

What is Jesus Doing Right Now? - Communion Service

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Date: 25 August 2024

Preacher: Rev Murdo Campbell

[0 : 00] Good morning. It's lovely to be with you again this morning as we gather together in worship. So let us worship God this morning. We're going to sing to God's praise in Psalm 68.

Psalm 68 is in the Scottish Psalter. It's on page 303 if you're using the blue psalm book. Psalm 68. Psalm 68. We're singing from verse 18 down to the verse mark 20.

And the words that we're singing, they remind us this morning that as we gather together in worship on the Lord's day, we do not worship a saviour who is dead.

We remember his death this morning, but he is not dead. He has risen. He has ascended up on high. And that's what the psalmist reminds us. That's what we are to sing about.

Down to the verse mark 20 where it says, He of salvation is the God, who is our God most strong.

[1 : 17] And unto God the Lord from death the issues do belong. So we'll sing these verses of Psalm 68. And we'll stand to sing if you're able to God's praise. ■ must kenneth he shalle who is dead.

He's God. Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, Ascended upon high, And in triumph victorious, Captive, Captivity, Thou hast received gifts for men For such as did repel Aim for them that God the Lord In midst of them might dwell Blessed be the Lord Who is to us of our salvation God

Who daily with his benefits As plentifully doth Lord He of salvation Is the God Who is our God most strong And unto God the Lord from death The issue is to belong Well if I could just speak to the children for a few moments It's lovely to see some of the boys and girls here this morning It's great to be with you And it's lovely to be in your church this morning

I was wanting to speak to you I usually in Barvis every morning I would speak to the children about things we see at home That remind us about Jesus Things we see at home that remind us about Jesus And usually I would take something from home that I could show you And remind you about Jesus But this morning I've taken something that you probably won't find in your home You'd probably find it Well actually you'd probably find it when you go away on holiday to the mainland And I'm sure you can work out what I've got with me this morning Maybe you've seen one of these before Do you know what it is?

Have you seen one of them before? Yeah? No!

[4 : 31] No!

No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! No! having a happy meal and inside it you maybe you choose chicken nuggets or you have burger and chips or you have fish fingers or maybe you're really healthy and you have carrot sticks and cucumber but always inside a happy meal you get a little toy I guess that's why they call it a happy meal it's a great little box that's full of happiness and you know boys and girls every time I see a happy meal box so every time we go to McDonald's and we get a happy meal it always reminds me of the happy meal that's mentioned in the Bible because the Bible speaks about a happy meal and it's a happy meal for those who love Jesus and follow Jesus and serve Jesus it's a happy meal for those who come together and sit together and remember the death of Jesus now as you know remembering someone's death isn't often a happy occasion it's often a very sad occasion but when it comes to the death of Jesus the death of Jesus is a happy occasion it's always a happy occasion because as we were just singing Jesus is not dead he is risen but it's so happy for us to remember that Jesus died because he died on the cross as you know I'm sure you've been told before he died on the cross to save us from our sins and he rose again from the dead to give to us the promise of eternal life and those who love Jesus those who follow Jesus they gather around this happy meal that's what you're seeing in front of you today this is a happy meal we're gathering to remember the death of Jesus and this happy meal it's called the Lord's Supper and we remember the Lord's Supper today we'll do that at the close of the morning service you might not be in to see it but we'll be remembering the death of Jesus and those who love Jesus will be sitting at the Lord's table and they'll be eating this happy meal because the happy meal is the Lord's Supper and maybe you've seen it before you've seen what happens you've seen little things down at the front where they will take a little bit of bread to remember the broken body of Jesus how he was crucified for our sins and they'll take a little bit of wine to remember the blood of Jesus and how the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all sin and although it's sad to think that Jesus died on the cross because of our sin it's happy it's wonderful to know that he is a savior who died for sinners such as we are and so I hope you'll remember that the Lord's

Supper is a happy meal I hope that all of us as Christians remember that the Lord's Supper is a happy meal because for those of us who love Jesus and followed Jesus and trust in Jesus we are remembering this morning that Jesus died on the cross to take away our sins so boys and girls I hope you remember that that every time you have a happy meal every time you go to McDonald's and I'm sure you'll go and you have a happy meal remember that there's a happy meal for Christians for those who love Jesus and follow Jesus and trust in Jesus and the happy meal is the Lord's Supper so thank you for listening you're very very good at listening so we're going to say the Lord's Prayer together we're going to clasp our hands and we'll close our eyes and we'll say the Lord's Prayer together okay our Father which art in heaven hallowed be thy name thy kingdom come thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom the power and the glory forever amen well thank you for listening so we're going to sing again we're going to sing this time in Psalm 121

Psalm 121 it's in the Scottish Psalter page 416 Psalm 121 page 416 and as we're singing this psalm the children go out is it this door this door okay I'm just following my instructions okay Psalm 121 as I often remind the people in Barvis this is the keeper psalm we are reminded in this psalm that the Lord is our keeper we cannot keep ourselves but he promises to keep us when we look to him I to the hills will lift mine eyes from whence doth come my need my safety cometh from the Lord who heaven and earth hath made thy foot he'll not let slide nor will he slumber that he keeps behold he that keeps Israel he slumbers not nor sleeps so we'll sing the whole psalm of Psalm 121 and we'll stand to sing if you're able to God's praise

I to the hills will lift mine eyes from whence doth come my need my safety cometh from the Lord who heaven and earth hath made thy foot he'll not let slide nor will he slumber that he keeps behold he that keeps Israel he slumbers not nor sleeps the Lord the Lord the Lord the Lord the Lord the Lord on my right the Lord the Lord by night they shall not the Lord who nor forever well.

[12 : 02] We're now going to read the Word of God as we find it in the Gospel according to John and John chapter 17. The Gospel according to John and John chapter 17.

We're going to read the whole chapter together. John chapter 17, reading from the beginning.

Let us hear the Word of God. When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven and said, Father, the hour has come.

Glorify your Son that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh, to give eternal life to all whom you have given him. And this is eternal life, that they know you, the only through God and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.

I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence, with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

[13 : 22] I have manifested your name to the people whom you gave me out of the world. Yours they were, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.

Now they know that everything that you have given me is from you. I have given them the words that you gave me, and they have received them, and have come to know in truth that I came from you, and that they have believed that you sent me.

I am praying for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those whom you have given me, for they are yours. All mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified in them.

I am no longer in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, keep them in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one.

While I was with them in the world, I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost, except the son of destruction, that the scripture might be fulfilled.

[14 : 26] But now I am coming to you, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have my joy fulfilled in themselves. I have given them your word, and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

I do not ask that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world. Sanctify them in the truth.

Your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, so have I sent them into the world, and for their sake I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth.

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

The glory that you have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one. I in them, and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me, and love them even as you loved me.

[15 : 40] Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, that you have given me because you loved me, before the foundation of the world.

O righteous Father, even though the world does not know you, I know you, and these know that you have sent me. I made known to them your name, and will continue to make it known, that the love with which you have loved me, may be in them, and I in them.

And so on, may the Lord bless that reading, of his own holy word. Well, before we consider a few verses, from that passage, we'll come before the Lord, in prayer.

Let's pray together. Gracious God, and loving Heavenly Father, we marvel this morning, at even reading those words, and knowing that, as Jesus prayed to his Father, that we pray to the same Father, in heaven, that Jesus today is our elder brother, that we are in Christ, united to him, blessed with every spiritual blessing, in heavenly places in Christ, and to know that we have received, that spirit of adoption, whereby we are able to cry, Abba Father, and that when we look, at the cross of Calvary, the cruel cross of Calvary, that we are able to echo, the words of the apostle, and say, behold what manner of love, the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called, the children of God.

It is a wonder to know today, that we are united, to this wonderful Savior, a Savior who promises, never to let us go, a Savior who assures us, that he will never leave us, he will never forsake us, he will be with us, every step of the way in life, and that even when we are confronted, with the reality, and even the finality, of the valley of the shadow of death, that he will be there with us then, for that is his promise, that we are in him, and he in us, and we are united to him, we are loved by him, we are kept, by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, ready to be revealed, in the last time.

[18 : 01] O Lord, we give thanks this morning, that however we feel, coming into church, however we feel, in and of ourselves, or whatever is going on at home, whatever is happening, in our providence, whatever pains, we are enduring, whatever suffering, we are going through, that the Lord knows it all, and that even as we come together, around his table, and around his word, enable us, we pray, to see more and more, of this wonderful saviour, who continues to pray for us, who continues to be faithful to us, that we thank thee, O Lord, today, that he ever lives, to make intercession for us, and it is a great wonder to us, as we were singing, that thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high, and in triumph victorious led, captive captivity, to know that we were once, those who were in bondage to sin, once enslaved to sin, sitting in darkness, in the dungeon of death, and yet Jesus has set us free, by the power of his spirit, that he has brought us from darkness, into his most marvelous light, he has brought us from death, to life, from the dungeon, to liberty, and to freedom in Christ, and Lord, our longing is, that even as we gather, this morning in worship, and even as we sit around, the Lord's table together,

Lord, our longing is, is to be more like him, to be more like, this wonderful saviour, who loved us, and gave himself for us, we confess, O Lord, that we are often, so unlike him, in the way we think, and in the way we speak, and even, in the way we act, but Lord, our prayer is, that today would be, a means of grace for us, to conform us, to form us, and to fashion us, to be more and more, like Jesus, to see him more, to love him better, to walk with him more closely, and ultimately, to serve him, more faithfully, Lord, remember us, we pray then, we ask, remember Lord, those who are unable, to be with us this morning, those who are at home, maybe with their children, or even due to illness, or old age, or infirmity, that whatever has kept them away, this morning, we pray Lord, that thou wouldest draw near to them, even those who are watching online, we ask that, although they are not partaking physically, we pray that they would know, the spiritual blessing, that they would know, the Lord's presence, that thou wouldest be, a wall of fire around them, that they may be assured, as the psalmist says, that the angel of the Lord, encamps, and round encompass it, all those about, that do him fear, and them delivereth,

Lord be gracious to us, we pray, bless also those, who are watching on, those who are looking on, we pray that these things, would speak to them, that Lord, the table itself, would be a sermon, a sermon, that proclaims to them, their need, their need of this, wonderful saviour, who was broken, who was wounded, for our transgressions, and bruised, for our iniquities, that they would see, even in the symbols, and the signs, pointers to this, wonderful saviour, whose blood is able, to cleanse us, from all sin, because that is his promise, that if we confess our sin, he is faithful, and he is just, to cleanse us, from all unrighteousness, for the blood of Jesus Christ, his son, cleanses us, from all sin, be gracious to us then, we pray our father, speak to us, as thy children, remind us, who we are, and whose we are, that we belong, to this wonderful God, who has provided for us, this new and living way, that he has brought us, to himself, not of ourselves, it is all of grace, not of works, lest any man should boast, and so Lord, help us, we pray, to worship today, in spirit, and in truth, go before us then, we ask, lead us, and guide us, into thy word, into thy truth, as Jesus prayed for us, that we might be sanctified, through it, that we might be made, more and more holy, but ultimately, that we might see Jesus in it,

Lord, remember us then, we pray, that Christ would have, the preeminence, that thou our father, would have all the glory, and that we as thy children, that we would know, blessing this morning, not because we deserve it, because Lord, solely thou art one, who is gracious, do us good, then we ask, take away our iniquity, receive us graciously, for Jesus sake, Amen.

Well if we could, with the Lord's help, and the Lord's enabling, this morning, if we could turn back, to that portion of scripture, that we read, the gospel according to John, John chapter 17, John chapter 17, and we'll just read again, from the beginning, John 17, and verse 1, when Jesus, had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes, to heaven, and said, Father, the hour has come, glorify your son, that the son, may glorify, you, Father, the hour has come, glorify your son, that the son, may glorify, may, you, may, you, you, as you know, often, when we approach, the Lord's day morning, of a communion season, we gather, around the Lord's table, and we partake, of the Lord's supper, and we remember, and we remember, the Lord's death, we look back, to what Jesus did, and we look back, to what Jesus, has done, for us, on the cruel, cross of Calvary, and in doing so, we recognize, our suffering Savior, and the sin he bore, and the salvation, he accomplished, and applied, and applied, towards us, we reflect, upon how he was, physically, and also spiritually, wounded, for our transgressions, and bruised, for our iniquities, we come, to the Lord's table, and we even repent, that it was our sin, that held him there, until it was accomplished, and yet, we rejoice, knowing that, he who knew no sin, he became sin, for us, also that we, might be made, the righteousness, of God, in him, my friend, when we approach, the Lord's day morning, of a communion season, we often, think about, what Jesus did, and what Jesus, has done for us, and rightly so, it's a means of grace, it's a means of strengthening, and sustaining us, in our walk with the Lord, and our growth, in grace, as a Christian, and so it's good for us, to remember, what Jesus did, and what Jesus, has done for us, but you know, as I was preparing, for this communion season,

[25 : 01] I was drawn to the question, well what is Jesus doing, right now, what is Jesus doing, right now, because we all know, that the cross, isn't the end of the story, on the third day, the Lord's day, he rose again, death couldn't hold him, the grave couldn't keep him, the angels proclaimed, about him, he is not here, for he is risen, and as we were singing, he has gloriously, ascended up on high, he has led, the captives free, he has put all his enemies, under his feet, and he has sat down, at the right hand, of the throne, of God, and so what is Jesus, doing right now, what is Jesus doing, as the head, of the Lord's table, and as we prepare, to sit at his table, and to partake, of his supper, what is Jesus doing, right now, and as you know, our Bible, it reminds us, that our Savior, he ever lives, and he ever lives, to make intercession, for us, therefore, what is Jesus, doing right now, my friend,

Jesus is praying for you, right now, Jesus is praying for you, right now, and I want to suggest, this morning, that this high priestly prayer, here in John 17, although it was prayed, on earth, it's also a prayer, in many ways, which is still being prayed, and presented, before the throne of God, in heaven, so now why Jesus, taught us to pray, thy will be done, as we were saying, earlier on, with the children, thy will be done, on earth, as it is, in heaven, and that's why I believe, that this high priestly prayer, although it was prayed, on earth, it's still being prayed, and presented, before the throne of God, in heaven, and so for a few moments, this morning, as we come, to the Lord's table, I want us to think, about this question, what is Jesus doing, right now, what is Jesus doing, right now, and the first thing we see, the first thing Jesus, prays about, is that he prays, for your salvation,

Jesus is praying, for your salvation, he says there in verse 1, we're told, when Jesus had spoken, these words, he lifted up his eyes, to heaven and said, father the hour has come, glorify your son, that the son, may glorify you, since you have given him, authority over all flesh, to give eternal life, to all whom you have given him, and this is eternal life, that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent, now as you know, it's always encouraging, to know that someone, is praying for you, and that you're upon their mind, and you're on their heart, and you're in their prayers, it's always encouraging, to know that people, are praying for you, and you know my friend, if the Lord has put someone, on your heart, to pray for them, then tell them, tell them, because, do you know us islanders, I don't think we're very good, at telling people, that we're praying for them, and yet there's no greater, encouragement to know, that someone, is bringing you, to the throne of grace, but what's so beautiful, about this chapter,

John 17, and this high priestly prayer, is that Jesus, is telling you here, and he's telling you, that he's praying for you, he's telling you, that he's praying for you, you know it's one thing, to know that God's people, are praying for you, which is such an encouragement, but it's another thing, entirely to know, that God's son, God's only begotten son, is praying for you, especially because, well those around you, they might not know, what you're going through, but he knows, he knows exactly, what you're going through, and he's telling you this morning, I'm praying for you, I'm praying for you, now as you know, these words in John 17, they were first spoken, on earth, in the garden, of Gethsemane, they were spoken, only hours, before Jesus, was arrested, and then tried, and crucified, on a Roman cross, but when Jesus, uttered these words, we know that, from the other gospel writers, we know that, his soul, was exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death, the hour had come, as Jesus says, where Jesus would become, burdened with sin, and he would become, sorrowful in his soul, and instead of thinking, about his soul, or his sufferings, or his sorrows, what we see in this prayer, is that this selfless, and sacrificial savior, he thinks about you, he prays for you, he intercedes for you, he doesn't think about himself, he thinks about you, and he does it, with such intensity, we're told, and such earnestness, of heart, that the gospel writers, they're shocked, at what Jesus is doing, that he's sweating, great drops of blood, and this is the thing, it was all for you,

Jesus is praying, for you, yes he's praying, for his bride, the church, yes he's praying, for us collectively, in that sense, but you know, I want us to see, that in many ways, this is a personal prayer, to you, he's praying, about you, he's praying, for you, because as you know, in our salvation, when Jesus, deals with us, when Jesus dealt with you, in coming to faith, he dealt with you personally, he dealt with you privately, just like he dealt with me personally, and privately, is that not how he deals with us, he deals with us personally, and privately, even when no one else, knows what's going on, in our heart and soul, not even those closest to us, not even our husband, or our wife, or our children, or our parents, but Jesus deals with us personally, and privately, and the amazing thing is, Jesus knew, and Jesus knew then, that he was praying for you, and he was praying for you then, and he's praying for you now, because he ever lives, to make intercession for us, my friend, what is Jesus doing, what's he doing right now, he's praying for your salvation, because that's his priority, his priority, is your salvation, because as the angel said to Mary, that's why they called him Jesus, the angel said to Mary, call his name Jesus, call him salvation, call him savior, because he shall save his people, from their sins, my friend,

[31 : 42] Jesus is praying for you, because his priority, is your salvation, his priority, is your salvation, now you might be thinking, this morning, Murdo, I'm already saved, I'm already a Christian, I'm already a follower, of Christ, I'm a member in this congregation, and I'm sitting this morning, at the Lord's table, so why is Jesus praying, for my salvation, because your salvation, is not yet complete, your salvation, is not yet complete, you know my Christian friend, it's wonderful to know, that we're saved, and we're sitting, at the Lord's table, but our salvation, is not yet complete, because the New Testament, teaches us, that our salvation, it involves, our past, our present, and also our future, where we're saved, we're being saved, and we will be saved, we're saved, being saved, and we'll be saved, and you know, this is the amazing thing, about your salvation, because Jesus was praying for you, in the past, before you were even born,

Jesus was praying for you, when you were still, in your mother's womb, being formed, and fashioned, he was praying for you, when you were still, in your sins, and faults of youth, he was praying for you, when you were still, a stranger to grace, and to God, out in the far country, like a prodigal, he was praying for you, even as he hung crucified, on a Roman cross, he was praying for you, Father, forgive them, for they know not, what they do, Jesus was praying for you, that you would see, the display, and the demonstration, of his love, towards you, on the cross, because he has displayed it, he has demonstrated it, and that whilst we were yet sinners, Christ died for us, and you know my friend, like it was, in my own experience, I'm sure you can look back, over your life, and see how the Lord, graciously, preserved you, how the Lord, even protected you, he kept you, from certain things, because, there were people, petitioning, and there were even parents, praying for your salvation, more than that,

Jesus was praying, for your salvation, and now that the grace of God, has been at work in your life, by the spirit of God, your eyes have been opened, your heart has been transformed, your will has been renewed, your life has been changed, you're now, a new creation, in Christ, where the old, has passed away, and all things, have become new, and it's all because, your great high priest, whoever lives, to make intercession, for you, he began that good work, in you, and he promises, and he prays, that it will be brought, to its completion, at the climax, and culmination, of this world, he promises, that your salvation, will come, to its completion, when he comes again, but until that moment, we're not there yet, until that moment, Jesus is praying, this morning, that you will continue, to love him, and look to him, and lean upon him, and learn from him, and live for him,

Jesus is praying, that you will continue, daily, to deny yourself, and take up your cross, and follow him, Jesus is praying, that you will, always seek first, the kingdom of God, and his righteousness, Jesus is praying, my friend, that you will live, well for him, and die well, in him, Jesus is praying, that you, will be saved, that you're being saved, and that you will be saved, why, because that's, what brings him glory, that's, what brings him glory, you might not think it, but your salvation, brings him glory, your salvation, brings him glory, that's why he's praying here, and he's praying in heaven, father, glorify your son, that the son, may glorify, you, your salvation, brings, him, glory, what is Jesus doing, right now, he's praying, for your salvation, then secondly, he's praying, for your safety, he's praying, for your safety, look at verse nine, look at verse nine,

I am praying, for them says Jesus, I'm not praying, for the world, but for those, whom you have given me, for they are yours, all mine are yours, and yours are mine, and I am glorified, in them, I am no longer, in the world, but they are in the world, and I am coming to you, holy father, keep them, in your name, which you have given me, that they may be one, even as we are one, while I was with them, I kept them in your name, which you have given me, I have guarded them, and not one of them, has been lost, except the son of destruction, that the scripture, might be fulfilled, I think I mentioned, I mentioned the other night, that one of our elders, in Barvis, he often says, that the first step, after being saved, is being kept, the first step, after being saved, is being kept, which is so true, but you know, what we see here, is that the first prayer, of Jesus, after you've been saved, is that you'll be kept, the first prayer, of Jesus, after you've been saved, is that you'll be kept, because Jesus prays,

[37 : 24] Holy Father, verse 11 there, Holy Father, keep them, in your name, which means, that Jesus, is not only praying, for your salvation, he's praying, for your safety, he's praying, that you'll be kept, because the first step, after being saved, is being kept, and you know, we forget this, so often, because we often, focus upon our feelings, don't we, we focus upon our feelings, and often we're focusing, upon our feelings, of failure, that we're not, good enough, or worthy enough, or fit enough, or faithful enough, to be a Christian, let alone to sit, at the Lord's table, that's why so many people, don't commit, their life to Jesus, or confess him, as their Lord and Savior, maybe that's why, some of you this morning, haven't yet made a profession, of faith, because you think, well, what if I start, but I don't finish, what if I start, but I don't finish, what if I become a Christian, and make a commitment, and I make a confession, and I come to the Lord's table, but then I fall away, what if I start, and I don't finish,

I don't want to let the Lord down, I don't want to let the Lord's people down, I don't want to let the, the church down, what if I start, but I can't finish, but this is when we need, to forget about our feelings, and our feelings of failure, and focus, focus upon not ourselves, but the faithfulness of Jesus, the faithfulness of Jesus, and commit ourselves to him, because the prayer, and promise of Jesus here, is that you'll be kept, you'll be kept, if he begins the work, he'll bring it to completion, he'll bring it to its end, if he starts, he will take you, to the finish, because the truth is, you will never get, to the finish line, my friend, and all of us know this, we'll never get, to the finish line, by our own efforts, or our own good works, or our own ability, to grow in grace, no, we will reach, the finish line, all because we're being kept, we're being kept, and as the apostle Peter learned, and as he lets us know, in his letter, he says we're being kept, not by ourselves, but by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, unto the end, of our salvation, you're being kept safe, until your salvation, is complete, what a wonderful promise, what a wonderful prayer, your salvation, is being kept safe, until your salvation, is complete, but you know, just because Jesus, is praying for, for our safety, as you know, that doesn't mean, that your Christian life, will come with all the promises, of promotion, and prosperity, and just because Jesus, prays that we'll be kept, that doesn't mean, that you'll be kept free, from trouble, or trials, or tribulation, no, because our Bible, never teaches us, that the Christian life, is a trouble free life, in fact, our Bible teaches us, the opposite, it tells us the truth, about life, that the Christian life, it's full of trouble, it's full of trials, and that it will be, through much tribulation, that we enter, the kingdom, of heaven, and my friend, maybe, you know this, maybe only too well, that the Christian life, it's full of hurt, full of heartache, full of heartbreak, the Christian life, is often a struggle, a struggle with sin, and sickness, and suffering, and stress, and sorrow, it's a struggle, with Satan,

I wonder what he was saying, to you this morning, before you came, into church, and yet here is Jesus, our great high priest, praying, and petitioning, and pleading, before the throne, of heaven, and what does he say, verse 15, look down, and verse 15, I do not ask, that you take them, out of the world, but that you keep them, you keep them, from the evil one, you know, in all your, trouble, and trials, and tribulation, in all your hurt, and heartache, and heartbreak, in life, and all the struggles, that we face, with sin, and sickness, and suffering, and sorrow, and Satan, you know, are you so thankful, today, my friend, that you can say, with a hymn writer, what a friend, we have in Jesus, all our sins, and griefs to bear, what a privilege, it is, to carry everything, to God, and prayer, and this is the glory, of the gospel, that our great high priest, has been touched, with a feeling, of our infirmities, he knows, what we're like, he knows, what we go through, he was, in all points, tempted as we are, yet, without sin, and so he invites us, he entreats us, to come, with all our burdens, and all our baggage, and to come, boldly, to the throne of grace, because when we come to it, we will receive mercy, and find that grace, to help, in time, of need, and I'm sure, my friend, through the providences, of life, you have found, that grace, to help, in time, of need, not when you didn't need it, but it was always, in time, of need, and that's what, the psalmist, was praying about, in Psalm 121, we were singing it earlier, the keeper psalm,

Psalm 121, a psalm, we often sing, where the psalmist, he asks the question, where does my help, come from, where does my safety, come from, and he confesses, and he confesses, that his help, and his safety, it comes from, no other than, the Lord, the maker of heaven, and earth, because the Lord, is his keeper, he says, I to the hills, will lift mine eyes, from whence, doth come mine aid, my safety, cometh from the Lord, who heaven, and earth, hath made, the psalmist, he lifts his eyes, and he looks beyond, the hills, and all the, the high places, of idolatry, and immorality, and he focuses attention, and he fixes his mind, on the high priest of heaven, because the high priest of heaven, he promises, and he prays, that his people, will be kept from slipping, and sliding, because he neither slumbers, nor sleeps, but not only that, I love Psalm 121, because the psalmist, he asserts to us, and he affirms to us, that all of the Lord's people, he says to us, that the Lord, is your keeper, remember that the Lord, is your keeper, and that us,

Jesus prays here, in his high priestly prayer, he prays, that you'll be kept, he will keep you, he will keep you, from all evil, he will keep your life, he will keep your going out, and your coming in, from this time forth, and even forever more, isn't it amazing, that Jesus is praying, Holy Father, keep them, keep them, in your name, I do not ask, that you take them, out of the world, but that you keep them, from the evil one, my friend, what is Jesus doing, right now, Jesus is praying, for your salvation, that it will ultimately, come to its conclusion, at the day of Jesus Christ, Jesus is praying, for your safety, he's praying, that you'll be kept safe, until your salvation, comes to its conclusion, and completion, he's praying, that you'll be kept, by the power of God, through faith, unto salvation, salvation, that's what Jesus, is doing, right now, and you know, with this,

[45 : 30] I'll conclude, at this point, because in the 19th century, there was a well-known, and well-established, hymn writer, from Northern Ireland, she was called, Charity Lees Bancroft, maybe you've heard of her before, Charity Lees Bancroft, she composed many hymns, contributed, get these things, out of the way, she contributed, to many hymn books, of some of the great preachers, of the time, some of the great preachers, like Spurgeon, or even my good friend, JC Ryle, but Bancroft's well-known, or best-known hymn, was originally called, The Advocate, but in recent years, we've all come to know it, affectionately, as the hymn, Before the Throne, and it's a hymn that reminds us, and reassures us, just as Jesus is doing here, in John 17, it tells us of what Jesus is doing, right now, what is Jesus doing right now, and Bancroft writes, before the throne of God above,

I have a strong and perfect plea, a great high priest, whose name is love, whoever lives, and pleads for me, my name is graven on his hands, my name is written on his heart, I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me, thence depart, when Satan tempts me to despair, and tells me of all the guilt within, upward I look, and see him there, who made an end of all my sin, because the sinless Savior died, my sinful soul is counted free, for God the just is satisfied, to look on him, and pardon me, behold him there, the risen lamb, my perfect, spotless righteousness, the great unchangeable I am, the king of glory, and of grace, one with himself I cannot die, my soul is purchased, with his blood, my life is hid, with Christ on high, with Christ my Savior, and my God, with Christ my Savior, and my God, and you know that's our testimony, as we come to the Lord's table, this morning, what is Jesus doing, right now, my life is hid, with Christ on high, with Christ my Savior, and my God, and my God.

Well, may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. Our Father in heaven, we give thanks this morning for reminding us of what Jesus is doing, of what he has done for us on the cross, that he was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities, but to know that today, he is continually making intercession for us, still praying for us as his people, still bringing us before the throne, and Lord, it is a wonder to us that, our salvation will come to its final conclusion, and completion, at the day of Jesus Christ, but until that moment, Jesus is praying that we would be kept, kept by the power of God, kept through faith, and that he would keep our going out, and our coming in, from this time forth, and even forevermore.

Lord, bless thy truth to us, we pray, uphold us, we ask, and enable us, we ask, to see Jesus in it, more and more. Take away then our iniquities, receive us graciously, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. We're going to sing again, we're going to sing this time, in Psalm 103. Psalm 103, it's in the Sing Psalms version.

[49 : 35] It's on page 135. Psalm 103, I was singing from the beginning, down to the verse, Mark 11.

In Psalm 103, it's a psalm that reminds us, of all the blessings, and all the benefits, that we have received, through Jesus Christ. He has blessed us. He says there, praise God my soul, with all my heart, let me exalt his holy name, forget not all his benefits, his praise my soul, in song proclaim.

The Lord forgives you, all your sins, and heals your sickness, and distress. Your life, he rescues from the grave, and crowns you, in his tenderness. So we'll sing Psalm 103, from the beginning, down to the verse, Mark 11, and we'll stand to sing, if you're able, to God's praise.

Praise God my soul, with all my heart, let me exalt his holy name, forget not all his benefits, his praise my soul, and song proclaim.

The Lord forgives you, all your sins, and heals your sickness, and distress.

[51 : 06] Your life, he rescues, from the grave, and crowns you, in his tenderness, and crowns you, in his tenderness.

He satisfies your deep desires, from his unending storage of good, so that just like the eagles' trend, your info later is renewed.

The Lord is known for righteous acts, and justice to the unthrodened ones, to Moses he made known his ways, his mighty deeds to his well sons, his mighty deeds to his well sons.

The Lord is merciful and kind, to anger slow and full of grace, he will not constantly reprove, or in his hand, or in his hand behind his face.

He does not punish our misdeeds, or give our sins their just reward, my greatest love as I have said, towards all those who fear the Lord.

[53 : 01] towards all those who fear the Lord. Amen. Well, we now come to the part of the service, that we often refer to as the fencing, of the Lord's table.

And fencing the Lord's table is a practice, that some have wanted to neglect, in recent years. And yet fencing the Lord's table is important. But I want to be clear, I don't fence the Lord's table.

The Lord fences the Lord's table. In fact, the Lord fences his table every time the gospel is preached. And the Lord fences his table, because it's his table.

It's not my table. It's not your table. It's not a free church table. It's the Lord's table. And when the Lord fences his table, he does so always from his word.

And he tells us who should, and who shouldn't sit at his table, and partake of his supper. And we see that even in Jesus' high priestly prayer, there in John 17.

[54 : 20] We've been asking, what is Jesus doing right now? What is Jesus doing right now? And we've seen that Jesus is praying for your salvation. He's praying for your safety. But Jesus is also praying for your sanctification.

Jesus is praying for your sanctification. He prays there in verse 17. Sanctify them in the truth. Your word is truth. As you send me into the world, so have I sent them into the world.

And for their sake, I consecrate myself, that they also may be sanctified in truth. You know, don't you find it so humbling that in heaven right now, Jesus is praying that you will be prepared for heaven.

In heaven right now, Jesus is praying that you will be prepared for heaven. Because is that not the purpose of sanctification?

To set apart, to separate, and to sanctify you for heaven. Sanctification is to make you holy, and ultimately to make you fit for heaven.

[55 : 29] But of course, your sanctification, the amazing thing about sanctification is, it's twofold. It's positional and progressive. Positional and progressive. Positional sanctification is that your position before a holy God has now changed.

Where you've been saved, you've been set apart, you've been separated from the world, and you're sanctified by the Spirit. And your position has changed, because you were once unsaved, but now you're saved.

Unholy, but now you're holy, or called holy. You were once unclean, but now you've been presented clean. You were lost, and now you're found. You were in darkness, but now you're in the light.

You've been brought from death to life, from the dungeon to liberty, from being an Adam to being in Christ, from being hell-bound. Now you're heaven-bound. You've been brought from being a sinner to, as the Bible describes you, as a saint.

My friend, your position has changed. And if your position has changed, then your place is at the Lord's table. If your position has changed, then your place is at the Lord's table.

[56 : 41] Because Jesus, he's praying for our sanctification. But not just our positional sanctification, he's also praying for our progressive sanctification, because he prays there in verse 17, sanctify them in the truth.

Your word is truth. And so whether we're conscious of it or not, we are being sanctified through the truth of God's word. Even this morning, we're being sanctified through the truth of both word and sacrament.

Because as we said, this is a means of grace. This is a means of strengthening and sustaining our faith. It's a means of our progressive sanctification, where we're being made more holy. And I hope more happy.

And ultimately more humble. Because we're being progressively prepared for glory. It might not feel like it. We might not think anything's really going on.

But this is what Jesus tells us. And as you know, what Jesus tells us is always true. And you know, this progressive sanctification always reminds me of a story Sinclair Ferguson once told.

[57 : 45] I love listening to Sinclair Ferguson. He told the story of his visit one day to a potter's workshop. And he said, on walking through the main entrance into the reception area, there was this large sign in front of him.

And the large sign read, workshop downstairs, showroom upstairs. Workshop downstairs, showroom upstairs. And in the workshop downstairs, that's where he went to visit first.

He said, you could watch and witness the process and the progression of the pot in the hands of the potter. As he was skillfully spinning and shaping and sculpting and sanding something into something beautiful.

And it was only on completion that the finished article would be taken from the workshop downstairs up to the showroom upstairs. And needless to say, my Christian friend, we are in the workshop downstairs.

Because here, Jesus is shaping us. He's sculpting us. He's sanding us. And sometimes it's painful. Sometimes it's difficult. But it's also that when we are the finished article, we will be put on display in the showroom of heaven.

[59 : 00] And we will be there as a trophy of grace. That's what you are. You're a trophy of grace. And that's why you're at the Lord's table today. And that's why you need the Lord's table today.

Not because you're perfect. My friend, don't ever think that anybody sitting at the Lord's table is perfect. They're far from perfect. But we are here because the Lord has worked in our life.

And we are here as an evidence of that outworking in our life. That Jesus is working in our heart. He's saved us. We're being saved. And we're going to be saved.

We are being prepared for heaven. That's why we're here this morning. Not because we're perfect. Not because we're good. Not because we're worthy. But because Jesus has begun that good work in us.

And he will bring it on to completion. at the day of Jesus Christ. And so my friend, if that describes you, you should be sitting at the Lord's table this morning.

[60 : 06] Because Jesus is praying for you. He's praying for your salvation. He's praying for your safety. And he's praying for your sanctification. He says, Father, sanctify them in the truth.

Your word is truth. we've been asking the question, what is Jesus doing right now? What is Jesus doing right now?

And we've said that Jesus is praying for your salvation. He's praying for your safety. He's praying for your sanctification. But you know, as we come to participate in the Lord's Supper and partake of this sacrament, we have to ask, well, what is Jesus doing now?

What is Jesus doing right now? What is Jesus doing as we sit around his table? What is Jesus doing as we see him in his supper?

What is Jesus doing as we witness the signs and the symbols of this sacrament? What is Jesus doing right now?

[61 : 18] And Jesus tells us. He tells us in John 17. He says in verse 24, Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me.

before the foundation of the world. You know, there's so much in this high priestly prayer that I feel I'm only scratching the surface. And maybe you'll look into it more in the afternoon.

But what I love about this prayer is that it covers every area of the Christian life. That Jesus is praying for your salvation, your safety, your sanctification, and he's also praying for your security.

He's praying for your security. Jesus is praying that you'll be with him where he is and that you'll see his glory. Jesus is praying that you will be with him where he is and that one day you'll see his glory.

But until that day, Jesus is praying that you'd know security in your salvation and that as you sit around the Lord's table today with your brothers and your sisters in Christ and as you partake of the Lord's supper together, that it will be a means of grace to you.

[62 : 42] That it will affirm to you and assure you that you belong to Jesus. That it will remind you and even reassure you that you are his and his for all eternity.

that it will strengthen and sustain you in your faith to keep going, to encourage you and enable you to keep serving, to keep pointing others to this wonderful Savior.

You know, Jesus, he's praying for you right now that you will remember and realize that this table, it is only a foreshadowing. it is only a foretaste of what's to come.

Father, I desire that they also whom you have given me may be with me where I am to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

What is Jesus doing right now? He's praying for your salvation, your safety, your sanctification and ultimately your eternal security.

[63 : 50] And so as we sit together with Jesus and eat together because he's present at his table, let us think on these things.

We now read the scriptural warrant for the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. It's found in 1 Corinthians 11 and verse 23. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and said, This is my body which is for you.

Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way also he took the cup after supper saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread, and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. And so friends, according to the institution and the command and the example of our Savior, we'll give thanks together.

Our Father in Heaven, we give thanks for these precious moments in life where we are able to come to the Lord's table and to know that it is a table for sinners.

[65 : 13] It is a table for those who have fallen short of the glory of God. It is a table for those who realize and have come to see not anything good in themselves but the beauty of Jesus, the wonder of the gospel and the glory of salvation.

We give thanks this morning that Jesus promises to be present at his table, to meet us and to assure us that he is here and he is with us in this sacrament, that he reminds us through these wonderful symbols of bread and wine, of his broken body and his shed blood and help us then to see him, to see him, to be reminded how he was wounded for our transgressions, how he was bruised for our iniquities, how his chastisement brought us peace.

But Lord, we give thanks for this table that it is a means of grace to us to strengthen us, to sustain us, to enable us, Lord, to keep looking to Jesus and to know him and to love him and to follow him as the author and the finisher of our faith.

Bless us, Lord, together then as we eat together, as we share together in this supper. May it be, Lord, a time of fellowship, of koinonia, one with another, but ultimately to have that communion with our Savior, to have communion with the saints, but to know communion with our Savior who loved us and gave himself for us.

Do us good, then we pray. Go before us, we ask, for we ask it in Jesus' name and for his sake. This morning, we've been asking the question, what is Jesus doing right now?

[67 : 00] And from John 17, we've discovered that Jesus is praying for your salvation, he's praying for your safety, he's praying for your sanctification, and he's praying for your security.

And my Christian friend, your security is important to Jesus. And it's important to him because he wants you to know and to remember that nothing and no one is able to separate you from him.

Is that not why Paul asked that question in Romans 8? Who? Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation?

No. Distress? No. Persecution? No. Famine? No. No. Nakedness? No.

Peril? No. The sword? No. No. In all these things, says Paul, we are more than conquerors through him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor even the things to come, neither height, nor depth, nor any other creature is able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

[68 : 28] My friend, isn't it remarkable that the one at the head of this table is praying for all those sitting at his table and he's praying for your salvation, your safety, your sanctification, and your security.

But as we leave the Lord's table today, let's leave with a renewed commitment a renewed commitment to him. We might have felt we weren't what we should be.

We always feel that. But let's leave with a renewed commitment to love the Lord more deeply, to walk with the Lord more closely, to listen to the Lord more earnestly, to serve the Lord more faithfully, and to sing to the Lord more heartily that before the throne of God above I have a strong and perfect plea, a great high priest whose name is love, who ever lives and pleads for me.

And may the Lord bless us. And may the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray. our Father in heaven, we give thanks that as thy children that thou hast fed us this morning, not only from thy word, but also from the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and that our prayer is that in seeing Jesus in the supper, we would leave knowing that this Jesus, he is one who strengthens us for the week that lies ahead.

He sustains us in our pilgrimage in this world, and that he promises that he will bring it all to its completion, that when the souls of believers are at their death, they are made perfect in holiness, and they do immediately pass into glory, and their bodies still being united to Christ to rest in the graves until the resurrection.

[70 : 25] And at the resurrection, believers will be raised up in glory. They will be openly acknowledged and acquitted on the day of judgment, made perfectly blessed, and go into the full, the full enjoying of God to all eternity.

Give to us, Lord, we pray, to walk by faith and not by sight, and to keep ever looking to this Jesus who loved us and gave himself for us.

Take away our iniquities. Receive us graciously for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning.

We're going to sing the words of Psalm 72, the well-known words of the last verses of this psalm, page 314 in the Scottish Psalter, verses 17 to 19.

This is a psalm that was written by Solomon. But as you know by singing it so often, it speaks about the greater than Solomon. It speaks about the greater king, the Lord Jesus.

[71 : 36] Because Solomon's name doesn't endure forever. But the name of Jesus does. The name of Jesus has stood the test of time.

And that's what Solomon tells us. His name forever shall endure. Last like the sun it shall. Men shall be blessed in him and blessed. All nations shall to him call.

Now blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel. For he alone doth wondrous works in glory that excel. And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity. The whole earth let his glory fill.

Amen. So let it be. These verses, and we'll stand to sing if you're able, to God's praise. Amen. Amen. This name forever shall endure, last like the sun it shall.

Men shall be blessed in heaven, and blessed all nations shall them call.

[72 : 53] Now blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel.

For he alone doth works in glory that excel.

And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity.

The whole earth let his glory be.

Amen. So let it be. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore.

[74 : 11] Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.