

Evening Communion Service 31.8.17

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Date: 31 August 2017

Preacher: Reverend Hugh Ferrier

[0 : 00] Let's come before the same God in prayer. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, as we bow in your presence this evening, we do so reminded in your word that you are the God who is all-powerful.

That we are told in your word that you are the one who has created this world by the word of your power. That all of the beauty and all of the majesty that we see around us, the very beauty of the landscape, points to the fact that you are the God who is the maker of it all, the creator of it all.

But you haven't simply created it. We are also told in your word that you sustain it by the word of your power. That nothing is in chaos and nothing is in crisis.

You are the one who is reigning and you are the one who will eternally reign. That while we may wear out like a garment, you are the same and your years have no end.

We praise you and we bless you that we are reminded in your word that you are the God who is all-knowing. You know everything about us, the things that we can admit to ourselves, the things that we can admit to others.

[1 : 04] But even the things that we cannot even admit to ourselves, the things that may be worry us, the things that may frustrate us, the things that may burden us with many anxieties.

But you know it all and we praise you and we give you thanks for this. That even tonight you know so much about us. That even before we speak a word, it is known to you and by you.

We thank you and we praise you that we are reminded in your word that you are the God who is all-present. The one who fills the heaven and who fills the earth. That there is nowhere where we can go where you are not.

And that even this evening we have that wonderful promise in your word. That where two or three people gather in your name, you are there in the midst to bless. We praise you and thank you that as we have sung in this wonderful psalm, you are the God who is great.

That we have sung of the fact that you are the God who causes great things. You are the God who has created the world. The God who has calmed the nations. And the God who calls for the praise from his people.

[2 : 05] That you are not simply a great God. You are also a God who is rich in grace. That we have sung of the fact that you are the God who answers the prayers of his people. And you are the God who atones for the sin of his people.

You are the God who when his people's iniquities weigh so heavily upon them. You are the God who lifts that sin and guilt away. We thank you that you are the God who accepts worshippers into his presence.

And the God who assigns blessing upon them. And we do thank you and praise you that you are that God of grace. And that we do have the record of grace. We have the gospel, the good news of the Lord Jesus.

We thank you and praise you that in the gospel we see and we rejoice in the person of Jesus. And the grace of Jesus. The glory of Jesus. The humiliation of Jesus.

The suffering of Jesus. The redemptive death of Jesus. And the glorious grave opening resurrection of Jesus. We thank you that we are told in that gospel that he has ascended in order to bless his people.

[3 : 09] He reigns at the right hand of the Father to bless his people, the church. And he has promised to return again in order to bless his people. We thank you that tonight as we begin this communion weekend.

As we remember and rejoice in what Jesus has done. We are able to come. Not pleading our own works. Not pleading our own worthiness. Not coming making pledges and promises of what we hope to do.

But rather we can come delighting in the fact that we have a saviour who has cried it is finished. So that now there is nothing that we will do that will make you love us more. And nothing that we will do that will make you love us any less.

We thank you that as we'll be singing. It is in Christ alone our hope is found. And here in the love of God we do stand. Permit us now we pray to worship you in spirit and in truth.

From the youngest to the oldest. We pray that you would presence yourself among us in such a way that we would know that you are in our midst. And that all of the songs that we sing would be sung to your praise, honour and glory.

[4 : 13] That in our prayers that we would present ourselves as those who need you and need your grace. And that we would simply be saying, Lord help. And we pray that even as we focus on your word and meditate on it.

That it would be a blessing to our minds, to our hearts and to our souls. That your spirit would take your word and apply it with force and power to each and every one of us.

Meeting us at our various points of need. So go with us we pray into this worship service. Keep our eyes firmly fixed on Jesus. And may all that we do be glorified to your name.

And may all that we pray in Jesus' name. And for his sake. Amen.

Well our reading from the Old Testament is taken from the book of Psalms. Psalm 130. Psalm 130. Psalm 130. Psalm 130. I'm reading the whole of the Psalm.

[5 : 27] A Psalm of Saints. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy.

If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared. I wait for the Lord. My soul waits.

And in his word I hope. My soul waits for the Lord. More than watchmen wait for the morning. More than watchmen wait for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord. For with the Lord there is steadfast love.

And with him is plentiful redemption. And he will redeem Israel from all his iniquities. Amen. And this is the word of God to us this evening. Well, again, sing his praise.

This is the word of the hymn, In Christ Alone. In Christ alone my hope is found. He is my light, my strength, my song. This cornerstone, this solid ground. Firm through the fiercest drought and storm.

[6 : 27] And what a reminder that is for us. As we prepare to take the Lord's Supper this weekend. That it is in Christ alone that we do so. We'll stand to sing to God's praise.

Amen. The singing is very good from here anyway this evening.

I was saying to David's daughters around the dinner table this evening that Lewis is far better than Harris. That we have Tesco, we have Argos and we have all manner of things.

But maybe this evening the Harris singing might rival the Lewis singing. I'm not sure, but it's so good to be able to sing God's praise together and to hear some with such joy and a gusto.

A reading from the Old, the New Testament is taken from Paul's letter to the Ephesians. Paul's letter to the Ephesians and chapter 2. Ephesians chapter 2.

[7 : 25] And we're going to read verses 1 down to 10. Ephesians chapter 2, beginning from verse 1.

Paul writes,

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. This is the word of God to us tonight. Let's again come before him and pray. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, as we bow in your presence again, we are so thankful that we can sing about it being in Christ alone.

That our hope is found and here in the love of God we stand. We thank you that we're able to sing of the wrath of God, the judgment of God being satisfied by that once for all sacrifice offered at Calvary.

Because we have just read in your word that by our own nature we were objects of wrath. And we were following the course of the prince of this world. We were without hope.

[9 : 35] We were without God. We were lost. And we praise you and we marvel at the wondrous sentence, but God being rich in mercy.

And we thank you and praise you that that is what it is all about. That we rejoice in the wonderful but gods of scripture. That we are able to read of Noah in the ark and you sending the flood and the waters of your judgment upon the earth.

And then we read those wonderful words, but God remembered Noah. We thank you that we read of Joseph and how his brother sold him into Egypt. And it seemed that everything was lost.

Everything was hanging in the balance for that man. And indeed as we see in the theology of Genesis, the salvation of your people. And yet we thank you that we read those words, but God delivered Joseph.

And we thank you and praise you that this evening those of us who are in Christ can look back at our own lives. And we can see how we were in the fearful pit and how we were in the mighty clay.

[10 : 40] But the fact that you rescued us and you set us on the rock of salvation that is the Lord Jesus. Establishing our way with a new song of praise on our lips to God.

We praise you and we bless you for this. And we do come into your presence this evening remembering all those that we know and love who need your grace in particular ways. We remember those tonight who are sick and unwell.

Those who are in hospital and those who are going into hospital. And those who are just out of hospital. Praying that you would lay your hand upon them. That they would know the sufficiency of your grace.

That they would know you're upholding. That they would know your care. That they would know what it is to be in the very centre of your will. And that you would give all those who are treating them and looking after them. The wisdom and the leading and the guidance as they do so.

We remember those tonight who are bereaved. Those who have been bereaved recently. But also those who have been bereaved over a long period of time. But still find the pain of separation as raw as ever.

[11 : 39] And still haven't ever adjusted. Because we know that in those times of bereavement our lives are never the same. But we pray that you would be the God who would pour grace into those empty places and spaces.

Into those voids. Into those vacuums. And that those who are mourning and those who are low in spirit. Would truly know that you're with them. And that they can cast their cares upon you.

In the full knowledge that you care. We remember those who are in the pit right now. Those who may feel like darkness is a very close friend. And those who may find themselves in a tunnel.

And be wondering is there any light at the end of that tunnel. And we pray that they would know that you are the good shepherd tonight. That you are the one who has promised and pledged that he will go with his people.

Not only by the green pastures and the still waters. But even through the valley of deepest darkness. And that they would know your presence with them. And your peace being upon them.

[12 : 40] And your promises and your providences stretching out before them. We do thank you and we praise you for this congregation. We thank you for the minister. And we thank you for the office bearers.

And we thank you for everyone who plays a part in the life of this church. And we do pray that this coming communion weekend would be a blessed time for each and every one of them. A time of encouragement.

A time of refreshment. A time of awakening and reviving. A time when everyone is quickened by your spirit. Moved by your word. And that all those who will preach your word will be given the words from you.

To speak and to declare. We remember those who will be publicly professing their faith. That they will be encouraged as they do so. Knowing it's not about them. It's all about you.

We pray for those who may be watching on. Who would love to be at your table. But for whatever reason they still feel they must hold back. And we pray that you might even speak to them. Reminding them afresh of the finished work of the Lord Jesus.

[13 : 38] And that you might give them the grace to make that public profession of their faith. And we remember any this evening who may be at the place where they do not yet know Jesus. They have not yet said the Lord is my shepherd.

And would you draw them to yourself. And that they would truly find that hope of glory that is found in Jesus. We pray now that you bless us as we come to focus on your word together.

And we pray that you would allow us to refocus tonight on the grandeur of your glory and your grace. We pray that you would allow us to see your wisdom and your power. We pray that you would allow us to dwell more fully on your patience with your people and your faithfulness to your people.

We pray that you would allow us to be stunned afresh by your holiness and by your perfection. That we would be reminded that there is no God like our God and there is no God besides our God.

We pray that we would be encouraged by the truth that you are the God who is present with his people. Whatever pit they may find themselves in. And that you would allow each and every one of us to rest in and revel in the absolute unshakable sovereignty of God.

[14 : 49] So go with us we pray. Bless in this time of worship. Bless in your word. Bless in our souls. For we pray this in the name of our prophet, priest and king, the Lord Jesus.

Amen. But before we turn back to focus on God's word. We'll again sing this hymn in the words of the hymn. Be thou my vision. Be thou my vision.

O Lord of my heart, not be all else to me, save that thou art. Thou my best thought, by day or by night. Waking or sleeping. Thy presence, my light. And as we sing this hymn together, we're praying that the Lord would indeed be our vision.

And that you would be the Lord of our hearts over this coming weekend. Be thou my vision. We'll start to sing. It's worrying when you see them put two recorders on either side of you.

It's as if there's going to be a press-pip-investigation. And I really want to make sure that it's a heresy or not a heresy. Turn with me, please, to Psalm 130.

[15 : 55] Psalm 130. And reading again verse 1. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. This is a psalm of ascent.

It's a psalm that pilgrims would sing as they were making their way up to Jerusalem for the festivals to worship the living and true God at a high point in their calendar.

But it is also not simply a psalm of ascent. It is a psalm of lament. It is a psalm that expresses sorrow. A psalm that expresses confusion in the presence of God.

And tonight I just want to look at a few themes from this psalm as we prepare to take the Lord's Supper together this weekend. The first thing we see in this passage are the depths.

[16 : 59] The depths. That's in verses 1 and 2. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord. O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my pleas for mercy.

Here we see the psalmist speaking about crying to God from the depths. Crying to God from the depths. And in verse 1, right away the psalmist finds himself in the depths.

This is a psalm that doesn't begin in the heights. It doesn't begin with praise. It doesn't begin with an expression or exclamation of worship. It doesn't have a psalmist immediately declaring his overwhelming love for God or even celebrating God's love for him.

The psalmist is speaking from the depths. He finds himself in this environment where he is surrounded by chaotic forces. He is experiencing despondency, dejection, despair.

He feels that he is on the verge of devastation, destruction, even death itself. And he is floundering around in absolute terror. He is overwhelmed by the waves of anguish.

[18 : 08] And he knows that he has to call on someone for deliverance. But he cannot call on himself. Self-help isn't the answer to the problem the psalmist is facing. Neither can he call on his friends.

Neither can he call on his family. He cannot even call on a minister or elder. And so he is left going to one place and calling on one person. We're told he calls on the name of the Lord.

And you note in your Bibles that this word Lord is in small capital letters. This isn't God's title. This is God's name. His personal name.

His covenant name. His glorious name that reflects the glorious character of God. It is a name that speaks of the eternal and unchangeable and incorruptible nature of God.

It is a name that speaks of the self-existence and self-sufficiency of God. It is a name that speaks of the salvation of God. Because if you remember how Moses at Mount Sinai was speaking to God.

[19 : 09] And God reveals his name, the Lord, to Moses. And he says to Moses, I am the Lord who is compassionate and gracious. Slow to anger. Abounding in love and faithfulness.

Forgiving rebellion and wickedness and sin. The psalmist is shipwrecked. The psalmist is sinking. The psalmist is going under. And he calls on the name of God.

And there is a desperation in this cry as you see in verses 1 and 2. He says, I cry to you, O Lord. O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive.

Can you hear the psalmist's earnestness? Can you hear his desperation? He has seen, act, O Lord, or I am going to die. Act, O Lord, or I am going under.

Act, O Lord, or I am going to drown. The psalmist speaks about crying to God from the depths. And you know, the life of the Christian involves being in the depths, doesn't it?

[20 : 09] It involves being in the valley of darkness. It involves going through, as one writer has said, the dark night of the soul. Some people can be so shallow, so superficial, so hurtful about the Christian life.

They speak about positive thinking and victorious Christian living. They never want to give the impression of being depressed or down or downtrodden. There is no mention that you must experience Egypt before you enter the promised land.

They have no room for lament in their theology. But the Christian life, and you notice yourselves, so often involves singing. Not in the major key, but in the minor key.

That is why we love the psalms. Because the psalms have the minor key so often being sung. We see that in the life of Spurgeon. We see it in the life of William Cowper.

We see it in the life of that great missionary, David Brainerd, who wrote in his diary, I was so overwhelmed with depression, I knew not how to live.

[21 : 09] I longed for death exceedingly. My soul was sunk in deep waters. And the question is, where do you go? Who do you cry out to when you find yourself in those depths?

And the psalmist is saying here, you must go to God. You must go to Jesus. You must call on the name of the Lord.

He is the shepherd who, yes, he leads the sheep by the green pastures and the still waters. But he is also that shepherd, isn't he? Who goes with his people, with his sheep, into the valley of the shadow of death.

The places and the spaces of deepest darkness. Friend, this may be very hard for us to hear. But it is far better to be found praying in the depths than playing on the heights.

Isn't that true? Better to be found praying in the depths than playing on the heights. And so when we are in the depths, the question is, will we call on God?

[22 : 12] Is our faith that real, that solid, that confident that we can take God into the darkest experiences? Even if it simply involves crying out to him.

You may not have the words to say. You may not have the answers. You may not have all the understanding. But you have this. You have a cry on your lips. A cry on the name of God.

That's the depths. This brings us second to the delight. Verses 3 and 4. If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared.

And here the psalmist expresses his delight in God's forgiveness. In verses 1 and 2 he spoke about being in the depths. Now sometimes you can be in the depths because of homesickness.

Sometimes you can be in the depths because of illness. Sometimes you can be in the depths because of bereavement. Sometimes you can be in the depths because of persecution. Sometimes you can be in the depths because someone has shot you a text message or an email message.

[23 : 21] And you think, how can I go on? How can I face tomorrow? How can I face this people? How can I face this people? How can I face this people? But here the psalmist is in the depths because of his sin.

He is submerged in this ocean of guilt. He has already cried out in verse 2 for mercy. He knows he has offended God. He knows he has let God down.

He knows he has disappointed God. And then in verse 3 he speaks about his iniquities. And the word iniquity relates to crookedness. Distortion. A bent that goes against God.

The psalmist knows that his character and his behaviour have dishonoured God. They have displeased God. They have disappointed God. And now he is in the depths of despair.

And that brings us to his question in verse 3. If you, O Lord, should mark iniquities. O Lord, who could stand? I wonder, do you ever worry about how others would react if they knew your deepest, darkest secrets?

[24 : 24] Do you ever worry that they might reject you if they knew the very worst about you? Maybe for the younger people this evening. Do you worry about what your parent might say to you if you do something that disappoints them?

The psalmist knows here that if God marks down his iniquities and acts on it, remembers it, treats him the way that he deserves, then he will not stand acquitted or accepted at God's final judgment when he comes before the throne of God.

He knows that he faces doom, faces destruction. It is the same realisation that he has done. It is the same realisation that he has done before God's indignation. Who can endure the heat of God's anger?

His wrath is poured out like fire. The rocks are broken into pieces before him. It is the same realisation the prophet Malachi came to when he said, Who can endure the day of God's coming?

Who can stand when God appears? For God is like a refiner's fire. And this brings us then to the psalmist's joy in verse 4, where he says that wonderful, But God, but with you there is forgiveness that you may be feared.

[25 : 35] The psalmist is in the depths. Knows he's a sinner. Knows he deserves God's condemnation, God's rejection. And he has cried out to God for mercy.

And now he says, But with you there is forgiveness. But with you there is mercy. But with you there is justification. God hasn't acted on the psalmist's sin.

God hasn't kept a record of the psalmist's sin. God hasn't called the psalmist's sin to mind. God hasn't thrown the psalmist's sin in his face. This is the God, we're told, who treads the sin of his people underfoot.

This is the God who casts the sin of his people behind his back. This is the God who hurls the sin of his people into the sea. This is the God who removes the sin of his people as far as east as from the west.

This is the God who blots out and forgets the sin of his people. This is the God who covers and washes away the sin of his people. This is the God who cancels the debt of the sin of his people.

[26 : 37] This is the God who forgives his people and ensures that they stand totally, completely free from any condemnation.

The God of whom Paul was able to say there is now no condemnation in Christ Jesus who is able to bring any charge against God's elect.

And now the psalmist says that he fears God, he reverences God, he worships God because of God's forgiveness. Isn't that wonderful? He doesn't fear God in order to be forgiven.

He fears God because he is forgiven. He doesn't worship God to earn God's love. He worships God because he is the object of God's love. He has experienced this wonderful second chance, this incredible new beginning, this amazing grace.

And he has come to the place of seeing this merciful and this gracious God who forgives his people as being his greatest treasure. He can say the words of be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart, because he has experienced the grace of the gospel, the grace of the second chance.

[27 : 50] The psalmist expresses his delight in God's forgiveness. Mark and Luther, the great reformer, loved this psalm because he said it contains so much of the gospel.

In fact, Luther went so far as to say this is a Pauline psalm. He felt that the apostle Paul could have written it. It was so close to the truth of what Paul wrote in passages like Ephesians 2.

And it is a wonderful psalm because it points us to the good news about Jesus. Isn't it wonderful that sin and wrath and condemnation isn't the last word? Isn't it wonderful that God's grace, God's mercy, God's forgiveness is the last word?

Isn't it wonderful that our sin, our iniquities have been paid for? Isn't it wonderful that God has sent his son for the salvation of his people? Isn't it wonderful that God's forgiveness is found free at the cross?

Isn't it wonderful that Jesus became our sin offering, received our punishment, died in our place, was raised as a guarantee of our future resurrection, and now has prepared a place for us in glory?

[28 : 59] Isn't it wonderful that God gives new starts, new beginnings? No matter what we have done through his only son, who removes and deals not with some of our sin, not with most of our sin, but with all of our sin, every atom, every molecule of our sin.

Isn't it wonderful that tonight you and I can sing in Tarbert, in Christ alone my hope is found, here in the love of God I stand. It is not any ordinary hymn.

It is not any ordinary truth. It is not just something that we fill up five minutes of the service with. We are saying, in Christ alone my hope is found, here in the love of God I stand.

And if you're sitting here tonight and you cannot call yourself a Christian yet, this gospel tells you that this incredible forgiveness, this amazing grace is freely offered to you.

And all you're required to do is receive this Jesus. All you're required to do is embrace this Jesus. All you're required to do is rest on this Jesus as a gift and call on him as your Lord, your God, your Saviour.

[30 : 10] That is all you're asked to do. Nothing more, nothing less. And if you are sitting here tonight and you are a Christian, this passage is asking you, are you fearing God?

Are you reverencing Jesus? Is it your desire to worship Jesus tonight? Are you rejoicing in this merciful and gracious God who is revealed to you in this glorious gospel?

That is a delight. This brings us third to the description, verses five and six. I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in his word I hope. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

And here the psalmist describes his waiting for God's restoration. Waiting for God's restoration. The central theme of verses five and six is waiting. The psalmist speaks about waiting on God, the one who is the fountain of grace.

And the psalmist speaks about waiting on God's word, God's promise of salvation. And look at the way the psalmist describes that waiting in verse six. My soul waits for the Lord more than watchmen wait for the morning, more than watchmen wait for the morning.

[31 : 26] In the ancient world, the watchmen were those who kept watch over the city until the dawn of day. And that is the experience of the psalmist. He is waiting for the sun of God's promised salvation to rise.

He is longing for that day. He is assured of that day. He is waiting with excited expectation and anticipation for that day, just like a watchman would wait for the morning.

I think a little of when I worked as a caterer in an old folks home. And I was on the night shifts. And you were exhausted on those night shifts.

And you were just longing to see that little bit of blue in the sky that would show you the sun was about to rise. And three hours time, the staff turnover, changeover would happen.

And I would get to my bed. I was waiting for the morning. And here is the psalmist waiting for the morning of God's salvation. But what exactly is he waiting for?

[32 : 27] You see, he has sung in verses three and four about being forgiven, being liberated from condemnation. But he still has to live with the consequences of his sin.

The stain is removed. The condemnation has been lifted. But the scars remain. You remember how God forgave David after the Bathsheba incident.

He said to David, I have put your sin behind me. But David still had to live with the scars. He still had to live with the consequences of his sinful actions. In 2 Samuel 23, we're given a list of David's past and present military chiefs.

And we read the name of Uriah, Bathsheba's husband, whom David had murdered. And one commentator calls this the memory that haunts David. He cannot erase Uriah from his memory.

Cannot erase Uriah from the annals of history. Or we might think of Paul. Or we might think of Paul. So wonderfully and incredibly transformed by Jesus into this great proclaimer of the gospel.

[33 : 33] But you remember how he is so haunted by the memory of his past. And he says so often, I was a blasphemer. I was a persecutor. I was a violent man.

He cannot get over the fact that he persecuted the church of Jesus. Or I think of the testimony of a man who had been heavily involved in drugs and violent gang culture.

And he was miraculously converted. But only months after his conversion, he was diagnosed with HIV AIDS. He had a new life in Christ, yes. He had received that amazing grace, that amazing forgiveness.

But on this side of eternity, he still had to live with the scars of his old way of life. And that may be your experience tonight. That might be my experience tonight.

We know we've been forgiven by God. We know the stain has been removed by the blood of Jesus. We know that we are free from condemnation through Jesus. But that broken marriage.

[34 : 34] Or that damaged relationship. Or that poor health that has resulted from some past sinful behaviour. Still remains. And it will never be restored.

It will never be fixed this side of eternity. Or maybe we find ourselves haunted by the memory of something we have said. Or something that we have done to someone. We long to erase it, but we remember it each day.

I still wake up some mornings with the memory of things that I have said to people ten years ago. Ringing in the back of my head. Maybe that's you tonight as well.

And that is why the psalmist is longing for that day. Waiting for that day when God will fully deliver the cosmos. From all the effects of sin. He's longing for the day.

Waiting for the day when he will taste and see the totality of God's promised salvation. Not some of it. Not most of it. But all of it. The psalmist describes his waiting for God's restoration.

[35 : 38] And do you know friend, the Christian life is about waiting on God, isn't it? It's about waiting on God's word. Waiting on God's promised salvation. Waiting on Jesus to come and make everything new.

It's about waiting on Jesus to fully renew and restore our lives and our world. It is about waiting for the full restoration and the full completion of God's work of redemption.

When all the stains will be removed. And all the scars will be removed. And all the effects of sin will be totally removed. And that is what the Lord's Supper is really all about.

The Lord's Supper anticipates the great feast that we will enjoy with Jesus in his glorious kingdom. Where all the guilt and all the consequences of our past, present and future sin will no longer be present.

And our taking part in the Lord's Supper is simply the expression of our waiting on God. We eat that meal, we drink that wine until Jesus returns.

[36 : 42] And then we will feast with him in his kingdom, in his banqueting house and at his heavenly table. This do in remembrance of me and do this until I drink and eat with you anew afresh in the kingdom of God.

Friend, will you take this meal this Sunday? Will you take this meal, friend, because you know you are forgiven in Jesus?

And now you are waiting for that great day of resurrection and restoration when Jesus will come and he will renew you and he will glorify you and he will take you to his home and he will sit you down at his heavenly table.

Will you take that meal, friend, simply as the anticipation, the expectation of the meal still to come? Will you take this meal, will you take this meal, will you take this meal because you are saying, I want to show that I am waiting on Jesus?

And it would be wonderful if he even came as I was eating this meal. Oh, friend, could you imagine if he even returned this Lord's day and we weren't at his table? We take the meal.

[38 : 41] Hope in the Lord. He declares the importance of hoping in the Lord. The psalmist begins by telling Israel in verse 7 to hope in the Lord. He is calling on God's people.

He is calling on the church. He is calling on the redeemed to hope in God. And this is something I am called to do. And this is something you are called to do as the Lord's people. We are called to tell people and encourage people and declare to people, even those within the church, hope in the Lord.

Is there someone you know that you need to say that to tonight? Do you look on this congregation this evening and you are seeing someone that you know you should say hope in the Lord too?

But the psalmist goes on in verses 7 and 8 to say, why people should hope in the Lord. And it's quite simple. This God, this Lord is the only one who is able to take his people from the pit, from the depths and restore them, set them free.

The psalmist tells us he is a God of steadfast love. The word in Hebrew is hesed. And it refers to God's unbreakable, unshakable, incomparable, indescribable, undeserved, unchanging covenant love.

[39 : 58] The image we might want to consider is a marriage. A couple meet. They fall in love. And they have all the butterflies and everything else that goes with falling in love.

That love is a heartfelt emotion toward one another. But they decide they're going to get married. And at their wedding, they pledge their love.

For better, for worse. For sickness and in health. Until death parts them. It is a public declaration that this is a love that will be centered in the will.

A love that is a settled commitment. A love that isn't based on emotion. A love that isn't based on feeling. A love that isn't based on little butterflies that rise up in your stomach.

A love that says, no matter what, I am pledged to you and you are pledged to me. And that is what we mean by God's steadfast love. It is his unbreakable, his unshakable, his incomparable, his indescribable, his undeserved, unchanging, one way covenant love.

[41 : 11] And the psalmist goes on and he says that with his God is a full, plentiful redemption. He doesn't give his people a bare minimum. Gives them the very best.

He gives us all that Jesus has. We enjoy all that Jesus enjoys. We receive this abundant life. We are lavished, as John says in his gospel, with this grace upon grace.

That super abundant grace. And with this in mind, the psalmist says, Hope in him. Rest on him. Depend on him.

Don't put your hope in your emotions. Don't put your hope in your feelings. Don't put your hope in the opinions of others. Don't put your hope in the charisma of your minister or your elders or some other church leader.

Don't put your hope in your present circumstances. Put your hope in the Lord. That is what the psalmist is saying. Put your hope in the God of steadfast love.

[42 : 14] Put your hope in the God in whom there is plentiful redemption. The psalmist declares the importance of hoping in the Lord.

You know, friends, when we're down, when we're low in spirit, when we feel that we're in the depths, it's easy to look at ourselves and ask, What's wrong with me?

How can I be more joyful in the Lord? How can I be more satisfied in God? How can I be happier in Jesus?

I have a friend who is prone to going down at times, and when they go really low like that, they start writing in a little journal about what's wrong with them and how can they possibly get right with God.

What must they do to be right with God? What must they do to see God's face once again? Here the psalmist is encouraging himself, and he is encouraging others who are in the depths, who are at whits and corners, who are at their lowest depth, to turn away from themselves.

[43 : 19] And he says, Turn away from yourself and look to God. Hope in the Lord. Rest on your Redeemer. And we hope in the Lord, because in Him there is grace that is greater than all of our sin.

We hope in the Lord, because in Him there is the steadfast love that is unshakable, that is unbreakable, and that can reach down to the deepest pit that we have sunk into, and can take hold of us, and will not let go of us, but will rather carry us up, and put us on the solid rock that is Jesus and His salvation, with a song of praise on our lips to God.

We hope in the Lord, because He has promised to redeem His people from the penalty of sin, the power of sin, and indeed one day, the very presence of sin.

We look, friends, to the objective work of Jesus. We look to His saving sacrifice on the cross that is symbolized in the Lord's Supper, that declares to us that the condemnation has been removed, and the place in God's glorious eternal kingdom is now assured.

We take this meal, we remember those truths, and we hope. We hope. Hope. Is this what you're declaring to your soul this evening?

[44 : 47] Even when you're in the depths? Hope in the Lord. And is this what you're declaring to others? When they're in the depths, and maybe they're saying to you tonight, I may not come to the Lord's table this Sunday.

I don't feel right. I don't feel I'm in the right place. Hope in the Lord. Amen. Well, let's close this time of worship by singing to God's praise in the words of Psalm 130.

Psalm 130, the whole of the psalm. Lord, from the depths to the eye cried, my voice, Lord, do thou hear, and to my supplications voice, give an attentive ear.

We'll stand to sing the whole psalm to God's praise. Amen. Lord, from the depths to thee I cry, my voice for to the hear, and to my supplications voice, give an attentive ear.

Lord, who shall stand if thou, O Lord, should mark iniquity?

[46 : 26] But yet with thee forgiveness is that fear thou mayest be.

I wait for God, my soul thou wait, my hope is in His word.

More than day that for morning watch, my soul waits for the Lord.

I see more than day that to watch, the morning light to see.

Let Israel open the Lord, Lord, for with Him mercy's peace.

[47 : 49] And plenteous retention is ever found within.

Lord, we thank you and we praise you that you are the God who delivers His people from the penalty of sin, from the power of sin, and you have promised in your word you will one day even deliver them from the very presence of sin.

And we do delight in your wonderful forgiveness, your amazing grace this evening that is found in Jesus. And we do pray that every one of us would be holding on to Him and that we would be hoping in Him.

Lord, we pray that over these coming days you would increase our hope, you would increase our confidence in you. We rejoice that we are not saved by the quantity or the quality of our faith, but by the object of our faith.

And yet we pray that we would enjoy this Jesus more and more. For we pray in His name. Amen.