

A New Way

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 08 March 2026

Preacher: Reverend Neil Lachie Macdonald

[0 : 00] Where we will hear God's word from John 13 again and we will hear a little of how Neel Ache came to know the Lord and was called into ministry.

! Maybe we'll hear some details about his family life in early years and these kind of things too. The only other thing to say is that the retiring offering this evening, usually we would have a retiring collection on the Sunday evening of the communion and the collection this evening will go to free church camps.

We've seen a lot of blessing through free church camps in the congregation here as well as across the denomination and so any donations tonight will go to the work of free church camps.

The table as you can see is set and for those who know the Lord and who trust in the Lord, the invitation is there to come.

It's not the free church table or North Harris table, it's the Lord's table. So if you're at the sides and you want to take the elements then at the time of serving you can just come across into the middle section.

[1 : 08] And today we're delighted to have two new members sitting for the first time, Lauren who's there and Miriam. And so we thank the Lord and are encouraged as we see the Lord working in the lives of his people.

These are all the notes as I think so I'll again hand over to you please Neel. Thank you David and good morning. Nice to see you all again on this nice morning.

We're going to begin our worship today singing to God's praise because that's what we do. We have a song to sing. The atheists have nothing to sing about but we have much to sing about and to give thanks for.

And so we're going to sing praise to God and we're going to sing from the words of the hymn, Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down. If we're able we'll stand and sing together.

Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven to earth come down.

[2 : 34] To earth come down. Fix in us thy humble dwelling, all thy faithful mercy's down.

Jesus, thou art all compassion, pure and founded above thy heart.

Visit us with high salvation, enter every trembling heart.

He will bring thy loving spirit into every troubled rest.

Let us all in need in heaven, let us find thy promised rest.

[3 : 47] Take away the love of sinning, alpha and omega be.

End of faith has its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.

Almighty to deliver, let us all thy grace receive.

Suddenly return, let us all in heaven. Suddenly return, let us all in heaven. Nevermore thy temple see.

Leave thee, we heard thee, all is blessing. Serve thee as thy hopes above. Pray and praise thee without ceasing.

[4 : 56] Glory in thy perfect love.

desde desde desde Finish and thy new creation, pure, unstopped, let us be.

Let us see thy great salvation, perfectly restored in thee.

Changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place.

Till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and grace.

[6 : 06] And so as we've sung, let's now pray. God our Father, we give thanks that our hearts sing because there is much to sing about.

That you are the one who is worthy of our praise, worthy of our exaltation, worthy of our adoration, because you are a God who is good and who is gracious and who is kind.

You are a God who is not indifferent, distant, remote, or far away. But you are one who is interested and invested. One who cares.

One who exercises his compassion. The one who offers us his comfort. The God who reveals himself to his people. And so, Lord, we pray that as you reveal yourself, that we may avail ourselves of the great truth that is set before us in the gospel.

That we would lay hold of the great invitation that is offered to each and everyone, extended by the gracious hand of the Savior. That we might come and that we might be made new in him.

[7 : 11] That we may be given a new heart and a new hope and an eternal future that can never be taken from us. We thank you that in Christ Jesus, we are saved by new birth into a living hope and into a lasting inheritance that can never perish, never spoil, never fade.

Kept in heaven for us by God himself. Lord, we look around and in the experiences that we have in our lives, we recognize all that is created and all that is beautiful and all that you have given to us to enjoy.

And yet we also recognize that all of these things are in decay. All of these things are passing away. But you are the one who is eternal and who does not change and who will always be as you are.

The great I am. And so Lord, help us to elevate the thoughts of our hearts and our minds that we might fix them on Jesus, the author, the sustainer, the perfecter, the keeper of our faith.

That we would know great treasure in heaven through him. And so we pray that you would bless us today as we gather in your name and as we come to your table and as we give thanks to you for the provision made for us in and through Jesus, the lamb that was slain, the one who came to give his life as a ransom for many, the one who came to serve and not to be served, the one who said, It is finished.

[8 : 45] We thank you for the finished work of salvation that is wrought through the Lord Jesus Christ, the one whose body was broken and whose blood was shed in order that we might be redeemed and forgiven and reconciled and restored unto you.

And so Lord, bless us today as we take these elements, these tokens of remembrance, and as we have thanksgiving and gratitude in our hearts. Lord, may you encourage us in our faith.

And we thank you for the profession of faith made by Lauren and Miriam. And we pray that you would bless them in their walk with you as they gain so much from that relationship with you.

Born again, made new in Christ Jesus, learning each and every day, eyes open to the wonder of grace and the mercy of God in Christ. We thank you for our young people.

We pray that you would guard their hearts. We pray that you would protect them in a world that would seek to pull them away from all that is true and good. Lord, we thank you for the work of the youth camps.

[9 : 48] And we pray that you would bless all of those who invest time and energy into the nurture of our young people in their faith, discipling and mentoring and pointing to Jesus, showing the great fun that can be had whilst knowing the Lord.

We thank you that you have made everything good for us to enjoy. And we pray that we would know that desire to please you and to enjoy everything that you have set before us.

And so bless us, Lord. Be with us in our worship this morning, we pray. In Jesus' name. Amen. Now then, boys and girls, do you come down? Do you want to come down? Do you want me to come down or do you want to stay there?

Or do I come over to you? What happens here? You're going to have to tell me. Oh, you're coming. You're coming over, right. I'll step down then. Have you got the pictures?

Yeah, you've got the pictures. Yes. Oh, it's that corner. Sorry, I'm looking at that corner. It's that corner. Okay, so I've got some pictures. So the good thing, can you see the screen? You have to see the screen. So come this way a wee bit. Come this way a wee bit.

[10 : 51] There's a picture of a guy up on the screen. Can anybody tell me who that is? You guys can answer as well. Anyone know who that is? Is there anyone behind me, no? Oh, the adults know who it is.

That's a man called Francis Schaeffer. Ever heard of him? Never heard of him. Okay, let's try another one. Who's the next guy? Who's that? Ever seen him? Looks like he's come from the Bays, doesn't he?

That's a man called Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Ever heard of him? Some of the older people have. Let's try another one then. Ever heard of him? Or seen him? Oh, there's a screen there.

I've not seen that one. You know who that is? Any ideas? You don't know who that is? Really? No idea? That's a man called John Knox.

Know who he is? Ever heard of him? Oh, man alive. What are you teaching them here? Okay, right. Surely you know the next one. Anyone know who that is?

[11:54] Ever seen him? No? No. Are you sure? He's a bit older and sort of whiter now than he was there.

Who's that? David. David, exactly. Do you know David? You do know David. Good. What does he do? He's a preacher, isn't he? So, all of these guys that I've shown you are kind of known for being the same thing.

It's a big word. They're theologians. No pressure, David. They're theologians.

Does anyone know what a theologian is? It's a big word, isn't it? Well, a theologian is somebody who studies God. So, theology is made up of two words.

Theos, which is Greek for God, and logia, which is about knowledge. So, theology is the study of God. Yeah? Is God small?

[12:56] No. God is? Sorry? God is what? Big. He's huge, isn't he? So, there's this whole thing called theology, the study of God. And there's men that devote their lives to studying God and His Word and telling people about them.

And they come from lots of different places. Schaeffer was American, and Bonhoeffer was German, and John Knox was Scottish, and there's even a heroch in the mix there.

So, theology is the study of God, right? So, if you have ology at the end of any word, it means the study of, right? So, let me give you another ology that you can take away with you today.

If I said to you, Christology, what do you think that would be the study of? If ology means study, and we put Christ before that, what do you think?

You guys in the corner can answer this. What do you think Christology is the study of? Jesus. Yeah. So, no trick questions.

[13:59] Jesus. And there's lots of ology, lots of big words. Soteriology. You ever heard of that one? This is like sort of systematics. Soter means to do with being a savior.

So, it's the study of salvation. Well, here's one you'll get. Ecclesiology. No? No? No? Ecclesiology is grace.

No? Man alive. Well, in Greek, do you know what the Greek word for church is? Ecclesia. So, ecclesiology, study the church.

What about eschatology? How about that? I'm going to have to give up soon, aren't I? Eschatology means last or the end. So, study of the end times. There are all these big words.

These men study all these big themes. All these amazing things. I'm going to show you a picture of another guy up on the screen now. I wonder if you know him. It's not George Barney.

[15:01] Similar. Know him? He's called Karl Barth. He's another theologian. A Swiss one. And he was once asked, of all of these big, huge doctrines that you study, of all these big words, whether it's theology or soteriology or eschatology or Christology and all of the other ologies, they said, what is the deepest, what is the most profound, what is the most complex and amazing thing that you've ever learned about when you've studied?

What do you think he said? He said, Jesus loves me. This I know. For the Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me. This I know. For the Bible tells me so. So, we can have all of these huge words, and some of the words we might not really understand.

But right at the heart of all of them is Jesus loves us. And we know that because his word, the Bible, tells us about that. And that's really good news.

And that's what we celebrate when we come to church. And that's what we do when we open the Bible. And that's what we do when we sing and when we pray and when we read. We celebrate the fact that Jesus loves us.

[16:21] And he loves us because he created us. And he wants us to know him and to live with him and to walk with him. Sometimes big words confuse us.

But big words can be taken down into really small and easy words because right at the heart of all of these big thoughts is Jesus, the one who loves us and who cares for us.

And he wants us to love him too. So, I hope you'll all love Jesus and follow Jesus. And with Karl Barth, you might know lots of big, amazing things as you grow up and as you study. But never forget that Jesus loves you. And you know that because his word, the Bible, tells you that. Okay? And David tells you that, doesn't he? Does David tell you about Jesus? Yeah? Do your mom and dads tell you about Jesus? Yeah? Good. That's because they love you. And they want you to know that Jesus loves you too. Can I pray for you? Is that okay?

[17 : 20] And then we're going to sing that song. We're going to sing, has anyone ever sung Jesus Loves Me This I Know. Do you know that one? Yeah? Good. Well, we're going to sing that in a minute. But let's just pray briefly first. Lord Jesus, we thank you that you love us and that you care for us and that you come to us and that you reveal yourself to us.

And we pray that you would help us to trust you and to love you and to follow you with our lives. We know that sometimes there are big words and big thoughts that we don't really understand and they can be a challenge for us.

But we thank you that you give us simple words to know that Jesus loves us and we know that because your word tells us so. So bless these young people, care for them, protect them, safeguard their hearts and reveal yourself to them, we pray.

In Jesus' name. Amen. So, we're going to sing that then. Shall we stand together and sing Jesus Loves Me This I Know For the Bible Tells Me So.

Jesus Loves Me This I Know For the Bible Tells Me So.

[18 : 45] For the Bible Tells Me So. Let the ones to Him belong They are weak, but He is strong Yes, Jesus loves me.

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so.

Jesus loves me. He who died Heaven's gate to open wide He will wash away my sin Let this little child come in Yes, Jesus loves me.

Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me.

The Bible tells me so. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. Yes, Jesus loves me. He will stay.

[20 : 02] He will stay. Goes beside me all the way. Then his little child will take Up to heaven for his dear save.

Yes, Jesus loves me.

Yes, Jesus loves me. The Bible tells me so. Thank you guys.

guys. Folks, we're going to read, as the young folk head out to Sunday school, we're going to read from John chapter 13. If you've been with us over the weekend, we've been in John chapter 13 over the past couple of evenings, looking at various parts of that, the service of Jesus as He served His disciples in the washing of their feet. Last night we considered the betrayal of Judas, and this morning we're going to be looking at a new way, a new way of living, and that's really characteristic of who we are as Christian believers, that we have a new way, a new perspective, a new relationship, a new command to follow in Jesus. We're going to read from John chapter 13, and we're going to read from the verse marked 18 down to the verse marked 35 here together.

Jesus, speaking to His disciples, says, I am not speaking of all of you. I know whom I have chosen, but the scripture will be fulfilled. He who ate bread has lifted his heel against me.

[21 : 56] I am telling you this now before it takes place, that when it does take place, you may believe that I am He. Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me. After saying these things, Jesus was troubled in His spirit and testified, truly, truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me. The disciples looked at one another, uncertain of whom He spoke. One of His disciples, whom Jesus loved, John, was reclining at table at Jesus' side. So Simon Peter motioned to him to ask Jesus of whom He was speaking.

So that disciple, leaning back against Jesus, said to him, Lord, who is it? Jesus answered, it is the one to whom I will give this morsel of bread when I have dipped it. So when He had dipped the morsel, He gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. Then, after He had taken the morsel, Satan entered into him. Jesus said to him, what you are going to do, do quickly.

Now, no one at the table knew why He said this to him. Some thought that because Jesus had the money bag, Jesus, that Judas had the money bag, Jesus was telling him, buy what we need for the feast, or that He should give something to the poor. So, after receiving the morsel of bread, He

immediately went out, and it was night. When He had gone out, Jesus said, now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him. If God is glorified in Him, God will also glorify Him in Himself and glorify Him at once. Little children, yet a little while I am with you. You will seek Me, and just as I said to the Jews, so now I also say to you, where I am going, you cannot come.

A new commandment I give you, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. Amen. May the Lord bless that reading of His Word. To us, let's again just pray.

Father, we thank You for the illumination that Your Word brings into the darkness and fuzziness of our own minds. Or we thank You for the clarity that Your Word offers, for its clear and distinct teaching, for the instruction set forth that is unambiguous. Lord, so often we put up obstacles, we erect fences, we make things more difficult and complex than they actually are. But we thank You for the wondrous power of the gospel that Jesus loves us. This we know, for the Bible tells us so. We thank You that Your Word is, and the gospel of John even, has been referred to as shallow enough for a child to paddle in and deep enough for an elephant to swim. Lord, we thank You that we can know the great and life-changing truths of the gospel in accessible ways, but we can also plumb their depths, recognizing to a degree that many of the truths espoused are beyond the confines of our limited minds, for they speak of things of an eternal nature, things that are in some ways beyond our comprehension. But we thank You that Your invitation is clear. We thank You that the gospel is straightforward, that we are sinners in need of a

[26 : 02] Savior, that we are a people who have a problem, and You have given a solution to that problem. You have provided an answer to the deepest needs of our hearts, and that answer, that solution, is Jesus, the One who came not to abolish the law, but to fulfill the law, the One who came to live and to give His life as a ransom for many, the One who came and who adopted to Himself the human frame with all of its weaknesses, and yet who had no sin within Him. And Lord, we thank You that through Him and by His atoning sacrifice, through His substitution for us, though He took our place, that we might be the redeemed of God, that we may be taken from the mere creation of God and made children of God, lavished with Your great love. For You are the God who is the Good Shepherd, the One who has come not to just give us life, but give us abundant life, the One who comes to call us by name, the One who leads us, the One who takes us into green pastures and leads us by still waters, the One in whom we can know great joy and peace, even as we walk in the valley of the shadow of death. For we know that nothing can befall us that will separate us from Your hand. And for us to live is Christ, but to die is gain. Lord, we thank You for the transformative nature of the gospel in our hearts and lives, and we pray that it would continue to change us from the inside out. Lord, we pray for each and every one who will come to the table today, but particularly we give thanks for Lauren and for Miriam, and we pray that You would bless them in this.

We give thanks for Your Word that reminds us that there is rejoicing in heaven amongst the heavenly host when folk profess faith in Jesus, when a sinner is saved. And we thank You for the rejoicing that is there today, and the rejoicing that is here amongst us also. So, Lord, we pray that You would protect them and nurture them and nourish them through Your Word and by Your Spirit. We pray for others, perhaps, who are still seeking, those who are present with us today but who have not yet bowed the knee to You in submission, surrender, that they don't yet know Your salvation, that their eyes have not yet been truly opened, that they have not truly heard or understood. But, Lord, we pray that even yet today in the service that Your Spirit might move, not through the words of men, but by the power of Your Spirit to bring life, to enliven deadened hearts, to impassion us and to encourage us and to enthuse us that we may have a zeal for the things of God, an enthusiasm for the gospel, and that many more may come to know You and to love You as Lord and as God. We pray for those who cannot be here today, who would dearly love to be amongst the saints in fellowship around the Lord's table, but due to a variety of reasons are unable to be here. Lord, we pray that You would minister Your grace to them, that Your presence would be with them where they are and in what they are doing.

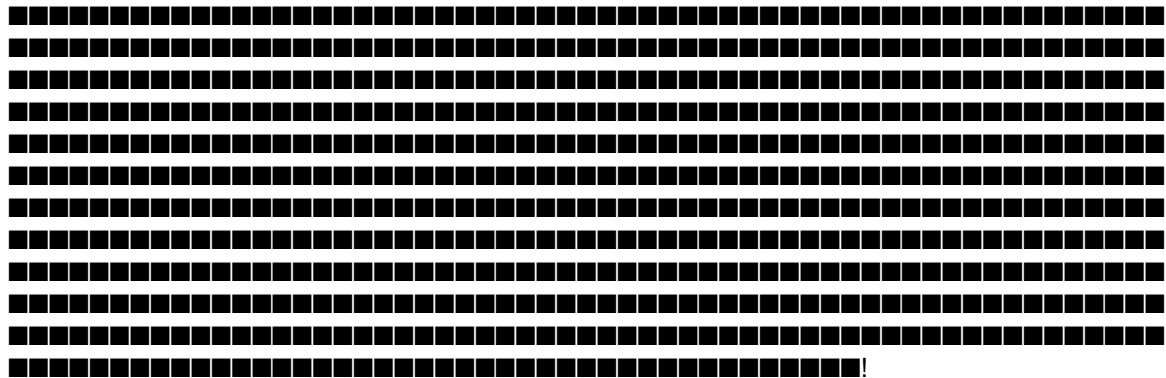
We pray to You, Lord, for those who could be here but who have chosen not to be, and we pray that You might remind them where they are in perhaps their backslidden state, that they would come to their senses as the prodigal did, that they would return once more unto You and find the Father waiting with open arms to welcome them back into this fellowship. Lord, we recognize that we need the encouragement of one another. We thank You for Your Word that bids us come. Do not give up

meeting together as some are in the habit of doing. But Lord, we pray that You would help us to incline towards the Savior, just as John did at this meal, that we would be inclined toward Jesus, seeking to be closer to Him, leaning upon His chest as close as we could be to His heart, that we might be encouraged, that we may be drawn into the light and shown the truth, and that we may be encouraged in it. We ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Folks, before we turn back to John 13 for a few moments, this morning again, we're going to sing this time from the Gaelic and from Psalm 91. We're going to sing the first two verses of Psalm 91. The first two verses of Psalm 91 are written from the psalmist's perspective. The rest of the psalm is really the response of God. But in these first two verses, we read, As we sing that, consider where your trust is this morning. Is it in the one who is a fortress, the one who is eternal? We'll remain seated and we'll sing together.

Amen. Amen.

[31 : 54] Amen. Amen.



Well, folks, turn back with me in your Bibles to John and chapter 13 for a short time this morning. I wonder in what you find your identity. What's your identity rooted in? What is it that motivates you when you get up in the morning? What is it that you follow? Is it a team? Is it a person? Is it the pursuit of one thing or another? For the Christian believer, our motivation, our identity, well, it's found, it's rooted in Christ Jesus, the one who is the same yesterday, today, and forever, the one in whom we can lay our absolute trust because he is unchanging, the one who has promised us things of eternal value, not just passing pleasure.

[36 : 03] Whatever. What motivates you? What inspires you? Is it something that will last? Or is it something that will pass away? There are many antagonists of the Christian faith who will just say, oh, you're brainwashed. You're absolutely brainwashed. And you know what? There's an element of truth to that, isn't there? We have been washed if we are Jesus' people. We have been washed in the blood, cleansed by the grace of God in Christ Jesus our Lord. So again, if we flip that question and we say, well, what is brainwashing you? What is it that is informing your hands and your feet and your minds and your desires? The Christian believer, the disciple of Jesus who has been cleansed by his blood, who has recognized his grace and his favor, and who has surrendered and submitted themselves to his gracious invitation to come and to be made new, to believe in our hearts and confess with our lips, just as Lauren and Miriam have done this weekend and as many of us have done in the past.

We come today to the Lord's table, not with any sense of self-worth, but we come in thanksgiving because we recognize we are unworthy to sit at his table. We are unworthy of his grace. We are ill-deserving of his goodness. We are sinners, and we make mistakes, and we falter, and we get it wrong perhaps more often than we get it right, and yet he is faithful, and yet he offers forgiveness. And so we come today, not in our own strength, but through the grace of Jesus, and we come in thanksgiving, and we come to remember the Lord's death until he comes. We come in order that we might remind ourselves of who it is that we are, and whose it is that we are, and how that transforms how we live, as we considered on Friday evening.

Knowing who we are is of paramount importance when it comes to life, and particularly when it comes to matters of eternity, it's not an option. It's not an option. It's not an option. It's not an option. It's something that I do maybe on a Sunday or even on a Wednesday if I'm really fervent. But Christ is not a bolt-on. He's not an added accessory. He's not an optional extra. You remember when you used to buy a car, and there were certain optional extras that you would go for, that you would add

in. Now everything's an optional extra. You basically just get an engine, and you have to optimize everything else. But many people look at Christianity like that. It's an optional extra in my life. Jesus will serve my purposes, and I'll just add him when I need him. That's an anemic and an ill-informed understanding of what Christian belief and Christian life is. Paul says if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation, a new person, a brand new person, born again, remade, renewed. The old has gone. The new has come. So I guess right at the outset of our service this morning is, who are you? And whose are you? And what motivates you? And in what are you placing your hope? Because may I say, if it's anything other than Jesus, it's not going to last. It's not going to meet your expectations.

[40 : 03] It's not going to fulfill the deepest yearnings of your heart. Don't look at the people around you. Don't look at us. We are sinners. Don't base your thoughts on Jesus on other people, but look to him.

Look at him. And who is he? And what has he done? And what does he offer you? Never mind what your neighbor's done or the elder down the street has done, because that's irrelevant to you. What matters is your relationship with Christ Jesus. Who are you this morning? Well, here we're back in John 13, and we're back to the Last Supper, the Upper Room Discourse, this intimate venue, this private meal, this opportunity that Jesus is taking right at the cusp of the climactic element of his earthly ministry. And he's taking this opportunity to mentor and to disciple his men, to teach them, to remind them, and to point them. And he gives them three pointers about the future, that they're going to have a new perspective, that they're going to have a new relationship, and that they are given a new command. So, these three things before we come to remember the Lord with thanksgiving.

Firstly, then, a new perspective. A new perspective. The first thing that a believer recognizes when we come to faith is that we are given a new perspective. We're given fresh eyes. We have a new look upon something. That's why the term born again is so descriptive of somebody who comes to faith, because we are made new. It is just like being reborn. The old has gone, and the new has come.

It's like when you get glasses. I'm reliably informed. I desperately need to get my eyes tested, but I'm reliably informed that once you get glasses and you put them on, wow, you see things like never before. I was out recently, and we were having a meal, and I was holding the menu about that far away from me, trying to see what it was. And they were saying, are you needing your eyes tested? [42 : 19] I'm saying, no, I think I am. And who was beside me, Murdo gave me his glasses, and I tried them on, and wow, I saw the words enlarged and emboldened right in front of my eyes with clarity.

And that's what it's like coming to faith, isn't it? That wow, we see things like for the first time. Throughout my life, in early life in Inverness, there was a house builder called Tulloch Homes. Some of you will have heard of it. And Tulloch Homes have this logo. And I always looked at it and thought, what is that? It was kind of two different shades of green and some white, and it was just squiggly lines. A squiggly dark green line, a squiggly green, light green line, a bit of white, and then just a wee corner of green up at the top. And I thought, what is that? And at the age of 17, I was driving along the distributor road in Inverness, and I was behind a van, and all of a sudden, bang, I saw it for the first time in 17. Oh, it's a T. It's literally a 3D T. It's white, and the green is used to make the shadow. For 17 years, I couldn't see it. And then in that moment, bang, and of course, I can't see it as I used to see it now. You know, we've all seen these optical illusions. You know, the cigar sticking out of the brick wall, and you're looking at it first, just seeing a brick wall, and you can't understand what it is. And then, oh, there's a cigar sticking out of the wall. And once you've seen it, you can't not see it. So it is when we come to faith, there may be things that are in an element of familiarity that we might have read these things before, but they just went right over our heads, washed over us. We never really understood them.

They're familiar, but unknown. And then we come to faith, and bang, high definition, 4K, 8K, I think is a thing. Now, we see it like we've never seen it before, and we can't then unsee it, can we? We are made new. Now, Jesus has just been talking to the disciples about being betrayed by Judas. Judas has left the room. He's gone out. He's been enveloped by the darkness, and there's a metaphoric picture there, as we looked at last night. But the dynamic of the room changes now with Judas' departure. When he was gone, Jesus says, now, now the Son of Man is glorified, and God is glorified in him. And if God is glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and glorify him at

once. Let's be honest, there is a sermon series within that verse. We could root ourselves here for weeks and plumb the depths with Schaeffer and Bavinck and Bonhoeffer and go into all of the depth of what is here. We don't have time for that today. What is Jesus talking about?

[45 : 03] Well, he's speaking about a couple of things here, isn't he? He's looking ahead. And that's what we do as Christian believers, right? We look ahead. We know what lies ahead. We have security about what lies ahead, and we long for that which lies ahead. Lord, your kingdom come. Your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. So, Jesus here is thinking to after the cross. The cross is imminent here. It's going to happen. Later on this very night, he will be betrayed. He will be taken to a sham trial. He will be mocked and beaten and scourged and humiliated and punted from pillar to post back and forth, ultimately crucified on a cross. But once that is over, once that is fulfilled, once all of the horror has been perpetrated against him, he will rise again, and he will return, and he will ascend, and he will go back to where he came from. You remember his final words on the cross? Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. He knew who he was, whose he was, and to where he was going.

And once all of that suffering was passed, he would again be glorified. Remember the words of the thief beside him? Remember me when you come into your kingdom. Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise. I will be glorified, and if you're trusting in me, you will be glorified also. So, Jesus is looking forward here. He's looking forward to going home. The Chiannilus, you know, if you're a heroc and you're away on the mainland, there is that longing for home. There's that draw to home. Amplify that. That's what Jesus had here, and he's longing to be back in the Father's presence, but not before he has done what the Father has given him to do. Hebrews 12 says to us, for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. For the joy set before him? How many of us would think it would be a joy to be arrested and mocked and scourged and flayed and beaten and hung and crucified and speared? His joy, of course, was that he might save us and that he might return to the Father. Following Jesus should give us the same kind of forward perspective, shouldn't it? All too often, we look at the immediate in our lives and not the ultimate. We focus on the temporal rather than the eternal. We're consumed by the here and now and the distraction of it, which often blinds us to the great treasure that we have and the great hope that is ours and the inheritance that we have gained in Christ. We're looking at our feet rather than at the road ahead. I wonder what road you're on this morning. Are you on the road that leads to heaven, the narrow path? The Word says that few find it, but it says many are on the road, the broad road, that leads to destruction and leads to a lost eternity. I wonder where you are this morning. Because we're making a choice. We're all making a choice. [48 : 53] Jesus or this world? The immediate or the eternal? Heaven or hell? If we are born again. If we are followers of Jesus, regardless of our circumstances, we can say, with this new perspective, my hope transcends the circumstance in which I find myself. Therefore, I can be joyful always. I can pray continually, and I can give thanks in every circumstance, not for every circumstance, significant distinction. I can give thanks in every circumstance because regardless of what happens to me here and now, regardless of how negative it may be, I am a child of the King. I have a place in His family. I will go to His side when this life comes to an end. The worst thing that can happen to us in this life actually, technically, could be the greatest thing because it may accelerate us into the presence of God. Having an earthly focus can be detrimental, whereas having a heavenly direction, a gaze in heavenwards, is transformative for us.

Oh, you're of such, so heavenly-minded, you're of no earthly use. I think that's, I'm sure you've probably heard that before. I think that statement's wrong. I think those who are most heavenly-minded are of most earthly use because when we're heavenly-minded and we know to whom we belong and to where we will go, we are able to do everything well. We are able to do things courageously and boldly because we're not worried about our affirmation coming from those around about us or from our success or otherwise because we are secure in the Lord. And so, we look to Him. Jesus here is looking beyond the cross.

He's considering His glory. Johnny Erickson Tadas, a name that's familiar to many people, she's lived most of her life as a quadriplegic after a diving accident. And yet, she is a wonderful example of being able to look beyond the present to what lies ahead. And she'll often quote Romans 8.18 where Paul writes, That's the great hope for the Christian believer. It's looking beyond the present. It's seeing what is to come and how that transforms the lives that we live, this new perspective that we are given.

On this same night, if you go to John chapter 17, you'll read the high priestly prayer of Jesus right before His arrest in the Garden of Gethsemane. And what does He say in verse 4 of that prayer? He says, as He prays to the Lord, His Father, I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Jesus speaks of His preexistent glory, that He was the one who had been already. He's the only person who was born a second time. He lived before He was born. It's a mind-bending truth in many ways.

[52 : 27] Speaks of His preexistent glory. If you go down to verse 24 of that same prayer, He says, Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am. That's the joy set before Him.

And to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. That's Jesus' prayer for you and I as His people, that we would be taken to be with Him where He is to see His glory, to be in glory with Him. You will be with me in paradise.

I wonder, is that your perspective this morning? Is that the perspective that you have? A new perspective. Secondly, a new relationship. A new relationship.

Religion is mankind's pursuit of God. Christianity is God's pursuit of mankind. We are in relationship with Christ. This faith that we own is not academic. It's not intellectual.

Yes, we need knowledge. Of course, we must develop knowledge. Without knowledge, the people perish, says the word. But our faith is practical. It must translate from the mere intellectual to something that is lived and experienced and understood in the light of who we are and who Christ is. And so, we are called to be in relationship with Jesus. My children, I will only be with you a little longer. He says, you will look for me just as I told the Jews I'll tell you now where I am going.

[54 : 05] You cannot come, he says. He's talking to them as his children, those whom he loves. He is speaking to them about the reality of him going to the place that he, they cannot come at that time.

It's reminiscent of Acts 1, isn't it? When Jesus ascends and the men are just standing, staring into the sky. And the heavenly messengers come and they say, men of Galilee, what is it that you're doing?

Standing here, staring into the sky. This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way that he's seen you go. But you've been given a commission. You will be his disciples to Judea and Sumeria and to the ends of the earth. There's work to do.

Stop staring into the sky and get on with it. You can't go where he is, but he has given you a commission to fulfill. And he is with you. He's always with you.

So far, the disciples have been with Jesus in the flesh. How wonderful that would have been, wouldn't it? To be in his presence bodily. To ask him questions and to hear his voice. But now he's saying, now it's going to be by faith. Now it's going to be by faith. I'm only going to be here a little while longer.

[55 : 25] Things are going to happen in the next few hours, and I'm going to be gone from your presence. That I will be with you always. And I have to go. We know that from elsewhere. He says, I have to go in order that the heavenly counselor, the Holy Spirit might come, and he might help you. He can't come until I have gone, and he will be with you forever.

So this relational aspect of our faith is so important. We're in communication. It's a two-way thing. We speak to him, and he speaks to us. For we walk by faith and not by sight. That is what we are called to. And that includes vulnerability, doesn't it? There is a period of time that we're vulnerable as we wait for either him to come or for him to call us at home. Lobsters. Lobsters don't keep one shell throughout their lives, I'm reliably informed. They molt their shells once a year. I think prawns do the same thing. They discard their old shell. And why do they do that? They have to do that in order to grow, in order to develop. Otherwise, their growth will be stunted. They'll be suffocated.

They'll be entombed and encased in this prison of a shell. And so what they have to do is they have to push off that old shell in order to grow a new one. But in the intervening period, they are vulnerable, vulnerable to predators, vulnerable to crabs and fish and everything in between, tossed by the currents of the sea, one thing or another. But they won't grow, they won't develop, they won't mature unless they cast off that old shell that encases them and grow another one. We're a bit like that ourselves.

We get tossed and tumbled through life. It can be scary and we can be vulnerable. But if we depend on the Lord, he will grow us and he will develop us and he will nurture us and he will mature us

even through the trials of this life. So we see a new perspective. We see a new relationship. And then thirdly and briefly, we see a new command, a new command. Judas has left the room. The betrayer is gone. Jesus turns to his true disciples and he gives them a new command, a new command I give you, a new command. Verse 34, I give to you, that you love one another just as I have loved you. You also are to love one another. By this, all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another. Now, the theologians amongst us here this morning are saying, hang on a minute, this is not a new command. If we go back to the Old Testament and we go right back to Leviticus 19, what do we read? Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Lord. That's an old command. This is not a new commandment.

Well, this is where language is so important. Scott's telling me about how much he loves Hebrew and Greek and he can tell you more about that. I struggled much more with language. I struggled with English, never mind Greek, but the word that's used for new here is the word *kainos* in Greek, and it doesn't mean new in terms of chronology, in terms of time or age. If that were the case, Jesus would have used the word *neos*, not *kainos*. *Kainos* means a fresh commandment. That's a better translation of it. A renewed commandment, a reminded commandment, love one another. We've just seen an example of that, haven't we? Jesus has washed their feet. He's taken the position of a servant, the lowest place possible, in order to love them. And he loves us to the end by giving himself for us. And the word love that's used here, as you I'm sure know, there are different words in the

[59 : 49] Greek language that are employed for love, depending on what kind of love it is. There's *eros* love, there's *phileo* love, that friendly kind of love. But the word here is *agape* love, which is the most searching type of love, the most sacrificial form of love. It's not liking, but it's emptying ourselves for other people. It's giving ourselves over wholly to them. It's demonstrating the love that we have from Christ by developing the meekness and the humility that Christ himself had, emptying ourselves for other people. He gives us the benchmark, and it's high, isn't it? It's high. His love is sacrificial.

No greater love has no man than this, than he lays down his life for his friends. That's the love that Christ has. It's a sacrificial love. It's an unconditional love. Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do. He had compassion on them because he saw that they were like sheep without a shepherd. He has this unconditional love. Whilst we were still sinners, Christ Jesus died for us, the wonder of the gospel. Jesus doesn't love deserving people because none of us are deserving. Jesus doesn't love lovely people because ultimately we might be lovely sometimes, but not all the time. Jesus doesn't love wonderful people, as wonderful as we may be at different times and in different places. He loves sinful people, broken people, uncertain people, doubtful people, cynical people, happy people, sad people, every person. And he loves sacrificially, and he loves unconditionally.

And he says, this is how you should love also. This is how you should love. And if you do, then all people will know that you are mine and that you have been with me. And we should remember always that Jesus, if he gives us a command, he will also give us the capacity to fulfill that command, won't he? An instruction from the Lord infers an equipping from the Lord, that he will never ask us to do something that he will not equip us to fulfill. How? Because, well, Paul says God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. We have been given his love, and we are to dispense his love, recognizing that we are unable and unworthy, unable to do it without him and unworthy of it. And yet, that's the great paradox, the great tension of the gospel, isn't it? Unworthy, yet we are saved. Undeserving, and yet secure. That's why we come to his table.

Not because we're better than the next person. We're not. But because he has done everything for us, and we rest in him and in him alone. I wonder, is love the character of your congregation?

[63 : 10] Is love the defining characteristic of your family? Is love the defining characteristic of your personality? There's a challenge for you. As the Lord's people, we should be those who exhibit love, sacrificial, unconditional, patient, gracious love, because that's what we've been given in Christ. How often the church of God is known as a place of schism and division and even hatred? But we are called to be those who love and to show that love.

Love will build the church. Love will draw people in. I think it was Alistair Begg who said, honey is always more attractive than vinegar. And there's so much truth in that.

How do we do that? Well, just as we conclude, he says, one another. One another. Not the whole world.

Not everyone, but start with one another. Start with one another. Start by loving your fellow believers. Do you love your fellow believers. Do you love your fellow believers? Do you love your fellow believer? Is there fellowship with your fellow believer? The word hate should never feature in the Christian's life, because we are Jesus' people, and so we love. And we love to the end, just as Jesus showed love, patience, kindness, grace, opportunity to Judas right to the end. We are to love one another, and if we love one another, one another will love one another, and so on and so forth. It goes until love is shown to the whole world. How can we love people who we don't know? How can we love people that we don't get alongside? And so we have these three things that Jesus offers and calls his disciples to. A new perspective. A perspective that goes beyond the immediate, the temporal, that's fixed on the end goal. I do not consider the present sufferings worth comparing with the crown of glory that awaits me.

He gives us a new relationship with him. We walk by faith and not by sight. We rest in him, but we speak to him as he speaks to us through prayer. And we're called to a new commandment, a refreshed and renewed benchmark commandment that we are to love like Jesus loves. There's a long-standing tradition. I don't know if it's absolutely verifiably true, but there are those who say that it is. It's about John the Apostle when he was an old man, and when he had left the Isle of Patmos, he was taken back to Ephesus, where he would spend his final days. He was around 100 years of age. By that point, couldn't walk, had to be carried everywhere by others. They would pick him up, and they would take him to church, and people would say, John, tell us something. John, give us a word. And always he would say, little children, love one another. The next week, John, tell us something. Little children, love one another. This went on and on. Somebody then said, why is it that you keep saying that, John? Because it's the Lord's command, he said, and if this alone be done, it is enough. Enough. If we would just love one another as he has loved us. Stand back and watch the world change. Let's pray. Father, we pray that you would help us to love. To love one another. To love as you have loved. Sacrificially, patiently, unconditionally, graciously, mercifully. That you would change our hearts from the inside out. Lord, that our identity would be found in you and the things of your kingdom, not in the passing trinkets or the vacuous desires of this world that are trivial, empty, and temporal. Lord, that we would fix our eyes on that which is eternal and of eternal worth. Lord, bless us and keep us and forgive us, we ask in Jesus' name.

[68 : 15] Amen. And so, folks, we come now to the part of our service where we come to the Lord's table, where we take off the bread and off the wine. And this is the Lord's table. It's not, as David said, North Harris's table or the free church table. This is the Lord's table. And the Lord calls us, He bids us come. You know, in His words, He calls us here in this chapter to love one another. If you go to the next chapter, into John chapter 14 and verse 15, Jesus, continuing to counsel His disciples, says to them, if you love me, you will keep my commandments. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. His commandment is to do this in remembrance of me. And so, as we come to the table, we come obediently. We come to obey His call, to do this in remembrance of me.

Of me. Not because we're good enough, because we're not. Not one of us is worthy of coming to His table in and of ourselves. Not a single one of us. But in Christ Jesus, we are given a new perspective, ushered into a new relationship, and instructed with a refreshed or renewed command to love. And so, as we love Jesus, we obey His commandments. And if you love Jesus, then obey His commandment and come to His table. If you believe in Him or trusting, if you believe in your heart and confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord, and yet you stay away from His table, what are you being?

Disobedient. Disobedient. We don't want to be disobedient. We want you to be obedient.

If you're still questioning and seeking and searching, continue on. Look to the Lord, because He alone will give you what you're looking for, what you're longing for, what you desire.

Keep looking. Keep seeking. Keep searching. And so, we come to the table not as worthy people, but as saved sinners. We come as those whose hearts have been cleansed by Jesus, by His blood, and we come to remember and to give thanks to Him for all that He has done. And so, I would commend you. If you are the Lord's people, then come to His table. We're going to sing in a moment, and if you haven't come, I think, in the two center sections is where the elements will be served, then please make your way there as we sing. We're going to sing from Psalm 118, and the Sing Psalms from verse 15 together to God's praise. Triumphant shouts of joy resound in places

And so we pray now as we take these elements, these tokens, these symbols of remembrance and of thanksgiving, we pray that you would help us to be a people characterized by love.

Love for one another. Love for the Lord. A love that will transform a life, a relationship, a family, a church, a community.

Indeed, a love that can transform the world itself. And so, Lord, bless these elements to us as we take off them, as we eat, and as we drink.

For we ask it in Jesus' name. On the night that he was betrayed, Jesus took bread and he broke it, saying, this is my body broken for you.

[79 : 16] Do this in remembrance of me. In the same way, he also 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. He says, for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

A new perspective, a new relationship, a new command, and all because of a new covenant.

Mentioned there in the warrant for the supper. What is that new covenant? It is Jesus and His work sufficient for us.

No longer do we need to sacrifice animals again and again. We have a new covenant where the sinless, spotless Lamb of God was slain in order that we might be saved and redeemed.

[80 : 34] And that's our testimony this afternoon as we sit here, as we take the bread and the wine. We don't have a testimony of the world around about us, the generation that we live in, the culture that we're a part of, which is a self-sufficient mantra.

Do it for yourself. Look out for yourself. Pull yourself up by your bootstraps. The gospel says, impossible. We cannot do it. We are unable.

We are ill-equipped. But Jesus can. And Jesus did. And Jesus' work was finished and it is perfect. It is the new covenant.

And so in Him we are given a new perspective, ushered into a new relationship, given a new command, and all because of this new covenant. Let's pray.

God our Father, we thank You for the great joy of salvation that is ours, the great joy of knowing Jesus, the one whose sacrifice was sufficient to satisfy Your justice, that He has come and He has fulfilled the work that You set apart for Him to do.

[81 : 46] And as a result, we have a new perspective on life and eternity. we are called into a new relationship with You and that we are given a new command to love one another just as Christ has loved us.

Lord, we thank You for the security that that brings to us, knowing that it is not upon us, but it is all on Jesus and everything has been done.

And so the invitation remains, come. Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden and I will give You rest, rest for Your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Lord, we pray that each and everyone who has not yet come, who has not yet responded to Your gracious invitation, would not delay any further, but would come to know for themselves that new perspective, that new relationship, that new command, because of that new covenant.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Folks, we're going to conclude by singing the familiar words of Psalm 72, verses 17 to 19 together. His name forever shall endure.

[83 : 05] Stand if you're able and we'll sing together. Amen. Amen. Amen. It need forever shall endure, As night the sun is shot.

Men shall be blessed in him and blessed, All nations shall impone.

Now blessed be the Lord our God, The God of Israel.

For he alone doth wondrous world, In glory that is hell.

And blessed be his glorious name, To all eternity.

[84 : 26] The whole earth let his glory fill, Amen, so let it be.

And now may the grace and the mercy and the peace of God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest and remain with us all. Now and evermore and all God's people say, Amen.