

Come Dine With Me

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, if we could, this morning with the Lord's help and the Lord's enabling, if we could turn back to that portion of Scripture that we read, the book of Genesis, chapter 43.
- Genesis 43. And if we read again at verse 33. Genesis 43 and verse 33.
- That's the end of the chapter. And they sat before him, that is Joseph, the firstborn, according to his birthright and the youngest, according to his youth. And the men looked at one another in amazement.
- Portions were taken to them from Joseph's table, but Benjamin's portion was five times as much as any of theirs. And they drank and were merry with him.
- Come dine with me. Come dine with me. When Joseph's brothers returned to Egypt with Benjamin, that was one of the first things Joseph said to them.
- [1 : 0 3] Come dine with me. And for many of us, we're familiar with that phrase, the phrase, come dine with me. We're familiar with it because of the TV series, Come Dine With Me. Again, I must confess, I've never really watched it.
- But I do know that it features four or five chefs who prepare meals. And they all live around the same area. And each of them, they host a three-course dinner with all the other contestants.
- And there are guests there in their home. And then each competitor who's visiting the home that night, they all rate the hospitality and the cooking skills of the host.
- And, well, whoever is the best wins the prize. But, you know, prior to living in lockdown, many family and friends, they took part in this experience, the come dine with me experience.
- Maybe you've taken part in the come dine with me experience by hosting your friends and your family for an evening. And then afterwards, you've gone through the torture of having your cooking critiqued or your hospitality skills scrutinized.
- [2 : 0 9] I have to say it wouldn't be something that excites me. I mean, but some people love that kind of pressure and stress. But, you know, when Joseph's brothers returned to Egypt, starving and looking for food, they returned this time with their youngest brother.
- And when Joseph saw his brothers, all his brothers and Benjamin, one of the first things he said to them was, come dine with me. Come dine with me.
- And I want us to just look at this passage of chapter 43 in the life of Joseph. I want us to consider it this morning under three simple headings. A delayed discussion, a distressed dynasty, and a delightful dinner.
- A delayed discussion, a distressed dynasty, and a delightful discussion. A delightful dinner. So a delayed discussion. We'll read from the beginning.
- Now the famine was severe in the land, and when they had eaten the grain that they had brought from Egypt, their father said to them, go again, buy us a little food.

[3 : 18] But Judah said to him, the man solemnly warned us, saying, you shall not see my face unless your brother is with you. If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food.

But if you will not send him, we will not go down. For the man said to us, you shall not see my face unless your brother is with you. Now chapter 43, it opens by reminding us that these were no ordinary circumstances.

The famine was now severe, not only in the land of Egypt, but also in the promised land of Israel. So the people, they were starving, families were struggling, and homes were stressed that they didn't have enough food.

But even though there was no food, we see that Pharaoh's dreams were still being fulfilled. Because when Joseph was brought from rags to riches, from the pit to the palace, from being a prisoner in Egypt, to being the prime minister in Egypt, you remember how he had interpreted Pharaoh's dreams, that there would be seven years of fullness, followed by seven years of famine.

And during those seven years of fullness, there was to be great blessing in the land of Egypt. There was going to be this wholesome harvest every year in which the earth produced abundantly.

[4 : 36] And as per Joseph's 20% tax rise, one fifth of all the grain that was stored up in all the cities in Egypt, to the point that we're told that there was so much grain that they couldn't count it anymore.

They couldn't measure it anymore. But it wasn't just Pharaoh's dreams that were being fulfilled. Joseph's dreams were also being fulfilled. To be precise, Joseph's first dream was fulfilled after 20 years of waiting upon God's promised plan and purpose.

Because as we saw last Lord's Day, when 10 of Joseph's brothers ended up on Joseph's doorstep, looking for food among this famine, you remember how they had traveled the 500-mile journey from Canaan to Egypt because their hope and their salvation was to be found in the Savior of the ancient world.

And when they were confronted with Joseph, their long-lost family member, we saw that they didn't recognize him. They didn't recognize Joseph. Joseph recognized them, but they didn't recognize him.

Because Joseph, well, he was now well-dressed. He was clean-shaven. He had been given a new name. He spoke another language. He was now the prime minister in Egypt with all these servants who were waiting at his very beck and call.

[5 : 56] And yet when Joseph's brothers are confronted with their long-lost brother, they bow down before him, we're told, with their faces to the ground. And after over 20 years of waiting upon God's promised plan and purpose, Joseph's first dream was fulfilled.

You'll remember that as a 17-year-old boy, Joseph had had two dreams. Two dreams about his family bowing down to him. The first dream was where he said, we were binding sheaves in the field and my sheaf arose and stood upright, but your sheaves, they gathered around and they bowed down to my sheaf.

And so after 20 years of waiting, Joseph's first dream was fulfilled. It was a long time to wait upon the Lord, but the Lord was faithful to his promise and the Lord fulfilled his promise.

But in order to preserve his integrity and protect his identity, Joseph, we read in chapter 42, he spoke roughly with his brothers and he dealt harshly with them.

He interviewed them and interrogated his brothers, asking lots of questions about his father and their youngest brother, Benjamin. And he repeatedly accused them of being spies that were worthy of death to the point that he imprisoned them for three days.

[7 : 18] And then after three days of imprisonment, he gave them their ultimatum. He said to them, do this and you will live. And Joseph, he confined their brother Simeon in custody and he sent the rest of them back to Israel with food and all their finances.

But they were warned. They were warned to bring Benjamin back with them so that their words would be verified and that they wouldn't be known as liars.

And you know, when all this happened, all the brothers could think about was their guilt. All their father could think about, their father Jacob, all he could think about when he heard what happened in Egypt, all he could think about was the grave.

So the brothers were thinking about guilt, the father thinking about the grave, and all Joseph was showing them was grace. All Joseph was showing his brothers and his family was grace.

Although they couldn't see it, Joseph was being gracious towards this family because God had an interest in this family. They had seized and separated and sold their brother into slavery.

[8 : 25] They had lied. They had ignored their conscience. And yet Joseph was gracious to this family. And when they came looking for salvation in Egypt, Joseph was gracious with this family.

He gave them back their money. It was of no use to him. Joseph graciously gave it back because he gave to them what they didn't deserve. He was gracious with them.

And the point of the narrative is that we're being emphasized that Joseph is the savior of the world. And he is showing grace to his brothers. Joseph, the savior of the world, is showing grace to his brothers.

But here's the thing. They couldn't see it because they didn't know who Joseph was. They couldn't see the grace because they didn't know who Joseph was.

And as we begin chapter 43, that's what's being emphasized here. Jacob and his sons, they knew that this man, Joseph, was prime minister in Egypt. He was the savior of the world.

[9 : 32] They knew that he could help them. They knew that he could save them. But what they didn't know is who he was. They didn't know his identity. They didn't know him personally.

They didn't know who he was. And that's the repeated emphasis to us. And it's emphasized by the fact that every time they refer to Joseph in the opening verses of chapter 43, they call him the man.

They call him the man. Look with me at verse 3. But Judah said to him, the man solemnly warned us, saying, you shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.

If you will send our brother with us, we will go down and buy food. But if you will not send him, we will not go down. For the man said to us, you shall not see my face unless your brother is with you.

Israel said, why did you treat me so badly? As to tell the man that you had another brother. They replied, the man questioned us carefully about ourselves and our kindred saying, is your father still alive?

[10 : 35] Do you have another brother? What we told him was an answer to these questions. Could we in any way have known what he would say? Bring your brother down. And then go to verse 11. Their father Israel said to them, if it must be so, then do this.

Take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags. Carry a present down to the man. A little balm, a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. Then verse 14.

May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man. And may he send back to your other brother. Send back your other brother and Benjamin. And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved.

They call him the man. Although Jacob and his sons knew that he was the savior of the world, they knew he was able to help them and be gracious to them. They repeatedly described him just as the man.

They knew he could save them, but they didn't know who he was. They didn't know his identity. They didn't know him personally. They didn't know who he was.

[11 : 39] And as we said, this was a delayed discussion because Judah said in verse 10, if we had not delayed, we would have now returned twice. So it was a delayed discussion that Jacob and his sons, they kept putting off having this discussion about seeking salvation in Egypt until they were being confronted finally with the harsh reality of death.

They kept putting it off. They kept making excuses. They kept avoiding the subject or even changing the subject so that they wouldn't have to speak about salvation and the savior of the world.

Now, can you see where I'm going with this, my friend? Do you know, my unconverted friend, there are so many similarities in these opening verses that can be made with you and Joseph's family because like them, you know where salvation is to be found.

You know who the savior of the world is. You know who can save you from sin. You know who can deal with your debt of guilt. You know who can change your heart and transform your life.

You know that he's the greater than Joseph, Jesus Christ. You know who he is, but the thing is, you don't know him personally. And this is the point.

[13 : 00] You haven't identified him as your personal savior. You don't know him as your brother. You don't confess him as your Lord and savior. And like Joseph, this is a delayed discussion.

It's a delayed discussion because you should have been talking about this years ago. You should have been dealing with this years ago. You should have been clearing your conscience and confessing your savior a long, long time ago.

But you've kept putting it off. You've kept making excuses. If somebody speaks to you about it, you avoid the subject. You change the subject. You fill your life with everything else.

And just to make sure that you don't have to think about your undying soul or seek salvation from the only savior in this world. But you know, my unconverted friend, we're going to have this discussion now.

There's no putting it off. No more excuses. Because as the Bible says, now is the accepted time. Today is the day of salvation.

[14 : 10] And as you know, tomorrow isn't promised. Tomorrow isn't promised. I don't know how many of you have started watching Euro 2020.

But you know, we were reminded of that very fact yesterday. The Danish midfielder, Christian Eriksen, he suffered a cardiac arrest while playing against Finland.

And you know, for that to happen to a 29-year-old in front of a watching world, it silenced everyone. And it put everything into perspective.

And all the football commentators, they had plenty to say about the football. But when it happened, they couldn't say anything. All they could say was, football doesn't matter now.

And you know, for Gary Lineker to make that statement, that's massive. Because they're reminded that life is so uncertain.

[15 : 10] We don't know if we're promised. We're not promised tomorrow. We don't know if we'll see tomorrow. Thankfully, Christian Eriksen, he was treated and he's recovering. But you know, the reality is that we don't know when our last step will be.

We could be one step away from the great eternity. And as I say to you so often, life is uncertain. Death is sure. Sin is the cause.

Christ is the cure. And you know, my friend, you've been reminded this morning that the greater than Joseph, Jesus Christ, he has shown you grace. He has shown you grace.

He has given to you what you don't deserve. He has lovingly, mercifully, and graciously held out to you the offer of salvation all these years. And so is it not about time?

Is it not about time that you took him up on his offer before death calls and judgment comes? Don't make this a delayed discussion.

[16 : 16] Make it a determined discussion. Determine this morning, my friend, to speak with your Savior. Speak with him. Seek him. Seek him.

That's what the Bible says. Seek the Lord while he's to be found. Call upon him while he is near. Don't delay.

Don't delay. So we see, first of all, a delayed discussion. Then secondly, a distressed dynasty. So a delayed discussion and a distressed dynasty.

Look at verse 11. Then their father Israel said to them, If it must be so, then do this. Take some of the choice fruits of the land in your bags and carry a present down to the man.

A little balm, a little honey, gum, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds. Take double the money with you. Carry back with you the money that was returned in the mouth of your sacks.

[17 : 14] Perhaps it was an oversight. Take also your brother and arise, go to the man. May God Almighty grant you mercy before the man and may he send back your other brother and Benjamin.

And as for me, if I am bereaved of my children, I am bereaved. So the men took this present and they took double the money with them and Benjamin. They arose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph.

You know, after Judah had persuaded his father Jacob to take Benjamin to Egypt, Jacob wouldn't allow them to go down empty-handed. He had to send them to Egypt with a present.

They were to take a gift to the Savior of the world. They were to take a gift to Joseph, which at that time it was customary. It was customary for travelers to present a gift to a high official of a foreign land.

But you know, in the middle of a famine, and you read the list, it was a lot to give away. In the middle of a famine, it's a lot to hand over to somebody else.

[18 : 20] And as we read, they were to take balm, gum, honey, myrrh, pistachio nuts, and almonds, along with double the money they had before. They wanted to return the money that they had received the first time for the food, which was the ethical thing to do, because they thought it was an oversight.

They thought it was a mistake. They didn't realize that Joseph was showing grace to this family. And yet, in the middle of a famine, they took all these precious presents, these great gifts, and they present them to Joseph.

Why? To get on his good side. And you know, in my mind, it seems that they were trying to buy his favor. They were trying to repay the gift.

They were trying to earn grace. They were trying to earn the grace that had been shown to them. They were trying to secure their own salvation from the Savior of the world.

But what they still couldn't see, and my unconverted friend, maybe this is what you still can't see, is that you cannot secure your own salvation from the Savior of the world.

[19 : 27] You can't finance his favor. You can't price his present. You can't gift his grace. You can't merit his mercy. No, it's unmerited.

It's undeserving. It's unearned. You can't buy it. You can't book it. You can't barter for it. You can only receive it. You can only receive it, and you can freely and fully receive it by grace.

Because grace is a gift. That's what grace is. Grace is a gift. It's unmerited. It's undeserving. It's unearned salvation through Jesus Christ.

And you know, that's how a sinner is saved. We're saved by grace through faith. And so, my friend, you come to this Jesus. You come to him.

And you earnestly ask him for his gracious gift. And the promise is you will receive this gracious gift. Don't come to Jesus saying, look at what I've done for you.

[20 : 30] No. You come to Jesus saying, Jesus, I know what you've done for me. I know what you've done for me. Then we read in verse 15.

So the men took this present, and they took double the money with them. And Benjamin, they rose and went down to Egypt and stood before Joseph. When Joseph saw Benjamin with them, he said to the steward of his house, bring the men into the house and slaughter an animal and make ready for the men are to dine with me at noon.

So Joseph, he had repeatedly said to his brothers, you shall not see my face unless your brother is with you. He had said that to them when they came the first time.

You shall not see my face unless your brother is with you. And as we read, when Joseph saw Benjamin with them, everything changed. You know, Joseph, he wasn't interested in the precious presents or the great gifts that they had brought all the way from Israel.

Joseph was only interested in his brother, Benjamin. And when Joseph saw Benjamin, he said to them, come dine with me. Come dine with me.

[21 : 41] Now I'm sure that Joseph's brothers, I'm sure that they had hoped that the prime minister, he would just see their brother, that he was there, he did exist, that they had a younger brother, Benjamin, and that they would believe that they were telling the truth, they didn't make it up, and that they could just buy more food and then release Simeon, and they could just all go home and the whole saga would be over.

But when Joseph said to his brothers, come dine with me, it sent a shiver through them. They didn't respond with this joyful acceptance of the invitation, temptation.

It was more like they turned white, and this wave of terror came over them, because they then thought, well, what's going to happen next? Whatever it was, they thought, well, it's not going to be good.

The men, when Joseph said to his servant, when they said, bring the men into the house to dine with me at noon, you know, Joseph's brothers, they nervously thought, as the saying goes, there's no such thing as a free lunch.

This is going to cost us, they thought. This is going to cost us dearly. It's going to cost us our life. And, you know, in a moment, and in a panic, this distressed dynasty, they became almost defensive.

[23 : 02] And they began coming up with excuses about the money in their sacks and why it was there. And they did that without anyone mentioning it to them. Because no one, you read the narrative, no one said anything about the money that had been put into their sacks.

The servants never said a word, Joseph never said a word to them. And yet, Joseph's delivered invitation, it was read and it was received as a direct insinuation and interrogation.

They thought it was, they took it the completely wrong way. And they became defensive. They thought it was an allegation and an accusation against them.

They thought it was this plan and plot to assassinate them. And they jumped to the wrong conclusion. And they say in verse 18, it is because of the money which was replaced in our sacks the first time that we are brought in so that he may assault us and fall upon us to make us his servants and seize our donkeys.

Joseph's brothers, they jumped to the wrong conclusion thinking that it was all part of this interrogation and they were going to be assassinated. but they couldn't have been further from the truth.

[24 : 14] They couldn't have been further from the truth. And you know, if you try and stand in their shoes, you know, we can do the same, can't we? We can sometimes be very defensive if someone looks at us the wrong way or says something we don't expect or they do something that we're not prepared for.

We can take it personally because we think it's an attack on us or that we're to blame for something we've done. And like these brothers, you know, we can actually, in our own minds, we can tie ourselves in knots wondering what people are really thinking.

And we can even imagine it. We can invent a whole story, a whole scene, a whole scenario of what it's all about and why it's happening and what's going to happen in the future. And because we've imagined it and invented it in our own minds, we can get so worked up, we can get so worried, we can get so distressed and distraught and defensive about everything, we can become touchy and temperamental sometimes for no reason at all.

But you know, you read this passage and I love, I love what's said in verse 23. Sometimes we just need the servant of Joseph to speak to us, like he spoke to Joseph's brothers.

Because Joseph's invitation, it was never intended to be read or received. as interrogation. Sometimes we just need the servant of Joseph to give us some perspective and to speak peace to us and say, do not be afraid.

[25 : 50] Do not be afraid. You know, we often jump to the wrong conclusion in our own minds. We become distressed and distraught and defensive.

Sometimes we need just the greater than Joseph to give us some perspective, some peace. Sometimes we just need that reminder and reassurance with those comforting words that Jesus is able to speak to us.

Peace be still. Do not be afraid. You know, we can invent so much in our own minds. peace be peace be peace be peace be peace be peace be peace be still.

Do not be afraid. And with that, the servant, we're told, he reunited them with Simeon. Simeon was brought out and they're brought into Joseph's banqueting house peace be to be a delightful dinner.

And that's what we see lastly, a delightful dinner. So a delayed discussion, a distressed dynasty, and a delightful dinner. A delightful dinner. Look at verse 26.

[27 : 06] When Joseph came home, they brought into the house to him the present that they had with them, and bowed down to him to the ground. And he inquired about their welfare and said, Is your father well, the old man of whom you spoke?

Is he still alive? They said, Your servant, our father, as well. He is still alive. And they bowed their heads and prostrated themselves. And he lifted up his eyes and saw his brother Benjamin, his mother's son, and said, Is this your youngest brother of whom you spoke to me?

God be gracious to you, my son. Then Joseph hurried out, for his compassion grew warm for his brother, and he sought a place to weep, and he entered his chamber and wept there.

You know, the Reverend Robert Candlish, he was a minister in St. George's Free Church in Edinburgh during the 19th century. And Candlish, he was also a contemporary and a colleague of Thomas Chalmers, who was an influential figure during the disruption and the birth of the Free Church in 1843.

But Candlish, he wrote a commentary on the book of Genesis, and he said about this passage, he said, If Joseph had been left to himself, he would have revealed his identity in a moment.

[28 : 24] But he was restrained by God, who was using him for the salvation of his brothers. And you know, it must have been very difficult for Joseph, because when Joseph came home from work that day, he was met with this company of men whom he had longed to see for over 20 years.

And as we read, Joseph's compassion grew warm towards his brothers. Literally, it means his love for his brothers began to bubble in his bowels.

That's literally what it's translated as. His love for his brothers began to bubble in his bowels. His emotions were being stirred. He's looking at these men he has longed to see for over 20 years.

He's looking at his long-lost family. And now he has this opportunity to enjoy food and fellowship with them. And for Joseph, seeing his brothers, it was such an emotional experience as it would be.

And Joseph's emotions, they're building and bubbling in his bowels all the time. And you know, that's actually something we need to notice as you read through the narrative. And I'd encourage you to read through the narrative as we study these passages.

[29 : 39] because from chapter 42 onwards, you know, we repeatedly read that Joseph has to leave the room. He's always leaving the room in order to just let it all out and weep.

It's been such a long time since he's seen his brothers that he just can't contain himself. And so Joseph, he has to keep leaving the room to try and calm down and compose himself and to wipe his tears and wash his face and make sure he's ready.

There's all this emotional tension and he's always having to leave the room. And you'll see that it continues to build as we go through the chapters from chapter 42, 43, 44 and then into chapter 45 where Joseph, he can't keep it in any longer.

And he just blurts it out. But you know, at this point in the narrative in chapter 43, when we read what's going on and we see the confusion of the brothers and you see the love and the compassion and the emotion of Joseph towards his brothers, I don't know about you but I'm almost shouting asking, Joseph, why don't you just say something to them?

Why don't you just tell them who you are? Why don't you just tell them that you're a brother, that you're their brother? But the reason Joseph doesn't want to say anything is because he wants to know, he wants to know if after all these years, if his brothers have actually changed.

[31 : 08] Despite everything that has happened in this dysfunctional family, Joseph still has so much love, he has so much care, so much compassion and grace towards his brothers but he's afraid that they haven't changed.

He's worried that they haven't changed in their attitude towards him and their other family members. He has a concern and he's cautious to make sure that his brothers have changed because Joseph, he doesn't want to get hurt.

He doesn't want to open himself up to be let down again. As the saying goes, once bitten, twice shy. And that was Joseph and that's why in the last verse we read that Joseph orders that Benjamin's portion is five times bigger than all of his brothers.

brothers. Joseph was showing favoritism to his brothers just like he had received favoritism from his father with the coat of many colors.

And it was all a test. It was all a test to see how his brothers would react towards their youngest brother, Benjamin. Would they treat him like they treated Joseph?

[32 : 18] Or had they changed? And you know, by what we read, it seems that Joseph's brothers had changed because they didn't say anything to their brother.

They didn't show anger or antagonism towards their brother like they did towards Joseph. Which means that his brothers had changed. Grace was working in their life.

Grace was transforming these brothers. And you know, we'll see more of this as the weeks go on. But I want to just conclude with this.

You know, Joseph's invitation to his brother, come dine with me. That was also the invitation of the greater than Joseph, Jesus Christ. But when Joseph and Jesus issue that great invitation, come dine with me, you know, they weren't like the TV program.

They weren't looking for their cooking to be critiqued or their hospitality to be scrutinized. They sought to discuss, display, and demonstrate their care, compassion and concern towards others.

[33 : 27] Because, you know, in the Gospels, you know, when you read the Gospels, how often do you find Jesus sitting around the dinner table and he's discussing with people? He's discussing his love.

He's displaying his grace. He's demonstrating his mercy. And, you know, Joseph and even Jesus, they're an example to us. They're an example to us as Christians of how to do personal evangelism.

Because they show us that personal evangelism, it's all about issuing the invitation, come dine with me. It's all about enjoying food, friendship, and fellowship with those around us, in our congregation, and in our community.

My Christian friend, issuing the invitation, come dine with me, it's all about showing hospitality to others. Which is something that's repeatedly emphasized and encouraged in the New Testament.

Because as you know, and as it should be, the church isn't a holy huddle. The church isn't a gentleman's club. Or the church isn't somewhere to sit either here or at home on a Sunday morning.

[34 : 37] No, the church is to be, as the Bible describes it, it's a family. Where friendships are fostered, where fellowship is formed, and where we are to grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

We're to grow together. And, you know, issuing the invitation, come dine with me in my home. Yes, it might be a daunting invitation to give to anyone.

But, you know, from the example of Joseph and the example of Jesus, that's personal evangelism. That's intentional evangelism. That's how we get alongside people. That's how we build relationships with people.

Because the gospel invitation, we are to give. We are to issue to people personally. Come dine with me. You know, that's the invitation Jesus gives to everyone.

To all our unconverted friends, that's the invitation Jesus gives to you this morning. Come dine with me. Come dine with me. You know, in the gospel, the table is set.

[35 : 42] And it's a delightful dinner. I mean, you come and taste this. And you'll never go back to anything else.

You'll never go back to anything else. And if you do, well, you're missing out. The gospel table is prepared. The dinner is set.

The invitation is issued. And Jesus says to us, come, dine with me. Everyone who thirsts, come. Come ye to the waters. Those of you who have no money, come, buy and eat.

Come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Come. That's the gospel invitation. Come. And you know, the greater than Joseph this morning, he is issuing to you that gospel invitation.

Once again. And Jesus is very simply saying to you, come, dine with me. Come, dine with me. Come.

[36 : 47] My friend, you make sure you come and dine with this great host who is able to save to the uttermost. May the Lord bless these thoughts to us.

Let us pray together. O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks to thee for the gospel and that it is a full and free invitation to come to this wonderful Savior, to come to the greater than Joseph, that he is the one who issues grace and he holds out that gracious gift for us to come to taste and see the Lord good, to receive the grace that has been on offer and will be on offer.

Father, and Lord, we do pray that we would not waste our opportunities, but that we would seek the Lord while he is to be found and call upon him while he is near. O speak tenderly to us, we pray, and remind us that time is short, eternity is long, and that we need to close in with Christ because now is the accepted time.

Today is the day of salvation. Bless us, Lord, we ask. Oh, may there be rejoicing in the presence of the angels today over sinners repenting. Take away our iniquity, receive us graciously, for Jesus' sake.

Amen. Well, we're going to bring our service to a conclusion this morning by singing the words of Psalm 34. Psalm 34, it's in the Scottish Psalter, it's on page 247.

[38 : 22] Psalm 34, we're singing from verse 7 down to the verse marked 11. Psalm 34 from verse 7.

The angel of the Lord encamps and round encompasseth all those about that do him fear and them delivereth. O taste and see that God is good, who trusts in him is blessed.

Fear God his saints, none that him fear, shall be with want oppressed. We'll sing Psalm 34 from verse 7 to 11 to God's praise. The angel of the Lord encampments and rocked and rocked and compasses, O Lord, the Lord gathering he's God todo CHOIR SINGS

CHOIR SINGS O CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS CHOIR SINGS How you teach to understand How we the Lord to fear

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forevermore.

[41 : 20] Amen.