

Facing Anxiety: Being rich towards God

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[0 : 00] Now, again, if you have your Bibles, perhaps you can turn with me to Luke chapter 12.

We're going to read from verses 13 to 34. That's on page 1044. And we find Jesus, again, teaching about anxiety.

Last week it was the fear of man. This time it's different anxieties connected to money. We're going to think about what it means to be rich towards God. Let's again hear God's Word.

Luke chapter 12 at verse 13. Someone in the crowd said to Jesus, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. Jesus replied, Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you? Then he said to them, Watch out. Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions. And he told them this parable.

[1 : 01] The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops. Then he said, This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones.

And there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy. Eat, drink, and be merry.

But God said to him, You fool. This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself? This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves, but is not rich towards God.

Then Jesus said to his disciples, Therefore I tell you, Do not worry about your life, what you will eat, or about your body, what you will wear. For life is more than food, and a body more than clothes. Consider the ravens. They do not sow or reap. They have no storeroom or barn, yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds. Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?

[2 : 07] Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest? Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you, you of little faith?

And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink. Do not worry about it. For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your father knows that you need them.

But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well. Do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near, and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

[3 : 12] Amen. So let's begin by asking ourselves a question. What is your relationship with money and possessions like?

Because we all have one. So whether we are living off the bank of mum and dads, whether we are trying to make our student loans last to the end of the term, whether we find ourselves building a career and perhaps thinking about property, whether we're at the stage of retirement and worrying about how our pensions will last, whether we find ourselves today comfortable financially, or whether the cost of living crisis has hit you hard, all of us have some kind of relationship to money. What does it say about us? What does it say about our heart? What does it do to our heart when we have money, and also when we struggle for money?

Money was a topic that Jesus spoke on often. His most frequent warnings were around the topic of money.

And Luke, who's very concerned about rich and poor and wealth, emphasizes Jesus' teaching. So in Luke chapter 9 verse 25, we have these striking words, What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very sale?

[4 : 53] As Jesus continues his journey to Jerusalem, he will meet a rich young man who refuses to follow Jesus because he loves his money too much. And Jesus will say, How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God.

It's easier for a camel to get through the eye of a needle. So money is something that obviously is essential to life.

The Bible reminds us that money is something that can be used to bless others, should be used to bless others. But there's also this warning, this recurring warning that Jesus presents, that money can become for us a distraction.

Money can, in the first instance, keep us from seeing that we need God, from recognizing that only God can truly satisfy, or it can take all of our energy, all of our heart away from serving Jesus because we have anxiety about, will I have enough money to provide for myself?

So if our wallets stand as a window into our hearts and our souls, Jesus wants to say two things to us. First, he wants to warn us. He warns us to guard against greed.

[6 : 08] And secondly, he wants to encourage his people to say, I am the answer to your anxieties about money and indeed about everything. So let's look at verses 13 to 21 together, where Jesus says to guard against all kinds of greed.

So we find that often, don't we, our newspaper headlines, they delight in exposing greed. You know, corporate bonuses, in hard times, those who are found guilty of stealing from charities, you know, some of those crazy football transfer deals, the newspapers delight to expose that kind of greed.

But there's also the more acceptable forms that we perhaps hardly even spot. How many people find themselves chasing a career only for the wage that it offers, rather than because they feel it's a good fit for them?

Or how many people find themselves trapped in this consumerism cycle of earning or borrowing simply to spend on the next thing and the next thing?

Or we concern ourselves for looking after our own future, and it prevents us from open-handed generosity.

[7 : 25] What's the case here? Look at verses 13 to 15. Jesus is speaking to a great crowd, and someone from the crowd says to him, Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me. Jesus, judge in my favor.

Jesus, I want to make sure that I get a good deal. Here is a self-interested brother who is risking dividing the family for the sake of making sure he has gain.

And he says, Jesus, I want you to judge in my case and in my favor. Jesus will judge. But not on property law.

Jesus has something far, far bigger. Jesus wants to judge his heart and our hearts. And Jesus brings a judgment on, here is what really matters.

Verse 15, Watch out. Be on your guard against all kinds of greed. Life does not consist in an abundance of possessions. And from this conversation from the crowd, Jesus then goes on to tell a story, a parable to illustrate his point.

[8 : 29] It's the ultimate, you can't take it with you story. The plot is very simple. A farmer has some surplus wealth.

That leads to a decision towards selfish spending. To gaining more and more, imagining it will bring security and comfort.

But that dream becomes a nightmare as judgment comes and his life is gone. Into his story, Jesus presents the reality of mortality and eternity.

He wants to cut through that chasing after wealth to remind us, the one with the most toys, the one with the most comfort, the one with the most experiences does not win if we're not rich towards God.

And notice that Jesus takes us to the biblical category of wisdom and folly. Verse 20, God said to him, You fool. A fool in the Bible, Old Testament wisdom, Proverbs, Psalms, the fool is someone who says in his heart, there is no God.

[9 : 46] Or that God doesn't see or care about what I do with my life. And so Jesus pitches this story in the context of Old Testament wisdom. So we're going to use, actually, some Old Testament wisdom to ask ourselves for questions in the light of this story and in light of Jesus' warning to guard against greed.

Here's the first question to ask ourselves, Who gets the credit? So in Proverbs chapter 30 and verse 9, there is this wise request, Give me neither poverty nor riches. And of riches he says, Otherwise I may have too much and disown you and say, Who is the Lord? If we have too much money, it can lead us away from God.

Proverbs 3 verse 9 also says, Honor the Lord with your wealth and with the firstfruits of your harvest. In this parable, who gave the wealth? Verse 16, The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest.

God gave the wealth. God caused the growth. God gives every good gift. And we are invited to serve as stewards of God's gifts to use them for God's glory.

[11 : 08] But notice that this man is absolutely self-centered, not God-centered. Listen to the conversation he has with himself. What shall I do?

I have no place to store my crops. This is what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns. I'll build bigger ones. And there I'll store my surplus grain. It's all about himself. The danger of wealth and greed is that it can lead us to self-trust.

I earned this on the basis of my skills. I received this wealth because of my hard work. Forgetting God gave those skills. He gave our abilities. It is that danger that we can enjoy God's gifts in the world that he created while we reject God the giver.

Instead, we're called to a better way to love God with our money, to treat it as his and not ours, and to send it out on the things that he loves.

Second question, what's my bottom line? Proverbs 11 verse 26 says, people curse the one who hoards grain, but they pray God's blessing on the one who is willing to sell.

[12 : 26] The way Jesus tells this parable invites us to recognize that because of this man's greed, he has isolated himself from others.

And often, greed cuts like a knife through human relationships. His only thought is, how can I build those bigger barns?

How can I get a bigger stockpile to look after myself? Not thinking, who else can benefit? His bottom line is, let me look after number one.

It's my comfort that matters more than my community. Indeed, they can curse me if they want because I'm sitting secure here in my nice cozy castle.

God has a different bottom line, doesn't he? God gives us a different guide for how we are to use our money. We are, as Jesus says, to guard against greed, to not spend or save selfishly, rather to use money so that others can live well, so that we can seek to extend God's kingdom, that we might follow God's pattern, God the great giver, God the one who gives us life, God who ultimately in the gospel gave us his son's life.

[13 : 53] A third question to consider from this story is this, where is my identity found?

Again, in Proverbs chapter 10, verse 15, we read there, the wealth of the rich is their fortified city. That's a negative assessment.

Rich people can so easily think, here is my security because I've got plenty laid up for myself. And we know it's a negative assessment because all through the Bible, God presents himself as the refuge that people should seek to run to.

But in this parable, we have a man who preaches a false gospel to himself. This wealth that God has given, this is the key to my security and to my comfort and to my joy.

I'll say to myself, you have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy, eat, drink, and be merry. The key to life, having money.

[15 : 01] Money spins a web of lies. Money tells us it can satisfy our longings. But actually, we often find ourselves enslaved because we never get enough.

And then occasionally, perhaps in the newspapers, you read the stories, the interviews of those who do get enough, who do become the multimillionaires. And what we find is often, they too feel emptiness and a sense of longing.

Money says to us, listen, trust in me, I can give you security. But we know that money can come and money can go. The banking crisis in the early 2000s brought with it a huge spike in suicides of

guys head up, high up in the banking industry.

Their life had been completely bound up with their wealth and it did not give security. Money would say to us, I am the only savior you need. If you have me, you have the good life.

And we can so easily believe that lie, we can be like children building sandcastles on the beach all the while ignoring the reality of the waves of uncertainty, of death, and of the judgment of God.

[16:22] And Jesus warns us, don't build your life and identity on money and stuff. You cannot take it with you. It can so easily be lost and it does not give ultimate security.

Question four is the question, what am I living for? Proverbs 11, verse four takes us in the same direction as the conclusion of Jesus' parable.

Wealth is worthless in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. Go to verse 20, verse 21.

God says, you fool this very night, your life will be demanded from you. This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God.

The judgment falls. This man has distracted himself to death. He has chosen to live for greed and not God.

[17:29] His energy and his heart has gone to bigger barns, bigger piles, greater wealth and comfort only to discover that what he was chasing was fool's gold.

And so Jesus gives this story as a loving warning that wealth so often becomes an idol in our heart, becomes the key to our happiness, our security, our hopes and dreams.

He reminds us that wealth can isolate us as it makes us selfish and not generous. He says to us, your wealth can be dangerous so you need to be on guard because this life is not all there is. and then from there he continues to talk about money but to treat it in a very different way because there's a different audience.

His attention now turns to his followers and he seeks to answer the anxieties of his followers in verses 22 to 34.

[18:43] verse 22 then Jesus said to his disciples therefore I tell you do not worry about your life what you will eat or about your body what you will wear.

So Jesus knows that worries about wealth can be a possible barrier for any follower of Jesus. For example we might find ourselves saying well I would love to serve but first of all I need to make sure I've got my own personal security sorted out.

that we do want to follow Jesus our master but we have this battle in our heart where money also wants to be our master. Where we can easily have that tendency to be self-serving rather than sacrificial when it comes to our money.

And so Jesus wants to deal with those anxieties and to invite trust. He doesn't want fears about paying the bills.

He doesn't want fears about us providing for ourselves and our future to take our energy to take our hearts away from him. He doesn't want us to overly worry about the cost of supporting church mission.

[19:58] He doesn't want our hearts to be gripped by fear as we're called to spend on others. He wants to free us from those anxieties so that we're ready to follow Jesus.

This Savior, the Savior who, remember, left the glory and honor of heaven, to come and to be born in poverty, to live in humility, to be homeless, and to be stripped of everything as he died to save us. How can we be ready to follow this Jesus as our Savior? Two things to remember. First, remember, this is your Father's world, so trust him to provide.

When Jesus says in verse 22, I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you'll eat, or about your body, what you'll wear, for life is more than food and the body more than clothes. He's not saying be reckless, he's not saying don't make provision for yourself, but he is saying do not worry excessively about those things, about the physical stuff of life, don't let them take your energy and activity as disciples, keep the right perspective.

In that sense, that life is bigger than this life, life is more than stuff, but also, remember who we belong to. Your creator is your Father.

[21:31] And so, we're invited to live with trust in him. So, Jesus says, look around. Verse 24, look at the ravens, consider the ravens, they don't sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn, yet God feeds them.

The ravens were a bird that were unclean in Jesus' day, they had no value, you weren't allowed to eat them, you couldn't sacrifice them, they had no value, but God feeds them, they don't need to stress, they don't need to busy themselves storing up, God provides.

Jesus says, how much more valuable are my children than ravens? Look around, look at the wildflowers, they don't labor or spin, verse 27, yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of thieves.

Think about the wildflowers, think for those of you who were in Edinburgh in the spring, about the cherry blossoms in the meadows, beautiful explosion of color, God provides fragile beauty for these wildflowers that are, as it were, here today and gone tomorrow, and if God clothes the flowers of the field, how much more will he take care of us, because we have more value to him.

Look around, verse 29 to 31, look around at the pagans, look at those who don't know God as creator, and learn, do not set your heart on what you'll eat or drink, do not worry about it, for the pagan world runs after all such things, and your father knows that you need them.

[23 : 21] If you don't know God as father, Jesus says, look at the pagans, they've got all that stress because they're having to rely on themselves, or they're chasing and they're grabbing because they act like this life is all there is, you know something different, you know a better way, you know your father, you know this is his world, he knows what we need.

And because that's true, verse 31, seek his kingdom, put his kingdom first, put following Jesus first, and these things will be given to you as well, learn to rest in the care of God for our today and tomorrow, and live as a disciple of Jesus.

Get the balance, this is how Jesus taught us to pray, remember in Luke 11, the Lord's prayer, we seek the kingdom first, and we ask our father for our daily bread.

Thinking about sections like this always make me think of George Muller. George Muller is a wonderful example of this, he was a guy in the 19th century who oversaw multiple orphanages in the south of England, looking after tens of thousands of children over a number of years, and the amazing thing about George Muller is he never made public the needs that those orphanages had, and there were many times where they struggled to pay the bills, many times they worried about how they would feed the children, but what he did is he prayed, and he encouraged people to pray, and to read his story is to read amazing story after story of God's providing, people being moved in their hearts from all around the world to be generous, God cares, this is our father's world, trust him to provide.

If we're anxious about the cost of living, and that seems all consuming, if we're anxious about the cost of serving Jesus, and we wonder can we afford generosity, if we're anxious about the life of a disciple, knowing that following Jesus is the road of dying to self, and facing rejection, what do we need to do?

[25 : 41] To look around, and ultimately to look up. It's my father's world, and I trust him, trust him to provide, I trust him with my life.

That's the first thing to remember, this is your father's world, trust him to provide. The second is this, Jesus says to his followers, remember you are rich in Christ, so be generous.

Jesus presents the only true solution to escaping the grip that money can have on our hearts. That stranglehold that can have our hearts, so either we tend towards greed, or we tend towards anxiety. How do we escape that trap? Jesus says, only as we come to see ourselves rich in Christ.

Verse 21, this is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich towards God. To be rich towards God, the end of the day, is to have Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

[26 : 50] Verse 31, to seek his kingdom and these things will be given to you as well. It's only when our heart is set on the Lord Jesus Christ as our true and living hope that we have the freedom, the single-minded devotion to seek his kingdom and not our own.

To pray and to work, your kingdom come and your will be done. Verse 32, do not be afraid, little flock, for your father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

It's only as we know Christ as our good shepherd that we know that there is no need to fear. He is the one who laid down his life for us.

He is the one who has called us into God's flock, into God's family. He is the gate through which we enter into the eternal kingdom of God and in him we are eternally secure.

Verse 34, for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. To know Christ, for him to have our heart, is to have eternal treasure in heaven.

[28 : 07] That is the one treasure that can never be taken from us, can never be lost. And it is to have a greater glory, a greater wealth than anything that this world offers.

Notice what Jesus says in verse 33 and 34. Or notice what he connects. He connects our hearts and our treasure. Sell your possessions and give to the poor.

Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out. A treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Our heart and our treasure, they go together. So when Christ has our heart, when we know that we are rich in Christ, in him we have everything, that's an implication for our money.

Jesus says, then there'll be the freedom to gladly be generous, to give wisely, to ministries, to churches, to people, to help spiritually and physically.

[29 : 13] Then there'll be the joy and the excitement of using our money to bless others rather than hoarding it or feeling anxious about it. Tim Keller, in one of his books, used the imagery of scattering seed.

You know, to view our money as seed. We scatter it not looking for a harvest for ourselves. We scatter it so that Christ's grace and Christ's life and Christ's word might grow in the lives of others. Because we've come to understand that's real riches. Changed lives to the glory of God, that's wealth to pursue. And so to help us towards that, in verse 33, Jesus gives this, begins to give us this comparison, to see what has real value.

Is it treasure on earth or is it treasure in heaven? So that we do not find ourselves chasing fool's gold, but that we gladly live for the real thing, pursuing treasure.

Think about riches on earth. If we have wealth, then we will likely have some measure of status. Some measure of status. But when we are rich in Christ, what is true of us is that we are children, the king of the universe.

[30 : 37] That's unbelievable status right there. Riches on earth, when we have them, we know this, we're not naive. They can provide some security. But when we are rich in Christ, we have the security.

security. We have Romans 8 security. We have the security that all things work together for the good of those who love him. Riches on earth.

We have money. We have some surplus wealth. That can bring us some joy. And we're not naive, but that's one of the good things that God gives. We have money so that we can enjoy life. We can enjoy it with others.

But we know there's always the day after. We know things wear out. But when we have riches in Christ, we have joy in this life and everlasting joy.

Perfect joy in the world to come. Riches on earth, they can be extremely helpful for us. They can free us from some debt.

[31 : 41] Find ourselves in debt. It's good to have money to pay it off. But when we are rich in Christ, we are set free from the only debt that would destroy us eternally.

Our moral debt before God. Of robbing him of glory. Of not giving him the honor that he deserves. All of that graciously forgiven.

Cancelled by the sacrificial work of the Lord Jesus as we heard in Colossians 2. So Christ serves to answer our deep anxieties by pointing us to the greater riches we have in him.

He makes us truly rich. Freeing us to serve others. Do we know it? Do we live it? Do we experience that? Being rich in Christ is the key to a healthy relationship to our money.

Helps us to understand this life is not all there is so that we would guard against greed and just living for today. It will help us to grow to trust our Father in heaven.

[32 : 54] To provide for our needs. Rather than living consumed by anxiety. And as we come to see Christ and his kingdom as true riches.

We'll gladly give our hearts, our lives, and our money for his sake, for his kingdom, for his glory. Let's pray about that together.

Lord, our God, we recognize each one of us has our own relationship to money that can change at different times. It can tend towards contentment at some points and greed at other points or anxiety at other times.

Lord, we pray that you would settle our hearts on this wonderful reality. That we live in our Father's world. That we would know you as Father through faith in Jesus and learn to trust you.

And that you would give us the eyes of faith to understand that if we have Jesus, we have all the wealth and riches we could ever need or ever imagine. And that, Lord, that would free us up to be radically generous, to give, to support the church that we belong to, to give, to be a blessing to our family and our friends, to give so that global mission could continue.

[34 : 16] And all for your glory we pray. Amen. Now, I think the boys and girls are just going to come and join us.

So we'll give them a moment. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. I want to read one verse together.

So we've just been thinking about that reality that to know Christ is to have true riches. Well, in 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 9, we have this, For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you, through His poverty, might become rich.

And so we are reminded of the gospel. The God who gives each one of us our life is the God who also gave His Son Jesus to come into this world. And Jesus gladly and willingly made this journey from the riches and the glory of heaven to come to live a life of perfect obedience here on the earth, to go to the cross, to give His life in our place, so that we, through His poverty, we might become rich.

So we've been reminding ourselves from God's Word that to know Jesus as Savior is what it means to be rich, to be rich towards God, to have treasure in heaven. And as we come to the Lord's table and as we think about the bread and the wine, we're being reminded about an incredible cost, aren't we?

[36 : 40] The incredible cost the Son of God paid that His people might be set free and saved. Giving up His life to give us eternal life.

So as we take the bread and as we take the wine, we remember that. This meal, this simple meal is for those who know Jesus as Lord and Savior, who belong to His church, who can say, by God's grace, I am rich, I have treasure in heaven because I'm trusting in Jesus.

We read in Colossians 3 and verse 4, when Christ, who is your life, appears, you also will appear with Him in glory.

As Jesus meets us here at His table, He wants this meal to be a reminder of the great feast awaiting us, the great hope, the great glory, the great fellowship that's awaiting us.

So this is a meal for the Lord's people. So if that's you, then please do come and receive. But let me say, if that's not you today, if you're not a follower of Jesus, if you don't yet trust Him as your Lord and your Savior, then please don't come forward to take the bread and the wine.

[38 : 10] But let me invite you to think about what we've heard in God's Word. Think about the treasure that Jesus offers through His own life, death, and resurrection that in the fullness of time you might come to Him and you might receive.

I'm going to read for us from 1 Corinthians chapter 11 verse 22, verse 23 rather. For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you.

The Lord Jesus on the night He was betrayed took bread and when He had given thanks He broke it. Let's pray together. Lord, our God, we thank You for Your grace towards us in the Lord Jesus.

We thank You for His willingness to leave the glory of heaven, to live for us, to suffer and die for us, to rise again for us, so that by trusting in Him, we too would have that hope of eternal glory.

Lord, we thank You for Jesus being willing to lay down His life to make rebel sinners into His friends, to call us into the family of God.

[39 : 33] We recognize as we share the Lord's Supper as the people of God that we don't do it on the basis of our own merit. We recognize that it's all because of Jesus and His blood shed for us on the cross.

Lord, we ask that You would meet with us as You promised, that You would strengthen our hearts by faith as we take this moment to consider, to remember the Lord Jesus suffering and dying in our place and for our sins, as we consider the glorified Lord Jesus who sends us His presence, who sends us His Spirit, who would feed us spiritually today, and who has prepared an eternal home in glory for us so that we know that there is still that great feast to come.

Lord, we pray that You would humble our hearts, You'd fill our hearts, with great joy and gladness, gratitude for all that You have done for us in the gospel.

Amen. Now, we're going to sing. We're going to sing a section of, or two sections actually, of Psalm 73, and as we're singing, folks will steward you to come, if you're receiving the Lord's Supper, to come and take some bread and take some wine.

The lighter colored cups are non-alcoholic, the darker are alcoholic. So, if you take those, take them back to your seats and then hold on to them so that we can eat and drink together after we have sung.

[41 : 16] So, let's stand to sing Psalm 73 together. Surely the Lord is good to Israel, to those who in their hearts are true and pure, but as for me, my feet had almost slipped, my foothold had become quite insecure.

For when I saw the wicked prospering, I envied them their arrogant success.
They keep their bodies healthy, fit, and strong. They do not have to struggle with distress.
They are not plagued by human weaknesses.
from burdens common to mankind they're free.

[43 : 02] They therefore clothe themselves with violence.

Pride is their necklace, flaunted shamelessly. When in my heart I was consumed with grief, and when my soul was filled with bitterness, then I was like a brute beast in your sight, so full of ignorance and foolishness.

yet I remain with you continually. By my right hand, you hold me as my guide.

You lead me with your counsel to the end, and take me into glory to abide.

In heaven, whom have I but you alone? On earth there's no one else whom I adore.

[45 : 04] Although my heart may fail as fresh grow weak, God is my strength and portion evermore.

Those who are far from you will be cut down. All those who are unfaithful you destroy, but I'll draw near and shelter in my God.

Your deeds, O Lord, I will recount with joy.

Let me read for us from Isaiah 53. Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

He grew up before him like a tender shoot, and like a root out of dry ground, he had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.

[46 : 36] He was despised and rejected by mankind, a man of suffering and familiar with pain. Like one from whom people hide their faces, he was despised, and we held him in low esteem.

Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering. Yet we considered him punished by God, stricken by him and afflicted.

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray. Each of us has turned to our own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Please have a seat. I receive from the Lord what I also passed on to you.

[47 : 47] The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. So let's eat and remember. In the same way, after supper, he took the cup saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

So let's drink together. Let me lead us in prayer once again.

We have now been commemorating the death of Christ. Lord, grant that by the power of that act, sin may be crucified in us, the world crucified to us, and we to the world.

[49 : 06] And enable your children so to carry about with us continually the dying of the Lord Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be revealed in our mortal bodies.

Amen. And now, as we close, let's sing our closing hymn, which is in Christ alone. And again, let's stand together to sing.