

Then Were The Disciples Glad When They Saw The Lord

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[0 : 00] Let us resume our public worship of God by singing to his praise from Psalm 24, Psalm 24 and from the beginning, singing down to verse 6.

The earth belongs unto the Lord and all that it contains, the world that is inhabited and all that there remains, for the foundations thereof he on the seas did lay, and he hath it established upon the floods to stay.

Who is the man that shall ascend into the hill of God, or who within his holy place shall have a firm abode, whose hands are clean, whose heart is pure, and unto vanity who hath not lifted up his soul, nor sworn deceitfully.

He from the Eternal shall receive the blessing him upon, and righteousness even from the God of his salvation. This is the generation that after him inquire, O Jacob, who do seek thy face with their whole heart's desire.

And so on. We can sing these verses, Psalm 24, from the beginning, the earth belongs unto the Lord and all that it contains.

[1 : 28] The earth belongs unto the Lord and all that it contains.

The earth belongs to the Lord and all that it contains. The earth belongs to the Lord and all that it contains.

The earth belongs to the Lord and all that it contains. For the nations thereof he on the seas did lay, and he hath in his salvation upon the heart of the dead.

The earth belongs to the dead. Who is the man that shall ascend into the hill of God, or who will be the one who is mermaid gate as one who is born within his Holy incarnation?

The earth has not Quickly called him, who is has muddled in his holy place. The earth has not performed in his holy place. The earth has not pequeña, if you are consumed in his Hy Singulian. The earth has not Ministry, but 1500 who is the greatest Daniel who is gathered at large, whose instantaneous jijges■■. The earth is mighty, whose ■■ John's victory is ■■ gathered, whose■ unsettretye Peter, and he hathneth■ destinies free unto the Lord andoland's home.

[3 : 25] The earthens Where Jesus jumped his Republic of truth. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Let us join together in prayer. Thank you. Oh Lord of God, as we continue before you in this act of worship, we give thanks that we can call upon your name.

And that name is a name that is above every name. We acknowledge that many have done so before us.

[5 : 26] Many have done so with us. And as long as this world continues, you will have your own people in it. And they will turn their face to God and they will identify with you and praise your name and petition the very heavens that is your abode in order that they may solicit your help.

And the psalmist identified this generation as the generation that called upon God and that made their petitions known to you.

And we pray that we too would have that identity, that we would know the wisdom of coming to God and making our desires known even at the throne of grace.

So bless us as we gather in your name this evening. Bless your word to us and remind us that you are indeed speaking the truth in love to each one of us.

And it is a loving act of the divine God who sits as a God who knows all that is to be known about us. And you haven't turned your back upon us.

[6 : 53] You haven't poured out your wrath upon us as we so richly deserve. As a people we have neglected to fulfill our created calling to worship our God and to praise your name for all that you are to us even as our creator.

Our creaturehood requires it and yet we often neglect to fulfill our created calling and we ask forgiveness for that.

Not only have we neglected the most holy things but in many respects we are guilty. As a generation of besmirching your name and doing so many things that in other generations have brought out the wrath of God as they have failed to recognize that you are a God who is holy.

And that the truth concerning you such that you have often times throughout the generations brought your people to account when their sacrifices were mixed with their own blood.

Lord help us to reconcile our own indifference to you, to the mercy that teaches us that you are a God of grace.

[8 : 31] And that we can understand that our continued existence is entirely of your mercy. We give thanks that as the prophets of old we can testify to the truth concerning our lives here that your measures are new each morning and greatest your faithfulness.

We are bound towards us. We are bound towards us far more than our asking and far more than our deserving. We pray that your blessing upon us in this privileged position that we have to meet together in your name here in this place.

And that you have provided it for us and that you have over the years visited in mercy and brought from darkness to light those who are identifying themselves as those who were in darkness until you brought them to light.

Those who can testify to your grace in the way that they recognize themselves to have been wanderers far from you.

And yet in your grace you brought them close to yourself and you opened the eyes of understanding so that they may gaze upon the face of the almighty saviour.

[9 : 53] We bless you and thank you for every single individual who has that testimony to make. And we pray that you would encourage them to bear witness in your name in this sad day in which we live.

That they should not fear what man can do. But that they could understand that they have a story to tell and that you are indeed the one who is their light and their saving health.

And therefore they should not be dismayed. That they are those who have come into close proximity to a saving redeemer.

And through knowledge of him their feet have been set upon a rock and they have a way established for them. Even provided by yourself.

We will sing these words that speak of the experience of one of old who was able to speak of your grace in that respect. So we pray as we continue in your presence at this time that you would open up your word to us as we sing it, as we read it, as we reflect upon it.

[11 : 04] Remembering those of our number who are unable to be with us and who are, because of illness of various descriptions, confined to their homes, others confined to hospital.

Some seriously ill. And we pray for those whose illness is terminal. And that you would help them to draw near to Christ.

And that the assurance is theirs that those who so do know that you will draw nigh to them. We pray for those in hospital. Some in the hospice.

And all carers of every description administer to the needs of such. Remember our nation at this time, wavered and negligent as it is.

May you bless our king, his family, the government that rules in his name. We pray that you would draw them to yourself. That you would open their minds to the truth of the scripture.

[12 : 07] That they would see that foundational truths are being usurped and walked away from. And others are being embraced that so soon expose their fragility and impotence.

And the confusion that ensues is there for all to see. Our prisons are overflowing. Our health system is overwhelmed.

And all that are endeavouring to bring stability in the various disciplines that are entrusted to them.

Find themselves incapable of meeting the demands that are made upon their time and their energy. These are but harbingers of your own displeasure.

And we pray that our eyes would see that for what they are. Remember our nation. Its place in the world and all that are in the world that are at this time experiencing sorrows and sadnesses.

[13 : 14] Especially because of war. Today has been appointed a day of commemoration and remembrance of past conflicts. And yet that is still ongoing in this world.

The grief and the sorrow that war brings is in evidence. Whichever way we look. Nations are embroiled in wars against nations. Neighbours against neighbours.

And those even have seen families rent asunder. Because of war in localities where these nations are divided and subdivided.

We pray Lord for your ministry. For your grace to be poured out that healing may come and that peace may reign. From your own hand and we acknowledge that we are not the best means by which such peace can be secured.

Indeed we have failed miserably. Even in personal circumstances in local contexts when we would seek to bring peace where there is discord.

[14 : 26] We find that very often the fissures and the fragmentation that takes place is so difficult to resolve. We need to look to yourself and teach us so to do.

Remember then all that we commit to your care this evening. Those affected by floods and by famine and by fire. And all the natural elements that have been exposed as instruments of destruction.

In this world of ours we pray Lord that you would remember all these places. And draw through these visitations men and women.

Young and old to yourself. Watch over us now the short time we are together. Bless your word to us. God pardon for our many sins. In Jesus name we would ask it.

Amen. Let us sing now to God's praise Psalm 40. Psalm 40 we are singing the first six stanzas from the beginning.

[15 : 32] I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. At length to me he did incline my voice and cry to hear. He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay and on a rock he set my feet.

Establishing my way. He put a new song in my mouth. Our God to magnify. Many shall see it and shall fear. And on the Lord rely.

And so on. Down to the double verse marked five. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear.

And so on. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. My God and patiently did bear.

My God and patiently did bear. He took me from a fearful pit.

[16 : 56] I 2020 and patiently did bear. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear. Beyond the battlefield and patiently tenim and specially did bear. dije cockroachroves stretch his heart and while you have become destroyed. They■■■■■■ per seate in the rain. And yet with his mother and ally did bear. And yet with his body would bear. journals may be breathe. I groot naark has loaring at this point.

You know what him or locaules be to bear. I am ■■■■ intermittent lagi. Lord oko ne'upload. He goes■■■■ efficiency, he■, Your blood had been Spotter has been to bear. Be saved by the Lord my God and precis poor as he waskels in the spreading Senate. He invited ph■ his city he derog■AY.

119 and he Commons to jedes. Did he lorsqu Corbinose me he consid empieza. A new song in my heart I thought in my dear light Many hearts ye yet I shall hear And on the Lord relied O blessed is the mother's cross Upon the Lord relied Reset him on the path nor such

As turn the light to light O Lord, my God, O many are The waters of heaven Thy guiltless heart to us Or trust above all the Lord And on the Lord And on the Lord Come back on them To give them pure head

As he o'er my God And on the Lord And on the Lord And on the Lord And on the Lord Let us hear God's word As we have it in the New Testament scriptures Gospel of John chapter 20 Gospel of Jesus Christ according to John chapter 20 We can read the whole chapter Chapter 20 from the beginning The first day of the week Cometh Mary Magdalene early When it was yet dark Unto the sepulchre And seeth the stone Taken away from the sepulchre Then she runneth And cometh to Simon Peter

[20 : 35] And to the other disciple Whom Jesus loved And saith unto them They have taken away the Lord Out of the sepulchre And we know not Where they have laid him Peter therefore went forth And that other disciple And came to the sepulchre So they ran both together And the other disciple Did outrun Peter And came first to the sepulchre And he stooping down And looking in Saw the linen clothes lying And yet went he not in Then cometh Simon Peter Following him And went into the sepulchre And seeth the linen clothes lying And the napkin That was about his head Not lying with the linen clothes But wrapped together In a place by itself Then went in also That other disciple Which came first to the sepulchre

And he saw and believed For as yet they knew not The scripture that he must rise Again from the dead Then the disciples Went away again Into their own home But Mary stood without At the sepulchre weeping And as she wept She stooped down And looked into the sepulchre And seeth two angels In white sitting The one at the head And the other at the feet Where the body of Jesus Had lain And they say unto her woman Why weepest thou She saith unto them Because they have taken away My Lord And I know not Where they have laid him And when she had thus said She turned herself back And saw Jesus standing And knew not that it was Jesus Jesus saith unto her woman Why weepest thou Whom seekest thou

She supposing him to be the gardener Saith unto him Sir If thou have borne him Hence Tell me where thou hast laid him And I will take him away Jesus saith unto her Mary She turned herself and saith unto him Rabboni Which is to say Master Jesus saith unto her Touch me not For I am not yet ascended To my father But go to my brethren And say unto them I ascend unto my father And your father And to my God And your God Mary Magdalene came And told the disciples That she had seen the Lord And that he had spoken These things unto her Then the same day At the evening Being the first day Of the week When the doors were shut Where the disciples Were assembled For fear of the Jews

Came Jesus And stood in the midst And saith unto them Peace be unto you And when he had so said He showed unto them His hands And his side Then were the disciples glad When they saw the Lord Then said Jesus To them again Peace be unto you As my father Hath sent me Even so Send I you And when he had said this He breathed on them And saith unto them Receive ye the Holy Ghost Whosoever sins He remit They are remitted unto them And whosoever sins He retained They are retained But Thomas One of the twelve Called Didymus Was not with them When Jesus came The other disciples Therefore said unto him We have seen the Lord But he said unto them Except I shall see

In his hands The print of the nails And put my finger Into the print of the nails And thrust my hand Into his side I will not believe And after eight days Again his disciples Were within And Thomas with them Then came Jesus The doors being shut And stood in the midst And said Peace be unto you Then saith he to Thomas Reach hither thy finger And behold my hands And reach hither thy hand And thrust it into my side And be not faithless But believing And Thomas answered And said unto him My Lord and my God Jesus saith unto him Thomas Because thou hast seen me Thou hast believed Blessed are they That have not seen And yet have believed

[25 : 38] And many other signs That truly did Jesus In the presence Of his disciples Which are not written In this book But these are written That ye might believe That Jesus is the Christ The Son of God And that believing Ye might have life Through his name Amen And may the Lord Be pleased to add This blessing To a reading of his word We can sing again To the praise of God This time from Psalm 4 Psalm 4 And we're singing From verse 3 To the end Of the psalm Psalm 4 At verse 3 But know that For himself The Lord The godly man Doth choose The Lord When I on him

Do call To hear Will not refuse Fear And sin not Talk with your heart On bed And silent be Offerings present Of righteousness And in the Lord Trust he O who will show us Any good Is that which many say But of thy countenance The light Lord lift on us On way Upon my heart Bestowed by thee More gladness I have found Than they Even then When corn And wine Did most With them abound Thy will Both lay me Down in peace And quiet Sleep will take Because thou Only me To dwell In safety Lord Does make Let us sing These five stanzas From verse 3 Of Psalm 4 But know That for himself The Lord The godly man Doth choose But know

That for himself The Lord The Lord Be managed The Lord When I On him Do not To hear Will not Refuse Fear And send To talk Of love And more All man's risen and all righteousness, I am the Lord, run me.

O who will show us any good, is not which many say.

But all my covenant and sunlight, Lord, is all as holy.

[29 : 35] Upon my harvest, O my knee, more honest I have.

Than the evil men, when born alive, devils with their minds.

I will go, lay me down in peace, and quietly will take.

Because that O ye ■, by ■ a anywhere, in healing, our blood bleak.

We turn to John, chapter 20. And we can read at verse 19. John chapter 20, reading verse 19.

[31 : 14] Then the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, and the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus and stood in the midst and said unto them, Peace be unto you.

And when he had so said, he showed unto them his hands and his side. Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord.

Then said Jesus to them again, Peace be unto you, as my Father hath sent me, even so sent I you. And when he had said this, he breathed on them and saith unto them, And so on.

A few days ago, when we met together in the Gaelic service, we were looking at the account that we have in the book of Acts, where on the day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit was poured out on the church.

And this took place after his death on the cross, after his resurrection, after his ascension to heaven.

[32 : 52] And the scriptures we were reminded of, prophesied of all of these events. And the Holy Spirit was poured out in that most awesome way.

And Jesus himself had forewarned the disciples about this. And they were able to recognize, I suppose, with a measure of understanding, some of the detail that Jesus had previously brought to their attention.

But it is a fact that the day was going to come in the experience of believing people that God was going to pour out his Spirit upon them.

In John's Gospel, in chapter 7, we find these words. In the last day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink.

He that believeth on me, as the scripture had said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water. But this he speak of the Spirit, which he that believes on him should receive.

[34 : 20] For the Holy Ghost was not yet given, because that Jesus was not yet glorified. So there are many passages of scripture that testify to the fact that the Lord himself understood the scripture and testified to the meaning of the scripture, even though those who were familiar with the same scripture did not themselves understand it at that point.

But there is a very real sense that they were there doing what Jesus asked them to do.

And in the Gospel of Luke, we are reminded of, you know, that they were required, God, while the Lord Jesus required of them to remain in Jerusalem until the Spirit was poured out.

I sent, he said, the promise of my Father, tarry ye in Jerusalem until the you receive be imbued with power from on high.

So that is believed, and rightly so, it is believed to have been accomplished on the day of Pentecost and in the pouring out of the Spirit on that day without measure.

[35 : 58] But that makes it a bit difficult for us to read the words of this passage. At the end of John's Gospel, where we find there in verse 22, that Jesus breathed on them and said unto them, receive ye the Holy Ghost.

It seems to be a contradiction of the promise of God, which we believe was fulfilled on Pentecost, and which we know came about as it is described in the Book of Acts.

Does that mean that there were two occasions when the disciples, for example, were endowed with the Spirit? And if you have time and if you are interested in that and access to commentaries, you'll find that the Church over the years have delved into this problematic passage and tried to reconcile these two truths, which seem irreconcilable, and tried to expound on something which clearly is difficult to explain because we know that Jesus here does something very real.

He breathes on the disciples and he says to them quite clearly, receive ye the Holy Ghost. And when we move forward, after Jesus has gone to heaven because he has yet, at this point, to ascend to glory and to take his rightful place at the right hand of God and at that point fulfil his promise given to the Church that he would send his Comforter and that his Comforter would then come into the world and the Spirit would accomplish what Christ had entrusted to the Spirit to accomplish.

Now some people are so taken up with these things that they lose sight of what is obvious. And it's what's hidden that becomes a concern and what is mysterious that becomes the burning issue of the day.

[38 : 37] The fact of the matter is that at this point, whatever Jesus did to the disciples, that this was significant to them and it endowed them with sufficient resources to proceed with their calling.

No more than that. Now whether they, at the appointed time, received a full measure of the Spirit along with the Church on earth is not a debate that is resolved within the Scripture.

It is not elaborated upon why these two accounts occur and when one seems to suggest that this was a unique occurrence and the other seems to suggest that it too was unique and that something has happened and it's been duplicated.

And some theologians try and answer the question by saying this has taken place as a result of a discrepancy on the part of those who have written the Scripture and they've brought together two accounts and they've in some way tried to bring these accounts into one.

Now that is not a suitable answer for any one of us. What we read here is what took place when the disciples were together in a room and the room was locked and Jesus visited them.

[40 : 17] And what he did with them we are told whether it differs from what happened at Pentecost we are not told. Whether there was an additional need on the part of the disciples to receive the further pouring out of the Spirit that marked out the Church of Christ from that point on it is not identified as something that we can understand in that respect.

What's important really is this to identify that this is something that we have before us that is that is not clearly explained to us that is just something that Jesus did in the experience of the disciples and he does it without feeling the need that he has to explain what he is doing because he gives a particular ministry to the disciples at this point that he equips them for by breathing on them the Spirit.

so we have to acknowledge that that is what the Scripture says to us but that doesn't allow us to overlook what all the other things that happen here.

It doesn't allow us to ignore what happens here just because there must be this difficulty to resolve and if it is a difficulty and the resolution is not readily accessible we just acknowledge that and like many other issues that confront us in the Bible that we have not got the resources to explain because Jesus Christ or the Holy Spirit has not seen fit to inform us as to what God is doing.

There are many things that God does without explanation. There are many things that are mysterious because he himself is a mystery and if you think as one of his creatures that you have the capacity to explore the mystery of God then you are deluding yourself.

[42 : 28] If you think that you have the capacity to absorb the depth and the wonder of God's eternity then you are sadly mistaken.

But let us look at what this passage is saying to us and seek to gain encouragement from it. The first thing I would like us to see is this that and really this is what I wanted to major on this evening that this is a personal encounter between the Lord Jesus Christ and his own disciples.

It is a personal encounter and they need this exposure to the person of the Lord Jesus Christ as the risen saviour upon whom they are to place their trust for the salvation of their soul.

And we know first of all that it was an encounter with just ten disciples because as we read not all the disciples were there.

Initially there were twelve disciples Judas Iscariot being one of them but he has gone. He has departed from the Lord. He has departed at this point from the world.

[43 : 56] He has taken his own life I think at this point. This is true of him but he wasn't there. And the other person who isn't there is Thomas. For whatever reason and again mystery surrounds the absence of Thomas.

God could easily have told us in his word where Thomas was. He could have been doing some business that was perfectly legitimate but God has chosen not to tell us that Thomas was about that business.

It's something hidden from sight. Thomas isn't there. So when Jesus comes he comes to disciples who find themselves in a locked room and Jesus appears in their presence.

And the two things have to be recognized. Simple truths but they highlight to us the situation in which they met. They were in a locked room because they were living in terror.

You can imagine it for yourselves. It's not easy for them to think of this world without Christ. It's not easy for them to think of their own continuance in it without the effect of what took place on the cross impacting upon them.

[45 : 24] They were his followers. The Jews had put him to death. The Roman authorities were involved in his crucifixion. In all likelihood as his followers they too would follow closely on his heels.

They would be ready for the same end if they were got a hold of. So they hide. They go into a locked room collectively.

You would imagine that you can see it so often. When you have people of a like mind they tend to gravitate towards one another and seek solace and comfort in each other's company.

And the disciples are no different. Now it seems obvious that that is the case but it's so easy to overlook. Despite the room being locked Jesus appears in their midst.

Again we might not think that's of any significance. but it is something to them that he is able to do that.

[46 : 34] He came and stood in their midst. And the mode of entry described in verse 26 is the same. To emphasize I think to the disciples and to the readers of this account that Jesus was still the same power that they came to know as his disciples.

He possessed the power to perform miracles. Doors that were locked were no bar to his access. He could open the graves of those who were bound in the chains of death.

Jesus was just able to do that. to the theologians this truth needed to be formulated in their minds.

And it had to be brought to their attention afresh. Given their weakness, given what they had gone through, given the fact that Jesus, who seemed impregnable to them as the power that they thought was going to resolve all issues with regard to the authority of the Roman Empire, that this had seemed to be done away with through his death.

So, it needed this encounter with Christ. A miraculous account. A miraculous encounter with a living saviour able to enter through locked doors.

[48 : 13] And it might appear to you and to me to be insignificant, but if you were in their shoes, what else would give you or inspire you to think that this was someone that had the power to bring relief to them?

So, these two things initially. But the second thing we notice is that he spoke to them. He spoke to them. And in one respect it is a normal greeting, just as if you were to speak to somebody you met in the way you would say to them good morning or good day or whatever.

In many respects, the greeting itself is one that was commonplace. It's in the Hebrew, it's shalom, in the Greek it is sirenai. it's just a statement wishing peace upon those that are encountered by them.

And yet, at the heart of this encounter is this greeting to a people who are in a state of dis-peace.

And these words to them had already been heard by them, from the mouth of the Lord Jesus himself.

[49 : 36] If you remember earlier on in this gospel, the very precious words that Jesus speaks in John 14, he, in the context, is bringing dismay to bear upon their heart, telling them that he is going to leave them and to go away from them, something that fills their heart with sadness and sorrow.

But, he says, in the midst of saying that to them, the comforter which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.

In the same context, in the same breath as it were, he says, peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you, not as the world giveth, give I unto you, let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

You have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you, if you loved me, you would rejoice, because I said I go, unto the Father, for my Father is greater than I.

These words, words that speak of the coming Holy Spirit, but also the certainty of peace being their possession from him.

[51 : 13] And they need to hear that, they need to believe that, they need to trust that what Jesus is saying to them is possible.

Now, if you're in a situation where circumstances are such that your peace has been taken from you, you're disturbed, and your mind refuses to settle on any meaningful thing that would give you relief from it, and here the person of the Lord Jesus appears in the middle of a group that are of equal, they're all equally disturbed by the events of the last few hours, and this person who was, as we said in the morning, the God of all peace, appears and says to them, peace.

And you have to bear in mind not just what they had seen, but what they had done, and what they had not done. I think it's Bishop Weill who says about it, it is important to recognize that when Jesus is speaking to them about peace, he is saying peace, not blame, peace and not fault finding, peace and not rebuke.

And when the disciples hear that, it would soothe their brain and soothe their troubled minds. Don't you think? Imagine, well, we do think that if Jesus appeared to them, that everything was going to be well.

Remember, they have had no encounters with the Lord since his death. And where were they when he died? He was crucified and where were they?

[53 : 20] They had melted away into the night. Peter had denied him three times. The last thing that they would expect would be Jesus appearing in their midst and saying peace to them.

And yet, that's what they heard from his mouth. And that's all important. I think we have to remember that this person is a real person with feelings and with empathy and sympathy and concern for those that he is in the world to bring to himself.

Always remember that. Last Thursday we were talking about sola Christa. Christ alone, the savior of sinners.

And the emphasis we had in that discussion was on all aspects of his character that speak to us of who he is.

All the elements that make up the awesome Christ that is held up to us in scripture. The fact that he is God, that he is creator, that he is the incarnate God, that he is the savior of sinners who went to the cross, that all the elements that are important for us to have an interest in and to have an awareness of and that should fit into what we believe concerning Christ.

[55 : 01] But our mind has to be not only able to embrace the truth that speaks to us of the Christology of Christ but of the person of Christ as the one who is the savior of sinners, the one who knows who sinners are and what their problems are and who is able to come into a relationship and be in a relationship with us and encourage us to be in a relationship with him.

We need to have a fully awed understanding of who Christ is. We need to have as much knowledge of him as we can but it should never just be head knowledge, it should include heart knowledge, it should include the experiences of our soul in interaction with God who is the minister of our soul, who is the pastor of our soul, who is the lover of our soul.

many years ago at a Keswick conference, one of the speakers was a preacher called Dr.

Donald English and he tells in that lecture he was given or lectures he was given, he gives this account of a friend of his or two friends of his who were Methodist preachers and he came to know them very well but he said they tell in their own experience how after many many years preaching as a tinner and preachers within the Methodist way of doing things, preaching and teaching others, these two friends came to acknowledge one Sunday that they didn't know what conversion was, they didn't know what it was to be converted and they phoned their minister on Sunday night and they said this is our problem, we both almost simultaneously realised we have no knowledge of what it is to be converted and the minister said he said

I'll go over right away and he sat with them and prayed with them one on either side of the fire and he in the middle and they went into the bible and they knelt down and they prayed and they talked about Christ and the place that he had as sinners and the place that he had as saviour and he said you know what by the time that he was finished all three were converted all three were converted the minister and the two Methodists who had sought him out for their help and he said every time that minister told his testimony he broke down as he told of his experience of living his life here in this world and so much time had been wasted not knowing for himself who the

[58 : 37] Christ that he preached was and what he was all about you know you can have a lot of knowledge about Christ all the time that was wasted playing at being a Christian and if that's all we have not only do we do ourselves harm we do others harm as well when they see our play acting when they see our lives spent without the full ability to be at one with our Lord and to have him in our fellowship and in our company and in our thoughts and in our feelings and in our imaginations and every other part of our being what does Jesus do well

Jesus knows his people he said that recently on two occasions in another context Jesus knows his people he's the good shepherd and he has that name for good reason and what does he do well we read here that when he he had so said he showed unto them his hands and his side after saying to them peace be unto you he did something very physical he showed them his hands and his side and did they ask to see it no they didn't we know that Thomas did just a few verses down from here this is what Thomas insists on this is what Thomas demands not only that Jesus would show him but that he would put his fingers into the nail prints and that he would put his fist into the hole of that was left in the side of Christ but Jesus speaks to the disciples and he showed them his wounds and I think if you want another mystery it is at this point that we are told that Jesus is recognised by them recognised by them in the way that they need to recognise him then we are told the disciples were glad when they saw the

Lord it's as if he was there and they were seeing an apparition they were seeing someone that they thought they might know but they weren't terribly sure if it was him or not how can a person have such a vague understanding of who this Lord was that they had walked with talked with slept with prayed with for all many all these years that he was with them and yet when he was in their presence they didn't appreciate who he was well sometimes we read that he held their eyes he kept them from seeing but we're not told that at this point but you have to appreciate that they were in a situation where Jesus was dead as far as they were concerned he had died but the resurrection was something that they had just been told of it wasn't something that they had come to terms with even though

Jesus himself had instructed them informed them warned them all of these events are going to happen yet when they actually came about they did not have the wherewithal to believe what Jesus had said he but he ministered to them and I think that the Lord's people are so glad that their Lord knows them and the very things that they can't understand the very things that they struggle to get to Terence with he takes time to reveal to them but only when they take time to spend take time to sit and be with him so that he can do that then were they glad because they saw the Lord there is no joy like it when the

Lord Jesus Christ opens the eyes so that they can see who he is what he has come into the world to do you are weak and you are afraid and you don't believe it possible that I could come and be with you but when he opens your eyes to see who he is and what he is about then it all changes I have to say when I was going over this I was thinking not everybody is in the same boat we don't always go the same path into saving knowledge of Christ sometimes we have a great deal of knowledge and sometimes such knowledge is the means by which the Lord opens the eyes of our understanding but others they come they come to it suddenly and they come to it without without warning as it were

[64 : 44] I remember a book that was prepared probably 30 years now and it included several testimonies of Christians coming to faith and one of them was the late principal Donald MacLeod and I don't think it was something he wanted to do and it was an account of that he was asked a question and he felt that he needed to respond because I think in his experience he grew up in the faith and he probably came to faith quite early on in his experience but he tells a funny story which and he tells it for a reason he said that Dr.

John Murray was once in a free church manse and he asked one of the children of the manse what did they most like about the communions and with refreshing honesty the child said trifle that was what the child most appreciated about the communions just like a child but Dr.

MacLeod put it to himself and he said what I appreciated most about the communions was sitting with old Christians hearing them talk about Christ my whole life at a young age was somebody the life of somebody who delighted in hearing Christians speak about Christ Christ now isn't that something that tells me and it should tell you that we're not all the same but there has to be a point at which if it's not there from the beginning where Christ assumes a place in our sight where he becomes our all where he becomes everything the disciples were glad when they saw the

Lord and let me tell you there is no joy like it there is no gladness like it there are many things we enjoy in this world there are many things we derive pleasure from and rightly so we shouldn't be ashamed of these things if they are innocent pleasures but they do not equate to the pleasure and the joy the child of God has when they come to know Christ for themselves and these disciples saw him maybe not for the first time but that's another thing you see that sometimes we lose sight of him sometimes he's hidden from view and the disconsolate believer is the believer who's lost sight of

Christ they're in the depths they're in the trough and their feeling at that moment is I never see him again but when they do there is no joy like their joy the experiences of the disciples are recorded for a reason and they're recorded for a reason that includes every one of us those who are believers amongst you you are reminded of how easily we can lose sight of who Christ is how easily our troubles can isolate us from him how easily we fail to comprehend how ready he is to come alongside us and to speak into our need Don Carson the theologian quotes a poem and in that poem is this verse the other gods were strong but theirs wasn't weak they wrote but you did stumble to our throne but to our wounds only

[69 : 46] God's wounds can speak and not a god has wounds but a alone I think these words are very pointed to our wounds only God's wounds can speak and there is no god that has wounds but this god who is Christ and because he has he is able to speak to you who are wounded in this world may God encourage you to look more to him let us pray oh lord oh god as we look to the experience of the disciples of old we pray that you would encourage us to look to the Christ who was their lord and their saviour and that we may trust in him as he did watch over us for giving sin in Jesus name amen and closing psalm is psalm 116 the beginning of the psalm psalm 116

I love the lord because my voice and prayer she did hear I while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear of death the cords and sorrows stood about me compass round the pains of hell to quote on me I grief and trouble found and so on to verse six four stanzas I love the lord because my voice and prayer she did hear I love the lord because my voice and prayer she did hear one so give son

This year, O'er then the Cards and Shortles Have become A tribe The pains of And who Hold on me Thy dream And love Upon The River Of The Lord And Till Thy Hold I Sing In Or God My ! I Do The Hail Amen God, Mary, is faithful, not my Jesus.

Parents, in which is evermore, was it andubed my God's Shelcome.

[73 : 55] May grace, mercy and peace from the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all, love and always Amen