

When I am a Schwarzer lived, I have a bit of cancer now! When I did it, I began pictures such a photo!

When the Bill of Pak's his biography, before Management C He architecture looked into the! He said to you, It was, it wasn't an uzi', it was great in orchid, it was a better future life, and sane now is limited to the piled Lay on your gebuQ Then we, as a child was using the warm Faculty Fighting the ground Straight and cleaning, We have forced Did you understand your inim Pete But first of all my life I me I Down.

What I What, I Tarot, I They, back to school. They are keeps being, Chinese, everybody knows why an English is saying . This is something.

[11 : 58] But I made some English if you want to try and find the Englishinton as well which cách of the language look like thisruk.

Here we are. Notine from all! We are just Story on the collegial feast. We are a treasure. In here, this is which is not the negatives.

Amen. Amen.

We'll sing again to God's praise. We'll sing from Mission Praise number 493. O come, O come, Emmanuel. O come, O come, Emmanuel.

And ransom, Captain Israel. That mourns in earthly exile here.

[13 : 37] until the Son of God appear. Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, O come, the Lord of might, who to thy tribes on Sinai's height ancient times did give them all in cloud and majesty and awe.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, the Lord of Jesse, free thy Lord from Satan's tyranny.

From depths of hell thy people save and give them victory o'er the grave.

[15 : 19] Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, the day-spring come and cheer our spirits by thine adventier.

Disperse the moonly clouds of night and desperate shadows moon to flight.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

O come, the King of David, come and open wide our heavenly home.

[16 : 33] Make safe the way that leads on high and cross the path to misery.

Rejoice, rejoice, Emmanuel shall come to thee, O Israel.

If you could turn, please, now in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 1.

Matthew chapter 1. Matthew chapter 1.

Matthew chapter 1.

[18 : 25] Matthew chapter 1.

name Jesus amen and may God bless that reading of his word to us let's pray just as we come back to the word our heavenly father we thank you for this your word we thank you for the the account here of the birth of Jesus we thank you that Jesus is your son and our savior and we pray that you would help us to see that help each one of us to see our sin and our need of a savior and help each one of us to see Jesus the one who came to save us from our sins and give to us faith Lord we pray that we wouldn't just see and hear but that we would believe as Mary and Joseph did and that we would respond in a way that brings honor to your name so hear our prayers and help us as we meditate upon your word now when we pray all this in Jesus name and for Jesus sake amen I want to continue from where we left off this this morning and this morning we we noted that at this time of year there are many things that are all around us that indicate that show to us that it's a special time of year it's a it's Christmas so if I was to ask some of the young ones they would tell me what kind of things do you do you see around that would remind you of the fact that it's Christmas you can answer the question for this one yeah Lois lights there's lights I won't I think I'll probably stop at one tonight will we there's lights and there's trees and there's cards and these things they they highlight the fact that it's it's it's this time of year it's Christmas time of year um there's food there's music there's functions there's there's all kinds of busyness there's lots of good things and these things actually they can be pointers to Jesus as we walk around Tarborough and we see the lights as we said with the young ones a couple of weeks ago we should think about Jesus he's the light of the world he is the one who came to to overcome the darkness so when we see the lights we should think on Jesus and uh we'll see the Christmas trees uh as I walk short us around the the village and pass all these windows

I see I see Christmas trees in your windows and um we could say the Christmas tree is a pointer it's a reminder of the cross there's a tree uh that uh we take out at Christmas time and I know this doesn't go back to the biblical text and all that kind of thing but when you see the tree think about the tree of Calvary think about the cross think about where Jesus came uh to to go for us and then there's these cards that come there's cards that come uh day by day with with greetings and uh the cards they they remind us of the message that God uh gives to us uh we are given the Bible we are given the message of Christmas the word became flesh he made us dwelling among us uh the Jesus the the Savior came uh to to save us from our sins and there's the gifts there's the presents there's all these things and we can we can draw lines from these things to remind us of Jesus but equally these things uh can be a distraction as well the parties that um mark Christmas can sometimes distract us from Christ they can sometimes pull us away from Christ uh the the busyness of the season can sometimes cause us not to meditate more upon Jesus but to drift from the word of God because of the pressures on our time uh so there can be distractions at this time of year and so tonight uh I want us to as we did this morning uh just return to this section of Matthew's gospel and think about the essence of Christmas the simple profound meaning of Christmas and in the morning uh we thought about salvation the big picture was it was the story of salvation the story of of the grace that comes from God we can't save ourselves we cannot climb our way up into God's approval salvation isn't something that we could climb up or work up salvation had to come down it's a gift so we thought this morning uh as we kind of focused more on verses 18 to 21 the grace that comes from God and this evening

I want to think about about the word communion as the sort of big picture the peace that we enjoy with God and these are the diamonds you could say of the of the gospel message these are the things that sparkle but even when we think about diamonds and jewelry if uh you're going to the the jewelers to to buy your girlfriend doll uh a present at Christmas time a necklace or a bracelet or a a diamond it's not just on a a bit of white paper in the windowsill it's on a dark cloth because against the darkness of the cloth the diamond the gold it sparkles and these diamonds of the gospel message grace from God and peace with God they're set against the dark backdrop of who we are and the problem that we have and the first thing tonight

[25 : 18] I want to highlight is the is the problem of sin now as we as we look at the gospel of Matthew uh it is the gospel and uh what does the the word gospel mean boys and girls do you know what the word gospel means it means good news you don't know that you're just a bit shy you're too far away over there it's the good news but the good news is only good news because it reverses the bad news and that takes us to the the problem of sin that's threaded all the way through the bible and to see the origin of that problem uh you need to go right the way back to the very beginning genesis 1 god creates the world genesis 2 god creates man and so we see man and woman we see adam and eve in this in this beautiful garden they've been made in the image of god uh they are without sin as god created them they're in perfect communion with with each other and with god and everything is the way it should be genesis 2 and then in genesis 3 man falls and with that fall comes the problem of sin and what did sin do well sin separated man from god and so we see adam and eve going from this state of contentment and joy and peace in the garden enjoying fellowship with god in the cool of the the garden how do they go from that state to a state of hiding from god there's a distance that sin brings in and sin brings in death and what god designed to be to be good is distorted and that's the bad news that's the problem that was in the world and that's the problem that still is in the world so you and i can pick up our phones and look at sky news apps we can we can open our newspapers we can see all these headlines that fill us with dismay and every headline can be traced back to the problem of sin it's a problem that was in the world it's a problem that is in the world but it's a problem also that's in our hearts the problem of sin and as we prepare to come to the lord's table we need to acknowledge this we need to to confess our sin we should be doing this daily but especially as we come to the table as we prepare to come to the table we need to confess our sin you and i need to be those who are repenting of our sin one of the girls was at the dentist last week and the girls have had problems with some teeth coming in in the wrong place some teeth that don't come in at all some teeth that come in in the wrong place and as i see the problem that they have i remember it's exactly the problem that i had so the problem of i think one of them described it as the deficient genes was passed from me the deficient dentistry was a problem that was passed from me it was inherited from me so the dentist says open your mouth he takes the photographs and he tells them about the problem that runs

through the family on my side now you and i have inherited the problem of sin from adam and that's the teaching of scripture god shows us and he tells us the extent of that problem and as we examine ourselves as we're called to in preparation for coming we confess our sin it's the first step as we prepare to come to the table we confess our sin in the quietness of this place we confess our sin the table is the place that we remember and profess faith in jesus the savior of sinners if we don't see that we are sinners we won't see a need for a savior alistair beg in his reading notes just a couple of days ago wrote this he says you don't need a fire brigade to come to your house if your house isn't on fire neither would you want a doctor administering an ivy drip when you're perfectly healthy similarly until we are truly aware of our need for forgiveness god's story of mercy and grace doesn't mean much to us but when god is at work when god the holy spirit is at work in our lives he shows us in his love in his mercy he shows us the problem of our sin and we confess it and as we confess it we can and we must come to the table to receive the grace of jesus remember the story of the girl who was broken as the elements were being passed around and the minister rabbi duncan knew the woman he knew the girl he knew her state he knew that she she was a christian she was broken by her sin as the elements were coming to her she passed them on and he went down he got the bread he got the wine he went back to her and he said tack it lass it's for sinners and so we first of all see we acknowledge we confess the problem of our sin the second thing we see as we actually get into the text here in matthew is there is the promise of a saviour so verse 22 says all this took place to fulfil what the lord had said through the prophet so matthew talks about all this and we thought about all this in the morning i'm not going to go back over it in detail but under the umbrella of all this we see the story of mary and joseph and what was happening mary was with child joseph is engaged to mary and he receives this this message from god which just turns this whole world upside down and all this says matthew was the fulfilment of the promise of the prophets and matthew in verse 23 he's speaking about isaiah the prophet he's quoting from isaiah 7 14 and it's the promise

of a saviour this is a promise that was first heard in genesis 3 15 we rewind all the way back to the garden of eden man falls but immediately god promises that there was one who would come from the seed of the woman who would be the saviour and as time passed and the prophets were called and they were raised up and they spoke the promise of a saviour was given and the volume was turned up as the years went on and now says matthew with the birth of jesus this promise of a saviour was fulfilled now in this world we're we're we're suspicious about promises aren't we because in this world we are we're so conscious of of how often promises get broken we see chaos and politics and local government and national government which are largely down to broken promises we see heartache in marriages we see heart and friendships because of broken promises we know that we are guilty ourselves of broken promises but the truth to take hold of as we think about what we're reading in this passage and as we look at the table that spread before us is the truth that God never breaks his promises when God makes a promise he always keeps it promise and sometimes we have to wait a long time to see God's promises fulfilled if you scan back through the first 17 verses of Matthew chapter 1 we're given a record of the family history of Joseph now why do we need to see all these names why are we taken through this this huge section of time well it's it's to illustrate the fact that through the generations God was working on this promise that he made that he was keeping that he was going to fulfill and that promise was a promise to send a savior there was the problem of our sin but there was the promise of a savior and tonight as we approach

Christmas how many days are we from Christmas 10 or so days is it at this time of year when we remember the birth of Jesus we thank God that he is a promise keeping God and tonight as we see the table as we see the bread as we see the wine as we remember that the death of Jesus the savior that death that saves us from the problem of our sin we thank God that he is a promise keeping God the bread and the wine that we will see that we will touch that we will taste there are elements that speak to us about how far God was willing to go in keeping his promise to save us so let's trust them tonight today and every day let's trust this God let's believe his word let's receive the word made flesh

Jesus as our savior and trust him follow him profess him honor him as our Lord there's a problem of sin that affects all of us as those who have descended from from Adam that is the promise of a savior the promise that was fulfilled in Jesus and the third thing we see here is the reality of peace with God we have peace with God verse 23 says the virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel which means God with us and that name Emmanuel it's just a

mind-blowing name we read in verse 21 that the child Joseph was told the child you are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins the name Jesus meant God will save so this child was to be called

[38 : 52] Jesus because he was the promised savior he is the one who would bring salvation from God to man but his name was not just to be to be called Jesus he was also to be called Emmanuel which means God with us and we should think often about that name Emmanuel God with us as we look to Jesus as we read about him in the in the gospel message as we listen to what he has to say as we as we look to see what he did for us we see God Emmanuel is God with us he is the the visible image of the invisible God he is the God man his name is Emmanuel God with us no longer God against us if we were left in our sin God would be against us but because of

Jesus because of his saving work if we're trusting him no longer is God against us that God is with us the cross is the the greatest expression of the truth that God is with us no longer is man in enmity against God but there is peace with God in Jesus no longer does sin separate man from God but in Jesus man and God are brought back into union all that sin broke Jesus fixed through Jesus we can know communion with God and the table is the place where we see that picture that picture of of union of of communion with God and so we are invited in fact we're not just invited we're commanded to sit at the Lord's table if we are trusting the Lord to taste of his grace and at the table actually we're given a preview of all that we will enjoy eternally if we are trusting Jesus so we think about heaven we think about this great feast this is just the taste of the greater feast that will that will never end and as we come to the table and as we sit as the Lord's people with each other there is that sense of communion there is that sense of of union with God and it's just a taste of what will be eternal if we are in Christ revelation 21 that passage that we so often read John gets a window into heaven and this is what he says he says I heard a loud voice from the throne saying behold the dwelling place of God is with man he will dwell with them and they will be his people and God himself will be with them as their God so because of Jesus there is union with God there is peace with God and there is union there is communion with all of God's people as a taste tonight this is a taste of what is to come for those who are in Christ there's a song that was written by a contemporary band called Crowder there's a great wee section in it that speaks about the table and it says this there's hope for the hopeless and all those who strayed come sit at the table come taste the grace there's rest for the weary rest that endures earth has no sorrow that heaven can't cure so as we come to the table we remember the death of Jesus in our place and we remember that through that death if we are trusting in Christ we have peace eternal peace with God the problem of sin the promise of a savior the reality that we experience that we know of peace with God and the final thing here briefly is the profession of faith on the part of Joseph verse 24 and 25 when Joseph woke up he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife but he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son and he gave him the name Jesus and I just want to finish by by noting that the straightforwardness of Joseph and his response to God his readiness to take God at his word and to just trust and to obey

God speaks into Joseph's life and tells him that this this child that his wife to be is carrying as as the savior the Messiah the Christ and Joseph is told probably against all his instance that he was to take Mary home to be his wife that he was to take this child into his life so what did Joseph do well he just believed and he did exactly what God said he professed faith by the thing that he did even though it was scary for him and even though it would have been immensely costly and that profession of faith on the part of Joseph is it's still being heard it's still being seen we're we're studying it this evening it has an impact on us still tonight his profession of faith his readiness to do what God had said now we're not in Joseph's shoes we we see much more than that than Joseph did because we have the whole New Testament we we know how this story goes we aren't wrestling with the that the same level of of disruption and shock that Joseph was wrestling with as he gets this news that breaks into his life and yet for some here to trust Jesus to take Jesus into our lives by by faith to take Jesus into our homes and our families as Joseph had to to take Jesus into our workplace to take Jesus and introduce him to to our friends it will be disruptive for some who are hesitating for some who are holding back it's likely because of the the disruption and the cost that will be incurred if they take Jesus into their lives it will be costly it is costly whether we're trusting Jesus or whether we're stepping out in faith to profess that we are we are believers in Jesus it will be costly it will tongue it will cause tongues to wag as it did in Joseph's world so what do we do as we think about the cost we do what Joseph did we just trust God and we obey if we

want to be saved if we are this evening coming to terms with the reality that we are sinners and we want to be saved we need to trust Jesus so for the young ones here for those who haven't yet done it for those who may be behind a camera somewhere trust Jesus call upon the name of the Lord and you'll be saved if you never call on him you'll never be saved so trust him call upon him and for those who are saved by his blood we are to profess our faith in him in our homes in our workplace amongst our families with our friends

we are to profess our faith in Christ and as we come to the table tonight what are we doing we are professing our faith in Christ we are saying we are not worthy but we are trusting in the one who is worthy we are saying we are sinners but we have trusted we are leaning upon the saviour so come to the table says Jesus don't just look at it come to it don't just see the bread and wine take it tack it it's for sinners it's for sinners who have received grace from God in Christ it's for sinners who have peace with God through Christ it's for sinners who know

[50 : 33] Jesus and who are professing faith in Jesus as our saviour let's pray heavenly father we pray now that as we come to the table that table where we remember the immense cost that was paid in order for us to receive grace help us we pray to remember Jesus to to have hearts that well up with thankfulness for all that you have done for us in Christ enable us to to do this in remembrance of of him and we pray this in Jesus name amen we're going to sing as we come to the table from Psalm 51 and let me just say as we do come it's not the free church table it's not

North Harris table it's a table where any who know and trust the Lord are invited to come and even if there are those who haven't yet come but who are trusting in Jesus who know that they are sinners who have asked Jesus to save them even in the singing of this Psalm step over and sit at the table and take the elements and we can speak afterwards Psalm 51 and we'll sing from verses 7 to verse 13 Do thou with this sprinkle me I shall be cleansed so ye wash thy meat and then I shall be whiter than the snow down to the end of verse 13 to God's praise I shall be cleansed so yea wash thou me and then I shall be whiter than the snow of gladness and of joyfulness make me to hear the voice that saw this very won't switch thou has broken may rejoice all my iniquities plotted life is high from my sin create a green heart glory new arise spread me within cast me not from thy sight nor take thy holy spread away restore me thy salvation joy with thy peace let me stay then will I teach thy ways unto those thee those that transgresser thee and those that sinners are shall then be turned unto thee thee thee I just going to read the words of the water from 1 Corinthians chapter 11 the apostle Paul gives these words of institution just highlighting the fact that as we come those who come to the table are those who are remembering Jesus we don't come to the table to think about ourselves to put before the Lord our efforts our good works because we're told in Isaiah they're like filthy rags we remember Jesus we remember what he has done for us and so 1 Corinthians chapter 11 and verse 23 the apostle Paul says for I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed to bread and when he had given thanks he broke the and said this is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me in the same way also he took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes until he comes and so as the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed to bread we take these elements of bread and wine and we set them apart from all common uses there here on the table for this holy use and as Jesus and as Jesus gave thanks and blessed what was prepared we follow his example now and we pray let's pray

Heavenly Father we thank you we thank you for all that we are called to remember as we take the bread and as we take the wine we thank you Father for your great love for us that God so loved the world that he sent his only son and we thank you that Jesus your son our saviour came into this world knowing that he would be despised and rejected we thank you that he came knowing that he would be bruised and that he would be beaten that he would suffer and that he would die for us we thank you that Jesus although he is the Lord of all became a child in the manger in the manger and we thank you that he was willing to take all our transgressions and all our demons we thank you that he took them into his body on the tree that he who knew no sin became sin so that we could be made righteous so that we could be forgiven so that we could have peace with God as we trust in him so we say Lord as we sit at this table that we are trusting in Jesus we confess our sin we pray Lord that you would help us day by day to be repentant of our sin and we ask Lord that you would cleanse us from our sin that you would restore to us even as we take the bread and the wine the joy

of your salvation of us and help us we pray to profess the death of Jesus as we do this but also as we go from here help us to tell people in our words and through our lives about the the Saviour who came who was born who lived who died who died and who rose to give everlasting life to all who believe so bless this meal to us we pray and we ask all these things in Jesus name

Amen according then to the of our Lord Jesus Christ and for a memorial of him we do this we remember Jesus who the same night in which he was betrayed took bread and when he had blessed it and given thanks he broke it and said this this is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me and in the same way he took the cup and said this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup and you drink the cup with what the Holy Spirit and the same way he did in remembrance of me and said this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me for as often as you drink it for as often as you drink this bread for as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes

[61 : 21] I just want to tell a wee story before we finish I've told this before but I think of it every time I serve communion I just don't usually serve communion here I remember in Stornoway in the APC church years back before I came here I was asked to go in and take the communion services we had services on the Friday and Saturday and then on a Sunday morning we had communion and there was an elder with me sitting at the table a man called Callum McLean and he was keeping me right with what was going on over the course of the weekend and so after we'd had the service and I'd we'd had the we'd had the communion sacrament the bread had been offered out to the congregation and everybody I could see that wanted to be served had been served and the wine had gone out and everybody who had wanted to be served as far as I could see was served and I was

I was at this point and I was just about to speak to pray to finish the service off and Callum he got up from his chair and he took the he took the jug and he poured the jug the wine from the jug into the cup that was almost empty and he filled it back up and he didn't tell me anything about what was happening he just did it just poured the cup and I filled it back up and I looked at him and he looked at me and I looked at the congregation to see if there was somebody I had missed that I hadn't served and this was the signal of trying to get me to see that and I couldn't see anybody nobody was catching my eye and I kind of paused and I didn't know really what was happening but it was slightly uneasy for a minute or two and then I I just proceeded to to pray and bring the service to a close so after the service was finished and

I I pronounced the benediction I went over to Callum and I said did I miss someone and he looked at me and he said I don't think so did you I said I don't think so I said well why did you why did you fill the cup back up when everybody had already been served and he said because I wanted everybody in the room and especially those who hadn't come to the table to know that there's more left and boys and girls and those who are a bit older as well I want you to know that on this plate with bread and in these cups with the wine there's lots more left and it's a picture of grace it's a picture of of what Jesus has done that he has given his body he has shed his blood and everybody who believes in him anybody who comes to him will be saved there's no shortage of his grace of his salvation so let's come to him and let's trust him and let's receive all that he wants to give us we'll pray

Lord Jesus we thank you that you love us we thank you that we see on the table before us these elements that show us how much you love us the bread that speaks of your body given for us the wine that speaks about your blood shed to take away all of our sin we thank you that there is no shortage of your grace we thank you that there is power in the blood of Jesus to wash away all of our sin and we ask that you would enable us if we are trusting you to be thankful each day for that to live our lives as an expression of our love for you the one who first loved us and help us as we go from this place as your people to rise from the table and to share the message of the good news about Jesus with those that you put around us we pray for those who sit here at the table thankful for your blessing thankful for your peace but yet aware of those who have gone on ahead of them and took glory and we thank you Lord that we have the assurance in your word that those who have trusted in Jesus are in glory we thank you that they no longer have to taste just these glimpses of what heaven will be like because they experience the reality of God with them even now so we pray for your comfort we pray for your presence to be with those whose hearts are sore those who are grieving and we pray for the hope of the gospel to be with all of us and for anybody who hasn't yet

trusted Jesus we ask Lord that even tonight that they would receive the grace the greatest gift that was ever given the gift of Jesus

Christ as saviour for their sins the saviour for the whole world so hear our prayers part us with your blessing we pray we ask all this in Jesus name Amen we're going to sing to conclude the carol on the scheme hark the herald angels sing you'll see the line especially in that carol God and sinners reconcile peace on earth and mercy in my own God and sinners reconcile and this is the cause this is what we remember that made that possible Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Amen Hark the herald angels sing

[67 : 47] Glory to the newborn King Peace on earth and mercy mild God and sinners reconciled Join for all ye nations rise Join the triumph of the skies with angelic boasts proclaim Christ is born in Bethlehem Hark the herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King amen Christ is strong Christ the everlasting ceil wilderness

Hail the flesh that God had seen, hail the incarnate Deity.

Please does man with man to dwell, Jesus our Emmanuel. Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King.

Hail the herald-born Prince of Peace, hail the Son of Righteousness.

Light and life to all He brings, raised with healing in His ways.

[69 : 53] Mild He lays His glory by, born that man no more may die. Born to raise the sons of earth, born to give the second birth.

Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King. Heavenly Father again, we thank you for your presence with us.

We thank you for that peace, for that reconciliation that we enjoy. For the communion that we enjoy with you and with each other as those who are in Christ.

We pray your blessing upon us now as we go from this place. We thank you especially for those who sat with us for the first time at the table tonight.

We thank you for Kiki and for Anna with them and for Natalie. We pray your blessing upon them especially. We thank you for grace that saves.

[71 : 04] We thank you for grace that keeps. Grace that restores. And we praise you Lord for the fact that you promise that you will never let go of us when you take hold of us.

And we see the testimony of that Lord in our own lives and in the lives of those that we sit with this evening. We ask now that as we go from here the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the love of God the Father. The fellowship of God the Holy Spirit. Would be with us all now and forevermore. Amen. Amen.