

Anglicanism Part 3

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

Date: 16 February 2020

Preacher: Dr. Jeff Greenman

[0 : 0 0] Okay, we're underway. It is good to be back at Learners Exchange. I'm Jeff Greenman, and this is part three of a, I think, four-part series on Anglican Liturgy. So the first two sessions we have looked at the communion service. Once around, the first time was at 39,000 feet roughly, and then the second time through was, I don't know, hovering about five feet off the ground.

It was very meticulous and methodical, and so what remains to be done is the morning prayer. So you have a handout in front of you that is an outline for the day that is everything that you need. I'm going to take you through the morning prayer service, and hopefully in a way that would increase our appreciation and experience of what we're doing week by week. I do want to say one thing as I got going, a plug, actually, for Jim Saladin. Many of you know Jim Saladin, and he's teaching in our Regent Summer School this summer a course on Anglican History and Theology, starting on June 29th through July 10th morning, so you can come along and appreciate that. He's a wonderful teacher, as most of you know. It's a great course, a course that Dr. Packer used to teach and has now been handed over to Jim. And anyway, there's a summer brochure for Regent if you're interested in knowing more about that. End of commercial for Regent College.

And so let me also say that it would be helpful if you had the service bulletin from last week. Last week was morning prayer, this week is communion. It just might help focus your mind on what we're going to do. I'm going to take you through this step-by-step as best I can on this lovely sunny day in a very warm room. Can't complain about sunshine in Vancouver in February, so it's marvelous to be here. So what I'd like to do is, first of all, draw your attention to the first two quotes at the top of my handout. One from Dr. Packer himself, who's just been mentioned, and it speaks something to my goal and what I'm doing in this series and doing this morning. One grows into the prayer book, one never outgrows it. Those of you who have been Anglicans a long time probably resonate with that, I bet. I hope you would anyway. Those of you who are newer to Anglican forms of worship might be still growing into that yourself a bit. But that is the goal, really, is to help us grow into a deeper, richer, more meaningful experience of what we're doing week by week as we gather. And then secondly, a quote from an older scholar interpreter of Anglicanism in different ways. Very astute comment, though. Public worship is not primarily to get something, but to give something. And in our, shall we say, cultural times that we're in, it's often all about us. And it's about what you get. It's a consumerist kind of mindset. And that that drives our world. We're enculturated into that every day in a hundred ways. So the reverse logic applies to what we're doing here. This is to give, give something. Praise, glory, and honor to God primarily. And so that's just worth thinking about. And it suggests a little bit that what we're doing in worship week by week is reorienting our whole way of being. And that's what the service is meant to do.

And if it's meant to be doing a reorienting of our whole way of being, I personally would like us to slow down a little bit and really think about what we're doing and what we're saying. The form of words matter. The flow and logic and trajectory of the service, I'll call it, the kind of pattern that has a beginning, a middle, and the end. It all matters. I'd kind of like, with many points in the service, most of them actually to push the pause button and just let us absorb a bit more of what's going on around us. Or maybe even in the style of sports on TV, get the slow motion replay so that you can actually see exactly what happened there. Maybe that's just me. But I think that entering into more deeply what we're doing and reflecting on it is good. Therefore, I think this sort of exercise, I hope, will be fruitful for us. And to say, as I approach, as I said last time, I'm a theologian.

I'm not a historian. And so there's lots of historical interest behind what I'm saying. How did this all come together? What were the sources? What did Cranmer do? What did other people do? How did it all come together? How has it evolved over 500 years of history?

[5 : 12] I'm not going to go into any of that. That's interesting, but get someone else for that task. I'm really interested in, in a sense, what are we doing theologically when we're doing this?

The one historical note I would make is that this service, particularly this service in morning prayer, is essentially a synagogue service. The early Christians took over synagogue worship and they Christianized it. And what they took over particularly was a central role for the Psalms, a reading of the scripture, and a sermon, a commenting upon that. So when Jesus sits down in the synagogue at the beginning of Luke's gospel and Isaiah 61 is read and this is now fulfilled in your hearing, that's a very typical synagogue service. And in a sense, the morning prayer service of this tradition and in other traditions, it has those main elements. So a huge amount of time and attention in this service is around those things, Psalms, scriptures, and sermon. It's a Bible service, and it's a morning prayer service. So what I hope to show you is where does prayer fit in and why does it fit in the way that it does. Another disclaimer as I get going is to say that the service that we're going to go through here is very much the St. John's service. And what we do at St. John's is not quite the standard morning prayer service that you would find in the prayer book. We have our own local adaptation of it. There are, I see none, no clergy of the church here. So I did talk a little bit with Dan Gifford last week and he says, yeah, they got to realize we just kind of do our own thing.

So that's paraphrasing Dan, but there's a couple of places where we adjust and I'll try to show you where those are. And yeah, comment on that as we go. Lastly, the sort of structure around this, my third bullet point there, harkens back to what I said in my first two sessions.

What I did in those first two sessions was pick up on Dr. Packer's point that he has written about in a few places. And I just sort of took his idea and expanded it and ran with it. And his idea is that the communion service is three cycles of a very particular theological sequence in our prayers of confessing and acknowledging sin, acclaiming the gospel, and exercising faith as a response to the truth and glory of the grace of God in the gospel. So a sin, grace, faith cycle. And so those of you who are here might remember that. So in the communion service, there's a cycle three times. You go through the sin, grace, faith cycle three times. That's Packer's point. I showed you how that worked. And so in the morning prayer service, there's one cycle. There's a very short sin, grace, faith.

There's a lot of faith. And the little micro cycle, I'll call it, of sin, grace, faith, those themes show up in a lot of prayers. They show up in a lot of places. But as a macro structure of the service, it only happens once. So we'll start out with confession of sin. There'll be pardon and assurance of pardon in the gospel. And then there'll be a lot of exercising of faith in the hearing of God's word and praying for various things. So there's really one cycle of sin, grace, faith.

[9 : 02] So we see that in pretty clear terms, I think, as we go through. Just keep a mind on that. Two other things that I said last time apply to this as well, because it applies really to all forms of Anglican worship and all the services, is that the Anglican pattern, true of others as well, Catholic, Lutheran, and so on, especially, is dialogical. What I mean by that is that there's a back and forth.

There's a back and forth between the leader of the service and the congregation. There's a sort of call and response. As some of you know, African American gospel music, there's a call and response structure.

There's a lot of call. Where did they get that from? They got a lot of that from the liturgy, actually. So there's a leader says this, we say this back. There's a dialogue back and forth. There is also a kind of theological dialogue between God's word and our words. So that's also dialogical. We respond to God's words, and God, in a sense, answers our words with his own assurance in the gospel. So there is this back and forth dialogical nature. And because of that dialogical back and forth nature, it's a highly participatory form of service. You do a lot if you're there. You're supposed to do a lot, not just sit there like a bump on a log. You have things to do, things to say. You have to stand and kneel and sit and pay attention. But it is using your own voice and not just having someone speak at you the whole time. So very participatory in that dialogical kind of mode within a very particular kind of structure that is a gospel structure of sin, grace, faith. Now, the last thing to say introductory-wise before we get into it is, fourth bullet, the pattern of the service follows the structure stroke agenda set out in the exhortation. What in the world am I talking about? Here's the clue.

Here's the structural clue that you need for this. So if you look in the order of service to what's from last week, page four. Well, let's just start at the beginning, and I'll get you to there. So start at page three, the very beginning. So what do you have? You have opening scripture sentences. Now, one of our local adaptations as St. John's is that these are done dialogically, so that it's a back and forth between the leader and us. Standardly in the prayer book, that's not called for, but it's a really good thing to do. So the logic we're kind of enhancing in a way, by the way we do it. Notice that the first words that you hear in the service are scripture. Always. That's the way this goes. In this case, last week, Lord, my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all your people. So that's from the Psalms. So typically, it is a scripture passage related to the theme or the week or the other passages that we use. So the very first word you get is from God. So my little handout, if you keep sort of one thing going with the other, this is, I say here in the left-hand column, a shape or a root, right? The shape, root, pattern, whatever metaphor you prefer.

We're preparing for worship, and what prepares us for worship is primarily having God speak to us, and us then respond in faith. So already we have this dialogical pattern. The primacy of God's word in the whole thing is right there from the get-go. Then there's a hymn of praise. Almost always, this will be praise and thanks. This will not be the sort of hymn that is, we dedicate ourselves to doing everything we can for your service. That's not the kind of hymn we sing. Those are great hymns, but they come later in the service because they fit the logic and flow of the service much better later on. That's a response of faith. This is more the sin-grace-faith cycle. So you begin the service with acknowledging who God is. You begin with praise and thanks. So here, this is my father's world to my listening ears. All nature sings around me, rings the music of the spheres. This is God as creator and the beautiful creation that we have. And God is the ruler despite everything that we see around us.

[13 : 28] So this is an acclamation and active praise. So you've heard God's word right off the get-back, get-go. There's some sort of acclamation and praise right from the start. Then what do we do?

We welcome one another, which is again a preliminary preparing for worship activity. Again, that's not typically where this is done. This is a local adaptation for St. John's culture, which is a fine and good thing by me. And the idea, I think, is to recognize the people that you're worshiping with. Part of recognizing what we're doing in worship is saying, yeah, this is what we're on about. We're hearing God's words and we're singing God's praise, which is reorienting our way of being towards whatever we were thinking about when we were walking in off the street and whatever 10 million things have happened in our life in the last week and whatever 10,000 things the world is pressing upon us to pay attention to, marketing, advertising, everything else constantly. This is saying we're going to pay attention to God now and we're going to pay attention to God with these people, these people around us that we meet and greet and say hello to, which might actually seem fairly mundane and it is pretty mundane, but it is recognizing the body of Christ into which we have been placed. Recognizing that we, together with others, have been summoned in a sense by God, invited by God to enter into this praise and worship with others, not just on our own, not just as a isolated single kind of atom in the universe.

I was A-T-O-M, atom, isolated atom, not an atom, an A-D-A-M, although some of you may be atoms, but not all of you atoms are atoms, but it's significant to recognize we are a community, we are a congregation. This is common prayer, remember, book of common prayer. That means it's not just what you do individually, it's what we do together. So that acknowledging that we're in it with some other people, we're just not here on our own, I think is tremendously helpful. We could talk about that more if you wish. So that brings us to the exhortation. These preparatory acts bring you to the main act. So the main act is tremendously significant. So you know how this goes. Dearly beloved, the scripture moves us in sundry places. Sundry is kind of a funny word, it's not a very common word, many in various places. But two things to notice right off the bat. Who are we?

We are the dearly beloved. So the point of worship is to reorient us into our true identity and have us learn and grow and flex our muscles in exercising that true identity. We are the dearly beloved.

These are some of my favorite words of the entire service. Right there. And if you're not paying attention, you can miss them. Don't miss them. Dearly beloved, the scripture moves us. So what are we again doing? We're invoking scripture right off the bat, right? This is not just a matter of what you feel or I feel or what the minister feels like saying that day. This is noticed not saying, hey everybody, how you doing? Some of you might have been in worship services where that's actually how the service begins. Hey everybody, how you doing? Very perky, cheerful, Canadian friendly and all that good stuff. But actually I'd rather have someone say, dearly beloved, scripture moves us in sundry places. And this is a calling to confession. Okay, that's what's going on here. This is our invitation right off the bat. Scripture moves us in sundry places to acknowledge and confess our manifold sins and wickedness. They are manifold. Not just one. Makes you think, doesn't it? Me? You? Manifold sins.

[17 : 41] Now, how about this? Wickedness. Oh my goodness. This is the place where you could be so offended you could just get right out, you know, just leave. Just walk out. I mean, manifold sins and wickedness?

Really? Is that me? Is that you? Hmm. This is serious stuff. And that we should not dissemble, hide them, right, or cloak them before the face of Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, but confess them with a humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart. To the end that we may obtain forgiveness of the same by his infinite goodness and mercy. Well, I'm a theologian, so I could go on for a whole hour about that, just that paragraph. I won't. But you see the basic idea, right? That our sins are serious, many, and severe. We're not meant to hide them. We're not meant to hide them because this is a God of infinite goodness and mercy. So right off the bat, you've barely warmed up your seat, right? And what are we being reminded of? Who God is. This is a God of infinite, infinite goodness and mercy. And our proper response to that is confession with, notice here, a humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart. One of the things that the liturgy does is it gives you a variety of words.

So not just a humble heart, not just a lowly heart, not just a penitent heart, not just an obedient heart, but all of those things together. Humble, lowly, penitent and obedient heart.

You could parse the significance and relationship of each one of those. So this is an invitation into confession, right? So then the second paragraph, what I'm going to say here is in our second paragraph, what we get is we place that confession in the context of a much bigger agenda.

So the agenda for the service, and I'm going to argue the structure or outline of the service is here in the second paragraph. What you're going to do for the next hour is described in miniature in the second paragraph. And although we ought at all times humbly to acknowledge our sins before God, true, true, yet ought we most chiefly so to do when we assemble and meet together as we are doing right now, right? In other words, assemble and meet together. To do what? So here comes the list of all the things that we're going to do, and this is the outline of the service, right? To render thanks for the great benefits that we have received at his hands. Thanks. Thanks for what? Thanks for benefits. Thanks.

[20 : 28] Thanksgiving is a response to the grace received, to the goodness and infinite mercy of God experienced, right? To render thanks for all of that. Secondly, to set forth his most worthy praise.

To set forth his most worthy praise because of who he is in himself. This is a God of infinite grace and mercy and love. So we're going to praise him, right? Thirdly, to hear his most holy word.

We're going to attend to this word, right? Fourthly, ask those things which are requisite and necessary as well for the body as for the soul. Prayer. Asking. Primarily intercession.

So, we are acknowledging our sins, rendering thanks for the great benefits, setting forth his most worthy praise, hearing his holy word, asking for what is needed for body and soul. That's the agenda, okay?

So on my little outline, you'll see that I've organized the rest of the pieces of the service according to those five things. Because that's what we're doing in this service. It's an agenda. Then, the third paragraph invites you into action, right? It's a sort of summons into action.

[21 : 46] Wherefore, in light of our true reality and who God is, in light of what we're doing today, therefore, wherefore, I pray and beseech you, as many as are here present, to accompany me.

The important thing about accompanying me is that the priest himself is one of us. The priest is no different in kind. The priest is not holy and on some sort of pedestal, so they don't have to confess their sins. No, no, no. They're doing it with you. Interesting.

Tremendously important Reformation point, by the way. But that's history. I'll just skip that over. Accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice under the throne of the heavenly grace.

One of the things that you see about the way that this works as English language and as beautiful writing is that it always leaves you on the uptick. It always leaves you on the positive.

It always leaves you on the trajectory of grace. So notice even the way that that sentence goes. Accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of the heavenly grace. Where does your mind go with that sentence?

[22 : 55] Where does it go with that prayer? It goes to the heavenly grace. In other words, it doesn't land you on your manifold sins and wickedness. You could write it the other way around.

You could say, oh, there's this wonderful heavenly throne and God's infinite grace and mercy is up there, but we are really, really, really, really, really bad. You could write it that way and leave you on bad.

Okay? This doesn't leave you on bad. It leaves you on throne of heavenly grace. It draws you in. It's invitational, right? It draws you up. Like, that's why we're doing this. Just remember the trajectory.

It is the heavenly throne is there. You can come to it. That's good news. Right? It's marvelous. It's absolutely brilliant. And therefore, there's a certain kind of feel in the service.

And if you pay attention to the way the prayers are written, you get why it has a certain kind of feel. And over time, doing this year after year after year, for some of you, decade after decade, it does shape the kind of shape of your soul, I think, to be oriented towards certain kinds of things, which are all good.

[24 : 00] Okay? So does that make sense so far? So I think the overall structure follows what's in the exhortation. So pay attention to what's going on in the exhortation. It orients you to the rest of the hour that's before us.

In terms of our sin-grace-faith cycle, we're still here at sin. Right? So therefore, the next step is confession, which we say together.

Right? And you know the words of this very well. I suspect many of you. What do you do? Again, you begin by invoking the nature and character of God upon which all of the requests are based.

That's the way all collects work. And that's typically the way that most all of these prayers work as well. The invocation is very significant. Don't just prattle on over it.

It sets up everything that follows. Almighty and most merciful Father. In light of who God is as an almighty and most merciful Father, we can recognize certain things about ourselves.

[25 : 03] And we can actually come before him. So the nature of the confession is fitted to the nature of God. Okay? So in any religious system, how you pray depends upon who you're praying to.

The great Jewish rabbi saying is, Know the one before whom you stand. That's the starting point of prayer. Yes. So here at Names, almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from your ways like lost sheep.

Now, as we get going into this, notice a couple of things. That the language of, this is Cranmer's language, is lots of doublets.

Erred and strayed. Devices and desires. And some of that is to let a certain kind of resonance, certain sort of ring, ring in your ears with the language.

Sometimes it's alliterative, devices and desires, for instance. But it's meant to underscore and slow you down. It's meant to make you linger over the words.

[26 : 12] It's meant to set up reflection about not just the state of your hearts, but the devices and desires of your hearts. It's beautiful. It's beautiful language.

But the point is not simply beauty. The point is not to be poetic, per se. It is poetic. It is very beautiful. It's incredible use of the language. But the point is theological.

And the point is spiritual formation of the likes of you and I to enter into the reality of what we're doing. It's worded for the sake of engagement with God.

That's what this is really all about. So we are addressing God, appealing to him on the basis of his character. We're confessing our sins. Listen to the multifaceted, subtle explanation of what our sins really are.

So there's a bit of kind of elbow room here that we go on for a bit of time. In order to settle into it, find our place in it, and make it our own.

[27 : 14] That's the idea. So many different sort of angles of our sinful human condition get a little bit of air time here. Follow too much the devices and desires of our own hearts.

Oh, well, so errant and strayed from your ways like lost sheep. Yeah, errant and strayed. So we've wandered from the path. That's one way that we sin. We just do our own thing. We get off the path.

You can imagine sheep and the wonderful sheep trails that probably a lot of you have seen. The little paths that all the sheep have trod and trod and trod. Very well-worn path. And then you see people going off on their own.

That's us. We've offended against your holy laws. Sorry, I'm skipping here. You follow too much the devices and desires of our own hearts, which means self-will.

The devices and desires of our own hearts. We're not following God's heart, you might say, but our own. Offended against your holy laws, we break laws. We're law-breaking people.

[28 : 15] There's things like Ten Commandments, which get rehearsed in the communion service, right? To remind us, yeah, we're the sort of people who don't do those things. We break them. That's another way that we go wrong.

Another way we go wrong is this. We've left undone those things which we ought to have done. And that makes you think back across the span of the week. What are the things, as it says here, that I have left undone?

Errors of omission. Errors of omission. As well as the things that I have done, which I ought not to have done. Errors of commission. So it's not just one or the other.

It's both. It gets you thinking. Like, hmm, probably there's a lot of things I should have done that I haven't. And a bunch of things I have done that I shouldn't. And if you put that together with errant and straight and devices and desires of your own heart and offending against your holy laws, and then you think about the things you have done and you haven't done, it's a very comprehensive statement.

It's saying all of that stuff applies to us. Now, it doesn't say all of that stuff applies to Jeff or all of that stuff applies to Bob or Susan.

[29 : 26] It just says this applies to us. This is common prayer. This is our human condition. And one of the things this language does is it allows you to resonate more this week with this statement and the next week with the next statement.

You may see yourself more this Sunday in errant and straight from thy ways like lost sheep. You might see yourself some other time offending against thy holy laws.

In other words, it might resonate with you in a different way. The range of language has some elbow room in it. It has some nuance in it. It just doesn't say we're sinners.

We've done a bunch of stuff. It gives you some language to relate to and enter into. Are you with me? Right? It's sheer genius. It's so, so, so helpful. So, these are, in a sense, enumerations of and a kind of taxonomy of sins.

But beyond that, and this is another Reformation point in the theology of all of this, it goes beyond that. We have done those things which we ought not to have done, and there is no health in us.

[30 : 41] Bold statement. It's like our statement of our wickedness that's just been proclaimed before. This is about our sinful human nature. It's not just our individual sins.

Right? You could have an enumeration of individual sins or mistakes or errors of omission or commission, but not also conclude from that that there is such a thing as sinful human nature.

Right? The Reformers all believe that. Cranmer believes that. It's also biblical, I would argue. That's another whole topic. But beyond this, there is no health in us.

In other words, there is no spiritual health in us. There is nothing that we have that we can bring before God to, in a sense, claim that we're okay. Or claim that it really wasn't a big deal, somehow that all of these other things that we have been doing are actually fine.

So, the trajectory here is there is no health in us. The confession of individual sins points to the bigger, deeper problem, which is that we're sinners.

[31 : 49] Sorry. I hate to offend you all, but, you know, politically incorrect, just theologically correct, I would argue. Right? It just might not be popular, but that's where we are.

But you, Lord, have mercy upon us, miserable offenders. We are miserable offenders. You might not be feeling particularly miserable that moment, because many of us actually quite enjoy our sins.

We do. Right? Right? You know, telling somebody off in a great, you know, rage might just feel really good.

It might be totally sinful. Right? So, this is a reminder that we are in a state, right? A state of being a miserable offender, not a kind of emotional current experience of being miserable.

You might not be miserable at all. But this may actually, you know, going through this might actually make you a bit miserable by reminding you that actually I've been skating through life and paying no attention to all these things, but actually I should actually have some sorrow over this.

[32 : 59] Right? So, our sinfulness is described. A state of kind of spiritual burden, in a sense, is what this is after.

And it's an expression of the old-fashioned word I'll use as contrition. Right? A contrite heart, which is, of course, biblical language. So, we have done a very thorough job of confessing.

And then it says, spare all them, O God, which confess their faults. That's what we're doing now. We're not shrouding them or cloaking them. We're going to confess them.

Spare all them. We're looking for God's action here. Spare is God's verb. Right? Spare all them, O God. Restore all them that are penitent. Sorry for their sins.

According to your promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. What is the basis for all of this? It's the gospel. It is the promises that God has made.

[34 : 04] Again, classic move of Reformation theology. If you want to go to town on this, read Calvin's understanding of prayer, which is always standing on and claiming the promises of God.

That was the key thing Calvin had to say about prayer. So, that's the theology that's here as well. We're miserable sinners. We can enumerate a whole bunch of ways that we've gone wrong.

We can only call upon you to spare us, O Lord, because we're trusting in the promises that you've already made to us. Right? There's an appropriate response for the penitent making confession because of your promises already that have come.

Wonderful, rich, important phrase. According to your promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord and grant, O most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life to the glory of your holy name.

So, there's this pattern of remorse, confession, and forgiveness according to gospel promises. You're appealing, in a sense, to the merciful Father through Christ our Lord.

[35 : 12] Christ is always the intermediary, just as he is in the communion service. Christ is the mediator between the Father and us. He's the one who goes to the cross on our behalf, takes our sins upon himself, so that he may be the mediator between us to this day.

Partly, what is also wonderful about this prayer is that the trajectory is not just our forgiveness in the moment, if you can call it that.

Not just punctual, right, punctiliar, but ongoing. This is about living a certain kind of life. What happens is that our sins, the analysis here, is that our sins prevent us from living the kind of life that we should have.

So, there's a horizon, there's a trajectory, there's a sort of what I'll call telos here, a purpose. And that big purpose is to live a godly, righteous, and sober life.

That is from Titus chapter 2. Titus 2, 11, and 12, by the way. Which is usually the appointed liturgical reading at Christmas, of all things.

[36 : 17] So, a godly, righteous, and sober life speaks to how we're meant to live day by day by day. And that forgiveness, by the grace of God, according to the gospel in Christ, is to restore us on our proper trajectory.

Having wandered from the path, the right path is getting back on this path, which is living a godly, righteous, and sober life. Okay? So, there's again something positive to land on.

There's a trajectory here. Right? It doesn't leave you as a worm. It leaves you as a pilgrim on the path. Okay? And it's meant to, this confession is meant to set you back on that right path.

Okay? So, being set back then on the right path is what happens when you have the absolution over the page. Page 5, which again has an address and an authorization of the minister.

And then it has an assurance of pardon. So, Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Notice how Christ-centered this all is. Who desires not the death of sinners.

[37 : 25] Again, back to the nature and character of God. God's not the sort of God that wants to wipe people out. He wants to give life. This is the life-giving, generous, creator, redeemer God of life.

Right? But rather that that may turn from their wickedness and live. Live what? Live a righteous, godly, and sober life. Live, but has given power and commandment to his ministers to declare and pronounce to his people, being penitent, the absolution and remission of their sins.

So, in a sense, this is invoking God's character and the authorization of the minister to do what the minister is going to do. What is the minister going to do?

The minister is going to say, on behalf of God, he, not the minister, God, God pardons and absolves all them that truly repent and unfaintedly, unfaintedly, without reservation, right, without qualification, believe his holy gospel.

Wherefore, so there was on the basis of all of these things being true. Wherefore, we beseech him to grant us true repentance, not a superficial fake repentance, not fake news, real thing.

[38 : 35] Okay. True repentance and his holy spirit. Oh, interesting. That those things may please him, which we do at this present, and that the rest of our life hereafter, back to the trajectory, back to being on the right path, the rest of our life hereafter, without qualification, may be pure and holy, so that at the last we may come to his eternal joy through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Classic move here, which is connecting our past, present, and future. Right? Absolution for our past puts us on a new path in the present, sets you on the right path for actually eternity, for the future.

Right? Do you see how it does that? At the last we may come to his eternal joy. One of the things about this liturgy that I really like, and other points of Anglican liturgy, compared to a lot of contemporary worship and contemporary Protestant worship, is that it always points you towards heaven.

It always points you toward the eternal future you have with God. A lot of Protestantism and evangelical Protestantism is pretty hunkered down to this world, if I can put it that way, and not opening up to a life that goes on forever with God in love and fellowship and communion.

And I love the fact that this does that. Because last time I checked, we are all mortal beings. Is that true? Yeah. So there is a bigger, longer, deeper horizon of an eternity with God.

[40 : 17] And the classical, I'll call the classical Anglican thinkers, like Cranmer and a bunch of others, they're always thinking about how this world prepares you for the next.

It's a very big Puritan theme as well. Dr. Packer could go on for days about that with you. The Puritans went on for days about that in great big long books. But I think we tend to lose it.

So I just wanted to underscore a little bit the significance of that. Past, present, and future are joined in faith in Christ. Beautiful good news.

This is gospel. This is fantastic stuff. Okay? So, this is our sin and grace moments of our sin, grace, faith cycle. Right? So a very thorough and comprehensive confession of sin.

A very thorough and comprehensive absolution. Yeah, it's kind of like Hawaii in here or something. I didn't know I'd gone on vacation in Hawaii. So this assurance of pardon and the good news of the gospel is setting us into sin and grace.

[41 : 24] And then what happens is the sin, grace, faith. Right? So what do you do? Still kneeling, you give praise. And then you stand up.

Standing is part of the motion of this. So what do you get? You get these responses. What we call responses. In technical, liturgical terms, those are versicles.

Which sounds like icicles. Of verses. O Lord, open our lips, and our mouth shall show forth thy praise. O God, make speed to save us. O Lord, make haste to help us.

This is an expression of praise. Right? What are we doing? We're responding to the good news of the gospel with praise. What's the function of this within the overall?

It's making a transition from our sin and grace, our confession and absolution, into our response of faith, which will dominate the rest of the service. This is a kind of transition point.

[42 : 22] But it's a little mini outburst of praise. Followed by, standing up, a full-blown outburst of praise, the Gloria Patri, as it's known. Glory be to the Father, as it was.

Praise ye, the Lord, the Lord's name be praised. We're praising. Why are we praising? We're praising because of the story that we've just told so far. This is like the first five minutes. We're already set up to praise.

So that becomes the trajectory for the rest. That praise is the response to the confession of our sins, which is met with the promises of the gospel and our absolution by the grace and mercy of Christ.

Alleluia. Therefore, we praise. Now, this is where a slight moment about funky St. John's variations goes on. Ordinarily, in the prayer book, you would have then some psalms.

You would have the venite, or come let us worship the Lord. You would have the jubilate, which is Psalm 100. But in our case, you don't do those. You have a hymn. So same sort of function, but they've just swapped out doing a hymn for doing some of these others, which is, what love my God would bring you down to earth, what king would take a low and lonely birth, in this case, right?

[43 : 36] Which is praise, which is thanks. It's rehearsing the gospel. It's reminding us of what the glory of God is in the gospel. That's what should happen at this point in the service. If something else is happening in the service other than that sort of hymn, of praise and thanks to God for forgiveness and according to his mercy, then you know that somehow in the planning of the service, something weird happened.

99 times out of 100, nothing weird will happen. And that they will choose something like this, right? Because it fits, it fits, it fits. It's calling you into this praise, right?

So you have a hymn, then you have a psalm. So now it is time to hear his most holy word. After we have now rendered thanks for the great benefits, that's what we've been doing in singing, now it is time for a psalm.

We're hearing his word. And again, it's back and forth usually, left side, right side, front, back. However it is, it's dialogically read. We are ones who are hearing God's word.

We are the ones that in praise are expecting God to speak to us. And then that is concluded again with another Gloria Patri, another praise. Why do you do that?

[44 : 47] Because whatever you're going to hear from God's word is going to be worthy of praising him for it. It is his truth revealed to us. Therefore we honor and bless him for the truth revealed.

We praise him. Glory be to the Father for whatever has been there, which is very important, especially when you read a psalm that's one of the hard psalms to read, or a psalm of lament, you still want to respond to it with praise, right?

It's a very good habit. So we're hearing the word. Then what do you go over the page? Then we're more hearing of the word. Now we're into the Bible core of the service. So that you've got a reading, and then you've got a song, you've got prayer with children.

Sometimes that has its own Bible component to it. Usually it does. Then you're on to an anthem. The anthem here is biblical again.

What are you doing? You're singing from Luke, right? That's really what you're doing here. This is more scripture. In case we don't get the points that we need to be saturated in scripture, there you go.

[45 : 52] You have another one. In the hymns, these anthems that are done by the choir typically, well, they're not all necessarily pure scripture texts, but they're always scriptural in the sense that they're thematically something deeply scriptural that you want to sing.

Why? Because the idea is that as we respond to the grace of the gospel in faith, we need to be saturated in scripture. So this is a service that saturates you in scripture, just like the synagogue does.

So here we are, Bible reading, anthem, which is more scripture, another Bible reading, more scripture. Okay? You get it? And then typically there would be in the standard Anglican liturgy, a couple of other bits from scripture, either from the Psalms or from the Benedictus as it's known, which is Luke chapter one, which is essentially what you've just sung right there.

But we do our own little local variation and don't use those typically. In the mode of affirmation of faith, you come to the creed, right? Having heard God's word, what you do is then you stand up and exercise your faith by reciting what you believe.

What you believe in the creed is basically, the creed is basically a summary of biblical teaching from start to finish, right? So it makes sense that it actually follows after what you've read in the scriptures, right?

[47 : 16] So all these scriptural texts, Old and New Testament typically, Psalms sung to you, read to you, you've recited it back and forth, you've had this saturation of scripture, then your response is to say the creed, our response is to say the creed, which is basically, again, scriptural summary, put forward as an affirmation of faith, right?

So we're affirming our faith. So having heard all of that and affirmed our faith, you come to the first episode, first sort of major chunk, that's not a technical theological term or anything, chunk of prayer.

Are you with me? See how this is working. So then you get a set of prayers that express our faith. The Lord be with you and with thy spirit.

More dialogue, right? Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy. Then the Lord's Prayer. Interesting. Note this. The first prayer, other than the prayer of confession, right?

The first prayer we pray is the Lord's Prayer. Hmm. Think about that. It is the key prayer of all prayers. It is the Christian prayer par excellence.

[48 : 24] It is the only common prayer of the entire Christian tradition. It is the only prayer that Jesus taught his disciples, at least that we know of, right? It is the paramount, supreme Christian prayer.

It's got two parts, basically. Living for God's name and kingdom and will and asking God for everything it takes to live for God's kingdom. Name, kingdom and will. It is par excellence Christian prayer.

So we start there. And all the other prayers, one of my arguments would be, all of the other prayers that we pray in this section and then in the second chunk of prayer section follow from and need to be consistent with the Lord's Prayer.

Right? Right? It's the key of the whole. Right? Sponhofer said at one point, any prayer that is not consistent with the Lord's Prayer should not be prayed. So the same idea here is that I think that the attempt here is actually to say, there's one overarching general prayer that all Christians of all times and ages have known, and it's this.

It's the root source prayer of everything. Then we're going to actually drill into some specifics along the way. So then there's the cantor people responses, and those at the bottom of page nine are familiar to you, I'm sure.

[49 : 43] Basically, all of those are scriptural. I'm not going to tease out exactly where they all come from, but you could actually trace them down. It's a scriptural pattern, and it's meant, again, to be comprehensive.

This is common prayer, and it's also comprehensive prayer. Right? So lots of different things here. Yeah, lots of things. I won't go into the minute detail of that, which leads you in our first main chunk of prayer onward still to the colics of the day.

And I think you know a little bit about colics, I would bet. We've talked about them at Learner's Exchange before. But there's a particular structure to colics.

Bruce Heinmarsh has talked to you about this on previous occasions, I know. Again, acknowledging who God is and some quality of God that is the basis of the request.

A petition, and then some kind of aspiration, the so that we may kind of language. And then some sort of pleading, as it's known, which is through Jesus Christ our Lord.

[50 : 50] The intermediary is Christ. So that's the typical structure of those. The colics of the day changes from week to week, as you know. Lord, we ask you hear the prayers of your people favorably, that we who are justly punished for our offenses, wow, may be mercifully delivered by your goodness for the glory of your name.

So the colics for peace and grace are there every week. Those don't vary. They have the same structure, right?

God, who is the author of peace and lover of concord and knowledge of whom standeth in our eternal life, defend us that we may not fear through Christ, and so on. So these colics are the same.

They have that very rich theological structure to them. And again, these are general prayers. They are very broad, big prayers. They apply to all of us.

We keep a kind of structure of using them week by week. These do not change. The prayer of St. Chrysostom goes way back in liturgical history to the early church, early centuries.

[51 : 59] This is one of Cranmer's favorites. He puts it in. What we do, again, in morning prayer at St. John's, this is a place of St. John's adaptation, which is that one week we use this, and then the next week we use the prayer of general thanksgiving.

So in this bulletin, last week was a Chrysostom week. It was not a general thanksgiving week. The next time we do morning prayer, which will be next week, though the general thanksgiving will be back.

They rotate them. I think that's just to keep the service a little shorter. I don't know why. Personally, I don't like that. Just to go on record, I want the general thanksgiving there every week.

And for part four of this series, I'll come back and talk to you about the general thanksgiving in some detail. It is my favorite prayer in the prayer book, so I personally think it needs to be there.

But you may or may not agree. And then, so the prayer of St. Chrysostom, the point of it is that we posture, we position ourselves in humility.

[53 : 06] We recognize all of these prayers that we have prayed and will pray. We really depend upon God's mercy to grant them. We have no claim upon God. We have no right to have answered prayers.

And then you conclude with what? More scripture. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, love of God, fellowship of the Holy Spirit, which is, of course, thoroughly Trinitarian.

Right? Then what do you do? You've got the offering. So this is back into, now, an exercise of faith. Just as prayer is an exercise of faith, sin, grace, faith, prayer is an exercise of faith, so is offering.

So is offering this token of our money, which stands for the bigger reality of offering ourselves to God in faith and trust, to be his servants. The money just stands for that.

So when you put your money in the plate or online or whatever, remember that what you're doing is just giving a little bit of material substance that actually represents you.

[54 : 09] It's your offering of yourself that God is interested in. Then what do you get? That's also an opportunity to stand up because we've been sitting or kneeling, so now it's time to stand.

Move your body. It's good. Sermon, because we're going to sit for a while. Sermon comes. Synagogue structure again. You've had all of the scripture that has been read. You've said the creed as a summary of it.

You've responded to all of that with one set of prayers. And now you're ready actually to hear and receive God's word again, God's word explained. So you have a long section here of sermon, you know, in terms of, you know, 20, 30 minute sermon.

And then what do you have is our second chunk of prayers. Okay. So the hearing and receiving of God's word sets you up for a more specific set of prayers.

The first chunk is relatively generic from the Lord's prayer, which is in a sense the most generic prayer, to the scriptural prayers, to grace and peace and chrysostom, right?

[55 : 11] Those are all, in a sense, general prayers. You've got this opportunity to give yourself to God and trust and faith and obedience in the offering. You then hear and receive God's word in the scriptures.

And then you respond to that word of God in the scriptures as they are taught to you. And you respond with more specific prayers. This is intercessions, usually led by one of us lay people from the congregation.

And we have the opportunity to bring all kinds of local, particular, specific needs before God. Up until this point, we have been, in a sense, doing common prayer, the prayers that apply equally to all of us.

When it comes to the second chunk of prayer, I don't know why I'm calling it a chunk. Forgive me. It's not, Cranmer would have a better word, for sure. The second sequence of prayer here is much more specific.

We're praying for these people by name, this situation by name, these people who need healing, this meeting of the congregation, this person who has come to faith, whatever it is, right?

[56 : 15] So it gets very specific, which I think is really quite marvelous. Which concludes with, well, leads you into the very prosaic, down-to-earth, nitty-gritty thing.

Who's doing what to whom and where are we going? During the announcements, which I call on my handout, preparation for departure. It's back to saying, yeah, we do this as a people. We're just not a bunch of random individual units wandering in and out doing our own thing.

We're a congregation. We care about one another. We serve one another. We do stuff together. We're trying to build one another up. That's where the announcements fit. The certain sense that, you know, it's just mundane stuff.

In another sense, think about it. It's like, these are my people. This is a community. We belong together. We're doing this whole journey of sin, grace, faith together, right?

We're praying for the needs of the world and for one another together. Therefore, maybe some announcements are good. That's a theological defense of the announcements. And then a closing hymn, right?

[57 : 23] Typically, the closing hymn at this point, the logic of sin, grace, faith leads you to something that is, well, can always be praise and thanks. The trajectory in the communion service is to lead you to the gloria, right?

To a kind of outburst of praise. So the trajectory here could lead you to an outburst of praise, which is pretty much what you've got here. Jesus shall reign where he is the son. Or it can lead to the guide me, O thou great Jehovah, right?

I'm a pilgrim on the way. It could lead to some act of service or commitment or some such thing. A bunch of, it fits there, right? It doesn't fit. You know, the service, commitment, go out there and do something good for the Lord kind of stuff doesn't really fit.

The first hymn, the opening hymn, it does fit given the flow of where we land by the final hymn. There's a blessing at the end. And the way that typically the prayer books prescribes it and the way St. John's also practices it is that that's 99.9% of the time from Scripture back to what is the first word that you hear in the service.

What is Scripture is Scripture? And what is actually the last word that you hear is from Scripture. A New Testament blessing or the Aaronic blessing, may the Lord bless you and keep you and make his face shine upon you, whatever it is.

[58 : 46] Those are biblical, scriptural blessings. That's the benediction, the good word that comes to you at the end. And then there, in our tradition anyway, is a postlude.

And the postlude is meant to be a way to reflect upon and enter into the experience that you've just had before you go back out into that mad, crazy world that we live in.

It's a moment of digestion, put it that way. Because there has been a lot of feeding going on. There needs to be some digestion and on into the world to live this kind of life that is envisioned by it.

Okay, so that is your guided tour of the book of Common Prayer, Morning Prayer, Service, even with St. John's adaptations.