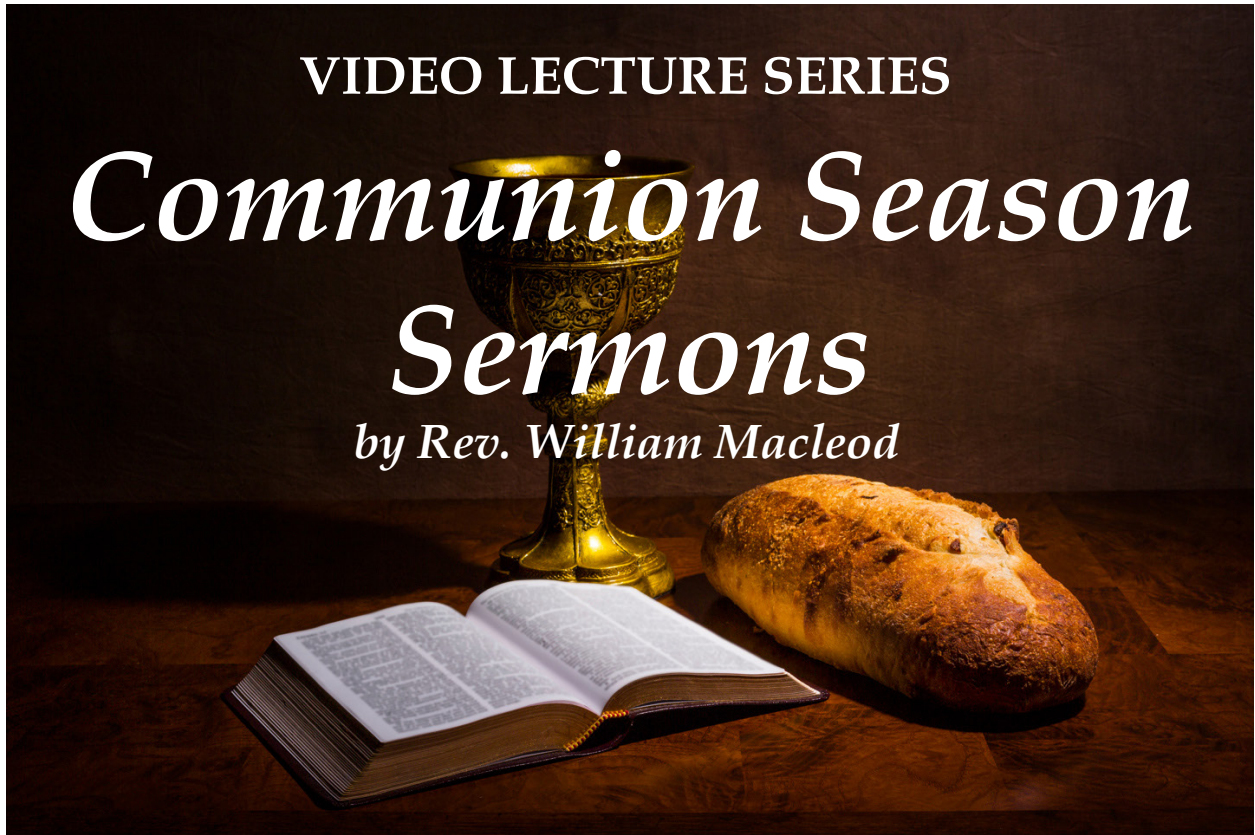


VIDEO LECTURE SERIES

Communion Season Sermons

by Rev. William Macleod

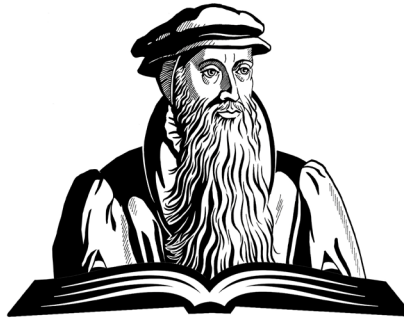


Sermon #5

The Awful Cup

Luke 22:42

and the Communion Table Address



The John Knox Institute
of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

John Knox Institute of Higher Education

Entrusting our Reformed Inheritance to the Church Worldwide

© 2024 by John Knox Institute of Higher Education

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced in any form or by any means for profit, except in brief quotations for the purposes of review, comment, or scholarship, without written permission from the publisher, John Knox Institute, P.O. Box 19398, Kalamazoo, MI 49019-19398, USA.

Unless otherwise indicated, all Scripture quotations are from the Authorized King James Version.

Visit our website: www.johnknoxinstitute.org

Rev. William Macleod recently retired, after serving as minister of the gospel for 45 years at Knightswood Free Church of Scotland (Continuing), in Glasgow, Scotland. In addition, he was for many years the editor of the denominational magazine, *The Free Church Witness*. He was also Professor of Systematic Theology and Principal of the Free Church (Continuing) Seminary, in Inverness, Scotland. He is married and has three adult children and six grandchildren.

[www/freechurchcontinuing.org](http://www.freechurchcontinuing.org)



Communion Season Sermons

*An Introduction and 7 Sermons
by Rev. William Macleod*

Introduction (Luke 22:14–20)

Sermon #1: Pardon My Sins (Psalm 51:9–10)

Sermon #2: Prepare Me for Thy Presence (Psalm 24:3–4)

Sermon #3: Examine Yourself (1 Corinthians 11:28)

Sermon #4: Mary's Great Love (Mark 14:3)

Sermon #5: The Awful Cup (Luke 22:42) / Communion Address

Sermon #6: Salvation for Pharisees and Prodigals
(Luke 15:29–30)

Sermon #7: Christ is Coming Again (Revelation 22:20–21)

Communion Season Sermons

by Rev. William Macleod

Sermon #5

The Awful Cup (Luke 22:42)

This morning, I would like to direct your attention to the Lord Jesus Christ in the Garden of Gethsemane. We'll read Luke's Gospel, chapter 22, and at verse 39: "And he came out"—Jesus came out—"and went, as he was wont, to the mount of Olives; and his disciples also followed him. And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation. And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed, saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground. And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow, and said unto them, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

Now, it's particularly verse 42 that I would like to direct your attention to, the prayer of Christ in the garden of Gethsemane: "Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Today, we hope to take Communion together. And in that Communion service, the cup is central. There's the bread, and there's the wine. But our cup, our cup of wine is very different from Christ's cup. Hopefully, those of us who take the cup do so with reverence and godly fear. There's a seriousness as we approach the Lord's Table. There's an awe there. But there's also a joy. It's a blessing. For us, it's a cup of salvation. But Christ's cup was an awful cup. He pleads for it to be taken away. He's trembling there in the garden of Gethsemane. And, in fact, an angel is sent from heaven to strengthen him, verse 43. It's amazing that the Creator of heaven and earth needs to be strengthened, and indeed needs strengthening from a creature that he himself has made. In verse 44, we read of him being in an agony. He prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground. So there was blood mingled with his sweat. The veins, as it were, were bursting. His human nature was stressed to breaking point. Why? What was in that cup? That's what I'd like us to look at first today. What was in that cup?

Well, first, there were his physical sufferings, and his physical sufferings were immense. You'll remember how he was blindfolded, and how they punched him in the face, and said, "Who punched you?"—how they plucked the hair of his beard; how they placed a crown of thorns on his head, and then a reed in his hand, and they took the reed out, and they would hit him on the head and the crown of thorns with this reed. And then also, you'll remember the scourging, the terrible scourging—brutal, the leather with bits of bone stuck in it, tearing his back; and then carrying his cross out to Calvary; and the nails hammered through his hands and through his feet; and he himself lifted up on that cross at nine in the morning, and left on that cross until he died at three in the afternoon. It was a slow, painful death, and very hard to endure. And there was all the mental suffering too, of being forsaken by his disciples; being mocked and ridiculed by everyone around him; laughed at as he was going through his sufferings. And yet, many others have suffered similar

things. We know of martyrs who've been tortured; torn by animals; burnt alive in the fire; some of them crucified. Yet, they faced their crucifixion or their burning in the fire, they faced it fearlessly, and indeed, to some extent joyfully.

So why is Christ so troubled? The reason is, of course, that Christ suffered the wrath and curse of God. Think of what Paul says, in 2 Corinthians chapter 5, and verse 21: he who knew no sin was made sin for us, so that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. Christ was the sinless one, the holy one, the one who hated sin with a perfect hatred. He is so pure, and sin is so vile to him. From all eternity, he was in the bosom of the Father. He loved his Father so much. He loved righteousness. Holiness characterized him. And he hates sin; hates it with an infinite hatred. And yet, our sin was laid on him. And we are told he was made sin, whatever that means. It's a mystery. He was made sin, not just that he was made a sin offering, which, of course, was true—he was the offering for sin—but made sin. Of course, he had no guilt—he didn't sin himself. William Huntington puts it like this: "It's as if the contents of a toilet were poured over him." How horrible! Indeed, it's like sewage poured into his mouth; worse, poured into his very soul. He hated sin. He hated it perfectly, infinitely. And yet, he is made sin. He is covered with all this filth, which he detests.

Think of the awfulness of sin. We are so used to sin, we sin every moment of every day, and indeed, we think very little of it. But try to see it from God's point of view. Think of a loving, kind, merciful, gracious God. And this God, we sin against him. We hurt him. We grieve him. Think of how God poured every blessing upon Adam, placed him in a garden, in a paradise indeed. Everything was so lovely, so good. There was no pain, no suffering, no death. It was beautiful. And there was just one sin possible for Adam to commit, to take the forbidden fruit. And yet, enjoying all this goodness and love from God, Adam took the forbidden fruit and ate it. And in some ways, we would think, "Well, that's a very small sin, to steal, say, an apple, and to eat it." And yet notice the consequences of this sin. Think of all the suffering that there is in the world; all the death that has taken place since the days of Adam; all the pain, the misery, the sickness, the war, the violence, the hatred, the quarrelling, the spite. And it all flowed from just one sin, one sin so horrible, bringing such wrath and curse upon men and women. And now think of all the sins of one person; and then think of all the sins of all these people. Every moment, we sin. Every Christian is a sinner. And we sin millions and billions of sins. And all these sins were laid on Christ. They were reckoned to him. He stands before God, and he stands before God covered in all our filth, his holy, loving soul submerged in all this sewage of sin. "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me." What a cup of sin it was! And he drank it. Not that he sinned, but this sin was accounted to him.

In Psalm 75, verse 8, we're told about a cup in the hand of God. It's full of red wine, and we're told the wicked shall drink of that cup. They will wring out every drop. What is that cup that the psalmist speaks of that the wicked will drink? It's a cup of the wrath, a cup of the fury of God. God is a just God, a holy God, a God of justice, a God who must punish sin. And this cup is a cup of red wine, not mixed, not diluted, no water added—the full wrath of God. And the heathen, in this life, begin to drink that cup of God's wrath, but then they drink it to the full in hell, in the next world.

Here, we have Christ treated as a sinner; treated indeed as the chief of sinners; treated as the one who carries all our sins. In Proverbs chapter 17, verse 15, God's Word says, "He that justifieth the wicked...[is an] abomination to the LORD." If somebody justifies an evil man; if somebody lets a wicked person, a terrible criminal off without punishing him, a judge, to do that, would be doing something terribly wrong. They're an abomination to the Lord. But how then can a holy God justify you and me, who are wicked? The only way he can justify us is by laying our sins upon

Christ, his Son—laying our sins on him, and then punishing him in our place.

In Revelation chapter 14, and verses 19 to 20, we have a picture of the end of the world. And we're told about the grapes of the earth being gathered and put in the winepress and trampled there. And these grapes of the earth are the wicked, the sinners, the ungodly. They are placed in the winepress. They are trampled. And the blood of the grapes spreads out, as it were, up to one thousand, six hundred furlongs from the winepress. That's two hundred miles. It's a picture for us of hell, and of the wicked suffering in hell, and the awfulness of their suffering. While here, we have Christ in the garden of Gethsemane, and he's trampled in the winepress. We have Christ on the cross of Calvary being crushed—crushed by the wrath of God.

We think of hell. What is hell? It's eternal misery, forever and ever suffering. How could Christ endure the eternal misery of all his people in just six hours on the cross? The only way he could do it is because he is God as well as man, and because he is upheld by the Holy Spirit. "Behold my servant, whom I uphold; mine elect, in whom my soul delighteth; I have put my spirit upon him" (Isaiah 42:1). He was baptized with the Holy Spirit without measure. He suffered an intensity of pain beyond our wildest imagination. Remember, it wasn't just a sample of punishment that came upon Christ. He was punished with all the punishment that you and I deserve.

In Luke chapter 23, verses 44 and 45, we read that a darkness came over the earth for three hours, as Christ was on the cross. It was a physical darkness. Remember how a plague came on the land of Egypt—the ninth plague? It was a darkness, as it were, that could be felt; a terrible darkness. They couldn't move, they couldn't see anything because of this darkness. But the darkness that came on Calvary wasn't just physical darkness. It was also spiritual darkness. Some people suffer mental depression, and that's a horrible thing, a terrible illness. They speak about this black dog on their shoulder. They speak about the horrible darkness in their minds. In a sense, hell is like that. It's depression and darkness—darkness forever; darkness without any light at the end of the tunnel, without any hope of deliverance. Hell is called "outer darkness." And here is Christ going through the hell of darkness for us. Christ endured the darkest of darkness as he drank that cup. What a cup it was!

But there's something else there—there's God-forsakenness. Christ, on the cross, cried out, "I thirst" (John 19:28). And no doubt, he was suffering from great physical thirst. The last drink he had was the night before at the Passover. And here he was, enduring this night of sweating and suffering, and torture, and then the next day, hanging on the cross with the sun beating down upon him—"I thirst." But his thirst was more than physical. Physical thirst is hard to bear. But his thirst was also a spiritual thirst. Jesus tells us a parable of the rich man and Lazarus; the rich man who fared sumptuously every day, who lived in a palace, clothed with purple and scarlet; and then, the beggar, Lazarus, who was at his door looking for the scraps that fell from his table. Lazarus died and the angels carried him to Abraham's bosom. And the rich man died and was buried, and in hell, he opened his eyes being in torment. And he looks up, and he sees Lazarus in Abraham's bosom in heaven, and he says, "Father Abraham, send Lazarus with a drop of water to cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame." What a terrible thirst that spiritual thirst must be in hell, tormented in this flame. If only he could get even one drop of water, what a comfort it would be! (Luke 16:19–31). And here is Christ on the cross crying out, "I thirst." And then, he cries, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46; Psalm 22:1). "Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"

What is hell? Some people have defined it as a place where God is not. And yet, the psalmist, in Psalm 139, says, "If I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there" (verse 8). Rather, hell is a place where God is absent as a God of kindness, a God of benevolence, a God of mercy, a God of

grace, a God of salvation. But God is present in hell; he's present as a God of anger, and wrath, and fury. Sometimes it is said, "God loves the sinner but hates his sin." And yet, that's not totally accurate. Sin doesn't exist apart from the sinner. God hates the sinner because he sins. Psalm 5, verse 5: "Thou hatest all workers of iniquity." God hates sinners with a perfect hatred. Does God hate Christ? Well, we cannot say that, because even on the cross, this is his beloved Son in whom he is well pleased. But yet, ye pours upon him his full wrath, and curse, and fury, and indignation against sin. He is his beloved Son; he's always his beloved Son. In one sense, never was he more his beloved Son than when he was dying on the cross, and yet Christ can have no sense of that love of God towards him. There's no smile from the Father towards him. The Father has turned away his face from him, and all he can see is the wrath, and curse, and anger, and indignation of God. And so, he cries out his cry of dereliction, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"—a sense of God-forsakenness. Who can understand what pain that was to Christ, who, from all eternity, had been in the bosom of the Father, who loved his Father with a perfect love, and enjoyed his Father's love. But this is the cup that he must drink, the cup of wrath, so that you and I will have a cup of blessing. He had a cup of suffering so that we might have a cup of joy. He had this terrible cup of red wine, so that we might have a sweet cup of Communion.

Let's pray.

Gracious God, we thank thee for our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. We thank thee that he came from heaven's glory, and he came into this world, and he died on the cursed cross of Calvary, in our room, and in our place; that he bore our sins in his own body on the tree; that he was made sin for us that we might be made the righteousness of God in him. We praise thee, Lord, that he was wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement for our peace was upon him; and by his stripes we are healed. So, Lord, help us to love Jesus with all our heart. And help us to come joyfully to the Lord's Table, rejoicing in him. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

THE COMMUNION TABLE ADDRESS

We come now to the *Fencing of the Lord's Table*. The purpose of fencing the Lord's Table is just simply to state who should be at the Lord's Table, and who should not be there. The Lord's Table, obviously, is for the Lord's people. It's for those who appreciate Jesus Christ; those who are saved by his sufferings and by his death; who look to him, who feed upon him and trust in him. The gospel table, of course, is open to everyone. Whoever you are, you're invited to come. "Whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely" (Revelation 22:17). The gospel table preaches the gospel to everyone in the world. But the Lord's Table, the sacrament, is only for the Lord's people; those who have repented of their sins, and believe in Jesus; and those who are living consistent Christian lives. Some Christians are not allowed to come to the Lord's Table because they're under church discipline. They have done something very wrong. Perhaps they've been involved in some crime, or maybe they've been committing adultery and the church has had to discipline them. And so they are forbidden to come. But those who are the Lord's people are invited to come. And when we are fencing the table, we very often read a passage in Galatians, Paul's Epistle to the Galatians, chapter 5, and verses 16 to 26. So I'll read this passage.

"This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the

law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envying, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying one another." Amen.

So this passage makes a very clear division, a division between those who do the works of the flesh—adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, and so on. We are told, of which things "I tell you before as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." So if we are doing these things, openly doing these things, sinning against God in these ways, we are not coming to the Lord's Table. These are the works of the flesh. But as Christians, we have crucified the flesh, and we are fighting against the flesh, and resisting the flesh. There is, indeed, a war going on inside us, and that's a great mark of the Christian. At one time we were dead in sin, but now there's a war going on. We're on the side of the Spirit, fighting against the flesh. And we seek to bear now the fruit of the Spirit. And these things mark out the Christian. The fruit of the Spirit is love.

The Christian, the person who should come to the Lord's Table, is somebody who loves God, who loves the Lord Jesus Christ, and who loves his fellow Christians. Joy, we have joy in our Savior, and rejoicing in salvation, and rejoicing in forgiveness of sin, we come to his Table. And we have peace too—peace in our conscience; peace with God; longsuffering—bearing with the trials and tribulations of life because we know it's for our good. These trials are to purify us, to correct us. Gentleness—not harsh; goodness—doing that which is good; faith—being faithful; meekness, that is, humility. The Lord's Table is not for the arrogant and the proud. We have to repent of such attitudes. And then temperance, or self-control—not getting carried away with earthly things. Now, no Christian is perfect, but as Christians, a change has taken place. We've been converted. We've been born again. And that means that now we hate sin. So we are to be daily repenting of our sin, daily trusting in Christ, and rejoicing in the cross. And so, the Lord's people, in whom this change has taken place, and who are seeking to live for the Lord, and delighting in the broken body and the shed blood, should now come to the Lord's Table.

We shall now read our *Warrant for Dispensing the Lord's Supper*. A sacrament is an ordinance appointed by Christ. So we'll read our warrant from 1 Corinthians chapter 11, and verse 23, where Paul says, "For I have received of the Lord that which also I delivered unto you, That the Lord Jesus the same night in which he was betrayed took bread: and when he had given thanks, he brake it, and said, 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 supped, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me. For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come. Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup."

So the Lord Jesus, the same night in which he was betrayed, took bread, and when he had given thanks, he brake it. So, let us follow his example and give thanks:

We give thanks, O Lord, for the great gift that thou has given us, God's unspeakable gift, of thine own beloved Son. We thank thee that the Lord Jesus Christ came from heaven's glory into this cursed world, that he suffered, and that he died for us; that he was made sin for us. We thank thee that he lived a holy life. But then, as the perfect, spotless Lamb of God, he suffered as our sin offering. We rejoice in Calvary. We rejoice in the broken body and the shed blood. We rejoice in the finished work of Christ. And we praise thee that thou dost give to us this sacrament—the bread symbolizing the body, and that body broken, and the wine symbolizing the blood—the blood that was shed on Calvary's cross. Help us, Lord, to eat and to drink to thy glory. Help us to remember the Lord's death, and to show it forth till he come. So, bless us around thy table, and forgive all our sins, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

And while we're sitting at the Lord's Table, I would like to direct your attention to words that we find in the Song of Solomon, chapter 2, and verse 3: "As the apple tree among the trees of the wood, so is my beloved among the sons. I sat down under his shadow with great delight, and his fruit was sweet to my taste."

The Apple Tree Among the Trees of the Wood. The Song of Solomon is a love song, a love song that portrays for us the relationship of God to his people, of Christ to his church. Christ loves his church like the bridegroom. He came indeed from heaven in order to get a bride. And one day there will be the wedding feast of the Lamb. The bride, the church, loves Christ. And this love relationship is portrayed for us in the Song of Solomon. And here, we're told particularly about the apple tree. We think of somebody traveling through the desert, through the hot desert. The sun is beating down upon them, they're sweating, they're tired, and they come under the shadow of the apple tree. There they are shaded from the hot sun. The apple tree bears the hot sun, and they have protection. And that's a picture for us of Christ. Christ, the apple tree, shading us from the wrath of God. The wrath of God beats down upon him; it's poured out upon him. He suffers the flaming rays, as it were, of God's wrath. But under the shadow of his wings, we are protected. We find a hiding place there, a hiding place from the storm, a covert from the tempest, a shadow of a great rock in a weary land. Christ is our hiding place. We come under his shadow.

And then also, *His Fruit is Sweet to Our Taste.* There, under the apple tree, we reach up and we take an apple from the tree, and these apples are the promises of God. And how many sweet promises come to us? Think of these things, how the Lord Jesus Christ has earned these promises for us. The greatest promise of all is, of course, the Holy Spirit—the Spirit who makes us holy; the Spirit who unites us to God; the Spirit who fills us with love, and joy, and peace, and longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance. We think of all the promises. "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee" (Hebrews 13:5; Deuteronomy 31:6). How wonderful that is! "My grace is sufficient for thee" (2 Corinthians 12:9). "My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9). "The mountains shall depart, and the hills be removed; but my kindness shall not depart from thee, neither the covenant of my peace" (Isaiah 54:10). Or think of these beautiful words in Romans 8:28, "All things work together for good to them that love God." What a sweet promise it is. When we feel confused; when we feel everything's against us; when we're tempted by Satan to despair, remember, "all things work together for good." And when we're struggling against the attacks of Satan, we remember that promise, "Kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation" (1 Peter 1:5). How wonderful it is, that it's not really us who keep ourselves, no, but we are kept by the power of God. We couldn't keep ourselves. If it was left up to us, we would be lost. But "kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation". We have "an inheritance

incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation” (verses 4–5). So take these promises. Think of the promises of Scripture. And as you sit at the Lord’s Table, rejoice. Rejoice in the shadow of the tree, and rejoice in the sweet fruit that comes from the tree.

“*This is my body broken for you.*” These were Christ’s words. We take the bread, we break it. “This is my body broken for you. This do in remembrance of me. And after the supper, he took the cup. “This is the cup of the New Testament in my blood. Drink ye all of it. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show the Lord’s death till he come.” Remembering his death, showing it forth, and looking forward till he come.

And after the Supper, just a few words, from this same passage, the Song of Solomon, chapter 2, verse 4: “He brought me to the banqueting house, and his banner over me was love.” *Brought into the banqueting house.* Yes, we have been at the banqueting house at the Lord’s Table. It’s a feast. It’s a love feast. Christ himself is at the table with us. He has been giving to us the symbols of his body and his blood, so that we might feed by faith upon him. We have been enjoying Christ, delighting in our Savior, feeding on him by faith.

Let us now more and more think about this love of Christ. He brought me into his banqueting house. Think of the banner: “His banner over me was love.” Let this love constrain us. As we rise from the table, let this love constrain us to new obedience, to be different, to live a more holy life, a more godly life, to be more beautiful Christians. Christ said, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15). He loved us. We love him, because he loved us. Let us now show our love in our holy life, and in standing for Christ. He says, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12), and then, he says to us, “You are the light of the world....Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:14 and 16). He says to us, No one can come after me; no one can be my disciple unless they deny themselves, take up their cross, and follow me. Deny yourself. Take up your cross. Be different. Be a follower of Christ in the midst of a dark world. Don’t be ashamed of Christ. Love Christ and love one another. “By this shall all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love one to another” (John 13:35). So let us rise from the Table of the Lord, determined more and more to be like Christ, to love him, and to show forth his love in the midst of a dark world.

Let’s pray.

We thank thee, Lord, for thy goodness to us. We thank thee for the sacrament. And we thank thee for being enabled once again to partake in this sacrament, and to remember the Lord’s death, and to think back to Calvary, and to the agony our Savior endured, and that he said, “Not my will but thine be done.” He was willing. He submitted himself, and he drank that terrible cup of suffering, of wrath, of fury, of indignation of the Lord, in order that we might have a cup of blessing. We thank thee for it. And we pray that we would be enabled more and more to be different—different from the world around us, indeed, different from what we have been in the past; that this Lord’s Supper would be a means of grace to us, and that in going from the Table of the Lord, we would go with new determination to follow the Lord; to stand on his side; to be different from the world; and to be a light shining in the midst of the darkness, pointing men and women to Christ. Help us, Lord, to be obedient, and forgive us for all our sins, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.