it'll be easy to be distracted by that and to be thinking about that and too much attention could then be given to the symbol to where the substance is really lost. And that's a true concern.

But folks, we run that same concern with other things that we do. Let's not single this out and say, well, because of this concern, let's dismiss it. Look what I say.

We run this risk with the ordinance of baptism and the Lord's table as well. Some even elevate baptism to the level of being necessary for salvation. Others do the same with the Lord's Supper.

However, the risk of such errors and the fact that some are actually guilty of such errors does not negate our duty to maintain the use of biblically required symbolic practices. And also, I would ask the question, why don't we worry about the other side of the issue? Why aren't we concerned that if the symbol is removed, the reality which it symbolizes may be lost? And folks, is this not exactly what has happened in our society today? Why aren't we concerned about that? We would never want to remove the Lord's table from our body life because our fear would be that we might lose the substance that those symbols remind us of. We would never want to remove baptism because we might lose the substance of what baptism symbolizes.

And we ought to be concerned about the head covering issue that if we remove that from the church at large, we're going to lose the substance of what it symbolizes. And folks, any honest observer of even the church over the last 50 years would have to say, that's exactly what has happened in the church of Jesus Christ, at least in this society. So if you're going to be concerned about, well, there's going to be too much attention given to the symbol, I would encourage you to also be concerned with the other side of things.

Number five, some might be turned off by all the controversy which surrounds this passage. And they ask, why practice something that is shrouded in so much controversy? My response would be, if you study church history, there's been a tremendous amount of controversy regarding water baptism. And there's a bunch of different viewpoints.

Infant baptism versus believer's baptism. The error of baptismal regeneration. Immersion versus sprinkling or pouring.

Hyper-dispensational teaching that water baptism is not even for today. Single dunk versus triple dunk. There's actually disagreements over that.

One of my professors in seminary believed that you dunk someone three times. In the name of the Father, bring them up. The Son, bring them up.

And the Holy Spirit, and bring them up the third time. Hopefully, if you've got the energy to do that. But they believe in triple dunking the person that is being baptized.

And so there's disagreements over that issue. There's also been a tremendous amount of controversy regarding the Lord's Supper. There's transubstantiation, which is the Roman Catholic view.

Consubstantiation, the Zwinglian or symbolic view. The Eastern Orthodox view. The Calvinistic view.

Weekly practice versus monthly practice. The sacramental view versus the ordinance view. There's been a tremendous amount of controversy over both water baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Yet, folks, we do not let these controversies discourage us from searching the Scriptures on such matters and seeking to rightly understand and practice such ordinances. Right? Do we look at all the controversy on baptism and say, you know, there's so much debate, even today. So many different practices.

Let's just throw it away because people argue over this. No, we can't do that. Consider also the fact, folks, that most of the controversy regarding this passage has emerged in the last 100 years.

There is actually less controversy over this practice and the records of church history than there is over the issue of the Lord's Supper and baptism. Now, some of you may say, well, obviously, because baptism and the Lord's Supper, those things are important. No one really viewed the head covering issue as important.

I'll tell you, you read some of the ancient commentators. You read some of the reform commentators and you'll find out that it was very important to them. In fact, I want to read to you a prediction from John Calvin hundreds of years ago.

Listen to this prediction and you tell me if this has not happened in our society. He says, so if women are thus permitted to have their heads uncovered, they will eventually be allowed to expose their entire breasts and they will come to make their exhibitions as if it were a tavern show. They will become so brazen that modesty and shame will be no more.

In short, they will forget the duty of nature. So when it is permissible for the woman to uncover their heads, one will say, well, what harm in uncovering the stomach also? And then after that, one will plead for something else, saying, now, if women go bareheaded, why not also bear this and bear that? Then the men for their part will break loose too. And in short, there will be no decency left unless people contain themselves and respect what is proper and fitting.

Has that not happened in our society today? Has that not even happened in in the church? You know, just in passing, I changed the channel immediately. But just this week, they had a woman who was totally nude. And and they said, this is a Christian woman.

And that's all that I saw. Here's a Christian woman doing this. She was doing some kind of newscast and she was totally nude.

And I immediately changed the channel. But I did hear the words, this is a Christian woman. Another girl who is like 19 years old.

She's a daughter of a pastor and claims to be a Christian. And she boasts in the fact that she's still a virgin. Last month, posed in a men's magazine in her underwear and in various seductive poses.

And it was no scandal in her conscience whatsoever. There are Hollywood stars, female Hollywood stars that are willing to bear just about anything. And yet they profess to name the name of Jesus Christ.

What John Calvin predicted is exactly what has happened in our pagan society at large. And then also it's even happening in the church of Jesus Christ. It may not seem like a big deal to you, but I'll tell you something.

John Calvin viewed it as a big deal. And the fact that there's not a lot of debate about it in the annals of church history is not because they didn't view it as important. There's not a lot of debate about it because they agreed on the need to heed Paul's instructions in 1 Corinthians 11.

I don't say that all of them universally did that. But by and large, the church was in lockstep on this issue until the 20th century. Well, anyway, let's go to number six, top of page 24.

Some people, they view the practice of wearing head coverings as useless because people in our society today do not understand the significance of it. And they go, you know, head coverings on women, it's

going to be misunderstood by people. And no one's going to understand what it means because women don't do this anymore.

And so because of that, you know, there's really no need for us to practice this because no one understands what it means anymore. Well, we've got to be careful with that. What I say here, letter A, is how many people in our society really understand the true meaning of water baptism or the Lord's Supper? Are we going to let the ignorance of our pagan culture cause us to throw away a biblical practice? Consider the fact that in ancient church history, the pagan world actually thought that cannibalistic practices were going on during the celebration of the Lord's table.

And when I say cannibalistic, I'm talking about the eating of human flesh. They actually thought that and leveled that accusation against the church because they misunderstood the eating of flesh and the drinking of blood that occurred during the Lord's Supper. Such misunderstandings put Christian apologists or defenders of the faith and the position of having to explain that such things were not going on.

I was reading from Tertullian, a Christian writer around 210 A.D., and he was taking the time in one of his essays to try to show the world this isn't what we do in the church. We don't actually eat human flesh. These accusations are not true.

And yet, in spite of such misunderstandings by the pagan world, the church universally continued the practice of the Lord's Supper, which the Lord Jesus had commanded. And, folks, I would say if we're going to dispense with Paul's teaching on head coverings in 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16, it surely should not be for this particular reason, or the church should have dispensed with the practice of the Lord's Supper long ago. And we'll have to put our finger to the wind on every issue and go, well, does it seem like people understand baptism anymore? Well, no.

OK, so we don't practice it anymore. Do people seem to understand the Lord's Supper in our pagan society anymore? No, it doesn't seem like they understand it. In fact, they're misunderstanding what we're doing.

So because of the ignorance of our pagan society, we're going to stop this practice inside the church. We don't want to do that. And I don't know why we single out head covering, the head covering issue, to treat in that way when we don't other issues like baptism and the Lord's Table.

And also, let it be, folks, the truth is that our society, whose brides are veiled during wedding ceremonies, does have some level of understanding of head coverings. Throughout American history, it was normal for a Christian woman to wear some kind of head covering either all of the time or at least while attending church. Yet in the latter half of the 20th century, such practices fell out of vogue.

My question is, is this merely an innocent fashion trend? Why do we just buy into these trends without examining them? We at least ought to ask, is this an innocent fashion trend? Is it not noteworthy that head coverings fell out of fashion at roughly the same time that the secular feminist movement began to exert its influence across the West? Are you aware that even secular observers understand that feminism has been a significant influence in the demise of head coverings and even hats on women? In fact, this is from an article in the New York Times back in 1997. I made reference to this, I think, a couple of weeks ago or last Sunday night. This woman is merely writing an article on a hat exhibit that was in Trenton, New Jersey, of a millinery shop or a hat making shop that had gone out of business.

And just commenting on just the whole hat business and women wearing hats and the hat industry that fed off of that, she is speaking of the 1940s and prior and she says this, millinery was one of the few trades open to women then, and the dozens of milliners who worked in Trenton met the needs of a society in which no woman ventured outside her home without a hat. But as the beehive hairdo gained popularity in the 1960s, and the feminist movement made it acceptable for women to leave their hats at home, the millinery industry faded. This is not a Christian writer who's criticizing anything.

She's just making a societal cultural observation. And folks, we need to, when we look at fashion trends, don't just buy into them and say, well, we just got to conform because that's what women do. We need to look beneath the surface and at least examine our culture.

Shouldn't we do that? And we at least ought to ask, is this merely an innocent fashion trend? And I'll tell you what would show me that it's an innocent fashion trend. If in our society today, wives generally were submissive to their husbands, and that was encouraged, that was being taught in our society at large. But nonetheless, the symbol of a head covering just wasn't in vogue anymore.

And that would be one thing. But not only has the head covering fallen out of fashion this century or this past century, but so has submissiveness. And feminism has been on the rise and has powerfully exerted its influence.

And part of the agenda of the feminist movement, I have no doubt, is to remove such symbols from the culture and from fashion. And so we should not, folks, look around at our pagan society and get our cues from there, putting our finger to the wind and saying, well, what does our society think? And we'll let that determine what we do and don't do in the church when someone prays or prophesies. We have no business doing that.

We as a church are to be unique from our culture. Nonetheless, number seven, some are hesitant to practice Paul's teaching on head coverings because so few churches today practice it. This is a more serious concern.

People look around and go, well, I don't seem like any other churches are practicing this. And that does kind of intimidate us. In fact, it intimidates me.

However, folks, letter A, while most Christian women in America do not practice Paul's teaching today, there are many Christians of the Presbyterian reform, Pentecostal, Mennonite, Plymouth Brethren, Baptist, Amish, and other traditions that do practice Paul's teaching. Outside of the United States, the practice of head coverings is more commonly practiced, though not universally. My brother is an associate pastor at a church in Greenville, South Carolina, that I think their average morning attendance is somewhere like 600 to 700 people.

Their Sunday evening services are like 1,200 people. And it's a pretty significant church in Greenville, South Carolina. And they're totally normal, you know, in every way, as a fundamentalist, Bible-believing church.

But you'll notice that women wear hats to church, and they don't humiliate themselves in doing so. It's just what they do, and it's not required of women who attend the church. They do require it of women who are on the platform and ministering publicly.

But nonetheless, that's a church that actually practices Paul's teaching today. So there are churches that do practice this today, even though there may not be many in the immediate vicinity and to our knowledge that may practice them. But also understand, let her be, folks, that the disuse of head coverings is only a recent phenomenon.

One writer I was reading suggested that one would be hard-pressed to find a commentary before the turn of the century which did not advocate women wearing head coverings. And I've looked, and I've tried to find one, and I have not found one. But if you find one, please let me know.

So when you look around and see so few churches practicing Paul's teaching on head coverings, please remember that what you are witnessing is a recent phenomenon that has occurred in the last several decades of church history. And the disuse of head coverings seems to coincide with the rise of secular feminism in the West. Is this merely a coincidence? As I think about this, I find myself asking, with whom am I going to side? My spiritual fathers and mothers down through the centuries of church history or the fashion sensibilities of our feminist culture? Letter D. You say, well, no one practices this today.

Well, I would beg to differ with you. Letter D. Actually, most Christian men still practice 1 Corinthians 11, 4, and 7 today, even in these United States. When praying, most men take their hats or caps off, and the historical roots of such a cultural practice go back, no doubt, to Paul's teaching on the subject.

Most men in the church today do apply Paul's teaching in this passage by making sure that their heads are not covered when they are praying or when they are ministering publicly. Now, not all men would do this, but I think we would all agree that the norm is for Christian men to apply this passage today. And if you're a guy here tonight, and you're not totally convinced that Paul's teaching applies today, let me ask you some questions while we're on the subject.

Number one, Paul teaches in verse 14 that it's a shame for a man to have long hair. Do you believe that this applies today? Ask yourself that. Do you believe that what Paul says about men having long hair, do you believe that that applies today? What if most men in our pagan culture around us had long hair? Would you feel that such a cultural practice entitled you to lay aside Paul's teaching in verse 14 regarding the shamefulness of long hair? If all other men had long hair, and it's what all men were doing in our pagan society, would you say, well, Paul says it's a shame for men to have long hair, but because men in our culture do this today, I think I can set aside what Paul says.

Would you be willing to do that, men? I don't think so. And if you believe that verse 14 still applies today, regardless of cultural norms, then what reason would you give me to explain why you don't believe Paul's other instructions in 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16 apply? Another question is if all other men in our culture covered their heads when they prayed in the context of their own religion, would you men feel that that gives you license to set aside Paul's teaching in verses 4 and 7? Would you pray with a covered head if everyone else in our culture did so? Imagine, men, that the cultural norm in our society today is for men to cover their heads when they minister publicly, when they pray, when they prophesy, and in all the other religions around us, that is the norm for men to cover their heads. Would you, if that were the case, and by the way, that was the case in Paul's day, but if that were the case in our day, is there any man in this room who would say, well, because that's what other men do of other religious persuasions and in our pagan culture, I think I can safely set aside Paul's instructions here in 1 Corinthians 11? I may be wrong, but I'm going to go out on a limb and think in my heart that there's not a man in this church who would do that.

I know I would not be able to do that. I would not be able to look at every other man having a head covering and saying, well, because other men do it, I think I can safely put a covering on my head when I pray. I would not be willing to do that, and I don't think that there would be many men in this room who would be willing to go against 1 Corinthians 11 verses 4 and 7, even if that's what the cultural practices of our day and in our society were.

And I want you men to think about that. If you're not persuaded this is for today, ask yourself these questions and try to reason this through. Anyway, number eight, we're moving along here.

Some are slow to accept the specific applicability of Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 11, suggesting that we should receive it in the same manner in which we receive his command in 1 Corinthians 16, 20, which is greet one another with a holy kiss. Now, we're commanded to do that. Greet one another with a holy kiss.

However, few of us literally apply this passage today because we all understand that kissing was a normal gesture of greeting in Paul's day, where it is not in ours. Some would suggest that we should allow the same considerations to be brought to bear on our handling of 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16. And some may say, well, Paul says greet the brethren with a holy kiss.

Milton, if you're going to treat 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16 in this way, then you better be consistent and instruct the congregation that they got to start kissing one another when they greet each other. However, folks, and there are some who would say, well, kissing was the normal way of greeting in Paul's day. And so Paul says greet the brethren with a holy kiss.

And therefore, we ought to treat 1 Corinthians 11, 2 through 16 in the same way. The problem I have with that, guys, look at response number one. Is this suggestion assumes that what Paul instructs the Corinthians to do in 1 Corinthians 11 was the cultural practice of the day.

Don't forget that what Paul commands men to do in 1 Corinthians 11, 4 and 7 was not the cultural norm in the Roman Empire. In fact, it was the opposite. So again, don't make that assumption even now with regard to this argument.

Paul says greet the brethren with a holy kiss. We know that was a normal gesture of greeting in Paul's day. But that doesn't apply to 1 Corinthians 11 because at least in Paul's instructions to men, he's telling them to do the opposite of the cultural norm.

But anyway, a second response would be there is a big difference between 1 Corinthians 11 and 1 Corinthians 16, 20. In chapter 11, Paul gives several reasons why a specific action and symbol is being called for. Whereas in chapter 16, none are given.

To say it another way, if in chapter 16 Paul had commanded us to greet one another with a holy kiss and then given theological reasons as to why it needed specifically to be a kiss, then we would have justification for treating the passages similarly. And I'll tell you, I'd be kissing every one of you every time I saw you. If Paul said greet the brethren with a holy kiss and it needs to be a kiss and here are five substantive arguments as to why it specifically needs to be a kiss.

So the difference to me is this. In chapter 11, Paul gives us commands with regard to a specific symbol and then he argues from theological truths as to why this specific symbol is necessary. Whereas in 1 Corinthians 16, 20, Paul merely gives an instruction without at the same time giving theological arguments

for the precise method of greeting.

Does that make sense to everybody? Hopefully it does. Tell you what, let's do one more. We'll do one more and then we're going to have to stop.

Some are reluctant, I really want to cover this one, some are reluctant to apply this passage today out of fear that head coverings on our ladies might hamper our effectiveness in evangelism. My response would be this, and look what I say here. If we are not being effective in our evangelism, it is because of deeper spiritual issues, not the presence of a piece of cloth on the heads of our ladies.

Keep in mind as well, one of the fastest growing religions in America today is what? Islam. Which requires head coverings on their women universally in all religious settings. How can this be? They require head coverings and yet their religion is growing by leaps and bounds in our western society today.

I would suggest that a part of the appeal of Islam in our society today is its counter-cultural elements along with its passionate adherence to deep-seated religious convictions. Perhaps many people are sick of our materialistic, shallow and rootless culture and they appreciate people who have deep enough convictions to be willing to look a little different than everyone else. Also consider the fact that there are many people in our society today who are willing to dress themselves in all sorts of weird apparel and adorn themselves in bizarre ways that make the kind of counter-cultural statements that they want to make to those who encounter them.

They show incredible conviction and boldness in doing this as wrong as their beliefs may be and yet we are afraid to look a little different? What has happened to us that leaves us with less boldness than the pagans have? Many will be turned off by our head coverings, I am sure. So too are many turned off by the cross, another symbol that represents a reality that the world views as moronic foolishness. And in using this analogy, don't get me wrong, I'm not saying head coverings equal the cross in importance, but nonetheless, the analogy still works.

Perhaps, folks, what we may really be embarrassed about is what the head covering represents. And I really want you to examine your heart on this and I've had to do the same, that I think what we're really embarrassed about is not the head coverings themselves as much as what those head coverings mean and that is a wife's submission to her husband. Maybe our problem is that we would rather hide this biblical teaching and not let the world know that this is really what our scripture teaches.

And you know what? If you have that in your heart, I'm not condemning you because I have that in my heart. It's not that I'm ashamed that the Bible teaches this, but it's like in interacting with lost people, do I want that to be a visible thing that's just hanging out there, begging for them to ask a question, what does that mean? And then to go explaining that, explaining a theological reality that is so offensive in our culture today, there's a part of me that would almost rather kind of put that on the back burner and let's get someone saved and then we'll ease them into the doctrine of the submission of wives to their husbands and so forth rather than just displaying it right out front. I think there may be something of that in all of us.

I know there's a little of that in my own heart. But anyway, I guess what we'll try to do is next Sunday we'll try to deal with the remaining issues that we have here. I really wanted to try to finish this tonight, but there's no way that we're going to be able to.

Anyway, I'm going to take three minutes for questions and then we're going to close. Michelle? Next week. That's my goal, as I said this morning.

We'll get to application, Lord willing, next week. Joe? Okay. I actually have that as the last page of your packet, so I'll go ahead and just make sure that I include that.

Yes. Okay, could you say that again? If a woman submits to her husband, is she kind of saying that she's too simple? We can probably talk more about that, but the truth is in Scripture we've got some incredibly sophisticated women. In the Old Testament, like Sarah and Deborah, and even in the New Testament, Priscilla and Aquila.

Priscilla was a very wise woman who actually was involved in teaching Apollos and worked alongside of her husband in various ministries. So the Scripture gives women a very high place, and it is taught in Scripture that they're totally equal to men as fellow heirs of the grace of eternal life, and equal in a lot of their capacities and so forth. However, in the home, just this is the way God has ordained it to be, that the woman who is equal to her husband voluntarily arranges herself underneath his leadership in the home.

And they're incredibly sophisticated, intelligent, and very powerful women who take that step that is taught in Scripture. And it's not an admission of weakness or simplicity. Yes.

And read 1 Peter 3, verses 1 through 6. In verse 6, Peter teaches women the path to power, how to be an influential person in your home, and to have incredible power over the heart of your husband. And he says the two ways to do that is, number one, to voluntarily arrange yourself underneath your husband's leadership, and then also by being a beautiful woman with the qualities of a meek and a gentle and a holy spirit. And you do that, Peter says, and you'll have your husband's heart right in your hands.

That's the path to power. Yes. Right.

Yeah, there were two things going on in the Corinthian church in all likelihood, and that is that there were men who were coming to church with head coverings, and they were putting their head coverings on when they got up to pray and prophesy. And Paul was concerned about that. And then there were also women who were taking their head coverings off when they prayed and prophesied.

So, Paul writes this passage to correct both. Brian. Yeah.

Yeah. Some believe that Priscilla even wrote the book of Hebrews, but the arguments for that are pretty weak. But there are some who actually think that.

I'll take one more question. Yes. She's asking how I could equate head coverings with the ordinances of baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are two ordinances that Christ ordained himself.

If Paul heard you say that, he would go, Now, wait a minute. The fact that I teach this doesn't mean that it didn't come from Christ. Christ is speaking through me, and he is making his will known to the church.

And so, I am saying what I'm saying under the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God and of Jesus Christ himself. And so, what I'm teaching is traditions that have been handed to us by Jesus himself, either when he was on the earth or having been handed directly to us by means of revelation from the Lord even since his ascension to heaven. And using those analogies, too, I'm not saying that head coverings equal baptism and the Lord's table in importance.

I'm not saying that. But the analogy still works for me because baptism, the Lord's Supper, those are taught in Scripture. They are symbolic ordinances.

And incidentally, with both of those ordinances, there are people who profess to be Christians who've eliminated both of them and view them as not being necessary. And so, there's analogies in that sense. But I'm not saying that head coverings are as important as those other two.

But I do think the analogy works because even baptism and the Lord's Supper is treated in the same way by some Christians as the head covering issue is, too. Okay. I'll try to figure out what we'll do next Sunday because I really want to get to the practical issues that I know many of you are asking.

And those questions are burning holes in your brain. So, I want to try to get to them. So, I may just leave it with you to just read the rest of this information on your own if you guys will do that.

But I may take the time next Sunday to go over the remaining objections that people may bring up because some of these final ones are actually very important and I want to make sure that we do them justice. But anyway, if you got any other questions, please approach me afterwards. Talk to me during commercials.

Okay. Actually, before we dismiss, just two announcements with regard to what we're doing over in the Fellowship Hall. If you would like to stick around after the game and to help clean up, that would be great.

The more people helping, the more quickly it'll be taken care of. And then I think we always forget to make this announcement, but we're not going to forget this year. We don't require you to pay in order to eat the food that is there, but we do want to remind you that it does cost money and there will be a basket for donations.

And we would encourage you to just donate whatever the Lord leads you to donate to help defray the cost of the hot dogs and stuff that have been purchased. Okay. Well, let's all stand together.

And folks, can I say this? There have been people who've asked me, where are you guys going with all this? And they're like really worried and thinking the elders have some big idea in their minds of what we plan on doing and legislating. I don't even know where we're going with this. I'm going from week to week and just trying to stay alive and keep my head above water and understand what Paul is saying.

And I would encourage all of you to just try to stay where we are right now instead of worrying about where we may end up. I do know that wherever we end up, I guarantee you that any leadership that the elders provide on this matter, it will be provided in a way that carefully guards the liberty of every person's conscience. And I also want you to know that we're not going to end up legislating, you know, you got to do this in order to come into a church service.

We're not in the business of doing that. But what we are trying to do is to be faithful to this passage of Scripture. And while I do view this issue as important, and I've realized that over the last month and a half, it's not a hill that I want to die on, and it is not so important that I want it to come between you and me.

And I don't want it to come between any of us. If we disagree on this, then we need to disagree in love and really be careful to preserve the bond of peace and love between us. And guys, if we stick it out and we stay together as a church body, nursing the bonds of love between us, we're going to end up in the right place, right? And some may be concerned that this may split our church.

And I'll tell you this, this issue, I guarantee you, will never split our church. You know what will? Ungodly, sinful, arrogant, selfish, prideful attitudes. That's what splits churches.

Not what the Bible may teach in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. So let's watch our attitudes as we continue to pursue this issue as fellow pursuers of the truth in loving and earnest conversations with one another, okay? You guys promise me you'll do that? Okay, let's go to the Lord in prayer. Our Heavenly Father, we thank you so much for your word.

And yes, it challenges us and kind of roughs us up a little bit as this passage is doing and pokes its finger in our chest. Lord, you're faithful to do that through your word. And there have been so many issues on so many levels that this passage has brought to the surface.

And I thank you for all of those things that you're dealing with in my own heart and in the hearts of so many people. I've had so many people sharing with me of just some of their struggles and some of the things that they've seen God doing in their life that's just thrilling their own hearts just through this passage. And I pray, Lord, that you would give us all open hearts, not just to the specifics of what this passage says, but give us open hearts to just fully receive your Spirit's ministry to us on all the levels that you desire to minister to us on through this text of Scripture.

Lord, help us to love one another and to not fight with one another. And if we disagree, we talk about it and we nurse the bonds of love between us. Help us to do that, Lord.

And help us as a congregation to get through this passage and all the issues that are touched on more unified than we've ever been before. In dealing with this passage, I'm well aware that this is fertile ground for the devil to just work in some deadly ways to wreak havoc, to breed division and dissension and factions amongst the people of God. And Lord, we just renounce what the devil would try to do in our own hearts and we're not going to let him in.

And just give us the grace to keep him out of our hearts as we try to pursue this issue to the full length. Lord, do mighty things in us and through us in the days of this coming week. I do pray, Lord, that you would help us to make our relationship with you far and away the most important relationship in our life.

And I pray that you would help us to always be careful to relate to you solely on the basis of gospel truths. Lord, as we go over to the fellowship hall, just bless our fellowship and bless the food that we eat to the nourishment of our bodies. We thank you for the opportunity to be together longer longer this evening.

In Jesus' name we pray. And all God's people said, Amen.

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