

Behold the Son, Behold the Shame!

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[0 : 0 0] Well, thank you. Thank you for your warm welcome. It's lovely to be in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ here in this congregation and to renew that fellowship. I thank the Lord for so many blessings received through my life, not least as a child growing up in this congregation and through in Laxdale in the Sunday school there. We lift up our hearts to the Lord in worship to praise his glorious name and we worship God with the words of Psalm 149 from the Scottish Psalter. Let's sing together Psalm 149 from the Scottish Psalter at the beginning and the verses 1 to 4. The tune is Montrose as we sing, praise ye the Lord, unto him sing a new song and his praise in sweet songs do ye raise. Let's rise and sing praise to our great God.

is he the Lord, unto him sing a new song and his praise in thee, that sent me all his praise. in sweet songs do ye raise. Let Israel in peace make your joy, and to him praises sing. Let all that thy the words of a body to sing the gospel is known for your greatest song forounding and theesiom be do ye raise. Let them and do his great hump 57 With them with timbrel and with harp, His songs His praise advance.

For God doth pleasure take in those that His own people meet, and He with His salvation the meek will beauty.

We draw near to our God in prayer. Let us pray. It is sweet indeed, gracious Lord, to come to make melody in heart and in mind before the Lord.

[3 : 4 9] We ask that we would be reminded constantly of the grace and the goodness that we have received from our faithful God, our Maker.

We ask that our worship will be characterized by the privilege of Christian joy. Let Israel in His Maker joy, and to Him praises sing.

As we look around this world of war and of confusion and of tragedy, as we see around us wickedness seeming to be out of control in so many places, Lord, where is there to be found any source of comfort, any source of joy, apart from eternal truth and eternal holiness, eternal beauty, that which comes from beholding the face of God.

may we be still in the Lord's presence in this hour of worship tonight, and may our hearts be prepared and made ready for a Lord's day of blessings and of rest and of good things.

As we turn in these days around communion to the Gospel of John to read together, and as we hear again the familiar story of our Saviour's obedience and humility and love, give us ears to hear.

[5 : 4 9] Give us understanding. Increase our love for your holy child, Jesus. Help us in our minds and our imaginations to see Him and to adore Him, to love Him, and to rejoice with thanksgiving in all your works.

We come with the church through ages past to worship God, and we join our prayers and our praises with the church that is in heaven around the throne.

Paul could pray, leading the church in its prayer, bowing the knee to the Father, in whom the whole family, in heaven and on earth, finds its name, its identity, and its source.

We pray to our Father, but we do not yet see His glory fully. But the church in glory is bathed in light.

Our praises and their praises coming together in Jesus to the glory of the Father.

[7 : 23] How wonderful. Lord, bless the work of this congregation, in this community, and in its influence throughout the island and further afield.

We thank you, Lord, for missionary partnerships that have been rich and rewarding through decades. and we ask that tonight, as a church, in our commitment to Jesus, we would be concerned for the care of the church and of the saints, but also for the welfare of those who are not yet part of the church, and for children and young people who have yet to show covenant obedience by an adult and a maturing faith.

How we long for the church of today to be used of God as a means to sow the seed for the church of tomorrow and the latter days.

Take pleasure in your people, gracious Lord. Take pleasure in your own people and with your salvation make beautiful your people.

make mature and fruitful your people so that your people's praises will not be merely in form, but with the whole heart, with the whole mind, leaning towards the Lord and declaring his praises.

[9 : 16] May we declare our Savior Jesus when we lift the cup of salvation when we break and share with one another the bread that speaks of his body tomorrow.

May we proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. And may the meek be beautified by the Spirit's work.

And may we eat and drink with each other and with our Lord as friends and as the people who know peace with God.

We pray that you would remember this nation. Even the king is frail and made of dust. Send healing and blessing upon him and his family.

and remember those who govern in Edinburgh and in the assemblies and parliaments of the United Kingdom in the various nations and in the UK.

[10 : 31] But most of all we pray for that kingdom that is coming and for that kingdom that is growing and for that kingdom that will never, never end.

the kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. May the light of his face be turned towards his praying people today in this land and in every land.

Keep us and use us and bless us and grant to us that for which Jesus prayed in the upper room.

Keep us united and keep us loving our Lord and one another and keep us as lovers of your truth.

Remember those who are suffering and sick who are known to us and who are in our prayers. Remember those who join us over the internet and make your servants hear ministering the word in this town and from this pulpit fruitful joyful faithful and thankful that they have seen the Lord working mighty things to his glory.

[12 : 00] Remember your servants here and all whom they love and remember us all pardoning sin for Jesus' sake.

Amen. I'm going to sing a further psalm from the Scottish Psalter Psalm 73 Psalm 73 at verse 23 in the psalm the tune is Weatherby if you're using the books Psalm 73 at verse 23 is on page 316 the psalmist here is disturbed but the wicked are apparently getting on with life without God they do their own thing it doesn't seem to matter and often God's people and even God's king can be in the gutter and bewildered by providence but to draw near to God and to worship God is to make all things clear so we sing from verse 23 to 26 to Weatherby nevertheless continually

O Lord I am with thee let us stand and sing thou dost behold by thy right heart and still thou hold us near now with thy hands still while I live wilt be conduct and guide and took thy glory afterward receive me to abide

O Mah Abayin the heavens high that live O Lord alone and in the air will my desire besides me there is come my flesh and heart my flesh and heart thou faint and fail but God doth fail forever for of my heart God is less than and portion forever forever we're turning to the scriptures to the New Testament and to the gospel of John to chapter 19 in John 19 last evening if you were with us we read the opening verses of John 19 and we take up the reading in the middle of verse 16 this evening to give you the setting the Lord Jesus was with his disciples in the upper room on the Thursday evening of the last week of his life he broke bread with them he washed their feet Judas left to betray him and wonderful teaching was given in that upper room and he prayed for them as perhaps no man has ever prayed in the history of the world and then they went out into the night and chapter 18 records his arrest in the garden of Gethsemane and the beginnings of his trial and now in chapter 19 the cross draws near John 19 verse 16 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 within 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 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 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 one part for 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 where 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 house to his own home this is the holy and inspired word of God may he bless to us the word and may it come alive for us before we study these verses together we're going to sing again a psalm of the cross psalm 22 from sing psalms in sing psalms psalm 22 at verse 16 page 26 in the blue book psalm 22 at verse 16 the psalmist is persecuted and suffering a pack of dogs encloses me their circle round me is complete I am beset by evil men and they have pierced my hands and feet prophesying beyond whatever the psalmist experienced the horrors of the cross the Tunis Maro will stand and sing verses 16 onwards a pack of dogs encloses me their circle round me is complete I am beset by evil men and they have pierced my hands and feet I count the number of my my hands and feet I am beset by evil men and they have pierced my hands and feet I am beset by the people they have pierced my hands and feet I am beset by the people they have pierced they throw the dice to get my coat among themselves my clothes they share and probably cover the dividing line of Jade Caman it will happenir

[22 : 39] O Lord, save me from power of evil dogs, my precious life from cruel storm.

From menace of the lion's mouth, and from their fury setting me, from peril of wild oxen's arms, he heard my guide and rescued me.

Brothers and sisters in Jesus, the story of the cross is a holy story, and these chapters around the cross are holy ground.

Perhaps we could briefly pray. May we receive, gracious Lord, the truth of your word in a fresh way, in a way that brings certainty and conviction and Christian joy to each one of us.

May we see Jesus, show us Jesus in his beauty and in his service and humility.

[24 : 39] To the glory of God the Father. Amen. The word behold is a really beautiful word in the English language.

It's a word that invites us to stop, to look, to consider. I know it sounds a little bit old-fashioned. Behold. But sometimes Bible translations are conservative in their use of language, even their use of the English language.

And I think that was probably true even centuries ago, 400 years ago, when Bible translations were being made. Sometimes they were a little bit clunky and a little bit archaic when they were brand new.

Because they were trying to get a hold of the truth written in Hebrew, written in Greek, that was itself reverent and presenting things to us that are not always common or ordinary or everyday.

You cannot talk about Jesus and his cross without stopping, pausing, thinking, looking.

[26 : 11] And my problem and maybe your problem is that we're often so busy that we just don't stop to think, to meditate, to look.

And our world and our culture is in such a hurry. It doesn't want to look at the cross. It finds God and the Bible an embarrassment.

You can talk about spirituality. You can talk about culture. You can talk about belief. But if it becomes too focused on the story of the Scripture, we want to look the other way.

That is sad. What do we have that invites us to look and to behold in John's Gospel and in the account of the cross in John?

It's an eyewitness account. I don't doubt that John was an old man when he wrote this Gospel.

[27 : 34] And that probably at least three decades and maybe more had passed from the events he was talking about and coming to write them down.

John was an old man when he died. But he talks about the cross in the way someone speaks about an event that is absolutely life-changing.

A day he is never going to forget. And it's as if he's back there seeing things, hearing things.

The sights and the smells of that day must have been appalling. There were others that he loved there. The family of Jesus was there.

The enemies were there. But this reads as a first-hand account from a man who has had a lifetime to think about what he saw.

[28 : 49] Last night, if you were here, we were invited looking at the way Pilate treated Jesus to behold the man, to behold the king.

What do we think of the prisoner who's getting this unjust trial? Tonight, behold the son Mary's son suffering and dying.

Behold the son, God's son suffering and dying. And to behold the shame of it all.

The shame that John remembers years afterwards. In chapter 18 and at verse 15, you hear the language of the eyewitness.

Simon Peter followed Jesus and so did another disciple. Since that disciple was known to the high priest, he entered with Jesus into the court of the high priest.

[30 : 09] And he was able to get Peter in as well. Who is this anonymous disciple who's being referred to in chapter 18? Surely it's John himself.

He knows so much about what happened. And Peter wasn't there for the whole time. Peter went out and wept bitterly, having denied his Lord three times in the courtyard of the high priest.

But the disciple who got him in is the disciple who doesn't like to talk about himself too much in this gospel. He always finds a way to say the disciple.

The disciple who Jesus loved. He's talking about himself in chapter 18 in all likelihood. And here in chapter 19 from verse 16 onwards, again on the way to the cross, you have an eyewitness account.

He is the disciple whom Jesus loved, who from that hour, the hour of the death of Jesus, would take Mary and be responsible for her until she died.

[31 : 32] Jesus was handing over the care of his beloved mother to his most well-beloved follower. Woman, behold your son. Son, behold your mother.

Two things to notice this evening. First of all, the son is put to shame. The son is put to shame.

In this eyewitness account, what does John want you to see? In verse 5, Pilate says, behold the man.

And that word, behold, is a little bit like ringing a bell. Many key words run through the gospel of John. Many symbolical incidents keep being repeated.

[32 : 41] There are contrasts between, say, light and darkness in this gospel. And so, when you come across certain words, you look for connections. connections. And this word, behold, on the lips of Pilate in verse 5, is a very important word in the first chapter of this gospel.

it's John the Baptist, the one witnessing on the side of the truth and preparing the way for the Messiah who sees Jesus and in chapter 1 declares in verse 29 and verse 36 of chapter 1, behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world.

in chapter 12, we have a quotation on Palm Sunday on the day that Jesus enters his city as a meek and lowly king to great acclamation from the crowds and they seem to want to make a king of him and they seem to love him.

Five days later, they will be saying, kill him, away with him, crucify him, release Barabbas to us, but on Sunday before the cross, they're treating him like the Messiah and he's riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey and in John 12 verse 15 and 16 there is an echo of the prophecy of Zechariah, behold your king is coming, sitting on a donkey's colt, but the comment of the writer in John 12 is that at the time they failed to see Jesus as the fulfillment of all the promises about the coming king.

At the time they did not understand but we're told chapter 12 verse 16 when Jesus was glorified then they remembered that these things had been written about him.

[35 : 03] And what had the prophet said? Your king is coming to you but he's coming meekly and in peace and not to wage war.

He's coming to die. It was after he was glorified that the scriptures about him made sense.

But before they could see him in his glory and understand him he had to taste shame. And the beholds start to come thick and fast in our reading tonight.

For in John 19 we have behold in verse 14 it was about the sixth hour so nobody wore a watch in those days but sixth hour is halfway through the day twelve hours in the day.

So somewhere in the middle of the day Jesus is on the cross. The other gospels probably would move that up a bit earlier more towards the morning than towards the midday but these are not supposed to be specific time markers.

[36 : 26] It was about bright full sunlight midday when they put him on the cross.

Behold your king on a cross. some king on a cross.

And then you have behold in verse 26 and in verse 27 and we're supposed to remember the behold in chapter 1 I think. Look the Lamb of God taking away the sin of the world.

Look the king on a cross taking away the sin of the world. And in verse 26 verse 27 woman behold your son. your son is dying.

So from now on John will be your son. John behold your mother. I'm dying. From now on Mary will be your care.

[37 : 34] The son tasting death tasting pain tasting rejection being the Lamb of God what does the writer want you to see?

Shame. Judgment. The wrath of God on this man. I think the way I've been conditioned to think and the way the church in the West has presented the cross from the time of the Reformation onwards the way we've tended to talk about the cross think about it disciple our children preach about it we have tended to focus quite rightly on how the cross answers the problem of guilt before God and removes the reality of sin before God sin is a real problem there is a real debt and the cross deals with it and solves it and the Reformation was about recovering a biblical idea of how the death of Jesus saves people by dealing with our sin one sacrifice dealing with guilt justifying sinners in a righteous way but there's an aspect of the work of Jesus on the cross that the early church seemed to understand that the church in the first few centuries seemed to understand that I don't think we've been so good at holding on to in the last few centuries certainly in Europe and in the West and that is not so much dealing with objective guilt but dealing with the consequences of guilt on our minds and on our hearts what we could call shame shame and guilt are obviously related they're obviously connected and guilt should make you feel ashamed if you really are guilty naturally you would expect to feel shame but what I want to say to you is that in the world that Jesus lived in in that ancient world people cared as much about shame loss of dignity loss of glory loss of name loss of face they cared as much about it as they cared about issues of truth

I'm not going to play down issues of truth sin is sin guilt is guilt and we should care about these facts but while we care about these facts we should also care about what these facts mean for how people feel and how they relate to other people and how they relate to God because in the ancient world their culture was much more a culture of shame and honour so if I swear that's a sin if I swear in front of my grandmother or my mother or a four year old child that's still a sin but it's also a shame it's a disgrace it's a dishonour and the

Bible wants you to look at the cross and see that Jesus carries guilt and he pays for it and he answers for it but he also experiences rejection and dishonour and disgrace and mocking and shame and that's part of the good news of the gospel because we live in a world where people sometimes rightly feel shame and sometimes wrongly are drowning in shame when objective truth says you are a child of God you have peace with God you have been forgiven Jesus has died for your sins he has paid for your sins and still whether it's the culture you grew up in the home you grew up in the way you're wired yourself or people around you or the work of

Satan you believe you are worthless you believe you are unloved you believe you are rubbish you are ashamed now the cross deals with both sin guilt and shame Hebrews 12 begins let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us fixing our eyes on Jesus the pioneer and perfecter of faith for the joy set before him he endured the cross scorning its shame and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God thank the Lord

[44 : 11] Jesus Christ that God's Son was put to shame for your salvation and his disgrace is the answer to any shame that is crushing you today that's the first thing the Son is put to shame the second thing that we have here is an invitation through the gospel to nail your shame to the tree to nail it to his cross to his tree why do I labor this point about shame well as the soldiers gamble over his clothes it dawns on us that

Jesus who was forced to carry his cross probably just the beam across his shoulders to the place of execution he was stripped naked before he was nailed to the cross to be in pain and to be mocked and to be facing death in the next few hours or minutes is bad don't you think to face all that absolutely naked is even worse in terms of shame there's something that Don Carson says in his writings about the cross and on John's gospel that is worth quoting Carson says in the ancient world this most terrible of punishments is always associated with shame and horror it is predicted of course in prophecy in the Old Testament in scriptures like Psalm 22 which we sang from a few minutes ago a thousand years before Jesus was placed on the cross in fulfillment David had tasted shame and David understood that God and God alone can lift shame from the shoulders of his people but how how would God lift shame from his people how would he do it if people are oppressing us by trying to give us inappropriate shame maybe legalism sometimes tries to do that rules that don't come with any good sense and they don't come with the word of God behind them expectations that are beyond human ability Jesus met people like that the Pharisees of old were experts at spreading illegitimate shame are you washing your hands the right way when your disciples feed themselves in the fields with the heads of the corn are they breaking the

Sabbath it's nonsense of course but I'm sure if you are accused of breaking some man-made taboo even if you know with your head that's ridiculous it's very hard not to feel shame we are experts we humans at ignoring real sin and things that stink before God and making a great fuss about things that don't matter well we need to repent of that and nail it to his cross and we need to care about real holiness and God's glory and God's name and the great name of God being lifted up high where it is not known or where it's lying in the gutter and not just care about my name or your name or the things that seem more important in my kitchen and probably in yours there is a smoke detector nowadays these things are very clever they're often wired into the mains or they're linked to other smoke detectors and carbon monoxide detectors in the house and they make a racket if they go off so if you burn your breakfast burn your toast the whole street knows about it and you probably have been like me many a time standing on a kitchen chair waving a copy of a magazine or something furiously trying to get fresh air at one of these detectors that has taken a dislike to the way you made the breakfast these machines are giving a warning and often it's a piercing warning and God gave us shame to help us to hear the warning so that when the warning of shame goes off like an alarm it says to us am I dishonoring

God what can I do about it am I drifting into sin what can I do about it am I heading away from joy and glory and salvation and towards the jaws of death and hell am I pleasing God or pleasing Satan and sometimes the alarm is blaring and there is no fire because our heart and mind has gone wrong and we're feeling shame when we shouldn't I could never sit at the Lord's table because well whatever comes next in the sentence is rubbish if you have been forgiven your sins because of Christ and his cross if you have confessed your sins then the blood of

[51 : 37] Jesus Christ God's son cleanses us from all sin and if the devil has caused the alarm to start sounding of shame we check is this alarm right or is it a false alarm but in either case we flee to the cross of Jesus and if fear or guilt or shame is illegitimate we speak to Jesus about it and we say I feel so weak I feel so useless I feel such shame help me to nail it to your tree and if we discover that the alarm is quite right to be going off and that we are a terrible woman a terrible man a wicked woman a wicked man then the gospel is for us and the gospel is the gospel of

John chapter 1 behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and the gospel is the gospel where the grain of wheat falls into the ground and it dies and that way there's fruit and you are the fruit he dies so that you will be fruitful not held by guilt not held by shame but because of Christ going forward in the life of faith going forward in Christian growth going forward to live for the glory of God for most of our lives we probably have not lived in a shame kind of culture shame on our culture like India or Japan or much of East Asia is a shame kind of culture you you know even Christians in

Southeast Asia will often really struggle to be honest with each other about a problem they'll struggle to speak honestly and say that's a root of bitterness that's caused offence we need to discuss this sort it out weep over it and then make up and love one another and move forward in Asia very often Christians they don't do that because their culture says you can't be embarrassed and you can't embarrass anybody else so we'll just ignore it and avoid each other for the rest of our lives that is not the gospel way the gospel way is to go to the cross with guilt and to go to the cross with shame legitimate or illegitimate shame it needs to be nailed to the tree for he tasted shame and death to take that bitter taste away from his people he does not want you burdened by shame paralyzed by the past if you are part of this modern world of technology and social media then it is doubly hard for us today to avoid the idea that everybody else has a wonderful life and a rosy life and they're all doing wonderful things and we may feel that that's not us and it's very easy in this modern age to believe a lie or to spread a lie or to tell a lie using things like

Instagram or Facebook the cross says if these things are a problem if these things are holding you back spiritually from maturity and peace and love and unity with your family or with your brothers and sisters in the Christian family there's a cross take your use of time and nail it to the tree take your use of social media and nail it to the tree take your use of gossip rumor nail it to the tree I heard a testimony about a year ago from a lady who came forward having lived with shame over a serious thing from years before a thing she regretted and a thing she was forgiven for but a thing that was many decades in her past and yet it had held her back for such a long time and it was the gospel

Jesus and his cross that enabled her to just tell her story and by taking a little step of faith and commitment and getting a little more involved in the life of the local church now serving so well being a blessing to others being an encourager to others because what happened to that shame that Satan was really happy for her to live under for for 30 years well it's gone Jesus took it Pilate put a notice above the head of the Lord Jesus in Aramaic the language of the common people in Latin the language of the authorities of the Roman Empire and in Greek the common language spoken all around the world this is the king of the Jews why did he write it well

[58 : 15] Pilate had been ashamed and embarrassed by Caiaphas and his chums and he I think was trying to annoy the Jews and mock Jesus and mock those who had Jesus crucified there's the claim there's your king no I won't change the notice it's part of shaming shaming everyone but you know what he was the king he is the king and because the king died on that cross shame is gone we have a young lad in our congregation who was just converted about last summer from atheism nobody in his family is a Christian somebody in his high school challenged his atheism have you really looked into this and he was honest enough to acknowledge that he hadn't and so he did his research and he went to google and he found out a bit about the bible and christianity and he started to read and he started to read good things and god saved him and brought him into fellowship with a christian church he was baptized on profession of faith on christmas eve and i met him this week we had a coffee we read the first chapter of romans together we prayed together what a happy day in ministry that was with a he's now seventeen and i asked him what he was doing and he told me while i'd been doing some writing i found this great hymn he said do you know it i'd heard of it when i survey the wondrous cross by isaac waltz you've heard of it well this boy new to christian things is writing an essay unpacking every line of that hymn for the biblical truth that is in it see from his head his hands his feet sorrow and love flow mingle down did e'er such love and sorrow meet or thorns compose so rich a crown were the whole realm of nature mine that were an offering far too small love so amazing so divine demands my soul my life my all tonight there is a liar who hates you and he wants you to feel shame and the

God of truth who gave his only son wants you to know that the cross takes guilt and shame away let nothing hold you back from living the rest of your life for Jesus and to glory and to let him show you the wondrous cross where sin and shame is gone lord bless the gospel of the crucified lord Jesus to each one of us show us your son mary's son and may we take him close to our hearts and give him our fears our failures our guilt our shame to the glory of

God the father amen we'll sing the same psalm to conclude psalm 22 and sing psalms psalm 22 at verse 26 the poor will eat and will be filled and those who seek the lord will give a shout of joyful praise to him after the suffering comes the joy and the fellowship of those who eat and drink in the presence of God let's stand and sing psalm 22 the poor will eat and will be filled and those who seek the lord will give a shout of joyful praise to him oh may your hearts forever hear him till over him on he he them and all who who will people's will bind to him the nations of the world have dominion to the

Lord be us and over nations he is king the rich of all the air will feast and worship with an offering for those who stay to me is that will humbly near before his throne they cannot keep themselves alive and they are they depend on them alone alone host host host host to who know to come and the people will serve and the

Lord will serve the Lord and generations still to come and come and the righteous acts that he has done amen lord god the poor will eat and will be satisfied may we feed on christ and may we know tonight and all of our days the grace of our lord jesus christ and the love of god and the communion and fellowship of the holy spirit the comforter amen to you and if were part was

[67 : 21] Josh a a a a