

Dec Communion service

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Date: 08 December 2013

Preacher: Rev Iver Martin

[0 : 00] Psalm number 24. And it's on page 230. It's the traditional version of the psalm.

I'm going to sing from the beginning down to verse 6. The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains, the world that is inhabited, and all that there remains.

For the foundations thereof he on the seas did lay, and he hath it established upon the floods to stay. So first six verses from Psalm 24. The earth belongs unto the Lord.

We're going to stand to sing. The earth belongs unto the Lord, and all that it contains. The world that is inhabited, and all that there remains.

[1 : 14] For the foundations thereof he on the seas did lay, And he hath it established upon the floods to stay.

Who is the man that shall ascend?

I'm to the hill of God. For who within his holy place Shall have a firm above Whose hands are clean, Whose heart is pure, And come to heaven, And come to heaven, Who hath not lived in a pistol, Nor storm be seen fully, He from the eternal shall receive, The blessing thereof of all.

A righteousness in from the Lord, Of his salvation, This is the generation, That after him inquired, O Jacob, O Jacob, O Jacob, Do seek thy face, With their whole hearts desire.

[4 : 12] Please be seated. Please be seated. We're going to bow our heads, And come to the Lord in prayer. There are many things, O Lord, That thrill us about what we do right now.

One of them is that we stand in the tradition of the apostles, That we meet together in the fellowship that the Holy Spirit has created through the death, Resurrection, And the ascension of our Lord. And that whilst our circumstances are so different, Our appearance is different, The building in which we worship is not one which they would have had. And yet we come, largely we believe, In the same simple, straightforward way in which they would meet together, And they would remember the Lord's death on the Lord's day.

Our Father in heaven, We pray to lay hold upon that simplicity that concentrates exclusively upon your word. We pray that today that your word will have the central place in our worship, As we expound it and receive it, And as we ask that our hearts may be opened, So that by faith we will come to it with hunger and thirst.

We ask, Lord, that your word will not only take a central place here in this place, But that it will take the central place in our hearts, As we leave here, And as we go to live for Jesus, In a world which is, Which you have created, And yet a world which is full of hostility against the gospel.

[6 : 02] And yet, Lord, you have promised that one day the earth will, Be filled with the glory of the Lord, As the waters cover the sea. And we can't help but longing for that day, O Lord.

In fact, the more that we are conscious of the unbelief that surrounds us, The more we long, And the more we ought to pray, And yearn, After that day which you have promised, That the gospel will take hold of people's hearts, And will bring them personally to a knowledge of Jesus.

That's what you've done for us. And we believe that what you've done for us, You can do for others. And so, Lord, by coming to look into the past, That what Jesus has done for us, We pray that at the same time, We will look forward to a future, Not just beyond this world, But for the world itself.

Because you have a purpose to build your church, And your promise that the gates of darkness, And hell, and Hades, Will not prevail against your plan.

We pray to have courage, And we pray that this communion service, Will remind us again of the reality of the Savior that we serve. God and man. We cannot possibly hope to understand what that means.

[7 : 22] And we do not understand what it means for the Son of God to be killed, And to die on the cross. Lord, we pray that there is something in our hearts, That militates against any such notion, How can God give himself?

Or how can God lay down his life? And yet, in the person of Jesus Christ, That is what we remember. Our Father in heaven, We pray today to be helped by the Holy Spirit, To comprehend and apprehend, What you have done for us in Jesus Christ.

And to lay hold upon it by faith. We ask, Lord, that each one of us, That one of us might be enlightened in our minds and in our hearts. And we pray for anyone here who hasn't yet come to faith, That place where they have put their trust in Jesus.

We pray that something in this service will speak to them, And that the Holy Spirit will take hold of them, And make them yours, And turn their hearts around, As our hearts have been turned by him. Our Father, we pray that we might come to the table in the right frame of mind. We pray that we will never compare ourselves either up or down with anyone else. Keep us from ever looking down on our brother and sister in Jesus.

[8 : 46] Keep us from ever idolizing those who are in themselves saved by grace. Oh, Lord God, we are all on the same level as we sit before you today.

All of us, by grace, we have been saved through faith. And we do not deserve your kindness and your love towards us. And yet it is a reality that we are commanded to lay hold of.

And so, keep us from looking inward too much at ourselves. Keep us, Lord, from dwelling on ourselves to the point that we are not able to see what Jesus has done. But, Lord, lead us to the cross.

And lead us to an understanding of what took place. That great transaction when he who knew no sin was made to be sin for us.

That we might become the righteousness of God in him. And so, Lord, bind us together in fellowship. The fellowship of the Spirit. We want to remember once again those who are not with us.

[9 : 47] Who are part of our fellowship as well. We want to remember them, Lord, because they are one with us. And we ask that you will be present with them where they are.

And draw near to them in your grace and in your love. And, Lord, we pray that you will do in us and for us now more than we can ask or even think.

Draw us all to your throne now, we pray. And forgive all our sin in Jesus' name. Amen. We are going to read together from the Old Testament book of Leviticus and chapter 16.

That's on page 113. Leviticus 16.

The Lord spoke to Moses after the death of the two sons of Aaron, when they drew near before the Lord and died. And the Lord said to Moses, Tell Aaron your brother not to come at any time into the holy place inside the veil before the mercy seat that is on the ark, so that he may not die.

[11 : 10] For I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat. But in this way Aaron shall come into the holy place. With a bull from the herd for a sin offering and a ram for a burnt offering.

He shall put on the holy linen coat and shall have the linen undergarment on his body. And he shall tie the linen sash round his waist. And wear the linen turban. These are the holy garments.

He shall bathe his body in water and then put them on. And he shall take from the congregation of the people of Israel two male goats for a sin offering and one ram for a burnt offering.

Pay particular attention to the two male goats. They are central to this chapter. Verse 6. Aaron shall offer the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house.

Then he shall take the two goats and set them before the Lord at the entrance to the tent of meeting. And Aaron shall cast lots over the two goats. One lot for the Lord and the other lot for Azazel.

[12 : 13] And Aaron shall present the goat on which the lot fell for the Lord and use it as a sin offering. But the goat on which the lot fell for Azazel shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement over it, that it may be sent away into the wilderness to Azazel.

Aaron shall present the bull as a sin offering for himself and shall make atonement for himself and for his house. He shall kill the bull as a sin offering for himself. And he shall take a censer full of coals of fire from the altar before the Lord and two handfuls of sweet incense, beaten small, and he shall bring it inside the veil.

And put the incense on the fire before the Lord, that the cloud of the incense may cover the mercy seat that is over the testimony so that he doesn't die. And he shall take some of the blood of the bull

and sprinkle it with his finger on the front of the mercy seat on the east side.

And in front of the mercy seat he shall sprinkle some of the blood with his finger seven times. Then he shall kill the goat of the sin offering that is for the people and bring its blood inside the veil and do with its blood as he did with the blood of the bull, sprinkling it over the mercy seat and in front of the mercy seat.

Then he shall make atonement for the holy place because of the uncleanness of the people of Israel and because of their transgressions, all their sins. And so he shall do for the tent of meeting which dwells with them in the midst of their uncleanness.

[13 : 38] No one may be in the tent of meeting from the time he enters to make atonement in the holy place until he comes out and has made atonement for himself and for his house and for all the assembly of Israel.

Then he shall go out to the altar that is before the Lord and make atonement for it and shall take some of the blood of the bull and some of the blood of the goat and put it on the horns of the altar all round.

And he shall sprinkle some of the blood on it with his finger seven times and cleanse it and consecrate it from the uncleanness of the people of Israel. And when he has made an end of atoning for the holy place and the tent of meeting and the altar, he shall present the live goat. And Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the light goat and confess it over all the iniquities of the people of Israel and all their transgressions, all their sins. And he shall put them on the head of the goat and send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a man who is in readiness.

The goat shall bear all their iniquities on itself to a remote area and he shall let the goat go free in the wilderness. Then Aaron shall come into the tent of the meeting and shall take off the linen garments that he put on when he went into the holy place and shall leave them there.

[14 : 51] And he shall bathe his body in water in a holy place and put on his garments and come out and offer his burnt offering with the burnt offering of the people and make atonement for himself and for the people.

And the fat of the sin offering he shall burn on the altar. And he who lets the goats go to Azazel shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water. And afterwards he may come into the camp. And the bull for the sin offering and the goat for the sin offering whose blood was brought in to make atonement in the holy place shall be carried outside the camp. Their skin and their flesh and their dung shall be burned up with fire.

And he who burns them shall wash his clothes and bathe his body in water. And afterwards he may come into the camp. And it shall be a statute to you forever that in the seventh month and the tenth day of the month you shall afflict yourselves.

Shall do no work either the native or the stranger who sojourns among you. For on this day shall atonement be made for you to cleanse you. You shall be clean before the Lord from all your sins.

[15 : 50] It is a Sabbath of solemn rest to you. And you shall afflict yourselves. It is a statute for ever. Well, we'll leave that chapter there. And we ask that God will bless it too.

As we're now going to sing some verses in Gaelic in Psalm 34. We do this when the two sections of our congregation come together as at present.

We have a Gaelic singing. And we're going to do that now. We're going to sing in Psalm 34. And we're going to sing three verses from verse 7 to verse 9.

Psalm 34 in English. In English. It is, O taste and see that God, the verse 7. Yes.

The angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear. And them delivereth. O taste and see that God is good who trusts in him is blessed. Fear God is saints. None that him fear shall be with want oppressed.

[17 : 07] And in Gaelic is, Ha aeallt jay a cawnpachach, Myn raam, Da neacol e. Ga foosglug. Ska n'hesar king on hriplachyf guileur, O blasef, O gus fechaf shog, O maes, O milish dhia, O fersins, Beannis dheco biaach, O jarrabus, As and ria.

We'll sing three verses, Three rhine, For n'hachgou jarang. Ha aeallt jay a cawnpachach, A cawnpachach, Myn raam, Da neacol e. Ha aeallt jay a cawnpachach, A cawnpachach, A cawnpachach, A ureojot a cawnpachach, A cawnpachach, A cawnpachach, A cawnpachach, Satsang with Mooji \$ satisfiesments are now \$ fired at \$\$\$ \$ w \$.

\$ \$ God...

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[20 : 20] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[22 : 50] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[25 : 20] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[27 : 50] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[30 : 20] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[32 : 50] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[35 : 50] Thank you.

And the penalty.

Thank you.

Thank you.

And the other goat.

[38 : 20] Thank you.

God resided. You might think of God residing in heaven. He does, but God chose on this occasion. He so loved his people. It was most peculiar because his people often rebelled against him, and yet there was this peculiar love that God had for his people that bound him to them and meant that he personally came and resided in the most holy place, which was in the tabernacle, which was in the center of the camp, which was God amongst his people. We believe by the promise of Scripture that one day God will once again dwell with his people. This time there'll be no rebellion.

There'll only be perfection where we will be able to see God, and we will have direct access to him, because his name will be on our foreheads, and there'll be no night there, and God will wipe away every tear. And what it says is this, the dwelling of the Lord will be amongst men. That's what it was in the Old Testament, but the Old Testament was so imperfect. But if we look forward to an eternity where the dwelling of the Lord will be with men and women who are his and who have been made perfect by his Spirit. So there was two goats then. One was put to death, and the blood was taken, and it was sprinkled on the Ark of the Covenant, and that made atonement for sin. That was God accepting himself personally, accepting the sacrifice that had been made on behalf of all the people.

And when we say that, God, I think this is something that we should dwell on, because in a moment we're going to turn to how this prefigured the Lord Jesus, but I think we should try and appreciate

that when God accepted the sacrifice on behalf of the people, he wasn't in any way reluctantly tolerating it.

[41 : 42] He was saying, I willingly accept this. With all my being, I love this people.

I hate the separation that exists between us. I hate the fact that we cannot be one. I loathe sin. And the only reason I cannot show myself in all my glory to my people is because of the sin that separates us. But that was, that's not my doing.

And God, at the same time, worked his way through the centuries to the point where his own son would come and where he would open up that separation between us.

The curtain of the temple, that was the separation. When Jesus died on the cross, the curtain of the temple was opened so that we could have access directly to God and so that the barrier would be removed.

[42 : 48] And the day of atonement that we've just read about was a prefigurement to the day of atonement in which the Lamb of God himself would lay down his own life and his blood presented to God.

That's what happened on the cross. There's two ways in which you can look at the cross today. You can look at it from the point of view of what happened on the outside, the cruelty of the soldiers, the events that led up to the cross, the pain physically that he endured on the cross.

But the Bible opens up what took place between Jesus and the Father in heaven. that when he laid down his life on the cross, he did so as the sacrifice that paid the price, the entire price for our sin. And he did so in love. And when he did so, the Father accepted his sacrifice on our behalf. Now, these two days of atonement are connected, the Old Testament day of atonement and the day of atonement when Jesus laid down his own life.

They're connected for us in Hebrews chapter 9, in the verses that we've just read, where we read, For if the sprinkling of defiled persons with the blood of goats and bulls and with the ashes of a heifer sanctifies for the purification of the flesh, how much more, says the apostle, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

[44 : 35] This verse tells us that the sacrifice and the high priest are none other than Christ himself.

The verse tells us of the superiority of Jesus as high priest, because now it is God who undertakes that sacrifice.

You remember when we read in Leviticus chapter 16, where the whole, the first part is about how Aaron had to offer the bull for himself. That's because he was as guilty as anyone else.

Although he represented the people, he had to make sacrifice for his own sin. But Jesus did not have to, because he was God himself.

God made it his personal business to take upon himself our nature so that he become one of us, so that he would represent us before the Father and die on our behalf.

[45 : 46] How much more. We read also that his death was through the eternal Spirit. We saw last night of how God the Father and God the Spirit and God the Son, they were involved in each other in every element of Jesus' work in the world.

And how it's very important not to make too much of a separation between them, although it was Jesus who died. It wasn't God the Father who died, it was Jesus, the Son, who died.

And yet, this verse tells us that when he laid down his life, he did so through the Spirit. The Spirit was present, presenting his offering to God. And what this tells us is that we can be absolutely guaranteed that our sin is forgiven by faith in Jesus Christ because it was God himself.

If it had been any other, well, it just couldn't have happened. But because this is God himself who is on the cross, laying down his life for his people, we have an absolute guarantee.

It just doesn't get more certain than that. One writer says, the dignity of his person guarantees the incalculable value of his sacrifice.

[47 : 27] We're remembering Christ today. Christ who became our sacrifice. Christ who offered himself up on the day of atonement.

And Christ who did so perfectly and effectively so that our lives would be changed. Well, the high priest's job wasn't over.

When he offered the blood of the dead goat, there was another element to be done. He then, after he came out of the most holy place, he had the other goat to see to.

And this was entirely different. And one had to follow the other. You couldn't have one without the other. The two goats were the one event. And the live goat had to be dealt with after the dead goat was presented.

The blood of the dead goat was presented before the Lord. It couldn't happen the other way. The high priest went to the live goat who was waiting all the time, tied up to the door of the tabernacle, and he laid his hands on the live goat.

[48 : 39] And this was in front of everyone. This was visible. Everyone was to look and see what was happening because what was happening was God had forgiven their sins completely, eternally, absolutely.

And now the high priest was to come and he was to lay his hands. And as he did so, the people knew well that the entirety of their guilt, all the sin that they had committed, it was placed, it was transferred onto the live goat.

And then a person who was designated for this function, he took the live goat and he led it away from the camp. He was to take it into an unknown place.

He wasn't to take it 100 yards or half a mile. He was to take it out of sight. That goat was never, ever to be seen again. And that was to signify the extent of the forgiveness which the people now enjoyed, the peace with God.

And our forgiveness is guaranteed because our sacrifice has been offered to God and God has accepted the death of Jesus.

[49 : 59] And he has sent our sin and our guilt away, never to be witnessed or seen again. We are not today to dwell on what we have done in the past.

There's an extent, of course, to which you can't forget your past. We all have memories of the past. But as we are assured once again of the death of Jesus as the payment for our sin, we are to drive that guilt away because God has sent it away.

See, that's the difference between the way we forgive people and the way God forgives us. We forgive people by saying, oh, it's all right. We'll just forget it. We'll just move on. But when God forgives a person, He actually takes the guilt of our sin and He does away with it.

Only God can do that. He actually eradicates it. He makes it disappear.

He erases the guilt. And He clothes us, we're told in the New Testament, with the righteousness of Jesus Himself.

[51 : 20] How much more. Let's bow our heads in prayer. Our Father in heaven, we pray now that as we consider how the Day of Atonement pointed the attention of the people of God to another day that would come in which your anger would be assuaged and in which your justice would be satisfied and in which the door would be opened for your people to have access to you, we pray that today that you will give us that same certainty that as the live goat was taken away into the wilderness, never to be seen again, we pray that you will assure us of our forgiveness and that you will give us that peace of God that passes all understanding as we meet before you today.

In Jesus' name, Amen.