

# English Communion Service

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[ 0 : 01 ] Good morning, friends. It's a joy and a privilege to gather together here this Lord's Day-Around Word and Sacrament, and we pray that together we'll know something of the Lord blessing us as we join in His name. We're going to worship God then, and we're going to sing to His praise from Psalm 34, sing Psalms 34, on page 40 of the Blue Psalm books, reading at the beginning of the psalm.

At all times I will bless the Lord, I'll praise Him with my voice, because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice. Together let us praise the Lord, exalt His name with me. I sought the Lord, whose answer came from fears, He set me free. We'll sing down to the end of the verse Mark 10, standing to sing, I've got the tunes somewhere here, to the tune martyrdom, and to the praise of God.

Amen. At all times I will bless the Lord, I'll praise Him with my voice, because Thy glory is to the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice. Together let us praise the Lord, exalt His name with me. I the Lord, His answer came from fear, from fear He set me free. We look to Him, but I will join. We are not good to see the Lord, but I will join.

Our answer came from fear, tacos Him sing from fear and same.

The angel of the Lord surrounds and hearts continually all those who fear and honor him he sets his people free.

[ 3 : 30 ] Come taste and see the Lord is good who trust in him is blessed O fear the Lord you saints will meet you will not be oppressed young lions may grow weep and faint and hunger and hunger for their good for those who wait upon the Lord will hold like any good let's unite our hearts in prayer let us pray

Lord our God we come and we give thanks this day for the promises that we have just joined together and sung one with another that those who seek the Lord shall not lack any good need we pray O Lord that our gathering here this day would be born out of that desire in our hearts to seek afresh the Lord that as we come around your word and sacrament this day that we might have a longing a thirst and a hunger after righteousness and that in having this we might be filled filled by your Holy Spirit your Holy Spirit who makes plain to us who reveals to us the things of the Lord Jesus

Christ and as we think upon these things we cannot but marvel and wonder as we think upon that sacrificial act of love that was wrought for sinners just like us on Calvary's hill we come and we worship the just dying for the unjust the one who took to himself hell so that we might have life and life everlasting the one who stooped to such depths of darkness and depravity so that we might have opened unto us that new and that living way behold what manner of love is this that the father has bestowed upon us that we should be called the children of God and it's as children we come humbly today before our father our loving heavenly father the one who saw fit to come into this world through the portion and work of his son to accommodate us by dying on that cross and giving unto us a hope that hope of glory that is as a result of

Christ dwelling in us and so we pray oh lord for your blessing this day we are so aware of the world that we live in a world that so often is characterized by pain and by suffering even as we reflect upon that which is taking place in Turkey and Syria the earthquakes that have in many ways turned the lives of those there upside down a reminder of the fragility of life a reminder of how temporary all around us is and so help them we pray help them in their temporal needs but help them especially in their spiritual needs even through this time of atrocity that your voice would speak to them in love and that they might come to know something of the wonder of what it is to call you their father and their friend oh

Lord we know that for all of us it is a time to be born and a time to die but yet we praise you oh Lord that you have conquered the grave that you have cried out it is finished so that for those of us who are in Christ the reality is today that the best is yet to come but until then we join together in a manner such as this and we remember we remember your death and resurrection until you come again we come in humble obedience and we reflect upon who you are and indeed who we are in you and so we pray oh Lord that you might be pleased by your Holy Spirit truly to be in our midst this day that hearts and minds would be attuned to your voice and that we might know in a very real way the presence of the

[ 9 : 12 ] Lord Jesus Christ sitting at the head of the table be with our brothers as they lead us in the singing of your praises those who will distribute the elements we give thanks for those who are so willing to serve in such a way but we pray oh Lord also for those who cannot be with us those who perhaps have a longing a desire to be here with us as they have been perhaps in years gone by that you would be with them where they are we give thanks oh Lord that you are not a God who is confined to a building but rather you are omnipresent so we pray that your Holy Spirit perhaps would touch them at their very point of need so that even if they are joining us online they might feel that they are here with us in spirit and so we pray now that you would be with us as we continue in all that we seek to do that you would lead us and guide us to do all decently and in order to the glory of your name seeking forgiveness for all our many sins in

Jesus name we pray Amen it's lovely to with us today and I don't want you to think for one moment that none of this is for you you might look down and you might wonder what is happening here what is going on what are we about to do why are there these white cloths there why is there bread and why is there wine there a simple answer to that question we are here today because we love Jesus and not only do we love Jesus but we know Jesus he is our father and he is our friend but my question friends is how can we know Jesus you might have seen this before but bear with me I'm going to show you how we can know Jesus through a piece of paper now we might think well I can know Jesus if I come to something like this any idea what this is what does this look like well it's meant to be a building a very poor building your building is far nicer here but it's meant to be a building and we might say well I can come to know Jesus if I come to church and all we need to do is to come to a building and then we'll know Jesus by coming to church but we need more than that now some people bear with me just a second some people think they can come to know Jesus by doing what do we think that we can go down to the airport and get on a plane and that somehow a plane can take us all the way up to heaven and then we'll get to know

Jesus well of course not that's ridiculous but you know in the Bible there were those who thought they could come close to God by building a really really high tower but of course we can't we need to get to know God that's for sure let's hope this works we need to get to know God why because we live in a world that is so torn it's so affected by what's that word sin what's the middle letter of sin I me myself and I it's so affected by sin we need to know Jesus how do we know Jesus well we know Jesus and that's why we're here today by coming to the cross nowhere else can we know Jesus by coming to the cross and looking upon Jesus on that cross where he died for boys and girls like you for mums and dads for grannies and grandpas and that's why we're here today drinking the wine which symbolises his blood and eating the bread which symbolises his broken flesh he died on that cross so that we might live and so yes come to church but more than that come to the cross all of us here even if we're not so young come to the cross and that's where we will come to know Jesus well friends we're going to read together and we're going to read from the gospel of Matthew chapter 27 and we're going to pick up our reading at verse 15 15 through to 55 let us hear the word of

[ 15 : 03 ] God now at the feast of the governor was now at the feast the governor was accustomed to release for the crowd any one prisoner whom they wanted and they had then a notorious prisoner called Barabbas so when they had gathered Pilate said to them who do you want me to release for you Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ but he knew that it was out of envy that they had delivered him up besides while he was sitting on the judgment seat his wife sent word to him have nothing to do with to do with that righteous man for I have suffered much because of him today in a dream now the chief priest and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for

Barabbas and destroy Jesus the governor again said to them which of the two do you want me to release for you and they said Barabbas Pilate said to them then what shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ they all said let him be crucified and he said why what evil has he done but they

shouted all the more let him be crucified so when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing but rather that a riot was beginning he took water and washed his hands before the crowd saying I am innocent of this man's blood see to it yourselves and all the people answered his blood be on us and on our children and he released for them Barabbas having scourged

Jesus delivered him to be crucified then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters and they gathered the whole battalion before him and they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him and twisting together a crown of thorns they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand and kneeling before him they mocked him saying hail king of the Jews and they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head and when they had mocked him they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him as they went out they found a man of Cyrene Simon by name they compelled this man to carry the cross and when they came to a place called Golgotha which means place of the skull of a skull they offered him wine to drink mixed with gall but when he tasted it he would not drink it and when they had crucified him they divided his garments among them by casting lots then he sat down and kept watch over him there and over his head they put the charge against him which read this is

Jesus the king of the Jews then two robbers were crucified with him one on the right and one on the left and those who passed by derided him wagging their heads and saying you who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days save yourself if you are the son of God come down from the cross so also the chief priest through the scribes and elders mocked him saying he saved others he cannot save himself he is the king of Israel let him come down now from the cross and we will believe him he trusts in God let God deliver him now if he desires him for he said I am the son of God and the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour and about the ninth hour

Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying Eli Eli Lema Sabachthani that is my God my God why have you forsaken me and some of the bystanders hearing it said this man is called Elijah and one of them at once ran and took a sponge filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink but others said wait let us see whether Elijah will come and save him and Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit and behold the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom and the earth shook and the rocks were split the tombs also were opened and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many when the centurion and those who were with him when the centurion and those who were with him keeping watch over Jesus saw the earthquake and what had taken place they were filled with awe and said truly this was the son of God there were also many women there looking on from a distance who had followed

[ 20 : 57 ] Jesus from Galilee ministering to him among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mothers of the sons of Zebedee Amen we pray God's blessing on that reading of his own holy word now friends we're going to sing once more to God's praise this time from Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter Psalm 103 reading at the beginning of the Psalm O thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that in me is be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless O my soul the Lord thy God and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits he hath bestowed on thee we're going to sing down to the end of the verse mark five to the praise of God standing to sing and to the tune

St. Paul O thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that there he is he set up his holy name to magnify and bless O my soul the Lord thy God and not forget for me of all his gracious benefit he hath his good on thee all thy end in quent his future most gracious

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We're going to go back to the chapter that we read, but we're also going to have a second text that I'd like us to turn to. So first of all, from Matthew 27.

And we're going to read verse 51. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

[ 25 : 01 ] And then if you could turn to Hebrews chapter 10. Hebrews chapter 10. We're going to read together verses 19 and 20.

Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that He opened for us through the curtain, that is, through His flesh.

Through the curtain, that is, through His flesh. Well, friends, if you've not been here, we've been asking some questions over this communion weekend.

We've thought on Friday night as to why we are here. We are here, of course, because our security is not in ourselves. Our security is in Christ.

Last night, we thought about how this was made possible. This was, of course, made possible through the precious blood of Christ.

[ 26 : 24 ] So we are in Christ because of the blood of Christ. Today, friends, we're going to ask a third question.

And we're going to seek to answer that from the text that we have before us here today. What is it that we gain from the why and the how?

What is it, what is, if you like, the outcome of us being in Christ through the shed blood of Christ? What have we received from this?

Well, the clue to the answer of that question is found in both of our texts this morning. And behold, Matthew 27, 51, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

And then in Hebrews 10, Now, again, details like this detail can, perhaps at a first glance, seem to be quite obscure to us, quite strange.

[ 27 : 46 ] We've grown up again hearing about the curtain of the temple being rent in two, being torn in two. It's just part of the whole narrative of Calvary.

But perhaps we haven't really thought too much about what it means. Or perhaps we think it's just because there was an earthquake. That's why it had been torn in two.

But it's more than that. And we're going to ask the question today, why does this detail punctuate the Calvary narrative?

What is its significance? Now, to unpack this just a little bit this morning, we're going to consider what we have before us under two very simple headings.

Firstly, the curtain. And then secondly, the cross. The curtain and the cross. Now, an awful lot today could be said about Old Testament worship.

[ 28 : 45 ] Studying it in any measure reveals a myriad of details, so much so that when we look at the intricacies of expectations surrounding the worship of God in the Old Testament, there's a distinct temptation, friends, as there not, to conclude that much of what we have there is really not relevant to us any longer.

Obsolete? Yes, it is. Irrelevant? By no means. And our text this morning reveals this to us.

And so let's travel back 3,500 years. Let's go back to the era of the Exodus where we find detail of the tabernacle, the place of worship for the God of Israel.

Now, of course, we don't have time to go into all the detail of the tabernacle. Don't worry, we're not going to do that. That could take a whole sermon series in itself. But what we are going to do, if you have your Bibles, is to turn to Exodus 26, 31, where we begin to pick up just some of the detail that's relevant to our text today, relevant to this curtain.

Exodus 26, 31. And you shall make a veil of blue and purple and scarlet yarns.

[ 30 : 29 ] And just incidentally, correct me if I'm wrong on this, but I remember being told growing up that that's why the colors of this church building are the blue and the scarlet, to reflect the tabernacle here.

You shall make a veil of blue and scarlet, purple and scarlet yarns, and fine twined linen. It shall be with cherubim skillfully worked into it.

And you shall hang it on four pillars of acacia, overlaid with gold, with hooks of gold, on four bases of silver.

And you shall hang the veil from the clasps and bring the Ark of the Testimony, that's the Ark of the Covenant, in there within the veil. And the veil shall separate you, for you, the holy place from the most holy.

the holy place from the most holy. Now you might be sitting here and thinking, well that's all very interesting, it's good to look into these things, but here we are on a communion Lord's Day morning.

[ 31 : 42 ] I want to hear about the sufferings of my Savior. I want to go to Calvary, I want to see what He has done for me. Well friend, just bear with me for a moment, because here, in this very description, we see something of our Savior.

Because what the pages of the New Testament do is, they shine, as it were, a bright light on the pages of the Old Testament. If we just have the Old Testament on its own, without the New Testament, it would be confusing to us.

We would struggle to understand what a lot of it actually means. but the New Testament shines this bright light and it reveals to us how seemingly obscure details, like the one we've just read, fit so beautifully into that grand plan of redemption.

Let me explain. What we have, what we've just read before us, it describes a curtain, or depending on what version you use, I think perhaps in some, the authorised version, it might call it a veil, a curtain, or a veil.

And this curtain was found in the tabernacle of Moses. This was, of course, a portable place of worship that went with the children of Israel through their wilderness wanderings.

[ 33 : 12 ] What did it look like? Well, if you're in the session room at the minute, if you look at the wall just above the door there, or beside the door, you'll see a picture of the tabernacle.

It's there. A picture of exactly what it looked like. It was a large, rectangular courtyard that surrounded it.

If you imagine a football pitch with a high fence around it, but instead of wiring, there was curtains filling in each panel. And within this large, rectangular courtyard, there was the tabernacle or what's also known as the tent of meeting.

Now, this wasn't big. It wasn't a very big building or structure. It was around 14 meters long and four and a half meters wide.

And at the end of this tent of meeting, this tabernacle, was this curtain. About three quarters of the way down, we had this veil, this curtain.

[ 34 : 16 ] What was it for? Why was it there? Well, this curtain was there to separate the holy place, that was the place of worship, from the most holy place, the holy of holies.

And it was in this holy of holies that you had the Ark of the Covenant. covenant. And inside the Ark of the Covenant, amongst other things, we don't have time to go into this, was the law of God that was, of course, written on tablets of stone.

And within this room, within this holy of holies, this was the meeting place of God with his people. He would come in that great cloud and this is where he would meet his people above the Ark of the Covenant.

And we might think, well, what a wonderful thing. What a wonderful thing for the Old Testament church. Imagine having a room in our place of worship that we could just go in and meet with God. Well, it wasn't all that wonderful for them because, in reality, this room was completely out of bounds. The holy of holies was a no-go area.

[ 35 : 37 ] And there was a very good reason for this because if you were to go into this room, if you would go into the holy of holies, what would happen is you would die.

You would die. Last night, we thought about the fact that there's a great gulf between us and God. God is holy. We are sinful.

God is of pure eyes and to look upon our sin and so we need that gulf bridged. We thought about that last night. It's bridged by the blood, of course.

But because of this, because God came into this room, people could not just go in into his presence and have fellowship and communion there with him.

That was apart from one exception, the high priest. The high priest. priest. Now, we know that we talked about this last night, that God had ordained regular burnt offerings and sin offerings when they would place their hand upon the animal, the guilt would be transferred, the animal would be killed, and the blood would be sprinkled.

[ 36 : 48 ] That would be a regular occurrence. But that wasn't enough because it was the job of the great high priest once a year on the day of atonement to pass through this curtain into the holy of holies to take with him the blood of a freshly sacrificed animal and then sprinkle it all over the lid of the ark.

This was known as the mercy seat. Why did he do this? Well, the wages of sin, as we know, is death. Someone had to die for the sins of the people.

In the case of the Old Testament believers, symbolically it was the animals. And so there we have in the holy of holies we have God coming, meeting with his people in the form of the high priest, representing the people coming into the holy of holies.

Here we have the great high priest coming and putting the blood on the mercy seat, as it were. Why was he doing this? Well, think about what was under the mercy seat, the law.

What have you and I done? We've broken the law. And so the only thing that could bridge that gulf between us and God was the blood.

[ 38 : 23 ] So why did the priest not die? Well, of course, the Lord accommodated his presence by coming in, but it's said that he had a rope tied around him.

I don't know if this is true or not, but he had a rope tied around him that was so long so that just in case for any reason he did die in the holy of holies, he could then be pulled out.

And so this was the way of God's people. If you were an Old Testament believer, this would be very much at the center, the fabric of who you were as a believer.

You would be used to all of this ritual, this routine. And in fact, this went on for over 1500 years, year after year after year.

And all the while, what was happening? Well, the people were never really wanting to get close to God. There was a fear of getting close to God.

[ 39 : 26 ] God was so holy, God is holy, and they couldn't come into his nearer presence. They lived lives that were saturated in perpetual ritual.

But today, friends, we are not Old Testament believers. we're New Testament believers. And that brings us to our second point, the cross.

We have the curtain and all it symbolizes there in the Old Testament. But today, friends, we have the cross. And we know that all that we read of and just thought of there in the Old Testament, it was wholly inadequate.

It was a shadow of what was to come. It was inadequate because it couldn't deal with the sins of the people fundamentally, but it was inadequate because the people couldn't have that communion with their Lord.

We're reminded of this in Hebrews 10. We read that, for since the law was but a shadow of the good things to come instead of the true form of these realities, it can never by the same sacrifices that are continually offered every year make perfect those who draw near.

[ 40 : 55 ] Otherwise, they would not have ceased to be offered, since the worshippers having once been cleansed would no longer have any consciousness of sins.

But in these sacrifices, there is a reminder of sins every year, for it is impossible, impossible, for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

And so all that happened in the tabernacle was but a shadow, a symbol of what was still to come pointing towards the shedding of the blood of the sacrificial lamb, who would cover the law, who would fulfill the law by coming in between sinners like you and me and God.

This was then the testimony of the Old Testament believers. By faith laying hold of the reality, how much of it they understood, we don't really know, laying hold of the reality that all that they were doing would be fulfilled one day on that cross, on that cross.

And you know, friends, today we look back, but they looked forward. We look back by faith to the cross, they looked forward by faith to the Messiah coming.

[ 42 : 23 ] And as we today look back, we begin to make sense of the relevance of this curtain. What do we read in verse 50 of that chapter in Matthew?

Jesus cried again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit and behold the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

And so while Christ was being crucified, this curtain elsewhere in the temple, the temple of course superseded, the tabernacle, the same rituals took place, the curtain in the temple was torn in two. Now Josephus, the Jewish historian, writes that this curtain was so thick that supposing you tied one horse on one side and one horse on the other and they went in opposite directions, you still couldn't tear this curtain.

It was a curtain that was so thick. almost indestructible. Yet now at the crucifixion it's torn.

[ 43 : 36 ] This curtain that shielded the presence of God in the Holy of Holies from the eyes of sinful mankind it is torn in two.

Picture the scene, friends, it's 3pm. The priests are preparing for the evening sacrifice and as they prepare for the evening sacrifice this curtain to the Holy of Holies it's torn in two.

So that which they should never have been able to see is laid before their eyes. And what happens? Do they die?

No they don't. They're very much alive standing there no doubt in wonder and in awe at what has just happened seeing that which they had never seen before.

Why was this? Because of the cross. Because elsewhere nearby those words had been uttered it is finished.

[ 44 : 43 ] This was a curtain friends that preached the sermon of all sermons. A curtain that preached a sermon that spoke of greater things.

That now there was no need for any of these types and shadows rituals or routines animal sacrifices. They were all gone or they should have been all gone.

That these religious activities that were so ingrained in the Jewish people now they were redundant. Why? Because the curtain of the temple was torn.

Is that why? No. That's not why. But because the flesh of Jesus was torn. That's why.

You see the curtain symbolizes something far greater. It symbolizes the fact that the flesh of our Saviour was torn into so that we would have access to that new and living way.

[ 45 : 52 ] It symbolizes the fact that the communion of God the Son with God the Father it was torn into. What does he cry out? My God my God why have you forsaken me?

Not my father my father. That relationship that intimacy torn in two. because the dignity of a most holy God in the person of Jesus Christ in taking to himself the darkness and depravity of the hell that should have been yours and should have been mine.

His dignity completely and utterly ripped in half. Torn in two. And it's because of all of this friends that this new and living way has been opened up to you and to me.

This access direct access to the holy of holies that you and I have through that torn curtain through that torn veil through that torn Christ.

You know friends there's one thing that wasn't torn throughout all of this. There's one thing that remained completely and remains today completely intact.

[ 47 : 18 ] What is it? The love of Christ for you. A love that tore the curtain of separation through the cross of reconciliation.

What are we here for this weekend friends? We're here to remember that like Peter we are safe and secure in Christ.

How is this made possible through the shed blood of our Savior? And what do we gain from this? The curtain of the temple being torn into the veil of separation being opened up, the flesh of Jesus being prized apart allowing us to come what?

Come boldly to a throne of grace. This is where we get our boldness. Come boldly to a throne of grace to seek forgiveness, to seek his face, to seek his favor, to be recipients of live and living communion with God through Christ.

It's not presumption friends to come to the Lord. It is finished so that we can come not once a year with fear and trembling through a priest, through a sinful man by offering the blood of a bull.

[ 48 : 50 ] Not by that and we praise God that it's not by that but by continually and constantly through the great high priest who is interceding on our behalf the Lord Jesus Christ by coming in and through him and no one and nothing else.

A lot more friends could be said about that, an awful lot more, but in a nutshell, there you have it, the curtain and the cross, or should I say the cross that tore the curtain, the cross that's given to us today, that boldness that we can come and sit at the table of the king with that joy in our hearts that now we have access to the holy of holies.

Let's pray. Lord, we bless and we thank you for that great plan of redemption, that there is not a detail that is irrelevant, that all is there to point us to Jesus.

And so we pray, O Lord, this day that indeed our hearts and our minds might be set upon you and you alone with that spirit of thanksgiving that we can come boldly and that we can have that union and communion with you in and through the Lord Jesus Christ.

Forgive us then we pray in his name. Amen. Well friends, at this point we might ask that question in light of all that we've just been thinking about, who is the Lord's table for?

[ 50 : 49 ] It's a question that's been asked, communion, after communion, year after year, who is the Lord's table for?

Who should be sitting at the Lord's table? Well we find a clue in Matthew 27, the chapter we read, verse 55, just at the end of that section we read, there were also many women there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

What do we find here? What we find here, Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and others, we find them at the cross. Now picture the scene there at the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ, the one whom they have loved so much, the one whom they have given so much to, there he is being crucified.

And what can they do? Nothing. We see that not only can they do nothing, but they are standing at a distance. We saw Peter walking at a distance from the Lord in different circumstances.

Now we have the close followers of Jesus standing at a distance and a new set of circumstances. And I wonder how they felt as they stood there, as they gazed upon the Lord Jesus, whom they had fellowshiped with, whom they had meals with, whom they had spent time with, and they see him there dying on that cross.

[ 52 : 34 ] How did they feel? Well, no doubt they felt useless, helpless, and you know, friend, perhaps that's how you feel today as a Christian, useless, helpless.

You're looking upon the Lord Jesus, even as we've considered him in the word today, and you feel like a fraud. There's nothing you can do. Deep down you would like to, but for one reason or another, time and time again, you're not saving him in the way that you would like, or perhaps you're even doing that, but you wish you wouldn't do.

That at times, just like these women, you're looking on from a distance. But notice these words. There were also many women there looking on from a distance who had followed Jesus from Galilee.

They had followed Jesus from Galilee. And it's true at this point. These women, they weren't able to do much for their Lord and their Savior, but still, but still they were there.

There they were. They had followed Jesus from Galilee to the cross. And you know, yes, undoubtedly it's true for all of us here today.

[ 54 : 07 ] We feel like we would like to be doing more for our Savior, myself included. And we're despairing almost at times at how little we do for the cause of Christ.

There's souls around us perishing. We want to help, we want to do something, but we feel so inadequate. And of course, we ought to strive to serve the Lord as best we can in his strength. But friend, don't be dismayed. Don't be dismayed. Why? Because you are here. And in spite of everything else, where are you?

You are at the cross of Jesus Christ. That's what this table is for. It's for those people who say, I can't, Lord, but you can.

You're here. Maybe you're looking from a distance, but you're here. John Newton wrote a poem entitled, Tis a Point I Long to Know, which dealt, of course, with that issue of doubt.

[ 55 : 11 ] But his friend Daniel Herbert wrote a response. Forgive me if I read this to you before, having preached here, but it illustrates this perfectly. Is this the point you long to know?

The point is settled in my view. For if you want to love your God, if that's your desire, it proves that he first loved you.

I want to know Christ died for me. I want to feel the zeal within. I want to know Christ's precious blood was shed to wash away my sin.

I want to feel more love to Christ. I want more liberty and prayer. But when I looked within my heart, it almost drives me to despair.

So where I want like this is found, I think it may be bold to say that God has fixed within my heart what hell can never take away.

[ 56 : 11 ] However small thy grace appears, there's plenty in thy living head. These wants you feel, my Christian friend, were never found amongst the dead.

So although we're here today and we're looking on and we feel so inadequate, the very fact that you have a desire to serve more shows that you are alive in Christ.

Who is the table for perfect sinless saints? No, they don't exist, at least not this side of eternity. The table is for sinners who have been saved by grace, who look today, albeit from a distance, as we look back at Christ on the cross of Calvary.

We're going to sing now, friends, from Psalm 116. Psalm 116 we're going to read from verse 7. rest, O my soul, God has been good to you, for you, O Lord, have saved my soul from death, my feet from stumbling, and my eyes from tears, that I may live for you while I have breath.

[ 57 : 53 ] Down to verse 19, before his people I will keep my vows within the courts of our God's holy place within the city of Jerusalem, and to the Lord alone be all the praise.

We'll sing these verses standing to sing to the tune Eventide, rest, O my soul, God has been good to you. Amen. Rest, O my soul, God sing to you to you.

For you, O Lord, have saved my soul from death, my feet from stumbling, and my eyes from tears, that I will live for you while I love death.

I trusted in the Lord, and then I spoke. I said in anguish, I am sore he died, and in the heavy depths of my dismay.

O let our liars share me warm my cry. I can, I can, the Lord for all he's done, with gratitude, salvation, help I raise.

[ 59 : 54 ] I call upon his name and will fulfill my eyes to him before his meek of grace.

The Lord holds near, the death of all the saints. Hear thee, O Lord, I am your servant too.

I am your servant and your handed son, and from my chains I have been breathed by you.

Thine of praise I will sacrifice to you and call upon the name of God the Lord.

When all his people in assembly meet, with joy I will fulfill my solemn word.

[ 61 : 23 ] For his people I will keep my vows within the courts of our God's holy place, within the city of Jerusalem, and to the Lord alone be all the praise.

Friends, here we are at the Lord's table. we are not what we would like to be, that is true. But it's also true that we are not what we once were.

It's by the grace of God that we are what we are. But friends, as we sit at the table today, our focus is in no way to be upon ourselves.

If we turn back to Hebrews 10, reading the next verses after our text, we read this, Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that is opened for us through the curtain, that is through His flesh.

And since we have a great high priest over the house of God, particularly these words, let us draw near with a true heart and in full assurance of faith.

[ 63 : 11 ] We are called to draw near to our Lord today. How do we do that? We do it with a true heart and with full assurance of faith.

How do we do that? By looking within? Certainly not. By looking to our great high priest, acknowledging today in our hearts the complete and utter sufficiency of His sacrifice for us, that our righteousness today as we sit at this table is not found in ourselves but in found in our Savior.

That's how we draw near to Him. We're confident, are we not? confident in the cross, confident in the power of the blood.

But make no mistake, because although we are called to draw near to our Lord and Savior today, this drawing near is by no means one-sided.

What do we read in James 4, 8? draw near to God and He will draw near to you. That's a promise.

[ 64 : 31 ] That's our promise today. So we might ask, well how does God draw near to us today? At this table, how do we know He's drawing near to us?

Well there's a few ways. Firstly and primarily through His Word. His Word is a special revelation to us, it speaks to us, it tells us of that great narrative of redemption.

Yes we know the bread and the wine they speak in their own way, but the bread and the wine without the Word, they remain silent. We need to have Word and sacrament together, they're silent because they are symbols.

So He speaks to us through His Word. And I often marvel at the wonder of the fact that an infinite God, a God who inhabits eternity, who is so vast beyond measure, He would accommodate our weakness by revealing Himself to us in a way that we can understand through words.

And so never underestimate His presence, His drawing near to us by His Word. But He also draws near to His friend by His Spirit, by His Spirit.

[ 65 : 57 ] He makes that promise where two or three are gathered in His name, He is there in their midst. We are here, are we not, in His name.

We don't come out of routine or ritual, out of formality, or at least we ought not to do that. We come to the table not with our eyes upon ourselves, so submerged in how sinful we are.

Of course, we're called to examine ourselves, but then eat and drink. We don't keep our eyes to ourselves. As we reflect, as we have that passing glance of the darkness of our own hearts by nature, our eyes are then taken where?

To Calvary's hill. We come in praise and in worship with our eyes firmly fixed on the crucified, the resurrected, and the ascended Savior.

And when we do that, if we do that, God promises to be here in our midst by His Spirit. What does His Spirit do?

[ 67 : 13 ] It reveals to us the things of Christ. We need the Spirit. I've given the illustration many times of Edinburgh Castle on a dark night. You would never see the beauty of the castle if it weren't for the spotlights that illuminated.

That's what the Holy Spirit today does for us, for the Lord Jesus Christ. And so the Lord draws near to us by His Spirit.

Spirit. But He's also the one, and this is relevant to what we've been thinking about today, He's also the one who tabernacles within His people.

We've thought about how the Holy of Holies could have been a wonderful place to go in and to be in the presence of the Lord, were it not that we would be killed if we would do so.

But we have no need of any of that now. That is all past. Why? Because He dwells in His people.

[ 68 : 14 ] He tabernacles in His people. He lives in you. We are the room. We are the tabernacle. This building isn't God's house.

This is God's house. We have no need for the old. Out with the old and in with the new.

Christ in us. Christ in us. The hope of glory. And so make no mistake, friends, today we believe by faith that Christ is here at the head of the table.

And He delights to be here. Why does He delight to be here? Well, He delights to be here because once more He is able to witness something. What does He witness?

Well, He witnesses His precious redeemed each and every soul gathering at this table today. He witnesses you once again nailing your colors to the mast for everyone to see, identifying as being as one who is in Christ, as one who is able to say with all your heart, Jehovah St.

[ 69 : 29 ] Kenya, the Lord our righteousness. Today, He's able to see the fruit, the fruit of His sacrificial labor on Calvary's Hill.

And that, dear friend, delights the Lord so that He cannot stay away. We're going to read our warrant now for what we're doing from the Word of God.

This comes from 1 Corinthians 11, verse 23 to 29. But I received from the Lord what I also believed to you, delivered to you rather, that the Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread. And when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, This is my body which is for you. 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.

[ 70 : 50 ] Whoever therefore eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. Let a person examine himself then and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.

For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. We're going to now follow the example of our Lord and our Savior and we're going to give thanks. gracious and ever blessed God we praise you this day that you are food for our souls that you are the God who has died and given himself to us the God who tells us today come and eat come and eat and be strengthened by my promises come and eat and be strengthened by one another and oh Lord we pray that indeed this would be the case that your Holy Spirit would be with us as once more we remember your death until you come again and how we praise you Lord that this is but a temporary arrangement that we have to look forward to that great marriage supper of the Lamb where we will never rise again in eternal unbroken fellowship with the King and with one another lead us now we pray and forgive us for Jesus Amen the night when the Lord Jesus was betrayed he took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and he said this is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me in the same way he also took the cup after supper saying this cup is a 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 this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again this is but a temporary arrangement and so it is there will be a day when we will not need to remember the death of the

Lord when we come into the nearest of his presence we will never ever forget but until then we must rise we must go back out into the world we must carry on with the ordinary every day friends don't take heart don't lose heart rather because it's through that is it not that we don't go out on our

own we've just professed that he is ours and we are his my counsel to yourself and to me with you is to make use of that profession how do we do that well again the clues in the chapter that we read Hebrews 10 let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering how do we do that let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering these are the following verses in Hebrew for he who promised is faithful he's always faithful to his promises no matter what tomorrow throws in our path he is faithful come unto me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will not I might [ 75 : 11 ] I will give you rest that's how we hold fast our confession without wavering that's what faith is friends laying hold of the impossible trusting that it can be made possible because God in Christ has made the way possible that new and that living way that he's with us every single step but before we leave today let's just remember one thing yes we need the Lord as we go out into the world as it were this is perhaps something that we're inclined to forget we also need each other who are you at the table with today are you on your own no you're not you're with your brothers your sisters in the

Lord you're with your family you have all been bought and me with you by the precious blood of Christ you are all one in Christ so let's make use of one another the writer of the Hebrews goes on to suggest this himself in verse 23 let us hold fast the confession of our hope we read without wavering for he who promised is faithful and let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works not break one another not tear one another down to stir up one another to love and good works not neglecting to meet together that's important we don't come to church just out of form or ritual we come to church because it's good it's good for us to meet with our saviour but also with our family don't neglect to meet together as is the habit of some but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near so dear friends our profession is not purely by sitting with one another at the

Lord's table but by being there for one another life is hard the Christian life is especially hard let's look out for one another between now and the next communion let's let this not be the only time when we're together let's seek to build up one another when the opportunity arises why because we need each other we identify with one another as we walk in this wilderness until and he will until he comes again amen we're going to close singing to God's praise from psalm 72 familiar words from the Scottish Psalter on page 314 his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call standing to sing to the end of psalm and to the praise of

God his name forever shall endure thus like the sun it shall it shall be blessed in the blessed all nations shine shine for thy blessed be the Lord and God and God of Israel shall for for he the Lord the wondrous world in glory of their and blessed and blessed be his glorious name to to all to all eternity the whole earth is glorified and his glory fill a man so let it be may may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit rest on and abide with you now and forever more amen you