

Preparatory Service 16.9.22 Evening

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Date: 16 September 2022

Preacher: Reverend Iain Macritchie

[0 : 0 0] Good evening everyone and a warm welcome to the service this evening. It's good to see all of you. It's good to have Ian McCritchie with us as well. I don't think you've actually been here preaching have you? No, I don't think so. He's well known to Harris having been in Leaverborough for many years but he'll say that himself I'm sure. But it's good to have him in the congregation this evening and we look forward to hearing God's word through him over the course of the weekend. A couple of things to say. First of all that after the service this evening the man's is open and there's time for fellowship. If you're able to come up please do so. It would be good to see you and also to say that the session opened this morning and for any who know the Lord, who trust the Lord and who want to come forward for the first time and to profess your faith and come to the Lord's table please be encouraged to come forward. The session will be meeting in the room next door to my left at the end of the service so be encouraged to come forward. If you're trusting the Lord, if he died for you and you know that then the commandment is very clear. Do this.

Take the bread, take the wine, Jesus says in remembrance of my death. Tomorrow the service is at seven o'clock we've got a prayer meeting service so similar to the format of the prayer meeting we'll have a couple of people praying and Ian will preach at the service and then after that there's an informal fellowship in the church around about eight o'clock and then on Sunday the service is at the usual time and we'll have the sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the morning and a fellowship in the evening where Ian will share a word of testimony as well. So I think these are all the notices and again it's great to have you Ian and God bless you as you open his word with us this evening.

Thank you. Thank you David for that warm welcome. It's lovely to be with you all here tonight. I bring with me the warmest regards of the congregation just over the Clesham there in Pathk and South Locks.

I'm no stranger to Harris. I came to know the Lord here 18 years ago. I was teaching in Liverpool and I think it's 16 years since I left Liverpool so it's lovely to see some familiar faces and we pray that together we'll know the Lord's blessing as we come around his word over these days. We're going to worship God now. We're going to sing to his praise from Psalm 34. Psalm 34, this is a Scottish Psalter version of the Psalm. Reading at the beginning of the Psalm.

God will I bless all times his praise. My mouth shall still express. My soul shall boast in God the meek, shall hear with joyfulness. Extol the Lord with me, let us exalt his name together.

[3 : 0 0] I sought the Lord he heard and did me from all fears deliver. We'll sing down to the end of the verse Mark 10 to the praise of God. God will I bless all times his praise. Standing to sing.

God will I bless all times his praise. My mouth shall still express. My soul shall boast in God the meek, shall hear with joy.

God will I bless all times his praise. My soul shall be with joy.

God will I bless all times his praise. My soul shall be with joy. I bless all times his praise.

- From all his distresses. The angel of the Lord encamps.
- [4 : 58] And round encompasseth. All those about that to him fear.
And then delivereth. O taste and see that God is good.
Who trusts in him is blessed. Fear God is saved.
And that in fear shall be with want oppressed. The lions young may hungry be.
And they may lack their food. But if that truly seek the Lord.
- [6 : 14] Shall not lack any good. Let's unite our hearts in prayer.
Let us pray. Lord our God. We come and we give thanks this evening. For the words that we have just sung.
Words that remind us that those who seek the Lord. Shall not lack any good. And as we gather together this evening.
And the days that lie ahead. We pray that indeed the intent and the desire of our heart. Would be to seek the Lord. That we would see your face.
That we would know something of what it is. To be united together as one. Around the living word of the living God. What a wonder and what a blessing it is for us this evening.
- [7 : 18] That indeed we have access to you. The God who is high and lifted up. The one who is infinite, eternal and unchangeable.
Yet the God who is near. The God who is near even this evening. In his word. The God who is near and fulfilling that promise.
That where two or three gather in his name. He is there in their midst. And so we plead that promise this evening. That our gathering would not be born out of any routine or ritual.
But rather that this would be a lively act of worship. Characterized by the presence of your Holy Spirit. Opening hearts and minds.
So that we might freely receive your word. That we might grow thereby. And that we might bow our hearts in worship.
- [8 : 17] For you are King of kings. You are Lord of lords. And you are worthy of all praise. And so we thank you Lord for every good and perfect gift.
That is so bountifully ours from your hand. And these temporal blessings that we confess. We take for granted. Health and strength.
And daily food. These things that we at times neglect to remember. Can so easily be taken from us. Help us to come with that spirit of thanksgiving.
Each and every day that we would be mindful of all that is ours from your hand. But yet your word tells us that man shall not live by bread alone.
But by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. And so we thank you for the greatest blessing of all. That you have given to us even this evening. That food for our souls.
- [9 : 17] We know that we are not worthy. We are a people who even today have transgressed your law in our thoughts. In our words. In our actions.
That we are a people who turn our back upon you. Forgive us we pray. Forgive us for at times how lukewarm our hearts are before you.
But we give thanks oh Lord that even as we come this evening. That you are a God who does not mark us according to our iniquities.
Because if you did who would stand. And that we come this evening not leaning upon our own righteousness. Or our own good works or merits.

But rather we come and we lean fully, wholly and completely. On the finished work of Jesus. Our Lord and our Saviour.

[10 : 15] And if there are any here this evening who are yet to know what it is to profess you as their father and their friend. We pray that even this evening they might know something of that spirit of adoption.

That they might be drawn to your royal household of faith. That they might know something of what it is to sit at that banquet of good things that's to be found or to be known by your children.

Lord you are a great king and a great God. A God who even this evening desires that none should perish. But that all should come to repentance.

And so we pray that hearts would be opened and lives would be changed. And that you would truly remind us of the work of your spirit on the cross of Calvary's Hill.

Where even the men and women, the boys and the girls gathered in here would be able to say, Abba, Father. And we give thanks, O Lord, for the young that are here this night.

[11 : 25] Our young friends. We praise your name for the encouragement it brings to us to see them here on a Friday evening. That you would work through this. That you would work in them and draw them to yourself if you have not already done so.

That they would come to know you in these tender years of their lives. So that they would grow up in this world not leaning upon their own righteousness.

But rather putting their trust in Jesus. And that they might be those who would be used mightily even in this congregation in the years that lie ahead.

And we give thanks, O Lord, then for this dear congregation in Christ. Those who are witnessing so brightly on your side here in Tarbert.

We pray for them that you would continue to be with them and lead them. And direct them and guide them. That you would be with David and the elders and deacons as together.

[12 : 26] They have that vision to see many more coming to know you as their Lord and Saviour. That your hand would be upon them in blessing. So that truly they would see fruit for their labour.

And so we pray now that as we come around your word. That you would teach us and that you would instruct us. And that we might truly be able to say that we have heard the voice of Jesus.

Go with us then we ask and forgive us. And all we pray, we pray in your precious name. Amen. We're going to sing again then, friends. This time from Sing Psalms rather.

Psalms 62. Psalm 62. Reading at the beginning of the psalm. My soul finds rest in God alone.

From him comes my salvation sure. My safety fortress sheltering rock. In him alone I am secure. How long will you assault a man?

[13 : 31] Do you all seek to lay him low? This leaning wall, this tottering fence. And bring him about his overthrow. Down to verse 8.

My honour and salvation rest. O God, my rock and mighty fort. O people, trust in him always. To him alone pour out your heart.

Let's sing these words to the praise of God. My soul finds rest in God alone. Standing to sing. God alone. Amen. Amen. Amen.

My soul finds rest in God alone. From him comes my salvation sure.

My safety fortress sheltering rock. In him alone I am secure.

[14 : 40] How long will you assault a man?

Do you all seek to lay him low? This leaning wall, this tottering fence.
And bring about his overthrow. They planish fall from his high bliss.
They take delight in spreading lies. With false and flocking mouths they bless.
But in their hearts curse and despise. I rest my soul in God alone.

[16 : 00] In him my hope is ever should. My safety fortress sheltering rock.
In him alone I am secure. My honor and salvation rest.
On God my rock and mighty fort. O people thrust in him always.
To him alone pour out your hearts. Good Lord.

Good Lord. Good Lord. We are going to turn now to read God's word together from the Gospel of John. The Gospel of John and chapter 21.

[17 : 20] I'm reading from the ESV, John 21. Let us hear the word of God.

After this, Jesus revealed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias, and he revealed himself in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas called the twin, Nathaniel of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples were together.

Simon Peter said to them, I'm going fishing. And they said to him, we will go with you. They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

Just as day was breaking, Jesus stood on the shore, yet the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, children, do you have any fish?

They answered him, no. He said to them, cast the net on the right side of the boat, and you will find some. So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because of the quantity of fish.

[18 : 39] That disciple whom Jesus loved therefore said to Peter, it is the Lord. When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his outer garment, for he was stripped for work, and threw himself into the sea.

The other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, but about a hundred yards off. When they got out on the land, they saw a charcoal fire in place, and fish laid on it, and bread.

Jesus said to them, bring some of the fish that you have just caught. So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore full of large fish, a hundred and fifty-three of them.

And although there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, come and have breakfast. Now none of the disciples dared ask him, who are you?

They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took bread and gave it to them, and so was the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus was revealed to the disciples, after he was raised from the dead.

[19 : 56] When they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these? He said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

He said to him, feed my lambs. He said to him a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? He said to him, yes, Lord, you know that I love you.

He said to him, tend my sheep. He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love me? Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, do you love me?

And he said to him, Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you. Jesus said to him, feed my sheep. Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were young, you used to dress yourself and walk wherever you wanted.

But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands and another will dress you and carry you where you do not want to go. This he said to show by what kind of death he was to glorify God.

[21 : 03] And after saying this, he said to him, follow me. Peter turned and saw the disciple whom Jesus loved following them, the one who had also leaned back against him during the supper and had said, Lord, who is it that is going to betray you?

When Peter saw him, he said to Jesus, Lord, what about this man? Jesus said to him, if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you?

You follow me. So the saying spread abroad among the brothers that this disciple was not to die. Yet Jesus did not say to him that he was not to die.

But if it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? This is a disciple who is bearing witness about these things and who has written these things.

And we know that his testimony is true. Now, there are also many other things that Jesus did where every one of them to be written. I suppose the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.

[22 : 13] Amen. Amen. We pray God's blessing on that portion of his own holy, inspired and inerrant word. Friends, we're going to lift our voices again in the praise of God, singing from Psalm 36, again from Sing Psalms.

Psalm 36, reading at verse 5. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord. It reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep. Your justice is like ocean depths, both man and beast you keep.

We'll sing. Did I read from the Sing Psalms version there? Yes, I did. We'll sing down to the verse marked 10, to the praise of God, standing to sing. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord.

Amen. Your steadfast love is great, O Lord.

[23 : 24] Your faith reaches heaven high. Your faithfulness is wonderful, extending to the sky.

Your righteousness is very great, like mountains high and steep.

Your justice is like ocean depths, both man and beast you keep.

How precious is your steadfast love, what confidence it brings.

Both high and low find shelter in the shadow of your wings.

[24 : 47] If it's within your house and drink from streams of your delight, For with you is the source of light, in your light we see light.

To those who know you as their God, your steadfast love impart.

Maintain your righteousness to those of pure and upright heart.

Well friends, if we could just for a short time this evening turn back to the chapter we read together in the Gospel of John, chapter 21. John, chapter 21.

I'd like us to take for our text this evening the words that we have in verse 12. Jesus said to them, Come and have breakfast.

[26 : 22] Come and have breakfast. The wonderful thing about the Word of God is that it is a living word.

These are not merely words on a page. This is the very breath of God himself. This special revelation, as I alluded to in prayer, of that one who inhabits eternity.

But as well as being the very voice of God himself, what we see in the Word of God is a mirror. Because as we come from Genesis right through to Revelation, page after page after page, who do we see?

Well, we see ourselves, do we not? As we meet with a variety of different characters, the good, the bad, and as it were, the ugly, and everything and everyone in between, we are bound at some point to say, That is me.

That is me. But the wonderful thing about this mirror is that it's not just ourselves that we see.

[27 : 35] I think it says behind me, we would see Jesus. And as we come to this mirror of the Word of God, who do we see but Jesus?

We see ourselves undoubtedly, but we're not left there. We see something of the wonder and of the beauty of who our Lord and Savior is.

And so over these few days, it's my desire with the help of the Holy Spirit that all of us here, we would see Jesus. As we come alongside him in various different narratives, that we would truly see something, yes, of ourselves, but more importantly, of our Lord and our Savior.

And that's what we see here tonight. We see so much, yes, of ourselves, but we see so much of Jesus as we come to this climactic point of redemptive history.

We see here that Jesus has died. He's risen from the dead. And as we see this scene set before us, we see his followers. And as we come alongside his followers, his disciples, we notice that they're discouraged.

[28 : 52] They are a people who've gone through so much. The last three years have been, in many ways, a rollercoaster of experiences and emotions for his disciples.

They were with him at all times. They saw him perform miracles. They saw him raise people from the dead. They saw him heal men and women, boys and girls of all of their illnesses.

And then they saw him on that cross, dying, as far as they're concerned, dead. And so as we come alongside the disciples this evening, we see that there are people who are dismayed, who are discouraged, who are confused.

This is not how they hoped how things would end. This is not the path that they thought they would tread with this King Jesus. They thought this Jesus would be with them time without end and no longer is he there.

So what do they do? Verse 9, verse 3, sorry, they go fishing. They go fishing. So like us.

[30 : 12] So like us. They go back to that which is familiar to them. Verse 3, Simon Peter said to them, I am going fishing.

And they said to him, we will go with you. In light of all that has just happened in their experience, in light of all that they have heard and seen, what do these men do?

They go back to their nets. Of course, this wasn't their calling. They were called to be fisher of men. They were called following the death and resurrection of Christ to go and make disciples of all nations.

But yet they go back to their nets. And that's so like us, friends, as we reflect upon ourselves. Because sometimes in the Christian walk, when things don't work out quite as we had hoped, quite as we had planned, when that path that we've plotted perhaps before our own mind's eye, where it doesn't take us in that direction that we had hoped to go, where things maybe go in a direction that we don't want to be led in, we resist.

We retract. We find ourselves even retreating to that which is comfortable, that which we know, that which is normal to us.

[31 : 36] And of course, we think at times that if we go back to the familiar, all will be well. Nothing ever stays the same.

We see in verse 3 that as the disciples go back to the nets, as they reflect upon all that's happened in their experience, who was this Jesus?

Did we waste the last three years of our lives? What's this all about? As they go back to their nets, they go out and they catch nothing.

They toil all night and have absolutely nothing to show for it. So put yourself in their position. Not only are they deflated in terms of their spiritual needs, but now their physical needs are not being met.

Can things get any worse? I wonder if you felt like that, friend. Perhaps you're feeling like that tonight. You wonder in your own experience, can things get any worse?

[32 : 40] You can even ask, who is this Jesus? Do I know him at all? Where is he in my experience? Has he left me to myself? Can things get any worse in my life?

But what we see here is that sometimes the darkest moments before the dawn? And that's so true. Because as the morning sun is rising, as the dawn of a new day comes into this world, into the life of these disciples, as they make their way back to the shore, exhausted, drained, and empty-handed, what do we see?

Rather, what do we hear? just at the right time, we hear a voice calling them. Verse 5, Children, have you any fish?

Look at that word, children. This is showing us straight from the outset that this is someone who cares for them. Children.

This is an intimate term. This is an affectionate term. This isn't someone who's just asking a cursory question. Have you got any fish? Did you catch anything?

[34 : 02] As we might do ourselves. Did you get a good catch? That's not what he's asking here. Children, have you any fish? This is a question that is so laden with concern.

They answered him, No. And he said to them, Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. So they cast it and now they were not able to haul it because of the quantity of fish.

Who was this man? Well, of course, it was none other than Jesus. We see ourselves in this mirror of God's word.

we see ourselves so like the disciples, so despondent, so discouraged, so downcast. The Christian life is not easy. But we praise the Lord tonight that we see and we hear Jesus.

Children, have you any fish? This was a voice of hope. This was a voice of provision. This was a voice that was coming alongside these men at their very point of need.

[35 : 21] A voice that doesn't condemn. A voice that had every right to condemn. If that was us, how would we react to the disciples?

If we saw the disciples going out to sea, fishing for physical fish, when they should have been out on the gospel field, winning souls for Christ, how would we have reacted on the shoreline?

Would we not be lecturing them and shouting at them and telling them what they should be doing and why haven't you been doing this and why haven't you been, that's the way we are. But not Christ.

Children, have you any fish? He comes alongside them even in their weakness, even in their disobedience, even in their faithlessness.

Friends, is that not the case, so often the case with us, that when we least expect it, that even when we've perhaps given up hope, the Lord comes and he reveals himself to us in such a wonderful way.

[36 : 35] He comes and he provides for us, not that physical food, but that food for our soul, through his word, this mirror that reflects his glory, this mirror that tonight is telling us not to give up.

I wonder if there's any here tonight that feel like giving up, throwing in the towel, as it were, that you've had enough of being a Christian, it's far too difficult. I can't go on any longer.

I'm sure we've all had at least moments, no matter how large or small like that in our experience. Yet he's coming alongside us here tonight in his word and he's asking us, have you any fish?

Have you any food? Do you long after that food for your soul? Well, if you do, here it is. I know where you can get it and it's not out in the bay there, it's here in my word.

And when we come with our net to his word, when we come with that desire to thrall his word for ourselves, what happens? We say with the psalmist, even as with marrow and with fat, my soul shall fill it be.

[37 : 56] Don't we long for our souls to be filled tonight? Don't we long to see Jesus afresh in his word? We're not content, are we, with going through the motions?

That's dead religion. We don't want that. We want to see Jesus and he wants to reveal himself to us. He's a God who gives, a God who comes alongside, a God who loves.

But just look at verse nine because there's more. When they got out on land, they saw a charcoal fire in place and fish laid on it.

What is this? Well, essentially, this is a barbecue on the beach. That's what this is. Charcoal with fish on top, it's a barbecue on the beach.

No doubt, a welcome sight and smell for these tired and hungry disciples who were seeking that food for their bodies. but this is where this narrative just almost explodes before our very eyes because this is not any old barbecue.

[39 : 09] This is a barbecue that is being literally prepared by God incarnate, by God himself, a God who not only fills the disciples' net with fish but then comes and invites them to eat.

Come and have breakfast. I think we need to pause there and really reflect on what's happening. Here is God who inhabits eternity.

We can never tire of thinking of God in these terms. God, no beginning, no end, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, and here he is preparing a meal, doing the ordinary every day, serving.

That is, of course, our example as God's people. We are here to serve. He is there serving, meeting even the most basic needs of his people.

What condescension that he would even think about doing such a thing. We would never think of the king of kings serving in such a way.

[40 : 16] Our idea of a king or a queen is that who ought to be served. But that's not the king of the Bible. He is the one who has come to serve.

What condescension. What a window into the heart of God himself. Come and eat, he says. Come and enjoy what I've prepared for you.

Come and find nourishment in this food that I have for you. Come and eat. That's our Lord. That's our Lord, a Lord who even tonight cares for you.

You might be so despondent and discouraged and wonder where God is. We've all been there. But he cares. He cares.

And that's why we're here on this Friday evening of the communion. Because the Lord is saying to you and to me, come and eat. He's provided for us.

[41 : 16] He's provided for us at the table of the gospel. Come and eat and feast of my word and fill your soul with it. Absolutely. But he's also provided a meal that is for tired and weary sinners just like you and like me.

A meal that so far exceeds any physical meal that we could possibly have. What is that? Well it is of course the Lord's Supper.

As I said in prayer, man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of the Lord. And so it is for us this communion weekend.

We come to have our souls refreshed in Christ. Yes, we hope on the Lord's day to visibly partake of the elements of bread and wine.

What are these? They're symbols. They're just symbols. They're symbols that point to something far greater. They're symbols that point to the fact that we are inwardly partaking of Christ.

[42 : 27] This is not just an outward routine or regime. That's not what we're doing. We're inwardly partaking of Christ. What does that mean to inwardly partake of Christ?

This is where things become real for us. This is where our faith goes from mere cold empty dead religion to a faith that is full of the spirit of the Lord in Christ dwelling within us.

Inwardly partaking of Christ. Some would say that that means to be physically feeding of Christ. Through the process of substantiation, the bread and the wine, they physically become the body and the blood of Jesus.

We don't believe that. We don't eat, physically eat his flesh and his blood. We don't need to. He is at the right hand of the father physically there making intercession for us.

That's what he is. But what we do do is this. We come and we spiritually feed of his body. We taste afresh the wonder, the glory, the sufficiency of that atoning sacrifice of Christ.

[43 : 41] We find him there present by his spirit and by faith we feed on him and all the benefits that are ours through his death and resurrection.

And as we do so, friends, we are nourished. Come and eat. We come and we eat by faith, showing forth that we are one with him and he is one with us.

And isn't there food for our souls there, friend. We can, of course, go through communion season after season after and it just becomes communion. But we must pause and reflect on this Friday evening before we go into our weekend what it is we're doing.

We're coming and we're eating that provision that is ours in Christ. But notice the Lord had to beck on the disciples to come and eat with him.

they don't brashly go ahead and start helping themselves to all that the Lord had prepared. That's not what they do. The Lord asks them to come.

[44 : 52] Maybe they're feeling ashamed. Maybe they're ashamed of the fact that now that they know it's the Lord that he's found them out in their boat rather than as it were fishing for men.

We ourselves can feel ashamed. I was saying this I think maybe Wednesday during the Lord's Day in my own congregation that we ourselves can feel ashamed so we don't come to the Lord for example in prayer.

We think that well how can I come to a holy God after what I've just done, what I've just thought, what I've just said. So we stay away from the throne of grace.

Or even we'll say well I can't come to church just now. X, Y and Z is going on in my family. When things are tidied up nicely then I'll come.

That's not the gospel. He tells us to come and to eat. Look at these disciples they had forsaken their calling. They'd gone back to their nets.

[45 : 53] And he says come and eat. Come and eat breakfast. Come and join me. Come and partake of the good things that I've prepared for you. I know you haven't earned this meal in terms of your obedience to me.

but still come and eat. That's friends what he is saying to us tonight. Yes we're to look within. And when we look within what do we see?

Nothing very nice. We see darkness. We see the real us that no one else sees. And so when we look within we despair.

are. But what he asks us to do is not to look within and stay there. But to look to him. And to come.

To come. We acknowledge friends tonight that we bring nothing of our own to that feast. There's nothing good in and of ourselves that we can bring.

[46 : 56] We see this in the passage. There's nothing that we can bring. But still he asks us to come. And notice that detail that he already has fish on the coals.

But the Lord Jesus asks the disciples to bring some fish with them. Fish that they'd caught. He wants them to be involved with this meal.

And that's the way he is with us. He wants us to be involved. He accommodates our weakness. He meets us at our point of need and he asks us to come. What do we bring?

to the meal? What do we bring to the meal? Well, we don't bring our own righteousness.

We have nothing to bring in that regard. What do the disciples bring to the meal? There's a wonderful detail. They brought to the meal what the Lord had already provided for them.

[47 : 58] God. And that's what we bring to the Lord. Not ourselves by nature, but ourselves by grace. His abundant grace.

The fact that we tonight can say, I am in Christ. I know I am not what I ought to be or what I want to be, but I'm not what I once was.

by the grace of God, I am what I am. And that's what we bring to the Lord's table, as it were.

We come and we bring with us his righteousness. The fact that he died so that we might live.

I know we often say, I'm not good enough, and that is so true. None of us are good enough, but he is good enough, and it's in him we come.

[48 : 58] We know that looking at the disciples here, they weren't good enough. Just look at the mix of men that we have here, and that's a wonderful thing about the mirror of God's word revealing to us, us by nature.

Because if we were going to be writing the Bible, we would want to have Christians characterized as people who are perfect. And we often even do that in the church, and we make everyone perfect, and on a pedestal.

Whereas that's just simply not true. We know that's not true. The Bible shows us that is not true. Just look at Peter. Here he is amongst this crowd who the Lord Jesus asks to come and eat breakfast.

He's the one who denied Jesus three times. He denied Jesus with cursing and swearing. Imagine the Lord Jesus in front of him, he denied him with cursing and swearing, and still Jesus says, come and eat.

I care for you. Then we have Thomas. In the previous chapter, he doubted and he said, unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails and place my hand in his side, I will never believe.

[50 : 11] He doubted and still Jesus says, come and eat. God will be so can't you see, friend, none of us are worthy here tonight.

You might not have professed faith in the Lord. Answer yourself this honestly. Why? Why?

If it's because I'm not a Christian, well that's fair enough. But if it's because I'm not good enough, you need to come back to the Lord and you need to remember the gospel and I say this in love, the gospel of Jesus Christ, that you would understand it in your heart that you are never ever on this side of eternity going to be good enough and you will be waiting for the rest of your life if you're waiting for this bolt from heaven that is never going to come, that's somehow going to transform you into this perfect person.

It's never going to come. Robert Murray McShane famously said this, I know you've heard it many a time, learn much of the Lord Jesus, for every look at yourself, take ten looks at Christ, he is altogether lovely, such infinite majesty and yet such meekness and grace, that's what we've seen here, and for all sinners even the chief, of course the apostle Paul called himself the chief of sinners, live much in the smiles of God, isn't that lovely, live much in the smiles of God, live much in his word, that mirror, yes that shows us ourself, but behind our shoulder who do we see, we see Jesus, we see Jesus, so yes we examine ourselves, yes we seek by the grace of God to root out that sin that so easily slows us down, holds us back, but we don't stop there, because in examining our heart and seeing how poor and miserable we all are by nature, surely all the more we come and we praise his great and his glorious name that he says come and eat, come and eat.

And you know friends, this is of course just a temporary arrangement, it's good for us, not just at times of communion, but at all times to remember that we're remembering his death until he comes again, the story isn't finished, the story is still to have that concluding moment when he comes again, that moment when we will see Jesus, the one who is waiting for us tonight on Canaan's shore, the one who's waiting for all his disciples to come and to eat with him for all eternity.

[53 : 35] And he's longing for that day when every single child of his that he bought for that price will sit down together with him at the greatest meal of all, the marriage supper of the Lamb in heaven.

That is what we are about. We are children of the resurrection, children of life, not children of death and doom and decay, children that are looking forward to that day where there will be no need for a cup or a plate or bread or wine because we will be there in person with the Lamb of God himself, the one who was slain for the sins of the world.

And what a day that will be, what an eternal feast is ours to look forward to. But in the meantime, in the meantime, if you are Christ's tonight, until then, don't deny yourself a blessing, come and eat.

Not that anything, we are going to have any bolts from heaven as you come to the Lord's table, that's not what it's about, but blessing follows obedience. And when you come and you partake of that, suffer by faith in obedience, you will be strengthened, you will be strengthened to face another day.

Let's all do so then, friends. Let's come not only to the table of the gospel, but to the table of the Lord. Let's feed of one another as we enjoy fellowship together in the Lord.

[55 : 14] And let us also feed by faith of our precious Savior until he comes. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your word and for your gospel, the power of God into salvation, a salvation that we know we are not worthy of, but nonetheless a salvation that is ours to be had in Christ.

And so we especially pray this evening for any here who are yet to come and to profess your name, who are perhaps waiting for a sign from heaven, those who love you in their hearts, but are yet to profess your name in their lives.

Lord, draw them, we pray, to take that step of faith and that they too would know that blessing that follows obedience. And we pray also for any here tonight who are yet to come and to taste and to see that God is good, who cannot enter into such things, that your Holy Spirit would work mightily in their hearts and their lives so that they would not only know about Jesus, but that they would know Jesus, that they would be able to say, he died for me.

Go with us then we pray, part us with your blessing and forgive us for Jesus' sake. Amen. We'll conclude our time of worship, friends, singing to God's praise from Psalm 107 in the Scottish Psalter, verse 5 to 9, for thirst and hunger in them fairs, their soul when straits them press, they cry unto the Lord and he them frees from their distress.

Standing to sing, we'll sing verses 5 to 9 to the praise of the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[57 : 16] Amen. Amen.

Em optional So in our way to war that right is seated guide, that they might do a city call wherein they might abide.

O that men to the Lord would give praise for his goodness then, and for his works of wonder done, none to the sons of men.

For he in the soul that longing is, that's fully satisfied.

With goodness he, the hungry sword, that's filled abundantly.

[59 : 06] Amen. Close with a benediction. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, rest on and abide with you now and forevermore.

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

lineup Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.