

5.3.17 Communion Sunday Service

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Date: 05 March 2017

Preacher: Rev. James MacIver

[0 : 0 0] Good morning and a warm welcome to the service this morning. Good to see a number of visitors with us as well and you're especially welcome to join with us in worship this morning.

The intimations, one or two intimations before I hand over to James. The evening service today will be at 6 and that will be conducted by the Reverend Jim Myrtle, Jodo.

And it will be followed by a congregational fellowship where both James and Jodo will be sharing testimony. So all are welcome to that and there will be tea and coffee etc. served at the end of that service.

There's also a retiring offering this evening as is the tradition. And this evening the offering that is collected will go towards Nurse Marion's travelling expenses and the projects that she's involved with through the Dochters Trust in Malawi.

The service tomorrow morning will be the last service of the communion season and that will be a Gaelic service at half past eleven and that will be conducted by James. And then as usual various things in the course of the week.

[1 : 1 0] First fruits and road to recovery. The prayer meeting and discipleship explored. They all continue at the same time in the same places as you have on the sheet. And the service is next Sunday.

The morning service will be at 11am conducted by myself, God willing. And the service in the evening will be in Scalpy. There will be no evening service here.

It's the Scalpy communion season from the 9th to the 13th. That's this week from Thursday through to Monday. And so we join together with the congregation in Scalpy at the evening service next Lord's Day.

Thank you. Just a note also there about the Ladies Day conference. The details you have on the sheet. And if you're able to indicate your attendance if you're going, that would be helpful for those who are organising.

These I think are all the intimations. And again, we're delighted to have James McKeever with us today. He will be leading us in worship. And I'll hand over to James now.

[2 : 1 7] Thank you for that warm welcome. It's my great pleasure and big privilege to be with you here for this communion service. And over these days of communion, we trust that the Lord will express himself through his word and sacrament to his glory and to our benefit.

We're going to begin our service today singing Psalm 107. Psalm 107. You'll find that on page 87 of the hymnody if you're using that book.

Psalm 107 verses 1 to 9. Praise God for he is good. For still his mercy's lasting be. Let God's redeemed say so. Whom he from the enemy's hand did free.

And gathered them out of the lands from north, south, east, and west. They strayed in deserts pathless way. No city found to rest. Through to verse 9. For he the soul that longing is, doth fully satisfy.

With goodness he the hungry soul doth fill abundantly. Psalm 107 verses 1 to 9. Praise God for he is good. This God for thee is good for still.

- [3 : 30] His mercy's lasting be. Let God's redeemed say so to thee.
The people yet be standing free. And gathered them out of the lands from north, south,
east, and west.
They stayed in deserts pathless way. No city found to rest.
For thirst and hunger in them faints, Their soul when saints impressed.
They cried unto the Lord, and he, The priests from their distress.
- [4 : 55] Then more so in our way to war, The rightest he did guide.
That they might to a city rule, Wherein they might abide.
O that men to the Lord would give Praise for his goodness then, And for his works of
wonder done, Unto the sons of men.
For he the soul that longing is, Thou fully satisfy.
With goodness he the hungry soul doth fill abundantly.
- [6 : 28] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Let's all unite together. Let's all unite together. Let's call upon
the Lord. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Lord, our gracious and eternal God, We give thanks for the privilege we now have
Of drawing near to you in worship, Of speaking directly with you in prayer, Of singing your
praises, Of coming before you with acknowledgement and recognition, That we are made
acceptable to you through Jesus Christ, O Lord.
And we thank you, Lord, That we come to you today in his merits, And for his sake, That
we can appeal to that in order that we would be assured of your welcome.
We bless you today, O Lord, For this day and all that it contains for us. We thank you that
it is a day that you have set aside from the very days of creation, So that it would be a day
that was sanctified to yourself.
We thank you, Lord, Today that we recognize, Even in the year that we live in, How
important it is for us to maintain the dignity of your day, To sanctify it in our own
experience, In our attitude, In our actions, And especially in the way of worshipping you
together.
- [7 : 49] We thank you for the benefit of being together, The benefit of belonging to your church
and being your church in the world. We thank you, Lord, For all the advantages that that
gives us in the Gospel.
We praise you today that you have promised that you will be in the midst of your people,
That you would accompany them through to the end of this world, Even as you assured
your disciples before you left this world.
We thank you, Lord, That your promises remain true in every circumstance, In every
situation and every generation of the world's experience and history, And of that of your
church too.
We come to you today, O Lord, And thank you for the ordinance of the Lord's Supper,
Which you have appointed in your wisdom and in your love, As a remembrance of your
death.
And we thank you today for the privilege of being participants in that sacrament, And of
being onlookers too, If we are not taking the supper. We thank you, Lord, for the benefits
that your people receive, Through taking the bread and wine that represent you in your
sufferings and death.
- [9 : 03] We pray that you grant to us, Lord, As we take these elements that represent the broken
body and the shed blood of our Lord, And as we remember you in your death, We pray
that we may meet with you in your risen life.

And we may come, Lord, today to acknowledge that, As we remember the Lord's death in the sacrament, So we met the living Saviour, Through his spirit and through his presence, Through his word, As we met together in this way.

Grace our gathering, we pray, with your presence. But we know, Lord, how much your people value your presence, How much they value the sense that you are here with them.

And the acknowledgement that they have of your presence Is also a matter in which they respond in praise and adoration. Which we would seek to do at this time.

Bless, we pray, the congregation here at this time, And their experience. We ask that this will be a blessing to them, An encouragement and a strengthening to them. Lord, we confess before you, each one of us, Our weakness, our sinfulness, our liability to error and to stray from your ways.

[10 : 20] We pray that you would grant that today word and sacrament will prove to be for us, A means of great strengthening and encouragement, To continue in that way of following faithfully and serving the Lord.

We ask that you would bless each one who will sit today at your table. We pray for those who have been there many times before, And yet may at this time have questions or anxieties that they did not have last time, Or even previously.

Still their hearts, we pray. Assure them of your own presence, of your own relationship with them. That you are their God, that they are your people. We ask your blessing too for Kyle, who will be here for the first time today.

Bless him, Lord, in the step that he has taken in his life. Grant that he may know today of encouragement. And grant that if he will not feel as he anticipates.

And if he leaves the table feeling that perhaps it wasn't all that he expected. Nevertheless, Lord, bless it to him. Grant that he may know that it is not by our feelings or by any of our emotions in themselves That you further your people in persevering faith.

[11 : 39] But grant to him that his strength and faith and trust may indeed be deepened. And his love for you enlarged. Bless his family and bless this to him.

Blessed to the congregation for their encouragement and perseverance And ongoing witness to you in this place. Blessed to your servant David as he ministers to them.

We give thanks for this encouragement for him. We pray that you would continue to bless his ministry here. And grant the congregation your guidance in the days ahead. As they seek to know your way and your will.

And as they seek to have you point out the way for them. Grant, Lord, in your providence that you would richly provide for them. Bless him in his home and in his family.

In every aspect of his work. Bless the witness of the congregation in this community. Grant, Lord, that it will prove to be a light that will draw many people to come to know the Lord for themselves.

[12 : 38] So go before us now we pray in the remainder of this service and of this day. And grant today as we anticipate meeting again this evening. That you're blessed to our Lord as he comes to take the service this evening.

Hear us, Lord, in all our prayers. Continue to watch over us and to accept us in our worship and in our thanks. For Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen.

Lord of God, we thank you today for the way in which you were disguised. All that you experienced but we cannot understand of all in your death on the cross.

You were wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. The chastisement of our peace was upon you. And with your stripes, with your wounds, we are healed.

We thank you today, O Lord, that the freedom that you have fought for your people at such great cost is ours to enjoy. We pray now for these children.

[13 : 39] That you bless them at this time. That you bless them in what remains of their life's course in the world. That you be pleased, O Lord, to bless to them for remembrance of your death here.

As they realize that something is happening of such importance to you people. May they themselves come in due time to confess their faith in you and love for you.

And take their place with your people in the memorial of your death. Keep them, we pray, from all harm and all that would seek to draw them away from you and follow you in this world.

And Lord, we pray that you would now watch over us and continue with us. And pardon our many sins for Jesus' sake. Amen. Now our next item of praise is going to be a Gaelic psalm.

That's from Psalm 45. Psalm 45, and we're singing verses 2 to 3. These are words, as you well know, that are prophetic of the Lord Jesus Christ.

[14 : 44] A psalm which is in fact very like the language of the Psalm of Solomon. Where you find a description of the royal prince coming to the marriage of his bride. Which we associate with the Lord's relationship to his people.

And in Psalm 45 and verse 2, we find that the description is that he is more beautiful than all the sons of men.

And that grace has been poured into his lips. That God has blessed him forevermore. And then a prayer to him to come and exercise his great power.

And girding his sword on his thigh. And during? This verse is. This is . These verses.

A reading of God's Word today is from the Gospel of John.

[15 : 53] And we're reading in chapter 19, verses 17 to 42. John 19, and at verse 17 through to the end of the chapter.

So they took Jesus, and he went out bearing his own cross, to the place called the place of Asgol, which in Aramaic is called Golgotha. There they crucified him, and with him two others, one on either side, and Jesus between them.

Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It read, Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews. Many of the Jews read this inscription, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city.

And it was written in Aramaic, in Latin, and in Greek. So the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, Do not write the King of the Jews, but rather, this man said, I am King of the Jews.

Pilate answered, What I have written, I have written. When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they took his garments and divided them into four parts. One part for each soldier, also his tunic.

[17 : 10] But the tunic was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. So they said to one another, Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it, to see whose it shall be.

This was to fulfill the scripture which says, They divided my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots. So the soldiers did these things, but standing by the cross of Jesus, were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene.

When Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to his mother, Woman, behold your son. Then he said to the disciple, Behold your mother.

From that hour, the disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now finished, said to fulfill the scripture, I thirst.

A jar full of sour wine stood there. So they put a sponge full of sour wine on a hyssop branch and held it to his mouth. When Jesus had received the sour wine, he said, It is finished.

[18 : 18] And he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Since it was the day of the preparation, so that the bodies would not remain on the cross on the Sabbath. For that Sabbath was a high day.

The Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who had been crucified with him.

But when they came to Jesus and saw that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. But one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water.

He who saw it has borne witness. His testimony is true. And he knows that he is telling the truth, that you also may believe. For these things took place that the scripture might be fulfilled.

Not one of his bones will be broken. And again another scripture says, They will look on him whom they have pierced. After these things, Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus.

[19 : 26] And Pilate gave him permission. So he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about 75 pounds in weight.

So they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths, with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now, in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid.

So because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there. And just for a short time, we're going to focus on the final verses of this chapter, from verse 38, especially in verse 41.

Now, in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had yet been laid. So because of the Jewish day of preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

It's very interesting and very instructive to look at the different customs that we find throughout the world of how burials are conducted or carried out.

[20 : 52] We know that the scripture tells us the custom of the Jews at the time in regard to burial was followed as far as possible with the burial of the body of Jesus, as you find it described in this passage.

Many other different types of ceremonies and rituals are found throughout the world in regard to burials. And we ourselves are familiar with what prevails in our islands in regard to the burial of people's remains.

And as you find described in this chapter, there are some remarkable details with reference to the burial of Jesus. There is, first of all, in connection with his death, the boldness or the courage of these two disciples.

Courage at the cross. The courage of Joseph of Arimathea and also Nicodemus who came along with them to take care of the body of Jesus to give it a proper burial.

There's courage at the cross. We'll need to look at something of how they came to have this courage and what exactly led them to take this body of Jesus at a time of much danger to themselves indeed, certainly danger of persecution when they came to take care of the body of Jesus and bury it in this new tomb, in this garden.

[22 : 25] Secondly, we're going to look at Christ's burial. The description you find of the interment of Christ's body by these disciples.

There's the courage they displayed and there's Christ's own burial, which is interestingly referred to there as they laid Jesus there.

So it's more than just a reference to burying a body, albeit the body of Jesus. What it says is, as you can read, there they laid Jesus.

Why does it say Jesus? And not just, as in the other Gospels, the body of Jesus. Well, let's look firstly at the courage that was displayed at the cross by Joseph of Arimathea and by Nicodemus as well.

There was a hidden allegiance on the part of these men. We read elsewhere in the other Gospels that they were actually disanquered secretly, as well as the reference here, he was a disanquered Joseph of Arimathea, secretly for fear of the Jews.

[23 : 28] He hadn't made it known up to this point, that he was actually a follower of Jesus, a believer in Jesus. There were reasons for that. We're told that he was actually for fear of the Jews.

We know something about them from the other Gospels, the description we have. They were both quite rich. They were members of the ruling council of the Jews, the Sanhedrin. They had position.

They were in a place of authority in terms of the religious practice of the time, of the Jewish practice. That's the kind of people they were. They had authority. They had power. They had riches.

But here they are, both of them, coming out into the open as followers of Jesus. They hadn't done it up to now because they were afraid of the Jews. There was a very genuine fear, of course, that they would be themselves persecuted, possibly even put to death, certainly badly treated, and certainly dismissed from the council if they were actually seen to be followers or disciples of this Rabbi Jesus of Nazareth.

And interestingly, in fact, just as an aside, really, although it's a very interesting point, in John's Gospel, you find Nicodemus mentioned three times. And there are three interesting references.

[24 : 43] The first one is probably the best known in chapter 3, where you find his interview with Jesus. He came to Jesus by night. That tells you something spiritually important, theologically important, in the theology of John as well.

It doesn't just say by night so that we'll have an image of him coming during the darkness because of the fear that he'd be noticed. There is that, but John makes more of that. He hears the Gospel that tells us the difference between light and darkness spiritually.

So he came to Jesus in a state of ignorance spiritually, which is brought out in his interview with Jesus, where Jesus said, except a man be born again, he cannot enter the kingdom of God.

Can a man be born again when he is old and enter the second time into his mother's womb? You can see the ignorance, the darkness that's there. That's the first occasion in John where Jesus and Nicodemus come to meet each other.

Then in chapter 7, you find him speaking up. More or less in defense of Jesus when those who were sent out by the authorities to capture Jesus, to take him into custody, came back without him.

[25 : 53] And when they're asked, why did you not bring him? They have a remarkable answer. Nobody ever spoke like this man. Why would you say that when somebody asks you, why did you not take him back?

Why did you not take him into custody? What they're really effectively saying is, how could we possibly take into custody a man who speaks with such authority? Jesus spoke up and said, shall we or do we condemn any man except we hear him for ourselves?

The words exactly as they're used there in the seventh chapter. Nicodemus spoke up and said, does our Lord judge a man without first giving him a hearing, learning what he says?

And of course they turned on him and said, are you also from Galilee? They were associating him with Jesus if he was at all speaking up for him. But you can see he had actually come along a bit spiritually by that time.

And there's a glimpse there that he was in fact beginning at least to trust in Jesus and recognize Jesus for who he was. And here he is, along with Joseph of Arimathea, a fellow member of the council of Sanhedrin.

[27 : 09] What are they doing? They're coming out into the open. They're actually going. Joseph boldly goes to Nicodemus, goes to Pilate, and then Nicodemus joins him. And you read from the other gospels that in Mark especially, that Joseph took courage and went in before Pilate and actually requested the body of Jesus.

And that took courage. And here he is taking courage, a man who had been hidden in his discipleship up to now. What made him take courage? What gave him the boldness? Well, it's no accident that all of this is related to and associated with the cross of Jesus, the death of Jesus, this dead body of Jesus that they now see hanging on the cross.

And it isn't simply that they know they have a particular relationship with Jesus, that they are indeed his disciples, and they want to come out into the open now and do it, and actually do this openly.

It's not just the sense in which they know there's a significance about Jesus. What brings them out really is the same as brings ourselves to the fore, and to make a confession of him, and to remember him in the sacrament.

It is that they valued this death. It was precious to them. They valued it as something significant to themselves spiritually.

[28 : 34] They recognized it as something basic to their own life, basic to their future, important to the way that they are now living, and the way they look forward to eternity. They valued this death.

They had come to appreciate it. They had come to recognize its significance spiritually for themselves. They couldn't leave the body of Jesus hanging on this cross now that he meant so much to them.

Isn't that what brings people to the Lord's table today? Isn't it the value they place upon the death of Jesus for themselves?

Isn't it the recognition that here is something immensely precious that you want to recognize in the way Jesus himself has set out for us to do? You go back to chapter 12 of John, you find a very similar emphasis there in terms of Mary, who came with her alabaster flask and anointed Jesus in the presence of those people there who, some of them at least, grumbled at the fact that she had, in their view, wasted such a precious ointment.

Six days before the Passover, Mary came with Martha serving and took a pound of expensive ointment and the house was filled with a fragrance and she poured that and anointed his feet by Judas Iscariot.

[30 : 04] Why was this ointment not sold for 300 denarii and given to the poor? He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief and having charge of the money back used to help himself to what was put into it.

Jesus said, Leave her alone so that she may keep it for the day of my burial. She was anointing him there, recognising that his death that he had taught her about was significant in her own life, in her own experience, for her own future.

And while you find that described as she poured out the ointment on his feet, there's the contrast of the grumbling of Judas Iscariot, where you find Judas complaining about this wastage.

Let's just pause a wee moment. So you have a contrast there in chapter 12 between the value that Mary placed upon Jesus and upon his death in anticipation of it, and the contrast with Judas Iscariot, who had absolutely no appreciation at all of these things and thought that this valuable ointment, which was worth a lot over a year's wages, in average wages, he saw it as a wastage.

Many people today will say that our commitment and devotion to Christ as we give our life to him, as we pour out our devotion to him, many people today will regard it as a wastage.

[31 : 39] What makes the contrast between that opinion, that point of view, and your own opinion where you don't see it as a wastage at all? It's the preciousness, isn't it, of Christ. It's the value that you place upon him so that it draws your love out to him and brings you today to the Lord's table.

And of course, in a sense, that's really what's happening at the Lord's table as well, isn't it? Just like those two disciples came and took down the body of Jesus from the cross to give it a proper burial and brought themselves by doing that into the open, acknowledging themselves and confessing themselves and showing themselves openly to be followers, disciples of Jesus.

Well, that's what's happening at the Lord's Supper as well. You're taking bread and wine into your hands and you're eating the bread and drinking of that cup.

And doing so, you're pretty much really like Joseph and Nicodemus there at the cross. You're taking to yourself this Jesus as represented in these elements and you're saying nothing is wasted in devotion to him.

This is never too much considering what he has done for me. It's the least I can do when I consider all that he has done in his death for me.

[33 : 14] The courage that they showed was a courage drawn out by their valuing of the death of Jesus.

Let me just ask myself and ask yourselves this question. What value do we place upon the death of Christ, upon Christ in his death today?

What does he mean to us? What does that death mean to us? Is it precious to us? How precious is it? Of course, you can't really put a value on it and not say that it's possible really to estimate its value because its value goes beyond any possibility of putting a valuation on it.

But what we're saying is it ought to be for us the most valuable treasure that we have. Jesus in his death. Jesus in his crucifixion.

which we're remembering in the Lord's Supper today. And today, even if you're not at the table, ask yourself as you're seeing the table, as you're seeing people taking the bread and wine, ask yourself today, what does this mean to me?

[34 : 32] How valuable is what is represented to me? Where is this Jesus in my life, in my experience today? That's the first thing then, the courage shown at the cross.

The second thing is the way in which Christ himself came to be buried. Christ's burial as described there. Now, in the place where he was crucified, there was a garden.

And in the garden, a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So, since the, because of the Jewish day of the preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

Firstly, this reference to be a new tomb. We learn from the other Gospels, it was actually a tomb which Joseph had prepared for himself. So, it looks as if Joseph, having prepared this for himself, was now prepared to make this tomb, this sepulcher, available for the burial of Christ's body, which is what happened.

It was a new tomb. Nobody had ever occupied it before. As you know, in our own circumstances too, as well as it would have been in those days, a lair might have had and would have had more than one body laid in it, a family plot or a family lair or a family sepulcher.

[35 : 53] So, very often you would have lots of remains buried in that same lair, that same sepulcher. But here, nobody had ever yet been laid in this tomb. It was an entirely new tomb.

Why is that important? What is the significance of that in John's theology? Well, a number of things, really. I think we need to take some of what you find in the Old Testament with you and just feed it into this description.

Sometimes we have things going in the opposite direction, don't we? We take what you find in the New Testament and you feed it into the Old Testament and it expands your understanding and casts light on it. But sometimes you take what's in the Old Testament and you feed it into references like these in the New Testament and you find that actually that gives you more understanding of it as well.

So, when you think of Psalm 45 which we sang from in Gaelic, later on in that Psalm, you find a reference to this person, this royal prince having the most wonderful aroma of perfume from Elo's, Myrrh and Cassia from his anointing.

Now, you could take that too far, I'm sure, but it's surely significant that these are the very things that are mentioned in terms of the spices that Jesus was anointed with in his burial as they prepared his body for the burial.

[37 : 21] This was a royal burial in other words. In the theology of the Bible, this was a royal burial. They were burying a king. Whether they recognized that or not, we're not able to say.

How much they saw of that, we're not able to say. But certainly you reading that today will say, this is what God is telling me. This person was no ordinary person. There was no ordinary burial.

It had to be a new sepulcher because it belonged to a king. The king whose death we're remembering today. Let's remember that Jesus in all aspects of his work on earth was acting in the capacity of his three offices as we tend to put it from a way to going back to pretty much to Calvin's day in the three offices, prophet, priest and king.

And that you remember from catechism and so on that he exercised these three offices before and after and indeed during his death.

And that's what you find described there as the burial of a king. He's been treated with royal honors. He's been given the kind of burial that he as a king deserved.

[38 : 35] being given this new tomb with all of this wonderful aroma that's mentioned as the royal king that he is.

But it also anticipates his resurrection because one of the things that needed to be clear and that we're clear about of course from the scripture is that Jesus actually rose from the dead.

and it's important that we're in remembering the death of Jesus today we're not remembering the Jesus who's now dead we're remembering the death of the Jesus who now lives.

We're remembering one who lives forevermore remembering the death that he died or that he died this death. But this is a demonstration of how obvious it was that it wasn't somebody else who rose from that tomb.

The garments that they found in the tomb described in the next passage in chapter 20 were not the garments of somebody else you could not argue but these were not the garments of Jesus somebody else was buried there they're probably his garments.

[39 : 48] He rose from the dead because nobody else had occupied that tomb there is no other explanation for it but that it was indeed himself and as you find as we'll see at the table he came actually to the disciples after his resurrection and he revealed to them his hands and his feet and his side.

Another demonstration that this was no other than himself. The same Jesus who had suffered and died is now risen from the dead and this reference to it being a new tomb in which nobody had ever yet been laid is just part of the evidence that Christ indeed rose from the dead personally and bodily and that that's what we believe.

But then you see there it says there they laid Jesus. Yes the other gospels do say they laid the body of Jesus there but John but John just says there they laid Jesus and John's concern throughout his book is his gospel is really to bring us the person of Jesus as to who he is in himself and what his status is and especially the fact that he is the divine son of God he's the word who became flesh.

so when John is saying they laid Jesus there what you're really reading is that here's something that you see is attached to his person when you ask the question who died you don't answer that question by saying the human nature of Jesus died you can't subtract the human nature of Jesus from his person as the son of God and say yes everything that happened there happened in the human nature of Jesus it did but whose nature is it whose human nature is it who took that human nature to himself the son of God did and so it is in fact the son of God through his human nature by virtue of his human nature now that he has died he's the one who was buried there or let me just expand that a bit in case you could misunderstand it it is the son of God through his human nature who experienced death and who experienced death in all aspects of death not only the spiritual death the damnation indeed that he experienced on the cross as the wrath of God was poured out upon him but even the physical aspect of death which is still a very real aspect of death the separation of a human soul and body he too experienced that the son of God did it is his experience as the son of God who are we remembering today let's put it this way who are we remembering today as we take communion we are not remembering merely the human nature of Jesus we are remembering the son of God and the death he died in his human nature at Calvary and who was buried as to his body in the sepulcher in the garden always ask yourself when you're reading the bible and you come across things to do with

Jesus always ask yourself who is he and you always answer that in terms of his identity in his person as the son of God that's who he is he took as the son of God a real human nature body and soul to himself to facilitate this death that he died for sinners that's who we remember today in other words it's the Lord's own experience of every aspect of death including this as he said himself in Matthew 12 and verse 40 as Jonah was three days and three nights within the belly of the fish so must the son of man be in the depths of the earth that word must is so important so must the son of man be it's an imperative it's something of a necessity in terms of providing salvation for us and you recall the shorter catechism definition of the humiliation of

[44 : 42] Christ wherein does Christ's humiliation consist and it tells you it consists of being born and that in a low condition and so on but it finishes by this by saying and in his being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time in other words the humiliation of Jesus the son of God ended only at his resurrection because he continued under the power of death as to his body for a time so that it could be said of him he died in every sense of the word for you and for me as sinners and there's just something else here before we conclude there's an interesting reference to the garden here was a garden the place where he was crucified and in the garden a new tomb and you think in your mind yes the

Bible has important references to gardens there's an important reference to a garden right at the beginning of the Bible's account of the creation because when God had prepared a proper environment for the man that he was going to create the woman he was going to create the human beings that he created in his image he placed them in that environment in the garden of Eden but that's also where the grave was created in Adam's Fall death came into God's creation through human disobedience sin the grave was created in the garden of Eden and here's another garden that's dealing with the problem of there being a grave in human experience of death having invaded human life and God's creation and in this garden near where

Jesus was buried near where he was crucified this what took place in this garden is actually what overcame the creation of the grave in the garden of Eden by human disobedience death is defeated in this garden by his death followed by his resurrection and what happened in the garden of Eden though many many many centuries before this is now in God's provision of Christ in his death and resurrection overcome and overcome triumphantly in the death and resurrection of Jesus remember when you remember his death you're not remembering a defeat you're remembering a victory a triumph Hugh Martin in his great work on the atonement talks about the fact that we mustn't just associate triumph with a resurrection only with which

Christ rose from the dead he says his death also is a chariot of triumph because by death he destroyed him that is the power of death that is the devil and it is his death that makes an adequate atonement a lasting atonement for his people a sinner in other words the grave is not only overcome but for God's people the grave by the death you remember today is actually consecrated by Jesus when you go to the next chapter you find that the sepulchre wasn't empty although we often speak about empty too and it's right from the point of view that the body of Jesus wasn't there but it wasn't entirely empty because the clothes that had been on his body were left lying there as he rose out of them that's what you find it described as the cloths separate from the cloths that had been round his face just imagine the body lying there cloths round his body and then his face wrapped in a separate cloth well when Jesus rose he left them behind they weren't folded up neatly otherwise people could have said somebody just came in took his body away folded up the clothes to pretend that he had risen from the dead no they found the clothes exactly as they had been on his dead body and as he rose from the dead he left the clothes there and you see it says there it's when that other disciple went into the tomb we understand to be

John along with Peter he saw and believed he believed when he saw what was in front of him in that sepulchre these clothes as they were no other explanation but that he had risen from the dead could possibly explain what he saw so he believed he believed in Jesus he believed in his resurrection in other words when you come to think about your own death and I think about my death it's not an easy thing to think about we tend perhaps to pass off from thinking about it but we should give it due consideration because we have to prepare for it but you know when you think about what the grave is for those who are believers in Christ one thing they can say for sure is that as they look towards their own grave they can say with assurance my

[50 : 51] Lord has been here before me he's left the marks of his presence in the grave just to assure me that I'm not going to be alone when I go into death that I'm not going into an experience that the Lord has not experienced ahead of me he's been there for me he's sanctified the grave if you can put it that way for me and as we remember him today in his death we remember that that death actually comes into the whole area of triumph and consecration and preparation for ourselves in all that is before us and of course the Bible ends with another garden the garden of heaven I know it's described there as a city but it's also described as a garden where there is in a paradise

God's people with himself in other words you've got the contrast between the first garden and the final garden of heaven God and his people together and what really joins them together is this garden where Jesus died and rose again from the dead and when the Bible describes the new heavens and the new earth there are no cemeteries there are no graves no place in which to bury the dead because there are no dead death shall be no more why shall death be no more what is it that causes that it's this death it's this resurrection it's this person it's this king it's this triumphant high priest of our profession Jesus the son of God friends there's so much that we do remember when we remember the death of Christ the death of this person the death facilitated by his taking out human nature the death in this garden that overcomes the death in the garden of Eden and that prepares for the deathless garden of heaven do this he says in remembrance of me two letters in that word me what a big word it is in remembrance of me me the Lord who was laid there in death so that we might through heaven live forever may he bless his thoughts on his word to us we're going to now briefly pray

I'm going to pray this time in Gaelic and then we'll move on to another item of praise let's turn together and to I been to know and to Thank you for your hebben one.

Amen. Amen.

Now we're going to praise the Lord. This time from the hymnody. In hymn 585. In the church hymnody. If you're using that. That's on page 211.

[55 : 08] That's number 585. According to thy gracious word. In meek humility. This will I do. My dying Lord. I will remember thee. Thy body broken for my sake.

My bread from heaven shall be. Thy testamental cup I take. And thus remember thee. We'll sing the whole of that. Verses 1 to 6. To God's praise.

In our church tradition. We normally refer to this part of our service. As fencing the Lord's table. Or seeking to give an invitation. Also to take off the Lord's supper.

To do that. I'd like to just to. Refer to John 20. And verse 20. Where we find that Jesus. When he came into this place. Where the disciples were gathered.

He stood amongst them. And said to them. Peace be with you. And when he had said this. He showed them. His hands. And his side. Then the disciples were glad. When they saw the Lord.

[56 : 09] He showed them. His hands. And his side. That's effectively what's happening. In a different manner. In the Lord's supper. The Lord is showing us.

What represents. His sufferings. He came into that gathering. He showed the disciples. His hands. And his side. That were wounded. By the crucifixion.

On the cross. He was demonstrating. Firstly. The reality. Of his sufferings. And secondly. That it was the same person. Now. Who lived. Who had suffered for them.

And died. The death of the cross. And when you take. The elements. Of the Lord's supper. What you have. Is a recognition. A recognition.

That this represents. Jesus. Paul. In 1 Corinthians 11. The passage. We associate. With the Lord's supper. And speaks about. Discerning. The Lord's body.

- [57 : 06] And that's effectively. What you do. When you come. To take communion. You discern. The Lord's body. You recognize. What this means. You have a meaningful. Relationship. With these elements. You understand. That they represent. To you. The death of Jesus. The person. You love. The savior. You revere.
- The confession of faith. The faith. The faith. The faith. The faith. Says very interestingly. For us. That. These believers. Coming to take communion. As surely.
- As they see bread. And wine. With their eyes. So by faith. They feed upon. Christ crucified. And the benefits. Of his death.
- In other words. In the same moment. As you are seeing something. With your eyes. You are translating that. Spiritually. Into your experience. Of salvation.
- [58 : 00] In Christ. You are seeing. Spiritually. By faith. The death. Of Jesus. And that's what really. Essentially. Gives you the qualification.
- To come. To the Lord's table. It's not that you have. A very strong faith. Or you may have. It's not that your love. Exceeds the love.
- Of other disciples. It's not that you've. Never sinned. Since the last communion. It's not that you. Don't bring yourself. To God daily. And ask for his.
- Forgiveness. It's not that you. Never think. Or act. Wrongly. It's that Jesus. Is your all.
- And all. And that the blood. Of Christ. Cleanses us. From all. Iniquity. We come. Because we believe.
- [58 : 54] In his. Sufficiency. We come. Because we. Recognize. In these elements. The very. Jesus. Who died. Portrayed. To us.
- In a physical way. But understood. Spiritually. And meaningfully. For ourselves. That's why you have. An examination.
- Before coming. To the Lord's Supper. We are. Required. To examine. Ourselves. And we are. Examine. To. By. Those who are. Charged. With looking. After the Lord's. Table. In the church.
- Of Christ. Those who are. Office bearers. Elders. In the church. Because they are. They are. They are. They are. They are responsible. To. Ensure. That those. As far as possible. Who come to the Lord's table.
- Have an understanding. Of what they are doing. That they are not eating. And drinking. As 1 Corinthians 11. Puts. Judgment. To themselves. Not discerning.
- [59 : 47] The Lord's body. And that's why. In that examination. We are not requiring. Of ourselves. Or required of us.
- By others. To be able. To give a great. Glowing testimony. Of our experience. Simply that we. Recognize. The Lord's body.
- And blood. In a way that. Meaningfully. Relates to them. Ourselves. That's why. He says to us. Let a man.
- Examine himself. And so. Let him eat. Of that. Bread. And drink. Of that cup. We have verses.
- In John. In Matthew. Rather. Chapter 5. That give us. Though they're very challenging. And also. When they're looked at. In Christ. Very encouraging. Where Jesus opened his mouth.
- [60 : 42] And taught his disciples. Saying. Blessed. Are the poor in spirit. For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are those who mourn. For they shall be comforted. Blessed are the meek. For they shall inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness. For they shall be satisfied. Blessed are the merciful. For they shall obtain mercy. Blessed are the pure in heart. For they shall see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers. For they shall be called sons of God. Blessed are those who are persecuted. For righteousness sake. For theirs is the kingdom.

For the kingdom of heaven. Not greatness. Politically. Or in human terms. But greatness. As we are found in Christ. And made acceptable to God.

In him. We're going to praise the Lord again. From hymn number. 723. From the mission praise.

[61 : 41] This time. And as we do so. Any who are still to take their place. At the table. If you're here from. Another denomination. Another congregation.

And in full communion. With them. And in good standing. This is the Lord's table. It's not our table. You are welcome. To share in the communion.

With the communicants here. So that's the mission praise. And it's hymn 723. We come as guests invited. When Jesus bids us die.

Let's get to the stage. We read from. First verse chapter 11. And verse 23. We read. What I received from the Lord. That which also I delivered to you.

That the Lord Jesus. On the night. When he was betrayed. Through bread. When he had done thanks. He broke out. And said. This is my body. Which is for you. Do this. In remembrance of me.

[62 : 42] In the same way. Also he took the cup. After supper. Saying. This cup is the new covenant. In my blood. Do this. As often as you drink. In remembrance of me. For as often as you eat.

You said. And drink this cup. You proclaim. The Lord's death. Until he comes. We follow the example. Of the Lord. Who gave thanks.

And now we give thanks. In his name. Amen. O Lord. And O God. As we come. To give thanks.

We pray too. That you would make us. Conscious of all. That we need. To give thanks for. That our thanks. May not be a mere formality. That we may not. Draw near to you.

With our lips only. And our hearts. Far from you. Lord. We thank you. For. The assurance. That you give us. Through the word. That you have a perfect.

[63 : 36] Understanding. Of all that you see. In our hearts. We come to you today. Lord. Expressing. Our own sinfulness. And the way. Which our sinfulness.

Makes us. So undeserving. To receive. Any grace. From you. Any mercy. Any gift. With your grace. Yet we come to you. Lord. As Peter did.

From the world. Who could say. Or be questioned. As to his love. Lord. You know all things. You know that I love you. And in the midst.

Of all. Of all. Our failure. We would also say. Today. That we love you. We love you. For all that you are. In yourself. That we love you. For all that you have done.

And we love you. For all that you do. Presently. In us. And we love you. For all that you have promised. You will let. Get you in us. And for us. We pray.

[64 : 29] For your blessing. To accompany. These elements. Of bread. Wine. Lord. May this bread. And this cup. Be sanctified. By you. From their common. To their sacred.

And may we come. Indeed. To see. In them. With the crucified. And pierced. Lord. And may we find. A meaningful relation.

Lord. Today. For ourselves. With these elements. And through these elements. With our now risen. Savior. So near to us. We pray. That is a sense.

Of your presence. And as we confess. Our sin. Cleanse us. We pray. From all our illiquity. And all that we present to you. We pray. We pray.

In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. I believe.

[65 : 26] That the Lord's. Table. And. The action. Of the sacrament. The set. Should be. The major part. Now. Of ourselves. And that we should not.

Encumbrance that. With. Any long. Unless it's before. And after. So hopefully. is beneficial to say a word to. We already accompany the sacrament with the preached word which in the reform tradition we belong to is such an important emphasis as the reformers laid down.

And as we come here to John chapter 20 again we've thought about recognition as he showed them his hands on his side but he also said something, he said peace be unto you which really effectively is reconciliation.

They recognized him but he spoke about peace. He brought in his own personal the reconciliation that his death had achieved between himself and God.

It's one of the great achievements of the cross that God has reconciled himself by the death of his son. And today that reconciliation is used now.

[66 : 46] It's not something that awaits you. It's not something even that is imperfect now. That reconciliation must be completed by God.

Christ has signed it in the Father's name. And we come to sign it when we accept him. we put out our mentored we say this is my reconciliation too.

And today we hear these words peace be unto you. The peace of God that passes all our understanding and yet is no possession because of Jesus and through Jesus.

we come to take communion. Not simply expecting a sense or wanting a sense of peace but knowing that the peace God has created is actually ours.

In Jesus Christ however you feel pain we can show it in so much. we read in the night which the Lord was betrayed and we read many of you in thanks and broke together and said take me this is my body which is for you this too in remembrance of me.

[68 : 14] Like the covenant also after the supper he took to the covenant day this comes the new covenant in my God this you in remembrance of me.

For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you will show forth the Lord's death till he comes. Recognition of the Lord's body and blood reconciliation peace with God.

We also find now as we come to leave the table we also find in that passage the Lord's saying as the Father has sent me even so I have sent you.

And when he said this he breathed on him and said to them to receive the Holy Spirit. And that was always to them as disciples and apostles as they would be the principle of that remains with ourselves.

The Lord doesn't just give us a recognition of his death and knowledge of reconciliation he also commissions us. He commissions us for a mission for witnessing to him for going out into the world.

[69 : 38] You find the same praise in the prayer in chapter 17 of John as Jesus prays to the Father as you have sent me into the world even so I am sending them.

And the even so is loaded with significance which are paralleled between the manner of which Jesus was sent and came into the world and how he sends us into the world.

And that parallels in many respects something that's seen in the humble servants. He came as a humble servant of God.

He humbled himself his spouse obedience to the death of the cross. That's how he was sent into the world. That's how he came into the world.

Now he's saying even so I am sending you. He's saying I'm not sending you to be proud arrogant Christians. I'm not sending you to be people who are up with them just humble servants.

[70 : 49] I'm not sending you to dispute but who's the greatest as the disciples were prior to the Lord's passage. I'm sending you to be images of me.

That's what he said. And there is no greater challenge than that. To serve the Lord after his image. To serve the Lord as he served the Father in humility of service.

And today as we come having participated in the joy and deed and commemorated the Lord in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Let's leave it myself and yourselves with this fresh in our minds.

We've recognized the Lord. We've known this reconciliation. We've come now to be again commissioned.

as the psalm said, you bow to the Lord upon me. So too I bow to him be the Lord, to us be the laver to play the act.

[72 : 04] We're going to conclude now with a singing. Again, singing in psalms. psalm 118, verses 24 to 29, page 95 of the church and 8.

This is the day God made, in it we rejoined triumphantly. Save now, I pray thee, Lord, I pray, send now prosperity. Blessed is people in God's great name that cometh us to save, we from the house which the Lord contains, you blessed have.

And then you speak about the sacrifice and how we do that sacrifice to ourselves. God is the Lord, who unto us that may like to arise, find the altar forms with cords and sacrifice.

Thou art my God, I be exalted, my God, I will be praised. Be thanks to God for his good, his mercy lasts always.

These verses, this is the day God is. Amen. This is the day God made will joy triumphantly.

[73 : 29] Save thou, I pray, thee, Lord, I pray, send thou prosperity.

Blessed have. This be God's great name, that cometh us to save.

We from the house which to the Lord pertains to blessed have.

God is the Lord who unto us hath made life to arise.

Bind he unto the author's horn, with course the sacrifice.

[74 : 46] The heart, my God, I thee exalt, my God, I will thee praise.

Give thanks to God, for he is good, his mercy has always.

Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you, now and always. Amen.