

# Saturday Evening - English

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 16 February 2019

Preacher: Rev Iain Macritchie

[ 0 : 00 ] Well, if we could, for a short time this evening, turn back to the chapter that we read together in the Gospel of John.

The Gospel of John and chapter 21. I'd like us this evening to take our text from the words that we have in verse 12.

John 21 verse 12. Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast.

Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast. Well, friends, it's true to say that the Word of God is just like a mirror.

It's a mirror because as we read it, as we study it, as we meditate upon it, we see ourselves. This is a living Word.

[ 1 : 09 ] This is a Word through which the power of the Holy Spirit speaks to us. It speaks to us as individuals. It speaks to us at where we are at.

And as it speaks to us time and time again, what do we find? Well, we find ourselves. We see ourselves in and through the narratives, the many narratives, the many doctrines that we find on the pages of Scripture from Genesis right through to Revelation.

But yet tonight, friends, we praise God. And we praise God that we see so much more than ourselves on the pages of Scripture.

That on each and every page of Scripture, what we have on each and every page of the Word of God is Christ himself deeply stamped upon it.

And as we find ourselves tonight on the eve of the Lord's Supper, we do so coming once again to this mirror of God's Word.

[ 2 : 16 ] As we look even at the narrative that we have before us here, this post-resurrection account of Jesus inviting the disciples to come and have breakfast, to come and eat with him.

And we do so mindful of the fact that there is so much in this account that, yes, reflects ourselves, but yet all the more reflects our Savior, reflects the loving kindness of our Savior.

A reflection that shows us the provision that he so bountifully provided for us in the Gospel. And it is, of course, this provision that is leading us, many of us at least, God willing, to his table tomorrow.

Now at this point in John chapter 1, Christ has been crucified. He's been buried. He's even resurrected. These were events that would impact humanity for not only time, but for all eternity.

On these pages we read of that climactic point in redemptive history. That point to which everything else has been gearing up towards.

[ 3 : 32 ] And in light of this, as we see the disciples here, those who are closely following Christ, those who have been involved with so much of what has happened to him, who have spent so much time with him, in light of this climactic point of redemptive history, what do we read of his people doing?

Let's look at verse 3. Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing. They said to him, We will go with you.

We will go with you. In light of all that's happened, these disciples, what do they decide to do? They go back to their nets. Now some would say that they're here turning their back on their calling to go out and to make fishers of men.

That's what they were called to do. After all, they had previously left their nets behind. And here we find them going back to their nets. But friends, we need to remember exactly what these men have just experienced.

For them, the events of the past three years had very much been a time of highs. A time where they spent so much time with Jesus. A time where they witnessed him performing miracles, casting out demons, speaking in parables.

[ 5 : 04 ] A time where they enjoyed close and intimate fellowship with him. Yet recently, this had been a time of extreme lows, had it not?

Seeing their friend, their brother, their saviour being dealt with in a way that they hadn't really expected, if the truth be told.

Seeing the Lord Jesus snatched from them so that he would be mocked, that he would be spat upon, that he would be beaten, and eventually he would be led to that cross on Calvary's hill, where he would be crucified.

And following that, this appearance that we see in the chapter that we've just read, this appearance of Jesus, firstly to Mary Magdalene, and then to the disciples themselves.

And so for them, it's very much been a time of ups and downs, of highs and lows. Their experience has been very much that of a roller coaster.

[ 6 : 08 ] And so these men, amongst all of what has just taken place for whatever specific reason Scripture doesn't tell us, they return to doing something that they knew so well.

They return to doing something that no doubt they find comfort in, something that was familiar to them. They go fishing. And as they go back to the nets, as they no doubt ponder and reflect on all that has just happened in their experience, as they take to the sea, as it were, you would think that this would be some sort of light relief for them.

But yet even there we see that things don't quite work out. We read that they went out into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

So you can just imagine the somber mood of these disciples, after having toiled all night long, after having come to something that at least they knew would be predictable, after putting so much effort into their labor, they have absolutely nothing to show for it.

And you know, when we think about what's happening here, this is very familiar to us, isn't it? The Christian life is one of ups and downs.

[ 7 : 37 ] We don't know perhaps what's going to happen in our experience from one day to the next. From one time in our Christian life, we may be experiencing those highs, those times of close, intimate communion with our Lord and our Savior, just like the disciples did throughout their time with Him.

Yet at other times, He can feel so far from us, can't He? We can think that He's not there at all. We can be discouraged.

We can think that things simply aren't as they once were in our experience, and perhaps never again they will be. But we try to carry on, don't we?

We try to continue. We try to follow the Lord and do those things that we know, those things that are so routine to us.

We read His Word. We come to church. We try to pray. We do all of these things. But how often, friends, is it that just like the disciples, we cast the net of our soul into that sea of His promises?

[ 8 : 54 ] When we're struggling, we come and we seek to find comfort from the Lord. And yet as we take that net in, we get nothing, nothing for our soul.

We feel so lean, so dry, and we struggle. Maybe that's you tonight. You're struggling. You're getting nothing from the Word of God.

Perhaps you're not even coming. Perhaps you're not even casting the net out. You're not coming to His Word. And you're struggling. You're wondering where the Lord is in all of this.

And even just like the disciples, you might be at that very point where you're going to give up. It's difficult, isn't it? And so as the morning sun is rising, the dawn of a new day comes.

And here we read that these disciples, they're making their way back to the shore. They're exhausted, they're drained, they're demoralized, they're empty-handed.

[ 9 : 59 ] Yet they're not left like that for long. Because as they come towards the shore, we read that they hear a voice calling to them. Children, have you any fish?

The answer to him, that is Jesus, no. And he said to them, cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. So they cast it and now they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of fish.

Here was Jesus. Here was Jesus on the shoreside to meet these tired, discouraged, disheartened men. Just when they had given up all hope, they hear His voice.

Not only, friends, do they hear His voice, but what do they do? They take heed to His voice. They listen to His voice. It would be so easy for them to say, well, we've labored all night long.

We're tired. We're hungry. We want to go home. But no. They go back out again, don't they? They go back out again and they cast their net out just as Jesus has asked them to do.

[ 11 : 08 ] And then He provides. He provides a quantity of fish that is greater than they could ever have imagined.

And isn't that so often the case, friends? When we least expect it. Just when we're about to give up hope. Maybe that's you tonight. You're just at the very end of your tether on the Christian walk. You're just about to give up. Well, friends, how often He will come and He will meet us at our very point of need.

Just when we need Him. Just when we don't expect Him. He will reveal Himself to us through His Word. And He will fill our net, as it were, with such an abundance of spiritual blessings.

And you know, friends, tonight He's exhorting us. He's exhorting us in His Word not to give up. Never give up.

[ 12 : 10 ] But to go right back out into that sea of His promises. And to launch into the deep of His truth. And to keep casting our net out day after day after day.

So that by His grace, He will fill it. And friends, fill it. He will. He promises never to leave us. Never to forsake us.

He might bring us to that point where we're at our wit's end. But friends, you bear with Him. You come to Him. You listen to His Word. And the instruction that He gives you to come to Him.

But there's more. As we look at the narrative that we have before us. And there's always more with our Lord, is there not?

He's the one who just keeps on giving. Because not only does the Lord fill the net of the disciples with fish. But we read that He gives them breakfast.

[ 13 : 12 ] Come and have breakfast, He says. And we read in verse 9, When they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, and fish laid on it.

He feeds them. The Lord Jesus Christ Himself, the God-man, He's prepared a meal for these poor, hungry, exhausted sinners.

He provides here for their most basic of needs. And you know, as we reflect upon exactly what is happening here, can't we see the condescension of the Lord Jesus?

Here is God, and He is preparing a meal for these disciples. He is the one who is coming down to their very level. He is the one who is providing exceedingly abundantly above what they could ask or even think.

And so Jesus invites the disciples to partake of the food that He's prepared. And He asks them to come and to eat. Come and enjoy what I've prepared for you.

[ 14 : 25 ] Come and find nourishment in this food that I have here for you. You come and eat. You see, friends, the Lord, He cares for His people.

We see that in His condescension, do we not? He cares for His people. He cares for our most basic of needs. And you know, friends, He cares for you tonight.

He cares for each and every need that is yours, no matter how small, no matter how insignificant it may appear to you. And you know, if He's desired to physically feed the disciples, it's true to say that He longs to give us food for our souls.

He longs to do so. And you know, the words that Jesus spoke here to the disciples, He's very much speaking to you and to me tonight, as we prepare, as we think about coming to the Lord's table tomorrow.

He's provided this table. He's provided this meal in His love and His mercy for tired and weary sinners just like you and just like me.

[ 15 : 41 ] But yet we come tomorrow, and we come and we eat so much more than physical food. We know that man cannot live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord.

Yes, we are outwardly partaking of these visible elements of bread and wine. That is true. But, friends, always remember that these are just symbols.

These are just a symbol of the fact that we are inwardly partaking of Christ Himself. Isn't that something? To think that tomorrow we will be inwardly partaking of Christ Himself?

What does that mean? What does it mean to inwardly partake of Christ? Well, we know what it doesn't mean. Roman Catholics would believe that in taking communion, you are taking of the physical body and blood of Christ.

That the bread and the wine become His body and His blood. Now, we know that this doctrine of transubstantiation, it's simply not true.

[17:00] What we do, believing in such a doctrine is a desecration of the person of Christ Himself, the God-man, the one who physically sits at the right hand of the Father tonight, interceding on behalf of His people.

We don't physically eat His flesh and blood. We don't need to. But what we do do is come and spiritually feed off His body.

We taste afresh the wonder, the glory, the sufficiency of the atoning sacrifice of our Savior. And there we find Him.

He's there. He's present there by His Spirit. And by faith we feed on Him and all His benefits that are ours through His death and His resurrection.

We feast, friends, upon these truths. We meditate upon these eternal realities. We don't just come to a table tomorrow, take a cup and take a drink and pass it on, and take the plate and take the bread and pass it on.

[18:13] We don't mindlessly go through the motions, no. We spiritually feed off our Savior. Friends, He died so that you and so that I, we, can live.

And there is food in that. You know, by eating the Lord's Supper, we are showing that we are one with Him.

Paul calls this communing or fellowshiping in the body and the blood of the Lord Jesus. And so what we're doing is so much more than a bare memorial or remembrance.

Yes, we're doing this in remembrance of Him, absolutely. But friends, never treat it as just an act of remembrance. This is a soul-nourishing table to which we are coming.

Notice here that the Lord, He had to beck on the disciples to come and to eat. We don't read that as they see the food, as hungry as they are. They don't brashly go over and help themselves and begin to eat.

[19:28] He says to come. Come and eat. Come and join me. Perhaps they're feeling ashamed at this point. Perhaps they're feeling ashamed of where Christ has found them.

That He's found them out there on the boat, fishing rather than being fishers of men. Or perhaps Peter is feeling ashamed of the fact that He's denied His Savior three times with cursing and swearing.

Or perhaps Thomas is feeling ashamed of the fact that He doubted that His Savior had risen at all. And so there may be a shame to come forward and to sit and to eat with the Lord.

But yet He says, come. Come and partake of these good things that I've prepared for you. Come and enjoy this food that I give you here out of love.

I know what you have done. I know who you are. But I love you. And I seek to provide for you. And that's what He says to us tonight.

[20:39] You might be thinking you cannot come to the Lord's table. You're too much of a sinner. You've done this, that and the next thing.

You simply cannot come. If only you knew my thoughts. If only you knew my heart. You wouldn't be beckoning me to come to the Lord's table.

Well, friends, we acknowledge that we bring nothing of our own to that feast. We bring nothing good in and off ourselves.

If we've been saved, friends, we come as we are. We see this in the passage we have before us. We see that already there are fish on the coals on the fire.

But what does Jesus do? He asks the disciples to bring some of the fish that they had caught themselves. He desires for them to be involved with this meal.

[21:42] He desires for the things that they have caught to be cooked on that fire. But think about what's happening here. Because the very things that the Lord is asking the disciples to bring to this feast are the very things that he has given them in the first place.

If it wasn't for his bountiful provision, they could take nothing to this feast, to this meal. And so it is with us, is it not?

We bring nothing to the Lord's table. We're not worthy to come to the Lord's table. None of us are worthy to come to the Lord's table.

Yet we rejoice that our worthiness tonight is not found in ourselves. It's not found in our own righteousness. Scripture tells us that our righteousness is as filthy rags in his sight.

He cannot stand our own righteousness. So we don't come with that. Father, we come, friends, and we offer the righteousness of Christ that has been imputed to us by him.

[ 23 : 01 ] We come to the table and we offer to our Lord what he has already given to us. That spirit of praise and worship and adoration.

We listen to him when he says, Come and eat. If you're waiting until you're worthy, you'll be waiting a long time.

I don't know how long you've sat in this church over the years. As a follower of Christ, yes, but from afar, as one who when questioned or challenged might say, Yeah, but I'm not good enough.

Allow me to ask you, When will you be good enough? Do you think you ever will be good enough in and of yourself? Well, the answer to that is no.

If you're waiting, friends, until you are good enough, you will never find yourself coming and being obedient to the word of God when he says this, Do in remembrance of me.

[ 24 : 09 ] He died for you. At the least, the very, very least, you can do for him. And so cast your righteousness to one side.

Cast even yourself to one side and you focus on Christ and what he has done for you because he longs for you to come and to eat with him so that your soul will be nourished.

It was Robert Murray McShane who said, Learn much of the Lord Jesus. For every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ.

He's altogether lovely, such infinite majesty, and yet such meekness and grace, and all for sinners, even the chief. Live much in the smiles of God, bask in his beams, feel his all-seeing eyes settled on you in love, and repose in his almighty arms.

And so yes, we do look to ourselves, absolutely. Scripture tells us that we are to examine ourselves.

[ 25 : 28 ] That is very much part of us coming to the Lord's table tonight. And every other day, in fact, we are to examine ourselves, examine our hearts, examine our lives, examine our standing before our Lord.

And yes, we are to seek, by the grace of God, by the power of the Spirit, to root out that sin that is so easily besetting us and slowing us down, and perhaps casting a shadow between us and our Saviour.

But yet, friends, in examining our heart and seeing how poor and miserable we are by nature, how we ought to all the more come to that table tomorrow and to praise his great and his glorious name that he looked on us at all.

We ought to come with a heightened appetite to spiritually feed off the one who died and gave himself to a poor and a needy sinner like you and like me.

So yes, we need to examine ourselves so that we can, once again, look upon who we are. And in looking upon who we are, we come and we see the greatness of who he is.

[ 26 : 58 ] You know, Thomas Watson said that feeding of Christ by a lively faith is delicious. And so it is. When we come and we feed of Christ by a lively faith, when we come to his table tomorrow and we sit there and we meditate upon all that is ours in Christ, oh, how sweet it is to our taste, how we're led to cry out these words in our heart, Behold, what manner of love is this that the Father has bestowed upon me that I should be called a child of God.

Let it not be a cold, formal act of routine or ritual, but let it be a feast, a feast for our soul, a sense of nourishment and strengthening, a sense of realizing once again afresh the greatness of our God, for he is great.

The Westminster Confession tells us that the Lord's Supper is for the sealing of all benefits of Christ unto true believers. It's for their spiritual nourishment and growth in him.

It's for their further engagement in him to do all duties which they owe unto him and to be a bond and a pledge of their communion with him and with each other as members of his mystical body.

So friends, we need the Lord's Supper. He's instituted this supper for your good. He's provided it for your growth, for your nourishment, for our communion, not only with our Lord, but also with one another, knitting us together as his body around these elements.

[ 29 : 08 ] Legon Duncan makes the point that this supper is an instrument whereby we experience on earth a foretaste of the glorious communion of the heavenly consummation.

What a wonder that is. This is a foretaste. Many of you have sat at the Lord's table in this very church for many, many years, perhaps even many decades.

And over the years, you've seen that this table has very much been a transient table, a table that changes from one year to the next. It's never the same, is it?

This year, this time that we sit at it will not be the same as the next time. There will, God willing, be people added, but there will be people who are no longer there.

And over the years that you've seen this table, you've seen many whom you've known and loved sitting at that table for the very last time.

[ 30 : 17 ] And their place was empty. As will yours be one day. But you know, we rejoice, friends, tonight. We rejoice that this is just a foretaste of what is to come.

We're remembering the Lord's death, yes, but only until He comes again. You see, Jesus is still waiting on that shore tonight.

He's waiting on that shore tonight for His disciples to come and to eat with Him. He's waiting on the shores of Canaan and He's longing for all of His children to come together and to sit down with Him at that greatest supper of all, the marriage supper of the Lamb.

What a glorious day that will be. There will be no need for a cup or a plate. There will be no need for bread or for wine because there we will be in person, sitting with the Lamb of God Himself.

and so tomorrow, as you sit, you remember that the best is yet to come. This is but a foretaste.

[ 31 : 45 ] What an eternal feast is ours to look forward to. I wonder if you have that to look forward to. There might be somebody in here tonight who doesn't know the Lord as their Savior.

What do you have to look forward to next week? Next month? The flimsy things of time and of sense?

The things that come and go? Things that we enjoy, yes, but things that have no eternal significance? We are a triumphant people, the Lord's people.

We are triumphant because we have that eternal perspective. We are able to look forward. We are able to look forward to that day when each and every saint that has ever sat in this church will be united together around the throne of the Lamb.

Let's meditate upon these truths. And in the meantime, tomorrow, let us come and let us eat, whether strong or weak in the faith.

[ 32 : 57 ] Let us do what He has commanded us to do. Let us come and eat because truly that blessing follows obedience.

Let us, by the grace of God, feed upon the abundance of manna that will be served at the table of the gospel. The sacrament's no use without the Word.

We need to have the Word with the sacrament for our souls to be fed. That is where the bread is. And so we feed on that manna. But let us also feed of one another as we enjoy fellowship, united fellowship together in the Lord.

And that is a precious thing. Lay hold of that unity and do everything in your power to guard it, to protect it. be as one rod in His hand for His glory.

And then let us, by faith, feed off our precious Lord and Savior as we partake of that supper by faith, allowing our soul to delight itself in fatness until He comes.

[ 34 : 17 ] Amen. Let us pray. Lord, our God, our Heavenly Father, we give thanks this night for the glorious Gospel of Jesus Christ, a Gospel in which Thou hast condescended to meet with our every need and that Thou hast even in Thy loving kindness to us given us that foretaste of heaven where we can have that fellowship not only with each other but with Thyself.

And we pray if there are any who are perhaps still being disobedient to Thy Word that Thy Spirit would truly convict them and show them their need of coming out on Thy side so that they would know the blessing that follows obedience.

be with our dear brother who has professed faith for the first time. We give thanks for him. We pray that Thou wouldst protect him and lead him and guide him.

Be his strength and his shield and enable him to constantly bask in the light of Thy Word to be much in the smiles of Christ that he would know what it is to walk closely with his Lord and what we pray for him we pray for all of us gathered here for Thy glory.

Go with us now we ask and forgive us for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well friends we can conclude our time of worship by singing to God's praise from Psalm 63.

[ 35 : 59 ] Psalm 63 in the Scottish Psalter you'll find that on page 295 of the Blue Psalm books. Lord thee my God I'll early seek my soul doth thirst for thee my flesh lungs in a dry parched land wherein no waters be that I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face and I as I have seen

thee heretofore within thy holy place and we'll read at verse 5 even as with marrow and with fat my soul shall fill it be then shall my mouth with joyful lips sing praises unto thee.

We can sing down to the end of the verse Mark 6 now to God's praise. Lord thee my God I'll early seek my soul to thirst for thee. Amen. Amen. Lord thee my God I'll early seek my soul to thirst for thee my flesh lungs in a dry parched land wherein no waters be as I have seen thee as I have seen thee here to form within thy holy place

Wizard A. shall and drizzle a to thirst for thee Let me while I live.

In arms with marrow and with thought, my soul shall fill it be.

Then shall my mouth with joy for them sing praises unto thee.

[ 38 : 46 ] When I to thee upon my head remember which he lies, and when on thee I meditate in my heart is of the night.

Thank you.