

Understanding Anglican Liturgy: Part 1

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[0 : 0 0] Thank you. It is very good to be here. And yeah, two parts talk, maybe more. We're not sure how many parts this has, but we'll start and get as far as we can go, and then we will go no more.

So Anglican liturgy is participatory by nature, so feel free to participate. Chime in, ask a question, put your hand up. Rebukes and corrections are appropriate as we flow here.

What you need are two things, ideally. One would be the handout that you have received, this chart, and then the other would be actually the order of service for the communion service coming up, if you happen to have one.

Do you happen to have one? Do you have one of these? No? Some of you do. Could you grab a few, Alexandra, maybe for people? Thanks. We're going to come to that in a little bit. Let me tell you what I'm going to do today, and part two or three or however many parts this series has.

It is about understanding the Anglican liturgy. It seems that Alexandra is probably not alone in thinking, well, no one's really explained to us how this all works.

[1 : 1 2] And so for some of you, like in her case, coming from a different background, you didn't grow up with the prayer book tradition or the liturgical pattern of our services. So some explanation, a guided tour, so to speak, might be helpful.

For others of you who have been Anglicans potentially all your life, this is maybe so familiar that you aren't even thinking about what's going on anymore. We're just kind of cruising through.

So what I want to do is give you a kind of orientation, bird's-eye view of the structure, particularly today, of the communion service.

And I'll go as far as we can go. I'm not going to get to the communion proper, because that's a big topic that takes some more unpacking. That'll be down the road. And then at some point, I want to also unpack the morning prayer service, which are the two main services, of course, that most people go to.

Evening prayer is very similar to morning, if you are part of evening prayer. And just sort of say there is a pattern, there is a structure, there is a logic to these services.

[2 : 2 1] And we want to kind of unpack it a little bit and help you to appreciate what we have. By understanding it better.

The more we understand it, the more we can appreciate what actual treasure we actually have in our hands in the form of this little bulletin that takes us through the order of service.

And not only appreciate in a kind of aesthetic sense, but enter into with our hearts and minds and more fully participate in the service itself and benefit more from it by understanding and appreciating more of what we're really doing as we go.

So that's the game plan for what we'll try to do in this series. There's, I think, a lot to be said for the theological structure, in a sense, of the liturgy and the spiritual truth and spiritual formation that goes on by experiencing the liturgy.

And that's going to be my main focus. There's lots of other topics we could have that touch on the prayer book, the history of the prayer book, the making of the prayer book, the language of the prayer book, the beautiful language of the prayer book that so much is the work of Thomas Cranmer has been one of the most influential books, actually, in the English language.

[3 : 50] And you can't really understand, for instance, the poetic tradition that has come out of the English-speaking world without understanding the prayer book. You're going to miss a lot unless you actually know where it's coming from.

But I'm not a literary scholar. I'm not going to go down that road, nor am I an historian. You need Bruce Heinemarsch here for the whole history of the prayer book and its sources and what was Cranmer doing, where was he drawing from, and so on.

I'm a humble theologian, trying to be humble anyway. I aspire to be a humble theologian. I'm a mere theologian. And I'm going to try to unpack this theologically for you and show how it all works, and then you can enter into it.

Now, in that regard, I am entirely in the shadow of and following in the footsteps of my own teacher, J.I. Packer, who's right here with us.

Thank you, Dr. Packer, for being here. You probably anticipate what I'm going to do. He probably has this all worked out in his mind exactly where I'm going, not only for this talk, but the next one.

[4 : 57] So what I have... So this is a famous philosopher once said that the history of Western philosophy is a series of footnotes to Plato.

I have a series of footnotes to J.I. Packer to offer because I'm taking the main insight that Dr. Packer has put in circulation for many, many years and trying to unpack it a bit.

You probably have heard him say, maybe you have, some of you who have been students at Regent have heard him say that he is a Packer by name and Packer by nature. This was the man who wrote the book called Concise Theology, after all, and I still have his own lecture handouts where on one single page, there is so much packed onto one page, you wouldn't believe it.

So I'm unpacking Packer for you. Now, that's my job. And the main insight that Dr. Packer has put into circulation goes back, for instance, maybe earlier, he can tell us himself, but a little booklet that he did in 1966 called The Gospel in the Prayer Book.

It floats around on the internet various places. You might be able to find it. We probably have an original copy in the library. Our librarian, Cindy Alders, is here. Maybe it's there.

[6 : 22] But I'm going to try to unpack the sort of main insight Dr. Packer has and show how it works in more detail, both at a bird's eye view level and then also at a piece-by-piece-by-piece level.

The assumption that I make is that what we're doing in the communion service or the morning prayer service is not any kind of hodgepodge of bits and pieces, that there's actually a very clear logic to it, if I can use that word.

There is a path, an order, a route that we take. It has a beginning and a middle and an end. It has a definite flow. And we need to sort of stop for a minute, slow down, and see what's going on.

Just before I get you into the Packer logic here that I'm going to unpack, I'll use this analogy. The communion service especially, maybe this analogy works, because after all, it's a meal.

We often don't think of the communion service as a meal, but it is a shared communal meal. So think about the communion service as a banquet and a kind of lavish, long-playing banquet of many, many courses.

[7 : 43] The Chinese banquet, some of you are familiar with, that has eight courses, and they just keep rolling and rolling and rolling, and you figure you've eaten enough, and then more food comes. Well, with the communion service, here's one of my analogies, which is it is a very lavish, rich banquet.

Each individual dish along the way, from beginning to finish, is incredible, actually, if you stop and slow down and think about that dish. But the banquet kind of just rolls along.

It's like we have a very wonderful first course, but you're consuming it pretty quickly, and then the waiter is there to take your plate away, and then very quickly, they've got another plate in front of you, and just when you finish that one down and you're barely swallowing it down, oh, there's another plate.

It's right in front of you, and it just keeps on going. So I'm one of the ones that wishes we might actually slow down the pace a little bit and allow a little bit more digestion room as the liturgy goes on and on, because I think it helps to sort of pause and digest, absorb.

That's what digestion is, is absorption. What really is happening here? What have we really said? What is the significance of what we've really done just there? And how does this actually lead us to the next step, which leads us to the next step, which leads us to the next step?

[9 : 05] So I would wish our banquet to be even more leisurely, one of those, oh, three, four-hour services, maybe, that we're in no hurry about.

No. Three- or four-hour banquets, lots of digestion time, lots of room for more. But that's kind of what we're going to do in this little series, is kind of slow down the pace a little bit and look at each of the courses along the way.

But first, let's look at the whole kind of menu. And let me do that by sort of borrowing from Dr. Packer particularly. So I have a kind of interpretive key here, which is really Packer's interpretive key of what's going on in the service.

But let me just quote you from Dr. Packer from 1966. And his statement goes like this, speaking particularly of the communion service.

He says this, like most masterpieces, the prayer book communion service has a basic structure that is extremely simple, just three repeats of a sin, grace, faith cycle, like three turns of a screw each going further than the last in fixing the gospel in our hearts and drawing out our response to it.

[10 : 28] The second adds to the first a sharpened application. The third adds to the second a sacramental confirmation. The service is built up thus.

Classic Packer prose packed in there very tight. And that logic of three cycles of sin, grace, faith is the interpretive key.

But I want to just pause for a minute before we launch right into that by drawing attention to what he says here. Each going farther than the last in fixing the gospel in our hearts.

Pause for a moment and think about references you may have heard in the liturgy to our hearts. This is the part where you stop and think for a minute.

The heart of the matter in Anglican liturgy is the human heart. There is a persistent focus in the liturgy upon our hearts. Some years ago, Dr. Packer did a learner's exchange talk years ago, ten or more years ago, on that very theme.

[11 : 45] How many of you were here for that? At least a few people remember. There you go. You can look it up on the website and listen to it as I did recently. But the idea behind this service and this liturgy is a shaping and a transformation of our hearts.

So, let's just start with a couple of little examples. and I'll let you fill in the words. Almighty God, to whom all all desires known and from no secrets are hidden.

Okay? And when we come to the Ten Commandments, we say, Lord, have mercy upon us and write your law in our hearts. And in the confession of sin, we say, we sincerely repent with heartfelt sorrow.

And when it comes to the communion service, we say, lift up your hearts. And as we've just had, for instance, a couple of collects that you may know in Advent, grant the ministers and stewards of your mysteries may likewise make ready your way by turning the hearts of the disobedient toward the wisdom of the just.

and on and on it goes. There are multiple, multiple, multiple versions of this reference to the heart.

[13 : 11] I was doing a little research on some of the collects and here's the one that most of you miss because it is the collect for the presentation the day, February 2nd, the presentation of Christ in the temple.

It doesn't usually fall on a Sunday so it's not what we're doing liturgy together, but Almighty and ever-living God we humbly pray as your only begotten Son was this day presented in the temple in the substance of our flesh incarnation so we may be presented to you with pure and clean hearts by Jesus Christ our Lord.

A lot going on doctrinally there but I won't go into it but the emphasis upon hearts is where this lands. So I'm going to give you a few kind of little guided clues to overall themes to look at and one of the themes to listen for and watch for and pay attention to is this constant reference to the heart.

The language of our hearts and the transformation of our hearts. That's what this is about. We'll have cause to say more about that as it goes.

The other things to say I think are that as I've mentioned already the service is participatory. This is common prayer and so the idea of common is communal and the Cranmer logic of Archbishop Cranmer who put this all together in the 16th century was prayer should be common and communal amongst the people.

[14 : 45] There should be participation by the people so we as congregation are not passive observers. We're not an audience going to a show and we're not just watching the action which the priest does.

We are a part of the action. We are thoroughly a part of the action. So the other thing to watch as we go is the participatory nature of that and the participatory nature of common prayer i.e. all of us as a community of congregation joining together is very often what I'll call dialogical.

It has a kind of call and response structure to it. If you're familiar with gospel music any of you gospel music fans there? Yeah? A few? Some of you are looking at me like what is he talking about?

If you don't know about gospel music call and response you just haven't lived. But that could be another learner's exchange and I'm not an expert on that. You'll have to get someone else who is.

But particularly it is in the kind of structure that the service has where fundamentally God speaks and we listen and then we speak back in response to what we have heard from God and ask God to listen to us.

[16 : 08] That's the fundamental structure of this whole thing. Right? God speaks. God speaks first. God speaks his own word of grace as he reveals himself to us.

We listen. And we then having listened speak back and we ask God to hear us for instance in the structure of the prayer. Does that make sense? And that is also that means that's a macro structure of the whole experience.

So think about it as we are coming together in worship to give praise and honor and glory to God but we're doing that fundamentally in a posture of reception and hearing and then we're actually responding as an exercise of faith and trust and obedience.

And when we speak we say, Lord, hear our prayer. Right? We're asking God to listen to us as we have heard his word and responded to it in faith.

That's also true at a more micro level as individual pieces go by. So the very beginning of the service the way that we do it at St. John's and the way that typically it has gone in the liturgy has been opening sentences which are dialogical.

[17 : 20] Right? The priest would start and we then respond. Right? In the Ten Commandments the Ten Commandments are read and we respond Lord have mercy and write these laws upon our hearts our hearts again.

Right? So it's our response again. When the scriptures are read the reader concludes by saying this is the word of the Lord and we say thanks be to God.

Right? Lord in your mercy hear our prayer. Okay. So you get the dialogue. So there's dialogue throughout. There's dialogue at the beginning in the middle there's dialogue around the readings where we respond there's dialogue in the prayers of the people as one of us actually in our St. John's tradition leads those prayers as we respond hear our prayer.

So it's a gospel shaped service point number one. This is a service that is meant to embody and reenact the gospel. That's what actually the sacraments do.

They're all visual reenactments embodiments of the gospel. Right? So the communion service that we're going to focus on is about that gospel being articulated proclaimed again to us and us responding to it in faith.

[18 : 38] So it's gospel shaped from start to finish. It has a certain logic. It is common prayer which means it's participatory in a dialogical mode.

Okay? Are you with me? All right. Pause there. Questions? Comments? Rebukes or corrections? Does this make sense?

Yes. You're with me? Okay. Some of you have been thinking why didn't anyone say this before? Okay. Let me just unpack a little bit this cycle this gospel cycle of sin grace faith.

Okay? This is the Packer insight we just unpack a little bit. What do we mean by that? Well, the gospel logic of Christ as Lord and Savior who comes to rescue us from our sins and bring us to eternal life is embodied in the way that this whole thing works from start to finish.

Dr. Packer's point in this little booklet is actually that's the way all these services work. That's Cranmer's logic. But I'm just going to refrain from going into the ordination service or the burial service or other things like that and just focus on what we're doing here.

[19 : 49] So, sin grace faith. Right? So, the idea is the prayer book is very forthright and clear in saying that we as his people gathered before him are sinners in need of salvation.

We are in need of forgiveness. And we never actually outgrow the need to confess our sins before God, acknowledge before him in humility our true status, and repent as we are sinners.

sinners. Now, none of what I just said is politically correct. It's very politically incorrect. But there is a forthright realism of this that I would want to stand behind theologically, so would Dr. Packer, I think, that that is actually the truth about us.

You may be a lovely, good-looking, wonderful group of people here today, but the prayer book says that we're all sinners, in need of grace and mercy. And it's a very good reminder that that is there.

And it comes up in this communion service three different times. First run, second run, and third run through. So it's not something that you just sort of nod at at the beginning and say, oh, yes, nice, nice, nice, I've heard that before, on we go.

[21 : 10] No, it takes you to that, and it takes you deeper into that and applies that, and then it takes you into the embodiment of that, in the communion proper. Now, we say, you know, we've erred and strayed from our ways like lost sheep.

Lost sheep are pretty stupid. Sheep are not highly intelligent. They're lovable, for sure, but they're not very smart. And so, we are reporting that we're like them.

we also report at one point in the liturgy that there is no health in us. No health in us. You ever thought about what we're saying when we say that?

There is no, well, that's not a medical report. Some of you are doctors here, including my dear wife. That's not a physical report of our annual checkup at the doctor's office, right?

There is no health in us spiritually. In other words, there is no spiritual life that comes from within ourselves, our own resources, that makes us pleasing to God.

[22 : 15] We need the health of the gospel and the transformation and healing power of the gospel to allow health to be in us, to live in God's presence and in fellowship with Him.

So, there is no health in us. So, this is very blunt, very direct stuff. And it's very easy to just like skate over it pretty quickly. But I want to say that there's something incredibly important about that reminder that the prayer book does so forthrightly, plainly, honestly.

It puts language around this that has depth and substance and quite a lot of beauty, actually. Some of you have been in other church traditions, perhaps even fairly recently.

And I'm a visitor of Mary, many church traditions in my role at the college. And Janet and I have been in other church traditions outside of the Anglican tradition for various places we've lived over the years.

But very many churches, including very many evangelically oriented churches, rather ironically, often have no element of the confession of sin.

[23 : 21] It just doesn't happen. Even on communion days, which are sometimes few and far between in these evangelical contexts, evangelical churches, as much as I admire them in many ways, here's a real gap, which is they don't actually pay a lot of attention to the need to forgive.

There's a kind of assumption, well, we're fine, and we just want to go on being finer. And am I right?

Have you felt this, noticed this? So I don't want to be too harsh, but I do want to underscore the real value of having a sin-grace-faith cycle.

And the reminder of the true reality about us is that we are needy and in need of forgiveness, and we never outgrow it. Now, on your handout, I have a little line here from Dr. Packer.

At the very bottom, one grows into the prayer book, one never outgrows it, which is a very astute comment. I'm trying in this series to help you grow more into it, but my words are not the experience of worship in it.

[24 : 29] Okay? I'm just trying to help you in that direction. His point is about the ongoing experience of it. You've never outgrown. You're not fine, and then there's going on to being finer.

Right? One never outgrows it. We need that reminder constantly to draw us back to that true reality. So that's what's going on in the sin element of this.

Sin, grace, faith. I don't think that there's a kind of morbid fascination with this, because it is always answered with grace. Right? This is the Reformation doctrine of justification by faith put into ordered worship.

That's what Cranmer is actually doing here. Right? I don't know if you realize that, but this is what it is. This is core Reformation stuff. Cranmer got that Reformation logic right down, and he put it in liturgical form, and hence, in a way, this is a slight digression, but maybe not too far slight, this is the most important theological book in the Anglican tradition, because it embodies this Reformation logic liturgically for all of us to enter into.

So grace is the reminder that God has proclaimed good news to us in Christ, that Christ has come to save us from our sins and bear them on the cross and rise from the dead for our life with him, and that grace is the drumbeat that goes on over and over and over, answering and responding to all of our confessions of sin.

[26 : 05] And the communion proper when we come to it is meant to remind us of that amazing feat of the cross to bear our sins and Christ to stand in our place.

And we are to gratefully receive all of the benefits of that passion, to use another prayer book phrase. We are to enter into all of the benefits of his passion. That is us as responders receiving then by faith, sin, grace, faith.

So let's just use one little example, which is what we say in the confession. Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who in his great mercy has promised.

There we go. You didn't know this was going to be a quiz, did you? It's something of a quiz. I'm just keeping you on your toes. Promise forgiveness of sins to all those who sincerely repent and with true faith turn to him.

Have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you in all goodness, bring you to everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

[27 : 19] You've heard that, haven't you? That's an announcement of grace, responding to our confession of sin, right? Who in his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins.

That is the gospel. It is the promise of God that we are laying hold of with our faith, right? It's sort of the hands by which we receive and accept, right?

In his great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins to all those who sincerely repent and with true faith turn to him. Confession of our sins, true faith turning to him.

That's the response of faith. Pardon and deliver you from all your sins is gospel promise, right? Confirm and strengthen you in all goodness is that looking forward to a life as a forgiven believer in this good news, right?

And bring you to everlasting life is the ultimate destination of this liturgy in orienting our hearts towards eternal life and a communion and fellowship with God forever.

[28 : 21] That's also another piece, by the way, that's a recurring theme in here. Our life now, change, transformed, and live faithfully, but a pathway to a life forever with God.

And that's another thing that many liturgies do not include and many non-liturgical traditions omit, which is part of gospel promise. It is part and parcel of it, inseparably part of it.

We sometimes get a little bit too earthly-minded to be much heavenly good. So, just that horizon of eternal life with God is always there and often these prayers conclude in that direction.

So, if you watch the sort of flow of things in this prayer, there is a sin, grace, faith cycle, right, within this little prayer right here, right, within this absolution that is pronounced.

It is gospel proclamation in response to the recognition of our sin so that we might live, turn in faith, and then live in faith and dwell in faith forever.

[29 : 23] It's all right there in that gospel proclamation. James is here as one of the clergy. The honor and privilege of clergy is to simply announce that, right, to announce that to us as the good news which is scriptural good news.

Another thing that I won't do because this series would get very, very, very, very, very, very, very long is if I unpacked all the biblical references along the way. But there's, you know, essentially a compendium of scripture references would take up a whole big fat book of all the illusions that actually the prayer book is making, right?

So I can give you for every phrase there plenty of biblical references to say this is actually where this all comes from, right? It's all there. Yeah? Does that exist somewhere? A book that would give?

Not that I know of. Can we sign up for that course yet? Of course. That will be very long. And the faith, sin, grace, sorry, yeah?

I just wanted, I don't know when I heard this, but Dr. Packer has an acronym, well, grace is God's riches and Christ's expense.

[30 : 38] Yes. And so I, I hope it's in my head. Yeah. Which is a beautiful summary. Yeah. See? Packer. Packer by name, Packer by nature, it takes four letters, five letters, that's it, it's all there.

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. So the other thing about faith, the sin, grace, faith, let's turn to the faith piece of this, right? It is fundamentally the act of our response.

Okay? It's response to gospel, it is response to the announcement of the gospel to us, and it is, it is expressed in the service in many and various ways.

There's not just one way that that faith is response. So during the whole sort of shape of the whole service from start to finish, there are contours. There is a movement around that.

Beginning with the confession, right? But praise, right? The supreme way that we respond in faith is an expression of the praise of God as he is worthy of being praised.

[31 : 39] The wonder of forgiveness is that it sets us free to be able to praise. We who are not geared that way naturally, right? In our own sinful, fallen, broken selves, we are not oriented to praise, but the wonder of the gospel is that it turns our hearts to praise.

So praise and thanks for the joy of the gospel, for sin forgiven. One of the ways that that happens is the sort of outburst of praise after the communion is properly over in the gloria, right?

The gloria toward the end, that is nothing more than a sheer outburst of praise. We're supposed to be lifting the roof with that. We should actually be annoying our neighbors because we're so loud and so exuberant and so heartfelt.

I had friends that are pastors of another church and on Easter Sunday, it was sort of a warm day, they had their windows open and they told me a few days later that the neighbors actually came and complained because their Easter service was too noisy for the neighborhood.

I thought, that's wonderful, you must be doing something totally right. So, I mean, Anglicans like decorum and propriety and so on.

[32 : 54] But the glory is not stiff upper lip time, folks. This is sheer outburst of praise. Because of what? Because we have celebrated the glorious gospel of Christ giving himself for us, God's riches, Christ's expense.

We are the beneficiaries of that. We have entered into that and be fed at the table by Christ and therefore, Alleluia! Right? So, that's one of those things.

Another response of faith is responding and reciting the words of the creed. Right? That is an act of faith. Credo means I believe. It's a confession of faith.

So, part of this response of faith to what we have heard in the scriptures which precede the creed, notice, more on that later, is to confess our faith. That's one of the ways that we express and respond appropriately.

We name those great truths of scripture that are compressed and digested into the creed. We recommit in our prayers to living a life that is pleasing to God.

[33 : 58] We offer ourselves in God's service. The offertory is not just a way to collect up money, by the way. It's a way to offer ourselves in faith into God's service.

Right? Have you ever thought about that? It's not just a practical necessity that we will abolish when it comes that all of us are just donating online. Right?

So it's not just a technicality to be done with. Right? It very deliberately is where it is as an act of our self-offering. It's a symbolic enactment of our self-offering to God as a response of faith.

And of course, prayer is that way as well. It's a response of faith. It is trust and looking in God's mercy and grace and provision to provide for all of our needs and all of the needs of the world that far surpass our ability to fix them and figure them out for ourselves.

All those and many others are expressions of faith, responses of gratitude and trust and obedience in response to this great and marvelous gospel.

[35 : 05] Okay? So those are kind of some highlights. That's how the sin-grace-faith cycle works. Right? So you'll have that cycle go through three times in the service of communion.

Therefore, you have this very Packer-esque compressed chart where I've got you a kind of guide. This is your road map to the service.

And let me just say a little bit about how this works. What am I doing on this little handout? Well, you can probably see the logic of it. Down the left-hand side, I've got these three sequences or cycles, as Dr. Packer calls them.

My analysis, and this is mine and not Packer's, so I don't want to saddle him with this. He might not agree with my way of mapping this entirely. But I think there's a sort of introduction and conclusion around the three cycles.

And so, let's just think about these elements at a macro level and then we'll start to dig into some individual ones. Right? So, notice how we begin. We begin with this dialogical opening which is typically called the acclamation.

[36 : 20] And you might want to have your order of service with you to sort of look along here at what we're doing. It is Eastertide and therefore it's raise the roof time in the Christian calendar.

Lent is not the raise the roof time but Easter is. So, let's just do this. Alleluia. Christ is risen. The Lord is risen indeed.

Alleluia. Semi-enthusiastic. Yeah, that was like a B. Yeah. Yeah. But, you see the idea here.

It's a dialogical opening. And what have we done? This is the grace of God announced to us. This is grace. Right? Typically, the opening acclamation will be a declaration of praise or of the grace of God to which we will respond in some way.

That's typically how it works. There is grace and faith right there, right off the bat. Right off the bat. Right off the bat. To orient us like, what are we doing again?

[37 : 25] Where are we again? Oh, I've walked into a church. I'm in a congregation. This congregation is about worship. What is actually going on here? Oh, the first thing is actually an announcement of grace and a declaration of praise, usually explicitly from Scripture.

So, the very first thing we're doing is we're listening to God and we're responding in faith and trust. right off the bat. There's the whole logic of the whole service in the first 30 seconds.

Maybe less than 30. So then, there's a hymn. Often, the Anglican tradition has started with the hymn and then had this acclamation. We tend to do the acclamation and then the hymn. Maybe James knows why we do it that way.

It's fine. But notice what we're doing in the hymn. Typically, the opening hymn is praise, adoration. It is how great thou art. It's not so much about our response.

It's not so much about what we need to do because we're not in the logical flow of the service yet to that point. We are typically at the, this is how grand and glorious God is.

[38 : 31] Do you remember? Right? This is the recitation of what God has said and done. Do you remember? Enter into that. Enter into that praise. Right?

Then there is a greeting in the way that we do things here. Right? You see what we're going to do or have done. Jesus shall reign where the sun. That's gospel. That's declaration. That's reminder.

His kingdom stretched from shore to shore puts our minds way beyond today onto the eternal purposes of God and the reign of God over all things for all time.

Hallelujah. That's probably not what you were thinking about when you were brushing your teeth, getting ready to come, dodging the marathon runners, hitting a few of them along the way.

Yeah, having the police take down your information. Yeah. So it reorients our minds. Right? That's what that hymn is doing. It's marvelous. So then a welcome. And how do you think about the welcome?

[39 : 33] I say on my little chart it is shared faith acknowledged. It could be like, oh, glad to see you today. You have a lovely tie on. Or I like your new sweater.

But that's really not the point of what we're doing. It is to recognize and welcome together people who are sharing in this praise of God and who are journeying with us as our brothers and sisters.

So it's not a social time so much as it is, oh, look at these people that God has sent to be my companions in common worship. Look at these people who are also needy sinners like me who are called to receive the gospel and then sing God's praise.

So it's an exercise of recognition by faith that we are this community that is doing this thing together. And it's also the recognition that I need you and you need me to be the body of Christ.

as strange or as odd as that may be. As strange or as odd as the person in the next pew may seem to you. Because we're all rather odd, aren't we?

[40 : 47] Really? And it's not our choice to assemble this particular crew of odd bods together. It's God's doing. So as we do this thing together we're doing it with others that are very different from us but to recognize them as also a gift to us by God's own decision and grace that we would enter into something together.

That's how I want you to think about that particular piece. So then we come into sequence number one very quickly. The collect for purity. Right?

What's that all about? Sin acknowledged. Grace sought after. Right? Then you come to the Ten Commandments. They're all recited in the way that we do it.

Sometimes liturgies use a summary of the law, the great commandment of loving God and neighbor. Here what we're doing is we're actually reading them all out which should be a very sobering thing for us.

If you really pay attention the idea here is to enter into your own reflection upon how you stand in relationship to those commandments.

[41 : 59] It's not just to say yeah, yeah, yeah I heard those before let's kind of get on here with something. No. And we actually slow down the pace here which I appreciate. So we don't do them all in one go.

There's a dialogical structure. Right? And we're asking for mercy and inclining our hearts. More on that later. Let's just keep going for the moment. The collect of the day typically has the sin, grace, faith, logic baked into it.

And we'll say more about collects as we go. Okay? Then you come to the Bible reading which is grace. God's revelation. God's speaking to us in Scripture.

That's what we believe about Scripture. That's the classic Anglican view. God's word written is then read to us. We respond in this dialogical way. There typically is a structure as you'll see here from this Sunday of Old Testament, Psalm, and New Testament.

Typically the Anglican tradition has always had the gospel, a gospel as in four gospels read in the communion service. And then as an act of faith. So that's grace. Grace.

[43 : 04] Grace. We are hearing and then we're responding. Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God. Okay? So grace comes to us as God's word is read. And the creed is, again, grace.

It is the summary statement of scriptural teaching about who God is and what God has done and what God will do. It's actually God-centric from start to finish.

It's Trinitarian from start to finish. It's the biblical summary. It's a summary of biblical grace, if you could put it that way. That's what it is. It's not just a kind of made-up random assortment of stuff.

It's meant to capture in summary what the core of the gospel is really all about. So, the creed is dependent logically upon the readings.

Then comes the sermon. The sermon in the sequence is the word of God spoken to us, announced to us, explained to us, applied to us.

[44 : 07] That's what it is. It's grace as the speaker, preacher, is God's mouthpiece to bring God's word to the people so that we will respond with faith, so that we will hear and receive and obey that word and live according to it in the assurances and promises of the gospel and in the aspiration of a life pleasing to God.

then the response to that is prayers. Does this all make logical sense if you actually stop and think about it? So, constant Ewan prayers for the world.

In light of everything that we have heard about the grace and goodness and provision of God as it has been read in the scriptures, as we have recited it in the creed, which is a kind of theological ballast to the whole exercise, as the sermon has brought it to us, we then, as God's people, and it's wonderful that it is a member of the congregation who comes forward to lead us as the congregation in those prayers, that we then say, Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

Again, we have heard God's word, we are now speaking back to God in response, we are asking him to hear us. We are not presuming that God does hear us. It is by his grace and through the mediation of Jesus Christ that he hears us.

Good news of the gospel. So then, offertory, I've already said something about the offertory, faith enacted in praise and in giving. It's again, our response to this narration of what we've had that we response by offering ourselves.

[45 : 47] That's some of it. And that means symbolically offering what's in our, well, I'm not going to offer the whole thing, but symbolically what's in our pocket.

it's, right? So, the offertory happens. Listen to what we're doing coming up in this service. To the name of our salvation, law and honor, let us pay, which for many a generation hid in God's foreknowledge lay.

But with holy exaltation, may we sing aloud today. Oh, see, it's with me on the loud thing. That's good. Sing aloud. Sing it out. Declare it. Let the world hear.

Okay? Then, an offertory prayer. Right? Appropriate. It's our response. It's an offering to God. There needs to be that offertory prayer. Then we're into the next cycle.

So, my analysis is that's sort of cycle one. Notice how sin, grace, faith has been at work there. Very thoroughly at work there. You've got another one. You've got a call to confession.

[46 : 49] All you who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, seek to live in love and peace with your neighbors, intend to lead the new life. Following the commandments of God, walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, make your humble confession to Almighty God.

Okay? So, there's the start of another sin, grace, faith cycle, particularly by an invitation. And behind it, of course, this is the good news of the gospel, right, that's going to be proclaimed to us.

It's assuming that that's where we're going. Truly and earnestly repent of your sins. Seek to live in love and peace with your neighbors. So, this isn't just your own private possession, but this faith of yours is to be lived in the world.

And it's also a calling here to faith, to a new life, following the commandments of God and walking in His holy ways. So, the aspiration here is not simply a moment, it's the aspiration of a life and a lifetime.

Very interesting. So, then there is the confession that we all know, right? It starts out by recognizing who God is, maker and judge of all people, acknowledge, grieve over our sins, heartfelt sorrow for our transgressions.

[48 : 07] There it goes, right? A very deep, robust, thorough expression of confession, right? We've already acknowledged our sin in the first cycle.

We're going back deeper now and we're applying it to our own selves very profoundly through these words. The burden of them is more than we can bear, more than we can bear on our own shoulders, right?

Then there is absolution, a word of grace. This is gospel, pure gospel, right? Heavenly Father in His great mercy has promised forgiveness of sins all those who heartily repent.

What does heartily repent mean? Fully. Fully. Sincerely.

Wholeheartedly. Wholeheartedly. All good. Terrific. From the heart. Right? Full-hearted. Heartfelt. Heartily repent. And turn to Him with true faith.

[49 : 06] Right? Have mercy upon you, pardon and deliver you from all your sins, confirm and strengthen you all goodness, bring you to everlasting life through Jesus Christ our Lord. That is just good news of an absolution that is grace expressed and gospel proclaimed.

Yeah? I don't know if this is the right spot for this question, but why is it we? Why don't I say me? Because it's common prayer, brother. But I don't know that you've said it.

I know that I have. Oh, you can assume that. Yeah. Pretty certainly we have. That's part of Cranmer's theological supposition. We're all in this together.

Yeah. It's like in the Lord's Prayer also. Right? It's not singulars, but plurals we use in the Lord's Prayer. You may have daily bread, but you may not. But we all together are dependent upon God's provision for daily bread.

So, yeah. I have a comment on that. Yeah. I grew up in the non-liturgical tradition, and I think in most, I think this is probably true in most non-liturgical traditions, that if you go to the service, you will hear the word I a lot more often than you will in this liturgical tradition.

[50 : 22] Interesting. And to me, that is one of the most important things about the liturgical tradition, because what it does is ground our community in the fact that we are shared acceptors of God's grace through Jesus Christ.

Yeah. I grew up in the Mennonite church, which has a very strong tradition of community, but very often it's because we have a shared history, we have a shared experience, even we have a shared theology.

But it's not necessarily that we have that shared experience of being saved by grace. And in that tradition, actually, they have more lay worship leaders, and I happen to be one of them in one of those churches, and my thing was always, you know, you've got to say we, you don't say I, because we're here as a community, and that's the basis of our community.

Yeah. And I, in the tradition I grew up, in what you were saying previously about the, how often communion occurs. Yeah.

Once a month. But I, then we went to a church, different branch of Mennonite, where it was quarterly. Mm-hmm. And there were people there who came from traditions where it happened once a year.

[51 : 42] Mm-hmm. And in that tradition, it was a really big deal. Mm-hmm. And like, you had to prepare for a week to go to communion. Right. And if you weren't in, you know, in good relationship with everybody in the community, you couldn't go to communion.

Yeah. And people used it to make statements. You know, and very often, I think, not very often, but it did happen that people would say, in their minds, I think, you know, he has done what he should not have done.

Right. And he has done, has not done what she should have done, and I am offended. Right. Right. That makes a wonderful prayer, doesn't it? Yeah. Very comfortable.

Yeah. No, all that's a very good reminder. This is common prayer. We are in this together, and it gives us words to say on behalf of others as well as on ourselves.

So, let me just move on here. Then we're up to comfortable words. And again, here's an archaic word, comfortable, comfortable, that it doesn't mean what we mean by comfortable.

[52 : 51] We mean like, those chairs are not very comfortable. We mean a nice, cushy armchair is much more comfortable. But this is the old-fashioned meaning of comfort, which is strengthening.

Fort, right? Comfortable. Fortis. It's the Latin. So, comfortable words are comforting words, reassuring words. And what words do we actually recite here?

They're just plain out scripture words. Right? It's not anybody's interpretation. We're just reading from Matthew, from John, from Timothy, from 1 John. There you go.

It's proclamation. Not just once, not just twice, not just three times. You think three was the perfect Trinitarian number or something? No, four times.

There's four of these statements. All of gospel truth. Right? Just so that we don't miss it. You could actually get away with one, theologically speaking, because the point would be made.

[53 : 53] But this is a place where the pace slows down a little bit and we linger. We're kind of repeating the same thing from four different vantage points. Right?

Very interesting. Makes us linger on the gospel. Makes us hear and receive gospel truth right then and there. Right? So it's not just what the priest has said to announce absolution.

Where does all that come from? What is it grounded upon? What do we rest our hearts upon? The very words of God. Okay? Does that make sense?

Now usually, and we don't do this at St. John's, maybe James, you know why, but usually in the Anglican flow, this is when there is the passing of the peace. Right? Which again is not a social time.

What is it? What is it meant to be? See, we don't do it so you don't know.

[54 : 53] James, putting you on the spot, brother. No, no, no, it's, there's probably more to say about this, but it is about our faith expressed. So, we actually now know that we have peace with God through Jesus Christ.

Exactly. And that's in part why we don't share the peace of St. John's. You do need to have peace with one another, but it's principally and ultimately with the Father, through the Son, and by the Spirit.

Correct. Correct. It's a bit of a declaration, but it's our affirmation that that's what's actually just happening. Yeah. Yeah. So, excellent. Thank you for that. Theologically, what's going on here is this is a sharing and an entering into what you have just heard and received and saying, this is our reality.

We do, we now come together to celebrate the peace of God that we have on account of the forgiveness of Christ and we share that peace with one another. This is who we are. We're a bunch of forgiven sinners together because of what we have just heard, because of what we have just received.

That's the nature of this community. This is who we are. So, again, it's not like, oh, well, hi, I like your tie. It's like, no, we're the people who are forgiven together. Right? This is who we are.

[56 : 06] We're the people who have received forgiveness from God. Isn't that good news? The peace of the Lord be with you and with you. Right? That's the idea behind it. Okay? Which then leads, where does it lead?

Thanksgiving. Just think about that for a minute. Where does this all lead to you? It leads you to a great Thanksgiving. Lift up your hearts. We're back to hearts again.

Aha! And then, we lift them to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. So, this is a thanks and praise moment. This is the transition. Scripture teaches us.

What do we do? We remind ourselves we're hearers of God's word. We're responding to God's word. Scripture teaches us always and everywhere to give thanks to you. And on and on it goes.

Right? And then, holy, holy, holy, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. So, there's an invitation to gratitude. An invitation to the expression of heartfelt faith as forgiven sinners.

[57 : 11] Right then and there. This is the transition moment that leads you into the third cycle. Right? Right? Confident in the gospel. Praising God.

Thankful. Recognizing who God is. Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Glory to you. We're coming before the holy God in a new and different enacted way in cycle three.

Right? But we just don't barge right on. This is very significant. We've been through two of these cycles. We've had a kind of loud acclamation of gospel forgiveness and the peace of God on account of that grace.

But, before we just charge right on, what do we do? The magnificent prayer of humble access. We do not presume to come to this your table, merciful Lord, merciful Lord, trusting in our own righteousness.

Because the temptation of sinners is self-righteousness. And thinking, we're okay and we just have to get okayer. Right? But in your abundant and great mercies, which we've had narrated to us, that we've been dwelling on.

[58 : 28] Right? We are not even worthy to gather up the crumbs under your table. You know the biblical reference there, don't you? Yeah? But you are the same Lord who always delights in showing mercy.

In other words, that is the character of God. He is a merciful, compassionate, gracious, forgiving God. How about that? Grant us, therefore, gracious Lord, so to eat the flesh of your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and drink his blood, that our sinful bodies, our sinful bodies, may be made clean by his body, our souls washed through his most precious blood.

We have sinful bodies, sinful minds, sinful hearts, sinful souls. We need to be washed. We need to be cleansed. Okay? That we may forever dwell in him and he and us, fellowship and communion as a gospel promise.

Whew! That's strong stuff. Right? That is strong stuff. Then, over to the prayer of consecration, as it goes.

I won't unpack this thoroughly, but there is sin and grace and faith all confessed together just as it has all been expressed as needy people in the prayer of humble access.

[59 : 45] So the whole sin, grace, faith cycle is baked into the prayer of consecration, recognition of who we are, of the grace and the once offered Christ on the cross, and our response of faith, which is coming to that table.

Partakers, yeah, maybe, that we may be partakers of the most blessed body and blood. We are receivers of this gift of grace, the very enactment of the gospel, again, right before our eyes in symbolic form.

Okay? So I'm not going to go through all the rest of that right now. We're running out of time. But on a further episode, episode two of our Netflix adventure here, my production budget's very low, but we can make a few handouts, you know, every episode of The Crown costs \$10 million, this costs \$1, you know, whatever.

Lamb of God, you take away the sin of the world, the honest day here, what is that? That's recitation of gospel promise, again, in case we've forgotten about it.

It's like a page before, if we've lost our way, it reminds us again, Lamb of God, have mercy upon us. What do we need? We need mercy. What is God doing?

[61 : 05] Taking away the sin of the world. What are we reenacting? Right here, our own need of mercy, and God's taking away the sin of the world through Christ on the cross. What's the result of that is peace, right?

Grant us your peace. Not our peace, not world peace, your peace. Grant us your peace. The choir will sing something to help us enter into all of that, right?

And then we will come after the reception of communion to the Lord's Prayer, page 11. the Lord's Prayer is an act of faith. The Lord's Prayer is our own commitment to put first God's name and kingdom and will, right?

That's what it's doing. It says, this is my priority, our priority. It's plural. Our Father who art in heaven, right? This is our priority as this community that has been forgiven, that has received all the benefits of the gospel, that has been fed by Christ.

We now commit ourselves to live for God's name and kingdom and will as an act of faith. We turn in our need to be that sort of kingdom person to ask for everything that is necessary to live in that way.

[62 : 17] That's the second half of the prayer, right? That's a very, very pecker-esque compressed explanation of the Lord's Prayer. Trust me, I think that's probably right, but that's the direction it goes.

So this is an act of faith, right? In fact, trust and obedience and dependence upon God. Second half of that prayer about give us, give us, give us, is all about dependence upon God to do for us what we cannot do for ourselves.

Then to this post-communion prayer, we humble servants entirely desire your fatherly goodness mercifully to accept this, a sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving.

I'll say more about that on a future occasion. There's not a sacrifice going on on the altar, there's a sacrifice of praise going on in the congregation, asking that you grant that by the merits and death of your son, through faith in his blood, we and all your church may obtain forgiveness and all other benefits of his passion, which is such a wonderful, wonderful phrase.

Everything we need for life and godliness in the world. And then what do we do? Dialogically, we respond. Here we offer and present to you ourselves, our souls and bodies.

[63 : 30] This is Romans 12, back to our 500 page exegesis of all the biblical references in the service. This is Romans 12. We offer and present ourselves a reasonable, holy, and living sacrifice.

Humbly pleading, not arrogantly, presumptuously pleading or claiming, but humbly pleading. Listen to this humbly pleading that all who partake in this communion may be filled with your grace and heavenly blessing.

although we are unworthy because of our many sins. See, the sin-grace-faith cycle is right here as well. It's baked into all these micro elements.

To offer you any sacrifice, yet we pray that you will accept this, the duty and service we owe, not weighing our merits, because we don't have any, but pardoning our offenses through Jesus Christ our Lord, by him, with him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory to you.

Then comes this great and glorious moment when you're going to raise the roof and annoy the neighbors, because you'll actually have the Gloria here. Praise.

[64 : 41] Sheer outburst of praise. That's what this is about. You got it? You ready to raise the roof when this comes? There you go. Sing with gusto.

Right? And then we've got James, I don't know how we theologically fit the announcements in here, but you know, it doesn't exactly go with the theological flow. But Cranmer didn't put that in there.

Cranmer didn't have announcements. Yeah, I don't know what Cranmer had. He didn't have the internet. So, and then a closing hymn, which again is praise and an act of trust and an act of obedience.

Right? This is all hallelujah. Sing to Jesus. His the scepter. His the throne. One of my all-time favorite hymns. Fantastic. Right? All you're not as orphans are we left in sorrow now.

Hallelujah. He is near us. This is gospel. Right? This is the truth that we enter into because we've been through sin, grace, faith, sin, grace, faith, sin, grace, faith. This is faith. This is trust.

[65 : 43] This is praise. This is acclamation. This is back to this is who God is. This is good news. Right? His the scepter. His the throne. And it's got this big eschatological horizon in it.

And then the closing, the blessing, what do you have? You have got words from scripture pronounced over us. First word of the service is scripture. Last word of the service is scripture. Right?

Good news, promise, and also an aspiration and sending of us. The dismissal bit is missio from the Latin again, the sending of us out.

church. So it's not, you know, go out and have a cup of coffee. It's go out and live for Christ in the world. You're his ambassadors and representatives. That's the logic of all this as an act of faith.

Sin, grace, faith comes back to us like now we're being sent out to be for Christ in the world. That's the flow of the whole thing. Make sense?

[66 : 42] So this is your little map. That's as far as we can go in the time that we have questions, comments.