

Christian Communion in a Pagan City

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[0 : 00] If you'd like to turn again to the passage I read, 1 Corinthians chapter 11, and for a particular verse, I would take verse 26.

For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

Now I realise that a number of us this evening may be from different church backgrounds, but certainly in our free church tradition, in our Presbyterian tradition, this is a very familiar passage of scripture that is read at those communion services which remain some of the most solemn highlights of our church calendar.

And for many of us, of our Christian lives. It's good to have special passages of scripture, but there's a danger involved.

When we read passages on certain occasions, and when they become very familiar to us, we tend to subtly lose something.

[1 : 29] In particular, I believe we've generally lost the connection of these verses in 1 Corinthians 11, the Lord's Supper passage, we've lost the connection between this passage and the rest of Paul's letter to the Corinthians.

That's a pity because if we do that, it gradually distorts our understanding of the passage. There's one very particular way in which that has happened that may ring bells with some of you.

If you look, for instance, at verse 29, you'll find a verse which has played a very big part in the tradition of Christian experience in Scotland over the centuries, aided or affected by the unfortunate translation in the old King James Version, which says, instead of the word judgment, has the word damnation.

The Old English word that, in Old English, could carry the meaning of judgment, but which has very shocking connotations for many.

If we, whoever eats and drinks without discerning or recognising the body of the Lord, eats and drinks damnation on himself.

[3 : 02] And in our tradition, many individual Christians or many individual people who were seriously seeking to worship and know and trust in the Lord, but were doubtful about whether they had real faith, were lacking in assurance, found that verse a terror to them, or at least a stumbling block.

And there were many who would never dare to come to the Lord's Supper, serious and carefully living people, though they were, trembling at God's word, lest, because for some way that they weren't aware of, if in some way they weren't aware of, they weren't rightly discerning the Lord's body, they might be bringing eternal damnation on themselves.

I hope by the end of our sermon this evening, you'll see that that verse has certainly a totally different reference to that agony of the exercised soul.

And I hope too that you'll see that it's actually an extremely relevant and important one to us today in our lives as Christians in a city such as this.

The setting of these verses is in the 11th chapter of Paul's letter, first letter, to the Corinthians.

[4 : 43] The setting of the letter then is this city of Corinth. It was a pagan city. Yes, there was a synagogue there, but it wasn't a very big one.

There was a church there through Paul's ministry, but overall, and when all was said and done, Corinth was a pretty evil, pagan city.

It's been traditional to say that Corinth was notorious for sexual immorality, although the references in history that say that refer to a somewhat different period from that of the New Testament.

But I'm sure that Corinth was no better, even if it was no worse, than the average port city where sailors come ashore with money in their pockets and few morals in their minds.

London, in the 19th century, when the London City Mission was founded that I now work for, London was the biggest port in the world. And there were whole areas, an area that you can drive along, many people drive along every day between Tower Bridge and Canary Wharf.

[6 : 04] It now looks a very fine street with fine buildings on and modern office blocks. That used to be known as the Ratcliffe Highway. And it was swarming with houses of ill repute and prostitutes who fed off the sailors who came into that port of London.

And the city missionaries who worked in that area used to talk of the misery of the young women who had been seduced into prostitution one way or another.

There was a bridge over the docks that was known locally as the Bridge of Sighs because so many young women threw themselves off that bridge in despair at the life and the misery and the darkness that their lives had sunk into.

At one point, there were so many suicides there that the police stationed a policeman permanently on the bridge to try and stop the young women killing themselves.

And along with the prostitution went drunkenness and fighting. In the 19th century, all the nations of the earth were represented in the docks of London and foreign wars were carried on in the streets and in the dark corners of the East End.

[7 : 32] It was a tough and vicious place to be. And Corinth was a port city much, I guess, like London, a place of ill repute.

And it's to a church living and meeting in the midst of such a city that Paul is writing. That church was founded, as I said, through Paul's ministry.

You can read of it in Acts chapter 18. It had initially faced persecution from the Jewish community who were angry and envious of Paul's impact on members of their own families and on the Gentiles who had begun attending the Jewish synagogue.

Very often, influential people in the city who brought their wealth and credibility with them. And when some of those followed Paul and turned their back on the synagogue, the anger and hostility of the Jews broke out in persecution.

You may recall they tried to have Paul punished by the Roman governor, but it all backfired because the mob turned on the Jews instead and beat up the leaders of the Jewish community who were making the complaint.

[8 : 57] perhaps another symptom of the violence and the cruelty and the factionalism that was just below the surface of Corinthian life.

You must have that background in mind otherwise you won't make sense of this passage. You see, Paul begins his passage about the Lord's Supper in verse 17 really by talking about or listing some of the ways in which the life of this church in particular the life as expressed when they meet together for the Lord's Supper the central most precious ceremony in the life of the early church and he says look, this pagan world is seeping in to your church this pagan world is corrupting your church and the way you're holding the Lord's Supper so from verse 17 to verse 22 he talks about the divisions and so on we'll look at those in a minute then in the light of that he takes them back to the passage that we are so familiar with beginning with the key link word for for I received from the Lord what he says about the Lord's Supper in other words he says to counter or to deal with the influence of a pagan city of which he's complaining in the previous verses so he sets out his complaint he shows them how the Lord's Supper should counteract all this and then finally from verse 27 to verse 34 he exhorts them to live carefully and distinctively as Christians in the midst of a pagan city now it seems to me that with our conference tomorrow and with the communion on Sunday this is exactly the sort of passage that we need to look at if our prime focus our prime interest this evening is on urban mission and how can we serve Christ in the city how can we do what Jesus wants Christians to be doing in the city for the poor and needy and for all the people of the city if that's our special focus then this passage

I believe is vital and is extremely helpful to us in putting our interest in ministering to the city putting that in the context firmly in the right context the gospel context I don't know about you I spend a lot of time of course thinking about city mission ministry to the homeless ministry to prostitutes ministry in the workplaces of the city we have missionaries to railway staff and to the police and ambulance staff we have a missionary who goes to the theatres of London to the theatre staff to the actors and so on we have missionaries to Muslim communities we have schools workers and so on it's so easy to get involved in all the practicalities in all the business of running a ministry whether it's an evangelistic ministry primarily or whether it's a feeding the homeless sort of ministry it's very easy for that to become an end in itself and in this passage

Paul links Christian life in the city the church's ministry in the city with the very heart of our faith there's a foundation here for urban mission but if perhaps that's a side issue to you perhaps you're looking forward to the communion on a Sunday then there is a great challenge to you here see I think one of our recurring problems is that we live in two different worlds with different people when we're within these four walls from what we are when we're in the office or the school or the college or the home that we're in from Monday to Saturday one of my colleagues once attended a church in London that had a very impressive choir leading the worship and they had robes on when he was getting into his car afterwards the person who followed him out of church a lady was carrying her choir robes over her arm and he said something my colleague said something appreciative to about the scene as she got into a car he noticed that the windscreen was completely blank and being a tactless man he blurted out oh you haven't got a tax disc and she looked at him and she said no and I haven't got any insurance either and then he said well but we've just been in church

I'm a member of the choir and she looked at him and she said look I give my Sundays to God and the rest of the week is my own now you may not ever have said anything as blatant as that and I hope you wouldn't be able to say something as blatant as that without being struck right through your heart and conscience but we may in effect live very like that even if we would never put it in those terms and it may not be something fairly blatant like a tax disc but it may be the way we treat the members of our family it may be the way we treat God it may be the way we operate in our business or in our work I want you I hope and pray for myself that we'll have a blessed and a very special time of communion with our

[15 : 45] Lord Jesus Christ and with one another as God willing we meet around the Lord's table on Sunday morning but I pray even more that what we do then will make a difference on Monday morning and Tuesday afternoon and right the way through to next Saturday that there may be no disconnection between our Christian worship if you like our outwardly religious life and our daily business in the world well let's look at this passage and it may help you I can't resist telling you this I had a teacher when I was at theological college who said there's actually a very simple summary of most of Paul's letters and this kind of just adds to the introduction to 1 Corinthians it certainly fits 1 Corinthians says Paul's letters not quite all of them but most of them can be summed up in three sentences here's a summary of

Paul's letter you wonderful people here are 16 things you need to work on I'll be there in two weeks to see how you're getting on that's a pretty good summary of 1 Corinthians so let's look at some of the 16 or more things that Paul is concerned about in other words the first point I want to make is we see here how the pagan city challenges the Christian church verses 17 to 22 are a pretty shocking list of complaints Paul says now about the Lord's supper I can't praise you in this and then he tells us I hear that when you come together as a church there are divisions among you and then a bit later he says can you believe it when you gather together as you eat each of you goes ahead without waiting for anybody else sort of a rush for the food at the table or maybe brought they brought food of their own I don't know and can you imagine it verse 20 one remains hungry one gets nothing to eat and another one gets drunk he guzzles all the wine and he's drunk what's going on here and why is

Paul mentioning these these particular sins is it just a random list of sins that he's heard of that have happened by accident among some of the congregation no it's actually a list as we'll see that reflects the things that he's been talking about elsewhere in the epistle the things that he's been warning the Corinthians against for instance this very first one I hear that when you come together as a church there are divisions among you and early on in the epistle he's talked about some say I am of Paul some say I'm of Apollos is Christ divided this isn't something that's just a problem at the Lord's supper this is a symptom of a problem that's affecting the whole congregation but where's it coming from where's this problem coming from well it's coming from the world around them these factions are evident perhaps in every city and maybe if truth were told in every human community as well

I used to minister in a very small village before I went to minister in London and there were divisions there everybody of course was always very polite to the minister minister and at least outwardly was very pleased to receive the minister when he went and give him a cup of tea in their home and they all seemed so friendly and so hospitable but when you'd been there for a while you notice that as you went round and dropped in on people you'd often find other people visiting in the house as well but you'd never find these people who you met visiting in that house you'd never find them when you went visiting in that house and you realised that there were sort of groupings within the village that had very little to do with each other there were sort of extended family circles which didn't ever mingle socially with other family groupings they'd all be in church on a Sunday but there was a kind of low key unspoken division in the church within the community where'd that come from well in a city and in a city like

Corinth as I described it using London as an example you get those sort of divisions you get class divisions between the rich and the poor who try and live in different parts of the city from each other and try and keep each other apart keep apart from the other then you get ethnic divisions like the hostility between the the Greek or the Gentile Corinthians and the Jews that led to the dramatic scenes when they tried to accuse Paul then in cities you get local divisions you get the gang in this estate and the gang in that estate you know and I don't know how it is in London but I know how it is in London and you you get in Aberdeen I don't know how it is in Aberdeen did I say London I meant Aberdeen I do know how it is in London that people sometimes get beaten up or even killed just because they cross the main road into somewhere that's not their turf the gangs the teenage gangs and the drug gangs are there very much operating on those principles you get families that are outcasts within the communities in the

[22 : 32] London City Mission we've got four members of the same family three brothers and a cousin they all come from Plockton and Kyle of Localsh and they're Stuarts and the Stuarts as some of you know the Highlands will be aware were regarded as something of outcasts generally and Will Stewart for instance will tell me that just about every day that he went to school from the age of five he got into a fight because one of the other boys would call him a tinker and they were kind of outcasts on the edge of village life all sorts of reasons why cities and communities are divided what seems to have happened at Corinth is that that divisiveness that factionalism had invaded the church it may be that they brought their divisions and their hostilities into church with them they'd been converted they'd become

Christians but they still despise those people because they were from that family or they were from that social group or they were from that particular ethnic background remember in the Jerusalem church in the early days of the New Testament there was a division between the widows of the Greek speaking Jews and the widows of the Hebrew speaking Jews they were all Jewish but they were of definitely different groups and the tensions between their groups broke out within the church or it may be that that factionalism shows that yeah everybody's very nice to each other in the church but they still some of them still hate that group of people outside it's very sad when you find for instance racism in the church people who are really loving Christians within the congregation but will not go will not be interested in making contact with in relating to in caring for in ministering to people of a different race a different skin colour it can happen or it may be and this I think brings us close even closer to harm it may be that the habit of having someone to hate and some group that you're against and you're certainly not one of them that that habit latches on to some of the minor differences that exist within every church differences of emphasis differences about some of the secondary issues around the church differences of the sort of preachers that they are

Paul preaches in a somewhat different way from Apollos and so are people in whom division and having enemies and us and them mentality has become natural and has not been rooted out yet by the gospel that latches on and produces the hostilities and the factions and yes eventually the splits that torment the Christian church well factionalism is there and Paul says when you come to the Lord's supper there are divisions among you I don't know how the eating thing was done in Corinth it's not altogether clear from this passage but perhaps they had a sort of bring and share lunch except they brought but they didn't share maybe Paul was sharp enough to notice that some people would come in and deliberately not sit next to somebody else even though that was where the most obvious seat was available perhaps Paul knew that there were some who just be careful not to end up next to somebody when people were chatting after the service an outsider wouldn't have noticed it but Paul with his great pastor's heart sees and grieves that this church which thinks it's celebrating the

Lord's supper is actually showing symptoms of the pagan hostility you see where do all those divisions come from where do all those hostilities come from well the Bible is very clear they go back to Babel when people rejected God and said we can organize our lives and God judged them for their sinful arrogance and they go back even further they go back to Cain and Abel they're the results of sin they're the very things that brought the curse of God on this world they're things that happened outside Eden and they have no place in the church of Jesus Christ we think we're so spiritual we Corinthians serving the Lord's supper we are the people who found the true faith and here we are celebrating the Lord's supper and Paul looks at them and says the poison has crept inside the church the virus of the world we've all been haven't we thinking these last couple of weeks of infectious viruses flu viruses and the rest of it and just when you think you're so spiritual can't you see says Paul the world the city the pagan city is affecting the church and then he goes on to talk about pagan morality too this business about getting drunk and hungry these are not particularly things that he's being left hungry these are not things that he's dealt with deliberately or directly in his letter but he has spoken of other ways in which the the immoral conduct of the city has been carried into the church as well he's talked in chapter five of

Corinthians about sexual immorality he's talked about the readiness to take people to court and to sue others he's talked in 1 Corinthians 10 about the pagan temples that were part of everyday life in Corinth and the way that some Christians have been going to them thinking that it's harmless and it doesn't mean anything what's the root of all this what's the principle that lies behind it well one writer on early Christianity says this it cannot be too strongly insisted that Paul's demand on Gentile Christians for utter purity of life constituted for them a moral revolution it was to many of them an entirely new ethical idea for they had been inclined hitherto to regard illicit sexual relations as matters of complete moral indifference

[30 : 31] Paul insists on continence before marriage and fidelity in marriage as the obvious duty of Christian people or to put it very simply the pagan world saw no connection between spirituality and morality or to put it another way the pagan world was exactly like the society that we live in that sees no connection between spirituality and sexual morality or any other kind of morality in our society standards of sexual behavior standards of personal behavior whether it's drunkenness or degrees of honesty having tax discs your car etc etc that's purely a personal matter it's nobody else's business to tell you what to do that's the pagan notion and what's happening again in

Corinth is that it's becoming clear even in the Lord's Supper that while these people have professed Christianity that pagan influences are affecting even controlling the way that Christians are living pagan life was completely self-centered and selfish you did what was right you looked after yourself actually probably the nearest equivalent if you were studying if I could take you back to Corinth and show you the pagan temples and what was going on in them you wouldn't say oh that looks very like the churches that we're familiar with you'd probably say no no no that's not a temple that's a night club that's what they would look like there was dancing there was prostitution there was feasting and drunkenness it was where the trade guilds the merchants companies would go for their celebration banquets and all get drunk it was they were the brothels of the city the pagan temples and people saw no connection the pagan world said yeah you have your religion you follow your spirituality but telling you that you can't do that or you've got to live in a certain way no what's that got to do with religion and as my quote said an enormous change to their way of thinking an enormous change and what's

Paul what Paul is saying in Corinth is that you haven't made that change or if you did make that change in principle the world is creeping back in now of course all of that sounds shocking to us although when we look around us and hear some of the things that are going on in the churches of our land maybe we're not as shocked maybe we see a closer connection but we're not so good at seeing perhaps the more subtle ways in which this same principle operates Paul said to the Romans do not let this world squeeze you into its mold do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your mind if you're Christians you've got to think the renewing of your mind completely differently and your life has got to be transformed because the world the pagan city around you is influencing you it's infecting you you don't see the infection coming you don't recognize it doesn't happen all at once but it's gradually shaping you molding you squeezing you and that same principle is happening in our day sometimes it takes a visitor from outside the UK to look at us and make the common

I've had visitors from Africa say who live or minister rather in shanty towns in Nairobi or have lived and ministered in the midst of a terrible civil war in Liberia and they come and sit in a church and they say why are you Christians so wealthy and so extravagant with how you live your lifestyle why are you so concerned about possessions and money goodness if you saw the way Christians live in our country and sometimes it takes an outsider to point us or to challenge us in those ways the world is challenging the church we need to be awake to that if we say well of course that would never happen to us we're free church of

Scotland then we're in terrible danger the question really is not is it happening to us but how is it happening to us what form does the influence of the world take in our lives in what ways are we being squeezed into that shape but then secondly and more briefly and by way of application positive message not only does this passage show how the world is challenging the church but it also shows how the church challenges the world because you see Corinthians is Paul is concerned not just not that this church should be more and more isolated from the world Paul says look I'm really worried or he doesn't say this but he could have said something

[37 : 20] I'm really worried to hear how the spiritual influence of Corinth is corrupting you now I want you all to leave that city there are some lovely islands off the Greek coast I'd like you to find one that nobody else lives on and I'd like you to go and live there and then you can be a really good church that's the only way you'll be good Christians if you separate yourself completely from that society no Paul doesn't say that in fact Paul has a real passion that that church should make an influence have an influence on the society for instance in chapter 14 where he's talking about spiritual gifts but he makes a comment and he says if you're well you know he's talking about speaking in tongues foreign unknown languages without interpretation one of Paul's concerns is if an unbeliever comes in and hears this strange talking and there's no explanation he'll think you're all mad but if he comes in and such a thing happens and then it's clearly explained in language that he can understand he may be convicted of his sin and he may fall down and worship

God Paul wants their services to convert pagans Paul wants the church to make an impact on the world he doesn't want the church to be isolated out of fear of being corrupted if you like he wants the church to corrupt the city he wants the church to transform the city he wants the city to be salted and lit up by the church that's in Corinth and he shows he makes it clear how it's done and the Lord's Supper brings that into wonderful focus I tried to emphasize it as we read you see Paul says you're making the Lord's Supper a selfish occasion for indulgence you're having a feast you're having a party with your friends actually the Lord's Supper is all about remembering Jesus do this in remembrance of me the same way after supper he took the cup saying this cup is a new covenant in my blood do this whenever you drink it in remembrance of me and then he says something uses a very strong word for whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the

Lord's death until he comes isn't that interesting he doesn't say when you do this you remember in your own heart in your privacy of your own soul you remember the Lord Jesus he says you proclaim the Lord Jesus when you come to the Lord's Supper you're remembering what the gospel is all about it's all about Jesus who died on the cross and you're remembering it and proclaiming it you're remembering it in your most precious service and in remembering it it goes without saying or it should go without saying that you're proclaiming it who are you proclaiming it to we don't need to proclaim it to the people who are remembering it you're remembering it in order to proclaim it to those who don't know it and the Lord's Supper is intended to send the church out into the world with the gospel of

Jesus Christ with the news of Jesus with the announcement that the Son of God has come into this world that the Son of God has suffered and died on the cross to take away the sin of the world that he shed his blood that our sins and not only our sins but the sins of many which is probably a reference back to a prophecy of Isaiah this is shed for the sins of many and it's a reference to the Gentiles as well as the Jews this is salvation for pagans this is the remedy that the world needs the Lord's supper focuses the church's attention on the centralities of its faith of the church's faith and reminds and drives the church to proclaim Jesus Christ to those who need him desperately the message the Christ that we proclaim is the

Christ whose body was broken and his blood was shed in other words he was a sacrifice the language of the communion is the language of sacrifice it was when an animal was had its throat cut as a sacrifice the blood was collected and the body bled of the blood was separated so by saying this is my body and this is my blood Jesus is saying in what would have been very clear to any well-taught Jew I am the Passover sacrifice I am the Lamb of God who by my death take away the sin of the world the church in its communion is reminded and commissioned challenged to proclaim the atoning the gospel of atonement the gospel of the crucified Christ remember what

[43 : 17] Paul said in the beginning of 1 Corinthians I was determined to know nothing among you you pagan Corinthians when I arrived but Jesus Christ and him crucified and the Lord's Supper is saying to the church according to Paul when you come to have the Lord's Supper it's not so you'll feel good with your little clique of friends it's not so that you'll have a little personal high of one sort or another it's so that you as a church can be recommissioned and reinvigorated to proclaim the gospel to all the rest of the people of this pagan city and not only that that you do that together this is why Paul is so appalled at their divisiveness we come together it's a meeting of the body of Christ discerning or recognizing the body of the

Lord the body of the Lord not only meant the physical body of Jesus that was crucified on the cross but the church is the body of Christ and I think the reference there in verse 29 is Paul saying look if you don't see the significance of the church as a community in which there's no Jew or Gentile Greek or barbarian none of the old divisions survive in that sense there's not even male or female rich or poor slave or free all the things all the divisions that rend human society are abolished in Jesus Christ and the church is to be a living demonstration of that when people come into our churches they should be amazed years ago in London in the church where I now worship on Christmas day an Afghan Muslim woman walked in halfway through the service she'd only just arrived in London to visit a sister and she had never seen a

Christian building Christian church before and she was intrigued and she walked in the very first time she'd been into a church building a fairly old traditional Anglican church and she was absolutely amazed and she stayed she was so amazed by what she saw that she stayed for two hours talking to the vicar and questioned again but do you know what amazed her wasn't the stained glass windows or the layout of the church what amazed her was that in that area of inner London she saw a congregation that was drawn from twenty different nations it was about forty percent black African and Afro Caribbean about twenty percent South Asian Tamils Indians with a smattering of Chinese and Malays twenty different nationalities all together about thirty forty percent white British and she said

I have never seen a group of people like this sitting together all mixed up in rows and talking together after the service I've never seen a gathering like this I didn't know that that would be possible we're all Muslims in Afghanistan but this tribe never have anything to do with that tribe and wouldn't dream of going to their mosque what is it that creates a gathering like this and I think that's why Paul is so appalled at these divisions he says look you've got something very precious in your church you've got a community of the spirit which has abolished these divisions that's why Jesus prayed do you remember Jesus prayed father I pray that they may be one that the world may know that you have sent the son when the world sees black white

Asian African Chinese whatever all mixed together and welcoming and sharing and listening to one another they'll say that just doesn't happen whatever can have caused this the Jesus Christ who's done this must be more than a man I pray that they may be one that the world may know and do you see again how in the Lord's Supper we come together perhaps more intensely than any other time that's a huge impact item on the pagan city a new and a holy community in Jesus Christ a unity a community that doesn't tolerate immorality that doesn't tolerate cheating and exploitation that doesn't tolerate hungry people being left to wallow in their misery while others chew on the fat things of the earth and Paul calls in

[48 : 40] Corinthians for church discipline he calls for the influence of holy example he wants the church to be a different an attractive a challenging community well that's the message of 1 Corinthians 11 that's the context of the city if we're going to do urban mission in a city effectively we have to be a different people we have to be a shocking people shocking to the standards of the world we have to be a puzzle to the world so that like that Afghan lady they say how has this happened what's going on here we can't explain it tell us what's going on when did people last grab you out of amazement at the differentness of the Christian church as we go to the Lord's supper on Sunday those of us that are here on

Sunday let's pray not just that we'll have a real experience of Jesus in our own hearts and that's I'm not meaning to denigrate that at all that's deeply to be longed for and deeply to be thankful for if God gives us those sort of personal experiences but let's not just stop let's not stop there let's pray that God will transform us as a congregation and bind us together because as John Calvin said long ago you cannot be joined to Jesus without being joined to all who are members of him and if that becomes real then we've got a dynamic when we go out to feed the hungry we'll do it with love not out of a sense of sort of duty or guilt when we go out to witness in the city there'll be a power to our witness because people will have heard what a loving community we come from and in case you were worried about verse 29 in case that eating and drinking judgment to yourself has been a barrier to you over the years let me just finish with the word of that in the context that we've looked at

Paul says therefore whoever eats or drinks eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of our Lord if you come to the Lord's supper in the way I've been describing says Paul just to get drunk or to enjoy yourself not even thinking about Jesus but it's saying hey this is party time just like they have at the pagan temple then you are sinning against the body and blood of Jesus you are not discerning the Lord's body you've forgotten you haven't seen what the gospel is all about and you're sinning against the Lord's body and the Lord's blood because Jesus gave his body and shed his blood so that the world may see God's great salvation and you by your worldly wickedness are spoiling hiding the gospel in the supper in the very ceremony which is designed to proclaim the gospel so clearly to all who come if you do have a problem with that verse still in your own individual life and you want to talk to me afterwards

I'd be very happy to speak to you I've spoken far too long already but may God bless his word to us and may God help us to be the church that Aberdeen needs or if you're from London or wherever else you're from may I be part of a church which is the sort of church that London needs in all the deadness of its pagan darkness Amen