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Isn't God good? I could have sung that about three more times, Jared [referring to *Hear Us From Heaven*, written and performed by Jared Anderson, visiting worship leader]. Maybe we'll get a chance to do that here in a minute again. That's what we want God to do is to hear us from Heaven and act here on earth.

And so this morning in our *God @ Work* series, I want to talk to you about how God works in our life through prayer. There are simply—

- Some things that we're never going to understand
- Some things in our lives that'll never change
- Some needs that will never be met
- Some relationships that are never going to be what they ought to be

—until we pray.

In *Jeremiah, chapter 33, verse 3*—if you've been in church any amount of time, you probably have that verse memorized about prayer—God comes to Jeremiah at a time when Israel was under siege. They were getting ready to be carried into captivity. They weren't listening to God's Word. They weren't listening to God's prophet because they had him in jail. And Jeremiah is pretty distraught. He doesn't see any hope for the future. He sees the ending being bad, of all the things that are happening. And so God comes to him, in *Jeremiah, chapter 33, verses 1 through 3*, and here's what He says:

<sup>1</sup> Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah the second time, while he was still confined in the court of the guard, saying: <sup>2</sup> "Thus says the LORD who made the earth, the LORD who formed it to establish it—the LORD is His name, <sup>3</sup> 'Call to Me, and I will answer you, and I will tell you great and mighty things, which you do not know.'"

*Jeremiah 33:1-3 (NASB)*

Those words "great and mighty" are pictures of a fortress:

- Things that cannot be penetrated
- Things that are guarded

And there are things in our life that have become (maybe) strongholds and fortresses that we just cannot overcome. And we look at the end of how things are going now and the end is not good.

Now one of the great things about DVDs is that you can fast-forward and you can see the end of the movie. And if you don't like the end of the movie, don't watch the rest of it. I like happy endings when I go to the movies. I go there (you know) to be entertained and kind of release and go into another world and get happy. And sometimes I come out of a movie more depressed than when I went in to the movie.

And so in our lives we have a choice:

- We can change the way the film ends.
- We can change the way our life ends.
- We can change the situation that we're in right now.

Prayer is the key. It unlocks for you and gets you into the storehouses of God.

Friday evening my wife called me. Kristi had been out riding her motorcycle and she was (you know) in a hurry to get to the *Prayer Summit*. She calls me and—

She says: Let me in.

I thought: Well, you're at my office and I'm over here at the *Truth Building* getting ready to start.

She said: No-no-no, I'm at the house.

Because my truck was parked in the driveway—I had taken my motorcycle Friday—she said: No, you're in the house. Let me in.

I said: I'm not in the house; I'm at the *Truth Building*. I took my bike.

She says: I've lost my keys. I can't get into the house.

Now, because I lose my keys often, my back-up plan is: I've got one hidden in the backyard. So now I want to tell you something: It's not in the backyard any more—for those of you who are going over there and look for it—I've changed the place.

So I had the key that she needed. Do you know what I told her?—well, call unto me and I will show you great and mighty things thou knowest not.

Same thing with prayer—I like what Blaise Pascal said about prayer: “*Prayers do shape the future in ways different from what would have been*” if “*no prayers*” had “*been uttered*” to God.

God wants to take your life in a new direction. He wants to change the end of the movie.

- He wants to do in your marriage what needs to be done
- ...in your finances
- ...a job

Whatever it is, God wants to do that. And I am convinced of this: that God specializes in impossible situations.

In the book of *Acts, chapter 12*, Peter is in prison. James—the head apostle, the head of the church of Jerusalem, has already been executed by Herod. Now Herod has Peter and he has Peter in the same jail that they put Jesus in. The only reason he hasn't executed Peter yet is because it's the Passover, and he doesn't want to anger the Jews that he's ruling over. So he's going to wait until after Passover and he's going to kill him. So this is the night—the next morning he's going to be executed.

- Not only is he in prison but he's in the depths of the prison.
- Not only is he being guarded but he's being guarded by four squads of four soldiers each.
- Not only is he just chained to one, which is the normal pattern, he's chained to two of them.

He can't even go the bathroom by himself. They are keeping him; making sure that there is no escape and there is no miracle, like the last time that they had him in jail and he got out.

And so now—with that in mind—that's pretty impossible. But in *Acts, chapter 12, verse 5*, it might be an impossible situation, but not with prayer.

## **IMPOSSIBLE SITUATION “BUT” NOT WITH PRAYER**

Look at *verse 5*:

So Peter was kept in prison, but {I love that conjunction} the church was earnestly praying to God for him.

*Acts 12:5 (NIV)*

But—

- But God
- But prayer
- But the church was praying

And so in a few moments when we pray you might be in that impossible situation. You might be in that place in life where there is no way out; there is no hope:

- I've lost my job.
- I've got bills that are due.
- My marriage is over.

Whatever it is—it's impossible...but—your Church is going to pray for you today and we're going to call on the name of God. And when we call on the name of God—from what the Bible teaches and has been the experience of Christians for centuries now—prayer is the power that moves the Hand that moves the world.

## **PRAYER IS THE POWER THAT MOVES THE HAND THAT MOVES THE WORLD**

I don't know why it is. God set it up this way and it's probably always going to be a mystery to me. But when we ask God, God gives us what we need. When we pray, the end of the movie changes, [and] the alternative ending that God wants for you begins to kick in and to be in place.

Peter comes to himself because—what had happened:

- An angel of the Lord comes
- He slaps him on the side; gets him up
- Moves him out through the prison
- All the doors unlock
- Shackles fall off
- He's walking into the street

He said: I must be having a dream. And then it dawns on him—in *verse 11*:

Then Peter came to himself and said, “Now I know without a doubt that the Lord sent His angel and rescued me from Herod's clutches and from everything the Jewish people were anticipating.”

*Acts 12:11 (NIV)*

When you pray, it's the difference from having a nightmare to living in a dream. Literally! It's a nightmare right now, but pray. And when God answers your prayer it's like: Is this really happening? Could God really be doing this? And the answer to that is: Yes! He does because prayer is the power that moves the Hand that moves the world.

And you don't have to have a lot of faith. You say: Well, that was the early church and they had a lot of faith. I want to show you in a second: No, they didn't because—

## **A LITTLE FAITH GETS A BIG ANSWER**

When this had dawned on him {that God had answered the Church's prayers}, he went to the house of Mary the mother of John {who is}, also called Mark, where many people had gathered and were praying.

*Acts 12:12 (NIV)*

You know what's going to happen in a few minutes?—many people that have gathered are going to be praying. And when that happens, God moves. So here's the Church—they're together and they're praying: God, let Peter out of jail. Let Peter out of jail. They're going to kill him, Lord. We need Peter; he's one of our leaders. Lord, help us.

<sup>13</sup> Peter knocked on the outer entrance, and a servant girl named Rhoda came to answer the door. {But} <sup>14</sup> When she recognized Peter's voice, she was so overjoyed she ran back without opening it and {she goes to the spiritual people who are doing all of this praying} exclaimed, "Peter is at the door!"

*Acts 12:13-14 (NIV)*

Now look what these spiritual giants said: "You're out of your mind." [*Acts 12:15 (NIV)*] I crack up every time I read that. Because haven't there been times in our lives when we prayed for something and really we didn't—we're just doing it because (you know) I know I need to pray, but surely God isn't going to do anything.

And so here they're praying: God, save Peter's life. God does exactly what they ask Him to do. They pray. The power—the Hand that moves the world—goes in and unlocks doors, knocks off shackles, brings Peter right there fully clothed saying: Hey, God's answered the prayer.

They say: No, you're crazy. You're crazy!

But she kept insisting: No-no-no-no, he's there.

And they said: Oh, it's got to be his angel. He's dead and it's his angel that's come to tell us Peter's dead. Stop praying.

I mean think about that. Is that not hilarious? Here's the Church: We're going to pray that God does something. And the Church says: No, He didn't...no, He didn't.

You know sometimes we don't enjoy the answers to prayer because we just don't believe God will answer the prayer.

- When you pray for your marriage, do you really believe your spouse is going to change?
- Do you really believe that you can change?
- Do you really believe that God can get you a job?
- Do you really believe that you can have that addiction broken?

And sometimes I think churches pray and pray and pray and, because we really don't believe God is going to do something, we don't do anything. We never by faith walk out on what God has for us. Today you can walk out on what God has for you.

So what do they do? They come to him.

But Peter kept on knocking, and when they opened the door and  
{they} saw him, they were astonished.

*Acts 12:16 (NIV)*

It still happens to me today. When God answers my prayer, I'm still blown away. God did that! God answered my prayer. I don't believe it! Isn't that what we say?—I don't believe it. Look what God did.

So what kind of faith did they have? They only had enough faith to pray. That's all the faith that you need. Do you remember the time that the man, whose son was possessed with a demon, came to Jesus and said: If you can help him? Jesus said: If I can? If I—I'm God. All things are possible to him who believes. Do you know what the man said?—what we say a lot (maybe not verbally but in our hearts): Oh, Lord, I believe; help my unbelief. [*Mark 9:22-24* (paraphrased)]

We see the promises in the Bible—don't we?—and we believe. We watched it happen in the people's lives in the Bible. We listen to people who say: You cannot believe what God—I don't know why we keep saying we cannot believe what God did. And so we know God can do that. But will God do that for me? Will He answer such a big thing for me—for us as a church? And the answer is: Yes, I believe; help my unbelief.

And today—no matter what is going on in your life—if you just have the faith to utter the prayer. No matter what disconcerting voices are inside of your mind and your heart telling you:

- No, He won't.
- What are you doing?
- It's foolish and it's silly.

I'm telling you there's nothing foolish and nothing silly. Your Heavenly Father knows what you need and He wants to give it to you. All He wants you to do is ask and you shall receive. [*Matthew 7:8* (paraphrased)]

Now, bottom line about prayer (you know what?)—here it is:

## **PRAYER CHANGES OUR REALITY**

Prayer changes our reality, guys. I mean whatever your reality is now, fast-forward to the end. Is that what you want?

- Do you really believe that's what God wants for you personally, for your marriage to end?
- Do you really believe that God wants your kids to end up in jail?
- Do you really believe that God wants you totally broke with no job?
- Do you really believe that God does not want to heal you from that sickness?

But if you really believe God wants to do those things, then all the faith that you need this morning is just to utter a prayer: Oh, God, I believe; help my unbelief. Please give me a job. Please heal my marriage. Please heal my little boy, my little girl, my husband, my wife. God, please move.

Now, this is going to sound silly to you, but it was a big thing for me. (I think it happened for my wife to get even with me. Remember I told you she lost her keys?) Voila! I lost my office keys, which is nothing new, again. Because many times on any given morning you'll find me at the back door of the office banging...banging. And you know what? They're starting not to peek out the office doors anymore. [Knowing:] Ah, that must be Sal. He lost his keys again.

Well, I lost them and I had to get back over here to the [Administration] Building to print something for the *Prayer Summit*. I didn't have it. I was all tore up and I stripped the house. I mean, I was throwing stuff around. I can't believe—[pantomimes a ranting mumble]—the stupid cats did it I bet...and [on and on, ranting]. I looked everywhere for the keys.

And then this morning when I got up and I was getting ready to leave—knowing that I'm just not going to be able to get into the administrative office this morning—it was like something said: Just go look on the key rack again and—I'll be darned! The worst thing is that I had to tell my wife. But I'm serious, my wife looked there and I looked there and none of our kids are in the house—the keys weren't there. We have two cats. Either God did it or the cats did; one of the two.

Now listen. What is it in your life that it would be unbelievable to you—if your keys were on the key rack?—the things you've been frustrated about. If God, just said: Hey, hey, just calm down. Look right here. This is for you.

We've identified 10 needs for our church in 2010, basically over the 800 prayer requests that have come in over the last several months.

## TEN PRAYERS IN 2010

This is what we're praying for you and this is what I want us together to pray for:

1. That in 2010 **we will be found in God's Word** studying and loving God.

Jesus said this:

... 'Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.'

*Matthew 4:4 (NASB)*

Let me encourage you again. If we pray, “God, Your will be done on earth as it is in Heaven,” you’ve got to know what that is. And so you’ve got to be in God’s Word. We got to be on the same page together. Go on the Web site. Click on “Read the Bible for a year,” if you haven’t done it yet, and I can promise you God will speak to you.

2. The second thing that we’re praying for is that God would **strengthen our marriages and our families.**

Never, in all the times that I have been pastoring this church, has there ever been an attack on marriage like [there] is right now. Maybe it’s not adultery or divorce, though that is happening. I have good friends that are going through a divorce right now because of the hardness of hearts, one toward another. Infidelity, pornography, all the stuff that ruins marriages [is] going on right now. And people are literally lined up, either leaving the church because they are ashamed or trying to get some counseling.

And I’m telling you, all it takes is one blast from God’s powerful Holy Spirit and He can heal that thing. He can break us and our marriages can be strengthened, and our kids can grow up one day and say: My parents stayed together. They had some tough times, but God was there. Because your kids, when they get married they’re going to have some tough times, and God [had] better be there.

We need to love each other. And we’re not going to love each other here [in church] unless we love one another, husband and wife.

3. The third thing that we’re praying for is that this year **God would move among us and deliver us and heal us from our sicknesses and addictions.**

Again, in the 15 years that I’ve been here, never have I seen so much sickness. Do you know what I think it is? It is an attack from the enemy. Now, not every disease has a spiritual cause. But I’m telling you, when you get up and you say, “I’m going to serve God,” all hell breaks loose on you sometimes. I have good friends now that are diagnosed with cancer. I have good friends whose kids have these undiagnosed diseases that just spring on them every now and then.

Not only that, but the addictions, the drugs, the alcohol, the pornography, to the depression, to the dark clouds of satanic opposition and oppression that come over us and make us think we’re not good and God doesn’t love us and that nothing good is ever going to come out of my life. I’m telling you, those strongholds are only destroyed through the prayer that God tells us that we need to pray so He can do great and mighty things in our lives. That can happen today. Today, that can happen.

4. The **lack of trust** that we have for one another. The constant thing that people are against me, or something is being done that I don’t know about, and surely this is wrong. That’s Satan and you don’t need to be listening to that garbage anymore. That’s why you need to be in God’s Word and we need to pray together.
5. The next thing that we’re going to pray about in 2010 (I think this is number five): **We need jobs**, don’t we?

There are so many people out of work right now. And here's what I believe: I believe that God wants to provide. Jesus said this: Pray this, "Give us this day our daily bread." [Matthew 6:11 (NKJV)] Now, I want to ask you something. Do you at least believe that God wants to feed you every day? I do. I mean, look at me! I haven't missed many. God wants you to take care of your family. God wants you to be able to give to your church. God wants to take our church and use us around the world and right here. And all [of] that takes money. And all we need to do is say:

God, would You keep Your promise to me that You would give me my daily bread and give me a job so that I can take care of my family and my own needs and I would be able to share?

It's biblical. God just wants to do such a deep work in your life that when you pray and ask Him for a job that you actually get it and then you will know: Look how God answered. Can you believe it? I can't believe it. That's what you're going to be saying. But you're going to be praying a whole lot more and getting a whole lot more from God.

The last time that we had people stand [who] didn't have jobs [because] we wanted to pray for you; that day—that day—that person got a job. So in a moment, we're going to pray. And I'm going to pray that God will give you a job if you don't have a job, because God wants to give you a job.

So not only are we going to pray that God give us a job and take care of us financially, but...

6. The next thing that we're praying for in 2010 is: **connect us to people that are far from God.**

Now look, the longer you are a believer, chances are the more you have Christian friends and the less you have friends that are not Christians. If somebody didn't befriend me when I was not a Christian, I wouldn't be a Christian.

So here's what I'm going to ask you to do. [To] invite people to church is the easiest thing in the world—easiest thing in the world. And so can you, right now, list at least five people that you know are far from God and they need Jesus Christ—that are not your immediate family members? Don't write the name of the person next to you right now. It happens [that] it might be your husband or your wife. But they're far from God. Can you name five?

If not: God, give me the heart to do what You did and go to the people who are far from You—which was everybody—and befriend them. And maybe (in) a year from now, five people that you didn't know before, that you became Jesus for them, those five people are sitting with you in your pew and in your *Small Group*; and they know Christ, and they're praying, and God is doing great things in their lives. Do you have five?

The next thing that we're going to be praying for is not only to pray for people—to get connected to people far from God, but...

7. **Give us a heart for people—break our hearts.**

The worst thing in the world that we do to people when they sin, especially when they're in a church, is that we totally neglect them. And so they learn over time [that] if something bad happens: I've got to leave the church because I'm not like those people. Here's the truth: We're all like that. And there're people that you know that aren't here any longer because they have fallen into sin, or some difficulty happened to them, and they think maybe God left them. We should be the reminder:

- God never left you because we're not leaving you (and)
- We're going to stick with you (and)
- Life is difficult and hard and you cannot do it by yourself

God, break our hearts for people. This is part of the whole culture that we have of being able to degrade people publicly, say it on talk radio, do it on news stations, do it in magazines, and slander people. And it's almost like it's a whole lot better if we put the pressure on someone else, then there's no pressure on me. That's not the church! We need to love people. Break our hearts, God, for people.

8. And then, not only break our hearts for people, but the eighth thing is: **increase our influence locally and globally**—around the world and right here.

Look, don't you think it's possible for God to fill *Jones Road [Campus]* up three or four times and maybe twice on Saturday and the same thing over there at *Fry Road [Campus]*? Even if you don't, would you at least pray about that? And when you pray that, would you invite your friends [so] that—

- God would give us influence? (and)
- Families would stay together? (and)
- People's lives would be changed because they hear the Gospel?

And they come into a place...they come into a place where they're never going to experience the Spirit of God moving. They're not going to [know]:

- What are these people singing about?
- Why are they so kind?
- What is this that I am feeling?
- Oh, God, is that You?

It happened to me the first time I went into a church. (I've told you this before.) The first time I went to church—

My friend said: There's going to be barbeque and girls.

I said: I'm in!

You know what it was? It was a capital fund-raising banquet. You know the type when you finally get your friend to come to church and I'm talking about money. [You say:] Oh, really, he never does this. Honestly, he never talks about money.

But it was so compelling. And the Spirit of God was there. And the Bible was being talked about. And I saw people's lives [changed]. And people were loving on me. And it was so uncomfortable that I wanted to leave. But it was so compelling that I had to stay. And weeks after that is when I gave my life to Christ.

9. And then **we need wisdom.**

For our *Children's*—our kids'—*Ministries*, that we would be influencing them for Christ. You would be influencing your family for Christ. And then we would be equipping you and equipping them to go out and change the world.

And then we need wisdom to make right choices. Everything that hurts in our life is a direct result of an unwise choice: financial, sexual, emotionally, career-wise bad choices. God, give us wisdom to choose what You want for us. As a church, put us on the same page so when You say, "Do this," that we have the faith and the courage to do it, which is the last one...

10. That God in 2010 would **give us faith and courage.**

Now, if He gives you faith that means you are going to know that this is what God wants me to do. But I will tell you this from experience and based on the Bible, He will not give you a spreadsheet and tell you every detail. He will say: Take the first step and I'll tell you where the second step will take you.

And that's what's keeping some of us from serving God, or going into the ministry, or changing careers—or whatever—because I don't know what's going to happen. You know what? If you do it or you don't do it, you still don't know what's going to happen. You're never going to know. But when you take that first step, I guarantee you this: Oh, I like that the way that happened. And then you'll take the next step. And the next step. And pretty soon we're walking with God and we have courage to trust God to do what only God can do.

Now, here's what we're going to do: We're going to pray for each other. There were some folks at the *Prayer Summit* this last weekend—Friday and Saturday—probably over 500 people showed up. Man!

- We confessed our sins
- We got right with God
- We were worshiping God
- God did a deep work in our life

And I told them Saturday before we left—I said: I know that you're as right with God as you can be right now. Stay that way until Sunday morning at least, because I'm going to want you to pray for people.

And so all down here [gesturing to the front of the stage] in a minute when we stand, if you were at the *Prayer Summit* and you're ready to pray for somebody, you come down. As you see these people coming down here and some of our ministers as well, I want you to come and say:

- I need a job
- I need my marriage healed
- I need to make a wise choice

Whatever it is that you need, you have not because you ask not [*James 4:2* (paraphrased)], and your Heavenly Father wants to give you everything that you need. [*Matthew 7:7-11* (summarized)]

So let's stand together. If you can help pray with somebody, would you come down here? And I'm going to open us up with prayer and then I'm going to close us with prayer. And then the deacons are going to come and serve us the elements for communion together. And so let's begin to pray:

Father, I just ask You that You would break us of our pride right now, and we wouldn't be concerned about what anybody would think or about how much we are worthy or unworthy of anything. But Jesus, our confession is: right now I need You. I need You, Jesus, and I pray that You would move among the hearts of Your Church right now.

There are some impossible situations in peoples' lives, but your Church is praying now, Father. Jesus, the Church you died for and empowered with the Holy Spirit is now ministering to one another, and God I pray now that You would minister through us.

And so this morning:

- If you need to know God's will, you come and ask.
- If you need your marriage strengthened, you come right now.

Just pray. Just come. These folks are here right now for you. You just walk out [into] that aisle and you come right now.

- If you need to pray for your children, you come.
- If you need a job, you come, let us pray for you.
- If you have a spiritual issue and you don't know what's going on
- If you have an addiction (or)
- ...you feel like you're being oppressed by the enemy

You come right now. Let us pray for you and watch the chains drop; because prayer moves the Hand that moves the world, and He can change your world. You come now. As we pray, you come.

Your Father, who is in Heaven, is hearing your prayers right now. He's opening up your eyes to see His will and blessings for you. He's unstopping your ears so that you might hear how much he loves you and cares for you. He's opening up and freeing your hands that you might love the ones that love you the most. He's moving. You come, Church. Let us pray. Let us pray for you.

[Musical interlude/pause for ministry of prayer...]

If you're here still and (maybe) you're just feeling:

- Man, I'm so unworthy.
- Why would God answer my prayer?
- All this is my fault.

That's the main reason—because He wants to deliver you. He wants to show you that He's your deliverer. He's your strong fortress. He is the shepherd of your soul and you don't have to live like that. You don't have to take that anymore. By the grace of God, He can bless your life.

So I want to pray for us. If you still need prayer, feel free to come down. But I'm going to pray and I we're going to get our hearts (just) tenderized as much as we can so that when we go into

communion in a moment that we really can sense that we're a part of this Body. The body and the blood of Christ was shed for us and now we are one Body. There is nothing that happens to anybody in this room that all of us aren't sensitive to and care about.

So whatever it is in your life that you need prayer for, there's still time for you to come.

Father, I have confessed to You so many times that I lack the faith and the courage to lead us in the direction that You want us to go. I pray, Lord, that this year, in spite of all of my weaknesses and all of the satanic oppression that sometimes comes my way, that You would give me faith and You would give me courage to obey You even though I won't be able to answer a lot of the questions of what's going to happen. I just want You to help us to trust You that the right things are going to happen.

Help me, God, to be an example to your people of what it means in the midst of fear, in the midst of doubt, and in spite of and in light of—to trust You, Lord. I pray for all of us in this room that *that* would be our heart; though we may not understand and sometimes it's not what we would like; but it's what You want; that we would do that.

I pray for our marriages. God, heal them. Give us godly children. Let us be the people that, when they look at us, people would say: Their Lord, He is really God, because look at what He has done for them. Do for us, Lord, what only You can do for us:

- Grant us love for You
- ...love for one another.
- Break the cycle of sin that is in our life.
- Heal us from our diseases.
- Give us encouraging words so that each day that we walk with You, we would know: That the Almighty hand of God rests upon me and no weapon formed against me shall prosper.

So, Father, as now we take a few moments to remember what You did for us as we have communion, forgive us of our sin, Lord. And help us to forgive others who have sinned against us; because, God, that's how we show people that Jesus has really changed our lives. Let there be no division among us. Let there be no hidden hatred or bitterness, Lord. Let it all come out. Cleanse us totally. In a moment, when that bread hits our tongue and that juice washes over our lips that we would know: the body and blood of Jesus Christ has saved me. We pray and ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

[Musical interlude/pause during distribution of communion elements...]

In a moment when we take communion, here's a reminder of a couple of things: one, Jesus died and Jesus is coming back again, but it's also to remember that we're all a part of one Body. We're in life together and we are here for each other. And the Spirit of God that lives in you and

the Spirit of God that lives in me is the same Spirit. The only way that we make it through life is having communion together—not only with God, but with one another.

As Jesus gathered in the upper room on the night that He was betrayed, the Bible says that He took bread and when He had given thanks, He broke it and He said: “This is my body, which is [given] for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” [Luke 22:19 (NRSV) then leads the congregation in eating the bread.]

The Bible goes on to say that—

In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant {and it’s} in my blood... {Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.}

*Luke 22:20 (NIV)*

[Then leads the congregation in drinking from the cup.]

Father, thank You for giving us such a gift in your Son. Lord, we testify this morning that if You gave us your Son, there’s nothing else that You’ll withhold from us. So, Jesus, as your Church, we call unto You and ask that You’ll help us stick together; that You’ll hear our prayers as feeble as they are—and, God, they’re so feeble, but in the midst of our feebleness we trust You. We just ask that You’ll move among us, heal us, deliver us, strengthen us, encourage us, and use us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.

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**To them God has chosen to make known among the  
Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is  
Christ in you, the hope of glory.**

*Colossians 1:27*  
*(New International Version)*

**Legend:**

**(words in parentheses)** = spoken by the preacher *but unnecessary* to the core sentence idea

**[words in square brackets]** = additional explanation for clarity *not spoken* by the preacher

**{words in curly brackets within indented quote}** = spoken explanation *not part of the quote*