

Competence

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Preacher: Lynn Manktelow

[0:00] Good morning. Now I'm just going to deviate a second. None of the screens are on. There you go. Well, one just went off. I think the screens didn't know that the clocks went forward. But I'm glad those of you who did are here. Welcome. A very pleasant good morning to you. So if you're sitting here, I'm so happy to see you. And if you're sitting at home and accessing this via the screening, I wish I could see you, but I'm happy you're there anyway. Welcome. This is the day that the Lord hath made. I will rejoice and be glad in it.

We gather to worship and to set our hearts in a place where Christ is fully honored as our Lord and Savior. We come with a unified intent to bring him praise and glory. So this week, we're continuing our series on confidence on our front lines. And my beloved sister Lynn Mantlo will be opening up God's word on the subject of competence. And you're probably asking yourself, what does competence have to do with confidence? You'll find out. So let's pray to begin.

Father God, we are in all of you. You are patient, gracious, loving, and you are constant. Your faithfulness towards us just knocks me off my feet. Father, we have sinned. We have sinned against you alone. We may think we sin against people, but we've sinned against you. And we've done evil things in your sight. Help us, God. Redeem us and forgive us our sins for the glory of your most holy name and for the sake of your beloved Son, our Savior, Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one true God, now and forever.

Father, we seek to honor you in all that we say and do as we gather today. As we bring our worship, we ask that you fill us up and then, Father, send us out into our various front lines with your confidence and your strength. Amen.

[3:16] So would you join me in this congregational reading? Would you stand? It's pretty short and we're going to go straight into the first hymn. Let's read together.

Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ.

For we were all baptized by one spirit, so as to form one body, whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free.

And we were all given the one spirit to drink. And so the body is not made of one part, but of many. So this song, the reading we did spoke to our unity and diversity. So let's sing this song, recognizing our diversity, but celebrating our unity.

[4:27] As we gather, Father, seal us in the love that knows no fear.

Draw us, heal us, reconcile us. May there be a place of refuge here.

We share one living bread, one Father's love, one Saviour's grace, one Spirit's bread.

One Holy Communion. One Holy Communion. No more outcasts, no more strangers.

All dividing walls are down. Here is love that redefines us.

[5:43] Dignifies the least and lowest one. To share one living bread, one Father's love, one Saviour's grace, one Spirit's bread.

One Holy Communion. One Holy Communion. One Holy Communion. Source of joy, belong in friendship.

Form your family likeness here. Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

That the world may know our God is near. To share one living bread, one Father's love, one Saviour's grace, one Spirit's bread.

One Holy Communion. One Holy Communion.

[7:06] Good morning. I am your reporter, Hamitalina Judd. And we're broadcasting here from the service of Union Baptist.

We're in the studios at Union Broadcasting Service in High Wycombe. We understand that Chris Mantlo, our Minister Trainee, has some exciting plans for July.

Let's speak with Chris to get more details. Thank you. So, Mr. Chris, where are you going and when will you be going?

Okay. So, on the 18th of July, I'm going to be going to Tanzania for, I guess, a month and a half.

Yeah, and when? Yeah. When? July from when? Yeah, July through to like the end of August. The end of August. Oh. Ooh. That sounds interesting, doesn't it?

[8:07] Now, what will you be doing in Tanzania, Chris? Okay. So, I'm going to Orynga, where Andrew and Miriam used to live.

And I'm going to be meeting up with the team there and helping out on some of their projects. So, one of the things they're doing is building a new footbridge in a place.

So, I'm sure I'll end up helping with that. I have no idea how to build bridges, but I guess they'll tell me. You know, that was going to be my next question. What's your experience with building footbridge?

Yeah. Go ahead. The other thing I'll be seeing is that they do some, this project called the Imarika Project. So, Imarika in Swahili means like strength or strengthen.

And it's about helping farmers there kind of look after the land and, you know, kind of grow their business by changing Alloy Farm.

[9:03] So, that would be really cool to see that too. Yeah. That would be cool. So, tell our viewers why you're doing this. Yeah. So, one reason is just because I want to see what God is doing in Tanzania and to be encouraged by Christians there and to worship with them.

That would be really amazing just to see that. The other reason is that I'm interested in doing some kind of work in the future that involves traveling to places like Tanzania or working abroad in a place like that.

So, I want to see if that's something I enjoy doing. Yes. Sounds. Does that sound good to you viewers? Yes. Just put a thumbs up. Here we go. So, he's not expecting this question but he can read it on my screen.

And my question is, so Andrew who is our associate pastor lived in Tanzania. Did he give you any advice about how to quickly set in?

What's the best way to do this? Settle in. Well, that's a good question. Andrew hasn't, the best advice I got wasn't from Andrew but was from Dismuth, if you've met Dismuth here.

[10:19] And he taught me this Tanzanian worship song in Swahili. And he said, if you sing this Chris, they'll be like, you're Tanzanian, we love you.

So, I need to practice singing that before I go. Yeah. You think you should practice it here? I've forgotten the words. He's forgotten the words already.

Okay. Okay. We let him off the hoof today. So, how can we in UBC TV land support you?

Cool. One thing you can do is pray for me and the team there. You can sign up to Emmanuel International's prayer letter on their website.

You can pray that God would help me as I prepare to go in terms of getting vaccinations and learning Swahili. Yeah. And just that I'd be able to serve and be encouraged by the people there.

[11:20] Excellent. Thank you. So, how are you going to find going? Yeah. Well, at the moment. So, it'd be great. I'm doing on the 21st of May, I'm going to do like a fun quiz slash game show after the morning service here.

So, if you stay on, you can have lunch and then we'll do that. And I'm going to tell you a bit more about what I'm doing and we'll also be raising a bit of money to, yeah, to hopefully cover the cost of my flights.

Yeah. Good. Thank you. So, brothers and sisters, let's support Chris in prayer and by attending the quiz.

What's the date? The 21st of May. Sunday, the 21st of May. Yeah. The 21st of May. But before I turn you back over to Judith Hamilton in the service, I ask you to join me in prayers for Chris and the

work of Emmanuel International.

Would you close your eyes where you are and in your hearts reach out to Chris? Well, if you don't want to close your eyes, just reach out to Chris. I think that works just as well. Father God, who gives us all that we need to do the things which we have to do, things you have purpose for us.

[12:43] We thank you for the promise of your presence, the guiding hand of your Holy Spirit, the protection of your love and grace through our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Please anoint Chris bountifully with all these gifts so that he will go to Tanzania in confidence. Teach him much about living and worshipping in countries like Tanzania and how best to bring your love to all he needs.

Protect him and sustain him as he works on EI projects. And Father, bring him back safely. We want him back.

In Jesus name. Amen. So before he runs away, we're going to sing a song with our friends. I have a song with actions. And I have some lovely people who've decided to help.

And this song is our charge to Chris. That God's people may not be super brave superheroes, but they have God on his side.

[13:54] And when you have God on your side, you can do absolutely anything. So would you stand and join me? And if you can do the actions, please join in because Chris is going to attempt to do the actions as well.

God's people are super brave superheroes. They don't have muscles from rise to their toes. They don't play the actions as well. God's people are super brave superheroes. They don't have muscles from rise to their toes. They're not gladiators. That's easy to see. In fact, it's amazing.

They're just like you and me. God's people are super brave superheroes. They don't have muscles from rise to their toes. They're not gladiators. That's easy to see. God's people are super brave superheroes. They don't have muscles from rise to their toes. They're not gladiators. They're just like you and me. God's people are super brave superheroes.

They don't have muscles from rise to their toes. They're not gladiators. That's easy to see. In fact, it's amazing. They're just like you and me. God's people are super brave superheroes. They don't have muscles from rise to their toes. They're not gladiators. That's easy to see. In fact, it's amazing. They're just like you and me. God's people are super brave superheroes. They don't have muscles from rise to their toes. God's people are super brave superheroes. They don't have muscles from rise to their toes. They're not gladiators.

[14:52] They're not gladiators. That's easy to see. In fact, it's amazing. They're just like you and me. Some are scared. Shaking and shivering. And lots of your eyes. We've got God on the side. And he can do it. Absolutely anything. God's people are super brave superheroes.

They don't have muscles from their heads to their toes. And they're not. God's people are super brave superheroes. They don't have muscles from their heads to their toes.

They don't have gladiators. They're not easy to see. In fact, it's amazing. They're just like you and me. Sometimes scared.

Shaking and shivering. But let's realize we've got God on our side. And he can do absolutely anything.

God's people are super brave superheroes. They don't have muscles from their heads to their toes. They're not gladiators. That's easy to see. In fact, it's amazing. They're just like you and me. Thank you. We just send Hamitalina Judd back from where she came.

[16:13] So let's... Our children and our young people will be going out to their groups. And WOW Extra is meeting today. So let's just pray that the Holy Spirit will fill the teaching today and encourage every heart and every leader.

Father, you said, let the children come to me. Father, you said, let the children come to me. And forbid them not. For of such is the kingdom of heaven.

And so we pray for our children who are going out to their groups to learn more about you.

We also pray for our youth who are preparing to take over, to walk in your purpose, to bring the good news to a world that needs it.

We pray for all the leaders of these groups that they'll be endowed with patience, love, and the grace of God. We thank you for WOW with our special guests who love you dearly and want to know more about you.

[17:37] And we pray for Judy who is not feeling well this morning. But we thank you that Roger is juggling many, many balls this morning. And WOW Extra is happening.

We thank you and we praise your name. Amen. I have one quick announcement. If your child has not registered and received their lanyard, could you do that on your way out, please?

And we will have some music while the children go out.'s Amen.

Amen. Thank you.

Thank you, Paul. We're about to dig deeply into God's word. And that requires a teachable heart.

[20:01] That requires a mind that seeks after God. And so I think we should I'm going to stop again and do something completely off script.

Welcome Abby and Olani and baby Samuel. Can we have a round of applause for these new parents? And is that your mom beside Olani?

Welcome, mommy. Thank you for coming. So, let's prepare our hearts by recognizing that the compass that leads us is God's word.

It is a lamp to our feet. Let's sing. thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my palm.

thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my palm.

[21:27] When I feel afraid think I've lost my way still you're there right beside me.

nothing will I fear as long as you are near as long as you are near please be near me to the end.

thy word is a lamp is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my palm thy word is a lamp my feet and a light and a light unto my palm my palm.

I will not forget your love for me and yet my heart forever is wandering.

Jesus, be my guide and hold me to your side and I will love you and I will love you to the end.

[22:50] thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my palm.

thy word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my palm.

Father, we come to feed on your word. After a week of things that may not have even resembled you in any shape or form, we need your word to build us up, to sustain us and to encourage us, Lord.

we ask that you would give us hearts of flesh that are hungry for your word so that when we leave here we will be prepared for what we meet and we will meet it with confidence.

I ask you now, Father, to bless Cash as he reads your word to us. Fill him with the power and the grace of your love. and when Lynn comes to unpack it, Father, give her your confidence, your strength, your beautiful power and radiance, Lord, so that we will hear and we will go and do.

[24:20] We will not just be hearers. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

Please be seated. Amen. Amen. Good morning, church.

Our reading today is from 1 Peter 3, verse 13 to 16. You can find it in church Bibles on page number 1219.

Amen. Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good, but even if you should suffer for what is right?

You are blessed. Do not fear their threats. Do not be frightened, but in your hearts revere Christ as Lord.

Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

[25:37] But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.

Praise be to God. Amen. Thank you, Cash.

So we're working through our series on how to be more confident in the Christian faith by looking at the six Cs which the London Institute of Contemporary Christianity have identified.

So far, we've reflected on how to be more confident through being convinced, through community, through compassion, through consistency, and this week, we're looking at becoming more confident through competence.

as messengers of the gospel in our homes, our workplaces, and other community settings, our confidence grows when our hearts and minds are prepared and we feel ready and able to share the good news of the gospel.

[26:58] people. Do you feel competent this morning as a Christian? On Monday, our church leadership carried out an interview for the role of children and young families worker and I imagine one of the questions they will have asked is, can they do the job?

Are they competent? competent? Again, the question, do you feel competent this morning as a Christian? Now, if you're feeling slightly uncomfortable now and you kind of want to slide under the pew because you whispered the answer, no, no, not really to that question and you know that you don't feel competent, then can I congratulate you?

I actually applaud you because I think one of the first marks of being a competent Christian is when you recognise that you are incompetent, when you know that you can't master this Christian faith because you're not meant to master it.

It's not a set of philosophical ideas to sort of wrestle with and then accept. It's all about a relationship a relationship with Christ being found in him and drawing closer to him and relationships aren't static, they develop and grow so you'll never feel fully competent but you might increase your competence.

A key verse in our passage says but in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Christ and Christ and Christ alone is meant to be our Lord.

[28:49] By Lord it means supreme authority. If we're looking to make ourselves the best authority in how to explain the gospel then Christ is not the supreme authority on our heart.

We just need to be the voice to allow him to speak. You could go on an amazing course on evangelism and memorize 60 verses in the Bible.

You could practice 10 times a day on how to explain the made truths of the Bible and those are fantastic things to do and I'm not saying not to do them but if you haven't turned to the Lord that day and told him how you need him and asked him for his strength then you've made knowledge and technique first in your heart rather than Christ.

you haven't revered him as Lord. We need the Holy Spirit to be the one to give us courage and boldness. The first step towards becoming a competent as a Christian is to recognize that we are incompetent in our own strength and Jesus needs to be in charge of everything in our life.

That's how most of us became Christians in the first place isn't it? A few weeks ago if you remember Andy and Catherine Gallagher got baptized right here and as part of that baptism Malcolm asked them do you confess the Lord Jesus Christ as your Lord and Saviour?

[30:21] And he then asked Andy and Catherine why they wanted to get baptized. Both said they knew that Christ had died for them. Andy said that he knows it's in his best interest to follow Christ and Catherine said that she wants to serve him for the rest of her life.

They both know that they desperately need Christ. To become competent Christians we need to start by revering Christ as Lord and knowing that we need him daily.

And revering doesn't mean just sort of kind of vaguely thinking about Christ from time to time. We're to venerate him to set him apart as holy to hold to hold him high.

It means treating God as the holy being that he is, recognising that he has all authority. In other words, following the commandments he sets before us and desiring that others regard him as holy. It means speaking of him as holy and not just with kind of shallow words, but words which we mean, and it means going to him first when we face times of trouble.

[31:38] As we revere God in our hearts, he enlightens us with his understanding. He blesses us with insights and conviction which we can share with others and which will increase our confidence.

Our confidence increases because our fears of other things reduce. Revering the Lord or what we call fear of the Lord is an absorbing emotion.

The more we practice it, the more it drowns out other negative emotions like fear of others. We become more and more and more convinced that he does all things well, even if we face hardship.

So our fears subside and our confidence grows and so our competence as Christians increases. If we look at the verses just before, it gives us more of an explanation as to why.

Who is going to harm you if you are eager to do good? But even if you should suffer for what is right, you are blessed. Do not fear what they fear.

[32:55] Do not be frightened. if we make Christ holy in our hearts, the blessing we receive is not just having nice, carefree days, though we might have those.

The blessing is about not needing to fear what others fear. Because ultimately, we have nothing to fear. Even if we go through the worst possible circumstance, circumstance, and even if that worst possible circumstance is facing an untimely death, then still we have no need to fear.

Because we can't be separated from Christ. We have an eternal hope. Giving Christ the place at the centre of our lives is the antidote to fear.

And fear, of course, is the thing that erodes confidence. When Peter wrote this letter, he was writing it to a group of Christians who could literally be killed for sharing their faith.

So they had every reason to be truly scared. But Peter tells them not to be frightened. They're not to be frightened because they have a hope.

[34:09] Because Peter tells us later, Christ died for sins once for all. The righteous, that's Jesus, for the unrighteous, that's us, to bring you to God.

It's already happened. Jesus has already done the work. He's done what is needed to bring us to God. So we don't need to fear, we just need to trust him.

Verse 16 says, always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you the reason for the hope that you have. God is to give an answer to everyone who asks you the reason for the hope you have.

An answer could kind of be translated as defense or apologia as it's called. God's says that because the way that we live and the way that we are should make a noticeable difference and a difference that makes other people curious as to why we are different.

it will prompt questions because they can see our faith has impacted our life. I don't know about you but has anybody ever said to you I wish I could have your faith or I wish I could believe like you because they see it makes a difference to you and if people have said those things to you then praise God you've allowed God to shape and mould your life.

[35:50] Christians have something which is life changing and if no one ever notices a difference in us then maybe we do need to challenge ourselves with how much we really are living out our Christian faith.

2 Corinthians 3 tells us that we are living letters known and read by everybody. How are you and I being read by others?

It may also be that people ask us questions in an accusatory or malicious way and it may feel like we're being sort of cornered and need to defend our faith but we're not all about being able to answer every difficult question there is about the Christian faith.

You and I didn't become Christians because we became amazing experts at answering philosophical questions. We became Christians because we realised that God loves us.

he sent Jesus to die for us and we've chosen to follow him. So we shouldn't try to see answering those questions as being pressed into defending our position but we should see it more as an opportunity to give someone else to be the chance to be blessed in the ways that we have.

[37:08] Enabling them to accept Christ rather than enabling them to accept us. always be prepared to give an answer. And be prepared means kind of standing by at the ready.

If you're going on a long journey then you don't set off in a car without any fuel in it. You make sure you've got enough fuel to at least get you to the next petrol station. So you prepare.

We should prepare to be able to have conversations about the gospel with others literally at the drop of a hat. Now I'm an administrator and Ian's a planner.

So you can imagine in our house we're largely pretty good at planning and preparing even a little bit to the extreme. In fact our children get driven mad by the way that we sometimes pack up the car to go on holiday with all the things that we might just need.

But we don't always prepare well. In fact I'm really embarrassed to say that that on two separate occasions in the past some dear friends called in to visit us on days that we had pre-planned and both times we completely forgot.

[38:24] We hadn't even got up and dressed when they rang on the doorbell. But we weren't at all prepared. Thankfully those lovely friends are very forgiving and they're still good friends now.

But it wasn't the best way for us to show that we cared about them. how much better it would have been if we'd had mugs ready by the kettle ready to make a drink for them as soon as they arised. If we care then we will prepare.

So Ian and I need to pay much more attention to being prepared to share the gospel with others than paying so much attention to planning our holidays. And I think that's something we probably both feel challenged by.

how can you and I prepare to share the gospel? Well maybe think ahead of some of those questions that people are likely to ask you before you were a Christian.

What were the sort of questions that you really wanted to ask others? What tricky things will most people want to get an answer to about the Christian faith? Think and reflect on those in advance and how you'd answer them.

[39:32] Go back and refresh your mind with the basics. If you've never done an Alpha or a Christianity Explored course, well maybe this is a time to sign up to one of those and think again at a basic level.

What does it mean to be a Christian? Mike's about to run the Bible course again. Is this the time to do that course and remind yourself of how the Bible tells us the story of Christ all the way through? An organisation called Dare to Share have a really simple way of sharing the gospel using the letters in the word gospel and you may find it helpful to memorise it.

I don't know if we can have the slide. Here it is. G. God created us to be with him. O. Our sins separate us from God.

S. Sins cannot be removed by good deeds. P. Paying the price for sin, Jesus died and rose again.

[40:40] E. Everyone who trusts in him alone has eternal life. L. Life with Jesus starts now and lasts forever. So all these things are good things to do.

But most importantly, the passage we are looking at today tells us to give a reason for the hope that we have. Quite often it seems to be that when Christians are asked the question why they believe, they start to give their testimony.

In other words, they tell people about how they became a Christian and what God is doing in their life, which is a good thing to do. But that isn't answering why we have a hope.

It's not giving a reason. It's only telling us how we came to hope. Peter encouraged us to explain why. And the reason for the hope that we have must be centred on the cross and the resurrection. There is no other reason why a Christian has hope or confidence. Any answer or apologia must centre on Christ's death on the cross and his resurrection.

[41:53] Our confidence and hope rests on our relationship with Christ, not in a system of arguments or thoughts. Paul says in 2 Timothy 1, I know whom I have believed and I'm convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day.

We have a hope because Christ died for us and as we believe and trust in him, we have confidence that he will raise us up with him. It's easy when people ask us questions in an aggressive sort of way to reply with an aggressive style of response, but Peter warns us against doing that.

We're told to give our answer with gentleness and respect. In Colossians 4 verse 6, Paul tells us, let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt so that you may know how to answer everyone.

We need to exercise patience and self control and commit to embodying gentleness, respect and grace in our responses whenever we face questions.

We should ask the Lord to help us grow in this. If we love and respect others, even when they don't respect our faith, they will begin to listen. But also don't be afraid to ask questions back.

[43:27] Jesus often asked questions in response to questions he was asked. His answer to the question, good teacher, what must I do to

inherit internal life, wasn't just believe in me.

It was, why do you call me good? Followed by no one is good except God alone. Sometimes our best answer will be to ask a question, so that the person themselves has to work out their own response.

Don't be afraid to ask, why do you think that? Or what do you think? And listen carefully to what they say. God may well give you an insight into a different question that's actually really behind the one that they ask.

Or it might open up a whole conversation which enables you to share more. Or it may help you just to work out some common ground between you. And don't be disheartened if it doesn't go well the first time.

It's very rare for someone to become a Christian the first time they hear about Jesus. Usually it's a process. Our job is to plant seeds and pray that those seeds would bear fruit.

[44:38] God and if it all goes pear shaped and belly up, well don't panic. God forgives people and he doesn't give up on others.

Your mistake in one conversation will not mean that that person has no further opportunity to come to faith. God wants all people to turn to him.

Peter completely denied that he knew Christ three times, yet Jesus didn't abandon him. Peter shared the gospel with numerous others later. If you didn't take the opportunity to share with someone one week, then there'll often be an opportunity to share with them another week.

Maybe all you need to do is say, oh, you know how we were talking about X, Y, Z last Monday? Well, I was reflecting on that this week and it reminded me of something that Jesus taught about that, or whatever.

we build up competence as we prepare and then have courage to speak. So, revere Christ as Lord in your heart.

[45:52] Make sure you draw on his strength daily. Remember that even if others criticise you and you suffer for doing good things, you are blessed. you have nothing to fear.

Take steps to be prepared to give answers to questions from others as to why you have hope. And remember that God does the work of saving.

Your role is just to be a step in the journey of helping them come to accept Christ just as you have accepted him. And I'd encourage you, if you haven't accepted him yet, then do that this morning, we pray.

Let's pray together. Father, thank you that we have an eternal hope in you.

Lord, give us the courage and strength and confidence to share that hope with others. Help us to increase our confidence and confidence in sharing our faith so that others will come to know you as their Lord and Saviour, we pray.

[47:06] Amen. Amen. Thank you, Lynn.

Let's just pause for a moment and let that sink in, revering Christ in our hearts. Was there something in the sermon that particularly spoke to your heart this morning?

What are you going to do about it? We are not just hearers, we have to be doers. And I came up with some Bible verses just to help you.

how do we revere Christ? Isaiah 42 verse 8 says, I am the Lord, that is my name.

I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols. And that verse says to us, God's name must be used rightly, reverently, carefully, because there is power in his name.

[48:27] Exodus 20 verse 7 says, you shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes his name in vain.

So, who glorifies God's name more than Jesus? us. And that's why we need to focus on Jesus and be like him.

Our opening song spoke of our unity in Christ into one holy communion. So, we're going to move into a time of communion.

So, please stand with me and join me in asking the Lord to purify our hearts so that we don't come to communion, carelessly, but we come with the reverence that it deserves to sit at God's table and to remember what Jesus did on the cross.

Please stand. Thank you. Purify my heart, let me be as gold and precious silver.

[50:06] Purify my heart, let me be as gold. Your gold refines fire, my heart's one desire.

History holy, set apart for you, Lord, I choose to be holy, set apart for you, my master, ready to do your will.

Purify my heart, cleanse me from within, cleanse me from within, and make me holy.

Purify my heart, cleanse me from my sin, keep within, refine us fire.

my heart's one desire. My heart's one desire is to be holy, set apart for you, my master, be holy, set apart for you, my master, ready to do your will.

[52:03] Good morning, church. You can sit. Can I ask those who are serving to come up now, please?

Thank you. So this morning, we have the privilege of being invited to this table.

The invitation is not from me, it's not from Malcolm or Andrew or pastors, Jesus. It's not from our elders or deacons or even Judith, who led us so well today, but it comes from Jesus.

And what's so significant about this table? This table does not belong to any denomination, church or community. It belongs to Jesus.

It was at table that he met people, heard their stories and shared his. It was at table that he deepened his friendship with poor folk and prostitutes, the business class and puzzled bystanders.

[53:36] It was at table that he shared profound insights into who God is and what God wants. It is at table with bread and wine that he initiated the sacrament we now celebrate.

So, he invites us to come to this table. Leave any baggage of arrogance or unworthiness behind.

Do not think this is not for me. Think rather of Jesus saying, I am for you and accept his invitation to be a cherished friend and to long to be fed.

The Apostle Paul relates this invitation to us in 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and it reads, For I received from the Lord what I also passed unto you.

The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread. And when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, This is my body, which is for you.

[54:52] Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, after supper, he took the cup, saying, This cup is now, is the new covenant in my blood.

Lord, do this whenever you drink in remembrance of me. For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

So, Jesus is telling us to come to this table in memory of him. Will you accept this invitation today?

So, let's pray.

Father, thank you for this bread and this wine. Feed us with your word. Help us to recognize our risen Christ in the breaking of bread, which represents his body, beaten and broken for us.

Thank you for the wine, representing his blood, shed for us. This brings us cleansing and wholesomeness in him. In partaking in this meal, may we be strengthened and united to do your good work.

[56:12] Amen. So, Jesus said, this is my body, which is broken for you.

do this in remembrance of me. Amen. Now, you don't have to be a member of this church to partake in this meal.

You don't even have to be a regular attendee. You just have to believe that Jesus Christ came and died for you. But, if you don't think you're ready, allow it to pass you by and consider what it is that we're all doing here today.

There are gluten-free options also that are available if that's what you require. And as we serve each other, we can do so with these words. the body of Christ was broken for you.

Also, we'll eat the bread individually, representing our individual relationship with Jesus as our Savior. Amen. Amen.

[57:52] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. In the same way, after supper he took this cup, saying this is the cup sorry this cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me.

As we serve each other, we can use these words, the blood of Christ shed for you. We will hold the cup and drink together signifying our unity in Christ.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[62:17] Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Brothers and sisters, the blood of Christ shed for you.

Your death, O Lord, we commemorate. Your resurrection, we confess. Your final coming, we await.

Glory to be, O Lord Jesus.

[64:53] Amen. Let us come to God in prayer.

Heavenly Father, we come to you today in gratitude and awe at the love that you have for us. For the unceasing love of your son to sacrifice his life for us.

That we might join you at your table, that we might be welcomed as sons and daughters. This is a gift that we do not deserve and a gift that we cannot earn.

Thank you for your gift of grace. That you would take our broken lives, our hearts of stone, and make them new. This is a gift worth shouting about, but sometimes our fear or our lack of competence gets the better of us.

Sometimes the fear of rejection, ridicule, or condemnation can be so great that we keep our amazing gift to ourselves. But you did not give us a spirit of fear, but one of power and love.

[66:14] May our love for you outweigh our fear, Lord. Remind us that your word never returns empty. That you will give us the words to say. That you will work through the relationships that we already have.

Help us to have the confidence to follow your prompting. To share what you have done for us. And to speak in kindness and respect. We lift up the Easter Holiday Club and the planned Easter outreach events coming up in the next few weeks.

We pray for energy and unending patience in the leaders taking part in the Holiday Club. Help them to show your love in word and action. We pray for boldness and wisdom in those taking part in the outreach.

That they will find receptive hearts and amazing conversations. That the people of Wickham will want to know you more and be thirsty for your word. We thank you for our new deacons and we pray that you would help them to settle into their roles smoothly.

Help them to remember that they work in your power and your strength, Lord, not their own. Equip them mightily to do your work and help us to support them in this. We thank you for Chris, our ministry trainee.

[67:29] We thank you for the way that you are using him and equipping him in his time with us. We thank you for this opportunity to work with Emmanuel International in Tanzania. We pray that you would be with him as he plans, prepares and fundraisers for his trip.

As we join together as a church next week to discuss, pray and vote on the Living Stones project, we ask that your spirit would be with us. Help us to hear and respond to your guidance.

And be with our leadership as they respond to the church membership. We pray that you will help us to know your plans for this building and that we would be bold in following them.

As we come close to the Easter holidays, we pray for all of those looking forward to a break from school, whether that be the teachers or the students. We pray for great rest and relaxation over the holidays.

And for our university students who are starting to come near the end of their final year, this is both an exciting and a terrifying time. As they start to prepare for exams and life beyond university, we pray that you would fill them with your spirit, that they would trust their futures into your hands.

[68:40] Guide them in the right paths, Lord. Help them to revise well and not to be overcome with stress and anxiety. We thank you for the life and work of our sister Margaret.

As her funeral and memorial service approaches, we pray for her friends and family. We ask for your protection over them as they travel. And may your comforting spirit be with each of us as we remember her and look forward to seeing her again in your kingdom.

Father God, we are grateful for a roof over our head, enough food to eat, enough to pay our bills, and that many of us are blessed with employment.

We pray for those that do not have enough. For parents going hungry so their children have enough food to eat. Putting on a brave face as they move into temporary accommodation. We thank you for the work of the Wickham Homeless Connection, the One Can Trust, and for Cap Job Club, and for the Warm Places Initiative.

Help us to recognise those in need around us and prompt us to take action. We pray for the leaders of our country, that you would work in their hearts and mind, that they would act justly and with mercy to bring about lasting change.

[70:02] We seek for you to build your kingdom here, Lord. Help us to be your hands and feet in our world. We ask all this in your holy name. Amen. Amen. Thanks, Hannah.

Thank you. We are heading towards the end of our service. I have two songs which I hope will encourage us to revere Christ in our hearts and to know from where we get our confidence and to know what to do with this confidence.

So would you stand and sing to each other. Our confidence is in the Lord. The source of our salvation Rest is found in Him alone.

The author of creation We will not fear the evil day Because we have a refuge In every circumstance we say Our hope is built on Jesus He is our fortress 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 the Lord The source of our salvation Rest is found in Him alone The author of creation We will not fear the evil day Because we have a refuge In every circumstance we say Our hope is built on 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 Amen That's a statement

[73:30] That's a, we might put our trust in God No, that's a, we will Come on, say it with me We will put our trust in God And when it seems like you've lost it Just say it I will put my trust in God Amen Let's move into the next one Worthy of every song we could ever sing Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe We live for you We live for you

Jesus, the name above every other name Jesus, the name above every one Who could ever save Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe We live for you Oh, we live for you Holy, there is no one like you There is none beside you Open up my eyes in wonder Show me who you are Fill me with your heart Lead me in your love to those around me Worthy of every song we could ever sing Worthy of all the praise we could ever bring Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe We live for you We live for you Jesus, name above every other name Jesus, the only one who could ever save Worthy of every breath we could ever breathe We live for you Oh, we live for you Holy, there is none like you There is none beside you Open up my eyes in wonder

Show me who you are And fill me with your heart And fill me with your heart And lead me in your love to those around me Holy, there is no one like you There is none beside you Open up my eyes in wonder Show me who you are And fill me with your heart And fill me with your heart And lead me in your love to those around me I will build my life upon your love It is a firm foundation I will put my trust in you alone

And I will not be shaken I will build my life upon your love It is a firm foundation I will put my trust in you alone And I will not be shaken Holy, there is no one like you There is none beside you Open up my eyes in wonder Show me who you are And fill me with your heart And lead me in your love To those around me

[79:01] And if you will indulge me I'm going to say the last part Of our opening prayer Before I do the blessing And that last part I said Father we seek to honor you In all that we say and do As we gathered here today As we bring our worship We ask that you will fill us up And then send us out Into our various front lines With your confidence And your strength Amen And now for the blessing Let's see how fast I can scroll back down to it Oops So here we go Actually I'm going to give you Just a few reminders Before we do the blessing Sit You sit Let me give you some

reminders Remember our special church members meeting

On Tuesday at 7.30 In the main hall We're going to look at living stones And you've submitted questions There are answers There is an agenda Remember to the Easter holiday club Which is coming up It is now full It's fully subscribed But there is a waiting list So if you haven't gotten your child Grandchild Niece Nephew On Maybe you could put them on the waiting list And if we have A vacancy opening You might just be next on the list It's worth it Trust me We have some Easter activities as well Outreach activities Other than the Easter club Hot cross buns in Eden Explaining why there is a cross On the buns And a giveaway On the rye We did it last year We're doing it again this year

We did We gave out A booklet to children On the Easter story And many parents said Thank you Because they didn't know How to explain this To their children And their activities They could do scratch crosses They can do stained glass windows And we give out daffodils To the ladies God gave us so much This is a little That we can give back And we need your help We need your prayers And we need your support They give away On the rye We'll be at around Two On Saturday The 8th Of April The hot cross buns Is on Good Friday The 7th Of April So bear those in mind Now since I Allowed you to sit I'm going to Allow you to stay seated But ask you to Reach out for the blessing From 2nd Romans 9 verse 8 And God is able

To make all grace Abound to you So that having All sufficiency In all things At all times You may abound In every good work And our church motto From Romans 15 verse 13 May the God Of hope Fill you with All joy And peace As you trust In him So that you May overflow With hope By the power Of the Holy Spirit Amen Please join us For tea and coffee If you've been Thank you