

Catford Lectures 2010-2011

Part 12

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[00:00:01] Again, I say good evening and very welcome to this, the final Catford Lecture of this session.

We're going to begin, and I trust we all can sing heartily after the address this afternoon, with hymn number 115, 1-1-5.

Head of the Church, Thy Body, O Christ, the Great Salvation, sweet to the saints it is to think of all thine exaltation. All power to thee committed, all power on earth in heaven, to thee a name of widest fame, above all glory given. 115. Head of the Church, Thy Body, O Christ, the Great Salvation, [00:01:01] sweet to the saints it is to think of all thine exaltation.

All power to thee committed, all power on earth in heaven, to thee a name of widest fame, above all glory given.

With thee believers raised, in thee, O night unseated, [00:02:04] O guilty ones, but cleared by thee, redemption's toil completed.

And when thou, Lord and Saviour, shalt come again in glory, thereby thy sight, thy spotless pride, shall drown the wondrous story.

At length the final kingdom, no budge, no end possessing, [00:03:11] when heaven and earth, God all in all, shall fill with luscious blessing.

All root of evil banished, no breath nor sin to quiver, on earth, on high, no tells for joy, and blissful peace for ever.

[00:04:07] Lord Jesus, Amen.

I wonder if we could turn to our Bibles, to the Gospel of Matthew and chapter 16.

Matthew 16. I have four scriptures I would like to read, and we'll read them at the beginning.

In Matthew 16 and verse 13.

When Jesus came into the coast of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?

[00:05:01] And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist, some Elias, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. He said unto them, But whom say ye that I am? Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou Simon bar Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I say also unto thee that thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. To the book of the Acts, chapter 2.

[00:06:04] Acts chapter 2, verse 1.

And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting. And they appeared unto them, clothed in tongues, like as of fire, And they appeared unto them, clothed in tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance.

Now to the first letter to the Corinthians.

Paul's letter to the Corinthians, chapter 11.

Let me read verse 17 and 18.

[00:07:14] Now this is that I declare unto you, I praise you not, that ye come together, not for the better, but for the worse. First of all, when you come together in the church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and I partly believe it.

We'll turn into the 14th chapter, and verse 37.

Chapter 14, verse 37.

If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you [00:08:02] are the commandments of the Lord.

And finally, in the book of Revelation, chapter 21.

Chapter 21, verse 1.

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth were passed away, and there was no more sea. And I, John, saw the holy city, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adored for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his

people, [00:09:03] and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.

I have four simple thoughts to bring out this evening in relation to the church.

The first one, in Matthew 16, I would like to talk a bit about the foundation of the church. In Acts chapter 2, the formation of the church.

In 1 Corinthians, the functioning of the church.

[00:10:01] And finally, in Revelation, the future of the church.

Perhaps it's not needed, but perhaps it's worth saying.

What is the church?

I suppose if you were to go out this evening into the streets of Catford, and ask the people you met what the church is, there may be those who would say the church is at the end of the road. It's always been there. It's the local parish church.

There may be others that would say, well, there is a church, it's the Baptist church, or the Congregationalist church, or the Methodist church. [00:11:01] And we know what they mean. They mean the building that people meet in. And in the English usage of the language, the word church, normally we would think of a building.

And many of us have been interested in the churches of our country, and there are many books written on the churches in Suffolk, the churches in Norfolk, the churches wherever you are. But when we are here tonight and we are talking about the church as seen in the New Testament, we want to forget the idea of a building. The only references that we have to the church as a building are spiritual references. We find in Ephesians, a reference there at the end of chapter 2. In 1 Peter 2, we get there, we are built a spiritual house.

[00:12:02] And so the idea of the church, according to the Greek word, which I don't know Greek, but I can read a concordance, is the word ecclesia, and it means a called out company. And I think that Peter got near the point when he said in Acts chapter 15, God is visiting the Gentiles to take out from them a people for himself.

And that's the idea. The church is a called out company. That God at this very moment is calling out from amongst the nations and from amongst the Jews, a people for himself. And so when Mr. Darby translated his New Testament, instead of putting the word church, which we get confused with the building, he used the term the assembly. And perhaps that would be a more accurate word to use [00:13:01] as we think about the church. When we talk about the church, and we will find out if we get a good concordance, if you're young, you get a young's concordance. If you're strong, you can get a strong's concordance. But whatever concordance you get, you will find that the word church does not appear in the Old Testament. And there's a good reason for that. The reason why the word church is not in the Old Testament is because it's not there. And you can search through it from Genesis to Malachi and you will not find the church. What you will find is pictures. You will find types. [00:14:01] There's many in those Old Testament books. And it is important to see that the church was not something that was introduced because the Jewish nation failed.

The Jews and Judaism had failed.

And the proof of their failure is seen at the cross of Christ where they nailed the Son of God to the cross. But that wasn't the reason why the church was introduced. Because in Ephesians chapter 1, we read there, we, the church, was chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world. So if we go back to Genesis 1, 1, we will find that the church was in the thoughts of God. And if we go beyond Genesis 1, 1, into that past eternity, before there was anything, the church was there in the thoughts of God. And the wonderful thing is, is that that church, which was in the thoughts of God in the past eternity, [00:15:01] is brought into fruition in time through the coming into this scene of the Lord Jesus and is seen in eternity going on to the future. And so if we do not have the church in the Old Testament, it's interesting to see that the first mention of the word church, and here again is a principle that we were taught when, certainly I was taught when I was young, that if we want to understand a particular word or a particular statement, we look for the first mention in Scripture. Now many of us have had profitable times looking at first mentions of the word. We look at the first mention of the word love, and we find that it is in Genesis 22, the father's Abraham's love for Isaac. If we look for the second mention, it is in chapter 24, and there we find Isaac's love for Rebekah. [00:16:03] A wonderful picture of God's love for his son and the son's love for the church. But the first mention is here.

The first mention of the church in the New Testament is in Matthew chapter 16. The second mention of the church is in Matthew 18, and the third mention is in Matthew 18. But the fourth mention is in the book of Acts. And you may wonder why, and certainly we can wonder why, why is it that Matthew, and only Matthew, speaks about the church?

It is not John who we might have thought would have spoke about the church. It is Matthew.

Now most of us will know that Matthew's gospel presents to us the Lord Jesus as the king. [00:17:06] Mark the servant, John the son of man, Luke the son of man, and John the son of God.

Now most of us here would have heard that saying time after time, but I wonder how many of us has stopped and said, Mr. Preacher, how do you know that Matthew presents the Lord Jesus as the king? How do you know that Mark presents him as a servant? And we ought to challenge the speakers as to where they get their information from. Because there is not a verse which says Matthew presents the Lord as the king. But in order to understand these sayings, we need to read the scriptures. And if we read through Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, we will get the idea that Matthew presents him as a king. [00:18:01] For simply, let us look at Matthew's gospel in relation to the birth of the Lord Jesus. He mentions the wise men. He mentions Herod. He mentions the fact that Jerusalem was troubled.

He mentions that which is suitable to a king. In Mark's gospel, there is no mention made of the birth of the Lord Jesus. Because you don't need to know the birth of a servant. In Luke's gospel, he's the son of man. And there we find more details in relation to his birth. Because that is absolutely vital. Born of a virgin. Born in the stable. That is Luke's gospel.

And when we come to John, he's the son of God. There is no need to mention his birth. He is the one that was the self-existing one. And so John begins his gospel, in the beginning was the Word. [00:19:02] So Matthew is the gospel that presents the Lord Jesus as the king. But why then is it Matthew who is left to introduce the subject of the church? I believe if we know what Matthew has already spoken to us about, it will help us. Because in chapter 5, 6 and 7, we have what we know as

the Sermon on the Mount. And in those three chapters, we are introduced to what we might say, the laws and the principle of the kingdom. The kingdom that would have been set up had they received the Lord Jesus. In Matthew 5, 6 and 7, we get the principles. We get the law. In Matthew chapter 8 and 9, we find that the Lord Jesus goes out and there are ten miracles. There are more miracles in Matthew 9 and 10 than in any other two chapters in the Bible. They're brought together. He heals the sick. He cleanses the leper. He stills the storm. He raises the dead. They're all in that chapter. We see the power of the king. [00:20:03] And in chapter 10, they go out. He sends out the twelve to tell the gospel of the kingdom. But in chapter 11 and chapter 12, we find that not only does Israel reject the king, but the king rejects Israel. And so we come to chapter 13 and we get the going out of the Lord Jesus from the house to the seaside. And there he gave the parable of the sower. He sends out the seed that he might produce fruit. And in the end of those, or in the middle of those parables of the kingdom, we find there the one of the pearl of great price. A wonderful picture of the church. Chapter 14 and 15. Brother Edwin Cross once gave an address on these chapters, bringing out the dispensational points. And it is amazing how that both of these chapters, we see a complete dispensational view. [00:21:03] But in chapter 16 and in verse 4, the Lord Jesus says, he left them and departed.

And I believe at this point, we find that the Lord Jesus is leaving the nation of Israel. We know he comes back. But here we find that the nation of Israel has been tried, been presented, and they've rejected him. And so the Lord Jesus moves outside of the coast of Israel or very into the north of Israel to this place called Caesarea Philippi. And he raises a question. And this is a very important question. The first question is, is who do men say that I am? Again, if we were to go out and ask people, who do you, what do people say about Jesus? We would have all sorts of answers. [00:22:01] There are some that says, well, Jesus is just like John the Baptist. He's a person that is speaking about repentance. Others said, I think he's like Elijah. He's a person that is speaking about judgment. And Elijah, you know, the first act that he did, he brought down fire from heaven on Mount Carmel. The last act he did, he brought down fire from heaven. He's the prophet of judgment. Some saw the Lord Jesus as a prophet of judgment. Others said he's like Jeremiah. He's known as the weeping prophet. Their ideas of the Lord Jesus were mixed.

But you know, the Lord Jesus says, very important. He turns to Peter and he says, but who do you say that I am? And I want to ask you that question tonight. Who do you say Jesus is? If you give me the answer, I can tell you on your answer to that question, whether you're on your way to heaven or on your way to a lost eternity. [00:23:02] Because if you can tell me from your heart that Jesus is the son of the living God. I believe you are saved. And you know, we find this through the Gospels. The attitude of people towards the Lord Jesus had a great mark upon them. I often like the story. I love the story of Bartimaeus. As the Lord Jesus was going out of Jericho, there was Bartimaeus sitting beside the roadside. And he called to the people and he said, who's passing? And they said, it's Jesus, the Nazarene.

In other words, it's Jesus from Nazareth. And you know what Nazareth is? That's that horrible place up in the north that nobody likes. And that's where this man was coming from. It was the despised Jesus.

But Bartimaeus said, he didn't turn around and say, Jesus of Nazareth. [00:24:05] He says, Jesus, you're the son of David. He had an appreciation of who the Lord Jesus was. And as a result, he got the blessing. Simply, I put it towards you, each one here tonight. Who do you say the Lord Jesus is? Can you say with absolutely conviction, this man is the eternal son of God?

This is the one that came into this world to save us from our sins. And Peter, as the spokesman, as he very often is, says, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God. And again, we have a wonderful little picture of what we've already said about the four Gospels. Because it is Mark that says, he's speaking about the servant. And Mark simply records the statement, thou art the Christ. [00:25:04] Luke says, the Christ of God.

But Matthew says, thou art the Christ, the son of the living God.

We may ask ourselves the question, why is it that Matthew introduces the Lord Jesus, not just as the Christ. Not just as the Christ of God, but as the son of the living God. And I believe it is because he is about to introduce the subject of the church. And the church is intimately linked with the revelation of Jesus Christ as the son of God. And so the Lord Jesus answers to Peter. And he says, blessed or happy art thou, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood hasn't revealed it to you. Sometimes it's very hard to learn this lesson. That if we are to understand the Word of God, if we are to know what the Spirit of God is saying within the Word, [00:26:08] we will never do it according to our own mind. It is not according to what we think, because God's ways are not my ways. If we are to understand the things of God, it is as the Spirit of God will bring them before us. And so let us not think that we can go to theological college and learn the truth of the Bible. We may learn the Greek, we may learn the Hebrew, but if we are to understand the person of the Lord Jesus, we have to have the Spirit. And it is only as the Lord reveals these things to us, will we understand this. And here the Lord Jesus says, flesh and blood is not revealed unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

And here again we have another very important point. [00:27:03] In John chapter 7, the Lord Jesus speaking to the Pharisees, he could say, my Father.

And as soon as he said that, they got up in arms.

John 5 verse 17. And they interpreted and said, in saying that, you are making yourself equal with God.

Actually they were exactly right.

When the Lord Jesus spoke and he spoke about God and he said he is my Father, he was making himself equal with God. Further along in John, in chapter 8 and verse 59, or in chapter 8 and verse 58, the Lord Jesus speaks, he says, before Abraham was, I am. And the Jews knew exactly what he meant. He meant that he was equal with God. [00:28:02] And they took up stones to stone him. And then in chapter 10 and verse 30, the Lord Jesus could speak about, I and my Father are one. And again the Jews took up stones to stone him. And so throughout the Gospel of John, where he is presented as the Son of God, time after time, we get these references to the Lord Jesus as God and his deity is clearly seen. And here his deity is clearly seen in the statement, my Father.

But we also get it in the next verse. Because he speaks to Peter and he says, my Father, flesh and blood does not reveal it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven. And I also say unto you.

There's nobody on this earth could say the same. [00:29:02] Nobody here could say, God has said something and I also can say something on the same level. But the Lord Jesus could because he was equal with God.

In John 14, verses that we probably all know, the Lord Jesus says, let not your hearts be troubled. Let not your hearts be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In exactly the same way as you believe in God, believe in me. Why? Because he was God. And here we get another wonderful proof of the deity of the Lord Jesus that he could say, my Father say this and I also say unto you. And then he says to Peter, thou art Peter. And upon this rock, I will build my church.

[00:30:08] There are those who say that Peter is the rock. To them, I will say, what a poor rock you're built on.

Because in the next few verses, particularly we look at verse 21, the Lord Jesus speaks about the fact that he is going to go into death and it is Peter who say, not so Lord. Peter is the person who would have had the Lord down here, but not the cross. In John 13, it is Peter who says when the Lord would wash his feet, not so Lord. You're never going to wash my feet. And it's Peter who says in Acts 10, when the net was let down, I've never eaten anything unclean. If it was left to Peter, there would be no cross. [00:31:02] There would be no redemption. If it was left to Peter, there would be no daily walking with the Lord and there would be no evangelism to the Gentiles and we wouldn't be saved here tonight. But we are thankful that Peter is not the rock because Peter means a stone and Peter was a stone. And the Lord Jesus says upon this rock and this rock is the fact that Jesus is the Christ, the son of the living God. That's the rock. The Apostle Paul says a very similar thing.

Other foundations can no man lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus. He is the foundation on which the church is built. And the Lord Jesus says, I will build my church.

Two things here. First of all, he says, I will build it. [00:32:01] He didn't say, I'm going to keep on building it. He says, I'm going to build it. As we said already, the church is not in the Old Testament. And this verse confirms it, that the church was not in existence when the Lord Jesus spoke here. He says, I will build it. And he calls it my church.

We very often use the term as we do, I'm going to my church today.

Well, actually, it's not your church at all. It is the Lord's church. He is the builder and he is at this moment building his church. And here he says, I will build my church.

It belongs to him. And you belong to him. And you belong to him at this very moment. Because according to 1 Corinthians 6 verse 20, you are bought with a price. [00:33:03] And that price was his precious blood upon Calvary's cross. And the apostle goes on to say, you cannot please yourself. And none of us here can please ourselves because we belong to the Lord Jesus. We're part of that company that is called the church. And that company, the gates of hell will never prevail against it. Let us never be disheartened. Let us never think that because things are getting bad, because the Christians seem to be smaller and smaller, that there's going to come a time when there won't be any. No, there will always be a church on this earth until the Lord comes and calls it to be with himself. The gates of hell will not prevail against it. And so we see that the foundation of the church is the son of the living God.

The Lord Jesus is the foundation.

So when was this church formed? [00:34:01] Well, we go into Acts chapter 2.

When the day of Pentecost was fully come. If we only had Acts 2, or if we only had the book of Acts, we may wonder why he begins to speak about the day of Pentecost. What is this day of Pentecost? It simply means 50. And in order to understand it, we need to go back in the Old Testament to the 23rd of Leviticus. Now you young people here, when I was your age, I used to sit in meetings, and there used to be a brother come to Lowestoft, and he used to very often read from the Old Testament. And Leviticus 23 was one of his favorite chapters. And to be honest, I used to be bored. [00:35:01] But there came a time when I stopped being bored and started to listen. And I came to the conclusion that Leviticus 23 was one of the most interesting chapters in the whole of the Old Testament. Because here we find that God gives Moses seven feasts.

The first one is the Passover. And we know from 1 Corinthians chapter 5, that that feast, the Passover, spoke of the Lord Jesus.

Because in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 and verse 7 it says, Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us.

And so we clearly see that this Old Testament feast speaks of the Lord Jesus. The next feast is the feast of unleavened bread. And in 1 Corinthians chapter 5 again, we read there about the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth. And so we know that that would speak of our life after receiving the Lord Jesus. [00:36:08] The next one is the firstfruits. And in 1 Corinthians 15 verse 23, we read these words, Christ the firstfruits. Afterwards, they that are his it is coming. And so we see that these feasts in the Old Testament have a wonderful fulfillment in the New Testament. In the death of Christ in the Passover. In the life of the believer in the unleavened bread. And in the firstfruits Christ has risen from among the dead. And then we come to this feast of weeks or of 50 days.

What does this feast speak about? Well, quite clearly, if we go back to the days of Acts, the 50 days or the days of Pentecost was 50 days after the Lord's resurrection. And if we go into Leviticus 23, we find there that the feast of weeks was 50 days after the feast of the firstfruits. [00:37:10] And so clearly, here was something which was given in the Old Testament. And here we see it being fulfilled at the exact time the day of Pentecost was fully come. The company of disciples were in one place.

And then the Spirit of God came suddenly upon them. The church began suddenly.

And it will end suddenly. 1 Corinthians 15, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye. Don't put off being a Christian because this church will end suddenly. And here, on this day, the church was formed. If we want to know the doctrine, we turn to 1 Corinthians. [00:38:03] And there, in 1 Corinthians 12, we read, We were all baptized into one body by one Spirit.

And that's what took place on the day of Pentecost. There was formed, from all individuals, from that group of disciples and others, was formed this one church.

And I should have said, who is in this church? Everybody that goes to church? Not quite right.

Everybody who comes along to the meetings? That wouldn't be right. Who is in this church? It's everybody that is a Christian. It is every born-again person is part of this church.

It is everybody that has put their faith and trust in the Lord Jesus. [00:39:05] And it doesn't matter if you go to a Catholic church, or you go to a Baptist church, or you go to the Brethren. You are part of the one body of Christ because your faith and trust in Him. And here, in the second chapter of Acts, we

get the formation of the church.

How is this church then going to function?

How is it going to carry on in the interval years? We look back on Acts 2 and we would think that this was nearly 2,000 years ago that this took place. How is the church going to carry on? Perhaps I could give an illustration. And often the young people like illustrations. There was a particular school with a headmaster and he had gone to the bother of writing out the timetable for the whole of the school. [00:40:09] And on the first day back to school, he gave the timetable to every pupil. And for the first few days, they obeyed the timetable. But soon some of them realised that they didn't like this particular lesson, so they went to another lesson. And in process of time, there were a lot of children in the sports department, very few in the maths department. However, there were some that were stickers and they stuck to the timetable. And they went to the sports when they were told to, and they went to the maths when they were told to. There was only a few of them. And they would sit there and they would say to themselves, are we right? There's only a few of us here. [00:41:02] But they were doing what the timetable said. And when the headmaster came back, the ones that had obeyed the timetable were the ones that got the high marks. You see the point. The Apostle Paul said, in that wonderful chapter, the 27th of Acts, where I believe we get a picture of the voyage of the Christian church. He said to those shipmen that had been in the boat, he said, you should have hearkened unto me. And if only we had hearkened to the words of the Apostle Paul, we wouldn't be in the state that we're in at this moment. And in the illustration, if the pupils had hearkened to the timetable, they wouldn't be in the confused state. And so where is our timetable? Where is our timetable? How do we know how we function? [00:42:01] It was good to hear Nick this afternoon when he wanted to speak about the question of singing in the present dispensation. He took us right to the point. He took us into 1 Corinthians chapter 14. But I began in chapter 11, where there the Apostle Paul says, when ye come together. If we want to know how we function as a church, wouldn't God have given us it? Wouldn't he have told us? And here it is. It is in 1 Corinthians. We get clearly laid out how we should function as a church. And it's interesting to see that the first thing that the Apostle Paul draws their attention to is the Lord's Supper. Verse 23.

[00:43:04] Here we have what we know as the breaking of bread. Here we have the words of it as given by the Holy Spirit, given by the Lord to the Apostle Paul. And what he is saying here is something that is absolutely vital. Because this is what will keep us going in this scene of Christ's rejection.

And this, what we read about here, will keep going until the Lord comes. And so I question everybody here, are we all remembering the Lord? Are we all responding to what the Apostle Paul, through the Spirit, through the Lord himself, said? Are we fulfilling this? Because this is how the church should function. To be gathered together to remember him in his death.

[00:44:04] And you know what I want to bring out of this? It's not particularly the details of the Supper. But simply to say that in chapter 12 verse 1, the Paul goes to a different subject. And he says, spiritual gifts. The Supper is not a place for exercising of gift.

The Supper is where our affections are touched. Doesn't that meet our affections when the Paul says, in the night in which he was betrayed. Think of that night. Judas had gone out to betray him.

It was dark. It was a horrible night. And it was in that night that the Lord Jesus said those words which we all ought to remember. Do this in remembrance of me.

[00:45:01] So one of the functionings of the church should be that we gather together to remember him. And so we go on and at the end of chapter 14 we find there these words. If a man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord. There are things that we don't like. Or some of us don't like. But they are the Lord's commands. And these are the things that if we want the assembly to function, we have to read the teaching of the Apostle Paul. If we want to know how to function in relation to the open meeting, it is given in these verses. As Nick said, it is not a question of giving out the favourite hymn. It's as the Spirit leads. It's not just praying because you always do at a particular time. It's as the Spirit leads. [00:46:02] Very practical things. But if we want to act in this scene, according to the timetable, it's here in the teachings of the Apostle Paul. He was the Apostle to the church. And what will it be? What will this result be? Well, in chapter 14, verse 3, we never read the verse, but it says there, But he that prophesy speaketh unto men to edification, to exaltation, and to comfort. You know, when brethren stand up to speak, the first thing that Paul says, if you're speaking from the word of God, number one thing is to build up people. And we're seeking to build us up. And why we come to the Catford lectures is that we're built up. But we also exhort in one another. We're stirring you up. But not only do we build you up and stir you up, we're trying to comfort, to lift you up. And we're living in a terrible day. And each one of us need lifting up. And if there's one thing that will lift us up, it's when we refer to the future of the church.

[00:47:12] First, we could ask the question, is there a future? Is there a future to this church? Is there a future to the assembly?

In 2 Peter, chapter 3, verse 4, they could say, Where is the promise of his coming? For since the fathers fell asleep, all things continued as they always have done. And you know, Satan sometimes gets into our minds and says, Why for hundreds of years they've been talking about the coming of the Lord Jesus. He's not come yet. Is he going to come? The question that is often put into our minds by Satan. The Apostle Peter answers the question. He says, God is long suffering. [00:48:03] God is waiting over this world. And the day will come when he will come. The Lord Jesus will come. Others are like the servant in Matthew 24, verse 48. He says, My Lord, delayeth his coming.

They think, well, the Lord is not coming in my lifetime. Therefore, I can do what I want. I can enjoy myself. I want to tell you tonight, if you haven't realized the Lord Jesus could come this very moment. The Lord Jesus could come before the end of this meeting. There is nothing to stop the Lord Jesus coming. And I'm going to give you three reasons why he's going to come. I'm going to give you three reasons why the Lord Jesus must come. There's not a question that he might or he could. He must come. The first reason is, is that the Old Testament prophets said he was going to come. [00:49:02] If you read through Isaiah, you will find that Isaiah chapter 7 tells us that a virgin was going to have a child. And it was going to be called Emmanuel. What happened? The virgin had a child and it was called Emmanuel. Malachi 5, he prophesies that there was going to be a, the prince was going to be born in Bethlehem.

Where was Jesus born? Bethlehem. The Old Testament prophesied that the Lord Jesus would die upon the cross. We think of, they pierced his hands and his feet from Psalm 22. The Old Testament has prophesied that there would be one that would come and there would be one that would die. But the same Old Testament prophets go on to say that he is going to come back. You think of Zachariah who could say, they shall look upon him whom they have pierced. [00:50:04] And the nation of Israel have never looked upon Jesus and mourned. But they will do because Zachariah's prophecy has to be fulfilled. And the Lord Jesus has to return to fulfill that prophecy. Another reason, and not in order,

why the Lord Jesus has to come is because he said it. John 14, in my father's house there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to repair a place for you and I will come again. On his words and on his words only, if they were the only words that we had, we could hang the fact that the Lord Jesus was going to come back. And he is going to come back for you and for me. And the third reason is his love demands it. In John 17, the Lord Jesus says, Father I will, that they whom thou hast given me.

[00:51:07] In John 17, is it verse 6, the Lord Jesus speaks to the disciples and he says, these which thou hast given me. And in a further verse he says, not only unto these, but unto those that will believe on me. That's you and that's me. And in verse 24 he says, those thou hast given me.

And what does the Lord Jesus want? He wanted them to be with him. It's the desire of his heart that his church is with him. It's the desire of his heart that the bride that he loved and that he died upon Calvary's cross is with him. Ephesians chapter 5 says, Christ loved the church and he gave himself for it. He loved you so much that he shed his precious blood and he died on Calvary's cross and he's not going to leave you here. [00:52:02] He's going to come and he's going to take you to be with himself because that's where he wants you, to be with him. You know when we come to Revelation 22, 21, we get even probably a more wonderful thought. Because in the 21st chapter of Genesis, of Revelation, we have one of the very few pictures of what the eternal state is going to be like. He says, I saw a new heaven and a new earth. The first heaven and the first earth is passed away. There's no more sea. We're in the eternal state. And what did John see? He saw a bride adorned for her husband.

The wonderful fact is, dear beloved friends, dear beloved saints, we are going to be in that eternal state as the bride for the Lord Jesus.

Yes, it will be a wonderful time for us. Yes, it will be a time when we won't have to get up and work. [00:53:08] We won't have to do things that we don't like to do. We often look at the Lord's coming and we say, I wish the Lord would come because we're in so much problems. But when we get to this place here, let us not think of what it will be for ourselves, but let us think what it will be for the satisfaction of the heart of the Lord Jesus. We will be there as his bride for all eternity. What a joy it is, what a prospect is before us, that there is a future for the church. That church which was based upon his death, based upon Jesus Christ as the son of the living God. That church which was formed in Acts 2, which should function according to what we find in 1 Corinthians. That church is seen in glory as the bride for Christ, for his glory and for his benefit.

[00:54:08] And you know, if that is so, there's a practical outcome that the Apostle Paul says when writing again to the Corinthians in 2 Corinthians 11, verse 2. He says, I espoused you as chaste virgins for Christ.

Are we living lives that are commensurate with the wonderful fact that the day is coming when we will be taken out of this scene to be with him for all eternity, as his bride, at his side, for his joy and for his pleasure. And even now in the scene of his rejection, let us live lives that are in keeping with the wonderful fact that we are going to be with him for all eternity. We're going to close with singing the hymn of Mr. Wigram, number 330.

[00:55:09] What weighs the wondrous thought?

Or who did it suggest that we the church to glory brought should with the sun be blessed?

O God, the thought was thine, thine only it could be.

Fruit of the wisdom, love divine, peculiar unto thee. 330. What weighs the wondrous thought?

Or who did it suggest that we the church to glory brought should with the sun be blessed?

[00:56:06] O God, the thought was thine, thine only it could be.

Fruit of the wisdom, love divine, peculiar unto thee.

For sure no other mine, for thought so bold, so free.

Greatness or strength could ever find, thine only it could be.

[00:57:13] The motives to thine own, the plan, the counsel thine.

Made for thy son, born of this birth, in glory bright to shine.

O God with great delight, thy wondrous thoughts we see.

[00:58:04] Upon this throne, in glory bright, the bride of Christ shall be.

Sealed with the Holy Ghost, we triumph in thy love.

Thy wondrous thought has made of us glory with Christ above.