

Going Out To Jesus

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[0 : 00] We're singing, first of all, to God's praise in Psalm 84. Psalm 84, that's on page 112. And we're singing verses 1 to 7.

How delightful are your dwellings, O Almighty Lord, to me! For your courts my soul is yearning, in your house I long to be. Heart and flesh cry out aloud, for the true and living God. Even sparrows find their dwelling, and the swallow builds a nest. Near your altar, Lord Almighty, where her offspring may have rest. Blessed whose home is your abode, they are ever praising God. These verses to the end of verse 7. How delightful are your dwellings. How delightful are your dwellings, O Almighty Lord, to me!

For your courts my soul is yearning, in your house I long to be.

[1 : 23] Heart and flesh cry out aloud, for the true and living God.

Even sparrows find their dwelling, and the swallow builds a nest.

Near your altar, Lord Almighty, where her offspring may have rest.

Blessed whose home is pure abode, they are ever praising God.

Blessed are those whose strength is in you, those who have a pilgrim's mind.

[2 : 36] Whoo, spreading whose full Catalonia and Wed Polize ■ sully and red hair, they Ephesim, precis■, colonoscow, ies, axing in you, blessed Michaela!

Where they He Kristolad! Hä■us Gabriel 161 Hope your children harem■■■■■

Vouismas■■■■■■■■■ Let's join together now in prayer. Let's call upon the Lord in prayer.

Lord God, Almighty our Father in heaven, we come to address you tonight as our God, as we always do when we come to worship you. For we acknowledge that you are our God, and we give thanks that you take us as your people in covenant with you.

We bless you tonight for this renewed opportunity we have to gather together in praise and worship, to call upon your name and to come to hear your word. And we thank you, Lord, for all that you mean to us as we prepare once again to remember the Lord's death in the Lord's Supper. We give thanks for your wisdom and kindness in providing us with such a means of grace, a means and an ordinance that accompanies the regular preaching of your word. And it sets forth the beauty and the sufficiency, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ. And we ask, Lord, that as we prepare for it and as we anticipate tomorrow coming to sit at the Lord's table again, may we find, Lord, the preciousness of the Lord and of his death made clear to us once again and made indeed increase in our estimation.

We ask, O Lord, that we will know of you meeting with us, of the calling of your Holy Spirit upon us to draw us to yourself. And we ask that each one who comes and intends to come to the table will come, Lord, not trusting in themselves or fearful because they find themselves unworthy.

[4 : 52] Help us to come trusting in you as our foundation. Help us to come believing in the worthiness of the Lord and that it is our responsibility and privilege to show that we accept that worthiness by coming to do as he requires. We thank you, Lord, today for all the blessings that we receive from you.

And we ask that you would help us as we confess our inability to number them. Help us, Lord, to therefore conclude that it shows your worthiness to be praised. So bless us here, we pray tonight, and bless us as a congregation at this juncture once again. And we thank you, Lord, that we can look back upon many times of blessing in the past, that we can recollect the ways in which you have blessed us and kept us and helped us hitherto. And we pray that we may draw strength from this renewed occasion, and especially from the Lord's Supper itself again. And enable us, Lord, to be encouraged and encourage us one of another as we come together. We thank you that your people form a spiritual family that you have called together, that you feed as they come together to worship

under the Word and as they come to sit at your table. O Lord, our God, we pray that you would dispense to us the blessings that have accrued through the death of Christ. And we pray as we come to remember him in his death, that we may, Lord, truly meet him in the power of his risen life, that through your Holy Spirit,

O Lord, you would draw near to us and show to us once again our great need of all that is set out on the table representing the Lord in his death. Lord, we pray that you would encourage us and enable us to help one another as we come on this pilgrimage that we've been singing about, a pilgrimage that goes on until we come to the heavenly Zion, until we come to appear before God. And we pray that our time in this world may be a time when we'll use all the means you have given us, O Lord, to progress in that way, to find strength for the journey, to cope with all the difficulties and overcome them as we come with our desire tonight, Lord, that as we lay our concerns before you, so you'd assure us that you are able to meet us and meet all our needs. Bless, we pray, any whose thoughts tonight are on coming to the Lord's table tomorrow for the first time. We give thanks that there are such among us, Lord. We pray that you would encourage them. We pray that they may find, even through this time of worship this evening, further confirmation to the comfort of their hearts. We ask, O Lord, that you would speak to them and draw them.

And we pray that we may rejoice in seeing others joining the number of your openly professing people. And we pray, O Lord, that this may be an occasion when we will have such rejoicing, when we will be able to say that the Lord is indeed at work among us. We ask for your blessing to be with those tonight who have challenges and difficulties in their lives that they may feel they cannot share with others and come to open their hearts to others. We pray that you would bless them and pray that you would draw near to them to encourage them, O Lord. We pray that you'd bless those who mourn the passing of loved ones. We ask, Lord, that you would draw near to them, those who have come in this past week to lay to rest the remains of loved ones. We ask, Gracious One, that you would bless them and comfort them and show to them your ways and give to them what we are unable to give ourselves, that comfort and consolation that derives from the energy of your Spirit, from the work of grace in their hearts. We pray, too, for those who are ill. We pray for those who are seriously ill tonight, those who are laid aside and appear to be approaching the end stage of life in this world. Gracious Lord, bless them, we pray, with the grace required, that we all require to take that great step out of time and into eternity, out of this world and into that world to come, out of this world where we know you but faintly compared to being in your presence in eternity.

[9 : 32] O Lord, our God, we pray that even as we come to remember them before you, you would help us to consider ourselves, too, so that we may realize that our days, too, are fast hastening on.

We thank you that you have given us such means as the Gospel and the Lord's Supper, so that we may be strengthened and may be prepared by your Holy Spirit's ministry for that time for ourselves when it comes also. Bless, we pray, all who are preparing for worship tomorrow in the various congregations in our presbytery and throughout the church, throughout the world. Indeed, O Lord, we pray that your Holy Spirit may be active on the Lord's day and may draw many to yourself. We pray that many will come to regard this coming Lord's day as a day of liberty, a day of deliverance, and a day of being ushered into the freedom with which Christ makes us free and brought to those wonderful places where the Lord Himself presides and feeds His people.

So, we ask that you would continue to bless us as a congregation, bless our young people once again as we pray for them, for our children, for our young ones, for our young adults. Remember them, we pray, as they witness the table of the Lord and all that is said in regard to it and all that is done laid on their young hearts, we pray. Give them even through witnessing such things for themselves that they may come to have that desire in their own hearts, that they too will join the number of your people, that they will turn their back to living for this world and will come to look forward to being servants of Jesus Christ. Remember, we pray each and all who at this time, Lord, are preparing for also to preach your word. We ask that you'd bless them here in our own midst, be with Scott at this time and be with all others, Lord, like him who are preparing and training for gospel ministry.

We ask that you would continue to provide for them and to encourage them each and every day. And so, go before us now, we pray, O Lord. Hear us in this our prayer and continue to bless us through this service for Jesus' sake. Amen.

We'll sing once again to God's praise, Psalm 63 this time. Psalm number 63, that's again in Psalm 63. O God, you are my God alone. I seek your face with eagerness. My soul and body thirst for you

in this dry, weary wilderness. I've seen you in your holy place. Your power and glory held my gaze.
[12:31] Far better is your love than life, and so my lips will sing your praise. Psalm 63, the verses 1 to 8. Again, we stand if you can to sing.

O God, you are my God alone. I seek your face with eagerness.
My soul and body thirst for you in this dry, weary wilderness. I've seen you in your holy place.
Your power and glory held my gaze. Far better is your love than life, and so my lips will sing your praise.

I'll bless you, Lord, throughout my life. And raise my hand to you in prayer.
[14:15] My joyful lips will sing your praise. My soul is fed with riches fair.

Upon my bed, I lie awake. And in my thoughts remember you.
I meditate throughout the night. And keep your constant love in you.
Because you are my help alone. In shadow of your wings I'll sing.
You hold me up with your right hand. Do you, O God, my soul will cling.
[15:44] Let's read God's Word together now from the Epistle to the Hebrews. And chapter 13, the last chapter of that letter to the Hebrews.

So that's Hebrews chapter 13.

Let brotherly love continue.

Keep your life free from love of money.

Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings. For it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods which have not benefited those devoted to them.

[17:20] We have an altar from which those who serve the tent have no right to eat. For the bodies of those animals whose blood is brought into the holy places by the high priest as a sacrifice for sin are burned outside the camp.

So Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people through his own blood. Therefore let us go out to him outside the camp and bear the reproach he endured.

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God.

That is the fruit of our lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you.

[18:28] Pray for us, for we are sure that we have a clear conscience desiring to act honorably in all things. I urge you the more earnestly to do this, in order that I may be restored to you the sooner.

Now may the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, equip you with everything good, that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

I appeal to you, brothers, bear with my word of exhortation, for I have written to you briefly. You should know that our brother Timothy has been released, with whom I shall see you if he comes soon.

Greet all your leaders and all the saints. Those who come from Italy send you greetings. Grace be with all of you. And again we pray for God to bless to us this reading of his word.

And before we turn to a few verses from this passage, let's sing again to his praise. This time we're singing in the Scottish Psalter, on page 382.

[19:44] That's Psalm 107. We'll sing verses 1 to 8. Praise God for he is good, for still his mercies lasting be.

Let God's redeemed say so, whom he from the enemy's hand did free, and gathered them out of the lands from north, south, east, and west. They strayed in deserts pathless way, no city found to rest.

And so on through to the end of verse 8. Psalm 107. Praise God for he is good. Praise God for he is good.

For still his mercies lasting be. Let God's redeemed say so, whom he from the enemy's hand did free, And gather them out of the lands from north, south, east, and west.

They strayed in deserts pathless way, no city found to rest.

[21 : 20] For thirst and hunger in them face, their soul when slates them pressed.

They cry unto the Lord, and he them frees from their distress.

Them also in our way to walk, that brightest he did guide, That they might to a city go, wherein they might abide.

So that men to the Lord would give grace for his goodness then, And for his works of wonder done, and to the sons of men.

Let's turn down this evening to a verse or two we find in Hebrews 13. We're going to look at verses 13 and 14.

[23 : 03] We can read at verse 12. Well, these verses on the immediate context there, as you can see, Recreate for us a very important scene in the New Testament.

That, of course, being the scene at Calvary, the scene of the crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ. And it is something, as these previous verses show, that fits in and indeed fulfills what the Old Testament ritual showed, When the bodies of these animals that were devoted to God, Those that were brought into the blood, brought into the holy places by the high priest, The bodies are burned outside the camp.

That's something that goes back to the Acts of Exodus 29, verse 14, Where the Lord gave instruction that that was to be the ritual. The bodies were to be burned outside of the camp, because they were regarded as unclean.

The blood was used in the ritual of blood shedding and sprinkling of blood and so on, Prefiguring the death of Christ. And that was done, as it says here, outside of the camp, outside the gate, it says there in verse 12, As far as Jesus once, as he fulfilled that Old Testament ritual.

So, Jesus also suffered outside the gate in order to sanctify the people. Therefore, let us go out to him outside the camp. So, he's using different words there, outside the gate, outside the walls of Jerusalem, Literally, as where the cross was situated, not inside, but outside the city, Which is really now taking us back, as it were, to the scene at that moment.

[25 : 09] Because the Word of God is what it is, a very reliable word to us, As it brings us and describes to us and recreates the scene to us, What it's really doing is taking you and I back, as if we were standing there And watching what was happening with the crucifixion of Christ.

It's just as real, it should be just as real to us, As if we had been standing there literally on the occasion it took place. And as it's placing us here at the scene, So, it's actually calling on us in a spiritual fashion To do what was done then by going out to the cross physically.

Those who were actually going to stand in the vicinity of the cross or nearby the cross. And spiritually, that is what it's calling on us to do, To actually come to associate with Jesus, Come to actually stand by the side of Jesus crucified, Come to actually show that this Jesus, this cross, this death, Is the death that is so vital and valuable to us, That we go and stand by it in terms of embracing it spiritually for ourselves.

And that's why the Hebrews are addressed here. The Hebrews were obviously facing some difficulties In following their faith in the Lord, Probably through the persecutions that they were suffering.

And it appears that some might have even had the idea That it might have been better going back to the Old Testament ways after all. And that it would be better to have something that you could see physically Rather than have the spiritual sight by faith of the cross and of Christ as a person.

[26 : 57] And the writer to the Hebrews is assuring them that that is not the case. That we have the advantage, that we have the benefit of looking back on this That has happened historically at Calvary.

And therefore we can come to that as the way in which God has revealed in Jesus His love for His people by giving Him to the death that He died on the cross.

And that's really what we're anticipating, of course, remembering tomorrow at the Lord's Supper. So that there's a real way in which, a very real way in which spiritually the Lord's Supper too Is actually itself as it sets out for you there, the bread and the wine that's used in the Lord's Supper.

In a sense that too is taking you back to Calvary. Taking you back to what you find even in these verses in Hebrews 13. And it's placing you there so that you're saying, Well, I see this in front of me in the Lord's Supper.

I know what it represents. And it's so precious to me. And as I do this, and as I reach out and take the bread, And as I reach out and use the wine and take the wine, Well, I am associating with this

Christ.

[28 : 06] I'm identifying with this Jesus. I am saying about these elements and what they represent, Especially in the death of my Lord. That is where I'm taking my stand. That's where I want to be found.

And that's where I want to be seen as one of His people. So, there are two things, briefly, I want to just take from the passage tonight. First of all, there's an emphasis on leaving the city, Which would be Jerusalem, literally.

Leaving the city to go out to Jesus. And secondly, looking forward to the city where Jesus now is. We have here no continuing city, But we are seeking the city that is to come.

The one that is to come in heaven. So, in a sense, it's a tale of two cities. The city of Jerusalem, which represents, really, All that's associated with rejecting Christ.

With putting Him outside. With not wanting to be associated with Him. And spiritually, you can relate to that, Because, in a sense, that's what this world is. That's what the world in which we live is.

[29 : 12] That's what worldliness itself is. That's what our natural condition and our fallenness and sinfulness wants to do with Christ. And what it's saying here to the Hebrews is, Well, you've got to leave everything that's associated with opposition to Jesus, With enmity against Jesus, With rejection of Jesus.

You've got to walk away from that. And you've got to go to Himself. And you've got to take and embrace His death as the basis of your new life. And as I say, that's what, in a sense, is actually done in the Lord's Supper.

Every time we have the Lord's Supper and we partake of it, We're reenacting, if you like, that walk out to Jesus And taking all that it means to us in His death, All that He means to us to ourselves, yet again.

Now, you notice here, Therefore, in verse 13, Let us go out to Him. And therefore, there ties up the previous verses for us. This is the conclusion, having stated what He said there in the previous verses.

Therefore, seeing this as the case, Let us go to Him outside of the camp and bear the reproach He endured. And as I said, Jesus was placed outside.

[30 : 28] And that itself is symbolic. Because it's really as someone rejected by the authorities of the time, literally, Rejected as a possible Savior or Messiah.

He is placed outside. They don't want Him. That's not... He doesn't fit with their expectations. He doesn't actually measure up to what they regard or think a Messiah should be. He has come.

They've heard Him. They've seen His miracles. They've done all... They've had all of that in terms of their advantage and their privilege. And still, by and large, most of them say, No, He's not for us. We don't have any king but Caesar.

That's what you find written in the gospel records, of course. But when we think about Jesus being placed outside, and the cross being placed outside, and the death of Jesus taking place there, that, of course, in the teaching of the Bible, is something that represents His being made a curse by God Himself.

Everything that was associated with being crucified was regarded as cursed. And in Paul's letter to the Galatians, you'll find that mentioned in chapter 3, that Jesus was made a curse for us.

[31 : 44] For it is said, it is written, Cursed is everyone who hangs upon a tree or is hanged on the cross. That's what that means. And so, when you think about Jesus outside the walls of Jerusalem, at a distance from Jerusalem, outside of the camp, outside of those that rejected Him, placed outside, primarily it's to be thought of as an act of God.

Because what happened was, of course, that God, having laid our sins upon Him, regarded Him in our place, as the one to bear the penalty of sin, the penalty that was due to sin.

And as we go, therefore, and remember where Jesus died, and what that represents, that it was outside, we'll see in a moment how that actually connects as well with His own words on the cross. My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why am I outside? Why am I actually out of your favor? Why have you rejected me?

Why have you forsaken me? And that itself is something you carry with you to the Lord's table, because the Lord's table, in a sense, as we said, is something of a reminder, or even a reenactment of this scene, as if you are physically going out to Him.

[33 : 13] Spiritually, that's what you're doing. When you come to take your place at the Lord's Supper, you're really saying, this is where I must be. This is where I want to be. This is what my remembrance of Him is about.

I remember Him, and I love Him as the crucified one, as if He were still hanging on the cross. You take your place at the side of the cross, in the vicinity of the cross, and you accept that as God's basis of new life of righteousness for you.

So, He's saying, let us go to Him. Let us go out to Him. Let's go to where He is. What you do, in other words, privately in your heart by faith, that's what you're doing when you embrace Jesus. This is the Jesus you're embracing. Not any modern versions of Christ where certain parts of the Bible are just excised or cut out that don't seem to fit the thoughts of today.

You take the Bible at face value. You take what it tells you about the Lord. You embrace the Lord as described in the Word of God, which you regard as reliable and accurate as to who He is and what He has done and why He has done it.

[34 : 24] And you say, that's the Lord that I need. That's the Savior I need. That's the Savior I embrace. That is the Savior I love to remember as to His death by doing it in the Lord's Supper.

And so you see, as you remember the Lord's death, you are remembering Him as He is represented and shown here, crucified for you, placed outside, made a curse, bearing the sin of His people, meeting the penalty that God must visit sin with.

Let us go out to Him. You've done that already. You've taken the biggest step already in going out to Him spiritually by accepting Him as He's offered in the Gospel.

And it's a natural progression of that step to actually come to the Lord's table and remember Him there. In a sense, that's part of the going out you've already done.

You've already come to stand by the cross, to accept, to embrace this Christ, to place your trust, your confidence, your faith in Him. And you're showing that now outwardly by coming once again to the Lord's table or by coming for the first time to the Lord's table, to the Lord's Supper.

[35 : 48] I remember Abraham in chapter 11 here of Hebrews. We find him described there in chapter 11, verses 8 to 10, as somebody who obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance.

And he went out not knowing where he was going. By faith he went to live in the land of promise as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise.

But you see, what he's saying is, by faith he obeyed when he was called to go out. There's a going out in association with trusting in Christ.

There's a going out from this world, a going out from the life that we had as we were born into this world, the life of the fallen sinner. We go out from that. We go out from the world, from the values of the world, from what the world sees as important.

And we walk out from that to the cross of Christ and embrace him and say, no, this is where I take my stand. This is my foundation. And this is where we find represented in the Lord's Supper that going out that's already taken place in your heart when you came to embrace the Lord, to stand by his side, to leave the city of this world, if you like, to go to him.

[37 : 13] And you see, it's also saying, bearing the reproach that he endured. The older translation has bearing his reproach. It comes to pretty much the same thing.

What is the reproach that he endured? Well, it's the stigma, it's the shame, it's all that's mentioned there at the beginning of chapter 12, for example, where in verse 3, you consider him who endured from sinners such hostility against himself so that you may not grow weary or faint-hearted.

It's all that's associated with the humiliation, the shame, the hostility of sinners against himself as it's mentioned there. That's what he experienced for you.

That's what he did for you. That's what he took to himself for you. And when you come and realize that going out to him is not going to be something different and kind from what he did for you because that reproach that he met with is the same in kind as his people meet with as they make it known that they've gone out from the world and come to the cross.

Bearing his reproach, being prepared willingly to come by associating with Christ, to be thought of by the world as no longer fit for purpose for their company.

[38 : 38] It's something that in being rejected by the world follows the pattern the Lord himself experienced in his own going out. And so he's saying bearing his reproach, the reproach he endured, the reproach the same in kind.

Just think of how willingly the Lord went out to the cross for you, for his people. Just think of how he committed himself wholeheartedly and fully and was not deflected, not even for a split second from going out to that cursed death of the cross.

Early on in his ministry, Satan had attempted every way he could and that's quite considerable. In that temptation that you find mentioned in the Gospels, Matthew 4, what was the devil's attempt? What was he trying to do? What was his aim? What was his purpose in that temptation of Jesus? Well, you can actually see it even from one of the three temptations that are mentioned when the devil said to him, all of these kingdoms, as he took him to see all the kingdoms of the world, all of these will I give you if you fall down and worship me.

What is that about? It's the devil saying to the Lord, look, you don't have to go through the cross, you don't have to go through the difficulties, you don't have to go through the trials that you're presently enduring.

[40 : 12] Here you are in the wilderness, you've been here such a long time, you're starving, you're hungry, you could easily turn these stones into bread, as he said in one of the other temptations. Why go on with that?

Why not just do what I say? Why not just do in obedience to me and I will give you everything you want? You see, there's the powers of evil ranged against the Son of God in our nature and in His life of obedience for His people.

These are the amazing, unfathomable challenges that He faced from the devil. None of us has been through such incredibly complex and deep temptation, but He dismissed him.

He was determined at every step that He would die the death He came into the world to accomplish. And so He's saying to you tonight, I have done all this for you, and now you're doing this for me.

You're doing this in response to my going out to the cross for you, crucified there for you, made a curse there for you, leaving the approval of the camp, leaving the approval of the city, and going out to the cross and to the curse and to the stigma and to the shame of the cross.

[41 : 38] Remember they said about Him when He was crucified, come down from the cross and we will believe you. You made yourself out to be someone, the Son of God. Now we'll believe you if you come down. And of course they didn't understand.

But you understand. You understand why He just couldn't come down from that cross, why He was committed to the death of the cross. It was so that you and I would be saved, would be redeemed, would be brought to have eternal life.

And now He's saying, let us go out to Him bearing the reproach He endured. After all, supposing we were to suffer all of our Christian lives, the kind of suffering that you find even in those who are solely persecuted in other parts of the world today above what we actually experience in whatever persecutions we have.

But supposing you had all of that persecution, it's a small cup in comparison. with what Jesus suffered.

And when we think of going to bear His reproach, bear the reproach He endured, that reproach that we experience will never measure up to the reproach that He experienced.

[43 : 01] because all of what He suffered, He suffered in all its intensity so that we would be delivered from the curse of God.

So let us go out to Him bearing His reproach. Again, if you cast your mind back to chapter 11 where it speaks to the same of Moses, Moses also by faith, when he was growing up in verse 24, He refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasure of sin.

And then look next what it says. He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than all the treasures of Egypt. for He was looking forward to the reward.

That's an amazing statement. Here was Moses brought up in Pharaoh's palace, brought up with access to all the riches of Egypt that would be given to him were he to remain there, were he to continue as the son of Pharaoh's daughter.

Instead, what did he do? He walked away from that. He went out from that. And he went out to align himself with the persecuted people of God in Egypt. But that's not the only thing.

[44 : 19] it says, though the language that's used there is most interesting and significant. He considered the reproach of Christ suffering for his God, he considered that greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt.

In other words, what's that saying to us is here is Moses saying about all these treasures of Egypt, yes, I can have that. I don't want them because suffering for God is of greater value.

And that's what it's like when you come out on the Lord's side. The Lord is convincing you and laying on your heart the same fact.

The sufferings that I endure and I may need to endure as a Christian, even if I don't know yet what they're about, they have a value which all the treasures of this world can never give you.

because they are sufferings for him. They are bearing his reproach. They are part and parcel of following Christ. And you might be saying tonight, well, I wish I could do that, but I would rather wait until my faith is somewhat stronger.

[45 : 33] I'm not sure I can just cope with that yet. Maybe here and that's what your thought is of going to the Lord's table and maybe even you're coming to the Lord's table having been there before and still lamenting your, what you see as your weak faith and you're saying you're tempted by the devil perhaps or your own mind is saying, well, maybe I shouldn't go this time the way I feel about myself.

Maybe I should just stay away this time. Well, listen to what Matthew Henry says in a wonderful book called *The Communicant's Companion*. You say your faith is weak, pious affections are cool and low, your resolutions unsteady, and therefore you keep away from this ordinance.

That is like a man should say he is sick, and therefore he'll take no medicine. He is empty, and therefore he'll take no food. He is faint, and therefore will take no cordials.

This ordinance was appointed chiefly for the relief of such as you are, for the strengthening of faith, for the inflaming of holy love, and the confirmation of good resolutions.

In God's name, therefore, use it for these purposes. Pine not away in your weakness while God has ordained strength for you.

[46 : 59] Die not for thirst while there is a well of water beside you. He meant by that the Lord's Supper. A well of water to refresh you.

A source of spiritual food to strengthen you. A means of comforting you so as to console your heart. Well, that's what Matthew Henry was saying going outside the camp to Him bearing His reproach.

All the sufferings, whatever they may be, small or great, are part of God's program of your sanctification, of your improvement, of your consolation, of your eternal happiness.

Let us, therefore, go out to Him outside the camp. And now, briefly, secondly, we find here looking forward to the city where Jesus now is.

For here we have no lasting city, but we seek the city that is to come. And if you think of that literally, in those days, the writer was talking there about the camp or the Jerusalem, the city of Jerusalem.

[48 : 10] He's saying, you can remain there, it's not going to last. And of course, Jerusalem was destroyed virtually by the Romans in 70 A.D. But when you come to apply this spiritually, what is it really saying to us spiritually?

It's saying, this world is not going to endure. Living for this world is going to be a disastrous decision on your part and a disastrous choice. So when you leave this world and you leave everything that's associated with rejection of Christ and you go out to Him and you come to the Lord's Supper as itself an extension, if you like, of that going out to Him, what you're saying is, well, I'm seeking the city that is to come.

I'm seeking the city of heaven. Not seeking in the way that you don't know much about it, but seeking it because God describes something of it for you in His own Word in the Scripture.

Because everything you have in the city of this world is fleeting, not only fleeting, but uncertain, uncertain to fall. It looks stable, but it's resting on the fault line of God's judgment and it's not going to last.

And that's why you've left that city. That's why you've gone out to the cross. Because you're convinced that to be in this world and to belong to this world spiritually, morally, is going to be caught up in the destruction, the terrible destruction of God's judgment.

[49 : 39] But to leave that city, to leave that condition, to leave that state, to go out to Jesus, to associate with the cross, to trust yourself to Him, to embrace that crucified Christ as crucified for you, that's to show that you are seeking the city that is to come.

And you want to express that on this occasion anew by going to take this communion yet again or for the first time. You're not saying of yourself, I'm worthy of this.

You're not saying of yourself that I can do this. I have the strength to do this myself. I can manage this on my own. It's just something I want to do. You're not saying that.

You're saying, He has done it for me. He's done everything I need to make me right with God. And it's the least I can do now to go to the table to show that my trust is in Him, that I'm looking forward to the city that has foundations as builder and maker is God.

And that's why it says we're seeking one to come. You see, again, going back to chapter 11, it's such a wonderful chapter 11, isn't it? All these examples of faith and different ways in which their faith was expressed.

[51 : 02] In verses 13 to 16, I often read this when we come to funerals, especially funerals of the Lord's people. These all died in faith. Chapter 11, verse 13, These all died in faith, not having received the things promised, but having seen them and greeted them from afar and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth.

For people who speak thus make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. And if they'd been thinking of that land from which they'd gone out, they would have had opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country. That is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for He has prepared for them a city, a lasting residence, an eternal abode in heaven.

And all the way through these few verses, you can see various things that tie in with what we're seeing here in Hebrews 13. They're seeing things by faith from a distance.

They were not yet in the city that is heaven, of course, but they were looking forward to it. They're making it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they'd been thinking of the land from which they'd gone out, they would have an opportunity to return.

[52 : 19] That's how it is for yourself, by going to the Lord's table, by doing what you're doing in obedience to Christ, you're actually making clear, I don't want to return to the world. I don't want to return to what I was.

I don't want to return to my lost condition. I don't want to return to my unforgiven state. I don't want to return to that position I had where I was either at enmity with God consciously to myself or not. I don't want to return to that. That's in the past. That's the city that's going to be destroyed. That's where God has taken me out from. But I'm looking forward to that city that is to come.

The city that has foundations of which He is builder and maker. Therefore, I want to go to the Lord's table, not because I'm good enough in myself, but because it shows that I love Him who is good enough.

And that He's done all this so that I could come and look forward in faith and hope to that city that has foundations. Now, we could think of what it says there in verses 11, verses 13 to 16 of chapter 11, as using all the means available, and same here in chapter 13, we're seeking the city that is to come.

[53 : 39] What does that mean? Essentially, it means using every means that God has given us to make our way towards it, to actually finally enter it. Not by our own merits.

That's on the merits of Christ. But we're using everything God has given us so as to progress on that journey. And one of the wonderful things that God has given us, the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, is designed to strengthen us for that journey, to strengthen our hope, our faith, our belief in Him.

Think of the banquet that's awaiting the Lord's people in glory, the marriage supper of the Lamb, as the book of Revelation calls it. And you can think, really, of the Lord's Supper, if you like, as the starter course for that great banquet.

We're coming to this world just to take the starter. It's a wonderful starter, especially for all that it represents. But as you come to take the Lord's Supper, as you sit there and eat this starter course, if you like, what it's saying to you is, well, isn't the banquet going to be magnificent?

If the starter is this good, what's the main course going to be like? And when you come to take that starter, you're really feeding your own hopes and your own faith of sitting at that marriage supper of the Lamb whenever that day will come.

[55 : 10] And so going out, going out and taking the Lord's Supper, coming out on the side of the Lord yet again or for the first time, is really an indication that you're looking forward to that marriage supper of the Lamb.

You're saying to the Lord, thank you, Lord, for this starter course that you've given me. It's sufficient for me as long as my life remains in this world. But I long to have the main course in heaven.

And this starter course gives me a taste of what that main course is going to be like when I see you face to face, when I'll be in your very presence, when I'll sit down and when you will wipe every tear from my eyes, when you will lead me to living fountains of water as my pastor in heaven, but I want to experience something of it, something of a foretaste, however small, while I'm in this life.

And I want to do it in the way Jesus himself has designed in this Lord's Supper, anticipating the marriage supper of the Lamb. I'm sure you've read, most of you at least have read The Pilgrim's Progress probably more than once.

And you may recall that when The Pilgrim Christian came to the point where this burden that was strapped to his back fell off, it rolled down the hill into a sepulcher, recreating the scene again of the Lord's cross and death and followed by the resurrection, that's where he lost his burden, that's where all the burden of his guilt and his sins fell off.

[56 : 53] And it says then that Christian rejoiced. He sang. And this is what he sang.

Thus far did I come laden with my sin, nor could aught else ease the grief that I was in, till I came hither. What a place is this!

Must here be the beginning of my bliss? Must hear the burden fall from off my back? Must hear the strings that bounded to me crack? Blessed cross!

Blessed sepulcher! Blessed rather be the man that here was put to shame for me. This do in remembrance of him.

May God bless these thoughts on his word. we'll conclude by singing to his praise in Psalm 119.

This is from the Scottish Psalter, Psalm 119, at verse 172.

[58 : 04] My tongue of thy most blessed word shall speak and it confess, because all thy commandments are perfect righteousness. Let thy strong hand make help to me, thy precepts are my choice.

I longed for thy salvation, Lord, and in thy law rejoice. So on down to the final verse, I like a lost sheep went astray, thy servants seek and find, for thy commands I suffered not to slip out of my mind.

These four verses in conclusion. my tongue my tongue of thy most blessed word shall speak and it confess, because gates ourlerin sons our Palestina Só 8 Thy peace that are my choice.

I long for thy salvation, Lord, and in thy glory rejoice.

O let my soul, your bondage child, give praises unto thee, O let thy judgment, gracious, be helpful unto me.

[60 : 24] I like a lost sheep went astray, Thy servants seek and find, O thy commands.

I suffer not to slip out of my mind.

I should have said, if there are any visitors with us who are communicants in full communion with their own congregations and in good standing, they're very welcome to come and join us at the communion table tomorrow.

And if you want to take a token with you just to show the elders that you have a token to go to the table, we'll be pleased to do that for you. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and evermore.

Amen. Amen.