Thoughts For The Lord's Table

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Preacher: Pastor Kenoyer

[0:00] Well, first let me say that it is my blessing and an answer to many years of prayer to be part!

And made a commitment years ago to begin looking for the man that we would call our senior pastor elect. And I am thankful that Pastor Scheer is among us.
And I want you to know that it was not an accident that he was tasked with preaching for the first five weeks of his public ministry here. I do want you to know that he is not going to be sitting in the back office snacking on bonbons for the next 12 weeks as I preach.
We are tasking him with the responsibility of going to Lafayette to Faith Baptist, actually Faith Ministries now. And he and his bride are going to be leaving at 4 o'clock in the morning.
That's fairly early for an average person. And they're going to be driving there and spending pretty much from 9 o'clock in the morning till 9 o'clock at night in extensive and very, very demanding counseling training.
[1:34] There's a reason for that. We believe that the answers to our deepest needs are theological. And we are fully committed to investing our energy and our resources in preparing the man that will be the preacher and leader of this fellowship with the Word of God in a very careful and deliberate way for his future ministry here.

He is going to spend essentially two and a half days in doing that task. Probably part of that time will just be in the practical matter of recovering from the arduous process and getting back in flow.
So I want you to be in prayer for him every day and for the developing ministry that God is giving him here and that we share together.
Now I come to something I like to say. Open your Bibles. Where are you going? Romans chapter 8 verse 1.
It is hard for me to stand before the Lord's table and the elements and not be tempted to go to 1 Corinthians.
[2:49] You know, that's kind of almost a default button for our study in advance of the Lord's table. But I want us to look in a larger context this morning.

Understand that what the Scriptures calls us to is that when we come to take these elements, we are not doing something that has salvific benefit.
In other words, you don't get points in heaven for taking communion. If there's anything that we probably should ponder it, it is this, that you can take communion and cause yourself harm.
And I will talk about that briefly before we come to the Lord's table later this morning. But what we do when we take the elements, when we take the bread and the cup, what we are doing is, first of all, we are obeying the explicit instructions of our Savior, He having said to us, do this in remembrance of me.
So for one, we are obeying. And there's value in that. But secondly, what we are doing is we are taking the time to think carefully about what the Lord Jesus has done in saving us.
[4:04] And let me tell you, every single one of us that are here this morning that are sitting up and drawing breath are really in one of two camps. You are here as a person who, by the grace and ministry of the Word of God and by the power of the Spirit, have come to the place where you know the Lord Jesus Christ as your personal Savior.

Or you are here, at this moment, still deceived by the enemy, not understanding the horrible, frightening reality of the depth of sin of your soul and still misdirected and believing that everything is okay.
And I would plead with you that even as we open the Word of God and think about what the Scriptures have to say regarding the status or the position that I am in as a believer and you as a

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believer are in, that if you're here today and don't know Christ as your Savior, that the winsome appeal of the gospel would bring you to the point of believing that you have no hope apart from casting yourself upon the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ who died in your place and offers salvation to all who come and repent and believe.
We're looking at a passage this morning that gives to us a reminder of the benefit of our salvation. What is it that I receive as a matter of salvation?
What happens? Interestingly, this last week, I had an opportunity on two different occasions to have lengthy conversation with a young man in regarding the matter of faith.
[5:53] It started out fairly innocuously on my lawn as the individual coming through and ended up in conversation and the subsequent statement, we were talking about faith and I made the statement to him that there are really only two religions in the world.

And he said, I've never heard that before. I said, well, there's one religion that proposes that you can work your way towards improvement and ultimately come to the point where you are accepted by God on the basis of all the good things that you've done.
And here we are standing on my little piece of grass and he says, that's right. I thought, wow, okay, golden opportunity.
He says, you're right. Yeah, that's it. I said, well, there is another way and that is that God recognizing our absolute inability to save ourselves and our moral bankruptcy in the darkness.
I really got kind of fired up at that point in case you're wondering. I wanted it to be clear to the poor guy that nobody can save themselves. And so we're kind of working our way into this and I said, you know, and God sent his son down to help us because we can't save ourselves.
[7:17] He got this quizzical look on his face like, what? Really? Anyway, we had opportunity then on Thursday to spend four hours after supper talking very carefully about the fact of salvation through the finished work of Christ and not through our own good efforts.

At the heart of the mistaken view that we can save ourselves by our own works is a failed appreciation for what sin really is.
Sin is far more terrible, far more devastating, far more absolutely destructive than we might imagine.
salvation. And so when we take the passage there in Romans chapter 8 verse 1 and hold on to it this morning briefly, I want you to understand that what we are looking at is one of many statements that explain to us the incredible benefit that we have in salvation.
And as you take these elements this morning, there are many different things that you could say to yourself and it would be appropriate. And I encourage you, don't just kind of sit, go through the motions.
[8:52] It is inappropriate to take the bread and take the cup and just do this as a routine. Do you follow that? It's something that when you do it you should consciously and deliberately think deeply and carefully about what Christ has done in saving you.

And so one of the things that I would propose to you is that when you take the bread and when you take the cup that you may want to remind yourself there is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.
As you think about this passage let me kind of lay some background by helping you understand that because we are in Christ as believers there's a wide variety of things that we enjoy.
For one, Ephesians chapter 1 verse 6 and I'm just going to make reference to several of these things and I would encourage you you may want to note these in your Bible and look at them later and I would plead with you think carefully think deeply about what you have received in your salvation.
Don't just kind of alright, alright I've got another 40 minutes hold my breath I'll get to the other side here. We are accepted in the beloved. In 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 9 it says that we are delivered from darkness into his marvelous light.
[10:18] In Colossians chapter 2 verse 14 it says that he has canceled our sin and nailed that statement of debt to the cross. It is a public declaration that our debt has been satisfied by the Lord Jesus Christ.

In John chapter 14 verse 3 it tells us that because of salvation he has made heaven our eternal home. 2 Corinthians chapter 5 verse 18 says that he has reconciled us to God.

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Philippians chapter 1 verse 6 says that he has begun a good work in us and he will complete it. One of the things that I love saying to people who are believers professing is that you don't have to stay the way you are.
And the reason I can say that without hesitation and with complete confidence is because of the clear instruction and teaching of scripture that when God starts a work when Christ begins a work in me I will change.
Stop just for a moment and recognize this. If you're sitting here this morning and you're an individual that professes to know the Lord Jesus Christ you should be able to look in the rear view mirror and see indicators that you're not the same as you used to be.
[11:36] I would tell you this if you can't see that evidence it might not be inappropriate for you to stop and ask yourself a fair question is well am I really saved?

Maybe I've learned the vocabulary I know the hymns I can recite some of the verses because I went to Awana but is there really the evidence of change? We're going to look carefully at Romans chapter 8 verse 1 and I want you to underline it in your Bible if it's not already underlined because it is a foundational verse in one sense you could say that Romans chapter 8 verse 1 is a summary verse of one of the most by the way you know that whatever passage I'm preaching happens to be the best one for the day right?
And Romans chapter 8 verse 1 is kind of the summary of the entire argument of Romans up to this point. Romans begins by making it clear that we stand justly condemned before a holy God.
Romans also goes on to explain that salvation comes through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ alone.
Romans also continues to explain the issue of our identification and our connection with the Lord Jesus Christ and the incredible blessings that we have in Him.
and then before Paul eventually shifts over to address the issue of the sovereignty of God in chapter 9, 10, and 11 he takes chapter 8 to press together the theological truth of our salvation and he puts it at the very beginning.
[13:19] How many of you know that when you're outlining you want to make your main point pretty clear? That's what Paul does in Romans 8, 1. There is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.

So what do we enjoy? What is it that is our benefit and blessing in this statement there is now therefore no condemnation in Christ Jesus?
The word now tells us that where we are today is different than where we were once in our past.
That our present state is different than our background and where we used to be.
We once stood condemned we are not condemned now. Several weeks ago I actually was watching a documentary about the Texas penal system and there how many of you knew that Texas executes about more than anybody else does?
How's that for a statement? Texas kills lots of people for their own death row. And there was this documentary about what it was like to be on death row. One of the things that I was really struck by is A nobody on death row deserves to be there.
[14:38] I remember discipling a guy who was a dentist in the prison system here in Ohio and he told me that one of the interesting things he discovered is that every single one of the people he had ever worked on in prison didn't deserve to be there.

They were innocent innocent and unjustly imprisoned. And here I have this opportunity to watch this and here are all these people and the first thing they said is I don't deserve to die.
I don't deserve execution. I mean it is true that I beat my girlfriend and her little four year old baby to death with a baseball bat but that really wasn't me. That was someone else that was in my body at the moment.
Well let's execute the guy who did that. We'll let the other guy go free. And so here I am watching this extended conversation of what it's like to be on death row in Texas.
And one of the things that I was struck by is that every single individual on death row keeps a running tab on how many days he has left to his execution.
[15:51] every single person. The reality of condemnation, the reality of eventual execution in the minds of those who stand condemned and judged at least in Texas was so significant that every man kept a tab in his room of I have X number of days left.

Can I tell you that Satan has deceived the vast majority of people in this world that they have no thought of what their eventual state is like?

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None. And yet for us who are Christians who have come to faith, we first of all were convicted, listen to me carefully, we were convicted of the absolute darkness of our heart and the just penalty for our sins before a holy God and we were drawn to faith by the burden of the darkness of our heart.
Isn't that right? There is no path to the cross that does not include, first of all, some conviction of the darkness of your soul. And as you look at this passage, we find that now we who know Christ are in a different condition.
Why is that? Because we're not condemned. I want you to recognize that that word condemned is a word that is not just talking about, well, you know, there's a case built against you.
[17:33] It is actually talking about the information actually being heard and handled, judgment then being brought and practically all you're waiting for, the condemned man, is only waiting for execution.

How many of you recognize that as believers we can't get away with what unbelievers can? Did everybody heard me say that? Okay. How many of you tried as believers to get away with what unbelievers can get away with?
You ever tried that? The reason we can't get away with what unbelievers can get away with is because we are His children and He's very interested in our growing to be more like Him.
Furthermore, in dealing with the unbeliever, God's incredible mercy is giving them time to repent.
But that doesn't eliminate the reality that they stand condemned before a holy God. And as it says here, that individual who is condemned is only practically waiting for the day of execution.
That's a burden. That's a burden that in the Texas penitentiary weighs on the individual who's waiting for that day of judgment.
[18:51] And if you're sitting here this morning and you do not know Christ, I want you to know the reality of eternity is that the day of judgment is coming. What it says in Hebrews chapter 9 is this, it's appointed unto man once to die and then to get a do over.

No, no, no, no. It's appointed unto man once to die and after that the judgment. The day of penalty is coming. The day of execution. And as we understand from the scriptures, the wages of sin are death.
So I want you to mark something else in the passage. It says, now there is no condemnation. That little word no there actually means not one or not any.
And the point that it is making is that there is not a single charge that remains against us. How good is that news? How good is that news?
Just imagine the guy who is on death row in Texas marking on his calendar the number of days until he is going to be wheeled into a room strapped down on a gurney and have needles put in his arm and after that it's gone.
[20:07] That's what it is. And suddenly someone comes in and says, hey, there is now therefore no condemnation. It's over. You're forgiven. There's no judgment against you.

It's appropriate for us to understand that what the Bible is telling us is that there is not a single charge that remains against the believer. I want you to stop and think about that.
How many of you, if you would take a moment, can refresh your memory of some pretty nasty things you've done? Huh? How many of you, if you take a moment, can actually recognize that even though there are many, many things you haven't done, that you've thought the most despicable and absolutely unholy thoughts?
A conversation that I had with the individual about the issue of working your way to heaven, the individual was explaining that because of his faith, whatever it was, he was in the process of just getting better and better.
And I was pleasantly pleased to deal with a person that was just by his own initiative getting better and better. So as we were having this conversation, I said, well, let me ask you, since you've improved this much, do you ever still have those absolutely incredible black, dark, wicked, just vile thoughts?
[21:36] I said, you know, I'm almost 68 and I'm still having some of those, you know? I was like, do you? There was this long pause and he said, well, yeah, I do.

I want you to understand that if you are depending upon your own efforts to bring about your redemption, you're hopeless.
But if you are relying on the finished work of Christ who died for your sins and in your place, the fact of the matter is Scripture says this, there is now therefore no condemnation. You are not

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condemned.
It's appropriate for us in our daily walk not to go about sharing all the wickedness that we were engaged in our past. And the truth of the matter is there's not a single individual here.
We tend to look at other people and think they've had a pretty unsullied and spotless life. But the truth of the matter is is every one of us in here are really wretched sinners that have been saved by grace and we don't need to tell the stories of our past.
[22:39] past. In fact, when people go around telling me about how incredibly wicked and nasty and angry and bitter and blah, blah, blah, I'm wondering who they think the hero in their story is.

Now there's appropriate recognition of our own frailty. But I've got to tell you that the Scriptures encourage us not to make much of the ugliness of our pasts.
The fact is that the body of Christ is made up of redeemed and transformed sinners. And I love the passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 6. I want you to turn there just for a moment. Go to 1 Corinthians chapter 6 and look at verse 9 through 11.
Here's Paul writing to the church in Corinth. By the way, just so you know, the church in Corinth was made up of people just like you and me. And Paul writes to the church and here's what he says.
Do you not know, verse 9, 1 Corinthians chapter 6, verse 9, do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? There is something sadly wrong with preaching that avoids helping people understand that sin is profoundly offensive to God and that the truth of the gospel is that Christ came to pay the penalty for sin and those who come to faith in Christ are not only forgiven of their sins but also enabled to not live the way they used to live.
[24:17] And to teach people that sin is not a relevant issue and doesn't have significance in this life in eternity is to fail miserably at the truth of the gospel.

The fact of the matter is, is here's Paul writing to the church at Corinth filled with people whose pasts were absolutely marked by their sin. He says, hey, don't get the idea that unrighteousness doesn't count because unrighteousness will not inherit the kingdom of God.
Don't be deceived. Neither sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revelers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.
Look at verse 11. And such were some of you. Don't you like that? Don't you like that fact?
That the fact of the matter is, is the church is made up of all different kinds of people. All of us, redeemed by the grace of God, and every one of us with one kind of background or another.
[25:25] And here's what he says, but you are washed, you are sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. Isn't that encouraging? When you get to heaven, the one thing that is going to be your pleasure and your identification is your relationship in Christ.

I will go to heaven because of my relationship with Christ. I will enjoy eternity because of my relationship with Christ. And my past, as ugly and as despicable as it is, is not the thing that will identify me in heaven.
In fact, in the court of heaven today, what it says in the Scripture, there is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. I think about the song that Philip Bliss wrote.
He said this, My sin, O the bliss of this glorious thought, my sin not in part but the whole, is nailed to the cross and I bear it no more. I like that.
I like that. I wonder if you do. I wonder if this morning as you get ready to come to these elements, you recognize that what these elements represent is what Jesus Christ did to take away all the guilt and all the shame of your sin.
[27:09] Can I tell you something? The remedy for the great discouragements and depressions of our soul is theological.

It is the fact that in Christ Jesus, we who have come to faith in his finished work on the cross now can say without hesitation, there is now therefore no condemnation.
I want you to recognize that you and I stood in the place of judgment waiting for our execution and the grace of God found us in that miserable state and brought us to first of all recognize the darkness and bankruptcy of our wickedness and then by his grace gave to us complete forgiveness.
Does it get better than that? No. I don't know what bearing it has, but I will tell you as I told my wife this morning that I was going to preach on this verse, I said it's my favorite verse.

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She said, no, it's not. It's mine. And she said, we were sitting there on the porch. She said, it's going to be on my tombstone.
[28:38] Well, I suppose it'll be on mine too. That's a summary. Do you understand that?

There is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus. So what business does Satan have dragging up all the darkness and bitterness of our past?
None. None. Don't entertain that. It's not of God. So let's think just for a moment and I will tell you that I am going to deal with this issue of being in Christ in greater detail at another point.
Sinclair Ferguson said that it is a truth that most believers don't believe. Interesting way of putting it. Why are we not condemned?
Simply, as you look at this passage in Romans, it says, there is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus.
[29:49] Hey, listen to me. You're either here out or you're in. That's the way it is. You are either here in a personal relationship with the Lord of glory, the Savior of all mankind, or you're not.

And Paul, as he is addressing this profound theological truth of the issue of our condemnation before a holy God, he summarizes the status and the place that we are in with this simple statement of the fact that there is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus.
We're not condemned because we're in Christ. It's amazing how often Paul uses this phrase, in Christ, in the Lord, in Him, over 160 times.
And I'm going to refer again to Sinclair Ferguson. He said that it may be because Paul recognized this issue of relationship, and it was driven home in particular when, as an unbeliever, you remember when Stephen preached to the Sanhedrin, the outcome of Stephen's winsome sermon was, what did they do?
They stoned him. And who held the coats? Paul. Saul. Later, as he is on the road to Damascus, and he's kind of trudging along with all kinds of intention of putting the hurt on the early church, along comes Jesus and says, what?
[31:32] Why are you persecuting me? What? The link between Stephen and Jesus was hammered home.

What Paul had done to Stephen had been done actually to Christ. Why is that?
Because Stephen and Christ in communion and relationship. And so when you think about this business of being in Christ, what does it really reference?
It is talking about the fact that those who are believers are in a relationship and a union. I wonder whether that just overwhelms you.
I am in personal relationship with the Lord. He is in me and I am in him. We are going to get into that in greater detail later.
[32:37] But I want you to stop just for a moment this morning and ponder the sweetness of this fact. The most precious truth is you, by virtue of your salvation, are in communion and relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christ. It doesn't get better than that. It doesn't get better than that. And so this morning, I'm going to ask the men to come at this time as we come to the table and we will take these elements, the bread and the cup.
I want you to think about this verse and I want you to hang on to it. And I want it to be something that affects the way you think. There is now therefore no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus because of what he did on the cross.
You're not condemned. And what he did on the cross, we remind ourselves of with the bread and the cup.

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