

18.6.23 pm Communion Service

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Date: 18 June 2023

Preacher: Reverend Neil Lachie Macdonald

[0 : 00] Good evening and a warm welcome to this service this evening, this communion service this evening. I'm not going to take time to go through the notices, I'll just remind you that there's a fellowship after the service tonight. If you're able to stay behind, please do so.

And as you can see with the table before us, those who know the Lord, those who love the Lord, those who may be in different denominations, are very much invited to come and profess faith. It's the Lord's table, not our table, and so all who know and love the Lord are commanded actually to come and to remember his death until he comes. Just a word of thanks as well on your behalf for Neil being with us on Friday and Saturday and today. It's been good to be under your ministry, and so just on behalf of the congregation, thank you for your ministry over these days and we pray God's blessing on you as you lead us again this evening. These, I think, are all the intimations, so I hand over now. Thank you, David. Good evening. Nice to see you all again. He's thanking me, but he didn't say, but you're not finished yet, so we're not quite finished yet. It's a joy to be together. Shall we open our worship this evening, singing to God's praise from the Psalter and Psalm 84, and we'll sing the opening verses together to God's praise. How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to me. Shall we stand and sing to God's praise? How lovely is thy dwelling place, O Lord of hosts, to me. The tabernacles of thy grace, my very heart and flesh, cry out, O living God, my very heart and flesh, cry out, O living God, for me.

Behold the swallow findeth out an house wherein to rest.

[2 : 47] The swallow also for herself hath purchased a nest.

In thine own altars where she saved her young ones forth may bring.

O thou almighty Lord of hosts who art my God and King.

Lest are they in thy house that dwell they ever give thee praise.

Blessed is the man whose strength thou art in whose heart are thy ways.

[3 : 53] who passing thought obey God's veil them in to dig up wells.

Also the rain that falleth down the pools with water fill.

well folks shall we unite our hearts together let's pray. How lovely it is O Lord our God to come into your dwelling place with the psalmist we say I joyed when to the house of God go up they said to me it is indeed a joy for us to come into your presence and into your house this evening to gather our voices together in the praise of the one who is worthy.

You are worthy O Lord of our praise you are worthy of our lives you are worthy of all that we have to offer for you have given to us all that is required for holy living you have given us the great gift of salvation in and through Jesus and that you have given us everything that we need in order to follow you and live for you God our Father we give thanks this evening that you are the one who is unchanging the same yesterday today and forever that you are a God who is and who was and who is yet to come Father we thank you for your eternal unchanging nature that you are the sovereign one the Lord God almighty the maker of the heavens and the earth as we look around at the majesty of your creation all that has been brought into being by the power of your word we give thanks that as we call out to you we call to the one who is indeed the maker and sustainer of all that we see and we know

Lord in that sense we are all too aware of our own insignificance when presented with your own majesty that you are a God who is holy and high and lifted up that you are a God who is great and we are a people who are feeble we are those who stumble and who falter in many ways but you are gracious and you are kind oh Lord our God you are the God who is faithful evermore and so Lord we pray that we would put our trust in you that we would put our hope in you that we would follow you with our lives surrendering ourselves wholly into your hands knowing that there is nothing and

no one that there is no thing in this earth that can snatch us from it that you have promised that all who come to me I will never drive away and so Lord we pray for each and every one here this evening we pray for every person we pray for every soul we pray that for those who are as yet outside your kingdom those for whom the eyes of their hearts have not yet been open to the glorious wonder of

[7 : 04] Jesus and those who have not yet accepted his great offer of salvation father would you draw them to yourself yet this evening may they join with their brothers and sisters in Christ at the table to take of the bread and to drink of the wine to obey your command and to remember you for all that you have procured for all that you have realized on our behalf that which we were unable to do you have fulfilled we give thanks that Jesus came not to abolish the law but to fulfill the law he came to do what we were unable to do he came to live as we live and yet was without sin he never had a wayward thought that he never engaged in illicit action but they upheld your law perfectly the thing that we cannot do and in doing so in giving his life as a ransom for many has made it possible for us to be adopted into your family as sons and daughters that we may say with John what great love this is that we have been lavished with that we might call ourselves sons and daughters of the most high father we thank you for the great blessings that are ours in

Christ this evening for all who have trusted in you that we have been chosen and adopted and redeemed and forgiven and restored and that we have the great deposit of our inheritance held by the Holy Spirit himself and so we pray with Paul that the eyes of our hearts may be enlightened to the great hope that is ours in Christ and the great power that is available to us that same power that raised Christ himself from the dead and raised him up that he is above every authority over all dominion he is the Lord our God and so father we pray that you would meet with us this evening as we have drawn aside to meet with you that you would send your spirit amongst us that you would make yourself manifestly known to us and that we would rejoice in the truth of your word and the gospel that is offered so freely to each and everyone Lord God we thank you for the universal offer of the gospel the free offer of the gospel to all who would believe and we pray that each and everyone here this evening would indeed believe and that in believing would rejoice in Jesus and would be a new creation in him the old having gone the new having come and that we would go from this place as your ambassadors heralds of the gospel into a world that is deficient and hopeless and in decay from its continued turning from you

Lord may you turn us once again to yourself may you restore us may we repent of our sin and the sin of our people and may we look ever unto you bless us go before us forgive us of our sin we ask in Jesus name Amen folks we're going to read this evening from John's gospel again we were in John 4 this morning but this evening we're going to read in John chapter 7 and we're going to pick up the reading in John chapter 7 at verse 25 and we're going to read down to the verse marked 53 what's happening here is that the feast of tabernacles the feast of booths is occurring and Jesus has come and he has began to teach there so let's begin the reading at John chapter 7 and verse 25 this is God's word at that point some of the people of Jerusalem began to ask isn't this the man they are trying to kill here he is speaking publicly and they're not saying a word to him have the authorities really concluded that he is the

Messiah but we know where this man is from when the Messiah comes no one will know where he is from then Jesus still teaching in the temple courts cried out yes you know me and you know where I am from I am not here on my own authority but he who sent me is true you do not know him but I know him because I am from him and he sent me at this they tried to seize him but no one laid a hand on him because his hour had not yet come still many in the crowd believed in him they said when the Messiah comes will he perform more signs than this man the Pharisees heard the crowd whispering such things about him then the chief priests and the Pharisees sent temple guards to arrest him Jesus said I am with you only a short time and then I am going to the one who sent me you will look for me but you will not find me and where I am you cannot come the

Jews said to one another where does this man intend to go that we cannot find him will he go where our people live scattered among the Greeks and teach the Greeks what did he mean when he said you greatest day of the feast Jesus stood and said in a loud voice let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink whoever believes in me as scripture has said rivers of living water will flow from within them by this he meant the spirit whom those who believed in him were later to receive up to that time the spirit had not been given since Jesus had not yet been glorified on hearing his words some of the people said surely this man is the prophet others said he is the Messiah still others asked

how can the Messiah come from Galilee does not scripture say that the Messiah will come from David's descendants and from Bethlehem the town where David lived thus the people were divided because of

[12 : 55] Jesus some wanted to seize him but no one laid a hand on him finally the temple guards went back to the chief priests and the Pharisees who asked them why didn't you bring him in no one ever spoke the way this man does the guards replied you mean he's deceived you also the Pharisees retorted have any of the rulers or of the Pharisees believed in him no but this mob that knows nothing of the law there is a curse on them Nicodemus them a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing they replied are you from Galilee too look into it and you will find that a prophet does not come out of Galilee then they all went home amen may the Lord bless that reading of his own holy and inspired word to us and may it be a blessing before we turn to look at that for a time before we come to the

Lord's table let's again sing this time from Psalm 63 in Galilee and we remain seated for this item and we're going to sing the verses 1 and 5 verse 1 and verse 5 of Psalm 63 to God's praise in Galilee Psalm 12 Psalm the Floom 1 Psalm 2 2 2 1 And now the Vatican Montessor Nuss■■■■ Amen. OK.

gentlemen 0 oh Thank you.

Thank you.

[17 : 15] Thank you. Thank you. The earth's over, the light of the earth.

Well folks, turn back in your Bibles for a short time this evening to John in chapter 7 and from verse 25. And just as we do, let's again pray.

Father, we pray now that you would still our hearts and that you would speak to us through your words. That you would speak into the reality of our lives and that we would rejoice all the more in Jesus, our Savior, as we consider all that is ours in him.

We thank you that true refreshment comes from Christ and from Christ alone. That he is the one who can fill the void in the human heart. That he is the one who can bring meaning and hope and peace and fulfillment.

That he is the one who transcends culture. That his love transcends gender and character. That he is a God who loves to the uttermost. That he is the one who wearies himself in the pursuit of lost sinners.

[18 : 37] That he is the one who opens the eyes of the blind. That he is the one who is all sufficient and who is capable to save to the uttermost. Lord, we pray that we would follow his example in going.

Going to people. Going to the ones who are high and mighty. And to the ones who are low and who are meek. Lord, that we would go to all people with the great and wondrous hope of Christ Jesus the Lord.

Lord, the one who can save each and every one and all who would call upon him. And so, Father, we pray as we open your word this evening and as we reflect on it.

And as we prepare our hearts to come before you in an act of obedience and thanksgiving. That you would meet with us. For we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Well, back in 1965, some of you were around then, some of us weren't.

The Rolling Stones had a very famous song called I Can't Get No Satisfaction. And Mick Jagger, whilst dancing around like a chicken, sang these words.

[19 : 43] I can't get no satisfaction because I try and I try and I try. But I can't get no satisfaction. I'm not going to put you through the trauma of singing it.

But he talks about many different things. He talks about people offering things and people selling things and people promoting lots of different things. When he's in the car listening to the radio, when he's at home watching TV, or even when he's traveling around the world.

He's seeing all of these things on offer and yet he can get no satisfaction. The good news this evening is that we know exactly where satisfaction can be found. And it's something that we mused on this morning.

Of course, that through satisfaction that fills the void of the human heart, the last piece of the puzzle that is missing in our lives is Jesus, the Savior. I'm sure at some point or in some place in our lives, we've all been parched.

We've all been thirsty. And when we find ourselves in situations like that, nothing else matters other than quenching our thirst.

[20 : 52] We had a pleasant day at the beach yesterday and I drove back and was presented shortly before reaching the house with your minister, loping along the road after a hefty 11 mile run.

Quite why anyone would choose to do that is beyond me, but we'll not get into that. But when he got back, the first thing on his mind was to hydrate himself. He was thirsty.

It was hot. He was hot. He'd run a long way. And the truth is that whenever any of us are thirsty, that is the thing that dominates our thoughts. It dominates our minds until we can satisfy the thirst that is within us.

Well, as we come to John chapter 7 this evening and as we look at the portion that we've read, we are presented with two things. We're presented with a crowd, a crowd of people, and there's different divisions within that crowd and we'll get to that.

But we're also presented with a marvelous promise as well, a promise that comes from the Savior himself. So let's look at those two things briefly before we come to the Lord's table and we take off the bread and drink off the wine to remember him.

[22 : 04] The crowd. We have a crowd of people here in Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles or the Feast of Booths. It was a week-long festival feast where people would come into the city.

They would make little booths outside in the garden. It's the kind of thing that your children would love because I don't know if your children are anything like ours, but they'll say, can we sleep in a tent? Can we sleep outside? Can we sleep on the trampoline?

No, it's February. You can't sleep on the trampoline. You'll get cold. But what they did was they would come in. They would make these booths and they would be able to see the stars. And it was a time that they would remember the Lord's provision for their ancestors during the wilderness years after the exodus and before they came into the promised land.

And so what you've got is you've got this melting pot of people within the holy city, within Jerusalem, who have all come together to observe the feast. And they're fulfilling their religious duty. They're doing what is expected of them, but they're dying of spiritual thirst.

They're doing the right stuff on the outside, but they're dying of thirst and they cannot see that the refreshment that they need is standing in their very midst.

[23 : 15] Right there with them is Jesus, the source, the origin, the fountain, the one who brings true satisfaction. But they cannot see him. They do not hear him.

They don't recognize him. They don't understand him. And how often we ourselves have stood in life or had experiences. And Jesus and the Lord has been very present with us and yet we have not seen him.

And we will not listen. And we do not understand. Jesus still offers himself as a spiritual thirst quenching solution to needy and thirsty people.

But the question is, are we listening to him? Do we see him? Are we responding to him? I wonder this evening, as we prepare for the Lord's table, whether you are quenched spiritually, whether your soul is awash with the joy of God in Christ Jesus, the Savior.

Or are you still parched? Are you still thirsty? Are you still looking? Well, open your eyes and stop your ears.

[24 : 29] Hear his call. Because here we have a study. There is a scientific study called hydrology and that is the study of water or, more appropriately, the distribution, the movement, the availability of water on the earth.

But what we have got in John chapter 7 is a study in spiritual hydrology, as it were. There is this people who are parched and thirsty. It is arid ground, as it were.

And yet within the midst of that, there is the source of abundant spiritual refreshment in Jesus. But they are looking in the wrong places. They are fulfilling their religious duties.

They are doing the things on the outside. And yet still they are parched and dry and blind. We're reminded of the words of Jeremiah, the prophet, where the Lord says, My people have committed two sins.

They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns, that cannot hold water.

[25 : 32] Much like we were talking about with the children today, digging that hole in the sand, going down to the water's edge, filling a bucket, coming back up, pouring it in, going for the next

one. By the time you're back, the hole is empty.

The water is gone. It cannot be held. It is a broken cistern. And so often that's what we do. It's the natural inclination of the human heart, is to try and fill ourselves with anything but the only true solution that there is.

And the irony, of course, here for these people that are spiritually parched, that are dying of thirst, is that in their very midst is the one who can give them the refreshment that their souls so crave and so desire.

So within this group, there are three groups. There are three groups of people present. Let's just look at them briefly and see what we can learn. There's the confused, there's the critical, and there is the curious. The confused, the critical, and the curious.

The first group are the local citizens of Jerusalem. They're there, they're listening, they're hearing Jesus, and they're beginning to talk.

[26 : 38] They know that the religious leaders are in town and that they're trying to find Jesus because they want to kill him, because he's claiming to be the Messiah. The religious people really want to rid the place of Jesus because he's upsetting the apple cart.

He's damaging their business. But the locals that meet are trying to discern who he is. They're saying, well, listen, this can't be the Messiah because we know who this Jesus is.

We know where he's from. And when the Messiah comes, nobody's going to know where he's from. Where did they get that idea? It didn't come from God's word. It didn't come from the law.

But some rabbis taught that when the Messiah arrived, he would be an unknown entity. He would be an unknown character. He would just appear, kind of like the genie in Aladdin.

And nobody would know his background, and nobody would know his genealogy or where he was from. So perhaps that's where that thought came from. Here they are saying, well, we know where this guy's from, well, therefore, he can't be the Messiah.

[27 : 47] They're confused about him. Now, we'll come back to that in a minute. But it ties into this. There was also the critical there, a group who were critical, a different group. This is the religious leaders.

This is the Pharisees, the scribes, the chief priests. And what they do is they send out officials to arrest Jesus. Jesus tells them, again, who he is.

He alludes to his divinity, that he is from the Father, that he has been sent by God himself, that he will go back to where he's sent, where he's going. They cannot come.

Again, they're confused by this. They're perplexed. They don't understand what he's saying.

Where's he going to go? Is he going to go to the Greeks, to the people that are dispersed amongst the Greeks?

Is Jesus going to go and teach them out in the Greek culture, the Hellenistic culture that's outside Jerusalem? Where is he going? They're not really joining the dots. They're not understanding that Jesus is, of course, alluding to heaven.

[28 : 46] I am going back to heaven. And for that reason, you will not find me, he says. Could it also have meant something slightly deeper? It could also mean in that statement that Jesus is saying, there will come a time when you will seek me, but you will not find me because I will not be here.

But I'm here now. And I'm available now. There is such a thing as a past opportunity, isn't there? Pharaoh hardened his heart.

And Pharaoh hardened his heart. And Pharaoh hardened his heart. And Pharaoh hardened his heart. And God hardened Pharaoh's heart. There may come a day where the Lord will not strive any longer with those who have continually rejected him.

And that's solemn. But it is the truth. And yet what we have before us today is an opportunity, another day, not to let it slip by, if you have not yet received the refreshing satisfaction of the living water of Jesus Christ.

But to accept it, Paul reminds us. He says, God reminds us that in my day of favor I heard you and in the day of salvation I helped you. I tell you, now is the time. Today is the day.

[30 : 00] Today is the day of salvation. Here is the offer. Take it. You know not if you will have that opportunity or that offer again. Joseph Alexander wrote a hymn called O Soul Beware.

And in it he says, There is a time we know not when, a point we know not where, that marks the destiny of men to glory or despair. There is a line by us unseen that crosses every path, the hidden

boundary between God's patience and his wrath.

O come today, do not delay too late, it soon will be. To Jesus fly, for mercy cry, he waits, so come. To Jesus fly, for mercy cry, he waits, to welcome thee.

So we have an opportunity. You have an opportunity here this evening, if you have not already, where Jesus is saying, here I am. Here I am the one who can satisfy the deepest yearning of your heart.

Here I am, the one who has done all things, that you may be free. There were those who were confused, there were those who were critical, there were also those who were curious, or continuing, they were lingering, those who were staying, not just the people from Jerusalem, not just the religious officers, but there are people from pilgrims, from all over the world, who are there, a mixed bag of people, and there's a cacophony of opposing, or confusing opinions.

[31 : 41] If you look through the passage that we read, you'll find that there are many different summations, of who Jesus is, his identity. He's a prophet, he's the Messiah, he's a good man, he's a deceiver, he's a Galilean, he's a great speaker.

Different opinions, by different people, in the same crowd, looking at the same man. Different opinions, about him. That's why verse 43 says, the people were divided, because of Jesus. Schisma, is the Greek word, and of course, it's where we get the word schism from. Unfortunately, we're no strangers to that, within the church. A split decision, a schism.

Due to the confusion, nobody could really make up their minds, about the identity of Christ. Still a problem, in the world, a reality in the world, in which we live.

Notice that, they said he was from Galilee. But at the same time, they say he can't be Messiah, because the Messiah must be born in? Bethlehem. Where was Jesus born?

[32 : 50] Bethlehem. So, you know, the people are confused. This is, fairly basic knowledge. They wouldn't have had to go far. They wouldn't have had to ask many people, to find, that Jesus was born, in Bethlehem, and that he was off the line of David.

That would have put a different spin on things. Oh, well, hang on a minute. Perhaps he is, who he says he is. Perhaps there is weight, to his claims. Perhaps this is, actually, the Messiah.

And it's just a pointer to us, that sometimes we need to weigh up the evidence for ourselves. We need to go looking, not just listen to the crowd, not just even listen to the religious leaders, as it were, not even just listen to your minister, without going and checking it against Scripture.

Being good, Boreans, Acts 17, checking what we know, against what is the truth. But notice, another statement that was made in verse 52.

Look, the religious, they're really ticked off, that Jesus hasn't been taken in. And they're saying, look, to Nicodemus, they're saying, search and look, no prophets are risen out of Galilee.

[33 : 57] Now, they say it with authority, and they say it with religious vigor, but it's not true. Ever heard of a guy named Jonah? Where did Jonah come from?

Jonah was a prophet. Jonah came from a place called Gath Heffer. Where was Gath Heffer? Well, it was about five miles from Nazareth, you know, the area where Jesus was raised.

No prophets come out of Galilee. Wrong. Wrong. We have an expression in English that says, there are none so blind as those who will not see, and none so deaf as those who will not hear.

If you're not in Christ this evening, is it because you will not see him? Or because you will not hear him? The evidence is plentiful.

It's abundant. He has done it all. But what are you doing with it? 2 Corinthians 4, Paul says, the God of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers so they cannot see the light of the gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

[35 : 09] There are people that you speak to. I'm sure we've all had the experience. You speak to folk about spiritual things and it's as if they're doing the childhood thing, you know, where you just put your fingers in your ear and start, la, la, I can't hear what you're saying.

Just speak over you. People do that. Thirsty. Dying of thirst. But don't want to hear about the solution to that thirst.

So here's a group of people, a few different groups of people, who are all confused about the identity of the Messiah and the thirst quencher that is right within their midst.

They've longed, they're longing for this deliverer to come. But they cannot see him. He is right there as they're dying of spiritual thirst.

It's funny, isn't it? Because one chapter back, they wanted to make Jesus king by what? By force. They wanted to make him their king, their political ruler.

[36 : 07] But Jesus didn't come to be a king or a political ruler. He came to be a savior. He came to give his life as a ransom for many. But they're so thirsty. They're becoming dehydrated spiritually.

Or they are dehydrated spiritually. They're unable to see. They're unable to focus. They're unable to comprehend. That's the factor in dehydration. It affects the way that people think and the actions that they take.

The dehydrated sailor that begins to drink salt water only compounds the problem that they have. The people are dehydrated.

They are in need. They are dying of thirst. And well, things haven't changed for the past 2,000 years, sadly. Think about all of the different wells that people drink out of now.

The many different wells. The well of money. If I get enough money, I will be just fulfilled. How much is enough? Just a little bit more. If I have enough relationships, then I'll be happy.

[37 : 13] If I get the status I'm looking for, then I'll be fulfilled. If I get these things, that's why so many people turn to substances and to abuse alcohol and drugs because they're seeking that fulfillment that is so elusive to them.

The irony, of course, is that all of these things are broken cisterns that do not fulfill and will not meet the need of the human heart. Max Lucado, in his book *The Applause of Heaven*, says this, False fountains pacify our cravings with sugary swallows of pleasure.

It's a great picture, isn't it? False fountains pacify our cravings with sugary swallows of pleasure. But there comes a time where those sugary swallows don't satisfy and don't pacify.

There comes a time when things become dark and nothing that we can appeal to in this life will meet that need that is so deep within us where we realize that we're not thirsty for fame or possessions or passion or romance.

We've drunk from those pools. They are salt water pools in the desert. They don't quench. They kill. We're thirsty for a clean conscience. We're thirsty for peace.

[38 : 28] We're longing for a clean slate, for a fresh start, for meaning and for reality in our lives. The problem is that the treasures of earth do not satisfy that thirst.

But the promises of heaven do. The promises of Christ Jesus fulfill that great yearning that there is within our hearts.

So within the crowd there is a divergence of opinion. There is confusion. But Jesus is standing in their midst. Don't be confused this evening.

Jesus, the Savior, stands and he says, will you come to me and drink? Will you come and surrender yourself into my hands? Will you give your life over to me? Will you follow me?

Will you put your trust in me? If you will, I will give you life and life eternal. I will make you a stream of living water. That's the promise. So we have the crowd. We then have the promise very briefly.

[39 : 25] It's found from verse 37. And it begins by saying that on the last day of the feast, on the last and greatest day of the feast.

Now I'm going to stop right there because we have to understand what's going on here to really get the impact. We can read past that and it seems mundane and just par for the course. But here's the feast.

It's the feast of tabernacles, feast of booths, a week long, every day within that feast in the morning. Thousands of people would come together. They would come together and go up to the temple area, to the temple courts.

They'd be met by the priest. The priest would come out and he would be holding a golden jug and the people would be holding citrus fruit in one hand and some foliage, a palm branch, a willow branch, a myrtle branch in the other hand, symbolic of the different stages of the wilderness wanderings before the promised land.

And they've got these things in their hand. The priest comes out holding a golden jug and they make a procession from the temple down to the pool of Siloam and the priest takes the jug and fills it from the pool of Siloam and then they march back up to the temple and the people are singing psalms and they're all in procession and there's joy and there's praise.

[40 : 38] It's Isaiah 12.3 that we alluded to this morning. With joy, you will draw water from the wells of salvation, Isaiah 12.3.

They would go back up to the temple and they would pour the water onto the altar, symbolic of the water that came from the rock in the desert itself when they were in the wilderness. And so that's a daily routine throughout the course of this feast until the last day because something different happened on the last day. So on the last day, everything would have happened as it did up until that point.

They would meet at the temple. They'd follow down to the pool of Siloam. They'd get back up. But on the last day, the priest would march around the altar, not once, but seven times.

Seven times. Why seven times? Well, they marched around Jericho seven times before they entered the land. And so seven times around the altar, the people are singing fruit in one hand, foliage, branches in the other hand, singing from Isaiah 12, you will with joy, you'll draw from the water and the wells of salvation.

[41 : 47] But on the sixth march around the altar, the priest was met by another priest who had a decanter of wine. And so there's water and there's wine. Symbolic of refreshment and joy, water refreshment, wine is joy.

It's a joyful thing. God has given us joy and God gives us refreshment. And then the priest with the water would climb, and he would ascend the steps of the altar and the people would shout and sing and there would be this crescendo with every step that he took.

It would get louder and louder and louder and he would reach the top and then there would just be this hush that would come over the whole place. This huge crowd has been really loud. It's been raucous and joyous and he's right there and just at that point whilst this quiet falls over the crowd, let anyone who is thirsty, says a voice, come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me as scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them. Imagine how powerful that would have been.

Jesus' voice booming, every eye, every head in the place turning around to see him. No PA system, no microphones for Jesus there.

[43 : 07] I don't know if any of you listened to our moderator, Reverend Dr. Bob Ackroyd giving his moderator's address but he alluded to being in the Boston markets where he would say guys wouldn't have signs but they would just shout, yo, beer or yo, pretzels.

We go down to the Barrowlands and it's more, oh, but people would shout loud with what they had to settle. And so Jesus is crying out in a loud voice, if anyone is thirsty, you're all thirsty, come to me and I will give you refreshment.

I will give you a drink and a drink that will satisfy the deepest longing of your heart and it will do much more than that. It will refresh you for eternity and it will make you refreshing for all of your days.

Just another picture that Jesus wasn't a kind of weak, wet, insipid character. He's imposing. He had a loud voice. He had a command. He had authority about him and in all of that he makes this wonderful promise, doesn't he?

Thirsty people are called. We are called. Number one, to take the plunge and be refreshed. If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

[44 : 27] There are three words there that sum up what he is saying. The first thing that we have to do is realize that we're thirsty. Before you come and take a drink you have to realize that you're thirsty because only thirsty people drink water.

Only people who have a thirst will come and get themselves a drink. So do you realize this evening that you're thirsty? Thirsty for something more, something greater, something fulfilling.

But the second thing he says is if anyone is thirsty let him come. Here's Jesus. He's saying here I am. I have come to you.

I am in your midst. I am making myself known to you. Now come to me. Make the move.

Come to me. You've come to the ceremony. You've fulfilled your religious duties. You've done all the outward stuff. But now come to me the one who can refresh you. That's being said I'm sure probably to somebody here this evening.

[45 : 36] If you're thirsty come. Come to Jesus. He's saying come to me now. And the third word is drink. It speaks of receiving Christ personally.

Not ceremonially. Not religiously. Not superficially. Personally. And I can easily demonstrate it to you. That was good for me.

You watched me do it. But that water did you no good whatsoever. But it was good for me because drinking is personal.

So the Lord says come to me and drink. Have you come? Have you drunk? The idea of drinking Christ drinking his living water is personally coming to him and placing your faith in him.

If I stood before you this evening and said I'm thirsty. I'm really thirsty. I'm parched and I waxed lyrical about being thirsty.

[46 : 49] Eventually somebody in the crowd is going to say well take a drink then. Why don't you have a drink? You've got it in your hand. It's right in front of you. Take a drink. Satisfy your thirst. And the same is true spiritually.

If you're thirsty this evening why don't you take a drink? It's right in front of you. He says come. And notice he says if anyone thirsts there's no hierarchy there's no programme there's no educational issue young old anyone female male anyone educated uneducated anyone if anyone is thirsty let them come to me and drink.

Have you come? Have you drunk? Are you satisfied? Let me just close very briefly by saying that's not the end.

So often that's billed as the end. Come to Jesus and you'll be satisfied and that's true. And we rejoice in that and we say thank you Lord. But he goes further than that doesn't he?

He says in verse 38 whoever believes in me as scripture has said rivers rivers of living water will flow from within them. So the promise of Jesus is not merely simply that we will be satisfied that we will be blessed but the promise is that we will become a blessing that we will become streams of that truth streams of that living water that we will no longer be just consumers but that we too will be fountains that we will dispense that same life giving truth that same life giving power that we will point people to the one who can save them point people to the one who can satisfy their souls because God never intended that we would take this water and store it up for ourselves and never use it because it would stagnate and it would become unfit for purpose that's why he speaks of streams of flowing rivers abundant streams that flow out such as his desire that he would satisfy our thirst and then we would seek first his kingdom and his righteousness and all other things will be added unto us so this evening do you know the promise have you received the promise have you acted on the promise do you recognize your thirst have you come to him will you drink nobody can do it for you will you come to the table this evening as those who say

[49 : 59] I recognize my waywardness and I recognize the void in my heart and I recognize that there is no one and nothing in this life or in this world that can fulfill me like my maker and my creator the one who will fulfill me in ways that I have never been fulfilled before and I will come and I will eat the bread and I will drink the wine and I will rejoice and give thanks to the one who has saved me by his grace and through his love through the shedding of his blood I am redeemed and restored and forgiven are you thirsty will you come will you drink if you do then you will be satisfied and you will then be used to draw others to that same satisfying well let's pray God our Father we thank you for your word we thank you for the great promise that Jesus gives we pray that we would listen to him and that we would act upon that truth that we would recognize our thirst that we would come to you as you have come to us and that we would take the drink that you have been offering that would fulfill our hearts and our souls that would satisfy the yearnings our deepest yearnings and that we would know that wholeness that completeness that fulfillment in Christ

Jesus and that we would go from this place to dispense that life-giving water to every other person whom we meet that we would weary ourselves through the dispensing of that life-giving water that many others may come and meet with Jesus and see him and know him as their Lord and as their God in Jesus name we ask Amen in a moment we're going to come to the Lord's table we are going to observe the sacrament of the Lord's supper which is a directive of Jesus himself something that he instituted for us and David's already alluded to the fact that it is the Lord's table it's not the free church table it's not the table of Harris North Harris free church but it is the Lord's table and therefore if you are the Lord's if he is yours and you are his if you have recognized your thirst and if you have come to him and if you have drunk from the life giving fountain then your place is at his table with his people

Jesus says in John 14 if you love me obey my commands if you love me obey my commands well Jesus command is to do this it's in the imperative do this in remembrance of me if you are Jesus people if you have drunk if you know Christ as Lord then your place is at his table and if you do not sit at his table you are disobeying him I trust that nobody will disobey this evening the finer details of

all of these things can be sorted out at a later stage if even in the last few moments you have committed your life to Christ recognizing your need and your thirst and his solution then come to the table eat and drink and remember and the rest can be sorted out later we're going to sing before we come to the table and we're going to sing from the hymn

I mentioned on Friday evening in my testimony Jehovah Sid Kenyu I once was a stranger to grace and to God I knew not my danger I felt not my load though friends spoke in rapture of Christ on the tree Jehovah Sid Kenyu was nothing to me Jehovah Sid Kenyu is the Lord our righteousness and later on in one of the verse it talks about coming to the fountain life giving and free that is what we are called to this evening shall we stand and sing together I once was a stranger to grace and to God I knew not my danger and felt not my load no friend spoken rapture of Christ on the tree Jehovah Sid Kenyu was nothing to me and tears from the daughters of Zion that rose I wept when the waters went over his soul yet thought not that my sins had nailed to the tree Jehovah said Kenyu was nothing to me when free grace awoke me from life from on high then legal fear shook me

[55 : 45] I trembled to die no refuge no safety in self could I see Jehovah said Kenyu my savior must be my tanners all punished before the sweet grave my guilty feels punished with boldness I came to drink at the fountain life giving and free Jehovah said Kenyu is all things to me Jehovah said Kenyu my treasure and hope

Jehovah said Kenyu I ne'er can be lost in thee I shall conquer by flood and by field my cable my anchor my breastplate and shield he has come D right son heb to be hurt