

Awake O Sword

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Preacher: Rev. Paul Murray

[0 : 00] Well now with a view to God's blessing, I want us to turn to the scriptures of the Old Testament and to the book of Sechariah in chapter 13.

Sechariah, that's the second last book in the Old Testament. It's on page 966 if you have a few Bible. Sechariah chapter 13 and reading together verses 7 down to 9.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me, declares the Lord of hosts. Strike the shepherd and the sheep will be scattered.

I will turn my hand against the little ones. In the whole land, declares the Lord, two-thirds shall be cut off and perish, and one-third shall be left alive.

And I will put this third into the fire, and refine them as one refined silver, and test them as gold is tested. They will call upon my name, and I will answer them.

[1 : 17] I will say, they are my people, and they will say, the Lord is my God. Especially these words at the beginning of verse 7.

Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me, declares the Lord of hosts. Well, today we come to observe the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

And the Lord's people, those who have professed their faith in Jesus Christ publicly, they will come and they will eat the bread and they will drink the wine. And that, of course, symbolizes the broken body of Christ and the shed blood of Christ.

And the Lord's people will do this in remembrance of Christ and in order to proclaim his death, to show it forth until he come again.

It is the death of Jesus Christ that we especially remember when we take communion. And so in order to prepare our minds, as it were, for the sacrament itself, I want us to ask a question today.

[2 : 22] And the question that I want us to ask is this. Why did Jesus die? Simple question. Why did Jesus die? Why did Jesus have to die? I first of all want to look at it from man's perspective.

Because you can read through the gospel accounts of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. And what you have in these books is eyewitness records of what happened. We have recorded in these books what people heard Jesus say and what they saw him do.

And so you have reports there of some of his sermons as well as about many of his miracles. We're told about the way that he came into the world and we're told about the way that he left the world.

Each of the gospels give us really quite lengthy and detailed accounts, especially of Jesus' death, of the trial that led to his condemnation, and of the crucifixion that secured it.

And these accounts, and we've just read one of them, these accounts, if you have any compassion at all, if you have any love at all for Jesus Christ, they're not easy to read.

[3 : 33] We read there in John that Pilate had Jesus, the Son of God, the God-man, he had him scourged. He had him scourged or flogged.

The soldiers, we read, they crowned him with a crown of thorns and they clothed him in a purple robe. They put a reed in his hand and they mocked him. It was a mock coronation.

They mocked him as a king. And they struck him. They struck the Son of God with their hands. And then we're told that Pilate, well, Pilate came out and he pronounced him innocent.

And yet it was the church, the church who demanded Christ's crucifixion. And so Pilate gives in. He's a weak man. He gives in, he gives him what they want.

And so Jesus is sent to Golgotha carrying his own cross. And the soldiers there, as if they haven't done enough, they strip him of his clothes and they divide them among themselves or they cast lots for them.

[4 : 34] And so you find there that in the Gospel accounts that Jesus, the Son of God, is crucified. Jesus, the Son of God, dies between two thieves numbered with the transgressors, dying the death

of a criminal.

And this, the Son of God. And so we survey the cross. We read these accounts. And we try to make sense of it all. Do we not? Why this happened?

Of why people hated the Son of God so much? Of why people were so certain that he must die?

And we ask ourselves these questions.

But we ask ourselves as well, what did it achieve? What was the point of the cross? Was this not just a waste of life? Was this not just a tragedy?

A great big mistake? And you know, that's how a lot of people will interpret the cross today. Sadly, how a lot of churches will interpret it. As a mistake. As an accident.

[5 : 34] Some even a case of mistaken identity. And you know, if we interpret it from a solely human perspective, well, there's a chance that that's a conclusion that we're going to come to too.

That this really could have been avoided. This was a dark day in the history of mankind. A day when justice failed in church and in state.

And of course, there is a measure of truth in these things. Never was such a crime committed as this crime. Never was there such a miscarriage of justice as there was that day in Jerusalem.

Never did humanity seem more evil. Never did sin seem more dark than on this day. And yet we'll never understand the cross, the purpose of it.

What it achieved if we look at it solely from a human perspective. Because in the grand scheme of things, this was no tragedy. This was no waste of life.

[6 : 34] This was no mistake. And so if we want to know the truth as to why Jesus really died, why he really had to die, we have to dig deeper, don't we?

We must look beyond the sin and into the unseen. We must look beyond the purposes of man and we must look into the purposes of God. Because man was doing this, but certainly you read it and you see that.

He was doing the crucifying. But God planned it. God allowed it. God and man, they are active here. The Jews took him, yes they did, and by wicked hands they crucified him and they slayed him.

But at the same time, Jesus was delivered by the determined counsel and foreknowledge of God. Indeed, throughout the scripture, it's clear, isn't it?

From Genesis to Revelation, it's clear that Christ's crucifixion was intended by God. That the death of Christ was God's way of salvation.

[7 : 39] That it was the only way of forgiveness. Now, when we want to learn more about this why of the cross, when we want to know more about the purpose of it all, sometimes the most enlightening commentary on it isn't in the gospel accounts themselves, but out with the gospels, even in the Old Testament, even in that which was written before the cross actually happened.

And so today, I want us for a short time to see how this is exemplified in the prophet Zechariah.

Because here, God is speaking about the death of Christ almost 600 years before it happened.

And he's here, he's telling us why this was going to happen. He's telling us why this had to happen.

He's telling us why God allowed this to happen.

More than that, he's telling us why God purposed it to happen. And so we have in verse 7 of Zechariah chapter 13, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, against the man who stands next to me.

And the first thing that we need to figure out here is, who is it that is being spoken of? It's clear that it's God himself that's speaking. It's the Lord of hosts as we see who is speaking.

[9 : 03] But who is this shepherd? Who is this man that stands next to him? Well, in Matthew chapter 26 and verse 31, Jesus himself answers that question for us.

And he answers it on the night in which he is betrayed by his disciples. And they betray him and they leave him and they scatter. And Jesus says this before it happens.

He says, All ye shall be offended because of me this night for it is written, I will smite the shepherd and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

And there, Jesus is quoting this verse in relation to himself and he's telling us that in himself it is being fulfilled. And so with that New Testament light we come back to this text and we realise that what we have here really is a description of Jesus Christ, of his role and of his person.

And he's called for us here the shepherd. He is God's shepherd. Awake, O sword, against my shepherd. God has appointed Jesus we can see to shepherd his chosen people.

[10:14] You read back into Zechariah and that's very clear. You have the same themes coming up. Jesus is the shepherd to shepherd the flock of God. He is the one who will lead the flock, who will care for them.

He's the one who will shepherd Israel. The 23rd Psalm tells us that he will lead them by the still waters and into the green pastures that they might eat, that they might drink.

He will care for them to the extent that they shall never be in spiritual want. They shall never be in spiritual need. And we find this in the New Testament as well, don't we? That Jesus is there and we see him and he is the great shepherd of the sheep.

He is the shepherd of the disciples. And we have a scene there and Jesus is looking out on the people and he sees them and they're fainting and they're scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd.

And he pities them and he speaks to them and they know his voice and they believe in him. He knows his sheep and he is known by his sheep.

[11:18] Indeed, we read of him in John chapter 10 that he is a good shepherd who loves his sheep and who lays down his life for the sheep. He is the shepherd who will give his life for their protection, who will suffer death for their salvation.

This is going to be Jesus' role as a shepherd to be faithful to the flock even unto death. These two things are always going to be together in the life of Messiah.

He is going to be the shepherd who must die. He is our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the everlasting covenant as Hebrews tells us. And so we have Jesus here as the shepherd.

But we're given another description of this shepherd too, aren't we? He is the man who stands next to me. This is a difficult phrase to translate.

The ESV doesn't translate it literally and I don't think it does it particularly well. The other versions I think are closer to the original where you read that he is the man who is my fellow or the man who is my companion or the man even who is my equal.

[12:27] The word here for fellow or that's translated here next to me it's often used or it's mostly used in the Bible for our relation or for somebody who is a neighbor or somebody who is on the same level as you with the same rights and the same responsibilities.

It's those who are on a par with each other, my fellow. And this is the language that God uses, the Lord of hosts uses of this shepherd.

This is the language that he uses of Jesus Christ that he is the man who is my fellow. Yes, he is a man. He took bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh and he was truly man.

Everything that is true of mankind accepting sin became true of Jesus Christ in the incarnation. And so as a man he knew pain and he knew suffering. He knew hunger and he knew thirst.

He knew joy. He knew gladness. He knew emotions. He knew affections. All of these things that are true of humanity were true of him. But he's more than just a man, isn't he?

[13:34] That's clear from the language here. He is the man who is God's fellow. He is a man who is God's relation. He is God's companion. He is the man of God's right hand.

As we read in the letter to the Philippians, he was in the form of God. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Why? Because Jesus Christ is shepherd who is going to be smitten.

He is God. Everything that was true of God was true of him. They were equal and they are equal in power and in glory.

And so the Jesus of whom you read in the pages of the New Testament, the Jesus of whom we read being crucified in John chapter 19, he isn't just man.

Neither is he just divine. He's the God-man. The Jesus who is crucified on Calvary's cross, he's the God-man.

[14:32] It is God who hangs on a tree. Isn't that amazing? Isn't that remarkable? It's God in his own purpose that hangs on a tree.

But it just brings us back to our initial question, doesn't it? Why? Why is this happening? Why does the God-man have to die?

Why does Jesus, the Son of God, have to suffer? And the answer is in the command. At the beginning of this verse, Awake, O sword, against my shepherd.

The sword is going to awake. The sword of justice, the sword of punishment is going to awake against the shepherd. This becomes all the more remarkable, doesn't it? In light of what we now

know about this shepherd, in light of what we now know about this Jesus, that he is God's shepherd, the one who God has appointed to lead Israel and to secure their salvation. More than that, he is God himself. He was from eternity with God. He was daily his delight. Yes, it is the God-man, the Son of God, who stands under the raised sword of God.

[15 : 45] But why? Why would the Father cause the sword to awaken in order to smite his own Son? Well, we need to understand what the sword represents.

And what it represents is just this. In Scripture, the sword generally, when it's not used literally, it represents judicial authority. The sword is the instrument of justice.

So, for example, in Romans 13, you read that the state is said to bear the sword in order to execute justice against wrongdoers, those who break the law.

If you've ever been to London, if you've seen the Old Bailey, which houses the Crown Quarter, if you've ever seen a picture of it, you'll have seen on top of it a golden statue of Lady Justice.

And what does she have in her hands? Well, in one hand, she has scales, and in the other hand, she has a sword. And the scales, well, they represent the weighing up of evidence.

[16 : 42] But the sword, it represents the power to justly punish. And now, throughout Scripture and history, the highest judicial punishment has been capital punishment.

And that's why it's a sword that's used. The sword is symbolic of this judicial power to kill him, to pronounce that highest sentence of death.

That's what it symbolises. Now, we know that human governments are fallible. This isn't an argument against capital punishment, not at all. That's quite clear from the Scripture that it is a biblical thing.

But we know that human governments are fallible in their wisdom and in their justice. That they can make mistakes and that they do make mistakes.

And so there have been occasions, have there not, when people have been wrongly convicted, when people have been wrongly sent to death, when people have been wrongly killed by the sword.

[17 : 47] Because man will make mistakes. Men are fallible. But God's justice is infallible. It is perfect. It is never wrong.

It is never unfair. He never deals harshly or too leniently. It is fair. God has all the facts of the case. He sees all things.

He knows all things. He discerns the thoughts and the intents of the heart as well as the work of the hands. And as the psalmist says, the judgments of the Lord are true and they are righteous altogether.

And it's this sword, the sword of God's infallible justice, which we see being called to awaken here. We expect God to be just, don't we?

We expect God's sword to be active. We can hardly imagine a world in which there is no justice. And we can hardly imagine an unjust God.

[18 : 48] It just doesn't seem right. But what's remarkable here is that the command that the sword is given is directed towards the shepherd, to smite this shepherd.

Now the word smite is usually used for a death blow, a strike which leads to death. This isn't talking about some sort of mild censure. It's not talking about a slap around the wrist, just some sort of chastisement or correction.

No, what this is talking about is a death blow. It's talking about death, death of the cruelest kind, of the most agonising sort. That's what's being spoken of here. And this, friends, is how we must understand the cross.

The cross is God smiting his own shepherd. It is the father smiting his own son. Indeed, this is the word that Isaiah uses when he describes a suffering servant in Isaiah 53 as stricken, smitten of God and afflicted.

He is smitten of God. And what God is telling us here in his quoting of the sword is just this, that Christ is suffering and Christ is dying justly.

[20 : 04] He's dying justly. This isn't just an unfair death at the hands of men with their unbalanced view of justice. No, Christ is being smitten of God himself in accordance with the infallible divine justice.

In other words, to put it simply, what's happening here on the cross, it's completely fair. It's completely fair. It's completely just. God's sword does not strike by mistake.

Well, how then do we explain this? How do we explain it? Because we know that the sword isn't raised up against God. It's not awakened against Christ because of his own sin or because of his personal guilt, but because we know, we're told that Christ, he is wholly harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners.

He is Jesus Christ, the righteous, is he not? He is the one who did no sin. Neither has their guile in his mouth. He had never offended God. The world even saw this.

Pilate said of him, he said, I find no fault in this man. The thief on the cross, he said, this man has done nothing wrong. This is why the sword of God's justice had to be awakened with regard to Christ because with regards to him, this sword was asleep.

[21 : 25] This sword had nothing against him. This sword had no case to make against him. There was no sin to punish. The sword wouldn't move from its scabbard unless the order came from Almighty God to awaken.

That's what we see here. God commands the sword to arise and to smite Jesus Christ. God himself, the father, he authorises this punishment.

We read of the father's hand. We read that it pleased the Lord, it delighted the Lord to bruise him. He has put him to grave.

And in God's mysterious providence he allows sinners to do to Christ what they will. And God isn't just passive here either. He's active.

He purposefully abandons his son on the cross. He causes him to call out as we read in Psalm 22 My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?

[22 : 28] Why though? Why does God do it? What's happening here? How do we explain this apparent anomaly? Well, this is the answer. God is smiting the shepherd instead of the sheep.

God is smiting the shepherd instead of the sheep. By nature, the sword of God's divine justice is raised against his sinful people. It's raised against you.

But Christ takes their place. He takes your place if you're a Christian. God makes him to be sin for us. And he treats him like sin for us.

That we who are in Christ might be made the righteousness of God in him. What do we have here, friends, is substitution. The sheep deserve the blow, but God inflicts the blow upon the shepherd instead of upon the sheep.

They deserve to be struck with the death blow of God's justice, and yet this blow comes down upon Jesus Christ himself. That's what you see on the cross. The Son of God being smitten, the sword of God's justice being directed towards him and going into his very soul so that it wouldn't have to go into your very soul if you were in Christ today.

[23 : 51] The good shepherd is here and he's laying down his life for the sheep so that the sheep might go free and this friends is the gospel. This is the gospel in its simplicity.

Some people tell you that it's complicated. You might tell yourselves that the gospel is complicated. You can't understand it. You can't be a Christian if you don't understand it. Yet friends there's a sense in which it's deep.

There's a sense in which it's more mysterious than we can ever understand. But there's another sense in which it's really quite simple. Christ is dying on Calvary's cross taking the punishment of sinners upon himself so that sinners might go free.

The shepherd dies so that the sheep will not have to die. This is why the crucifixion was necessary. This is why nobody could get to heaven without it.

Because you can't handle the sword of God's justice. You can't swallow infinite wrath against sin. This is why hell is eternal.

[24 : 57] Why it's without end. Because infinite justice requires eternal punishment. In finite men and women like me and you. And yet Christ is the God man.

He pours his own infinite soul out to death in order to satisfy divine justice. He becomes a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. He bears our griefs and he carries our sorrows.

He stands in the place of his people and he accepts their punishment willingly. God's justice had to be satisfied. This couldn't be sidestepped. He's not unjust.

He won't let sin go unpunished. And yet instead of punishing it in his people, he punishes it in Christ as their substitute. What do we have here, friends, is a window.

A window into God's heart towards sinners. A window into God's commitment to our salvation.

Because we know, do we not, that the Father delighted in his Son.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. clin ancrasse tion who is to us of our salvation God, who daily with his benefits is plenteously to thwart.

He of salvation is the God who is our God most strong, and unto God the Lord from death the issues do belong. These four stanzas, verses 18 to 20, to God's praise.

Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high. Thou hast, O Lord, most glorious, ascended up on high, and in triumph victorious, that's led captive captivity.

[33 : 19] Thou hast received the gifts for men, for such as did repel.

Yea, in for them, that called the Lord, in midst of them I dwell.

Blessed be the Lord, who is to us of our salvation God, who daily with his benefits, such plenteously to the Lord.

He of salvation is the God who is our God most strong, and unto God the Lord from death.

He is should to belong. Well, we now come to the part of the service which we call the fencing of the table.

[34 : 52] Now, aim at this part of the service is to show who ought to be sitting at the Lord's table, and by consequence, we ought not to be sitting at it.

And as we come to think about this for a short moment, if you would turn to read with me in the New Testament and Paul's episode to the Galatians and chapter 5.

Galatians 5 and from verse 16. I'm reading this portion of the scripture together. verse 16.

But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh.

For these are opposed to each other to keep you from doing the things you want to do. But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The works of the flesh are evident.

[35 : 59] Sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.

I warn you, as I have warned you before, that those who do such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.

Against such things there is no law. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another, and so on. Amen. The Lord will bless his word to us. As I hope you know, all are invited to come to Jesus Christ.

But all are not invited to come to the Lord's Supper. the gospel call is for you to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thereby to be saved.

[37 : 19] When you've done that, the call of discipleship is for you to profess your faith. Well, it's part of it. To profess your faith among men. And part of that is to partake of the Lord's Supper and to proclaim the death of the Saviour who died for you.

How do you know if you are a Christian? Well, Christians ought to be at the Lord's table unless there is something out of place in their life. Christians ought to be at the Lord's table.

How do you know if you are a Christian? How do you know if you are indeed in the shepherd's flock? I suppose that's a question that we have to answer if we want to know who ought to be at the Lord's table.

Well, let us hear the voice of the shepherd. What does the shepherd himself say about his flock?

He says, My sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me.

There are two things here which characterize the Lord's people. Two things which mark out the shepherd's sheep. And the first is this, they hear the shepherd's voice.

[38 : 24] They hear the call of the shepherd and their ears are opened. Now there was surely a day in your experience when your ears were closed to the gospel.

When you weren't hearing the voice of the shepherd. When sermons passed you by. When the Bible was little more than a book to you. And when the heavens were as brass to you.

Shepherd may have been calling but you certainly didn't hear him. And neither did you want to hear him. The day came, did it not, when your ears were opened. When you heard his voice.

When you began to hear sermons. When you began to hear the call of God upon your life. When you began to hear Jesus Christ calling you. To believe in him.

To live for him. To follow him. Did the day not come? Well if your ears have been opened. And if you know, I remember somebody telling me once his testimony. And the first thing that spoke to him was this.

[39 : 23] the minister saying, well, if you're listening, then there's hope for you. If you're not listening to the sermon, he was saying, well, there's hope for you.

But if you are listening, then there's hope. And that man, who I know very well, is now an elder in the church. That's how he began. Because he realised that he was listening. He realised that he was hearing the voice of the shepherd. But as you know, there's a second mark. Because the sheep don't just hear the shepherd's voice.

The sheep follow the shepherd, don't they? A sheep in natural life, he is led by the shepherd. And a sheep in spiritual life is too led by the shepherd.

It's not enough for you just to hear. We could go farther. It's not enough for you just to listen. Even to enjoy listening. Even to agree with what you hear.

[40 : 22] It's not enough. Because there must be this following of Christ. If you're going to be in the flock, there must be this following. There must be this active faith in your life.

There must be this obedient reaction to Christ's word. This is why we read Galatians 5 at communion time as we fence the table. Because this speaks to us of what it means to follow. And it describes for us the two camps. This people, they're not following. They're walking not according to the spirit but according to the flesh. And there's a people on the other hand and they are following.

And they're following because they're walking by the spirit. To follow Christ is to walk in the spirit. It is to manifest the fruit of the spirit. To follow Christ is to live obediently.

obediently. Or put it this way, to follow Christ is to seek to live obediently. I heard it say very powerfully sitting myself at the Lord's table.

[41 : 23] And I'm answering this and pointing to these works of the flesh, sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, all these things. He says, you're sitting here now and you plan to go out into the world tomorrow to practice these things.

You're in the wrong place. You ought not to be here. You're back slidden. And it is the case, isn't it? The Christian sins. The Christian, he makes mistakes, he falls out of the way but he should never plan to sin because he doesn't walk according to the flesh.

The flesh isn't controlling him. It is the spirit that he walks according to. And so, you're not going to live a perfect life. You're not going to live a perfectly obedient life but you should be seeking obedience.

You should be seeking to turn from sin and to follow Jesus Christ. That's what we're called to.

That's what we're called to. And if you've heard the voice then of the shepherd, if you've heard Christ's voice and if you're seeking to live out this Christian life, then the table is your place.

If you haven't heard the voice of the shepherd and if you're not seeking to live out this Christian life and to follow him, then the table is not your place. It's that simple. It is good to see many behind the table too here today.

[42 : 46] And it's good to have you with us. And it's good to be under the word. And it's good to be observing the sacrament. But this is what you're called to too, is it not? You're called to hear the voice of the shepherd, to hear what he's saying, to hear what you've been called to and then to follow, then to put it into practice.

You may have been hearing for many years, but you're called to follow, are you not? You're called to walk. You're called to follow the shepherd where he goes. You're called to go with the sheep where they go.

You're called to stand out and to follow. I pray to God that the day will come in your own experience sooner rather than later when you will do just that. Well, let us sing again now in Psalm 118.

And as we sing these verses from verse 15 on page 398, the elders will, the elements on the table. In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health the Lord's right hand doth ever valiantly.

[44 : 02] The right hand of the mighty Lord exalted is on high. The right hand of the mighty Lord doth ever valiantly. I shall not die but live and shall the works of God discover.

The Lord hath made just eyes and sword but not to death given over. O set ye open unto me the gates of righteousness. Then will I enter into them and I the Lord will bless.

This is the gate of God. By it the just shall enter in. Thee will I praise for thou me heardst and hast my safety been. Let us then sing Psalm 118 from verse 15 onwards till the elements have been set on the table.

In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody. In dwellings of the righteous of joy and health the Lord's right hand that ever valiantly.

The right hand of the mighty Lord exalted is on high.

[45 : 38] The right hand of the mighty Lord doth ever valiantly.

I shall not die but live and shall the words of God discover.

The Lord come and be just eyes and sword but not to death given over.

O set ye open unto me the gates of righteousness then will I enter into them and I the Lord will bless.

This is the gate of God by it that God shall enter in.

[47 : 17] Thee will I praise for thou me heardst and hast my safety been.

Amen. For we do no time to read that one and for the Lord suffered from Paul's first whistle to the Corinthians.

First Corinthians and chapter 11. Reading together from verse 23. Amen. For I have received with the Lord that which also I delivered unto you.

For the Lord Jesus the same night and which he has been fed through bread. When he had given thanks he broke it and said Take it. This is my body which is broken for you.

This too in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup when he had stopped saying This cup is in your testament in my blood.

[48 : 40] Just do ye as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you will show the Lord's death till he comes.

So on. Amen. Just for a moment I want us to focus on to shift our focus back to the text which we have in in Sebediah chapter 13.

And the end of verse 7 if you remember what it reads And I will turn my hand upon the little ones. Now this phrase turn my hand can be used in a negative context.

It can be used as an act of violence. But it can be used positively as well. For example in Isaiah God speaks to Judah and he says to her I will turn my hand upon thee and purely purge away thy cross and take away all thy turn and afterwards thou shalt be called the city of righteousness the grateful city.

What he's saying is that I will bring you through difficult things and through these things I will purify you I will purge you I will offend you and they will be difficult but when turning my hand upon you I will bring you through them I will be with you in them.

[50 : 07] And God is here speaking about those and indeed his shepherds protection of the Father and especially his protection of the little ones the weak of the flock the feeble and the young of the sheep a good shepherd they say always has his eye upon the lambs always has his eye upon those who can't look after themselves and he also does with Jesus Christ the good shepherd.

In Isaiah we read often that he shall feed his flock like a shepherd he shall gather the lambs with his arm and carry them in his bosom and shall gently lead those that are with young.

And you are here today and I expect that this is how you see yourself is it not? One of these little ones is a little lamb weak and helpless because you know how often you stumble that you know how liable you are to go astray in your heart and in your mind that the shepherd the shepherd has his eye on you the shepherd will not leave you not forsake you he is the one to remember who is a good shepherd who willingly laid down his life for the sheep and we've been thinking especially upon the work of the father in punishing the son but we can't forget this that he loved us and gave himself for us that the two things were there that he did all things for our salvation he did all things that we might be justified and that he will do all things as a shepherd too to ensure that we are both sanctified and glorified to make sure that we do not fall by the wayside but to make sure that we will carry on in the way this is the one who gave his body to be broken for you this is the one who gave his blood to be shed for you oh what a shepherd he is what a saviour we come to remember what a death we come to think upon at this time and what a comfort and what an assurance it is for you that he turns his hand upon the little ones it is a comfort for you you are a little man but an old sheep it is a comfort for you fear not little flock for it is your father still treasured to give you the kingdom now we read that in the night in which Jesus Christ has been declared that he gives thanks we shall

follow his example and give thanks to the Lord and give thanks to thee that it is our experiences this day to be in the house of God and to be in the place where we are and coming to the table of the Lord which was ordained all these years upon the night in which Jesus Christ was betrayed and we thank you Lord that we can come with the full assurance of the faith because it is not our work that we are proclaiming it is not our faith that we are remembering that we are remembering what was done for us what was done for sinners what Jesus Christ did for men and for women for boys and for girls indeed for all who would believe upon him we pray now that as we come to eat of that bread and drink of that wine that these elements would be changed as it were from a common to a holy use that they would be blessed to us and that we would know communion not only with one another but that we would know communion and fellowship with our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ as we partake of him through faith bless us then and keep us Lord go with us in all of these things and forgive us for our sin for Christ's sake Amen well as we read that the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed and that he took bread and on the different parts he broke it and said take it eat this is my body which is broken for you this due remembers me on the same honor also after the same honor also he took the cup from his up saying this cup is in your testament in my blood this due he is often as you drink it and remembers me cup can't you das you can't samen you believe that the money is in your credit and you understand God she but He will see you Thank you.

[56 : 07] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[58 : 37] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[61 : 07] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[63 : 37] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[66 : 07] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[68 : 37] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[71 : 07] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[73 : 37] Thank you.

Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
Thank you.
[76 : 07] Thank you.