

Lions and lentils

Part 1

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Duration	00:47:29
Online version	https://www.audioteaching.org/en/sermons/ec004/lions-and-lentils

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[00:00:01] Well, let's just bow our heads in prayer before we read the Scriptures together. Lord Jesus, we thank Thee that we can be together. We thank Thee that we've had opportunity already to be occupied with Thyself in Thy remembrance and to show forth Thy death. And we pray that the impressions and the atmosphere of those moments might continue with us in the new week that has begun today. We pray that we might be encouraged and fortified in our faith and that Thou would help us to stand up for Thee who has done so much in delivering us from so terrible a tyrant and from death itself. We thank Thee now that as we open Thy Word, we can count upon Thee to lead us by Thy Spirit. We pray that Thou would give us attentive minds and that we might benefit from our consideration of Thy Word, that it really might be for profit [00:01:06] and that the hearing of Thy Word might be mixed with faith so that it does profit us and that we might lead lives which are for Thy glory and devoted to Thee and Thine interests alone. And as we pray for ourselves, we think of Thy children everywhere who are reading the Word or indeed already have done so this day. And we pray that Thou would bless Thy Word for Thy glory and the strengthening of Thy people and the salvation of precious lost souls. Amen. Now, I want to turn to 2 Samuel 23 and speak to you about lions and lentils.

Lions and lentils. That's not going to be the menu today. When I was in South Africa last year, [00:02:03] we had a very funny menu. We had giraffe, could eat giraffe, and other animals which I won't name now. But we're not going to eat the lion, but we're going to learn something about a lion. We're going to read a short story. It's one of the shortest stories in the Bible. 2 Samuel 23 verse 20.

And Benaiah, the son of Jehoiada, the son of a valiant man of Kabziel, who had done many acts, he slew two lion-like men of Moab. And he went down also and slew a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow. So what we're going to look at in particular is Benaiah, son of a valiant man, [00:03:02] he went down, slew a lion in the midst of a pit in the time of snow. In fact, that verse really gives us two stories, but we're going to focus on the last. And then we're going to have a look at the lentils in a minute. Benaiah must have been one of David's heroes. David, he's coming to the end of his life, but there seems to be, in this chapter, a recollection of some of those great men who had stood with David and had served him. And Benaiah is a very interesting character. We don't read much about him. We don't have great pages of narrative about him. And he's not much spoken about. But what he did meant an awful lot to the people round about where he had done this great deed. You see, that winter was a terrible winter [00:04:03] in Israel. The snow had fallen. It was probably deep and crisp and even.

And from time to time, in the cold weather, they didn't have double glazing in those days, and they

didn't have electricity to warm up their homes, nor gas-fired central heating. They shivered. It was cold and miserable. And just to get the food ready, it was wretched.

But they had an additional problem. Not only was life a struggle in itself, there wasn't much warmth to cheer the hearts of anyone, but there was someone, some creature, that was going about prowling to see who he could devour. And that creature was a lion.

Now today, you won't get lions in Israel. They're confined to some places in Africa and India. But [00:05:06] in those days, they were everywhere. In Iraq, foremost in the news today, there were lions there, lions in Syria, lions in the Middle East, lions in Israel. And in particular, there was one lion that must have caused a lot of havoc in the district where he was. And the reason why he caused havoc was because he was quite a clever lion. He would go into hiding after he'd done his terrible deed. He would go and perhaps break into a place where sheep were kept and take a sheep.

And that would cost something. Or perhaps he would go into a house, and the doors weren't well locked perhaps, and there was a child there. And the terrible lion would maul the child, kill it. So the lion was very dangerous.

[00:06:08] Now that old lion from Bible times is really a picture of Satan himself.

And Satan is very dangerous. And he's prowling around seeking whom he may devour. And who will be his next victim? Who can tell? If we're not watchful, if we're not on guard, if we're not protected, he's at loose. And he's dangerous. And some of us think, oh, well, I'm all right.

I'll manage. I can look after myself. But you know, today the lion is known as the king of the jungle.

And there's nothing that a human being can do with his bare hands to defend himself from the strength of the paw of the lion. You'll have to be a courageous man to tackle a lion.

[00:07:05] Well, Ben Nair, he saw the danger and the need of the people. And what does he do?

And what does he do? Look at the text. He went down. And if the lion is a picture of Satan, Ben Nair becomes a very bright, a little one, but a very bright picture of another man who came down into this world. And we've remembered him this morning in the breaking of bread. That's none other than the Lord Jesus Christ. He's like Ben Nair. And he's come down into this world. And he's come down into a place of danger. He's come not just to the edge of the pit, but into the middle of the pit, in the midst of the pit, where Satan was. He's come right into the arena where Satan has been active, and is still active. And there he confronted [00:08:06] that terrible enemy, which had frightened so many people, who all their lifetime were in fear and in bondage because of death, danger of death. Satan holds that fear over people.

And so Ben Nair, very courageously, all by himself, maybe others would have liked to have done it. They might have said, we'll die with you. We'll go and fight for you. We'll be with you. But when it came to the moment of conflict, Ben Nair was alone. Remember, Peter said, Lord, you're not going to die. I'll die for you. But when it came to the moment of conflict, why, we remembered those words already this morning in our prayers together. When the Lord Jesus goes forth from the garden of Gethsemane, he says, the cup which... Those lovely words, aren't they? The cup which my father giveth me to drink, shall I not drink it? Shall I not take it? [00:09:04] And he would go alone. He'd let the

others go. The sword would fall on the shepherd, and the sheep would be scattered. And so Jesus would be the unique, the solitary defender of his people. And he would go into the pit, which is really the place of death. Go into the pit with a lion. Would you do it? Well, of course, Daniel, he was thrown into a pit, into a den of lions. You might say, pray for Daniel. No, you had to pray for the lions, because they weren't going to get their dinner. Yeah. But he was defended. He was protected.

He wasn't going to fight the lions. God shut the mouths of the lions. But in this case, we've got a dangerous lion. And in a time of snow, he goes down, and he accomplishes his purpose. And his triumphant comes out of the pit alive. And the Lord Jesus had gone into the place of death [00:10:03] and come out of that tomb, alive forevermore. It's a wonderful picture. And I just wonder if all of us in this room know the man who slew the lion. If we know the man, the true man, the true Benaiah, the Lord Jesus, who has slain our enemy. My, those people were pleased when that old lion got slain. And aren't we happy? Aren't we glad that Satan has been defeated? Satan's been conquered? And we're identified with the Lord Jesus, and we're no longer in fear.

We might have to pass through the article of death, but we don't fear it. We don't fear its consequences because the Lord Jesus has taken away the sting and the power of death itself. Well, that's a wonderful victory. And I trust that every one of us in this room today knows the one who has conquered Satan and sin and death. So that's the story about the lion. I [00:11:08] thought that might be interesting for the younger ones here. But now I want to talk about the lentils. Now we're not going to have lion and lentils, June, but we're going to look at lentils. Lentils are sort of little peas. They're not much. Lentils. It's humble food, isn't it? It's lowly fare. If you've got a plate of lentils at a restaurant, you think you were at a health farm. But it's not something fancy. You won't get a plate of lentils at a top restaurant. I shouldn't think so. Just some lentils. There's a lot of protein in them. They're good for you. But they're very simple, plain things for poor, ordinary people. Not much to bother about, really. If you had the choice of a good, you know, 16-ounce steak or a plate of lentils, [00:12:01] what would you choose? Well, let's look at some lentils here in our passage. Same chapter. Verse 11. Shammah, son of Aegi the Hararite, was there, and then the Philistines were gathered together into a troop. And there was a piece of ground full of lentils, and the people fled from the Philistines. But he, the Shammah, stood in the midst of the ground and defended it, and slew the Philistines, and the Lord wrought a great victory. What a lovely little story that is. It seems insignificant. Here you've got a fellow looking after a plot of lentils. And God counts him, we might say, as one of the great heroes. And I want to know if there are any heroes like that today, in this room. If there are any people [00:13:04] here who are ready to stand up for their lentil patch. For that little bit of territory that God has given them. You see, it was in the land of Israel. That was the land which was promised to the Jews. It was that plot of land, that territory, which was to be flowing with milk and honey. It was their inheritance. It was what God gave them. It was what they should have prized and valued. And there are always people ready to steal what's worth having. And you get that today, in the theological schools and colleges of the world, who will steal what's worth having. They're truth stealers, and truth twisters, and perverters of God's word.

You might say, wow, the story of the Garden of Eden, well it's just interesting. Not a lot [00:14:06] rests on that, does it? The story of Noah's Ark, not a lot about our salvation rests on that story, does it? The Tower of Babel, that's not so important. We can dispense with those stories. It's not important to believe those. That's how they think, and that's how they reason. And they say, it's just ordinary. It's all right for the poor and the simple. It's just lentils. It's not strong meat. It's just for the kids. You don't have to believe those things. How are you going to counter that? How are you going to deal with a situation like that, where the truth of the Bible is being whittled away, day by day, moment by

moment, by liberals and their duels? Well, it might be like the generality of people. Look, it says, the people fled from the Philistines. Yeah, they all ran away. They were ready to leave their [00:15:03] heritage to another, to people who hadn't come into the land in the proper way, who made a profession of living in the inheritance. We might say today, people who pretended to be Christian, and those who were really Christian, they were on the run, and they'd given up. And they fled before these mighty Philistines, these people who were living in the land of Palestine, living in the land of Canaan, but they didn't come over the Jordan, they didn't know anything about the Red Sea, they didn't know anything about the Passover land, but they were there. And just, you get just that today, you get people in the church, in the churches, in the denominations, they know nothing about Christ being the Passover shed, a sacrifice for them. They know nothing of the Red Sea, and God's judgment on Egypt, and all its powers. They know nothing of what the Jordan will stand for, and being brought into a new land, into favored blessing [00:16:02] and circumstances, to eat what God has provided in that land, the old standing corn. They know nothing of those things, but they're there. Religious people, but they've got no real link with the Lord. And those who do have a real link, those who are the true inheritors of Christ's blessings, the spiritual blessings that we have in Christ, not just in heaven, but in Christ himself, you know, the Christians' blessings don't have their seat in heaven, much higher, it's in Christ himself, in God's heart. And very wonderful, the Christians' blessings, that's your inheritance. The truth of the New Testament that's been disclosed to you, that's your inheritance, that's yours. You know, some people are young. It'll probably be like that with my sons, I'll give them my stamp albums if the Lord doesn't take us all together at the rapture soon, and stamp albums will be left to them. They'll probably never look in them, and they'll never realize the value of my Penny Black, and my Penny Red, and my Tupney Blue, [00:17:05] the first stamps that were ever issued in the world. They'll never realize the value of it. They won't enter into the inheritance. They'll just see them as father's old books and stamps.

It's a pity, really, they couldn't enter into those. But much more important than my old stamp collection, have we got into the truth of this book? This is your inheritance. This is yours. All the treasures of wisdom, the unsearchable riches of the Christ are found in this book. What knowledge do you have of this book? What understanding do you have? What's your conversation about? Are you talking about the scriptures? Are you talking about the Lord's things? What's the central thing? What's the first thing you talk about? Scuba diving or scriptures? What's the first thing you talk about? Mountaineering or what the Lord has said on the Mount of Transfiguration? [00:18:05] What's your first thought? What's your waking thought of? What's your consideration of? What's your meat and drink? It was the food of the Lord to do his father's will. But what's your food and drink? To please yourself? To get on in the world? Make yourself rich? Survive? Be successful? Be prosperous? Build up some dynasty in this world, in this region, which is ripening for judgment? You're despising the lentils. Basic, common, fair, the bread of life.

So simple, yet so good. The Lord Jesus is the bread which is sent down from heaven. It's called the bread of God, which means two things. It means the bread that God gives, but also I think means the bread that God eats. It's what he satisfies himself on, the Lord Jesus. [00:19:03] And it's the bread of God for you, so that you can satisfy yourself on that too. And in that way, you and I can have fellowship with God. It means having something in common with God. What an inheritance. Have you grasped something of this? And what he has done and what he will accomplish in Christ, the head, head over all things, and to the body, the church, those things. Have we grasped those things which pertain to our inheritance? Well, Shammai didn't understand any New Testament truth. He wasn't established in the present truth of Christianity. Of course he couldn't be, but he was certainly established in the Old Testament truth. He knew that God had given him that patch of land, and even

though there were only lentils, which others might have despised, and others didn't think worth defending. And so when the enemy, the Philistine, came in, they fled. But good old Shammai, he stood there. My Shammai, [00:20:04] you better get out quick. Run as quick as you can, they might have said to him. Quick, come on, away. There's a whole troop of Philistines in front of you. You're a fool. You can't stand there alone. You can't defend them. How can you manage? Run for your life. Give it up. Don't look an idiot. Do what everyone else is doing. Come, run. Run and leave what God has given you. Shammai wasn't going to listen to those cries at all. That was folly to his ears. He was going to stand there. And it says, as they gathered together into a troop, there was a piece of ground, it was full of lentils. For them, well, they wanted the land, they wanted territory. But for Shammai, all those lentils, they were like diamonds. All of them. It was full of diamonds for him. Full of gold, full of treasures. The unsearchable [00:21:02] riches of the Christ, we might say. Wonderful things in, just to the ordinary eye, not much.

But to the eye of faith, great treasure. And he was going to stand there. And you know what he did? He stood in the middle of the ground. He stood his ground. He wasn't going to be near the edge so he could make a quick getaway. He was going to be right in the middle. He was going to be wholly identified with that piece of land. He was going to be wholly identified with the truth, we might say, it represented. I wonder whether we're like that. And then it says, and he slew the Philistines. He was a strong man. A man with stamina. A man with fortitude.

There were difficulties. There was the heat of the day. There was the danger of death. He had to be quick moving. There were many all around him. He was surrounded. Where to turn? [00:22:03] Where to look? And how to wield his means of defense? I don't know how he did it.

But he stood his ground. And he defended it. And he slew the Philistines. The whole troop of them. And you know what? He must have been a remarkable man. And he was. But we also learn another little secret. He didn't do the job by himself. It says right at the end, and the Lord wrought a great victory. The Lord stood by me. You know, it was like that with Paul, wasn't it? He was in jail on his own. He said, they all left me. He said, no one stood with me. The Lord stood with me. Stood by me and strengthened me. Shema knew that. Three and a half thousand years ago, three thousand years ago, he knew that. Saul knew it. Paul knew it two thousand years ago. And you can know it today. [00:23:01] Now, I just want to have a little resume of some of the lentils. And have a look at lentils. We're going to have a look at seven different lentils. I hope I'm not twisting scripture by saying that. I want you to glance with me at Acts chapter two. And we're going to look at seven points as quickly as possible. But I want you to have a look at each of those things, which I think all of you have heard about from the earliest days of your conversion to Christ. And you might therefore have regarded them as commonplace. You may, as we say, familiarity breeds contempt. But we don't want to be contemptuous about these treasures. And if we have been too familiar with them and have said, well, that's just very nice. And we're not ready to defend these truths, then we're not like Shema at all. Look here in Acts chapter two. You have to cast your eye down the passage [00:24:05] because I can't possibly read the whole chapter in the time allotted at the present. But you notice that the Holy Ghost comes down. And effectively, in the first section, the Holy Ghost, as he comes down, all those different individuals are baptized into one body. They're united to form the house of God. So we see straight away a single entity has been formed, the house of God. Do you value the truth of the house of God? Paul has to say to Timothy that you might know how you ought to conduct yourself in the house of God. It's a very important truth. It's not understood properly in Christendom generally. And we've heard it every day of our lives, of our Christian lives. And we treat it with contempt. And we're ready to give it up and say, oh, well, I'll go in with some denominational order. There's so few ready

to stand in this lentil patch. I'll give it up and we just join a denomination. Well, that's not the truth of the house of God. That's a perversion.

[00:25:09] God has made us members of one body, not a member of a denomination, not a member even of a saint. Let's stand up for the truth that we are members one of another, that Christ is the head in glory. We're members of his body. The truth of the assembly is just suggested here. It's developed fully in Ephesians and practically in Corinthians and touched on in the other epistles also. Are you going to give that up or are you going to hold on to it with a tenacity which cannot be shaken? Then you'll be a shaman. You'll stand up for at least one lentil. And then the next thing is the gospel. Are you engaged in the gospel? Do you like the gospel or is it a nice thing? Nice thing to hear. Nice thing to see. You might hear on the radio. You might hear it in the street. You might hear about it being proclaimed on the television or wherever [00:26:04] it might be at a stadium somewhere. But are you engaged in it? You know, one of the first things that marked the early church was that the gospel went out in power. Look here, verse 21. It came to pass that it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. What a wonderful message. Paul said he wasn't ashamed of the gospel of Christ for it was the power of God unto salvation. He wasn't ashamed of that. Rome in all its power and ceremony and pomp wasn't going to put him in shame. He wanted to go to Rome and preach the gospel there also. He was so impressed with it. I wonder whether we're impressed with the gospel, whether we really think it's a life-changing message from the house of God. A wonderful message is going out the gospel. Are we ready to stand for the truth of the gospel or are we happy with the modern-day compromises as we see them? [00:27:04] Are we happy with the modern-day compromises as to its presentation? How often it's mutilated, it's truncated, it's diluted.

But the gospel is still the power of God unto salvation. It's the power of God. Look at Romans chapter 1 verse 17. We should glance at that just to catch Paul's remarks on it and we're going to say three things about it there before reverting back to Acts 2. He says, verse 16, I'm not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It's the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth, to the Jew first, also to the Greek. It's the power of God. The atomic bomb is very powerful. Electricity is very powerful. The forces of nature are very powerful. A great tsunami wave would destroy a city on the coast. But the gospel is greater [00:28:08] power than all that. It's the supreme power. That's the gospel. Have you got a grip of that in your soul? That the gospel is the supreme life-changing power in this world today. Then he says it's unto salvation to everyone, everyone, yellow, red, black, and white, all the precious in his sight, but rich and poor, the president and the pauper, the good, honest, upright, clean living man, still a sinner, and the rich in the gutter. It's sufficient for all, for the boy, the naughty boy, and the good girl, or the naughty girl, as the case may be. It's for everyone. You see the gospel is not only supreme, but it's also sufficient to embrace everyone. Has that gripped your soul?

[00:29:06] Are you ready to stand up for the truth of the gospel, which is being assailed constantly? And then there's one other factor in the gospel. It's to everyone that believes. It's not to everyone that goes to Rome on his knees. It's not to everyone that does religious rites. It's not to everyone who's baptized. It's to everyone who believes. The wonderful simplicity of the matter.

The gospel is supreme. It's sufficient. Thank God it's simple. I believe that Christ died for me. You're going to stand up for those lentils? You're going to stand up for those truths? You're going to stand up for those things when the truth generally in this country, and in other countries of the world, are being whittled away? Eventually Christianity becomes nothing but a threadbare carpet, covering nothing. Well, the gospel, second thing you want to stand up for. The next thing, [00:30:06] look here.

You have to cast your eyes over this little section. Verse 38 through to verse 41. It speaks about baptism. End of verse 40. Save yourselves from this untoward generation.

Baptism signifies separation. They said, what shall we do? We're guilty of crucifying Jesus. So he said, repent, change your mind as regard to ourselves, and be baptized. Baptism wouldn't save them as far as eternity was going to be concerned, but it would have a separating effect from that body of people that was guilty of the death of Christ. They would cease to be Jews. It would be final. Now, I think we've all been baptized, those who are believers in this room, [00:31:01] but took of the Lord's supper, baptized. Are you living up to the truth of your baptism?

Are you living separate from the world? Or are you blending in with the world, trying to be like the people in the office, at work, in the street? Want to be like them, behave like them. Listen, you and I have got to be different. We're in the world, but we're not of it. We don't have the same appetites. We don't have the same interests. Are we living up to what our baptism signifies? Are we really demonstrating that we're not of this world? We're separate. You're going to stand up for that? You're going to stand up and be counted, and defend that lentil patch, that portion, which God wants us to be different. He doesn't want us to be like the world. What's the point of being like the world? It's heading for judgment. All its ambitions, all its interests, all its sports, everything. Its education, its politics, all ripening for [00:32:04] judgment. You're going to get involved in that. You're going to pursue that. What are your pursuits? What are your hobbies? What are you giving yourself to? Surely, you can't give yourself to those things which are part of the system where Satan is its prince. You have to be separate from the world in every way. Firstly, in your mind, repent and be baptized.

There has to be the change of mind. There has to be turning. You know, we had this little illustration of, like Jonah did the same thing, you know. God said to him, I want you to go to Nineveh, where the sun rises, and he turned his back on it and went to Tarshish, where the sun set. Well, that's not what God wants us to do. He wants us to be walking steadily in the light and to be distinct from the world which crucified Jesus. Can you love the world? Can you love the world that hated your Lord? You want to be different. Sure. Let's stand up for [00:33:03] that. And there's some other little things here. Verse 42. The early believers, they were a new body of new society, completely different from what anything had ever been before. They were Jews before. Now they had to learn new things. They had to continue in something different, completely different order of things. And they had to continue in the apostles' doctrine. Many people say, oh, we don't want doctrine. We have too much. We want something practical. Give us something practical. Maybe you've heard that. I don't know. Maybe you even thought it. But you know, all doctrine is practical. The trouble is, we're not. We don't put it into practice. Doctrine is essential. We need to learn doctrine. Even the doctrine, the form of doctrine that was delivered to us in respect of the gospel. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. That's doctrine. And the practical response to that is to believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. And many other things in scripture, sound doctrine, which have an immediate practical [00:34:03] requirement. All doctrine is practical. Now, he says, they continued in the apostles' doctrine. You see, that's what the apostles had learned from the Lord Jesus. They'd been with the Lord, and they learned wonderful things in the Lord's company. And they continued in those things. I trust that we're going to continue in the apostles' doctrine. And that comes first of all, of this little list here. Because the next thing is fellowship. Some people say, oh, let's just have fellowship. Let's forget our doctrinal differences and let's be buddies. But that's not the divine order. There has to be a basis of doctrine. How can you have fellowship with someone who doesn't believe that Jesus is God? Can you have fellowship with the Russellites, the people who watched our people? You can't have fellowship with them in any wise whatsoever. So you've got to have doctrine. The doctrinal base is a foundation on which you can

build. And when you build on that, you can have fellowship. If we walk in the light, [00:35:02] we have fellowship with one another. Fellowship is exceedingly precious. And it's having things in common. What does a Christian have in common? It's not scuba diving, not even stamp collecting, not even book selling. He has Jesus Christ. Oh, that we might talk more about the Lord. They speak often one with another. And then in the New Testament, what was the subject matter of what has just happened? They spoke together about the Lord Jesus and his death and those things. They're occupied with him. And what's our conversation? What's our fellowship about? Having a good time, having a picnic together and talking about everything under the sun, but Jesus Christ and his word. Surely fellowship is going to be focused on Jesus. Now, there may be other practical things we want to talk about. And we have a very agreeable time with our friends. Well, there's nothing wrong with that. But if that's the focus, well, we need to have a shift and get focused properly on the Lord and have fellowship, have him in common. [00:36:06] Not only as our actual privilege to have the Lord in common, but have it practically so as well.

Then the next thing, breaking of bread. Breaking of bread. That's a wonderful thing. We've just done that, haven't we? Wonderful. We've done it for years. We love it. And sometimes I think when people leave their little assemblies that we're identified with and they go into some denominational system, what do they lose? They lose heaps. They lose so much. You just think of this. 1 Corinthians chapter 10, the cup of blessing which we bless. That's gone straight away. Tear that out of the Bible. It's in the denomination. It's invariably the cup which he blesses, the fellow up the front. But it's the cup which we bless, something we do together. The mutuality of the brotherhood, the fellowship that we have together, something we do together. [00:37:02] The cup which we bless. It's not the cup which they bless as if it's just the elders or if it's just the brothers. It's something we do together, brother and sister. We do it together. We're priests together, a company of priests, a spiritual priesthood. Those things are lost in the systems of men. Are you prepared to stand up for that simple order which was given to us in the New Testament? Are you ready to defend the lentil field on that matter too? Or are you ready to give it up? Do you prize it above all other things? Would you be ready to stand until you are the last person to stand for the truth like Shema? He was ready to stand even though it threatened him with possible death with a troop of philistines around him. He was going to stand up. Not only the breaking of bread. The breaking of bread also leads to worship. It does say the cup of blessing which we bless. Is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? What does it mention that first in 1 Corinthians 10, whereas in 1 [00:38:05] Corinthians 11 we get the historical order? Well, it reminds us straight away of what we have in Revelation chapter 1, unto him who has loved us and washed us from our own sins in his own blood and made us kings and priests to his God and Father. You see, the blood of Christ cleanses you from your sin and makes you fit to be a priest, to worship the Father. Have we understood what it is to worship the Father? Have we understood what it is to draw near to the Father and to tell him all the glories of his beloved Son? Tell them, tell him of my glory we read today. Are we telling the Father of the glories of Jesus? Are we worshiping the Father? Have we understood that? We might say, well, we give out a hymn. Well, it's good to give out a hymn. You give out hymns. Give out many hymns of praise and worship to the Lord and to the Father and read some scriptures, too. That's okay. I think that's quite acceptable. But, oh, that we might pray [00:39:04] more often. We might express our worship. Maybe we ought to be more like the psalmist. He was indicting a good matter. Are we indicting good matter? Are we talking about good things to the Father and to the Son? You know, Pontius Pilate said, are you a king then? And you know what Jesus said to him? Sayest thou this of thyself, or did others tell thee? And I think that can also be applied. I hope you forgive me for doing so. But hymn writers, you can sing what another hymn writer wrote. That's what someone else told you. It may be useful to say the right things. Sing out a hymn. We love hymns, and I do very much. But, oh, it's much better when you can say it of yourself. You

can tell the Lord how much you love him and tell the Father how much you appreciate the Son. Think of that. Those simple utterances. We've got a brother in our assembly who comes from Chile, [00:40:03] South America, and he's deaf. And he got an operation and he got 30 percent recovered in one ear. And then he came to England. He was going to be killed by Pinochet. He came as a refugee to England. And he came into the truth as we know it. Fifteen years of searching. That's a great story. But he said to me, Brother Edwin, they laugh at me when I speak English. I said, no one dare laugh at you, brother. He said, no, I can't pray in English. My accent too bad. I can't imitate his accent sufficiently badly. It's very incoherent at times. But when he opens his mouth in thanksgiving to the Lord and to the Father, some of the most sweetest and wonderful utterances you could ever hear in the meeting. Brother beloved, don't be ashamed. The Lord says, let me see thy countenance. Let me hear thy voice.

[00:41:03] At the Lord's Supper, there's an opportunity for you to lift up your voice. Not only serve the brothers and sisters, but serve the Lord. Give him his portion with those utterances. Simple utterances. Lord, thanks for your wonderful day. And then the prayer meeting and prayers.

They continued in prayer. I hope you spend time in prayer. I hope you give yourself to prayer.

Prayer is very important. I'm not sure what your weekly program is, but you should really make sure it incorporates prayer. The early Christians did. They did in Acts chapter two. But in Revelation chapter three, Laodicea, they cut out the prayer meeting because they said, I need nothing. You don't need nothing if you've got everything. You don't need to go to the prayer meeting if you're satisfied and rich and increased with goods. Well, it led to their spiritual [00:42:04] detriment at Laodicea. Prayer was one of the things that the early church continued doing. So we've got those seven things, which I'm going to tell you are my lentils for today. The unity of the assembly, the unity of the body, the gospel going out in power, the truth of baptism separating us from this world, the need for biblical sound teaching, the need of fellowship, the preciousness of the breaking of bread, and the essential character of prayer. Now, these seven things were what the early church practiced. Do you want to stand up for those truths? Do you want to stand up for those things until the coming of the Lord? Are you ready to defend your lentil patch? Are you ready to fight against the Philistines who are ready to rob those seven things from the Lord's people at the present time? Well, I haven't got time to elaborate on all those points. As you go from here, maybe you can think about those seven [00:43:06] points, meditate upon them, and think of the implications and the full scope of those truths that are set forth in those seven brief things I've touched on. How important it is to continue in those things that have been delivered to us. May the Lord help us. May the Lord help us not only to continue in them, but defend them, even though there are hostile elements ranged against us. And may the Lord give us grace. And in the end, if we think we've done anything, well, it won't be us at all. It'll only be the Lord that brought a great victory amongst us. May it be so for his namesake, and for the blessing of your home. 278, 278, Savior, we long to follow thee, daily thy cross to bear, [00:44:18] and count all else whatever it be unworthy of our care. 278, Savior, we long to follow thee, daily thy cross to bear, and count all else whatever it be unworthy of our care.

We are not now our own, but thine, the purchase of thy blood.

[00:45:15] Then may, by grace and love divine, the sons and heirs of God, thy spirit to the presence still of all thy Father's love, dwells in our souls, and let me feel the glorious rest of all.

[00:46:08] Thy life is now beyond the grave, our souls thou hast set free.

Thine strength and grace in me we have, for we are one with thee.

O teach us, O the hard to know, of risen life with thee.

Naught we may live while here below, but Christ our life may be.