

The Lamb of God - Punished

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Preacher: Rev Calum M Smith

- [0 : 00] Psalm 34, the Sing Psalms version on page 40 of the psalm books. We're going to sing from verse 1 to verse 10. Psalm 34, the tune is Peter's ham.
- At all times I will bless the Lord, I will praise him with my voice. Because I glory in the Lord, let troubled souls rejoice. Together let us praise the Lord, exalt his name with me.
- I sought the Lord, his answer came from fear, he set me free. We'll sing from verse 1 to 10 to God's praise. We stand to sing. Amen.
- Together let us praise the Lord, exalt his name with me.
- I sought the Lord, his answer came from fear, she set me free.
- [1 : 28] They look to him and shine with joy, they are not good to shame.
- This suffering and cry to the Lord, from whom deliverance came.
- The angel of the Lord, exalt his name with me.
- All those who fear and honour him, he sets his people free.
- The angel of the Lord, exalt his name with me.
- [2 : 46] And hunger for their good. But those who wait upon the Lord will not lack any truth.
- Let's bow our heads in a word of prayer. Let us pray. Lord, our gracious God, we come just seeking to worship you and thankful that at all times we can bless the Lord and praise you with our voice.
- That we can come together with that joy in our singing just now, lifting our voices to you, raising up our praise to you. For you alone are worthy of it.
- And we thank you for this renewed opportunity. We thank you for this time together where we can reflect on your word to us. And above all, reflecting upon what has been done for us in your giving your Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, who came to take away the sin of the world.
- And we thank you that we come to do this in remembrance of him. And we come humbly before you. We come just seeking to know your presence with us, to know your peace upon us.
- [4 : 18] We thank you that the psalm that we have sung has reminded us that we can come and taste and see that God is good who trusts. And him is blessed. And so we pray, Lord, that we would all come to taste of your goodness today, whether we are sitting at the table or whether we are looking on, that today our hearts would hunger for you, that we would long for you, that we would long for you in a way that maybe we haven't before, to see your goodness with us, to see your blessing upon us.
- And we do thank you for your word that guides us. We thank you for the word that we have before us today. And as we open it up together, we pray that we would know your spirit guiding us in it, that we would know your voice speaking to us through your word.
- For it's so precious, your word. It is a word that gives life to our soul. It's a word that became flesh and dwelt among us, as we read last evening.

And we thank you that it is a living and an active word, that it has power, even today as it has at all times.

It is still powerful today to convict and to convert. And we pray that that power would be known with us today as well. The conviction that we come under, when we realise how far short we fall of your glory, when we recognise the sin in our hearts, when we recognise who we have sinned against.

[5 : 54] But yet we thank you that your word is able to convert, to turn us from our sin and to turn to you as our Lord and as our God.

And so we ask, Lord, that your power would be known with us today through your word and spirit. And that as we come to the sacrament too, that, Lord, all that we do there would be giving glory to you.

For we are unworthy of it, Lord, but we thank you for the one who came to bear our sin on the cross. The one who was silent before his accusers.

And the one who was led like a lamb to the slaughter. The one who bore our sin on the tree. But the one over whom death had no hold.

For even as he gave his life, he took it up again. And we thank you for that reminder on the first day of the week as we meet. That he is risen. And that in Jesus Christ we have a risen Lord, a risen saviour.

[6 : 58] We have one who is even now at your right hand. And we offer our prayers in and through him. Asking, Lord, forgiveness for all our sin.

So may you bless us together. Thankful for the fact that you are building your church. Not just here, but throughout the world. That you are one who is active.

The one who is working. The one who is mighty and sovereign over all lands and nations and people. And we thank you that you have your people.

That you are calling them to yourself. And that throughout the world today where your name is praised and glorified. That you would be calling sinners to yourself. That you would be calling people to turn to you.

And to weep over their sin. But to rejoice in the joy of salvation. And so we pray, Lord, for all who go out with your word today to all ends of the earth.

[7 : 56] That the promise of your word will be fulfilled. That it will not return empty or void. But accomplish all that you have sent it forth for. And so bless us together even here.

And all your people who gather in your name. Remember us in our homes and in our families. In our communities as a whole. We know, Lord, that every need we have is known unto you.

Every burden that we carry. Every prayer that we offer up. You hear. And are able to answer according to your will. We do pray for our communities.

We pray for all our people. We thank you for our young ones who are in Sunday school. And tweenies and creche and Bible class. We thank you for the many that we see coming.

Week by week. And thank you for each home and family that they come from. We pray your peace and your blessing over them. And we thank you too, Lord, for those in different needs at this time.

[9 : 01] We know that the needs around us are so many. There are those who are grieving and mourning. We thank you, Lord, for the comfort. For the grace that sustains and keeps in these times.

We remember those who are unwell at home or in hospital. We pray for them, Lord, that you would surround them with your loving arms. That you would uphold them and keep them also.

And even maybe those who are tuning in online today from home or hospital. We thank you for the ways that we can still communicate the gospel in that way.

And that they can feel part of our congregation here. And we pray that they would know that union that is found in Christ. That we are one in Christ Jesus.

And even though they may not take part in the Lord's Supper physically. That they would feel and know your presence. Even remembering their Lord and their Saviour where they are.

[9 : 59] And so, Lord, we plead with you to be in our midst. To do us good. To guide us and to help us. To encourage us and to strengthen us. Through your word and through all that we do today in our fellowship with one another.

That you would bless us with your unity. With your presence. And that we would glory in the Lord. So hear our prayers. Continue with us. And go before us, pardoning our sin.

That's all we ask. We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. We're going to read together now from the word of God.

Two readings we're going to have. First of all, in the Old Testament. In the book of Isaiah. In chapter 53. Isaiah chapter 53.

Just a few verses from this chapter. From verse 4 to verse 7. And then we'll turn. And our second reading is in John chapter 19. So our first reading in Isaiah chapter 53.

[11 : 06] You'll find it around page 742 of the church Bibles. And at verse 4. Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows.

Yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities.

Upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace. And with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray. We have turned everyone to his own way.

And the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted. Yet he opened not his mouth.

Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter. And like a sheep that before its shearers is silent. So he opened not his mouth.

[12 : 02] Then we'll turn to our second reading in the Gospel of John chapter 19. We're going to read from verse 14 down to verse 30.

We find this about page 1091 of the church Bibles. Gospel of John chapter 19. I'm reading from verse 14 to verse 30.

Here we find Jesus before Pilate in this chapter. Pilate speaking to him and asking him questions. And in verse 9 you see that he speaks there to him.

He entered his quarters again and said to Jesus, Where are you from? But Jesus gave him no answer. He was silent as we see what we read in Isaiah 53.

But then we take up our reading at verse 14. Now it was the day of preparation of the Passover. It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, Behold your king.

[13 : 08] They cried out, Away with him, away with him, crucify him. Pilate said to them, Shall I crucify your king? The chief priests answered, We have no king but Caesar.

So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and he went out, bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of the skull, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them. Pilate, who wrote an inscription and put it on the cross, it read, Jesus of Nazareth, the king of the Jews.

Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek.

So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write, The king of the Jews, but rather this man said, I am the king of the Jews.

[14 : 14] Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, and also his tunic.

But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see whose it shall be.

This was to fulfill the scripture which says, They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. So the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother, and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciples whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, Woman, behold your son. Then he said to the disciple, Behold your mother.

And from that hour the disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all was now finished, said to fulfill the scripture, I thirst.

[15 : 28] A jar full of sour wine stood there, So they put a sponge full of the sour wine on a hyssop branch, and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, It is finished.

And he bowed his head, and gave up his spirit. Amen. And may God bless these readings from his word. Before we come to consider these words together, we're going to sing once again, this time in Gaelic, in Psalm 23.

We're singing two verses in Gaelic. You'll find them on the front of the order of service. The words are there on the bulletin sheet, I should say. The words are on the front of the bulletin sheet, in both Gaelic and English.

We'll be singing this psalm. We remain seated for the singing of the Gaelic psalm. The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want these well-known words.

We remain seated and sing this psalm in Gaelic. We remain seated.

[17 : 13] We remain seated.

We remain seated.

We remain seated.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[19 : 43] Isaiah 53 verse 7. He was oppressed and he was afflicted, yet opened not his mouth.

Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter is really the text that we have this morning.

We began last evening with a theme of looking at the Lamb of God over this weekend. And last night we were looking at the opening chapter in John's Gospel where John the Baptist looked and saw Jesus coming towards him and said these well-known words, Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

And that is really what we're looking at over this weekend. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Last evening we thought of it under the heading, The Lamb of God Promised.

We saw how the Lamb of God was promised, seeing it from the Old Testament and fulfillment into the New. And this morning we're considering the Lamb of God punished.

[21 : 04] The purpose for which the Lamb of God came was that he would give his life. And what we see in Isaiah here is Isaiah depicting it in that way.

The Lamb that is led to the slaughter, the Lamb who died for our sins. It's amazing how often people use phrases without realizing where they come from.

How often do you hear people saying things like, The blind leading the blind. Or by the skin of our teeth. Or no peace or no rest for the wicked.

They're almost everyday occurrences when you hear these kinds of phrases being used. But what's amazing is that people don't realize the seriousness of them.

Because they are from the Word of God. They are all words that we find in the Scriptures. The blind leading the blind is found in Matthew and Luke's Gospel.

[22 : 07] By the skin of our teeth is found in the book of Job, chapter 19. Where he says, I am nothing but skin and bones. I have escaped with only the skin of my teeth.

And you also have no rest or no peace. For the wicked, Isaiah uses that phrase twice. In chapter 48 and chapter 57. And so there are phrases, everyday phrases, that are used.

And yet they don't realize where they come from. And perhaps one of the most serious ones in that sense, not recognizing that it's from the Word of God, is people who say they were like lambs to the slaughter.

They were led like lambs to the slaughter. Without thinking or realizing where it comes from, without realizing the background to these words, it can be used so flippantly.

They were just like lambs to the slaughter. And in the passages we have read, first of all in Isaiah, here and then in the Gospel of John, we see just how significant this phrase is.

[23 : 16] Led like a lamb to the slaughter. And how for all believers, these words are such a key to the hope that we have of salvation in Jesus Christ.

As John the Baptist said, Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. What Isaiah is saying here is, Behold the lamb of God who was led, the Savior who was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

And when we think of how this phrase is used today, it's often applied to people being led somewhere where unbeknown to them, something terrible is going to happen.

And I remember I've read a number of books from the Second World War and especially about the suffering of those who were in concentration camps. And they were promised peace.

They were promised work. They were given all these promises. And yet the phrase that is often used of them was they were led like lambs to the slaughter.

[24 : 22] They didn't realize where they were going. But when you look at the Lord Jesus and when you see these words applied to him, that he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, it wasn't that he didn't know where he was going.

He knew what lay ahead of him. He had given the prediction of his death at least three times before it came to pass.

He had told his disciples, he had told his people that he was going to give his life. And so he knew where he was going. And yet he was led like a lamb to the slaughter because he was going there because it was required to save sinners, to save you and to save me from our sins.

Behold, the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world is this lamb who was led to the slaughter. And it is this lamb that we remember together today.

It's this lamb that we see represented before us in the bread and the wine. And so I want us to think of the lamb again today, the lamb who was led to the slaughter.

[25 : 44] And we're going to think about it under three headings. And the first one is the lamb who was silent. The lamb who was silent. And then we're going to think about the lamb who is Lord.

And then thirdly, the lamb who was led. So the first thing we're going to think about is the lamb who was silent. What we have in our text there in verse 7 of Isaiah 53.

Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent. So he opened not his mouth. He opened not his mouth.

The silence of Christ is something that leaves an impression in itself. We know that there are words that he spoke as we see in the Gospels, but there are times when he does not answer.

There are times when he says nothing in response to questions that are put to him. We see it in the account that Luke gives where he's before Herod in all the questions that Herod was asking of him.

[26 : 50] He said nothing. And we see it here in the Gospel of John as well in verse 9, as I mentioned earlier, when he was asked, where are you from?

But Jesus gave him no answer. You have it in the Gospel of Mark, again with Pilate. When he was before Pilate, Pilate asked him again, saying, do you answer nothing, seeing how many things they testify against you, but Jesus still answered nothing.

So that Pilate marveled, it says in the Gospel of Mark. He marveled at the silence of Jesus before him. Pilate was unable to find fault with him.

Herod couldn't find fault with him, and yet they both see him innocent before him, and yet silent, giving no response.

What would you do if you were falsely accused? Would you stay silent? Surely you would stand and defend yourself to say all these accusations are false.

[28 : 04] There is no truth in them. Well, imagine having to stand before accusers, and the punishment is death if you are found guilty. Would you say nothing?

Would you remain silent? Well, Jesus is here before his accusers, and he knows the outcome of this trial, that he is going to the cross, and yet he opens not his mouth.

Why was he silent? Well, he wasn't there to defend himself. He was there as the Lamb of God who had come to take away the sin of the world.

He was there not to defend himself, but to defend us, to defend you and to defend me.

And therefore he couldn't open his mouth and defend us, because we are sinners. He couldn't open his mouth and say, my people are innocent, because we are guilty.

[29 : 10] But here is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And so because he had come for his people, he opened not his mouth.

He was silent. He didn't defend himself. Because as Isaiah makes clear for us in our reading in the verses just before, when he speaks of, in verse 6, So we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned everyone to his own way, and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

We have gone astray, but the Lamb of God has come to take away the sin of the world. The preacher Andrew Bonner, he often spoke about an illustration about sheep.

And he used to reflect on how you would see sheep often get themselves into situations of trouble. And there was one particular story often recounted was how sheep would often jump down onto a ledge where there was grass that looked so sweet.

But what they would find was that where they had jumped down, they couldn't get off. They couldn't get back out of the situation that they'd put themselves in. And what caught his attention was this, how the shepherd, instead of immediately going down to the sheep and rescuing it, would leave it.

[30 : 39] Would leave it for a few days even until it had eaten all the grass, until it was starting to get tired and weary. And only then would the shepherd at that point go down with a rope to lift the sheep out from the ledge it was stuck on.

And he would ask, why? Why don't you just go down and rescue the sheep immediately? And the shepherd would say, well, if I did that, the sheep are so foolish that they would just dash off the edge of the cliff.

You have to wait until they're tired and weary. And only then can you go down and rescue them when they're helpless. And he was making this illustration to say that is the way with us.

All we like sheep have gone astray. We've turned each to our own way. But we're so busy in what we're doing, we're not listening to God. We're not listening to what his word is saying to us.

That we are in danger, that we are in our sin lost. We won't listen until that point where we are made to feel helpless and hopeless.

[31 : 52] And only then is he able to save. We are sheep who have gone astray. But we have a shepherd who has come.

But he has come as a lamb. He has come as a lamb. He has come as one of us to take away our sin. In our action in coming to the Lord's table today, we do so in silence.

And yet our actions speak loudly. What we are doing, we are showing that we are not struggling and shouting anymore against the Lord, but that we are resting in Christ, our Saviour.

We are still before him. But maybe you're sitting, looking on today as well, and you're still in that restless place.

You're still in that point in life where you're still like the sheep who has gone astray, who turned to your own way. But the Lord is speaking to you as well.

[33 : 06] And he is saying, Be still, and come to me. The one who was silent, the one who opened not his mouth, the one who was led like a lamb to the slaughter, the lamb of God, who came to take away the sin of the world.

It's the one that we are to behold and to look at today. So the first thing there we have is the lamb who was silent.

The second thing we have is the lamb who is Lord. And we notice this in Isaiah speaking about it as well, how he was oppressed and afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth.

Why did he do that? Because he had authority, because he had power. He was Lord. And we see it too in the Gospel of John.

Especially there we're going to reflect for a few moments on this point, the lamb who is Lord, we see it here in different ways. We see it first with Pilate. Pilate is an interesting character as you look at him here when he's got Jesus before him.

[34 : 20] He finds no fault with him. And it's so many of the things that Pilate says that make you wonder just where he was. Pilate said to him in verse 38 of chapter 18, What is truth?

What a question to ask. What is truth? There's this kind of wondering and looking and seeing this Jesus. And he's saying, What is truth? And in the whole encounter with Pilate and Jesus and the questions that are back and forth, you see that there is an interest being stirred up in him.

At one point, he just wanted to give him away to Herod. You make the decision almost. Just take it out of my hands. He doesn't want to make this decision and yet he comes to the point, as we all do, where we have to decide, What will you do with Christ?

And Pilate here, he sees him as king. He says in there in verse 14, Now it was the day of preparation of the Passover.

It was about the sixth hour. He said to the Jews, Behold your king. But they cried out, Away with him, away with him. Shall I crucify your king?

[35 : 36] He said. We have no king, but Caesar was their response. So there's this debate going on. Who is Lord? And Pilate is always saying, Here is your king. Here is your Lord.

And they're saying, He is no lord to us. We have no lord. We have no king, but Caesar. Caesar. So there's this dilemma going on.

And that's the way we can often come as well. We have this dilemma of, Well, who is our Lord? What is truth? What can make me come to the Lord's table?

Can I come to the Lord's table? We're being torn in different directions. We can try and avoid the whole subject of Jesus ourselves as well. We can say, Well, it's not for me, but there's no hiding from Jesus.

And as Jesus is taken away, the chief priests came to him in verse 21, Do not write, The king of the Jews, but rather, This man said, I am the king of the Jews.

[36 : 41] But Pilate's answered, What I have written, I have written. I am the king. The king of the Jews is what he kept.

There was something he was seeing. That this Jesus, this Christ, he was Lord. And that's the question we have to answer today as well.

Who is he to us? Is he your Lord? Is he your king? And if he is, you come. Because he is Lord.

He is God of all. We are reminded too of how he is Lord and the reaction of the soldiers as we see here.

In verse 23, when the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts, one part for each soldier, also his tunic. But the tunic was seamless, woven into one piece from top to bottom.

[37 : 43] So they said to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots to see whose it shall be. And this was to fulfill scripture, which says, He divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

It's an interesting thing here that what's the point here that they cast lots for his garments. One of the things that people speak about here is the garment, the tunic especially, was woven in one piece from top to bottom.

And that there's a significance in that. And that there was a change coming into the system now. A change coming into the world.

Because as we were looking at last night, behold the Lamb of God. The Lamb of God was the Lamb that was slain once a year for the forgiveness of sin.

And there was a high priest who would take the Lamb into the Holy of Holies. And only he could go in. And the high priest, we are told in Exodus 39, would wear a tunic that was seamless, that was made in one piece, representing, going in without blemish or without flaw.

[38 : 56] And here we find that the garment, the tunic that Jesus was wearing, it was in one piece, seamless, woven from top to bottom.

And there's significance in this. In who Jesus is being seen as. He is now going to be the great high priest.

And the night before Jesus' crucifixion, in Mark 14, verse 61, again he was appearing before the high priest.

And the high priest asked him, Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed? And Jesus said, I am. You will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of power and coming with clouds of heaven.

And then it goes on to say this, the high priest tore his garments and said, What further witness do we need? You have heard this blasphemy.

[39 : 56] What is your decision? And they all condemned him as deserving death. The high priest tore his own garments. What was forbidden by the law in the Old Testament, he did.

And people are saying this was how it was being seen as the old system was gone and the new was coming. Here is the Lamb of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ, the one who came to take away the sin of the world so that no longer was the system going to be the high priest himself going in, but Jesus as high priest.

Once and for all sacrificed. So that now we have access to God through our Lord who is Jesus Christ. He is Lord.

And you see it too in the reaction of the people in verse 15. We have no king but Caesar, they said.

But what were they saying before that? Crucify him. Crucify him. Away with him. All these different responses.

[41 : 09] Pilate, Herod, the soldiers, the people, the crowds, they're all significant because they're all making the point who is Lord and what is your verdict of Christ.

Will you avoid him or trying to push him away? Will you mock him? Will you shout his condemnation? Or will you instead take hold of him as the one who is the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world?

We are shown the Lamb who was Lord. But is he Lord for you? But before you answer that, there's one other thing we want to consider here.

And that is to see what Jesus did for his people. And there we see the Lamb who was led away. As we see it in Isaiah 53 verse 7, he was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

We see it also here in verse 16 and 17 of John 19. So he delivered him over to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and he went out bearing his own cross to the place called the place of the skull which is in Aramaic, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha.

[42 : 42] He was led. The Lamb was led away. But all the time the people are leading him. Or so it seems.

They were leading him to Pilate, to the high priest, to Herod and eventually leading him out to be crucified. And it would seem they get what they want.

The Lamb of God was punished. punished. But when you look at where he was being led to, as he was led away bearing his own cross to the place called the skull to Golgotha to Calvary as it's known, we see he was being led away to fulfill scripture.

The scripture that we have in Isaiah 53 verse 7, the Lamb was led to the slaughter. He was wounded for our transgressions, it says in verse 5 of Isaiah 53.

He was bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon him and by his stripes we are healed. He was led out to suffer in our place.

[43 : 58] He was led out, condemned, a sinner. but his sacrifice was for us. It is through him we can say in my place condemned he stood.

He didn't open his mouth, he was led to the cross. Because of the sin in your heart and mine, he was led like a lamb to the slaughter.

Because we all like sheep have gone astray, we have turned each to our own way. The cost of our sin was this lamb being led away to die on the cross.

And it is the cross that we are to look to today. It is the cross that we see before us when we think of the blood and the body that was shed and broken for his people.

There is a story told of a long time ago in London when London wasn't as enormous as it is today. And the heart of London, the centre of London from which all other points took its distance was Charing Cross.

[45 : 18] And the place was often just referred to as the cross. People knew it in that way. There was one day when a policeman was out on duty and he came across a little boy who was distressed.

He was lost. He was weeping. And the policeman was trying to ask him where are you from? Where do you live? And the wee boy just couldn't explain to him where his house was.

And this was going on for a little while. Policeman just trying to get this information out of the boy. Can you just tell me something? Can you tell me something about where you live? And eventually the little boy said, well if you take me to the cross I can find my way from there.

Because he knew Charing Cross. He knew that point and from there he knew where to go. But the illustration is there for us as well. When we are lost we are struggling to find our way to know what direction to go in.

Where can we go? Well we pray take us to the cross. Take us to the cross because there we see all that's been done for us.

[46 : 34] And from there we can find our way because there we see our Lord the Lamb of God who came to take away the sin of the world.

And from there we can follow him and walk with him knowing that he is the way the truth and the life. Knowing that in him we have a saviour who is faithful to us.

And he has shown it in his love for us in giving his life. Today we come to the cross in remembrance of the Lamb who was punished.

To remember what Christ has done for us. And when you see that when you behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world what is your verdict on Christ then?

When you see what he has done the price that he paid in giving his life as a ransom for many what is your verdict?

[47 : 49] Do you ignore him? Do you mock him? Do you cry out crucify him crucify him? Or do you say as John the Baptist behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world?

As we come to the Lord's table today may we behold the Lamb the Lamb who was led away the Lamb who died for your sin and mine.

Quoted from the hymn How Deep the Father's Love Last Night I'll quote the last verse of it just now where it says I will not boast in anything no gifts no power no wisdom but I will boast in Jesus Christ his death and resurrection why should I gain from his reward I cannot give an answer but this I know with all my heart his wounds have paid my ransom by his stripes we are healed why because the Lamb was punished the Lamb was led away to die for the sins of this world so today may we behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world let us pray our

Father in heaven we come before you just as we are with nothing in our hands to bring to you but simply to your cross to cling and we pray today Lord that as we come to behold the Lamb of God to remember all that he has done for us to see even the elements before us the Lamb that was slain to remember what they represent the blood represented by the wine and the bread representing the body may you enable us to look and to see and to rejoice in the Saviour of the world Jesus Christ our Lord our King may you continue with us Lord may you hear our prayers may you guide us in all that we do and all that we see as we ask all with the forgiveness of our sin in Jesus name

Amen well before we come to the Lord's table it's customary that we would just make clear who the Lord's table is for and it's what's often called the fencing of the table and maybe seems a little bit of a strange thing to call it fencing what does that actually mean it's not that we're putting up a great barrier to those who should and shouldn't come it's not about putting up a wall in that sense of you can't come past but it's just to make it clear for whom the Lord's table is it is for those who have come to trust in the Lamb of God Jesus Christ I want to highlight just three things from the word fence when we think of fence we maybe just think of of crofts and we think of the fences we see all around our islands and what are they used for well they're used to either keep people or animals out or in and that's certainly one element of fence and there's three I want to highlight as we come to the

[51 : 59] Lord's table from the word fence the first it means to shield or protect so there is a sense when we come to the Lord's table it is for a particular people that is why there are white tablecloths on some of the pews there is an indication of a separation there's a divide but it's not in the sense of being exclusive in that sense but it's just marking the difference there are those who sit on one side of the fence those who have professed the Lord those who have said the Lord is my shepherd but as we see there are others on the other side of the fence where you have not come to confess the Lord as your shepherd and it's not there to keep you out don't see it like that it's not the sense of stay away for good but it's to show that there is another place that you can come to to come and find yourself on the right side of the fence not halting between different opinions what side of the fence are you on but to come to this side the side where we find the protection of the

Lord because coming to take the Lord's supper by faith if you believe it will do you good the second thing we see about a fence is it encloses for those who come confessing and professing Jesus Christ as Lord there is a sense of being enclosed together strengthened together we are no longer the sheep who have gone astray we are not out wandering away by ourselves away from God we are gathered together as one body in Christ and we are seeking to be strengthened together to be nourished together by the shepherd of the sheep so we are enclosed together we are given strength and encouragement and we rejoice when the number of the flock is added to when there are those who come to profess

Christ as Lord and come into membership with ourselves we are encouraged we are blessed as we are enclosed together one in Christ but the word fence has another quite different meaning and it means fencing or to fence to fight with a sword I don't know if anybody has ever tried it you see it I think it's part of the Olympic Games they have these fencing competitions and they're fighting each other with a sword and in some ways that reminds us what the Lord's table is like as well because there's often a fight going on a fight going on of the battle of coming to acknowledge the Lord and who is Lord but as we look to the Lord Jesus Christ and trust in him we are reminded that he has won the victory when you go back to the book of

Genesis when the man and the woman were cast out of the garden of Eden there was a flaming sword that was to protect them from getting back in the axis was denied but when we look to Jesus Christ we find in him the victory that he has broken down that barrier that he has fought that fight for us and that we have access once more to God we are to come victorious in him he has opened up the way so the fencing is important it does show that there is a division but it's not a divide that we want always there we want others to come because it means enclosing together coming near to God together as one and remembering the victory of Christ well as we prepare to come to the

Lord's table we're going to sing to God's praise in Psalm 118 the Scottish Psalter version of the Psalm Psalm 118 we're going to sing from verse 15 to verse 23 page 398 of the psalm books Psalm 118 at verse 15 we'll sing from verse 15 to verse 23 to God's praise B

[58 : 17] The bright hand of the mighty Lord, exalted is all night.

The bright hand of the mighty Lord, the faithful, valiantly.

I shall not die, but live and shall the works of God discover.

The Lord not be just eyes and sore, but not to death in over.

O set ye open unto me, the gates of righteousness.

[59 : 42] Then will I enter into them, and I the Lord will bless.

This is the gate of God, I am, that I shall enter in.

The gate of God, I am, that I shall not be.

And so this make a cornerstone, which builders did despise.

This is the doing of the Lord, and wondrous in our eyes.