

# Assets of Accessibility

Long Beach Alliance Church • June 1, 2014 • Pastor Chris Lankford

For through him we both have access  
in one Spirit to the Father.

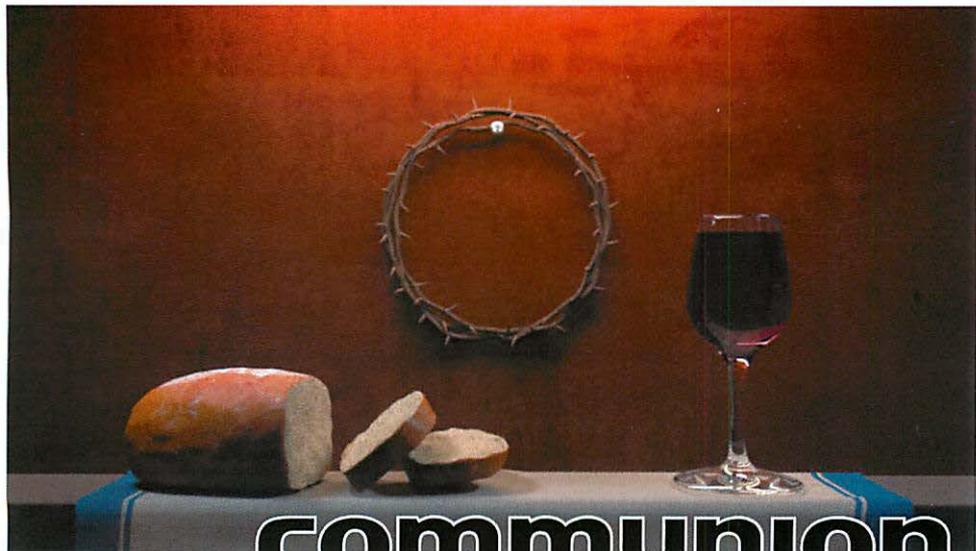
~Ephesians 2:18 (ESV)

## 1) *The Foundational Benefit Of Peace With God*

- A) God's rich mercy and love (Ephesians 2:4) reaches out to sinful and hostile mankind (2:5), through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross (2:13), in order to provide a completely new life marked by God's special handiwork and purpose (2:10), purely because of God's grace (2:8-9).
- B) God's "new creation" is not an abstract concept, but is literally Jesus Christ (2:10,14). Believers in Christ are recreated "in Christ," no longer living with self-identity (esteem), but rather with Christ-identity, living intentionally as "Jesus with skin on" (2:14-17).
- C) The purpose of bringing 'peace... far and near' (2:17) is only possible through **the foundational benefit** of the Holy Spirit (2:18). Life through Christ means full access to God the Father in the unity of the Spirit.

## 2) *The Benefits Of Access In One Spirit*

- A) There are numerous benefits which come from "access in one Spirit" (2:18) in the lives of those who have trusted Jesus Christ with their lives:
  - **Unity.** The Spirit of God brings "both" together in Christ (2:18) for peace and harmony, despite "native" diversity (4:1-6).
  - **Confidence.** Through Christ we receive the Spirit, giving us confidence of mercy and grace during difficulty and temptation (Hebrews 4:14-16).
  - **Intimacy.** We are God's children, providing us access to our "Father" (2:18), whom we can address as 'Dad' ("Abba," Galatians 4:6-7).
  - **Blessing.** "Access" brings joy and hope because God is able to come near to us, allowing true spiritual endurance (Romans 5:1-3).
  - **Worship & Prayer.** The Spirit makes possible a life of worship and living responsively to God (Romans 8:8-11), even providing needed help in our natural weaknesses and uninformed prayers (Romans 8:26-30).



# COMMUNION

In Remembrance Of Me

Prior to experiencing Judas Iscariot's duplicity, Jesus Christ sat with His disciples on the floor of an upper room in Jerusalem and ate a Passover meal. Eating a meal together was common for Jesus and His disciples, a mark of living life with one another from the past three years.

Jesus and His disciples were friends who ate together often, sharing food and life with one another.

As it is for us today, eating with friends was a time of good fellowship for Jesus and His disciples.

As Jesus led His disciples through the Passover meal, He gave thanks to God, raising up unleavened bread while breaking it apart for His disciples. After breaking the bread, Jesus said the immortal words,

*This is my body which is for you. do this in remembrance of me.*

Soon after, Jesus picked up a cup, gave thanks again, and poured wine into the cup while saying,

*This cup is the new covenant in my blood. do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.*

"it is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you I will not drink again of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

In the earliest churches (Acts 2:46, 20:7), "breaking bread" became a shorthand way of speaking about fellowship (koinonia): eating meals together and remembering Jesus Christ. Whether it was with apparent strangers (Luke 24:35) or with new friends (Acts 2:42), the remembrance of Jesus Christ intertwined with life around the table of fellowship.

When Paul writes to Christians in Corinth, he criticizes them for making food the focus of fellowship, rather than Jesus. Paul viewed fellowship "with one another" and "fellowship with Christ" as two sides of the same coin. For Christians, the two are inextricably intertwined. Living life together means being a community which always remembers Jesus Christ. It's not a ritual, ceremony, or first-Sunday-of-a-month formality. Remembering Christ is part of fellowship with Jesus *through* relationship with one another. It's the family of God: transparently and authentically living with Christ and with each other.

It's relational. It's introspective. It's engaging. It's intimate. It's the body and the blood. It's Communion.

# growth group guide

“assets of accessibility”

(ephesians 2:18) june 1-6, 2014

## warm up

If you could secure welcome “access” to any living person in the world for an ‘audience’ (discussion, interview, consultation, etc.) -- who would you choose and why?

Any comments, observations, or questions from Sunday’s Sermon?

## chop it up

Read Ephesians 2:18, Romans 5:1-2, and Hebrews 4:14-16. There are many benefits of ‘access through Christ... in one Spirit’ to the throne of God. We discussed 5-6 of those benefits this past Sunday. Which of these benefits is most significant in your life? How and why?

Hebrews 4:14-16 notes Jesus Christ is able to “sympathize with our weaknesses” because He was “tempted as we are,” but was without sin. But, if Jesus never sinned, how could He really know anything about the sufferings we face? Are these verses truly helpful, and why does it say it should produce confidence in us?



live it up

Read Romans 8:7-9. What is the difference between living “in the flesh” vs. “living in the Spirit?” If you were sitting with a friend struggling with a sinful issue (you pick), what would you say to help them live “in the Spirit” instead of living “in the flesh?”



extra

Read Romans 7:1-25

Is this chapter written to/about the person who is in a pre-Christian state: the sincere Jew who is trying to live according to the Law, but failing? Or, is it written to a Christian who is living by grace, but is frustrated by the occasional failings of living by grace?