

Communion Service - The Death of Jesus

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Date: 04 June 2023

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] So these are all the intimations for the moment. Let's begin our worship. We're going to sing firstly from Psalm 147. 147. Visitors, if you're using the blue psalm books, it's in two sections.

The older traditional psalms are in the second half of the book. The Sing Psalms, more recent versions, is in the first half of the book. So this is Psalm 147 on page 192.

The tune is credited. We're singing verses 1 to 7. O praise the Lord! How good it is to sing Him songs of praise! How pleasant to give thanks to Him for all His gracious ways! The Lord builds up Jerusalem, and He it is alone who reaches out to Israel to bring the exiles home. He heals His people's broken hearts, restores the bruised and lame. He sets the number of the stars and calls them each by name. And so on to the end of the verse, Mark 7. These verses, if you're able to stand, please stand to sing, O Praise the Lord.

O Praise the Lord! How good it is to sing Him songs of praise! How pleasant to give thanks to Him for all His His gracious ways! The Lord builds up Jerusalem, and He it is alone. Who reaches out to Israel, to bring the exile to the Lord.

the Lord, to bring the exile to the Lord. He heals His people's broken hearts, restores the bruised and lame. He sets the number of the stars and calls them each by name.

[2 : 41] Great is our Lord, and great in power, His wisdom is profound. The Lord sustains the meek, but casts the wicked to the ground.

Sing to the Lord with joy His praise proclaims. And with the music of the heart, give glory to His name.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let's now call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's join together in prayer. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks for this occasion anew when we can come together to worship You, to sing Your praise, to call upon You in prayer, to read Your Word, to hear Its message, to have fellowship together and to have fellowship with our God. We thank You too, O Lord, for the Lord's Supper that we will partake of today and be observers of today. And we thank You for the Lord's Supper.

We thank You for the Lord's Supper.

We thank You for the Lord's Supper. We thank You for the Lord's Supper. We thank You for the Lord's Supper. We thank You, O Lord, our God, that as we call upon You now in prayer, so You are ready to hear us and ready to answer us. Your Word assures us that You hear the prayers of Your people, that You place in their hearts the very thoughts that they bring to You. And even though You know all things about us already, we give thanks, Lord, that such is Your interest in us, that You would have us speak to You and bring the desires of our heart to You.

[4 : 53] And so we do pray, Lord, today that You would bless us as we meet together, that Your blessing will come through the power and energy of Your Holy Spirit.

And we pray that Your Holy Spirit will take those things that we are partakers of, that we read in Your Word, and bless them to us, we pray. Help us, we pray, to discern in all of these things the glory and the praise and the majesty of Your name.

And enable us, we pray, at this time to be conscious anew of Your greatness and of Your majesty and of the wonder that such a great and glorious God as You are, has made provision for sinners like we are, not deserving that we are, not deserving that we should ever come into Your presence, not deserving that we should receive any beneficial gift from You.

Yet You have provided us with salvation. You have provided us with a Savior, Your own Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord. And we thank You especially today, Lord, for the salvation that we have in Him, the salvation that includes our access to You now.

And we come before You, O Lord, as children to a Father. That we come before You, expressing our concern and our need to be blessed. We confess, Lord, also our sins to You.

[6 : 15] And we thank You that in the provision You have made for us, You have opened up a fountain for us, for sin and for uncleanness, in that same person of Your Son.

And we pray today as we come to confess our sin and seek Your pardon and cleansing, that we may know that great privilege also and blessing of our sin be forgiven, of righteousness imputed to us instead of the sin that we come to confess.

And Lord, our God, help us, we pray, as we anticipate coming to partake of the Lord's Supper shortly, that we may do so with a true discernment of what it means to Your people, of what is represented by the elements of bread and of wine.

And we pray that You would bless to our hearts the partaking of the Supper. We pray that You would bless the meetings of Your people, the gatherings of Your people for worship today throughout our land, throughout the whole world.

But we know, Lord, that there are many people who meet together as we do today, some in very different circumstances. Yet Your people have that same desire, wherever they are found, to exalt Your glorious name, to give You praise and to draw their strength from You.

[7 : 32] And we pray that that will be so for all Your people everywhere today. Remember especially those who are persecuted, those who suffer for their faith deeply, and those who have today difficulties even publicly confessing You through fear of being rejected by families.

And yet we thank You, Lord, that there are so many throughout the world who, despite these challenges and difficulties, still make it their concern to witness to You and to be faithful to You in their own context.

We ask, Lord, Your blessing too for those throughout the world today who face such great difficulties in Providence. Remember those who are suffering from drought and famine.

Remember those who are caught up in places where war and terror is such a daily occurrence for them. We pray, Lord, that through the Gospel, You would create peace in people's lives, so that aggressors may be turned into worshippers of God, and those who are recipients of terror and of violence will come to know days of peace.

We pray for those, Lord, who are caught up in this terrible train crash in India. We pray for all the families who have lost loved ones. We pray for these communities.

[8 : 56] And we pray, O Lord, that even through such tragedy, You would reveal Yourself as the Savior of sinners to them, that You would grant, Lord, to them at this time in Your compassion and in Your mercy, that You would draw near to them and give them the consolation that You alone are able to give through the Lord Jesus Christ.

And we ask Your blessing today to be with our children. Bless them, Lord, as they will later on come to join us to observe the Lord's Supper. We pray for them as they receive the teaching of Your Word weekly here and at home.

We ask that You would continue to bless that to them, and bless their teachers, bless their parents, grandparents. Help them, Lord, we pray, to bring into their own practice daily those things which are commended in Your Word as the lifestyle and behavior and practice of Your own believing people.

And we pray that You would protect them against the evil that is in the world against the many forces that seek to bring them away from the following of Jesus.

And we ask that You would give them that they be established firmly in Your ways and in Your service. And we ask that You would continue to bless those in our community who this time face difficulties in family life and various other types of adversity, including those, Lord, who are seriously ill at this time.

[10 : 26] Remember them, we pray. Remember those who recently have lost loved ones, and those for whom mourning is an ongoing reality, even if they've lost loved ones in times gone by.

We pray that You'd comfort their hearts, O Lord, that You would build them up in faith and trust in Yourself, and that You would give them to see that You are the God who changes not, and is therefore able to look after all who need You and all who need Your help.

Receive us now, we pray. Continue with us and bless us freely for Jesus' sake. Amen. We're going to read now from God's Word. It's from the Gospel of John.

The Gospel according to John. We're reading from chapter 19 and at verse 17. We're going to read from verse 17 on through to the end of the chapter.

So that's the Gospel of John, chapter 19, and beginning at verse 17. So they took Jesus, and He went out, bearing His own cross, to the place called the place of a skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

[11:44] There they crucified Him, and with Him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross.

It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.

So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write the King of the Jews, but rather this man said, I am King of the Jews. Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written.

When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took His garments and divided them into four parts, 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.

[12:52] So the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus were His mother and His mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw His mother and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, Woman, behold your son. Then He said to the disciple, Behold your mother.

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

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

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

[13:58] So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs.

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

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

After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission.

So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight.

[15:03] So they took the body of Jesus, and bound it in the linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where He was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid.

So because of the Jewish day of the preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. And may God bless to us reading that portion of His Word anew.

Our next singing is from Psalm 22, and the singing is in Gaelic. I'll read the verses first of all in English, Psalm 22, verses 15 to 16.

My strength is like a shattered clay, and as I fight to draw my breath, my tongue is sticking to my jaws. You lay me in the dust of death.

A pack of dogs encloses me, their silk around me is complete. I am beset by evil men, and they have pierced my hands and feet.

[16:10] And so we're singing these verses in Gaelic from Psalm 22 at verse 15. On each discussion eventually essays spread the last day to our STN Spring.

Cuando subpo las 10ijones sur anew, once voix cons ■■■■■ ensemble selanct, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[18 : 41] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[22 : 43] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

So, thank you.

[25 : 55] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. And, thank you. Thank you. That's what Jesus, that's what Jesus experienced. And, that's what Jesus experienced. And, ultimately, it's not very popular nowadays to speak of it, but it's true. And the Bible is unquestionably clear on it. The ultimate death, the ultimate death is the ultimate death, the ultimate death is hell. The ultimate death is hell. The ultimate death is hell. The ultimate death is hell, separation from God spiritually and forevermore.

That is what hell is. That's the wages of sin. That's what Jesus experienced. That's what Jesus actually came when He came to die.

[31 : 48] That's the death He died. He didn't just die this physical death. He didn't just die in terms of His body and soul being separated and His body being buried, as we see in the sepulcher, and His soul going to be with God, the Father.

He died the death of damnation. I can't explain to you, and I've never come across an explanation, I don't think it can be explained, how it could be that the death Jesus died, this eternal death, this spiritual death, how could it be that all of that happened without it continuing forever, as it is in hell? Theologians used to speak of it as, he died that same death intensively, but not extensively. It's nothing short of the death that is damnation and hell, but it didn't last forever in his case, but he still experienced the whole of it in these moments of his death.

And it took place especially, the very depth of it, if you like, was at that moment when he cried out, you remember his words from the cross, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

Think of that word, forsaken, and apply it to the death that Jesus died. The forsakeness of the Savior on the cross is him expressing at that moment what he knows in his own soul is taking place.

[33 : 26] It's that separation from God. It's the hell that you and I deserved, and you're here at his table today, or witnessing his table, and you're taking into your mind and heart once again all that he has done for you, and how amazing it is that the Son of God, who didn't deserve to die, the Son of God who came into this world to take our human nature to himself and became a real human being, that he died not just the death of every other human being, but the death that we deserve for our sin.

That is the death he died. And that's what you remember as you remember him in the Lord's Supper. This do in remembrance of me.

But don't ever leave out of your thoughts, of your meditation, of your conclusions, the fact that he died the very death that we deserved as the wages of sin.

If you take that out of the meaning of the cross, you're evacuating it on many ways of its most important element, that that's the nature of his death, the death he died.

Secondly, you find here the reason for Jesus' death. We said that the blood and water that's referred to here, John would have seen a significance in them spiritually.

[34 : 57] That takes us back to the Old Testament, doesn't it? It takes us back to the rituals of the Old Testament, where these two elements, blood and water, were so frequently used. For example, the sprinkling of the blood on the altar on the Day of Atonement in the Holy of Holies.

The labor that you find in the courtyard of the temple and previously in this tabernacle, for the priests to wash themselves is to do with washing. The water is to do with washing.

The blood is to do with making an atonement or giving to God what he requires to pay for our sins. Now, of course, these in the Old Testament were representative things.

They weren't actually themselves capable of removing our guilt or taking away our defilement. They were representative themselves of the death of Jesus, who was to come fulfillment of them. So, I'm sure that John saw here in the blood and the water the symbols of atonement and of cleansing. That the death of Jesus was an atonement for sin to deal with the guilt of our sin. [36 : 09] That the death of Jesus was a death that was to provide a cleansing from the pollution of our sin, from the defilement of our sin.

And that is essentially what the cross of Jesus is for you today. And when you're coming here to remember him at the Lord's Supper, to remember the death he died, to remember the Savior who died, you're remembering him in terms of why he died.

The reason why he died, the reason why he died, is to provide an atonement for sin that we could not give ourselves. And to provide a means of cleansing from a defilement of sin which we could never wash ourselves of.

In 1 John, I mentioned that John refers to these, uses these terms in his writings and his first epistle. Very interestingly, you find him also using these terms blood and water with respect to Jesus and Jesus coming into the world.

1 John 5, this is he, he's been speaking here about Christ, born of God and so on at the beginning of chapter 5. And in verse 6 he says, this is he who came by water and blood, Jesus Christ.

[37 : 33] He says, this is he who came by water and blood, not by the water only, but by the water and the blood. And the Spirit is the one who testifies, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three that testify, the Spirit and the water and the blood, and these three agree.

It's not easy necessarily to work out just exactly how John is using these terms, but the terms themselves are quite clear. The Spirit is the Holy Spirit. The whole context is about testifying to the Jesus who died and to the kind of death that he died.

Well, the Spirit testifies, and the water and the blood also are associated with that testimony as to Jesus himself. He came, he says here, by blood. In other words, he came to die.

He came to die, this death of the cross that we mentioned, the very death that he died. This is why Jesus came into the world. Ultimately, that is the reason for why he became human, that there might be a means by which he would die and lay out his soul in death.

You see, his life and his example, while powerful, while perfect, would not have been enough for us to save us from our sins.

[38 : 53] Because if he had provided his life as an example, that would still not have rendered to God the payment due for our sins.

Because what God demanded, what the law demanded, was the death of the transgressor. And without a death, there can be no salvation for the sinner who needs to be saved.

And when Jesus came into the world, yes, he came to give a perfect example of a human life. He came to show us what we ought to be like in our standing before God.

But of course, we're sinners, we're fallen, we're flawed. So, Jesus is held before us as an example.

But you would try, if you would try following the pattern that you see in the life of Jesus, and you have the life of Jesus, the kind of life he lived in the Gospels especially, and you try and live up to that, and you do your best to live up to that, thinking that if you do that, well, God will accept you.

Well, you don't have to try it very long before you realize you just can't do it. And even if you could do it, that would not be itself sufficient to satisfy God who demands the death of the transgressor.

[40 : 19] To atone for our sins required a perfect human being dying the death we deserve to die.

And that, friends, is what we remember in the Lord's Supper today. He did not need to die in the sense that he himself was sinless.

Of course, in that respect, he didn't deserve to die. But because the Lord laid on him, as Isaiah 53 puts it, the Lord laid upon him the iniquity of us all, he became as the greatest sinner who ever lived.

He became someone because he was bearing our sin. He became someone that God the Father regarded in our place as the guilty one, in our place as the one who deserved the death that we deserved.

He made him, as 2 Corinthians 5, 21 puts it, he made sin, he made him who knew no sin, to be sin for us, so that we might be made or come the righteousness of God in him.

[41 : 30] It's a perfect substitution. He took our sins. He paid the price of them. He died the death deserved for them, so that we might take his righteousness, that we might receive by faith the

righteousness he died to procure for us.

He came by blood. But he also came by water. As 1 John 5 puts it, he came not by water only, but by water and the blood.

The purpose of his coming was to cleanse us from our sin, to remove the stain and the defilement of sin from our persons, which will be the case at last.

Of course, even in our justification, God accepts us in him as righteous, and the Holy Spirit begins that work in us that will issue, that will finally come to its completion when we are completely sinless, washed from a defilement of our sin, to spend eternity sinlessly with God.

That's why Jesus said to Nicodemus, you remember, he came to Jesus by night in chapter 3 of this Gospel, and was perplexed that Jesus said to him, "'Except someone, accept a man, be born again,' he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus was convinced, of course, that he was already in the kingdom of God, that he was already one of God's accepted people, and he didn't know Christ, he didn't know him as a Savior.

[43 : 17] He was a teacher in Israel. He was one of the Sanhedrin, one of those religious authorities. "'Truly I say to you,' Jesus said, "'Except one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" Nicodemus said, "'How can a man be born when he is old?

Can he enter a second time, and do his mother's womb and be born?' Jesus answered, "'Truly, truly I say to you, "'Unless one is born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.'" Why did Jesus come into the world? He came to die.

Why did he come to die the death he died on the cross? He came to die that death so that we might be redeemed from the guilt of our sin and washed from its defilement.

He came by water and by blood. And when he died and the spear pierced his side, these symbolic, real physical elements, but symbolic to John, flowed from his side.

Rock of ages, said the hymn writer, cleft for me. Rock of ages, cleft for me. Let me hide myself in thee.

[44 : 33] Let the water and the blood from thy ribbon side which flowed be of sin the double cure. Cleanse me from its guilt and load." There came out blood and water.

When you come to take the bread and the wine to yourself today, meditate on this point. Meditate on what it represents.

Meditate on the real death of this real human, of the Son of God in our nature. Meditate on what took place at Calvary. That hell came into time in the soul of Jesus.

That he died that death. That out of his side came blood and water. That we might be forgiven and cleansed from our sin.

And that's what we say. Thirdly, the remembrance of Jesus' death in the Lord's Supper. There's the reality of his death, the reason for his death, and the remembrance of his death in the supper.

[45 : 42] We'll say more about this at the table itself. But again, in 1 John, the passage we read speaks about witnessing to Jesus the Spirit and the blood and the water.

The Spirit, they all witness to Jesus their testimony to the reality of who he is and why he came and the death that he died. The Holy Spirit bears testimony to the death of Jesus.

Where does the Holy Spirit take you? Where did he take you when he came to work in your life, all of you today who know him savingly? And where did he take you? Where did the work of the Spirit in your heart and your soul actually take you spiritually?

And in your thoughts and in your concern? He took you to Calvary, didn't he? He took you to Jesus. He took you to the death of Jesus. He took you to that death that happened specifically so that your faith might be in him, that your sins might be forgiven.

That's what the Spirit of God does. He draws us to the cross. He draws us to the blood and the water of Jesus' side. He draws us to contemplate and to understand in a measure at least why this perfect man died the death he died at Calvary.

[47 : 02] And so that means that the Lord's Supper itself is a means, a channel of grace, of God's grace, God's favor, God's blessing to our souls.

Never forget that the Lord's Supper is not primarily, not in the first place, not first and foremost, a means of witness. It is that. You are witnessing today that you are believing people of God.

But that's not its primary purpose. Its primary purpose is not as a means of witness to yourself or to others that you are the people of God. Its primary purpose is a means of grace.

God uses it to channel grace, to channel more of his spiritual energy into your life, to actually convey to you something more of the salvation that Jesus died to procure.

And through both the word preached and the sacrament as it's administered as you partake of it, what you're doing is taking into yourself spiritually and believingly the benefits of Christ's death.

[48 : 09] As the confession of faith puts it, we feed upon Christ crucified and all the benefits of his death. The bread and the wine as they represent, as they convey to us, the reality of his death and the reason why he died, they become a means in the hand of God and by the blessing of God.

They're not changed into anything other than bread and wine. But they have that spiritual significance by which we come to see in them the death of our Savior.

So that is why he says, Take, eat. Take this cup. Take, eat this bread. What you're doing in reaching out and taking these elements is really taking again Jesus to yourself in a spiritual way, renewing your own covenant obligations to God and your confidence in him that he is indeed your Savior and worthy.

That you should remember him. It is for me he died, you say, as well as for all others who belong to God's people.

And as you read that there came out blood and water. So you take that with you today. And you take it with you so that you stand once again amazed at the love that could provide such wonderful benefits through such an amazing event as happened in the death of your Savior.

[49 : 52] May God bless these thoughts on his word. We're going to sing now some words to his praise. We're singing from Psalm 61. And while we're singing, some of the children will come in from Sunday school.

Psalm 61, page 78, verses 1 to 5.

The tune this time is Land of Rest. O hear my urge and cry, my God, and listen to my plea. From earth's remotest bounds I call when my heart faints in me.

O God, conduct me to the rock that's higher far than I. For you're my refuge from the foe, my tower of strength on high. And so on, verses 1 to 5 in Psalm 61.

And we'll stand to sing. O hear my urge and cry, my God, and listen to my plea.

[51 : 07] From earth's remotest bounds I call when my heart faints in me.

O God, conduct me to the rock that's higher far than I.

For you're my refuge from the foe, my tower of strength on high.

O let me dwell within your debt, forever there to live.

O for the shelter of your wings, the refuge which they give.

[52 : 17] O you have heard my vow so far, and you have given me.

The heritage of those who fear, your name continually.

O God, conduct me to the foe, my heart of strength on high. O God, conduct me to the foe, my heart of strength on high. Now, at this point I'd like to give a few words of direction, sometimes known as the fencing of the Lord's table, but it's really just giving direction as to who the Lord's table is for, and who should be taking their place at the Lord's table to remember Him in His death.

If we turn back to the passage we read in John chapter 19, we find there that verses 38 to 42 speak to us about the burial of Christ's body.

The two persons, these two men came, Joseph of Arimathea, who was secretly a disciple of Jesus, and also Nicodemus, who we read through the Gospel of John in various places.

[53 : 31] It's a very interesting pattern that John shows in regard to Nicodemus. He first of all came in chapter 3 to Jesus by night. In chapter 7 he spoke up somewhat for Jesus, not yet sure as to where he stood there spiritually, but now here at the death of Jesus he comes to light as a true disciple of Christ.

Now, it's interesting, what you find in this passage is how they dealt with the body of Jesus and how they acted. And I think there are three things here that will help us as we come to consider who should be at the Lord's table, who have that privilege to come to remember Him in His death.

First of all, you see that they acted believingly. There's no doubt that they acted believingly, believing in who this Jesus was, and believing to some extent at least why He had died the death He died.

They went to Pilate, or Joseph went to Pilate to ask Him permission to take away the body of Jesus.

They gave Him permission, so also Nicodemus came with Him. And the way that you find the passage developing, you can see that they truly believed in this person, in this Jesus.

They came believing. They came to take His body down from the cross, believing in who He was, believing that He indeed was the Savior, that He was the Son of God who had come into the world to save sinners like themselves.

[54 : 57] And so, you come to the Lord's Supper today, and you come believingly. It's not a mere ritual for you. It's not something that you do just out of habit.

It's not something you've learned to do just because others are doing it. It's not something you do just because it's been in the church during your lifetime. You come believingly.

You come as if you were taking the body of Jesus down from the cross, believing in who He is, believing in why He died, believing that He died for you.

Paul speaks in 1 Corinthians 11, rather, about discerning the Lord's body. To discern the Lord's body in the Lord's Supper really means that you see, believingly, in these elements of bread and of wine, the reality of the Lord's death.

You see Jesus Himself because you believe in Him. And as you believe in Him, so these elements come to be for you very meaningfully, a representation and a presentation to you of the Jesus who died.

[56 : 11] They acted believingly. They acted, secondly, very thoughtfully. They didn't just do this without giving it some thought. They didn't do this just because they felt sorry for Jesus and because they thought it was important that His body would not remain on the cross.

They did this thoughtfully. They went to Pilate. They prepared spices. They went to use Joseph's own new tomb. Matthew tells us it was his tomb, a new tomb.

Nobody had ever been laid in it. All of that has thoughtfully gone about. They didn't just rush into it, though they were short of time because of when this took place. But they acted thoughtfully.

They gave their mind to what they were doing. And these are the people who also come to the Lord's Supper. They don't come unthinkingly.

They don't come just because somebody has recommended it. They don't come just because somebody else is doing it. They come thoughtfully.

[57 : 16] You come today thinking of what's before you. You come giving your mind to the bread and the wine and what's meant by them. You come thinking about what you're doing.

You come thinking about why it's meaningful to you. You come thinking as to why it's important you do this. You're applying your mind so that in a very real way you're reenacting, if you like, what Joseph and Nicodemus did in taking the body of Jesus down from the cross.

Having acted thoughtfully, having made preparation, so do you when you come to the Lord's Supper. The Supper is for people who come believingly to take the bread and the wine, who come thoughtfully to take the bread and the wine, who give their minds to the meaning and significance of these things.

And also they acted lovingly. They obviously took great care. They acted in loving regard for what were really the remains of this person, this human body of Jesus.

They acted lovingly in regard to it. They were very short of time. And yet they took great care that they did everything possible because of their love for him and what he had done to make sure that he had a decent burial.

[58 : 42] But his burial was in a manner the custom of the Jews to bury. And so you come. And those who come to the Lord's Supper, those who are able to partake of the supper meaningfully are those who love the Lord.

You come when your heart loves him for what he did. You come and you love him. As you partake, it's an act of love for you.

It's as if you're taking him down from the cross and just taking him up in your arms and saying, Lord, I love you for what you've done. I love you for who you are.

I love you for how you remembered me. I love you that you've done such a thing as this for such a person as I. Yes, you come believingly.

And you come thoughtfully. And you come lovingly. And the Lord's table, the Lord's Supper is for them.

[59 : 44] For those who come with that mindset to take the bread and take the wine in remembrance of him.

Now, we're going to sing some more verses before we come to the supper itself. And this is from Psalm 118. And at verse 15, that's page 398.

Psalm 118 at verse 13. We'll sing down as far as verse 23. In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health.

The Lord's right hand doth ever valiantly. Now, at this stage, among the visitors present, if there are any who love the Lord, who are in full communion in their own congregation, they're welcome to come and take communion.

This is not our table. This is not our table. This is not the free church's table. This is the Lord's table. And we welcome any who are genuinely living in obedience to Christ and who want to remember him in the supper.

[60 : 54] So, if you are amongst those, please do join us and come forward to the table. In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health. We'll remain seated for this singing.

In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health.

The Lord's right hand doth ever valiantly.

The right hand of the mighty Lord exalted is on high.

The right hand of the mighty Lord doth ever valiantly.

[62 : 13] I shall not die but live and shout. The works of God is covered.

The Lord doth ever valiantly. The Lord doth me chastise his soul. And not to death give no word.

lanç Would God is covered. He was worthy of anger to me the gems of righteousness.

Then will I enter into them, and I the Lord will bless.

This is the gift of God, I hear the just shall enter in.

[63 : 38] Be well, I praise, for thy meaner, and thou thy safety be.

That stone is made, a cornerstone, which builders did despise.

This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.

Let's take a moment for the Lord's name. 1 Corinthians 11, verse 23.

For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you. The Lord Jesus on the night when He was betrayed took bread. When He had given thanks, He broke it and said, This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

[64 : 57] In the same way also He took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes. And the pattern that the Lord set for us is what we follow in our observance of the Lord's supper as well.

We come to give thanks now in His name. Let's pray. Lord, our gracious God, as we give thanks for all that is set before us in the Lord's supper, we give thanks for all that it means, for all that it represents.

We give thanks for the reality of your death. We give thanks for the way that you graciously provide us a means to remember it. We confess, Lord, even in the most important things that we are apt to forget, that we are apt to leave aside a consideration to the extent we ought, even of such things as your own death on the cross.

Lord, we thank you today that we gather here in your presence. We pray that as we remember the death of the Lord in the supper, may we come, O Lord, to meet you in the power of your risen life.

[66 : 23] May we come through your Holy Spirit to benefit from all that we now do in our actions at the table. We thank you, O Lord, that today we can come to you with assurance that all that you have provided for us is forever sufficient to make us acceptable to you.

that it is forever sufficient to be the ground about forgiveness from our sins, about presenting us righteous before God. We thank you, Lord, today that in this reminder and this remembrance, you impress upon us anew that great love that you showed to your people when you sent your beloved Son into this world to die that cursed death of the cross for them.

And we thank you today for that ongoing love of God which can never be diverted from your people, which can never be diverted from your own dear Son as the head of your church.

Lord, we pray today for grace to discern the Lord's body in these elements. We ask that you would sanctify them from their common to this their holy use.

And enable us as we express our thanks, Lord, to be also considerate of how we come together.

For it is the table that you have set not only for us individually, but for your people collectively, so that they may come together and share in this communion meeting.

[67 : 55] So blessed to us, we pray, in all that we are participants of. Blessed today those who are observing, not being at the table, but yet observe these things.

We thank you that they are here. We thank you that they have an interest in being here. We pray that they themselves, Lord, will be drawn by you to come eventually to sit at your table and to do so even perhaps the next occasion if it please you.

We commend them to you and ask that you'd remember them. And Lord, help us to encourage one another and to fulfill all our privileges and our responsibilities in the gospel.

We ask now that you'd go before us throughout the remainder of our service. Keep us, we pray, our hearts and minds focused upon you. And all of these things that we ask, we ask with the pardon of our many sins.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. When we come to partake of the Lord's Supper, how do we partake? Well, we partake, first of all, as worshipers.

[69 : 01] This is an act of worship. It's not something that's a sideline to our worship as we worship in having the Word preached to us in singing the praises of God and praying.

This is an act of worship. It's part of this whole service of worship. And as you come today to take the bread and take the wine, you do so as worshippers of God.

You do so giving thanks to God for it and for what it represents. You come in your worshipful spirit to partake of it, praying to God.

Part of the worship is that you pray God will bless this to you. God will make it once again precious and meaningful to you as you come to partake of it.

You come praising, you come praying. You come also with a meditative heart. You come to meditate, to think through, you said earlier, the things that are represented here as you come as worshippers of God.

[70 : 11] May you and I, as we take this communion together, may we do so in a way in which we are conscious that we are actually engaging in an act of worship, to do it devotedly in our love for the Lord.

We come as worshippers. You also come to the table today as children of God. This is the Father's table.

It isn't just the table of Jesus the Son. Jesus the Son is set out in the bread and the wine that represent His body and His blood, but it's the Father's table.

You come to a gracious Father today. He has spread this table before you with what's represented on it being the salvation really essentially that Christ has died to purchase for you.

Father has provided this table, has prepared this table, has given His Son to the death of the cross so that we might have the benefit of the life that comes as a result of that to us.

[71 : 18] That's what's represented here. The Father has provided it for us. And the Father is saying to you today as it were and saying to us all together, at this table, here is what represents my Son.

Come and eat. Come and drink. Come and take your fill of this wonderful salvation represented here. Come and draw further strength from me.

Come and once again experience my love, my regard for you, my provision for you. Come and take it into your soul.

Come and take it into your souls as you take this bread and as you take this wine. Take my Son. Take your Savior. Take Him again into your embrace, into your hearts, into your soul.

Come and eat. Come and dine. Come and pray for you. Come and pray for you. Come and pray for you. The Father has spread a banquet for you. Last night we spoke of it as the starter course of the marriage supper of the Lamb that will be at the end of the age.

[72 : 27] But when we say it's a starter course compared to that marriage supper of the Lamb, don't think it's just a little tiny morsel. He's setting before you a table with bread and with wine that represents the whole salvation that Christ has died to procure.

And He's now saying to you, come and take this. Once again, come and feast yourself upon what I died to obtain for you. You come as worshippers.

You come as children of God. You come as His children to the Father's table to meet with both the Savior Himself and the Father who sent Him through the Holy Spirit.

And you, take this is for you. So we read that same night in which the Lord was betrayed that He took bread.

When He had given thanks, He broke it and said, This is My body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of Me. After supper also, He took the cup, saying, This cup is the new covenant in My blood.

[73 : 50] This do as often as you drink it in remembrance of Me. For as often as you drink, as you eat this cup and drink, as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you show the Lord's death until He comes.

Amen. Well, we came to the table of the Lord as worshippers, and we came as children of God. And of course, that's how we leave the table as well. That remains to be true of us. But we leave the table also with a renewed resolve, surely, a renewed commitment to serve the Lord.

What you have been remembering in the Lord's Supper is the servant of God, the Son of God who came into this world, as He put it Himself, not to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.

Jesus is the ultimate servant. He is the one who gave Himself to the death of the cross in obedience to the will of the Father.

[75 : 01] And as He is the ultimate servant, and as you've remembered the ultimate servant today, so He's sending you out now to be His servants in the world. And what does that mean?

Well, it means essentially, as He Himself said in the last chapter of Matthew, go and make disciples of all nations. Go and make disciples.

Don't think that that's just the work of the minister or assistant minister or elder. It's a privilege that God has given to His children to be disciple-makers by your testimony, by your life in the world, by the words you speak.

You make disciples. And as we make disciples for the Lord, so they're brought in under the teaching of the Word of God and come to develop themselves then as children of God we trust.

So you go forth with a renewed commitment, a renewed commitment to serve the Lord. You also go out with a renewed concern to be watchful in your life.

[76 : 14] having remembered the death of the Lord here, you go out from here and you're concerned that you bring nothing of disrepute to the name of Jesus, that you live in such a way as will actually always honor Him privately and in public.

You don't want from your life or my life anything that would cause the Lord's name to be in disrepute. And you go with that concern to be watchful against Satan.

Remember that the times when you are most vulnerable is when you have enjoyed something most. When you've really enjoyed being here today as I know you have, when you've enjoyed again communion with God and the worship of God and the remembrance of the Lord in the Lord's Supper.

That's when Satan knows at the height of your enjoyment that you're vulnerable to attack. Don't let him get into your life in such a way that would capitulate to any of his temptations.

much easier to be watchful when things are tough and the going is hard and you're conscious of real challenges in your life. Then you come to depend upon the Lord rather than on yourself.

[77 : 41] To go out with a renewed concern to serve him and to be watchful. But not just watchful against Satan but watchful against yourself.

Because you and I have something natural to us that we always need to be watchful against. And the Bible calls it pride.

Pride is the opposite of being dependent on God. Pride is that thief, that burglar that sneaks into your life, into your heart, into your mind unnoticed.

And the one thing he's after to rob you of is your dependence on Christ. Because when you come to lose your dependence on Christ or leave it aside, you come then to think of yourself and your own sufficiency and pride will make you feel I can do this.

Don't let that happen. Because you know what the Bible says, pride comes before a fall. watch against Satan, watch against your own heart, watch against everything that would bring the cause of Christ into this repeat.

[79 : 02] But positively, keep on serving him, keep on loving him, keep on commending him, keep up your worship, keep up your love, your fellowship for the Lord's people.

And as we leave the table today, we do so, conscious of the privilege that's been ours. I do want to say a word to the children up in the gallery. First of all, I want to say thank you for being here today.

Thank you for coming. Thank you for coming to look at what is in the table of the Lord as you've seen it from up there. And you've got a good vantage point there, you can see down to the table of the Lord.

And I want you to go home and think about what you've seen, what you've heard, what you've seen these believers doing, what you've heard me in the preaching of the word and as I've been speaking at the table.

And I want you to think of yourselves. And what does that mean to yourselves? Is that something important to you? And why should it be important to you?

[80 : 09] And do you want to serve Jesus? And do you want to know him better? And do you want one day to come and be here also at the Lord's table with those who remember him in his death?

So it's very encouraging for us to see you. We love you. You're part of the congregation. So we want you to go on now to know the Lord for yourselves and to serve him and to come to remember him whenever that time comes in the Lord's Supper.

And I say the same to those who are not at the table. You have your own reasons for not being at the table. Your own thoughts are with you.

Your own thoughts have been on what you've seen happening. But I do wish that you would come and that you would commit yourselves to the Lord or commit yourselves anew to the Lord so that you would benefit also from this means of grace.

that he has graciously given to his people. Please be assured that we love your presence here, that we are encouraged by the fact that you're here, and that we want to see you develop in your spiritual lives too, so that eventually too you'll join us, hopefully soon, at the Lord's table for you also to come to benefit from what is set out here for your benefit.

[81 : 44] So may God bless to us, all of us today, partakers and observers alike, of what we've seen and heard. We're going to conclude by singing in Psalm 72, Psalm 72 on page 314, the three verses from verse 17.

These three verses will stand to sing.

in Psalm 72, the three verses of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. This name forever shall endure, lost like the sun it shall, then shall be blessed in him, War himself ■■■er tous and bless' blessed all nations shall explore.

God bless'd be the Lord that good means Lord, I celebrate him lost as the Son of Israel, Israel, for thee alone doth wondrous words, and glory art expel.

And blesseth thee, his glorious name, to all eternity.

[83 : 40] The whole and plent is glorified, and hence the glory of the Lord.

Amen. Go to my wife this morning. 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.