

# Lord's Day Communion Service

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Date: 19 March 2023

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[ 0 : 00 ] We're going to turn back to Matthew chapter 26. And we're going to hopefully be able to bring some thoughts from verses 36 downwards of the experience of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

We can just read the first few verses of that portion that we want to consider.

Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane. And he said to his disciples, sit here while I go over there and pray. And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.

Then he said to them, my soul is very sorrowful, even to death. Remain here and watch with me. And going a little further, he fell on his face and prayed, saying, my father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will. And he came to his disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, so could you not watch with me one hour?

[ 1 : 33 ] Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. And so on. Now, last night we were considering the horror that Jesus saw in the cup that the Father had given him to drink.

As he began to anticipate the sufferings that he would have to suffer in order to satisfy the justice of a righteous God.

And it's the death that was contained within that cup that filled him with terror and with fear concerning the death that he was going to have to die.

Now, the recording of his experience in the garden is given to us by all four evangelists. And it gives us an insight into how truly Jesus was a human being.

He was a human being as surely as we all are human beings. And he experienced the weaknesses that we experience.

[ 2 : 53 ] So, this morning we want to consider the frailty of human flesh. We read that when he reached the garden that he left eight of his disciples at the gate and invited John, James, and Peter to come in with him into the garden.

And he does this as if he was seeking to draw some comfort from having these disciples with him.

As he was beginning to experience the anguish that he was experiencing in his soul. Because we read that when he entered the garden that he began to be sorrowful and deeply troubled.

And then that he said, my soul is very sorrowful even to death. Now, as we read through the Gospels, we learn that Jesus spoke to the people much in his day.

And we learn of the miracles that he performed. But we don't read very much concerning what he himself experienced within his own soul.

[ 4 : 24 ] It's very seldom that he opened his mouth to speak about his own deep feelings. And how the things that he encountered in this world affected him.

But here we have our rare glimpse of what he was experiencing in his soul. The internal world of emotions that he no doubt was experiencing.

Once, when he stood at the grave of Lazarus, we read of him that he groaned within himself because his spirit was troubled. And his feelings found escape in that he wept.

Jesus wept. Now, we're not going to look at what he experienced at the grave of Lazarus and what caused him to weep.

But that's one of the instances, one of the rare instances that we have written concerning Jesus, where the veil is lifted and we're given a small insight into the groanings that he himself was experiencing within his soul.

[ 5 : 44 ] And again, as he journeyed towards Jerusalem, when he spoke about the grain of wheat that must die, realizing that he was speaking about his own death, that we see that his human

feelings and emotions found an outlet in the words that he spoke to his disciples, Now my soul is troubled.

And as we mentioned last night, what a contrast. Just in a matter of a few hours from the calm and collected Jesus that instituted the Lord's Supper, celebrated the Passover with his disciples, and gave them the long discourse that we have in John 14 through to 17.

And then the singing of the hymn, which we know was one of the Hallel Psalms, which was customary to be sung at the Passover, which is one of the Psalms from 113 through to 118. And now we see him here in the garden of Gethsemane, a broken man, filled with terror and anguish at the cup that he was going to have to drink.

Now this man of sorrows, as he was predicted, that he would be, like all other men, experiences sorrow.

[ 7 : 22 ] And like all other men, he finds relief in sharing that sorrow with others. And although he wanted to be on his own to wrestle with God in prayer, which is very often how we all feel when we're afflicted with some kind of trial or sorrow or sense of anguish in our souls, we want to take ourselves aside and come to the Lord in prayer.

But at the same time, we find comfort in the fact that there may be others alongside with us that are able to uphold us at the throne of grace and prayer.

And we see that Jesus takes three of his disciples along with him into the garden as if he's seeking to find comfort in the knowledge that they're going to share this burden with him, that they're going to pray with him as he comes aside from the rest so that he can lay his anguish before God in prayer.

And his grief is so overwhelming that although he wants to come aside so that he might do business with God, that he's still clinging on to possibly the help that these three could afford him in the garden.

How very human. Doesn't it comfort you to know that you have such a high priest who can be touched with a feeling of our infirmities?

[ 9 : 10 ] Because he himself experienced these infirmities. He himself experienced all the horrors and the trials and the terrors that we experience in this world.

But he experienced it to a far greater depth than we can ever experience. Because when we're passing through these troubled waters, we're assured that underneath us are the everlasting arms. Now for these everlasting arms to be underneath us, Jesus had to descend to a greater depth than we could ever descend to in any of our trials and in any of our sorrows.

Now God had already tried his son by certain preparatory exercises. But he now allows his mind an insight into the cup that contained the death that he was going to have to exhaust.

And the weakness of his human flesh comes to the fore. As we considered last night, the horror that he saw contained within that cup.

[ 10 : 32 ] And as a result of that, his secret feelings are let out. Now he had managed to keep himself composed throughout his ministry.

He kept these things hidden from human eyes. But now he affords these three disciples a small glimpse of what he was experiencing as he anticipated drinking the cup that the father had placed in his hand.

And he speaks to them as brethren. Brethren who may be able to afford a measure of help to him. And he's wanting to know that they're there for him.

He asks them to remain with him. Remain with me and watch with me. As if to say to them, stay with me. I need your comfort.

I need to know that you're praying for me. Because of what I'm experiencing, I'm afraid that I'm going to fail. I'm afraid that my human nature won't be able to stand the terror of God's wrath that's going to be poured down into my soul.

[ 11 : 52 ] I want to know that you're there for me. I want to draw comfort from the knowledge of knowing that you're going to be there praying. But what an awful disappointment his three disciples were going to be for him.

Because he's going to discover that they're no stronger than the ones that he left at the gate. When he asks them to watch with him.

It's pointing to the deep distress that he found within his soul where he's looking to these weak and miserable sinners to give him one shred of comfort.

And they were only going to add to the bitterness that he was already experiencing in his soul. Because how disappointing when he came back on several occasions to find that they were falling asleep and that they weren't able to watch with him for one hour. Now he had selected them to accompany him so that they might share his burden. But they only added to his burden and grief.

[13:16] He declares that he is grieved at having been forsaken by them in their prayer life. And he had good grounds for accusing them of the indifference that they showed when he was experiencing such extreme anguish.

When he challenged them, so, could you not watch with me for one hour? After all that I've done for you, after all that I've revealed to you, and this in my moment of great anguish, when I asked you something that I had never asked you to before, to watch with me for one hour, to share this burden with me, was that too much to ask of you?

That you might pray with me whilst I wrestled with the Father over the cup that I'm going to have to drink. Was this too much to expect of you?

That you might watch with me for one hour? Now, some people find that difficulty in believing that Jesus was so afraid of death.

But, how else would you answer the question? What is it that caused him to shed great drops of blood like sweat as he wrestled with the Father in prayer?

[14:52] Now, you all know what it is to sweat. But you must go through a great deal of exercise and feel a great heat before that sweat begins to drop off you.

But this was no ordinary sweat. This was his blood. Such was the extreme agony of his soul that he burst the smaller blood vessels under his skin and that it was dropping off him down to the ground because of the fear that he was experiencing concerning the death that he was going to have to die.

And, you might find it difficult to understand that here, the Son of God experienced so much terror and anguish in his soul and it shows us just how human Jesus really was.

This was not some superhuman. This was no superman. This was a man just like you and I who experiences the same difficulties that you and I experience and to experience the same fear and terror that he experienced as he anticipated the death that he was going to have to suffer.

Now, you might think, well, this is inconsistent with the glory of Christ that he was seized with such trembling and such sadness.

[16:44] And some people try to find a way of evading that difficulty in trying to answer the question that the Son of God would experience greater fear than man can ever experience in this world.

That he was filled with terror at the prospect of the death that he was going to have to enter into and exhaust. And if we're ashamed to acknowledge that our Savior experienced such weakness, then we haven't yet come to appreciate who our Savior is.

Because he had to experience this. Is there any other scripture which gives us an insight into the sufferings that he experienced in his soul more than this scripture that we're considering this morning?

Where else can we find the kindness and the mercy and the love that Jesus had for sinners such as we are?

What relationship could we have with him unless we were assured that he experienced the same weaknesses that we experience?

[18:19] That he experienced the same fears that we experience? How else could he be the perfect high priest?

Because he didn't come in the appearance of human flesh. He came in the reality of human flesh. And he had to become that because God could never suffer. God could never experience the terror that we experience.

sufferings because God being a righteous God can never suffer and God could never die. But God taking to himself our nature had to experience the sufferings that we deserve to suffer.

He had to enter into the very depth of hell which is described for us by John in the revelation as a bottomless pit.

[19:27] Those who go to hell will never reach bottom. They will never exhaust the pains of death that are found in hell. But Jesus had to exhaust it fully.

He had to descend to the very depth of hell. He had to experience the sufferings that our sins deserved in order to redeem us.

What better high priest could God have given us? We read in scripture that he was made perfect through the things that he suffered. Now it's hard to imagine that Jesus had to be perfected in anything.

He was born into this world sinless, harmless, undone, defiled. He never sinned. He was perfect. But to become the perfect high priest, he had to associate with his people.

He had to experience the sorrow and the trials of his people. And he had to experience the death and the hell that his people ought to have experienced.

[ 20 : 39 ] So that he would indeed become the perfect high priest. And he was perfected through the things that he suffered. in the Old Testament he's referred to as the servant of Yahweh.

He came into this world to serve, not to command. He was born into this world to submit rather than to rule.

God's God's God's name. He came to serve us and he came to submit himself to all that his father required of him in order that he might redeem sinners such as we are and reconcile us to God.

Had he used his divine attributes at any time to help him. When he was going through such great anguish and trouble in his soul, if he had drawn one ounce from his divine attributes, then his sufferings would only have been imaginary and not real.

Because he wouldn't have suffered. everything that hell contains, which is stored up for those that will continue to resist him.

[ 22 : 21 ] He did not at any moment cease to be God. He was in full possession of all his divine attributes, even when he was dying on the cross.

people but he could not for one moment use them so that he might help his human nature. Because if he had thrown from them at any moment, then he would have jeopardized the redemption of his people.

Because he had to experience what his people experience. experience. He had to live this life as a life of faith.

And all the support that he received, he had to draw down from the Father. He had to submit himself to the leading and to the teaching of the Holy Spirit in order to lay hold the Father so that he might receive the strength that would enable him to do everything that he did in this world.

And he himself freely acknowledged that. That everything that he did, he did as a result of the Father helping him to do it. And just as surely as he performed all the miracles that he performed through his dependence upon his Father, even in the depth of his suffering, he did so in dependence upon his Father through faith.

[ 24 : 02 ] And everything that he did, he did in obedience to the Father's will, even when his human nature was shrinking back as we see here in the garden.

And as he wrestled with the Father pleading with him, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. Nevertheless, he says, not my will be done, but your will be done.

And he went forward to drink of that cup, because he received through prayer the same as we received through prayer and the exercise of faith, the grace to help us in our time of need.

Just as he said to the apostle Paul when he wanted to take the thorn out of his flesh, and he prayed to him three times to receive the answer, my grace is sufficient for you, because my strength is made perfect in your weakness.

Well, that was applicable to the Lord Jesus Christ. God's strength was made perfect in his weakness. He readily acknowledges his weakness.

[ 25 : 22 ] He readily acknowledges the fear that he has from the death that he was going to have to suffer. And he readily acknowledges that he needs help from God.

That's why he went to the garden to do business with the Father. And he thought that the three that he took with him would be able to help him. What a disappointment.

they afforded him no help. They only added to his grief. But he received the help that he needed.

And he went forward to fulfil the work that the Father had given him to do.

And he didn't cease doing what the Father wanted him to do until he could triumphantly cry, it is finished. And as soon as it was finished, he committed his spirit into the Father's care, and he gave up his spirit.

May God grant that he would bless to us these thoughts. Let's pray. Our Father in heaven, what a friend we have in Jesus.

[ 26 : 38 ] What a high priest was perfected through the sufferings that he endured, so that we might be reconciled to you, and that we might experience the communion that we experience here this morning, in fellowship with yourself, the God who created all things, the God who was not dependent upon anything that you created, but the God who loved us from before the foundations of the world, even when you saw us filthy in our own wax.

You prepared a sacrifice that would make atonement for our sins. You were willing to send forth your Son into this world, to demonstrate the great love that you have for this world, that you were willing to give him, and that he was willing to come so that whosoever would believe in him would not perish, but have everlasting life.

But what a cost, what a cost to our Savior, our thoughts freely given to us, what a cost to him, that he exhausted the death that our sins deserved, so that you might freely give us the life that we've now begun to experience in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Lord, continue to bestow that life upon our souls, continue to lead us and to guide us, and cleanse us from all of our sins, for we're asking it in Jesus' precious name.

Amen. We're now going to come to the part of the service where we fence the Lord's table, and I'm going to read some words, in the first letter of John to bring some thoughts to us concerning that, in 1 John chapter 2.

[ 29 : 03 ] At the end of chapter 2, verse 28. And now, little children, abide in him, so that when he appears, we may have confidence and not shrink from him in shame that is coming.

If you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him. See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God.

And so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Beloved, we are God's children now, and what we will be has not yet appeared, but we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, because we shall see him as he is.

And everyone who thus hopes in him purifies himself as he is pure. In this world, there are two types of people.

You have the children of the world, and you have the children of God. And the way that they live their lives will reveal to us whose children they are.

[ 30 : 37 ] John, when he was, Jesus, rather, when he was contending with the Pharisees in the Gospel of John, reveals to us, because they claimed that God was their Father, and that Abraham was their Father.

And he says to them, if Abraham was your father, you would do the works of Abraham. And we all reveal who our father is.

As he went on to speak to the Jews, Jesus said, you are of your father, the devil. God is because the works that you're doing is making it clear who your father is.

You might like to claim that God is your father, but if God were your father, you would do the works of God. But it's quite evident that you're not of the Father in heaven, because you don't believe me, and you're going to try and kill me.

And that's the work of the devil. You won't believe me, and you would rather crucify Jesus in your heart than crucify your sins.

[ 32 : 05 ] You love your sins, and that's what characterizes you as the children of this world. You are living for this world, and you are living to enjoy the sins that you can enjoy in this world, and it's evident who your father is by the way that you live your lives.

But here John tells us, if you know that he is righteous, you may be sure that everyone who practices righteousness has been born of him.

This is the evidence that we've been born again, that our desire is that we might walk in obedience with Christ, because that's the father's will for us, that we believe in him whom he sent.

And he will lead us, as we sing so often, into the paths of righteousness. And it becomes evident that we have been born of him, because that's how we want to live our lives.

It becomes evident that our citizenship is in heaven, because our hearts are taken up with the things of heaven. Our hearts are not taken up with the things of this world.

[ 33 : 23 ] And you can easily discern which category you belong to by asking yourselves, what's my greatest interest?

Where does my heart lie? Does it lie in the things of this world? Am I continuing to resist Jesus as my Savior? And if that's the case, then you shouldn't come to the table.

But if your heart is taken up with the things of God, and your desire to give obedience to God by putting your hope and confidence in Jesus, then your place is at this table.

Even although you see your own shortcomings, place, your place is still at the table, because that's what brought you to Christ in the first place and continues to do so.

The fact that you realize that you're a sinner and that you need Jesus to continually cleanse you and save you from the power of sin that still lurks deep down in your heart.

[ 34 : 34 ] So if that's your experience, then your place is at the table. If there are any who are yet outside of the table that need to come, then please come and take your place as we sing in the next psalm that we're going to sing.

Psalms 118 from the Scottish Psalter on page 398. And we're going to sing from verse 15.

In dwellings of the righteous is heard the melody of joy and health the Lord's right hand doth ever valiantly. The right hand of the mighty Lord exalted is on high.

The right hand of the mighty Lord doth ever valiantly. Now we're going to sing to the end of verse 23. And if anybody who is yet to come to the table is to come, then please come and the elders will set out the table.

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

[ 36 : 27 ] the right hand of the mighty Lord exalted is on high.

The right hand of the mighty Lord of heaven but valiantly.

I shall not die but live shall the works of God discover the Lord hath me chastised soul but not to death give no fire.

O set ye open unto me the gates of righteousness then then will I enter into them and I the Lord will bless this is the gate gate of God I help the trust shall end at end thee will

I praise for thou me hurts thou hast my safety be that stone is made head corner stone which will thou dead despise this is the doing of the Lord and wondrous in our eyes we read there together see what kind of love the father has given to us that we should be called the children of

[ 40 : 00 ] God and so we are the reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him as you take your place at the Lord's table Satan doesn't want you to feel comfortable there and no doubt he's been reminding you all morning of what an awful person you are that you are the least likeliest kind of person that should be partaking of the Lord's supper and take your place at the Lord's table and maybe still he's seeking to convince you of your sinfulness sinfulness but the reason that you came to Jesus in the first place was because you realized that you were a sinner and you'll continue to be a sinner whilst you're still in this world but God doesn't see you as a sinner because as we've already mentioned

God sees you through Jesus Christ he sees you as perfectly righteous and let's remind ourselves of some of the characters that were God's people David who committed the sin of adultery and went on to murder in order to try and cover up sin the fact that he fell and sinned against God didn't jeopardize his standing before God he was still one of God's people Lot who got drunk and committed incest the fact that he did that didn't disqualify him from being one of God's people because his standing before God was never dependent upon anything that he was going to do and when he did sin against

God that wasn't going to alter his standing because he was never justified as a result of anything that he did he was justified by faith in the Messiah that was to come and that's the covenant that God had made with him it's a covenant of grace and we can go through scripture and think of the notorious characters that we read of in scripture who were God's people Manasseh Zacchaeus who robbed the people and yet they were made God's people when we think of people that we may have read of John Newton caught up in the slave trade and even after he was converted the sins that he committed it little wonder that he wrote to him amazing grace what could be more amazing than the grace of

God and that's the experience that John has when he comes to write this letter when he mentions about those who are practicing righteousness who are the children of God he's reminded am I a

child of God could God actually save such a wretch as I yet this is what God reveals to me and he asks us to consider the kind of love that God has that saves us even in the depravity of our sins this is truly amazing grace and if you consider it to be amazing grace then you're in the right place because it's a covenant of grace that God made with us and we're thankful for that that it was never dependent upon anything that we did or were going to go on to do and even if we've sinned we have an advocate with the father

Jesus Christ the righteous not even our sins can take us out of the father's hands we are safe because our trust is in Jesus that's what we're reminding ourselves of that this was the reason for which he died in order for us to be saved and we're as safe today as we will be throughout all of eternity so take comfort if you're looking to Jesus because you're in the right place if you're sitting at his table now we learn on the night that he was betrayed that he took bread and that he prayed and asked a blessing so we'll ask a blessing before we come to partake of the bread and the wine our gracious and ever blessed

[ 45 : 28 ] God we give you thanks for the amazing grace that saved wretches such as every one of us here are today and we're thankful and becoming more thankful every day of our lives that our salvation was never dependent upon anything that we could do that it was never dependent upon anything that we would go on to do as the recipients of grace that it was always dependent upon what Christ has done for us that he was willing to have his own body broken and that he was willing to pour out his own blood so that we might be saved from the destruction and the penalty that our sins deserved and when we think about these things it edifies our souls and as we partake of these symbols that are revealing to us the broken body of

Christ and the shed blood help us oh lord that our souls would be truly fed and that our sins would be completely cleansed and forgiven and that we would be able to experience the joy and the peace that belongs to those who are in communion with God lord lead us to experience that as we now partake of these elements that bring these truths before us for we're asking it in the name of our precious saviour jesus christ amen now we're going to read our warrant from scripture before we partake of the elements for i received from the lord what i also delivered to you that the lord jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and said this is my body which is for you do this in remembrance of me in the same way also he took the cup after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the lord's death until he comes now we'll seek to follow his example and we'll break the bread as the lord jesus did on the night that he instituted the supper and he gave it to his followers saying take eat this is my body which is broken for you and in the same manner after the supper was ended he took the wine and said this is this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me for as often as you eat of this bread and drink of this cup you do show forth the lord's death until he comes just one of you you you

■ ao ao Amen. Now John isn't trying to describe heaven for us.

He's describing what we're going to be like in heaven. And he himself didn't fully understand what that entailed.

He says, we don't know yet what we're going to be. But he was assured that when Christ comes again, we're going to be like him.

[ 50 : 35 ] Because his trust was not in his own understanding, but in the word of God. And the word of God promises us that where he begins a good work, he will bring it on and it will be completed in the day of Jesus Christ.

And as we remember the Lord's death, we're remembering until he comes. And we're renewing our hope as to what's going to happen when he does come.

If we have died before he comes, our souls, which will be in heaven, will come with him. When he comes again, he will bring all the spirits of those who are in heaven with him.

To receive the glorified bodies that will then be raised up from the graves. And what was sown in weakness will be raised in power.

What was sown perishable will be raised imperishable. What was sown a natural body will be raised a glorified body.

[ 51 : 56 ] And we will all go to be with the Lord to inherit the new heavens and the new earth. Now we don't yet know what that fully entails.

But we do know that we will be perfectly righteous, perfectly holy, because the word of God makes it clear to us that nothing can enter into it that will defile it.

So everything that we are familiar with in this world will have ceased. There will be no more curse. There will be no more experiencing what the curse brought into our experience.

In other words, there will be no more illnesses. There will be no more diseases. No more viruses. Because we will have received glorified bodies.

Bodies that will never again be able to suffer. Because sin will have been dealt the final blow. And God's people will go on to inherit what Christ has earned for them.

[ 53 : 21 ] Glorified bodies to inherit a glorified heaven and a glorified earth. Wherein dwells righteousness.

In other words, there will be no more envy. There will be no more greed. No more pride. No more of the things that causes so much distress and so much pain in this world.

That's going to be eradicated. Our bodies are going to be conformed like the bodies of Christ. We're going to have glorified bodies.

And we're going to go on to inherit what Christ has purchased on our behalf. Where we will live blissfully happy throughout the ages of eternity.

And where our praise will be continually of the Lamb who was slain and has secured such a great salvation for our souls.

[ 54 : 34 ] There will be no more aging process. We will never grow old. We will live in the vitality of youth to glorify and to enjoy our God which is the purpose of our redemption.

We're going to rise from the table by singing to his praise in Psalm 103 in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 103 on page 369.

O thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that in me is be stirred up his holy name to magnify and bless. Bless O my soul the Lord thy God and not forgetful be of all his gracious benefits.

he hath bestowed on thee. We're going to sing to the end of verse 4. O thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that in me is. O thou my soul bless God the Lord and all that I thought I'd not forgetful be.

Of all his gracious benefits, he hath bestowed on thee.

[ 56 : 54 ] All thine iniquities to doubt for his chance be forgiven.

Who thy diseases all and pains stand here and thee relieve?

Who doth redeem thy life that thou to death mayst not go down?

Who thee with love in kindest and get the mercy's crown?

Amen. Now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, the Father, and fellowship of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with you all now and forevermore.

[ 58 : 20 ] Amen. Amen.