

Blessed are the poor in Spirit

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Preacher: Rev Iver Martin

[0 : 00] The Caber Faith group meets of course on Tuesday, I should have mentioned that earlier on.

That will be every Tuesday in the Caber Faith Hotel in the Willow Suite at 8pm. And again, let me emphasize its huge importance, not just in our own congregation, but others come along as well to find out more about the Christian faith, to ask questions, to listen to other questions, and to hear and to try and grow in their understanding of what the Christian faith is all about.

And so I would encourage you to go along to that if you're in that category, you want to find out a little bit more in a relaxed atmosphere over a cup of tea or coffee, and it really has been a tremendously useful function.

So we're delighted to have with us, of course, Reverend Ian Watson next week at the communion. We welcome him. It's the first time he's ever preached in this pulpit, although he was in Barvis Church of Scotland last year.

Some of you heard him over there. And we welcome him amongst us for this communion season. We are delighted that he's able to come with us. We're delighted that Reverend Kenneth Ferguson is with us, but he needs no introduction whatsoever to the Gaelic folks.

[1 : 34] So we pray that the Lord will bless our weekend together as we come round his word and come around his table to remember what he has done for us. I'd like us to look this evening at Matthew 5.

Matthew 5, and the very first words in what we know as the Sermon on the Mount. Seeing the crowds, he went up on the mountain, and when he sat down, his disciples came to him, and he opened his mouth and taught them, saying, Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

I'm sure if we ever had the opportunity of listening to the Lord Jesus himself, we would be waiting with bated breath to hear his first words.

His first words couldn't come soon enough because whatever mistakes a preacher makes, and we do lots of them, if we were to hear the Lord Jesus preaching, there would be no mistake.

No mistake in the content of a sermon. No mistake in the introduction. No mistake in the conclusion. Everything would fall into its right place.

[2 : 55] It would be the perfect sermon. That's what this is. The perfect sermon. There are not many perfect sermons in the world. Certainly not from this pulpit.

But this, we can with absolute confidence know that this is the perfect sermon. And it begins literally with nothing.

It begins at the very beginning with someone who is empty in himself. And has nothing to bring before God.

You'll know, of course, that this section here, and we can see it in the ESV Bible, is entitled The Beatitudes. I used to, when I was a boy, I used to have to learn all the Beatitudes off by heart. I guess that doesn't apply to young people nowadays. But we used to have to learn sections of scripture like that. It was actually quite easy to learn them. Because they were nice and broken up into eight separate statements.

[3 : 59] And each of these separate statements began with the word blessed. That's what makes it the Beatitudes. Because the Beatitude is something that is blessed. It's got the word blessing in it.

And there are these eight statements that Jesus makes. And there's been all kinds of confusion, I guess still is, as to what these eight statements mean. What place they have in the teaching.

And how important they are as far as my rightness with God is concerned. You see, some people have the mistaken notion that this is what I need to be a Christian.

I need to know how to live the Beatitudes in order to please God and to be right with God. And as long as I can adjust my life and become the Beatitudes, then I will secure my place in heaven. So my main task, my main objective in my life here in this world is to know what it is to live out and obey the Beatitudes. If I know how to be poor in spirit.

[5 : 08] If I know what it is to mourn. If I know what it is to be meek. If I am a meek person. If I hunger and thirst after righteousness. If I am a merciful person.

If I am pure in heart. If I am a peacemaker. Then, if I put all these things in my life, make sure that's the way I live my life, then I will be saved.

Now, it might come as a terrible shock to you when I say that that is not what the Beatitudes are about.

And I'll tell you why. Because you can't do it. Have you ever tried to live the Beatitudes? Have you ever gone away from reading the Beatitudes and said, right, I am going to try and learn.

Are you pure in heart? I'm not. Are you really a peacemaker? You may try to be, but you're not really. Do you really, can you really honestly say tonight that you perfectly hunger and thirst after righteousness?

[6 : 12] Is it not the opposite? That what we really want most of the time is to do what God says not to do. That's the way we are inside.

And that's what the Bible calls sin and guilt. It's that voice within us. That influence. That pulls us in the opposite direction to the direction that God wants us to live in.

So it is absolutely impossible for anyone to live out these Beatitudes. And the reason it's impossible is because of sin.

It keeps us from the perfect life. This is a description of the perfect life. And our sin means that we are prevented from living the perfect life.

But that's what God demands. The perfect life. So the way to be saved has to be found somewhere else.

[7 : 13] The way to be saved is not the teaching of Jesus. And some people are quite horrified when they hear me saying this. It's not the teaching of Jesus that saves us.

It's the death of Jesus that saves us. You can know all the teaching off by heart. The Sermon on the Mount. The conversations that he had with various people here and there.

And you can try your best to live them. But they won't take away your sin. You'll be as guilty as ever. Even having spent your whole life trying your best to live out these teachings.

It's the death of Jesus. By which the guilt of our sin was placed upon Jesus.

And he carried that guilt as he laid down his life on the cross. That's what saves us. The blood of Jesus Christ.

[8 : 14] His life as it was laid down for us. As sacrifice. And as God's justice was satisfied in the death of his son. Then Christ says to those of us who come to him by faith.

Confessing our own complete bankruptcy. He says your sins and your iniquities. I will remember no more. So let's not get confused.

I'm not saying we don't need the teaching of Jesus. Of course we need the teaching of Jesus.

Otherwise they wouldn't be there. But the very first step. And we'll see this in a few moments.

Is to come to Jesus crucified. And risen. So that by his death. We can be set free from sin.

And then. With the new life. And the new beginning that God gives us. We can read these beatitudes. With a whole different perspective.

[9 : 18] Because what they are. Is a description of the person of faith. The man or the woman. Who follows Jesus. So let's not put the cart before the horse.

It is not by living the beatitudes that I'm saved. But it's as a Christian. That I need to come back to. This great passage. As the description.

Of what my life should be. And I can't come to them. These eight statements. And say well I like this one. And I don't like the other one. I'm better at this one.

But I'm not as good at the other one. You can't do that. You've got to take them. And take them in order. It starts at the very beginning. Like I say with nothing. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. I want to say three things tonight. I want to look at it. Three things. First of all I want to ask. What does blessed mean?

[10 : 17] What does it mean to be blessed? Secondly I want to ask. What does it mean to be poor in spirit? And then I want to ask. What is the kingdom of heaven?

And these three natural questions. That arise. Out of anyone. Looking at this great verse. Which begins. This great sermon. The meaning of the word blessed.

Is very simple. It simply means. Happy. Now when I tell you that.

That should arouse. A sense of curiosity. In your mind. Because really what Jesus is saying. Is happy. Are those who are poor.

Now right away. You know that there's something wrong. That just doesn't make sense. How can anyone be truly happy. If you haven't got anything to be happy about. Because that's what poor means.

[11:21] Well now. That ought to get. The attention of everyone. Because paradoxes. Because paradoxes. Always get people's attention. And this. If anything. Is a paradox in the Bible. This is.

Happy. Are those. Who are poor. Well when you think about it. There are all kinds of happinesses. Aren't there? There's happiness. When I pass my driving test.

There's happiness. When I get good results. In. In. The hires. Or. University results. Or when I pass my. Apprenticeship exams. There's happiness. If I get married.

Or when a baby is born. But you and I. Know that. The kind of happiness. That people seek. All around us. In this world. Is. The kind that's found. When you have things.

That's why the lottery. Is such a big thing. Because there's this. Hope. There's distant hope.

[12:19] That my life. Which is kind of average. Right now. And where I have to control. My spending. Like everyone else. Has to control their spending. That can all change.

All that has to happen. Is my number. Needs to come up. And as long as there's. The one chance. Of that. Do you know. What the chances are. Of your number.

Coming up. One in 14 million. There's more chance. Of me dying. In the next 25 minutes. Than there would be. Of winning the lottery.

I feel like saying to people. When I'm behind them. In the queue. And when they're holding. The queue up. From every. I'm not in the queue. To buy a lottery ticket. But I'm in the queue. To buy something else.

So. When I sit. When I see them. In the queue. Buying a lottery ticket. Then. I feel like saying to them. Do you know. What the chances are. And even if you were to.

[13:19] Buy one chance. In 14 million. Would that. Really truly. Solve all your problems. Would it really give you. The contentment. That you're looking for. And meanwhile. You're going to spend.

At least a pound. If not two. Three. Four. Five. I see people spending. More than 10 pounds. 20 pounds. And I feel like saying to them. I wish I had the courage. I so wish I had the courage. To be able to say.

But I don't want to make a pest. Of myself to people. I wish I had to. Just tap them on the soldiers. Say. Do you know. What a person. Could do. With that 20 pounds. That's 20 days. Wages. In some countries.

And you're going to. Throw it down the drain. But they would rather. Have that. With a light. The one in 14 million. Chance. Of winning.

That's what that chance. Means to them. How foolish. I normally would say. I'm not speaking.

[14:13] To anyone here. But I might be. And if I am. That's too bad. I'll say it. You're a fool. Because the Lord.

Has given us. His word. To give us. Happiness. The kind of happiness. That he alone. Can give us. And that happiness.

It can only be found. In himself. You know. It's hard to think of God. And happiness. For some people. They think of God. As the great judge. The angry God. The holy God. The God who has. Wants to have nothing to do with us. And who loves to condemn. And punish. And judge people. And he wants to give you. A miserable life. But if we could see. But if we could see into God.

If we could be transported. Up to heaven this evening. And if we could feel and experience. What God is truly like. Then there would be nothing but unbroken.

[15:14] Perfect. Blissful happiness. In God. That's what there would be. We would get the shock of our lives. Because God is not.

The being that. The monstrous being. That sometimes. Our perverted minds. Imagine him to be. He is perfectly. At peace in himself.

A joy in himself. There's a happiness. That we will never. And that's why tonight. We know that those. Who have been taken from this life. And who are in eternity. They never want to come back.

Into this world. Even although they may have lived.

The happiest lives in this world. Even although that they have. Loved their families. And their families have loved them. To be with the Lord. Is better by far. Why? Because it is for the first time. Unbroken. Enter thou. Says God. Into the joy of the Lord. There is no joy. That can ever be experienced. In this world. That can compare with. The joy. That we have.

[16:11] And we will have. One day. With God. And that's because. God is happy. In himself. I'm not saying. That God. Isn't angry. But his anger.

Is a reaction. To outside events. Outside himself. Which means. That there must have been a time. When God. Was not angry.

At all. It's quite an interesting. Theological. Point. Isn't it? That there must have been a time. Way. Way back. When God. Was never. Ever angry. Because all there was.

Was God. In himself. And God. Cannot be angry. In himself. Or with himself. It had to be. As a response. To what he made. And to that creation.

Turning against him. In sin. We don't know. How that began. How that originated. That's a mystery. But when it did. That's what provoked. The anger of God. And it was necessary. The anger of God.

[17:07] Is necessary. God doesn't. Just. He doesn't take pleasure. In his anger. It's a natural. Godly. Perfect. Holy reaction. To when he sees.

Something which is. Opposed. To himself. And God's anger. Is always right. We've seen all that. Before. Of course. I don't want to get.

Taken aside on that. I don't want to be distracted. On that. But in himself. God is nothing. But joy. And happiness. Enter thou. Into the joy. Of the Lord.

Jesus will say. To his people. Who are before him. And who die. Having. Having. Been. Prepared. For. For the kingdom. Jonathan Edwards.

Once said. Part of God's. Fullness. Which he communicates. Is his happiness. We can experience. Happiness in this world. Because. We are made in the image.

[18:01] Of God. And even although. That's been. Spoiled. Because of our own. Sinfulness. And our guilt. It's still. We can experience it. In this world. Even although. We pervert it. We find happiness.

In all the wrong things. What we really should. Find happiness. And where we can. Find happiness. That's what this passage. Is about. Is in God himself. God says to us. This is where real.

Joy is. Not joy. That comes. And goes. And that fades away. And that's good one day. And bad the next. And that has to be. Propped up. And kept up. And filled up. The joy I give you. Can never be taken away.

We saw that last week. Rejoice in the Lord always. And again. I say. Rejoice. That's the command. Christian can do that. Because he knows. That there's a God. Who's worth praising. And rejoicing in.

And loving. With all. Our heart. God's happy. In himself. God's happy. God was happy. In his creation. Remember Genesis chapter 1.

[18:55] When he looked at everything. That he had made. And it was all very good. That means he delighted. In what he had made. He was absolutely. Thrilled. With what he had made. It gave him.

A joy. A holy. Good. Righteous joy. To look at everything. That he had made. And he was. Completely satisfied. With it. But the Bible tells us. That he's also happy.

In his son. What was it he said? When Jesus was going to be baptized. He says. This is my beloved son. In whom. I am. Absolutely. Thrilled. That's what that word.

Well pleased. Means. I am well pleased. That means that. When I see him. I my heart. If you will. If you want to. Give God. A heart. Just for our own benefit.

My heart. Leaps. Because he is my son. And with him. I have a perfect. Joy. Now here's the great bit. Here is God saying to us.

[19:53] There is a way. That you and I. Can have his happiness. Can enter into it. That can share. In the happiness. Of God. A person.

Who is blessed. Is someone. Who knows the joy. That God can give him. By him. Being saved. And rescued. From his sin. And brought into his kingdom. The happiness.

That Jesus speaks about. When he says blessed. Is God's happiness. The particular kind. Not one that you find. In the world around us. But only find it. In God.

The second thing is. What does poor in spirit mean? He's not talking about. Those who are poor. Those who have little. Or no money. In terms of having. A bank account. Or whatever. He's talking about. Being poor. In spirit. That's someone who's poor. Inwardly. In his heart. Your spirit. Is what makes you different.
[20 : 48] From the animals. It's because of your spirit. Or rather your soul. If you want to call it. Soul and spirit. They're both. They both mean. The same thing. We don't have a spirit. And a soul. We have one and the same.

Sometimes it's called the spirit. And sometimes it's called the soul. In the Bible. That's who you really are. That's your inward being. That's what makes you conscious. Of the world around you. So that not only you see the world around you. But you can process it in your mind. And you can make certain decisions. About what you see around you. You can love. But it's in your spirit. In your soul. That you love.

It's in your soul. That you experience sadness. And when things go wrong. It's in your spirit. That you're conscious. Of not only those you know.

Those you like. As your friends. And those you're comfortable with. But that we're conscious of God. At the same time. We know that there's a God. Because God says. That he has revealed himself.

[21 : 45] And what he has made. Around us. The stars. The sun. The universe. The creation all around us. The heavens declare. The glory of God. There isn't a single person. Here in this building. That doesn't know. Deep within themselves.

That there is a God. Why? Because God has given us. A soul. A spirit. That is conscious. So when he talks about being poor in spirit. It's a poverty that goes on. Inside my soul.

So what does it mean to be poor. In spirit. Well let's take it. Let's try and make an analogy. Between what it means to be poor. With regard to money.

And compare it with what it means to be poor. In spirit. Every year. The Sunday Times. Publishes what they call. The Sunday Times. Rich list. And.

I guess they sell more papers. That Sunday. Than any other. Time in the year. Because they produce this rich list. List of people in the world.

[22 : 46] Or people in Britain. Who have the most riches. And they start off with the richest person. I often wonder. How do they calculate that? I guess what they do. Is they calculate the person's income. And they calculate what the person has in the bank.

And they calculate the value of the property. And they put them all together. And that's how much a person is worth. And of course there's all these people. Who are famous. And celebrities. And who are included.

These authors. And film stars. And all the rest of it. Who are included. And there's nothing like drawing the attention of the public. Like publishing.

The rich. Now most of us. We read something like that. And we say. Well. That's not what I'm like. I'll never be.

Whatever. Bill Gates. But I'm not poor either. I'm kind of average. I have enough. I've got more than enough. Probably here tonight.

[23 : 46] Most of us can say. Well we've got more than enough. More than what keeps the wolf from the door. More than enough. It's. We're just kind of average. In what. We are.

But to be really poor. You would have to have nothing. I'm not just talking about someone who's got something. Maybe a lot less. Than someone else. But to be really poor.

It means that you have absolutely nothing. Now you and I. Have never experienced that. I doubt. I didn't get along to the.

Missionary support group meeting on Friday. I wish I'd been able to get along. But. Because I knew that the subject was India. And I'm not sure whether. Photographs or.

Slides were shown. I'm not quite sure. But. It's hard to. If you visit India. India. You can't get away from people. Who are.

[24 : 46] Coming up to you. And begging. I remember being there about 13, 14 years ago. It was the one and only time I've ever been in India. It's the first time I've ever visited a. Developing country.

And it's the first time I've ever experienced for myself. And you need to experience it for yourself. So everybody will. Think. Knowing that people are poor. You read it in the newspapers. You see it on

TV and so on.

And. But it's a different thing altogether. When you actually see it for yourself. It really does something to you. Because you're looking eyeball to eyeball. With a person who has nothing in this world.

They're coming up to you. And all they're doing is they're putting their hand out. Now I know a lot of it is a scam. And so on. But. Isn't it awful when people are reduced.

To depending on the kindness of others. When their dignity is taken away from them. And they're reduced to that place where. Where they're depending on.

[25 : 46] On other people. Where they have absolutely nothing. I was with a pastor at that time. And he took me to see a woman. A widow in his congregation. On a Sunday afternoon.

And we sat there. She had three daughters. She was entirely dependent. For her household. On the wages. To switch these. And these were only like 15, 16 year olds. Anyway.

She came out of the kitchen. And she gave me an egg. And it was raw. It wasn't cooked. And I made probably.

A diplomatic mistake. In saying. Well. I'm sorry. I don't. Don't really. Well. I would rather not. I felt so bad afterwards. In fact. You go away from these places. And you feel so bad.

Because you're not used to this. I mean. We don't eat raw eggs. I don't eat raw eggs. But the pastor was telling me. That's all she had. She had a hen. That laid. A couple of eggs every day. And that was it.

[26 : 42] And there was she. Giving me. The only thing that she had. And I had the audacity. To refuse it. I really felt bad about it. Afterwards. Not quite sure.

What it would have done to me. But. I felt bad about it. Afterwards. She didn't say. Tea or coffee. Coffee. I was told. Was only drunk. At Christmas time. Couldn't even afford.

A teaspoonful. Of coffee. Nothing. Go through. Go into the cupboard. There's nothing there. Open a drawer. Nothing. There's no fridge. Nothing. Now we have never experienced that. When Jesus says.

Blessed are the poor in spirit. He's talking about people. When they go to their cupboards. In their hearts. There's nothing. God does not look for riches.

In our homes. He does not ask. How much money have you got. In your bank account. He's not asking. How successful you are. At your job.

[27 : 41] He's not asking. How clever you are. At doing things. Or how good you are. At doing things. That's how the world outside. Judges us. That's not what God is looking for.

He's looking for what the Bible calls. Righteousness. Goodness. Holiness. He's looking. He's asking. How obedient. We are. To his law.

His commands. The ten commandments. You shall not have any other God. Before me. And it starts with this. You shall love the Lord. Your God. With all your heart.

And all your mind. And all your soul. And all your strength. That's the first commandment. In fact. Every other commandment. Is summed up. In that. You shall love the Lord.

Your God. With all. Your heart. And mind. And soul. And strength. And you know what people do. When it comes to this whole question of. How do I stand before God.

[28 : 36] What does God see. When he sees in my life. We try. We. We do our own sums. We do the maths. We look at our own life. And we say. Well. I know that there are people.

Who are better than. Same as the rich list. You look at the rich list. You say. Well. These are the. These are the richest people. In the country. I'm not like that.

But I'm thankful. That I'm not the poorest either. I'm kind of average. That's the same as we do with God. When God says. I look for righteousness. We say. Well. I know that there are people. Who are better than I am.

But there are people. Who are worse than I am. I'm kind of average. And as long as I. Keep going. As I am. I know there are false things. I need to confess. Things I need to change.

And I'm trying to do that. I'm trying to better my life all the time. But as long as I'm Mr. Average.

Then surely. Most of us are in that boat. Then God. At the end of the day. Will say. Well. Because.

[29 : 29] Your good things. Somehow. Outweigh the bad things. And the bad things. Haven't been all that bad. Anyway. Then. Everything's going to be okay. Well.

I hate to be. The bearer of bad news. Actually. I don't hate to be. The bearer of bad news. Because. If this is the first time. You've ever heard this. Well and good. Whether it's bad news or not.

This is what God says. He says. You. And I. Have. Nothing. He says. That even when we've tried. To do good things.

It's been like filthy rags. That's what Isaiah says. All our righteousnesses. Are like filthy rags. You know.

There's one thing worse. Than not having anything. And that's. Thinking. That you have something. And then discovering. That you. Have you ever been. Down a car. Driving a car. You go for miles. [30 : 26] And miles. And miles. You're heading for a. Certain direction. You think you're going. In the right direction. You've studied the map. You know where you're going. You're driving along the road. Mile after mile.

After mile. And then you stop. You look at the map. And you. You discover. To your horror. You're entirely. On the wrong road. That's the person. Who thinks. That he's Mr. Average. Or Mrs. Average. And believes. That somehow. God is going to accept him. For what he is. Warts and all. And then discovers. Actually. Everything. You've been putting his faith in.

Is coming to nothing. Absolutely nothing. That's why the Bible describes you tonight. As dead in trespasses and sins. Because we go on. And on.

And on. Believing. That somehow or other. That in our hearts. We're okay. Just because we think. We think we're not as bad as some people. We're okay.

[31 : 23] And so that's why people say. Well. Poor in spirit means sincere. It doesn't. It means the person. Who has.

Examined himself. In the light of the Bible. And has come to that. Awful discovery. That despite everything. I thought of myself. I have. Nothing.

To bring to God. Nothing. Not. A single. Thing. It's like going to your. To your. To your bank. How do you find out. When you've got nothing. How do you discover.

How much you've got. In your bank account. You take your card. You go to the cash machine. And you put your card. In the cash machine. You put in your. Pin number. And the card comes out. And you've got this display. Saying zero.

There's one thing. Worse than that. And that is. When you believed. All the time. That your bank account. Was full. And you've said to yourself. I've got enough. I've got plenty. I can spend.

[32 : 19] I can live a normal life. And when you. But when you go. To the cash machine. You know that. That's not going to tell you. A lie. You can take your card out. You can clean it. Put it back in.

You can take your card out. You can thump the machine. It still will tell you. The same message. And that's what people do to God. They thump God.

Because he tells them the truth. They say. They say. This can't be right. How many people tonight. Are saying. This can't be right. This Christian faith. It can't be right.

Because it doesn't tell me. What I want to hear. And it doesn't give me leave. To live my life. The way that I want to live it. You see. The thing is. I. Me. I put myself first.

That's what the world around us does. And that's what you're doing. If you haven't come to Christ. You're putting yourself first. You see. It's only the choice. The choice is. Either Christ. Or me. It can only be.

[33 : 16] One or the other. And because God gives me the bad news. He doesn't tell me what I want to hear. Then I write him off. I clean my card. I say. There must be something wrong.

I go away. And pretend. And keep pretending. That there's plenty in the bank account. There is nothing. And it's only when you discover tonight.

That there is nothing. What your true balance is. That these words will mean anything to you. The gospel will not mean anything. It won't make any sense at all.

Until you come to discover who you really are. And what you really are. I had to make that discovery. I continually make that discovery.

I continue as a Christian to be reminded that everything I am is down to what God has done for me. I've got nothing. I've never had anything to bring to God.

[34 : 17] I've never had anything of worth to bring to God. God never looked at me and said because Ivor Martin. He's not so bad after all. He can be one of my. That's not the way it works. It's not the way it works.

It's only when you discover that you have nothing. You're completely bankrupt. That these words are going to not only make sense to you.

But that these words are actually going to draw you. They're going to make a difference. There's not much point in talking about being saved if you don't think you have anything to be saved from. But when you know. Then what do you do when you realize that you're bankrupt? You do what the woman did that we read about in Luke's gospel. When she realized that her blood was draining out of her.

Continued to drain day by day by day. For 12 years. She had done everything she possibly could to visit the doctor. She had tried the best. She had spent a fortune on the doctors.

[35 : 21] Because she was resting all her hope in something else. Until she heard that Jesus was in town. And that was the moment that she knew where her answer lay.

And she came to him at all her need. She thought she was coming. Anonymously. Behind the backs of the crowd. She made her way through the crowd. After 12 years. And simply reached out her hand.

And touched. The hem of his robe. And that was the moment. That her body.

Was completely healed. In her poverty. She went. She came to where. The healing was.

And that's what gives the blessing. It's not that people are blessed. Because they have nothing. It's that people. Will be blessed.

[36 : 21] When out of their poverty. They come to Jesus. What do you do when you discover you've got nothing? You go to where there is something. That's why people beg. That's why in places like India.

You get people who. Because that's their only hope. That's our only hope today. But there's nothing I can do for you. There's nothing anyone can do for you. Except Jesus himself. Don't put your hope in the church.

Church can't do anything for you. Don't put your hope in the Lord's table. The Lord's table can't do anything for you. Jesus. Is the only one. Who can save us.

From our sin. It's like the prodigal son. When he ran away from his father. And he spent. He squandered his entire living.

Wasted the whole thing. What did he do. When he was sitting down. Feeding the pigs. And he remembered there. That in his father's house. Even the servants were better off than he was.

[37 : 19] What did he do. He went. He arose. And he went back to his father. And when he did. He had nothing. He didn't even have the clothes. That were on his back.

He had lost everything. But he went. Step by step. All the way home to his father. Who knows what he wondered. What went through his head. As he made. As he took each step back to the father.

Who knows. What he anticipated his father would do. If he had got what he deserved. His father would have thrown him out. Once and for all. But he didn't get what he deserved. None of us have.

I haven't got what I deserve. If you're a Christian tonight. You haven't got what you deserve. And if you haven't come to Christ. God is looking for you. Asking you. Commanding you.

He's showing you the open door. For you to come. Like the prodigal son. And you'll discover the same thing. That the father. He saw him far away.

[38 : 12] And as soon as he saw him. He ran to him. And he put his arms around him. And he kissed him. And he says.

Quick. Bring the best robe. Put shoes on his feet. Kill the fatted calf. And let's celebrate. For this son was lost.

And was found. He was dead. And he's alive. Again. Every one of us. Is a prodigal.

Every one of us. Needs to discover the true. Condition of our hearts. Before God. And every one of us. Needs to rise. And return home.

Come home. To God. Through Jesus. Come home. To where.

[39 : 13] You will. Find. Rest. The kind of rest. That you've never had. In this world. God. Peace.

The peace. With God. The apostle Paul said. Having been justified. By faith. We have peace. With God. Through our Lord. Jesus Christ. You might have everything.

In this world. Tonight. If you don't have peace. With God. You have nothing. But is it.

Prophet. A man said. Jesus. If he gained. The whole world. And lose. His soul. Theirs. Is the kingdom. Of heaven. The kingdom of heaven. I'll just say this in a word.

Because the time has gone. Kingdom of heaven. Of course. Is the kingdom. That we pray for. In the Lord's prayer. Your kingdom come. Your will be done. On earth. As it is in heaven. The New Testament promises. That God's kingdom.

[40 : 08] Will come. The kingdom of heaven. The new heaven. And the new earth. In which. God's people. Will be welcomed. And drawn into. To. But the new testament. Also.

Is clear. That the kingdom. Is here. And now. It's wherever. God's people are. It's the church. Where God's people. Gather together. And where they live together.

I'm not saying. I'm not saying. When they gather together. And they. They fellowship together. Around the world. Like we're doing tonight. I'm not saying. That it's perfect. I'm not saying. That every one of God's people.

Is in the place. They should be. Some of us are. And some of us are. Backslidden. Some of us are conscious. Of sin. In our lives. And yet. We are here together.

As people. Who. Say. Exactly. The same thing. That I was blind. But now. I see. I was lost. And now. I'm found.

[41 : 02] I was dead. But I'm alive. I've been made alive. By Jesus. And all that he did for me. When he laid down his life. On the cross. That's what the Lord.

Table is about. Poor. People. Poor souls. We all look different. We all have different experiences. Of life. Come from different backgrounds. And yet. We're all together. Because there's one thing. That we have in common. And that is that we say.

I love Jesus. Because. He first. Loved. Me. And gave himself. For me. And if that describes. Your relationship. To Jesus. Tonight. Then I hope you will be at the table. Hope you will come. And I hope that if this is the first time. That you will make that faith in Jesus.

[41 : 58] Known. And that you will come. And. Know what it is to make. To make that faith public. And open. And open. For our encouragement.

For your strengthening. And for the glory of God. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven.

We come to you now. And we ask that you will. Bless our. Reflection. On your word.

And we pray that you will challenge us through it. We pray that our lives will be enriched by it. But we pray more than anything. For anyone who hasn't taken that step of faith. Show them their poverty.

Show them oh Lord. Their emptiness. Their deadness. Show them how far away they are from you. Lord. As they discover the horror. Of the reality of their.

[43 : 00] That they have nothing. We pray that you will show them yourself. And show Lord. That. That the door is open into your kingdom. And draw them.

By your power. By your spirit. To a living relationship with you. In Jesus name. Amen.