

Communion

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[0 : 00] I'd like for a little time, seeking the Lord's enabling, to turn with you to John's Gospel from chapter 7. John chapter 7, reading at verse 45. And if you bear with me, I'm reading from the authorized version at this stage. John chapter 7, verse 45. Then came the officers to the chief priests and Pharisees and said unto them, Why have you not brought him? The officers answered, Never man spake like this man. Then answered them, The Pharisees, are you also deceived? Have any of the rulers of the Pharisees believed in him? But this people who know not the law are cursed. Nicodemus said unto them, He that came to Jesus by nightly, one of them, does our law judge any man before it hears him? And know what he does. He answered and said unto him, Art thou also of Galilee? Search and look. For out of

Galilee arises no prophet. And every man went unto his own house. Galilee arises. I would like to particularly think of the words that we find there at the end of verse 46, that statement, Never man speak like this man. It's always good for us to be constantly asking ourselves questions. Questions particularly in relation to our relationship to God, to Christ, to the Spirit. It's always good for us to be involved in that kind of exercise. Even answering the great question that you find in the Gospels, What think ye of Christ? How important is he to you?

If you were to ask to give a presentation of what you think of Jesus, what would you say? How much of Christ is really in you?

If you would be able to give a true picture, a true account of this Christ, who has done so much for you, that he loved you, that he gave himself for you.

I want for a little time to go into the background of this situation that is arisen here. Because this statement from these two soldiers, these two men that were called upon by the Pharisees to go and take Christ, the picture surely is one of which the Pharisees have become is so upset by the teaching and the and the example of the Lord Jesus that they have had enough.

[3 : 14] Up until this point, they have been seeking out through people like these soldiers to find out what he is saying, what he is doing, what new word is he uttering.

And more and more they are building up accusations against him. The Pharisees are concerned, even without knowledge, they have already built up a picture, a picture of hatred, a picture of evil against this Jesus.

And they've finally snapped. No more. Bring him in. We've had enough of this man that calls himself the Christ.

So they send these two soldiers to take him. It's not the first time that these soldiers have been out on the move listening to Jesus. After all, their only interest was to report back what he had said and what he had done, things that they had heard.

But after a time of exposure, to the word of Jesus, now I'm not saying these two men were converted. But there is no doubt that none of us can come under the exposure of the word of God, the word of Christ, without us going away with some influence.

[4 : 44] Whatever we go away from in this building today, when the word of God is read under the sun, there is one thing sure, it will have its effect.

It will either harden your heart or it will subdue you. It will bring you maybe even to a position like these two men who concluded at this point that no one have they ever heard speaking like this Jesus.

I bring me back to the first question I asked about what we think of this Jesus because it's of unparamount importance what we think of this Jesus.

After all, in a little while, many of us here are going to sit at the table and participate on those things that he has laid aside for us as a reminder to us not only of his death but of his coming again.

What do I think of this Jesus? How much has the influence of Christ been upon my life that I find myself today wanting to sit at his table to stuff with him as he with me?

[6 : 10] This is a great desire, is it not? This is the great longing of my heart. There is nothing more that I would like to do but to sit at the table with Christ and with his people and participate in those things that remind us of what he has done for us, what he is doing for us, and what he will yet do and demonstrate in us in his great eternity.

no man has ever spoken to me like this Jesus. Now there are a number of things that I want us to consider here.

And the first thing is when you ever came to faith in Christ when the starting of the spirit started working in you what was it that drew you to this Jesus.

Let me take you to a situation one that is well known to you, one that is very familiar. Earlier on in John's Gospel we have the account of Jesus meeting with the woman of Samaria at that well, Jacob's well.

And you remember we are told in that account how Jesus opened up her heart in a way that nobody ever else did.

[7 : 36] Oh, people knew her. They knew her for what she was. The kind of person she was. And she herself had to admit yes, she knew what kind of person she was.

But no one, least of all a Jew, ever spoke to her like Jesus did. No one ever opened the word of God, the word of life to her in the way that Jesus did.

So much so that beforehand she would conclude the Jews have no hearing through the Samaritans. Yet she finds herself being more and more influenced by this man who works basically far distant from her culturally and religiously and so on.

Yet she is finding herself hearing and listening. Do you remember that? Do you remember the time when God in Christ through his word started to speak to you?

You were listening to things that you tried to even forget before. You wanted to forget them. You didn't even want to listen. But you couldn't stop eventually and the word broke through.

[8 : 52] what was the conclusion for the woman of Samaria? How did she respond to the whole situation of this Jesus coming to her?

A Jew speaking to a Samaritan woman on his own? It was almost a criminal offense. But the conclusion was no man no man has ever spoken to me like this man.

Come, she says to those men with whom she had all her illicit feelings with. She went straight back to them. Come, see a man that told me all things that ever I did.

Is not this the Christ? This is the one, this is the true Christ. This is the one who speaks to the heart even to the stoniest of hearts. And if he not spoken to you as well and to me in such a way that you know fine that you never heard it like this before.

It's not that you didn't hear it with the hearing before, but you never heard it like this before because the Spirit of God began to work in your heart. And the Spirit of God was enabling you to listen.

[10 : 16] Those very familiar words you remember in Isaiah's prophecy, chapter 55. Remember what God says in that prophetic utterance.

My word, he said, my word, the word of Jesus, the word of truth, will not return to me void. it shall accomplish that which I please.

It will prosper in the thing which I sent it. How many times have we set ourselves like a brick wall against the word of God, trying to defy it time and time again and say, no, I don't want this man to rule over me.

I may find myself in the house of God on a Sunday, but I'm only there out of tradition, I'm only there out of maybe because of my parents or something like that, but every time you come under the word of God, it's having its effect.

God said, it will not return to me empty when you hear the word of God. You may want to never believe it in all your life, because there is a world out there that you cherish much more than the word of God, but it still has its effect.

[11 : 37] God said, it will not return to be born. Maybe today, for some people in this building, it will be a savor of death unto death, for others, a savor of life unto life.

What is it to you and to me? What is the word of Jesus to you and to me today? Is it the savor of life? Is it what I long taught?

Is it the psalmist says in Psalm 19, sweeter than honey to my taste? Every time I hear the word of God, I am transfixed by it.

Or like the psalmist says, you remember in Psalm 119, I think it's verse 166 or 67, he says, I stand in awe, he says, of thy word.

These men were professing nothing, they had listened to Jesus countless times, they reported on Jesus countless times, but here they find themselves standing in awe.

[12:48] I'm not saying that they were converted, maybe they were, maybe we'll meet them in heaven, one would love to think that these two men would be in glory, and they might be able to tell us what it was that struck them about this Jesus at this point, and it hadn't done beforehand.

There is no doubt that something marvelous had happened that resulted in them refusing to take Jesus. Imagine, imagine them refusing to be obedient to those who were their bosses basically. Imagine turning to the Pharisees and saying, we couldn't take him, we disobeyed you, yes, our jobs are in the line, but what is it? We couldn't touch him because no one has ever spoken to us or an outheating like this man.

They never went there to hear Jesus, at least not for their soul's well-being, not to hear a great sermon preached by him. They went for another purpose, that having found themselves there, the purpose for which they had gone, disappeared.

Now, surely, there is nothing more phenomenal than the power of the word of Christ. Let me take you to another situation, which is much nearer to what we are doing today in the remembrance of the Lord's death.

[14:27] The thief and the claws. Let's take the two of them just for a moment. Both of them had been hurling abuse against Christ. Both of them were together in their criminality.

They were criminals. But something happened to one of them. Yes, we talk about the 11th hour conversion. Of course it was. It was a great miracle.

Something great was taking place at that time. And it was Christ and his message. And how it penetrated even the storniest and hardest of hearts.

These two men were alike. In the words against Jesus, then something happened. And I'm tempted to think. I don't have scriptural warrant necessarily for saying this.

But you remember the very first thing that Jesus said that we're told of anyway, that's written in Holy Brit, that he said from the cross. What did Jesus say?

[15:41] What was the first word? What was the first assuring word that came to you as a poor sinner? And you realize this Jesus is for me.

Remember what Jesus said to the crowd? Father, he said, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing.

That's true of every unbelieving heart, even those in this building. You don't know what you are doing. But you deny Christ, the privilege and the blessing of the gospel in your heart and soul.

Jesus cried to his father, Father, forgive them, for they know not what they are doing. Then we hear from this thief and he looks up to Jesus and he says to him, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

Had anyone ever said to me, this man, him, in all his debauched life, had anyone ever said to him, had anyone said anything to the woman that was taken in adultery, or to the woman that was the marion, that there was such a thing as forgiveness?

[17:08] Was this the first time that this thief on the cross heard anything about forgiveness? forgiveness? It's no wonder these two men came out with that statement, no man has ever spoken like this man.

For the thief on the cross, what a day it was. I believe the thief had heard Jesus utter those words, Father, forgive them.

and it had a resounding influence upon his life. For immediately he finds himself appealing to Christ. To whom else can we go, said Peter? Thou is the word of eternal life. There is none like unto Jesus, no, not one. Can you say that today?

What think he of Christ? What do you really think of him? He is the one who forgives sins. Oh, the Pharisees had an answer for that.

[18:14] Only one can forgive sins. That's God. In their cynicism, their hypocrisy, they would accuse Christ rather than acknowledge that what he was saying was the absolute truth.

These two men, we don't hear anything more about them. Did they lose their job? who knows? Who knows what was?

But you know, the sad fact would be that having sat under the words of Jesus and having been almost convinced in their mind that there was no one ever had a message like the Lord Jesus Christ had a message for any man, woman, or child in any society, it would be really sad if they had come to that situation and then turned their back on it all.

That's what so many people do, don't they? They come to the house of God, they come to, I know it's a cliché, they come to the means of grace, they come to the place of privilege, they hear the message and maybe sometimes are even brought to a degree of conviction.

What life would it be for you in the day of judgment? It's not that you never heard, it's not that Jesus has not spoken to you, it's not that you haven't known something of what the truth is concerning this Jesus and the necessity for you in him, but you refused, you refused to yield life.

[20 : 07] No man has spoken like this man. Let it come back to yourselves. Can you remember the day, those of you who are sitting here as believers in Christ, can you remember the day when he opened your heart, when he convinced you of your sin, the state and the condition of your heart and mouth, you remember the day when you knew, according to the word of Christ, that in that present condition, you were held deserving.

It didn't matter what work you did, what good works you did, you were held deserving, you were deserving only of his wrath and of his curse.

Jesus spoke to you, in the middle, in the midst of all your corruption and unbelief and godlessness. And he drew you to himself, just like the thief on the cross.

He could say, no man has ever spoken like this man. He was assured anyway, from the very lips of Christ.

He asked Jesus a very simple question, remember me when you come into your kingdom. And Jesus replied, which was the second statement from the cross, today I will be with me in paradise.

[21 : 50] What a blessing for that man, what a privilege. Are you longing to meet with him, to hear more of what he is to say?

I'd love to hear more of what he is to say, of this Jesus, and how Jesus spoke to him, and what these words meant to him. But there is another practical lesson I think that is very important here. And the lesson is this, so often you and I as witnesses and bearers of the testimony of the Lord Jesus, we are called upon to go out into the world and tell people about this Jesus.

How do we do it? What is our methodology? Pardon me for using that expression again. What is our methodology? Have we read plenty of books as to how to communicate the gospel to different types of people, different classes of people, different age groups?

Have we learned the books? Have we filled our heart and our minds full of all the material? We're all ready now to go. The woman of Mary didn't have to go into a whole dive of books.

[23 : 10] She knew what was in her heart, and she expressed it. But what I think about Jesus very often, that it's lost in us. We might have the theology, we might have the teaching, we might even pride ourselves, and that can even be an offense to God.

We might pride ourselves in the fact that we have the truth and we own the truth, and yet, when it comes to demonstrating the truth in word, we are so far away.

We can be so cold, we can be almost so clinical. If you take the words of Jesus, and if you have a red-letter edition of the word of God, and look at all the words, all the statements of Jesus, and you look at them, go through them carefully, and listen to Jesus speaking in these words.

And you listen with that ear that is helping you to understand how am I to speak to my brother, to my sister, to my friend, about the Lord Jesus.

How did Jesus do it? What was it about Jesus? The voice? The intonation? Ah, more than anything.

[24 : 39] There was compassion. There was compassion in the very tone of his voice. There was compassion in the words that he spoke. He was moved with compassion.

People could see that he was moved with compassion. In many respects, he wasn't saying anything different to what the Pharisees were already saying.

Only that the Pharisees couldn't speak the truth in love. that's where you and I go off the beat so often. We cannot speak it in the way that we should.

Learn from Jesus. Learn from the way that Jesus responded to situations. Remember the woman taking an adultery?

woman taking away. He said to her, where are those who are accusing you? Was she sitting there trembling?

[25 : 40] Maybe she was. But I'm quite convinced that when Jesus spoke to her, the fear had disappeared. He said to her, I'm not accusing you, I'm not condemning you, go and sin no more.

How has Jesus spoken to you? What can you say about this Jesus? I know what these two men could say.

No man has ever spoken like this man. that becomes true the moment that we really listen.

Listen with the hearing of the ear, the understanding of the heart, the activity of the Spirit of God in us, taking those things of Christ and enabling us to appreciate the thief and the trust.

We hear nothing more about him except that he is in paradise. Today he said, he was told, you will be with me in paradise.

[26 : 54] Are you anxious today? Did Christ not give you a promise? Did he not give you a promise? I will never leave you, I will never forsake you, I am with you to the end of the world.

And if you are concerned about those sins, that you know it an offense to God in your life, yes, maybe you are grappling with them.

Maybe you tried your hardest to free yourself from every last vestige and opportunity for the evil one. Let me put it this way, let Christ do it.

Let this Christ in whom you believe do it, just in exactly the same way as Peter had to do it. Christ. I mentioned it last night, Jesus said to him, Satan has desired to have you, that he might stiff you at wheat, that I have prayed for you, that your faith will help you.

Ah, Peter, what an assurance he has, what a message from a loving Savior, a compassionate Savior, one who never ever spoke like Jesus spoke.

[28 : 20] Is that what you feel and know today? I hope so. And as you come to the table, it's not the preacher we want to listen to, it's Christ.

We want Christ to open up his word to us. We want Christ to encourage us. We want Christ to fill our hearts with the music of his word.

your praise. Dear Lord, our God, we do thank thee for every token of thy love, for the many blessings and privileges that belong to us in Christ Jesus.

Lord, we thank thee for that day that thou did bring us out of the state of sin. We thank thee, O Lord, for the words that thou hast given to us, the words that we were undeserving of, the words of assurance, the words of thine eternal love.

Lord, we pray that as we continue in our service, and as we come to the table, may we do so in the strength of Christ, hearing the Lord Jesus say to us, come and dine.

[29 : 38] Lord, leave us not to ourselves. Take away everything that provokes thee in our eyes and throws us in with our spirit. And all we ask is in the precious name of Jesus.

Amen. We're going to sing some verses in Psalm 110 in the same Psalms version. Psalm 110 singing verses 1 to verse 7.

Psalm 110 The Lord said to my Lord.

We come now to what has been traditionally spoken of, and I don't know if it's still conducted either or not, but the fencing of the table has been something that has been on the go for a long time.

And I know that different people will approach this aspect of the remembrance of the Lord's offer in different ways. Sometimes there might be a very traditional way of doing it.

[31 : 14] There might be other times when maybe we almost bypass it. But again, I would draw your attention to that question that I brought to your mind earlier on.

What think you of Christ? It all depends on how we answer that, as to whether or not we are suitable for the coming.

They do take the bread and the wine. One thing that should never be done, and that is that no preacher of the gospel has a right to be insensitive to the Lord's people.

Everyone is different. Of that there is no doubt. You don't have to go very far in the scriptures to realize that there are people who are different.

People who may be closer to the Lord than others. People who present a more, did I use expression, a more faithful witness and testimony.

[32 : 23] But that doesn't mean to say that others who may be struggling with their faith, and I don't know anybody who doesn't, if we're really being honest with ourselves, that we would have to admit that we come short of the glory of every time.

And we know that within our own hearts, we are not worthy to receive. But then, it's not up to us entirely, is it?

It is up to Christ. But I want to read, before I say something else, I want to read from the words that is often read at the time of this, and I'm not bypassing it, because I think it's very important.

For a number of reasons. But let me read the passage in Galatians, and chapter 5. So I say, live by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature.

For the sinful nature desires what is contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit is contrary to the sinful nature. They are in conflict with each other, so that you do not do what you want.

[33 : 40] But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law. The acts of the sinful nature are obvious. Sexual immorality, impurity, debauchery, idolatry, and witchcraft.

Hatred, discord, jealousy, gifts of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, flat actions, and envy, drunkenness, orgies, and the like.

I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. Notice what Paul says. They are obvious.

They are very obvious. They are not part and partial of the culture of the soul that has been revived and quickened. It is not the desire of the heart of the believer to fall into these things.

But there are some things that we do fall into that are not so obvious. And maybe we haven't considered it this way, and I hope I'm not being presumptuous here in stating this, but sometimes the second part of Paul's teaching here is the area in which it is not always so obvious.

[34 : 59] Because what does Paul say? The fruit, he says, of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

Against such there is no law. And you and I can wrestle with many of sin and of great conflict.

Paul speaks about the conflict. Of that there is no doubt. But these things of which Paul talks about that are the fruit of the Spirit, they are not so easy not only to identify in our everyday living, it's not so easy to practice.

I might be unable to say I have no problem with immorality. I have no problem with many of these sins of which the Apostle speaks.

But what about love? What about peace? What about gentleness? There again you get back to Christ. How did Jesus conduct himself?

[36 : 12] What kind of spirit did he show to poor sinners such as you and me? Were they not gentle with us? It's that area, I think, that very often we forget.

We think that the real struggle is against those fleshly sins. When in actual fact, maybe for many of us, we are struggling, really struggling, with loving, living a peaceable life with our brothers and sisters in Christ, showing mercy and kindness to people that are less fortunate than we are.

all these things we have so often left undone. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified sinful nature with its passions and desires.

since we live by the Spirit, let us keep and step with the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying one another.

where am I? Where are you? Christian life of battle for you?

[37 : 32] Always will be. Decided eternity. It is a fight. But it's already won.

And that's the beauty. I'm fighting with sin. You're fighting with sin. In all different shades and colors we are fighting with sin every single day.

Don't be afraid. Jesus can stand before every single one of his disciples and say, I've overcome.

And if today you are trusting in the one alone who has overcome for you, then come to the table.

If you are trusting in your own devices, in your own attempts to cover up your sin or to deal with your sin on your own, then you are not trusting in Jesus.

Come to me, says Jesus, that you might have life. What kind of life?

[38 : 39] A life that has its assurance in the finished work of Christ. He loved me. He gave himself for me.

How much did he love me? How much did he love you? Think of your worst sin. It might not be your worst sin.

Maybe your worst sin you've never even realized is your worst sin. But think of the thing that you've ever done that you know was your worst. And then think of it this way.

Jesus loved me. And he has taken away my sin. The thief on the cross could present a catalogue that might put shame and embarrassment in the faces of good standing upright people.

But he knew one thing. That Jesus loved him. And every last segment, every last game of sin that was in him, he knew he was victorious over.

[39 : 51] Not like the Pharisees who worked it out, but he knew that he was trusting in Jesus. Remember me. Warts and all, sin and all, remember me.

You come to the table with that attitude of the thief and the cross. Remember me. And I will guarantee you in the word of the authority of the word of God, he will not turn you away. You can sit at the table assured, not self-assured, but assured that Jesus loves you. We're going to sing a few verses in Psalm 118.

Now, it was interrelated by your session card last evening. This is not the free church table. It is the table of the Lord. And all who are in fellowship with Christ, if you are from another denomination and you are truly trusting in Jesus, we invite you in the name of Jesus to come and sit at the table. And may the others of you who are not sitting at the table, you're in the gallery or wherever, please come and join with Christ's people at this table and come with faith believing that Jesus is with you. [41 : 25] Psalm 119 verse 15.

Singing from verse 15. Triumphant shouts of joy resound in places where the righteous will. The Lord's right hand is lifted high. His mighty hand does all things well. And we shall sing on to verse 22 from verse 15.

Triumphant shouts of joy. In the work of the ministry as a preacher of the gospel that one appears to be presumptuous enough to suggest that, I think it's one of the best and greatest privileges for a minister to be in company of the Lord's people and to serve at the Lord's table.

It demands a tremendous responsibility because everything that is said must be for the good of the body of Christ. It is not to further or advance anything of man.

[42 : 53] It must bring all the glory to the Lord Jesus Christ. We, after all, are his servants. You are his people. We are all part of that great body.

All of us with differing gifts but all treasured by the Lord Jesus Christ. And I hope that even in itself will give you encouragement to know that you are a chosen vessel, chosen in Christ Jesus. No matter what you might feel yourself and know yourself to be, as long as you know yourself to be one of his. I am his and he is mine.

There's always been the practice of the Presbyterian Church to give and to demonstrate that we have a biblical warrant for what we are doing here this morning.

And I want to read from those very familiar words which we will refer to again in Saran. But it's in the words of 1 Corinthians chapter 11 that we have this great warrant.

[44 : 10] I'm reading from the authorized version if you don't mind. In verse 23, For I have received of the Lord that which also I deliver unto you.

For the Lord Jesus Christ, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread and when he had given thanks, he braided and said, Eat.

Take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me. After the same manner also he took the cup.

When he had stopped saying, This cup is the new testament to my blood. This do ye as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show forth the Lord's death till he come.

We read there that on that night that Jesus broke bread that he gave thanks and let us seek to do the thing that is praying.

[45 : 23] O Lord, our God, we do thank thee for this further opportunity to sit around at thy table. Lord, threaten thyself with us.

We covet thee, O Lord, we desire thee. There is nothing more important to us than that we be found in fellowship with thee and with one another.

O Lord, we thank thee for this day and all the blessings that it speaks to us of. We pray for all of thy people here gathered at the table.

we ask of thee, O Lord, to remember each and every one of us. Pray especially, O Lord, for those who may have had discouragements and those who are overwhelmed with many things, not known to us, but known to thee.

Grant, O Lord, that they may be enabled to set their affection upon Christ, knowing that he will never leave them, he will never forsake them. we ask of thee, O Lord, to bless Rob who is here for the first time.

[46 : 36] We thank thee for his testimony, for his witness. We pray, O Lord, that thou would encourage him in his heart and soul as he sits with thy people at thy table.

We pray for those who cannot be with us, some because of legitimate duties, and others especially we would remember who because of illness or because of infirmity of years, Lord, be with them. We know that thou would not confine to a building made with stone, and that thou would not withhold any good thing from thy people. That was the purpose, and thy purpose is to be with them where they are.

So continue with us for the time that we are gathered at thy table. Bless who is word and sacrament. All we ask is in the Redeemer's name. Amen.

I want to turn just for a few moments to words we find in the book of Psalms and Psalm 27. I don't mind saying this one.

[47 : 44] This is my favorite passage of scripture. And I think all of us have a favorite passage of scripture. It has something maybe to do with our conversion. It's got something to do with the enlightenment that has come upon us, the awakening of our hearts and spirits.

But there is something about this psalm that speaks to the heart of all of us. This might not be your verse, it might not be the verse that you came to faith in Christ or the one that is uppermost, but it's one you can identify with the psalmist.

The psalmist here speaks at the beginning, the Lord is my life and my salvation, whom shall I fear? I have nothing to be afraid of in Christ Jesus.

Were there clouds, dark clouds gathering around him? Was it the fact that Absalom, his own flesh and blood, was a thresh room? Was he becoming overwhelmed with many things of life's journey that were so great and pressing upon the soul?

Were the clouds so dark that maybe for a time they were obliterating the light and the liberty that he had in God and Christ? Think what the psalmist here is doing and telling us.

[49 : 03] It doesn't matter how dark things might be, not just how much they might appear of darkness. There's something that dispels the darkness.

It's the same thing that dispels the darkness when we first came to faith in Christ. The light of the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ.

And if that has taken place, if today we're sitting at the Lord's table and we know what it is to have the darkness dispelled, the darkness of unbelief, the darkness of a past corrupt life, that that is dispelled and the light has shone through, what?

What do you want more than anything else? Listen to how the psalmist goes on, and these are the words particularly that I want you to hold on to. He said, one thing he said that I desired, and that will I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life to behold the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.

Remember what I said last evening about the Christian life. This is the Christian life. This is the source, this is the fountain, this is the living water.

[50 : 39] Remember what Jesus said to the woman, whosoever drinks of this water that is of the world shall thirst again, but whosoever drinks of the water that I shall get in shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

An insatiable appetite for God, for his word, for the water of life, for the bread of life. You can never get enough.

You want more and more. And the expression that the psalmist uses here, of all the desires, and it's not that the psalmist has no desires other than being in the house of God.

There are lots of desires that are part and partial of the Christian life, but this is a great one. This is the one that is much more important to be with Christ, because you know what life is out there every week.

You come here at a weekend, you meet together for fellowship and worship God, but then you're out there, and you might be amongst the unbelieving community and never even speak to another believer.

[51 : 50] You might. I'm not suggesting that there are no other believers out there apart from free church people in Bonacord, or from it, but sometimes life can be very lonely out there, and you long for the Lord's day again.

What an opportunity, but that's the kind of thing that the psalmist is suggesting to us. Though I'm host, should encamp me, against me, my heart is fearless, because Christ is with me.

One thing I decide, that's what I seek after, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord. Now, of course, we don't need to necessarily take that word, that statement, the house of the Lord, I've seen a building like this, or any other building of which people gather like this.

It's to be in the presence of Christ all the time. That's what's important. And to have Christ with me, that's important. That's what I need. If I'm going to face this world and all its various activities against me, I need Christ.

And what way am I going to face the world is to have fellowship with Jesus more and more. And listen to what he says also, that I might behold the beauty of Christ.

[53 : 13] Inquiring in his temple, beholding the beauty, what beauty is there in Jesus? What beauty is there in him that you should desire him above everything else in your life?

Well, there are lots of things that could spend happening out here at least, and more, I'm sure, to talk of these things alone. But let me take you back to one thing particularly that identifies to me, and I'm sure to all of us here, to the thief on the cross, to the woman of Samaria, the woman taken in adultery, to Peter, who was tried and tempted in so many ways.

The one thing that's beautiful with Christ. Unlike many other people, even my Christian friends and brethren, one thing that's beautiful, he's always there for me.

He will never leave me, he will never forsake me. He will always be my friend. Through thick and thin, he will always be my friend. Even when I know that I have let him down, and that I'm not worthy of him, I will not leave you.

I will not suffer you to be overwhelmed by this world. Go back again to John 17, and you'll understand and show what I'm trying to say.

[54 : 38] I want to behold the beauty of Christ. Here, in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper, presented to us as a means of grace, to strengthen us and to encourage us, when you take the bread and you take the wine, you're reminded that Jesus did everything for you.

I'm not going to withhold any of these things any longer. We read that on the night that Jesus was betrayed, he took bread, he baked it, and he said, take, eat, this is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me.

after the same manner also, when he took the cup, he said, take this cup, it's the New Testament in my blood.

As often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show forth the Lord's death till he comes. Amen. Amen. Are you forgiven?

Do you know the forgiveness of Christ? I'm sure you do. You might not know the measure of that forgiveness apart from the realization of what sin has been and might still continue to be in your life.

[56 : 36] But you know forgiveness. Are you still fretting? Are you afraid? Is there a need to be afraid of anything?

As the word reminds us, I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. Let me just for a moment take you to another stand.

this time in Psalm 37. For the psalmist is joking himself, I suppose, to a measure concerning the fretting that can often arise in him.

And we can all fret for one reason or another. And listen to what he says, fret not thyself because of evildoers, neither be thou envious against the workers of iniquity, because all of these things have been dealt with in Christ for you and for me, so there is nothing to fret about.

Rest in the Lord, he says, in verse seven, and wait patiently for him. What causes fretting very often in the heart and soul of the believer is the lack of patience, the inability to wait on the Lord and to be strong in him.

[58 : 04] The psalmist here is saying, is reminding us to rest in the Lord. we know, we can testify, at least theologically, we can testify to the fact, that all things are working together for good, to them that love him.

So you don't need to fret, no need to be afraid, you can rise from this table and know assuredly that Christ is going before you, breaking up the way of your life.

all that you are asked to do as you leave this place, is delight in him. As I said in Psalm 27, the desire of my heart is to be here and to inquire of Jesus.

As I leave him here, let it be the words, delight thyself also in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

the one thing I will seek to attain with all days of my life I may be in the presence of God, in house of God, in the fellowship of his people.
[59 : 25] Thank you.