

13.3.22 am Communion Sunday Service

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Date: 13 March 2022

Preacher: Reverend John Lachie Macleod

[0 : 00] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. Those who are here, those who are online as well, it's good for us to be able to come together and to worship God.

Just to say in terms of the online, the cameras will be on for as long as until after the sermon and then in the praise after the sermon, before we come to the Lord's table, the cameras will go off. Communion is something that we do physically, it's not really something that we can do virtually. So apologies to those who are online, but that's all we're able to do at the moment.

So a warm welcome to the service everyone. It's good to see some visitors with us. I know some have travelled a long distance to be here. Kenji's dad from America is here and perhaps there are one or two others visiting.

So you're very welcome and when we come to celebrate the Lord's Supper, just to reassure everybody, everyone is welcome. This is the Lord's table. If you're trusting the Lord and a member of a congregation anywhere, then you're very welcome to join with us at this table.

[1 : 09] Evening service will be at six and that will be conducted again by John. John and after that there'll be a time of informal fellowship where John may...

I don't know if you've given your testimony here, have you? Probably. I don't think you have. So he'll probably share some words of testimony and I think he's going to speak also about Russia. John has some contacts with ministers in Russia that he's been speaking to recently.

So he's going to speak about the situation over there. The hospitality group, I think is the name, hospitality group one.

Please could you meet at the church at half past five just in advance of the fellowship. Retiring offering after the service in the morning and in the evening today in aid of Blytheskowitz Ukraine emergency appeal to help refugees fleeing to neighbouring countries.

So please take note of that. And in the course of the week, various things happening as we would normally expect. We have a quick session, a brief quick session tomorrow night at half past six.

[2 : 15] I expect it'll be over within half an hour. Just a few things to deal with. And then in the course of the week as usual, ladies fellowship, Little Fishes on Tuesday, Road to Recovery on Tuesday, prayer meeting on Wednesday here in the church and also still the link on Zoom.

And on Friday, the children's clubs jammed, connected and rooted on at the usual time. Services next Sunday, God willing, will be taken by myself at the usual time.

And a local islands prayer meeting for the work of Slavic Gospel Association is held on the first Saturday of each month at 8.30pm via Zoom. Further information available on the table in the foyer. One more thing as well. We're required annually by charity legislation to have a congregational meeting, the AGM, as we knew it.

So just to give notice of that, Thursday 24th, half past seven, the AGM. So that's Thursday 24th, half past seven, the congregational meeting, where we just deal with the items that we're required to in terms of charity law.

[3 : 27] So these, I think, are all the intimations. Once more, John, we're delighted to have you. And we look forward to what the Lord has to say through you. And perhaps one more thing, just to welcome for the first time, Alisanne, who came forward.

Maybe not everybody heard, but Alisanne came forward on Friday night to profess her faith in Jesus for the first time. So she'll sit for the first time at the table today.

So we are delighted to have you, Alisanne. And we pray God's blessing on you as you sit here for the first time. So these, I think, are all the intimations. So over to you now, John.

Thank you, David. It has been a pleasure to be here over these past couple of days and look forward to today. One of the things about coming home is that you realise you are getting old.

Because I remember Alisanne as a child coming to church on the Sunday evening of Communion in Talbot. And it's so wonderful to be here to see her profess faith.

[4 : 32] And it's so good to be with you all over these days. I was asked specifically by different people to pass on greetings to the congregation. First of all, from my own congregation in Mulgai to be remembered to you as they will be praying for this weekend together as well.

But I was also asked by the group in Romania, by the Copipentro Cristos group in Arad and Varferili. They're really missing fellowship with the Harris team.

They were hoping, and I'm sure we were all hoping, that we would have been able to do more by now. And certainly the situation in proximity to Romania is not looking good at the moment. But they appreciated so much the fellowship and the hard work that the work team from Harris accomplished at the camp.

And they wanted to be remembered to you this morning. And also very personal greetings from Reverend Gordon Thompson of the Faith Mission. He said he was jealous of me that I was getting to come here.

And in his own words, and it's not just the baking. So he has really appreciated the opportunities he's had to minister in this congregation and in Harris with the Faith Mission.

[5 : 42] And he wanted you to know today that he remembers you all with fondness. We're here to worship God together. We're going to hear his word.

We're going to gather at his table. And in all these things, we want to give him the glory. As Isaiah said, Lord, you are my God. I will exalt you and praise your name.

For in perfect faithfulness, you have done wonderful things. Things planned long ago. Let's lift our hearts and voices to God as we sing together.

Before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea. Before the throne of God above, I have a strong, a perfect plea.

A great high priest whose name is love, whoever lives and pleads for me. My name is graven on his hands.

[7 : 00] My name is written on his heart. I know that while in heaven he stands, no tongue can bid me then depart.

No tongue can bid me then depart. Satan tempts me to despair and tells me of the guilt within.

Upward I look and see him there who made an end to all my sin. Because the sinless Savior died.

My sinful soul is counted free. Our God the just is satisfied. To look on him and pardon me.

To look on him and pardon me. The great unchangeable I am.

[8 : 11] The King of glory and of grace. On with himself I cannot die. My soul is purchased with his blood.

My life is hid with Christ on high. With Christ my Savior and my God. With Christ my Savior and my God.

Amen. If we draw near to God, let's pray. You are my God. I will exalt you and praise your name.

For in perfect faithfulness you have done wonderful things. Things planned long ago. Father in heaven, as we bow in your almighty holy presence this morning.

We do want to come in that same vein of thankfulness. In that same attitude of gratitude that we recognize. Permeate so many of the wonderful scriptures we recognize today as the word of God.

[9 : 17] We thank you Lord that throughout the ages. There have been people who have seen your hand at work. Have recognized the glory of your sovereign power. And have acknowledged their thankfulness.

For the realization that this world is under your sovereign reign. And the things of this world are accomplishing the great things you have purposed. So that even in the darkness that prevails.

You are working to a day where there will be endless light. And we thank you our great God and Savior. That there is a perfection and a faithfulness in everything that you do.

We thank you today as we come to remember the death of Christ for sinners. That there is a perfection in the sacrifice that he made. That indeed his sacrifice is the complete and perfect sacrifice.

He has done all that is necessary for our souls to be reconciled to God. We think oh Lord of the volume of the imperfect sacrifices of bulls and of lambs that were slain on the Jewish altars for generation after generation.

[10 : 24] And even the very best that could be found from the created order would never be good enough to meet the glory of the holiness of the God who made us. And so we thank you that in your great humility and the perfection of your planning.

Your son came into this world. Your son came with purpose. Your son came with intent. Intent on revealing grace to us. Intent on revealing salvation and in showing us mercy.

God sent his son. They called him Jesus. He came to love, heal and forgive. He lived and died to buy my pardon. Father, we thank you today that there is an empty grave.

That the death of Jesus did not follow the natural proceedings of every human being where death would follow decay. But no, in his case, death was followed by victory.

Death was followed by resurrection. And so we thank you today that whilst we are looking to memorials of an act that was in the past, they are given to us to bring us into the living present reality of the power of a living saviour and of a living God.

[11 : 32] And so, Lord, this is our prayer today. That we would praise you and thank you for the perfection of your plans in history. And the perfection of your plans for each and every one of us.

We marvel at what the psalmist says in his record of the wonder of life. All the days of my life were written for me in your book before one of them came to be.

And so we thank you that in the plan you had for each one of us, this day was written. This day was thought of. This day was prepared in your providence. And so, God, we want to grasp the wonder of it and make the most of it.

To rejoice and be glad in the day that you have given us. In the day of your mercy. The day of your favour. And so we recognise for many it is a day where we come with thankfulness for what we have known.

Some for a short time, some for a long time. The wonder of the salvation that is in the cross. But we would pray that this would even be the day when a soul would discover.

[12 : 34] Discover anew and come afresh to know the forgiveness that is found through repentance when we come to Jesus. Thank you, our God, that we do share in this fellowship and share in the message of the gospel.

And that we will share in communion. We recognise that it brings us to Christ. And in bringing us to Christ reminds us that we share life in Christ with one another.

And so we pray for the fellowship of your people in this congregation. As we thank you for them.

And thank you for your leadership and guidance over them. In the past years we pray for David and for his elders.

And for those who serve in the deaconship. We pray, O God, that you would continue to maintain unity within the body of Christ in this place. And encourage them in the building up of one another. That all may come to the fullness of the knowledge of God. We pray for their continued ministry, for guidance and for grace, for understanding and wisdom.

[13 : 35] In the days that we live in, Lord, we're conscious of difficulties and oppositions. But we know that you are the Lord who has built your church and continues to build it in the face of the greatest hostilities.

And so today, as we remember the fellowship that comes to the table, we recognize that it extends beyond these walls to brothers and sisters in this island, in this nation, and indeed throughout the world, who live today by the simple hope that Christ is our plea before the throne of God above.

And so we pray for our brothers and sisters in Ukraine and in Russia and in Poland and in Romania, Slovakia and Moldova, so many nations being reminded again of the atrocity that dwells in the heart of humanity.

And so, God, in the midst of that, draw them ever closer to the mercy that dwells in the heart of God. So be with us, we ask for Jesus' sake. Amen.

Amen. Well, boys and girls, it's good to see you all over here. And I'm glad that you're with us this morning. I don't know, but it's probably best to keep a distance in case anyone coughs over me and I cough over you.

[14 : 50] But I want to just share a little story with you about my own family life that I often think of when we come to communion, because today's a special day for the church, because we're doing something that Jesus told us to do.

And it's amazing to think, all these thousands of years ago, he was in a room with his friends, and he told them to do this, to take bread and to take wine. And all these years later, all over the world,

in all kinds of different ways, Christians still do this.

And what I often remember at this time was something that happened when my own children were small. That's how long ago, there's an ancient story. And we had friends come to visit us, and they brought a carton of juice for us.

And every time our kids wanted this juice, they really liked it, and we had to keep on buying it, even after the first carton had run out. They loved it so much, it's so old that the company doesn't sell it anymore.

But our children would never ask for it by the name of the juice or by the flavour of the juice. They would always say, can we get Scott and Antonia's juice? Scott and Antonia were the name of the friends that brought it.

[15:59] It was the first time they had ever tasted it, and they loved it. So forever, they were only wee, but whenever they wanted it, it was always, can we get Scott and Antonia's juice? If mum was going to the shop, mum, buy Scott and Antonia's juice.

And I don't know whether the words were too hard to say, or they couldn't remember the flavour, but that's how they always remembered. And the funny thing was, it meant that whenever I went to get their juice, I would always think of my friends.

And sometimes I think, you know, I remember they're going through something, I better pray for them. Or sometimes I would think, oh, I haven't spoken to them for a while, a better phone. And in that simple thing, they were always brought to my memory.

And you know, when Jesus took the bread, it was in a meal that he was sharing with his friends. All God's people at that time were sharing a similar kind of meal. And the bread was on the table. Loads of people would have had the bread. But Jesus just took that piece of bread, and he broke it and said, do this in remembrance of me. And I'm sure his disciples weren't even sure of what he meant at the time.

[17:02] And then later on, there was a cup, and it was a special cup that was meant to be taken with thanksgiving to God. Because they were remembering the fact that God had rescued them. And thousands of years before, God had rescued them from each.

God had delivered them from death, and God had made them these people. And as they were celebrating, he took the cup and said, whenever you take this cup, the cup of thankfulness for God's saving love, do it in remembrance of me.

So I know you're going to go out to Sunday school, but you'll come back in later on, and you'll see people taking the bread and taking the cup. And just remember this, that Jesus, in these moments, wants us to be thinking of him.

Just like that old carton of juice used to make me think of my friends. He knows how easy we forget things. And we do forget things very easily.

Somebody once said to me, or I heard them say, God gives and forgives. We get and forget. And I certainly feel it. I forget. Forget people. Forget where things are.

[18:04] Forget my glasses. My wife. It takes me half an hour to leave the house most times, looking for everything. And so we need things to help us remember. And Jesus gave us this very special supplication.

So that we would always remember him. That we'd always think about what he did for us. We'd always remember how much he loved us. That we'd always think about how much he wants to know us.

And to share life with us. And so when you come back together, you'll see us around the table. And I hope and pray that as you see it, that even as you see it, you'll be able to think and remember.

This is amazing how much Jesus loves us and wants to be with us. That he would come and give his body and shed his blood. So that we could come to God and be forgiven.

Let me pray with you and then we'll sing together again. Father, we confess that sometimes it's so easy to forget you.

[19:05] Sometimes when things are hard in life. Sometimes when people are horrible to us. Sometimes when we get bored or distracted. It's so easy to forget that you're a good God.

And it's so easy to forget that you're a God who is near to us. And we're sorry God that so often we forget that you want to be with us and in our lives and everything. And so we thank you that even before Jesus went to die for us, he gave something to his friends so that they would always remember what he was willing to do.

So that we would know the love of God. And so Lord, we do pray that in the service here today and in Sunday school, that you would just speak to us in certain ways that would help us for the rest of the days this week.

To remember that you love us and that you're with us. And that you're willing to forgive us. So God, as we want to remember you, please remember us today. In Jesus' name.

Amen. Well, let's sing together. I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me, a sinner condemned unclean.

[20 : 15] I stand amazed in the presence of Jesus the Nazarene and wonder how he could love me, a sinner condemned unclean.

How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be. How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

For me it was in the garden, he bowed to the will of thine. He had the tears of my own grief, had sweat drops of blood for mine.

How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be. How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

When the angels beheld him and came from the world of life. To comfort him in the sorrows he bore for my soul at night.

[21 : 58] How marvelous, how marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be. How marvelous, how wonderful is my Savior's love for me.

He took my sins and my sorrows, he made them his very own. He bore the burden to Calvary and suffered and died alone.

How marvelous, how marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be. How marvelous, how marvelous, how wonderful, and my Savior's love for me.

When the ransomed in glory his face I at last shall see. It will be my joy through the ages to sing of his love for me.

How marvelous, how wonderful, and my song shall ever be. How marvelous, how wonderful, is my Savior's love for me.

[23 : 26] How marvelous, how marvelous, how marvelous, and my son shall ever be.

In 1 Peter chapter 2, reading at verse 11, we'll read to the end of the chapter. 1 Peter 2 verse 11. Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires which wage war against your soul.

Live such good lives among the pagans that though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us.

Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every human authority, whether to the emperor as the supreme authority or to the governors who are sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to commend those who do right.

[24 : 58] For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. Live as free people. Live as free people. But do not use your freedom as a cover-up for evil.

Live as God's slaves. Show proper respect to everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

Slaves, in reverent fear of God, submit yourselves to your master. Not only to those who are good and considerate, but also to those who are harsh.

For it is commendable if someone bears up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God. But how is it to your credit if you receive a beating for doing wrong and endure it, but if you suffer for doing good and you endure it?

This is commendable before God. To this you are called because Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example that you should follow in his steps.

[26 : 07] He committed no sin and no deceit was found in his mouth. When they hurled their insults at him, he did not retaliate.

When he suffered, he made no threats. Instead, he entrusted himself to him who judges justly. He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed, for you were like sheep going astray, but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

Amen. And may God bless that reading from his word. Just before we come to look at some of these verses, let's sing together in Gaelic from Psalm 51, three stanzas from verse 7.

[27 : 12] Psalm 51, verse 7. Lehisab jensah mishaklan is bihim glan kupyak. Lehisab jensah mishaklan, Lehisab jensah mishaklan, Lehisab jensah mishaklan is bihim glan kupyak.

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

[30 : 45] Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. himself bore our sins in his body on the cross so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed for you were like sheep going astray but now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

It's remarkable when we see the way in which Peter is drawn in this letter to focus so powerfully on the sacrifice of Christ for his people because if we look at the context in which he shares again these ancient truths concerning God's promise to redeem and forgive his people we recognize that Peter was in the midst of a section in his letter where he was trying to encourage people with regards to godly living in a very ungodly world. He was encouraging the church how to behave in a society that was against their message and against their gospel. He was encouraging Christians when they lived in the realms of Roman authority that was so deeply opposed to their existence and indeed was involved in persecuting and torturing those who believed in Christ but his exhortation was not retaliation. His exhortation was not for them to become more militant and ready themselves for war against them. His attitude was that in terms of winning the argument in society that the argument was going to be won not by clever rhetoric but by powerful action. Something many of our Twitter users and Facebook followers would do well to learn. By doing good he says but by living the life you will demonstrate the glory of God and the power of Christ and he applies these principles into the issue of the issue of the bond slave, the slave who was working for all kinds of people in different circumstances. People say that the issue of slavery is irrelevant to society today. I think if you spoke to some people on zero-hours contracts they would disagree with that principle and in fact if we cut through some of the cultural differences that Peter is addressing we recognize that so many principles are the same. How do you live faithfully in a world where the government is so obviously ungodly?

How do you live faithfully in a workplace where it's so difficult to be faithful to God and truthful and all the rest and challenged to be a profitable work? How do you manage people? How do we lead people?

[33 : 55] How do we honour those we work for and how do we give them the best of our lives?

How do we work in the home where we have some of our greatest conflicts and challenges in our domestic lives? How do we work these things out in such a way that they are the benefit to us that God wants them to be and that they're the blessing to others that they should be and they ultimately bring glory to him? Well he says we work these things out through the power of the cross, through the power of what we understand of Jesus doing as he goes to the cross. This is where we see the relevance of the sacrifice of Christ for all of life because it's not just a distant spiritual and religious transaction that we benefit from occasionally. No it's a transaction in the spiritual realms that has implication for us in every area of life and it has a power to give to us for every issue in life. Peter was addressing difficulties at work, problems at home and as he does these things he reminds them if you really want to find help in your situation remember Jesus, remember me, remember Christ. People who are he says bearing up under the pain of unjust suffering because they are conscious of God, they're conscious of who God is, they are conscious of what God has done and they are called to understand the nature of Christ's think as he goes to the cross to redeem mankind for the glory of God. Paul would have a similar philosophy, remember he would say to the church, let the mind which was in Christ be also found in you. And so as Peter is addressing people and trying to help them to live with all that's hard to live amongst and live against, he draws us to remember the person of Jesus. To this you were called because Christ suffered for you. There's three things I want to highlight today with regards to the work of Christ on the cross and as we prepare to remember him together as he directed us. And the first thing is simply that the cross is profoundly personal. It is not a distant transaction as I said, as if somehow we have to delve into the

realms of history just to know something about it. We go into history and we're thankful that it is an historic event that we can relate to and that we know about. But its relevance is applicable to this very moment because of the personal nature of what takes place on the cross. When Jesus goes to the cross it is a profoundly personal experience for him and for us because he goes personally for us. He goes with us in mind.

And our testimony to that fact, we sang some of the ways in which these truths are reflected in him. It was for me in the garden, he knelt to the will divine. And our assurance for believing such things are true, I found in John 17. As Jesus prays and his prayer is recorded before he goes to the garden of Gethsemane, before he goes to Calvary, we find Jesus praying for his situation, praying for what he's going to go through himself, praying for the group of disciples who were with him and who would take up the leadership of the message of the cross to the world and praying then for every single person who would come to believe in Jesus because of the message that would go out from Jerusalem that Jesus Christ died and rose again. My prayer, he says, is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message. And so then as Peter writes to this church, a church made up of different people from different parts of the world but united in Christ, he reminds them of how profoundly personal their salvation is. Christ suffered for you. He himself suffered in his body. He himself bore our sins in his body. He suffered injustice for you. You think that life is unfair? Well, it often is.

It really is cruelly unfair at times. But you know what? Nobody understands that more than Jesus. It was personal when the Son of God came into the world to redeem and to ransom. Personal in his relationship and love with the Father because his intention and objective is to glorify God through his obedience and through his faithfulness and through his faithfulness to God in all things and personal in his love for us.

That he entrusted this transaction to nobody but himself. You know that old saying, it's not often used helpfully, but if you want something done properly, do it yourself.

Well, God wanted salvation done perfectly. So he accomplishes himself. He comes in the glorious incarnation of Jesus Christ in the body, the body of the baby, the body from the embryo, the body that grew and that was nurtured and loved, the body that became the man that goes to Calvary to bleed and die for us.

[39 : 56] He himself bore our sins in his body. He was, of course, quoting from Isaiah, quoting from the promises of God that such a person would come for the people of God. When you take this bread, do it in remembrance of me. This cup is the new covenant in my blood.

There is such a wonderful, powerful intimacy and personalness to the faith that is offered to us this morning in Jesus Christ. In all that Jesus does, we see his personal relationship with humanity. We see his personal relationship with God. He entrusted himself to him who judges justly. Just that as he lives out the experience of going to the cross, Jesus suffers many of the pains and trials that human beings suffer and especially that people who follow him suffer, where they are accused of things, where they are persecuted for things, where lies are told about. Here was the one, and Peter highlights for us the irony of it. He committed no sin, and there was no deceit found in his mouth.

And yet when insults were hurled at him, he did not retaliate. We know that in our own human nature, how difficult it is not to retaliate. When someone says something insulting or someone has a go at our personality or say something that's very personal to our sensitivities, it's almost instinctive to lambast back at them. But he says, this is the wonder of Christ and his commitment to who he was as the sinless, perfect offering for God, that even when there was provocation and everyone would have been understanding, no, he didn't retaliate. And when he suffered at the hands of people whom he could command their death in that moment, the God who holds out every breath watched as these people used the very breath God has given them to speak insult and accusation against the perfect son of God. And yet even in these moments, as he suffers, he doesn't say, I'm going to get you. No, if anything, he does the opposite.

Forgive them, God, for they know not what they do. They hurled their insults at him. He didn't retaliate. He suffered. He made no threats instead.

[42 : 34] It wasn't that he was just a complete walkover with no backbone against all this hostility. No, instead he entrusts himself to God who judges justly. He demonstrates to us the power of faith and of trust, leaving it in the hands of his heavenly Father who judges justly, who will get things right, who will never misinterpret someone's actions because he knows every person's motives.

He will never get somebody wrong or misunderstand the tone in which something was said or done because he understands perfectly every word that comes from our mouth before we speak. Jesus shows the power of his personal relationship with humanity and he's willing to suffer for us. And he shows the power of his personal relationship with God as he goes to the cross, entrusting himself into the Father's hands for what's ahead of him and for what's being done to him. Bearing our sins on the cross in his body. It's so powerfully personal and that's why we talk of Jesus as our personal Savior because of the relationship and intimacy that is central to the faith he offers us.

And friends, I would ask every one of us this morning whether we know that personal nature of God's love for us and Christ's willingness to suffer for our sake.

[44 : 11] It's remarkable when anyone does anything good for us. How much more is it remarkable when someone is willing to do this for us, to suffer for our sakes, to engage in real pain and agony himself so that we can be spared, to endure a severance from the face of God that he didn't deserve in order that we might live eternally and be beholding the face of our loving heavenly Father.

The cross is profoundly personal. The cross is incredibly powerful. He did this so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness.

There's an ongoing activity that flows from the cross when we talk about its ongoing relevance in the world. We note here that Jesus is accomplishing something that is enabling people to live different.

He is enabling us to have different motivations, different inspirations and different actions when it comes to the things of this world. Remember the situation he was talking to slaves who were sometimes working for unjust masters, people who were cruel to them. He says, how are you going to get the strength to bear up under that kind of suffering?

Well, he says, if you do it because you're conscious of God, how commendable is that? How commendable is that when you realize that you're living a life that is ultimately to God and for God?

[45 : 52] And if you understand the power of the cross, you understand what Jesus endured for your sake and for the glory of God. And that empowers you in the difficulties you face in this life. You're changed so that you know might die to sins and live for righteousness.

If you live for sins, you live in the spirit of retaliation. You live in the spirit of anger. You live in the spirit of bitterness because bad things will happen to you in the world. But you live in the power of the cross. There's the power to overcome.

There's the power of the peace that comes when you entrust things to God rather than try and work it all out yourself. There's the power that comes from knowing the glory of forgiveness that liberates you to forgive others because you know the blessing, benefit and love and peace that comes when God pardons your sins.

And so he says there's a power in what Jesus did that enables you to die to one mindset and to live for a new mindset because he says by his wounds you have been healed.

So it's as if he's saying to us, look at the cross today as Jesus says, remember me. And we know the story. Many of us know the story. We know the insults and the injury he endured. We know the agonies, the whippings and the agonies.

[47 : 00] And the word of God had prophesied it. Jesus fulfilled it. And now the Holy Spirit applies it. By his wounds you have been healed. So when the soreness of someone's horrible words comes to you in this world, don't look to the wound that they are seeking to inflict upon you, but look to the healing power of Christ's encompassing love around you.

There is power in the cross of Jesus Christ to take us through this world, to take us through all the sorenesses, to take us through all the disappointments.

There is power in the cross to die to the dominating influences of sinful thinking and to live in the power of righteous thinking, righteous healing.

We see it in Jesus. He says the guy who deserved, the one person who came into this world and deserved glory and honour, allowed the world he made to reject him and kill him.

The one man who brings a kingdom that is unshakable still allows unjust men and wicked men to try and expand their empire until the day comes when every throne will fall and every ruler see there's only one King of Kings and only one Lord of Lords.

[48 : 20] He himself, he said, gave his body on the cross so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness because by his wounds you have been healed.

The brokenness, the deep things, you're not going to be healed getting one up in your neighbour. You're not going to be healed just thrumping in some form of self-righteousness above everybody else.

But you're going to be healed in your inner being when you see that all the soreness and pain of life finds its healing power and its cleansing in the love of God that gave itself at Calvary and that because of the wounds inflicted on him, not just in his physical body but in the soul that went into the darkness for our sakes.

There's healing for us to be brought into the light and to live differently, to live with the mindset of righteousness and with a view on glory.

Even think of Jesus when it tells us in the later in the New Testament, it was for the joy that was set before him that he endured the cross.

[49 : 31] And that's how the cross still gives power to you and I in our living. When life has upset us, when life has gone wrong for us, even sometimes when we've made a disaster of our own lives through our own sins, what gives us hope that we can make up for it?

No, what gives us hope is that Jesus paid it all. All to him I owe. Sin had left a crimson stain, but he's washed it white as snow.

The cross is personal in Christ giving himself for us. The cross is powerful because we can die to sins as we look in the death of Jesus. We are offered a power to die to sin and to live for righteousness.

And finally, the cross is pastoral. For you were like sheep going astray. Now you have returned to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

These are the words of pastoral leadership and recognizing the wonder of the heart of God and what is being accomplished in Christ's suffering for our sakes.

[50 : 50] Pastor is where we get the phrase pastor is from the concept of shepherding in the scripture. Normally when I'm preaching, I can safely assume in the audience as I preach in, that I know more about sheep than anyone in the building.

I'm definitely not in that position today. So I'm not going to use any of my shepherding illustrations that I can get away with in my usual audiences. But I don't need to tell anyone here the folly of the life of the sheep, the wantonness of it.

You're all like sheep, he says. You are all going astray. Going your own way. Pursuing what looks right.

Pursuing the thing of the moment. How often we've noticed it. Sheep that go over cliff edges. Sheep that get hit on roads. Going to all paths of danger.

Because they're just driven by the immediacy of desire. And here we're reminded. This is true of, it was true of Israel when they received the prophetic message again through Isaiah many years before.

[51 : 59] And here we're reminded that what was true of them is true of humanity. We want, we go our own way.

We don't have an instinct that leads us into what's good for us. We've got an instinct that will lead us into what can destroy us. But now he says, you've been returned.

You've been brought back. And again, we know Jesus himself used the shepherding imagery in tremendous power when he spoke about the shepherd, the one who went out to seek out the lost sheep.

The others were secure in the fold. That's his heart, to go and get the wanderer and to bring the lost one home. You've been returned, he says. The power of what Christ is doing in the cross is to reveal to us the pastoral heart of God.

That there are many ways in which we can go astray. There's so many ways in which the sheep can wander. We can wander into alcohol, pleasure of the world. We can wander into work and success.

[53 : 03] We can wander into religion and self-righteousness. He says, you've all gone astray. But here's our power now and here's our love that comes to return you to the shepherd and overseer of your souls.

He comes to retrieve us. He comes to restore us, to bring us back, to reconcile us. And the language is language of powerful leadership and of powerful protection.

The kings of Israel were the shepherds of this overseer. It's a word that has been translated in some English translations as bishop.

In a sense, that's where the term came into usage ecclesiastically. That somebody who had oversight, responsibility for the care and protection of God's people.

This is him, says Peter. He says, you were all away. One way or another, you were all away from God and far off. But now when we think about the cross, now when we think about Jesus, we recognize that we have been returned and brought by the one who is the pastor and overseer of our very souls.

[54 : 14] The one who cares for us. The one who provides for us. The one who will protect us. The one who will nourish us. The one who will heal us. The one who will love us. The one who will keep us. He's come for us and he's asking us today to remember him.

Remember me. Remember the lengths I went to in order to reach your soul. Remember the extent to which I loved you.

That I laid down my life for you. Remember today the perfection of the life I lived. So that your imperfect life could be saved. Remember today the life that I poured out.

So that my life could be poured into you. You've been returned. We're going in a few moments to pass bread and to pass a cup.

And it's testimony to us is this. God has brought you back. God has brought you to himself. And if today you're not sitting at the table.

[55 : 22] But as you listen you feel you should. We do give thanks. That you can still commune with Christ. Beyond the table.

We would encourage you to make this your last communion. Outside the table if that's speaking to you. But at the same time. I don't think the one who shed his blood.

Would want you to miss out on the knowledge. Of the closeness and nearness. Of his truth and grace to you. And the love that he has. That came to bring you back.

To seek you out. To search for you. To awaken you. To call you. To bring you into the family. To bring you into the fold. So that whatever you're suffering in the world.

Unjust governments. Difficult workplaces. Troubled homes. Today you find rest and peace. In the one who is the pastor. Of your soul.

[56 : 21] Who is leading you. Into his goodness. Leading you. Into his grace. And will ultimately. Lead you into his glory. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Father we do come.

This morning so thankful. That you are a God. Who desired us. When we never desired you. And you are a God. Who came.

To seek. And to save the lost. And we thank you Lord. That it was. He himself. Who bore.

Our sins. We thank you God. That our hopes today. Are not based on the. Best angel. Heaven could find. That our trust. That our trust. That our trust.

[57 : 27] Is not because of the. Most powerful prophet. That the tribes of Israel. Could muster. But the confidence.

We can have. That our souls. Have been reconciled to God. Is because it is. The son of God himself. Who loved us. And gave himself.

For us. And so as we approach. Your table. Our prayer would be. That it would be. In accordance. With your gracious word.

And in me. Humility. That we will come. To you. Our Lord. To remember. Thee.

Remember you Lord. And your love. And all your pains. And love to us. So that in these moments. God. We would just be.

[58 : 24] So blessed. In your presence. And so blessed. By the remembrance. Of your salvation. For us. That it would alter. The perspective. We have. And the troubles.

That plague us. And the problems. That persist with us. Just for these moments. We would be reminded. Of the hope. Of the glory. We have. Because Christ. Is in us.

And we ask now Lord. For you to continue. To lead us. And bless us. For your own name's sake. Amen. When I survey.

The wondrous cross. On which the prince. Of glory died. My riches gain. I count. But loss. And poor contempt. On all my pride. Let's sing together. As we approach the table.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Amen. I surveyed the wondrous cross on which the prince of glory died.

[59 : 42] My riches gained I count but lost, and born on ten on all my bride.

O'er bid it, Lord, that I should boast, save in the death of Christ my God.

All the vain things, the charming most, I sacrifice them to His blood.

See you all present His hands, His feet, sorrow and love flow mingled down.

Did e'er such love and sorrow meet, or thorns composed so rich a crown.

[61 : 01] And the whole realm of nature mine, that were an offering far too small.

Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my own.