

The Lord's my Shepherd and that's enough

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Date: 05 February 2023

Preacher: George Haines

[0:00] Well, good evening, everybody. Very warm welcome to Union Baptist Church this evening. It's great to have you here.

It's great to be together to worship our Lord. I'd just like to share a couple of notices of things coming up for those that weren't with us this morning.

First of all, the weekend at home is the weekend of the 18th to 19th of February in just a couple of weeks' time. There's a leaflet that looks like this that you can pick up from the table over there.

The message is we really need you to book in if you're coming so we know who's coming. So we can plan for that. It's going to be a great time. We'll be together on the Saturday with Cyn-Deesis leading worship.

Paul Woolley from LICC leading sessions on finding frontline confidence and a bunch of different activities and workshops in the afternoon from worship to walking and lots of other fun and games.

[0:56] So do please sign up online. If you're not able to manage to sign up online, just call the church office and we can get you booked in or see Mike after the service. Is that okay, Mike? Go and see Mike and he can get you booked in.

Other things coming up. We have a bereavement service coming up on Sunday the 12th of March in the afternoon, 3 p.m. Really helpful service. We've done this the last couple of years for people, yourselves or people that you know who've been recently bereaved.

And it's a really helpful time for them to reflect and to experience the presence of God in that. So I do encourage you to take a few of these postcards to invite friends, family members, colleagues to that.

And then finally, most of you will have received a letter following our presentation a couple of weeks ago about the Living Stones project, the update on that. And there's a letter about that with a pledge form.

So if you haven't already received one of those, please pick that up and there's a brochure about the project as well. You can pick up from the table at the front here. Now we've started a new series this Sunday on focusing on Jesus, the non-anxious presence.

[2:04] And Malcolm kicked that off this morning looking at David and the account of David in battle against Goliath and helping us to see that, you know, we tend to associate ourselves with David in that story, perhaps from the way we've been brought up in Sunday school.

But actually, in so many ways, David points us to Jesus, the one who comes to be our champion and to win the battle for us. And I found that was really helpful, especially when we think about the difficult situations and stressful things and the battles that we face.

And this evening, we're going to be focusing on a psalm that David wrote, again, very much to help us to understand the non-anxious presence of our Lord and to help us in difficult times in Psalm 23.

So we're going to be hearing from that psalm and George is going to be sharing more on that later in the service. We're going to start our time together with some song worship.

And after a couple of songs, we'll have an open time of prayer for us to give our thanks to God. But before we start to sing, let me open with a word of prayer. So let's pray. Father God, we thank you for your presence.

[3:17] And we thank you for your presence here with us this evening.

Thank you that whatever is on our mind, whatever might be troubling us, whatever might be worrying us, whatever might be looming or distracting, you are greater than that.

Father, I thank you that you are God who has already overcome the power of sin, the power of darkness, the power of the evil one, the power of death. And we want to praise you for that this evening.

And I pray as we sing, as we spend this time together, that our having this time together will be pleasing to you, that our sung worship will be pleasing to your ears, Lord.

And I pray that you would speak to us during this time, that we would know your presence, that your Holy Spirit would work among us, open our hearts and open our lips and our voices to praise you now.

We pray that in Jesus' name. Amen. So let's stand and we're going to sing together from the highest of heights. From the highest of heights to the depths of the sea, creations revealing your majesty.

[4:45] From the colours of fall to the fragrance of spring, every creature unique in the song, that it sings.

All exclaiming, indescribable, uncontainable, you place the stars in the sky and you know them by name.

You are amazing God. All powerful, untamable, awestruck, we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim.

You are amazing God. You are amazing God. Who has told every lightning bolt where it should go. Or seen heavenly storehouses laden with snow. Who imagined the sun and the gift source to its light.

[5:52] Yet conceals it to bring us the coolness of light. None can fathom. Indescribable, uncontainable.

You place the stars in the sky and you know them by name. You are amazing God. All powerful, untamable, awestruck, we fall to our knees as we humbly proclaim.

You are amazing God. You are amazing God. You are amazing God.

Indescribable, uncontainable You place the stars in the sky and you know them by name You are amazing God Incomparable, unchangeable You see the depths of my heart and you love me the same You are amazing God What gift of grace is Jesus my Redeemer?

There is no more forever now to give He is my joy, my righteousness and freedom My steadfast love, my deep and boundless peace To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus For my life is wholly bound to His Oh how strange and divine I can see All is mine, yet not I, but through Christ in me The night is dark, but I am not forsaken For by my side the Saviour He will stay I labour on in weakness and rejoicing

[8:54] For in my need His power is displayed To this I hold, my shepherd will defend me For the deepest fight He will lead Oh the night has been won, and I shall overcome Yet not Christ, but Christ in me No fate I dread, I know I am forgiven The future sure, the future sure The price it has been paid For Jesus bled and suffered for my pardon And He was raised to overthrow the grave

To this I hold, my sin has been defeated Jesus now and ever is my plea Oh the chains are released I can sing, I am free Yet not I, but through Christ in me With every breath I long to follow Jesus For He has said that He will bring me home And day by day I know He will renew me And still I stand with joy before the throne To this I hold, my hope is only Jesus All the glory evermore to Him When the race is complete Still my lips shall repeat Yet not I, but through Christ in me When the race is complete Still my lips shall repeat Yet not I, but through Christ in me Yet not I, but through Christ in me Yes Lord, we thank you so much for the gift of Christ Thank you for that gift to us by grace That you didn't hold back in sending us your one and only Son The most costly of gift So that we could be restored into relationship with you And we're so thankful for that

That we can live in relationship with you Enjoying the presence of your Son Jesus And we just thank you for that Amen Just invite you to continue in praise By just offering up your prayers of thanks And worship to God Just as you feel led Amen Amen.

Thanks, Jesus, that you remove our sins as far as the east is from the west. Amen. Amen.

[13:12] We praise you, Lord Jesus, that you are victor and our champion. Amen. Amen. Thank you, Lord, that we can sing that you are our joy, our righteousness, and our freedom.

And thank you, Lord, that your power is displayed in our weakness. Amen. Amen.
Amen. We're going to continue in worship now. And when we consider the difficult things we might be going through, the tough things, the struggles, the trials, it's so good to just start in worship and just look to God and look up.

Don't look in to begin with, but to look up and just to get that perspective on our lives. And we're going to sing a song now about facing the realities of the difficult things that we face, but in the perspective of the God who is for us and who will hold us through everything.

So we're going to sing, when I fear my faith will fail. Let's stand as you feel able and we'll sing this together. When I fear my faith will fail, Christ will hold me fast.

[14:54] When the tempter would prevail, he will hold me fast. I could never keep my hold through life's fearful path.

For my love is often cold. He must hold me fast. He will hold me fast.
He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so. He will hold me fast.
Those he saves are his delight.

Christ will hold me fast. Precious in his holy sight, he will hold me fast.

[16:02] He'll not let my soul be lost. His promises shall last. But by him at such a cost, he will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so.
He will hold me fast. For my life he bled and died.

Christ will hold me fast. Just as has been satisfied, he will hold me fast.

Raised with him to endless life. He will hold me fast. Till our faith is turned to sight.

[17:12] When he comes at last. He will hold me fast. He will hold me fast.

He will hold me fast. For my Savior loves me so. He will hold me fast.
For my Savior loves me so. He will hold me fast. Hold me fast.

Amen. Do please sit down and Lynn's going to lead us in our intercessions. Let's pray together.
Amen. Loving, living God, we do thank you that you do hold us fast, even when we fear that our own faith will fail.

[18:32] We rejoice that you are involved in our world, that you're involved in our lives, that you aren't distant or remote. And thank you that you seek the good of everything you have made.

We ask you to bring your goodness, your wisdom, your compassion to the situations we lament and cannot control or have little control over.

Father, the war in Ukraine continues and many of us are perhaps less sensitive to the situation because we've become so accustomed to those reports of missiles and killing and war crimes. And yet, every day, mothers and fathers on both sides are losing their sons and daughters. Every day, people are witnessing violence they never wished to see.

So, Father, we pray for an end to the fighting. We pray for President Putin and pray for a miraculous softening of his heart.

[19:40] May you speak directly to him. May you bring people into his presence who can change his rhetoric from one of anger and aggression to one of kindness and of diplomacy.

Lord, have mercy on these countries of Ukraine and Russia, we pray. We pray for the countries across the world where food is scarce and death from starvation is a real risk.

Father, we hear the name Afghanistan and our thoughts immediately go to the Taliban and political rulers there. And yet, poverty and hunger is of the most urgent concern in that country.

Alongside Ethiopia, Somalia, Nigeria, South Sudan and the Yemen desperately, desperately need food supplies. So, we pray for agencies having the courage to work in these countries to bring aid. Especially where political stability is so fragile or almost non-existent. Father, give them safe transport and access to the people where need of food is the greatest.

[20:50] And may the aid given by other countries be safely directed to people who will make honest provision for those most needy. We pray for those in poverty in our own country.

And we pray for teachers and nurses picking up the first signs of malnutrition, particularly amongst children. May you give them wisdom to know when to contact social services and how to help

families who may be embarrassed to seek help.

We thank you that energy companies are becoming more compassionate towards those who are vulnerable. And we give thanks for business leaders who don't exclusively pursue profits but balance the needs of business with compassion towards those they serve or employ.

May you give them the courage to speak up when the balance has tipped too much in the favour of profits and not enough to compassion. And may you give wisdom to each of us here to balance the needs of sensible levels of money in the bank or in our assets against our need to show compassion through generous giving.

Lord, help us each to be joyful, generous givers. And we pray for your loving comfort to be given to those we know who are most in need at this time.

[22:18] We do pray for Karen Bates mourning the loss of her mother. May she know your peace as she adjusts to life without her. And we pray for Margaret Cunliffe and Margaret Roberts as they recover from illness and a fall.

And for Pastor Christian as he rests at home. But we also rejoice with Robert and Mary Harris and with Olenie and Abby as they welcome new babies into their families.

Lord, we thank you for the gift of these new lives. And may those children grow to be amazing men of God, we pray. Thank you that you hear our prayers.

We ask them all in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen. Okay, it's no surprise that we're reading from Psalm 23 tonight.

The version in the Pew Bibles is on page 555. Okay. The Lord is my shepherd. I lack nothing.

[23:40] He makes me lie down in green pastures. He leads me beside quiet waters. He refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his namesake.

Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil. For you are with me. Your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies.

You anoint my head with oil. My cup overflows. Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life. And I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Amen. Thank you, Drish. I'd like to invite George up so I can just pray for him before he shares with us.

Let's pray. Father God, I thank you for our brother George.

[24:42] And thank you for the gifting that you've given him to be able to communicate your words. And I pray that you'll use him this evening. I pray that you'll speak through him. And give him your words to us.

But I pray that we would be receptive, that you would open our ears and our minds and our hearts to receive what you have to say to us this evening. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Thank you. I'm only small. You won't see me if I leave it there. The Lord's my shepherd and that's enough.

Six verses, 109 words. And yet, as I went through it, it reminded me very much of an onion. That as you peeled away layer after layer, there was still more to come.

So what do we think about when we hear about Psalm 23? If I was to ask the musicians, they would say, Crimmond, because that is the tune that the psalm is often played to.

[25:45] If I was to ask other people, they'd probably say, The vicar of Dibley, because it starts and ends that TV program. And a third group might say, Funerals, burials and cremations, because it's often there that we read, hear, sing and cry over those words.

Psalm is, as it starts, we're reminded that it's a psalm of David. And David wrote 73 of the psalms, although the New Testament writers actually accredit him with a further two.

So out of the 150, David has written half of the psalms. As we read through those six verses, it may have struck you that the first four verses take place here on earth.

Verses five and six take place in heaven. The first four verses are a signpost to God's leading and care. And verses five to six are an invitation to his table of grace and mercy.

It might surprise some of you, but not all, that Psalm 23 is one of the ten confidence psalms that David wrote. And there's the number up there before you.

[27:01] And in fact, in about eight weeks' time, I'm preaching on Psalm 16. So I'm going to have to do some extra work towards that. And while we're talking about confidence, I think this is going to come up now.

It's the leaflet that seems to have been spoken about throughout the day. And it says, finding frontline confidence. Wow, that's pretty good, isn't it? And on the Saturday, confidence in times of crisis in the book of Isaiah.

And continuing confidence in everyday life from Philipians. And on Sunday, a sermon on confidence in the gospel by Joel. So I want to ask you tonight, well, I'm not really going to ask you. Oh, it's a rhetorical question. But where is your confidence when the storms of life set in? Where is your confidence when the storms of life set in?

Do you shout out, the Lord is my shepherd, just after the roof of your house has blown off? Or do you shout out, where is the Lord my shepherd? And I think if I was to interview everybody here tonight, if I had the time and they would allow me, and said, has your life been without storms or difficulty?

[28:16] The answer would be a resounding no. There are no Teflon Christians in life. And if I pressed you for, come on, tell me what those difficulties have been, you'd probably say health, marriage, family, finance, employment.

But what about if we could interview David? David the psalmist, David the shepherd, David the warrior, David the king. And say, well, what about your life, David?

Has that been without difficulty? And he'd say, well, read about it for yourself. To Samuel. It's all there. To Samuel, verses chapters 15 to 18. And it'll tell you about my son Absalom, the one that I loved, my son with Bathsheba.

And yet he turned against me. He wanted the throne of Israel. And he got a bunch of itchy-eared people around him. And they all agreed. And they set off. And I was in Jerusalem.

And word came to me. You'd better get out, David. Go now. Have you ever had a phone call like that? You have to leave. You have to go now. No time for a toothbrush.

[29:22] No time for a change of clothes. No time for crisps and salmon sandwiches to help you on the way. You've got to go now. No time for a breath. And so David left and went off into the wilderness.

Off into the valley of Kidron. Just as he was. And every time he wanted to pause for breath, Absalom's army was on his tail. He'd move.

And Absalom was following him all the way. And on the point of total exhaustion, David sits back and God provides some people who come to him with food and water and refreshment.

And then stunning news arrives. Absalom has been killed in battle. Now, I think being human, we might think, yay.

I think that perhaps even a bigger yay. But what does David do? He breaks down and weeps for his son. Here is truly a man after God's own heart.

[30:19] Throughout all of his trial, David had the words on his lips, The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

So can I ask another rhetorical question? And that is, why does our society, why does our community, Why does our nation, our world, not have that same confidence today?

Why? Something major happened on the 13th of January this year. It caused a lot of headlines. And that was the death of Lisa Marie Presley.

You probably heard about it. It was splashed all over the papers. But something came up that was truly amazing. And it was said by her friend, Nancy Sinatra. Isn't it amazing how these people move in stratospheric circles?

And she said this, Every now and then, I find myself wishing very, very hard that there is a hereafter. And tonight is one of those times. Because otherwise, the nothingness, the emptiness, would be too hard to bear.

[31:27] How does the world react to that statement? I suspect for a lot of them, they didn't even notice that she said it. But how do you react to it? Where is your confidence?

Well, for some people in society, And if I was to walk through Wickham, Bravely brandishing my £10 note, They would say, well, my confidence is in the Bank of England.

Because underneath the name, the Bank of England, It says, I promise to pay the bearer. On demand, the sum of. Although, in all honesty, I had to get a magnifying glass out to read it. It was so small. Is it my eyes, or has things got less? Some people have their confidence in the Bank of England. Others will put their trust in the National Health Service, Who, in all honesty, do a fantastic job.

But that's where people will say, That's where my confidence is. A third group might say, Well, my confidence is in the brakes of my car. So when I press down, I know it's going to stop me, And save me from an accident.

[32:28] A fourth group might say, My confidence is in my pension fund. I've been paying into it for a long time, And I know that in the end, That I won't want. Well, I hope that they all understand That those illustrations are fallible, And they can and do fail.

I hope instead that they would look At our omnipotent God Almighty, Omnipotent, meaning all-powerful. He is the one who created the world out of nothing.

There was nothing to build on. He just spoke it into existence. He is the one who took the dust of the earth, And created life. He is the one who stops the sun in the sky, Defying the laws of physics. He is the one who makes the iron axe head float. He is the one who causes the shadow on the stairs To go backwards ten steps. Omnipotent. That's just not even scratching the surface Of the glory of God and what he does.

This is the one who leads and guides his people From provides rest and still waters. And how does he do that? Through the provision of his word in the Bible.

[33:44] Sadly, it's a Bible that all too many people Are failing to examine. And instead, what they do is they turn to Barren paths and false shepherds.

God leads you and me With as much care As he continues to create galaxies and stars And in the midst of all that He has time to look after you and me To comfort us, to shepherd us.

David, the king of Israel Said, the Lord is my shepherd And he swaps his crown For a place as a sheep In the sheepfold of God And puts his trust In this omnipotent shepherd.

What a lesson for us. What a lesson for me. As I try every day To put the crown back on my head And say, I know the best way forward And no, I don't.

Psalms 23 Was written By a shepherd About a shepherd Just let those words sink in It's written By a shepherd About a shepherd David, the shepherd Writes about Jesus The master shepherd And that takes place A thousand years Before Christ's birth The Holy Spirit Is speaking through David's psalm Inspiring his words And we meet Jesus In Psalms 22 23 and 24 Which are called The Messianic Psalms Another layer of the onion Coming off And in Psalm 22 Jesus speaks to us Through the cross In Psalm 23 He speaks to us As he shepherds his flock And in Psalm 24 He appears as the king of glory Strong and mighty Charles Haddon Spurgeon The great Baptist preacher From the 19th century Said that we should be able To open the Bible Anywhere

[35:42] And see the purple thread Of Christ running through it We can certainly see that All the way through The Old Testament But I want to take you Into the New Testament There's a surprise To Luke 24 Verse 44 Where Jesus said After the resurrection Everything must be fulfilled That is written about me Listen carefully In the law of Moses In the prophets And drum roll In the Psalms Wow There's the purple thread Of Christ Jesus said In John 10 Verse 14 I am The good shepherd And immediately And immediately As Bible believing Christians You know that your word Your thoughts go back To Exodus To the burning bush To Moses To God And God said I want you to go to Pharaoh Well hang on a minute You better give me a name If I'm going to go Give me a name I am I am who I am I am

Sending you And Jesus Brings us straight Into that Focus of who he is God made flesh I am the good shepherd I know my sheep And my sheep Know me And when the wolves Threatened the flock Jesus protected the sheep With his life And through his death And resurrection He leads the sheep Who know and hear his voice To eternal life John Stott The Anglican Minister Writer Theologian Used to tell the story About going through Israel On a tour bus And As he was doing so The man at the front With the microphone Was telling the story About the shepherd About how the shepherd In those days Would lead the sheep From the front The sheep knew him They heard his

voice They would willingly Follow him With that Somebody leaned out And said Well hang on a minute What about this guy

Over here And so everybody Cramped their necks To see what was going on And there was somebody Beating the sheep Along the road From behind Forcing them forward Well not wanting To be called a liar The chap on the bus Had it pulled over He got off And ran to where This man was Lots of arm waving Lots of shouting In Arabic And eventually The man gets back On the bus Takes the microphone And said It's okay everybody It's okay That man's not the shepherd He's the butcher Verse 1 Of Psalm 23 Talks to us today About the trust And confidence We can have In Jesus As our Personal shepherd Did you get the stress In that?

Did you get the stress? The Lord is My shepherd He is Your shepherd And that trust And confidence Begins with Our statement Of faith Doesn't it?

Begins with our Statement of faith It's one that we make I'm standing over The baptistry It's nice and sound I'm not going to Fall through But it's one That we've made here We've made it To our church To our family To our friends To everybody Gathered here The Lord is my shepherd We tell our story About why we've done that We go into the water Of baptism To the best of our ability To get rid of the way That we are And coming up And to the best of our ability Following a new life The Lord is my shepherd But not everybody Has that confidence As we heard from From Nancy Sinatra But when we state The Lord is my shepherd What we're doing Is we're opening A conversation A conversation That Jesus Provides our needs Not our wants It's a conversation We need to have Brothers and sisters With our community To be led We must first Become sheep

[39:44] And become Under God's will However long Or short Our life is To say The Lord Is my shepherd Is to accept A lifelong commitment To the will Of God the Father Through Jesus the Son Jesus the shepherd Who laid down His life For his sheep Verse 2 At the beginning Of verse 3 Reminds us That rest Must proceed Leading Now I've taken this Very much to heart This week Because if we're Always in that Hamster wheel What's going to happen Is we're going to burn out We're just going to burn out Jesus wants us to stop And rest And take time out And so he makes us Lie down In green pastures Beside quiet waters And restores our soul And I think it's No coincidence That through COVID That's exactly What's happened Our society Has been forced To a halt The church Has been forced Pretty much To re-evaluate And to go online Well I wonder If you've ever had A restless night And I'm looking at Colin I'm sure Colin's Never had a restless night Being in charge Of the Living Stones project And trying to get rid Of parts of the organ But if we have Restless nights And I think all of us Have been there What keeps us awake Isn't it The what ifs The what ifs Get in our head What if this is Oh no Sheep can't Rest Unless they're free From fear And hunger Sheep Are reluctant To drink Running water They prefer Still water Because they like To lap it up With their tongue If they got To running water There's a danger They could fall in And if they fall in With their heavy coat There's no way out Sheep can't rest Or feed If they follow Barren paths And ignore The shepherd

Have you been down Any dead ends lately? A crown on her head Wanted to do things Our way We need rest And peace Through reading God's word There's a book On the church Bookshelf Called Be Still By Brian Heasley He is from Northern Ireland That will please Roger And he tells The story there Of After his mother's Death He went completely Off the rails Got into crime Got into drugs Terrible state And he sat On his Hostile bed And he'd be given A cheap Throw away bible The sort of thing You give to Visitors In church And he just Cried out God if you're real Save me And he allowed The bible To fall open And it rested On Isaiah My arm is not Too short To save And he knew That that was God's answer That he was Going to be saved

He committed His life There and then To Jesus And thirty Years later As an evangelist He's still Going strong The lord Is his shepherd He knows that The next time You're feeling Frantic And stressed And you're Wondering how You're going to Make it through The day Can I suggest That you read Again Verse two He makes me Lie down In green Pastures He leads me Beside quiet Waters He restores My soul And verse three Continues by Showing that Restoration Leads to new Hope And a new Path Has anybody Here been Ill lately Maybe you've Had covid Or flu Or something Else But as you Start to Recover You're getting Energy back And have you Notice that Ideas start to

Appear They pop up Like effervescent Bubbles And you're Making notes Oh I didn't Realise that Before And up They pop The good shepherd Is revealing His path Which is Beneficial And not Harmful So again Can I ask A rhetorical Question Has the good Shepherd Found or Restored you Are you Or are you Still lost Still lost If you Come to our House The chances Are you Might see This porcelain Image up Here And I like To bring it Out and say This is one Of the lost Sheep His name Is Israel And it's a Good reminder To pray For Israel We're told That many Will come Back in So let's Continue to Pray for Israel But if you Are a lost Sheep If you Are damaged In some way Tonight The Lord Is speaking To you He wants To restore You To put You back On that New path How will

[44:49] You respond To his Voice It's a good Question Well in Verse 4 Jesus leads Us safely Through our Dark valleys And I think That's always A comforting Thing because It is a Valley It's not a Cul-de-sac Jesus is Leading us Through the Dark times In our Life Unemployment Depression Whatever it Happens to Be Or in Some cases A court Appearance Dark valleys Are inevitable They can't Be avoided So don't Be surprised When we Encounter Them Even Jesus When he Was walking Towards Jerusalem Knew that Ahead of Him was Gethsemane Ahead of Him was Calvary But he Walked Through that Dark valley And therefore His victory Over death Is our Victory And therefore We can Cry out In confidence The Lord Is my Shepherd The truth

Is of course That we're Either in a Storm Headed into a Storm Or coming Out of a Storm We don't Have to be Afraid of The storm Or the Darkest night Because Jesus The light of The world Walks beside us We don't Have to be Afraid of The storm Because the Shepherd Protects His sheep And fights Off the Wolves And uses That staff To put Them back On their Feet And there's A picture Of a Staff Deliberately Wide enough So that it Can pick up The sheep And pull Them back On their Feet I once Went to Hear a Man called Peter Broadbent Speaking Peter Broadbent At the time Was the Archbishop Of Wilsden And he Came out And he Said People Often ask Me What does The Archbishop Do And I Tell him I'm the Crook at The head Of the Bishop's Staff By which He meant That his Job was

To restore People Put them Back on Their feet Well we Know that The last Valley For us All Is death But Jesus Resurrection Has taken Away that Sting For all Who belong To him So when The Christian Dies They don't Need to Fear Judgment Or For what Lies Beyond Death Will be A glorious Entrance Into the Presence Of God But that Is not So For those Who die Without Responding To the Shepherd's Voice Without Admitting Their Need Of a Saviour For them Judgment Will lead To a Sentence From which There is No return In verse Five It reminds Us that One day Jesus Jesus will Welcome Us to His table Of grace And mercy As special Guests In his Home And it's Here that David no Longer writes About the Shepherd But writes About his Gracious and Glorious king Who invites His honoured Guests to His banqueting Table Did you Recognize That Only the Friends of God Will be Invited To that Table There is Nothing Better Than to Be called A friend Of God Nothing Better Than to Be invited To be With him Forever And ever And verse Six reminds Us that Our reward Is eternal Peace and Happiness Goodness And mercy Will follow Us Will pursue Us All the Days of Our life When we Allow him To be Our shepherd And with God's Love and Goodness Overtaking Us We will Dwell In the House Of the Lord Forever So let's Move forward In confidence That we Will meet Our shepherd In heaven That he Will wipe Away Every tear From our Eyes Deuteronomy 31 verse 8 says

This The Lord himself Goes before You and He will Be with You and Never leave You nor Forsake You Do not Be afraid Do not Be discouraged In a Short While we're Going to Be coming To communion It has A link With Psalm 23 Because Under the Old Covenant The Sheep Died For The Shepherd But under The New Covenant The Shepherd Died For The Sheep So let's Leave here Tonight Joyfully Declaring The Lord's My Shepherd Shepherd And that's Amen We're going To stand And sing Our next Song Which is The Lord's My Shepherd in

[50:03] To The Lord's my shepherd, our Lord's heart.

He makes me lie in pastures green. He leads me by the still, still waters.
His goodness restores my soul. I will trust, I will trust in you.
I will trust, I will trust in you. Endless mercy follows me.

Your goodness will lead me home. He guides my ways in righteousness. And he anoints my head with oil.

[51:15] And my cup, it overflows with joy. I feast on his pure delights.

And I will trust, I will trust in you. I will trust, I will trust in you.

Your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.

And though I walk the darkest path, I will not fear the evil one.

For you are with me. And your rod and staff. All the comfort I need to know.

[52:12] And I will trust, I will trust, I will trust in you. For you are with me. I will trust, I will trust in you.

Your endless mercy follows me. Your goodness will lead me home.

Amen. Amen. Do please sit down.

Thank you so much. Thank you so much to George for leading us through that psalm so helpfully.

And we're going to come to our time of communion now. I'm going to ask the deacons who will be helping to serve if they could come and join me here as we prepare the table.

Thank you, Roger and Stephen.

[53:21] So, as we come to this table to share in communion together, let's remind ourselves of what we're remembering here. So, I'm going to read from 1 Corinthians 11, from verse 23.

Verse 23.

Verse 23. Verse 24. Verse 24. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes. Therefore, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord.

A person ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink of the cup. For anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on themselves.

So, with that in mind, let's just take a moment to examine ourselves and to confess to God the ways that we've let him down before we come to share this meal.

[54:47] Let's pray. Let's pray. Lord, we look at our own lives and realize that we don't deserve to come close to you.

We're sorry for complaining about what we lack and not being grateful for what you've given us. We have not submitted to your leading. We've chosen our own paths and walked down barren paths instead of your paths.

We've been selfish. We've been living our lives with ourselves at the center instead of you. Thank you that you reach out your hand to save us.

Thank you for sending Jesus to die for us so that we can be forgiven. In Jesus' name. Amen. This meal is a celebration of the fact that we can have a close relationship with Christ, united as one body with no condemnation because of what Christ has done for us.

We celebrate the love that God has shown to us in sending Jesus to us to make a sacrifice for our sins, paying the penalty that should have been ours. What we'll do in a moment is we'll pass around the plates of bread.

[56:07] And as you receive a piece of bread, we can eat that bread as we receive it, reminding ourselves that Jesus died for each one of us as individuals. And he wants a personal relationship with each one of us.

There is a small dish of gluten-free bread, which is in a dish like that. So if you need that one, then please take from that dish. Afterwards, we'll pass around the trays with little cups of non-alcoholic wine.

When you receive the cup, please just hold on to it. We'll wait until everyone has been served and then we'll drink together as a reminder that we've all been united into one family through what Jesus has done for us.

Sharing in holy community is something that we take part in as individuals who've decided to follow Jesus as our Lord and Saviour. Now, if that's something that you're not ready for yet or you're not sure about, then feel free just to let the trays pass you by at this time.

But just watch and listen and hear what God might be speaking to you through this time. Well, let's give thanks to God for this meal that we're about to share.

[57:18] Lord, we come to your table for this small meal and remember that you've prepared a table for us in the presence of our enemies. We drink a small cup of wine this evening, but to those who ask, you fill them to overflowing with your spirit.

Thank you that this meal reminds us that we can come home to eat a feast with you in eternity. But for now, we can come into your presence daily and receive from you as the bread of life.

We are hungry for you, Lord. We need more of you. Thank you for this small meal, this amazing reminder of what you've done for us. Through this meal, may we be filled with a knowledge and an assurance of your love that you came all the way from heaven to earth to save us.

Thank you for your body, broken for us and your blood shed for us. We thank you for these reminders of Jesus' body and his blood given for each one of us.

Amen. So Jesus took the bread and he said, This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

[58:36] I'll serve you at the end. I'll serve you at the end. I'll serve you at the end. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Roger, the body of Christ for you.

Stephen, the body of Christ given for you. Amen. After the supper, Jesus took the cup and he said, This cup is the new covenant sealed by my blood.

Whenever you drink it, do this in memory of me. The blood of Christ was shed for you. Amen.

[61:35] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Thank you. Thanks. Have a seat. Watch in the blood of Christ shed for you. Amen. Stephen, the blood of Christ was shed for you. Amen.

Stephen, the blood of Christ was shed for you. Amen. So let's drink together, remembering what Jesus has done for us.

Let's pray.

[63:47] Father God, we thank you that you sent Jesus, your precious son, as part of your rescue plan for us. Thank you that you have rescued us.

Thank you that we can have confidence that you're coming back to put everything right. Thank you that you want to use us in the meantime. Thank you that you promise to lead us according to your ways.

Please continue the work you've started to lead us and to make us more like your son. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen.

Now we're going to invite the musicians, one of them is over here, to get into a position to lead us in our final song. We're going to stand and we're going to sing together, come now fount of every blessing.

Let's praise God together. Come now fount of every blessing, turn my heart to sing your praise.

[65:01] Goons of mercy never ceasing, call for songs of loudest praise. Teach me some melodious sonnet, sung by flaming tongues above.

Praise the mount, I'm fixed upon it, mount of thy redeeming love.

I was lost in utter darkness, till you came and rescued me. I was bound by all my sin, when your love came and set me free.

Now my soul can sing a new song. Now my heart has found a hope. Now your grace is always with me, and I'll never be alone.

Come now fount of every blessing. Come now fount of our blessing. Oh, to grace how great a debtor, daily I'm constrained to be.

[66:25] Let thy goodness like a fetter, mind my wandering heart to thee.

Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it.

Prone to live the God I love. Here's my heart, Lord, take and seal it. Seal it for thy God's above.

Come thou fount, come thou king. Come thou precious prince of peace. Hear your bride to you we sing.

Come thou fount of our blessing. Come thou fount, come thou king. Come thou precious prince of peace.

[67:32] Hear your bride to you we sing. Come thou fount of our blessing. Lord, please remain standing for a final prayer.

Father God, we say you for the Good Shepherd. After all shepherds. And we say for refreshing our soul tonight. Guide us along right paths for your namesake.

Maybe you o hymne and may you come to your via email? Knowing that your goodness and love follow us today and all the days of our lives. In the name of our Good Shepherd, Jesus. Amen.

Do please sit down. Thank you so much to our musicians and everyone who's taken part in the service tonight. We hope you can join us for tea and coffee up in the hub now.

And please do speak to myself or Malcolm or anyone with a praying hands badge if you'd like to pray through anything. We'd love to spend time with you and pray for you. God bless.