

What is the church?

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 September 2021

Preacher: Philip Wells

[0 : 00] Right, so what is the church? So we're going to do what is the church first of all. Right, and so I did have a picture of a camel, but you have to imagine the picture of a camel.

So if I were to say to you boys and girls, what is a camel? Right, could you answer that question? So Maureen has never heard of a camel. She doesn't know what a camel is.

Sorry, Maureen. So you could explain to her what a camel is. What's a camel? It's a what? It's a mammal. Okay. It goes across the desert with one or two humps.

Okay, it goes across the desert with one or two humps, yeah. It's store fat in them. Which what? Store fat in them. Store fat in them. Oh wow, you looked at Wikipedia before you came, because that's pretty much what Wikipedia says.

Anybody else want to add to that? A camel? Do you think Maureen knows what a camel is now?

Okay, you happy with that, Maureen? Good. Okay, a little round of applause then. Well done.

[1 : 06] What is a camel? So I would like us to think, what is a church? So first of all, my first answer is, if you look at this building, would you say that that is a church?

Would you say, we're going to church this morning, and meaning to say we're going into this building? Now, so hands up boys and girls if you'd say that's right.

Hands up those who think it's not right. Okay. Hands up those who don't put their hands up. Well, let's try that. Building then.

What do you want? Do you want to say something, Daniel, about building? Oh, I thought you had your hand up. I thought you were going to say something.

Let's try over here. Do you want to say anything, Bethany? Building. Do you think the church is a building? No. Okay. Why not? Because you can actually have a church anywhere.

[2 : 16] Is that right? What do the grown-ups think? Yep. Okay. Good. Yeah. Anywhere? Yep. I should be looking over here for answers as well, shouldn't I? Okay.

So what do you think a church is if it's not a building? Okay. What would you think it is? You think it's the people?

You think it's the people. So should we have a little vote? How many people agree with that that it's the people? Yeah. Okay. Right. It's the people.

And it's special people. So let's look at a bit of the Bible. This is Acts chapter 2. So if you can all have a... Find this.

Sorry, if you... I will read it if you're not somebody familiar with finding places in the Bible.

[3 : 14] I will read it anyway. And then I'm going to ask a few questions what this says about being a church. So this is Acts chapter 2. This is on the day of Pentecost.

So I should explain. This is way back in the history of the church when the church of Jesus Christ first started. Jesus had died. He'd risen again. He'd gone into heaven.

And he sent the Holy Spirit on his waiting disciples. And this was amazing. And Peter took the lead. And everybody said, what's going on? There's a lot of noise and fuss and sounds. What's happening? And Peter stood up and he explained it all. And at the end of it, he said in Acts chapter 2, verse 37.

So listen to this. He says in verse 36, Let everybody be sure that God has made this Jesus whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

[4 : 17] And when the people heard this, they were cut to the heart. These are the people in Jerusalem at that time. And they said to Peter, what should we do? And Peter replied, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins.

And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off, for all whom the Lord our God will call. And with many other words, he warned them

and he pleaded with them, save yourselves from this corrupt generation. And those who accepted his message were baptized. And about 3,000 were added to their number that day. So I think this tells us about the church, some of the things about the church.

So it says, Peter replied, they said, what should we do?

And Peter replied, repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

[5 : 31] Those who accepted his message were baptized. And about 3,000 were added to their number that day. Now then, boys and girls, there was a word in there which says what the people did to become a member of the church.

It began with R and it ended in D. So I would have that up on the screen, but you can do it, I think. One of the things that they should have done or that Peter said they should do, beginning with R, I suppose we could say ending in T if you like.

So this is one of the things that they did. Yeah. Repent. Any other advance on repent? Are you going to say repent? Yeah. Repent? Repent?

Okay. Shall we? Yeah. Repent. Repent. Now then, some of the growing up, what does repent mean? What does repent mean?

Turn around. Turn around, yeah. Turn around in your life. Turn from going your way to going God's way. And he said that's what you should do. So one thing here is repent.

[6 : 41] So the church is a group of people who have repented. Repent. And I'm going to look for another word now. It says, so I've got verse 41, something to do with their message.

What does it say that they did with the message? And if you're looking in the Bible, it's a word beginning with A in my translation. What did they do with the message?

What did they do with the message? What did they do with the message?

It's in verse 41. We might have to go to the Olympic team here. Yeah? Accepted, you were going to say?

Accepted? Okay, right, yeah. How many boys and girls think accepted is a good answer? Yeah, okay. Thank you very much.

[7 : 49] So accepting a message is believing. So I'm going to say they repented and they had faith. They repented and they had faith. And then he said, I want you to show that you've done this.

I want you to show that you repented. I want you to show that you have faith by doing something that everybody else can see. Because repenting is something that happens deep inside you. And faith is something deep inside you. But this thing is something that other people could see. So repent and believe and do something else.

Beginning with B. Let's ask the grown-ups for a change. You have a little rest for a second. Yeah, at the back. Do you think that's right, everybody?

Yeah, okay. Be baptized. Yes. Well, let me get a round of applause as well. So what is the Church of Jesus Christ? There's lots of ways you could answer it.

[8 : 51] But this is just a very simple way. It's that group of people who have repented. It's the group of people who have trusted. And those who have been baptized.

They've moved from... Well, that's probably another section. They have shown their faith in Jesus Christ. And people can see it because they've been baptized.

Let me just catch up with myself here. And if you're... So hands up here. How many people have been...

Let me just explain what I mean by baptized. If you look on the floor here, we've got a big hole in the ground. Or putting it another way, a very small swimming pool underneath here.

It's got no water in at the moment. And in our church, when people are baptized, they go down into the water, sploosh under the water, and then they come out again. And who was the last person who got baptized here?

[9 : 52] It was Annika. Yeah, Annika was the last person who got baptized here. What was I going to say? So that's baptism. I'm just interested. How many people here have been baptized? Okay, right, quite a few.

So the Church of Jesus Christ is the people who are not ashamed to express this in front of other people. And it says... I don't know whether the boys and girls get this.

How many people did that on that day? There's a number in there. How many people? Yep.

About 3,000. Is that right? Yeah. Okay. I think we get one. About 3,000. So they knew who was in.

They knew who was out. And they had a list, and they could add it up, and it was 3,000. So this is what it is to be a church. They knew who was in, and he was out, and there's 3,000.

[10:55] And what would be the alternative to belonging to the church? There's a little hint. I think I'll ask the grown-ups here. What was the alternative to belonging to the church?

If you didn't belong, where did that leave you? Dead in your sins, because when we come to Christ, there's forgiveness of sins, and without that, we're unforgiven.

Yeah, anything else? Anything else? Yes, he says that you're in a corrupt generation, so you're either belonging to one group, which it says is a corrupt generation, or you're belonging to the church.

Save yourselves from this corrupt generation. The alternative to being in the church is actually worse than being nowhere. It's being lost, unforgiven, without God, and that's not a good place to be.

So, my answer, and I'm just going to read what I had on the screen. It's a community of people who have repented by turning from sin to Jesus Christ, putting their faith in the gospel message of his sin-bearing death and life-giving resurrection.

[12:11] They show this by the action of baptism in water. They receive forgiveness, the gift of the Holy Spirit. They move from one group, the corrupt generation, to the community of faith, the church of Jesus Christ.

And as we go on, I'm just going to say that church can be used to mean all Christians or a huge group of Christians across time and space, and it can be used to mean this particular group of Christians in one particular place.

So, I'm just going to point that out, and I'm going to say I'm going to use the word community because the church, in its nature, is a place of interaction where people do things together.

They do things for, with one another. It's not just like a collection of billiard balls which have no relation to one another. It's more like an organism.

What did I put? I've got a little picture of a rowing team who work together and pull together and sort of sweat together and exert themselves together.

[13:25] The church is an interrelated group. And before we sing something, I'm just going to say if you are a Christian, and a number of people put up their hands and said they've been baptized, have a think about what a privilege it is to belong to the church of Jesus Christ.

Have a think about what a privilege it is to be forgiven our sins, to have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, to be no longer members of a corrupt generation, but members of the community of Jesus Christ.

Christ. So let's have a little think about that. And we're going to sing a song. So we will put the screen up. We're going to... Yeah.

Is it not on at all?

It depends how much of this you can do from memory.

[14:55] To God be the glory, great things he has done. So loved he the world that he gave us his Son, who yielded his life an atonement for sin, and opened the life gate that all may go in.

So if you can't remember the... the verse, it doesn't... in the end, still doesn't come up. The chorus says, Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the earth hear his voice.

Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, let the people rejoice. Come to the Father through Jesus the Son. Give him the glory, great things he has done. Oh.

So we're now going to do about the importance of the church. So boys and girls, I put on there food, and I was going to ask you, what's the importance of food? So we wanted to explain how something is important.

Let's think about food. Anybody... How many people here think food is important? Okay. Corinne was really fast off the mark there. Okay. What's the importance of food?

[15:57] Could you explain? Corinne. So Corinne was really fast off the mark there, but of course, not everybody even put their hand up. So suppose you had to explain the importance of food.

What would you say? How would you say it was important? If you think it's important, what would you say is the importance of food? Well done. It gives you energy. Good answer.

Well done. Yeah. Anything else about food? What do you like about food? Tasty? Yeah.

Tasty. Tastes nice. Yeah. Tasty. Good. Yeah. Anything else? Makes you good? Is it tasty? Anything else that it does? What happened if you didn't have food? You'd grow very weak and very tired.

So lots of good answers there. Yeah. Let's give them a little round of applause there. And Steve had an answer, so I want to... I was going to say it also provides a lot of chemicals and things like that. Yeah.

[17:03] Yeah. It provides all sorts of good things. So yeah. Okay. So it is important. So I wonder if we could say that the church is important. There's my click for...

Is that coming through on the live stream? Is this... Yeah. Okay. Before we go on, I'm just going to say that the church in its...

When you think of everybody in the church, the whole church, meaning across time and space, and we have our little... Our own church here. It's a little bit like an ocean and a raindrop.

The ocean is big and wet and a raindrop is small and wet, but they have the same qualities. Each little church is a sort of micro version of the big church.

So I'm trying to think of people watching at home as well as people here. Let's look at a bit of the Bible on this. Ephesians 2, 22 to 33.

[18:07] Ephesians 2... No, that's not even right. Ephesians 5, 22 to 33. Right. So, again, if you're not a Bible person, I don't want you to be put off.

I'll read it out. But we are going to look at some of the particular words in the Bible here. This part of the Bible is St. Paul talking to the early churches about how they're to live, and he picks up on how husbands and wives should relate to one another, and he gives a rather beautiful picture about how that should work.

And this is what he says. Wives, to your husbands as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Savior.

Now, as the church submits to Christ, so also wives to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless.

In this same way, husbands ought to love their own wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. After all, no one ever hated his own body, but he feeds and cares for it just as Christ does the church.

[19:43] We are members of his body. For this reason, a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife and the two will become one flesh. This is a profound mystery, but I am talking about Christ and the church.

However, each of you must love his wife as he loves himself and the wife must respect her husband. Right. So here's a verse in there.

I'm going to turn this off in a minute if it keeps crackling around. Some words. Jesus is the something of the church.

The church is his something of which he is the something. So have a look at those. Jesus is the something of the church. H something, something, D.

He is the something of the church. H something, something, D. and the church is the B something, D something. And he is the S something, V, something, something, something, R.

[20:48] What do we think? Anybody got any idea of any of those?

What have you got? The second one is body. Is that right? Yes. Well done. The second one is body.

The church is his body. And which one is that? The first one is head. Is that right? Okay. Well done. Well done. Jesus is the head.

The church is his body. Of which it says, I'm just quoting what it says, he is the S something, V. Yes. Well done. Yeah. Well done. Okay. Which is the Savior.

Jesus is the head of the church, which is body, of which is the Savior. So let's take a moment to pick out each of those things to say why the church is important. So the church is saved by Jesus Christ.

[21:49] He's its Savior. Savior. Savior is a rescuer. If we didn't have a rescuer, we would be all sorts of things. Let's come to that in a minute. Has anybody here needed rescuing?

Boys and girls, have you ever needed rescuing? No, I remember once I rescued somebody who was a bit younger than most of you who had climbed a tree and got up to a certain point and then they got stuck.

And I was like, help, help, help. And I had to sort of climb up behind them and rescue them because otherwise they were stuck and they were frightened and, yeah, they needed rescuing.

Jesus is the Savior of the church. He has bothered to save the church, to rescue the church. And without a Savior, we would be, I'll put a list here, lost, sunk, ruined, helpless, hopeless, estranged from God, distant from God, guilty, doomed.

That's what we would be if we were not rescued by the Savior. I'm just going to look around. Is that right, Christian people? Is that correct?

[23 : 17] That if we didn't have a Savior, we would be all those things? Yeah. With a Savior, we are saved, found, found, rescued, restored, helped, given hope, given assurance, given confidence, brought near, forgiven, and not having death but eternal life.

Is that correct, Christian people? That's what Jesus does for us when he saves us. So, first thing, the community of Jesus Christ is important because it's saved.

And, it's a community of rescued people. And I think, brothers and sisters, that this being the case, we ought to be, we ought not to forget this. And we ought to be a community of thankful people, grateful people.

When I rescued that little boy from the tree, I can't remember whether he said thank you or not, but he should have done. And if we've been rescued, we should be saying to the Lord, thank you, shouldn't we?

No matter what else, no matter what other issues we have, we should be saying, at least, bottom line, we're saved.

[24 : 47] That's right, isn't it? Yeah. Ransomed, healed, restored, forgiven, who like me his praise should sing. So, saviour. Church is important because it's saved.

And then I wanted to pick up on body. Who was it who said body? Was it you said body? Or you said, which one said body? Yeah, okay, well let's think about your thought about body. Now then, put up your hand if you care about your body.

In other words, if your body is cold, you think, oh, I'll get a pullover to put on. If your feet are cold, you put some socks on. If you're wet, you dry yourself off. If you're hungry, you go and look for something to eat.

How many people care about their body here? Okay. And what does it say in verse 29 about Jesus and his body, the church?

It says, after all, no one ever hated his own body but feeds it and cares for it. What's it say in verse 29 about Christ and the church? Okay. Grown-ups?

[25 : 59] What does it say in verse 29 about Christ and his church? Hmm? The same. He cares for it just as Christ does the church.

No one else hated his own body but he feeds it and cares for it just as Christ does the church. Word there, nurturing and cherishing. The church of Christ is important because Jesus cares about it. Jesus nurtures his church and cherishes his church. That's us. He nurtures his church and he cherishes his church just as we do our own bodies.

I have to say it doesn't always feel like that, does it? It doesn't always feel as though Jesus is nurturing us and cherishing us and I think there's a reason for that.

It's because he looks after us as his children. He does love us but sometimes he shows his love by putting us through tough times and there's a bit in Hebrews where it says that's what parents are supposed to do with their children, they're supposed to discipline them.

[27 : 13] That doesn't always make life comfortable for children. Sometimes children resent that and it's hard and tough but a good father and a good mother is prepared to let their children experience that in order that they should grow and God is not an insecure parent.

He doesn't want, he doesn't need us to be thanking him all the time or he doesn't need us to be approving all the time of the way that he looks after us and he's not afraid to put us through difficult times but he does it because he cares about us.

He does it because he loves us. Christ nourishes and cherishes his church. That makes it an important place and then I thought union. This whole thing is about belonging.

Union. He is the head, we are the body. So, hands up boys and girls, if you've ever found that you woke up one morning a little bit late and your feet had decided to go for a walk separately and then when you looked for your feet there was a little note which said I've decided to go for a walk, I'm off to Lewis, see you later.

You ever had that experience? Your feet have decided to do something separately or you woke up in the morning and your one arm wasn't there and there's a little note that says I've gone to play tennis, see you later.

[28 : 43] Your body doesn't do separate things to you, does it? You work together and it is with Christ and his church we are joined to Christ and we're in Christ and with Christ and there's actually a very close union between Christ and his church and if we had time I'd go through Ephesians 1 where it says things like that the church is blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ he chose us in him before the creation of the world in love he predestined us as his sons through Jesus Christ to the praise of his glorious grace which he has freely given us in the one he loves in him we have redemption and so on and so on and so on in him we were chosen the link between Christ and his church is very very close and I'm not going to go any further from that but just say there's an enriching closeness between us and Christ and a donated greatness hands up anybody who's been to tea with the Queen no we did have somebody in the church who had been and had an audience with the Pope and there was a picture of him and the Pope whatever else you think that's rather something isn't it

I went to a minister's meeting with a minister in a minister's house in Angmering and in the toilet there was a picture of him having tea with the Queen I don't know why he put that picture in the toilet but anyway there he did so it made me think he must be rather special must be rather great you know he met the Queen he was close to the Queen I'll just leave this thought that there is a greatness about the church because we're close to the Lord we're part with him it's as if he sort of put his shoulder his arms around our shoulder and said you come with me you lot you're mine and there's a greatness to do with that so I'm not going to stop on that but we'll sing another song we'll try and sing another song which is be still for the presence of the Lord is moving in this place it's saying that there's something special about being as the church of Jesus Christ and being together as the church of Jesus Christ so what we're trying to say was what is the church of Jesus Christ and we said it's people who repented and believed and sort of like that and then we said what's important about the church well it's the place that is saved it's Jesus' body it's his bride that he cares for the place where he is found and then I said what about the description of it so what are the sort of things that describe the church so I had a is there anything noteworthy about it now how many boys and girls have been on holiday in the past few weeks okay right and people have been to different places anybody been to

Dunster anybody here oh you've been to Dunster right where did you guys go on holiday you went to Wales north or south south right yeah very good were you camping or what were you doing static caravan okay good right well tell us some things that would describe did you go to Cornwall as well okay tell us some things that would describe Wales or Cornwall or Dunster or wherever you went beaches okay do you have any beaches in Wales not where we were staying never mind beaches okay beaches any other words that would describe where you've been on holiday pasties yes that's Cornish pasties well done pasties what have you got rivers yeah good rivers yeah do you have any mountains mountains okay so things like that these are sort of describe holiday on my what did I put beaches seaside cliffs sand moors ice creams tea shops things like that

I'll kill that I think and I'll just carry on here so what would what words would come to mind for the church to describe it and I'm going to go to John 13 34 John 13 34 so this is Jesus talking about his disciples and a word that would come to mind if you describe these disciples so John 13 34 so again if you're not a Bible person I don't mean to make you feel uncomfortable or excluded I'll read what it says it says a new command I give you love one another as I have loved you so you must love one another and so I've got a word there it's not ever so difficult to work out what I had in mind but it's L something V something L something V something yeah so this is a word that should come to mind like beaches ice cream mountains rivers the church this is the word that ought to come to mind love is that right yeah okay let's well done yeah should be the place of love and there's a love is not primarily a feeling and love in the Bible is not primarily a mood and love is not just something on the outside of a person which you can train yourself to do like politeness it's something that comes deep down it's the deep inclination of the inner person and it works out in attitudes and behaviours and it works out in all sorts of ways but it goes right down from the middle right down from deep and comes out and it affects everything so it does affect emotions and it does affect behaviour and it does affect thinking but it's all of those it isn't just a feeling and to say that it's just a feeling starts you off on the wrong foot when you're thinking about love and there's a classic

passage about love and I'm going to ask us to look at that 1 Corinthians 13 from verse 4 and onwards so again if you've got a

Bible you could look at this some people think this is a very pleasant and lovely passage which it is I think the people to whom it was originally written might have found it rather embarrassing and awkward passage because it says all the things that they're not and I think they would have noticed it says all the things they're not but anyway love is let me read what it says love is patient 1 Corinthians 13 verse 4 love is kind it does not envy it does not boast it is not proud it is not rude it is not self seeking it is not easily angered it keeps no record of wrongs love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth it always protects always trusts always hopes always perseveres it says more about it but we'll just stop on that this is love it is patient it is kind it is not envious it is not rude so if we're impatient it shows that we're not actually managing love if we're unkind we're not actually managing love if we're envious we're not actually managing love if we're boastful we're not managing love if we find ourselves being rude we're not managing love it is not self seeking if we're putting our self first we're not managing love if we're saying

[37 : 45] I want what pleases me first we're not managing love if we're saying I want my way we're not managing love if we're saying I want it to be under my control we're not managing love if we're saying the main thing is my problems we're not managing love it's not irritable not easily angered the word If we're having teenage tantrums and meltdowns, we're not managing love.

It doesn't keep a record of wrongs. If we're counting up evil and remembering it, we're not managing love. If it says we don't delight in evil, we're not gleeful at other people's failures, but rather glad about truth, glad about personal truth.

I don't think it means glad about doctrine. I think it means glad when we see sincerity and good motives and honesty. And that last little section, it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

I think perhaps a bit difficult to translate, but generally speaking, love has the quality of holding out and trusting, I put the words in, for the best. I think that's what it means, hoping for the best.

Standing firm for the best. Standing firm for the future. Believing that if Jesus Christ is in there, then it's worth trusting and persevering and putting up with and carrying on.

[39 : 20] And this is love. And this is what the church ought to be like. This is what the description of the church should be, a place of love. And lastly, one thing more about, that ought to come to mind about the church, a place of sweet order.

There's so many things I could have picked up on this, and I hope I picked up on some useful ones. But I've picked up on Ephesians 5, verse 18, where he says to the church, this is what you should be doing.

You should be being filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another, singing songs, and submitting to one another. I want to pick up on verse 21, where it says, submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

I'm just picking up on that submitting. He says that this should color everything in the church, wives and husbands, the way they relate to one another, children and parents, how they relate to one another, slaves and masters, how they relate to one another.

Just everything, this submitting should be instinctive, like you say, beaches, mountains, ice cream is holidays.

[40 : 37] And I've said sweet order. The word for submitting means to take a place, to take the right place, there's an under there, to sort of put oneself under rather than over.

And it says to one another, submit to one another. And I've put there, in reciprocal, appropriate, honorable relationships. It doesn't say, parents submit to your children, because that's not an appropriate relationship.

But it does say, children submit to your parents. That is an appropriate relationship. And he says, out of reverence for Christ, because it's honorable and right and pleasing to the Lord.

And there's a whole set of relationships like this, which have a sweet order. And I'm saying it's sweet. I'm saying it's the opposite of trying to belittle each other, trying to tread on each other.

It's the opposite of mocking one another. It's the opposite of being cruel to one another. It's the opposite of gossiping about one another. It's the opposite of being an individual, a defiant individual, where we say, no one tells me what to do.

[41 : 50] Where we say, no one criticizes me. Where we say, how dare anyone challenge me. It's the opposite of that. Unless I'm in charge, I won't do it. It's the opposite of that.

It's the opposite of a refusal to apologize. It's the opposite of saying, I'm never wrong. It's the opposite of saying, it's a weak thing to apologize. But what the Bible says is, there's a sweet order. There's a sweet submissiveness. And this should characterize the relationships in the church. Submitting to one another, he says.

And it's linked with humility. And self and pride is the opposite of this. And this is, I'm saying, love and I'm saying sweet order are the words that ought to come to mind describing the church. And the sweetness of it is that this is how Jesus lived. The sweetness of it is this is how Jesus lived. It says in John 15 now, John 15 verse 9, Now remain in my love.

[42 : 55] If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love. Just as I have obeyed my father's commands and remain in his love.

And Jesus took himself into a place of sweet order and looked to his father and delighted to submit himself to the every word and will of the father.

And that was the secret of Christ's greatness. That he did exactly as his father said to him. And I'm saying there's a sweetness that ought to be in the church where we're not all individuals and complaining and arguing and grumbling and insisting on our own way.

But there is a sweet order in the church submitting to one another. Well, and what was Christ's command?

Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. Well, I'm sorry about the technology, but I hope the idea has got through. What is the church?

[43 : 56] It's a community of sinners who have repented and believed, who have the Holy Spirit within them. What's the importance of the church? It's Christ's bride that he loves. Christ's body that he nurtures.

What's the description of the church? It's a place of love and a place of sweet order. And I want to try and encourage us to say this is a wonderful thing to belong to.

And I want to say let's be that as much as we possibly can. Let's go for that. Let's be part of that. Let's give ourselves to being the church of Jesus Christ as the Bible describes it.

And we'll think about more of that this evening. So let's sing 426 and we'll close. And thanks, boys and girls, for your help. Shall we say thank you to the boys and girls?

Because I think they did really well. Thank you. Let's take our thoughts back to the founder of the church, who was not actually Mrs. Gates, but Jesus Christ.

[45 : 07] And the son and the father, that's by the spirit, that's how we become the church of Jesus Christ. So this is 426. How deep the father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure.

How great the pain of searing loss. The father turns his face away as wounds, which mar the chosen one, bring many sons to glory. Just bear with me a sec.

Amen.