

The Presence of Christ in Public Worship

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Preacher: Doug VanderMeulen

[0:00] Good morning and greetings from North Dakota where we take the phrase the frozen chosen very seriously! Thank you very much for praying for me on reference to the science religion lunch seminar! It's a seminar that meets weekly. It's open to the public.

and it's hosted by the Science and Religion Department of the University and the Free Thinkers Society of Fargo-Moorhead area.

It's been going on for years. I wasn't even aware of it. But last September, I think it was, I was invited to go because a Lutheran pastor was going to be defending the biblical view of same-sex marriage.

And I was invited to go along just as moral support. And he did a wonderful job. He did a wonderful job.

But the vast majority of the people in the room are not just unbelievers. They are hostile, openly hostile to Christ.

[1:22] And the seminar works like this. You go for a 40-minute presentation, and then you have up to 50 minutes of Q&A.; And so I was intrigued, and I kept going.

And I've been trying to spend more time networking with non-Christian people in the community, especially people of position, to try to give an answer to Christ.

And so the man who was the emcee of this, he's named Davis Cope. He's a professor of geometry at the university.

And so I invited him out to go out to eat, and we were sitting. And I assumed he was an atheist. And I said to him, as a joke, when we got together, I said, I wasn't sure you were going to show up on time or the right location.

Since you're an atheist, everything's random. And he didn't laugh. But then he assured me he was not an atheist.

[2:32] He said he was a naturalist. I said, well, what is a naturalist? He says, well, when us naturalists get together, we make fun of the atheist for being way too religious. So my presentation went very well.

It was very well received in the sense of, you know, graciously. And they even applauded. Maybe they were thankful it was over. But I definitely stirred more conversation than any of the other presentations throughout the year.

And we poked them in the eye graciously, lovingly. That wasn't necessarily the intent. But, you know, we challenged a lot of their untested assumptions.

And it went very well. And after the 50 minutes of Q&A; when I left, there were still people staying around arguing. And so I appreciate it.

And I want an opportunity, I think, to do more. I hope to do a thing on the virgin birth next fall. And, but a couple weeks later, this man named John Heglund, who's the head of the religion department there, and he's way left of left.

[3:51] And he sat and talked with me. And he spoke with me for the very first time after a, you know, subsequent meeting as a peer.

And I took that to be a real compliment and a thanks to the Lord that now I've opened a door to be able to speak to him, not just to some radical right-wing bomb thrower, but as someone who can talk directly.

So I'm hoping to continue that and to share the gospel and to challenge some of the places in which he denies scripture and Christ. And so please keep praying.

Well, this morning I'd like to talk briefly about the presence of Christ in our worship services. Christ is going to be present here this morning and in a wonderful way.

And it's interesting, I think it's interesting, that that's not an issue that's ever really been debated. Even at the time of the Reformation, the Catholics and the Reformed deeply believed in the presence of Christ in the midst of the worship service.

[5:00] Some of you who maybe grew up in a Catholic background might remember the ringing of the bell and God is present. It's not an issue of whether God is present or not.

The debate may have been over how he is present, what means he uses to manifest his presence, but he is present with his people. And that presence is actually part of the gospel promise.

Like Ezekiel chapter 37 says, My dwelling place also will be with them and I will be their God and they will be my people. And the nations will know that I am the Lord who sanctifies Israel when my sanctuary is in their midst forever.

And you remember even in the book of Revelation, when the new heavens and the new earth come, it's God in the presence of the city where the people of God dwell.

And we have a foretaste of that this morning as part of the gospel promise, as part of the good news of Jesus Christ.

[6:06] The Apostle Paul says in Ephesians 2 that Jesus, now in Jesus, you who were formerly have been far off and been brought near by the blood of Christ. And then he says in verses 17 and 19, he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near.

For through him, we both have access through one spirit to the Father, so we are no longer strangers to aliens, but are fellow citizens with the saints and are of the household of God.

God delights to dwell in the midst of his people. You remember in the Old Testament, when they come out of Egypt and there's the tabernacle, it's put right in the middle of the 12 tribes.

And there's all sorts of references. We could appeal to. But the presence of God with his people is one of the great pleasures of God and one of the great promises of the gospel.

And so I want to talk a little bit about how is God present with us this morning. First of all, he's present with us in Christ, but Christ is always present in a Trinitarian manner.

[7:17] I stress that. Some might say, well, that's kind of obvious. But that's not always obvious to everyone. We have certain denominations and associations who claim Christ, and there's like the Jesus Only movement and others.

Whenever God acts and whenever God speaks, he does so Trinitarianly, because God is Trinitarian. One God, three persons. The Father always acts in Jesus through the Spirit.

And God always speaks in his Son through the Spirit. And so when God is present, he comes to us in all that he is, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You think of creation. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. Well, how did he create? Through the Word. And he said, let there be light.

And the Spirit of God was hovering over the creation. God speaks in and through his Word, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

[8:24] And the Spirit comes and attends that Word to see that it accomplishes all of its purpose. And that's happening in the midst of the worship service. The Father is speaking.

He is declaring. He is fulfilling his eternal purposes in the lives of his people. In some cases, bringing the unregenerate to salvation.

In other cases, furthering the sanctification, transforming us from one level of glory to another. But God is present, accomplishing his eternal purposes through Jesus Christ as the Spirit of God attends that Word or attends that presence to bring it to its fulfillment in all that God intended.

You see this also, for example, in the reference in opening verses of the book of Hebrews, where it said, after God spoke long ago through the fathers and the prophets in many portions and many ways in these last days, he has spoken to us in his Son.

He has spoken to us in his Son. And then Peter reminds us that the Scripture is Trinitarian in that he tells us in 2 Peter 1, verse 21, that the Scripture is of no private interpretation, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

[9:47] Just as an aside, I remember when I was first becoming committed to reformational doctrines and worship and piety, struggling with, well, you know, how do you form worship and what role do the Psalms play in worship?

And at our church, we sing from the hymnal that you all have, but we also have a psalter. We love singing the Psalms. And I had heard of the Psalms-only view, and I knew of a man named G.I. Williamson.

Maybe some of you have read some of the stuff. And he's a Psalms-only guy. And I called him, or actually emailed him. I said, if you really want to have Reformed Trinitarian worship, how do you sing only from the Psalms?

And he answered back. He's the same age as my parents. He says, Son, you have not read the Psalms rightly if you have not read them Trinitarianly.

And the Bible is Trinitarian. God always speaks in his Son through the Spirit. And so Christ is present with us this morning, and he's present because his Father has decreed that.

[11:08] And the Father is here in his Son and through the Spirit. So secondly, Christ is present for us through the Scriptures. As we read and quote and sing the Scriptures, Christ is present.

When we think about the Bible, what is the Bible? A lot of times, and many of us who grew up in more evangelically oriented churches, the Bible is treated as some kind of manual.

It's treated as some type of encyclopedia of eternal truths. And that's really very unchristian and very Greek.

It's very pagan Greek. For example, if you read any of Socrates' dialogues, he has this one place where he's talking about you're needing to get out of the body so you can really pursue philosophy.

And he has this play on words. And you don't even need to know Greek at all to hear the play on words. He uses three words, soma, sema, and sozo. You can hear the connection, can't you?

[12:18] Soma, sema, and sozo. Soma is the Greek word for body. Sema is one of the Greek words for the tomb.

And for Socrates, the tomb was the body. And salvation, sozo, is when you finally get out of the tomb and get to go and pursue wisdom and truth and knowledge without the limitations of your five senses.

and all those truths are in that upper sphere that philosophy talks about in those eternal places, the spirit realm. Unfortunately, many people treat the Bible that way, that it's a reference point to all these eternal truths.

Now, it's clear the Bible tells us the will of God, it tells us the way of wisdom, it gives us lots of things to do, but we can summarize everything in the Bible that God has for us to do with two statements, can't we?

Jesus does. Matthew 22. Love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. On these two commands hang the whole law and the prophets. You can summarize everything God has for us to do with those two commandments.

[13:36] Love him with all that you are and love and serve your neighbor. You cannot summarize everything the Bible tells us about God and his purposes in two statements.

My point is the Bible is primarily a revelation of God. It's a revelation of his purposes in Christ that are being accomplished through the power of the Spirit.

The Bible is really a narrative. Think of how much of the Bible is pure narrative. narrative. It's telling us a story. Not a story as in some type of myth that's not true.

Sometimes when we hear the word story we go, oh, that's like, you know, once upon a time. Not that kind of story. It's a true story. God has moved in history but he's telling us in history. He reveals himself to us in history.

Remember the story of David and Goliath. So often we treat the Bible as an encyclopedia of how to live really successfully. We take stories like David and Goliath and we read them and say, okay, now you need to learn to stand up to the bullies.

[14:46] You need to be able to overcome the bad guys and, you know, pick up them rocks and throw them. But that's not why the story was given. The story was to tell us about how God would redeem.

God redeems an entire nation through one person. God redeems an entire nation through the weakest and, humanly speaking, most unfit.

Remember when David says, I'll go fight them? What do they do? They laugh, right? God redeems all of them because of his name.

David says, God's not going to allow his name to be mocked. And all those things you find at the cross. God redeemed an entire nation of the elect through one man, through weakness, in a way that the world just looked at and says, that can't be.

Foolishness to the Greek and a stumbling block to the Jew. The Bible's a revelation about God. Yes, it tells us about how to live. Yes, it tells us God's will. But it's primarily revealing to us and

disclosing to us things about God.

[16:01] In fact, look in your Bibles, if you will, to Luke 24. And you remember there's passages like in John chapter 5.

Remember, Jesus is confronting the Pharisees. He says, you search the scriptures but they testify of me. Moses, he says, wrote of me. And in Luke 24, after the resurrection, he has an encounter first with the disciples who are heading back to Emmaus.

And in verse 26, it says, was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory? Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the scriptures.

And then later in the chapter, down in verse 44, now with his, the remaining 11 disciples, he says to them, these are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, the things which are written about me in the law and of Moses and the prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.

And he opened their minds to understand the scriptures. And he said to them, thus it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name through all the nations or to all the nations beginning with Jerusalem.

[17:20] Moses and the prophets and the Psalms are a narrative, a story about what is God intending to do, through whom is he intending to do it, and how will that be accomplished that we might come to believe and trust and rely upon him.

As Paul says in Ephesians chapter 1 verse 10 that it is God's will that he would sum up everything in the heaven and everything on the earth underneath the headship of Jesus Christ.

This is the eternal plan. And then he lets us in on the story. And he gives it to us in a way that is not only interesting to read but that we can understand.

And he brings it to us in a narrative so that we can see it in real life circumstances and real life situations where real people like you and I live.

and so we can come to learn and trust him. So Christ is present to us through the scriptures because they are about him. And they reveal him to us.

[18:33] But my third point is he is present in the preaching and the singing of the word in a way that I hopefully will put a new spin on it.

Not new as a novel. We don't need novelty. There's plenty of that. But new and a fresh understanding of the old truths. Christ is preaching to us in the midst of the worship service.

God uses his intended vessels. You have no problem with God speaking through people. the word of the Lord came to the prophet Isaiah.

The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah. You read those passages and you receive them as the word of God because it is the word of God. But how did it get to you?

Not by osmosis. Not by some magical incantation. But through a vessel. A human vessel. The New Testament came to us through the apostles on apostles' aids.

[19:42] But in this morning when the word is being preached Christ is using his appointed means to be present with his people to speak. And what's kind of fascinating to me is if you look at if you will Romans chapter 10 where we have this clear chapter on coming to saving faith and many of you who have done evangelism or been training your own children or taught a Sunday school class will have used passages from Romans 10 like call upon the name of the Lord and you shall be saved.

And there's this interesting play that's going on and verse 13 says whoever will call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. Verse 14 how shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him whom they have not heard? Now I'm reading from the New American Standard whom they have not heard.

Some of your translations say how can they believe on him of whom they have not heard? But the grammar here is very specific.

It's having heard him. If you have old King James having heard him. New American Standard having heard him.

[21:09] When we use the word here in English ordinary English speaking people at least in North Dakota we use it I'm supposing Indiana use it this way you use the word here at least two different ways to hear something with your ears and to hear with your understanding every parent knows that every parent has said to their child somewhere along did you hear me and then when there's

no response did you hear me as if it was a matter of decibels well that's not what the parent really means right I asked you to pick up your room you didn't did you hear me did you understand me picking up the room meant now well the Bible uses the word the same way to hear but also to hear in terms of understanding when the and when the when Paul writes this he's writing to Greek readers and when you put the word in the particular case as a genitive case to hear of him it's stressing the hearing with understanding the speaker how will they believe in whom they have not heard how will they believe if they have not heard him

Paul says very similarly over in Ephesians in the fourth chapter in verse 17 he says stop walking like the gentiles and the foolishness of their heart and darkness of understanding and everything verse 20 but you did not learn Christ in this way if indeed you have what heard him and so Christ is going to be here and he's going to be preaching to us and he uses these flawed people called pastors and I think that in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 is this fascinating passage where Paul says that we have this treasure the ministry of new covenant preaching in these clay pots the same God who spoke creation into existence spoke light into existence is going to speak through this clay pot the light of the gospel or show you the light of the glory of Christ through this preaching in order that the surpassing greatness of the power would not be of the preacher but of Christ of God isn't it interesting in our day we have Christian celebrities who are pastors one of the things and this is probably a little bit I shouldn't dwell on this too long but one of my pet peeves now is it seems to me even in reform camps if you really really want to hear the word of God preached you got to go to a conference right got to go to some national conference and they have about a half a dozen! names they cycle through and these are great men godly men they love the Lord and when I hear them preach I am edified by them and I have no problem listening to them but sometimes I think we undermine our confidence in the local church pulpit men men all around the world today are going to stand in a pulpit men who will never warrant a footnote in any church history book who are going to open up the word of God and because it's Christ who's preaching the power of the eternal heavenly father to accomplish all of his purposes in Christ through the spirit is going to be unleashed on people like you and I and so what we ought to do is marvel at the presence of Christ preaching rather than the eloquence of the speaker or lack thereof

I first was challenged to think some of these things when I heard Dr. Bob Godfrey make a comment he's the president of Westminster Seminary down in Escondido where that hosts the IRBS Institute of Reformed Baptist Studies where Dr.

[25 : 53] Renahan is and I heard him speaking one time and he said that he had gone to do some pulpit supply at a church he had never been to a good Dutch Reformed church and didn't know anybody there and he got up and he started off with a little joke to kind of break the ice nobody laughed and then he preached and when you're preaching you're getting nonverbal you get all sorts of nonverbal feedback when you're preaching and there was none and so when the service was over he was heading out to the car and he said he was thinking to himself well you win some and you lose some and this one gentleman came running up to him Dr.

Godfrey Dr. Godfrey I want you to know that it was all that I could do to keep from laughing at your joke and I know I'm not supposed to tell you this but that was an excellent sermon and Dr.

Godfrey says well I think I understand why you don't think you should laugh at the joke but why do you think that you can't tell me that it was a good sermon and the gentleman responded oh Dr.

Godfrey if I was so presumptuous as to tell you this week that that was a great sermon I might be presumptuous to tell you next week it wasn't a good sermon and the issue is how did I do under the preaching of Christ Christ will be speaking today and through the Holy Spirit he's going to be addressing each and every one of us and the issue is not did he go too long did he not go long enough did he have enough stories not enough stories was he funny was he winsome was he judgmental was he none of that the issue is Christ preaching to his people you can ask the different pastors ask John but ask any of the different pastors going to be around this week if they haven't had this experience I bet you get 100% will say yes and since those in the room have heard me say that now you've got to back me up but you get done preaching a message and somebody comes up and says oh pastor that was you were just preaching right at me this morning it was just right it's like God opened up my brain and my heart and let you know and just really what was God saying to you and they go off they start telling you all these things that God was saying to them and you sit there and you think I didn't see any of that what message were they listening to well I believe that was the Holy Spirit working through the preaching of the word of God through the ordinary means of the clay

pot preacher to address because some of you this morning need to be saved some of you this morning need to be more thoroughly sanctified be transformed from one level of glory to another some of you need to be deeply encouraged some of you need to be deeply humbled some of you need to be confessing sin others of you need to be reminded how wonderful your sin has already been forgiven and no pastor knows all that not even with Facebook but God does and so [29 : 25] Christ comes to preach he comes to preach in the midst of his people now in my closing few minutes I want to suggest something that's pushed this his preaching in our midst a little bit further by having you look at Hebrews chapter 10 and I want to do so for two reasons one is when Christ is present what is he preaching and two to further push you in thinking of Christ actually being here to preach when you read Psalm 40 which the writer of Hebrews quotes in chapter 10 Jesus is not just being talked about in Psalm 40 he is the singer of the Psalm again G.I.

Williamson once said that in the Gospels you have the infallible Holy Spirit record of the life of Jesus Christ you read the Gospels you see the life of Jesus faithfully recorded we can trust it but Williamson went on to say in the Psalms you have the infallible Holy Spirit given record of the mind of Christ now New Testament and Old Testament scholars debate over how much of the Psalms is Jesus actually speaking there are Psalms that are kind of about him there are Psalms where he's talking are all the Psalms some of the Psalms a complete Psalm or a portion of the Psalm I am not competent to answer that question but John is and he will do that for you in another Sunday school lesson but clearly in some of the Psalms without having to have any imagination you have the Father speaking to and about the Son like Psalm 2 you are my son today I have begotten thee and Christ responds I will speak of that which God has said Psalm 110 my Lord said to my Lord sit at my right hand you've got these inter Trinitarian conversations going on in many of the Psalms you have Jesus talking in such a way and I believe primarily he's there in terms of the perfect man fully God perfect man when Jesus prayed on earth to his father what did he pray about well the Holy Spirit talked to us about that how did he feel you ever wonder the Holy Spirit has given us insight of that and not just that we would know

Christ but he becomes as the perfect man the example of what redeemed saints pray for and how they feel and how they respond to blessings to trials to sin to failure wait a minute Christ never sinned he never yes he did not in the sense he committed sin but remember the Bible says that God made him who knew no sin to what become sin he very much understood the weightiness of sin as he takes it upon himself and he certainly lived in a world full of sin why did he weep in front of the tomb when he knows he's going to raise up Lazarus if I had been knowing that I was going to raise up Lazarus I would have been saying watch this this is great because he sees and he feels the effect of a fallen world and sin as a perfect man who himself has never sinned in thought word or deed but he feels that he experiences it vicariously and that's recorded for us in the Psalms well in Psalm 40 you have Jesus speaking and it's not my vain imagination that's suggesting that the writer of Hebrews tells us that in chapter 10 he's been talking about the difference between the shadow of the Old Testament and Old Testament worshippers and the Old Testament priests compared to Christ and verse 5 says therefore when he comes into the world he says and then he quotes Psalm 40 who's the he in the context it's Jesus he says this not David Jesus says this about himself and he is addressing his father now you've got this in a Trinitarian conversation the mind of Christ before the throne of his father speaking about that which he was sent to do and to accomplish isn't that amazing that you are actually given windows into this [34 : 35] Trinitarian conversation again let me stress you don't have to come up with some weird mystical interpretation oh I feel like no just read the text allow the ordinary principles of sound exegesis to guide you in the text when he comes into the world he says and he comes and he preaches now he also sings did you know that one reason why we very carefully when the man climbs into the pulpit to preach he has to be careful not to preach what he wants or what he thinks he used to have a quote hung on a wall I don't know what happened to it in one of my moves it disappeared but R.C.

Sproul said something that I'm not allowed to say what I hope the Bible will say what I think the Bible will say what I want the Bible to say I must only teach what the Bible says why because we're preaching the word of God we're preaching Christ he also sings in the midst of the congregation before we get back to Hebrews 10 look back at chapter 2 quoting from Psalm 22 we talk about Jesus being made a little lower in the angels he quotes from Psalm 8 but then in verse 12 he says saying speaking of Christ I will proclaim your name to my brethren so he's in the midst of the

brethren and he's proclaiming he's preaching in the midst of the congregation I will sing your praise in church history the song leader was typically a pastor and if not a pastor a good theologian and if Christ I believe Christ is not only the primary preacher in the congregation he's also the primary song leader he is as the prophet and the priest of God brings the father to us in the preaching of the word and he turns around as that same prophet and priest and brings us on our praises back to God and makes them acceptable now that is going to be a lesson for another day but if Jesus is leading our singing what words are you going to allow to be put into his mouth but that's another lesson that John will clean up the mess on that one later so back in chapter 10 Jesus is preaching and what is he preaching in the midst of his people he stands in the midst of the congregation chapter 2 verse 12 and he preaches to the brethren here we see something of what he preaches verse 5 therefore when he comes into the world he says sacrifice an offering you have not desired but a body you have prepared for me in whole burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you have taken no pleasure then I said behold

I have come in the scroll of the book it is written of me to do your will after saying above now that writer of Hebrews is going to kind of expound or explain that passage from Psalm 40 after saying above sacrifices and whole burnt offerings and sacrifices of sin you have not desired nor even taking pleasure in them which were offered according to the law then he said behold I have come to do your will he takes away the first order to establish the second and by this will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once and for all and in verse 18 he adds and there is now where there is the forgiveness of these things there is no longer any offering for sin remember Cain and Abel they both offered up a sacrifice didn't they and I believe both of the sacrifices were appropriate prior to the fall what was the capstone of the creation week but the Sabbath what would Adam have been doing on the Sabbath prior to the fall worshipping God just like we do and before the fall what kind of sacrifices would he have brought what the writer of Hebrews will later call sacrifices of praise thank offerings which are established formally at Mount Sinai there weren't just guilt offerings they were thank offerings and what would Adam have to be thankful for oh not much just in paradise getting to eat from any tree in the garden freely like all the avocados he ever wants without a cholesterol problem the most wonderful supportive wife I mean what's he got to be thankful for everything life itself and breath after the fall now another sacrifice is required one to cover sin the problem with Cain and Abel is that

[39 : 45] Cain does not bring the sin offering that Abel does he brings the obligatory thank offering one writer put it this way that Cain is the original Pelagian he's coming to worship God and there's no need for forgiveness and that's why his sacrifice wasn't accepted but Abel comes and he offers the guilt offering Christ is saying here in Psalm 40 recorded for us and explained to us by the writer of Hebrews that the guilt offering God the Father never really wanted in the sense that you know as those who believe in the providence and the decrees of God yes the fall was part of history but it was a lapse right it wasn't that God ever took the pleasure in the blood of animals what he took pleasure in is the obedience of his people and the first Adam failed the second

Adam succeeds and the second Adam Jesus comes and says sacrifice an offering you have not desired but a body you have prepared for me a whole burnt offering and sacrifices for sin you have taken no pleasure then I said behold I have come in the scroll of the book it has written me to do your will oh God Jesus comes and he fulfills the thank offering he does the perfect obedience and he becomes the perfect sacrifice and so he removes all of our guilt and shame he takes away all of our sin which is imputed to him and what's imputed to us is his perfect obedience including all of the gratitude and the thankfulness that goes along with that obedience because the obedience that we are to offer is not a reluctant obedience but one that flows from a heart that loves

God with all my heart all my soul in fact it says in Psalm 40 where part that's not quoted that your law is hidden in my heart and I love to do it and so what is Jesus preaching this morning he's preaching to all of us through whatever passage that is opened some to convert some to encourage some to save some to sanctify some to build up and some to humble he's preaching the sufficiency of his perfect obedience that we might stand before God righteous and his perfect death that all our guilt might be taken away or in closing let me just put it this way did you know there was a man in the Bible who was perfectly sinless it's not Jesus there was a man in the Bible was perfectly righteous and innocent who was not fit for heaven do you know who it was Adam prior to the fall what was he lacking merits obedience that's what the whole point of the test of the garden was so if

Jesus just takes away our sin we're not fit for heaven what he must also give to us is the merits the obedience that was required and what Jesus is going to be preaching to every one of us in whatever way we need in whatever way the word of God is opened he's going to be coming and applying himself to our minds and hearts he's present to remind us and to assure us to convict us to humble us to lift us up whatever the need is at the moment that he in his death and his obedience is enough and he is here to love you and to teach you and to unfold you and to lavish upon you the truth of all those things and the spirit of God hovers over the preaching and the hearing of the word to make it effectual God is present here this morning amen let's pray heavenly father we thank you for your presence in the person of Christ and in the spirit both in the preaching of the word and the application and the ordinances now lord we pray in the coming hour that you will bless both the preaching and the hearing that we might go from here having been transformed from one level of glory to another by the power of the spirit working in and through the word to conform us all the more to the image of Christ in whom we pray amen