

Communion Service - The Creation of Peace by the Death of Jesus

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Date: 05 June 2022

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] Sincere welcome to you all today to this communion service. It's good to see so many out on this wonderfully bright morning and we trust the Lord will bless us as we come together.

And if you're joining us online, we welcome your presence online as well and pray God to bless your participation that way. Now there are a lot of things in the intimations bulletin sheet today.

I'm not going to go through them all. There is an insert as well, which I won't just say anything about. You can read that for yourselves. Just to say that tea is served in the hall after the morning service here for tea and fellowship and coffee.

And everybody's welcome to come to the hall after the service just now. And there's a congregational fellowship tonight. We're really pleased to be able to get back to those sort of things that we enjoyed so much before the COVID situation set in.

And so tonight there's a time of fellowship. It'll be led by Scott McLeod and our elder Murdo McLeod, Murdo A. McLeod, will share his testimony. The monthly prayer meeting tomorrow evening is on Zoom.

[1 : 02] That's at 7.30 p.m. And you can see all the other services through the week as they're mentioned there. Now you can see on Friday the 17th of June at 7 o'clock, that's 7 to 9 p.m.

Arrangements have been made there under the church's Healthy Gospel Church emphasis, which is a free church-wide emphasis. An invitation is extended to all those who work with children and young people in the congregation, along with parents and carers of children, to come along on that evening on the 17th of June to just share ideas about the children's work in the congregation.

And Gordon McLeod, the Presbytery Youth Worker, will actually be present as well and will help guide the time that we have together. So that'll be in the MA Upper Hall, Friday 17th of June.

And if you can help in any way with that or be present, then please just do so. There's a thank you there from the Women for Mission. You can see that the sum of £3,400 was raised over the past year through the fundraising meetings in the congregation.

That's a wonderful sum and that's gone to the WFM main fund. Now also there's a summer holiday club being planned. We've not done this before and it's quite an exciting venture.

[2 : 23] It's led by Fiona McLeod, whose details are there. If you can help with that, just please read the information. But if you can help with that, please do read whatever way you can help, whether it's by donations or by helping with various other aspects of what's planned there.

It'll be on the mornings of 1st to 5th of August, God willing. Finally, just I'll mention the presentation to Reverend Callum Murdoch-Smith. We're greatly looking forward to the induction of Callum Murdoch-Smith as our Assistant Minister.

I'm thankful to God for that provision. But as it says there, please remember not only him, but the congregation that he's leaving in North Uist and Grimsey as well. And as is customary, we will be making a presentation to Callum Murdoch and to his family.

Please just read through the details there as how you can contribute if you wish. Contributions can be placed on an envelope. Just mark them, presentation. And as usual, if you're making them by cheque, make it payable to Stornoway Free Church.

Well, these are all the notices I'm going to mention for the moment. Let's begin our worship, and we're singing firstly today from Psalm 113 in the Scottish Psalter version on page 393.

[3 : 46] We'll sing the whole of the psalm to the tune St. Columba. Praise God, ye servants of the Lord. O praise, the Lord's name praise. Yea, blessed be the name of God from this time forth always.

From rising sun to where it's set, God's name is to be praised. Above all nations, God is high. Above heavens, his glory raise. Psalm 113, singing the whole psalm, and we'll stand as usual to sing.

Amen. Praise God, ye servants of the Lord.

O praise the Lord, ye praise. Yea, blessed be the name of God from this time forth always.

Praise God, ye servants of the Lord. Praise God, ye servants of the Lord. From rising sun to where it's set, God's name is to be praised.

[5 : 12] Above all nations, God is high. But then, God's glory raise.

But to the Lord our God that dwells, On I who can compare, And serve the humble things to see, In heaven and earth, the time.

Yea, from the dust of grace of the earth, The very Lord of life, And from the dust of grace of the earth, And from the dust of grace of the earth, Oppressed with poverty, That he may hide, And with the princes set, With those that know his people are,

The chief, he princes great. Join together in prayer.

Almighty God, we thank you for this occasion and renewed privilege that you have given us together to worship you and to gather here in this place. We ask, O Lord, that you would bless us as the one of whom we have been reading and singing, The one who humbles himself and looks down toward us, And who has come into this world in the person of your Son, In order to identify with our need, And to provide for us against it.

[7 : 57] We confess, O Lord, that we are indeed humbled whenever we think of God coming into this world of sin and of woe, And taking to himself the penalty that his people deserved for their sin.

We thank you today for the remembrance of it in the Lord's Supper. We thank you for the way that, in your wisdom, you have appointed this sacrament for us to partake of.

Knowing how liable we are, O Lord, even to forget or even to sideline the best of things. We bless you, Lord, for all that is set out before us in the Gospel and in the Lord's Supper.

We thank you today for being part of your church in this world, For belonging to your church that has so many privileges given to it by you. In covenant with yourself we come to possess so many promises, So many privileges and advantages.

And we pray today for thankful hearts, O Lord, as we seek to give thanks to you. We pray that our thanks may be truly sincere, And that we may not be satisfied with a mere formal confession, Either of sin or of thanksgiving.

[9 : 14] But enable us, O Lord, to know that movement of our hearts That truly comes from your Holy Spirit working in us. And be pleased, we pray today, to impress upon us anew the love of our Saviour, The love of the Jesus who walked this world And met the many temptations he met with And came to face the wrath of the devil and even the wrath of God And successfully overcame them.

And we thank you, Lord, for all that that death provides for us. And bless you today that in remembering the Lord's death in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, We do bring before ourselves the reality of these things.

They are real to your people. And they are thankful that they are real. They are not inventions of human beings. They are not ordinances that the church has seen fit to invent and to set up and appoint.

Lord, we thank you that they are appointed by yourself. And even the death of the cross was your appointment. From all eternity you purposed that your own dear Son should come into this world And die the death of the cross for sinners.

O humble us anew, we pray, as we think of the implications of this for ourselves. As we think of that great love of God with which you have embraced sinners such as we are here.

[10 : 40] And embrace them in such a way as to love them freely. And by your grace provide for them a salvation that is in Christ our Lord. Lord, we thank you today that there is forgiveness of sin with you.

Because we are so conscious of our sin, O Lord, at such times as these. Although we are conscious of them many times. But we are conscious especially in the light of the cross.

And of the sufferings of the Lord and of his death. How it is our sin that nailed to the tree. The Son of God in our nature. Even though ultimately it was your appointment and your doing.

We recognize, O Lord, that the gravity of our sin can only be measured by the greatness of the cross. And we thank you today that you have given us the privilege of seeing ourselves anew at the foot of the cross.

And gazing upwards to him, as your word says, of those who gathered there in the presence of Golgotha. And sitting down, they watched him there.

[11 : 48] And may we today, O Lord, have our eyes keenly fixed upon what your word tells us about your cross. And keenly fixed especially upon your own person as the Savior.

And we ask, Lord, today that these moments we spend here in this place of worship will truly be meaningful and precious and lasting with us. We pray for all today who are at the Lord's table.

We thank you for those who have been here before. For their continued attachment and perseverance and walk of faith. We thank you for those who are here for the first time in their experience.

Lord, we pray for them too today that they may know the meaningfulness of belonging to your people. And especially that they may know the meaningfulness of being savingly related to the Lord whose death is remembered.

Bless this occasion to them, we pray. Bless it too to those who are onlooking. We give thanks for them again today. We pray that your blessing will reach forth to them as they witness those things that belong to the remembrance of your death in the sacrament.

[13 : 00] We pray that they themselves, O Lord, will be touched in their hearts. That we will see them coming in days to come to take their place at the Lord's table too with his people. We ask, gracious one, that as your word tells us, your people proclaim the Lord's death by taking the communion.

Lord, we pray that that proclamation today, along with the proclamation of the gospel, will touch the hearts of all who are looking on and all who are participating alike.

Remember, we pray today, those who can't be with us. Remember those who are confined to their homes and are watching online. Remember those, O Lord, who for other reasons are unable to be present.

Remember those who are still fearful or apprehensive, following the results and the period of pandemic that we have come through.

And we thank you, Lord, that you continue to provide for us as we emerge from the pandemic and from its conditions. And we pray that you would help us to look to you for our strengthening.

[14 : 05] We ask that as we reflect upon those issues that are so big and so important for us in Providence, Lord, that they may impress upon us all the more our need of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Our need of being found in him, not having a righteousness of our own, but having the righteousness of Christ. We know that we are made acceptable in the beloved, in the Father's presence.

And so we pray for our children today. We pray that as they come in to watch the table being served, we pray that it will be meaningful to themselves as they grow up and reflect upon these things and are taught about them at home and Sunday school and other ways.

Lord, we ask that your blessing today will be upon them and that they will grow up in the fear and in the respect that is due to the Lord.

Remember, we pray all that we anticipate in this week ahead. We pray for Reverend Calamurdo and for Joan as they anticipate and prepare to come to join us here.

[15 : 11] We thank you for the provision you have made for us in them. We pray for Calamurdo as he takes up the assistantship. We ask, O Lord, as we look forward to his induction, that we may do so depending upon yourself and with thankful hearts that we may indeed come to appreciate him and his ministry here in our midst.

And we ask that you would bless the congregation that he has been in, in North Uist. Remember them, Lord, we pray. We know how difficult it is now when a minister leaves the congregation and when they find themselves not only bereft of a pastor but having to look for a replacement.

We pray for them and ask that your blessing will continue with them. And even as was the case many times before, that even in the absence of a permanent pastor, great blessing may yet break out amongst them.

Many will be turned to the Lord and your people strengthened. Go before us then now, we pray. Hear us in this our prayer and pardon our many sins. For Jesus' sake.

Amen. Now let's read from God's Word. Our reading is from John chapter 19. The Gospel of John and chapter 19. And today we're reading beginning at verse 17.

[16 : 32] And reading down to verse 37. So John chapter 19 at verse 17.

So they took Jesus and he went out bearing his own cross to the place called the place of a skull which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

There they crucified him and with him two others, one on either side and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.

Many of the Jews read this inscription for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city. And it was written in Aramaic, in Latin and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, do not write the King of the Jews.

But rather, this man said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, what I have written, I have written. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts.

[17 : 47] One part to each soldier, also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said to one another, let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see whose it shall be.

This was to fulfill the scripture which says, They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. So the soldiers did these things.

But standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, woman, behold your son.

Then he said to the disciple, behold your mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said, to fulfill the scripture, I thirst.

A jar full of sour wine stood there, so they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, It is finished.

[18 : 59] And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Since it was the day of preparation, and so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath, for that Sabbath was a high day, the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away.

So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other two, of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs.

But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water. He who saw it has borne witness. His testimony is true, and he knows that he is telling the truth, that you also may believe.

For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled. Not one of his bones shall be broken. And again another scripture says, they will look on him whom they have pierced.

And so on may the Lord add his blessing to that portion of his own precious word. Now we're going to sing in Gaelic, and our singing in Gaelic is from Psalm 22.

[20 : 16] Psalm 22 and verses are marked on their bulletin sheet. You can follow them on the bulletin sheet. Psalm 22 and verses 14 to 16.

In English they go, So like water I am poured out, my bones all out of joint do part, amidst my bowels as the wax so melted is my heart.

My strength is like a potsherd dried, my tongue it cleaveth fast unto my jaws, and to the dust of death thou brought me halfst, and so on.

So Psalm 22 in Gaelic from verse 14. Psalm 22 and verses 14.

These verses from 14. Mariske, Vortig Mishu Machu. I'm going to be seated for this singing. Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Evangelia, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Hermen, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Mariske, Maris ...

[22 : 11] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[25 : 43] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

O Christ, O Christ.

Will you turn with me now, please, to Paul's letter to the Colossians. Paul's letter to the Colossians. We read in John's Gospel the account of the crucifixion.

And here is Paul's theological reflection on Jesus who died the death of the cross. It's a passage that really deals with the Father's role in it.

But here there's also digression, if you like, to consider who it is. It is Jesus, the firstborn of all creation and so on.

[26 : 44] And in verse 17, we can pick up the reading there. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent.

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross.

Particularly verses 19 and 20, the emphasis on reconciliation through the death of Christ, making peace by the blood of the cross. Now, the Colossians were facing false teaching of a serious kind.

It was false teaching that many scholars think led to, or were the early parts of what came to be known as Gnosticism. And it appears that there were false teachers going around saying that in order to approach God, you needed a series of levels of approach, if you like, involving angelic beings, especially angels.

Because the idea was that God himself could not come into actual contact with humanity. Because human beings being sinful, God could not actually come into contact with humanity.

[28 : 11] And whatever the nature of that false teaching was, that was certainly one of the ideas that it was promulgating in Colossae.

It appears that some people in the church in Colossae were giving far too much attention to that teaching, which is why Paul wrote the terms that he wrote in Colossians in regard to the person of the Son of God, Jesus Christ, and the death that he died on the cross.

And that's why Colossians stresses again and again through the letter as you read it, the superiority and the sufficiency of Jesus. The sufficiency of Jesus is so very, very important to us.

We're actually commemorating or remembering in the Lord's Supper the death of Christ, and it's the death of the Christ who is himself sufficient to meet all our needs.

The Jesus who died on the cross is God's provision against all our needs as sinners, and particularly in regard to being reconciled to him.

[29 : 19] We do not need anything more than Jesus or anyone more than Jesus. And that's what Paul was setting out for the Colossians, that God the Father did this through the death of Jesus, he reconciled us to himself.

He was making peace through the blood of the cross. And we're looking at that today just very briefly in relation to the Lord's Supper. Making peace really is very much the same thing as reconciliation, making peace between us and God.

And two things I want to mention briefly. First of all, the enmity which required to be removed. Because when you think about making peace between two parties that are at odds, obviously that means that the enmity there is something that stands between those who are at odds, those who are divided, and that making peace, reconciliation, means dealing with that enmity, with the cause of that enmity.

And so we need to look at the enmity which required to be removed, and more fully looking at the death which removed that enmity. Now the enmity which required to be removed is an enmity that we caused.

Because when we believe the Bible and go back to what it says about the fall of man in Adam in the Garden of Eden, this is where our rebellion against God actually resulted in this enmity against him.

[30 : 50] You know, there's a lot of mystery about Adam, the perfect human being, yet in Genesis 3 you read an account of the fall and how he and his wife Eve capitulated to the suggestion of Satan that God was somehow keeping something back from them that he should have also given them.

But here is the issue that we face. We cannot understand the cross unless we accept Genesis 3 to be a reality.

You'll come across many, many people, many theologians indeed, that will say to you, you should not take the likes of Genesis 3 and even Genesis 1 and 2 literally. They're actually mythical accounts.

They're designed to present something that's important, but you mustn't take Adam as a historical figure. Well, Jesus did. And that's enough for me and it should be enough for you, that Jesus believed in the historical Adam.

And as he reflected many times and taught many times, as you find in the Gospels, what happened in Adam was so important for Jesus because Jesus knew that that's where man fell, that that's where we fell from the estate that God had created us in.

[32 : 02] That's where we became sinners at heart, if you like. That's where our rebellion against God resulted in enmity against him. In other words, if you accept Genesis 3, then you accept it as the background to the cross of Calvary.

You can't begin to understand the death of Jesus, the Son of God in our nature. You can't begin to even appreciate what that includes and what that is for and what the purpose of that is if you dismiss the account in Genesis 3 of our fall and of the enmity that came between ourselves and God.

And that hostility, that enmity that came about by our sin against God in Adam, in our representative Adam as the Bible presents him, means that that rebellion, that hostility is two-sided.

There is our hostility to God. Our hostility as sinful human beings to God. And that's really shown in many respects.

It's shown particularly in the call of the gospel to come and repent. What do you do with that unless God actually opens your heart to receive the need of it and to believe what the Bible is saying about yourself while you dismiss it?

[33 : 24] You do what Adam did. You just go and hide from it. You're not willing to accept it as something that you're called upon to do because the hostility of your heart is directed against God and the claims of God and the authority of God and the Word of God.

There's hostility from our side towards God. But there is something else. There's the hostility of God towards us.

If you look at verse 21 here, you can see how Paul goes on, You who were once alienated and hostile in mind, doing evil deeds, he has now reconciled.

And the hostility of God himself consists in the way in which he himself has something against us because of what we've done against him.

We mustn't think that our sin is something in which God is somehow neutral. You can see the hostility of God towards us in our fallenness.

[34 : 35] And this is in no way interfering with his love for his people and his provision, as we'll see, of Jesus and of his death. But all you've got to do is go back to Genesis again and Genesis 3 and look at what happened after God had spoken to Adam and Eve and also to the serpent, the devil and the serpent.

We read in verse 24 of Genesis 3 that he drove out the man from the garden. And he placed a guard against entrance to the garden.

Cherubim and a flaming sword. In other words, God was saying to fallen man, you can no longer live here. You can no longer come here. And when you think of what that word means, God drove the man out of the garden.

He didn't just say, now please leave in a very kind sort of way. He drove him out. It's an action of hostility against this man because of what he has done and because of the human race in him.

God's hostility needs to be dealt with. You see, there's a two-sided hostility as the Bible teaches us. We haven't time to go into other passages that deal with this.

[35 : 52] You can follow it through yourselves, especially in the writings of the Apostle Paul. And when you go to the Romans epistle, Romans chapter 8, you can see that the whole creation actually came under a curse due to the sin that we sinned against God.

We can't explain why that is or how that is. But Romans chapter 8 tells us that creation is longing to be released from that bondage of corruption which came upon it at the fall and in consequence of the fall of man.

You see, that tells me today, my sin is serious stuff. And not only is my sin serious as far as I'm concerned, even more so it's serious as far as God is concerned.

He is not neutral towards sin or towards sinners. He has that hostility that needs to be removed along with our hostility against him.

That's what the cross is about. That's what the death of Jesus is about. To deal with that hostility, to make peace by the blood of the cross, to reconcile to himself all things.

[37 : 06] So there's the enmity, very, very briefly, the enmity that needed to be removed. And let's look at the death which removed the enmity. Who took the initiative in providing the cross and providing the death of the cross, the death of Jesus?

Who took the initiative? It didn't come from us. It didn't come from human beings saying to God, please do something about our predicament. Please do something to set this right, what we have put wrong.

No, it came from God himself. He has done this. God the Father sent his Son into the world specifically with this purpose to die the death of the cross, which is the death that we as sinners deserved.

Instead of applying it to us, the Son of God took it himself. God made the first move. You see the words here in verse 19, it pleased him.

Well, it isn't quite translated that way in ESV, but I think that would be the better translation. It says here, in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell. Better translation, I think, would be it pleased God.

[38 : 18] God the Father especially. And that's what he's been dealing with in the earlier part of the passage through there, the early part of the chapter. But anyway, it would be better just translating it, I think, this way.

It pleased God, or it pleased the Father, that in him, in his Son, in Jesus, all the fullness would dwell. Now, when it says fullness, really that means the fullness of God.

Everything that makes God divine. Every single attribute that makes God divine. All the powers and the plenitude of godness, of godhood.

That's what fullness there means. And it pleased the Father that in him, in Jesus, all this fullness would dwell. In other words, when he became human, in order to die the death of the cross, he didn't leave his deity behind.

He didn't cease to be fully God. He didn't drop some of the plenitude of the fullness that was always his as the Son of God. You can see the same in chapter 2 and verse 9 there.

[39 : 24] For in him, in Jesus, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily. You see the wonder of Christ's person just glimpsed at there, can't you?

The wonder of the Jesus who walked in this world, who faced temptation, who lived a perfect human life, who died the death of the cross. Who is he?

This is the question that we have to keep asking all the time in order to keep in our minds a right view of Jesus and who he is and what he's done. You ask, who died on the cross?

Well, here is the Son of God, the plenitude of Godness in him. And what it's saying is it pleased the Father through him to reconcile all things to himself.

Remember when God created the universe at the beginning, as you see, as you read in Genesis, he looked out on it when it was finished after the six days of creation, and it was very good.

[40 : 22] God was delighted with it. God was pleased with it. Nothing needed to be adjusted. Nothing needed to be done to improve it. It couldn't be improved. He was pleased. And what Paul is telling us here is that God was pleased to restore it.

That God was pleased to bring it back towards a pristine state. To reconcile all things to himself. And now doesn't that make you wonder today?

With thankful wonder that the God against whom we rebelled, the God against whom we have enmity naturally in our hearts, the God whose hostility against sin is explained in the Bible or referred to in the Bible, doesn't it amaze you that that God, that same God, that very God, is the one who initiated this reconciliation?

And doesn't it make you even more amazed and thankful that he did this through his son? That he himself set up this plan of salvation from all eternity that would send his son Jesus into the world to die the death of the cross for sinners, for those rebels against God that we are.

That's what lies behind verse 20, verses 19 and 20. God was pleased to do this.

[41 : 49] And he says it's by the blood of the cross. Making peace by the blood of the cross. And as we said, verses 19 there in chapter 2, verse 9 shows Jesus being fully God.

But of course, he's also fully human. There is no aspect of humanity or humanness missing from the humanity of Jesus. You mustn't think of the fact that he did not have sin of his own, that he was a perfect human being.

You mustn't think that that means he wasn't a complete human being. Because God created human beings in the beginning without sin, of course. And the completeness of Christ's humanity is so precious.

So precious to us as we remember his death today. The death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God in our nature. Now, the Bible has some pretty amazing things to say about that.

And they're not things which we would ourselves have invented or spoken about in the terms they're spoken about. And I'm thinking especially of two verses in the book of Acts, which really fill your heart with amazement.

- [43 : 01] Especially as you come today to remember the death of the Lord in the Lord's Supper. Acts chapter 3, verses 14 to 15. Here is Peter saying, verse 14.
- But you denied the holy and righteous one and asked for a murderer to be granted unto you. That's reflecting on the Jews' desire to release Barabbas and to condemn Jesus.
- You denied the holy and righteous one. That's a name for God, of course, too. And asked for a murderer to be granted to you. And you killed the author of life.
- What a remarkable phrase. The author of life is God. The one who creates life. Who gives life. And what he's saying is you killed the author of life. This very one.
- And then in Acts chapter 20, you remember where Paul met with the elders from Ephesus. A very poignant emotional passage. An emotional meeting as it was.
- [44 : 09] He wasn't going to see them again. And it was very much a sorrowful occasion for that reason. But you remember what Paul said there in verse 28 of chapter 20.
- He says, And this is something that elders take into account in terms of their responsibility as overseers, as elders, as in a pastoral setting, carers of the flock of God.
- What is this saying to them that really, more than anything else, I think in that passage, says this is really what impels you, what motivates you, what fills your life with a burden to look after God's church?
- Because he purchased it with his own blood. And these are remarkable words. And they bring us back to the question, who died on the cross?
- It wasn't just a human nature that died on the cross. The Son of God in our nature or through his human nature died on the cross. God didn't die.
- [45 : 45] God didn't die. The deity didn't die. But the Son of God, who is fully God, through our human nature, gave himself to the death of the cross.
- And I can't explain that any further. Nor do I want to. Because I want to preserve the mystery, the wonderful mystery in this, how God, in becoming man, came to the cross in the person of Jesus and died the death of the cross.
- But that's what you remember today in the Lord's Supper. Achieving God's peace. Making peace by the blood of the cross. And reconciling all things, he says, to himself.
- That's what the cross achieved. To reconcile not just you and me, individuals, or even the whole church of God. When Paul says all things, he means the whole creation.
- The whole creation as it came under the curse of God is going to be released from that bondage of corruption at that time when Christ will be revealed. When God restores the whole created order to what it should be.
- [46 : 58] And when that happens, we will appreciate all the more how that has been achieved. Reconciling all things to himself.
- Making peace by the blood of the cross. The word reconcile there means more than just individuals coming to be reconciled to God.
- Or God reconciled coming to make peace between himself and individuals like we are today. It actually carries in it the whole idea of setting things back to the way they should be.
- If you think about two people that have fallen out. The need to make peace between them. However that's brought about. What you're really seeking to achieve.
- Whether it's by mediation or whatever. What you're really seeking to bring about is to restore things to what they were and to what they should be. To make peace.
- [47 : 59] And this is what God has done. The Father has done us through Jesus Christ, his son, by his death on the cross. Making peace by the blood of his cross.

God has put the enmity behind him. God has put our rebellion behind him. God has put the cause of the breakdown behind him.

In Jesus and his death on the cross. That is what the cross has achieved. It's so enormous that we cannot take it in. It's of such dimensions that we just don't have the capacity.

And I certainly don't. To take in exactly and all that's involved in that. To take a broken creation. And provide for its fixing.

To take a broken relationship. Where God detests sin. And is wrathful against sin. And against sinners. And deal with that so that it's put behind him.

[49 : 02] What could achieve that? Who could achieve that? When such an enormous thing needed to be fixed. To be put right. Well that's what Jesus has done.

That's what God the Father through. The death of his son on the cross. Has actually brought about. Making peace by the blood of his cross.

Now that peace exists. And 2 Corinthians 5 tells us that. The reconciliation that has been brought about. By that. Actually exists. It's there.

God is saying. I have done this. I have dealt with the problem. I have dealt with the enmity. I have dealt with. What needed to be done. To reconcile sinners to myself.

And to deal with my wrath against sin. All of that. God has dealt with in the cross. God has dealt with the cross. And so when you come to Jesus. What you're doing effectively.

[50 : 00] Is taking that reconciliation. And making it your own. That's why you're here today. At the Lord's Supper. You've taken this Christ. To be your Savior.

By faith. You've come to trust in him. You recognize that. That itself is by God's initiative. Through the work of God's spirit. In your heart. But it's a reality.

That's the reality. That exists in your heart today. And you remember. How that's so wonderfully portrayed. In the prodigal son.

In Luke chapter 15. When he came back home. Still filthy from. The most recent. Work that he'd been doing.

And groveling. And scrabbling with pigs. Trying to get something. Even the pigs that were eating. So that he would not die. And he came to himself.

[50 : 56] And when he came to himself. He began to think. What a fullness there was. In his father's house. And how foolish he had been. To turn his back on it. And he said. I will arise.

And I will go to my father. I will say to him. Father I've sinned against heaven. And against you. And I'm no more worthy. To be called your son. Make me one of your hired servants. Friends. Or as one of your hired servants.

But when he came back. When he actually reached his father. And saw his father running towards him. And his father embraced him. He began. The words that he had practiced saying.

Until. They disappeared. And the father's. Smothering of them. As he clasped them to his chest. He said. It's the greatest hug. Recorded in the Bible.

And it. Represents. The most wonderful reconciliation. That the father has effected. Through Jesus Christ. His son. There's no mention.

[52 : 00] By the father of the prodigal. Of his past. He doesn't say to him. Now what are you going to do. To make up for what you've done. What are you going to pay me.

How are you going to show respect. How are you going to actually deal with. The problem that came between us. Yes you're back home. But I need something from you.

There's nothing like that. Is there. Neither is there with God. God. Because when you come. To the offer of the gospel. Where Jesus is presented.

As the savior of sinners. Here is God saying. This is my provision. I've made peace. By the blood of the cross. And I'm calling on you.

To accept it. And when you accept it. You don't then come to God. The father. Seeking to accept Jesus. And afraid of God.

[52 : 55] Saying well. What else are you going to give me. You don't need anything else. It's all here. In the person. Of his son. The death.

Which removed. The enmity. It pleased the father. That in him all fullness should dwell. And through him. To reconcile to himself. All things.

Whether on earth. Or in heaven. Making peace. By the blood. Of his cross. Amen. May God. Bless these thoughts too. And while we sing some verses.

The children. Will make their way in. From the Sunday school. And if we need to pause. Until all the children are here. Then we'll do that. Psalm 85. Page 113.

And we're reading. Singing verses 8 to 13. I will hear what God the Lord says. To his saints. He offers peace. But his people must not wander.

[53 : 53] And return to foolishness. Surely for all those who fear him. His salvation is at hand. So that once again. His glory. May be seen within. Our land.

Psalm 100. Psalm 85. Page 113. These verses 8 to 13. Come out. And to God's praise. Amen. To God's praise.

I will hear what God the Lord says to his sins, King of the Jews.

But his people must not wander and return to foolishness.

Curing for all those who fear him, his salvation is at hand, so that once again his glory may be seen within our land.

[55 : 00] Love and truth come together, righteousness and peace and grace.

Righteousness looks done from heaven, from the earth's faint faithfulness.

What is good the Lord will give us, and our land his food will bear. Righteousness will go before him, and his royal way debil.

Amen. Amen. Well, as always, we now take our warrant for the remembrance of the Lord's death in the Supper from 1 Corinthians chapter 11, as we read there what Paul wrote to the Corinthians, 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and from verse 23.

What I received from the Lord, what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread. When he had given thanks, he broke it and said, this is my body which is for you.

[56 : 46] Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also he took the cup after supper, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

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

And we follow the Lord's own example in giving thanks. So let's give thanks now in his name. Almighty God, we pray that you would still our hearts in your presence.

We know that we are in the presence of the living God. That we are in the presence of the one who gave his only begotten Son. And in the presence of the Son who is now exalted.

The presence of the Holy Spirit. The one God in three persons. We thank you Lord today for all that is set out before us here on this table of the Lord.

[57 : 52] We bless you for all that it represents. We thank you for all that has gone toward providing it for us. Lord help us to see yourself in it.

We read in your word that you came to the disciples after your resurrection from the dead. And that you came into that place they were gathered. You showed them your hands and your side.

The confirmation not only of your death but also of your resurrection from the dead. And so we pray Lord today that these elements may be for us. As they were for these disciples long ago.

The evidences of your suffering and death. But also that we meet with yourself spiritually. As the Lord who has risen from the dead. And we thank you Lord today.

For the fullness of that life that you have provided for your people. For out of your fullness we have all received. And grace for grace. Bless to us we pray these elements today.

[58 : 56] As we seek that they be sanctified. From their common to their sacred use. Make the bread oh Lord indicative to us. Of your broken body.

And make this cup oh Lord represent to us the reality of your death. The shedding of your blood. Lord. We thank you that your promise to your people was that and still is.

That you would never forsake them. That you would be with them through the course of their life in this world. And bring them on to be in heaven with you. And we thank you Lord in that wilderness journey.

That we come to such an oasis as this today. Where we can refresh our souls. Where we can draw strength to bring with us Lord from this table today.

To meet the difficulties and the challenges of life in this world. We thank you for everyone who is here. We thank you for the children as they watch from the gallery.

[59 : 59] We pray that as they watch these things. That they may ask themselves of the meaning of them. We pray that their parents at home will explain to them. That this represents the death of Jesus.

And that in the Lord's Supper. The Lord's people come. To draw their strength from Christ. And to express their thankfulness to him. And so Lord we ask now that you'd continue with us here.

Bless us as we serve the table. As the elders go about their privilege and responsibility. And help us who receive the supper Lord to do it. With faith.

And with hope and with love. And to discern in it the Lord's body. Hear us we pray. For your glory's sake. Amen. Just briefly before we take the supper.

Going back to Colossians again. And we find in chapter 1 of Colossians. That Paul was expressing there his thankfulness. Giving thanks to the Father.

[61 : 03] And giving thanks to the Father he says. In such a way as remembered how he had delivered them. From the domain of darkness as he puts it in verse 15.

He has delivered us from the domain of darkness. And transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved son. Giving thanks to the Father who has done this. The Father is perhaps not the one we think of.

Mostly at the Lord's Supper. Father. We rightly think of Jesus. We rightly think of the Son of God. As we're thinking of through the sermon today.

Who effected the reconciliation. By the death of the cross. By his blood making peace. Well actually of course it's the Father that sent him. And it's the Father that's in Paul's mind here.

Giving thanks to the Father. Who has qualified you to share. The inheritance of the saints. In light. And has delivered us from the domain of darkness.

[62 : 12] It's appropriate for us to come to the table with thanks to the Father. As well as thanks to the Son. That's what we're doing today. Remember last night I mentioned that.

Eucharist was the name given by the fathers of old to the Lord's Supper. And still it's called the Eucharist in certain denominations. And it's a lovely term.

It's a term that means giving thanks. Or to give thanks. And as we come to the Eucharist. We give thanks to the Father. And we give thanks to him.

As Paul says here. Because he has qualified you to share. In the inheritance of the saints in light. An inheritance is something you receive. From someone who has obtained it for you.

Or bequeathed to you. An inheritance usually. Is something that comes to you. By way of the death of someone else. Who has left this to you.

[63 : 13] And so it is with our redemption. With our salvation. God has made peace. By the blood of the cross. And obtained an inheritance for us in that.

An eternal inheritance in heaven. And we give thanks to the Father today. Who has made this for us. Who has qualified you to share.

In the inheritance of the saints in light. That qualification is precious to you. God has made you his children. God has adopted you into his family.

That's true of everyone who is in Christ. You are adopted children of God. And as adopted children of God. You have an inheritance. An inheritance that he has obtained for you.

By the death of Jesus on the cross. And so we give thanks today. For that inheritance. For that inheritance. And to the Father. And to the Father. Who has done this for us.

[64 : 21] But he says who has also delivered us. From the domain of darkness. And transferred us. To the kingdom of his beloved son. There are two things in that.

He has delivered us from something. And delivered us into something else. Delivered us from the domain of darkness. That is the region or the realm.

In which Satan held sway. And that's what Jesus came to effect. To deliver us from the domain of darkness.

And to deliver us into. Translate us into. Transfer us into. The kingdom of his own beloved son. In whom we have redemption.

The forgiveness of sins. You sit at this table today. As people delivered. From the domain of darkness. You sit at the table today.

[65 : 20] As people who are free. From the powers of darkness. Doesn't mean they no longer trouble you. But it means you've overcome them. Because your life is in Christ.

And you give thanks to the father. You give thanks to the father. For qualifying you. For adopting you. For giving you the qualification. As his sons.

As his children. To be here. At his table today. To be partakers of. That inheritance. And you give him thanks. For the deliverance.

From the freedom. With which he has set you free. As Jesus himself says. In John's gospel. If the son. Sets you free. Then you are free.

Indeed. And so we go back to our warrant. In 1 Corinthians 11. And we read there. That the night in which the Lord was betrayed.

[66 : 17] That he took bread. And when he had broken it. He said. Take. Eat. This is my body. Which is for you. This do. In remembrance of me.

In the same manner. After supper. He took the cup. And said. This cup. Is the new covenant. My blood. This do.

As often. As you drink it. In remembrance. Of me. For as often. As you eat this bread. And drink. This again. To a verse in Colossians.

Colossians 2. Verse 8. Which says. As you have received. Jesus Christ. The Lord. Christ Jesus. The Lord. So walk in him. Rooted.

And grounded. In him. We mentioned. That the Colossians. Were facing. False teaching. Where there were. Ideas. That Jesus. Wasn't sufficient.

[67 : 22] That there needed to be. Other. Avenues. Followed. As well as. Jesus himself. And Paul. As we said. Was writing to the Corinthians. To counteract. That false.

And damaging. Teaching. And so he wrote. As you have received. Jesus. The Lord. So walk in him. In other words. He was saying to them.

Don't. Accept. Any other. Jesus. Any. Variation. On. The Jesus. That was preached. To you. The Jesus. That you accepted. The Jesus. You began.

Your Christian life. With. That's what he's saying. To them. Don't accept. The Jesus. Of the false teachers. Don't accept. The Jesus. That's presented. To you. In alternatives. To the gospel.

And that's as relevant. For you and I. Today. As it was. For the Colossians. Back. In the time. Of the apostle. Because you'll. Come across. Many varieties.

[68 : 16] Of teaching. As to who Jesus is. And also. Varieties. Of teaching. As to whether or not. Jesus is sufficient. You'll come across. A theology.

That really amounts. To a Christ. Plus. Theology. That's Christ. Plus. Your prayers. That's Christ. Plus. Your obedience. That's Christ.

Plus. Something else. On your own part. It's not. For the apostle. It is Christ. Jesus. You received. And so. Walk. In him.

And of course. He meant too. That. Jesus. The Lord. Was accepted. By them. They received him. And so. He says. So. Walk. In him. In other words.

The lordship. Of Jesus. Is always. To be with you. It's not something. You ever deviate from. That's something. You always appreciate. Is your place.

[69 : 11] Of safety. The lordship. Of Jesus. Is universal. The lordship. Of Jesus. Is total. As far as you're concerned. And so. You walk.

In him. As your lord. You follow him. As your lord. You don't give in. To any suggestions. That. Would draw you away. From a faithful. Following.

Of Christ. Whatever it is. The lord. Requires of us. As our lord. We are committed. To that. And that's not legalism. That is.

Loving. Obedience. To Christ. And as we come. From this table. Today. Let these words. Be mine. And yours. As we look forward. To go back.

To the world. To follow. Jesus. In our own life. And in our witness. To his love. As you have received. Christ. Jesus. The lord.

[70 : 05] So. Walk. In him. Let him. And him alone. Be your lord. Let him. And him alone. Decide for you. What's right and wrong.

Let him. And him alone. Be the will. To which you are subject. Let him. And him alone. Be the one. That reigns supreme. Over your life.

And to those today. Who are not. At the table. It's so good. To see you here. We're so encouraged. And so grateful. That you have.

Made time. To come. To this communion service. I know that some of you. Will have thoughts. Of being here. At the table.

With the lord's people. And for whatever reason. You have not found it. In your heart. Or mind. To join them. On this occasion. I pray that if you don't yet have Jesus for yourself.

[71 : 06] Something of this service today. In the word being preached. And in the supper that you've seen. Will have touched your heart. And you will overcome whatever fears you may have.

Of coming to commit your life to Christ. And to follow him. And to join his people. In their public witness. In the midst of this. We pray for you.

We commend you to God. We're thankful to God for you. And we pray that you too will come. Fully. Into the following of this lord.

So that you will receive him. If you haven't already. And that as you receive him. So you too will come. To walk in him. And find. Your security.

Your delight. Your hope. All together. In Jesus. We're going to now conclude by singing. God's praise.

[72 : 03] Psalm 72. Psalm number 72. From the Scottish Psalter. On page 314. These final three verses of the psalm.

Amen. Amen. His name forever shall endure. Last like the sun it shall. Men shall be blessed in him. And blessed all nations shall him call.

Now blessed be the Lord our God. The God of Israel. For he alone doth wondrous works. And glory that excel. And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity.

The whole earth let his glory fill. Amen. So let it be. These three verses. And again we stand to sing. Amen. Amen. Amen. And blessed.

All nations shall live call. The Lord our God. So blessed be the Lord our God.

[73 : 34] The Lord of Israel. For he alone doth wondrous works.

In glory thou art excel. Amen.

Amen. And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity.

The whole earth let his glory fill. Amen So let it be After the benediction I'll go to the main door O Lord our God Sanctify all that we have done in your name today Bless to us your word And the elements of the Lord's Supper O Lord this occasion is so precious to your people We thank you that we are part of it today Bless all who were observers and all who joined us online In wherever they are in the world O Lord we ask that the blessing of your spirit Will take the things of Christ and show them unto us And now be with us we pray throughout the remainder of this day Help us to gather once again in the evening

To the praise of your name With hunger in our hearts to learn more of your word More of its teaching And to come to draw near to yourself And be with us throughout the remainder of the week That we have entered into Help us in all the activities we anticipate By your will to partake of And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ The love of God the Father And the communion of the Holy Spirit Be with you now and evermore Amen Amen Amen Amen