

The Dimensions of Christ's Love

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[0 : 00] Now, could you turn with me to that passage that we read in Ephesians chapter 3, and particularly words that we find in verse 18?

That you may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth. And to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge.

The breadth, length, height and depth of the love of Christ. While philosophers and gurus may wax eloquent about love, books and films extol its virtues, poets and songwriters sing its praises.

There's a song called Up Where We Belong. Love lifts us up where we belong. Where the eagles cry on a mountain high. Love lifts us up where we belong. Far from the world we know.

Up where the clear winds blow. The Bible too, of course, commends love. The Song of Solomon, chapter 8, from verse 6 says, Place me like a seal over your heart.

[1 : 23] Like a seal on your arm. For love is as strong as death. Its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire. Like a mighty flame.

Many waters cannot quench love. Rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all of his wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

And of course, there is the very famous verse in 1 Corinthians 13, verse 13. And now these three remain. Faith, hope, and love. But the greatest of these is love.

But of course, as another song says, the experience of many is that love hurts. Love hurts. Love scars. Love wounds and mars.

Some fools rave of happiness, blissfulness, togetherness. Some fools fool themselves, I guess. But they're not fooling me. I know it isn't true. I know it isn't true.

[2 : 28] Love is just a lie made to make you blue. And how many people, of course, have been let down by love? Let down by the love of husbands or wives, lovers, friends.

And so we can become so cynical. They say it's better to have loved and lost than never to have loved. But they don't have to count the cost and learn to be unloved.

Or such an experience can make us long for a higher love, a wider love, a deeper love. But is there someone somewhere else who loves without reserve, accepts me as I am, and gives the love I don't deserve?

The message of the gospel is that there is such a love. It is Christ's love. A love that is wider, longer, higher, and deeper than any mere human love.

I'd like us here this morning to consider the dimensions of this love. First of all, the width of Christ's love.

[3 : 41] Christ's love is wide in this sense, first of all, that it comes to all branches of the human race. In verse 6 of this chapter, this mystery is that through the gospel, the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.

Jews and Gentiles are also the recipient of God's love. The word Gentiles simply is referring to the nations. The Jewish people were one nation.

But God revealed consistently throughout the Old Testament that he had purposes also for the other nations of the world. And in the New Testament, we see that coming to fruition.

This was the radical message of the gospel. God so loved the world. We know that persistently down through history, one nation is against another.

One type of nationalistic religion is against another. Excluding people of a different race and all those kind of things. Well, God in the Old Testament had narrowed down his revelation to one nation, to the nation of Israel.

[4 : 56] But it was a narrowing down in order to extend his great love to all the nations. It was right there at the beginning of the covenant that God made with the people of Israel through Abraham, their founder.

He said that through Abraham and through the descendant of Abraham, all nations would be blessed. But of course, the Jewish people had forgotten that.

They despised the nations. They had their own proverb half based on scripture, love your neighbor and hate your enemy. And that, of course, is the problem with human love.

It can tend to be exclusive. Excluding people from love. I can love a person of this nation or this color or this culture, but not of that.

The basis of all kinds of racial prejudice or class prejudice. Jesus, in his earthly ministry, showed none of that. Even although his ministry was the last great concentrated witness to Israel, he helped Samaritans, Romans, Greeks.

[6 : 05] Whoever came across his path, he showed the love of God to them. And, of course, he commissioned his disciples to go and to make disciples of all nations.

So it doesn't matter this morning what nationality or what culture or what color you are. Christ's love reaches out to you.

He died for the world. He wants you to know forgiveness and peace and eternal life. But, of course, Christ's love is broad and extensive and wide also in this sense that it comes to all kinds of people. Charlie Brown in the Peanuts cartoon famously said, I love mankind. It's people I can't stand. And I suppose we can all identify a little bit with that. But Christ's love comes to all different kinds of people.

The kinds of people that perhaps we may not be able to stand. But he shows love to everyone. And other people may not be able to stand us. But Christ's love is also shown to us.

[7 : 15] In 1 Corinthians 6, from verse 9, we read, Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived.

Neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor male prostitutes, nor homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor slanderers, nor swindlers, will inherit the kingdom of God.

Now that sounds very exclusive, doesn't it? Saying all these types of people are excluded. But notice what immediately Paul goes on to say. And that is what some of you were.

In other words, the church there in Corinth was made up of people just like that. All those sorts of people. From all those different nefarious backgrounds.

Because he goes on to say, But you were washed. You were sanctified. You were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And by the Spirit of our God. In other words, the word of God came to all those different kinds of people.

[8 : 25] All different stratas of society. And all different positions in life. And by the grace of God they responded to it. Christ's love reached out to even the most unlikely people there in Corinth.

That is what some of you were. So again today, No matter what your identity is, Or what your sexuality, Or anything like that, You are not excluded from Christ's love.

His love, yes, Will cause radical changes In how you may view your own identity. Because his love is a transforming love. But he loves you nonetheless. That's how broad and wide Christ's love is.

Coming to us in all different circumstances of life. He has died for people of all sorts of identities. But also, Christ's love is wide in this sense, That it comes to all kinds of personalities.

The Apostle Paul has an interesting thing that he says in 1 Corinthians 15. He's speaking about the fact that God has chosen various apostles. And he revealed himself to them.

[9 : 37] And then he says, But he also included me. Like an apostle that was born out of the right time. Born sort of after the others. But then he goes on to say, But by the grace of God, I am what I am.

Now that's a very fascinating statement. Of course he doesn't say, I am what I am. Because that is the title of, The unique title of God alone. But what he does say is, By the grace of God, I am what I am.

Just as the triune God has a unique identity, So we as human beings, By his grace, Also have a unique identity. And a unique personality.

And you see, God chose different personalities there. In New Testament times, God's love came to all those different types of personality. To weld them into the church of Jesus Christ.

There was the extrovert and impulsive Peter. And the more introvert, thoughtful John. There was the highly intellectual Paul. And there was the more people person, Barnabas.

[10:49] There was the sensitive Mary. And the practical Martha. There was the highly religious and respectable Nicodemus. And the disreputable Samaritan woman.

All these became recipients of Christ's love. Jesus loved them all. All those different types of personalities. And his love is wide enough to embrace you today.

Whatever your personality is. You may have a personality that's easy to get on with others. You may have a difficult personality. But whoever you are, Christ's love is wide enough to embrace you. That's the amazing love that we're celebrating today. This love that was demonstrated on the cross as Christ died for the sins of the world. But secondly, we think of the length of Christ's love.

Christ's love is from all eternity, first of all. Earlier in Ephesians chapter 1 from verse 4, we read, For he chose us in him before the creation of the world, to be holy and blameless in his sight.

[11:58] In love he predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will. Now this is absolutely staggering.

If you're a Christian today, it's not simply because of some decision you took at a particular point in time. It is not even because God loves you now.

It's not even just because Christ died for you at a particular point in history. It is because back of all that, he loved you from all eternity.

A powerful, effective, non-negotiable, eternal love. That's the amazing length of Christ's love.

It stretches back into eternity. Now there are different types of human love. We talk about a whirlwind romance. Very short romance.

[12:57] But a different kind of love is when perhaps someone has loved you from a distance for a long time, maybe waited many years, through all your mistakes and broken romances, waited for the right time to declare their love for you.

The Lord Jesus Christ has waited for us so often, hasn't he? Perhaps today there's some person here that has not yet responded to that love.

Christ has been waiting for you to respond. Will you not now respond to that love? But of course, the length of Christ's love is seen in this also, that it is for life.

It's not just for a moment, not just for a few days, not just for a few years. It is for life. There's a word used in the Old Testament for love. It's often translated covenant love or steadfast love.

It's a constant faithful love. It is God's love to his covenant people. He has promised them that he will be with them, that he'll never forsake them, and he'll always love them.

[14:05] See, human love so often is fickle. Carl King had a song called, Will You Love Me Tomorrow? I'd like to know that your love is love I can be sure of.

So tell me now, and I won't ask again, Will you still love me tomorrow? And so often we can't be sure of human love. But we never need to ask Jesus that, Will you love me tomorrow?

He said that he is always with us to the end of the age in Matthew 28. And he said he'll never leave us nor forsake us, Hebrews chapter 13.

And in that same chapter, we're told that he is the same yesterday, today, and forever. The playwright Somerset Maugham once said, We are not the same persons this year as last, nor are those we love.

It is a happy chance if we, changing, continue to love a changed person. The amazing thing about the love of Jesus is that he loves us through all the changes of life.

[15:11] Because we all change, and we all face changed and new circumstances. But the Lord remains faithful. His love is long, and that it continues with us through all the stages of life.

George Matheson wrote a very famous hymn called, Oh, Love That Will Not Let Me Go. And it came out of particular experiences in his life.

He started to go blind, and the engagement that he had with a young lady was broken off.

Sometime later, his sister was getting married, and he wrote this hymn, Oh, love that wilt not let me go, I rest my weary soul in thee.

I give thee back the life I owe, and in thine ocean depths its flow may richer, fuller be. The love that will not let me go.

There are many kinds of love that will let us go, that will let us down, that will disappoint us. Other loves may fail us, but Christ's love never. But not only is this love long, in that it is for life, for the whole of life, through all the experiences of life, it is also love to all eternity.

[16:36] Somerset Maugham, whom I quoted a minute ago, once said, The love that lasts longest is the love that is never returned. In other words, he's speaking about unrequited love.

But he's wrong. Because the love that lasts longest is Christ's eternal love. A love that is responded to. The famous verse in the Bible says, For God so loved the world, that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

It's eternal love. It's a love that extends beyond the grave. He is the one who has promised us that he'll take us to be with us where he is.

In John chapter 17, verse 24, in Christ's great high priestly prayer, as it's called, where he's praying for his people, he says, Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. That love that is eternal, that love that is in the very heart of God between Father and Son is the love that he has shown to us here in time, but the love that will continue throughout all eternity as he brings his people to be with himself.

[17:58] This love, you see, is not till death do us part, as human love has to be. It is forever. Charles Spurgeon, the great Baptist preacher in 19th century London, he said, when the time comes for you to die, you need not be afraid because death cannot separate you from God's love.

But thirdly, we see here the height of Christ's love. It's love, it's high because it comes to us from heaven, from the very heart of God.

Now, of course, it's great to be loved by family and by friends, by people similar to ourselves. But what if you were loved by somebody famous? A prince or princess, a pop star or film star, a famous writer or a sports person?

Apart from anything else, it would do your self-esteem no end of good, wouldn't it, to be loved by such a person? But that's as nothing compared to being loved by the Lord Jesus Christ.

He is the Prince of Glory. He's the one and only begotten Son of God. He's the King of Kings. And Lord of Lords. And yet, He loves me.

[19:16] He loved me and gave Himself for me. Think of what the Apostle Paul says in 2 Corinthians chapter 8. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, so that you, through His poverty, might become rich.

The hymn says, there was no other good enough to pay the price of sin. He only could unlock the gate of heaven and let us in.

Only He, the priceless one, the Prince of Glory, the Eternal Son of God. He was rich. He came from the heights of heaven for us.

No wonder Paul speaks here of the height of Christ's love, how high that love is. Only Jesus could achieve this. Only the highest, the noblest, the most glorious person.

And He did it because He loved us. He loved us who don't deserve any such love, yet He did it out of His great grace. But of course, His love is high in another sense because it can reach us at our high points in life.

[20:30] It can reach us if we're high in status, in society. 1 Corinthians 1, verse 26, Paul says, Brothers, think of what you were when you were called.

Not many of you were wise by human standards. Not many were influential. Not many were of noble birth. And his whole point there is talking about the fact that God chose the poor and the weak and the despised things of this world to confound the mighty and the wise and so on.

But notice, he does say, not many of you were wise, but it does mean, therefore, some were wise. Some were mighty. In other words, no matter who we are, no matter what position we have in society, God's word still comes to us with this message of love.

There's a verse in Revelation chapter 21 that says, the nations will walk by its light and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it.

He's speaking there of the city of God, the eternal city of God. The kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. There will be those who are high in society who will be transformed by the love of Christ.

[21:39] So this tells us no matter who we are, what position we have in life or what our circumstances, things may be going very well for us. We may feel no great need, but still, Christ's love comes to us and tells us that we are needy and we need to be transformed by His grace.

So, if we're high up in any sense, if we're a high hedion, you're not excluded. He loves you in spite of all that, perhaps. And He has something for you to do in His service.

But also, Christ's love is high in that it can come to us at the high points in our life. We sometimes think that Jesus can only reach us at our lowest points. You know, we hear the famous stories of people's conversions when, you know, they've fallen on hard times.

They're down in the gutter and yet Jesus raises them up. And that's true, gloriously true. But Christ's love can also reach us at the times when things are going well. Perhaps we feel we don't need anything.

But yet, Christ's love comes to us even in these circumstances. Think of Saul of Tarsus, there. He had his whole life planned out. He knew what he was doing. He thought he was doing God's will.

[22 : 50] And yet, the Lord Jesus Christ met him on the Damascus road and totally transformed his life. He had no sense of his own need as he was traveling there to Damascus. But Christ awakened him to it.

And he can do the same with us. So Christ's love can reach us in our times of high emotion or high achievement or even our high sense of self-importance.

but supremely, Christ's love is high in that it lifts us up. Mostly, we do need to be lifted up.

Psalm 113 from verse 7 says, He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap. He seats them with princes with the princes of their people.

Who did Jesus choose as his apostles? He chose fishermen, a despised tax collector, an ex-terrorist.

[23 : 48] He lifted them up to a place of eternal honor. Jesus, in his love, wants us to be with him where he is. Where is he?

He's seated at the right hand of God in the place of honor and power. And he wants all those who trust in him to be there. In Ephesians chapter 2, the same letter, verse 6, And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

The amazing love of Christ that lifts us up. We who don't deserve it lift it up to such an amazing position. But fourth and finally, there is the depth of Christ's love.

And we think there of the depths to which Christ went in his love for us. Jesus spoke of himself as the bread that came down from heaven.

John chapter 6, verse 33. And in that passage in 2 Corinthians, we mention verse 8, it says, For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor.

[25 : 01] so that you through his poverty might become rich. He, the Prince of Glory, came down to a manger. He came down to the position of an asylum seeker before he was two years old in Egypt.

He came down to be a working man who earned his living by the sweat of his brow in carpentry. He became the one who had nowhere to lay his head.

He came down by taking the very form of a servant. Taking the likeness of sinful flesh, as the Apostle Paul puts it. Notice, he's not saying that Christ took sinful flesh, but the likeness of sinful flesh.

He was as near to us as it's possible to be without himself being a sinner. he came down to that extent, living among us, surrounded by sin and selfishness and hatred, the pure Lamb of God.

He came down by making himself vulnerable to hostility and hatred, making himself vulnerable to temptation and suffering as he took a human nature.

[26 : 19] He came down eventually by taking on himself the sins of the world and enduring what those sins, that is, your sins and mine, deserved.

There's a hymn that says, None of the ransomed ever knew how deep were the waters crossed, nor how dark was the night that the Lord passed through. Here he found his sheep that was lost.

No one knows how deep were the waters the Lord Jesus Christ crossed. No one knows how deep the Lord Jesus Christ went down, but we know this, that he went down to the very pit of hell because he cried out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

The absence of God, the absence of the love of God is surely the reality of hell. And the Lord Jesus Christ experienced it because that is the price of sin.

And he took upon himself the price of our sins. How deep is his love for us? But also it's deep in this sense, in that it reaches us at the lowest.

[27 : 34] someone said to me not all that long ago that I'd known them at their worst and at their best. And that's quite something, isn't it? But we can be sure that the Lord Jesus Christ has seen us at our worst and his love comes to us in the depths of sorrow or the depths of despair or the depths

of depravity.

There's a song by Bob Dylan called The Chimes of Freedom Telling for the aching ones whose wounds cannot be nursed for the countless confused accused misused strung out ones and worse and for every hung up person in the whole wide universe and we gazed upon the chimes of freedom flashing.

These words expressing a kind of compassion for those who are in such need and in such dire straits. And these are the very people to whom Christ's love comes. Christ's love reached a Samaritan woman who had been married five times and was now living with another man. Christ's love reached a widow in the depths of despair because she'd now lost her only son. Christ's love came to a synagogue ruler whose little 12-year-old daughter had died.

Christ's love came to a prostitute who came and washed his feet with her tears of repentance. Paul says in 1st Timothy chapter 1, Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the worst, the chief of sinners.

[29 : 08] And he goes on to describe himself as a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man. But then he also says that I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

If the Apostle Paul could say that who counted himself the worst of sinners, surely there's not a person here that can exclude themselves from the orbit of this great love that the Lord Jesus Christ is showing to us.

It comes down to the very depths no matter how low we are. Victor Hugo who wrote Les Miserables that has become famous as a musical and a film, he said the greatest happiness of life is the conviction that we are loved.

Loved for ourselves or rather loved in spite of ourselves. I think that's a very telling phrase. Loved for ourselves or rather loved in spite of ourselves.

And that is the great love of God. He loves us for ourselves but it's really in spite of ourselves, in spite of all our sin, in spite of how low we are, his love can lift us up.

[30 : 18] Like David, can you say today, Lord from the depths, to you I cried. And if you can say that, you can also come to the conclusion of that psalm that speaks of the great redemption that Christ has achieved.

So in conclusion, Mother Teresa once said, the hunger for love is much more difficult to satisfy than the hunger for bread.

But there is a love that can satisfy that hunger. love. It's Christ's love, the dimensions of which love are infinite. Neil Young said in one of his songs, only love can break your heart.

And for many people, that sums up the failure of love. But it also sums up the effect of the greatest love. Oscar Wilde was a notorious figure in the late Victorian age.

he was sent to prison eventually for a homosexual affair. But there in prison, he wrote an amazing poem called The Ballad of Reading Jail.

[31 : 28] And in it he says, how else but through a broken heart may Lord Christ enter in. And that is very true and very biblical.

biblical. Is your heart broken today by the love of Christ? Sigmund Freud, the great psychiatrist, wrote a letter to his fiancée in which he said, how bold one gets when one is sure of being loved. And if we know that great love of Christ, the dimensions of that love, the width of it, the length of it, the height and the depth of it, surely we also can have that boldness to approach the throne of grace.

Bold I approach the eternal throne and claim the crown through Christ my own. Let's pray. Our loving Heavenly Father, we thank you for this amazing revelation you give to us in your word of Christ your own Son, of his amazing love towards us.

A love that we know that we need in this world because our human loves are so frail and feeble. And we know that we need this great transforming love.

[33 : 00] Lord, our gracious God, show to us that in the depths of our hearts that we may be fully persuaded of it and that every one of us here may yield to that love.

Enable us to have this in our hearts as we come to sit at the Lord's table, remembering that great sacrificial love that Christ has shown to us.

O Lord, God, look upon us in mercy. Draw those who perhaps feel they are far away from you and may in reality be so far from you. Draw them to yourself. Those who perhaps feel that they are near to you but not yet quite there, we pray that you would draw them by your great love.

May every one of us today exalt the name of Jesus for the great dimensions of his love towards us. We ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen.

Now we sing to God's praise in Psalm 103 in Sing Psalms on page 135.

[34 : 10] And we sing there verses 1 to 11. Praise God, my soul, with all my heart, let me exalt his holy name. Forget not all his benefits.

His praise, my soul, in song proclaim. The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress. Your life he rescues from the grave and crowns you in his tenderness.

From the beginning to verse 11, to God's praise. Praise God, my soul, with all my heart, let me exalt his holy name.

He exalt his holy name. Forget not all his benefits. His praise, my soul, in song proclaim.

God bless you all name. The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress.

[35 : 21] your life he rescues from the grave and crowns you in his tenderness.

and crowns you in his tenderness. love you all and crowns you in his hands. I despise your deep desires, promise unending storms of good, so that just like the eagles' strength, your youthful vigor is renewed.

The Lord is no for righteous acts, and justice to the trodden ones.

To the hostess he made on his ways, his mighty deeds to Israel's sons.

His mighty deeds to Israel's sons. Lord is merciful and kind, to anger slow and full of grace.

[36 : 58] He will not constantly reprove, or in his anger hide his face.

He does not punish our mistreats. For in our sins their just reward, how great is love as I ask him. towards all those who fear the Lord. Towards all those who fear the Lord.

Lord is merciful and kind, to anger. Now could you turn with me to the passage in 1 Corinthians chapter 11, where we have our warrant for celebrating the Lord's Supper.

We'll read there from verse 23.

[38 : 19] 1 Corinthians chapter 12, verse 23. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also he took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner, will be guilty of profaning the body and blood of the Lord.

Let a person examine himself then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body, eats and drinks judgment on himself.

That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died. But if we judged ourselves truly, we would not be judged. But when we are judged by the Lord, we are disciplined, so that we may not be condemned along with the world.

[39 : 33] We are told here that we are to examine ourselves before taking part in the Lord's Supper. And often a mistake can be made about this because we are not told to examine ourselves to discover some kind of legalistic worthiness that we might have ourselves.

But we are told to examine ourselves to see if our attitude is right. In this context, the Apostle Paul was speaking particularly about the attitude of the Corinthians to their fellow Christians.

In verse 17 to 22, he was speaking about the fact that there were divisions there amongst them in Corinth. And they weren't showing love for one another as they ought to have.

But he developed that, beyond that, to speaking about examining ourselves to see particularly if our attitude to the Lord Jesus Christ was right.

Because if our attitude to him is right, then surely our attitude to our fellow Christians should be right. He spoke about discerning his body and blood.

[40 : 47] In other words, to understand the meaning of his death for us. Because he tells us to do this in remembrance of me.

We won't get any good from the Supper if we are doing it for the wrong reasons. If we are doing it simply as a religious ritual with some mysterious effect. Or we are doing it just as something that Christians are expected to do.

Or, even worse I think, to do it as something that you think that you are worthy of. Because the worthiness spoken of here is not worthiness in ourselves.

But it is about having an unworthy attitude. Or doing things in an unworthy manner. In other words, not regarding our fellow Christians as we ought.

As those who are dearly loved bought by the Lord Jesus Christ just as we are. Instead, we will get great blessing if we do this in remembrance of Jesus.

[41 : 49] Remembering him as the Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me. Even although the same one who said that could say that he was the chief of sinners.

And as we come here today, surely we are conscious of our own sin and failings and shortcomings. But his blood cleanses us from all unrighteousness. And it is his great death that we remember as we come here together today.

And through that, we will be blessed. We read that the Lord Jesus Christ on the night in which he was betrayed took bread and gave thanks.

Let us seek to follow his example. We come before you today, Lord, amazed that the Lord Jesus Christ on that night when he was betrayed, when he was given over to such a death, should give thanks.

Such was his great love. For he knew that in no other way, and by entering into such a death, could he redeem the world.

[43 : 10] Lord our God, as we think of the Lord Jesus Christ taking that bread in his hands, the bread, the symbol of that death, we seek also to give thanks to you today.

Not for the mere bread only, but for what it symbolizes. The bread and the wine symbolizing the death of the Lord Jesus Christ.

His body broken. His blood poured out. And all for sinners. We thank you for the great Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world.

Fill our hearts with thanksgiving to yourself for your great love to us in Christ Jesus. May we know the reality of that love as we sit around together and take the bread and the wine, appropriating to ourselves those symbols of your grace and love.

Even as we lay our hand of faith upon him, confessing our sins and accepting that he has died for us. May we know your presence with us.

[44 : 25] May we know your loving kindness in every way. May we know great blessing as we seek to obey his command, to do this in remembrance of me.

We ask all of this in Jesus' name and for his sake. Amen. We read in Isaiah chapter 53 that he was despised and rejected by men.

A man of sorrows and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not. Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows.

Yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

And the punishment that brought us peace was upon him. And by his wounds we are healed. We all like sheep have gone astray.

[45 : 31] Each of us has turned to his own way. And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was a man of sorrows because he carried our sorrows.

He was despised and rejected because he was being pierced for our transgressions. And crushed for our iniquities.

And so, as you remember the Lord Jesus Christ today, remember that it's your sins that were laid on him. And it's the punishment that was on him that has brought us peace.

In that passage we read in Isaiah chapter 53, there are these words, that his wounds, he are healed. That means that he knew by every drop of his blood, that took her down from the crown of thorns of his head, by every maceration of that cruel scourge, every day, every day, I will feel questionable.

But most of all, by the greatest wounds of all, that wound in his relationship with his father, that he is a daily native ear for us.

[46 : 55] My God, my God, why are you for safety? By his wounds, our spiritual believers and sorrow have healed.

By his wounds, our sins and iniquities have forgiven. Praise him with great praise. Worthy of the man who is slain, we receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory.

And praise. May that praise not just be the praise of our lips, the praise of our hearts and the praise of our lives, as we rise from this place remembering the Lord's death.

Let us seek to spread that great love, the dimensions of which we are thinking about today, so that others may come to know the height and depth and width and breadth and blood.

May we show forth the Lord's death as we come, not only in the Lord's Supper, but in our lives, may we do so depending upon him and his grace, may we do so.

[48 : 26] May we pray for you, may we pray for you. May we pray for you, our loving Heavenly Father, we pray that you would follow with your blessing, all that we have sought to do in your name.

We know that all our efforts, all our actions, all our deeds, are all tainted by sinfulness. It is impossible in this present life for us to make ourselves absolutely pure.

But we thank you that in your sight, we are completely justified. We are covered by the righteousness of Christ. And all that we have sought to do here that is inadequate in its own terms, is received by you and clothed with that righteousness, and accepted because of the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ, the perfect Lamb of God, who gave himself for us.

And so, may we go out from here with the assurance that we are accepted in the the Beloved. And we pray that as we seek to live our lives day by day, it may be on the basis of his great love to us.

That love that is showed by dying on the cross for sinners. We pray that we may continue to praise your name as we receive and benefit from that love each day.

[49 : 57] And may we also have a desire to share that with others. We'll here share together the bread and the wine, a symbol not only of our union with Christ and his death, but also a symbol of our union with one another.

May we continue to show that fellowship, that koinonia, that communion with one another in the days ahead. So that the congregation of your people here may show by clear example the love of Christ in the midst of this community.

And we pray that it may be an effective witness. We pray that just as your love was outgoing, reaching out to those who are far from you, may our love also reach out to those who at the present time may be far from us and far from you, but draw them by your love and faith.

And we pray for those here today who have observed and watching others taking part in the Lord's Supper. We thank you for their presence here. We thank you that your word and sacrament is a testimony also to them.

And we pray that you would give to them a love for the Lord Jesus Christ, so that they too may join with your people here. Lord, perhaps there are all different kinds of questions and doubts that may form in their minds, things that may seek to be keeping them away from this table and keeping them away from yourself.

[51 : 26] Lord, break down all those barriers. By your grace, softened love, break through them, and do great things in them and through them for your name's sake and for your glory.

So we ask all of these things in the precious name of Jesus and for his sake. Amen. Now we close the service by singing to God's praise the last three verses of Psalm 72 in the Scottish Psalter, page 314.

His name forever shall endure, last like the sun that shall. Men shall be blessed in him, and bless all nations. Shall be called to God's praise.

Father John, let them just do Blessed in heaven, blessed, all nations shall live home.

Now blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel.

[53 : 11] For me alone, the glorious world, in glory I excel.

Now blessed be the glorious name, through all eternity.

The whole earth is glorious. Amen.

So let it be. Amen. Amen. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with each one of you, now and forever. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[54 : 27] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.