

Pre-communion Service - God's Guests at Salvation's Banquet

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Date: 19 February 2022

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

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Musik Musik Musik Musik Musik Musik Let me extend a very warm welcome to you all this evening as we come to this pre-communion service just to prepare for the Lord's table, God willing, tomorrow.

As you know, we are not giving out tokens at this communion just to save contact in the current situation. So we would normally be waiting behind those who are going to the table on the Saturday evening. There's no need to do that this evening.

[5 : 50] So after the benediction, you're free to go. Except those who maybe want to come to the session either with a certificate to be welcomed by the session or else want to come to the session to take communion for the first time.

The session is going to be meeting in the hall this evening. The hall has been set out and it's nice and cosy. And that's just to give space as well and a bit of comfort rather than just in the session room nearby here.

So I do hope that there are some present who may wish to come for the first time to the Lord's table. I'm sure there are. We'll be delighted to meet with you. And if you could make your way down to the hall, we'll meet with you there.

Perhaps the first thing maybe is to go to the session room. And if you've got a problem with steps, just make your way down to the hall and we'll meet you there. We've decided not to use the upper hall again to avoid steps for those who may have some difficulty with steps.

So we'll meet in the main hall and you'll see the set out of the chairs there as you get there. And the services tomorrow were advertised or intimated last week.

[7 : 02] The communion service itself at 11 o'clock here. I'll be taking that service. The evening service will be taken at 6.30 by Reverend Callum Murdoe Smith, Minister of North Uist Free Church.

Well, we begin our worship this evening in Psalm 36. 36 in the Sing Psalms version. Psalm 36 on page 44 we're singing.

Verses 5 to 9. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord, it reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep. Your justice is like ocean depths, both man and beast you keep. How precious is your steadfast love, what confidence it brings.

Both high and low find shelter in the shadow of your wings. They feast within your house and drink from streams of your delight. For with you is the source of life. In your light we see light.

[8 : 03] And the theme of our thoughts this evening, looking in anticipation to the Lord's table, is our spiritual nourishment, our spiritual feeding, if you like, as we come together around the Word of God and anticipate the Lord's Supper, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper tomorrow.

And these verses, as you can see, speak along these lines in the terms of verse 8 especially. They feast within your house and drink from streams of your delight.

So verses 5 to 9 we stand to sing. You stand fast love, this great, O Lord, in Gretchen's heaven high.

Your faithfulness is wonderful, Extending to the sky.

Your righteous death is very great, Like mountains high and steep.

[9 : 25] Your justice is like ocean deep, O man, not peace to be.

O precious is your steadfast love, O confidence it is, O kind and love I shelter in, O God and love I shelter in, O God and love I shelter in, O God and love I shelter in, The shadow of your wings.

If he's within your house and drink, From streams of pure delight, For with you is the source of light, In blue and green's delight.

Let's call upon the Lord now in prayer. Let's join together as we seek God's blessing.

Lord our God as we unite together in calling upon your name, We give thanks for the reminder these great words have given us, Of your steadfast love, Of the way in which your wondrous love has been made known to us, In the work and person of our Lord Jesus Christ.

[11 : 13] We thank you tonight, Lord, That as we sing these words with a sense of wonder and a sense of thankfulness too, That we can never quite capture enough of that sense of wonder and thankfulness That we would like to have in our hearts.

We thank you, Lord, that they bring before us the sheer marvel of your grace and of your love, And the way in which you have exercised that toward our redemption.

We thank you tonight for the salvation so complete and so bounteous in the person of your Son. For he has been made to us, O Lord, a Saviour, And you have from all eternity set him apart to be the Saviour of his people, To be the King and head of his church, To be set finally over all things demonstrably, So that the whole creation is under his care.

We bless you tonight, O Lord, for the death that he died. We give thanks for the willingness of the Lord to give that gift of his Son, And for the willingness of the Son to come to take upon himself so willingly the burden of his people, Even to the extent of taking their sin and their punishment, their penalty for their sins.

Help us, Lord, to believe that you have done this. And give us, we pray, that sense of comfort and of assurance, Knowing that your acceptance of us is not on the basis of anything we can produce, Anything we ourselves can create, Not in anything at all that we are able to do, Or the quality of our thoughts.

[12 : 55] We thank you tonight that we come to you on the ground of Jesus Christ and him crucified, And risen from the dead. We pray, Lord, when we are so prone at times to look in upon ourselves, When we allow the evil, allow the evil one too, to take our minds away from Jesus, And to focus in upon our own, our own demerit, And upon that which we find to be so true of ourselves in our sins.

Help us to lift up our eyes to you, Lord, tonight. And enable us to be satisfied in you. Satisfied with all that you have done. Satisfied with your beauty, with your grace, And with your love and with your power.

Satisfied in the achievement of the Lord Jesus Christ, In bringing redemption and coming in the fullness of that redemption, To present himself in the gospel.

O Lord, we thank you tonight that we anticipate the Lord's Supper for the first time in two years. We thank you for all that you have been to us during these two difficult years.

We thank you for the encouragements that you continued to give us. For the way in which you upheld us. For the way that you kept your own word alive amongst us. For the way that your word went forth in the preaching of your word.

[14 : 17] For the way that your people showed such obvious relish. To share together even if they were not able to meet physically. Nevertheless, in other ways to share together in the wonder of the gospel.

And we pray tonight, O Lord, for your blessing. To follow that difficult time. As we emerge from the pandemic and the circumstances of it. And the restrictions imposed because of it.

We pray that that itself, Lord, as your providence. May bear its own fruit in our lives. In our thoughts and in our aspirations. May we come to realize more and more, Lord.

How dependent we are upon you. That we do indeed live and move and have our being in you. We cannot create an extra day for ourselves. We cannot reclaim yesterday.

All the efforts that we go through in order to achieve things. You bring them, Lord, to our notice. As that which cannot provide us with an inheritance in your sight.

[15 : 20] We don't need it, Lord. For you have provided it for us. And we pray that as we come to remember you once again. In the Lord's Supper in your death. O Lord, we pray that the preciousness of this may be once again impressed upon our souls.

We give thanks for it. We give thanks, Lord, even as we anticipated. And that by your will, as we will sit at your table. And partake of these elements that represent the Lord in his death.

Convey to us, we pray, through your Holy Spirit. That life that he himself has procured for us. And help us in fellowship with you and with one another.

To rejoice in your presence. To truly come, O Lord, with glad hearts. To share together in the blessings of not only the gospel. Of that salvation that you are pleased to make over to your people.

We pray your blessing tonight for all who have been there before. And to come again with rejoicing. And perhaps some with doubts, even though they've been there before. Yet, Lord, we pray that you would bless this to them.

[16 : 28] We pray for those who will be unable to attend through illness or other reasons. We ask that you'd bless them. We pray, too, for those who have willingly given of their time to look after children.

And young people in the creche and twinnies. And who themselves, O Lord, would ordinarily be at your table. We thank you for that sacrifice that they have made.

And pray that their devotion in your service will be blessed to them. And that you would meet with them, O Lord, as they serve you in that way. We pray for those tonight, O Lord, who contemplate coming to take communion for the first time.

We thank you that they are here among us. We thank you that we anticipate them coming to take communion with your people. We thank you, Lord, for the rejoicing that it brings to our hearts to know that your work goes on amongst us.

That you have a people who will be burdened to profess your name in the world. We pray tonight that you would encourage them. Lord, we pray that you would give them the strength and give them the deep desire to come.

[17 : 36] And to make it known to us that they are your people. And help them, Lord, we pray, as they look forward in anticipation to do this for the first time. We thank you for those who have already come to the session.

And for those who have come also with certificates from other congregations. Setting them before us as proof of their being in good standing. We thank you for them.

And for the desire they have to join with us as a congregation. And we pray, Lord, as we give thanks for these things. We pray that you would continue to bless us and add to the number of your own professing people.

And so we ask now that you'd bless us as we turn to your word. Guide us, we pray, through it by your Holy Spirit. Bless it to our hearts for our comfort, for our stimulation.

For all that we require, Lord, to be before you and to one another. And so receive our thanks and cleanse us from sin. For Jesus' sake. Amen.

[18 : 36] We're going to read now from God's word in the prophecy of Isaiah. Prophecy of Isaiah. Reading chapter 25. And into the first few verses of chapter 26.

Isaiah 25. Down as far as 26, verse 4. O Lord, you are my God.

I will exalt you. I will praise your name. For you have done wonderful things, plans formed of old, faithful and sure. For you have made the city a heap, the fortified city a ruin.

The foreigners' palace is a city no more. It will never be rebuilt. Therefore strong peoples will glorify you. Cities of ruthless nations will fear you.

For you have been a stronghold to the poor, a stronghold to the needy in his distress. A shelter from the storm and a shade from the heat. For the breath of the ruthless is like a storm against a wall, like heat in a dry place.

[19 : 48] You subdue the noise of the foreigners as heat by the shade of a cloud, so the song of the ruthless is put down. On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever. And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.

And the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth. For the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Behold, this is our God. We have waited for him that he might save us.

This is the Lord, we have waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. For the hand of the Lord will rest on this mountain, and Moab shall be trampled down in his place, as straw is trampled down in a dunghill.

And he will spread out his hands in the midst of it, as a swimmer spreads his hands out to swim. But the Lord will lay low his pompous pride together with the skill of his hands.

[21 : 04] And the high fortifications of his walls he will bring down, lay low, and cast to the ground to the dust. In that day this song will be sung in the land of Judah.

We have a strong city. He sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. Open the gates that the righteous nation that keeps faith may enter in. You keep him in perfect peace, whose mind has stayed on you, because he trusts in you.

Trust in the Lord forever. For the Lord God is an everlasting rock. Amen. May once again God be pleased to bless this word to us.

Before we turn to a passage in this chapter, let's read and sing from Psalm 63. Psalm 63 in the Scottish Psalter this time, page 295 in your psalm books.

We're going to sing verses 1 to 5. Lord thee, my God, I'll early seek my soul, doth thirst for thee. My flesh longs in a dry, parched land, wherein no waters be, that I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face, as I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place.

[22 : 19] And again in verse 5, you notice how the note of nourishment and strengthening is set out. Even as with marrow and with fat, my soul shall filled be.

Then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee. Verses 1 to 5. Lord thee, my God. Lord thee, my God. Lord thee, my God. Lord thee, my God, I'll early seek my soul, doth thirst for thee.

My flesh longs in a dry, parched land, wherein no waters be.

Lord thee, my God. Lord thee, my God. Lord thee, my God. Son, O beget! My Lord. God thee, my God. My God. Amen. Heav sollst us. Heavhold th ■■■■ful.

bur numberig of Weah, in any time for the Holy Spirit. God shall my soul, dothmonthly only, by the Holy Spirit. At all times I have seen thee are dear to form within thy holy length.

[23 : 36] ZANG EN MUZIEK Even as with marrow and with fat my soul shall fill it be, then shall my love with joyfulness sing praises unto thee.

Now, would you turn back with me, please, to Isaiah chapter 25. Begin reading at verse 6, Isaiah 25 at verse 6.

On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

And he will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever. And the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces.

And the reproach of his people he will take away from all the earth. For the Lord has spoken. It will be said on that day, Behold, this is our God. We have waited for him that he might save us.

[25 : 28] This is the Lord we have waited for him. Let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation. Now, as you read these words, you're reminded, I'm sure, of that great passage in Exodus chapter 24, where representatives of the people of Israel went up the mountain and were told they sat there in the presence of the Lord God of Israel.

They had a vision of God there and they ate and drank in his presence. It was God's way of sealing or ratifying the covenant that he had made with them.

Covenant that they had themselves been recipients of the time that they spent there at Mount Sinai. And as the Lord sealed his covenant through these representatives, so Moses himself, as he led the people, he himself from there on, of course, led them on through the wilderness onto the promised land.

It was, in many ways, a celebration of God's redemption of them, God's taking them out of the slavery of Egypt and on into now a journey beginning on the way to the promised land.

And it was fitting that the Lord should actually have these people as representatives of the people sitting to celebrate that at the meal that they shared in the presence of the Lord.

[27 : 01] And all the way through Scripture, you find meals being very significant in different ways, especially to the people in the Old Testament. And that follows through into the New Testament.

And it comes through especially in the spiritual sense to the Lord's Supper, which is literally a meal because there are elements of food, although they're used for a spiritual purpose.

They are not anything less than food that we use at other times. And Jesus used the imagery of the feast frequently in his own, certainly a good number of times in his own ministry, as we read in the Gospels.

For example, in Matthew chapter 22, you remember the way in which he set forth the account that he gave of the great feast that had been provided and the invitations that were given out to come to the feast.

Sadly, some refused. But that was really an illustration given by Jesus of the kingdom of God and what the kingdom of God was like. And there are so many other passages that you need to fit in along with that.

[28 : 10] But actually having that imagery of a feast is such a powerful way of setting out for us, by way of illustration, setting out for us the salvation that God has provided for His people and how rich it is and how nourishing it is spiritually as we partake of it.

The very symbolism of a feast or of a banquet immediately conjures up in your mind the matter of a richness of food that you have freedom to partake of.

An abundance of rich food, not just a meager ration. It's an abundance. It's there to partake of. And as you carry that image with you, take it through into these wonderful words in Isaiah chapter 25.

In verse 6, you'll find the feast described. A brief description there of the feast on this mountain. The Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food, a feast of well-aged wine, of rich food full of marrow, of aged wine well refined.

This is the feast described. And secondly, we come to the main course. He will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations.

[29 : 35] He will swallow up death forever. The main course is eternal life. What is the removing of death? But it's replacement by eternal life in the rich salvation that we have in Jesus that we remember, as we remember His death in the Lord's Supper.

That is the main dish on the banquet table in the Lord's provision for His people, the provision of life in Jesus Christ.

And thirdly, in verse 9, that's in verses 7 to 8, you could say the main course is there. In verse 9, we'll finish off by looking thirdly at the rejoicing guests, those who have come and have been invited and come to sit at the salvation table will be saying, Behold, this is our God.

We have waited for Him. This is the Lord. We have waited for Him. Let us be glad and rejoice in His salvation. And we'll finish by applying these words to the Lord's Supper itself, as if you like that aspect of the kingdom of God or the banquet that awaits the Lord's people more perfectly in glory in heaven, in miniature form, you have it in the Lord's Supper as we sit and partake of that spiritual banquet that you have in the Lord's salvation in Christ.

So look at the feast described very briefly. We'll go through these points. He first of all says, On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples. Now in Isaiah, Isaiah loves to actually bring out the foolishness and the worthlessness of idolatry.

[31 : 24] This is what the people had imported into their practices. This is what surrounded them and all the pagan nations around them. And you'll find a similar reference in the second chapter of Isaiah where he refers to the mountain there as well.

It shall come to pass that the mountain of the house of the Lord shall be established as the highest of the mountains. And I think he's got in mind the fact that in many cases, pagan idolatrous practices were practiced in the heights.

The bales that were the false gods of the Canaanites, for example, were always or usually worshipped on higher ground where altars were set up for these pagan rituals.

And what Isaiah is really doing is the Lord is actually going to build far higher than that in such a way that will actually crush and overcome and show the foolishness of that pagan idolatry.

Of course, he's talking to a people, he's preaching to a people that had sadly brought a lot of these practices into their own practice as the covenant people of God.

[32 : 29] They had gone away from faithfulness to the Lord. All of that is built into it. But it's really an emphasis when he says here on this mountain. This mountain where Zion, I think, is what's meant there.

You meant to just think of that as well, Mount Zion, where the temple was situated, where the people of Israel came and gathered in accordance with God's will to remember the Lord, to give sacrifices, to worship the Lord.

On this mountain, a mountain that was regarded, Mount Zion was regarded as pathetic, pretty small, didn't have the heights of other mountains, but that's where the Lord lived in the sense in which he presented himself to his people through the sacrifices and the gatherings and the festivals and the feasts that he himself had ordained and commanded them.

What are you saying? On this mountain. Now this mountain is going to surpass any other mountain, this mountain that represents, if you like, the spiritual mountain of God where salvation is situated, the heights where God himself lives.

And that mountain, this Zion, this house of the Lord, and all that it represents, the mountain that it represents, the salvation of God, God, the provider, the savior of his people.

[33 : 48] In other words, it's really the triumph of God over all his enemies, the triumph of God over all his rivals, the triumph of God over everything that Israel themselves think of as important in terms of the sinful practices that they had imported.

No, he's saying this mountain of the Lord, this God, is the God who triumphs over everything that rivals him, over everything that stands opposed to him.

And he does so because he himself, as God, saves his people, brings them out of slavery, out of darkness, into his marvelous light as the New Testament put it.

And you see, it's there for all peoples, verses 2 to 3 there. You find, sorry, in verses 6, you find it for all peoples, verses 2 to 3 of chapter 2 has a similar reference.

The Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast of rich food. You know, it gladdens your heart when you realize that the Lord's table is not a Stornoway free church table.

[35 : 02] It's not the free church table. It's not a Baptist table. It's not an Anglican table. The table of the Lord is the Lord's table.

The feast of the Lord is the Lord's feast. It's not for those that we might deem would be best qualified to actually come and partake of it. It is for all peoples.

Now, how many times the Lord showed his disciples, even in that wedding feast that he mentioned there in Matthew, as we mentioned near the beginning in Matthew chapter 22, you remember how that passage developed in the way that the Lord taught there about the invitation that was given to the wedding feast.

And as many as refused, then the Lord actually then gave instructions to go out and to invite others, go to the main roads and invite to the wedding feast as many as you find.

And those servants went out into the roads and gathered all whom they found, both bad and good, so the wedding hall was filled with guests. The Lord is saying tonight, it's not because you're special that you have the opportunity to come to take communion.

[36 : 22] Not because you're special in the eyes of people. Not because we maybe think we're special in comparison to other people. If we are special and we are special, it's because the Lord sees us as special to him.

His own chosen people, his own people that he has formed for himself, as Isaiah says in chapter 43. Tonight as we come in anticipation of the Lord's Supper, we are so comforted by this fact that he says, for all peoples.

You look in on yourself and I look in on myself and I see my sinfulness and I see my unworthiness and I see how much I've failed to progress since the last time I took communion.

And the Lord is saying, yes, I know that too, but this is for your likes. This is for the people who see themselves as unworthy and see Christ as worthy of them doing this for him.

And you're not excluded when you see yourself as unworthy. You're not excluded because you may think that you're nothing compared to others that come to take their place at the Lord's table.

[37 : 37] The important thing is what the Lord makes of you, what the Lord's opinion is of you. And if you have reached out in faith and taken Jesus to yourself and as your Savior, well, the Lord is saying to you, whatever anybody else thinks, you're special to me.

and because you're special to me, I've provided a banquet for you. And because you're special to me, I've provided a miniature of it in the Lord's Supper. I've provided this for you as a spiritual delight, as a representation, and indeed a means of grace so that the Lord Himself can channel this grace and this wonderful spiritual nourishment into your soul.

And it's a very rich feast. You can see the terms that are used there. A feast of well-aged wine, of rich food, full of marrow, of aged wine, well-refined.

Isaiah is just going out of his way to emphasize just how rich and how nourishing and how strong this fair is, the food in this feast is. And the Lord is, in other words, saying to us, as this represents His salvation, as it represents the banquet that you have, the salvation you have in Christ, the eternal life that you've come to already begin to partake of when you've come to take Christ to yourself and put your faith in Him.

Eternal life begins with that. It doesn't reach its full height till we get to be glorified in heaven. But thanks be to God, it begins in your soul the moment Christ lives there.

[39 : 23] And as you come to the table, you realize from this passage that God is saying to you, I'm giving you the best that I have.

I'm giving you the best I can provide. You know, when God brings this banquet table, His salvation before us, and we see the elements that are set out on it that are represented by the body and by the cup and the bread that represent the body and the blood of Jesus, well, God is saying through all of that to us, I have nothing better to give you than this.

I can't improve on this. This is the best that I have, and I'm giving it to you. I've provided it for you. You are my people. You're precious to me. What else could I give you but the best?

And you say in return, well, Lord, I want to give you my best. And even though I know my best is not itself fit and sufficient for your purpose, I know that by your grace you'll receive it.

because you promise me that when I have Christ, you see me in Him, and therefore you see me in Him as the best you've got.

[40 : 42] Don't ever think of the Lord's table in any less terms than God's very best represented there in these elements. It's the best He could provide.

He couldn't improve on it Himself, speaking with all reverence, because it is Jesus in His death, a person, the immaculate, the sinless person of Jesus and the death that He died.

That's what He's saying. Take this. Do this in remembrance of me. It's God's great banquet, the feast as it's described, the richness of the feast.

And that's spiritually what God is holding out for us in the Lord's Supper. What you see is physical and what you do is physical in taking it into your body.

It represents that which is spiritual and nourishing for your soul. Nothing less than the salvation, the eternal life that God in Christ has provided.

[41 : 48] Well, what about the main course then? He goes on to say that He will swallow up on this mountain the covering that is cast over all peoples, the veil that is spread over all nations. He will swallow up death forever.

And we said at the beginning that's the main dish on the table, this eternal life. That's why He's saying here He will swallow up death. He will take away death. He will just...

The amazing thing is He will take it into Himself really is what happened. And what's behind these words, Jesus taking the death that we deserve, the curse of God, which is what God Himself very rightly imposed in consequence of our sin, your sin and my sin.

For that's what death is, the wages of sin. Not just physical, the way we're used to seeing death when the soul leaves the body and the body is left behind, that dead body and the soul goes to eternity.

Death is much more than that. Death, essentially, and the meaning of it in the Bible, is separation from God. An eternal death, the death that is, hell, is separation from God forever without any possibility of rescue.

[43 : 11] And it is that as what we deserve that Christ took to Himself. That's what He Himself experienced and gave Himself to as He died the death of the cross.

But here is the great promise in Isaiah, looking forward to the day of accomplishment on the cross. He will swallow up on this mountain.

He will swallow up death forever. You come to the Lord's table and you may have many fears and you may have fear even as you anticipate the end of your life and my life whenever that will be and in whatever circumstances.

And there may be much in that that we are afraid of and much of that is, of course, uncertain as far as we looking ahead are concerned though we know we will die. But you know the death in the sense of separation from God you need not fear because your Savior has already taken that away.

your Savior has already taken that to himself. Your Savior has actually accomplished the death which is the penalty for our sins and he has paid the price of it in his own death successfully, fully.

[44 : 32] And this is why he is speaking here of this covering this veil that is spread over all nations and I think that that means really the way that death or certainly the environment of death the things associated with death, sorrow and gloom and sadness and loss everything you can think of as well as death itself maybe it's death itself primarily that's thought of here as just like a dark shroud that came after the fall in Adam to be just fall onto the whole of creation if you like certainly the whole of humanity that dark veil that covering this shroud that has come to lie on all human life from the fall onwards and into that came the person of Jesus the person of God's Son in whom life itself is and into this gloom he came to lift away that veil to remove death to remove our alienation from God and to deal with the reason of it in our sin that is why he died and willingly came to die that death he died he will swallow up he will swallow up in himself this death what a wonderful wonderful description

Isaiah gives it there he will swallow up death he will swallow it up in himself he will take it to himself and deal with it successfully and you see what he's saying he's doing that forever he will swallow up death forever it's permanent it'll never return for his people never return to be held against them never return into their experience even when they die physically they don't die spiritually as the catechism wonderful reminds us the souls of believers at their death are made perfect and do immediately pass into glory and their bodies meantime united to Christ do rest in their graves till the resurrection death's already defeated you can say of the body of a believer as we so often see being laid down into the grave in a coffin you can say categorically as that person is in

Christ as the soul of that person has gone to be with Jesus in glory that body dead as it is physically is united to Christ it's not going to miss out anything on the resurrection or on the redemption that Christ has purchased and that physical death is not going to disturb the bliss and the peace that belongs to God's people because God has swallowed up death in himself when we come to die in this world we come to be separated from loved ones we come to have a separation of our soul from our body as believers but none of that not an iota of that not a single second of that separates us from God from the life that God has procured that's the main dish on this table that's the main dish that we partake of and enjoy at this banquet of the

Lord as you sit at the banquet the salvation that God has given to you this is what you enjoy this is what you partake of this is the main course eternal life as you have it in Christ although you know full well that that's not going to be completed until you reach heaven that's when it's going to be perfect when it's going to be finally perfect and you perfect with it but you have the beginnings of it here and you have not least you have the Lord's Supper as a part of that whole means of enjoying the salvation that God has given us you come and you take these elements you take the cup you take the bread you take the cup as you reach out and take them and make them your own in a physical sense so spiritually you're saying in your soul to yourself and you're saying to the Lord who has provided this for you

Lord thank you for this main course thank you for its fullness thank you for its richness thank you for its permanency thank you that it will never ever again be removed from me thank you that I can come and sample of it even briefly in this life at the Lord's supper and you see this is the Lord God the Lord God will do this he will wipe away all tears from all faces the Lord of the Lord of the tears from all faces and that of course is part of the consequences what follows on from the defeat of death from death being swallowed up from death being overcome because that's the cause of our tears friends isn't it not just death itself but our fallenness everything that's come into our fallen situation and circumstances and relationship with

[50 : 29] God everything that's attached to our sin that's what causes our weeping that's why this world is full of weeping it's a consequence of sin even for believers it's a consequence of sin but here is God saying I have swallowed up death and because I've swallowed up death there's no reason for you to weep as if that was not the case to weep as if death was going to claim you at last and separation from God would be forever it's the other way about he will swallow up death forever and the Lord God will wipe away tears from all faces all faces of his people well that of course reminds you of Revelation doesn't it Revelation chapter 21 where you come to these wonderful words the Lord wiping away the tears of his people when he says behold the dwelling place of

God is with man he will dwell with them they will be his people see no more alienation or separation and he will be their God and they will be his people he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain anymore for the former things have passed away and as a believer and believers you come to the Lord's supper to remember the Lord in his death and as you do that with thankfulness so you say in your heart of hearts and you say sincerely and you say willingly Lord thank you for the wiping away of my tears you have shed many tears in this life some of you have shed tears all the way through your lives some of you have shed tears even in recent times tears of pain and of sorrow and you continue to know something of that all through the course of your life but what a wonderful picture this is if you like of

God God doesn't have physical hands of course except in the person of Jesus but this is really God as if you find the Almighty with that gigantic finger like a parent that's just coming to console a little child that's fallen and scraped their knees and caused themselves pain and come in crying wiping away the tears and say it's alright I'm here I'm here you're safe with me and that is what God is saying to your soul tonight as you're in Christ and as you're anticipating remembering him in his death God is saying to you in all your weeping and everything that causes you to cry and everything that wrings out your heart and pain it's alright my child I'm here nothing's changed I'm still your father I'm still your chief carer I'm still the one that continues to keep death away from ever touching you again spiritual death and so you come to the main course and you say

Lord thank you for that keep me mindful of the fact that you have dealt with death that you have dealt with my sins that they will never meet me to condemn me ever again that they have been taken away and you see he's saying the reproach of his people along with that the reproach of his people in verse 8 that he will take away from the earth for the Lord has spoken well reproach you could say reminds them of the time they spent in Egypt especially it's often associated with that time that they spent in Egypt because in Egypt they were slaves it was their disgrace it was a reproach to them here they were the Lord's covenant people and here they were under the cruel tyranny of a pagan society and a pagan people and a pagan king their reproach and God was going to take that away and he had taken that away when he led them out of

Egypt but that now of course spiritually points forward to our reproach our slavery and sin what we caused and brought on ourselves that's been dealt with a great verse in Deuteronomy 15 and verse 16 there are these same people the Lord's people as they were then on the border of the promised land about to enter in imagine just the rejoicing in their hearts imagine the anticipation of actually finally entering into the land of Canaan and coming to settle there as the land that God had promised them as an inheritance in this world and there was God saying you will remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt in other words never forget where I found you never forget where your rescue came from never forget what it took to rescue you the death of a lamb as a sacrifice for your redemption and as we come to approach the Lord's table that's the same emphasis isn't it what a wonderful banquet we have represented in the

[56 : 23] Lord's table what a wonderful means the Lord's table is not just to feed our souls but to come with all that causes you pain and sorrow and through that table itself through these elements as you wait upon God as God you trust will bless them to you he's using that itself so often for his people to say don't be anxious I'm here I'm never going to go away and leave you again to the slavery of sin but remember that you were a slave that that's where I found you and therefore as you come to as you come to celebrate your redemption as you come to take those elements in the Lord's Supper that represent it as you come again to fellowship with Christ and with God's people by all means celebrate it but don't celebrate it as if it's your own achievement because God found you as a slave and rescued you in

Christ and brought you into the liberty which he makes us free the main course the feast described but then you see the rejoicing guests it will be said on that day and of course in the prophecy of Isaiah this is pointing forward to the day of Christ the day of fulfillment it will be said on that day behold this is our God we have waited for him let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation a sense of both recognition and of wonder as they realize this is our God we have waited for him you see God is recognized in the rescue of his people they recognize him in that rescue that he has done this the arm of the Lord has done this and it's with a sense of wonder that they then exclaim this or confess this in his presence so take that too friends to the

Lord's table with you because these words are eminently applicable as you look at the bread and at the wine as you think of what they represent as you then take them and physically take the bread and physically drink of that wine that cup say behold this is our God this is what this represents this is our God he has chosen elements that we use in the ordinary course of life elements that are associated with our ordinary foodstuffs because certainly in those days wine and bread were basic foodstuffs they were enjoyed they were nourishing as they still are if they're not misused but you can take this to the table with you as you view these elements as you take these elements as you remember the Lord's death say to your soul say to your God this is yourself this is our God and if you're coming for the first time everybody here who's coming for the first time how grateful we are that you are coming for the first time but say we have waited for him

I've waited for this moment I've looked forward to this moment perhaps some of you looked forward to it for a long time for years months at least and certainly for all of us who will come to the table after two years without the privilege and the blessing of the Lord's supper here we are again by God's grace by God's mercy able to come to the Lord's table behold this is our God we have waited for him we have been longing for this moment once again and here it is and what is he saying he's saying let us be glad and rejoice in his salvation come to it with your hearts rejoicing this is your God this is your salvation in him maybe there is somebody here who has not yet accepted

Jesus but still to receive the eternal life that he died to procure for his people well I'm sure you know what I'm going to say I've said it many times so have others this is for you this also has relevance to your need this is God's provision for lost sinners salvation in Christ why should you be a slave in the land of Egypt when the fullness of Canaan is offered you when the land flowing with milk and honey in heaven is already secure through what Jesus has achieved but for all of you who think of coming to the table for the first time please do come please do show your appreciation for what

[62 : 12] God has done for you and as he has described the feast for you tonight and as he has set forth the main course for you reviewing that eternal life that is in Jesus and as he has emphasized the appropriateness of saying let us rejoice and be glad in him oh take these words with you and come and come and celebrate the victory of Christ let's pray oh Lord our God we thank you that there is such a table to come to as the table of redemption we thank you too for that table of the Lord's Supper where the central aspect of redemption and the death of Jesus Christ is set before us Lord we pray that you would prepare our hearts that we may come humbly and yet with hungry souls that we may come depending upon you and yet triumphing in you and we pray oh

Lord that you would continue to make us thankful and grateful and dependable and dependent on all that you have done go before us Lord we pray and in all of these things take the praise to yourself and bless your word to us once again for Jesus sake Amen we're singing in conclusion tonight from Psalm 118 118 in the Scottish Psalter on page 399 399 verses 24 to 29 these words this is the day God made these are referring forward from the psalmist day to the day of redemption the day of Jesus the day of God in Christ reconciling the world to himself as the New Testament puts it this is the day God made in it will joy triumphantly save now I pray thee Lord

I pray send now prosperity and so on to the end of the psalm to God's praise this is the day God made in it will joy triumphantly will joy triumphantly and so on thank you you the ■■■■ prueba Seb ■ Moritz Ex Amen.

Amen. Amen.

God I will be praised, give thanks to God for he is good, his mercy must always, his mercy must always, his mercy must always.

[67 : 00] Amen. As I said at the beginning, those who are seeking to come to the Lord's table for the first time or with a certificate, you could please wait in the vestry here first of all, and then we'll send for you as we deal with these things one by one in the hall.

So please use the vest... Sorry, the session room, not the vestry, the session room to the side here, and then we can bring you down to the hall in turn. Thank you. 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.