

# AM Acts 3:1-10;4:1-22

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[ 0 : 00 ] In the New Testament, that's from Acts chapter 3, and it's on page 1098.!

So the book of Acts deals with, well, it begins just after the resurrection of the Lord Jesus from the dead. And just the first half chapter deals with his appearances to his disciples after he had risen from the dead.

And then he is taken up into heaven after commissioning them to be his witnesses to the ends of the earth. In the following chapter, we read of the Holy Spirit.

Just 10 days after Jesus is taken up, the Holy Spirit is sent on the disciples and fills them. And enables them to bear witness to the Lord Jesus.

And we're going to take up the reading in Acts chapter 3. Last time I was here, we did look at chapter 3. And today we're going to look at the first part of chapter 4. But just to get the setting, I'm going to read chapter 3 verses 1 to 10 and then move into Acts chapter 4.

[ 1 : 24 ] So this is on page 1098. Now Peter and John were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.

And a man lame from birth was being carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple that is called the Beautiful Gate, to ask alms of those entering the temple.

Seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, he asked to receive alms. And Peter directed his gaze at him, as did John, and said, Look at us.

And he fixed his attention on them, expecting to receive something from them. But Peter said, And all the people saw him walking and praising God, and recognized him as the one who sat at the beautiful gate of the temple, asking for alms.

And they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. When he clung to Peter, while he clung to Peter and John, all the people, utterly astonished, ran together to them in the protico called Solomon's.

[ 3 : 03 ] And when Peter saw it, he addressed the people. And then the rest of chapter 3 is Peter's address to the people gathered there at the temple.

And he explains that it's by the power in the name of the Lord Jesus that this man was healed and made strong. And we take up the reading in chapter 4, and we'll read from verse 1 to 22.

And as they were speaking to the people, the priests, that's Peter and the other apostles were speaking to the people, the priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, greatly annoyed because they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

And they arrested them and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. But many of those who had heard the word believed, and the number of men came to about 5,000.

On the next day their rulers and elders and scribes gathered together in Jerusalem with Annas the high priest and Caiaphas and John and Alexander and all who were of the high priestly family.

[ 4 : 21 ] And when they had set them in the midst, they inquired, By what power or what name did you do this? Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers of the people and elders, If we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well.

This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone. And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men, by which we must be saved.

And when they saw the boldness of Peter and John and perceived that they were an educated common men, they were astonished. And they recognized that they had been with Jesus.

But seeing the man who was healed standing beside them, they had nothing to say in opposition. But when they had commanded them to leave the council, they conferred with one another, saying, What shall we do with these men?

For that a notable sign has been performed through them is evident to all the inhabitants of Jerusalem. And we cannot deny it. But in order that it may spread no further among the people, let us warn them to speak no more to anyone in this name.

[ 6 : 07 ] So they called them and charged them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered them, Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you rather than to God, you must judge.

For we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard. And when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way to punish them because of the people.

For all were praising God for what had happened. For the man on whom this sign of healing was performed was more than forty years old. May God bless to us that reading from his word.

Let's sing this morning to Acts chapter 4. So back to page 1098 or 9.

Some of you may have heard of the story of the elephant and the six blinds. So six blind men are led to an elephant and asked to describe what they feel.

[ 7 : 28 ] So one of the men says, Oh, an elephant is like a rope, as he felt the tail of the elephant. Another of the blind men felt the leg and said, No, an elephant is like a tree trunk.

Still another felt the side of the elephant and said, No, the elephant is like a wall. And another, still another said, An elephant is like a fan, as he felt the ear of the elephant.

A fifth man felt the trunk and said, No, an elephant is like a snake. And the sixth said, No, the elephant is like a spear, as he felt the tusk of the elephant.

And that story is used to illustrate the relationship of different religious traditions or spiritual paths and their relationship to the truth, to ultimate reality.

Now there are two ways to interpret the story. One is a positive way, or the other is a negative way. A negative way is that they were all wrong, because we know it's an elephant.

[ 8 : 42 ] Or the positive way, well, slightly more positive way, is that they were all right. Because all the different religious traditions, different spiritual paths, have some grasp of the truth.

But it is only a partial grasp. They only see some aspect of it. And it's only partial in as much as they think that their way is the correct way, but it is only one way of seeing things.

But of course, the person who's telling the story knows it's an elephant. And they're claiming that superior knowledge. Well, we'll come back to that in a wee while.

But we live in a religiously diverse world, where there are many different world faiths, different world views, different spiritual paths on offer, almost as if it's in a marketplace, in a supermarket.

How does Jesus Christ and his gospel, his good news, relate in that marketplace? Is it just another spiritual path, among a number of others, among many others, like you might choose one washing powder from a whole array of different washing powders in the supermarket?

[ 10 : 02 ] Or is it something bigger than that? Infinitely bigger than that? Well, the Bible makes unique, exclusive, and ultimate claims about Jesus Christ.

And one place that really comes to the surface and is very clear is in this chapter in verse 12, where Peter says, there is salvation in no one else.

That's no one else other than Jesus Christ. For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.

So I want us to look at the passage under three headings. First of all, the setting. Second, the speech. And third, the saviour, the only saviour. First of all, the setting.

This begins in the temple courts in Jerusalem. And we read the account of the healing of the lame man, the man who was carried there in order to beg for alms.

[ 11 : 11 ] And the crowd are amazed. They're astonished because they know the man. And then they see him leaping around, whole and able-bodied again. And they ask, what does this mean?

And Peter then explains how it is in the name of the Lord Jesus, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, that this man is made whole. Now, not all those who heard were sympathetic.

And this arouses hostility and opposition. And we read at the beginning of chapter four that the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came. And they were greatly annoyed at what they were saying.

And that may have been partly because they were speaking about the resurrection from the dead. The high priests were Sadducees. That was a kind of a grouping, a minority grouping within Judaism of the time that didn't believe in resurrection.

But the really key thing that annoyed them was that it was in and through Jesus that they were proclaiming the resurrection of the dead.

[ 12 : 21 ] That was the biggest issue. And we see that from their later threats that you must no longer speak about this name. Part of that was it was brought shame on them because they were the ones who had instigated Jesus' crucifixion and death.

And here they were proclaiming that people were being healed in his name. So they arrest Peter and John. And because it's late in the day, they leave them in jail overnight.

And then the next day there is a trial. Now verse 4 tells us that that's not the only response. There's another response.

And that is that many of those who heard the word believed. And the number of men came to about 5,000. So it was 3,000 at the end of chapter 2.

It's now up to 5,000. So in verses 5 to 7, it's the next day in Jerusalem. And there's the rulers, the elders, the scribes.

[ 13 : 27 ] They're gathered there with Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas, and John and Alexander, who were members of the high priest's family. And Peter and John are made to stand in their midst.

And they are interrogated. Now, we just note that this hearing, this trial, it's led by Annas and Caiaphas.

They were the people who had condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion. So Peter and John can expect no fair hearing here. They can expect no justice from this.

In fact, this is a life and death situation. They had condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion. Would they also condemn Peter and John?

That's the situation they're in. Very tense situation. And they asked them, by what power or what name did you do this? Well, that brings us to the second heading to the speech.

[ 14 : 26 ] In verses 8 to 12, Peter replies. Peter is, we're told, filled with the Spirit. So what he says here, it's kind of like a prophetic utterance. The Spirit guides him and leads him in what he says.

Peter begins by being respectful. He addresses them as rulers of the people and elders. But then points to the irony of being called to give an account for a good deed.

Normally, if you're hauled before a court, a trial, it's because you've done something wrong, or at least something questionable. And Peter says, we've done a good deed. We've healed this man who was lame.

And we're being called to give an account for that. That surely goes against any version of natural justice. And then he talks about the healing of the man.

He answers the question. If we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man, by what means this man has been healed, let it be known to all of you and to all the people of Israel that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by him this man is standing before you well.

[ 15 : 49 ] Now, in this translation, it's Jesus Christ of Nazareth. I think it would be better translated Jesus the Messiah of Nazareth because we tend to think of Christ as just being Jesus' surname, whereas the Messiah we think of as a title.

And it's very much a title that is being used here. Peter is not just saying his name. He's saying that Jesus is the Messiah, the long-expected anointed king that Israel was expecting.

And this anointed king is Jesus of Nazareth. And it's in his name, that means it's by the power and authority of Jesus the Messiah that he has been healed.

On the basis of who Jesus is, that this man has been healed. And what's more, he's the same Jesus whom you crucified.

And he's, of course, addressing the body, the Sanhedrin, the Jewish leading body who condemned Jesus to death.

[ 16 : 56 ] But he's also the same Jesus whom God raised from the dead, vindicating him. God setting his seal of approval on Jesus by this astonishing, mighty miracle of resurrection.

Well then in verse 11, Peter says, This Jesus is the stone that was rejected by you, the builders, which has become the cornerstone.

Now that's really a quotation from Psalm 118. And we sang two sections of that psalm. We're going to sing the remaining section in the next singing.

But Peter's words there are a quotation from Psalm 118. Verse 22. The stone the builders rejected has become the chief capstone or cornerstone.

And Peter adapts it slightly. He says, The stone that you builders rejected. You being the Jewish ruling council, those who had rejected Jesus, who had condemned him to death.

[ 18 : 07 ] But God, in raising him, has made him the chief stone in the building. Now Psalm 118 is a psalm of pilgrimage. It's relating to going to the house of God in Jerusalem, to the temple for one of the festivals of the Israelites.

And it was a huge building, the pride and joy of the Jews. And the chief cornerstone is the stone that sort of holds the whole building together. And Peter is saying that this verse, which about the stone the builders rejected, God has made the chief cornerstone.

That is Jesus. Jesus is that stone. Rejected by men, but honoured by God. Well then we come third to the only saviour.

So we've had the setting, the speech, now the only saviour. Of course it's still part of the speech, but we're focusing in on verse 12 in particular. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven, other than the name of Jesus, given among men, by which we must be saved.

There's a strong double negative here. And it's just all pointing to the fact that Jesus is the only saviour. Now these words of Peter here, they echo, and I'm sure this is deliberate on Peter's part, words in Isaiah that speak of God as the only saviour.

[ 19 : 44 ] So for example, in Isaiah 43 verse 11, God says, I, even I, am the Lord, and apart from me there is no saviour.

Again in Isaiah 45 verses 21 and 22, it says, there is no God apart, this is God again speaking through the prophet, there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a saviour.

There is none but me. Turn to me and be saved, all you ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is no other. And so Peter in saying this about Jesus is hinting at least that Jesus has the identity of God, the one speaking there in Isaiah.

God the only saviour is Jesus. But what is this salvation that Peter speaks of? What does Peter mean by salvation, by being saved?

Well it's based on the hope that was revealed in the Old Testament, particularly in the prophets, of the time at the end of the age when God would intervene and put this world to right and restore justice and peace.

[ 21 : 05 ] Sometimes that was expressed in terms of God himself returning to reign. or at other times of God working through a Messiah, through the Messiah, through his appointed king.

It's the time that Peter speaks about in chapter 3 verse 21 when it speaks about the time for restoring all things about which God spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets long ago.

And that restoring of all things is the restoring of the whole of creation to how God originally made it. that very good creation that God originally made that was perfect and harmonious and was characterized by God's peace, God's shalom.

In that hope that the prophets spoke of sins being forgiven, of the sins of the Israelites, their rebellion against God being forgiven and wiped out.

It also spoke of the dead being raised and of eternal life, of all the hopes and aspirations being fulfilled. The time when God would fix what was broken as a result of human sin.

[ 22 : 24 ] And a time, a place where there would be no more pain or illness or sorrow or even no more death. And last time when we were looking at chapter 3 we looked at how this healing of the lame man was like a trailer of that great event.

You know, we used the illustration of a trailer of say a film that's coming. And a trailer just gives you a glimpse of the action maybe for 30 or 60 seconds to make you want to go and see the whole film.

And this healed man is a trailer of that total salvation that will come at the end of the age.

In fact, in verse 9 it's where Peter says if we are being examined today concerning a good deed done to a crippled man by what means this man has been healed.

The word actually in the original is the word saved. By what means this man has been saved. And I think that tells us that salvation is kind of all encompassing.

[ 23 : 34 ] It includes the physical. The physical material realm comes under God's salvation. Of course it's more than the physical but it is not less than the physical.

So that is the salvation that Peter speaks about that is spoken about in the Old Testament particularly in books like Isaiah. but Peter also says that it is Jesus who is the one who brings this salvation.

He is the Messiah. He is the king and deliverer. In verse 2 when Peter says well that it's speaking actually about the annoyance of the leaders that they were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection from the dead.

that's not they're talking about Jesus' own resurrection it's talking about the resurrection of all the dead. The dead there is in in the plural in the original Greek.

So the apostles were saying that basically at the end of the age when the dead are raised it will be through in and through Jesus the Messiah that this takes place.

[ 24 : 45 ] resurrection to eternal life comes through Jesus Christ. He is the Savior the only Savior. And this is demonstrated Peter and the other apostles say that it's been demonstrated by God raising him from the dead.

Now the Jewish leaders knew that the tomb was empty. If they could produce the body they would have done so and that would have put an end to all this business. But also they were confronted with the apostles bearing witness that they had seen and heard the risen Jesus.

And in verse 20 Peter and John responding to the threats that you've got to be quiet, you've got to shut up about this. Peter and John reply that we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard.

And what they had seen and heard was in particular the resurrection of Jesus. seeing the risen Jesus after his crucifixion. And don't forget that this testimony this eyewitness testimony is not lightly given.

They're speaking here to those who had condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion. Surely that would be an impetus to be quiet.

[ 26 : 09 ] But no, they say we can't help but speak of these things because we ourselves have seen with our own eyes. The risen Lord Jesus and his resurrection from the dead is God's seal of approval on him, God's confirmation of all that he claimed including that he is the one and only saviour.

And so in verse 12 he says there is salvation in no one else. No other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. God's righteousness in God's righteousness in righteousness in righteousness in righteousness in righteousness in sort of drift of the whole Bible, the message of the Bible.

Throughout the Old Testament, so often the prophets proclaim that there is one true God who alone should be worshipped, who alone is the maker of the world and who rules over the world.

And all the other claimants to God's status are idols. They're nothing. There is only one true God. And there is only one way to come to him, to be forgiven, to be at peace with this God.

And that is, in the New Testament, that's revealed to be through Jesus Christ. Now, as we said at the beginning, we live in a multi-faith world.

[ 27 : 34 ] A world where there are different spiritual paths, different ideas, different philosophies, different worldviews on offer in the marketplace.

How does this claim about Jesus being the only saviour, how does it fit with those different views and offer?

Well, the first thing we can say is that it doesn't deny that there is wisdom in the various religious traditions and spiritual teachings around the world.

There may be much we can learn from other religious traditions and communities. We also have to be careful because the term religion is a complicated one.

Often it's used to refer more to a culture, a civilisation, than it is to actual beliefs, spiritual beliefs. William Carey, the famous missionary to India in the end of the 18th and early 19th century, spoke about wanting to see Christian Hindus.

[ 28 : 46 ] Now, that might seem a contradiction in terms to us, but he was using Hindu there in terms of people from that civilisation. So, we have to be aware of that and be careful in the language that we use.

But what we can say is that any religion, any spiritual teaching, any philosophy, any ideology that says that you can find a way to God, a way to salvation, a way to ultimate meaning and fulfilment, apart from Jesus Christ, is a false teaching and is therefore extremely dangerous and harmful.

There is no other leader or philosophy or teacher or saint, no spiritual path, no belief system that can save us.

And we cannot save ourselves either by our own efforts and deeds. The only one who can save us is Jesus Christ. Well, someone might be saying, maybe you yourself are saying, or if you don't say this, it's quite likely that you'll know somebody who might say this.

Isn't this idea that Jesus is the only saviour narrow and intolerant and bigoted even? Isn't this the kind of narrow certainty and exclusivism that is the biggest problem in our world today?

[ 30 : 17 ] Well, I want to answer that with three things. Two I'll say now. One will come just before the communion because it relates to that. But the first thing is just to go back to the story of the blind men and the elephant again.

In the positive version of that story, the blind men were all right. They all grasped a different aspect of the truth. And in the way the story is told, they are made to represent the different religious traditions who all grasp different aspects of the truth.

And that might sound very broad-minded and very tolerant. But of course, we have to remember that the person telling the story knows that it's an elephant. And even if the elephant represents the idea that ultimate truth can't be known, they're still proclaiming a superior knowledge to all the different religious traditions of the world who are too narrow in their certainties, according to that parable.

But of course, the narrator, the storyteller, is just as certain that it's an elephant, that their view is correct, as any religious believer is of their particular view.

And so it's just as narrow, just as intolerant, if you want to use those words, as any religious person making exclusive claims about her beliefs. So we just have to recognize that.

[ 31 : 49 ] The person who tries to kind of relativize different truth claims is actually making a big truth claim themselves. The second thing to say is that Peter got this from Jesus.

The background to what Peter says is, well, it's the teaching of also the whole of the Scriptures, the Old Testament, but particularly the teaching of Jesus. And Jesus' own claims.

Perhaps the most explicit is Jesus' words in John chapter 14, verse 6, where Jesus says, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

But again, that's not an isolated text. It's in keeping with the whole of Jesus' own teaching and ministry and of the whole Bible. So it's based on Jesus' teaching.

But when we read the Gospels and read about the life of Jesus, can we really say that Jesus was narrow and bigoted? If you read the Gospels, read them with an open mind, I believe that you'll find two things.

[ 32 : 59 ] You'll find deep humility and servanthood, along with absolute certainty and conviction combined in Jesus Christ.

Now in history, there have been other religious leaders or teachers who have made enormous claims for themselves, claimed even God's status for themselves.

But if you examine them, you'll find that they were megalomaniacs and had people, had their followers running around serving them. There have been other religious teachers or spiritual leaders who have served others, but they have made relatively very small claims about themselves.

What is uniquely combined in Jesus is the enormous claims that he makes about himself and also his humble serving of others.

We see absolute conviction and this deep humility combined in Jesus Christ. But he claimed to be unique.

[ 34 : 09 ] He claimed to be the supreme above all others. He claimed that the eternal destiny of every human being depends ultimately on how we respond to him.

But that's not from the mouth of a megalomaniac, but from the humble, compassionate, serving Lord Jesus Christ who washed his disciples' feet and who gave his life for others, who lived for others and died for others.

Now we as his followers must follow in his footsteps. We must have that combination of certainty and conviction with deep humility.

Because it's possible to grasp the truth that Jesus is the only way of salvation and yet to do so in a way that is self-righteous and arrogant and harsh and which denounces other people.

And of course that is not in keeping with the spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, we'll come to the third reason why this is not just some sort of narrow bigoted view shortly after the next song.

[ 35 : 21 ] But I want to just sort of draw some applications from this. And the first is, and it's probably obvious, that if there is no other saviour other than Jesus Christ, then you need to place your trust in him.

You need to believe in him, to put your trust in him for your life, for your salvation, to save you from your sins and from the consequences of those sins, and to save you to eternal life, which begins in this life as Jesus Christ gives you his spirit, but which comes to fullness and completeness in the age to come, in the resurrection, to eternal life.

The book of Hebrews says, how shall we escape if we neglect or ignore such a great salvation? But the second application is that if all this is true, and I hope we see that it is, then the compassionate thing to do is to tell people about it.

If you were to go to Dumfries bus station and to ask for the bus to Edinburgh, and the person you ask just says, well, there's quite a few buses here, so whichever bus you like the look of, whichever bus you find comfortable, just take that bus.

Well, that would be, it would be really unhelpful because what you want is the bus that's going to take you to Edinburgh. Or if you go to the doctor, and the doctor diagnoses an illness, and says, well, there's a whole kind of pharmacy here, and you can just take any drugs you want, whichever you like the look of, just take those drugs.

[ 37 : 10 ] That would be, at best, unhelpful, and at worst, extremely dangerous to say that. No, in both of those instances, the decent thing, the kind thing, the compassionate thing to do, is to tell the right way, the right bus in the first instance, the right drugs in the second instance.

Jesus Christ is the only saviour of the world. And that means that everybody needs to know this.

And that is why the apostles proclaimed everywhere about Jesus Christ. That is why, as they say in verse 20, we cannot, we can't stop speaking about what we have seen and heard.

And that is why we, today, as disciples of Jesus Christ, seek to continue what they started, to proclaim Jesus Christ as the saviour of the world to everyone.

And may God bless his word to us. Let's sing together again. Again, so just returning to the, as was the issue of whether the claim that Jesus Christ is the only saviour is a kind of narrow, intolerant view.

[ 38 : 28 ] We looked at the fact that the person telling the story about the elephant, the person who tells that, who narrates that, knows it's an elephant and is claiming the superior knowledge.

And so is actually just as, in a sense, narrow as any religious view. But then secondly, that Peter got this from Jesus himself. It was Jesus' own claims about himself that he was the world's only saviour, that he is the way, the truth, and the life, the way to God, the only way to God.

The third thing I want to say is that if Jesus Christ, if the gospel is a way of salvation at all, it is a supremely costly way.

In the gospel, we read of God giving up what was most precious to him, his one and only son, Jesus Christ. Or looked at from another angle that Jesus Christ himself laid down his life, that life that was infinitely pure and perfect and good.

And he laid it down to pay for our debts, to pay for our sins. So our salvation comes to us at infinite cost to God, to Christ, but of course free for us.

[ 39 : 55 ] Why would God do that if there were other ways of salvation possible? Any other way of salvation is far less costly than this one.

salvation. And that means that if any other way of salvation is possible, then Jesus Christ died for nothing. But Jesus Christ laid down his life deliberately, voluntarily, willingly, precisely because there was no other way of salvation possible.

to say that Jesus Christ is one among a number of possible saviors, it just doesn't work, it's impossible. Why would he lay down his life if there was another way for us to be saved?

If there are other ways of salvation, then the gospel is at best a ghastly mistake. But thanks be to God that we know that it is not a mistake, it is the only way that we could be reconciled to God, the only way that we can have peace with God, the only way that our sins can be forgiven, it's through Jesus Christ the saviour, and in particular through his death on the cross, which is what we remember in the communion as we eat the bread, which represents his broken body, broken on the cross, and as we drink the wine representing his blood shed for us for the forgiveness of our sins.

So, the communion, it's simply bread and wine, it's nothing special in itself, it's just ordinary bread or ordinary wine, but it's what it represents that makes it special, it represents the body and blood of Jesus Christ.

[ 41 : 49 ] Who is it for? Who is communion for? Well, it's for those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, those who trust in him as their saviour.

And normally, as a mark of that, baptism is a way of marking that inclusion among the people of God, being included among the people of God, and those who are able to take the communion.

communion. So if you're a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, you don't have to be from the free church, from any church, then you are welcome to take the bread and the wine, the communion today.

I want to read the warrant given in scripture for the communion, it's in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, where Paul writes, I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is for you, do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way, he also took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood, do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. for as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

[ 43 : 26 ] Whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

Let's join together in prayer. Lord, our God, we thank you for this reminder of your vast and immense love for us.

Lord, we cannot fathom even for ourselves to lay down our life for someone is a huge thing, it's an enormous thing, it seldom happens, and yet for you, the perfect Lord of glory, the eternal word of God, the son of God, to lay down your life for sinners, for people who are impure, people who are wayward and rebellious and ungrateful.

Lord, what an amazing thing, and yet we thank you, we pray that we would not be ungrateful, that we would be filled and overwhelmed with gratitude to you for your great sacrifice for us, and that as we eat the bread and as we drink the wine, that we would remember that your death is for us, that we benefit from that death, that we through your death, we receive life by your grace, by your kindness, by your love.

So, help us in this time to eat and drink with thanksgiving, with gratitude to you. and Lord, for any who are here, who do not yet, have not yet experienced that salvation, who do not yet believe in Jesus Christ, we pray that you would speak to them and bring them to that place where they can say that they trust you as for their eternity, that their eternal destiny is based on what you have accomplished for them, and that they are safe and secure in, your love.

[ 45 : 50 ] We pray in Jesus' name. Amen. Paul writes, I received from the