

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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People Of The Kingdom

PART

3

TITLE

Distinguished by Sincerity

SCRIPTURE

1 Thessalonians 2:1-12



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Well, Providence family, it's good to see you this morning. I hope you've had a good week. And if you are new here with us, we're thrilled that you have joined us. Before we jump in here this morning, let me share with you, I'm going to be gone for the next two months. And I don't normally talk about things that are real personal outside of when I'm trying to really help you understand. And so it's normally like to say, Hey, here's how I've blown it and you can blow it too. But because this thing is personal, you're not going to see me for the next two months. I should probably let you know. But it's because of your generosity and your kindness. You care about your pastor so much that every seven years you give us a sabbatical and it just so happens that mine starts next week.

And so I thought I should let you know. We have some amazing pastors here at Providence. And so when I'm gone, they will be here to preach in the lead and I'm thankful for them. But the fact is it's an enormous gift that you give to us to make sure that we're healthy and to make sure that not only physically, but also mentally, spiritually is that we're in a really healthy place. It's an unusual gift that you give to your pastors. And I want you to know that I'm aware how unusual it is. Over the next two months, we're going to do several things. I don't just sit around. And so that would not be restful. And so we are going to rest. We're going to be able to see all of our kids. And so we're excited about that.

In fact, this week, we're going to fly out to San Diego and have the opportunity to see our son there. In fact, all our sons are going to fly out there. And so we're excited about that. I'm going to take two online self-paced classes. And so that's just for my own health and benefit. We're going to travel some, but a lot of our traveling will actually be to go to places in the world where we have partners, where we have church planners, missionaries to where they don't get the encouragement that I constantly get here at Providence. And so, we're going to go and actually see a number of them in places in the world that are closed to the gospel and to simply be an encouragement to them while we're away. And I suppose that the last thing is to think and to write and what we're going to be thinking about, what I'm going to be thinking about is I'm 48.

So if the Lord tarries and I'm still on the earth, the next time that there's a next time this happens, I'll be 55 or 56 years old. And the fact is about every five years in ministry, what you need to be focusing on changes just a little bit. And so I'm just going to be praying and seeking the Lord's direction on what I'm supposed to be doing with my time over the next five to seven years here at Providence and how it might be just a little bit differently than it is now. It may look identical, I don't know, but at least to think through those things. There's a lot of people who said, are you excited? I suppose that I'm excited, but even more so I'm thankful. I really am. I think it's undeserving that you bless us in this way.

It's an amazing thing. I'm also really thankful that I'm in a really good place. In fact, when I drove here this morning, I was... I'm excited to go see our son and all of our sons and to see family and to be together. I think it's going to be fantastic. But to be honest with you, I was a little bummed thinking, I'm not going to be here next week. And so it's an unusual thing. I really love to come to Providence and I really love to be here. And so for all of the blessings, I just want to say, thank you. Okay. So let me pray. Yeah. Father in heaven, we bow

before you and we thank you that you are the one who makes life worth living. And thank you for in each of our lives, God, that there is need of rest.

And we thank you that you give to each one of us in unique ways the replenishment that we need. And so I pray for the church family. God, if you tarry, you wait to come and these months pass, God I pray, Lord that you would allow me the privilege to come back to this place and to see a continuation of faith and hope and love that I see today. I pray father that you would protect and you would provide, and you would bless, and you would build up, you would restore, you would reconcile, you would heal, you would do all the things that only you can do. And even in this time, and in this space, as we open up your word, we pray that you would do that. You would pour out your spirit and help us to see things in your word that we couldn't see, we couldn't appreciate without your spirit at work in our lives.

I pray father that you would convict us, that you would, Lord would you quicken our hearts to be able to see and appreciate love and feel a sense of conviction where your word this morning is going to find us out of balance. God, we thank you that it's through your kindness that you lead us to repentance. And I pray father that as we uncover this passage that deals with sincerity, inevitably it is going to expose a measure of hypocrisy in each of our lives. And we pray that instead of resenting that conviction, that you would help us to appreciate that conviction that comes from your spirit, through your word, as a means by which we would repent of our sin and find just what you promise and that is refreshment for our soul. And so would you do good to us, even though it requires your grace and mercy to do so.

Would you speak through weakness, we pray now in Christ name. Amen. If you have a Bible turn with me to first Thessalonians chapter two. If you're brand new here with us, if you don't have a Bible there's Bibles in the chairs near you. There at the bottom. You don't have one, take that home as a gift. This passage is really about a word, and it's the word sincerity. That as people of the kingdom, we have the responsibility to be distinguished by sincerity. The fact is that for each one of us, as we live in a broken world, that's marked by deceit, hypocrisy, things that are not true. It doesn't take very long to live here for us to grow attracted to sincerity. The word sincerity, it means real or true, genuine, authentic. There's a word origin, sine cera is there are some who believe, I'll just say that this is a contested belief.

We're not exactly certain of the origin of the word sincerity, but there's many who believe that it comes from two Latin words sine cera that means without wax. The idea there is this beautiful word picture that's really... Well, it's really informing to us. And that is that if you were somebody at a point in time that was creating pots out of clay, in which people would purchase them in order to cook their food, which the entire world did at one point in time. And if you made an error in your construction, if you were dishonest, you could fill that error with wax. You could sell it in public and people wouldn't know any better. And then they'd get home when they put it under the fire, suddenly it would reveal its imperfection. And so the view or the idea is that the words came from a time when people would mark their wears by saying, this is without wax.

This is *sine cera*. That's what you see on the outside, same as on the inside. There's no hidden flaws within it. The idea whether that's true or not of the origin of the word, it means to be the same throughout. That what's on the outside is also true on the inside or that sort of who we are in public is the same as who we are in private. And isn't it interesting how you and I, we tend to want to distinguish it. We tend to want to look at people and to look at sincerity and to pick it out of a group. It's interesting what people say to me when they talk about a pastor, when they talk about a politician, when they talk about a worship leader, sometimes they will distinguish one from the others by saying, that person is just so sincere.

It just seems so authentic coming out of them. We have an eye for this and the reason is because we live in a broken world. And it's interesting that Jesus kept touching this nerve. In fact, in Matthew chapter 15, he looks at these Pharisees and he says to them, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me." He's saying that what people can see and hear, it is not the same as what I see in their heart. We just sang songs. He's talking about people who come and they're honoring me with their lips and yet their heart is far from me. There's many of us who are absolutely sincere in the songs that we just sang and then there were others that were absolutely insincere. In Matthew 23, he looks at the same group of people, the Pharisees. And he says, "You guys are like whitewashed tombs, which outwardly appear beautiful, but within are full of dead people's bones and all uncleanness." There's an outward and an inward.

And what's interesting is that when we come across these kinds of passages in the New Testament or in the Bible, it's interesting how colorful they become. It's interesting how they sort of sparkle. Our attention gravitates to these. They sort of jump off the page. And the reason is because you and I both, all of us, we tire of living in a world of half truths, of hypocrisy, of deceit, false information, false marketing. We all want to believe, and yet we've been taught throughout our entire life, don't believe. Don't believe that person is real. Don't believe that promise is real. Don't believe that they're going to keep their promise. But there's another reason I think of why these passages jump off the page. It's not merely that we tire of living in a world full of hypocrisy. I think the second reason is because we tire of participating in that hypocrisy. That we are tired of trying to sell a better version of us than is real.

And this is what we find in first Thessalonians two. Let me give you the backstory. Man named Paul comes into the town Thessalonica. He preaches the gospel there and people trust and they believe. They become converted, they're forgiven of their sin and they become people of the kingdom. Meaning people of Christ's kingdom, citizens of his kingdom, called to love and to resemble the virtues and the values of the King. We're told there that there were some Jews who were threatened by the gospel. They were working to earn their salvation.

And the gospel said that we're simply trusting in someone else's work and someone else's accomplishments for our own sake. And they were offended by the gospel. They sought to undercut the gospel. And so they come into Thessalonica hearing that Paul had gone there to preach the gospel and they stir up a little mob, a little riot. Paul has to leave. And yet Paul becomes so concerned in his heart of the condition of these people

that he loves, this little local church that he sends a friend back to check on the church. And then the friend comes back to Paul and he has this glowing report of how well they're doing. And so in chapter one, Paul writes and he simply commends them for their sincere faith, their sincere love, their sincere hope. And you get to chapter two and what he has to do is something that's a little startling and that is to defend his sincerity. For Timothy, his friend had told him that the false teachers, that these people who were opposing the gospel had come in and in order to undercut the gospel, they had sought to undercut the person who shared the gospel with them. And they did so by accusing Paul of insincerity. And so this is what he says, "For you yourselves know, brothers, that are coming to you is not in vain. But though we had already suffered, had been shamefully treated at Philippi. As you know, we had boldness in our God to declare to you the gospel of God in the midst of much conflict. For our appeal does not spring from air or impurity or any attempt to deceive, but just as we have been approved by God to be entrusted with the gospel, so we speak not to please, man, but to please God who test our hearts."

"For, we never came with words of flattery as you know, nor the pretext for greed. God is witness. Nor do we seek glory from people, whether from you or from others, though we could have made demands as apostles of Christ. But we were gentle among you, like a nursing mother taking care of our own children. So being affectionately desirous of you, we were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own selves, because you would become very dear to us. For you remember, brothers, our labor and toil: we work night and day that we might not be a burden to any of you while we proclaim to you the gospel of God. You were witnesses. And God also how holy and righteous and blameless was our conduct toward you believers. For you know how like, a father with his children, we exhorted each one of you and encouraged you and charged you to walk in a manner worthy of God, who calls you into his own kingdom and glory."

So the first thing I want you to see here is that sincerity of heart is noticeable. It is noticeable. You can pick it out of a lineup. But what's interesting is even though sincerity is noticeable, it is not always rightly explainable. It is not always accurately explained. You see, you and I just like everyone else. We live in a world that literally propels our heart to become jaded, to not be trusting of others, because there's so many things that are untrustworthy in the world. And so, as a result of that, one of the sad characteristics of following humanity is that when we have a lack of information, we tend to assume the worst.

If we don't know, we don't give people the benefit of the doubt. We assume that they're actually a part of everything that we have seen that sniffs a little close to what this smells like, that is not trustworthy. And so we tend to look at things, whether it's leaders, whether it's ideas, whether it's letters, whether it's sermons, whether it's promises that somebody makes to us. And because we live in this world that causes us to be jaded, we simply have a hard time assuming the best. We typically, like this picture, walk around think, it's simply too good to be true. We look around at people's promises, sort of like cheese, right? People's platforms and it's like cheese. And we look at it and we think, you know what? Man, I like cheese. Of course, if you don't like cheese, this whole thing falls on its face.

But if you do, you look and you go, you know what? The last time, the last time that I believe somebody's promised, the last time that I joined a church, the last time that I... Whatever it is, it's ultimately a deadly trap. A lot of people live like this. A lot of us live like this. Well to the Jews who came into the city who didn't believe the gospel. You remember, as we read four different times in the text, he says, we proclaimed to you the gospel of God. What is the gospel of God? It's the good news that's found in the Bible that God created us in love for a relationship with him. And yet we walked away from him. We sinned against him, fell short of his glory and his result of that were separated from him.

But in the love of God, instead of leaving us far away to be able to have to endure his everlasting condemnation, he sent his son to the earth to rescue us. He taught us how to live. He showed us how to live. He loved us. He cared for us. And then he went to a cross and there he died for our sin. He was buried in a grave. And then he rose from the dead in order to give us eternal life. And for those of us who put our faith and our trust in him, he takes away our sin. The Bible's word is forgiveness. He gives us his righteousness. The Bible's word is justification. He gives us eternal life and then he does something amazing. He takes his spirit and he causes his spirit to dwell within our heart to give us new motivation, fresh motivation to live in different ways, to treat people in a different way.

But if you happen to be just like Paul's opponents, individuals who don't believe the gospel and who therefore cannot see how the spirit of God can live in somebody's heart and through somebody's life, then somebody like Paul, his behavior is really confusing. You see he knew that they knew that verse one and two, that he had been shamefully treated, that he had suffered in Philippi. And then in verse two, that he had boldness to declare the gospel in much conflict. But in spite of the conflict and in spite of the affliction and the suffering, the shameful treatment, they kept looking at him and seeing this indomitable strength, this desire to self-sacrifice, this unbelievable endurance. And they were left with accusing him of things that might explain his behavior on the natural, because they couldn't compensate for the supernatural. They couldn't imagine how somebody could have the spirit of God living in them, causing them to be self sacrificial.

And so when they saw self-sacrifice, they assigned it to motives that were filthy. And so verse three through six, what does he say? He says, "Our appeal does not spring from error or impurity or any attempt to deceive. Not to please, man. We never came with words of flattery nor the pretext for greed, nor do we seek glory from people." What's he doing here? These are the accusations that Timothy, when he went to check on him, heard that the people had been told. He comes back and he says, this is what the people are hearing. And so in order to defend the gospel, he's compelled to defend his character by telling them this is not how he behaved among you. In essence, he's saying, Thessalonians know that we didn't come in order to teach an error. We didn't come and... We weren't in it for ourselves. And we didn't lie to you. And we didn't come in order simply to have you be happy with us, to be pleased with us.

We didn't flatter you. And we didn't take from you because our heart was so full of greed and we never sought to receive your praise and glory. Now, the amazing thing of what happens is next. This is the big deal. This

is what I have underlined in my Bible. Is to defend the gospel, he has to defend his character and so you say, well, how did he do it? How did he defend his character? He could have, as he said, stood on box as the apostle and simply leaned on his authority over people and said, I'm up here and you're down here. And this is how noble I am and how sincere I am and you must believe, but he doesn't do that. He also could have thrown his own punch. He could have said, oh, that's what they're saying about me, well, let me tell you about them. Leaving the church to have to see who has less mud on them in order to make a decision as to who is sincere.

But instead, what does Paul do? What he does is he appeals to their first hand remembrance of how he treated them when he was there. Notice what he does seven times in chapter one, verse six, "You know what kind of men we proved to be among you for your sake." Chapter two, verse one, "You, yourselves know, brothers, that are coming to you was not in vain." Chapter two, verse two, "As you know, we had boldness to preach the gospel of God." Chapter two, verse five, "We never came with words of flattery as you know." Chapter two, verse nine, "You remember brothers are labor and our toil, we work night and day." Chapter two, verse 10, "And you are witnesses. And God also how holy and righteous and blameless with our conduct toward you believers." In chapter two, verses 11 and 12, "For you know how like a father with his children, we exhorted you." Imagine, Providence, if we treated people so well that the memory of that treatment would be our only needed defense if accused. This kind of sincerity is noticeable. So how did he treat him? The second truth, sincerity is demonstrated by caring and sacrificing like a mother.

When we care for people like a mother, it is distinct. And one of the ways that you know that you're caring well is it's not efficient. If you said, man, I just really care for that person. That eight seconds of care was just stunning. I suppose it could be worse behavior, but anytime you see care advertised in the scripture, it always takes a lot of time. And caring in our culture, it often feels so unproductive because we're so used to accomplishing things through people instead of in people. We've been taught and we've been treated like a pawn on the chess board. And therefore many of us, whether it's in the marketplace, whether it's in school, whether it's in ministry, the church, wherever it is, if you have a greater end, it's okay for people to be expendable. And as a result of that, so long as we win, we can sacrifice a bunch of pawns. This is not biblical sincerity. Okay? You don't win the race as a Christian by exploiting people and devouring people in your wake. People are important.

And so notice what he says to them. He says, "We were gentle among you." This is how we were among you. We were gentle among you. The word gentle in its noun form is the word infant or baby. We don't use that because it's not a verb. We don't infant you. Right? We're gentle with you. But if you're holding a baby, like little baby skin, right, little baby hands are like this big, right? And they put their little baby hands on you, it's so soft. You can hardly feel it. It's so gentle. He says, we were like an infant to you. We were that gentle with you. We were not rough. We were not reckless. We didn't run over you. We didn't leave you less than when we arrived. No, we looked at you and we saw a human being created in the image of God. And as a human being, we saw inherent within you, personhood and dignity. As such, we treated you with care. Not only had, but we

saw that you as a human being happen to be fragile, you're breakable and that you're fighting a great battle. There was an old Saint, I forget who it was. And he says, be gentle with everyone for everyone is fighting a great battle.

You happen to be in the lobby and you see people walk in one at a time. You think I wonder if I should greet them. Just remember something. Every time you see someone, this person who's just walking in, they're fighting a huge battle right now. A battle for their joy, a battle for their peace, a battle against anxiety, a battle against something. Every one of us, you think you have it big. Well, you do, you do. You have a big battle going on? I recognize it, that person's sitting right next to you whether you know it or not, they have a huge battle going on as well. So he says, be gentle. We were gentle, how gentle? This gentle. We were so gentle. We were like a nursing mother taking care of our children, being affectionately desirous of you. We were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God, but also our own selves, because you would become very dear to us. What he says is this, we could have found a more efficient way to feed you the truth. Now look, if you have kids and you didn't nurse those kids, right? You used a bottle or some other form to feed them. Like, don't take any offense of this. I'm not talking about the merits of nursing or not nursing right now. What I am saying is this, you cannot find a more inefficient way to get nutrition into a baby than to nurse the baby. It takes time. And this is what he says. He says, "Like a nursing mother, we gave you our time and energy because we wanted to give you the truth. But we also wanted to give you our own selves. And the reason is because you would become so dear to us. Sincere care for people always is accompanied by sacrifice. And perhaps one of the greatest stories in the Bible that was told by Jesus about sacrifice and care is this parable of the good Samaritan. A parable that we teach to children, they can understand and yet it confounds the adults in the room. There's a middle lawyer who comes to Jesus. And they're talking about loving God and loving our neighbor as ourself. And it says that he wants to justify himself. And so he ask a question and he says, Jesus, who is my neighbor? In other words who qualifies?

I know I'm supposed to love my neighbor as myself, but who is that neighbor? Is it all people? Is it like male people and female people, Jewish people and Gentile people, white people and black people, educated and uneducated, religious, irreligious, rich and poor? Who qualifies? Who do I have to be a neighbor to? And so Jesus tells a parable. Now a parable is a story with intent. It's not a true story. He does say there was actually three guys and this is what happened. He makes up a story about all of us.

And he says that there was a man he's walking down the road, he gets beat up and left for dead. And suddenly a guy walks by, sees him, makes rationale as to why not to help him and walks off. Second guy does the same. Third guy comes, a Samaritan. And what it says that he then demonstrated this exceptional startling, sacrificial care. Then Jesus finishes his parable. He is done with his story now and he gets back into the context and he goes, well, let me ask you a question. You asked me a question earlier, who's my neighbor? Let me ask you, which one of these was a neighbor? And this is so important you understand what he's doing in this passage. All of us need to understand what he's doing in this passage. Because we went from who is my neighbor to, am I a neighbor?

In the end, we aren't asking about the quality of man who's lying half dead on the ground, we're asking about the quality of men who are walking by. When you go into your neighborhood or when you go to the supermarket or you go and there's people in your workplace and you look around and you see, and you quantify the levels of dignity that you see in those people. The question is, if you're like the first guy is which one of these qualifies as my neighbor and Jesus turns everything on its head and he says this, are you a neighbor? Are you a neighbor? Do you give care like this? The third thing I want you to see is that sincerity is demonstrated by teaching and modeling like a father. So like a mother we're supposed to care and like a father, he says, this is that when we leave people with truth to build their life upon from God and they model to follow that distinguishes the truth. It shows how truth is applied to life, it is distinct. So notice what he says in verse 11 and 12, he says, "For you know, like a father with his children, we exhorted you." It's the word urge. We urged you. We pled with you. And he says, "And we encouraged you." That's to comfort you, to try to motivate you. But then he says, and charged you and the word charged in its noun form is the word martyr, to die for your faith.

When put into a verb form, it's the word charge. And the idea is this is that we proclaim to you a truth without wavering and urged you that no matter how hard it got that you would hold fast to this truth. He says, this is what we did to you. What he's saying in these verses is this; like a father, we dispensed truth to you. But then he goes a step further in verse 10. He says, "You're witnesses and God also how holy and righteous and blameless with our conduct toward you believers." What's he saying here? He's saying not only did we dispense truth, we also dispensed trust.

We showed you how to live. We showed you how to put these principles into action. He's saying we could have watered down the truth to make it more culturally acceptable, but we didn't. And we could have told you the unbridled truth without any effort to live by it ourselves but we didn't do that either. No, instead we gave you love and care, we gave you truth to build your life upon and we gave you a model to follow. Sincerity. As a church, I believe that you're sincere and yet throughout the pages of the New Testament, you keep finding every time they're saying, I see that you're sincere. There's this refrain that says, and yet excel still more. So how can we even grow in these areas? First as we close, lets reimagine the sincerity of Jesus. The reason this is so important is because you and I will become like the person that we admire.

You admire somebody, you want to emulate that someone. So let me clarify what I mean by reimaging the sincerity of Jesus, right? You cannot do this with a closed Bible. Otherwise, you imagine something that's not true. Instead, open your Bible, read the stories of Jesus, pause in those stories and then imagine the depth of sincerity and truthfulness that was demonstrated by Christ. No hypocrisy, no deceit, no inconsistency. In fact, his own enemy says, we know that you are true and that you are not swayed by appearances. Jesus never sold a version of himself that was better than who he actually was. He was free from error. He was free from impurity, free from deceit, free from flattery and greed. And like a mother, he cared for people. Oh, did he care for people, all people. In fact, there's a prophecy in Isaiah that was fulfilled in Matthew.

And it says the bruised reed. He, the Christ, when he comes, he will not break off. What that means is that if you went out into, as he did, the massive humanity and that mass was in a metaphor, like a field of wheat, you would find some stalks that would just be so strong and just be waving in the wind. And some people are like that. They're having those moments in life where it's like, man, I'm walking with the Lord. I'm so strong. They're strong. The fibers, either so healthy. And as a result of that, it stands like they're just standing tall. And yet he says that he also comes apart upon humanity and some of the stalk are broken over. Christ, he doesn't just break him off, nor does it say that he just mows him over. Instead, it says that the son of God and all of us ins he comes and he straightens out those stalks and he holds them tight with his own hand until the fibers of their soul are restored.

Inefficient care he gave to people. Let me go have lunch with you in your home he said repeatedly. Caring for people well and like a father, he spoke the truth and he modeled that truth as how to live. And then he went to Jerusalem and there he died for our sin. He was buried in a grave and he rose from the dead. And when you and I, we hear good news, it's instinctual that we lean towards that good news. We root for it to be true. We want to be true. And yet today there are literally countless of people, some of which are in this room who lean away from Christ in the gospel because the version they or you hear or see is not the genuine article. So I beg you open up your Bible, read it and reimagine the depth of sincerity in the son of God.

A second, let me encourage you to put your trust in Jesus. When he rose from the dead, he extended an invitation to all humanity, including you that if we would repent of believing, we can save ourself. If we admit that we have a need, if we confess our sin to him, if we will believe in him and confess him as Lord, he will forgive us. He'll save us. And he will do that in your heart. And third, let me encourage you to confess after examining your own heart and your life for sincerity. Let me just ask you a few questions to consider for yourself. Are you trying to sell a better version of yourself than is real?

Are you asking the question, is that person my neighbor, or are you asking the question, am I a neighbor? Are we caring for people? Are we declaring truth? Are we providing a model to follow? The last time that you were accused of something, were you content with merely appealing to people's memories of how you previously had lived and treated them as your only defense? Jesus gave us the Lord's supper for a lot of reasons. One was to proclaim what he did. One was to remember what he did. The other is to examine our hearts, which is what we're going to do now. If you've never trusted Christ, we welcome you to do so. But if you're not quite ready for that, we ask you not to take the elements. Because the Bible says to take the elements is to tell others that you treasure the elements and that wouldn't be true. But if you do know Christ, he tells us to examine our heart, confess our sin before we do so.

So I want to help you like I did last week simply by leading through a few categories, asking you to consider and asking God to examine your heart in these areas. So if you would, would you bow your head and let's pray together. First, why don't you take just a moment and ask God to examine your heart, your motives, your intentions. And anything that he reveals about your heart, your desires that are out of step with his word

and confess those to him now.

And now let's ask God to examine our hands, our behavior, how we've treated people. Ask him to examine, to see if there's anything out of step and anything that he reveals that is out of step then confess that as sin.

And finally ask God to examine your mouth, the words that have come from your mouth. Does any hypocrisy, any deceit, anything that he would reveal that's out of step and confess that to him as well.

Father in heaven, we thank you that your word is true and your word says that if we confess our sins to you, that you are faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleans us from all in righteousness. And so we thank you for forgiveness. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, Jesus, on the night that he was betrayed, he took bread with his disciples and he broke that bread, he gave thanks. And he began talking about how his own body would be broken in order that we would be able to trust in him to have a relationship with God. And so if you enjoy a with your creator and you know it's only possible because of Jesus Christ and take and eat and remembrance of him. And then Jesus took the cup. The cup had wine in it, looked like blood. He began talking about how without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sin. And there at that table, there were 12 sinners and one sinless one. There were 12 insincere men and there was one sincere son of God. And that one said that my body is going to be broken to the place that it's going to bleed, but that blood is going to inaugurate a new covenant. It's going to take your sin away forever.

If you know the joy of being forgiven and the peace that it brings, you know it's because of Christ alone and take and drink and remembrance of him. So father in heaven, we bow before you and we thank you for sending Jesus. Thank you for sending Jesus to save us from our sin and Jesus, thank you for coming. Thank you for coming in love and power, wisdom and truth, courage, compassion. Thank you for being gentle with us. Thank you for dying for us. For being buried and rising from the dead and we praise you and we'll praise you forever and ever, and ever as the lamb who is slain. And Holy Spirit, we thank you for teaching us and opening our eyes and helping us to see Jesus as supreme, convicting us of sin, inclining our hearts to you. And so we want to respond in all of this to you in faith, as we sing to you with a full heart. So would you help us now to sing as sincere people. Not only with our lips, but also with our heart and we pray this in Christ's name. Amen.



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