

A Most Generous God

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Bible Verse: Psalm 65
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Well, as we come to Psalm 65, I just want to set the tone by giving you a sense that this Psalm is a praise to God for his goodness. We are in the week in which we celebrate Thanksgiving and it's just so important to remember why we give thanks and to whom we give thanks. We give thanks to the God who has revealed himself in Scripture and in the Lord Jesus Christ, and we give thanks to him for all of his bounty, all of his goodness. He is a most generous God and if there's anything that I would want to leave a mark on the congregation at Truth Community Church, it would be a sense that moves us away from a view that God is perhaps stingy and difficult to please into one that views him fundamentally as one who is generous, who delights to bless us, who loves us with an everlasting love, who has shown us immeasurable kindness that we do not deserve, and it's because he is like that and he has done that, that we give him thanks and give him praise as we gather together here this evening.

So Psalm 65 is a text that brings us to that theme and gives us that sense of response that is an appropriate response to prepare our hearts for coming to the Communion Table. As we've said many times, as Scripture says so clearly, we're to come to the Communion Table in a worthy manner, meaning that we have examined our hearts for sin, we've confessed them and repented of any known sin that we might have, and we come with a sense of recognition of what Christ has done, of the sacrifice that he has paid for our sins, of the generous way that he poured out his blood for unworthy sinners like us that we might have our sins forgiven, be reconciled to a holy God, and be carried off into heaven when we die, and that we would be the recipient of the gift of eternal life. These are magnificent transcendent realities of which we speak, that God has been good to unworthy sinners, that Christ has come and shed his blood, that the Holy Spirit has applied that to our hearts and given us new life and brought us into the family of God and sealed us in a way that can never be broken. This is a wonderful gift and this is a gift that comes from a most generous God.

So Psalm 65, what we're going to see is that this Psalm extols God, it praises God for three different aspects of his goodness, and we're going to look at those as we go through the text one-by-one. First of all, we see that God is a generous God in the fact that he is the God who forgives sin. He is the God who forgives sin and David expresses his intent to praise God from the very start of this Psalm.

Look at it there in verse 1 with me. It says,

1 There will be silence before You, and praise in Zion, O God, And to You the vow will be performed.

And it's interesting, isn't it, that it starts on a note of silence. We don't often use silence as a means of praise, particularly in corporate worship, however it is a fitting response to God and if we grasp something of the majesty of his being, the majesty of Shekinah glory, the majesty of the Incarnate Christ, the majesty of the blood shed on the cross for our sins, the majesty of the wonder of Christ crying out from the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me," and we realize how lofty and noble these things are, then silence is an appropriate response, we realize that we are overwhelmed, we're in the presence of someone so much greater than us that there are appropriate times where we would simply cover our mouths and be silent before him.

The Prophet Habakkuk spoke to this at the end of chapter 2 when he said, "the LORD is in His holy temple. Let all the earth keep silent before Him." The holiness of God generates a response of worship and genuine awe and a sense of holy reverence that brings us to a place of silence, and if you're conscious of your sin, conscious not only of individual acts of sin but of being a rebel sinner before God and you come and Christ saves you, then there's a sense of awe and majesty and wonder and silence that comes upon your soul, a quietness that says it's time for me to stop talking and simply contemplate the majesty of what these elements represent, a body, a true human body, truly suffering on the cross on my behalf, the juice representing the blood that was genuinely shed, that precious blood of Christ that was shed for our sins without which we could not have been redeemed for the Bible says that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sin.

So my friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ, as we come, we come with a holy earnestness here this evening, we come with a hushed soul, hushed lips, and bow in silent worship before our God in light of these great realities. One commentator said this about commenting on verse 1, he said, "Silence may sometimes be the height of worship as we fall silent before God in awe at His presence and in submission to His will." So there is a holy hush that comes at times when we contemplate the greatness of Christ, the majesty of God, and the wonder that he saved unworthy sinners like us and so this has a cleansing effect, it has a purifying effect on our souls. In this age and in this culture of just talk, talk, talk, and fight, fight, fight, all of the agitation that goes on and all of the division and people getting stirred up and wanting to fight back is a place for you and I as Christians to step back from all of it, close the door and lock it to keep it out, and to approach God in a silent spirit that recognizes something of the majesty that is intrinsic to his essence.

Looking back at verse 1 there, and you can see that he intends the silence to be praise in the parallelism of the text, "There will be silence before You, and praise in Zion," that poetic name for Jerusalem, "silence before You, and praise in Zion, O God, And to You the vow will be performed." And so the vow was a promise that is made that, "I will thank You when You bless me." It's a promise of thank offerings or songs of praise that

are made to God in anticipation of his blessing in that Old Testament economy, and now the blessing has arrived. As we read through the rest of the Psalm, what David is saying here at the start is, "Lord, we prayed for Your blessing in the past, now You have blessed us and I come to fulfill my vow. I come to keep my promise to praise You that I made in the past. Now that we have Your blessing, we come and we give You thanks for it." And it's a wonderful statement of fulfilling the promise and showing integrity to the prayer.

You know, we're all guilty, we're all guilty of this, what I'm about to describe, we're all guilty of coming to God in a time of distress, praying, asking for his help, praying for his relief, and he gives it and we're happy, been glad for that but we forget to give him thanks for what we asked for, especially those things that maybe we've prayed for for a long period of time and God answers the prayer, you know, and we're not always as faithful to give the thanks as we are to pray for the relief on the front end of the problem. Here, David shows us that on the backside we come and we give thanks, and tonight you and I have the opportunity as we remember Communion, as we come together on a weekday evening, we have the opportunity that, "Lord, we're here to give You our thanks and we partake of these elements with a grateful, thankful heart for all of the goodness that You have shown starting with the provision of the Lord Jesus Christ, and then in addition to that, all of the earthly blessings that we enjoy as well."

So we come and we give thanks and we do so knowing that the Lord our God hears us. Look at verse 2. This is just wonderful to think about. Those of us that have been brought into union with the Lord Jesus Christ, saved by grace, saved by his shed blood, and in verse 2 we come and we know by revelation, quite apart from anything that we feel, quite apart from any inner sense that we might have, we know by revelation that the Lord God himself hears us even now. As we respond to him, as we read his word, as we preach his word, as we offer up our prayer and thanks to him, what does he do? Verse 2,

2 O You who hear prayer, To You all men come.

This transcendent God of whom we've been speaking, this wonderful Lord Jesus Christ, so good, so gracious, so generous, so great, that when we offer our thanks to him, he immediately hears it. I mean, he knows what we're going to say before the word even crosses our lips but the Lord hears us when we pray. And so we are not simply going through some motion here tonight, we're not simply doing an outward act that has no real significance, as we preach, as we partake of Communion, as we pray and give thanks to God, we are engaged in an act of eternal worship that the eternal God hears and the eternal God receives as we offer it in the name of his Son. He is the God who hears us and he is the God to whom we come and present our praise.

Now look, David gets more specific as he goes on in verse 3 here and he comes with a spirit of confession of sin, and that's what we're speaking about here in this first section, he's the God who forgives sin. For all of his majesty, he is gracious and compassionate toward us, you know, I never get over that, the greatness of God, the majesty of God, the one who is so great that no man can see him and live, who lives in unapproachable light, who is immortal, unchanging, who is self-existent, who was not created, who had no

beginning and who will have no end. That God, that God is a God who is generous and kind and compassionate and gracious toward those who come to him in the name of his Son. How can we fathom this? How can those attributes all dwell in one great essence, in one great character? You would think, if you were just left on the realm of human reason, you would think that one excluded the other but in Christ, in the eternal God, we see these attributes, these perfections joined together, transcendent glory of inexpressible essence together with a close, intimate, gracious, forgiving response to those who call upon him in prayer.

Well, you know, friends, as we come at the end of the day, at the end of business, at the end of ministry, at the end of family life, and no doubt there are many of you that come in today mindful of the fact that you've fallen short of the glory of God even in what you've done today, harsh words that you've spoken, things that you've done, things that were sinful, things that you would be ashamed to be known in a place like this, and to realize that you can come to your God in the name of Christ and realize based on revelation, not on the way that you feel, look at it there again in verse 3 and just let this verse be the expression of your heart, "O God,

3 Iniquities prevail against me; As for our transgressions, You forgive them.

He forgives them in the sense that he does not hold them against us, that in Christ when God forgives sin, he does not hold our sins against us, he does not call them to our account. They have been put away. They will not be mentioned again throughout all of eternity. That is how great the cleansing is. That's how great and full the compassion is, how great and wonderful his forgiving spirit is that he doesn't hold that against us, and when we come in the name of Christ, we are welcomed into the fullness of his presence because we come clothed in the righteousness of Christ which pleases him, which he accepts. This is what Christ has done for us, he has taken away our filthy robes of sin, clothed us with his righteousness in a way that enables us to go welcome into the presence of a holy God. What kind of God is like that? What kind of God has shown mercy and grace to you to be like that?

So we sing to him, we sing freely to him. That word "forgive" in the Old Testament, it's a word that means "to cover or to atone." It's used only three times in the Psalms which is interesting, but it occurs 15 times in the 16th chapter of Leviticus where God revealed his plan for the Day of Atonement, and where a blood sacrifice atoned for the sins of the nation. So we see that there is atonement and whereas God otherwise would have to hide his face from us because of our sin, yet he provided for us an atonement to cover our sin and that would one day put sin away forever for those who believe in him.

Now beloved, this is at the heart of true worship and it's just so important for us to understand this, that true worship is not found in how loud the band is, true worship is not found in how emotional you feel at any given moment, true worship isn't found in silly man-made rituals, in places of glittering artistry with stained glass windows. None of that has anything to do with true worship. True worship, at the heart of true worship is a

recognition that Christ has atoned for my sin and I come to God in response to him. I come to God through my mediator, the Lord Jesus Christ. Not a priest. Not a priest. Not through Mary. I come through the Lord Jesus Christ who atoned for my sins at the cross. His blood atonement reconciles me to a holy God. And in that I worship, I give thanks, I respond to him with all of my heart, with a heart full of gratitude to such a generous God.

So that forgiveness, while it provokes a sense of silence, yes, as the Psalm opened up, it also gives us joy, it gives us assurance that based on his own testimony in his word, based on the shed blood of Christ, based on the testimony of the indwelling Holy Spirit who affirms these truths to our heart, based on all of those things we have a sense of joy because God has been gracious to us. In place of judgment, God has given undeserved favor to us that blesses us not only now but all the days of our lives, and not only all the days of our lives but carrying us through the transition as we pass through the valley of the shadow of death, and then when we enter into the glories of heaven, the blessing and the grace have only begun, and only then will we understand the fullness of what Christ has done for us, only then will we understand the depth of his sacrifice, only then will we understand something of the glory of God, only then will we begin to start to grasp the greatness and the fullness of the salvation that God has given to us in Christ. Only then. And we have silence and joy now and we have a foretaste, but the fullness is still way ahead, the fullness is still ahead of us to be revealed, to be enjoyed in heaven, and I believe with Jonathan Edwards that part of eternity is going to be just God blessing us with an ever-expanding comprehension and grasp of the greatness of who he is, the greatness of Christ, the greatness of our salvation. It won't be static. There will just be that we will be plunging deeper and deeper and deeper into the eternal depths of the character of God and we will be continually overwhelmed so that we can only cry out with the angels, "Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty!"

So God initiated this forgiveness of sin. Don't think for a moment, I put it this way on social media today, you do not have faith, God does not love you because you had faith, you have faith because God set his love upon you. All of this was God's idea and the prompting initiating movement was from God to you, not from you to God. 1 John 4:19 says, "We love because He first loved us." God was the one who loved us, not vice versa. God initiated all of this wonderful goodness to us, and so David responds in worship and notice how he emphasizes what I just said about God being the initiator of it.

Verse 4, he says,

4 How blessed is the one whom You choose and bring near to You

God does the choosing. God reached out. God drew us to him. God brought us near. Christ brought us near. And so he gets all of the glory, he gets all of the worship. That's why we respond to him in a spirit of thanksgiving. He's been so generous to us. He saved us when we weren't even looking for it. So we respond in this spirit of worship to him.

Now David goes on, he moves beyond the fact that God is one who forgives sin and he praises him, secondly, in Psalm 65 because he is the God who rules nature. He is the God

who rules nature and if you think of the horrific forces that nature can sometime unleash on us in F5 tornadoes and Category 5 hurricanes and 7.0 earthquakes, and all of those kinds of things, and you realize the great, vast power that is present in nature and that God rules over that with a greater power? You know, if you've ever lived through a serious earthquake and you felt the ground tremble under your feet and toss you back and forth, tossing you from wall to wall, I have, it's a frightening display of the power that is resident in creation. Then you realize and you come to this text and you realize that God superintends and rules over all of that? God rules over the storm? God rides on the wind of the hurricane? You see more reason to praise him and to give him glory.

Look at verses 5 and 6.

5 By awesome deeds You answer us in righteousness, O God of our salvation, You who are the trust of all the ends of the earth and of the farthest sea; 6 Who establishes the mountains by His strength, Being girded with might;

David calls God the trust of all the ends of the earth, in other words, God has a universal claim on the trust and obedience of all men everywhere even if they don't respond. The fact that they deny him, ignore him, make false gods and make up false religion in order to do something of their own making and worship the works of their own hands and the work of their own minds doesn't change the fact that God reigns over all and that God has a claim on the trust and obedience of all of them, and every one of you in here, speaking to Christian and non-Christian alike, Jesus Christ is Lord and Jesus Christ therefore has full authority over your soul and he calls on you and he commands you to repent and to come to him. He does not give you the option of choosing differently. You are commanded by Christ to repent and believe in the gospel for the salvation of your soul and those who reject that and refuse that bring upon themselves the greatest kind of judgment; to hear the gospel of Christ, to hear the shed blood presented to you, and to turn away from that, Scripture says how much severer punishment does one like that deserve than anyone else. You have heard the most sacred things, my friend. You have heard even tonight the most sacred things about Christ and his shed blood and if you judge yourself unworthy of them, if you judge yourself not interested in them and you condemn the shed blood of Christ by your indifference, oh, what an awful fate awaits you if you do not repent of that cold-hearted rejection of this most generous God who sent his Son to be the Savior of everyone who would believe in him. We are dealing with matters of great import, of great sobriety. As Christians we deal with them with a sense of sober joy and we rejoice in these things, but there is a time and a place, especially as we come to Communion, to recognize that these are matters of serious import that require our whole-hearted response of worship.

Well, David points out in verse 6 how God displayed his power when he created mountains by his word, that power calls forth praise, his power over nature points to his power to forgive sin, and here's the thing: he is such a good God that anyone on earth, no matter how guilty, no matter how sinful, anyone on earth can come to Christ and find him to be a willing Savior. Jesus said in John 6, he said, "The one who comes to Me, I

certainly will not cast out." Isn't that remarkable, that even after a life of rebellion, a life of gross sin, that a man, a woman, a boy, a girl, could come to Christ full of sin and find in Christ a Savior that's willing to receive him, receive her, forgive her and cleanse her and welcome her into the family of God? This is amazing. This is amazing that God would have mercy on chronic fornicators, that God would have mercy on chronic homosexuals, that God would have mercy on chronic drunkards, chronic blasphemers who come to him in a spirit of repentance and saying, "Have mercy on me the sinner," as the tax collector did in Luke 18, and to realize that this gracious God receives sinners just like you and just like me. Well might our lips fall silent to realize that such guilty men and women could come and find this God gracious and willing to receive them; this God who rules over creation is a God who is willing to forgive.

David goes on and points out in verse 7 and expands on the theme in nature here. He says,

7 Who stills the roaring of the seas, The roaring of their waves, And the tumult of the peoples. 8 They who dwell in the ends of the earth stand in awe of Your signs; You make the dawn and the sunset shout for joy.

You see proof of his power in the morning, in the evening, at sunrise and at sunset. You see his glory painted on the skies as you look out over the clouds of a lake on a morning sunrise, and you see those gorgeous pinks and blues and all the other colors that come in and you realize that you're just seeing the tip of the finger of his creative majesty in something like that that's overwhelming in its own self. He rules over nature. He's a great God. He's a generous God, the God who forgives sin, the God who rules over nature.

Then, thirdly, David closes in the final section of the Psalm, verses 9 through 13, praising him as the God who provides food. God's generosity is particularly seen at harvest time. Look at verses 9 through 11 and notice as I read this, the repetition of the pronoun "You." He is setting God apart with an emphatic use of the pronoun, repeating it over and over again, repeatedly emphasizing, "God, it's You that does this. You and You alone. You and no one else. You are the One through which we have our daily bread." So in verses 9 through 11 he says,

9 You visit the earth and cause it to overflow; You greatly enrich it; The stream of God is full of water; You prepare their grain, for thus You prepare the earth. 10 You water its furrows abundantly, You settle its ridges, You soften it with showers, You bless its growth. 11 You have crowned the year with Your bounty, And Your paths drip with fatness.

You know, in the area in which we live here in the Midwest, it's easy for us to take water and rain for granted, you know, because we get so much of it. Well, it's not like that everywhere. I remember being with a friend in South Africa and I was doing something like letting the water run while I was brushing my teeth and the lady of the house rebuked me. I thought, "How can you rebuke me over this, I'm must brushing my teeth?" She said, "Oh, don't waste water. Water is precious and we don't get much of it around here and so

we have to conserve it with everything that we have." She didn't take water for granted and the people in the land of Israel, they didn't take water for granted either. In that land and in that day, the matter of water was a matter of life and death and here David gives thanks to God and he says, "You are generous in providing us with what we need." And before the days of the sophisticated irrigation that we have today, oh, the blessing of rain on them in that time was a matter for profound thanks.

So David says and just notice that repetition of "You. You visit," verse 9. "You greatly enrich it. You prepare their grain. You water its furrows. You settle its ridges. You soften it with showers. You bless its growth. You have crowned the year. Your paths drip with fatness. God, I'm recognizing that You are the One who has done this." It's not enough for him to say it once or twice, David is so filled with praise, so filled with gratitude that he just says it over and over again, "God, You have done this. You have done this. You have done this. You have blessed and given to us in so many ways." And David is thanking him for water, how much more as we come to the Communion Table should there be an exclusivity of the glory of Christ in our minds and we say, "Lord, it's You that's done this. You are the One, Lord Jesus. Praise be to Your name. You are the One who came from heaven. You are the One who lived a perfect life. You are the One who offered it on the cross as a sacrifice to God. It was Your blood that was shed. It was You that was put in the grave. It was You that was raised from the dead. It was You that descended on high. It is You that intercedes for me at the right hand of God. It is You who is coming again. You are coming back to receive me so that I can be where You are." John 14:1-3. "It's You. It's You. It's You, O Christ. There's no one else. My mind, my heart, my strength, my love is consumed with You. It's who You are."

And the resulting abundance, going back to Psalm 65 and the Communion Table is in front of me, it's hard to get very far from the cross and you just keep coming back to it, at the end of Psalm 65, he describes the bounty further. Verse 12 he says,

12 The pastures of the wilderness drip, And the hills gird themselves with rejoicing.

Normally the wilderness would be brown and bare, it's a desert over there much of the time, but David's describing a land that's bright and fruitful. It's a cheerful scene. It's a beautiful scene. "God, Your bounty is all around us. You're so good." And his description of the abundance earlier in the Psalm, it's a picture of an overloaded farm cart so filled with the produce of the harvest that as the cart goes along, it's just the produce is just falling off because the bounty is so great and the farm cart is so full.

David closes the Psalm, David was quite the man, it's his greater son that we worship but he was such a magnificent poet, he ends this Psalm on this great poetic note as he personifies the beauty of the earth joining in the songs of praise with the people of God. Verse 13,

13 The meadows are clothed with flocks

In other words, there are abundant flocks covering the meadows. They're all out there eating and our prosperity is assured there.

And the valleys are covered with grain;

And he personifies them, he says,

They shout for joy, yes, they sing.

So much goodness revealed that David says, "It's as though creation itself was joining in responding to honor Your great name, O God."

Now beloved, I want to take an extra moment here to help you see that this Psalm points beyond the earthly blessings of which it focuses on the last two sections there, but when you realize what the Psalm is saying as it's speaking before the time of Christ, speaking about how God forgives sin, God rules over nature, God provides food, you realize when you come to the New Testament that it has laid the groundwork for us to recognize Christ and recognize the deity of Christ, that he is God in human form. Does God forgive sin? Well, so does Jesus Christ.

Turn to the gospel of Mark with me. We're just going to look and read a couple of extended passages, again, just culminating our focus on Christ as we prepare our hearts for the Communion Table. Mark 2. We ask the question: does God forgive sin? Well, so does Jesus Christ. In chapter 2, verse 5, you remember they brought a paralytic to Jesus, lowered him through the roof so that Jesus could see him and the paralytic could be near him and in verse 5,

5 And Jesus seeing their faith said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven." 6 But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, 7 "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins but God alone?" 8 Immediately Jesus, aware in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? 9 "Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'?"

Those words are equally easy to say. The proof is in the power that is behind them. So he says in verse 10,

10 "But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins" He said to the paralytic, 11 "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." 12 And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

His power to cure a paralyzed man illustrated and verified and vindicated his power to forgive sin. That's the key issue.

Well, does God rule over nature? So does Christ. Go to chapter 4 of Mark in verse 37, actually let's start in verse 35 just to set the context.

35 On that day, when evening came, He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side." 36 Leaving the crowd, they took Him along with them in the boat, just as He was; and other boats were with Him. 37 And there arose a fierce gale of wind, and the waves were breaking over the boat so much that the boat was already filling up. 38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" 39 And He got up and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Hush, be still." And the wind died down and it became perfectly calm.

He spoke into the wind of a hurricane and it stopped. He spoke into surging waves that were about to sink the boat and they flattened out instantly, illustrating the control of Jesus Christ over nature. The one who has power over nature is God and the one who has power over nature has power to forgive sin.

Well, thirdly and finally following the sequence of Psalm 65: does God provide food? Do you know what? So does Jesus Christ. Look at Mark 6:34. As you're turning there, understand that when we enter into the presence of Christ, when we contemplate him, when he comes to us in the gospel, when he comes to us by his Holy Spirit, when he saves us, we are in the presence of deity, we are in the presence of God Almighty, and this should call forth the deepest response of adoration and worship.

Chapter 6, verse 34,

34 When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and He began to teach them many things. 35 When it was already quite late, His disciples came to Him and said, "This place is desolate and it is already quite late; 36 send them away so that they may go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." 37 But He answered them, "You give them something to eat!" And they said to Him, "Shall we go and spend two hundred denarii on bread and give them something to eat?" 38 And He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go look!" And when they found out, they said, "Five, and two fish." 39 And He commanded them all to sit down by groups on the green grass. 40 They sat down in groups of hundreds and of fifties. 41 And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up toward heaven, He blessed the food and broke the loaves and He kept giving them to the disciples to set before them; and He divided up the two fish among them all. 42 They all ate and were satisfied, 43 and they picked up twelve

full baskets of the broken pieces, and also of the fish. 44 There were five thousand men who ate the loaves.

Christ miraculously exercising his control over creation, over bread, over fish, multiplying it effortlessly in order to feed the crowd of many thousand that were in front of him from such a small visible provision.

What a wonderful Savior, what a magnificent Lord, and to realize that he is the most generous God who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, that he loved us before the foundation of the world, that he chose us before the foundation of the world, and that when Christ was hanging on that cross, for those of you that are in Christ, he was thinking of you. He had you in mind because he was dying as a direct substitute for your sins. He was there bearing God's wrath against your sin. And so somehow in the greatness of his infinite mind, he was conscious of you as he suffered on that cross and that's what we remember at the Table tonight. This most generous God, this great God, this good God, we remember him with a sense of thanksgiving and gratitude as we come to the Communion Table.

Bow with me in prayer. As we come to the Table, let me just remind you that the bread is a symbol of the body of Christ, the cup a symbol of his shed blood, and we invite every repentant believer in Christ who trusts that shed blood for the remission of his sin, of her sin, we invite you to share these elements with us in just a moment. But if you're not in Christ or if you're a Christian and stubbornly refusing the repentance that your sins require, if you're not a believer in Christ and you know that for a fact, we would ask you, we would urge you, we would plead with you just let the elements quietly pass by. Don't partake of elements that symbolize something of which you do not take part. But for those of you that are in Christ, let this be a joyful wonderful time as you remember the loving Savior who laid down his life voluntarily for you.

Father, we just thank You for the mercy of Christ. We gladly honor Him in this hour. Father, we adore Your Son and we thank You for being a generous God to us. In Jesus' name. Amen.

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