

# Without love I am nothing

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Preacher: Malcolm Hazell

[0:00] Jesus Christ, my living hope, O God, you are my name.

Well, good morning to you all and welcome to our morning worship this morning. We come to worship the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth. And as we come to him, we remember the primary nature of God.

When we summarize who is God, we say God is love. Should we just say that? God is love. And so as we come today, we want to remember that and to learn from his great heart of love.

We're going to read a passage which will come up on the screen together. This is from 1 John 4, 7 to 12. So let's read this together. Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.

[1:11] This is to show his love among us. He sent his one and only son into the world that we might live through him.

This is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.

Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us.

What amazing words as we come to God. We're going to stand and sing two songs which I think will help us to understand that love and see how that love has been expressed to us in Jesus Christ. Let's stand and sing Great is Your Love. Great is Your Love.

[2:32] Let the whole love sing, let the whole love sing. You are the way, you are the way, there is no other.

You rose from death to victory. You reign in life, O majesty. Your name is high and lifted up.

Jesus, Jesus, alive in us. You are the way, you are the way, there is no other.

You are the way, there is no other. You are glorious, you are glorious. You are glorious. Lord over all, you have made us new.

We give it all to you. In everything, we are owed. You are the way, there is no other. Now, let the whole love sing, let the whole love sing the Glyde term.

[3:52] You are the way, there is no other. Now, let the whole love sing, let the whole love song.

you is we are we are You are free, you are free.

Let us be defeated by love, You overcome, you overcome. From death to victory, you reign in life, O majesty, your name be high and lifted up, Jesus, Jesus, I'm not making up.

From death to victory, you reign in life, O majesty, your name be high and lifted up, Jesus, Jesus, I'm not making up.

piano plays softly All is stripped away, and I simply come Longing just to breathe Something that's not worth That will bless your heart I'll bring you more than a song For a song in itself is not what you have required

[6:38] You search much deeper within Through the way things appear, you're looking into my heart I'm coming back to the heart of worship And it's all about you It's all about you, Jesus I'm sorry, love, for the thing I've made it And it's all about you, Jesus King of endless worth And it's all about you, Jesus And it's all about you, Jesus And it's all about you, Jesus

Lord, when I'm weak and poor All I have is yours Every single breath Are you more than a song For a song in itself Is not what you have required You search much deeper within Through the way

things appear You're looking into my heart I'm coming back to the heart Of worship And it's all about you It's all about you, Jesus I'm sorry, Lord, for the thing I made it But it's all about you It's all about you, Jesus

As we stand, let's offer up our hearts to the Lord Just perhaps stand and offer yourself to God We come to you, Lord And we don't want to come with any pretense We simply want to come to you The God of love We thank you, Lord Jesus That you have reached down to us And you've made us your own Your own people We worship you We give you thanks We praise you for your glory And we pray this morning We would know your love And reveal your love to you, Father

And to one another In Jesus' name Amen Amen Amen Do take a seat I'd just like to welcome you all I'm Malcolm, one of the pastors here It's great to see you And welcome particularly if you're here for the first time We're going to see a short clip in a moment Which my lovely wife produced during lockdown In fact, over the next few months We're going to see a few clips That were produced about two years ago So, I don't know whether you can transport yourself back into I'm always doing I just want to Yes, I hope you don't cringe too much As you see yourself again, darling But here we go Let's have a look at this Good morning Today I want to talk to you about love And I wonder how you show love Can I just take a minute to think about different ways That you might show somebody that you love them Did you think of flowers?

Or maybe you thought of chocolates I always liked chocolates Well, perhaps you thought about helping somebody That can be a really lovely way to show love Or perhaps you thought about really listening to someone That can make them feel very loved Well, in the story that we're looking at from the Bible today We see a woman who really showed her love It was Mary and she showed her love to Jesus Now, Mary was Lazarus' sister Who Jesus had raised from the dead So she had a lot to love Jesus for Jesus had also taught her about heaven and eternal life And so she really loved Jesus And on this particular day Mary came to Jesus And she brought some perfume That was worth about a whole year's wages And she didn't just give that perfume to Jesus But she poured it onto his feet

[11:46] And wiped it away with her hair So Mary gave something really costly And she gave of herself She knelt at Jesus' feet Really showing her love for him And I wonder this morning if you can think of ways That you can show your love for Jesus And we could Have a think for a minute We could listen to him Read his word We can sing praises to him But Jesus also said that We can show our love for him By showing love to other people He talked about showing love to everyone that we met Not just our friends and family So I want you to have a think Maybe this week See if you can think of ways That you can show love To the people that you come into contact with People at school or at work or whatever To show that love to them But also in that To show just how much you love Jesus I'm going to pray

And in the prayer We're going to just spend a moment Reflecting on what we could do This coming week To show the love of God to others So there'll be a little point in it Where there'll be a silent We'll also pray for our children and young people As they go out Let's pray shall we Dear Lord Teach us how to love How to love you How to love others Often we get this wrong And we're sorry Often we think we can do it all Ourselves in our own strength And we're sorry Lord When we do that We turn away from self-sufficiency And look to you To fill us afresh With divine love And as we look to pour out That love we've received Please guide us This coming week As we spend a moment Quietly now We just ask you to

Fill our mind With ways of Showing love This week And we thank you For the way in which Our children And youth leaders Show love to Our children and youth By teaching them From your word And loving them And listening to them And we pray your blessing On them The leaders This morning As they go out To their groups During this next song We pray that they would Love the Lord their God With all their heart All their soul All their mind And all their strength And love their neighbour As themselves And so fulfil The law of Christ Hear our prayer Amen Amen So as the children go out We're going to sing a song Lord I come to you Let my heart be changed Renewed Shall we stand? Amen Lord I come to you Let my heart be changed Renewed Flowing from the grace That I found In you Lord I come to know Lord I come to know The

weaknesses I see In you Will be stripped away By the power of your love  
Hold me close Let your love surround me Bring me near Draw me to your Son As I wait Arise up  
like evil And when I will soar within Your spirit leads me on In the power of your love Lord unveil my  
eyes Let me see you face Face to face To face The knowledge of your love As you live In me Lord  
renew my mind

[17:06] Lord renew my mind As your will unfolds In my life In living  
everyday By the power of your love Hold me close To let your love  
surround me Bring me near Bring me near Bring me near Draw me to your Son  
And as I wait Arise up like evil And I will soar within Your spirit leads  
me on In the power of your love Amen

Do take a seat And Titi's going to lead us In prayer Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen  
Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Good morning Let's bow our head in prayer Let's bow our head in  
prayer Father God we want to thank you for your goodness And your faithfulness in our lives We  
are grateful for the strength given to us daily As we live our lives Thank you for the precious hair we  
breathe in daily Father God we appreciate you We bless you you, Lord, for always showing us your  
love.

Thank you for dying on the cross for us. Thank you for the meaning of Easter. Thank you for the  
hope that you give us. We want to bless you, Lord.

Heavenly Father, we pray for our church. We pray that you continue to uphold us and help us to  
uphold one another in faith.

And through our Christian journey, Lord. Father God, help us to continue to build up one another in  
confidence and draw unbelievers closer to you, Lord.

[19:44] Enable us to change lives for your glory. Father God, we continue  
to pray for the world and its leaders, Lord. We pray that your will  
prevails overall and that you send your revival.

Cleanse the world clean, Lord, with your blood and send forth your anointing. Heal the sick from  
their illnesses, Lord, and save those who are oppressed.

Intervene and shine your light in the midst of darkness, Lord, and send hope for all those who have  
given up. Father God, we pray that you give us strength.

We pray for peace. We pray for those who are saddened and bereaved. Lord, ease their pain, Lord.  
Help those at war to seek your face and to remember that your peace surpasses all.

Lord, open the eyes of the tyrants and end the evil they are doing, Lord. Let them see the errors of  
their ways. Let them know that you are God. Father God, we pray for our church members who are  
recovering from hospital.

[21:00] We pray for your complete and divine healing process, Lord. Give  
them strength. Father God, we pray for Lindsay.

We pray that you provide all the necessary help needed, Lord. Father God, we also pray for Martin.  
we pray for your strength, Lord, your divine strength and healing.

Father God, we pray for Pastor and his wife as they prepare for their holiday, Lord. We pray that  
they will feel rested and experience your unfailing love. We pray that you continue to enrich them,  
give them guidance and wisdom, and that they will come back feeling refreshed.

Father God, we pray that as your people you will give us the ability to show your love unto one  
another and spread your love to the needy, to unbelievers, and in our frontline walking.

Lord, we pray that we will act as your beacon of light and let others see hope through you, through  
us. Lord, we pray for your continuous protection this week.

[22:19] We pray that you will continue to stay strong and rejoice in you  
no matter the challenges that we face, Lord. In Jesus' name, I pray.

Amen. Amen. I think we now have our reading and Sarah's going to come and bring that.

Amen. The reading this morning is from 1 Corinthians 13 verses 1 to 13 and you can find that on 1,  
1, 5, sorry, 1, 1, 5, 4 of the Pew Bible.

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a  
clanging cymbal.

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge and if I have a faith  
that can move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing.

[23:30] If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind, it does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud, it does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth, it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

Love never fails, but where there are prophecies they will cease, where there are tongues they will be stilled, where there is knowledge it will pass away, for we know in part and we prophesy in part, but when completeness comes, what is in part disappears.

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child, when I became a man, I put away the ways of childhood behind me, for now we see only a reflection as in a mirror, then we shall see face to face, now I know in part, then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known, and now these three remain, faith, hope, and love, but the greatest of these is love.

[25:16] Let's ask the Lord to speak to us through his word. Thank you loving heavenly father that you are love, and so when you inspire your servants to speak of love, we want to listen to discover what love is.

We hear a world that has many deafening voices telling us what love is, and so many of them are dead ends. Holy Spirit, we invite you to speak to us this morning, that the word that is written in our Bibles will become a living word in our experience and in our lives.

We pray this for your glory, and in the name of Jesus, our Saviour. Amen. Well, I hope you enjoyed the reading of 1 Corinthians 13.

Who enjoyed just hearing it read? Just out of interest? It's a good one, isn't it? It's just, and did it trigger any memories in your mind? Some of you may have had memories that were very, very joyful memories.

Some of you may have some painful memories as you hear this passage read. It's beautifully written, isn't it? Beautiful words, and we're going to be spending three weeks looking at this passage.

[26:48] Normally, it's read at a wedding, and then you get a little homily for about five or ten minutes, so you're going to get a bumper crop of 1 Corinthians 13. I pray that it will do your soul's good, and you'll love the Lord more at the end than you do now.

Now, as we come to this passage, you may be hoping for what one might describe as spiritual bubble bath. I don't know whether you're hoping for that, a nice, warm, comfortable bath.

The first week, as we look at verses 1 to 3, I have to warn you, I would suggest, I think in this week's sheet, which I hope you received, I described it as a cold bath, but on reflection, I think it might be better described as a very, very hot bath with antiseptic to cleanse.

You can decide which of those analogies are most appropriate. Let me explain. Well, the Corinthians saw themselves as very, very spiritual, and the evidence for this was that they could speak in tongues, they could have ecstatic times of worship, and some of them could prophesy, and prophesy they did loudly.

And Paul wants to say to the Corinthians, by the way, prophecy and tongue and other gifts of the Spirit are good, but they're not the main thing.

[28:15] And perhaps Paul is saying, you've made them the main thing, and it's not the main thing. After all, if we go back a little to 1 Corinthians 12 verse 7, he says this, so it shows that he's very affirming about the gifts of the Spirit.

Now, to each one, the manifestation of the Spirit is given, what for? So they feel better themselves? No, for the common good. So Paul is affirming of the use of the gifts of the Spirit, and certainly that is something that would be good for us to grow in.

But gifts used without love leads to nothing, whereas gifts used with love will result in the common good.

food. So that's the first thing just to say. So it's quite a warning. You don't want at the end of your days to have done lots of things, offered lots of gifts, and at the end of the day, it add up to nothing. That would be sad. And Paul wants to warn us of that. So let's start by looking at verse 1, shall we? And you might want to just get that in front of you, make sure we're following the Word of God.

[29:29] If you haven't opened it in your pews, then please open it up. It says, If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

Now, I haven't warned you, David, but could you help us? If you could just make a little bit more noise, that might be good. Very good, very good, very good.

Well, you got the kind of idea. Some of you may quite like that sound. Others kind of go, oh, no, not the cymbals. I think, sadly, I don't think Paul is saying what a lovely sound here.

He's saying what a racket is what he's getting at. Now, the tongues that Paul is speaking of here are an indiscernible language.

tongues that tongues with an interpretation can edify the body of Christ as we gather in worship.

[30:38] But he also, there are, there is a tongue that many Christians find the Lord gives them for personal edification. translation and that's not to be used in public but is used to offer prayers to God when you just don't know what to say and you've run out of words.

My mother-in-law, we were chatting to her this last week and the Lord has guided her every day to pray in tongues for 15 minutes. It's interesting, isn't it?

15 minutes, quite a long while. So, this is tongues. Paul is not saying there's anything wrong with tongues. He's saying that tongues just given out with lots and lots of noise in a public setting with no interpretation is just a load of noise.

It's like a clanging symbol, doesn't achieve anything. Now, the other thing, so they're kind of into this ecstatic worship and one of the reasons why the writer Paul may have chosen the symbols, David, just so you feel slightly better about this, is at the time there was something called the cult of Sibel, and this particular cult involved very noisy clanging of symbols as part of frenzied pagan worship, and it seemed like something of that had found its place into the new church as it formed.

Paul is saying your gathered worship seems to have become a lot of noise without a lot of love, and the focus of this type of worship was on performance and the performer, and as such it became self-focused and not God-focused and God-honoring.

[32:21] Is that okay for verse one? You get the kind of idea of what Paul's getting at, saying that's not the way to go if you want to show love. We go on to prophecy. Now, Paul was a big fan of prophecy.

This was like, he said, above all gifts, this is a really, really good one. So he's not knocking it. chapter 14, verse one, says this, eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially, especially the gift of prophecy.

So it then comes as a bit of a surprise when you hear the verse two of our chapter, chapter 13. It says, if I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have the faith that can move mountains, but have not love, I am nothing.

Now, this is obviously very sobering for anyone who is involved in a preaching ministry. If I am able to preach and teach the word of God from complex passages, but I fail to love, Paul has a shocking conclusion to make.

He says, I am nothing. I am nothing. So friends, even if you or I are able to prophesy or preach even the most complex passages or share some wonderful mysteries about God, Paul concludes that without love, it equals nothing.

[33:57] Now, this last week on Tuesday, about 50 or service gathered to hear Andy Robinson speak about sexuality, sexuality, and he spoke very well, very helpfully.

But the thing which really struck me about what he said was not so much what he said, but the way he said it and the grace with which he said it. And I came away thinking, wow, what a humble man who really loves people.

I don't know, those of you who were there, is that what you heard? If you felt that, just put up your hand, as few of you did, yeah. What a humble man who really loved people. I think Paul would commend him if he were here.

And certainly, I really appreciated Andy's ministry, and we're hoping to have him back on a Sunday sometime, probably on a different subject. So, to be clear, you may think you have the answer to enable the church to grow.

You may have a very high IQ. We may exercise outstanding leadership, but these qualities alone do not impress God, says Paul. If we don't have love, when God marks our card, he gives us zero.

[35:16] It's quite sobering, isn't it? Is this a hot bath with antiseptic, or is it a cold bath? I don't know, you can decide. Friends, Paul is offering some very sobering words. We can exercise incredible gifts, but fail to love and follow Jesus, and it all adds up to nothing.

Now, I hear you saying, I suspected as much. Let's not get involved in spiritual gifts. They can be very, very disruptive to the church. Instead, let us focus on sacrificial service.

That's the way to go. Surely we're safe there. And then you come to verse three. If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames, but have not love, I am, perhaps you can help me, nothing.

Oh. So even if I am willing to serve until I drop, to be martyred, but fail to love Jesus and others, I achieve nothing.

No love leads to loveless sacrifice that adds up to nothing. Maybe we hope to do incredible things for God, but without love you get nothing.

[36:33] Friends, I wonder how you picture a properly spiritual person. Just take a moment. Really, you know, Christian who's really spiritual.

What would that person look like? Do they speak in tongues for 15 minutes each morning? Do they prophesy wonderful things about God?

Do they sacrifice for the Lord? Well, maybe they do all three, and Paul certainly isn't knocking any of those. But you're looking in the wrong place, says Paul.

You're missing the point. Do you love Jesus? Do you love others? Do we love Jesus? Do we love others? Do I love Jesus? Do I love others? Do you see what I meant when it's a scalding hot bath with some antiseptic?

[37:37] It's all too easy, isn't it, to seek to do the work of the Lord without experiencing his love and being able to show his love. So, that's kind of like the sobering bit.

Where do we go then if we find ourselves bankrupt of love? Where can we be renewed in love? How can we know love? Well, I'm really delighted, and it kind of was planned, that this service is a communion service.

And surely this is the place to be renewed in love. We come to this table to remember the one, the Son of God, who gave himself for us in the supreme act of love and sacrifice by dying on a cross for the sins of the whole world.

And the remarkable thing is this morning he invites you and me to his table to eat with him, even though it was our sin that held him there.

what love, what sacrifice. This is the place to be renewed in love, to find love if you've never found it before.

[38:54] Come to this meal and focus on the King of love, the Lord Jesus. Have you been tired, have you become tired in your work for the Lord or just your work you're doing to earn a living?

Then come to the servant king, come to him, come to his table and be served by him and be renewed in love. This is the place for renewal at the table of the Lord.

This is the place of love where weary souls discover living water. So what does all this teaching look like?

I was trying to think how would this actually work out? Perhaps someone over coffee afterwards upstairs might say to you you know how's it going in your Christian life?

Perhaps that's a good question to ask one another from time to time. You could reply for example by telling them about how things are going in the job club. I'm sure Rachel will tell you lots about what is planned for the next job club on the 17th of May.

[39:59] But just imagine wouldn't it be better if somebody started talking about the job club? Wouldn't it be better if they shared how Jesus had given them a love for those people who were coming to the job club?

Wouldn't that be great? These people I didn't know at all and I found I really found the Lord gave me a love for them. Wouldn't that be beautiful if that was what was shared? Or how about you know at

the job club it's great to serve all those people who are coming without employment but do you know what's been so wonderful is as brothers and sisters working together we've known real fellowship and love together.

Wouldn't that be a great thing to share? You could share perhaps about something different you could share with one another about a new worship song that you like or an old one that you'd prefer.

But wouldn't it be better to share how that song reminds you of the greatest lover of all? Whichever song. Wouldn't that be the better thing to talk about?

Do you follow what I mean? Or perhaps the Lord has given you the gift of tongues for your private prayer. Well that's great and some may even want that gift and ask for prayer for it.

[41:25] But don't talk about the gift. By all means if you want to talk about the giver. the giver of all good gifts is our heavenly father. Or how about as you talk about the fact that you were able to pray in tongues last night for a particular situation, maybe talk about how that changed your heart for that person.

Or how you suddenly found rising faith or hope in that situation. That would be better, wouldn't it? do you see what Paul would be saying? The focus is loving God, loving others.

Wouldn't that be wonderful? And what does all this look like? What is it about talking about love that stirs us?

Does it stir you this morning? does it remind you of what's most important? I think that's what Paul would want. I find it does something else though.

It makes me remember how little I love. Does it you? It reminds me of the deep wounds that still need healing.

[42:41] Does it for you? The temptation is to just keep busy and focus on the great endeavour. Do you ever do that?

Just keep moving. Global warming. If we can just sort that out it'll all be okay. And of course it is important. Church growth. That's the answer. And please Lord, build your church and the gates of hell will not prevail against her.

Or perhaps you desire to change the country. The NHS really must get sorted. And all those working in the NHS, God bless you and thank you. Anything really seems to come to our mind. But Paul warns us, keep going in that way and that way alone and at the end of the day it all adds up to, just remind me, nothing.

So instead stop. And I think Paul wants us to stop as we come to this chapter. Stop the pretense. Don't hide behind your giftedness or lack of gifting for that matter.

[43:46] Come instead to God because God is love. And in him there is no darkness at all. In him you will find rest for your souls.

Hallelujah. I was reading a book just this other day by Michel Coist in his book The Breath of Love. And he speaks about humanity's unquenchable thirst and hunger for God.

He speaks in this way. I was hungry. I was thirsty. But I did not know what food and what drink I needed.

Nothing is worse than being hungry and not knowing bread. Nothing is worse than being thirsty and not knowing wine or grape juice.

I wondered who had set me free from my torture. You see humanity every single one of us is searching everywhere for love for food and drink to satisfy but we are left unsatisfied until we find our satisfaction in the love of God.

[45:12] In Jeremiah 2 verse 13 the prophet says this. My people have committed two sins. They have forsaken me the spring of living water and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.

I want to re-read our passage again from 1 Corinthians 13 and I hope you'll accept this re-reading. I'm not trying to change the word of God but you do accept that God is love don't you?

And every time the word love comes up I'm going to replace it with Jesus. Is that okay? And then we're going to pray. you might want to close your eyes not necessarily follow the text to make sure I get them all right.

So let's hear the Lord speaking to us. If I speak in the tongues of men and angels but don't have Jesus I'm only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all the mysteries and all knowledge and if I have faith that can move mountains but I don't have Jesus I am nothing.

[46:35] If I give all I possess to the poor and surrender my body to the flames but don't have Jesus I am nothing.

A moment of quiet and then we'll pray together. Loving Heavenly Father forgive us that so much of our labour and effort is driven by fear rather than loving faith.

Father forgive us for being proud of our gifting or service rather than loving and worshipping the giver of every good gift. Forgive us when we compare our gifts with others rather than receiving from your generous hand heart.

To satisfy our thirst and to share what we have found with others. Today we come again to you. We come hungry.

We come thirsty for you Jesus. Longing to know your love afresh which is life to our body and soul. Father our love is like a flickering match.

[48:14] Your love is midday sunlight filling up our senses and bringing life. So this morning again fill us with yourself.

Fill us with your love. And at the end of our lives may the epitaph on our grave be simply loved of God.

Amen. Amen. We're going to prepare ourselves to come around his table to continue to listen and respond to him as we sing Jesus Christ I think upon your sacrifice.

Can I invite you to stand? Amen.

God bless He will reach lebih for you.

[49:24] uh upon your sacrifice you became nothing born out today many times i've wondered at your gift of life and i'm in that place once again once again i look upon the cross where you died i'm humbled by your mercy and i'm broken inside once again i thank you once again i pour out my life now you are exalted to the highest place king of the heavens where one day about the highest place i'm in that place and i'm full of praise once again i'm full of praise once again once again i look upon the cross where you died i'm humbled by your mercy and i'm broken inside and i'm broken inside once again i thank you once again i pour out my life thank you for the cross thank you for the cross thank you for the cross my friend thank you for the cross thank you for the cross thank you for the cross my friend wonderful oh thanks okay thank you

I thank you Once again I pour out my life Amen, do take a seat.

And I'm just going to say a few words and then I'll invite the deacons to come up. I just want to introduce our time of communion in a slightly different way, which I hope will be helpful and link to the sermon.

We need Jesus, don't we, brothers and sisters? We needed him when we first believed. We'll need him on the final day when we see him and on the day of judgment we'll need him as our saviour and we need him every day.

The problem is we get caught in the meantime with depending upon our giftedness, depending upon our experience, depending upon our good traditions, and all these things it's not they're wrong it's just they're not the main thing.

[53:20] I want to remind you of that scene of Good Friday just for a moment. Can you picture it? Jesus in the middle and the two thieves either side.

You'll remember that Jesus spoke to one of the thieves. I want you now to imagine the scene when that particular thief, murderer, whoever he was arrives in heaven met by an angel.

What are you doing here? He'd say I don't know. What do you mean you don't know?

I don't know why I'm here. Well let me get my supervisor. So the supervising angel comes along and says just a few questions just to make sure that you should be here.

Now are you clear on the doctrine of justification by faith? Never heard of it. What about the doctrine of scripture? the word of God on which we base our faith?

[54:31] Nope. Don't know what you're on about. So what on what basis exactly are you expecting to be welcomed into heaven then?

And the thief simply says well the man in the middle he said I could come. Brothers and sisters that's the only answer.

I don't know how well you're doing at the moment or how badly you're doing but we come on bended knee to Jesus. Don't we? All of us? Every last one.

Some more gifted some less gifted but all that adds up to nothing unless we have Jesus. The only answer for those who want to share bread and wine this morning is do you want Jesus in your life and are you turning away from all you know to be wrong?

That's the only question. And we invite everyone to receive bread and wine to receive this meal which shows you how much you're loved.

[55:45] This is the place of renewal. This is the place where love began and begins again in each one of us. So I invite you to come.

Perhaps the deacons and elders serving could come out now. earlier in the passage the letter sent to the Corinthians this is what this is what Paul said about this meal.

For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you the Lord Jesus on the night he was betrayed took bread and when he'd given thanks he broke it and said this is my body that is given for you do this in remembrance of me.

In the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again brothers and sisters in Christ the Lord Jesus loves you this much his body broken for you as you receive the bread as it served to you feed on him in your hearts with thanksgiving receive this gift of life a sign of his love to you his body broken for you the body of Christ was broken for you and if you need gluten put your hand up and I'll gluten free

I should say then put your hand up and I'll bring it to you God bless youjan with ale give Thank you.

[58:55] 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. in the eternal kingdom.

[60:48] That's going to be good wine, isn't it? So let us receive the cup, hold on to it, and then once we've all been served, we'll drink together. The blood of Christ cleanses you from every sin.

The blood of Christ cleanses you from every sin.

The blood of Christ cleanses you from every sin.

The blood of Christ cleanses you from every sin.

The blood of Christ cleanses you from every sin.

[63:17] The blood of Christ cleanse this Word to the with us. Amen. Amen.

We are the shedding of blood. There's no forgiveness of sins, but the perfect Son of God's blood has been shed for us. Hallelujah. Let us drink and be thankful. Amen. And a prayer of thanksgiving for this love feast.

When we feel alone this next week, remind us of this meal, Lord. When we're hungry and thirsty, point us to Jesus.

Lord Jesus, we need you. We need you to save us from ourselves. Save us where we're weak. Save us where we're strong. Save us to the uttermost. You alone are the Savior of the world, and we are so grateful that you invite us to your table.

[65:12] Truly, you died for us. You rose and are at the right hand of the Father, praying for us right now. Such love.

Such love and such grace. We eagerly anticipate the day when we will see you face to face, and then we will be truly perfected in love.

In the meantime, Lord, help us to live lives that add up to you, to nothing else. And may our only claim be that I am loved of God.

Amen. Amen. Well, can I invite the deacons to take a seat? Because we've got four new members we want to welcome into membership this morning.

So, John and Kwai, do you want to come up? And also, Olinihi and Abi. Are we bringing Samuel as well? Marvellous. Come on up. It's great to come and to worship God and to find spiritual

nourishment in this place.

[66:31] It's even better if you recognise that God is calling you to commit to this place, this place of love and fellowship and of nurturing as the people of God. So, do you come up?

I don't mean you can come up this way. Save you. That's it. Brilliant. Hi, Abi. Hi, Olinihi. And Samuel. How old is he now? Two.

Four weeks. Sorry. Brain gone. It happens, doesn't it? How much sleep did you have last night?

Twelve weeks. Twelve weeks. Oh, he's doing lovely, isn't he? Anyway, it's not a dedication.

Sorry. Keep on message, Malcolm. Keep on message. Well, we are really delighted that you have all been, all asked to come into membership. Welcome, John.

Welcome, Kwai. And I just want to share some words with you. So, in the name of our loving God and with great joy, we welcome John and Kwai and Olinihi and Abi and lovely Samuel, he's there, into the membership of this church.

[67:40] They are committed to serving God in this community and today we acknowledge and thank God for that commitment. We are receiving John and Kwai as they transfer their membership from Gold Hill, great partners in the gospel with us here at Union Baptist Church.

So, I received a very lovely letter. I don't know how much they, you paid Stephen Walker Williams to write that, but it was lovely to receive and so we obviously send our greetings to Gold Hill too.

Now, I'm going to ask you some questions which will come up on the screen. You may not be able to read them because they might not be big enough for you. This is an eye test. I find I'm doing less and less well with it. But the first two questions, if you are affirmative with them, you say, I do.

And the second two questions, you say, I will. Is that all right? And you as a congregation will also be asked some questions in a moment. So, do you believe in one God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, your creator, your creator and redeemer and sustainer of all things?

I do. Fantastic. Do you believe that God has led you to share in the worship life and witness of this local congregation? I do. I do. Excellent. Will you share with us the gifts God has given you that together we may serve God in our local community and in the wider world?

[69:02] I agree. Fantastic. And this is a long one, so I have to do a bit of reading here. As Baptists, we convene together as a community of the disciples of Jesus Christ, baptized into his name.

We share the joys and responsibilities of fellowship. We gather for worship to discern the mind of Christ. And together, we seek the kingdom of God through prayer, witness and service and in the power of the Holy Spirit, we seek to build one another up in love.

Will you share with us in this common life and serve and service and will you walk together with us before God in ways that are known and yet to be made known?

I will. I will. Fantastic. Thank you very much. And I've got one or two questions for you as church members. If you are a member of the church, then please answer, we do, or appropriate words.

Do you welcome Olenihi, Abbey, John and Kwai into the fellowship of this worshiping community?

We do. Fantastic. God has given us the gift of Olenihi and Abbey, John and Kwai and through them has given us the gifts of ministry in this life and witness of this local congregation.

[70:12] Will you support them in Christian service and in the responsibilities of church membership? We will. Fantastic. Lastly, will you pray for Olenihi and Abbey?

Remember their names and welcome them for a meal or a coffee and, yeah, show hospitality, friendship and prayer. We will.

We will. In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit and in the name of Jesus Christ. Sorry, I went off message and I forgot to say and will you welcome John and Kwai and encourage them through hospitality, friendship and prayer as well?

Just the we will do. We will. Fantastic. We got everyone. Excellent. I got carried away there. Now we've got cards to welcome you to the church, certificates as members.

So Kwai, that's for you and John and Abbey and I think I'll give that. Olenihi's one. And I've asked Andrew to come and to pray for you.

[71:13] So he's going to stand in the middle here. Bless you, brother. Wonderful. Well, thank you. It's really exciting to be able to welcome

new members officially to our church family and I'd like to pray for God's blessing on them and pray for, that God would help us to welcome them to this church family and help them to find their place here.

You might like to just raise your hands towards them as a sign that you want God to bless them at this time. So let's pray. Father God, we thank you so much for Abbey and Olenihi and for Samuel and for John and Kwai.

We thank you so much that you have led them to this church family and thank you for the blessing it is to have them as part of our church family, to be able to worship with them, to be able to serve with them together and I pray that you will help them to find their place as part of this church family, to know how they can serve, how they can love but I pray that you would help each one of us to welcome these, your servants, into our church family, to show them hospitality, to support them, to love them.

I pray that they would, as we've been reminded, just the importance of knowing you, knowing your love and I pray that you would fill them with your love by your Holy Spirit and I pray that you would equip them to love in this place, Lord.

I pray that you will show them how they can love within this church community and beyond it as well and I pray that they would know your blessing as they worship alongside us and serve you together as members of your family.

[72:44] We thank you so much for bringing them to us and we pray for a big blessing for them today and in the days to come. We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Let me welcome you with the right hand of fellowship. Welcome. Welcome to membership of the church. I'm going to shake hands just now. Welcome. Welcome. Great. Great to have you. Bless you. Do feel free to take a seat now. Thank you so much. We're going to sing of the great love of the Father and then we're going to say a few prayers and we'll have our notices before our final song.

So can I invite you to stand as we sing how deep the Father's love for us. Thank you. How deep the Father's love for us How vast beyond all measure That he should give his only Son To make the wretch his treasure How great the pain Of searing loss

The Father turns his face away As wounds which Mother chosen one Bring many sons to glory Behold the man upon a cross My sin upon his shoulders Ashamed I hear my mocking voice Call out among the scoffers It was my sin that held him there Until it was accomplished

[75:25] His dying breath has brought me life I know that it is finished 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 Amen. Do take a seat And we're going to spend A little bit of time in prayer We want to linger In the presence of God And to know his blessing And his power His love upon us So let's just spend a moment in prayer We're often greedy For lots of different things Lord And sometimes those things Make us fat or tired or whatever We are hungry and thirsty And will always be For more of your love Perfect us we pray Sanctify us, renew us Heal us Lord Where we're broken and hurting Nothing but the love of Jesus Nothing but the power of the cross Will ever be enough We wait on you Holy Spirit come Minister to each one Amen Amen Just a couple of notices

Which I hope are helpful If you're new today And would like to link up with us Then in each of the pews There's a little welcome card At the end Do pick one of those up And fill it out We'd love to keep in touch with you Make sure that you're kept informed Of what's happened What's happening in the church's life You're all welcome to come upstairs For tea and coffee If you're not sure where to go Ask somebody near you Can you show me the way Obviously the way is always Jesus But the way to coffee Is a little bit more involved sometimes If you've never been here before You'll know that our sort of king elect Is going to be Our king is going to be coronated Coming up And many of you Crowned Oh gosh Gosh Yes okay Something's going to happen And there will be events In our community And we are encouraging the church To everybody in the church To get involved locally And to be a blessing And to show the love of Christ Where you are Now in our little area Up near Rectory Avenue There's going to be a street party So Dawn and I are going to get Involved with that On the Sunday At 12 o'clock And I just want to Encourage you That if

there's something Going on in your area Get stuck in Connect with people And show the love of Christ By being generous In some way If there's nothing going on In your street Well I'm sorry But you could You could invite some neighbours round Watch the thing together Or whatever We want to encourage you To do something locally Often we organise things Here at the church But this is one where we're saying We really encourage you To reach out To those around you And if you have no friends And don't know any neighbours Maybe this is an opportunity Yeah so there we go That's just an encouragement Let me pray Asking the Lord To give us creative minds In this area So Father We ask you To help us to have Hearts for our neighbours And our community Help us to reach out

[80:28] In love towards them And be a blessing to them And whatever we think Of the crowning We pray Father That we would use this As an opportunity To connect with others May love Overcome all things And we pray The coffee and tea That we would love One another And that we would Pray for one another Give us grace To know how to Come close to one another And to pray for one another And encourage one another And spur one another on Hear our prayer Lord Amen Well to conclude Our gathered worship Before we are scattered To show the love of God In our world We are going to stand And sing Love divine All loves excelling Shall we stand?

Love divine All loves excelling Thine all loves excelling Joy of heaven To earth come down Fix in us Thy humble dwelling All thy faithful Mercies crown Jesus Jesus Thou art all compassion Pure unbounded Love Thou art

Is in us With thy salvation Enter every trembling heart Let us find Thy love Son, God Let us Round ourên Thy love Thy loving Spirit into every troubled Let us all in Thee inherit Let us find Thy promised rest Take away The love of sin Comber and the favor be And of faith As its beginning Stands Our hearts and liberty Come Almighty to deliver Let us all Thy grace receive Suddenly Return And Never Evermore Thy temples We Thank you

We Forum Finish then thy new creation Pure and spotless let us be To thy heart to see Thy great salvation Perfectly restoring thee Change from glory to glory Till the land we take our place Till the cross not close before thee Cast in wonder, love and grace And let us receive a blessing.

[85:36] You might find it helpful to put out your hands. Lord, we come always to you for blessing. We deserve something else, But we come in the name of Jesus For the Father's blessing.

Bless us, I pray, With an outpouring and filling of your Holy Spirit, Your Spirit of love, Your Spirit of counsel, Of wisdom, of strength.

Fill us with your Spirit this day, That we might know your love From the inside out. Thank you, Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. God bless you all. Do come up for coffee.