

Community

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Preacher: Aubrey Dunford

[0 : 0 0] well good evening everyone welcome to our worship service this evening and welcome visitors with us this evening lovely to have you with us i'm michael birmingham one of the elders here it's good to have you with us and for the rest of you you're all welcome as well we're going to start we're going to start with the prayer father god as we come to you this evening we come to worship you we want to thank you so much for all that you've done for us and we offer ourselves to you this evening that we might be able to serve this coming week for you so hear our prayers we worship you hear our songs as we sing lord our praise to you and speak to us through your words through aubrey a little bit later lord in jesus name we commit this service to you amen i wonder if you'd like to stand and together we could say the first three verses of psalm 134 as our call to worship could say this together praise the lord all you servants of the lord who minister by night in the house of the lord lift up your hands in the sanctuary and praise the lord may the lord bless you from zion he who is the maker of heaven and earth and we're going to sing a lovely song i wasn't here this morning but i believe you had a rehearsal for it this morning it's come set your rule and reign in our hearts again increase in us we pray unveil why we're made come set our hearts ablaze with hope like wildfire in our very souls holy spirit come invade us now we are your church we need your power in us let's sing this together come set your rule and reign in our hearts again increasing us we pray unveil why we're made come set our hearts ablaze with hope come set our hearts ablaze with hope like wildfire in our very souls come set our hearts ablaze with hope like wildfire in our very souls holy spirit come he made us now cerca- Jack

Michael 3 mm 4 monks g 30 The captain was released The hurt, the sick, the poor at peace We lay down our lives The heavens cause We are your church We pray with high bliss Build your kingdom here Let the darkness fear Shine a mighty heart In our streets and land Send your church on fire Bring this nation back Change the atmosphere Build your kingdom here We pray Unleash your kingdom's power Reach in the near and far No force of hope can stop Your beauty changing hearts You made us for much more than this Awake the kingdom seed in us Fill us with the strength and love of Christ We are your church We are the hope on earth Build your kingdom here Let the darkness fear

Show your mighty heart Illustrate sunblock Send your church on fire Win this nation back Change the atmosphere Build your kingdom here We pray Please Please These We pray Abra You Fill your kingdom here, let the darkness fear Show your mighty hand, clear our streets and land

Set your church on fire, win this nation back Change the atmosphere, let the kingdom here be brave Please be seated, let's have a time of prayer and a little time of open prayer for anybody who'd like to give praise and thanks to God for anything that he's done in your life tonight, let's do that Father we come to you, we want you to change our town We want you to change us, we recognise we fall short of your glory Lord but we want to be more like Jesus So we ask Lord that you work in each of our hearts tonight We come to worship you because you are God There is none like you, you've done so much for us Hear our worship and our praise as we come to you in the only name we can

[7 : 0 8] We come to you in the precious name of your Son Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ Hear our prayer Jesus, light of the world, we thank you that you have come to us You are promised to be with us by the Holy Spirit of God We thank you that your light will never be extinguished Thank you Lord Thank you, Amen Thank you Thank you Father that you give us your spirit To be with us each day Monday to Friday and also the weekend Thank you that wherever we are your spirit is with us Thank you also that you give us each other To support each other To pray for each other To just be there for each other Lord

We might just really pray that your help from the Spirit To really encourage each other To encourage those around this fellowship To support them throughout the week as well Amen Amen

Father we thank you for your word It's inspired and it's in follow And it's never changing And it convicts us of our sin And brings us back into the fog We just praise you for that Father Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen I've got another couple of songs that I'd like us to sing I don't know what you feel about Well the first one is When all around I feel despair I hope you don't stop there If that's where you feel I look to your eternal word Find strength to carry on Undying words Boundless grace So freely poured on me And then after that We I put my confidence in the Lord But it's actually our confidence in the Lord So you're included The second one is Our confidence is in the Lord And that's what we need to fix our eyes on So if we stand and sing The first one When all around I feel despair When all around I feel despair And all my hope is gone I look to your eternal word My strength to carry on Undying words of harmless grace So freely poured on me I trust in each and every one And walk on gratefully I put my confidence in you You tell me I'm secure And you'll provide for all my needs Through all that I endure Your words of life Restore my hope And breath of me I share So stronger do I take each step And cast off all despair How great a gift That you should give Your Son That I go free So ever shall I praise your name For all of eternity No sorrow, fear or evil Can still your love away Each day I hold on to your word No life, no word, no grace Each day I hold on to your word Your life, your word, your grace Our confidence is in you, Lord You're the only source of our salvation And that rest is found in you alone Our confidence is in the Lord The source of our salvation Rest is found in you alone [12:16] The offer of our patient We will not fear the evil day Because we have a refuge In every circumstance we say The hope is found from Jesus He is our fortress We will never be shaken He is our fortress We will never be shaken He is our fortress We will never be shaken He is our fortress We will never be shaken We will put our trust in God We will put our trust in God Our confidence is in you

The source of our salvation The source of our salvation Rest is found in you alone The offer of Christian We will not fear the evil day Because we have a refuge In every circumstance we say In every circumstance we say Our hope is found from Jesus He is our fortress We will never be shaken He is our fortress We will never be shaken He is our fortress We will never be shaken He is our fortress We will never be shaken We will put our trust in God We will put our trust in God Father God We will never be shaken We will never be shaken We will never be shaken We will never be shaken We will never be shaken But you know what we're like You know how we drift You know how we forget You know how selfish we can become We want to put our trust in you We rely Lord On you to hold on to us Please never let us go You said that no one can pluck us out of your hand Lord we hold you to that Thank you In Jesus' name Amen Please be seated Our Bible reading now will be brought to us by Ruth Thank you So yeah The reading is from Acts 2 Starting at verse 42 through to 47 It's on page 1094 of the church Bible They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship To the breaking of bread and to prayer Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles All the believers were together and had everything in common They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts Praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved Amen Well good evening everyone

Not sure why we're all sitting in half darkness But let's assume we're saving power Hope it's not a good reason for you to go to sleep This evening we're continuing on our theme of finding confidence on our front lines And as this morning we're considering today The confidence that we can obtain from being part of a community And the passage that I've been asked to look at is that short passage from Acts chapter 2 That Ruth has just read to us Short little few verses Well the Acts of the Apostles Is as you probably know The second part of Luke's writing to a guy called Theopolis

[17:36] And Luke's first book ends with an account of Christ's ascension And his second book takes up the story Almost by repeating the story of the ascension And after that the disciples go back to Jerusalem And chapter 1 of Acts tells us of the believers waiting as Jesus had told them to During that time of waiting they appointed Matthias To replace Judas as the 12th Apostle And then in Acts chapter 2 we have this dramatic account Of the day of Pentecost And then the sermon that Peter preached Which resulted in 3,000 being added to the believers And then as we move on

Following on in chapter 3 the story moves on As the church starts to move out And as a result Faces first the opposition

And then persecution And in between the story of Pentecost And the start of the opposition We get this short passage Just six verses Beautiful little cameo Of the early church Just six verses Now quite often the day of Pentecost Is described as the birthday of the church However I'd like to suggest that In many senses that is inaccurate The church did not begin on that day Indeed we would go back Nearly 2,000 years earlier To Abraham The church as a body of believers Includes all those who In Old Testament times Had put their faith in God Of course they didn't know About putting their faith in Christ But they put their faith in God And that's certainly true of Abraham And many of the people we read about In the Old Testament In fact in Hebrews The writer of the Hebrew Gives us a great long list Of the Old Testament characters Who he thinks There's other witnesses That surround us So the church did not start On the day of Pentecost But what did happen On the day of Pentecost And that's the important bit Was that the body Of God's people Became the spirit filled Body of Christ The church became The bride of Christ That was an extremely Significant point And that's the first point I would really like To stress this evening You see the church However we might think about it

Is not a human construction The church is part A key part Of God's eternal purposes Yes we can get together As a group Of people But that doesn't make us a church What distinguishes us As the church Is that we are Spirit filled And that spirit Came as part Of God's Eternal purposes And in a few minutes I want us to consider How we should Gain confidence From being part Of the community Of the church But you see If we are to gain Confidence from the church We have to start By seeing The church For what it is The body of Christ God himself In human form

I suspect That the problem For many of us Is that we find it Very difficult To see the church In that way Of course we Have Maybe Painfully To recognise That throughout The period of history Since Pentecost What the world And indeed Many Christians Have seen Is that the church Has been very far Away from what It should be It can almost Be said That the The more official That the church Became The further It drifted away From What Luke Describes Here In these verses The church Has been used And I would say Abused By all Sorts Of people For their Own ends Not least By those Who have Sought power And that's

[22 : 42] True of Roman emperors And the popes That followed Kings who have Decided that They didn't like The pope Too much And all These things Which people Would look at As the church That's not What we're Talking about Folks We're talking About the Church As we see It Described In these Verses Well we Might feel That that's Not so Prevalent Today Perhaps People don't Look at The church In that Way anymore Perhaps Not least In this Country Though I Suspect That in Other Countries Of the World They do Perhaps Perhaps we Need to Recognize That we Now face A different Problem You see The church Nowadays Can be Seen as A charity We're Required To follow The requirements Of being A charity I won't

Tell Brian And Brenda Too much About trying To be Keeping up With the Charity Commission We need To guard That we Never allow Ourselves to Be more Concerned With following The rules Laid down By the Charity Commission Than following What Christ Has told us To do And what Christ says To us We are Not As the Church A human Institution In any Shape or Form It might Suit us Sometimes Because we Get good Tax Rebates To be Registered As a Charity But that's Not what We're About And if We allow Ourselves to Have this View of the Church as Just another Club or Society or A good Cause to Which we Might belong Or attend Then we'll Never be Able to Find the Confidence

That comes From being Part of Christ's Eternal Body If we Are to Find any Confidence In the Church Community It comes From What the Church is Christ's Body Here on Earth Controlled By the Holy Spirit And that Is why Luke I think Puts These Little Verses Into The Narrative He Wants To point Out to Theopolis And Therefore To us The Difference That the Holy Spirit Made to This Group of People Luke Says Luke This is How you Can Know That the Holy Spirit Came Not just Because people Could hear The words Of the Apostles In their Own Language Which Was pretty Miraculous But Apparently Didn't Happen Very often

After that What Luke Is saying Is that The Spirit Came And that Meant that The way The people Behaved Was different That was The birthday In a sense Of the Church In terms Of the Evidence That it Was Spirit Filled So in These Few Six Little Verses Luke Gives This Us Four Characteristics That I Would like Us to Look at This Evening Characteristics That this Group of Believers Were

Filled With the Spirit's Presence And the First one Of those These four Characteristics Was that They were A learning Church Verse 42 Is really The verse That says It all They devoted Themselves to

The apostles Teaching See These new Believers Were not Carried away With some Mystical Experience They just Had an Incredible Experience The day Of Pentecost Had just Happened It would Have been Very easy Them to Say Well Yeah We're On a High Now Aren't We Folks But they Didn't They sat At the Apostles Feet Hungry To receive Instruction They didn't Say Well look We've got The Holy Spirit So we Don't Need to Have any Other Teacher Throughout The whole Of time God God has Revealed Himself By word And by Spirit Of course What Those Disciples Such as Peter and John And the Others Taught Was confirmed By the Miracles That they [27 : 46] Were able To perform And in Time That teaching Has come To us In the Word of God As we Now have It As the New Testament And therefore A sign Of a Spirit Filled Church Is one That studies And submits To the New Testament Instruction The Spirit Of God Leads Us Leads Us To want To know What His Word Says The Word That We Now Have Such as In these Writings Of Luke Such as The Epistles Written By John Peter Paul The Gospels Written By The Others Who Learned Primarily From the Disciples They Submitted Themselves To the Apostles Teaching They Were A Learning Church

But They Were Also Secondly A Loving Church They Devoted Themselves To Fellowship Now This Word Fellowship I Suspect Is Much Overused And Misunderstood Word Particularly In churches Where We're About To Have A Time Of Fellowship Never Never Understood What That Means What Were We Doing Before Or After I'm Not Quite Sure We're Going To Have A Time Fellowship Fellowship Well Fellowship Is What We Do All The Time But The Greek Word That Luke Uses Here Is This Word Koinonia Which Comes From The Word Koinos Which Means Common Now There Can Be Two Ways In Which We Can Have Things In Common Common With Our Fellow Believers See Firstly Expresses What We As Believers Have In Common You See We All If We're Believers Sharing God Himself We Have Fellowship With The Father And The Son By Our Fellowship In The Spirit We Have All Received Mercy And Grace A Pastor From Previous Church Many Years Ago In St.

Hampton Always Used To Say That Fellowship Meant That We Are All Fellows In The Same Ship I'm Not Sure That's Politically Correct Nowadays Or Whether It Should Be Fellows And Fellow Essays But You See None Of Us Is Any Better Or Worse Than Any Other We're All The Same We're All In The Same Ship We Are All Sinners Saved By Grace And Therefore All That We Have Of Importance Is The Same We Have Everything In Common Because We Are Sinners Saved By Grace That's What We Are And In Our Position In The Church That's Who We Are We're All The Same We May Have Different Gifts Of Course We Have Different Gifts We Have Different Abilities We're Called To Do Different Things

That Doesn't Make Any One Of Us More Or Less Important Than Anybody Else We Have That In Common Our Fellowship In The Holy Spirit But Verse 44 Goes On And Explains This Commonality In A Different Way In A Second Way See All The Believers Were Together And Had Everything In Common Selling Their Possessions And Goods And They Gave To Anyone As They Have Need I Don't Know About You But I Find Those Verses Quite Disturbing Do We Really Mean That We Should Follow Their Exam Literally Should We All Rush Out And Sell Everything And Give It All Away Is That Really What They Did Is That Really What We Should Do Well Scholars

[32 : 10] Have Poured Over And Debated That Verse For A Long Time I Think One Of Things Important To Notice Is That This Sharing Within The Fellowship Was Voluntary Now if You Read on In Verse 46 We Read That They Met In Their Homes Which Is A Way I Think Of Saying That They Had Not All Sold Their Houses They Hadn't All Moved Into Some Great Commune In That Sense What Is Important That We All Need To Make Decisions Before God About What God's Calling Us To Do With Our Possessions What Is God Telling Us To Do Not What Everybody Else Is Doing But What's God Telling Us To Do And We Are Called To Give Generously And That Might Not Be Only Of Our Money Maybe We're Called To Give Generously Of

Our Time Maybe We're Called To Give Generously Of The Gifts That God Has Given Us God Gives Us All Different Things We're To Use Our Time Our Money Our Talents According To How God Tells Us To You See The Principle Here Is Not Basically One Of Communal Living But Of Generosity Especially Towards Those Who Had Need Especially Towards The Poor The Apostle John Writing Later Said That If We Have Material Possessions And See See a Brother Or Sister In

Need But Do Not Share How Can We Claim That God's Love Is Living Within Us See The Apostle John Thought That Even Then Some Years Later It Was People Had Things The Principle Was About Sharing The

Principle Was About Other People Who Didn't Have But Had Need What They Held In Common Was Looking Out For One Another's Needs And Thirdly They Were A Worshipping Church They Devoted Themselves To The Breaking Of Bread And To Prayer You See In Addition To Caring For One Another Their Fellowship Was Expressed In Corporate Prayer And Worship Note That It Says The Breaking Of Bread The Breaking Of Bread Which Implies That This Meant The Lord's Supper Which We Are Going To Celebrate In A Few Minutes Together But It Also Suggests That They Had Corporate Prayer Times Not Just Private Prayer Reading Those Verses It Seems That They Held Times

For Both Formal And Informal Worship They Met In The Temple Courts And They Met In Their Homes It Seems That They Needed And They Did Both And I Would Suggest That That Is Still The Same For Us Today We Need Times We Come Together As Church Like This Evening Like We Did This Morning But There Is Also Times When We Come Together And Share In Small Groups And More Informally Maybe That's In A Home Group Or A Life Group Or In A Training Session Of It Might Be There's Times When We Do One There's Times When We Do The Other And We Need To Do Both But There's Also Here An

Insight Into Their Worship You See In Verse 43 We See That They Were Filled With Awe And In Verse 46 They Described As Having Glad And Sincere Hearts Our Public Worship Is To Be Very Dignified Or To Be Dignified See We Are To Remember The Majesty Of The God We Are Worshipping I Think So Often Perhaps In Many Churches Nowadays The Majesty Of God Is Kind Of Put To One Side We Don't Stop To Think About Whose Presence We're Coming Into We To Be Dignified But The Service Is To Be Joyful Every Worship Service

[37 : 12] Must Be Joyful Because It's A Celebration Of God's Mighty Acts In Christ Jesus It Seems To Me Sometimes Church Services Particularly In This Country Seem To Lead Ones I've Been Observing Seem To Veer To One Extreme Or The Other These Early Believers Seem To Know How To Keep These Things In Balance And We Should Aim To Do The Same The Very Famous Preacher Who I'm Sure Most Of You Would Have Heard Of A Guy Called John Stott Who Karen And I Had The Great Privilege Of Being Part Of All Souls When We Were In London Together Listen To John Stott On Regular Basis John Stott Said Once It Is Right For Public Worship To Being Dignified It It It Is Unforgivable If It Is Dull You

See So Often Perhaps We Get The Dignified Muddled Up With The Dull We Have To Remember Whose Presence We're Coming Into Church Now It's Very Interesting And I Think I May Have Commented On This Before When You Look At Verse 42 Verse 42 Says They Devoted Themselves To The Apostles Teaching Into Fellowship To The Breaking Of Bread And To Prayer It's Interesting To Observe They Did Not Devote Themselves

To Evangelism Evangelism Doesn't Appear In Verse 42 At All It's Not Something That Luke Says They Devoted Themselves To Well We Need Be Careful Not To Take Verse 42 Out Of Its Context In This Passage You See It Was Precisely Because They Devoted Themselves To Learning Loving And Worshipping That They Were Just Naturally An Evangelistic Church You See Too Often Maybe We See Evangelism As Another Activity That We Need To Do What This Passage Says Is It Flows As A Natural Consequence Of These People Being Filled With The Holy Spirit Verse 43 Says That Everyone Was Filled With All Not Just The Believers But Those Who Knew Them Verse 46 Says They Enjoyed The Favor Of All The People You See If If We Devote Ourselves To Learning Loving Worshipping Then

We Too Will Be People That Will Be Noticed As Being Different And Having Something That Other People Will Want To Know And To Understand So What Else Are We To Notice About This Early Church Well These Activities Even The Learning And The Worshipping Were Things That They Did Together I've Searched God's Word Not Enough I'll Grant You But There Seems To Be No Such Thing In God's Word As A Solitary Christian I Recently Heard A Story Of A Scottish Pastor I Don't Know Whether It Was Important That It Was A Scottish Pastor But The Story Was Of A Scottish Pastor And He Went To See One Of His Church Members Who He Had Not Seen In The And They Were Sitting There The Pastor And This Gentleman In Front Of An Open Fire With A Good Cup Of Tea In One Hand Must Have Been In Scotland And The Church Member Explained That He Really Didn't See The Need To Come To Church Anymore He Could Read His Bible At

Home He Could Most Certainly Pray At Home There Were Plenty Of Services On The Television And The Radio And There Were Now Even Christian Radio Stations To Listen To The Man Had All He Needed And After The Man Had Finished His Explanation The Pastor Sat In Silence Staring At The Fire And After A Few Moments The Pastor Leant Forward And With A Pair Of Tongs Pulled A Lump Of Red Hot Glowing Coal Out Of The Fire And Placed It Down On The Half Then The Pastor Continued To Sit In Silence And Watched As The Lump Of Red Hot Coal Slowly

[42 : 19] Started Turning Black Then Without Saying A Word He Stood Up Put His Coat On And Left The Story Goes That Next Week The Man Was In Church The Fact Is That As Christians We Need Each Other We Need The Koinonia Oh Yes There Are Some Very Great Resources Available To Us On The Internet We Can Listen To Some Great Sermons There's Teaching Materials More Than We Would Know What To Do With There Are Online Courses There's Hours And Hours Of Beautiful Worship Songs We Can Listen To And We Can And We Should Pray And Read The Bible In Private But To Be Part Of The Body Of Christ We Need To Be Together We Need To Come Together For Both Formal And Informal Worship We Need To Break Bread Together Like We're Going

To Do And We Most Certainly Need To Come Together As A Church To Pray A Note Here Says Don't Forget To Plug Church Prayer Meeting Looking at these characteristics of these first believers what we can see is that all of them are fundamentally about relationships they were related to the apostles teaching in submission to what God's word was saying they were related to each other in love they were related to God in worship they were related to the world in outreach church we can't enter into those relationships by ourselves we need the community of the church so as we consider the issue of our confidence it should come to us as no surprise to us that we need the community of the church to build and maintain our confidence by ourselves of course we can have confidence in God but to maintain that confidence to build that confidence just like that red hot coal it won't stay hot very long when we remove it from the fire we need to maintain our relationships with other believers that's where we help the church helps us build up our confidence by being together and just as I finish there's one last thing we need to consider suppose we are able to maintain our confidence without others perhaps we can well then we've missed one of the key points about relationships relationships are a two way process see even if we don't need others the fact remains that the others need us as we consider our life as a community what is most important to you what you get from our life together or what you can give to others is it more important to you that your confidence is built up or that you can play a part in building up the confidence of others often maybe just by being there whether it's a public service or a home group or a prayer meeting or helping in one of the many church activities whenever we come together we can encourage each other this morning

Calvin told us a bit about what he would be doing tomorrow morning we can help each other we can encourage each other you see if we share the stories of the times when we plucked up courage to speak to somebody we're encouraging other people who perhaps are trying to pluck up courage to speak to somebody our God is a God of relationships in the mystery of the Trinity he's even in a relationship with himself father son and holy spirit I don't understand how that quite works but all three parts of God work together and we've been saved to be part of his body we've been called to be in relationships to each other yes we need confidence on our front lines that's what we're thinking about in these weeks together but we also need confidence as a body on our front line our vision to see how we become transformed by God through his loving serving and worshipping church well that's got a touch of

Acts chapter 2 about it hasn't it you see as a group of people we have a front line and that's why we need confidence it's not Malcolm's job or Andrew's job ok they may be here more than we are sometimes but they need encouragement if they're going to lead us we build confidence together and when we devote ourselves to biblical teaching and to fellowship to the breaking of bread and to prayer then the Lord will add to our numbers those who have been saved Amen thank you

[48 : 36] Aubrey we come together for communion but before we do that I suppose as we come to this table we realise that we need to be rescued we're sinners that need to be saved and this is a reminder that it's all been done Christ has done it there's good news for the captive if you still feel you're caught up in your sin and you think that God doesn't love you well this table says that he does so very much there's good news for the captive there's good news for the shamed there's good news for the one who walked away and there's good news for the doubter let's sing this

together as we come to communion let's prepare ourselves for that too we stand good night He's our rescuer

We are free from sin forevermore Oh how sweet the sound All our grace abounds We will praise the Lord our rescuer There is good news for the captive There is good news for the ashamed There is good news for the one who walked away There is good news for the doubter The one virgin veil For the good Lord has come to see the same He's our rescuer He's our rescuer We are free from sin forevermore

Oh how sweet the sound Oh how grace abounds We will praise the Lord our rescuer He is beauty for the blind man Riches for the poor He is friendship for the one the world ignores He is rest for the weary Rest for those who strive For the good Lord is the way the truth the light Yes the good Lord is the way the truth the light He's our rescuer He's our rescuer He's our rescuer He's our rescuer We are free from sin forevermore We are free from sin forevermore Oh how sweet the sound

Oh how grace abounds We will praise the Lord our rescuer So come and be chainless Come and be fearless Come to the foot of Calvary There is redemption There is redemption For every eviction Here at the foot of Calvary So come and be chainless Come and be fearless Come to the foot of Calvary There is redemption There is redemption For every eviction Here at the foot of Calvary He's our rescuer He's our rescuer We are free from sin forevermore Oh how sweet the sound Oh how grace abounds We will praise the Lord our rescuer We'll praise the Lord our rescuer Heavenly Father there is nobody who could have saved us other than you through your Son, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ We thank you that you took our sin and dealt with it We thank you that you've taken our lives and given us a new life We thank you that you're preparing a place for us where one day we will see you face to face We thank you that you've taken the chains away Satan has no hold on us because of what Christ has done

[54 : 11] We thank you and we celebrate this time and we remember as we come to this communion table what you've done for us Bless each one of us we pray and accept the worship we bring to you in Jesus name Amen Please be seated Perhaps those serving at communion will join me This table is set for all who believe and have put their trust and faith in Jesus If that's you you're welcome to this table If it's not you just at the moment and you just want to observe It's fine Just let the elements pass you by But Jesus died for everyone No one is it

The gift is free The invitation here at this table to the Lord We're gathered is to his supper A foretaste of things eternal A reminder of the past And a promise for the future As we read in Isaiah chapter 53 Just read it to you The prophet writes Who has believed our message And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed He grew up before him like a tender shoot And like a root out of dry ground He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him Nothing in his appearance that we should desire him He was despised and rejected by mankind A man of suffering And familiar with pain Like one from whom people hide their faces

He was despised And we held him in low esteem Surely he took our pain He bore our suffering Yet we considered him punished by God Stricken by him and afflicted But he was pierced But he was pierced for our transgressions He was crushed for our iniquities The punishment that brought us peace Was on him And by his wounds We are healed We all like sheep have gone astray Each of us has turned to our own way And the Lord has laid on him The iniquity of us all He was oppressed And afflicted Yet he did not open his mouth He was led like a lamb to the slaughter And a sheep before its shearers Is silent

He did not open his mouth By oppression And judgment He was taken away Yet who of his Sorry Yet who of his generation Protested For he was cut off from the land of the living For the transgression of my people He was punished He was assigned a grave With the wicked And with the rich in his death Though he had done no violence Nor was any deceit in his mouth He was the Lord It was the Lord's Will to crush him And cause him to suffer And though the Lord makes his life An offering for sin He will see his offspring And prolong his days And the will of the Lord will prosper In his hand After he has suffered He will see the light of life And be satisfied

By knowing By knowing The righteous servant Will justify Therefore I will give him a portion Among the great And he will divide the spoils With the strong Because he poured out his life Unto death And was numbered with the transgressors For he bore the sin of many And made intercession For the transgressors This is a phenomenal passage Written so many years Before the crucifixion Before Jesus came In the flesh And we have it here Represented at this table The body And blood of Christ For our sins For our sins Let's give thanks For the bread And for the cup Heavenly Father

[59 : 24] We thank you That Jesus gave us these symbols And this table To remember We come in two minds To remember the cost That you paid for our sin And we come In sorrow over that And yet we come in excitement And celebration That you didn't remain dead You overcame death And have given us the offer Of your grace For forgiveness Thank you After Jesus had given thanks He took the bread And he broke it And said This is my body Which is given For you Do this As often as you do it In remembrance of me We do that Paul just does remind us

That before we take Of the bread Or drink of the cup We examine ourselves And see if there is anything In our lives That we need to confess And he promises If you confess your sin He'll forgive it That's a promise And God keeps his promises So as we give the bread out We'll have a time Quiet without the music But we'll think about As we take this bread That Christ died for us And we can take that As an individual commitment As we take the bread We'll eat it And we'll give thanks We could just say The body of Christ Given for you There is some gluten free bread There is some gluten free bread there as well

If you're worried about That Thank you The breast Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[63 : 33] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. We individually accept this outstanding gift, not because we deserve it, but because we want to respond with thanksgiving and submission, offering our lives again to serve him as we remember the cost.

In the same way, after supper, Jesus took the cup. When he gave him thanks, he said, this is a new covenant, a new agreement that's been sealed by my blood.

Whenever you do this, we remember his death until he comes again. This time we'll hold on to the cup, and then we'll drink together, remembering that Christ died for his church.

We're his church, his body. Amen. Amen. So this time we might just say the cup, which is given for you, for the forgiveness of sins.

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

[64 : 57] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thanks to you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. This cup represents a new covenant that God has made, and that covenant is sealed through his blood, which was shed for us.

It's opened a door to eternal life. Christ died for his church. We are part of his church. Let's drink and give thanks as his church.

[67 : 04] Amen. Famous window, please. This cup pov. I wish we had a special gift to him! We've ■■■■■ed slowly from this baby.

We ended up not air-like singing. Our temple is together. Now our temple has gaat in the wilderness. We have matured the wisdom. They have given us questo pc, which was used for us. The Holy ■ WHAT ■■■■ PAGE Hasnotic ■■■■nt The Bible- aulacause- Your death, O Lord, we commemorate.

Your resurrection, we confess. Your final coming, we await. Glory be to you, O Christ. Father of all, we give you thanks and praise that when we were still far off, you met us in your Son and brought us home.

Dying and living, you declared your love, gave us grace and opened the gate of glory. May we who share Christ's body live his risen life.

[68 : 17] We who drink his cup bring life to others. We whom the Spirit lights give light to the world.

Keep us firm in the hope you have set before us, so we and all your children shall be free and the whole earth live to praise your name through Christ our Lord.

Amen. We're going to sing another song. The grace of God has reached me and pulled me from the raging sea and I am safe on this solid ground.

Who's your salvation? The Lord is my salvation. We stand and sing. The grace of God has reached for me.

And pulled me from the raging sea And I am safe on this solid ground The Lord is my salvation I will not fear when darkness falls This strength will help me scale these walls I'll see the dawn of the rising sun The Lord is my salvation My hope is hidden in the Lord Who is like the Lord our God Strong to save, faithful in love My debt is paid and the victory won

[70 : 36] The Lord is my salvation My hope is hidden in the Lord My hope is hidden in the Lord He flowers each promise of His word When winter fades I know spring will come The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation In times of waiting, times of need When I know loss, when I am weak I know His grace will renew these days The Lord is my salvation Who is like the Lord our God Who is like the Lord our God

Strong to save, faithful in love My debt is paid and the victory won The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation And when I reach that final day And when I reach that final day He will not leave me in the grave But I will rise, He will call me home The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation Who is like the Lord our God Who is like the Lord our God Strong to save, faithful in love My debt is paid and the victory won The Lord is my salvation

Glory be to God the Son Glory be to God the Son Glory be to God the Spirit The Lord is my salvation Glory be to God the Father Glory be to God the Father Glory be to God the Son Glory be to God the Father Glory be to God the Spirit The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation The Lord is my salvation Rejoice in that. Praise the Lord.

We're bringing our prayers of intercession now. George, thank you. Let us pray.

Father God, creator of heaven and earth, our shepherd and our guide, we come to you tonight in prayer with thankful hearts. We're thankful for the time today with our family and friends.

[74 : 14] We're thankful for a grateful knowledge of you from your word provided to us today by Andrew and by Aubrey. We're thankful, Lord God, that you know all things, especially the trials we are going through.

So in our quiet and in our stillness, lead us, mind, body and soul, into your presence, that we may rest, sensing nothing but a gentle warmth of your love.

Come, Holy Spirit, and refresh our mind. Refresh us in your word and remove the false images presented by this world that we should work for bigger and bigger barns.

Come, Holy Spirit, and refresh our body. Revive us each day when we feel weary and surround us with a cloud of witnesses who will encourage each one here tonight to finish the race strongly.

Come, Holy Spirit, and refresh our soul. Lead us to green pastures and still waters that will prepare and equip us ready for the spiritual battle in the coming week.

[75 : 21] And Father, we don't know what the week ahead will bring, but we have been, but you've been teaching us about frontline confidence for such a time as this. And so we ask you, Lord, place in our hands the shield of faith and the sword of the Spirit that we may stand firm in Christ our Saviour.

Place on our head the helmet of salvation to protect our mind from the lies and deceit of Satan.

Place on our feet the gospel of peace so desperately needed in our world where wordsmiths contrive to deliver false gospels and false goss.

Help us, Lord, to be peacemakers. Place around us the belt of your truth that we may not be deceived and in so doing bring dishonour to your name and your church.

Place upon us the breastplate of righteousness so that we may be aware of how sin so easily entangles and remind us once again of how you set us free from all condemnation through faith in Christ Jesus, our Lord and our Saviour.

We thank you, Lord, for the freedom we have to come here tonight eager to listen, eager to hear and eager to seek your face. We thank you, Father, that even as we hear the sirens there are no secret police watching us as there are in many countries.

[76 : 49] We thank you that the boundary lines have fallen in pleasant places for us in this country where we have warmth and shelter and clean water and a democratic government when many around the world have none of those things.

Lord, restore in us a spirit of contentment and shepherd us when we attempt to do things our way. Father God, we offer up to you our prayers of asking, seeking and longing, knowing that you hear our cries and answer them.

And so, Father, we pray that the paperwork required for the sale of Matt and Rachel McNulty's flat in High Wycombe will be located wherever it's hidden, whatever file it's got misput into, and that the insurance company will pay for the repairs without delay and without any financial penalty.

Lord, hear that prayer. We pray for Karen Bates and her family and all her newer mother as they prepare for that Thanksgiving service on the 9th of March.

Lord God, speak through your servant Andrew with words that bring hope and inspire faith and place on his lips an eternity-changing message for all who have ears to hear.

[78 : 13] And Lord, we pray too for the bereavement service that will take place here on the 12th of March. You've reminded us that death comes like a thief in the night, but as we heard this morning, ask questions.

We don't live in the night. We live in the glory of your victory over death. Therefore, death for Christians has no sting. Be close, Lord, to all who even now are thinking of attending that service, and in your mercy is their sense of loneliness and loss because they believe that no one else understands.

Heavenly Father, we pray for all the staff at Guinea-Borch Hospital in Chad, and we ask for the training, the swift training of new members, and we pray that more will be added to the team, especially in surgeons, so that they will ease the suffering of those who have to wait for surgery, especially Habiba.

Father God, we remember tonight those who have disappeared from the front pages of the newspapers or from the TV screens, and yet for whom suffering is still raw and real.

We pray for the husband and the young daughters of Nicola Bulli, sadly found drowned in the river of Raya. We pray for those who support and comfort that family right now and in the days to come.

[79 : 42] And we pray for all those still affected in Turkey and Syria, and we pray for the team of workers who continue to remove the rubble and bury the dead.

We pray for all those who remain in trauma and distress about their future, that they will continue to receive aid and food and shelter, and that as new buildings are erected, that they will be built stronger and safer.

We pray, Lord, that in the week ahead, that as we hear of behaviour that the media will use to provide gossip, that we will turn to prayer for all involved, for you alone are their judge.

We pray that where there is sin, there will also be those who will appoint those affected to you, the healer and giver of life eternal. Father, of all mercies, hear our prayers that we ask in Jesus' name and speak to us tonight through the power of the Comforter, your Holy Spirit.

Amen. Amen. Thank you, George. We've got a closing hymn now, and after that, I hope if you're able to stay, there'll be tea and coffee after the service somewhere up there, just follow the crowd.

[81 : 05] I hope you can. So let's finish with a song, with a challenge. Maybe this is God saying something to us. Will you follow me if I but call your name?

Will you go where you don't know and never be the same? Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be known? Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

Challenge for each one of us. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing. Let's sing.

Will you come and follow me if I will call your name? Will you go where you don't know and never be the same?

Will you let my love be shown? Will you let my name be grown? Will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?

[82 : 17] Will you leave yourself behind if I would call your name? Will you care for cruel and kind and never be the same?

Will you risk the hostile stare should your life attract or scare? Will you let me answer prayer in you and you in me?

Will you let the blinded see if I would call your name? Will you set the prisoners free and never be the same?

Will you kiss the love at me and do such as this unseen and admit to what I mean in you and you in me?

Will you let the youth you hide if I would call your name? Will you quell the fear inside and never be the same?

[83 : 37] Will you use the faith you found to reshape the world around? Through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?

Lord, your summons echoes true when you but call my name Let me turn and follow you and never be the same In your company I'll go where your love and footsteps show Then I'll move and live and grow in you and you in me There's an invitation after the service for somebody to pray with you if you'd like prayer for anything or like to pray for somebody then just see somebody with a badge and

if they don't have a badge just ask them if they pray for you that'll put them on the spot okay we'll close with a blessing perhaps we could say to one another May God our heavenly father bless you with the confidence of his peace

May our lord jesus christ grant you his joy in the knowledge and confidence that you're accepted and forgiven May god the holy spirit give you the confidence to serve god and bring glory to his name all through jesus christ our lord amen amen bless you all have a fantastic week ■ mutelene ■ ph