Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Hopelessness of Sin
Scripture: Galatians 3:10-13
Code: 80-187

The reason we come to this table, in a word, is because of sin. Everything about the Lord's table talks about sin. Sin is a very unpopular term in our society, very unpopular word in out culture, even in churches there is a rather careful effort to avoid the subject of sin, if possible.

Sin is offensive. Today people don't want to acknowledge their sin. They want to avoid culpability any way they can, place blame beyond themselves, outside themselves.

But the fact of the matter is, the very heart and soul of the Gospel is the issue of sin. Any understanding of the Gospel, and presentation of the Gospel, any comprehension of the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ is based upon a proper understanding of sin. Until we understand the sinfulness of sin and the sinfulness of man, the Gospel cannot have its full meaning.

So we could say, and I think it's fair to say, the most important issue in the Gospel is the issue of sin. It is sin that has devastated every relationship. It has devastated the relationship of man and God, man and man, and man and nature. It has generated cosmic chaos in the heavens between angels and demons.

Sin waits to attack every baby born into the world beginning at conception. Sin rules every human heart, and intends to damn every soul to an eternal hell. Sin has turned beauty into ugly deformity, and the sinner is more concerned to cover his sin than to have it cured. He is more eager to excuse it than to admit it and seek a solution.

The Bible says men are not only sinners, but they love their sin. They love darkness rather than light because they learned to cherish their evil deeds. The Bible calls sin the accursed thing in Joshua 7:13. It is compared to the venom of snakes, it is compared to the stench of rotting death. In fact, the grossest kind of language possible in human vocabulary is used in the Bible to describe sin.

If you want just a simple definition of sin, 1 John 3:4 will work. "Sin is the transgression of the law." Simply put, any violation of God's law constitutes sin. Anytime God's law is broken, that is sin. Everyone who lawlessly violates God's law, in any part, has committed a sin.

So the standard by which sin is defined is the law of God. The standard of sin is not cultural, it is not a matter of cultural values or cultural morals. It is not a matter of some social ethical system that has been established by men. The standard by which sin is defined is the Word of God, the Law of God,

the Scripture in which God has revealed His moral law.

And violation of that is sin. Sin could be titled a number of things: iniquity, transgression, unrighteousness - the Bible calls it all of those things. But the bottom line is, it is in every case a breaking of the Law of God, a violating of God's law, God's expressed will.

It is living as if there was no God, no law, and no consequences. Any act, any word, any thought, any motive that in any way violates God's holy just perfect law is sin. And God is the authority who has established the law. He set the standard for man to live by. Any violation of it constitutes sin.

Now what is the nature of sin, going past the definition. How are we to understand sin? Well, you could understand it in a number of ways, it could be characterized by several things.

First of all, it is defiling. It is not only a defection from the standard, it is a pollution. It is to the soul what rust is to metal. It is to the soul what scars are to a lovely face, what black ink is on white silk. It is a pollution. It is filthy rags, according to Isaiah. It is like the oozing sores from a deadly plague in 1 Kings 8:38. Zachariah 3:3 describes sin like vile, filthy, putrid garments.

So sin is seen as more than just some ethical breech. It is a polluting thing. It degrades man's nobility. It stains his soul, it darkens his mind. According to Zachariah 11:8, it is so polluting that it causes God to loathe the sinner. And, according to Ezekiel 20:43, it is so polluting that it even causes the sinner, who genuinely sees himself as he is, to loathe himself.

Listen to what Ezekiel said: "And you will remember your ways and all your deeds with which you have defiled yourselves, and you will loathe yourselves in your own sight for all the evil things that you have done." Sin pollutes, defiles and stains - Paul calls it the filthiness of the flesh, even to the degree where not only God is offended by the pollution, but so is the sinner.

Thomas Goodwin, the Puritan, wrote, "Sin is called poison, sinners, serpents. Sin is called vomit, sinners licking dogs. Sin is called the stench of graves, sinners rotted seplicurs. Sin is called mire, sinners, pigs." It has made man a defiled and deformed being.

Secondly - and this connects with what I said in the definition - sin is rebellious. It demonstrates that man at heart is a rebel. In Psalms 12:4, the sinners say, "Our lips are our own. Who is Lord over us? We will say whatever we want to say. Whatever comes out of our mouth is what we desire to come out of our mouth, and nobody is going to take charge over us."

Jeremiah 2:31: "We are lords, we will come no more to you. We don't want a thing to do with you, God. We'll run our own lives." Rebellion. In the ubiquitous words that we've heard repeated over the last few days, it seemed to be the by word for the life of Frank Sinatra, I'll do it my way.

The Hebrew word for sin is the word pasha, and it signifies rebellion. That's what it means. Jeremiah 44:17: "We will certainly do whatever things goes forth out of our mouth." We'll do exactly what we're gonna say we're gonna do.

Sin is then God's would-be murderer. Sin is doing it my way. Sin is dethroning God, ungodding God, if there was such a concept. And the sinner replaces God. What blasphemy. Sin is defiling and sin is rebelling.

Thirdly, sin is ingratitude, gross ingratitude. Romans 1 points out the fact that God has created everything and given it to man for his enjoyment and to lead man to God so that man is without excuse, but man has turned on God. And Paul says in Romans 1, "He is not thankful."

That is one of the heinous crimes that sin commits against God's goodness in gratitude. God had given us life, He's given us breath, He's given us beauty. He's given us food and joy and love and adventure and knowledge, wisdom, fun, laughter, skill, health. A world full of goodness. And the sinners surrounded by God's goodness mocks God, abuses His privilege.

It's like Absalom. You remember Absalom, the son of David. As soon as David, his father, had kissed him and hugged him, taken him into his heart, Absalom left his father's kiss, went out and plotted treason against his father. So the sinner indulges in the embraces of God's goodness in the world that God has made for him, and then betrays him by being only the friend of Satan, God's archenemy.

Sin is gross ingratitude. Deuteronomy 32:6 says, "Do you thus requite the Lord o foolish people and unwise. Do you think you can get away with this? God being so good to you and you repay Him with your ingratitude?"

Fourthly, sin is incurable. It is incurable. Jeremiah 13:23 says, "Can the Ethiopian change his skin or the leopard his spots?" Obvious answer, no. "Then may you also do good that are accustomed to do evil." You cannot change yourself at all any more than a leopard can change his own spots or an Ethiopian change the color of his skin. You have an incurable leprosy of the soul.

John Flabble, the Puritan, said, "All the tears of a penitent sinner, should he shed as many as there have fallen drops of rain since the creation, cannot wash away one's sin. All your sorrow, all your self-effort is useless. The everlasting burnings of hell cannot purify the flaming conscience from the least sin."

Hell is when, is where men pay an unpayable debt, that's why it's forever. There is no human cure. Not good works, not reformation, not education, not morality. Sin is absolutely incurable. "The whole

head is sick," Isaiah says, "and everything else in the body is defiled" - Isaiah 1.

And ultimately, of course, sin is deadly, it is deadly. It is defiling rebellious, ungrateful, incurable and deadly. "The soul that sins, it shall die," said Ezekiel. And Jesus, of course, says to the Jews, "You will die in your sins, and where I go you can never come." And the apostle Paul says, "The wages of sin is death."

So here is this terrible, terrible blight on humanity. Defiling, rebellions, ungrateful, incurable, deadly sin. You would think that people would run from it. You'd think they would flee from it. You'd think they would race toward a cure. But just the opposite is true. They love their sin, they love their iniquity and they work very hard at it. Sin, by the way, is hard work. This defiling, rebellious, ungrateful, violation of God's law, which is incurable and ultimately deadly and damning is hard work.

Jeremiah 9:5 says, "They weary themselves committing iniquity." Psalms 7:14: "They travail with iniquity." In other words, they're literally having labor pains trying to give birth to some evil they want to do. Their lust drives them into all kinds of complex machinations to achieve their sinful objectives.

Proverbs 4:16 says they can't even sleep unless they do evil. Their hearts are restless. They can't even go to sleep unless they've fulfilled their lusts. They'll lie awake with all their passions racing. Isaiah 5:18 says, "They sin and then they drag their sin around as if they were a beast of burden pulling a cart." More sin than they can carry on their back. It's literally a burden to be dragged around. They work at it like a beast of burden.

Ezekiel 24:12 said about the people of Jerusalem, "They had wearied themselves with lies, wore themselves out, concocting deceptions." Somebody said people go to hell sweating.

How many people are affected by sin? Everybody. Absolutely everybody. For all have sinned and come short of the Glory of God. No one escapes. "There is none righteous. No, not one," Romans 3 says. We are all sinners. "Whoever says he's not a sinner is a liar," 1 John says.

This infects everyone in the human race. And the major problem is not what's going on around you and it's not what's done to you, the major problem is you and me. What are the results of this sin, which is in the very fabric of our life, which is part of us as humans from the time of conception. When David said, "In sin did my mother conceive me," he didn't mean he as an illegitimate child. He meant that from the time of conception, sin was a part of his being. It was there woven into his very being.

What are the results of it? It causes evil to overpower us. People come into the world and with all the best intentions are inevitably overpowered by evil. It overpowers their mind, it overpowers their will, it overpowers their affections, it overpowers their choices, it overpowers their acts. It takes control of

their affections.

It also brings them under Satan's control. They walk according to the prince of the power of the heir. The spirit that works in the children of disobedience. They're children of the Devil. They do the deeds of their father, the Devil. They're slaves. It brings them, therefore, under God's wrath. They are children of wrath. They will be the objects of God's wrath.

It subjects them further to all the miseries of life. Man is born into trouble as the sparks fly upward. Romans 8:20 says that men are subjected to futility. Isaiah puts it this way: "There's no peace of the wicked." You see sin causes evil to overpower us, brings us under Satan's control, brings us under God's wrath, subjects us to all the miseries of life.

Sin causes the heart never to be satisfied, never to be satisfied. And all the best of life when you've gained brings you, as what Solomon said, "Vanity, vanity, all is vanity. Empty, empty, everything is empty."

And then finally, sin brings the soul to eternal hell. The soul that sins dies, and when it dies, it goes into eternal hell, the lake of fire revelation calls it. The doctrine of hell is developed in the Bible by Jesus himself. In fact, it's safe to say Jesus is personally responsible for the doctrine of hell.

The apostles sort of reinforced what Jesus taught. There is no clearly defined doctrine of hell in the Old Testament. There are, of course, bits and pieces of it, but the real doctrine of hell is clearly articulated and defined by Jesus himself. The loving, gracious, merciful savior was the one who defined the doctrine of hell for the obvious reason that He wanted to be sure men and women understood where their sin was taking them, and how important it was to turn to the provision of forgiveness that God offered in Him. Sin is a deadly thing.

Summing all of this up, we could safely say sin has pronounced a curse on every human being, and that curse has temporal implications and eternal implications. In time and in life, it brings to all of mankind pain and suffering and sorrow and trouble. And in eternity it brings eternal judgment and eternal punishment.

Now with that in mind, turn in your Bible to Galatians 3. I know this is not a happy subject, but it is a necessary one because it is the foundation of the joy that we have in Christ. In Galatians 3, we read the definition of our sinful condition that's a little different but ties in well. Verse 10: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse. For it is written, cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law to perform them."

Very simple statement made here. It is this: if you ever broke God's law one time, you're cursed. You're cursed. If you don't abide by all things written in the book of the law at all times and perform

them all in perfection, you are cursed. Cursed in time and cursed in eternity. This is the curse of the law. It's also referred to in verse 14: the curse of the law.

And in verse 10, Paul is quoting from Deuteronomy 27:26, which says, "Cursed is everyone who doesn't abide by all things written in the book of the law to perform them." God gave his law and God said, "Break it and you're cursed."

Now most people don't think like that. They think, well, yes, there's a law, there's a moral law. Maybe God gave them moral law. And if we make a good, you know, running effort to keep it now and then, if we feel bad when we don't but we sort of make an honest effort, that's all that that's required. God's moral law is summarized in the 10 commandments, has a good ethical system, something to strive for.

Adherence to that constitutes a very religious and somewhat noble person and not everybody can do it to the max and not everybody can do it perfectly. But if we make a nice shot at it, God will sort of pick us up and dust us off like you would do when you're little boy is learning to walk and he stumbles. You don't beat him for that, you just pick him up and help him do a little better.

Isn't that how God is dealing with us? Isn't it the case that we're just kind of stumbling along in our sort of infancy and we don't have the capability to keep it all all the time and the Lord just kind of picks us up and helps along as we stumble? No.

The way God's law works is break it once and you're cursed forever. If you fail to obey God's law at any point and you're cursed forever. That's what the Scripture says.

What is a curse? Well, a curse is simply a pronouncement of judgment. And that's exactly what it is. It would mean to be devoted to doom in the Hebrew. It means devoted to destruction, despised, set apart for judgment. Bottom line, you break God's law at any point, you will be judged by God. "Cursed are all who do not persevere in doing everything written in the law all the time."

Now, this is an impossible situation. That's exactly right. It is absolutely impossible. You can't keep the Law of God. Therefore, we're all cursed. That's exactly what Scripture says. We are all cursed, we are all on the way to hell, we are all children of wrath under God's judgment.

What is the nature of this cursing? Well, if you were go back into Deuteronomy 27 and 28 - you don't have to do that now - but you will read - I'll read just a few excerpts - you would read about what curses God pronounced on people. They've violated his law. To dramatize what they meant, listen to what God says - and I'll give you some excerpts from Deuteronomy.

"The Lord will send upon you curses, confusion and frustration in all you undertake to do until you're destroyed and perish quickly on account of the evil of your doings. The Lord will smite you with consumption" - that's a plague - "with fever, inflammation, fiery heat, with drought, with blasting, with mildew. The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You shall go out in one way against them and flee seven ways before them.

"You shall be a horror to all the kingdoms of the Earth. Your dead body shall be food for all birds of the air. For the beast of the Earth, there shall be no one to frighten them away. The Lord will smite you with madness, insanity, blindness, confusion of mind. You shall grope at noonday as the blind grope in darkness.

"You shall betroth a wife and another man shall lie with her. Your sons and your daughters shall be given to another people. It shall not be in the power of your hand to prevent it so that you should be driven mad by the sight, which your eyes shall see. You should become a horror, a proverb, a byword."

He's describing, of course, what's gonna happen when the captivity comes and the judgment of God falls upon them. But he's talking about temporal judgment here. "Because you didn't serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart" - obvious he didn't keep His law - "the Lord will send you hunger and thirst, nakedness, want of things. You shall eat the offspring of your own body" - cannibalism - "the flesh of your sons and daughters" - and that's what happened in some of the horror of the famine that occurred when Israel was being under siege.

Talks about women doing the most unthinkable things. Eating their own children. "If you are not careful," it says in that passage, "to do all the words of this law, which are written in this book that you may fear this glorious and awful name the Lord your God then the Lord will bring on you and your offspring extraordinary afflictions, afflictions severe and lasting, sickness, grievous and lasting," and it just goes on and on like that. In the morning, you're gonna say, "I wish it was evening," in the evening, you're gonna say, "I wish it was morning."

The Psalms are also full of curses. "God will shatter the heads of His enemies, add to them punishment upon punishment. Return sevenfold into the bosom of our neighbor that taunts with which have taunted thee o Lord. Let there be none to extend kindness to him or any to pity his fatherless children. Happy shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock."

Such strong language. C.S. Lewis said in some of the psalms the spirit of hatred strikes us in the face like heat from the furnace. And R.N. Benson wrote in 1901, a book entitled *War Songs of the Prince of Peace*, and it he said no less than 39 psalms were war songs. Talking about God's wrath.

One study in 1974 concluded that 84 psalms were not fit for Christians to sing. The prophet Naem said, "The Lord is a jealous God avenging, the Lord is avenging and wrathful, the Lord takes vengeance on his adversaries, keeps wrath for His enemies. Who can stand before his indignation, who can endure the heat of His anger. His wrath is poured out like fire and the rocks are broken asunder by Him." So it goes.

Jeremiah said, "Behold the day of the Lord comes cruel with wrath and fierce anger, a desolation in the Earth, destroy sinners." "God's wrath" - Romans 1:18 says, "it's revealed from heaven against all unrighteousness and ungodliness of men." And even Jesus pronounced curses. It was Jesus, you know, who said, "Depart from me you cursed into everlasting fire," Matthew 25:41.

It was Jesus who pronounced curses on Besaeadicof _____. You see, inability to bring the law puts us under curse, a real curse. Not an imaginary one, not a fanciful one, a real curse, a curse from God himself. And Romans 12:19 says, "Vengeance is mine. I will repay." The effect of God's curse is judgment, doom, destruction and it will come.

The law then becomes a tool for a curse rather than an instrument for salvation. You can't be saved by the law because you can't keep it. It just curses you. It's a holy law, it's a just law, it's a good law, it's a right law, it's a true law, it's ethically exactly right, it's pure, it's true to the character of God. There's nothing wrong with the law itself. It's you that have a problem. You can't keep it. Consequently, you can't be saved by it. So all the law does is curse you because of your inability to keep it.

Thinking about that for a moment. That phrase, the curse of the law - the law literally sort of exacts the curse. Think about this. I'll give you several thoughts about the law. The law requires behavior contrary to human nature. The law of God asks you to do what is not normal. It asks you to behave in ways that are not normal. In fact, it asks you to do what you don't want to do. It asks you to love what you hate and hate what you love.

It calls for the very opposite of all your longings, all your desires and all your lusts. It asks you to change your natural desires for what is undesirable and unnatural. That's what the law asks you to do. Secondly, it not only demands what is contrary to human nature, but it demands what is impossible. The law is not only against your will and your wishes, but could you will it and wish it, you couldn't do it.

Sinners can't do holy deeds, think holy thoughts, speak holy words. They don't have the ability to do it so they are forced to do the impossible. There's none righteous. No, not one. By the deeds of the law shall no one be justified. It's impossible.

Thirdly, it requires perfect performance of every part. The law is a severe creditor that demands perfect compliance. You can't get a discount on the law. It demands nothing less than absolute perfection. That's not possible. It asks unwanted, impossible things to be done and to be done perfectly. "Be perfect even as your father in heaven is perfect. Be holy even as I am holy," God says.

We're held up to an exacting, perfect standard we don't want, can't attain, and we have to keep it perfectly, and nothing short of that counts. In fact, we could say fourthly the law refuses to accept good intentions and effort as a consolation. Even if he had a few good desires and meant to do well and wanted to do well and gave it a best effort, intention counts for absolutely nothing because the law has no consolation bracket. Trying doesn't count. Even trying hard doesn't count.

Furthermore, the law accepts no payback plan. That is you can't say, "Well, I've violated a lot of it in the past now I'm gonna keep some and make up for the past." You can't make up for the past. You can't present present and future good deeds to work off your past debt. The debt is never discounted and never repayable. If you were to break the law once in the beginning of your life, lived the rest of your life a perfect life, hypothetically, you would be damned by that one time. There is no accumulated merit plan that can undo any past iniquity.

On the other hand, if you kept the law your whole life and broke it on your deathbed, it could damn you. You can't accumulate merit to pay off sins in the future. You can't accumulate merit to pay off sins in the past either.

Furthermore, the law is unrelenting taskmaster. It never lightens up, it never eases off, it never backs away, never relaxes the requirement, never gives the sinner a moment's rest, doesn't say, "Take next Tuesday off. You can do whatever you want, it won't count." Never does that. No days off.

Furthermore, the law shatters happiness. When you measure your life against the law, it's crushing experience. It's like a steel rod smashing a clay pot like a hammer breaking a pane of glass. You live with shame and guilt and restlessness and sorrow and fear and pain, dissatisfaction, futility, doubt and hopelessness, you can't find relief. The law furthermore requires the severest penalty held with no parole. No time off for good behavior.

And the law makes all these demands and doesn't help. It has no strength to give you, no power, no plan, no assistance, no method. It offers no salvation, listens to no repentance, doesn't care about your remorse and penitence, provides no grace, no mercy, no forgiveness, offers absolutely no hope. That's what the law does. That's the curse of the law. And that's where every sinner is cause he's violating God's law. He's under that curse.

And consequently he is gonna feel the effect of that curse in time and, monumentally, in eternal hell. And everyone who has broken one command of God's law is in the cursed category, and that includes the whole of human race, with the exception of the one sinless one, the incarnate God Jesus Christ. All men are included.

Now that takes us the Gospel. Verse 13: "Christ" - Galatians 3 - "redeemed us from the curse of the law." Well, that is the good news, and that is the great truth of Christianity. That's what we talk about, that's what we preach. Redeemed is to buy us, buy us out. Ezagaradzo, a garadzo, from agura, the marketplace. Out of the marketplace. You came, we were slaves, we were for sale in the marketplace, he bought us and took us out. He ransomed us, paid the full price.

It says in Galatians 4:5, "He redeemed those under the law, and brought them into the family and made them sons by adoption." He bought us out from under the curse. He did that. How did He do that? Verse 13: "Having become a curse for us." How is that God could let him do that? How could Christ buy us out from under the curse? Only one way: he became a curse for us, He became a curse for us. Jesus literally took our place. He absorbed the full curse of God against us. He took the curse on himself. That is the great significance of His substitutionary death. And that's the Gospel.

It says in Romans 5 - and this is a definitive passage - verse 6: "While we were still helpless, at the right time, Christ died for the ungodly." He died for us. That's the issue. He died for us. He died in our place. God unloaded the full blast of the eternal curse on Jesus on the cross. All the full fury of God's wrath fell on him as he took our place, paid the price for our deliverance from the curse of the law.

And then Paul sees a graphic way to illustrate this at the end of verse 13. "And he remembers" - Deuteronomy 21:23, which says, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." This is a very good illustration. Criminals in the ancient Hebrew time, under mosaic law, were executed usually by being stoned to death. The literally would be placed down on a hard surface below the people with the stones who would then just throw the large rocks until they crushed their life out.

After the person was stoned they were they, the corpse was then taken, and frequently tied to a post in a very visible place. Displayed to bring shame upon the person for the crime committed, serious warning to the rest. Tying to a post stated that they had been cursed by God. In other words, they had violated God's law and they felt the fury of God's judgment. They were rejected because of their sin. They were symbols of cursing, and that's what Deuteronomy 21:23 is referring to when it says, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." When you see a person there, you're seeing evidence of the curse of God upon them, the judgment for sin.

Well, Paul sees Jesus on the cross like that, like a cursed and executed criminal, rejected by God for his sin. He's hanging there as a symbol of the wrath of God against sin. Jesus took the curse for us. He became the cursed for us. He bore in his body our sins on the cross. He who knew no sin became sin for us. That is the great reality of the death of Jesus Christ.

And that's why we come to this table because this is what Christianity's all about. It's all about people who have been forgiven of all their sin because Jesus bore the curse. You say, well, how does that occur in the life of an individual? By faith, by faith? In Galatians 3:24 it is, yes, it says at the end, "We are justified by faith," by faith.

If you believe that Jesus died in your place, if you believe that Jesus is God, came into the world in human flesh, died on the cross in your place to be your savior, bore the fury of God, absorbed the full curse, if you believe that He died in your place, rose again from the grave having given evidence of satisfying the wrath of God.

When He came out of the grave, God was affirming the fact that Jesus was a satisfactory atonement, a satisfactory substitute and God raised him from the dead to demonstrate that. If you believe that Jesus accomplished your redemption on the cross, died in your place to provide you forgiveness of sin because the price was paid by Him. Then all you need to do is invite Him to be your savior, forgive your sin, confess Him as Lord, and by that act of faith, the curse is removed from you and placed upon Him.

What a tremendous truth. This is the Gospel. The Gospel is the good news, isn't it. What good news that a whole human race cursed to an eternal hell under the vengeance of God, cursed by God, can be free from that curse to enter into the glories of eternal heaven, and, in time, enjoy peace and all the blessings of God simply by an act of faith in the one who died in their place. That's the Gospel. And all of us who know Christ, all of us who are saved, all of us who are true believers, come to this table over and over and over again with hearts that are filled with gratitude and thanksgiving for what the Lord has done.

I hope it's never becoming commonplace to you. I don't care how long you've been a Christian, I don't care how many times you've been to the Lord's table, I hope it is not a commonplace thing for you. I hope there is such exhilaration, such joy, such gratitude here, such a welling up of worship in your heart that every time you do this it is as if you've never done it before. There's such a freshness to this because you do understand what your salvation really means. You have been saved from eternal wrath. What a profound source of worship and thanksgiving that is.

Let's pray together. Lord, thought he symbols are familiar, and you wanted them to be, the surroundings are familiar, the great reality of the cross is familiar. O Lord, we pray that there will be a joy and a freshness as we share in this table, as we contemplate again and to fresh the greatness of

our salvation. Jesus took the curse for us.

As we think about people all over the world who've never had the privilege of hearing the Gospel, who've never come to know Christ, who have no forgiveness, who have no hope. We are grateful. We are mystified as to why you would chose us, but we're grateful. And we want to express that gratitude by being obedient to you. You have commanded us to come to your table, to partake of the bread, because the bread is the symbol of your body given for us in a fitting remembrance. Partake of the cup because the cup is that which reminds us of your blood shed for us, your life given for us.

You've asked us to do this with hearts filled with gratitude and so we come. You've told us not to come in an unworthy way, not to come thoughtlessly, not to come holding on to some sin, but to come penitently and grateful and that's how we come.

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