

Lost And Found(2) - Reconciliation And Restoration

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[0 : 00] Just to finish off that part of Luke 15, tonight we're looking at verses 20 to 24. I want to read from the verse 11 again just to get the whole of this parable of the prodigal son, at least this first part of it.

So we'll read from verse 11 to 24. Jesus said, There was a man who had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the share of property that is coming to me. And he divided his property between them. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and took a journey into a far country. And there he squandered his property in reckless living. And when he had spent everything, a severe famine arose in that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed pigs.

And he was longing to be fed with the pods that the pigs ate, and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants have more than enough bread, but I perish here with hunger.

[1 : 07] I will arise and go to my father. I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

Treat me as one of your hired servants. And he arose and came to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him. And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son. But the father said to his servants, Bring quickly the best robe and put it on him.

And put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. And bring the fattened calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate. For this my son was dead and is alive again, was lost and is found.

And they began to celebrate. Now previously, as we saw verses 11 to the first part of verse 20, we took that under the headings of reconciliation, of rebellion and repentance, where we saw the younger son, in his rebelliousness against the father's house where he had been brought up, asked for all that was going to come to him by way of inheritance.

[2 : 27] He took that away and squandered it with reckless living. The freedom which he thought he was going to have turned out to be bondage. And we saw how that relates to our own sinful and fallen condition and to our own minds until God comes to show us our true situation.

And we saw that that was a freedom which imprisons. And then secondly, we saw, down to verse 20, servitude which sets us free, which we begin to realize is indeed freedom when we come to know Christ as our Savior.

When we come to give our lives into his hand, we come to know that our service to him, which once we thought of as being bondage is in fact the freedom of which the Bible speaks, the freedom to do what we ought to do in the service of God.

And tonight we're looking at reconciliation and restoration. Now we did refer to verse 2 as really the key verse to the chapter. Verse 2 which says that the Pharisees and the scribes grumbled about Jesus saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them.

And we said that that's a representation not of God the Father as such, but especially and particularly of Jesus himself. He was receiving sinners to himself. He was receiving the people, verse 1 there, tax collectors and sinners, all kinds of sinners, that the Pharisees despised and looked down on.

[3 : 59] They were coming to Jesus. They were accepting Jesus. They were giving themselves to him as disciples. They were believing his message. And so they committed themselves to him. But the Pharisees refused such.

And the representation there of Jesus receiving those tax collectors and sinners and their like is here in the father figure in the parable of the prodigal, and especially in the verses that we see tonight, where he came to his father and while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and felt compassion.

So there's the welcome there. There's the people coming to Jesus represented by that and Jesus welcoming them, just as you find in the key verse. And you find in the rest of the passage, we're not going into it, the older son who was, he heard the music and the dancing, the celebrations, and he would not go in.

That's representative of the Pharisees, where the father said to them, to this figure, the older son, who refused to go in.

His father came out and he entreated him, and he still refused. But the father said, Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.

[5 : 17] And that was speaking to the likes of the Pharisees and the Jews who wouldn't receive Jesus. They were brought up under the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures, that revelation of God.

God had, as it were, made them his covenant family, but they refused to accept Christ. They would not come to him. And so they stayed outside the kingdom. And this part of the passage now, as we come to it, reconciliation and restoration, talks about Christ as represented by that father figure in the parable.

There are three things tonight that we're going to look at with regard to Christ particularly. First of all, Christ's eagerness to receive repentant sinners. Secondly, Christ's welcome for repentant sinners.

And thirdly, Christ's joy in restoring repentant sinners. Remember we said this morning how the verses down to verse 20, from verse 17 to 20, are such a superb representation for us of repentance, where we come to a realization of what the truth is about ourselves and about God. And then having had that realization, we also then come to make our way back to God. We come to a resolve or a resolution to go back to the father's house, which involves not only coming back to him, but making our confession.

[6 : 50] And then there's thirdly, the return in repentance, because he actually did come back to his father in the beginning of verse 20. Realization, resolution, and actual return.

And now that he's returned, we find Jesus represented firstly in the father's eagerness to receive the son back, the son that was lost, that he said was lost, and is found, was dead, and is alive.

There's so much in this parable that's full of teaching really about ourselves, and about our relationship with God, and its restoration, and all that God gives in relation to that.

So, Christ's eagerness to receive repentant sinners. Now, you see what it says here. Verse 20, He arose and came to his father, but while he was still a long way off, his father saw him.

His father saw him while he was making his way back, and long before he reached back to his father's house, his father actually saw him. Christ's eagerness to receive repentant sinners is represented by that, because here is Jesus represented as looking out for repentant sinners, for sinners coming back to himself.

[8 : 01] Such is his eagerness to receive us back to himself, that his eye is upon us long before we reach him. What a comforting thought that is tonight, that God, that Jesus, the Savior, does not let us out of his vision, even though we let him out of our vision.

His eye was upon, this father's eye was upon, this lost son, the son that had gone away from home so deliberately, that had done such things, had squandered his living, brought dishonor upon his father, and here he is coming back.

And when he was still a long way off, his father saw him. What a great comfort that is, that his father had never lost sight of him.

He had never been out of his father's memory or mind. He was always thinking about him. Always concerned that he would come back. Always concerned as to what he was doing.

And so it is for yourself tonight. If you are here tonight and you haven't come back to God, if you are just thinking about it, if you are still at the resolution stage, if you haven't actually made that return,

what a comfort to you, that Jesus knows that situation, that Jesus knows you, that Jesus sees you, that Christ's eye is upon you.

[9 : 28] But, please don't make that a reason for delay. Some people, you see, will say, well, God knows all about me, and I can leave myself confidently under the knowledge of God, and therefore I'll just be happy to wait while I am, where I am just now, and if he's going to save me, he's going to save me.

Please, don't make the fact that Christ sees all of us, knows us in our lostness, knows us in our wandering from him, don't make that a reason to be indifferent, to be inactive.

We said this morning that the Bible actually brings to us our responsibilities. There is, of course, God's side to our repentance.

Repentance is a saving grace of God. He gives us the spirit of repentance, the grace of repentance, but the Bible addresses us in our responsibility to repent, our responsibility to come back to God. And that's what's represented by this Son, and by the Father looking out for him. Jesus tonight is looking out for returning prodigals.

[10 : 43] Remember we said that this doesn't mean, this prodigal doesn't just represent some who've fallen on really hard times, and have personal problems in their lives that are obvious to other people.

This represents everyone who's lost, that has gone away from God, that needs to return to God. People living in a very high social order, I'll include it.

And here he is, he's come back. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him. Then you read, he had compassion. He felt compassion. It's not just that he saw him making his way back, that his mind was set upon him, and had always been upon him.

He had never forgotten him. He had never let him out of his sight. But when he saw him coming back, his compassion is moved. It's not the beginning of his compassion, but his compassion is intensified, if you like, as he sees the sun on the horizon, as he knows he's making his way back, as his eye catches him, plodding his way back home, his compassion flows out to him.

And that's one of the great features of these Gospels, that give us a record of the ministry of Jesus, of the life of Jesus, that so often you find this word used of Christ, compassion.

[12 : 01] It really means a stirring of his inner parts. It's not something cold and calculated. It's not something to do with, like a scientific formula, or a mathematical formula, which says repentance, I receive you, I'll give you forgiveness, just doing it sort of, that equals that.

This is Christ's heart exposed to you. This is Christ's compassion revealed to you. This is the warm heart of Jesus Christ.

You know, when he fed the multitude, the 5,000, with the few loaves and fish that he began with, and miraculously, by his power multiplied, so that that fed the multitude.

You read there, that he looked out on those people sitting there, on the hillside, that had come to hear his teaching, that had been with him for a long time, and hadn't eaten for some time. When he saw the multitude, he said, I have compassion on them.

I will not send them away hungry, in case they fall, in case they faint. There's the compassion of Jesus, as he sees the people in their need, it's drawn out towards them.

[13 : 18] Where would you and I be tonight, if the compassion of Christ, was not real? If the compassion of Christ, was a figment, of our own imagination?

If you believe the people, that tell you today out there, this Bible is just full of fairy stories. And however much this figure of Christ, might have once lived, we can't be sure, about anything at all about him.

Perhaps one or two details, but when you come to read about miracles, when you come to read about, this sort of insight, that he had into people's lives, when you come to read parables here, that represent him, don't actually accept, that was okay for that generation.

They believed in those things, then, and they believed in those things, until fairly recently, but science has disproved that. No, it hasn't. Science cannot disprove, or prove, what is spiritual.

It doesn't have access to it. And if it has some measure of access to it, it doesn't at all, mean that it disproves, what is supernatural.

[14 : 29] People may think in their minds, they've done away with the idea, of supernatural, miraculous. But here is, the word of God, this account that we have, of the ministry of Jesus, and here he is, represented here, in saying, his compassion, flowed out towards, his returning son.

my friend, my friend, tonight, Christ's compassion, is designed for sinners. It's for the likes of you and I, to be stirred by, to be moved by, to come back to him, to have his compassion.

That's one of, our great, motivating, factors, as we look at his life. To say, Lord, how can I refuse, such compassion, such a heart as that, such overtures of love.

You see, God, God doesn't have to be, he didn't have to be, wasn't obliged to be, compassionate toward, us sinners, in our fallenness, in our rebellion against him. He's not obliged to do that, it's an act of his will, that he's merciful.

But being compassionate, he is obliged to act, in that compassionate way. God is not compassionate, and then chooses not to show it.

[15 : 59] If you were to mark iniquity, is what we sang, Lord, who could stand, but there is forgiveness with you, there is compassion with you. Why? So that we may come to fear, you, and to know you, and to respect you, and to know you as you are.

And with compassion, what did he next do? He ran towards him. He saw him a long way off. He felt compassion, and ran, and embraced him, and kissed him.

Now that would be offensive, to the Pharisees, because this was a relatively old man, in the parable, that represents Jesus here, although he wasn't an old man. But, here is something, the Pharisees would have, been following, in terms of listening, to what Jesus was saying, that I found this offensive.

Wasn't becoming, of an oldish person, to actually run. That was demeaning, in their eyes. But, Christ is unconventional, to the human mind, isn't he?

He doesn't do the things, that people expect. You can't fit him, into a box, of our own human thinking, and say, well, that's the kind of Jesus, that I would expect.

[17 : 13] He's not like that. It's, in C.S. Lewis' writing, it's Aslan the lion, isn't it? It is not tameable. And yet, he's wonderfully compassionate.

He has all this, almighty power, but he uses it, for our redemption. And so, he runs, towards this, returning prodigal.

And notice, that's what he does. He throws his arms, around him, and kisses him. And just imagine, what that means.

He ran, and embraced him, and kissed him. The son, hadn't cleaned himself up. He hadn't said, I'm going back, to my father's house, so I'd better, really get some new clothes, and I'd better, tidy myself up.

I'd better wash my hair, and my hands, and my body, yet just come. From a filthy, way of life. He had come, with spending, his time, with pigs, scrabbling around, for something to eat.

[18 : 23] He would have been, pleased to eat, of the pods, that the pigs, were eating, but nobody, gave him anything. Just imagine, his wretched condition. Would you and I, have come, near him?

Would we have embraced him? Would we have, thrown our arms, around him, and clasped, to our chest, to our bosom? Would we have, kissed him, in that condition? Of course not. But we're not Jesus.

And this represents, that Jesus, receives returning sinners, penitent sinners, still in need, of being forgiven, in need, of being cleaned up, in need, of being set right, with God.

God, but as he looks out, on us, sees us, in the filth, of our sin, he doesn't say to us, you go and clean yourself up, before you ever think, of coming near to me.

He doesn't say that, does he? Come as you are. Come with your sins, in repentance, yes, but don't try, and tidy yourself up. Let him do that.

[19 : 35] Let him wash you. Let him receive you. Let him clean you up. Let him, change your life. Turn it around. So he embraces, his son.

There's Christ's, eagerness to receive, repentant sinners. And what you take from that, is this.

Wherever reluctance, exists, it's not in the heart, of Christ.

Wherever there's, a reluctance, for us to come, to know Christ, as our Savior, to know his embrace, to know his forgiveness, to know his reception, the reluctance, is certainly not, on his side.

If you're, not in Christ tonight, if you've not, come to him, you're here tonight, and you're not yet, saved. If you're still, in the far country, the reason, for staying there, is your own reluctance, not that, of Jesus.

That's where, the reason lies. That's the hub, of the problem. It's not on his side. Accept this, for what it says.

[20 : 48] Return to him. And this is, what you'll find. This is, what you'll find, as to who he is, and what his response, will be. Secondly, there's Christ's welcome, for repentant sinners.

Well he came, his father came, he ran towards him, and, clasped him, and kissed him. The kiss, of reconciliation. And you notice, what's happening, and that is that, in that wonderful embrace, what is happening, is the father, is really, hiding the son's past, in that great embrace.

Doesn't matter, what he's done, he's not going to, hold that against him. He's not going to say to him, well, I will, embrace you just now, but that will be as far as it goes, and you won't get into the house, until you do something else, and I'm not going to treat you, as you, as my son.

The past is forgotten, the past is the past. It's buried, in the father's embrace. You see, Christ's, compassion, Christ's affection, Christ's compassion, is that out of which, reconciliation, flows.

And this case is, the case of, ultimate sincerity. You contrast that, with the case of Judas, Judas Iscariot, the ultimate, in hypocrisy, in delivering over the Lord, to be crucified.

[22 : 15] Here's Christ's case, the case of, ultimate, sincerity. And you know, something else, it's wonderfully detailed, this passage, and, it seems to be, very deliberate here, that, there's no account, of the prayer, that the son, was practicing, or had said to himself, that he was going to, use when he reached his father, he said to him, he said, before he actually came back, this is what I'm going to do, I'll go back to my father, verse 18, I'll say, father, I've sinned against heaven, and before you, I'm no longer worthy, to be called your son, treat me as one of your hired servants.

And so you come through, to verse 20, 21, the son said to him, father, I've sinned against heaven, and before you, I'm no longer worthy, to be called your son, that's it. The embrace of the father, has stopped the matter there.

And even though he is still, convinced he's no longer worthy, to be called a son, he doesn't go as far as to say, make me one of your hired servants, before he can get the words out, the father has a command, that he's going to have, a very different status, altogether to a servant.

And there's such a lot of meaning in that, where you find that, not only does Jesus not delay, to bestow, the status of sonship, upon us when we come to him, not only is he, far from being reluctant, to receive us back, as penitent sinners, coming back from the far country, but he also has in this, kiss of reconciliation, you might say, almost a hurry, to put the past behind us, and to persuade us, and to assure us, that whatever else, is going to be true, what he's got in store for us, is not, the lowest, but the highest point, in his family, he's going to restore him, to sonship, and that's the second point, the kiss of reconciliation, there's then the command, for restoration, before the son, can get out these words, that he has practiced, that he's going to say to him, father, make me one of your hired servants, the father speaks, the father said to his servants, there's this interruption, there at verse 22, but the father said, you can see, how it's interrupting, what the son was saying, in his prayer, but the father, said to his servants, bring quickly, the best robe, don't delay with this, bring quickly, the best robe, and put it on them, and put a ring on his hands, and shoes on his feet, bring the fattened calf, kill it, and we're going to celebrate, what a wonderful description, of the savior, what a wonderful description, of how Jesus, welcomes, repentant sinners, having in his eagerness, sought his return, here he is, now that he's returned, welcoming this, penitent son, back into, his own, family life, it's a full, restoration,

I think of the son's condition, it was right to say, and we said that this morning, that when we come to realize, our own true state, as sinners, separate from God, when we come to realize, where we are, and come to resolve, to come back to God, and to come back, and come back, we do, we do say to God, Father, I am not worthy, Lord, I am not worthy, the very least, that you give, will be sufficient, for me, but he quietens that, and says, we won't listen to that, that's not what it's going to be about, you're going to have dignity, you're going to be restored, to sonship, and I'm going to give you things, which will confirm, that that's what I've made you, see what he's saying, here he is saying, bring forth, bring quickly, the best robe, and put it on them, doesn't mean that, he didn't actually, get him to wash, first of all, we can presume, that before it was actually, put on them, that perhaps he washed himself, and the same with, with his hands, and his feet, but in any case, they had to do it quickly, bring quickly, the best robe, and put it on them, his own filthy rags, are no longer relevant, they're going to have to be put off, they're no longer, they're just dumped, they've gone in the bin, and instead, the best robe, in the house, is given to him, can you imagine that, can you imagine that, happening in real life, well probably not, although in some cases, of course you would, in terms of, parent, parental love, but this is certainly, true of God, this is certainly, true of Jesus, where the clothes, that we come to him in, these filthy clothes, the rags of our sin, the rags of

our sinful life, our wasted life, the Lord says to us, these are behind you, take them off,
[27 : 22] I've got something for you, something I'm going to clothe you with, something, that will dignify you, the best robe, that I've got, it's yours, of course, the Bible speaks, the Bible speaks, about God, in Christ, covering his people, doesn't he, covering us with righteousness, covering us with, the spiritual clothes, that he admires himself, and looks upon, and says, this is now very good, that's really, what this is saying to us, when God takes away, the filthy clothes, of your sinful past, and dumps them, he gives you something, entirely opposite, the best that he's got, do you want the best, that God has, what a difference, to the life, that he once lived, he was saying, I'm going to take, the things that are due to me, father give me these things, he took them to the far country, and now he's saying, I'm going to have, the best time, and it was imprisonment, it was bondage, and now that he's back, in the father's house, and in the father's embrace, the father brings, brings this command, to the servants, give him the best, that I've got, you know,

I think some people, sometimes, refuse to come to Christ, because, it just seems too good, to be true, what awaits them there, just seems too good, to be true, the best that God has, the clothes that he has, manufactured, and woven, through the obedience, and suffering, and death of his son, through his death, and resurrection, the spiritual clothes, that God has actually woven, that has this designer label, made by God, the best that he has, that's what he's got, for penitent sinners, that's what awaits you, when you come back, when you come back to him, when you come back, that's what you have tonight, all of you, who have come back, don't ever underestimate, the quality of your spiritual clothes, when you look at them, and admire them, remember who made them, remember where they came from, remember they're the best, that God has, and then a ring, not only the clothes, he said, but a ring, on his finger, this ring, this wonderful, symbol of his status, this finger, that was so filthy, when he came back, from his wanderings, when he came back, from the far country, from scrabbling, with the pigs, for the things, that they were eating, trying to get something, to fill his belly with, just imagine, how dirty his hands, his fingers were, what are they like now, he's wearing a ring, with the family, signet, the family crest on it, just to show, you are my son, you belong, to this family, you have a right, to be here, that I have given you, is what he's saying, and the wonderful thing is, that that's true, how it is, with God, he gives us, the right to sonship, remember that, great text, in John chapter 1, verse 12, he came to his own, and his own received him not, but to as many, as received him, to them, he gave, the right, to give, the authority, it's the power, but it's really, a word that means, authority, a right, to them, he gave the right, to be, sons of God, to be children of God, people come to us, maybe and say, you don't have a right, to be a Christian, you don't have a right, no,

I don't have a right, myself to be a Christian, but I have a God, given right, to be a Christian, because he's given it to me, and the father, has honoured, God the father, I mean, has honoured, God the son, by conferring, the right, of sonship, upon all of those, who have come to him, in penitence, and repentance, and upon whom, he has placed the robe, of his righteousness, he has given them, the assurance, they're no longer, servants in this house, they are sons, they have the best, that God could give, they have a ring, on their finger, spiritually speaking, that testifies, to who they belong to, what family, they belong to, that they are indeed, a family of God, and he puts shoes, on his feet, he came back, without shoes,

Rembrandt, has a great portrait, of the returning, prodigal, if you study it, it's so full, of details, from this chapter, you'll find, the older brother, skulking, the background, in the shadows, you find the, the son, the younger son, on his knees, in the presence, of his father, you'll find, find his, his father's hand, upon him, and the whole, the center, of that photo, the light, that Rembrandt, has chosen, to actually, place in that photo, is on the father's face, and on his hand, because that's the essence, of what it's about, and you can see, the son's feet, as, his, bedraggled shoes, as his, his worn out shoes, are still, on his feet, you just get the impression, that, once he's on his feet, he's going to be, given the best shoes, as well, because being, without shoes, was a sign, of a slave, he's not a slave, though he'd have been, happy to be, one of the father's slaves, as he himself said, not worthy, to be called your son, but the father, is saying to him,

Jesus is saying to us, I know, what you're saying, I accept, what you're saying, that of yourself, you're not worthy, to be my son, to be one of my children, but, I've got the best for you, I've died, to secure the best for you, and I'm not going to treat you, as a slave, but as a son, as one of my family, that may seem, very inappropriate, it was to the older brother, seemed completely, out of place, what does he say, look he said, these many years, I've served you, and when the son, of yours

came, he's not even prepared, to call him his brother, when the son, of yours came, was devoured, your property, with prostitutes, you killed, the fatted calf, for him, and his father said, it was fitting, to celebrate, and be glad, for this, your brother, was dead, and is alive, was lost, and is found, here's the heart, of Jesus again, in responding, to that complaint, of the Pharisees, that he was receiving, sinners, and eating with them, yes, restoration carries, right to sonship, here are you and I, tonight, you come back, to him, are you still not, in the father's house, have you come back, to Jesus, in response, to his own, call to you, come to me, and I will give you rest, and you can see, thirdly, [35 : 28] Christ's joy, in that, it was fitting, he said, the father said, that we celebrate, and be glad, the fatted calf, this was a special, calf usually kept, for celebrations, and it was a cause, to celebrate, and indeed, you find that, near the beginning, of the chapter, where he says, I tell you, in verse seven, there will be joy, more joy, in heaven, over one sinner, who repents, than over ninety-nine, righteous persons, who need no repentance, don't think, it's just the angels, that rejoice, when it says, there's joy, in the presence, of the angels, the savior rejoices, the heart, of Jesus, is glad, over every sinner, that comes back, to him, you know, that's, saying something, about our non-return, if the heart, of Christ, is indeed, filled, with delight, and joy, over sinners, repenting, and coming back, to him, what does it say, about those, who don't, what does it say, about the seriousness, of refusing, to come back,

Christ's joy, is it over you, if you haven't, come back to him, will it be over you, tonight, will you not, make the savior, glad, if you haven't, done it already, by coming back, to him, and by responding, to his love, and to his call, Elizabeth Browning, who became the wife, of the poet, Robert Browning, was born, into a family, of twelve children, the father, was very domineering, very, very strict, and in fact, he told all his children, that they were not, allowed to marry, he forbade them, to marry, and at fifteen, Elizabeth became very ill, she had head, and spinal pains, which lasted, the rest of her life, so she developed, a love for poetry, spending much, of her time, in a room, and in the 1830s, and 1840s, she became, a very popular, writer, and she got, the attention, through that, of Robert Browning, himself, a poet, at that time, and so, once they got, to know each other, Elizabeth actually, ran off with him, and they married, in secret, and moved to Italy, and her father, completely, disowned her, and for the next, ten years, Elizabeth wrote, to him regularly, from Italy, beautiful letters, poetic letters, trying to mend, the relationship, with her father, these letters, can be read today, because, they're in the form, of a book, she never once, received a response, from her father, and a year, before her father, died, she received, a box in the mail, from him, imagine, that excitement, after all these years, ten years, sending him letters, regularly, yet not even, responded once, and here's this box, coming from him, and when she opened, the box, she was massively, disappointed, because here, were all her letters, that she had ever sent, unopened, in this box, what a tragedy, even if he had just, read one, it might even, have melted his cold, and stubborn heart, friends, the Bible, is God's letters, to us, they contain, many beautiful appeals, to us, to return to him, to restore, a broken relationship, that we have, by our sins, have caused, I know you read them, please go beyond, reading them, please respond, to what they're saying, go back, to God, to God, as we read in, Isaiah 55, seek the Lord, while he may be found, call upon him, while he is near, let the wicked, forsake his way, and the unrighteous man, his thoughts, let him return, unto the Lord, and he will have mercy, upon him, and to our God, for he will, abundantly, pardon, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, let's pray, Lord, our God, we thank you, for the pardon, that is so abundant, with you, we ask that you, would enable us, to open our hearts, to you, we know that you, address us, through your word, that you continue, to speak to us, that your appeals, to us, in the gospel, come to be heard, by us outwardly, we pray,

Lord, that each of us here, may know that response, of penitence, and faith, for we know, that you're waiting, to receive, penitent sinners back, we know the quality, of your welcome, we know, what you will give, to us, as we come to you, and Lord, we ask, that you would, give us, to be the cause, of joy, in the presence, of the angels, in coming, to repent, of our sin, in coming, to receive you, and to be received, by you, bless us, we pray now, continue with us, for Jesus sake, Amen, Amen, let's conclude, by singing, Psalm 107, 107, in this, Sing Sam's version, singing to the tune, St. George's, Edinburgh, and that's on page, 144, we're singing, verses 17, to 22, of Psalm, 107, some erred, through their rebellious, ways, and for their sins, paid dear, all kinds of food, revolted them, the gates of death, threw near, then in despair, they sought the Lord, he saved them, from their doom, his word, went forth, with healing power, and kept them, from the tomb, so for the

Lord's, unfailing love, let them give thanks, again, and for the awesome, deeds of power, which he achieves, for men, let them prepare, a sacrifice, and bring an offering, in praise of all, his mighty acts, let them rejoice, and sing, these two verses, some erred, through their rebellious, ways, some erred, through their rebellious, ways, and for their sins, paid dear, all kinds of food, we hold to them, the gates of death, through years, when in history, they sought the Lord, he saved them, from their doom, his word, went forth, with healing power, and kept them, from the tomb, his word, went forth, with healing power, and kept them, from the tomb, so for the Lord's, unfailing love, let them give thanks, again, and for the awesome deeds, of power, which he achieves, for men, let them bring, and sing, and sing, and sing, and sing, and sing, and sing, in praise, of all, his mighty, and let them rejoice, and sing, in praise, and sing, in praise, of all, his mighty earth, let them rejoice,
[44 : 50] and sing, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah, ah amen, Amen.

Amen. Amen. I'll go to the side door here to my right this evening.

Lord, we pray now that your blessing will accompany the food we are to partake of at the fellowship. We ask for your presence to be known to us there. And we ask now that your grace and your mercy and your peace be our portion now and evermore.

Amen.