

Straight from the "Heart"

May 5, 2024

Enemies of Abundant Living (10)



Integrating Hands and Heart

The Apostle's Creed

Opening Prayer

Lord, we offer ourselves, in both gratitude for who you are and in seeking more of your presence, in both remembering what you have done and hoping for all that is yet to come, in both the heaviness of our fears and the lifting fulfillment of faith. Regardless of what is going on in our lives, receive these gifts, receive us, as our way of praising you. **Amen.**

adapted from Herb Mather © 2002 General Board of Discipleship
in Worship & Song, Leader's Edition (W&S-LE)

Call to Worship

Come, let's gather together to call on the Lord out of pure hearts, pursuing righteousness, faithfulness, love and peace, so that we can continue becoming instruments useful for God's special purposes, prepared to do any good work.

Inspired by 2 Timothy 2:21-22

Music As God comes beside us to guide us and walk with us, we gain courage to serve Jesus, our Master and friend. Let's sing

O Jesus, I Have Promised

Words: John E. Bode, 1866 Music: Arthur H. Mann, 1881

2. O let me feel thee near me! The world is ever near;
I see the sights that dazzle, the tempting sounds I hear;
my foes are ever near me, around me and within;
but Jesus, draw thou nearer, and shield my soul from sin.

3. O let me hear thee speaking in accents clear and still,
above the storms of passion, the murmurs of self-will.

O speak to reassure me, to hasten or control;
O speak, and make me listen, thou guardian of my soul.

4. O Jesus, thou hast promised to all who follow thee
that where thou art in glory there shall thy servant be.
And Jesus, I have promised to serve thee to the end;
O give me grace to follow, my Master and my Friend.

Theme

Promises are meant not to be empty words, but to be fulfilled. Promises made where there is no sincere intent to fulfill them are lies – so common in our culture today that it seems to have lost its connection as something that is negative, and people don't even fact check and seek truth, but will believe whatever sounds good to them. In the long run, this cannot have a good result, as this children's story illustrates.

Once upon a time in a make-believe land, two castles were being built. One was the palace of truth. The other the palace of lies. In the real world, every time a child told the truth, a brick was created that could be used for the truth palace, and every time a child did not tell the truth, a brick was built to use in the palace of lies. The spirits would take these bricks and add them to their castles. Both palaces were becoming quite impressive, and both were trying to outdo the other.

So much so that the lying spirits, who were much trickier and more deceitful, sent a group of spirits to the real world to get children to tell more and more lies. They were successful and started getting many more bricks. As a result, their palace became bigger and more spectacular.

But one day, something strange happened in the palace of lies. One of the bricks turned into a cardboard box. A little later another brick turned into sand, and then another turned into glass and shattered. zaaa The lying spirits researched, and it became clear that whenever a lie was discovered in the real world, the brick that had formed from it changed its form and was crushed by the weight of the bricks around it.

The palace of lies became weaker and weaker, and in the end, it completely fell to pieces. That is when everyone began to understand that you cannot build a castle in the make-believe world; and you cannot build a life in the real world, on a dishonest life.

Adapted from "The Great Palace of Lies" by Pedro Pablo Sacristán, freestoriesforkids.com

The Bible says what is done in secret will be found out and broadcast from the rooftops. (See Luke 12:2-3) You may seem to get away with it -- sometimes for a long time; but ultimately it will unravel and collapse all around you. Better to sincerely tell the truth all the time, and if you slip up and fail, to own up to it and take the consequences rather than try to spin more lies to cover it up. The sooner the truth is out in the open, the more solidly you can build your life without the pain and stress and worry of being found out.

Jesus encouraged us to build our lives on the truth of his wisdom – it's be like building on a rock, a solid foundation. But those who failed to listen were building their lives on sand. (See Matthew 7:24-27) Therefore, when trials come, we should earnestly seek God's guidance in our life, giving opportunity for those trials to produce perseverance that will develop full maturity...(See James 1:2-4) Join me on the yellow font.

Responsive Reading 1 (R: Reader, C: Pastor with Congregation)

R: In this process [of maturing], if you do not know how to meet a particular problem, ask God.

C: He freely and generously gives wisdom to all without finding fault, without making us feel foolish or guilty.

R: But ask in sincere faith and don't doubt whether you really want his help. Doubters are like waves of the sea, carried forward by the wind one moment and driven back the next. People of divided loyalties are unstable at every turn.

C: We cannot be loyal to two guiding priorities.

R: Yet, from the same mouth come blessing and cursing. This ought not be. Can a spring supply both sweet and bitter water simultaneously? or does a fig tree produce olives? or a grapevine grow figs?

C: No. We cannot draw fresh water from a salty spring.

R: So how can we say to our friend, "Let me help you get the speck of sawdust out of your eye," when we can't see past the log in our own eye? Instead, you should get into the habit of confessing your own sins to one another and pray for one another, so that you may be healed.

C: Tremendous power is available through the earnest prayers of those who are right with God.

R: And this is our prayer: That your love may increasingly overflow with knowledge and full insight so that you may determine what is best, so that you may live pure and blameless lives. Cleanse your hands [clean out your sinful behaviors] and purify your hearts [clean up your interior life by a single-minded focus].

C: We will come close to God, and he will come close us.

Blended from James 1:5-8, 3:10-12, 4:8, 5:16, Matthew 6:24,7:4, Philipians 1:9-10 (PHILLIPS, NIV, NLT)



Music Therefore, with faith in God's grace, we turn to him God to guide us away from guilty actions and unify our divided hearts. Let's sing these prayer songs.

My Faith Looks Up to Thee

Words: Ray Palmer, 1875 Music: Lowell Mason, 1870

1. My faith looks up to thee, thou Lamb of Calvary, Savior divine!
Now hear me while I pray, take all my guilt away,
O let me from this day be wholly thine!
2. May thy rich grace impart strength to my fainting heart, my zeal inspire!
As thou hast died for me, O may my love to thee
pure, warm, and changeless be, a living fire!
3. While life's dark maze I tread, and griefs around me spread, be thou my guide;
bid darkness turn to day, wipe sorrow's tears away,
nor let me ever stray from thee aside.

Sanctuary

Words: John Thompson and Randy Scruggs

Music: John Thompson and Randy Scruggs

© 1982 Whole Armor/Full Armor Music, ad. by the Kroger Organization

Lord, prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy, tried and true.

With thanksgiving, I'll be a living sanctuary for you.

Repeat

Prayers

Gracious God, God of compassion and comforting strength. You bring life to our dry and weary souls. Revive us with hope and faith through Jesus Christ our Lord. Help us to find and maintain our joy in you, who not only calls us out of the wilderness of sin and into the light and hope of your kingdom, but you have also come to show us the way, to write your will on our hearts, that we may represent you well as your people, to care for the sick and encourage those facing challenges, to walk with those who need your presence, to listen to those who need an ear or even a shoulder.

Petitions Specifically today we pray * for our country (May 2nd was the national day of prayer) and so we lift up our country. * The Melvilles ask prayers for a friend Salley Bowser who had a heart attack Friday. We continue to pray for * Bill Wycoff who is recuperating, * Karen Nowak's sister, * for Earl Campbell, * Jim Malott, Cheri Holt's daughter-in-law Stephanie's mom, Lori, * Stephen Brittain, * for Patti and Carl Didomizio, * Ann Martin, * for people having a hard time financially * Wes, * and for Fran Warthman, for countries and families and individuals who are facing

challenges, and for those on our hearts and minds that we lift to you now in the silence. **Silence**

May our eyes be affixed of Jesus so that we may live, despite our faults, as a forgiven people. Keep us in your presence and give us your wisdom. Open our hearts to gladness and restore to us the joy of your salvation. We pray this in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray -- **Lord's Prayer (sung)**

portions adapted from a prayer inspired by Ezakeil 37, "I'm Just Saying", thepostmodernpastor.com

Intro to and Bible Reading 2



Jesus hears the news that Herod has assassinated John the Baptist. He leaves by boat to be alone, but the crowds saw where he was headed and skirted the lake to be where he was. Even in his grief, Jesus had compassion on them and healed their sick. It got late, so Jesus told the disciples to feed them. Then he sent the disciples across the lake while he dismissed the people, then got alone to pray. Night fell. Meanwhile, a strong wind had risen, and the disciples were making little headway against the wind and waves. Jesus

came out to them. Peter joined him for a minute, and then they got in the boat and the sea calmed. They arrived at Gennesaret. News quickly spread that Jesus was there and people were bringing their sick to be healed, and he healed them.

Summary of Matthew 14:13-36

Some Pharisees and teachers of religious law now arrived from Jerusalem to interview Jesus. "Why do your disciples disobey our ancient traditions? For they ignore our tradition of ceremonial hand washing before they eat."

Jesus replied, "And why do your traditions violate the direct commandments of God? For instance, God says, 'Honor your father and mother ... But you say, 'Even if your parents are in need, it is all right to vow to give to God what you would have given to support them.' In this way, by your man-made rule, you cancel the direct command of God to honor and care for your parents. You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

'These people say they honor me, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship is worthless, for they teach man-made ideas instead of (and as if they were) commands from God.'

Then Jesus called to the crowd to come and hear. “Listen and try to understand. It’s not what goes into your mouth that makes you unholy. It is what you say and think that makes you unclean....

[Then responding to Peter’s question, he explained it to his disciples again] ...

“Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out again? But evil words come from an evil heart and mind and defile the person who says them... but there is no spiritual defilement from eating without first going through the ritual of ceremonial handwashing!”

From Matthew 15:1-11, 17-18 (NLT, TLB)

Music And so we pray that the Holy Spirit will enlighten us not with human customs but with the truth that makes us what we are created to be. If comfortable, let’s stand before the sermon and sing...

O Spirit of the Living God

Words: Henry H. Tweedy, 1935

Music: Trad. English melody; arr. by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

1. O Spirit of the living God, thou light and fire divine,
descend upon thy church once more, and make it truly thine.
Fill it with love and joy and power, with righteousness and peace;
till Christ shall dwell in human hearts, and sin and sorrow cease.
2. Blow, wind of God! With wisdom blow until our minds are free
from mists of error, clouds of doubt, which blind our eyes to thee.
Burn, winged fire! Inspire our lips with flaming love and zeal,
to preach to all thy great good news, God's glorious commonweal.
4. So shall we know the power of Christ who came this world to save;
so shall we rise with him to life which soars beyond the grave;
and earth shall win true holiness, which makes thy children whole;
till, perfected by thee, we reach creation's glorious goal!

Sermon Integrating Hands and Heart

Last week, Paul’s principle of life was to feel free to adapt his lifestyle to the people he was with in order to more effectively present God’s love and grace in Christ to those particular people.

Liken it to many parents and grandparents who may not be fascinated by Sponge Bob or Elmo, or the Pooh gang, or Chutes and Ladders; or other children’s activities, but they watch and listen and play because of our love for the person who is interested in it, and we care about what is important to them.

But some people read into Paul's life not his higher and long-term calling (to effectively present the message of the grace and freedom we can find in Christ), but an insincere person with hidden agendas.

India has a proverb, an "Elephant has two sets of teeth: one to show-off, and the other to chew." The meaning is what a person presents to others may not be what is going on underneath. There may be alternate motives. With Paul, the deeper motives were positive and well purposed. To go beyond the proverb, the truth is that sometimes even the elephant's tusks, while showy, also have some very practical purposes. But most often, the warning of the proverb is that people present one version of themselves, but underneath may have a different, usually more sinister, agenda.

We may believe our behaviors are totally sincere and honest; but deep down, we know, and sometimes we don't know – that there are also additional motives. E Stanley Jones' call this enemy of abundant living: "Insincerity, conscious and unconscious".

Consider the last supper. The disciples gathered and Jesus says one is going to betray him. After three years of traveling together, you'd think they could have figured out who it would fairly easily. But not only did they not know who it was, each of them in their turn asked, "Is it I?" (Luke 22:23, Matthew 26:22) But at least they knew what potential was in their hearts, whereas we like to think of ourselves that there are only pure and unselfish altruistic motives behind all we do. But all of us are still "Christians in the making" and we have not yet fully arrived.

It is not good practice, but sometimes we justify, or at least feel better about our failings by pointing out the failings of others. Jones' reports a lady who fired her maid because she caught her stealing "*her*" Waldorf-Astoria hotel towels. She was morally indignant at someone else's thievery and completely blind to her own. Some like to condemn Judas the betrayer, Peter the denier, the Pharisees as legalistic traditionalists, or the woman's multiple marriages or the one caught in adultery, or the rich man who went away, and modern day examples around them because when they point to them they feel better, even justified about their own betrayals and failures and tendencies to codify their favorite traditions to withhold grace at the expense of others and enrichment of themselves.

Jesus is questioned about the disciples' failure to uphold traditions, and answers that they have used some of those rituals to sidestep the will of God. He illustrates how love of materialistic possessions became more important than honoring

parents. The parents need some tangible help. The children say, “I’m sorry Mom and Dad, all my stuff is ‘Corban’ (dedicated to God); and so, I can’t help you.” They leave their parents out in the cold and keep everything to themselves to enjoy... They dishonor their parents in the name of being faithful...

Jesus explains that it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles. (Course they didn’t have fast food and overly processed foods in that day... 😊) But what we feed our mind and heart is a different story. Just as bad food can make us sick, so can other bad inputs to our senses, our brain and our heart. So as the children’s chorus says, “Be careful what you see, what you hear, where you go, what you do.” But what we eat doesn’t contaminate our *spirit* -- it just goes out again. But if our heart is evil, then what comes out of it in words and actions will lead to all kinds of bad things and that is what makes us spiritually unclean.

Faith is meant to be lived both within and without. Depending upon the personality and the particular circumstance, some people do better by behaving their way into heart-felt commitments. Discipline yourself to do the thing, and the right heart-felt attitude and commitment will follow. Others need to start from the heart-felt commitments that work their way out into better behavior. But however you get there, it is meant to be a holistic, unified effort of actions, thoughts, emotions, words, will, body and spirit all moving toward the desired goal of who we want to be. Honoring parents, and not provoking children to exasperation is supposed to come from a loving heart, not just because “God said so” on stone tablets. When the action is also from the heart, it results in solidifying the individual, which in turn solidifies the relationships, the family, the nation, the world.

But when we consistently act when our heart and mind is not in it, (and the intent is to not behave our way into a changed attitude) when the good acting tusk is only for pretend show and the underlying motive is – let’s just say negative... in the long term, eventually there will be a cost to insincerity. Our responsive reading spelled out a few. We get tossed about like a small boat on a rough sea. We don’t get what we want because we don’t know how to chase it or receive it because we are not sure which desire or doubt is truly sincere. Double-minded, divided desires lead to unstable actions, which means we well may become inconsistent. We can’t be a healthy good tree and supply bad fruit, we can’t be a dead tree and produce any fruit at all. We can’t be sweet and sour and the same time, unless we are a special sauce. It is not that we are one-dimensional people – there are times to be gentle and times to be angry – but if we are not, at heart, purely (singularly)

focused on the consistent principles that in the long term will develop us into what we want to become (under God), then we will be driven by the mood of the moment that may hinder and even short circuit that long term progress.

This will make us ineffective in trying to remove the little flaws we think we see in others, all the while having a log in our own that we cannot see at all. We need to worry more about our own insincerities than the insincerities we imagine in others. If we don't, then sooner or later, people will figure out that we are at cross motives and cross purposes, perhaps even before we realize it ourselves.

Jones says that all these hidden motives will write themselves on the lines of your face, will come out in your eyes, and will creep into your words, your looks, your attitudes. Learn from Rebekah of the Old Testament. Traditionally, the oldest son receives the blessing and inheritance from the father. But her favorite child was the younger son Jacob. So out of her selfish preference (surely justified by the word "love"). (She plotted with Jacob to trick father Isaac into giving his legacy to him instead of his older brother Esau. This greed led to deception that eventually forced Jacob to leave home and be on the run and away from his mother for a long time. So that didn't work out so well. Rebekah, in turn, was out of sorts and frustrated, and lashed out at the servants, saying she was sick and tired of them. But it wasn't really them, it was with herself that she was out of sorts. The cheating she engineered succeeded only in cheating herself of inner peace, so that she couldn't get along with herself or others. (See Genesis 27)

These kinds of behaviors that we may not even recognize as wrong in our own life leads to distrust --

people may have doubts about everything you represent, including your faith.

Jesus called these religious leaders hypocrites – actors presenting a persona. Their tusks are saying and showing valuable goodness, bringing honor to God, but hidden teeth are gnashing out self-important human motivations, and trying to pass them off as God's will.

Another cost is not only will people not trust us, but we will also not be able to trust others. Steven Covey put it something like this: When you observe an action of another, you tend to assign your own personal motivation to their heart. For example, you see someone working on a food line in a rescue mission. And you wonder why they do it. So you ask yourself, "Why would I do it?" I might do it for God's glory, to love people who are hurting, for altruism, or I might do it out of guilt, or the peer pressure of friends, or to let people know how good and caring I am,

for my own glory, or to make some political points with those I am working with. There could be a multitude of motivations. And whatever you find as the primary motive or motives in yourself, you will likely attribute (project the motivation) onto the person you observed serving in the rescue mission line.

To put it in terms of the children's time story – if a dishonest person is comfortable with lying; then why wouldn't that person expect that everyone else will also be comfortable with lying to them? If we lie, we will always wonder if others are lying, just telling us what we want to hear, or not want to hear depending upon the nature of the people and relationship involved.

So what can we do to overcome conscious or unconscious instances of heart impurity? How do we strive to be the pure in heart who will see God? (Matthew 5:3) To be able to stand before God in true, meaningful worship because he has successfully integrated our now clean hands (good, proper actions) inspired and flowing from a purely principled, loyal (undivided) heart? (Psalm 24:3ff) Here are the essence of Jones' suggestions:

First, **humbly seek God**. Draw near to God (not to tell him what to do, but to seek his presence and guidance) and he will draw near to you. We must humbly bow before God in prayer (like the Psalmist) and have him search our own hearts and see if there be any wicked way in me – (and cleanse me from any unrighteousness). (Psalm 139:22-24) Lay your heart open before him. Ask him to show you your inconsistencies. Allow him to bring anything he chooses to the surface.

When he does, recognize them for what they are, and (2) do **not be defensive** about it. That's a tough one. We tend to rationalize them away by justifying our emotions, or "religionizing" them by covering them in pious language. Like the Pharisees, "This is Corban, I *must* keep it for me. I can't give it to you." We re-label stubborn opinions to convictions, condemnation as standing for truth, hate for knowing their fruit, we re-label personal license to sin as freedom, God's will as restrictive legalism, and proclaiming truth as oppressive meddling. We make whatever we want to do --- to sound good and right by our word choices. And sometimes they are what they are, but sometimes they are burying and covering over a less sincere agenda.

Jones was approached by a leading General in one country who was bitter and critical about Christians. He gave a bitter tirade about how insincere and wrong they were. Jones quoted scripture where Peter had just asked Jesus about John,

and Jesus answered, "What is that to you? [You] follow me." (John 21:21-23) The general became angrier and ranted all the more. Jones repeated the quote to him. "What is that to you, you follow me." The general stopped and said, "You got me." And with that, all the pious sounding rationale and the sound reasoning for him to reject Christ and Christianity was put away. In finally being honest, it opened the door for him to deal with his insincere excuses. Bring yourself to God, don't be defensive, and then

(3) **Deal with causes** and not ONLY the symptoms. If we find ourselves inappropriately angry, for example, yes, we need to deal with that particular instance of anger and confess it and make it right. But if we deal only with that minor skirmish and leave untouched the root fear or frustration or self-perspective from which that anger bursts; it likely to recur again and again and again because we have not dealt with the cause, we have only dealt with the symptoms and its consequences. It'll be much more difficult, but if we can dig down deep and deal with what is going on inside, then the next time, the temptation for inappropriate bursts of anger will not be as strong.

Or for another example, if we deal with an act of theft while leaving the root of coveting intact, the temptation will come back again and again. we must deal with the root causes, get them cleansed out of our system.

But be aware that they will try to come back. (4-5) Don't let these insincere motivations sneak their way back into your life. Find an accountability partner or group you can trust and to whom you can confess. If you have to confess to someone you care about and who cares about you, you will be much less likely to let the insincerities back into your life, and finally, (6) keep focus on the pure holy One who sits on the heavenly throne; and on Jesus, the perfect pioneer and perfecter of our faith (Hebrews 12:1-3); and on the Spirit who cleanses us and empowers us. As John wrote: Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure. (1 John 3:2-3)

Communion

Invitation

And one of the best reminders that hones our focus to his grace that purifies is Communion, which is open to all who sincerely desire to love Christ, determine to submit to his teachings, and when we fail, confess to him and allow him to work on

eliminating all our insincerities, so that by his reforming grace and guidance, we are able to faithfully follow in every situation.

Music Let's begin preparing our hearts by singing

Are Ye Able?

Words: Earl Marlatt, 1926 Music: Harry S. Mason, 1924

1. "Are ye able," said the Master, "to be crucified with me?"
"Yea," the sturdy dreamers answered, "to the death we follow thee."

Refrain

Lord, we are able. Our spirits are thine. Remold them, make us, like thee, divine.
Thy guiding radiance above us shall be a beacon to God, to love, and loyalty.

4. Are ye able? Still the Master whispers down eternity,
and heroic spirits answer, now as then in Galilee.

Refrain

Confession

O Lord, too often we are too busy looking at the sins of others without seeing our own sins and weaknesses. We open ourselves up to you. See any hidden infections and insincerities. Allow our rationalizations and explanations to fail us, for we are tired of justifying the logs in our eyes, we are tired of the warring within our own hearts -- and the inconsistent actions of our lives.

Remove our doubts, our counter motivations and cross purposes. With your help, let us go deep into your Spirit until we plummet the clear living water of your presence and power.

Assurance of Forgiveness

Make us clean within of every hidden contradiction, for we want to be harmonious and effective. Give us the mind of Christ, form us into his image, that our intent, our attention, our heart, mind, soul, and strength may be renewed -- that moving from clarity to clarity and from glory to glory; we become mature, pure, transparent souls, that we may sincerely say:

The Great Thanksgiving

The Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

It is right to give our thanks and praise.

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our hearts became impure and our hands unclean, when our love failed, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, brought us to a land flowing with milk and honey, and set before us the way of pure living.

And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. By your great mercy we have been born anew to a living hope through the resurrection of your Son from the dead and to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading. Once we were not a people, but now we are your people, declaring your wonderful deeds in Christ, who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. When the Lord Jesus ascended, he promised to be with us always, in the power of your Word and Holy Spirit.

On the day you raised him from the dead he was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread, and in the power of your Holy Spirit your Church has continued in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup. And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and at home, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, that we may be your living presence in the world, offering his cleansing and purity and strength of souls, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast together at his

heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. **Amen.**

The Bread and Cup

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." [Take and eat]

When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." [Take and drink]

Communion Blessing Now through this sacrament, God unites us with himself and with all his people everywhere. Now renewed and refreshed by his presence, we are sent to build and plant and work for the welfare of everyone. Amen.

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Music Let's sing one more prayer that God's Spirit would purify us in preparation to going and interacting with our homes and communities this week. Stand if comfortable as we sing

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Words: Charles Wesley, 1747

Music: John Zundel, 1870

1. Love divine, all loves excelling, joy of heaven, to earth come down;
fix in us thy humble dwelling; all thy faithful mercies crown!
Jesus thou art all compassion, pure, unbounded love thou art;
visit us with thy salvation; enter every trembling heart.
2. Breathe, O breathe thy loving Spirit into every troubled breast!
Let us all in thee inherit; let us find that second rest.
Take away our bent to sinning; Alpha and Omega be;
end of faith, as its beginning, set our hearts at liberty.
4. Finish, then, thy new creation; pure and spotless let us be.
Let us see thy great salvation perfectly restored in thee;
changed from glory into glory, till in heaven we take our place,
till we cast our crowns before thee, lost in wonder, love, and praise.

Blessing

As we go, may God's presence surround you. May God's Spirit uplift you. May the wisdom of Jesus stand with you through the challenges ahead. May the love of Jesus convince you, in every situation, to love as Christ loves you.

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CCLI # 2561297