

Behold the Lamb

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

Date: 01 March 2024

Preacher: Rev Colin Macleod

- [0 : 00] to the praise of God from Psalm 147 and sing Psalms, Psalm 147 from the beginning, page 192 in our blue psalm books, and we'll sing from the beginning to verse 6.
- O praise the Lord! How good it is to sing him songs of praise! How pleasant to give thanks to him for all his gracious ways! The Lord builds up Jerusalem, and he it is alone who reaches out to Israel to bring the exiles home.
- Psalm 147, we'll sing to the end of verse 6, to God's praise. Give thanks to him for all his gracious ways!
- The Lord builds up Jerusalem, and he it is alone.
- The Lord builds up Jerusalem, and he it is alone. The Lord builds up Jerusalem, and he it is alone. The Lord brings up Jerusalem to bring the exiles home.
- [1 : 49] He heals the people's broken hearts, restores the blusam name.
- Heziashe with rampant of his car, an rose in peace caminho.
- Great is the Lord, the great in power, His wisdom is over.
- The Lord's salvation equaled, the wicked to the young.
- Let us pray together. Our Lord and our God, we bless you anew this evening. We lift up our voices in worship and song and praise and adoration.
- [3 : 25] We acknowledge you tonight to be the living true God. And we bless you that we have at this opportunity of this evening hour, at this time of worship, praise and prayer, an opportunity to study together the good news of the gospel of your Son, the good news of His coming into this world, the good news of the incarnation, the good news of your intervention on the behalf of sinners.
- For Lord, it is true to say that in the Scripture we find such an announcement, such a declaration. We thank you, Lord, that we read of the Lord Jesus, your Son.
- And we thank you that we have this access this evening together for some to prepare hearts before sitting together at the Lord's table, if it be your will.
- And for us all, Lord, here together tonight to consider and reflect anew on the wonder of the gospel of grace, that we can say tonight, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.
- In just a sentence, we have the deepest of theology and the simplicity of faith. For we come to Him with nothing. We come to Him as sinners in need of forgiveness.
- [4 : 39] We come in filthy rags of self-sufficiency and self-worth, and thinking that we can earn and win and work our way to heaven, and in some way be fit and be due in some sense of entitlement to the forgiveness of God.
- But we know that we are under the wrath and curse of God because of the awful reality of sin, a condition that we are born into, a condition that leaves us spiritually dead before you, and under the wrath and judgment of God, far off, banished, strangers to God, not participating in the promise and closeness and communion with God, because we are by nature children of wrath.

And yet, Lord, tonight as we are confronted with this reality in your word, we bless you that the word continues. It does not fixate and stop on sin.

It shows us, Lord, what you have done because of sin, what you have done for sinners who are lost and under the wrath and judgment of your holiness and your justice.

For we read that the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord. We bless you, Lord, in the psalm we've already sung this evening, that we read of your glory and also of your grace, that you are the God who has set the stars in the sky and you have named them one by one, and you are also the God who heals the broken hearts of your people.

[6 : 11] We bless you for this wondrous closeness, the communion that is ours through faith in Jesus, your Son, who came in to seek and to save the lost, who came in in his compassion and his covenant commitment, in his love and in his mercy, to save a people to himself, and he did so by going to the cross.

Lord, we can scarce take in the scope and reality of that teaching. For as we read our Bibles, we are inevitably brought to the cross, and there we see the Prince of Glory, there we see your Son, dead.

Lord, our God, how awesome are your ways, how unsearchable your thoughts. Your nature is beyond our understanding, and yet we know, Lord, that in love you gave your Son.

And as we survey that wondrous cross on which the Prince of Glory died, we know that the moving, motivating factor behind that provision is your love.

For God so loved the world that he gave. And so we pray tonight, Lord, as we spend this evening hour together, as we worship, as we sing, as we bring you the petitions of our hearts, as we pour out to you, Lord, our concerns, as we bring to you our loved ones, as we in our mind's eye go round the world and round our families and round our neighbourhoods and friends and colleagues, our communities, Lord, we commend and commit them to your care and keeping.

[7 : 43] We pray for your grace. We pray for grace upon grace, that your grace would be poured out upon us, that the Holy Spirit would move between us and amongst us in our hearts tonight as we worship here, testifying to the things of Christ, testifying to the wonder and reality of the gospel, testifying to the truth that holds us, that truth that sets us free.

And we bless you, Lord, that this is the gospel around which we meet. And we are not ashamed of this gospel, for it is the power of God and to salvation to all who believe.

So, Lord, bless us tonight, we pray, draw near to us, do us good. What more can we ask than the living God to shine on us with your face, to know communion with the living God through worship, praise and prayer.

We bless you, Lord, that you have set before us this means of grace to nourish us and to sustain us, to strengthen us, to teach us that we would know how to live to your glory.

For we know, Lord, that man's chief end is to glorify God and enjoy you forever. And we bless you that you have shown us the way and that way is Christ, who is the way, the truth and the life, who is the resurrection and the life.

[9 : 07] And it is of him that the Baptist would say, behold, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Lord, we pray tonight your blessing on your people here in Tolstam.

Bless them in their work and their worship and their witness. And may it please you, Lord, that as they worship week by week together and as they spend time together in fellowship, iron sharpening iron, that they would become in this community, bright, shining witnesses, commissioned ambassadors of the King, sharing the good news of Jesus, bringing people under the gospel, bringing people to your house to hear the declaration of your word that sets forth the praises of your Son, who is the friend of sinners.

And so be with us, Lord, tonight as we seek your blessing and your hand to be upon the congregation, Donald, and Emma, and the office parish and everyone who is involved in the work of the congregation.

Bless the community here, Lord. We ask that your hand would rest upon not just North Tulsa, but our island and our nation at this time, where we seem to be, Lord, more divided than ever before, more divided than in many decades, where there is intolerance and division, where there is hostility.

And Lord, we ask that you would remember us at this time. You would raise up men and women and boys and girls across our land who would be unflinching in their commitment to the cause of Christ and good witnesses through their love and patience and tenacity to the wonder and truth of the gospel.

[10 : 44] May it please you, Lord, that there will be many this evening and in days to come, strengthened by your word and by your spirit, to bear witness to the truth that Christ Jesus, who died upon the cross, is no longer dead, for he is risen.

He is risen from the dead and he is Lord. So we ask, Lord God, that you bless and watch over the congregation, particularly at this communion time, be with Callum as he leads the worship here on Saturday and on the Lord's Day.

And may the Lord your people here by word and sacrament be greatly encouraged. May they enjoy the feast that is set by your word. And may they enjoy, Lord, that feast that is prepared at the table where the Lord himself says to all who trust in him, come, for all things are now ready.

So, Lord, be with us tonight. We pray, open our hearts to the gospel, bless us through the presence and ministry of the Holy Spirit and forgive our sin. In Jesus' name we ask it.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. We'll turn to the Psalter this evening. We'll sing together from Psalm 40. Psalm 40 in the Psalter, page 259 in our blue Psalm books.

[12 : 05] We'll sing from the beginning of the Psalm to the double verse 5. I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did bear at length to me. He did incline my voice and cry to hear.

He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay and on a rock He set my feet establishing my way. Psalm 40 will sing to the end of verse 5 to God's praise.

I waited for the Lord my God and patiently did me to me He did incline my voice and cry to hear He took me from a fearful pit and from the miry clay He took me and on a rock

He set my feet establishing my way put a new song in my mouth our God to magnify many shall see it and shall fear and on the Lord rely O blessed is the man whose trust upon the Lord relies respecting not the proud nor such as turn aside to lies

Lord my God full many are the wonders that has done thy gracious thoughts to us were far above all thoughts are gone ignore thy own how make on them to thee them to thee if them declare and speak of them

[16 : 10] I would them more than can be numbered are them were done well we'll read together this evening from God's word two passages in the New Testament firstly from the Gospel of Mark in chapter 1 and then turning forward to the Gospel of John to read there in chapter 1 as well the Gospel of Mark and chapter 1 the beginning of the Gospel of Jesus Christ the Son of God as it is written in Isaiah the prophet behold I send my messenger before your face who will prepare your way the voice of one crying in the wilderness prepare the way of the Lord make his path straight

John appeared baptizing in the wilderness and proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins and all the country of Judea and all Jerusalem were going out to him and were being baptized by him in the river Jordan confessing their sins now John was clothed with camel's hair and wore a leather belt around his waist and ate locusts and wild honey and he preached saying after me comes he who is mightier than I the strap of whose sandals I am not worthy to stoop down and untie I have baptized you with water but he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit in those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan and when he came up out of the water immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the spirit descending on him like a dove and a voice came from heaven you are my beloved son with you I am well pleased the spirit immediately drove him out into the wilderness and he was in the wilderness forty days being tempted by Satan and he was with the wild animals and the angels were ministering to him now after John was arrested

Jesus came into Galilee proclaiming the gospel of God and saying the time is fulfilled and the kingdom of God is at hand repent and believe in the gospel and if we turn forward to the gospel of John and we'll read in chapter 1 and we'll read from verse 19 and this is the testimony of John when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him who are you he confessed and did not deny but confessed I am not the Christ and they asked him what then are you Elijah and he said I am not are you the prophet and he answered no so they said to him who are you we need to give an answer to those who sent us what do you say about yourself he said

I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness I'm just trying to turn a page here of my apologies I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness make straight the way of the Lord as the prophet Isaiah said now they had been sent from the Pharisees they asked him then why are you baptizing if you are neither the Christ nor Elijah nor the prophet John answered them I baptize with water but among you stands one you do not know even he who comes after me the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie these things took place in Bethany across the Jordan where John was baptizing the next day he saw Jesus coming toward him and said behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world this is he of whom I said after me comes a man who ranks before me because he was before me I myself did not know him but for this purpose

I came baptizing with water that he might be revealed to Israel and John bore witness I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove and it remained on him I myself did not know him but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me he on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit and I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God Amen may he bless to our hearts the reading of his own word to his name be the praise we'll bow in prayer for a moment together gracious Lord we give thanks for this privilege joy and opportunity to come together in your house to sing praise on a Friday night before the living God we bless you Lord for what you have revealed of yourself toward us and above all for your provision for us in Christ Jesus your Son our Saviour how his enemies detracted from him and abused him miscalled him how they rejected him and sought to mock him by calling him the friend of sinners and what joy that title brings to our hearts tonight to think of Jesus our friend our Lord our Saviour and yet Lord we know all of these things are true because he became a curse for us and Lord as we study these things as we take the gospel into our hearts and lives and as we begin to shape and mould our choices our language our behaviour our decisions may it please you Lord to pour out the Holy Spirit upon us day by day that we would in order to give you the glory depend on you in every way that we would say Lord and make the psalm our prayer show me thy ways

[22 : 46] O Lord thy paths O teach thou me and we ask Lord God for clarity in understanding and in sharing the good news the good news in which we rejoice and the good news for which holds us the good news which thrills our hearts when we think of Jesus who came into this world to seek and to save the lost and called the lost from darkness to light from death to life and we know through him because of this sweet exchange we go from being children of wrath to being children of the living God and so be with us tonight Lord as we consider these wondrous things these wonderful amazing uplifting thrilling doctrines of grace that flow from and are fulfilled in the Lord Jesus Christ our Saviour your Son the King and Head of the Church may each one of us tonight know him to be close and Lord if we have questions we pray that you would be near to us if we have uncertainty be with us

Lord if we have a lack of understanding or a lack of assurance this night we pray that in your grace and in your mercy you would grant peace that we would throw off our limitations that we would throw off our questions that we would throw off our hesitation that we would be as Isaiah saying here am I send me and may we revel in that communion that closeness that walk with God and so we pray Lord that you be with us tonight that you bless your word to our hearts cleanse us and forgive us we pray of all our sin in Jesus name we ask it Amen well we'll sing once more from Psalm 116 in the Psalter Psalm 116 in the Psalter page 395 in our blue books and we'll sing from the beginning to the end of verse 7 I love the Lord because my voice and prayer seated here I while I live will call on him who bowed to me his ear of death the chords and sorrows did about me compass round the pains of hell took hold in me a grief and trouble found we'll sing from the beginning to verse 7 to God's praise

I love the Lord because my voice and prayer and prayer did it here I while I live will come on him who bowed to me is here of death the hearts and sorrows in the world we come as well the ways of to call on me

I grieve and travel far upon the name of God the Lord then did I come say deliver my soul Lord I do thee humbly pray God God merciful and righteous is yea gracious is our

Lord God saves God God God was brought low he did me help afford O thou my soul do thou return unto thy quiet rest for our hearts will know the pure poor to thee is found he hath expressed well we turn back together in our bibles to the gospel of john in the first chapter the gospel of john and the first chapter to think this evening about the message of john the baptist this declaration this famous declaration which brings us to the heart of the gospel for it brings us to christ both in who he is and what he came to do and we have it in this incredible statement in verse 29 in the first chapter the next day he saw jesus that is john come in toward him and said behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world we've just sung together this evening from sam 116 which opens with these words i love the lord and i would hope and and pray that that's why we're all here this evening because we love the lord jesus christ we want to know him more understand him more discern him more take him into our lives even more and give him the glory day by day by day to live as paul would say for to me to live is christ and so we want to live for our lord and our savior and here in this passage in the gospel of john we have the ministry of the baptist at its height his fame has spread the vast crowds are gathering walking for miles to see this enigmatic figure who the word is spread like wildfire who is this and eventually it's such as the the intrigue and the attraction and the impact of john that the pharisees in jerusalem here of his work and his ministry and the delegation is dispatched go into the desert find out what's happening out there and that's what we have from verse 19 onwards they came from jerusalem to ask him who are you and of course it's his answer that brings us to this wonderful declaration behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world john said time and again it's not about me i must decrease he must increase i am not elijah i i am not the prophet i am not the christ i am none of these things and he confesses immediately to be the voice crying out in the wilderness and as jesus would say in his own ministry that was john who's referred to in isaiah chapter 40 and as we piece the scriptures together we see that elijah himself was in some way a type of john and he came in the spirit and power of elijah preaching and declaring the good news that the messiah was coming but he was very clear

[31 : 25] i am not the christ i am not the one he is coming after me he says i baptize with water but i baptize with water but among you stands one who you do not know even he who comes after me the strap of whose sandal i am not worthy to untie psalm 116 then which we've just sung begins with that wonderful statement i love the lord i want to share with you a rather sad quote i guess in many ways it's it's looking back to hg wells that famous very famous 19th century author and commentator and and social activist not a friend of the church by any means and yet he wrote these words christ is the most unique person in history no man can write a history of the human race without going first and foremost or without giving first and foremost place to the penniless teacher of nazareth it's a wonderful sentiment and a great claim sadly wells himself would die while holding the view that mankind was ultimately doomed and that humanity's only prospect was extinction not salvation the gospel disagrees fundamentally with any such world view it is not about the world as many would tell us burning up and the human race becoming extinct our prospects are far greater than that and we're going to reflect on that this evening and i find that in this statement of john's in the bank of the jordan behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world we find our hope we find our joy we find our focus because here we find our savior who came into the world to seek and to save the lost john's declaration then here in this passage is sewn together with several other titles that we find at the beginning of the gospel there's six or seven past titles he's the anointed one the savior he is the king of israel he is the messiah and all these the son of god the son of man these titles are combining to confirm from the outset of the the gospel of john as it was in mark's gospel in the outset but here is someone we need to reckon with for here is none other than the son of god the promised one chapter one in verse 34 sums up these themes by saying i have seen and i've borne witness this is the son of god here is our hope our joy our peace our consolation christ who loved us and gave himself for us to think then about this declaration we see firstly a clear declaration a clear declaration everything for john the baptist you see it hinged upon jesus he was there to prepare the way for him as he says in verse 23 i am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness make straight the way of the lord his was a preparatory ministry he was preparing the people for what was to come for one greater than him was coming make way that make straight the way of the lord as the prophet isaiah has said he was disappointing others to jesus even he who comes after me the strap of whose sandal i am not worthy to untie and the the temptation in some ways for john at that point was to take center stage was to take the platform was to take the plaudits and the adoration of the crowd he wouldn't have any of it i am not the christ i am not elijah i

am not the prophet spoken of back in the book of deuteronomy again an indication of a preparatory work to come he says i am none of these i am merely me a voice crying out calling out preparing you for what's to come so that you would understand that the one who comes after me he is the one that you need to reckon with he is the one you need to know john then had a very specific role in god's revelation of his plan to redeem sinners to redeem the lost in malachi we read behold i will send you elijah the prophet before the great and dreadful day of the lord and these words are applied to john and jesus makes it abundantly clear in his own teaching that we would understand there has not risen one greater than john the baptist he is elijah who is to come and so jesus he never moved away from and in many ways and these sentiments gave thanks for the ministry and witness and preaching of john the baptist and then we come to john himself this enigmatic wild scary looking character who was attracting the crowds who came to see this man to hear this man something in the power of his preaching something in the conviction of his ways the way he took on the pharisees around him the way he exposed false religion and called the people they saw sincerity they saw a man of conviction but there's not just conviction here in his ministry there was not just heat there was also light i am the one crying in the wilderness make straight the way of the lord he's pointing people to christ and that is the first word that we have here behold behold behold he drives away any uncertainty any indecision any hesitation any attraction to himself he absolutely rejects it out of hand and says behold here then is this clear declaration and in some ways we can say john's life is summed up in this one word the snapshot we have of his of his powerful ministry of his witnessing to christ of his confronting false false religion of his confronting immorality of his fearless preaching and then his incarceration and his execution his life cut short in an atmosphere of violence and hatred and drunkenness and immorality we think what an impact he made in these few short years that he gave everything he had and it's i guess we could say it summed up in this one word behold that's john the baptist behold people came with their questions and challenges their accusations their indifference all were met with the same response it's not about me it's about him it's about the one who is to come it's about the christ god's messiah was about to be revealed and john's mission and ministry at this point was to prepare the people's hearts for what was to come god's messiah was coming as then so now gospel centered preaching always focuses on the lord jesus christ it's all about him remember a number of years ago visiting the the visitor center or being at the visitor center in the bannock burn where there's a commemoration to the battle of planet burn 1314 there's a huge and very brand new visitor center with a display outside the famous statue to robert the bruce and you go inside you're a gift shop and all the usual stuff but as part of their visit that day i still remember going into what is a 3d display of how they

think the battlefield looked back then 700 years ago and the young tour guide at the time young girl i think she was a graduate from sterling university she her opening remarks were pointing to the battlefield this is what it's all about this is what it's all about not the tea and scones and the tea cakes and the dish towels and even the statue this is why we're all here because of what happened that illustrates for me that the very same emphasis we have here in this one word behold don't get distracted with other things keep your gaze your focus your determination your faith in christ is that not why we're here tonight to prepare for the lord's table to look into our own hearts as you know as i know part of our preparation for the supper involves and requires self-examination it's part of what we are called scripturally to do to prepare our hearts and so we examine our hearts tonight friends by beholding the one who came that day in the banks of the jordan this is gospel centered preaching and the gospel honoring church will always acknowledge the kingship of christ he is the head of the body the church the firstborn from the dead that in all things he may have the preeminence gospel centered preaching gospel honoring churches and gospel loving people are in many ways summed up by this word behold it's not about us it's about our savior it's not about our denomination our distinctives our history our presbyterian ways all these things are precious and meaningful but we must park them they have their place but we must keep them in their place by beholding first and above all christ and ensuring that in what we do and how we live people who would look in from outside would see see see see how they love one another and where does that love come from it comes from beholding the savior john looked at him as he came toward him that day he saw jesus coming toward him and his response behold behold and so the church today needs to capture and sustain and retain this similar fixation with christ behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world and so can i just ask as we move on to the second thing this evening if you are tonight beholding jesus is he your lord and savior is he your friend have you put your trust in him and sought the forgiveness and cleansing of your sin then friend you are beholding him and he bids you come to his table this coming lord's day should it be his will that we are spared come there beholding him the one who commands you to join with him and your brothers and sisters at his table in remembrance of him behold a clear declaration secondly there's this the clear declaration it gives us precise identification because as the words burned up in john's hearts and then exploded from his mouth behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world john here then speaks with what we would say is light and heat there's conviction and there's clarity there's passion and there's insight and it's all here in this incredible statement behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world the the word lamb in the new testament is quite interesting this

it only appears in the new testament out with the book of revelation five times two of them are here in the first chapter of john when we come to revelation we find the lamb 27 times that revelation of the risen savior to the apostle john who writes this record for us the lamb comes through again and again and again the throne of the lamb the blood of the lamb the wrath of the lamb the song of the lamb the marriage supper of the lamb the light of the lamb again and again john refers to the lamb in 20 in revelation here john the baptist uses this wonderful title the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world what do we have here then we have precise identification when he saw jesus coming toward him he spoke of him in a very distinctive manner and using a very distinct title in order to be precise in his identification of who was walking toward him at that moment and he wanted everyone around him to know and so behold the lamb of god precise identification what's easy for us of course looking back from our vantage point two thousand years later as we can see in this statement the the the glory and the grace of jesus coming into the world as the lamb of god and we know what's going to happen but at this moment on the banks of the jordan john foresaw a ministry of judgment which is what led to that tension that we read of in matthew 11 when he was in prison he sent messengers to jesus saying are you the christ or do we look for another the the the confusion and uncertainty that came in was because john was anticipating and had proclaimed and had preached about a ministry of judgment and here now jesus is fulfilling and effecting a ministry of healing a ministry of peace a ministry of preaching and so john asks the question he doesn't doubt he doesn't lose his faith no we mustn't say that not of john the baptist but imprisoned wondering when the kingdom would come he sends messengers and the glorious message that comes back can i just turn to that chapter in matthew and chapter 11 where we have this messenger sent from john and jesus said to the messenger go and tell john what you hear and see the blind receive their sight the lame walk lepers are cleansed the deaf hear the dead are raised up and the poor have good news preached to them blessed is the one who is not offended by me the kingdom was coming the gospel of grace was spreading the power of the messiah was being displayed and his identity was being confirmed again and again but hard hearts didn't want to know religious leaders hated him persecuted him despised him turned away from him and no doubt influenced many many people to do the same but here at this moment in this oasis of time at the height of john's ministry in the banks of the jordan the lamb of god is coming what then do we make of this this general allusion through this title clearly speaks to you and i tonight of sacrifice it speaks to us of the lamb the appointed lamb the lamb that would be slaughtered the lamb that would be blooded the lamb that would be sacrificed for the sins of the world for the sins of those around us

the temple in its full capacity was there in jerusalem two lambs every day being offered through the levitical system for the sins of the people again and again at the feast time at the festival time the number of lambs would go into their thousands sacrificial lambs offered for the sin of the world without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin and here is the lamb not yet slain but who would be seen as though slain standing in his glory but here before that john identifies something of the atoning sacrifice that christ himself would become he senses it he identifies it and he sees it as he sees it behold the lamb of god bishop riles words very helpful here never was there a fuller testimony born to christ upon earth than that which is here born by john the baptist in these incredible powerful and in many ways simple words words that should thrill our hearts and melt our hardness of heart and bring us anew to our saviour giving thanks for the truths and the imagery and the symbolism and the meaning behind this title the lamb of god had come remember when we read from the gospel of mark how jesus begins his preaching ministry after john was arrested he comes into galilee doing what proclaiming the gospel of god saying the time is fulfilled the kingdom of god is at hand repent and believe in the gospel if you have a red letter version of the bible it's always quite striking that the first recorded preaching words of christ are there in mark 1 15 repent and believe the gospel christ called sinners to him and we must do the same we must never shy away from the reality and awfulness of sin its existence and its consequences it leaves us where under the wrath and judgment of god for a shocking and powerful summary of how we stand in and of ourselves go to the very last verse of john in chapter 3 whoever believes in the son has eternal life whoever does not obey the son shall not see life but the wrath of god remains on him how is the wrath of god removed from any one of us only by the lamb of god who came to seek and to save the lost this then is a lamb like no other sent to do what an entire sacrificial system pointed to but could never achieve to close the gap between god and sinners that place another beauty spot just if I could mention of our own country

[50 : 47] I haven't mentioned Bannockburn if you go north a wee bit you'll come up to Killie Cranky near with the Queen's View and you can visit there another historical site and part of the visit there in Killie Cranky there's another famous battle the Scots were always fighting back then fighting ourselves or fighting the English or Catholics against Protestants and it was a very difficult time in the country and that battle of Killie Cranky a famous victory for the Jacobites against a government army if you visit there you'll come to a place called the Soldiers Leap and they reckon the story is told and it seems to be true that after the battle with the government troops fleeing for their lives being pursued by the Jacobites that one government soldier managed to leap 18 feet across a gorge high above the river Gary to save his life and he got away from them by making that incredible leap and there's a marker there on the ground to show you where it apparently took place but I think about that story sometimes because

I think there are people tonight maybe even here who think spiritually the same way that they can wait until the right moment and then they'll just make the leap they'll get across the gap they'll do something themselves to close the gap or they'll leap over the gap or they'll do some way something will be sorted it'll be fine it'll be okay friends if any of us could do that why did the Lamb of God come into the world to take away the sin of the world there's a gap and we cannot cross we cannot get there ourselves we cannot make ourselves right before God but in Christ that changes this is what the Lamb of God came to do to seek and to save to call sinners to repentance to call us to repent and believe the gospel the good news the Messiah had come and that if we would come to him we would be made right in him and so we say

I love the Lord because my voice and prayers he did hear John the Baptist that day saw the Lord and referred to him in a worshipful way as the Lamb of God he gave a clear declaration he in doing so gave a precise identification and finally these words confirm a glorious mission because the Lamb of God came to take away the sin of the world the Bible nowhere hides denies or turns away from the reality and awfulness of sin that's the work of men and women that's what the human heart does the world the flesh and the devil will often deny dilute or delete any mention of sin from the Bible from preaching from the church's mission and they'll turn it into something other than what the church should be all too often sadly we see examples of this just a number of years ago a national church leader in our own country bemoaned the fact that people have no real idea what Christianity is about and that leader urged their denomination to embrace science to boost our appeal you see the tragedy of that acknowledging and confessing people out there don't understand

Christianity so instead of preaching the cross and expounding the Christian faith let's talk about science maybe that will get them in and do what leave them condemned under the wrath and judgment of God that's what and so we preach Christ crucified as Paul asserts in Corinthians I determined to know nothing among you except Christ and him crucified for it is here we find our hope our joy our peace our solace it is through him and him alone there is now no condemnation upon those who are in Christ Jesus the Lamb of God takes away the sin of the world this is the intervention of the Lord Jesus this is the heart of the gospel Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners we needed most of all from God a saviour and that's what he sent and that day in the banks of the Jordan John acknowledges it the Lamb of

God came to carry out the greatest work imaginable he came to seek and to save the lost he himself Peter would say in one of his epistles bore our sins in his own body on the tree he came to take away the sin of the world how did he do it Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us when you read Isaiah 53 Psalm 22 Matthew 27 you are there presented with a saviour suffering and finally dying for the sin of the world the Christian gospel holds forth the incredible message that our redeemer died the world would have him still dead the world's other main religions would have him still dead a good man a great man a holy man a teacher a prophet a gifted man but a dead man and the gospel says yes he was dead but he was not just man he was the

[56 : 49] God man and he is no longer dead he has risen from the dead and he is Lord and the empty grave stands today evidence of his acceptance by the father that the lamb of God succeeded and completed in the work he was given to do he takes away the sin of the world he offered himself in a room instead you're going to hear much again of this over the coming days of course our focus goes at communion to the cross because the bread and the wine send our hearts there we can't share that meal and take part in that feast without thinking the bread speaks of his broken body the wine speaks of his shed blood the lamb as though slain marred beyond recognition he didn't even look human as he suffered on that cross such as the agony of the separation and judgment spiritually and the physical torture and agony of that death upon the cross the lamb and he went there why to take away the sin of the world this is our saviour and this is our song and we praise him all the day long there's many a song that's been written to try and capture the wonder and beauty and magnificence of the gospel of grace let me share one of these with you jesus of thee jesus of thee shall be my song to thee my heart and soul belong all that i have or am is thine and thou blessed saviour thou art mine is that your song tonight is that your hope tonight is that your focus tonight thanks be to god who gives us the victory through our lord jesus christ be sure friends to take your place at his table this coming lord's day where you will profess he is my saviour he is my song he came then to fulfill a glorious mission to take away the sin of the world to go back to rile again we know nothing rightly about christ until we see him with john the baptist's eyes behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world he's appointed lamb came to seek and to save the lost and the fullness of time had come god sent forth his son born of a woman born under the law to redeem those who were under the law that we might receive the adoption of sons what a message what a saviour what a gospel but how did it all come to be the appointed lamb came to deal with god denying sin in god's created world and he did so by giving himself in giving himself he made atonement so that sin could be dealt with by becoming one of us he came into the world to take out offense he came into the world to seek and to save and took away the sin of the world by taking it to himself he didn't speak it away he didn't write it away he carried it away by taking it upon himself on the cross the cry of anguish that shows us the evidence of the burden he carried my god my god why hast thou forsaken me a cry of forsakenness a cry of loneliness and results tonight in a table of fellowship and a gospel

of grace and so we give thanks tonight for the lamb of god takes away the sin of the world sin dealt with in its totality friends so that salvation might be experienced in its totality sometimes we struggle with that sometimes we falter sometimes we question and doubt and we quiver and we quake and we struggle with assurance why because we feel the weight of sin because of the battle between the flesh and the spirit because of that warfare that never leaves us because of the work of the world the flesh and the devil because of the existing reality of the old man still there because of the trips we make because of the mistakes we make because of the way sometimes we get things wrong because we do what god forbids and don't do what god commands it's our nature and will always be our nature until glory and so all the more important christian friend that we gather at his table because there is a feast there is a spiritual meal a moment of abundance and blessing and refreshment and nourishment for your soul as you look up to him the lamb of god who took away the sin of the world he did for the world what the world could never do for itself in his action upon the cross god demonstrates his own love toward us paul would write and that while we were still sinners christ died for us in doing so he took away the sin of the world there is forgiveness in jesus and so we sing our songs of praise and thankfulness and gratitude because he lifts our burden he covers our condition he cancels our debt that's what christ does when we come to him in repentance and faith when we cry that prayer lord be merciful to me a sinner remember friends it's what you know not what you feel how often is it we get into it difficultly because we think it's all about what we feel when in reality the gospel makes it abundantly clear it's what we know that counts behold the lamb of god who takes away the sin of the world we go to the table with this our hope and joy that he came and did for us that we could not do for ourselves he took away a burden that would crush us he covered a condition that condemned us and he cancelled a debt that we could never pay and so we say thanks be to god who gives us the victory through our lord jesus christ this lamb of god and this phrase just launches a golden thread through the scripture that explodes in the revelation these 27 times where we see the throne of the lamb the blood of the lamb the wrath of the lamb the song of the lamb the marriage of the lamb and the light of the lamb who himself will be the light in the new jerusalem where christian friends you will take your place with the lamb who gave himself for you may he bless to each of us his word and to his name

be the glory let's pray for a moment together gracious lord we say in our hearts hallelujah what a savior we rejoice tonight in the hope of glory a hope that is ours because of jesus a hope that is ours because of who he is and what he did and so we say i love the lord and i we ask tonight lord that you would bless these precious truths to our hearts to the hearts of your people here in the congregation as they look forward in anticipation to the lord's supper may the lord be blessed in their hearts nourish them build them up edify them that they would become on monday and tuesday and in the week ahead bright shining witnesses commissioned ambassadors convinced and convicted that the lamb of god is their friend and saviour may each one lord know you to be close go before us and forgive our sin we pray in the name of jesus christ your son we ask amen we'll turn to the psalter one final time this evening we'll sing from psalm 108 psalm 108 singing from the beginning of the psalm and we'll sing to verse 6 psalm 108 in the psalter from page 386 my heart is fixed lord i will sing and with my glory praise awake up psalty in heart myself i'll early raise i'll praise thee among the people lord among nations sing will i for above heaven thy mercy is great thy truth doth reach the sky psalm 108 from the beginning to verse 6 to god's praise my heart is fixed lord i will sing me and with

My glory, Jesus, Thou wake of something in the heart.

My strength, my glory, Jesus, O praise thee among the people, Lord, Of nations, sing, well, I, For love of heaven, thy mercy's great, Thy truth hath reached the sky.

[68 : 07] You dove above the heavens, Lord, Exalted gloriously, Thy glory on the earth above, Be lifted upon high, The doors who are in our love and our deliverance may be.

O do thou say with thy right hand, And the answer to thee.

Once again, thank you, Colin, for that. The Lord will bless this word to us. The session is, of course, open, And would be overjoyed, Truly, to meet with any, Wishing to profess their faith, Belonging to congregation, Confess their faith in their Saviour, And sit at the table.

Open just now, and the meeting afterwards, And have a prediction, and just come in the side door, There, if you wish to come forward. Come forward. Come on. Let's pray.

May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, The love of God the Father, And fellowship of the Holy Spirit, Be with you all. Amen. Amen.