

Communion Saturday - Rev Jonathan Baxter

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Preacher: Rev Jonathan Baxter

[0 : 0 0] Good morning, brothers, sisters and friends, a joy to worship the Lord again together. Of course, a special welcome to friends visiting with us. We ask you know the Lord's blessing as we join together today.

Just two announcements, three announcements, I guess, first of all, to welcome and to thank the Reverend Jonathan Baxter for joining us today. Most of you will know Jonathan.

If you don't, he's a minister in the APC in Stornoway. We're very thankful on relatively short notice to join with us today. One thing I was reminded to announce, and I haven't done it all weekend, is there will be a retiring collection on Sunday evening.

I think it's the first one since before around COVID time. It's a retiring collection on Sunday evening just to help with communion expenses. Of course, the session is open.

I won't do the same spiel again, but the session is open. And we would be overjoyed to meet with any in the congregation who wish to make that public profession of faith.

[1 : 0 5] We're open all the time. We've been in the mants all day. Anytime. Knock on the door. Phone us. We will convene a session immediately, and we will have a good conversation.

Please don't let this chance pass you by. We heard a powerful reminder last night. The Lord's table is for those who feel and who are lame, who feel unworthy.

And we saw the goodness of Jesus who tells us to come and eat with him. I'll pass the honour to Reverend Baxter. Well, friends, it's a great privilege to be with you today, and I pray that this communion season would be richly blessed to you by the Lord.

Well, let us worship Almighty God. Let us begin by singing to his praise in Psalm 63 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 63, and let us sing verses 1 through to 8.

Amen. Amen. Lord, be my God, I'll early seek.

[2 : 3 3] My soul doth thirst for thee. That's why we're here today, isn't it? Is it? Lord, be my God, I'll early seek.

My soul doth thirst for thee. My flesh longs in a dry parched land wherein no waters be. That I, thy power may behold, and brightness of thy face.

As I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place. Since better is thy love than life, my lips thee praise shall give. I in thy name will lift my hands and bless thee while I live.

Even as with marrow and with fat, my soul shall filled be. Then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee. When I do thee upon my bed, remember with delight.

And when on thee I meditate in watches of the night. In shadow of thy wings I'll joy. For thou mine help hast been. My soul thee follows heart. And me thy right hand doth sustain.

We pray then that you would break our hearts, And that you would receive our sacrifices of broken and contrite hearts, And that we would have a new resolve within us, To guard our lives, To guard our thoughts, And to watch every word we say, That we might strive to bring Glory and honour to your name, In all that we say and do and think, And as we have that awareness, Of how much we fail you each day, And still sin against you, And still find to our shame, pleasure and sin, We pray that as you expose more of our hearts to us, That you would once again drive us back to Calvary,

[12 : 04] And help us to remember afresh, What the Saviour has done there for sinners, And that we would marvel and wonder, At the magnitude of your love, For those so undeserving of it, We thank you for your great plan of salvation, A plan which has its origins in eternity, Even before you brought time into existence, And made this world, Your people were already precious to you, And you gave them to you, Your eternal son, The one eternally, In the bosom of the father, The one whom you have eternally delighted in, Through whom you made the world, The one that you would give, That work of redemption to,

We thank you that, He was prepared to come for us, We thank you that he, Undertook that work of our salvation, And that he has, Come in the fullness of time, And, To his eternal deity, That is united, A holy and perfect humanity, And we thank you that, He has lived this life of perfection, That we have all failed in Adam, To attain to, But he has come as one, With that delight in your law, With a holy love for his father, One who knew no sin, And we thank you that, That this man, Was prepared to, Undergo the agony, And the torment, Of, Being punished, Bearing the wrath of God, For the sins of all his people,

And, We, Cannot indeed, Get our heads around the fact, That he would, Come to save, Those so, Unworthy, Those who did not want him, Who did not love him, But yet he would come, At great cost to himself, In order to redeem us, We thank you, For the sacrifice, That has been made, We thank you for the price, That has been paid, That, As Christ has given, Himself up, Even to death, At a price of, Infinite worth, And value, Has been offered, For the sins of his people, And we thank you, That there is nothing, Lacking in him, And that there is, Nothing lacking in his, Willingness to receive, Those who come to him, But that he has promised, That those who come to him, Repenting of their sins,

And looking to him, To save them, He will receive them, And that the king of heaven, Now raised from the dead, Seated at your right hand, With all authority, In heaven and earth, That this king of kings, Will be pleased, To take as his own, All who will approach him, And seek his forgiveness, And seek the salvation, That he freely gives, And we thank you, For the freeness of the gospel, We thank you, That there is nothing, We need to contribute, For we can contribute nothing, All our righteousnesses, Are as filthy rags before you, And we thank you, That we are called, To come empty handed, For we can come in no other way, We thank you, That you receive us, When we do come, We thank you, That it is not even, That you save us, Begrudgingly, But, That it is your delight,

To draw your people in, And that you, Are one who rejoices over us, And we pray, You would help us, To remember this, As we, We feel each day, The shame of, Not living, As consistently for you, As we would like, At this time, We ask that you would, Draw near to us, And that you would, Bless your word to us, By your holy spirit, As we would, Place ourselves under it, For our instruction, And we ask, Your blessing to be upon, This congregation, We pray that you would, Draw near to them, At this time of communion, And that they would know, Those manifestations, Of the saviour's love to them, That they would know his presence, And know his power, At work in their lives, We pray that you would be, With all who will minister, Your word to them,

[17 : 12] And the sacrament itself, We pray that, You would visit them, With that ministry of your spirit, And that they would know, Great times of blessing, And rejoicing in their king, We pray, That you would, Be with the witness, Of this congregation, In the wider community here, And ask that, The godly and joyful lives, Of these people, Would be, Used by you, To convict those, Who do not know you, That, They would see, The, The great love, They have, For you, And, The great satisfaction, And belonging to you, And that you would, Give, Them the opportunity, To witness for you, To tell of the, The wondrous things, You have done in their lives, And that you would, Build your church, In this way, Please bless, Please bless, Bless the ministry, From this pulpit, Please bless, The pastor, And his family,

Please be, With him, And grant him, That holy unction, And anointing, As he proclaims, Your words, Grant wisdom, To the office bearers, Grant them that, Continual burden, For the souls, That they keep watch over, That they would be faithful, And diligent, As watchmen, On the walls, And we pray, That you would, Indeed, Do mighty things, In this place, As you have done of old, That you would come again, In your great power, We ask that you would, Bless those, In this community, Who mourn,!

At this time, That you would draw near to them, In their sorrow, And in their grief, And that they would know, Your hand upon them, And they would know, Your presence with them, Now, Living God, We ask that you would, Pardon all our sins, And make our hearts, Humble and teachable, And ready to receive, Your word, And we ask all, In Jesus name, Amen, For our scripture reading, Today, Please turn to the New Testament, And to the gospel, According to Matthew, And chapter 15, And let us read, From verse 1, Matthew chapter 15 and let us read from the beginning of the chapter reading through to verse 31.

Matthew chapter 15 and let us read from the beginning of the chapter reading through to verse 31.

Honour your father and your mother and whoever reviles father or mother must surely die. But you say, if anyone tells his father or his mother, what you would have gained from me is given to God.

[20 : 54] He need not honour his father. So for the sake of your tradition, you have made void the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said, This people honours me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

In vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the people to him and said to them, Hear and understand.

It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth. This defiles a person. Then the disciples came and said to him, Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?

He answered, Every plant that my heavenly father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone. They are blind guides.

And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit. But Peter said to him, Explain the parable to us. And he said, Are you also still without understanding?

[22 : 14] Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart.

And this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.

These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone. And Jesus went away from there and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying. Have mercy on me, O Lord, son of David. My daughter is severely oppressed by a demon.

[23 : 21] He answered, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. But she came and knelt before him, saying, Lord, help me.

Then Jesus answered her, O woman, great is your faith. Be it done for you as you desire. And her daughter was healed instantly.

And great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute, and many others. And they put them at his feet and he healed them.

Amen. Once again, let us sing praise to God. We sing this time Psalm 130.

My voice, Lord, do thou hear. And to my supplication's voice give an attentive ear. Lord, who shall stand? If thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquity. But yet with thee forgiveness is that feared thou mayest be.

[25 : 40] Let Israel hope in the Lord. For with him mercies be. And plenteous redemption is ever found with him. And from all his iniquities, he, Israel, shall redeem.

Lord, Lord, to thee I cry. Lord, to thee I hear. And to my supplication's voice give an attentive ear.

I wait for God, my soul complete, my hope is yet is one.

I say for now, yet I am to watch.

The more in light to see. Where is the I am?

Open the door. Open the door.

Open the door. Thank you.

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What do you hope to get out of this communion? What are you looking for? Amen. Now we know as believers that first and foremost it's not about what we get.

It's about us giving ourselves to God in obedience. And our Lord has commanded us to sit at his table and to partake of the bread and wine and proclaim his death until he comes.

First and foremost it's about God being glorified and honoured in our worship and obedience. But we come looking for something, don't we?

And what is it that we want? The believer has one desire. Above all else there's one thing that they seek and there's one thing that they hunger for.

[31 : 18] And what is it? It's the presence of Jesus Christ. Isn't that what you want above all else?

The presence of Jesus Christ. Not just at the table. Not just in this communion season. But every single day of your life.

Don't you want him? And don't you want that closeness to him? When we experience his presence, there's an awareness of his power as well.

You know when he's present. And what you want is for him to come. And for the Holy Spirit to make him known.

And as we, this time, focus our thoughts upon his death, it's to be refreshed in the knowledge of his death. And to bathe in the truth of his love for us.

[32 : 29] Which his death demonstrates. When you're close to the Lord. It serves as a reset and a recalibration for our whole lives.

Doesn't it? It helps us to reassess our priorities and goals. To restructure our lives around what really matters. When Christ is present.

It sets our hearts back onto the spiritual and the eternal things. The matters of our soul. We see how they carry infinitely more weight than the temporal things of this world.

And communion is a time when we hope and we pray that the Lord himself will meet with us. Are you seeking his presence?

Are you seeking him at this time in the secret place? In all the busyness of a communion season.

[33 : 39] Where it's good to spend so much time in the company of believers. Are there those personal dealings with the Lord in the closet?

Today in the passage we read in Matthew chapter 15.

We encounter a woman who sought the Lord. And we hope with God's help to learn some lessons from her experience with the Lord.

Lessons for our own seeking the Lord. Not just at communion but in our daily lives. She desired to come into his presence because she desired his power to be at work.

In her life and in that of her daughter. Before we get into the passage itself and consider the Lord's dealings with her.

[34 : 39] Let's just set it in its context. The unifying theme of the whole of chapter 15 of Matthew's gospel could be put under the title defilement.

Because you can see the argument that the Lord had with the Pharisees and the scribes at the beginning of the chapter. And how there was an argument over what really constituted defilement.

For the Pharisees they were appalled that the Lord's disciples did not wash their hands before eating. This was one of the many rules the Pharisees made.

So that if their hands were dirty nothing defiled would go into their bodies and then they'd be indeed defiled. But Jesus sought to teach them that defilement is not merely an outward ceremonial issue.

But it's an inward moral issue of the heart. And so what will Jesus do?

[35 : 46] He'll use this woman's inquiry to show that he's also come to bless the Gentiles. Because remember in the eyes of the Jews the Gentiles were all defiled.

They were an unclean people. Because they did not adhere to the ceremonial laws that the Jews did.

And so Jesus shows the Pharisees that they were the ones truly defiled. And we are all truly defiled by nature.

Because the Lord says it comes not by what goes into the mouth but what comes out. What comes out of the heart. Through the mouth.

In words. Through the hands. In action. Through the mind. In thoughts. We are all by nature defiled.

[36 : 47] And this theme continues as Jesus goes to minister to people considered to be defiled. And you can see the contrast here between the unbelief of the Jews who thought they were clean.

But actually the reception of the Gentiles. We see the Lord goes in verse 21 to the district of Tyre and Sidon.

Which was a Gentile district. It was a coastal region to the north of Israel. It's where Queen Jezebel came from. But it's also where Elijah ministered to the widow at Zarephath.

And God raised her son. And so we see a Canaanite woman coming to Jesus. And that's the passage we'll consider. Verses 21 to 28.

But then we see also that the Lord goes to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. And he heals many of them. And then the passage ends with him feeding 4,000 men over that side.

[37 : 56] Remember what Simeon said of the Lord. A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles. And the glory of your people Israel.

He came for both. And so Jesus will use the inquiry of this woman. To show he's come to bless the Gentiles as well. And that explains how he deals with the woman.

Because as we read his response. Perhaps we do so being rather puzzled. And thinking why does the Lord treat her like this at first?

Why such a response? When he is one whose heart is so full of compassion and love and mercy. Why does he appear to be so cold with her?

Perhaps we've come across people that we've been really friendly with. They've always greeted us warmly and heartily. And we've always thought we can speak freely with them.

[39 : 00] But then one day we seem to get them on an off day. And their greeting to us is much more cold and distanced. And we wonder if we've done anything.

And perhaps that's how we read this passage as well. Why is the Lord so standoffish with his woman? She's coming in faith. She's seeking his help. His initial response is silence.

Doesn't even acknowledge her. And then we see he says he's only there for the lost sheep of Israel.

She even comes to him again after that. Kneeling before him. Asking his help. And then he gives his answer in verse 26.

It's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs. Well we'll come on to why the Lord has dealt with her in this way.

[40 : 11] And perhaps we might even feel there's a parallel in our own experience. Perhaps if you're seeking the Lord you're not a Christian. You want to be. Or perhaps.

Or perhaps. As a believer. You're struggling because heaven seems silent. And. Where once.

You knew the Lord's countenance. Shining so warmly upon you. Once you knew the joys of the Lord. You had a motivation. You had a freeness. As a young believer.

Now. You would say is there more of a. A coldness. From heaven. So there's lots we can learn from how the Lord deals with.

This wound. And we're going to see three things. Three lessons that we can apply to seeking the Lord. Not just at communion. But at all. Times. We see first of all.

[41 : 09] With the woman. That she comes believing. And if we're going to ask anything of the Lord. The first thing we need to do is believe it.

Actually believe. He can do. What we're asking. Him. Otherwise. Isn't it mockery?

Isn't it dishonoring to him? To ask him. Of something. And to not actually believe. But when you believe.

What you're asking him. It's faith. Isn't that faith? Taking God at his word. Trusting him. Trusting he is able to. And that's honoring to God.

That pleases God. And so this woman came believing. That's why. She came. She had heard. Things about Jesus.

[42 : 06] And she. Believed them. Knowing he was a Jew. But being prepared. To break that social barrier. She comes to him. Asking.

And. That's one of the reasons. The Lord. Deals with her. As he does. Because he's testing. Whether she really does believe. And the Lord will do that.

With us. You come and say. I believe you can do this. Lord. His response. May we do you. Let's see. We shall see. If you do. She's heard of his healing.

She's heard of his miracles. And. She believed. That he could help. Her daughter. Her. And if you recognize.

The Lord's power. Ask. For what you need. But do so. Believing. He can do it. Notice. She understood. Who he was.

[43 : 02] Because. She calls him. The son of David. So she has. Some understanding. Of. The Lord's dealings. With Israel. She knew. That the Messiah.

Would come. From David's line. As is foretold. Throughout the Old Testament. Scriptures. And she acknowledges him. To be so. By calling him. The son. Of David. Here is.

The Lord's anointed. Here is. The chosen. King. She understood. Something. Of God's plan. Of. Salvation. And she.

Caught him. Seeking the one. Who. Had the power. Of God. She came. Believing. God willing. As you.

Go to the Lord's table. Tomorrow. Knowing that the Lord's supper. Is eaten in faith. And obedience. Remember. To believe. That he can bless you.

[43 : 58] Through it. Remember. To believe. That he can bless. The word preached to you. Are you going to the table. Tomorrow.

Tomorrow. Believing. Do you believe. He can meet you there. Do you believe. He can meet you. In his word. Daily. As you read it. As you hear it preached.

Is that how you come. Do you come. With this. Hungering. And thirsting. And anticipation. That the Lord.

Is able. So do you believe. And if you're not. A Christian. Do you believe.

He can save you. Do you believe. He has the power to. And if not. Well what's lacking.

[44 : 55] In him. What does he not. Have the power to do then. If you're saying. He can't save you. So the woman came believing.

And that. Faith would be tested. As the Lord did not. Grant her request immediately. The second thing.

To remember as we. Seek the Lord. Is that we must. Understand. Our unworthiness. Jesus.

Says to the woman. I was sent only. To. The lost sheep. Of the house. Of Israel. Now of course. God's plan. Was always. To include the Gentiles. And. Jesus knows this.

He's in Gentile region. But does the woman know this. She's come hopeful. But does she really believe.

[45 : 57] That being a Gentile. Is not going to. Be a barrier. To her receiving. The Lord's. Blessing. And notice. It doesn't put her off. When he says.

Only to Israel. She comes. In verse 25. She kneels. Before him. Saying. Lord. Help me. Her understanding of God.

Is that. His grace. Is overflowing. And so. She. She comes. She's been met. With silence. She's been met.

With. Israel. Only. She still comes. And so. Jesus answers her.

Again. In verse 26. It is not right. To take the children's bread. And throw it. To. The dogs. And this is perhaps. The words.

[46 : 54] The words. That. That. Maybe. Confuse us. And surprise us. The most. Why would the Lord. Speak to her. In that way. Well.

The first thing to say. Is that he's not degrading her. There are times. There are times. When the word dogs. Is used. In the New Testament. And it is. And it is.

In a. Offensive way. Like. When. The Lord says. Do not. Throw what is unholy. Do not. Do not. Cast what is holy. To the dogs.

Or. When. Paul warns. In Philippians 3. Beware. Of dogs. Speaking about. Unbelievers. Speaking about. False teachers. There is a way. Where the word dog.

Is used. As a warning. In scripture. It is a different word here. In the Greek. This is describing. A pet dog. The Lord is not. In any way.

[47 : 49] Demeaning. Or degrading. This woman. Or the Gentiles. As a whole. He is describing. A family dinner table. Where there were. Pet dogs. Underneath. And where.

It would be common. To give the scraps. To the dogs. From. The table. He is asking her. If it would be right.

For him to help her. He is reminding her. Of her. Unwilling. Unworthiness. Why should I help you?

And so what is. What is her response? Well she acknowledges. She doesn't deserve. His help. How does she do that? She keeps the analogy going.

With the dogs. She says. Well okay. If I am a dog. So be it. I know. I know. I know. I don't deserve.

[48 : 53] Your help. I may be a dog. But I know. What table. I'm coming to. I know. I know. I know. Who my master is.

So please help. She's still. Confident. He can help her. She won't be put off.

To whom else. Shall she go? And so pray believingly. But pray secondly. Remembering. We deserve nothing good.

From God's hand. Crumbs are a mercy. To be given a crumb from God.

He doesn't owe you a crumb. He doesn't owe you even a crumb. Anything you have from God's hand.

[49 : 52] Is a mercy. Every breath you take. Is a mercy. Every day he gives you on this earth. Every opportunity he gives you. To repent. And to seek. Him in the gospel. Is a mercy.

So come before God in humility. Because he owes you nothing. He owes you nothing.

You can earn nothing. From him. But what does he say to us in the gospel? He says I'll give you everything.

Paul says in Ephesians 1. That. We have been blessed. With every spiritual blessing. In the heavenly realms.

God says come to me. Come to me and my son Jesus Christ. I'll provide for all your needs. In your journey through this world. Usually he has more than.

[51 : 07] Meet our bare requirements. We overflow with temporal blessings. But he also gives us. Salvation.

Forgiveness of all our sins. Eternal life. Communion with God. God. The hope of glory.

All the riches in heaven's storehouses. And ours. And friends. That should help us. In our prayer life.

That should help us. In seeking the Lord. In knowing how undeserving we are. But knowing. The riches of his mercy. To give us. All things.

Paul says. In Romans 8. 32. He who did not spare his own son.

[52 : 12] But gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him. Graciously. Give us. All things. And so remembering.

Our unworthiness. As we seek the Lord. But that he. Is one who invites us to come. And is prepared. To give us so much. Should be a spur.

To push us on. And drive us on. In prayer. And in seeking him. Because. The darkness. Of our sin.

And unworthiness. Reveals. All the more. The wonder. And the glory. Of his mercy. Christ has secured.

Every spiritual blessing. For us. If you are a believer. Every spiritual blessing. In the heavenly places. Is yours. Forgiveness of sins.

[53 : 14] Eternal life. Adoption. Sanctification. And everything else. That God does. In his people. Everything God has. For his people.

It's all yours. Seek them. Seek. To know them better. To be more acquainted. With what is yours. And to enjoy them.

And to enjoy. God. Through them. Through them. We don't deserve a crumb.

But what feast. Does our Lord give us. In giving us himself. To be our saviour. Thirdly. Thirdly.

Here is a lesson. To persevere. In prayer. This woman is persistent.

[54 : 24] She keeps going. Even though she's first met. With silence. Have you encountered silence. From heaven. Then. It's not a no. It's a keep going. That's God's response. In silence.

Keep asking. Seeking. Knocking. Knocking. So what do you do. When God doesn't answer. According to your time frame.

Do you walk. Or do you get on board. With his time frame. Keep praying. Use the language. God has used. Back to him.

In prayer. The lady took up. This analogy. Of the dogs. She gave back to the Lord.

What he spoke to her. Do the same. How many promises. Has God. Given us in his words. Plead them before. His throne. There are two words.

[55 : 24] That we can. And we should take to God. In prayer. We do it reverently. And respectfully. And when we do so. It's honouring to him. It's the words. You said. You said.

Tell him. What he's told us. Plead his promises. For what you're seeking. The woman keeps going. Her faith is being tested.

And through this. Her faith is being strengthened. Faith is a muscle. That needs to be. Exercised. And the Lord's delays. And answering us. Serves this purpose.

To make you seek him. More. There will be many things. That we will. Find on our prayer lists.

For this woman. It's. Her daughter. And in love for her daughter. She keeps going. As well. Her love for others. And. Her love for others.

[56 : 27] Will be shown in our prayers. For them. And it's one of the ways. We can most demonstrate. Our love. For others. Isn't it?

In pleading. With the Lord. For them. For their salvation. For their. Growth in grace. If they are. Believers. Notice.

Notice. Another barrier. This woman. Had to face. And this one. Was a barrier. We wouldn't call. The Lord's responses.

Barriers. They are more. Really. Bumps. That she had to get over. But the barrier. Comes from the disciples. Because.

She goes to them as well. Verse 23. And his disciples. Came and begged him. Saying send her away. For she's crying out. After us. She tries that avenue. And they want the Lord.

[57 : 25] To send. Her away. But the woman. Persevered. Through this. It's a good thing. That Christ. Has more compassion.

Than us. Isn't it? And there's times. When we might be put off.

Seeking the Lord. Because of. The harm. And the damage. That the Lord's people. Do to us. But it's important. That we persevere.

Through that. And if you've ever found that. That you've been turned away. By the servants. Well you appeal to the master. Because.

It's the master. In whom. Your salvation lies. It's the master. You must go to. And it's the master. You can. Go to. He'll deal with the servants.

[58 : 21] He'll deal with the sins. And the failings. Of the servants. But you've got a higher court. You've got a higher authority. That you can. Appeal to.

I always think of. The song of Solomon. And the. And the. The woman there. Seeking her beloved.

The believer. Seeking after Christ. In chapter three. She goes to. The watchman. And then very quickly. She goes past the watchman. That's what you have to do at times.

The church is a place where. In God's sovereignty. You may be. Let down and hurt. We're all sinners.

None of us are perfect. None of us get things. Right. And we grow together. As a body of God's people. In this way. But it can involve.

[59 : 19] Hurts and wounds. So. The believer. The bride. Goes. Past the watchman. To find her beloved. In chapter three. In chapter five. She's back at the watchman.

And they're hurting her. You find that in. In Solomon chapter five. They. Beat her up. They tear her clothes. At times.

In the life of the church. The watchman. Do not do their duty properly. And there are times. You may have been hurt badly.

By other believers. The disciples. Wanted. To put this woman away. Press on.

Press on. Because. Because Christ. Is not like us. He's making us. Like him.

[60 : 22] That's an ongoing work. But we can know. That he. There's more compassion in him. Than in us.

So go. To Christ. What was Christ doing.

In all this. In these responses. That seem so cold. That seem so out of character. What he's been doing all along. Has been drawing her. What seems.

On a first reading. Perhaps. Is that he's. Pushing her away. Keeping her at a distance. No. He's been doing. The very opposite. He's been drawing her in. Let me give you a quote. From Samuel. Rutherford.

Just as an aside. Samuel. Rutherford. Preached. 27 sermons. On this. Incident. Of the Canaanite. Women. Seeking. The Lord. It's. Part of a.

[61 : 20] Book. Called. The trial. And triumph. Of faith. Published by the banner. Of truth. I. Heartily recommend it. To you. But. Rutherford. Says this. About.

What Christ. Is doing. All along. Here. But. Christ. Desired. Not. To be hid. From. This woman. He. Was. Seeking. Her. And. Yet. He.

Flyeth. From. Her. Christ. Is. Such. A. Flyer. As. Would. Gladly. Have. A. Pursuer. How.

Did. Christ. Seek. Her. By. Staying. Back. And. Running. Away. Why. So that she. Would. Follow. So that she. Would. Pursue. Him. That her. Faith. Would. Be. Tested.

And. Tried. And. Would. Grow. In. It. All. And. He. Does. That. At. Times. With. Us. He. Seems. To. Be. Silent. He. Seems. To. Be. Far. Away. He. Seems. To.

[62 : 12] Be. Running. Away. Why. So. That. We. Pursue. Him. He. He. He. He. back. He's saying come. We just don't always realize it, do we?

Our faith can be so small that we give up so easily. But actually he's saying come after me. And if you feel you're being met with silence this day, if you feel you're being met with coldness this day from heaven, have you concluded the messages the gospel's not for you, the message is no, you stay back, you can't have any blessing from me. Have you ever considered what the Lord is saying is come after me. Run.

Run toward me. What am I worth to you? Because at times we prize spiritual blessings so little. We like the idea of having them but we've got everything in this world as well.

And that's good if we have some nice tokens from the Lord, some nice experiences from the Lord but well, we've got all the material and temporal things of this world and that'll take up our time and energy and affections.

But we want a side plate with some spiritual blessings from the Lord when he's saying really how much do you value what I can give you? Are you prepared to make it your whole meal rather than just a little side plate?

[63 : 46] So the Lord is silent at times because he's asking us that. What am I worth to you? How much do you value me? Do you treasure my presence enough to pursue me fervently?

How badly do you want me to be here? How badly do you want Christ to be here today and tomorrow? How badly do you want him in your life every single day?

How much do you treasure those sweet seasons of closeness with him? How much do you want the mountaintop experience?

We talk about the mountaintops and the valleys. We want to be in the mountaintop but are you prepared to climb? Are you prepared to scramble to get there? Are you prepared to put in work?

Are you ready for it to cost you? Are you ready for there to be sacrifice? Are you ready to wrestle all night with Jacob and have the limp for the rest of your days?

[64 : 50] Is Jesus Christ worth spending extra time in prayer seeking after? Is it worth giving extra time to the Lord in prayer? Especially at this time when you want him to be present with you.

Is it worth turning off the television for him and meditating on something spiritual for a little while? Is it worth fasting for him?

Do you fast for him? To know him better? To know his presence? Is he worth giving up that sin for?

That little darling sin that no one else knows about but you hold on to and indulge in? Is he worth forsaking it for?

How much do you prize his presence? What is it worth to you to be given that tiny little glimpse of that window into heaven to behold that bearish ray of his glory?

[66 : 04] Which is enough to fill your soul to overflowing? What's it worth to you for the Lord to pass by and to have that manifestation of the sweetness of his love and the power of his glorious presence?

What does that look like in your life in terms of pursuing him? What's it look like on the run up to this communion? Are you knocking?

Are you wrapping on heaven's door? Are you giving him no rest? Are you refusing to let him go until he blesses you?

just for that breath of the wind of his spirit the fragrance from his garden to pass by for you to be enraptured as you behold your king see that little glimpse of the glory of God in Jesus Christ you know how much it was worth to Moses I think he thought it was worth dying for remember what he cried to the Lord in Exodus 33 and then into 34 show me your glory what a claim what a request from Moses Moses had beheld the burning bush he saw the plagues on

Egypt the Lord's hand of judgment he saw the great Mount Sinai smoke he saw plenty of people drop dead in God's power and he asks to behold the glory of God I think he knew fine well that his feeble body and mind could not bear it I think he knew it would consume him but he thought it would be worth it for that split second just for that moment to be given that glimpse of the eternal to behold the majesty of the Lord what's it worth to you to have a closer walk with Jesus Christ in this life the

[69 : 03] Lord told Moses it would kill him and so the Lord hid him in the cleft of the rock and the Lord passed by and Moses saw the back of the Lord he saw a pre-incarnate appearance of Jesus Christ pass by my friends as we go to the table tomorrow we do so looking back to his death but remember we're doing so proclaiming his death until he comes there's an aspect of communion where we're looking forward as well remembering that the table we sit at on this earth is but a foretaste of another table of that day when we will sit down with our beloved at the marriage supper of the lamb and on that day we will behold the glory of

God in all his fullness shining in the person of his son Jesus Christ our souls our minds our bodies will be transformed will be marked by incorruptible!

we'll be marked by holiness we'll have we'll have a much greater capacity to take in the glory of God and we will never weary of fresh depths of discovery of the riches of our God in Jesus Christ eternity will be continually marvelling as we behold him and he takes us deeper into that infinite ocean of who he is and it's a foretaste tomorrow it's a foretaste of that great feast that awaits us and so what will it mean for today for tonight for approaching the table tomorrow do you want him there do you want him there every day in your life the silence you may feel you're being met with what if it's to draw more out of you to increase faith to draw more prayer out of you what happens with the woman her faith gets a public acknowledgement verse 28 then

Jesus answered her all woman great is your faith her daughter's healed but those around also know that this is a woman of great faith love and as you love and as you persevere now in your trials as you persevere in prayer seeking the salvation of your loved ones seeking the Lord to come again in blessing and in revival well your perseverance might be brought to light as a witness to others the fact the fact that through all your joy in the Lord will not be diminished that your trust in the Lord will not be shattered that your dependence upon God will not be broken the Lord might be silent and fleeing that you will pursue further and that pursuit will be seen and others will join in it with you so you just don't know what he's doing in your life and so wherever you are before the

Lord today a woman came to him a Gentile woman along the way she found out something of God's plan of salvation for Israel she knew that the son of David meant something who knows what her background was who knows if she started off a true Canaanite with another religion with other gods a different lifestyle but when she came to the Lord in the end he received her and if you come to him no matter where you've been no matter what your life has looked like so far he'll receive you it's what Jesus Christ does he's promised that the one who comes to him he will in no wise cast out whoever calls upon him in sincerity will be saved that's a promise he makes and you're no exception to that why does

[74 : 29] Jesus Christ deal with people in that way because that's who he is and he's showing us the heart of the eternal God he receives sinners he blesses he strengthens and may these thoughts fill our minds and encourage our hearts as we God willing as you go to the table tomorrow I just close with words of encouragement for us in prayer coming from the lines of one of John Newton's hymns thou art coming to a king large petitions with thee bring for his grace and power are such none can ever ask too much let us pray eternal

God and loving father in heaven how we thank you for your wondrous love and mercy shown to sinners in the gospel and we thank you that though there are many ways in which you deal with us mysteriously in this life that we can know that if we are in Christ then your love for us is upon us and your love is never taken from us and your love can have no end because it had no beginning it is everlasting it is from eternity!

to know that all your dealings with us are in love and as we at this time would be thinking upon your love for us help us not to measure it by our current providences in this world but to measure it by the depths that the saviour went to for us to think upon his agony and torment in Gethsemane and the darkness that he endured the punishment he took in order that we would have a glorious eternity with him in heaven we pray then that you would be with these dear people and that you would this day prepare their hearts and that they would know great blessing as they would come in faith and obedience and eat and drink tomorrow please be with them please keep the evil one from this place and from the thoughts of each person where he can tempt and seek to accuse and discourage please protect everyone and fill us with that sense of your love and with that awe as we behold your majesty and please visit tomorrow we ask in

Jesus name Amen! Amen Well we conclude by singing in Psalm 27 Psalm 27 in the Scottish Psalter we shall sing from verse 4 to verse 8 Psalm 27 singing from verse 4 one thing I of the Lord desired and will seek to obtain that all days of my life I may within God's house remain that I the beauty of the Lord behold me and admire and that I in his holy place may reverently inquire for he and his pavilion shall me hide in evil days and seek it of his tent me hide and on a rock me raise and now even at this present time my head shall lifted be above all those that are my foes and round encompass me therefore unto his tabernacle

I'll sacrifice his bring of joyfulness I'll sing yea I to God will praise his sing O Lord give ear unto when thou didst say seek ye my face then unto thee reply thus did my heart above all things thy face Lord seek will I so singing to God's praise Psalm 27 from verse 4 to verse 8!

[80 : 16] ! sang For he is our kingdom, shall be thy day of the day.

Yes, he let all will stand behind all our wrong feelings.

Oh, knowing at this present time, mine head shall lift at thee.

Above all the times I've old and round them come past me.

Look for unto his tabernacle, how sacrifice his grain.

[82 : 25] Of joyfulness I'll sing, yea, I to God will praise us, sing.

O Lord, give me unto my voice.

When I do cry to thee, upon me also mercy.

How and do thou answer me.

Where thou didst say, seek ye my face, then unto thee reply.

[83 : 47] Thus did my heart above all things.

Thy face, Lord, seek well I. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

Amen.