

The Curtain and the Cross

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[0 : 00] Vielen Dank.

Good morning, friends, and a very warm welcome to our service of worship as we have that greatest of joys and privileges of coming around word and sacrament today.

And we pray that as we do so, we'll know the Lord's blessing and his spirit leading us to fountains of living water. We're going to worship God then. We're going to sing to his praise from Psalm 103.

Psalm 103, the beginning of the psalm. O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord and all that in me is.

He stood it up, his holy name, to magnify and bless. Bless, O my soul, the Lord thy God, and not forgetful be. Of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee.

[1 : 21] We're going to sing verses 1 to 5 to God's praise. O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord. O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord and all that in me is.

He said, O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord and all that in me is.

O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord and all that in me is.

O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord and all that in me is.

O thou, my soul, bless God the Lord and all that in me is.

[3 : 44] ZANG EN MUZIEK Unite our hearts in prayer. Let's pray.

Gracious God, loving Heavenly Father, hallowed be your name, the name of the one who is above every other name, the name of the one before whom every knee will bow and tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And as we come together this day, we pray, O Lord, that indeed our hearts would be bowed down in worship before you.

You are King of kings, Lord of lords. You are prophet, priest and king, the one who teaches us in his word, the one who intercedes on behalf of his people, the right hand of the Father, and the one who sits as king on the throne of the hearts of all those who have put their trust in you.

What a blessing and what a privilege it is. What an honour that God would be pleased to dwell in his people by his spirit.

[5 : 39] We come and we confess that we are far from worthy of such a visitation of your grace, that we are sinners in word and thought and action, that even since we've opened our eyes today on mercy's ground, each and every one of us gathered here today, we have transgressed your law.

Forgive us, O Lord, we pray, for our sin, for our disobedience. Grant unto us that desire after repentance, even for those of us who are strangers to grace and to God, a desire after repentance unto life, whereby we turn our back upon that which cost you so much, that we flee to Christ and find that comfort, that security and that safety in you and you alone.

And as we reflect upon that safety, we come and we seek to praise you all the more, that we have nothing to bring to you today, but rather what you have given to us already, in and through the person of your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, that all that we have to claim is not our own righteousness, but rather your righteousness, that you have imputed to us through your grace and your mercy and your love.

Behold, what manner of love is this, that the Father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God. And so we praise you for that wonderful spirit of adoption, whereby we can cry, Abba, Father, whereby we can know you not as a distant or detached God, but one who draws close to us, one who pities us even as a father does his child, one who longs to give unto us all that we need, not only for time, but especially for the endless ages of eternity.

And for that, we seek to worship. We thank you, Lord, then, that you've given to us this remembrance, whereby we can join together and reflect upon that sacrificial act of love.

[8 : 10] We confess that as we allow the busyness of life to overshadow our hearts and even our minds, that we forget.

We forget, as your people, where our identity lies. We look around us at our providence, at our circumstance. We look within us, even perhaps at the darkness of our own heart, and at times we can despair.

At times we can wonder if we are yours at all. But we thank you that if we are in Christ, we are always in Christ, that no one can pluck us from the hand of the Father.

And we pray, O Lord, that as we reflect upon that security that is ours only through the broken body and shed blood for God being forsaken for sinners such as we are, we thank you that you've given to us this occasion.

And we pray that as we gather around word and sacrament that you would guard us against cold ritual or formality, that we would not be content merely going through the motions, but rather that we would have a spirit-given realisation that we come around the word of truth, that you promise to be with your people when they gather together in your name.

[9 : 44] And you've given to us that glorious, special revelation in that word that is before us, speaking to us that great narrative of redemption.

O Lord, we pray that indeed this would be our testimony today, that you would speak to us by the power of your spirit so that truly we would be able to say it was good for us to meet.

And as we gather as your people, we think of those perhaps here today who are unable to identify as your child, who are not at your table, who are not yet able to avail themselves of this means of grace.

Speak to them, we pray. Touch them in a very real way by the power of your word so that even as we eat and drink in remembrance of you that they would be convicted of the separation that is so evident between them and us that they would be convinced of their need of Christ and that even today they would be converted by your spirit to that way, that glorious way of salvation.

For what indeed shall it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

[11 : 16] Time is short, eternity is long, today is the day of salvation and so we pray that all of us gathered here today we would not rest until we can say for ourselves he brought me into his banqueting house and his banner over me is love.

Be with those who cannot be with us here today through infirmity of the flesh, old age, other commitments. We pray that you would be with them where they are.

We thank you that although you are a God who delights in the assembling together of your people in a manner such as this, you are nonetheless a God who is not confined to walls.

You are one who is omnipresent, the one who can be with us and meet us at our very point of need. So we pray for any whose heart's desire is to be here, that you would draw nigh to them, that your spirit would reveal something to them afresh, of the beauty of who you are and who they are in you.

We give thanks for this congregation, for their witness here in this community, their dear brother who has pastored them so faithfully over so many years.

[12 : 33] We pray that your hand would be upon them for good, that they would see fruit for their labors as they seek to sow the good seed of the gospel, that that seed might even at this moment be taking root in the hearts of all who hear it, and in the months and years that lie ahead, that much fruit would be seen to the glory of your name here in this district.

And so be with us now as we seek to praise you, be with our brothers as they lead us in the singing. We thank you for every gift you've given to mankind and for those who will serve the table, that you would grant unto them a stillness and a peace of spirit and of mind, a clarity of thought, and that truly above all else you would be here in our midst.

Forgive us then for all our many sins and all we ask in the precious name of Christ and for his sake. Amen. So friends, let's join together.

We're going to read God's word from the gospel of Mark. Mark chapter 15. Mark 15.

And we can read the whole chapter together. It is here God's word.

[14 : 09] And straightway in the morning, the chief priests held a consultation with the elders and scribes and the whole council and bound Jesus and carried him away and delivered him to Pilate.

And Pilate asked him, Art thou the king of the Jews? And he answering said unto him, Thou sayest it? And the chief priests accused him of many things, but he answered nothing.

And Pilate asked him again, saying, Answerest thou nothing? Behold, how many things they witness against thee. But Jesus yet answered nothing, so that Pilate marvelled.

Now at that feast he released unto them one prisoner, whoever they desired. and there was one named Barabbas, which lay bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection.

And the multitude crying aloud began to desire him to do as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them, saying, Will ye that I release unto you the king of the Jews?

[15 : 27] for he knew that the chief priests had delivered him for envy. But the chief priests moved the people that he should rather release Barabbas unto them.

And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do unto him whom ye call the king of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify him.

Then Pilate said unto them, Why? What evil hath he done? And they cried out to the more exceedingly, Crucify him. And so Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them, and delivered Jesus when he had scourged him to be crucified.

And the soldiers led him away unto the hall called Praetorian, and they called together the whole band. And they clothed him with purple and plaited a crown of thorns and put it about his head and began to salute him, Hail, King of the Jews.

And they smote him on the head with a reed and had spit upon him and bowing their knees worshipped him. When they had mocked him, they took off the purple from him and put his own clothes on him and led him out to crucify him.

[16 : 52] And they compel one Simon a Cyrene who passed by coming out of the country the father of Alexander and Rufus to bear his cross. And they bring him unto the place called Golgotha which was being interpreted the place of a skull.

And they gave him to drink wine mingled with myrrh. But he received it not. And when they had crucified him they cast lots upon them whatever what every man should take.

And it was the third hour and they crucified him. The superscription of his accusation was written over the king of the Jews. And with him they crucified two thieves the one on his right hand and the other on his left.

And the scripture was fulfilled which saith and he was numbered with the transgressor. And they that passed by railed on him wagging their heads and saying ah thou that destroys the temple and buildest it in three days save thyself and come down from the cross.

Likewise also the chief priest's mocking said among themselves with the scribes he saved others himself he cannot save. Let Christ the king of Israel descend now from the cross that we may see and believe and they that were crucified with him reviled him.

[18 : 26] When the sixth hour was come there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour and at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying Eli Eli lama sabachthani which is being interpreted my God my God why hast thou forsaken me and some of them had stood by when they heard it said behold he called Elias and one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar and put it on a reed and gave him to drink saying let alone let us see whether Elias will come and take him down and Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost and the veil of the temple was rent to the bottom and when the centurion which stood over against him saw that he so cried out and gave up the ghost he said truly this man was the son of God there there were also women looking on afar off among whom was

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joseph and Salome who also when he was in Galilee followed him and ministered unto him and many other women which came up with him unto Jerusalem now when the even was come because it was the preparation that is the day before the Sabbath Joseph of Arimathea an honourable counsellor which also waited for the kingdom of God came and went in boldly unto Pilate and craved the body of Jesus and Pilate marvelled if he were already dead and calling unto him the centurion he asked him whether he had been any while dead and when he knew it of the centurion he gave the body to Joseph and he bought fine linen and took him down and wrapped him in the linen and laid him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre and

Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph beheld where he was laid Amen we pray God's blessing on that reading of his own holy and inspired word friends before we come back to that chapter together we're going to sing once more psalm 22 this time picking up a reading at verse 14 psalm 22 like water I'm poured out my bones all out of joint to part amidst my bowels as the wax so melted is my heart my strength is like a pot shard bride my tongue it cleaveth fast and to my joys and to the dust of death thou brought me hast we're going to sing verses 14 to 20 to the praise of god who takes me

Swift upon mi new sao ball whoanst my dobrze and cruisePAYERS fifteen ho box Amen.

My darling, send thou clear. Friends, for a short time together, let's turn to Mark 15 once more.

[24 : 54] Mark 15. I'd like us to take our text today from the words that we find in verse 38. You can read verse 37 as well.

And Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the ghost. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom.

On Friday evening we thought about the fact that sometimes in scripture it's the smallest, most seemingly insignificant details that perhaps give off the most profound truths.

We were talking, of course, about that familiar topic, the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. A topic that we know about, perhaps in our minds, but yet we don't consider in any great depth.

We've heard it over and over again. And there are many such phrases or verses in scripture that we can say the same about. Phrases and verses that we've grown up knowing well, but perhaps we don't really know exactly what they mean.

[26 : 14] And so it is with the verse that we have before us here today. A verse that might seem strange to us or even a verse that might seem so familiar to us that we don't give it any attention.

Many of us have been brought up hearing those words. That the veil of the temple was rent in two from the top to the bottom.

The veil of the temple was torn in two. But why is this here? Why does this seemingly inconspicuous verse detail punctuate the whole narrative of redemption?

Why is it significant? Well, to unpack that, what we're going to do is we're going to consider this under two very simple headings. Firstly, we're going to think about this curtain.

And then we're going to see how that curtain takes us to the cross. So we're going to look at the curtain and the cross.

[27 : 21] Firstly, then the curtain. And to understand the significance of the curtain, what we need to do is we need to go back. We need to go back to the Old Testament way of worshipping.

A way of worshipping that was very different to how we worship today. Now, an awful lot could be said about this. Studying Old Testament worship in any measure, it reveals such a myriad of details.

So much so that when we look at the intricacies of the expectation that surrounded the worship of God in the Old Covenant, in the Old Testament, there's a temptation, is there not, friends?

A temptation to stay away from it. A temptation as we look at all these details, all the various different furniture that was in the place of worship of God, all the rituals that took place, we were tempted to stay away, to think that it's no longer relevant to us.

It is relevant. It might be obsolete. But it's relevant, as our text today reveals to us.

[28 : 38] So let's go back 3,500 years. A wee bit of detail here, so bear with me. Let's go back 3,500 years to the era of the Exodus.

And what we find there is the detail of the tabernacle, that place that God's people would gather together to worship him.

Now, we don't have time to go into the detail of the tabernacle. You could spend a whole sermon series going into each and every detail and what that detail means to us today.

Very interesting it would be as well. But what we are going to do is we're going to go back to Exodus 26. So if you have your Bibles, it would be helpful to open at Exodus 26.

I'm going to read my reference from the New King James Version, reading at verse 31. Exodus 26 at verse 31.

[29 : 35] And here we begin to see something of the detail of the curtain. You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread and fine woven linen.

It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim. You shall hang it upon the four pillars of acacia wood overlaid with gold.

The hooks shall be gold upon four sockets of silver. And you shall hang the veil from the clasps. Then you shall bring the ark of the testimony in there behind the veil or the curtain.

The veil shall be a divider for you between the holy place and the most holy. You shall put the mercy seat upon the ark of the testimony in the most holy.

You shall set the table outside the veil and the lampstand across from the table on the side of the tabernacle toward the south. And you shall put the table on the north side.

[30 : 44] So there we have the detail of the curtain. And at this point you might be saying, well, that's all very interesting. It's good to know these things. But really, this is a communion Lord's day.

Why are we going into this Old Testament detail when we want to see Christ? We want to see something of what Christ Jesus has done for us.

Well, friends, bear with me because he's here in this detail, in this very description. We see Jesus. Because what the pages of the New Testament do, never, never think that the Old Testament is irrelevant.

There's a book that's been written that is called Jesus on every page. But if you look hard enough, you can see at least a pointer to the Messiah there on every page.

And our reading from Exodus is no exception. Because what the New Testament does is it shines a bright light upon all that we have in the Old Testament.

[31 : 53] It's as if you go into a room and you switch a light on and suddenly everything begins to make sense. You can see it for what it is. It reveals to us how seemingly obscure details, like the one we've just read, fit so beautifully into that grand plan of redemption.

Let me explain. Because what we've read describes a curtain. Depending what version you use, you have the authorised version here. It describes it as a veil.

Now this veil, this curtain, it was found in the tabernacle of Moses. Now this was a place of worship, but not like we have here, that's got foundations that are secure.

This was a place of worship that essentially was portable. It was a portable place of worship that went with the children of Israel, the people of God, wherever they went throughout their wilderness wanderings.

It would be folded up like a flat-packed piece of furniture and taken away with them. And then it would be reassembled wherever it was that they settled.

[33 : 06] What did it look like? Well, if you imagine a rectangular courtyard, much like the shape of this church here. It had within it the tabernacle, so there was a fence right round.

And within it, there was a tabernacle or that tent of meeting. It wasn't that big. It was around 14 metres long, about four and a half metres wide. And at the end of this small building, if you like, at the end of the tabernacle, the tent of meeting, there was a curtain.

So if you imagine the wall at the back there, there was a curtain. And this curtain, it separated two places. It separated that normal place of worship where the people of God would come from another room, from another place that was known as the Holy of Holies.

And it was just that. It was a holy place, a special place. A place that had in it the Ark of the Covenant. And, of course, the Ark of the Covenant.

It was a chest. A lot of detail here, I know. But within the Ark of the Covenant, it was a chest. There were many different things. But amongst all that was there was the Law of God. And, of course, the Law of God had been written on tablets of stone.

[34 : 28] It was placed in the Ark of the Covenant. This was a room that not only had the Ark of the Covenant in it, but also a room where God would come and meet his people.

This was a room where God, in a cloud, would come and presence himself. And I think, well, how wonderful this would have been to have a room in our place of worship, that God himself would come and meet his people.

Well, not really. Because, apart from one person, this was a room that was completely out of bounds. No one was allowed in there.

So much so that those in the main part of the tabernacle, the main part of the place of worship, they wouldn't even dare to peer behind the veil. They couldn't even have a look.

They never saw what was behind that curtain. Why? Because the Bible said, God said that, if they did peer behind this veil, they would die.

[35 : 42] They would die. They were sinners. And because they were sinners, and because God was and is holy, there was this great gulf between God and sinful mankind, as we thought about on Friday night.

And they simply could not come into the nearer presence of God. They couldn't do it. Apart from one exception, and that would be one man known as the high priest, who could come into the Holy of Holies.

Even though God had ordained that regular burnt offerings and sin offerings were to take place, and they did, these weren't enough. So that's when we had what was known as the Day of Atonement.

This was one day, once a year. And on this one day, once a year, it was the job of this one man, the high priest, to pass through the curtain.

He was allowed into this holy place. How was he allowed into this holy place? Well, he was allowed because he took with them, again going back to the blood, he took with them the blood of a sacrificed animal.

[37 : 00] And taking that blood of a sacrificed animal, he would sprinkle the blood on top of what's known as the mercy seat, the lid of the box where the law was underneath.

So he would come in, the blood of the animal, sprinkle it all over the mercy seat. He didn't die. Why did he not die? Because that is what God had required.

There was an exception. He was allowed to go in. And people say, whether it's apocryphal or not, whether it's true or not, we don't know. People say that the high priest had a rope tied to him, so that they were taking no chances, that if he did happen to die for some reason, the rope would remain out in the main part of the place of worship, so that they could pull him without having to go in themselves, and face death.

And this was the way, friends, for 1500 years, this was the way. Year after year after year, God's people never really wanting to get close to God, or able to get close to God, through fear.

The holiness of God prevented them. It prevented them from coming into his nearer presence.

[38 : 24] And because of this, they lived lives that essentially really were saturated in perpetual ritual. We're so blessed. Our worship is so simple, so straightforward.

When you see the rigmarole that Old Testament brethren had to go through, in obedience to God, and yet we have the simplicity of worship set out before us here today.

What a blessing that is for us. And that brings us to our second point, the cross. This was the way of the people until the cross.

Because all that happened in the Old Testament, it was inadequate. It was just a type. It was a shadow. The blood of animals couldn't really deal with the sins of people.

It was impossible. It was just a shadow of what was to come. We're reminded of this in Hebrews 10. For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come, and not the very image of the things, can never with these same sacrifices, which they offer continually, year by year, make those who approach perfect.

[39 : 41] For then, would they not have ceased to be offered. For the worshippers, once purified, would have had no more consciousness of sins.

But in those sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins.

They were shadows. They were symbols. They were types. They were pointing forwards. All that the Old Testament saints did was looking forward to that crucial point on the cross, on Calvary's hill, when the shedding of the blood of the sacrificial lamb would once and for all cover the law.

No more sprinkling with the blood of goats or bulls or any other animal. The blood covered the law. It fulfilled the law.

It bridged, as they thought on Friday, that gap between sinners who'd broken the law and God himself. Of course, that was the testimony of the Old Testament believers.

[41 : 00] They laid hold of it by faith. How much of it they really understood? We can't be sure. I'm sure they understood more than we give them credit for. They would have known their scripture.

They would have laid hold of the reality that all that they were doing would one day be fulfilled as they looked forward to the coming of the Messiah.

We look back to the cross. They looked forward to the cross. And today, friends, as we look back, we begin to make sense of this, the relevance of this curtain.

What do we read in verse 37? We read that Jesus cried with a loud voice and gave up the cross. And the veil of the temple was rent in twain, torn in two from top to bottom.

This is a curtain that was so strong, that was so thick, so heavy, that the historians of the time, Josephus being one of them, they stated that even if you had a horse tied to either side of the curtain and the horses bolted in opposite directions, the curtain was so strong that it simply could not be torn.

[42 : 24] Yet now, at the crucifixion, at the cross, it's torn. This curtain that for all those years had shielded the presence of God from the people of God in the Holy of Holies, veiling the eyes of mankind from the glory of God himself, it's torn.

Torn in two. Picture the scene, it's 3pm. It's the beginning of the evening sacrifice. And here, as the people are around this place of worship, this most holy of places that has been out of bounds for centuries, suddenly it's laid there for all to see.

You can just imagine the thoughts going through their mind as they caught a glimpse of that which they had never seen before, that which had been out of bounds, that fear that they were going to die.

But none of them died. Why? Because of those glorious words cried out by Jesus on the cross. It is finished.

This curtain that preached the sermon of all sermons, a sermon that spoke of greater things, a sermon that spoke of the fact that there was now no longer any need of types or shadows or symbols, that Jesus had fulfilled all of that, that the many of the religious activities that were so ingrained to the Jewish people, they were now redundant.

[44 : 09] And of course, as we go through the pages of the New Testament, we see that it's hard for a leopard to change its spots, as it were, that the Old Testament believers, as they came into the New Covenant, those who were living, they found it hard to shake off the rituals.

We know what that's like. We have much that we're steeped in, in our culture that's perhaps not necessarily biblical, that we hold to, we find hard to shake off.

that's just what we've known all our lives, and they were no different. Even although Christ had come and fulfilled all these types of shadows, they would struggle for a while, and of course we see the apostles accommodating for this, sympathizing with this as they made that transition, they would struggle to shake off the reality that these types and shadows were no longer needed.

Why were they no longer needed? Was it because the curtain of the temple was torn? Well, no, it wasn't. For the real reason, what we need to do is we need to turn to Hebrews 10, for the New Testament as it was to shed light once more on the Old Testament.

Hebrews 10, verse 19, having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way.

[45 : 44] That's important. There's the boldness now to come into the presence of God by a new and a living way, which he had consecrated for us through the veil, through the curtain, that is to say his flesh.

what's this telling us? The people of God now have access to the holy of holies, to God himself.

How? Is it because the curtain was torn in two? No, it's not. But rather, as we read here, because the curtain of the flesh of Jesus was torn in two.

because of the communion that God the Son had had with God the Father from all eternity, because that had been torn in two.

Because the dignity of a most holy God in the person of Jesus, in taking to himself the darkness, the depravity of the hell that should have been yours and mine if we're his today, that dignity was completely torn and ripped apart.

[47 : 05] And because of all of this, that new and that living way was opened up to you and to me, that access to the holy of holies, so that you and I today, through the torn curtain of his flesh, can come into the nearer presence of God.

But you know one thing that wasn't torn throughout all of this, one thing that remained completely intact, was the love of Christ for his people.

A love that tore the curtain of separation through the cross of reconciliation. The curtain of the temple being torn in two, the veil of separation being opened up, the flesh of Jesus being opened up, allowing us to come now boldly, that's what scripture asks us to do, to come boldly to a throne of grace, to seek forgiveness, to seek his face, to seek his favour, to be recipients of living communion with God through Christ.

Not once a year, through fear, through a priest, by offering the blood of a bull. Not that way, but continually and constantly through the great high priest himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, who is interceding on our behalf.

I don't know, those of you here today who perhaps aren't Christians, I don't know what kind of view you have of God. Maybe you think that you can't come to God, that he's an angry man in the sky who rules with a rod of iron and is seeking to bring you down, waiting for you to put a foot wrong.

[49 : 07] That's not the God of the Bible. There's a new and a living way, so that you, even you today, can come to him boldly and cry out that prayer by faith, Lord, have mercy upon me, a sinner.

And when you know that prayer answered in your experience, he's no longer just God, but he's father and he's friend.

The curtain and the cross, or should I say the cross that tore the curtain, opening that new and living way for all of us here today, if we wanted.

That's the gospel, friends, and that's why we gather here around word and sacrament, remembering what he has done for us.

Amen. Let's join together in a word of prayer. prayer. We thank you, Lord, for the hope of the gospel. We praise you that you've not left us to ourselves, that we are not even those who are relying upon types or shadows, but the finished work of Christ, so that for all of us here today, there is no excuse for those of us who do not know you in this way, there's no excuse for us not to come boldly and to cry out to you for mercy.

[50 : 47] For those of us who perhaps have known you for many a year, there's no excuse for any of us not to come each and every day as a child before our Father and to cry out to you in worship, in praise, in repentance, in thanksgiving, to come and have that living and lively communion with the one who died and gave himself for us.

Forgive us, we pray, for the many times that we treat you perhaps like an abstract idea and not a person. And we pray, O Lord, that as we remember all that you've done for us on that cross, that we would be stirred up in our hearts by your Spirit to not only remember all that you have done for us, but seek to return thanks to you by living lives in the light of the cross of Jesus Christ.

Go with us then, we ask and forgive us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Well, friends, let's sing once more together. Psalm 116, Psalm 116, verse 13.

I'll offer salvation, take the cup, on God's name will I call. I'll pay my vows now to the Lord before his people all.

Dear, in God's sight is his saint's death, thy servant Lord, I am I. Notice the connection there in taking the cup of salvation and then acknowledging in response to that, that we are all servants.

[52 : 38] We're called to serve and to give our all to him. Thy servant sure, thine handmaid son, my bands thou didst untie. Verses 13 to the end of the psalm, to the praise of God.

I'm all salvation take the cup, on God's name will I call.

I'll pay my boucher to the Lord before his people all.

Dear, in God's sight is his death, my servant Lord amine, my servant and true, thy handmaid son, my answer distant time.

Thy calling sign to thee will give, and all God's sin will fall.

[54 : 19] I'll pay my boucher to the Lord before his people all.

Within the course of God's own hands, within the midst of thee, O city of Jerusalem, praise to the Lord give me.

well friends, we're now going to ask the question, who should be sitting at the Lord's table?

Who is the Lord's table for? Some are at it, some are not. Today we've all sat at the table of the gospel, we know that is true.

the table of the gospel is for everyone. But the Lord's table is only for the Lord's people.

[55 : 51] And that leads us to ask the question, well how do I know if I am one of the Lord's people? Well coming back to the few thoughts that we've just considered together, quite simply, the Lord's table is for those who have seen Jesus.

Those who have seen Jesus. Those who are no longer standing behind the curtain, those who are no longer at a distance, as it were, from God, those who are no longer wondering exactly what he's like or what he's done, those who've had that curtain torn, that curtain of their own self-reliance, we know what that's like.

Maybe today, you know what that's like. Before you came to the Lord's table, before the Lord opened your eyes, you thought that in order to be right with God, you had to do, do, do.

the more that you read your Bible, the happier the Lord would be with you, the longer your prayers, the more accepting he would be of them, that if you presented yourself physically in a certain way, that that would be you as a Christian.

But the curtain tore all that apart, our self-reliance, our self-righteousness, that saying that we often quote our righteousness and as filthy rags, soiled garments, they're not pleasing to the Lord because they're relying upon ourselves.

[57 : 46] We've got nothing, absolutely nothing to bring to the table here today but what he himself has given to us. As Christians, we don't think we're better, we're far from better, but as Christians what we have done is put our trust in one who is better, one who as we have had that curtain taken from our eyes, the scales taken from our eyes, one who we can now see.

We can see it not as a historical character but as a person, a person that we can't do life without, a person who is with us every step of the way.

Does our vision get blurred? Yes, it does. Maybe even for any of us here today, we know what that's like. Life takes over, circumstances dictate, our vision of Christ becomes obscured with things, even good things so that we neglect to see the beauty of who he is and what he's done, even at times overshadowed by sinful desires.

But we don't come to the Lord's table because we're perfect, because we've dotted all of our I's and crossed all of our T's.

We don't come to the Lord's table today because we're the finished article. Maybe you're not at the table and you know the Lord's working in your heart. Something's changed.

[59 : 34] Maybe you're a Christian. You've not admitted it yet, but maybe you're looking for this level of perfection that simply does not exist.

We don't put our trust in our own perfection, but rather in the perfection of the one who said it is finished. The one who is the finished article.

The one who is worthy. And so yes, at times, friends, we feel weak and weary as Christians. I've no doubt that many of us know what that's like.

We're struggling spiritually to put one foot in front of another. That's true. that's real. But all the more to be here today because we need sustenance from this supper.

A supper that's known as a strengthening ordinance. Blessing follows obedience. When we do what God asks us to do in remembrance of him, he gives us the strength.

[60 : 48] He gives us the reminder that when we drink of that wine, bowing out hearts in humble praise and adoration, we acknowledge that this cup of faith, it's a strengthening ordinance, not because of who we are, but because of who he is and what he's done.

Drinking every last drop of the cup of God's wrath for you and for me, so that we as weak and fragile thirsty sinners, what are we called to do?

We're called to drink deeply, draw with joy from the wells of salvation. That's the irony of it all.

At times we think we shouldn't be here, and yet he calls us to come, to come and to be strengthened and refreshed at the very place that our soul truly desires.

You know Horatius Boner, he knew something of this himself. He said, I heard the voice of Jesus say, behold, I freely give the thirsty water, thirsty one, stoop down and drink and live.

[62 : 11] I came to Jesus and I drank from that life-giving stream. my thirst was quenched, my soul revived, and now I live in him.

And that's what today is. It's a demonstration of the fact that we are thirsty sinners who find a drink in Jesus. And that's where we come in a moment to remember that he is all sufficient to give us food, drink, and strength so that we can face tomorrow.

We're going to sing then as we come to the table. In Gaelic this time, I'll read the verses in English. Psalm 118. I'm going to sing three verses from verse 15.

In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health the Lord's right hand doth ever valiantly. The right hand of the mighty Lord exalted is on high.

The right hand of the mighty Lord doth ever valiantly. I shall not die but live and shall the works of God discover.

[63 : 36] The Lord hath me chastised it sore but not to death given over. We're going to sing three verses then in Gaelic to the praise of our Lord.

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Vers 9 Vers 9 Vers 9 Vers 9 Vers 9 Vers 10 Vers 10 Vers 9 Vers 10 Vers 9 Vers 10 Vers 9 Vers 10 Vers 8

[73 : 40] Vers 10 Vers 10 Vers 10 Vers 10 Vers 11 Vers 10 But the Passover meal would be led by the head of the house.

And throughout the meal, four different cups of wine would be drunk. After the first, I'm not going to do any great detail in this, but after the first cup was drunk, the food for the Passover meal would be taken in.

This was unleavened bread. Bread that didn't have yeast. And this was for a good reason, because bread that didn't have yeast, didn't have time to rise, was bread that was prepared in a hurry.

And this unleavened bread, it symbolised the hurried nature of the departure of God's people from Israel. But they didn't have time to let it rise. They had to move quickly.

And so this bread was symbolic of the rapidity of how God dealt with them. There was also bitter herds. And these were, of course, eaten as a reminder again of the bitter, the harsh bondage, the affliction that the Hebrew people, God's people, had endured while in Egypt.

[75 : 10] There would have been a thick paste of stewed fruits and ground nuts. They would have dipped the bread into that. And of course, they would also have been primarily the roast lamb.

The lamb that symbolised the sacrificial lamb from which the blood came for the lentils in order for the deliverance of God's people.

When all the food was brought in, what would happen is that the father, sorry, the youngest person would ask the question, why do we eat these foods?

We've got a young friend here today. The youngest person would ask that question, why do we eat these foods? The same question would always be asked. And then this would be followed by the father, the head of the house, retelling the Exodus story.

Retelling why they did what they did. It was important that they knew why they did what they did. It's important for us to know why we do what we do.

[76 : 13] And just before the food was brought in, what would happen was the father would hold up the plate of unleavened bread and he would say, this is the bread of affliction which our forefathers ate in the land of Egypt.

Let everyone who hungers come and eat. Let everyone who is needy come and eat of the Passover meal.

The people would respond. How would they respond? By singing the Psalms, the Hallel. Psalms 113 to 115. At various points, cups of wine, they would be passed around.

But the last cup, the fourth cup, when that was passed around, that would be a sign, a symbol that the Passover had come to an end.

And of course that had gone on amongst God's people for many, many generations. Year after year, this meal with all its various rituals, it took place in the same way for hundreds of years.

[77 : 18] That was until the day that we have before us here, friends. When Jesus meets with his disciples in that upper room, because this was to be a Passover without difference.

The meal that changed everything. We read there in verse 14, when the hour was come, he sat down with the twelve disciples with him, and he said unto them, these wonderful words, with desire I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.

For I say to you that none will eat thereof until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. He desired, he fervently desired to eat this particular Passover with his disciples.

Why was that? Was it to go through the usual ritual and routine? Far from it. We have to remember that Jesus was a revolutionary. Jesus is revolutionary.

So much so, he had every right to because he is God, so much so, that what he does is he takes it upon himself to alter this meal that had taken place in this manner for generations, for centuries, to alter this Passover meal right in the middle of it.

[78 : 42] to change what the people had been so familiar with, linking, of course, back to that curtain. You see, when the bread was broken and distributed by the head of the house, it was always in silence.

Everything was in silence. That's just what happened. But not today. Because as Jesus breaks his bread with the disciples, he should have done it in silence, but he doesn't.

because instead he speaks a new narrative into proceedings. Verse 19, And he took bread and gave thanks and break it and gave unto them, saying, he's speaking, This is my body given for you.

This do in remembrance of me. And then at the point in the third cup of wine would have been distributed, Jesus also spoke, saying, Likewise also, the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the New Testament in my blood which is shed for you.

These are words that are so familiar to us. They wouldn't have been familiar to the disciples in that upper room. These would have been words that they had never heard before.

[80 : 05] They were to give thanks. And that verb giving thanks is translated from the Greek word eucharistio. That's where we get the word eucharist.

Eucharist, which some would align with communion. Professor John used to call the Lord to suffer the eucharist. And that's for good reason.

That's what this is, the giving thanks. But what do we see Jesus doing here? Why is he taking it upon himself amongst the giving thanks and everything else to change the Passover ritual?

But quite simply, because in the next 24 hours, Jesus himself would change the necessity of the Passover. How did the Passover previously, what did the Passover previously symbolize?

Well, God's deliverance from the oppression and bondage of the Egyptians. What was to happen on the cross, friends, was far, far more significant than this.

[81 : 13] Because Jesus was about to deliver his people from the bondage and oppression not of Egyptians, but of sin itself.

A deliverance that would apply his blood not to the lintels, but to the hearts and lives of people like you and like me. Giving us that new and living way, that way of escape, not from the tyranny of Pharaoh, but the tyranny of sin itself.

a deliverance that would mean that he himself would become the Passover lamb. That's why, excuse me, that's why today we're not partaking of the Passover supper, but the Lord's supper.

A supper that, in the same way, he was with the disciples in the upper room, he promises to be with us here today.

With desire I have desired, he said to them, with fervent desire. That's what he says to us today. With desire I have desired to be with you, not at the Passover, but at the Lord's supper, at my supper.

[82 : 39] I desire to be with you through the word. Remember, the sacrament without the word is obsolete. That's very important to remember.

The word has to be central to all that we do. That's how the Lord reveals himself to us. He strengthens us by his spirit through his word encouraging us to take heat, to drink, to be strengthened in our soul as we reflect upon all he has done for us as the Passover lamb.

I will now read our warrant for doing what we are doing. 1 Corinthians 11 23-29 23-29 For I received of the Lord that which I also delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread.

And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, Take, eat. This is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner also he took the cup. And when he had supped, saying, This cup is a new testament to my blood. This do ye as oft as he drink it in remembrance of me.

[83 : 58] For as oft as he eat this bread and drink this cup, he to show the Lord's death till he comes. Whoever, wherefore, whosoever shall eat this bread and drink this cup of the Lord unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.

But let a man examine himself and let him eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body.

Friends, in the same manner, let's join together and let's give thanks. Lord, we seek to praise and to magnify your name.

You're the God who not only leads us, but the God who also feeds us. You promise to be here with us in your word as we remember your death, as we reflect upon all that is ours, because you are God incarnate.

And we can just pause there for a moment. Do we need any medical assistance? Are we okay? We're fine.

[85 : 32] We'll continue in prayer. We thank you that you are God and you became God incarnate, that you came as the sacrificial Lamb of God, taking away the sins of your people, for which we seek to now come and give thanks for, acknowledging that we are not worthy, but rather worthy as the Lamb that takes away the sin of the world.

Bless then these provisions to our bodies, we pray to our souls, especially that we might feast upon the delights of what it is to be numbered amongst your people, to be numbered as a child of God.

Forgive us then we ask, in Jesus' name we pray. Praise the Lord, Jesus, the night of which he was betrayed took bread.

When he had given thanks, he broke it and he said, take eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me.

After the same manner, he also took the cup which he had sucked, saying, this cup was the New Testament in my blood, this do ye as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

[87 : 04] For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show forth the Lord's death until he comes.

Vielen Dank.

Vielen Dank.

Vielen Dank.

Vielen Dank.

[89 : 15] Vielen Dank.

Vielen Dank.

Vielen Dank.

Vielen Dank.

Vielen Dank.

[91 : 45] Vielen Dank.

It's so much more than a bare memorial.

We don't worship a God who is dead, but who is very much alive, who has conquered the grave. And He's given us this meal to feed us, who has given us, who has given us this meal to feed our souls, to strengthen us upon the glorious implications, what it is to be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.

And so, of course, we're looking forward.

And the wheat board, and the disciples, God is, The fourth cup that we thought about in the Passover meal, it would usually be drunk as a sign of the Passover being complete.

[94 : 26] But in that account in the upper room, it was left untouched. Why was it left untouched? Well, it was showing that there is a now, but also a not yet.

That we are remembering his death, but he's coming back. He's coming back and on that day, whether through death ourselves, or if he comes while we're still alive in that great second coming, we will be able to drink freely and fully of every spiritual blessing of Christ when we're with him in his kingdom.

What that not to stir us up and to strengthen us to go forward, so that as we rise today from this table, as it were, that we lean on the one who makes promises.

He promises another meal. The marriage supper of the Lamb. That celebration of the Bride of Christ, the Church of Christ, of you and of me today, of us, has been brought home never, ever to part again.

It might seem abstract to us today. We find it hard to even allow our thoughts to go there. But it's good for us, even in time, to keep an eye on eternity, to be reminded of the fact that we're but pilgrims and sojourners.

[96 : 04] This is not our home. We've been pitched a tent here, and we're awaiting that day when we'll be brought into, as it were, the house of many rooms, the house of many mansions.

That's our hope. And it's not the house that's our hope, but the head of the house. When we see Jesus face to face, and we will be like him.

If that doesn't strengthen us today, I don't know what else will. That glorious, eternal hope that can be yours and mine here in time.

But until then, we're not called to, as it were, throw our tools in and sit back and wait. We're called to serve.

We're called to serve the Lord, to serve one another. We are his body. Remember, we thought on Friday evening of the fact that the body of Christ, the bride of Christ, has many different parts.

[97 : 11] Some are arms, some are legs, some are ears, some are eyes. We can't all be the same, otherwise the body wouldn't function correctly. We are all in it together.

With all our doubts and fears, our hopes and aspirations, with all our quirks and personalities, we're all different. But let's remember, as we rise today, to be there for one another, as the body, so that in this community, you can function as you've been called to function, working together in perfect harmony for the good of the kingdom of God, building one another up, not tearing each other down, building one another up, encouraging one another, meeting together with one another.

That's important. Why? Because we need each other. We need to lean upon one another as sojourners in this wilderness.

going through the scene of time, walking the walk together until he comes again. Amen.

We pray that God would bless to us all that we sought to do. Let's pray. We thank you that we are part of this body.

[98 : 43] And we seek forgiveness for the many times not in this congregation in the church worldwide that we can appear to be a dysfunctional family, that we are not walking one with another, building one another up in our most holy faith.

help us to do that by keeping our eyes upon the one who gave himself so sacrificially for us that you would be the centre of all that we do and all that we seek to be and all that we are.

As Christians, we would be Christ ones, rising from this table with a renewed vigour and zeal and strength and purpose to go out with that great commission to serve the one who gave his all for us.

And for those who are yet to identify as a child of God, those behind the table, we pray that this would be the last time that they would be subject to this visible separation, that your Holy Spirit would touch them, convict them, draw them to yourself, so that even this day they would cry out to the God of mercy, the God of peace and the God of grace.

We pray that you would bless all that we sought to do to get anything done on this. Lord, we ask in your name and for your sake. Amen. Well, friends, we're going to conclude.

[100 : 23] We're going to sing to God's peace. Psalm 72. Psalm 72. This is temporary. Thanks to the Lord of your man.

His name forever, forever, shall endure, and ask that the Son it shall. Men shall be blessed in him, and blessed all nations shall and call.

17 to the 8 from God's sake, ■■■ and call. His name is the Son it shall return to heaven's H Revolution.

Then shall be blessed In Him the best all nations shall enthrone.

Now, blessed be the Lord our God, the Lord of Israel.

[101 : 42] And in Him the best all nations shallogram ours to worship.

Amen. Amen.

So let it be. Stand for the bed. May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with you now and forevermore.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

[103 : 55] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Vielen Dank.

Vielen Dank.