

Mourning for the King's Return

Mephibosheth and David

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Bible Text: 2 Samuel 19:24; John 16:20-22

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We come this Lord's Day to the ninth and last installment in the look at Mephibosheth and David. Last Lord's Day we talked about the fact that King David's treatment of the poor, lame Mephibosheth is a portrait of our Lord Jesus' treatment of weak and helpless sinners who are fetched to him by God the Father.

The last incident regarding Mephibosheth recorded in the Scriptures involves his slander by his Servant Ziba, who accused him of staying behind in Jerusalem for his own selfish benefit when David the King was driven out by the rebellion of Absalom. We saw that King David made a rash judgment against Mephibosheth based upon hearing only one side of the story. Our Lord Jesus, our King, will never be fooled by false accusations against his people, certainly not by the old accuser of the brethren, the devil himself. For he will judge righteous judgments according to the truth, not according to the way things look. When Mephibosheth is finally able to come before the king in Jerusalem after his triumphant return, the truth comes out -- that Mephibosheth was prevented from fleeing with David by his servant Ziba's betrayal; and that Mephibosheth had, in fact, been in mourning the entire time of David's exile.

Even though David had shown himself an imperfect judge in the matter, Mephibosheth was so loyal toward him that he readily left the matter of his fate in David's hands. The king realized his mistake and restored Mephibosheth's lands to him. Perhaps for political reasons he did not punish Ziba for his deceit.

But our great judge and king will never be bound by such considerations. Wickedness will not escape his judgment, no matter the political might the miscreants may have had in this life.

Oh, that the saints would trust their judgment entirely into the hands of our noble Prince, who is far better than David!

Oh, that we would wait to let our King set everything right, and wait in patience for it, knowing that it is assured to come.

Mephibosheth, a loyal servant, dared not ask anything further of the king, for he had already done him great mercy and great kindness. But we are God's sons because of

Christ, and we are entitled -- nay, rather, the Scriptures exhort us and command us -- to ask anything of him. For he loves to hear from us!

How God delights in the prayers and petitions of his people! How eagerly we ought to act like the royal sons that we are by God's grace alone! For when we petition our God and our Father for great things, we only grant to him the right to be recognized as the all-powerful and all-good God whom we worship and whom we serve!

So last Lord's Day, we cleared away from this text all of the secondary matters, the question of slander, the question of faulty judgment, the question of restoration. And now we come to what I consider to be the most important points about this text. We find them in 2 Samuel 19 at verses 24 and 30.

And we read this. "Mephibosheth the son of Saul came down to meet the king, and had neither dressed his feet, nor trimmed his beard, nor washed his clothes, from the day the king departed until the day he came again in peace."¹

And then in verse 30. "Mephibosheth said unto the king, Yea, let him take all, forasmuch as my lord the king is come again in peace unto his own house."²

From these two verses we see this about Mephibosheth -- that Mephibosheth mourned the king's absence, and Mephibosheth rejoiced in the king's vindication. We ought to note well that the king's restoration and peace were more important to Mephibosheth than his own houses and his lands. He was willing to lose them so long as the king was exalted and restored to his place of rule and authority and peace.

How much Mephibosheth's mourning for David pictures what actually happened when the Son of David was taken out and crucified!

Have you ever thought of that? You know, Christ foretold the saints' attitude, the disciples' attitude and their feelings, when he would be taken from them.

In Luke's gospel, the fifth chapter there is this interesting text. "And they said unto him,"³ that is the disciples of John the Baptist and the Pharisees,

Why do the disciples of John fast often, and make prayers, and likewise the disciples of the Pharisees; but thine eat and drink?

And he said unto them, Can ye make the children of the bridechamber fast, while the bridegroom is with them? But the days will come, when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.⁴

¹ 2 Samuel 19:24.

² 2 Samuel 19:30.

³ Luke 5:33.

⁴ Luke 5:33-35.

You see, Christ is making it clear here that he is the object of the joy of his people, that there can be no mourning and fasting and weeping and moroseness while the Lord Jesus is present with his people.

He is all our hope. He is all our life. He is that person in whom we invest all of our hope for eternity, and he ought to be that person in whom we invest all our joy and all our hope in this life as well. And when or if he were taken from us, like Mephibosheth we must mourn for then we are unsatisfied, then we are distraught, then we are full of apprehensions.

You notice that Christ actually compared his people in his presence with the rejoicing that happens at a marriage feast, not just that we are in a neutral position of living our lives, but, no, that we are in the presence of Christ eating and feasting and rejoicing like at a marriage supper, like when the bridegroom is there to provide the banqueting table for his friends and for his wife's friends and for his family and for his wife's family.

And then when that comes to an end or when it is taken away, when the bridegroom is gone away, then the friends of the bridegroom—much less the bride of the bridegroom—are filled with sorrow. They are filled with longing and disappointment and desire that he might be restored back to their presence, that they might rejoice again. This is the comparison that Christ makes with the attitude of his people in his presence and in his absence.

And then he becomes more specific, doesn't he, the night before he goes to Calvary. We read John 16, portions of it, this morning, those three verses at verse 20 of John 16:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, That ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy. A woman when she is in travail hath sorrow, because her hour is come: but as soon as she is delivered of the child, she remembereth no more the anguish, for joy that a man is born into the world. And ye now therefore have sorrow: but I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you.⁵

You see, he describes the sorrow and the lamentation of his people when he was to be taken away from them. He speaks, primarily, of course, of the death that he should die when he was to be taken to Calvary and nailed to the cross and suffer the agony and shame of the crucifixion, and then be buried away in the tomb and the stone rolled over the door of the sepulchre.

There would be sorrow there! There would be a sorrow more profound than Mephibosheth could ever have for his lost king David. The saints would sorrow, but the rebellious world would rejoice.

⁵ John 16:20-22.

What would they say? They were glad to be rid of Christ because he was always imposing his higher standard of righteousness upon them. They didn't like that king anyway. They would not have him to rule over them. And they would celebrate that he was finally gone away, that they had finally finished him off and forced him away from them so they wouldn't have to bear up under his teaching and under his gospel that he preached, which they didn't approve of and which they didn't receive. And so they rejoiced, rebels that they were, when the King, the Lord Jesus was taken away, was sent to prison and to death as the prophet Isaiah put it.

Mephibosheth mourned when the King David was driven from the land. But the Absaloms, the rebellious Absaloms and their supporters no doubt rejoiced to see the king gone, to see a rebellious one set up in his place, to see the one who had a right to rule deposed and sent away in shame across the brook Kidron.

And, in fact, this mourning, this weeping of the saints that Christ foretold is recorded in the Scripture.

It is interesting about the Lord's death, when you really read the description of the crucifixion, the description of the events that went on around it. They are very sparse for details. Now some people have dreamed delusory dreams and come up with all sorts of extra details that they have made into movies that are very, very heavy on the details of the minutia of the crucifixion and of the behavior of the people surrounding the crucifixion; and very short on details about the purpose of the crucifixion and what great victory was accomplished there.

But the Scriptures do record at least in two places—actually three places—that this promise by Christ that his people would weep and mourn when he was taken from them was, in fact, fulfilled.

You remember it says in one gospel—I forgot to note the text—but all the people that watched beat their breasts at the horror of these things and all went away home. But in Mark 16 at verse nine we have a recording of the fact that the saints, the disciples did weep and mourn at the loss of Jesus, at the crucifixion of Jesus. It has to do with Mary Magdalene going to tell them that she had seen him alive. She went in Mark 16 and verse 10:

And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.⁶

So they were apparently gathered together in one or more places three days later after the death, mourning and weeping at the loss of the Lord Jesus. And Mary, of course, herself had wept outside the tomb. In John 20 and verse 11 it says, "But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping."⁷

⁶ Mark 16:10-11.

⁷ John 20:11.

And then at verse 15, “Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away.”⁸

So it is true that the Lord’s people, as the Lord foretold, wept and mourned when he was taken away at Calvary and when he died for his people and when he was buried, put away in the grave. They mourned for him like Mephibosheth mourned when his king was taken away and driven from the kingdom and from the land.

I don’t think that we can imagine the sorrow that must have come over all the disciples when the Lord Jesus was put to death at Calvary.

All their hopes for the kingdom -- they knew that he was the Messiah., the Promised Redeemer of Israel and they so longed for his reign to be established, and they were so much in love with the Lord Jesus for the great works he did and for the power that he showed and for the love that he displayed in his great compassion, his great tender heart for his people.

They had hoped that he would be as the two disciples put it, “He who would have redeemed Israel.”

And now all their hope was taken away and all their loss was that great emptiness, that great sorrow, that great aching of heart that must have descended upon them, all their desires and hopes and dreams were crushed by the death that he died.

I think of the way in which we invest in certain people, certain leaders, certain saviors in the modern sense, if you will, the way some people invest in them such great hope. And they show such great sorrow and weeping when they are taken away from.

You remember the great weeping and sadness when Robert F. Kennedy was assassinated amongst some people. There was great sorrow. There was great lamentation.

You go back to those people who had invested so much hope in his brother, the president. And then to have Camelot destroyed in a moment. And there was a profound impression among some people, a profound sadness, profound sorrow.

You could go back in history, no doubt and pick up many examples where a leader or a hero was cut down in the middle before his work was finished, and the people who trusted him and the people who followed him had all their hopes dashed. And some of them, many of them never recover. They never recover their heart, never recover their spirit. They live out their days in sorrow and mourning and bitterness.

But there are two key differences between the Mephibosheth story and the story of the saints weeping over the crucifixion of Christ. One of the main differences we have

⁸ John 20:15.

commented on many times before that bears repeating -- that when David crossed the brook Kidron, when he was driven out of Israel, when he was deposed from his kingdom by his rebellious son and by his hangers on, there was no benefit obtained by the people of Israel. David was not working a great work of redemption for them, was he? It brought about great weeping and mourning in God's people like Mephibosheth, but it accomplished nothing.

It was all a waste. It was all a pointless sad incident in the history and life of the people of Israel, at least as far as they were able to tell, and there was never any redeeming virtue seen in it even after he was restored, was there? David didn't come back a stronger king than before. He didn't come back with any great salvation for his people.

But when our Lord Jesus crossed that same brook Kidron all those years later and went to Calvary, and his people mourned and wept and thought all was lost, he was winning a glorious fight to save us all!

At the very time that they knew that all was lost, the Lord Jesus was defeating death itself and obtaining our eternal salvation by his sacrifice in our place!

So while Mephibosheth wept for his king David, it was an empty weeping. It was an empty sorrow. It was an empty incident in the life of David and in the life of his people. It accomplished nothing.

While the saints wept, feeling in their hearts the same way, no doubt, that Mephibosheth and other faithful citizens of Israel felt, our Lord Jesus was not driven forth in vain. He did not go to his death in vain. But he was accomplishing a great victory for us, a great salvation.

Mephibosheth wept for the king that he loved and the king that he lost. The saints wept also -- but had they known it was their sins that drove him to the cross, the guilt and the sorrow might have consumed them utterly! But the Savior went as a Lamb without protest.

It is interesting, is it not, that the Lord Jesus doesn't seem to have harped on the purposes of the death that he would die. He prepared his people to understand what was about to take place and he made certain statements which their blind eyes and their deaf ears could hear and could see, but could not understand, statements that explained the purposes to which he would suffer. And yet he didn't make on over it, did he? He didn't make it explicitly clear to them. He didn't pound it into their heads so that they would clearly understand.

I think it was, perhaps, an act of mercy on his part. Imagine if we all had known in advance the cause of our Savior's suffering and dying -- that it was all for us, it was all on our behalf, it was all on account of our sin, on account of our rebellion, that he was being punished in our place.

Well does the song writer put it in these words.

We now look back to see
The burdens thou did'st bear,
When hanging on the accursed tree,
For all our guilt was there.

Our Savior wrought a glorious redemption while his people wept, so much greater is our Prince and our Savior Jesus than was King David!

But not only is there that first difference, the difference between Mephibosheth weeping over David's loss and the saints weeping over Christ's loss, that Christ was accomplishing a great redemption while his saints wept. Not only is there that difference, but there is also the difference that the saints' weeping should have been with hope. It should have been with hope, even if they didn't understand the purposes of Christ's suffering and death.

Mephibosheth had no hope, did he? He had no promise that the king would be restored. He had no assurance of his king's return. For all he knew this was the end of it. Absalom would reign. The king would be driven into the wilderness, perhaps even tracked down and killed.

But our Lord Jesus promised his people what the end of his death would be, did he not?

What did he say? "Ye shall weep and lament, but the world shall rejoice: and ye shall be sorrowful, but your sorrow shall be turned into joy... I will see you again, and your heart shall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you."⁹

It will never be taken away. There was that promise that though they would mourn his death, his passing, yet he would see them again. He would be restored to them and then they would return to joy and it would be an everlasting joy, a joy that could never be undone, never taken away.

Mephibosheth rejoiced at David's exaltation and his vindication, but it wasn't an everlasting joy. It was only a temporary joy, wasn't it? I don't know which one out lived the other. David was older than Mephibosheth. Perhaps Mephibosheth saw David grow old, and age, and finally become ill and sick and weak, and finally die. And then where was the joy in the reign of the king, of the noble king, the glorious prince David?

His joy even when David was restored was but a temporal and temporary thing, but our joy at the Savior's vindication and resurrection and exaltation is forever! It can never be taken away, for he is the one who said to the apostle John in all his glory, "I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore."¹⁰

⁹ John 16:20, 22.

¹⁰ Revelation 1:18.

The joy of the saints at his resurrection is an everlasting joy that can never be taken away, that will never wax old, it will never fade away like Mephibosheth's joy did.

You know, there is another mourning about the Lord Jesus recorded in the Scriptures, is there not, in Zechariah chapter 12. We read it this morning. It was not like Mephibosheth's mourning.

Mephibosheth mourned when the king was driven from the land. But this mourning that is recorded in Zechariah 12 is another sort of mourning. It is a mourning like those who only find out later, much later, the truth about the King and the Savior that they had abused. It is as if Absalom were converted and Absalom's people were converted and they turned and mourned for the things they did to the king, for the times that they knew him not, for the times that he was cast out from before them.

What does it say? "They shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn."¹¹

A mourning of centuries lost, a mourning over what might have been had they not rejected the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer in his place. And yet all those years later the king comes back and rescues his people, and they mourn for their rebellion, for their short sightedness, for their rejection of a noble and mighty king. How could they have been so blind and so ignorant and so foolish and so dead in their hearts? It must be their sigh, their complaint.

Mephibosheth is an example for the believers in a couple of ways.

You know, we ought to be downhearted and sad and mourn, oughtn't we, at Christ's rejection by the world. All around us we see mounting signs of the rejection of Christ, and the rejection of the gospel, as the number of people who are under the blood, who come to Christ, who trust in him seems to be waning in this society, at least in the West it does. And as fewer people respect the Savior, as fewer people desire to follow after the Savior, as fewer people will have anything to do with the claims of Christ.

Perhaps we ought to mourn like Mephibosheth at the way in which the Lord Jesus is cast out from our modern society by our neighbors around us, or by the people in this very city who have no interest in him, or who have just a casual interest in him, or who will not submit to his rule and will not rest in the salvation that he offers to lost sinners.

We ought to mourn at the dishonor that is heaped upon God by the world, the hatred that is placed upon him, the rebellion against his rule, oh, the casting forth of the Lord from the public square, from the public arena, the total secularization that we see galloping towards us in this world, the way in which all of the great minds of the world seem to be bent towards excluding the Lord of glory, the creator of all things from his rightful place in the world.

¹¹ Zechariah 12:10.

Perhaps we are all like Mephibosheth in this way -- that to protest and to mourn is about all we can do.

For one thing we learn in this modern world is that an individual usually can make little difference at all in the whole flow of things; that all of history seems mostly just to trample over the individual person and to leave him in the dust, perhaps like Mephibosheth, who was too weak to follow the king across the river, who was lame in both his feet. All he could do was protest, in a silent sort of way, the deposition of his king, of the rightful king, and the usurpation of his place by the traitor Absalom, by just putting on the signs of mourning and protest against what had been done to him.

We ought also to mourn when we detect in our own hearts a coldness towards the Lord Jesus, when it seems that he is far away from us because we are far away from him; when we don't read his Word, when we don't pray to him, when our hearts are not warmed by his presence, by the singing, by the worship; when we don't desire to be in his company and his place. We ought to mourn the sadness of it and to seek after him and to call unto him.

You remember the Scriptures tell us, "Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you."¹²

What did Jesus say? I read just the other day the book of the Revelation. What did he say to the Church at Laodicea? "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock."¹³

You see, the Lord Jesus had been pushed out of the church and the door had been shut and he stood at the door and he knocked.

Sometimes that verse is used as a text to encourage men, lost men, to come to Christ. But it is primarily meant to describe the rejection of Christ's rule and his presence by ostensible believers, and that the Lord Jesus has been put out, has been thrust out, and he stands at the door and knocks for the attention of his people.

Oh, that his people would know that sound and would know that voice and would mourn and repent of their coldness and of their rejection and of their slighting of the King of Glory!

But, you know, we also ought to long for his exaltation. We cannot mourn over his loss or over his departure, can we, really, because we have the promise that one day he will be exalted. He is exalted already in his Father's house. He is already set upon the throne. He hasn't taken unto himself the seat of the throne of the kingdom of David. We haven't seen him exalted in his rule, in his reign in this world before our very eyes.

¹² James 4:8.

¹³ Revelation 3:20.

And so while we cannot mourn his deposition, for we know the will of God, the will of the Father is being worked out and that he will be restored and exalted and that he has been restored and exalted and that every knee will bow; we can, at least, long for it, can't we? We can look forward to it. We can pray as Christ instructed us to, "Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven."¹⁴

This ought to be our deepest heart felt desire. Even as Mephibosheth longed to see David's reign restored, so we ought to long and be ready and look for and hope for and reach out for that restoration of Christ to all of his rights and entitlements in all his creation. We ought to long for his presence upon the throne of David as he promised David all those years ago. We ought to long for that time when we shall see his face and will not be away from his presence ever again, but will ever be with the Lord, as Paul put it. We should long, but not mourn, because he has promised all of these things.

You remember what Paul said in Titus two at verse 11:

For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men, Teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world; Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.¹⁵

You see, the longing for Christ's exaltation or Christ's presence, and to see Christ's face, is also accompanied by a remembrance of the fact that we have been taught by that salvation, by the gospel, to turn away from ungodliness, to turn away from worldly lusts, to live soberly, righteously and godly in the present world which is evil, looking for that hope. And one day we will be in the presence of Christ. We will be in a land in which righteousness dwells. How much our Lord encourages us to eagerness, to eagerness at his appearing.

I noticed in 2 Timothy four that passage where Paul talks about fighting the good fight, finishing his course, keeping the faith. He says this. "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day: and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing."¹⁶

You see, we ought to long for the appearing of Christ. We ought to long for it. We ought to prepare ourselves for it by his grace and through his power. And, as Paul says, there is a crown of righteousness which will be given to all those who love his appearing, all those who long for it, all those who pine for it, who grasp for it, who hope for it, who put all their hope in it.

Mephibosheth repudiated even his interest in his own property in exchange for the king's honor. So, too, with the apostle Paul as our example. He made great sacrifices for the

¹⁴ Matthew 6:10.

¹⁵ Titus 2:11-13.

¹⁶ 2 Timothy 4:8.

preaching of the gospel, and here he was about to be taken out and put to death for the cause of Christ. He gave up all that he had in this world in exchange for the glory and the hope of the coming of the Lord Jesus, and for the crown of righteousness which he had been promised.

So, too, ought the people of God to be willing to have their substance wasted for the honor of Christ, to not try to build up a treasure in this world, but treasures in heaven knowing that all of the things in this world will be burned up and destroyed. We will not take any of it with us, but we will have a home in the presence of our King, and we ought to build our treasures where our hope will be.

You know, we ought to desire the King's country and the King's rule and the King's face. There is entangled with this desire to see the king exalted a desire to be in his kingdom, a desire to be in his country, a desire to be under his rule or under the rule of Christ now. But we ought also to long to be under his rule in that heavenly place, in that blessed place where he has promised one day we shall be.

You remember what the writer of Hebrews said about those saints who trusted in God, the Old Testament saints, old Abraham, Sarah and Isaac and others. It said of them in Hebrews 11 at verse 13:

These all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country. And truly, if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out, they might have had opportunity to have returned. But now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for he hath prepared for them a city.¹⁷

A city in another place “wherein dwelleth righteousness.”¹⁸

That is the place we ought to long for. It is not good enough, like Mephibosheth, that the king should be restored in his own time and his own place. Rather, we long to be restored to the presence of Christ in his great kingdom which will never be at an end, that glorious city, the new Jerusalem.

There is an old song written in a broad Scots dialect called *My Own Country* or *My Ain Countrie*. And I will try to read some of the verses of it and change the words to English because some of them are very obscure ... no one today knows what words like “ken” and “een” mean.

I am far from my home
And I am weary often whiles,

¹⁷ Hebrews 11:13-16.

¹⁸ 2 Peter 3:13.

For a longed for home bringing,
And my Father's welcome smiles.
And I'll never be full content
Until mine eyes do see
The golden gates of heaven,
And my own country.

I have his good Word of promise
That some gladsome day,
The King to his own royal palace
His banished home will bring.
With eyes and with heart running over
We shall see the King in his beauty,
In our own country.

So little now I know
Of yon blessed bonnie place,
I only know it is home
Where we shall see his face.
It would surely be enough
Forever more to be
In the glory of his presence,
In our own country.

He is faithful that hath promised
That he'll sure come again.
He will keep his tryst with me
At what hour I do not know.
But he bids me still to wait
And ready aye to be
To go at any moment,
To my own country.

That is the attitude of the saint, longing for the presence of his Lord and King.

Finally, we ought to rejoice, contrariwise to Mephibosheth's mourning, we ought to rejoice at the King's presence with us today! The Scriptures tell us he is present with us here at the Lord's Table. "For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them,"¹⁹ the Scriptures tell us.

So there is a sense in which our rejoicing and our joy in this world is greatest, or ought to be greatest, in the presence of the Lord, around his table, gathered with the saints to remember and to celebrate what the Lord Jesus did for us.

¹⁹ Matthew 18:20.

You remember he said to his people that night before he was betrayed, that he wished them to memorialize or to remember his body and his blood that would be given a sacrifice to make an atonement for them, to be the remission of their sins, that he wished us to remember him by remembering that act, that sacrifice that he would make for us.

Interesting isn't it, that he didn't leave us any pictures. He didn't leave us any description of his face. He didn't leave us any statues or any memorial walls or certainly not, praise God, any grave stones to gather around and to mourn around. He left us a picture of that work of redemption, that act of sacrifice that he made for his people. And that is what he wants to be remembered by, the action of his sacrifice in the place of his people, the remembrance of that, coupled with the hope and the promise of a reunion in glory.

Remember he said, "I will not partake of this wine, the fruit of the vine, until I drink it with you anew in my Father's kingdom."

How we ought to long to be in the presence of the Lord Jesus in glory, and in this life to long to be in his presence each week around the Lord's Table. How we ought to long for the king to come in peace. It will be a happy time for us, but more importantly we will see the king in his beauty. We will see the Lamb glorified. Never, never to be thrust out, never to be deposed, never to be insulted again, never to be anywhere but the highest place and in the seat of honor!

Oh, what did old Samuel Rutherford say in those lovely words?

The bride eyes not her garment,
But her dear bridegroom's face.
I will not gaze at glory,
But on my king of grace.
Not at the crown he giveth,
But on his pierced hand.
The Lamb is all the glory
In Immanuel's Land!

Let's rejoice in the presence of Christ with us around this table. And let us crank up our longing hearts to long towards that day when we see him face to face, when we can join with all the saints around the throne of heaven before the standing Lamb that was slain for us, to cry out that he is worthy to receive all power and dominion and praise and honor and glory and blessing!

Let's give thanks for the Lord's Table that reminds us of what we have to celebrate, reminds us of that time when the saints mourned for their Savior, not knowing that at the very time they knew all was lost, he was accomplishing that eternal redemption for his people. Let's give thanks, first, for the bread that reminds us of the body broken for us at Calvary.

Oh God, our Father, we rejoice in your goodness to us and in your mercy towards your people, how you did not leave us in our shame and in our folly and in our guiltiness and in our judgment and in our doom, but you provided a Lamb for a sacrifice when none other Lamb would do.

You sent your Son the Lord Jesus. Oh, how you loved us that you sent him, that you delivered him up for our offenses, that you prepared a body for him and he went to dark Calvary in the place of his people, and the people mourned and wept, but their mourning was turned to rejoicing, and we are still rejoicing today, praise God, around this table at the exaltation and victory of our Lord Jesus, and what he has accomplished for us at Calvary!

We thank you for this bread that reminds us of his body that was broken for us. It reminds us that one day we will see with our own eyes the bread of life, and we will see his face and we will be made like him when we see him as he is. And in our hearts and in our lives and in all the world there will not be a place left where he doesn't have the absolute and complete reign and rule, and then will our rejoicing be at a fulfillment. It will be there for all eternity.

Thank you for the presence of Christ with his people when we gather around this table. Help us to look forward to it each Lord's Day, and help us to take with us a remembrance of what Christ did all through the week, and help us to exalt him before the world and tell everybody who is our King and who is our Redeemer, the Lord of glory.

We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

And the Scriptures tell us that on the night that he was betrayed the Lord Jesus took bread and he blessed it and he broke it and he said, "Take and eat. This is my body which is broken for you."

Let's give thanks for the cup. I would like to ask Bro. Whitten if he would give thanks for the cup that reminds us of the blood poured out, a ransom and atonement for us.

And the Scriptures tell us that after they had supped he took the cup, and he blessed it and he said, "Drink ye all of it. This cup is the new covenant in my blood for the remission of sins. Do it as often as ye do it in remembrance of me."

And the Scriptures tell us that as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we do preach the Lord's death till he comes.

Let's sing number 191:

With Jesus in our midst, we gather round the board;
Though many, we are one in Christ, one body in the Lord.

Number 191. Let's stand as we sing this and then we will be dismissed.