

Today you will be with me in Paradise

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[0 : 00] I would like us to turn for a little time to the words we read in Luke's Gospel in chapter 23. Luke chapter 23, I'm reading again at verse 39.

And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us. But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Does not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds. But this man has done nothing amiss. And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, Today thou shalt be with me in paradise.

Remember me when thou comest in to thy kingdom.

We read there in the prophecy of Isaiah, the very familiar words. Those words which are familiar to, I'm sure, all of us. My word will not return to me void or empty, but it will accomplish what I please.

[1 : 16] It will prosper in the thing whereto I sent it. And I'm sure we can say our amen to that, especially if this morning we are to be found in Christ Jesus.

That word of which the prophet spoke, or what was given to him by God, my word will not return empty, but it will accomplish a purpose for which God sent it.

And of course everyone that is to be sitting here at the table. And maybe there are others who are outside of the table, and yet have a love for the Lord Jesus Christ.

But at this stage, maybe they do feel unfit for one reason or another, and that they are not at the table. But for each and every one of us who have an assurance of the love of Christ, an assurance for eternity, that what the Lord Jesus Christ has done on our behalf, that that will bring to pass for each and every one of us.

But of course also, it will have its evident token upon those who have constantly refused to accept that word of Christ, that word of God.

[2 : 30] We may think that if we refuse certain things in this life, and especially those things upon which God has made a command, that we repent and believe, that somehow or other we duck and dive underneath.

And we think that such a word and testimony has no bearing upon us. But of course it has. Every word that has ever been dropped into your hearing, since ever you became aware of what God's word is, but every word will have its effect.

It's a savor of life unto some, but it will be a savor of death, and to death to others. And to contemplate the word of God being a savor of death, the providence of God, because of our unbelief, surely ought to make us shudder and make us think.

We might complain about God's providences upon us. Maybe God has laid upon you providences that are very difficult to bear. But yet that does not in any way reduce the significance and the importance of that word for which God was sent into this world, even through the very person of Jesus Christ, that we can escape it.

How can we escape if we neglect so great salvation? And that very testimony is played out here on this scene, a scene above all scenes in the history of mankind.

[3 : 57] And yet a scene that has far-reaching consequences for every single one of us. Some people might want to think to themselves, well, it has nothing to do with me, because, well, I'm an atheist, or I'm a humanist, so it has nothing to do with me.

But that's not true. It encapsulates every single one, and none will escape, if we neglect so great a salvation. But my concern this morning, or we're into afternoon now, is that we consider, for a moment or two, something of the event that has taken place here.

I don't want to use the word exactly played out here, because it is so momentous, and it's so unlimited, as far as time is concerned. Because as it affected those who were involved in this whole scenario of the crucifixion of Christ, and to those who denied Christ, for each and every one, there was the word of God in the person of Jesus Christ.

And that action of Christ, in experiencing, yes, the condemnation, because of your sin and mine, experiencing the hatred that was played out against him by the authorities, whether these would be political authorities, or whether they were religious authorities.

Each and every one of them would have given an answer, or will have to give an answer, on the day of judgment, for what was happening. But the event, and these three crosses, have a great message to teach us.

[5 : 30] A message that we would do good to heed to them. I want to centre my thoughts mainly on this thief, who responds to the word made flesh, the word in Jesus Christ, the word and the testimony of the Lord Jesus Christ, the very example of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the sacrificial giving of himself, a ransom for his people.

Because this thief in the cross, he makes an amazing prayer, that is absolutely full of theology. The kind of theology that maybe even many of the disciples didn't fully understand.

Remember me, when thou comest in to thy kingdom. But it wouldn't be right to carry on with this man until at least we got some kind of background of where he had come from, he and his friends.

He and the friends of this world, who were, yes, base in their character, doing things that were totally unsociable, and were deserving, as the authorities of the time believed deserving of death.

In fact, that is the communication that is going on between these two men. And as far as the account in Mark's gospel is concerned, both these men were railing against the Lord Jesus.

[6 : 48] Save thyself and us. You ask yourself, what were they anticipating to be saved from? Save thyself and us. They wanted to, as it were, escape the rigors of death.

And maybe they did not know what was before them in that death. Maybe they were looking for a second opportunity to have a second life for the side of eternity. But that wasn't going to happen.

And no matter how they might have wanted to plea in an ignorant fashion, save thyself and us, that was not going to hold any water at all in Christ.

You see, the railing against Jesus is something that will be given an answer to on the day of judgment. And especially by this man who would not repent and who lived constantly in that state.

This thief that we want to look at, he recognizes his state, or at least he has come to recognize his state, in exactly the same way, I'm sure, although the providence might be different, the providence of his life might be different in drawing them towards Christ to that which has been your experience.

[7 : 59] You and I have not been set up in the gallows or somewhere on a cross, but we might have come through maybe hard providences that have caused an awakening to us. Something maybe even like the Philippian jailer.

An earthquake arose. He was afraid. He was shaking. He would have killed himself. But the church of Christ at the time, represented in Paul and Silas, called out to him, Do thyself no harm.

This thief, he recognizes what he is. And he says, We receive our due reward. This man, referring to Jesus, he has done nothing wrong.

I often ask myself, Where did that come from? After all, just moments before, he was railing against Jesus. But then I'm sure I could talk to many people here who found themselves in a state of gracelessness one moment, and then the next moment they found themselves under the heaviness of the Spirit of God with great conviction that their life has been a sham, a waste.

He was telling his partner in crime to be quiet. Now again, I want to refer to this a little bit because, you know, when you think of this thief and the other thief, both of them must have been racking in pain.

[9 : 16] We know of the pain that Jesus was going through on the cross. But these two men, without any hope in this world, and the pain that they must have been going through, it's almost unimaginable what like it would be because crucifixion was not a painless activity.

Far, far greater is it not the case that what they were going through was beyond the measure of man's ability to cope with. Such was the reasoning why they would try and give them that awful stuff to drink to try and dead in the pain.

But in the midst of all this pain and racking, this man, this thief, turns to his friend and says, this man does nothing amiss. We receive the due rewards of our deeds.

Was he admitting twofold? Was he admitting that justice was being done as far as the state was concerned? Was it the case that he was acknowledging that yes, eternity is before him, whatever he might have thought that to be beforehand, but he knew fine that where he was going was not going to be to a heavenly bliss.

Some people have this idea that when we die, that no matter how we lived or what we believed, they're going to enter into some heavenly place free from all the pain and suffering of this world, how many are under a delusion as far as that is concerned.

[10:38] This man recognized condemnation. We are condemned, he is saying, not just by the society that we have been criminals in, but we are being condemned as well by God.

Listen to what he is saying. We indeed just leave, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man has done nothing amiss. Why does he say this?

Is he making a different kind of appeal to his friend? Well, he was making the same appeal as his friend before this. He's making a different appeal now, but this is a prayer that he is now going to make towards the Lord.

He says to Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. Now again, that opens up a tremendous amount in the life of any single one. And you don't need to hang on a cross to have your life right up in front of you.

And many that have been, have been in the state of death almost, and realised their life is ebbing out from them, and they're seeing their past hurtling towards them.

[11:43] They're experiencing within their heart and soul a condemnation, maybe something of which even the apostle would allude to. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ.

What was the condemnation? that every evil deed had its due reward. This man knew that his life was about to close. And the statement that follows, the prayer that follows, is not a statement of fear, at least not the kind of fear that was uttered before this.

There is a calmness in the spirit, I would suggest. When you look at the way that the words are formulated here in his appeal or his prayer to the Lord Jesus Christ, he said to Jesus, Lord, remember me.

Acknowledging the person of Christ, whatever mocking had been going on before, something had changed, something had witnessed to his heart and to his soul that, yes, things are now different. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, he had time, maybe, to rush and pick up a Bible and see if he could search for a scripture that in some way or other would be enabled to cool him down or give him some kind of comfort.

[12:56] I think that there is something to be said in what Jesus himself says and maybe I've said this here before but something that is important of what Jesus said right at the very beginning on the cross, the very statement that Jesus made there.

Some commentators allude to that, that when Jesus said, Father, forgive them, they know not what they do. One of the things that is the experience of every man or woman in this world, if they live in this world and love to rub shoulders with this world, one thing that they don't know very much about or experience and that is forgiveness.

Maybe this man because of his lifestyle didn't know what it was to be forgiven by anybody because after all his life did not deserve it. And as he says, we deserve the condemnation.

This is our due reward. Was this the very first time that the warbling words of Jesus spoken out from the cross in the midst of his pain and his agony and what he was doing, did that have a singular effect upon him?

Lord, remember me. The one who has just heard, the Son of God, the Saviour of the world, whatever he might have thought or what he might have meant when he asked that Jesus if thou be the Christ, save thyself and us, that was a taunting but now it's different.

[14:17] He recognises Jesus as Lord. He appeals to the Lord of all the ends of the earth, the eternal Son, the one that was sent, the Word made flesh, who dwelt among us, beholding his glory.

What it was for that thief to experience the words of Jesus. Father, forgive them. And there is no testimony greater to the soul of the sinner who is locked in sin and sees that there is only one way of escape and make an appeal to the one who alone can forgive.

nobody else would forgive this man for what he had done. There was going to be no reprieve.

There was no attempt to call upon the authorities to release them from this pain and this suffering.

Well, we know what way they would do it. In order to hasten their death, they would break their legs or something. But he knew, this man knew, there was no backtracking. There was no way back. The only way was forward. And the only way was Christ. And he says to Jesus, remember me. That opens up a catalogue.

[15 : 23] Can you imagine asking Jesus to remind us of ourselves, what we have been, what kind of stories would be written, what would be released, the great press release on each and every one of us.

Well, after all, Jesus knew much more about this man than he even knew about himself. Oh, yes. criminal he was, and we can use the language of those who would prosecute any criminal. But we think of Jesus. We think of this thief in the cross and what Jesus says, which we'll come to in a moment or two, this thief appealing to Jesus, remember me.

There was nothing meritorious in him. He couldn't reflect back in his life at all at this point because he knew he was condemned. And he probably believed that he was condemned by God.

But it doesn't stop him. Making his appeal, remember me, based on the fact that Christ is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to a knowledge of the truth.

[16 : 25] Now, I don't know how much he knew of scripture, of divine revelation. In fact, we often maybe ask ourselves, how much did we know? Maybe we knew a lot more, even to our shame.

Those who are still rebellious and unrepentant and have listened to the gospel of Jesus Christ time and time again, and that unmoved and unsaved. He was a man who probably, because of his whole lifestyle, portrays and betrays his whole character, debauched.

So he's got nothing to commend himself to Jesus. All my righteousnesses, he would say, I'm sure to himself, they're like filthy rags, even if he knew that scripture at all.

Maybe we would struggle to find a scripture that would fit the bill. But he knew. He could make no appeal with regard to his conduct of life, the way that he lived, he could make no appeal to that.

Why? Because he was hell deserving. And the only way out was by looking and turning himself towards the Lord Jesus and saying, remember me.

[17 : 29] Poor, wretched sinner. On the very precipice of hell. You don't need to be someone up on a cross being crucified, punished for all the things that we have done wrong against society to be standing or hanging over the precipice of hell.

Every single one that refuses Christ are in that position. Everyone. If we refuse the Lord Jesus, our position in relation to time and to eternity is looking over into the precipice.

Surely there is none here that would want to be tipped in the balance over there. Certainly that would seem from what narrative is suggesting in scripture was the state of the other thief.

And we must never forget him because he himself is part of the word of God and its testimony to any soul that relaxes back and sits in his laurels and thinks that all is well when all is not well.

For this thief, he makes an appeal to the only one possible, the one who has the words of eternal life. Remember me when you come into your kingdom. I think it's a beautiful expression in so many ways and as I suggested already, there is deep theology in what he's saying and he had great understanding, much more maybe even than we who proclaim his word, but he knew that there was a kingdom.

[18 : 58] Oh yes, a gracious, merciful kingdom, an eternal kingdom, a time and an experience where they would be at peace and secure.

The souls of believers added their death made perfect in holiness and do immediately pass into glory. The thief on the cross is the great argument against the Roman Catholic theology that speaks of purgatory.

There was no purgatory for this man. The blood of Jesus Christ cleansed him from all sin. The blood of Christ justified him. When he asked Jesus to remember him when he came into his kingdom, did he have any doubt as to whether or not he might get there?

He certainly wasn't being presumptuous, but one thing was sure, he knew who this Jesus was and he knew what he could gain from Jesus, the very forgiveness of sin and the acceptance into his kingdom.

Imagine being translated from that state of sin and misery in the moment and the twinkling of an eye straight in to the presence of God.

[20 : 07] Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom, he says to Jesus. And Jesus' response, as it is the case with every single one of us, his response to every penitent sinner is,

come, welcome.

Jesus' response to this thief is full, it is free as far as the gospel is concerned. There is nothing being withheld from this man, no more than it is withheld from any one of us here.

When we repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, we are assured, it doesn't matter what tomorrow brings, today tells us assuredly we will ever be with the Lord.

If tomorrow is our day of demise and we believe in Christ, we will be assured. Jesus says to him, today thou will be with me in paradise.

I made the suggestion that this man's turning point may have been the very words of Jesus as the forgiver. The one of all the crowds, of all this man's enemies, and he was one of their enemies, and yet here was one who could forgive.

[21 : 13] Who can forgive sin but Christ alone? But even more so, it's amazing that I can believe that Christ can forgive my sin. Verily says Jesus, today thou will be with me in paradise.

What a blessing, what an assurance. Dying in peace. Even although his death was going to be painful for this man, he was going to suffer physically, of course he was, but what was not going to be taken from him was eternal life to experience Jesus.

Verily I say unto thee, today shall thou be with me in paradise. Free peace, a glorious peace. Some commentators are not too sure as to how to express all that's been stated here because it is a tremendous mystery that paradise is certainly a place where there will be no pain, no suffering.

Imagine, brought into the very presence of God, the spirit of this man going into glory at the very point of his death. Just think about it, one moment, in a state of unbelief, the next moment assured of eternal life.

The thief in the cross is a reminder to all of us, a testimony to every single one of us that there is life and that there is hope. If you have Professor Finlayson's book A Just God and a Saviour, he does a very interesting analysis of this event of the three crosses and he relates to us there his thinking of it.

[22 : 46] He says one is dying as a consequence of his sin. Another is dying for sin. Another is dying, yes, because he has been a sinful man, but he is not dying without hope.

Where will you and I be? We come to sit at the table this morning. We come assuredly, do we not, and believe and trust in the living and the true God? That whatever happens to me this side of eternity, I have this one assurance that I am his and he is mine.

Is that what can be said of every single one of us? Make your confession, acknowledge him as your only surety for time and for eternity. Because as the apostle says, without him you can do nothing, without him you have nothing.

That's why it's a plain and simple prayer of this man, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. He couldn't say anything that would in any way purchase his way into heaven just by faith in Jesus Christ.

Except you become as little children, you will in no wise enter the kingdom. Except you and I become like this man, whatever our deeds have been, whatever might be our demise or the very nature of our demise, we are still dependent upon the Lord Jesus Christ who says, Father, forgive them for they know not what they do.

[24 : 14] Do you believe in Christ's forgiveness? Well I know fine that those who will sit at the table believe in Christ's forgiveness. But do we all in here believe in Christ's forgiveness?

Where are we in relation to our sin? Are we still under condemnation or have we been set free? There is now therefore no condemnation.

Now this moment if you put your trust in Jesus, you don't have to wait, just put your trust in him. There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.

May the Lord grant unto each and every one of us an awareness of what Christ can do. A Christ who suffered and died on the cross and whose word and testimony, yes, was to one a savor of death, but to another gloriously a savor of life.

Is that what he is for you and for me this afternoon? Shall we pray? O eternal and ever blessed God, we are indeed a people saved by grace.

[25 : 22] There is nothing meritorious in us, nothing that in any way could bring to us the love of Jesus. We who were dead in trespasses and sins have been not brought nigh by his blood.

He loved us so much, he gave himself for us. And we do thank thee for the grace of faith that enables us to do as with the psalmist. When he admitted and he exclaimed, Lo, I do stretch my hands, to thee my help alone, for thou will understand all my complaint and moan.

May none of us, O Lord, leave this place with souls that are empty or devoid of the things that matter most. Go before us then for giving all offence, loving us in him.

Amen. Now we come to that part of our service which is traditionally been spoken of as the fencing of the table. I'm always very conscious in this one because as every preacher of the gospel must contemplate one's own position in relation to the table of the Lord.

The Lord's table is a place for those who put their trust in him. those who have submitted themselves humbly and meekly. Those who have exercised a desire above all things to be in the very presence of Christ.

[26 : 44] I want to come back to this in a moment or two but I'm always reminded of the words of Psalm 27. One thing I desire of the Lord, that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Let me turn to those words that have often been read at this time. I don't know, maybe in some places they are not being read the same but I think they are appropriate provided we approach them appropriately.

They are not to condemn, they are there to cause and exercise in your heart and mind and spirit that we would acknowledge our own frailties and our own weaknesses but by the grace of God being enabled to overcome.

Let me read the words of Galatians chapter 5. This I say, reading at verse 16. This I say then, walk in the spirit and you shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

For the flesh lusts against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh and these are contrary the one to the other so that you cannot do the things that you would. But if you be led of the spirit you are not under the law.

[27 : 54] Now the works of the flesh are manifest which are these adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envies, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such like.

Of the which I tell you before as I have also told you in time past that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

Against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit let us also walk in the spirit.

Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another. There's a little statement in there that again has got a drawing of it to what the thief on the cross said.

Remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom. And what we are told here is those of us who act for the way that would be the way of the world, we are in danger of not inheriting the kingdom of God as it says there at the end of verse 21.

[29 : 13] That's a status that none of us wants to be in. But these two, these lists that the apostle draws our attention to, which would suggest to us the walking in the flesh or the walking in the spirit.

And these are contrary things. And sometimes we are aware and very conscious of the sins that do so easily beset us. And there are sins in every one of us.

They may be hidden from other people, but they are not hidden from God. In fact, those of us who would in any way suggest that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

But in this sense also, if we believe truly and righteously that the Lord Jesus has dealt with our sin, he has taken it away, he has dealt with it in his own body on the tree.

Let me turn for a few moments. We sang in Psalm 15 there and I would suggest that this psalm is a good preparation any time we are found committing ourselves to Christ in a special way like remembering his death.

[30 : 21] Because in Psalm 15 there are all the elements there for those of us who would want to be in the tabernacle of God, in the very presence of God, to be acceptable before God.

It ought to be the great desire of your heart and mine to have this life of ours in Christ Jesus in a very similar way in which it is spoken of here.

Let me read it again, but this time from the authorised version. Lord, who shall abide in thy tabernacle? Who shall dwell in thy holy hill?

Important questions. And they may make us shudder at times. And especially when we are told those who have access into the very presence of God through faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He that walks uprightly and works and worketh righteousness and speaks the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue nor doth evil to his neighbour nor takes up a reproach against his neighbour in whose eyes a vile person is condemned.

[31 : 31] But he honoureth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own heart and changest not. He that putteth not his money to usury nor takes reward against the innocent.

He that does these things shall never be moved. We're coming to the table. We're sitting at the table. Not dependent on ourselves but dependent upon him.

And what we want out of our lives in Christ Jesus is to become more and more like Christ. If there is any element of doubt within us at all about our walk and our conversation that is not up to standard, ask yourself this question.

Do you want to be freed from all the vagaries of the evil one? Well after all Jesus knows you do. Is that not what he meant when he said in those great words that are recorded for us in this intercessory prayer?

Listen to what he says. I pray not that thou should take them out of the world but that thou should keep them from the evil. That is the longing of the heart of every single believer.

[32 : 41] That Christ would keep the evil one at bay. He is ever there, he is ever the tempter and he is always waiting for his opportune moment. And again we don't have to go far down scripture to find the examples of those who have to a degree fallen over.

That each time the Lord picks them up in the same way that he has done for you. Even things that other people may not know about. But as you repent and believe and put your trust in him and as you as it were remove all this idea of self-preservation.

He is the one that will keep you. He will keep you from falling. He is the one that will sustain you. He is the one who will pick you up. So if today you are one of those who recognizes your own failings and shortcomings but also know where the source and the fountain of life is for you even when you stumble, lean upon him, cast the burden upon him.

What you want out of Christ and Christ living in you is this. But again the Apostle Paul says elsewhere, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who thought it not robbery to be equal with God made himself of no reputation took upon himself the form of a servant, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

there is the word, he became obedient. Let us exercise obedience toward him in everything especially if you love him, sit at his table.

[34 : 21] God, it's always good for us to understand that what we do within the Church of Christ must have a biblical authority.

Of course, I'm sure there are some changes in different places to behave and do things, but the sentiments and the central theme of it all is how the scripture follows.

And when we think of the Lord's Supper, we know fine that we've been given authority to dispense that Supper according as was shown by the example of the Lord Jesus Christ in the upper room.

And we have an account of that authority given to us through the Apostle Paul in 1 Corinthians chapter 11. And I read that for a moment or two.

that I received of the Lord, that which also I delivered unto you, that the Lord Jesus the same man which he was betrayed to that.

[35 : 21] And when he had given thanks, he said, take eat. This is my body which is broken for you, this too in remembrance of me. After the same man also he took the cup, but he had said saying, this cup was the New Testament in my blood, this do ye as often as you drink it in remembrance of me.

But as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat the bread and drink this cup of the Lord and wherefore he shall be guilty of the body and the blood of Christ that let the blood of the Lord let a man examine himself and so let him eat of that bread and drink of that cup.

The Lord Jesus on the same night in which he was betrayed took bread and gave thanks and shall be followed this example in this train. O Lord our gracious God thou was set before us the token of thy love and favour a reminder to us every day not just on a communion Sabbath but that thou didst lay down my life for a mansion for my people thy blood was shed and we would thank your God that

thou hast set before us those things that might be used for a temporal purpose but now they have been set before us by spiritual use we pray that we might recognize with plentiful hearts what that provision means for those who believe in the

Lord Jesus Christ this do he says in remembrance of me the soul of the believer he better believes how can I forget what the Lord has done for me how can I forget the provision that he makes for me every single day of my life as one who was born of the due season how can I forget that the Lord's hand is not short that it cannot save neither is he heavy neither is he heavy and O Lord we pray that thou is to receive with that measure of faith that will bring glory and honour to thy name we pray that what we are doing at this time would not be just an exercise of tradition however significant that might be within the calendar of the church but may it always be spurned on because Jesus loves me this I know for the Bible tells me so continue with us then O Lord and keep our thoughts essential upon the one whom the souls of thy believer loves keep us ever looking unto him this is our privilege this is our blessing guide us then to the we all offense loving us in him amen I'd like just for a few moments to gather a few thoughts and I don't know how does you have heard me speaking of this at table before maybe another complication because I think what portrays and I mentioned this earlier on in the prophet is the sentiments that are found in the soul of the believer that is really hungering and thirsting it is exercising a practice following what

[39 : 33] Jesus says blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for they shall be filled

In the true of the Lord Jesus Christ. And it's that that he speaks after all the days of his life. Isn't that what he says in these words, in verse 4?

He says, one thing he says, I decide of the Lord. That will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life.

Something of what we mention in Psalm 15 within the entire battle of the Lord who shall abide with thee. The hungry soul, the thirsty soul, the soul with bonds and beliefs.

And this is the one overriding desire for the Psalms. There may be legitimate desires in our lives, and there may be legitimate things that are pinched upon our lives day by day, and some of them can be a great distraction to us.

[41 : 35] But the overwhelming desire of every single believer in Christ is to have fellowship with him. And where can you have that better than in the house of God with those who are like-minded with him, with us?

Where better is it for us to be week by week at the prayer meeting, even in our house fellowships? And I say this by the way of the side.

It's always been one of my privileges to enjoy when I've come up to Lewis many times, and to enjoy fellowship in the home with other people, talking about the daily experience in the Lord, and how we, as it were, strengthen one another.

But the psalm's desire is, I want to be in the presence of Jesus. And of course it's important for us to do that at home, in our own closet.

Yes, that is true. But it's also so important for us to strengthen one another. You know, those who love the Lord, they speak often with one another.

[42 : 49] And I know how easy it is to be partying with a group of Christian people, and all that we are talking about are things that are secular. It takes us ages, maybe, for us to move on to the spiritual, and that which really enlightens the soul.

And that's why I say, my experience coming up to Lewis at these fellowships, as we say, I've used the expression always, I felt my back spiritually charged, spiritually charged, with the sentiments of those of the brethren, the ladies and the brethren, who were joined together in the sea, but much more so here.

Here we are, all one in Christ Jesus, sitting at the table, waiting, anticipating me, for a crumb from the Master's table.

One thing I decide of the Lord, that when I say after, that I may dwell, you can put it this way, I may dwell in the presence of the Lord, all the days of my life, not just one day, or two days a year, or whatever, but every single day, rejoicing, glory, in the fellowship that we have, one with another.

I don't want to throw these things any longer from you, but once again, we read this on the night that Jesus was betrayed. He took prayers, and he didn't dance, he break it, and he said, take, eat, this is my body, which is broken for you, this too, in remembrance of me.

[44 : 29] After the same moment, he also took the cup, saying, this cup is in your testament to my blood, this to you, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.

But as often as you eat this bread, and drink this cup, you do show forth the Lord's death till you come. Amen.

I'm going to go back to Psalm 27. One thing that the Lord desires, that I may seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of mine.

And it's not just a case of sitting in the house of God, it's not just fulfilling a function, it's experiencing something of the spiritual, all through grace of, and that comes as a result of a faith, of an awakening faith, of trust in the Lord Jesus, an appreciation, an heightened appreciation of what God has done for us in Christ.

That, as the psalm says, that I may behold the beauty of the Lord and inquire in this temple. There's a evening, on Friday evening, we read in Isaiah chapter 53, where it hinted there is what the word was saying with regard to that lack of appreciation that we had of the Messiah prior to our coming to faith.

[46 : 11] There was no beauty in Him that we should desire. that the voice of faith, the expression of faith, is this, to behold the beauty of Christ.

And what beauty there is there, unfathomable. Each day, to you and to me, the Lord will bring out more and more the water, the well is so full.

It is full of the running over. It is there, waiting, as it were, to fill you more and more with the good things, the precious things. And the beauty of Christ surely is to be found in His love toward you, in the gifts that He has afforded to you, in the treasure that He is to you, as you express your faith in Him.

Amongst us, there are those who have just come and sat at this table for the first time. And I do hope and pray that something of the beauty of Christ has come out of this sacrament, has come out of His words and His testimony for you.

But I know what I believe that there are some in here who are still stubbornly sitting away. and there's no one of one of old, each of the old, who was conducting a communion service on there.

[47 : 42] And He saw this lady further back from the table when she was weeping. And she got the elders to all them take the bread and the wine with you and follow me.

And He said to the woman sitting there weeping, He said this, Tacket woman, it's for sinners. How true that is.

Tacket woman, it's for sinners. And what a beauty to behold. A sinner pining for Christ. And I hope that every single day you will pine for Him.

That you will want more of Him. and if you feel your soul drying up, flee to the rock that is higher than we are. Flee to that rock that will gush out in splendor.

That which will satisfy you. Please be assured that this is not an exercise of dullness or morbidity.

[48 : 50] it's an exercise of rejoicing. Do this, says Jesus, in remembrance of me. For as often as you do do this, you do show forth the Lord's day to become.

What a satisfying influence for every soul and hear that has embraced Christ. so you friends who are sitting back, looking on, maybe wondering, maybe even noting, don't let this day go past.

Without going on your knees and asking the Lord, come in, take me, as you all. We're going to conclude by singing in Psalm 72.

Psalm 72.

Psalm 73. Psalm 73. Psalm 73. Psalm 73. Psalm 73. Now blessed be the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, of Israel.

[50 : 36] For He alone the Lord, the Lord, the Lord, What can glory Come to heaven And blessed be His glorious name To all eternity The whole earth Is glorious Amen So let it be And to now may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ The love of God to the Father

The fellowship and the comfort of the Holy Spirit Rest upon and remain with you And with all the Israel of God Both now and always Amen