4.10.26 Communion Sunday Evening Service

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Date: 04 October 2026

Preacher: Reverend Derek Lamont

[0:00] Evening everyone. A warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to see people from other people. So Derek's wife Katrina was involved in setting up where Christians seek to try to help those who've gone through, women who've gone through abuse earlier in their lives.

So Derek makes us something more about that. But we'll hear from Derek after in the fellowship as well about how God has worked and continues to work in his life at this time. So if you're able to stay behind, please do so. Just a word on behalf of the congregation as well, Derek, to say thank you for your ministry over this weekend. It's been an encouragement and we have very much benefited from you opening God's word up to us. So thank you for your ministry and we will continue to pray. We'll hear a bit more about where you are tonight in terms of ministry and we'll pray for the work as you go from here. So thanks Derek and I'll hand over to you.
Thanks David. And thank you as a congregation for putting up with me for the weekend. It's been thoroughly enjoyable for me, all apart from being up here. But it has been enjoyable to meet you and to have fellowship with you and to know your prayers and your support over this weekend. And I hope, I do hope you will pray for what we're doing in, by God's grace in Edinburgh and that we'll pray for you and your ministry and work and witness here in North Harris. So it's great to gather together and worship God and we're going to do so by singing.
And our first time of praise is the hymn, Great is Thy Faithfulness. We come before God in worship and song. Amen.
Amen. Amen. Amen.
[3:26] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen. I'd just like to connect very briefly with a prayer that has been a prayer in the Scottish Church for a long, long time.
It's adapted from John Knox's liturgy of 1560, and it's a prayer of confession. So let's bow our heads as we pray. Almighty God, we are unworthy to come into your presence because of our many sins. We do not deserve any grace from you if you dealt with us as we deserved. We have sinned against you, Lord, and we have offended you. And yet, O Lord, as we acknowledge our sins and offenses, so also do we acknowledge you to be a merciful God, a loving and favorable Father to all who turn to you.
[6:32] And so we humbly ask you for the sake of Christ, your Son, to show mercy to us and forgive us all our offenses, forgive us, forgive us, forgive us, forgive us, forgive us, forgive us, forgive the sins of our youth, and the sins of our old age.

By your Spirit, O God, take possession of our hearts, so that not only the actions of our life, but also the words of our mouths, the smallest thought of our minds, may be guided and governed by you, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom, with you and the Holy Spirit, be all honor and glory, both now and forever. Amen.
It's great to know that the gospel and the foundation of the gospel remains the same through the centuries as we put our trust in Jesus Christ.
I'm going to sing again to God's praise. And again, this is a more modern song called His Mercy Is More. And it's His mercy we depend on in our lives and in what we do as believers.
Let's sing to God's praise. God's praise.
[8:15] God's praise.

God's praise. The nations will quit as we constantly roam. What Father so tender is calling us home. He welcomes the weakest, the violent, the poor. Our sins, they are many, His mercy is more. Thanks to the Lord, His mercy is born. Stronger than darkness, we're every war.

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Our sins, they are many, His mercy is born. What riches of kindness He lavished on us.
[9:36] His blood was the pain and His life was the loss. We stood in a debt we could never afford.

Our sins, they are many, His mercy is born. Thanks to the Lord, His mercy is born.
Stronger than darkness, we're every war. Our sins, they are many, His mercy is born.
We'll turn for a reading this evening to the New Testament as we were in Colossians this morning. We're in Colossians again this evening and we'll look at chapter 2. I think it's on your screens from verse 4. I'm actually going to read from verse 1 if that's okay. We'll read from the beginning of the chapter, Colossians chapter 2, and you'll pick it up on your screens at verse 4.
[10:42] We'll read the whole chapter. This is God's word. For I want you to know how great a struggle I have for you and those at Laodicea, and for all who have not seen me face to face, that their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery, which in Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge.

I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments. For though I am absent in body, yet I am with you in spirit, rejoicing to see your good order and the firmness of your faith in Christ.
Therefore, as you've received Christ Jesus, the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.
See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ.
For in Him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily, and you have been filled in Him, who is the head of all rule and authority.
[12:02] In Him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised with Him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised Him from the dead.

And you who were dead in your trespasses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with Him, having forgiven all our trespasses by cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands.
This He set aside, nailing it to the cross. He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame by triumphing over them in Him.
Therefore, let no one pass judgment on you in questions of food and drink, or with regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath.
These are a shadow of the things to come, but the substance belongs to Christ. Let no one disqualify you, insisting on asceticism and worship of angels, going on in detail about visions, puffed up without reason by his sensuous mind, and not holding fast to the head from whom the whole body, nourished and knit together through its joints and ligaments, grows with a growth that is from God.
[13:36] If with Christ you died to the elemental spirits of the world, why, as if you were still alive in the world, do you submit to regulations? Do not handle, do not taste, do not touch, referring to things that all perish as they are used, according to human precepts and teachings.

These have indeed an appearance of wisdom in promoting self-made religion and asceticism and severity to the body, but they are of no value in stopping the indulgence of the flesh.
This is God's word. We give thanks for the freedom and the privilege of being able to read his word this evening together. We're going to praise God once more this time in Gaelic, and from Psalm 117.
It's a short psalm. Two stanzas. Psalm of praise. O give ye praise unto the Lord, all nations that be. Likewise, ye people all, according his name to magnify.
Accord, sorry, his name to magnify. For great to usward, ever are his loving kindnesses, his truth endures forevermore. The Lord, O do ye bless. To God's praise.
[14:52] Amen. Amen.

Amen.
Amen. Amen.
Amen. Before turning back to the passage we read together, let's bow our heads once more in prayer.

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Let's pray. Father, we come before you this evening with deep thankfulness to you for all that you are and all that you mean to us.
[18:35] We rejoice in your character. We rejoice in your uniqueness. We give thanks for all the benefits that we enjoy from you, all the realities that would not exist.

Were it not for you? We thought about many of them this morning when we considered your supremacy over creation and your supremacy and sovereignty over death.
And we give thanks that you're the one who holds this universe together with that divine gravity, without which there would be no existence and no hope and no life and no future, no past.
Father God, we pray as we come together this evening that we would give thanks for you, give thanks for you in creation, in life, but above all in salvation.
Give thanks for Jesus Christ, for the invisible being made visible, and for the wonder of your character and of your work on our behalf.
[19:50] Father, we pray that we would embrace Christ Jesus and that we would seek to follow Christ Jesus and know that in him is fullness of life.

Remind us of that in good times when we are prone to forget, in bad times when we may be prone to shake our fist heavenwards, help us to humbly acknowledge that your purposes are always right and that you take the darkness of our experiences and will weave them into molding our character and redeeming our lives so that darkness and sin and Satan has no victory and all things will be used by you.
We pray, Father, that you would help us to love you more deeply and serve you more fully because of the great gift of salvation.
And we pray, Father, that you would give us a heart for the least, the last, and the lost. We pray for those who have not many of this life's pleasures and joys and material possessions, those who are broken in our communities, those who are in addiction, those who are battling and struggling with circumstances that seem bleak and difficult, those who sometimes through no fault of their own at a human level, are bereft of any sense of purpose and hope in life.
We pray, Lord God, that we would reach out to such with the gospel, that we would bring them the good news. It is indeed very good news, and we thank you for it.
[21:48] We pray that you would give us a burden for our communities, whether it's here in Tarbert, throughout the island here, in Lewis and Harris, Uist, or whether it's in the Highlands or indeed the Central Belt, wherever in Scotland we might be.

We pray that you would give us a burden for its peoples. You would give us a love to serve those with Christ's love and bring them the hope of the gospel.
We pray, Heavenly Father, that you would give us prayerful hearts for our neighbors and our friends, for our family members, and for those that you put in our way.
We know there's no chance occurrence in life. And so when you put people in our path, we pray that you would help us to see that as a spiritual reality and give us humility and trust that you will hear our prayers and answer them.
So, Lord, we ask and pray that you would give us gospel hearts and that we would long and desire to see many, many people in this community coming to church, that this building wouldn't be big enough to hold all those who cry out, what must I do to be saved?
[23:09] And that many, many will find eternal life through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ.
And we pray that this would be a loving and grace-filled, compassionate, patient, truth-loving community of God's people.

Bless us, Lord, as we open Scripture. May you receive the glory as your living word is unfolded in a very simple and basic way this evening, leaving much untouched.
But we pray that your Spirit would guide and protect each of us and be spoken to by you and molded, moved, transformed, made alive, encouraged, built up, challenged, rebuked.
Whatever it is that you see we need in our lives this evening. And continue, we pray, to bless us, bless the praise, bless the prayers, the preaching of your word, the fellowship we share together.
May it all be in Jesus' name and for His glory. Amen. I'd like to turn back this morning, sorry, that's what happens when you preach four times, this evening, to the passage in Colossians that we read together, maybe more particularly from verse 6, and just dipping into it.
[24:31] There's a whole lot in this passage and I'm not going to go into it in great detail. But we will look at one or two important truths, I hope, this evening as we go through it.

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And kind of as we saw, I guess, this morning a little bit, getting things right from the beginning is very, very important, not just spiritually but in life generally.
The church that I used to be pastor of in St. Columbus in the middle of Edinburgh, there was a hotel just down the road from the church just off the Royal Mile called, well it was originally called the Missoni Hotel.
It was built in 2009, I think it's now owned by Radisson. So it was only built in 2009 but since 2020 it has had ugly scaffold all over the building, right throughout the whole building.
And it's been, I'm sure, a financial disaster for the original builders. You can't book rooms in the hotel, restaurants underneath that have been closed, the pavement has been narrowed because they have had to correct a major, major design flaw that has been there since the beginning.
[25:45] And I shudder to think how much it has cost the original company who built it. It's been a disaster for them. And that's true in any area of life or in anything that we do.

That it's important to get things right from the beginning. And Paul, the apostle, recognized that and was commissioned by God to be the apostle, as we saw this morning, the apostle to the Gentiles, but to not only bring the gospel to the Gentiles, but to make sure that they were well grounded in the gospel.
All the churches that Paul visited, sometimes founded, but often visited, he was bringing them the gospel and also bringing them the truth, the doctrine about Jesus Christ that was so significant, foundational, and true.
Because he knew that the foundations are tremendously important, not just for the church, but for us as individuals in our Christian lives. And that truth, under God's inspiration, is for the church in every century and for Christians in every century that we recognize who Christ is and how important he is and how significant it is that we interact with him and worship him and serve him as Christ Jesus.
The problem in the early church in Colossae was that false teachers were coming in and introducing a different gospel, slightly twisting it, slightly changing it.
[27:18] to make it like Jesus Christ plus other things and shrinking down the significance, the uniqueness, and the divinity of Jesus Christ and introducing, ultimately, heresy into the church.

And so Paul is coming to these places and reminding us of who Jesus Christ is. Because if we don't get who Jesus Christ is and what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ, it's disastrous.
If we don't get it right from the beginning, then we're always struggling because we see our salvation as something other than what is given to us in the New Testament and what is the only way of coming to know and understand who Jesus Christ is.
So what Paul does here is he speaks about who Christ is, probably more so in the first chapter that we looked at this morning. He gives us that magnificent description of who Jesus Christ is that we spent a bit of time on this morning.
But here he goes on to describe what it is to be a Christian and then speaks about some things that get in the way of being a Christian or becoming a Christian and then he refocuses back on who Jesus Christ is.
[28:46] So Paul in verse 6 and 7 gives this tremendous description of what it is to be a Christian. And you could, again, you could preach a series of sermons just on these two verses alone.

And he almost imperceptibly describes what it is to be a Christian with a series, a very quick series of pictures about what a Christian is.
Because pictures help us and the Bible is full of pictures and all of these descriptions he gives are used in different parts of the Bible as well to describe what it is to be a Christian.
Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. So he says that he describes salvation and following Jesus Christ as being a gift.
Therefore, as you have received Jesus Christ the Lord, as Lord, we receive Him as a gift. And that goes on to be something that's very important. It's not something we earn.
[29:55] It's not something that we bargain with God about. It's a gift that He gives us, a gift of His grace. We offer nothing for our salvation.

It is absolutely the gift that comes from receiving Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. So it's a gift which we have received, He goes on to say.

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It then, goes on to say, is a journey. So, walk in Him. We walk with Jesus Christ. Salvation isn't something that happened to us 20 years ago, 10 months ago, yesterday, and we forget about it. We are united to Christ when we receive Christ Jesus and we are in Christ and we are with Him and He walks with us and He empowers us to live the Christian life by His Spirit that He gifts to us. He ascends, He gives the gift of the Holy Spirit to be our teacher and our guide and so we are on a journey with Him, our walk with Him and He becomes our guide and He becomes our helper and He becomes our strength and in that journey it is often an adventure.
[31:13] He often takes us to places we would never have gone, I don't mean geographically, it might be geographically, but generally in life He will change the direction of our life because we become His followers and He becomes our Lord and Master.

It's often a battlefield, it's a place of sweat and a place of where we need strength and where we need courage because of the battle, spiritual battle that we're in.
But we are always on the move with Him in us and He with us. We never are static spiritually, if we think we're the same spiritually today as we were 20 years ago, then we've regressed because we are being transformed, we are moving towards Christ Jesus as He works in us and through us.
So it's a gift, it's a journey, it's like a plant being built up and established and rooted and built up in Him.
So there's this picture, the great picture from Jeremiah 17 of where our roots lie and you know, it's going back to the foundations, isn't it? Where our roots lie, that great tree that's spoken of in Jeremiah 17 that is evergreen and always bearing fruit even in a time of drought.
[32:34] Why? Because its roots are always towards the living water. Christ Himself describing Himself as the living water in different parts of the Gospels.

So there's this vital connection, what you are and who you are beneath the surface, where your relationship lies, where your direction lies is to be rooted in Jesus Christ, that relationship of prayer and the relationship of dependence and trust, the only source of life for you, rooted in Him because of what He has done, guided by Him in your journey.
And similarly to that, rooting built up in Him. Picture, maybe going back to what I said at the beginning, the building that we are, a building that's established, that's being built up both individually and together as a people built up with the solid foundation of Jesus Christ so that in good times, of course, but particularly in the droughts and in the storms of life, we have a solid foundation, relying on this great, great Savior we spoke about this morning who establishes all things and whose power and whose strength the whole universe is able to exist.
So it's a gift, a journey, a plant, a building. It's also a classroom, isn't it? Just as you were taught, we remain disciples. We're always disciples.
We're always learning. We're always students. We always have L plates on as believers. In the Bible, God's living word is our textbook, the Holy Spirit in us, our patient teacher.
[34:19] And in all these things, as we understand what Paul is here describing of the Christian life, a life that's a gift, a journey, well-rooted, founded, and a learning experience, we are able to have a bursting heart abounding in thanksgiving because we see and we understand and we appreciate that this is not all there is.

That this is not actually what it's all about. Sometimes, think of life as, if you think of a big, a big heavy tome, maybe a thousand chapters, this is a rubbish example, but it's as if our lives are the first sentence of the introduction of a book of a thousand chapters.
This life, however long it is, it's just, and of course, that falls because in Christ we live eternally, but it's just, we put so much focus on this life, on the here and now, on our physicality, on being young sometimes and all that we look forward to.
There's a great deal of mystery in it all, isn't there? But, it's only a tiny part of eternity and we're called to come to Jesus Christ to know death defeated and life in Jesus Christ eternally in a way that is beyond our comprehension, beyond our ability to fully understand.
So, Paul describes the Christian life, but he then goes on to, in much more detail than I'm going to spend this evening, talk about some things that get in the way of the Christian life when we shrink Christ down and we add things to our salvation because we want a part in it.
[36:21] We want to own part of our salvation. We want to see it's Christ and what I've done because it's so important that we get to play a part in salvation and we can't see it as a gift and there's many different ways that that can happen and that was what was happening in Colossae is that people were coming and saying, yeah, it's all very well speaking about Christ, but it's Christ

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plus some other things.

It's not just Christ and the gift of Christ. It's Christ plus so that humanity and mankind and people get a bit of credit that it can't possibly be just a gift.
That was the danger in Colossae. Different ideas about knowing God and remember, this is a young church that didn't have the completed scripture, didn't have the New Testament as we have it.
We are much more privileged than them because we have all of this written down for us. But these were people, false teachers who were coming to make Jesus only half a God or not a good enough God or a God that we needed to put our clothes on that we've designed to make Him a presentable Savior so that we can add to that salvation and get some credit for salvation.
And that was quite attractive in some ways to the people of Colossae and I guess has been attractive to people and to ourselves ever since. Just very, very quickly, just three things that he speaks about, at least maybe many more here.
[37:52] But he speaks about the sense of privilege, of belonging to a group of people that were privileged and that it was Christ plus the tradition that they belonged to.

That was really the Jews that belonged to them. In verse 16, he says, let no one pass judgment on your questions of food and drink or regard to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath. These are a shadow of the things to come but the substance belongs to Christ.
And he speaks earlier on about circumcision and all that goes with that, the privilege that they had. And it was as if the false teachers were coming in and saying, yeah, Christ is good but you need to take all that Old Testament tradition with you, the privilege you have of Jews and that you must keep on maintaining these rituals and these regulations and all that was done in the Old Testament that they haven't been fulfilled in Christ.
You need to have them as well as what Jesus Christ has done. And that was adding to Christ's salvation. It was shrinking Christ down. It was saying, we can add to what Christ has done by our own ritual, by our own privileges, by our own background.
I wonder what the modern day equivalent of that is sometimes that maybe we think it's Christ plus all the baggage of the church I belong to and all maybe the ways that need to go alongside Christ so that we add through our traditions and our knowledge and the privilege of who we are and the privilege of what has gone in the past that that must be added to what Christ has done in order for us to be saved.
[39:34] Or it could be a sense of feeling inwardly special. In verse 18 he speaks about let no one disqualify you insisting on asceticism and the worship of angels going into detail about visions puffed up without reason and by a sensuous mind not holding fast to the head.

It seemed that in Colossae there was false teachers who engaged in angel worship and who brought Christ down to really just be another angel and who spoke about special knowledge and so really it was Jesus plus the kind of special private knowledge that I'm given.
Again I'm not sure what the modern equivalent of that may be kind of spirituality where people will claim a private insight into a spiritual realm where God speaks to them with ideas that can't be found in scripture that they have special access to God private visions secret knowledge that can't be disputed making them really a law unto themselves can't be bothered with what the Bible says can't be bothered with commitment to church church is full of so many dull people who just believe in the simple gospel I don't think anyone here thinks that but you might come across that sometimes people who have this special private line to God who look down on ordinary Christians because they are special it's Christ plus my private experiences that no one can criticise or condemn or it might be Christ plus being outwardly disciplined to add to Christ's salvation verse 20 to 23
Christ died to the elemental spirits of the world why do you continue to submit to regulations do not handle do not taste do not touch referring to the things that perish as they are used according to human precepts and teachings where people say it's Christ but Christ's not enough I need to show about my discipline forget all this love nonsense it's all about just pleasing God by denying pleasures by being hard on myself by having rules and routines sometimes abstaining from food from habits from outward behaviours none of these things necessarily are wrong but if it's Christ on the cross plus my good efforts and my self-discipline and God being pleased to add to salvation if I keep the rules and lots of ways of living outwardly that show everyone how disciplined I am how religious I am how self-denying I am that's adding to the gift of salvation by Christ it's saying it's what

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Christ has done but I'm adding to it it's not just enough that Christ give me a gift I need to add to that so that I can own part of salvation for myself yes these are always temptations for all of us however they reveal themselves to us in our lives and what does Paul remind us of here as we draw a bit more to a conclusion is that we've got to hold on to the head man Jesus Christ not he says the danger of not holding fast to the head from whom the whole body nourished and knit together through its joint and ligaments grows with a growth that is from God Christ is the head Christ is always the head Christ is the only head of the church and of the Christian at all times and in every way and he is the only way to the father and salvation is his gift and you know headship is so important isn't it in life people look to have a leader all the time in many ways the top dog the main man the matra the boss the head honcho the leader of the gang el presidente me myself [43:40] I am the boss I'm the one I make the decisions no one will tell me how to live so we have that sense of wanting to be the authority wanting to be the main person not letting anyone not even Jesus tell us how we need him and yet here we're told and reminded that Christ and we saw this this morning really as well that Christ is the fullness of God for in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily that incredible reality we are you know when it's Christ plus we're saying well Christ in whom God dwells in whom the fullness of deity dwells bodily isn't quite enough isn't quite enough it's an astonishing claim astonishingly self-centered claim that we need more than Jesus that the fullness of deity isn't enough for us we need to add to our own righteousness our own good works and it goes on to say of him in verse 10 that he is the head of all rule and all authority again it was mentioned in the first chapter and again an astonishing claim that people who are not believers who are not in Christ who are not in the church would mock and would deride you know you're Christ really the head over all rulers and authorities but let's consider it they all pass they're all accountable they all perish no head man no big shot is the one who will survive no one no country no empire has ever survived whether it is the

Turkish the Roman or the British or whatever and all the human or spiritual dark forces behind them are ultimately under the power and control and headship of the Lord Jesus Christ nations that think they're all powerful you know we're in these days today aren't we maybe there's always been these days but it seems maybe with social media and publicity today we see it more than ever whether it's between China and the US and Russia they're all in this great race who's going to win the AI race who's going to be sovereign over the world who's going to be dictating and we as ordinary punters ordinary people of the world we're under that and it seems we're helpless yet we're reminded that Christ is the one to whom they're all accountable Christ is the one to whom we are all accountable he is the eternal king he is the one the only one who has defeated death a long long time ago Bob Dylan wrote a song in the 60s it's alright ma I'm only bleeding I don't mean to be disrespectful by saying it even the president of the United States sometimes must have to stand naked and it's that reality isn't it that the most powerful people in the world come into this world naked they leave this world naked with nothing we're all in that position Christ is the only exception to that who's taken the power of death and destroyed all its power and all its victory in his resurrection and in ascension we take nothing with us Christ alone is the one who has the head and rule and authority over your life and over mine and we see him as the one who is the head and also the great debt collector 14 and 15 remind us of that he is the one who has forgiven all our trespasses cancelling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands this he set aside magnificent phrase by nailing it to the cross he disarmed the rulers and authorities put them to open shame triumphing over them in him this great reality of his finished work is that he nailed our sins our trespasses to the cross you know what it is to trespass people keep telling me there's no trespass laws in Scotland maybe that's true but in many places if we trespass it's us going into land that we are not supposed to be in and that's what humanity has done from the beginning we have wandered into land that we shouldn't the land of death and the land of destruction and the land of self service and independence and rebellion against God and he's the one who takes our sins our trespasses and has forgiven them cancelling the record of our debt on the cross for all who will put their trust in him his verdict the same king of kings and lord of lords is the one who declares innocence on all who come to him by faith with all the legal demands of the cross of the law of God and he is the one who walks into that place of trespass in our place he's the one who takes the forsaken road so that we needn't be forsaken the greatest of all mysteries

Jesus Christ God the son nailed to the cross Martin Luther who spent I think went to spend many days to try and understand the cry of forsaken us on the cross and prayed and fasted over it and

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came out at the end of that time saying God forsaken of God who could understand it and yet that is the reality for us the commitment of his love ordinary people like nobody knows about us nobody cares if we live or die apart from a few close friends and neighbours and family we're gone and forgotten and yet Jesus Christ loved us so much that he went to the cross on our behalf and the irony of this great passage that he sees here great verse verse 15 is that on the cross he disarmed the rulers and authority put them to open shame by triumphing over them and that's exactly the irony that's exactly what they thought they were doing to Christ on the cross they thought they were disarming
Christ that they were putting him to open shame that they were triumphing over him in the cross and yet the absolute opposite was the case he did the opposite of what the spiritual forces of darkness thought they had done to him on the cross he crushed Satan's head disarmed and disgraced and defeated him and the power he has over you and me as we put our trust in Jesus Christ and it's as if Jesus says and again I mean to speak reverently here it's as Jesus says on the cross to Satan is this is this your best shot is this the best you can do he takes the darkest moment and he crushes Satan's head and he shines the light of his victory and his resurrection from the jaws of what is perceived defeat by the world and many people will look at it and say it's defeat it's a little bit like
[51:27] Haman's gallows isn't it in that great story from Esther where Haman thought he had built the gallows for Mordecai because he thought Mordecai would end up hanging on the gallows but I don't have time to go into it but of course he ends up being the one who gets hung in the gallows the very opposite of what was expected go and read that if you have time it's remarkable and Jesus is the one in him our death loses its sting our failure is covered our future is assured beyond anything we can imagine the sin that will that will defeat disarm and disgrace you is taken by Jesus Christ and will be crushed otherwise if we reject the king and his grace you live and you die outside of life and hope defeated and lost eternally there can't be a more solemn message there can't be anything more substantial and more significant than recognizing who Jesus

Christ is and entrusting your heart and life to him it can never be Christ plus my best efforts Christ plus me trying my best it is always his gift and it's a free gift and he offers it this evening and in him then we live a life in his strength to follow him but it can never be Christ plus so that we have some credit for our salvation and it's most ridiculous with this I finish it's like that I owe someone a million pounds and an incredible friend comes and says I'll pay it all for you I love you I want to pay for it I have the resources I want you to be free from debt and I say oh yes that's great I would love you to do that but look you only need to pay 999,999 pounds 99 and a half pence because I've got half pence and I can be part of that and that can be my contribution so it's not just you that saved me but I've got my own works and my own effort too isn't that a ridiculous idea that there's something we can do to add to what
Jesus has already won on the cross he simply asks us to accept it and to trust him and to live in his strength and to follow him and serve him in love as those whose hearts have been transformed the gift is his and it's good to be reminded of that and to consider that in our lives amen let's pray father god help us to know you and to understand you we have I'm sure in our hearts in my heart a million different ways that we relegate Christ that we make him small that we make ourselves big important adding to what you've done as if it's a requirement for us to add to the finished work of Jesus on the cross to add to the right the perfect righteousness that he promises to cover us in to keep some things some glory some importance some self independent addition to what Jesus has done forgive us when we do that in our lives when we relegate you to a place where we can live in our own strength when we are not dependent on grace when we are unrepentant for sins and where we forget our need of you every single moment when we're thankless or when we're graceless and when we are hurtful or embittered or abusive or whatever it might be that reflects sometimes a shrinking of the significance and the power and the importance and the love and the fullness of Christ may we live as believers in him and know the humility that comes from that and may
Christ tonight appear so beautifully attractive and powerful and victorious and compassionate and open armed like the prodigal father to us all this evening we ask and pray in Jesus name Amen it's hot in here we'll close our worship responding to God for his goodness and grace singing Psalm 72 from the traditional version of the Psalms and the last three verses of the Psalm Psalm 72 and we'll sing the last three verses his name forever shall endure last like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him all nations shall him call blessed be the

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Lord our God the God of Israel for he alone does wondrous works in glory that excel and blessed be his glorious name to all eternity the whole earth let his glory fill Amen so let it be to God's praise this name forever shall endure thus like the sun it shall men shall be blessed in him and blessed all nations shall him call now blessed be the Lord our
[58:03] God the God of of Israel of for he our Lord!

wondrous works in glory that excel blessed be his blessed be his his glorious name to all eternity the whole earth glad his glory filled amen so let it be I've been asked to give thanks also for time together later on in the food that's been provided so let's pray father god we thank you for your grace and goodness we thank you for your word we thank you for jesus christ we thank you for the hope of salvation which is everything and without which there is nothing and we give thanks for fellowship together and for friendship for old friendships renewed and new friendships made thank you for being one in christ for being indwelt by jesus christ and for remaining in him by his strength and power we thank you for the holy spirit thank you god the father we thank you now for being able to spend time together more informally we pray that you bless the food that's been provided the hands that are provided it may be a blessing to us and may it be nourishing for our bodies and we ask now that we would be people who grow in the grace and knowledge of our lord and savior jesus christ to him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity and all god's people say amen

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