

Communion and Baptism Service - Observing Christ's Cross

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Date: 02 June 2024

Preacher: Rev James Maciver

- [0 : 00] Worship of God singing in Psalm 145, Psalm 145, the second version on page 444. We're singing verses 1 to 6.
- The tune is Warrington. O Lord, thou art my God and King, thee will I magnify and praise. I will thee bless and gladly sing unto thy holy name always.
- Each day I rise, I will thee bless and praise thy name time without end. Much to be praised and great God is. His greatness none can comprehend.
- We're singing verses 1 to 6 to God's praise. We stand to sing. Until my heart will fly and praise.
- I will thee bless and gladly sing unto thy holy name always.
- [1 : 21] Each day I rise, I will thee bless and praise thy name time without end.
- But surely grace and great God is. His greatness none can comprehend.
- His will ever miss and goodbye. The mighty act. I will sing of the glorious grace The mighty act so done by thee I will sing all the glorious grace And honour all thy majesty To thy wondrous works I will report By them the might shall be extolled Of all thy dreadful hearts, O Lord
- And I thy goodness will unfold Please be seated.
- Well, we now come to what's a very pleasant baptism, an adult baptism. We don't very often see that in our own context, but we still believe, of course, in the baptism of adults as well.
- [3 : 30] And Ian Don Campbell has come forward asking to take communion for the first time, and that's a wonderful privilege for us to have him come forward in that way with that desire.
- But not having been baptized previously, it's necessary that baptism precedes taking communion in the order of things spiritually. And so we've come to this point, and you yourselves today are witnesses, and also not just witnesses, but participants in the sense that you will be pledging silently your support for Ian Don as he comes now to be baptized.
- So first of all, I'm going to ask you all to stand, and please remain standing until the baptism is over. Ian Don, if you come forward, please. I'll ask you some questions, and then I'll ask you to kneel there after the questions.
- Right. Do you believe in God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, revealed in Scripture as the only true God and your God? Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, the only mediator between God and men?
- Do you now pledge to live a holy life as God will enable you by His grace to His glory? Thank you. Just be a thank you. First of all, we're going to engage in a word of prayer, asking the Lord to bless the ordinance.

[4 : 55] Lord our God, we thank you for the sacraments you have given your church. We know it's our privilege, Lord, always to participate and to be observers of baptism and of the Lord's Supper.

And we thank you today for the privilege that we are here to witness both and to participate in that appropriate way in the support we give to Ian Don, and also in the way we participate in the Lord's Supper.

Bless these two as we pray, and bless now this water to its own sacred use as we use it in baptism. We pray, O Lord, that Ian Don will know your blessing as he comes to offer himself to be baptized.

We thank you for the way that you have led him and the way you have brought him to know yourself. And we thank you for the way that that encourages us as a congregation, that your Holy Spirit is active and at work in our midst.

We pray for him in the days to come, as he now comes to be baptized and as he will take communion with the rest of your people here today. Lord, bless it to his own soul and bless it to ours also, that we may reflect upon it in days to come and give our thanks to the God of all grace and comfort.

[6 : 08] Receive our thanks now, we pray, and cleanse us from all our sin, for Jesus' sake. Amen. I am Don Campbell, I baptize you in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, one God.

May God bless you and keep you. May God make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May God lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace.

Another word of prayer just to finish off. Lord, bless what we have done now in your name, and grant that you would continue to bless us through the remainder of this service.

We ask that you would forgive our sins as we confess them. And in relation to what we see in baptism, Lord, we confess our need of being cleansed and washed in the blood of Christ by the power of your Holy Spirit.

And so, receive our thanks now, and all we ask is in Jesus' name. Amen. Bevan Calum Orlis-Smith will now read the word of God from Matthew 27, beginning at verse 27.

[7 : 24] Well, we turn to God's word as we have it in the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 27, taking up our reading there at verse 27. You find it around page 1005, Matthew 27 at verse 27.

And then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him. And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand.

And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews. And they spat on him and took the reed and struck him on the head. And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him, and led him away to crucify him.

As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. And when they came to a place called Golgotha, which means place of a skull, they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall.

But when he tasted it, he would not drink it. And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there.

[8 : 50] And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, This is Jesus, the King of the Jews. Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left.

And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself. If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.

So also the chief priests, so the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, He saved others, he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel. Let him come down from the cross, and we will believe in him.

He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now if he desires him. For he said, I am the Son of God. And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice saying, Eli, Eli, Lema, Sapatani.

[9 : 58] And some of the bystanders hearing it said, This man is calling Elijah.

And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. But the other said, Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.

And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom, and the earth shook and the rocks were split.

The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many.

When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, Truly, this was the Son of God.

[11 : 04] Amen. And may God bless that reading from his word. Let's engage now in prayer. We'll call upon the Lord in prayer.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Almighty God, we thank you for this day and for all that takes place in it, here in our witness, both in the sacraments and in the word being preached.

Help us in our worship, we pray, to know that we draw near to God with the promise that he will draw near to us. We thank you again for this day that you have set apart from the beginning of the creation, a day that is set apart to be holy to the Lord, and a day in which we find so many ordinances and privileges given to us.

We thank you for the gospel that draws us to you. And we thank you for the way that you use it in bringing people to know yourself. And we ask, O Lord, that today we will know your blessing as we come once more around your word and under your word.

Help us to know that the things that we confess about you are truly sealed to our souls. And bless us each one as we appear before you.

[12 : 17] You know our thoughts, you know our hearts, you know everything about us already, and yet you would have us to come and pray to you and confess our sin and seek your cleansing.

Lord, bless us, we pray, as a congregation of your people. And may this time of celebrating the Lord's Supper be used to our strengthening and to our confirmation as a congregation, that you take us as your people and that we take you as our God.

We ask, Lord, that your blessing will follow us in all that we seek to do in your name in this community. And we do ask, O Lord, that you would accompany your word especially and the witness of your people with the power of your Holy Spirit.

We thank you, Lord, for that Spirit that you take, where you take the things of Christ and show them to us. We thank you that you have your Holy Spirit to dwell in the hearts of your people, that they are united together in the bonds of fellowship through him.

And we thank you today that we can come and expect that the Lord will take those things of his word and sacrament and make them precious to us and make them effective in our experience to bless us and to sanctify us further in the things of God.

[13 : 33] We pray your blessing for all gatherings of your people today, wherever they gather throughout the world. Lord, we pray for them again and ask that you would make us conscious that we belong to such a great number that no one can number but the Lord himself.

We thank you that we are members of that church that extends even to the heaven itself, to those who have gone to be home with the Lord, and yet who are bound in spirit by that same Spirit of God, with those of us here who remain in this world.

We ask now your blessing to follow all that is being done in your name and to guide us and to keep us in mind and body through these things. Uphold us, we pray, with your Spirit and enable us to rejoice in your presence, enable us to know more of that joy that you give to your people, that joy that is truly, even in this life, filled with an anticipation of glory.

We ask your blessing, Lord, to be with those who can't be here today with us. We know that there are some who used to be here and who used to partake of the Lord's Supper and now no longer can do so through ill health or other reasons.

We pray for them, and we pray, Lord, that you would bless to them all that they have already partaken of in the course of their life. And we ask that you would be pleased to draw near to them, to assure them at this time that they are your people indeed, that you remember them.

[15 : 03] We ask your blessing now to continue with us here, and as we turn again to your word, to hear its teaching and to sing your praises, Lord, help us to do so with the joy of the Lord in our hearts, and seeking his glory and his praise in all that we do.

Hear us, we pray now, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Well, our next singing is going to be in Gaelic. It's customary for us to have a Gaelic singing when we come together for the Lord's Communion.

And the singing is from Psalm 146. You'll find it on the back page of the bulletin. Verses 5 and 6, and the English equivalent there as well.

These two verses, we remain seated for the Gaelic singing.

The Gaelic singing is from Psalm 146. The Gaelic singing is from Psalm 146.

[16 : 21] The Gaelic singing is from Psalm 146. They pleased to have a great creative Werk of Peace.

For this verse, we sing famous music beginning to make slow rap, Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[18 : 35] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[22 : 05] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[24 : 53] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[28 : 03] What is the of that parish of that care? record that? What did it mean to them? What would you have thought? Here you are, one of those sitting down and watching him there. What would this have felt like? What would your mind have actually thought of what was happening? You'd be asking, what's happening? This is midday and it's getting dark. And it lasted for three hours. Why? What's it about? What's remarkable about the event that this has to take place? Well, it's symbolic, isn't it? It's symbolic of the spiritual darkness that Jesus is experiencing in his heart, in his soul, as he carries the sin of his people, as he bears the punishment, as he bears what is due to them for their sins, as he enters into the darkness of soul. We'll see it in a minute when we come to the expression of

Jesus on the cross. Ila, Ila, lama sabachthani, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? But that is what this is symbolic of, as the creation itself actually comes to darkness. Remember what Jesus, how he described himself in John's gospel, I am the light of the world.

And whoever walks after me shall not abide in darkness. And here he is, the light of the world, experiencing darkness, as it were being turned into darkness. The darkness of his soul, as it's symbolized by the darkness of the creation. It's as somebody put it, the creation itself cannot bear to look upon its creator in the state that he is in, in the sufferings that he's enduring. He's the creator. He's the one who created light. He's the one who said, let there be light as it was in the beginning. And yet here is that creator himself entering into the darkness of his soul, about to expire on the cross. And the creation hides its face.

Jesus cannot bear to look upon such a terrible thing, such a mysterious thing, such an awful thing, as the darkness being experienced by Jesus.

You cast your mind back to the time when Israel were slaves in Egypt. And when the plagues, as they recorded for us there in Exodus, when the plagues came upon the land one after another, one of these plagues was the plague of darkness. And we read in Genesis there that there was darkness over the whole of the land of Egypt. But Israel had light in their dwellings. They lived in that part of the land called Goshen, which itself is the Hebrew word for light. And while there was darkness over all of the land of Egypt, the people of Israel had light in their dwellings. They were set apart from the Egyptians. The Lord was looking after them when it was dark elsewhere. They had the fullness of light in God's own miraculous way of providing that for them. There is no such thing at Calvary.

[31 : 32] You don't read here, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour, but there was light where Jesus was. There was light at Calvary. There was light around the cross. There wasn't.

light at Calvary. It was enveloped in darkness just like the rest of the land. What a Savior. What a love. What an event. What an experience for you sitting there with the rest of those who kept watch. And all of a sudden it gets dark and the gloom sets in. And you think to yourself, why is this happening? There must be something remarkable here for this to happen at the height of noonday, for this to become dark. And so it is remarkable. It's nothing less than the Son of God having taken our human nature, expiring on the cross, coming towards that time of his death on the cross.

Now that's what you remember in the Lord's Supper today. That's what you remember as you remember Christ in his death. You remember how the pain of his soul and the pain in his body was pain to the maximum, the pain due to you for your sins. And you also experience the creation in darkness when you expect it to be light. And you know that that is symbolic of his agony and darkness of soul.

That's what you would see. Other things as well, but we'll confine it to those two for the moment. And then secondly, what would you hear? What things would you actually hear spoken up or in conversation during those times, during that time that you sat here watching Jesus? Well, the first thing you would hear would be mocking words, words of mockery and derision. Verses 39 to 44. You can see there how those who were passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, you who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself. If you are the son of God, come down from the cross.

So also the chief priests with the scribes and elders mocked him saying, he saved others. He cannot save himself. He is the king of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross and we will believe in him.

[34 : 14] He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now if he desires him. For he said, I am the son of God. This is what you would hear. Derision and mocking thrown in the face of Jesus by those here who actually made mockery of him at that time. But you see, as we said last night, sometimes the gospel writers present the truth to us by way of even the mocking of Christ's enemies. Everything they're saying there is actually true of him. He is the king. He is the king of the universe. He is the one who holds all things in the power of his own hands. And just like it is in Luke chapter 15, the scribes and Pharisees then mocked him saying, this man receives sinners and eats with them.

What a great testimony to the truth of who Jesus is. That's exactly who he is. He receives sinners and eats with them. He enters into fellowship with them. That's what you're experiencing here today at the Lord's Supper. This man, this Jesus, he's derided here. He's mocked here. But the words of mocking that mock him as the king, as the son of God, actually convey the truth about him. And as you read these, as we said last night, you realize that everything being said here is actually true of him, though they're used as terms of mocking on the occasion in which they were spoken.

And of course, in verse 42, he saved others. He cannot save himself. What remarkable words these are. He saved others. Yes, he saved others. They're using that by way of mocking, but it's the truth about him.

He is the Savior. He cannot save himself. Now think about that. Could he have saved himself? Well, there's a sense in which you might say yes if he came down from the cross, but what would that mean? Even if it had been possible, it would have meant that you and I would not have been saved.

So from that point of view, he could not save himself. He would not save himself. He would not actually bypass the sufferings involved in the cross because that's what he came to do. That's what he came to finish. That's what he came to accomplish. This was the devil, as we saw last night. This was the devil's attempt to deflect Jesus and divert him from the path of obedience to the Father that he was on.

[36 : 48] He said, "If you are the Son of God, all of these kingdoms of the world and their glory I will give you. All you have to do is fall down and worship me." And Jesus says, "Get hence Satan." and the same when Peter tried to take him aside and say this shall not happen to you Jesus responded get behind me Satan an attempt to deflect Jesus to divert him from the path that he was on yes he is the king of Israel but for our sake he cannot come down from the cross for our sake he will not come down from the cross for our sake he will not save himself so that we can be saved and he remained true to his obedient self all the way through his agonies on the cross until it was accomplished until it was done you can see Matthew 26 chapter 26 and verse 53 there 26 and verse 53 where Peter had drawn his sword and tried to defend Jesus from those who had come with Judas Iscariot to apprehend him and take him into custody put your sword back into its place for all who take the sword will perish by the sword do you think that I cannot appeal now to my father and he will at once send me more than 12 legions of angels but how then would the scriptures be fulfilled that it must be so you see there is Jesus saying

I could call on multitudes of angels to come to my rescue to come to help me but how then would the scripture be fulfilled the scripture that prophesied that he would come and die for his people that's what he was committed to and if you go to John's gospel you'll find that in the garden of Gethsemane as he was coming out of the garden and this incident took place Jesus said the cup which my father has given me to drink shall I not drink it what was that cup?

that was the cup of his agony the cup of damnation the cup of what is due to you and I for our sins and what he's saying now is I will drink it I'll take it to the very last drop whatever suffering it means for me shall I not drink it that's what he did you would have heard mocking words but words that conveyed the truth about Jesus and the commitment of Jesus to die the death he came to die you would have heard mocking words you would have heard also pleading words for that you need to go to Luke's account of the crucifixion chapter 23 verses 40 to 43 and of course that means the cry of the thief from the cross both of these robbers, malefactors we read here in Matthew Matthew actually were involved first of all in deriding him but as you listened on to what was happening as you sit there with those who are observing the cross you'd have heard something happening you'd have heard some words that really filled you with amazement here is one of those two thieves and he has stopped deriding has stopped mocking he has stopped casting things against Jesus and he's come to ask him now something specific

Lord remember me when you come into your kingdom and then you'd have heard the response of Jesus to that truly I say to you today you will be with me in paradise what is happening here you are with these people listening to what's going on hearing these words and all of a sudden you hear this conversation this thief breaking out with a request to Jesus to remember him and Jesus not only hearing but replying and saying today you're going to be with me in paradise this man's going to be in paradise what do you mean this man's going to be in paradise what's he being crucified for he's being crucified for his crimes he's being crucified as a malefactor as a robber as somebody who deserves actually to be dead and to be put to death for his crimes and instead you find Jesus saying you're going to be with me today in paradise I hear you are today at the Lord's table and you're imagining yourself sitting there with the rest of them what would you have thought what would you have thought of Jesus himself hearing these words in response to the thief's pleading pleading words responded to by Jesus with comforting words today you'll be with me in paradise you'll be in heaven with me you see that's why you find these things that are spoken to be so meaningful to yourself because you have asked the Lord to remember you haven't you at some point in your spiritual journey you've come to the Lord and sought that he would remember you that he would bless you that he would receive you that he would forgive your sins that he would have you as one of his own disciples that he would save you and that change that took place in the thief is the change that has taken place in you as you remember the Lord in his death today

Psalm 139 verses 17 to 18 remember the psalmist and that psalmist just taken up in awe at the knowledge that God has of him that he sees through into the very depth of his soul the words that he speaks even before he's spoken them God knows them God is found everywhere God's looking in upon him and measuring and sifting his thoughts even then he comes to say how precious are your thoughts to me oh God how precious are your thoughts to me what did he mean Lord thank you that you are mindful of me that you are mindful of me always that you are mindful of me when I forget you that you are mindful of you even when I sometimes have questions and even doubtings you never you never cease to be mindful of me isn't that a precious thing to you today as you come to remember the Lord and his death at the Lord's supper to know that God is mindful of you that he has you in his mind that he never lets you out of his mind that you are so precious to him that he never forgets you that not for a moment does he stop being mindful of you that's what you heard that's what you would have heard here this interaction of the thief and Jesus and that's essentially what's inside it but thirdly finally not only would you have heard mocking words and you would have heard pleading words answered by Jesus you would also have heard the Lord's own words all the statements that he made while he was on the cross but there's one really that stands out above the rest and it's there in verse 46 about the ninth hour

[44 : 45] Jesus cried out with a loud voice that is my God my God why have you forsaken me I think we can safely say these are the most amazing words ever uttered they are what Martin Luther calls behold behold God forsaken by God why hast thou forsaken me and if you imagine an exclamation mark there at the end rather than a question you'll have a better idea then of just the depth of these words but we cannot measure them we cannot properly enter into the depths of them he alone knows the depth of meaning in these words my God my God why have you forsaken me forsakenness by God is the essence of death we think of death perhaps more in physical terms when people die when we leave this world separation of our soul from body and that is an aspect of death undoubtedly but the essence of death as was shown even by the exclusion of

Adam and Eve from the garden as they were driven out by God as the gates were closed behind them the essence of death is nothing less than separation from God and that's why eternal death the death that is in hell is separation from God forever without ever ending and that's not a neutral thing to experience separation from God in the wrath of God being inflicted upon any person is the most painful thing imaginable to be cut off from life to experience everlasting death with no prospect of hope or mitigation salvation now Jesus didn't die for his own sins but the people whose sins were laid upon him deserved this death and he took that death in their place and you remember him today as one who took that death instead of you who willingly went to the cross and died this death that involved separation from God nothing less than actual damnation experienced by him in his own soul now we can't really go beyond saying this is just a mystery how can we possibly try to begin explaining what was actually involved in the son of God in our nature experiencing the hell that we deserved in his own experience in his own soul let's just leave it there but think about it and the reality of it think about it as you watch him there as you hear these words why have you forsaken my God my God why have you forsaken me well of course they didn't understand they thought this man was calling for Elijah some said well let's wait and see whether Elijah will come and save him then Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit that itself is something amazing to hear not only the cry my God my God why have you forsaken me but then it comes to this he yields up his spirit he breathes his last as it puts elsewhere he hands over his spirit his soul to his father for keeping for safe custody how does he do it he does it in a loud voice what is that saying to you it's saying that here is the champion of death here is somebody who has power over death here is somebody who comes to die not in the weakness that we usually associate with death but with a loud voice showing that he is still the powerful one the son of God he comes to yield up his spirit remarkable things that you have seen as you sit there at the cross you've seen

Jesus refusing this drink you've seen the day turned to darkness and you've heard remarkable things you've heard words of mocking that actually convey the truth about Jesus you've heard pleading words from one of the thieves and the words of Jesus in reply and you've heard this cry of Jesus himself and all of that is precious to you today because it's part of what you remember as you remember the Lord's death until he comes amen let's pray gracious father we thank you today that your word conveys to us the truth that is so much greater than ourselves truth that our puny minds cannot fully take in but we thank you that it is the truth nevertheless that you came into this world to give yourself a ransom for your people we thank you for the truth of your death and for the way that it brought about the salvation of your people we thank you Lord for all that is entailed in your death on the cross and make it more and more precious to us as time goes by

Lord enable us today as we remember you in the Lord's supper to do so with gratefulness thankfulness dependence all that we should be in ourselves as we relate to that death of our Lord receive our thanks we pray now and pardon our sin for Jesus sake Amen now we're going to sing some verses during the singing the young ones will come in they'll take their place up on the gallery so we're singing from Psalm 22 and page 25 the tune is Saldo page 25 verses 1 to 8 my God my God oh why have you forsaken and abandoned me why are you far from giving help from listening to my anguished plea so on through Psalm 22 verses 1 to 8 so on

Rod Thank you.

[52 : 34] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Now, at this point in our service, we come to give directions to those who come to the Lord's table, those who have the privilege and the responsibility and the right indeed to come to take communion at this time.

[55 : 38] I'm going to read some verses, just a verses of a poem. I think it might actually be a hymn, although I couldn't find any writer for it, so I'm not sure if you know who it is.

You can please let me know. But the poem, the verses are as follows. I sought thee, weeping high and low. I found thee not. I did not know.

I was a sinner. Even so, I missed thee for my Savior. Until upon the cross I saw my Lord, who died to meet the law. That man had broken.

Then I saw my sin, and then my Savior. Be thou to me, my Lord, my guide, my friend, yea, everything beside. But first, last, best, whate'er betide, be thou to me, my Savior.

And I think these verses, each of them, encapsulate something of our experience as we come to know the Lord, because more often than not, we're like those in the first verse, they're seeking answers to life's questions.

[56 : 44] I did not know I was a sinner. I sought thee, weeping high and low, distressed about his own life, but not necessarily knowing where the answer lay.

And I'm sure for some of us, at least, that's how it was. And so you come to the Lord's table today knowing that you did seek answers to life's big questions, but maybe for some time you didn't find an answer until you came to know the answer in Jesus himself.

And as he says there, I do not know, did not know I was a sinner, even so I miss thee for my Savior. There's something deep within the heart of each one of us that knows we lack something that we can't provide ourselves.

And that makes us ask questions. Where do I get this? Where can I get satisfaction? And you have come. The Lord's table is for those who have come to know satisfaction in Christ.

Not an answer to every question, but certainly an answer to the most important ones. What must I do to be saved? The second verse there, until upon the cross I saw my Lord who died to meet the law that man had broken.

[58 : 04] Then I saw my sin and then my Savior. They come to the Lord's table today because you've come to know the Lord. You've moved on from the questions. You've come to know the Lord himself as the great answer to all of life's questions.

And it's when you came to know the Lord and the kind of death that he died as you came to know the scriptures, that he died to meet the law, the demands of the law, the death as we saw that he died.

Then I saw my sin and then my Savior. The people who come to the Lord's table don't think they're very good in themselves. They're very opposite. And as they look at Jesus, and as you look at Jesus today portrayed in the Lord's Supper, as you see him portrayed in the death that he died as these elements of bread and wine set out for us, so you came to see your sin in the light of Christ's sufferings.

And I'm sure it's the case for most of us that the place where we most clearly see our sin and know our sin for what it is, is as you look to the cross.

And as you see, that's what my sin did. That's what my sin deserved. As you see your Savior, so you see your sin.

[59 : 29] As you see your sin, so you see your Savior. And you come today to express your trust in him by taking communion and being with his people at the Lord's Supper.

They sought answers. They came to know Jesus. Thirdly, they value Jesus above all else. Be thou to me, my Lord, my guide, my friend, yea, everything beside.

But first, last, best, whatever betide, be thou to me, my Savior. They are the people who come and have the right to come to the Lord's table.

They can say about their lives they're far from perfect. They can say there's many things about them they still actually wish were not true about them. But the one thing they will not deny is that Jesus is special.

And that he's special above everyone else. Whate'er betide, my first, last, best, be thou to me, my Savior.

[60 : 45] And that's what you're saying of him today. That's why you're here. Because he is the best. He's the very best. He's one you know you can't improve on.

Nor would you want to. Because there's no need for it. And that's what's leaving you here today. You've found your answer to life's big questions in Jesus.

And now you love him. With all your heart. And you want to love him even more. As time goes on. So now we come to sing once more from Psalm 118.

And then we'll come to administer the Lord's Supper. Psalm 118, page 398. And at verse 15. Singing to a tune, Coleshill, verses 15 to 19.

In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health. The Lord's right hand doth ever valiantly. The right hand of the mighty Lord exalted is on high.

[61 : 53] The right hand of the mighty Lord doth ever valiantly. And so on to the end of verse 19 to God's praise. In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and death.

The right hand of the mighty Lord exalted is on high.

The right hand of the mighty Lord doth ever valiantly.

I shall not die but live and shall the words or not discover.

The Lord of the just I said so, but not to death give no word.

[63 : 42] O set ye open unto me the gates of righteousness, then will I enter into them, and I the Lord will bless.

We now read from 1 Corinthians chapter 11, what we refer to as the warrant for our celebration of the Lord's Supper. 1 Corinthians 11 at 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 this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes, and so on. And we follow that example, the Lord himself set us, by giving thanks to the Lord.

So let's pray. Lord, our gracious God, we know it is our privilege once again to be here at the Lord's Supper.

[65 : 26] We know it is our privilege once again to remember the Lord and his death. We know it is our privilege to call upon you and give you thanks, which we do, for all that is set out before us here, representing your death, and being a sign and seal to your people of your love for them.

We bless you today, Lord, for this opportunity. Help us to maximize it for ourselves. Help us to come believing, trusting, being sure, O Lord, that you will do as you have promised, and that your word will not return to you void, that you will bless the ordinances that you yourself have set forth and have sanctified for your people.

We pray, O Lord, as we take this bread and this cup today, that you would sanctify these elements, so that they be means by which we ourselves can feed upon Christ crucified and the benefits of his death.

We give thanks, Lord, that they represent to us what we cannot put into words. And we pray that as we partake of them once again, that we would be conscious, O Lord, of how undeserving we are of anything that is represented here, how deserving we are of the very opposite.

And we pray that our love for you might be increased, that our faith may be deepened, that our hope of eternal life in heaven might itself be enlarged.

[67 : 03] Bless us, Lord, we pray now, and grant that your blessing will be with us throughout this day and in all of these things receive our thanks, cleanse us from our sin.

For Jesus' sake. Amen. Just before we take the Lord's Supper, just a few words very briefly, because I want to focus upon you taking the supper and us taking it together.

It's called the Lord's Supper. It is a supper spiritually. The things that are here physically are representations of what is true spiritually.

So as you take the bread and take the wine, spiritually, you're actually feeding upon Christ. And it's significant that the things Jesus chose to represent Him in the Lord's Supper are very simple things, bread and wine, common, ordinary things in everyday use.

But that's the Lord's choice so that we would focus not on the things themselves, but on what they represent. That they represent to us Christ in His death.

[68 : 19] Indeed, the confession of faith reminds us in the passage that sets out how these elements are not changed in essence from what they are.

They don't become the body of Christ or the blood of Christ. They represent that. They sign their signs and seals of that to His people, but they remain bread and wine.

Ordinary things to convey a deep spiritual reality. And what the confession says is that by faith, God's people feed upon Christ crucified and all the benefits of His death.

That is what you feed upon. That is what by faith, today you're drawing into your soul. And as the confession says, as surely as you see outwardly these elements of bread and wine, so spiritually, you see and feed upon Christ crucified and all the benefits of His death.

What a marvelous point that is in itself, that God would take something that's of ordinary use and make it extraordinary for His people.

[69 : 34] And it helps us in the simplicity of the supper to remember that its simplicity itself conveys wonderful, deep, deep, abiding, spiritual truth.

And of course, this passage also says that we take it together. The apostle was concerned to teach the Corinthians and to deliver them from the abuses of the Lord's Supper that they had engaged in in the city of Corinth, in the church in Corinth.

So he says, So then, my brothers, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. In other words, the Lord's Supper is a supper we take together.

And our togetherness is important. It expresses the unity we have in Christ. It expresses the wonderful bonds that unite us together as we are united to Christ.

You don't take the Lord's Supper on your own, though it's significant for you individually. We take it together. We wait for one another.

[70 : 44] And that unity is expressed at the Lord's Supper just as it is. In reality, a spiritual unity, so it's outwardly expressed by being together.

Wait, he says, for one another. We come as believers united together. And it's our privilege to be so.

This will be the last time that I administer the Lord's Supper to you as your minister. For me, that's precious. It's always been precious.

And as I today am part of that unity on the same level as yourselves spiritually feeding on Christ crucified and the benefits of His death, may the Lord bless this moment to us.

And maybe a taste of heaven. And maybe it's something that reminds us of what we were thinking of earlier, of the commitment of the Lord and His love to die for His people.

[71 : 53] Well, we read that night in which the Lord was betrayed that He took bread. when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, This is my body which is for you. This do in remembrance of me.

Like manner after the supper, He took the cup saying, This cup is the new covenant in my blood. This do in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death until He comes. Until He comes.

This will only go on as long as the world exists and it will end with the Lord's own return. And today at this table, at this Lord's Supper, you are joined to the marriage supper that will follow throughout eternity.

The marriage supper of the Lamb. Somebody once asked an Anglican bishop, Bishop, are you saved? And his reply was, I was saved, I am being saved, I shall be saved.

[73 : 13] In other words, salvation has all of these dimensions. He was saying, I was saved, the day came when God saved me. I am being saved.

The work of salvation in our hearts and our souls goes on through our sanctification, that aspect of it. And that will be the case until the Lord takes us home.

I was saved, you can all see that. I am being saved, you're conscious of that. I shall be saved. Lord, this world is not our home.

Thank the Lord for that. Home is in the better country, the heavenly country, the marriage supper of the Lamb, where we shall enjoy not only fellowship with one another, but with Him in a perfect world.

And that's what our hope is set upon today. And that's why the Lord's Supper is such an important feature of life as it is now, because it feeds that hope.

[74 : 25] God uses it to draw our mind, as Paul said to the Corinthians, to the Colossians, seek those things which are above where Christ is, if you be risen with Christ.

seek those things which are above. Live your lives in a way that shows that you are being saved, that you value the process of guidance by the Holy Spirit, and that your hope is that you shall be saved, that there is a future waiting you in heaven, brighter than we can imagine.

And it's all due to this. The Lord loved us and gave Himself for us. May God bless to us these thoughts on His Word.

We're going to conclude by singing from Psalm 72, the usual verses that we sing, Psalm 72, from page 314, and from verse 17, His name forever shall endure, last like the sun it shall.

Men shall be blessed in Him, and blessed all nations shall Him call. Singing to the tune, Ephingham, these verses 17 to 19, His name forever shall endure.

[75 : 50] forever shall endure, cross by the sun it shall, men shall be blessed, in Him our birth, Lord shall everyone love.

all nations shall trump Him call. No, blessed be the Lord God, the Lord of Israel.

On thee, thou Lord, the wondrous world, in glory of his Son.

And blessed be his glorious name to all eternity.

The whole and the wondrous world, in glory of his Son.

[77 : 29] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my right, and the calendar will go to the door to my left.

Lord, bless to us, we pray. All that we have partaken of today. Help them to store, help us to store in our minds those things that we have experienced.

May we feed upon them in days to come. And now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you now and evermore.

Amen. Thank you. Good to be very much.

Don't give it a great  rode. Thank you. — Why?