

# Stones that Speak

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Preacher: Rev Iain Macritchie

[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to begin our service then, friends, worshipping God by singing to his praise from Psalm 103. Psalm 103 in Sing Psalms. That's on page 135 of the Blue Psalm books, reading at the beginning of the psalm, Psalm 103.

Praise God my soul with all my heart, let me exalt his holy name.

Forget not all his benefits, his praise my soul in song proclaim. The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress.

Your life he rescues from the grave and crowns you in his tenderness. We'll sing down to the end of the verse marked 11 to the praise of God, standing to sing, Praise God my soul with all my heart.

Praise God my soul with all my heart. Let me exalt his holy name.

[ 1 : 18 ] Forget not all his benefits, his praise my soul in song proclaim.

The Lord forgives you all your sins and heals your sickness and distress.

Your life he rescues from the grave and crowns you in his tenderness.

He satisfies your deep desire. He satisfies your deep desire.

From his unending source of good.

[ 2 : 40 ] So that just like the evil strength, your youth will be her is renewed.

The Lord is known for righteous acts, and justice to the God in once.

Till Moses he made known his ways.

His mighty days to Israel's sons. The Lord is merciful and kind.

To thine best, low and full of grace.

[ 4 : 03 ] He will not constantly do. For in his anger hide his days.

He does not banish our mercies. For he has been their just reward.

And great his love as high as men. To hearts alone, to fear the Lord.

Amen. Friends, let's unite our hearts in prayer. Let us pray.

Lord our God, we come and we seek this evening to know what it is to worship you in spirit and in truth.

[ 5 : 34 ] That we are a people who are richly blessed as we reflect this evening upon the reason of our gathering. That we gather together in order to come before the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the one who is high and lifted up.

The one who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. What a wonder it is that this is our desire.

To come and to worship. And as we gather, O Lord, at this time, we pray that we might know something of your Holy Spirit leading us and guiding us to those fountains of living water.

That our gathering together would not be born out of any routine or ritual. But rather that we would come with that sense of expectation.

Expecting you to fulfill your promise to your people. That where two or three gather in your name. You promised to be there in their midst.

[ 6 : 44 ] And so we pray that indeed we would be here in the name of Jesus Christ. That you would honor this promise. And that we would be able to say it was good for us to meet.

You are worthy of all praise and adoration. Not least because although you are the God who inhabits eternity, you are the God who draws nigh to sinners just like us.

You are a God who accommodates our weakness and our infirmities. You are a God who meets us at our very point of need.

You accommodate our finite mind by revealing yourself to us in a way that we can understand. And for this we give thanks. We give thanks for your word.

This special revelation of not only who you are, but who we can be in you. What a blessing it is that for many of us here tonight, we can say that indeed we are in Christ.

[ 7 : 51 ] That our identity is not found in anything in this world. Not even in ourselves. But in the one who died and gave himself for us.

The one who cried out upon that cross. It is finished. So that for us, our life would just begin. And so as we reflect upon the wonders of such an identity, we pray that all the more we would find ourselves coming and worshiping your name.

Individually and collectively as a people who you tell us is your beloved bride. We know that indeed we are those who have been chosen from all eternity.

We know not why and in many ways we cannot understand the depths of such wonders. But yet we believe. We believe that you are God and that there is none other.

And that in this very act of faith, we come and we cling on to you as the only one for life and for death.

[ 9 : 01 ] And Lord, we pray this evening for all who gather here. Those who perhaps are unable to identify as of yet as a child of God. Those who are perhaps wandering aimlessly in the wilderness as we once were ourselves.

That you would be with them even this evening. That you would speak to them mightily by your word through your spirit. That you would bring them to that place where they recognize their need of you.

For indeed what should it profit a man if he should gain the whole world and lose his soul? What shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Help us to see the brevity of time. The time is short and eternity is long. And that in light of this, we would make our calling and election sure by coming and laying hold of these promises by faith.

That those who seek will find. Those who knock will have that door opened unto them. And so we pray also for any gathered here this evening who as of yet are to profess your name publicly.

[ 10 : 12 ] Those who perhaps do identify in their hearts as a child of God. But have not come out and publicly shown that they have been bought by the precious blood of Christ.

Help them we pray even this evening as your word goes out. That it would encourage them and draw them and strengthen them. To truly know the blessing that follows such obedience.

We know that Satan is like a roaring lion seeking whom he might devour. He is the accuser of the brethren. He is the one who even at this time is whispering in our ears and telling us that we are his.

Forgive us, O Lord, for listening to his voice. Forgive us for doubting our salvation. Forgive us for the many times that we lose sight of the fact that our security is not in our own righteousness.

But in the righteousness of another. And so we pray then that you would be with this dear congregation in the days that lie ahead. We give thanks for their witness here in the town of Stornoway.

[ 11 : 26 ] That this would be a continued witness. That they would shine as a beacon of light in a dark world. And that they would seek to reach out with the good news of the gospel.

We pray for this new ministry that has commenced. We give thanks for it, for Calamordo. And we pray that as he partners in the gospel with James. That together they will see great things happening.

Not only in terms of a leadership team. But as a congregation. That they would all have that shared vision and purpose. To go out and to, as it were, from one beggar to another.

Show them where to get food. What a wonder it is. That you have not left us to ourselves. But you have provided for us that way of salvation. Help us then to be reminded of its urgency.

And to seek with every fiber of our being. To fulfill that calling that is ours. To make disciples of all nations. And so we pray that you would bless our time together this evening.

[ 12 : 34 ] And also every other congregation that is meeting in a like manner. We pray your hand of blessing upon the ministry of your word. Wherever it goes out.

That it would go out with sincerity and with power. That it would penetrate hearts. So that men and women, boys and girls. Would be fed and nourished in their souls. That they would be drawn even from darkness.

Into your own most marvelous light. And so be with us now we pray. Forgive us for all our many sins. And all we ask, we ask in Jesus name. Amen.

Well we're going to continue singing to God's praise. This time from Psalm 106. Psalm 106 in the Scottish Psalter. This is on page 378.

Psalm 106. We can pick up a reading from verse 4. Psalm 106 and verse 4. Remember me Lord with that love.

[ 13 : 38 ] Which thou to thine dost bear. With thy salvation, O my God. To visit me draw near. That I thy chosen good may see.

And in their joy rejoice. And may with thine inheritance triumph with cheerful voice. Let's lift up our voices and praise. Let's lift up our voices and praise from Psalm 106.

Verse 4. Standing to sing. Remember me Lord with that love. Remember me Lord with that love.

For the love of that love. Which thou to light us bear. With thy salvation, O my God. To visit me draw near. That I thy chosen to be. To be.

That I thy chosen to be. To be. For the love of that love. To be. To be. To be. To be. To be. To be.

Is it me, John, near That I, thy chosen to deceive And in their joy rejoice And here with thine inheritance Triumph with cheerful voice We with our fathers

[ 15 : 27 ] Say it, God Act of iniquity Too long we have the workers' feet We have done wickedly Thou wonders great wish That, O Lord, this work In each of our Our fathers All they saw yet well It did not understand

And may thy mercy Is not assured Yet not in memory But at the sea In mercy Provoked in grievously Never the rest He saved the dead Been for his own name's sake That so he might To be well Lord His mighty power May Well, friends, let us now turn To read the word of God together We're going to read from the Old Testament And from the book of Joshua Joshua chapter 4 We'll read the whole chapter together Let us hear the word of God When all the nation had finished Passing over the Jordan The Lord said to Joshua

Take twelve men from the people From each tribe a man And command them saying Take twelve stones from here Out of the midst of the Jordan From the very place Where the priest's feet stood firmly And bring them over with you And lay them down in the place Where you lodge tonight Then Joshua called the twelve men From the people of Israel Whom he had appointed A man from each tribe And Joshua said to them Pass on before the ark Of the Lord your God Into the midst of the Jordan And take up each of you A stone upon his shoulder According to the number of tribes Of the people of Israel That this may be a sign Among you When your children ask In time to come What do these stones Mean to you Then you shall tell them That the waters of the Jordan Were cut off Before the ark of the covenant

Of the Lord When it passed over the Jordan The waters of the Jordan Were cut off So these stones Shall be to the people of Israel A memorial forever And the people of Israel Did just as Joshua commanded And took up twelve stones Out of the midst of the Jordan According to the number Of the tribes Of the people of Israel Just as the Lord Told Joshua And they carried them Over with them To the place Where they lodged And laid them down there And Joshua set up Twelve stones In the midst of the Jordan In the place Where the feet Of the priests Bading the ark Of the covenant Had stood And there they are To this day For the priests Bading the ark Stood in the midst Of the Jordan Until everything Was finished That the Lord Commanded Joshua To tell the people According to all That Moses Had commanded Joshua The people

[ 20 : 39 ] Passed over in haste And when all the people Had finished passing over The ark of the Lord And the priests Passed over Before the people The sons of Reuben And the sons of Gad And half the tribe Of Manasseh Passed over Armed before the people Of Israel As Moses had told them About forty thousand Ready for war Passed over Before the Lord For battle To the plains Of Jericho On that day The Lord exalted Joshua In the sight Of all Israel And they stood In awe of him Just as they had Stood in awe of Moses All the days Of his life And the Lord Said to Joshua Command the priests Bearing the ark Of the testimony To come up Out of the Jordan So Joshua Commanded the priests Come up Out of the Jordan And when the priests Bearing the ark Of the covenant Of the Lord Came up from the midst Of the Jordan And the souls Of the priests Were lifted up On dry ground

The waters of the Jordan Returned to their place And overflowed All its banks As before The people came up Out of the Jordan On the tenth day Of the first month And they encamped At Gilgal On the east border Of Jericho And those twelve stones Which they took Out of the Jordan Joshua set up At Gilgal And he said To the people Of Israel When your children Ask their fathers In time to come What do these stones mean?

Then you shall let Your children know Israel passed over This Jordan On dry ground For the Lord Your God Dried up The waters Of the Jordan For you Until you passed over As the Lord Your God Did to the Red Sea Which he dried up For us Until we passed over So that all The peoples Of the earth May know That the hand Of the Lord Is mighty And that you May fear the Lord Your God Forever Amen And we pray God's blessing On that reading Of his own Holy word Let's once again Sing praise to God This time from Psalm 20 Psalm 20 Again in the Scottish Psalter We're going to Read from verse 5 This is on page 224 Psalm 20 And verse 5 In thy salvation We will joy In our God's name We will Display our banners And the Lord Thy prayers All fulfill Now know I God His King Doth save He from his Holy heaven Will hear him With the saving Strength By his Own right Hand Given We'll sing down To the end of the verse To the end of the psalm Rather To the praise of God Standing to sing In thy salvation We will joy In thy salvation We will joy In our God's name We will Tis■

Now know I magazines O my God, his gift has saved him from his holy hand.

[ 24 : 41 ] We'll hear him with the saving strength, by his own right and clear.

In chariots sounded, all fiddeth, some horses passed upon.

The dear remember, well, the name of our Lord God alone.

We rise and up, but stand where they are, how it come and fall.

Deliver, Lord, and let the king pass here when we do call.

[ 26 : 20 ] Well, friends, just for a short time this evening, if we could turn back to Joshua chapter 4.

Joshua chapter 4, and we can read again from verse 19. The people came up out of the Jordan on the tenth day of the first month, and they encamped at Gilgal on the east border of Jericho.

And those twelve stones which they took out of the Jordan, Joshua set up at Gilgal. And he said to the people of Israel, When your children ask their fathers in times to come, what do these stones mean?

Then you shall let your children know. Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over.

So that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the Lord is mighty, that you may fear the Lord your God forever.

[ 27 : 45 ] I wonder, friends, if there's anyone here tonight who would say that they have an especially bad memory. They find it difficult to remember things.

I know myself. I find it difficult at times to remember dates. And I need to be reminded. And of course, I suppose it's a case for all of us in many ways.

Our lives are governed by diaries and by schedules. We're apt to forget. That is the nature of who we are.

We have short memories. There are few people, of course, who are gifted with good memories.

Those who remember every last detail of every last situation.

Those who remember every last date that's on their calendar in the year that's ahead of them. But generally speaking, we have poor memories. We are apt to forget.

[ 28 : 46 ] And friends, as we gather here this Friday evening, we praise the Lord. We praise the Lord because he is a God of mercy and of grace and of love.

He is a God who meets us at our very point of need. He knows who we are and what we're like. He knows our infirmities. He knows our struggles.

He knows our challenges. He knows our trials. He knows our tribulations. Whatever you're going through tonight, perhaps no one else in here knows, but he knows.

And the wonder of who our God is, is this. That he accommodates us. He accommodates us at our point of need. I said that in prayer.

A God who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable. A God who inhabits eternity and yet he reveals himself to us through words. He doesn't need to do this.

[ 29 : 44 ] But he does. He accommodates our limitations. And in terms of our memory, he does the same. That's why we're here tonight.

And we see that, do we not, throughout Scripture. That because we as human beings, due to our sinful fallen nature, we are those who forget time and time again.

He is a God who meets us at our point of need and who prompts us to remember. You remember in Exodus 12, what do we see there?

Well, we see that after God has saved his people, he does what? Well, he passes over the houses, does he not? And he puts blood on the lintels of those who he's going to save.

He saves his people. And of course, in response to saving his people, he knows that his people will forget. So what does he do?

[ 30 : 42 ] He institutes the Passover, this time where they would gather together and they would remember as a people that great deliverance from God to safety.

Of course, that's what we see here tonight. Not only in the chapter that we read, but also in our own experience.

Because as we reflect upon how the Lord deals with us, we see that he's continuing to prompt us to remember. Take, for example, the Lord's Day.

Today, we are a people who are so busy in life. We have so much consuming our time and our energy. But yet the Lord, in his love and in his mercy, he gives us this one day that we can set aside things that so take up our time.

And we can focus on gathering with his people and worshipping his name. Why? Because we forget. I spoke to some in lockdown.

[ 31 : 44 ] Perhaps you yourself would be able to testify to this as well. That during lockdown, when we didn't have that routine of gathering together as God's people, before we knew it, yes, we would watch sermons online.

But before we knew it, the Lord's Day began to become just like any other day. And we could see, if we're being honest, and good Christian people have confessed to this, being honest, that yes, we found ourselves as a people, once we had got our services out of the way, doing what we wanted with the rest of the day.

That's the way we are by nature. Left to ourselves, we forget. And so that's why the Lord gives us this Lord's Day, not as a bind, but as a blessing.

A blessing to remind us. To remind us of what? To remind us of that great resurrection power. So that we can gather together as his people, and that we can celebrate, because that's what it is, a celebration.

We can celebrate that victory that is ours in him, that he is not dead, he is risen. That's what the Lord's Day is.

[ 33 : 03 ] It's for our good. And we come to a passage here tonight in Joshua 4, and we see that the Lord is reminding the people for their good.

The context of this chapter is, of course, the exodus of the children of Israel. They are making their way to the promised land. They've had the Jordan parted for them, and they've had the path made clear, so that after decades of wandering in the wilderness, finally, eventually, they make their way to Canaan's shore.

That land that God had promised long since would be a land that is flowing with milk, milk, and honey. You know the story.

I don't need to go into it in detail. We don't have time to go into that side of the story in detail. But we know that they were a people who were making no progress.

They had been offered this freedom that God had given to them to lay hold of by faith, and yet time and time again, they thought they were better off where they were.

[ 34 : 11 ] Sounds familiar. Maybe you're like that here tonight. Maybe you're not a Christian. And you're here tonight, and you know of the gospel message.

You know of the freedom that's offered in the pages of Scripture, Lord's Day after Lord's Day in your head, but not in your heart.

And perhaps you refuse to acknowledge it in your heart because you're scared. And because you're scared, you're happy to settle for the status quo.

As it were, as I once was myself and every one of the Lord's people here, going round and round in circles, perhaps even for decades in this wilderness, when all along there is something so much better on offer.

That land that is flowing with milk and honey. That place where there is freedom and joy and liberty. That place where you can say, as I said in prayer, I am in Christ.

[ 35 : 15 ] And what a place that is to be in our souls. And so they make their way through the Jordan. We know the narrative.

We know the story. But that's not the end of the story. That's not the end of the Jordan narrative. Because as the Israelites find themselves safe on the other side, before they can move on to the next part of their journey, the next chapter in their experience to go on and to conquer the land, they're stopped.

They're asked to pause. To reflect. And in this reflection, essentially what they're being asked to do is to ensure that they don't forget what the Lord has just done for them.

And of course, looking at what the Lord has just done for them, he's parted the seas. So that the sea was, as it were, a wall on either side of them. This miraculous phenomena took place before their very eyes.

This wasn't something that they would have been seeing every day. This was something, a sight to behold even for themselves. And so we might say, well, of course they won't forget. How could they ever forget what the Lord has just done for them?

[ 36 : 33 ] This will be etched upon their minds for as long as they live. But of course they would forget. If not reminded, they were fallen human beings, apt to forget like you and like me.

And so what does the Lord do? Well, he accommodates again in his mercy and in his love. He accommodates their weakness. How? Well, let's look together at verses 1 to 3.

When all the nation had finished passing over the Jordan, the Lord said to Joshua, take 12 men from the people, from each tribe a man, and command them, saying, take 12 stones from here, out of the midst of the Jordan, from the very place where the priest's feet stood firmly, and bring them over with you, and lay them down in the place where you lodge tonight.

So basically what they were to do was this, that one of each of the tribes of Israel, one man from the tribes of Israel, this was, of course, representing God's people as a whole.

We see the collective of God's people coming together, of course, we know that two and a half of the tribes had gone on before previously to make their home in the promised land.

[ 38 : 00 ] They had pledged to come back and to help their brethren in the Lord when the time would come, and of course that time has come, and so they all joined together to send out one man to the riverbed and to take a stone on their shoulder.

Now we can see that this was a large stone. It wasn't a small stone. It was one that would have to go on their shoulder, a large stone. And so 12 large stones made their way from the riverbed up to the riverbank.

That's where they were to stay the night, in Gilgal. And what they were to do with these stones was to build a monument. We don't know what this monument would have looked like.

In my own mind, I have a picture of what we would call a cairn. You see them on our island. I know in Ness, in Skigersta, there are two cairns out at a place called the Ka.

They're built up with stones. They're a monument of something, of what I'm not quite sure, but of something. There's another monument further out called the Karnangyal.

[ 39 : 10 ] This is a cairn that's speaking of a geologist who, in years gone by, worked in that part of Ness. There's a war memorial in Stornoway, a far more conspicuous monument, a cairn, one that testifies to the men who died in the war.

There are cairns, there are monuments all around us. And so that's what they're asked to do, to build a monument, to build a cairn.

But as we look at verse 9, friends, we might begin to get a little bit confused. Because there we read this, and Joshua set up twelve stones in the midst of the Jordan, in the place where the feet of the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant had stood.

And there they are to this day. So is there one monument? Or is there two? Is there one on the banks of the Jordan and one in the middle of the Jordan?

This raises the question. And of course, commentators differ on this. Even commentators of the same Reformed tradition will differ on their opinion as to whether there are two monuments or one monument.

[ 40 : 28 ] Some who say that there's just one monument would say that when this is speaking of the twelve stones set in the midst of the Jordan, that the Hebrew would allude to a translation that says that Joshua had set up the stones that had been in the midst of the Jordan.

So that he had taken up the stones that had been in the midst of the Jordan. And as we read the passage as a whole, and as we read the comments on the Cairn and Gilgal, I think myself that this is most likely.

When we think logically about there being a monument, a Cairn in the middle of the River Jordan, we would see that this poses its own difficulties if we look at verse 18.

And when the priests bearing the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord came up from the midst of the Jordan, and the souls of the priests were lifted on dry ground, the waters of the Jordan returned to their place and overflowed all of its banks as before.

The waters returned. So that the valley of the Jordan River, which went from 15 to 60 meters, it was now full of water.

[ 41 : 45 ] So that any stones, any Cairns that had been built in the middle of it would either not be able to be seen, which would defeat the whole purpose of them, or would more likely be washed away.

But either way, whether there's one or there's two, what we know is this, that this monument was set there as a reminder. That was its purpose, to be a reminder.

But who was it to remind? And what was it to remind them of? Well, there are two or three things for us to consider. We read in verse 6 that they were to make this a sign among you, so that when your children ask in time to come, what do these stones mean?

What do these stones mean to you? Then you shall tell them. Then you shall tell them. And these stones were there to provoke conversation, to stimulate discussion, just as any Cairns or monument does today.

It was to be a talking point. What do these stones mean? Verse 21. And he said to the people of Israel, when your children ask their fathers in times to come, what do these stones mean?

[ 43 : 11 ] Then you shall let your children know. Israel passed over this Jordan on dry ground. For the Lord your God dried up the waters of the Jordan for you until you passed over, as the Lord your God did to the Red Sea, which he dried up for us until we passed over.

Can you see, friends, the purpose of this monument? That this monument would be a talking point, not only for the children of Israel.

This is a small detail, but it's a significant detail. And that's the wonder of Scripture. The Lord includes these small details, these small accommodations for our weaknesses so that we don't forget.

And that's exactly what this monument would do. It would go on to act as a reminder to the generations to come, what the Lord had done.

People would say, well, what does this mean? What do these stones mean? And those who would have heard it told to them by their fathers, who had been told by their fathers, would say, well, these stones tell a story.

[ 44 : 28 ] They tell a story of the wonder and the power of the God of Israel who delivered his people. Do you know that God?

Do you know that God? Get to know that God. He's a great God who can do wonders for you. And so conversations would be stimulated for years to come.

These are stones that speak. And of course, as the Israelites themselves went on to conquer the land of Canaan, they would be overwhelmed, no doubt, as they were faced with the magnitude of what lay ahead of them, the paralyzing fear of the daunting task that was before them to conquer the enemy.

They would forget. Quite quickly, they would forget. How often do you and I forget? We're faced with something that's difficult.

We're faced with something, if we're being honest in our mind's eye, we say it's too difficult, even for God. And we forget. In that blur of anxiety and of fear, we forget.

[ 45 : 47 ] We forget that this is the self-same God who has delivered us in times past. This is the self-same God who seeks to lead us to that place of safety and of refuge, but still we forget.

We need reminded. We need reminded. And so for us here tonight, friends, these stones speak.

They speak to us. They speak to you and to me. And what do they say? Well, they say plenty.

Because if you're here tonight and you're a Christian, the reality is that you too have a memorial in your life, your own personal memorial.

You have that marker that you can go back to in your mind's eye, that point in time. It might be a specific hour, day, week, month, year, couple of years, whatever it is.

You have a time in your mind's eye, a period whereby you know that the Lord did something miraculous in your life. Perhaps you can't remember a time in your life when you weren't the Lord's.

[ 47 : 08 ] That's also the case for some. Some are converted so young that they cannot recollect this time, but still you know the Lord has done something miraculous in your life.

He didn't part the Jordan, but what he did was this. He parted your heart. He opened your heart so that you could receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and your Savior.

So much more miraculous than anything we read here before us. And when we're first converted, when we have our hearts opened in such a way, is it not true, friends?

We're so full. We're so full of zeal and vigor and wonder and awe as we look back upon what Jesus has just done in our lives. Just as the children of Israel were here as they reflected at Gilgal on what the Lord had just done, they couldn't believe it and so it is with us.

When we see lambs, as it were, coming, we pray for more. We can almost see it in their face. face. This brightness, this vigor, this zeal, that something wonderful has taken place in their lives.

[ 48 : 22 ] and we think that will never end. That we'll always be on that mountaintop. And how disappointed we are when we come crashing down to earth with a bang.

And so we do. And so we do. And as we're left, as it were, to, not left, but as we're called to go on and to live that life of faith, it can be difficult.

So much so that we lose sight of what the Lord's done in our life at the beginning. We forget the wonder of that grace and mercy and love that has drawn us to Him in the first place.

So that our hearts grow cold. Or so that we're so busy even with the church but we forget the Savior, the Lord, the King of the church.

The main thing doesn't become the main thing. He becomes secondary in all that we do. And so we need reminded.

[ 49 : 30 ] Allow me to ask you, what does Jesus mean to you tonight? And I ask myself the same question. And we know the textbook answer what we should say but really in working terms, what does Jesus mean to you tonight?

In your life on this Friday evening in August, if you were to honestly answer, what does Jesus mean to you tonight? How would you articulate that?

How would I articulate that? It's a challenge. It's a question that searches us because we can tell what many different things mean to us tonight.

We can even tell what church means to us tonight. But what does Jesus mean to you tonight? We forget.

We forget the wonder of who He is and what He's done and what He will do. we lose sight of our identity as being in Him and in none other.

[ 50 : 40 ] We get bogged down and held back. We forget. But tonight, friends, we have good news. And the good news is this, that He accommodates us.

It's not to justify our neglect of our Lord and Savior or far from it, but still, the Lord accommodates us. He's so different to us. When people forget us or neglect us, what do we do?

We turn our back on them. We let them know in no uncertain terms that we're not happy, we're not pleased, not the Lord. He accommodates us, He meets us at our point of need.

How? By giving to His bride that memorial to return to time and time again. What is it?

It is, of course, the Lord's Supper. What do we read in Luke 22, 19? And He took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to them, saying, This is my body which is given for you.

[ 51 : 52 ] We read these words so often and, of course, when we read words, often familiarity can lead us to lose sight of the depth of their meaning. This is my body which is given for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. And likewise, the cup after they had eaten, saying, This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this in remembrance of me. What we have here, friends, is a crucial marker for God's people, a time when we can refocus on our Savior and His loving kindness and delivering us out of the bondage and the tyranny of that wilderness that we found ourselves in.

It's so easy to forget. It's so easy, even as the Lord's people, to become high and lofty and to start looking down on those who are not saved and tutting at their behavior as if we ourselves were never there.

We forget that He took us from the mighty clay, from the fearful pit. We didn't take ourselves, He took us. And so we need to be brought back down to earth.

[ 53 : 07 ] We need to be brought back to that place where we remember. A reminder of that miracle, not the parting of the Jordan, but the miracle of grace that has taken place in our lives.

That's what you hope to do here this Lord's Day. And in this reminder, there is strengthening. Because it's important to remember that the Lord's Supper isn't just a bare memorial service. That's not what it is. We're not coming to just remember. It's so much more than that. The eating and drinking in the Lord's Supper, it shows forth what they used to call that that mystical union between Christ and His people, which essentially refers to that intimate, that spiritual union between Christ and you if you are His.

What the Apostle Paul calls communing or fellowshiping in the body and in the blood of Jesus Christ. Isn't that wonderful?

That He's given us that. Do we deserve it? No. Are we worthy of it? Certainly not. But yet He gives us that time where we can be reminded that we are in Christ.

[ 54 : 30 ] This is not a bare memorial or an act of remembrance. And so never ever treat the Lord's Supper as such. Come with that sense of expectation and praise and worship.

that almost sense of victory within your heart. He is not here for He has risen.

And that's why it's so important for us to avail ourselves of such a blessing. God has given it to us for our good.

Now I didn't say God has given it to us because we are good. That's sometimes what we can think. Maybe you think that tonight you haven't professed the Lord as your Savior and you are His.

You have a relationship with Him and you have done for years. But you say I am not good enough and neither you are and neither you will be. That is a complete and I say this with all love and due respect that is a complete and utter misunderstanding of the whole gospel of Jesus Christ and not only that but it undermines it.

[ 55 : 44 ] Because with that approach you are saying that there could be a time that you are good enough. It will never come. That's the whole point. He is good enough.

And that's what ought to draw us all the more that we take our eyes off ourselves. Yes we examine ourselves but we take our eyes off ourselves and we look to Him and we say Hallelujah what a Savior.

What a Savior. And so if you haven't come forward to the Lord's table what's stopping you? If you're His we know that this is the table of the Lord for His people.

It's a strengthening ordinance. What is it that's stopping you? You can't say that you're not good enough or you can say that but you're never going to get over that hurdle.

But what about Christ? What think ye of Christ? You answer that and allow your answer to that question to inform the reason why you are or are not at the Lord's table.

[ 56 : 57 ] You're denying yourself a blessing. But more than that this is important. You're denying others your witness.

Remember this memorial was to serve as a witness to the children of the people. As many of you know I grew up in this very congregation and I would sit up in that seat that has the ladder in it in the back there and the Lord's Supper would be dispensed here on a Lord's Day morning and I would peer over and I would ask questions what's happening?

Why are they doing what they're doing? And I would see people partaking some of whom are here tonight some are long gone and I would look upon them and they would speak not as stones but as living stones those who join together to build the house of God that's what the house of God is not this building but his people joining together I would ask what are they doing?

What does this mean? if you are not coming to the Lord's table and you are his and again I say this in love what you're doing is this you're marrying your witness your friends your loved ones your children your grandchildren your husband your wife your mother your father they're seeing you holding back year after year after year refusing to identify with the people of God and not only that and this is a real challenge to us you're marrying your witness to the community at large what do I mean?

well let's come back to our text and with this I'm nearly finished because as well as reminding the Israelites and their children that this simple monument this simple monument was to remind all people the pagans the godly the ungodly all that were living in the vicinity all who were worshipping false gods they were they were this monument would serve as a reminder of what the God of Israel had done and was doing verse 24 so that all the peoples of the earth may know that the hand of the

