

19.9.21 am Communion Service

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Date: 19 September 2021

Preacher: Reverend Thomas Davies

[0 : 0 0] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. It's good to see everyone here and good to know also there are some who are watching online at a distance. And it's good to have some visiting with us. It's good to have some who are not visitors but who've been away, moved away for a period and who are back. I see Nanny and various others and so it's good to come together once more and to worship God.

The evening service will be at 6 and again that will be a Thanksgiving service. Thomas will be with us once more and we pray God's blessing on the ministry as it has certainly been a blessing to us thus far. After the evening service we'll have an informal fellowship and Thomas will share something, a word of testimony or a personal word of encouragement with us in the evening Thanksgiving fellowship. One or two more things to say. The prayer meeting is on Wednesday and it's an in-person prayer meeting. We're back to in-person prayer meetings but also there's the capability to watch on Zoom for those who are not able to come into the church yet. So it's the same code, same set up, you just tune in but there'll be some folks in the church and there'll be some who are Zooming in. The kids clubs are back on again this Friday. Come in, come in. It's a good complaint to have when we're just looking around for spaces. Good to see you. So the children's clubs will be back on this coming

Friday, Jamming Connect and Rooted. You have the details there on the screen and be encouraged to come along to that, those of age. Be encouraged to pray for that, those who are like me, not of age anymore. On Friday 24th September, you can see the intimation there about the Stornaby Christian Bookshop. It's 70th anniversary and there's lots of discounts so we're encouraged to go and take a look there. So you can note that. The service is next Sunday. The morning service will be taken by Reverend John Lachie MacLeod from Northden who's a minister over in Glasgow.

And we'll be hearing more about the ministry of Children for Christ. A team of us were out there two years ago and so we'll hear more about how things are there presently. So that's John Lachie in the morning next Sunday. The evening service is the last service of the month and that will be a galaic service at 6pm. I'm hoping to be away from tomorrow through till Friday. So if there's any pastoral issues, please speak to one of the elders in the first instance and they'll be able to defer you on if necessary. And a couple of things to say as well just about the communion today. The first thing is that the live stream, it's good to have some people on live stream just now, but the live stream will go off just after the service during the hymn after the service and the communion part of the service will just be those in the church building. Communion is not something I think we can really do online.

So the live stream will go off at that point. You'll note today there isn't a separate table as we would usually have or traditionally have had. The reason for that quite simply is space. We still are wanting to make sure that there's some measure of space between us in this current climate and so it's impossible to have a separate table when we're trying to manage the space or present.

[4 : 19] So when it comes to the communion, the elements being served, if you are... Come in, come in. Good to have you. For those who are wanting to take a communion, to take the bread and the wine as the elders come forward to serve. It's not always easy to recognise people with masks, so perhaps you can just lower your mask as the elders approach and that will be an indication to them that you're looking to take the elements and to remember the death of Jesus until he comes. These, I think, are all the intimations. So once again, Thomas, it's great to have you and I'll hand over now to you to lead us in worship.

Thanks. Thanks very much indeed, David, and thanks to you all for your warm welcome. It's lovely to see you all here today and we're so thankful to God that we have this opportunity to worship together at the beginning of a new week meeting in the name of our risen saviour, Jesus Christ. Most of our service will be in English but our first singing is going to be in Gaelic. We're going to sing from Psalm 103.

Thank you.

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

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[6 : 30] Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[8 : 34] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. So I gave M sae an drawing with the letter of the Bible and the ■■■ump of the word Gospel.

And don't Euxch in the expressed statement. So I gave M sae an drawing with the homage to Gospel Gospel and Gospel.

[10 : 33] I got lost and transitioned to Newt Krist, hundreds of years coming out to work if things were not god thing.

Everyone was able to say something. Now everything here...

He does not have HephaestusEM with his heartache death apart from another!

He does not have Hephaestus bones and life races...

another place where there's a bigger gouvernement■■■ Punch, or whateverTh Shankar Ou.

[11 : 36] When the■anga with his furway movement keeps changing, and putting his distance fromii together while he hits his ring and finds his place and makes the same artistic ■wuizing in the world.

Los buried pegres de prosta edil durante mucho tiempoAS vaya de los luminos con malas des■■■als en balta Tasmanos por Hazón es demasiado I am cuad kann.

amen boys and girls it's very nice to see you all i hope you've all had a really good week and a good weekend so far um today i'm going to do a wee test with you all okay and you have to listen very carefully as you may know sometimes when people get a bit old they can get a bit deaf and they don't hear things so well but when you're young your hearing is very good i think you're very good at listening i'm sure you're very good at listening to your parents and very good at listening to your teachers i'm sure you've all got very good hearing okay well i'm gonna test your hearing today okay so i'm gonna say some words right one at a time and you have to listen very very carefully to tell me if you can hear what the word is okay so but to make it harder i'm gonna put my mask back on okay so you can't see my lips all you can do is hear and i'm going to say something very quietly and you have to listen really carefully okay so and if you know the word okay you put your hand up okay so listen carefully ready chocolate at the back did you hear me chocolate well done good start excellent okay well i'm gonna make it a bit harder see these microphones are making it too easy for you i'm gonna stand back a wee bit okay stand back a wee bit or maybe say it even quieter okay so listen listen listen you're so good did you hear me potatoes my goodness that's excellent right i'm gonna have to make it really hard i'm gonna turn this way listening listening okay right maybe did you hear me sausages well i think that deserves a round of applause that was excellent well i am most impressed with your hearing that is tremendous well done isn't that amazing that i stood away from the microphone and i even turned and faced the wall and i really did only just whisper that and yet you could hear me i think that's really really good hearing so all the boys and girls here have got very good hearing i think do you know who's got the best hearing of all god god exactly god has got the best hearing of all and that's what i want you to remember today that that you know if i was just whispering you could still hear me but do you know if there was loads of noise or if i was even further away they would reach the point where you wouldn't be able to hear me if i went through to the kitchen and i whispered sausages then you wouldn't hear me and if there was lots of other noise maybe if there was a big wind blowing outside or whatever then you wouldn't be able to hear me but do you know the amazing thing about god is that he always hears you and so when you pray to god doesn't matter how quiet your voice is it doesn't even matter if you're praying silently just in your heart and it doesn't matter if there's loads of noise all around you he always hears you and that's one of the many amazing things about god if you think about god god's got so many things to think about you've got all the planets turning in space you've got all the clouds and wind moving over the globe you've got the oceans back and forth you've got the

rainforests growing seeds sun all the different things that god's got to think about there's loads going on in the universe but do you know even though there's so much going on there's never a moment when god's not listening out for you and that's such a wonderful thing because it means you can talk to him anytime and it means that he'll always listen to you and i want you to remember that for every part of your life so maybe when you get up in the morning i want you to remember that you can pray to god and he'll hear you but it's not just in the morning all through the day if you're in school maybe you might be in a busy classroom you might be struggling with your work you might be thinking i'm finding this really hard you can pray to god and he'll hear you even if it's just silent you can say lord i really need you to help me with this he'll hear you and help you with your when you're with your friends when something goes wrong when something goes well you can always talk to god and he'll always listen to you and at the end of the day when you're going to bed sometimes that's when things worry us most of all you can talk to god and he'll listen and even in the middle of the night you talk to god and he'll always listen so never ever think that your voice isn't loud enough or your prayers aren't good enough or that you're not strong enough or anything like that not at all if you think you've got good hearing god's hearing is a million times better and so that means he'll always always hear you when you pray to him so that's what i want you to remember today we're going to let the boys and girls go out to their sunday school class just now and as they do so we'll turn to read god's word in romans romans chapter 8 and we're going to read from verse 18 romans 8 the words are on the screen but if you want to turn to the to the passage in your bible or on your phone please feel free to do so we're going to read um uh the middle chunk of the chapter and we've been looking at these uh verses in the middle of romans 8 we've uh started at verse 12 and we're working down uh to around verse 23 24 and 25 i want to read today from verse 18 down to verse 30 for i consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of god for the creation was subjected to futility not willingly but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of god but we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now and not only the creation but we ourselves who have the first fruits of the spirit grown inwardly as we eagerly wait eagerly for adoption as sons the redemption of our bodies for in this hope we were saved now hope that is seen is not hope for who hopes for what he sees but if we hope for what we do not see we wait for it with patience likewise the spirit helps in our weaknesses for we do not know what to pray for as we ought but the spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words and he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit because the spirit

intercedes for the saints according to the will of god and we know that for those who love god all things work together for good for those who are called according to his purpose for those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his son in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and those whom he predestined he also called those whom he called he also justified and those whom he justified he also glorified amen this is god's word and may he bless it to us all but before we turn back to this passage let's sing together we're going to sing the hymn immortal invisible mission praise number 327 and the words are on the screen let's sing together immortal invisible god only wise in light inaccessible the hymn of day from our eyes most blessed most glorious the ancient of days almighty victorious thy great name we praise unresting and hasting and silent as night nor wanting nor wasting thou rulest in might thy justice like mountains high soaring above thy clouds which are fountains of goodness and love to all life thou givest to both great and small in all life thou livest the true life of all we blossom and flourish as leaves on the tree and wither and perish but not changes thee great father of glory beautiful father of light thine angels adore thee all veiling their sight o lord we would render oh help us to see tis only the splendor of light hide at thee the mortal invisible god only wise in light inaccessible head from our eyes most blessed most glorious glorious the ancient of days almighty victorious thy great name we praise as we turn back to god's word let's just pray for a moment together father we just ask and pray for your help now

[24 : 56] as we turn to your word we pray that by your spirit you would be working among us and enabling us to see more and more of of you and of what you've done for us through your son our saviour jesus please may your blessing be upon us and upon all across the world who are meeting to study your word and to praise your name today in jesus name we ask it amen but i'd like us to turn back to romans chapter 8 the passage that we read and as i said we've been working through these verses in the middle of romans 8 over this weekend and we're going to carry on our wee mini series if you like today i kind of i've jumbled up the order a wee bit because tonight i want us to to go back to verse 18 but this morning i want us to to to pick up the reading at verse 19 and we can read verses 19 to 22 together because these are the words that i'd like us to focus on particularly in relation to the lord's supper for the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of god for creation was subjected to futility not willingly but because of him who subjected it in hope that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of god for we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now as we've been saying romans eight is one of the most remarkable chapters in the whole of the bible it is so full of rich teaching and we're only looking at a few verses i think we would need our communion weekend to last a month if we were going to go all the way through romans eight it's a it's such a rich and wonderful chapter and one of the things that makes it so wonderful is that it speaks about all the blessings that are ours in christ it starts off with a great statement that there's no condemnation for those who are in christ and it goes on to talk about all the implications of what union with christ has brought and as we saw last night and in many ways one of the real high points of that is the fact that that we are brought into god's family as his adopted children so there's so much in romans eight that's so personal and so meaningful to us as christians paul is giving us a wonderful reminder of the blessings that we have as individuals and as a collective people through faith in jesus christ and all of that is reminding us that jesus doesn't make a tiny difference to your life jesus makes a massive difference and that's true for now and it's true for eternity so in many ways paul is focusing a lot on what we have as christians and that's a brilliant thing for us to think about but then all of a sudden in verse 19 he kind of goes off at a wee tangent and he starts talking about creation and the fascinating thing is that in these verses that are on the screen verses 19 to 22 paul talks about the fact that the gospel is not simply good news for people it is good news for the whole universe and in these three remarkable verses paul gives us an insight into the implications of the cross for the created universe and i think that's a remarkable thing for us to think about often you know we we come to the lord's table and we are recognizing the amazing implications of the cross for ourselves and that's a wonderful thing for us to do the fact that through jesus's death and resurrection we can be saved and brought into god's family

and so you know for us we think well for me the cross is massive and it's made such a difference what paul is teaching us here and what i hope we're going to see is that for the whole universe the cross is massive and has made such a difference and one of the things we must always remember that when we come to the lord's table on the one hand we are looking back it's a great act of remembrance but at the same time we are looking forward looking forward to something amazing and i think that's where paul is pointing us in these verses so in the verses before you paul is talking about the universe and as he does so he personifies the universe in other words he writes as if the universe were able to communicate like a person so in other words what i think paul is basically saying is this he's saying if the universe could talk this is what it would say so what is paul saying what are the implications of the gospel for the universe well this is what i want us to think about and to help us do that we're going to structure our thoughts around two questions we're going to ask what has happened to the universe and we're going to ask what is going to happen to the universe so first of all what's happened to the universe in these verses paul is wanting us to think about the universe is story so you think about you know we talk about ourselves we'll talk about our own story paul just wants us to think here about the universe's story and you can see that if you look a little bit more closely at the verses because you can see in verse 19 he talks about what the universe is doing now there's a present waiting the creation waits verse 20 talks about the past you can see that in the word was the creation was subjected and then in verse 21 he talks about the future creation itself will be set free so in these verses our minds are being drawn towards the whole history of the universe past present and future so what is that story what's happened to the universe well the one of the things that's really interesting about the bible is that the story of the universe is actually the very first history that the bible gives to us if you go all the way back to the book of genesis you may know that the book of genesis can be split into ten unequal sections so the book of genesis is divided into ten chunks that all have varying lengths but they all begin with a statement that more or less says something like these are the generations of so you go through genesis you'll see that in 5-1 this is the book of the generations of adam 6-9 these are the generations of noah 37 these are the generations of jacob and there's others as well and you can spot them if you read through genesis in a one ad each of these is telling a particular story about an individual and their family but do you know what the first one is it's the story of the heavens and the earth and in chapters 2 3 and 4 of genesis we're told what that story is and that story has a beginning a middle and an end the beginning is wonderful genesis 2 gives this stunning description of the perfect world that god has created and that beauty is echoing the stunning descriptions we have in genesis 1 where god brings life and order into the created realm so the beginning is wonderful and the high point of that beginning is humanity man and woman together god's family being established and the people of god dwelling in god's creation to serve him glorify him and to bear god's

image the beginning is wonderful the middle is tragic in genesis 3 humanity who were created as the high point of this creation rebel against their creator and that fall of humanity where we sinned against god changed the history of the universe the result is that creation is now under a curse 317 because you've listened to the voice of your wife and have eaten of the tree of which i commanded you you shall not eat of it cursed as the ground because of you and very quickly the order and beauty of god's creation in genesis 1 and 2 descends into horrible chaos in genesis 4 you read of murder domination arrogance fear hostility the world that was created very good is now very broken and that shift from order to chaos is still visible around us we can still see that the universe is created as a thing of beauty driving from carloway to tarbert this morning was stunning there's something so majestic whether it's the mountains the flowers outside that you can see down to the beach and the shore the sunshine all these things still display the beauty that god has made but the world is also broken and and it can hurt us and people are toiling to survive and alongside that brokenness in creation is the fact that our relationship towards that creation has shifted from order towards chaos in the beginning in genesis 1 god gave humanity dominion over the created realm now that dominion was in terms of an exercise of responsibility the biblical concept of rule and dominion is never one where you're like just the boss and you can do what you like it's always one of responsibility whereby you are to look after that which is under your authority it's never an excuse to abuse the world that we've been given but that's exactly what we've done through our sin we've we've rejected god's command to care for the creation and instead we thought that our sense of authority over creation means that we can just exploit and abuse the world to further our own interests and we see that very much in our own day and particularly in environmental damage that that humanity has done and continues to do and it's such an interesting question you know why does humanity destroy the world why do we muck up the world that we live in because it seems so stupid to willfully wreck our habitat for short-term gain you know it's a bit like you know you live in your house you think you've got a really nice house you get it really nice and you know you think to yourself you know

I'm just going to you know I'm feeling a bit cold tonight so I think I'll just set my floor on fire you would never do that it would warm you up for a few hours but it would ruin your house and you think why does humanity do the same with the world around us and the biblical answer to that question is that sin has brought chaos into the world and within our sinful hearts there is a desire to rebel against the responsibility that God has given us to look after the world it's a great reminder that caring for the environment around us is always honoring to God whether that's a community cleanup or avoiding dropping litter or being careful about your electricity consumption these are all things that we do not just to kind of care for the environment but we actually do them to honor and obey God the key point though is that creation has descended from order to chaos the beautiful world around us is broken and creation is under a curse now Paul describes this in Romans 8 here and he uses three fascinating phrases to do so he says that the creation is subjected to futility he says it's in bondage to corruption and it's in the pains of childbirth now I think it's fascinating the choice of words and phrases that Paul uses just imagine that you were way back in school and you were in your your science class and they picked on you and they said you know can you just describe the universe in three sentences would you ever say well it's subject to futility and bondage to corruption in the pains of childbirth you'd never say that and yet that's what Paul chooses to say so what does he mean well first of all he says that creation is subjected to futility now that word futility is really interesting because it basically means vanity it's the word that was used and it was word to use the to translate the term in the Old

Testament that we get in Ecclesiastes vanity is vanity of vanities all is vanity and so it's conveying this idea of emptiness of nothingness of pointlessness in other words it's saying that the creation is has been broken and as a result it's no longer fit for purpose so the world that was originally created to be this wonderful habitat in which we could live as God's people bearing God's image has been ruined it's no longer fit for purpose it's no longer fulfilling the purpose that God created it to have as Paul says it's been subjected to futility and so the curse imposed after the fall has brought a sense of frustration and hindrance and emptiness into the great purpose that the universe originally had and our experience backs this up because how often is life frustrating how often do things happen in the world that seem to make no sense how often do we see people who just can't seem to find meaning in the world around us there's a futility in everything and that futility comes from the fact that we've rejected God and that's why who people who reject God and the people who really think that through and who take it to its logical conclusion the people who say well there's no God and they think through the implications of that all the way to its logical conclusion they always come to the same destination they always conclude that life is pointless because without God we're simply tiny specks on a tiny planet living for a tiny period who ultimately don't matter and that's why all around us there are people who instead of looking at the universe and thinking wow look at what God made for us instead people are looking at the universe and saying is there any meaning to life at all

[40 : 09] Paul is recognizing that that the curse of creation has meant that the world has lost a key aspect of its purpose and that loss of purpose manifests itself in the next thing that Paul says he says that it's in bondage to corruption that term corruption is basically implying that the world is rotting and the term bondage implies the fact that we can't escape from that as Paul says the creation was not willingly subjected to futility but the result is that the beautiful world that world that God made to thrive is now rotting and decaying and we see that in loads of different ways we see that in the environment we see that the thriving nature that God created is battling against decay and ruin so animals become extinct diseases continue to spread irreparable damage is done to the environment but it's not just the environment this affects it also affects behavior so you look at the animal world you can see that it's hostile sometimes it's just brutal and even humanity we can only hang our heads in shame in terms of how we've behaved towards one another across the ages of history and this is one of the times where the biblical doctrine is so easy to prove because if if you look at the news today or this week and ask yourself the question is the world rotten the answer is obvious and that corruption that rotting is dominant over nature at this present time the creation is enslaved to this it's like an illness that the creation can't recover from and that results in a lot of pain sorrow and suffering in our lives as well and so the result of all this is that creation right now is not the way it was made to be and it is not the way it wants to be and that's brought home to us in the third phrase that Paul uses in verse 22 because he says that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now that here Paul Paul's choice of words is superb because he uses a remarkable and vivid image of childbirth to describe the situation that the world is in right now and that's teaching us two very important things because firstly childbirth is sore and so it's reminding us that the current state of creation is not one of peace or harmony it is one of agony likened to a woman in labor but the second thing that Paul reveals in this image is that childbirth is the precursor to something wonderful so although the pain of labor is immense it leads to the incredible joy when a precious baby is born and so whilst this image is conveying the present agony and distress of the universe it's also expressing the fact that something brilliant is coming and that brings us to our second question what will happen to the universe what's going to happen remember we said the universe has a beginning the world was created by God to be the habitat where we could live as God's family serving him bearing his image the story of creation has a middle where where the fall of humanity has brought a curse where the world is broken and corrupt and no longer fulfilling the purpose that it was meant to have but the story of the universe also has an end we've got a beginning where it was broken a middle a beginning where it was made made good wonderful a middle which was

tragic but the universe the story of the universe also has an end and interestingly even back in Genesis there's hints of this because in Genesis 3 God responds to the fall and he does so by promising that the serpent whose actions led to the fall will be crushed and then when Adam names his wife Eve he is recognizing that God has brought the promise of hope into humanity's experience because she's not going to be the mother of the dead she's going to be the mother of the living and Paul reinforces this point when he says that that when creation was subjected to futility as part of God's judgment in the aftermath of the fall that subjection was in hope that the creation itself would be set free so that means that even within the brokenness of the universe now there is an end in view there's a hope of something better and the Bible tells us that that God's great plan is to recreate the universe so that the world that we live in now will be restored and renewed to what it was meant to be remember back at the very beginning of the

Bible Genesis tells us the story of the generations of the heavens and the earth and then you go to the very end of the Bible what do you find you find the glorious vision of a new heavens and a new earth in Revelation 21 and and and it's all there to tell us that if we are trusting in Jesus we can look forward to all the beauty and wonder and joy of the new creation but what I want us to notice is that in the midst of all this Paul tells us something remarkable about what the creation is hoping for so we're thinking about this journey we think about creation created wonderful at the beginning in the middle tragic broken damaged and in the future it's going to be renewed and restored a wonderful new creation and so you think to yourself you know well the the creation is longing for that moment longing you know for Jesus' return when everything will be put right well yes and no because there's something very particular that the universe is hoping for that these verses reveal we've act we would naturally think that the creation is longing for the return of the world creation is longing for the restoration of Jesus creation is longing for the restorative work of God creation is longing for all that God is going to do in terms of putting it right and no doubt that's true but it's not what Paul says so what does he say what is creation hoping for he says that creation is eagerly longing for the revealing of the sons of God.

And creation is hoping for the freedom of the glory of the children of God. In other words, in terms of what creation is looking forward to, the focus is not directly on God.

The focus is on you as a Christian. Why is that? Why does Paul make such a direct link between the restoration of creation and the family of God?

[48 : 04] Why is there such a clear link between the universe and you in these verses? Why does the universe long for the day when your salvation is fully completed at the return of Jesus?

Why is that? Well, I think the answer is as follows. We've been saying that creation has lost its sense of purpose.

It's subject to futility. In other words, right now, the universe is not what it's meant to be. So we have to ask, what was the universe meant to be? What was its purpose? What do you think the universe was created for?

And the answer to that question is that the universe was made to be your home. Your home.

The universe was created to be a wonderful environment where humanity could live as the family of God.

[49 : 11] Therefore, the reason why creation is longing for the future is because creation is longing to be a perfect home for you. The whole purpose of creation is to be a perfect environment for you to live in as God's people.

And that's why the creation longs for the full salvation of God's people. It longs for the resurrection on the last day when our bodies are reunited with our souls, when we are eternally free from the decay of sin and from the effect of the curse.

And on that day, creation will finally be able to fulfill its purpose to be a perfect home for God's family. No wonder the creation is longing for the revealing of the sons of God because that will be the day when the curse is gone and when perfect order will return.

And that makes perfect sense because all it's doing is simply taking the universe back to what it was meant to be in the first place. In other words, the universe longs for your full salvation because the universe was made for you.

It was made to be a home for you. And it longs for the day when that purpose will finally be fulfilled. And I think that is amazing.

[50 : 29] The universe is longing for you because you are its purpose. This whole creation was created for you.

And surely that tells you how special you are in the sight of God. If you go back to Genesis 1 and 2, one thing is abundantly clear.

Humanity is special. Humanity is different. It's not just another part of creation. Humanity is the occupant of that creation.

God made this universe so that we could live in it as his family. So that we could know him and serve him and love him. There's a sense in which the universe is an extraordinary gift from God to us.

It was made for us as a place where we can live. And the reason that I want to say all of this is because there's a crucial implication that every single one of us needs to recognize that comes from all of this.

[51 : 41] What we need to see and what I want us to see is that all of this is reminding us of the fact that a worldview, an understanding of the world around us that doesn't have God in it, so in other words, a non-biblical worldview will always devalue humanity.

A non-biblical worldview will devalue humanity. Now what do I mean by that? Well, think about it like this. Some people reject God. Maybe people you know, people in your family, and they just conclude, you know, there's no God, there's ultimately no meaning, and therefore everything at a most basic level is pretty much pointless.

Humanity is just another cog in this massive machine that originates in some thing that will eventually collapse into some sort of nothing. Ultimately, we're nothing more than just a thing.

Everything's basically pointless. Now, a lot of people hold that view, but if you think about it too much, it leads to horrible depression, and you can see that very clearly in the history of the last 100 years. You look at some of the most gifted artists and musicians and things like that who held this view and who thought it through to its logical conclusion, and they ended up producing artwork that was really quite hideous and depressing.

Most people don't tend to think about it that much. They prefer to just try and forget about it, and so they seek to create an illusion of meaning in their life, and they seek to find some kind of meaning in the universe, and what people will often do in that is that they'll end up treating the universe as a kind of God in itself.

[53 : 20] So some people will talk about sort of nature or fate or force or something like that that has some kind of authority over us that we want to live in harmony with.

Others might not go as far as to call the universe like a God or anything like that, but they still regard nature as something that should be served. So today there's many people who are very sincere and very well-meaning who are passionate about caring for the environment or looking after animals or trying to do good to the world around us, and that's a good thing in so many ways.

But what I want us to see is that all of these approaches are devaluing humanity. The view that looks at the universe and says that life is pointless is saying that a human being is worth no more than a stone or a rat or a germ.

The view that makes a God out of the universe devalues humanity because it's saying that it's more important than us. Ultimately, the universe is more significant than humanity.

And the view that wants to care for the environment, for the sake of the environment, also devalues humanity because it makes us the servants of the universe. The Bible says something very different.

[54 : 35] The best that the world offers us is to say that we can find purpose looking after the universe. The Bible says that the universe finds purpose looking after you.

The Bible tells us that we are not pointless objects in a pointless universe. We're not subordinate creatures under the rule of the universe. We're not servants who need to try and find purpose in the universe.

The Bible tells us that you're far, far more special than any of that. You are created to be the child of God. And the universe was created to be the place where you could all live.

And yes, sin has ruined that. But Jesus came to fix it. And so when Jesus died on the cross and rose again, he didn't just deal with my problem.

He dealt with the universe's problem. He didn't just do it to restore us. He did it to restore the whole creation.

[55 : 51] And now we are looking forward to that day when he returns and he brings us all into a new heavens and a new earth and creation itself is longing, groaning for that day when it can finally be the perfect home for God's perfect family.

And I think this is absolutely amazing because it means that you can stand today and think about the cross and it shows you how special you are.

But you can also go and climb a hill and look out over the beautiful views all around us and it tells you how special you are. You can stand and look at the stars in the sky tonight and see the vast universe that God has made and it's all for you, for us, where we can live together as God's family.

and that's where we see that it is in the message of the gospel, in the work of Jesus Christ, it's in him that the whole universe fits together.

The whole of creation is centred on God's plan to make a perfect place for his family to live together where he himself can dwell with us. That's why hell is described as outside because it's outside of all of that but the new creation will be a perfectly restored universe that's everything that God wants it to be for us and where we will be everything that God wants us to be for him.

[57 : 38] And God wants every single one of you to be part of that. And this is where we see just how absolutely amazing the gospel is.

You think of the huge story from beginning to end, the story of the heavens and the earth in the beginning of creation all the way through to the new heavens and the new earth in Revelation. You think of the whole of the universe, you think of the whole of God's plan of salvation, you think of how it's all centred on Jesus Christ, you think about how the fact that Jesus came, died and rose again to pay the penalty for our sins, to deliver the whole of creation from bondage, to set the universe on a path towards restoration, to give us all hope.

You think of everything that Jesus has done and all he asks you to do in return is trust him. That is incredible.

All he asks you to do is trust him and if we trust him, whether you've been trusting him for many years or whether you start right now, you will be adopted into God's family, you become the heir to a glorious future and creation itself, the universe itself, is longing for that day when we'll all be brought home.

Amen. Let's pray. God, our Father, we thank you so much for everything that you've done for us through your son, our Lord Jesus.

[59 : 23] And we realize that even in these few verses, we recognize that we're only just getting a glimpse of the magnitude of what you've achieved for us. And we pray, oh God, that our minds would be expanded.

And that it would never be the case that we just keep our faith in you to just confine to part of our lives, but that no matter what part of the universe we are looking at and thinking about, that we would recognize that it's all your work and all part of your plan.

And we thank you for the incredible place that you give to us in that plan. And we pray for people who think that they're a waste of space or who think that their life is pointless or who can't make sense of the world.

We pray that the truth and reality of the gospel would help them to see just how precious they are.

May that be true of us all, we pray in Jesus' name. Amen. We're going to sing together now before we share the Lord's Supper together.

[60 : 40] We're going to sing a psalm, Psalm 118. And I think during the psalm the children will come back through. We're going to sing from the sing psalms version of Psalm 118 at verse 15.

Triumphant shouts of joy resound in places where the righteous dwell. The Lord's right hand is lifted high. His mighty hand does all things well. let's stand and sing verses 15 to 24.

Triumphant shouts of joy resound in places where the righteous dwell.

The Lord's right hand is lifted high. His mighty hand does all things well.

I shall not die but I shall live. The Lord's great works I will proclaim.

[61 : 49] The Lord severely chastened me. But rest to me from death's domain.

Throw wide the gates of righteousness I'll enter and give thanks to God.

This is the gate of God through which the righteous come before the Lord.

You answered me I will give thanks salvation comes from you alone.

The stone the builders had refused has now become the corner stone.

[62 : 52] the Lord himself has done all this. It is a marvel in our sight.

This is the day the Lord has made. In it let us take three delight.

light. name part of a glory in yours time on very first on its sou ustedes and good whatever you have learned about say a degree