

## Transcription of 17GS1019

Ephesians 3:8

"The Unsearchable Riches of Christ"

February 22, 2017

So tonight.....tonight, tonight, tonight. I want to share with you something this day I both love and yet struggle with from time to time that I believe many other believers struggle with on occasion and maybe even struggle on a fairly regular basis. I know the title up on the screen, here, doesn't exactly portray what I just talked about, but it'll all make sense. I promise.

You see, we know we live in a sin-cursed world. We know difficulties and trials are knocking at our door all the time, and, as a result of it, sometimes those problems trip us up pretty bad. But the hardest thing for me personally, as a Christian - the thing that just kind of squashes me to a point where I feel like I just can't get up - it's not when I've been sinned against, even though that can be extremely painful, but it's rather my own sins that I commit against God, as a believer. Sin brings with it a sense of guilt and condemnation and alienation from God. But I'm a believer! I know I'm saved. I know I'm going to heaven. I'm convinced of that even though I know I deserve hell. I know God loves me in the sense that He went to the cross for the sins of humanity, and because I believe that and confess that, I'm going to heaven. I know this.

But here's where the struggle comes - I know God loves me (because I know He came to save us), but I don't always really think He likes me very much. How is that even possible? How can God both love me and dislike me, all at the same time? I'll tell you how we think that. How could God like somebody that keeps on screwing up all the time? How could God delight and enjoy His relationship with me who continually messes up what seems to be over and over and over again? Who continually spits in the face of His grace with, at times, even willful disobedience? How could God not be displeased with me, considering my track record and my performance, as a Christian? This type of thinking is very much real for many of us. Below the surface of the smiles and our "amens," we live lives of guilt-ridden insecurity when it comes to our relationship with God; that leaves us with our heads hung low, just trying to do everything we can do to hopefully make things right again after, hopefully, a couple days or maybe a few weeks of some good behavior to start feeling better again; this, of course, until we blow it again, and the cycle just keeps repeating itself. The reason for this ugly cycle that many of us deal with, and face regularly, is because we live by an incomplete view of the

gospel. We tend to see the gospel as a door we walk through to become a Christian. In this view, the gospel is really only for unbelievers. Once you become a Christian, you don't need it anymore except to share it with other people who are still outside the door. And we fail to see the gospel as the solution to our greatest problem - our guilt, our condemnation, and our alienation from God. We fail to see it as the basis for our day to day acceptance with Him, and as a result, many believers live in spiritual poverty.

I read a story of a Southern plantation owner who left behind \$50,000 inheritance to a former slave who served him faithfully all his life. This was a huge chunk of change back in those days, probably equivalent to what would be \$500,000 today. So the lawyer for this estate duly notified the old man of his inheritance and told him that the money had been deposited for him into a local bank. So weeks went by, and the former slave never called for any of his inheritance. Finally the banker called him. He called him in and told him that he had \$50,000 available to draw at any time. And the old man replied, "Sir, do you think I can have 50 cents to buy a sack of cornmeal?" Not having handled money most of his life, this former slave had no comprehension of his wealth. As a result, he was asking for 50 cents when he could have easily had so much more. That story illustrates the current situation that many of us Christians face today.

Now, in Ephesians 3:8 the apostle Paul wrote of preaching to the Gentiles "the unsearchable riches of Christ." That's the title of the message. Paul was not referring to financial wealth but to the glorious truths of the gospel. To use figures from the former-slave story, Paul was saying that each of us has \$50,000 available to us in the gospel. Yet most of us are hoping to squeeze out 50 cents' worth. Why is that? It is because we don't understand the riches of the gospel of Christ any more than the former slave understood the riches of \$50,000. So that's where we're going to dig deep into as much as possible this evening. "The unsearchable riches of Christ," which is the gospel message - the good news, the basis of our faith, the core of the truth we believe in (as Christians) for salvation, and hopefully, as we will learn, for our everyday lives. And it will pave a great segue into a rich time of communion this evening, reflecting on all these rich truths that come out of the gospel.

Now I know it's typically our style to go verse by verse, which is how I regularly like to teach, but this particular message, seeing that I only have one night to do it, I'm not going to be able to pull that off. I'm going to be flipping through several

different books and epistles and lay out, as best as I can for you, "the unsearchable riches of Christ" found in this message of the gospel. So bear with me. I'm not going to ask you to flip to all the passages. Go back later and flip through them yourselves, maybe at a later time, but you're not going to be able to keep up with all the references.

So what I want to do right now is I want to start with the basics. Most of you are all going to know the basics, but we have to start here. The gospel essentially means good news, and it is specifically good news about our relationship with God. We like to receive good news, especially if it addresses bad news we've just received. If you've just been told that you have cancer, for example, it's good news when the doctor tells you that it is a type of cancer that readily responds to treatment. The gospel is like that. It is the good news that directly addresses the ultimate bad news in our lives. The Bible tells us that we are deep in trouble, that we were unrighteous and ungodly. And then it tells us that God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and wickedness of men. In fact, it tells us that we were by nature objects of God's wrath. That is a crazy reality, a reality that people refuse to believe is true. But fresh out of the womb, whether you believe it or not, you're a natural-born sinner. How is this possible? Romans 5:12-14 says, "Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned. For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come." It all goes back to Adam in the garden. Adam was the first man ever created and was appointed the legal representative of the entire human race. When he fell, that means we all fell. Romans 5:18 says, "Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation....." The fall of Adam and the loss of God's moral image resulted not only in guilt but also in moral depravity or corruption. Now Adam's will, which had been totally responsive to God's will, was biased towards evil, and that is what we call original sin - an internal drive rooted in the perversity of fallen human nature. We Christians call it our sinful nature or our flesh. And the story goes downhill from Adam. Since we all have a corrupt and sinful nature, we aggravate our condition by our own individual sins. Every day we sin - both consciously and unconsciously, both willfully and unintentionally. As believers, we tend to generally abstain from the grosser sins of society. In fact, we tend to sit in judgment of those who practice such things. But beneath the surface of our own lives, we tolerate all kinds of refined

sins such as selfishness, covetousness, pride, resentment, envy, jealousy, self-righteousness and a critical spirit towards others. But Jesus, in Matthew 22:37, says the greatest commandment is to "love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments," He says, "hang all the Law and the Prophets." Have you thought about what it means to love God in that way, every single day of your life? Or to love your neighbor as much as you love yourself? To love in such a way that you care for another person's needs - your neighbor's needs - just as much as your own? Sin runs so much deeper into our core that even the very best deeds we could do will always be stained with sin. Isaiah 64:6 says, "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags."

So you may be thinking by this time, "I get it, I'm a sinner. I thought you were going to talk about 'the unsearchable riches of Christ.' All you're doing is making me feel guilty all over again." There's a reason for that. The gospel begins with the bad news so that we all must realize we have no place to hide. In our relationship with God, we cannot plead with our Christian duties (as helpful as they may be) or our external morality (as exemplary as it may be). Instead, we must confess with Ezra (9:6) that "our sins are higher than our heads, and our guilt has reached to the heavens." We must also realize that even a deep, penetrating sense of our sinfulness does not do justice to the reality of the predicament we are in. Our need is not to be measured by our own sense of need but by what God had to do to meet that need.

Our situation was so desperate that only the death of His Son on a cruel and shameful cross was sufficient to resolve the problem. Many people erroneously think that God can just forgive our sins because He's God, and He's a loving God. Nothing could be further from the truth. The cross speaks to us not only about our sin but God's holiness. If God were to simply just forgive everyone, He would be denying the totality of His eternal character. To be holy is to be separate, and when used of God it means, among other things, that He is eternally separate from any degree of sin. He does not sin Himself, and He cannot abide or condone sin in the moral agents He created - that being us. To put it bluntly, the psalmist said (Psalm 5:5), "The arrogant cannot stand in Your presence; You hate all who do wrong." And God is a righteous judge, a God who expresses His wrath every day. Thus we see that God always hates sin and inevitably expresses His wrath against it. The cross of Christ, then, is an expression of God's wrath towards sin as well as

His love to us. It expresses His holiness and His determination to punish sin, even at the cost of His own Son, and it expresses His love in sending His Son to bear the punishment we so justly deserved. That is why we have the cross. We must say God's holiness demanded it as punishment for our sins, and God's love provided it to save us from our sins. It is only against this dark backdrop of our sinfulness that we can see the glory of the cross shining forth in all its brilliance and splendor.

But Jesus didn't just go straight to the cross. He didn't pop out and go right to the cross. There's more to that story. Jesus, for roughly thirty-three years, all the way from infancy to childhood to teenage years and to young adult life, He lived perfectly. He was faced with temptations and challenges just like we ourselves face, and yet He was sinless. Not only was He perfect in behavior, He was perfect in thought. Jesus, in John 8:29, says, "I always do what pleases the Father." Jesus not only did what pleased the Father, but He delighted in doing it. Why is this important? For the most part, Jesus' life of perfect obedience has been seen only as a necessary precondition to His death. The truth is, however, Jesus not only died for us, He lived for us. That is, all that Christ did in both His life and death, He did in our place as a substitute. You see, there are two works of Christ in regards to God's Law. The Law contains both precepts and penalties. The precepts are to be fully obeyed, and the penalties are imposed for the least infraction of the precepts. You break the law, there're consequences. This law of God, that communicates God's own moral nature, the law that was fully imprinted upon Adam's heart, this same law that the apostle Paul said (Romans 2:15) was "written on people's hearts," regardless of how of obscure it might be now, this universal moral will of God was lived out by Christ in perfect obedience because we, in our sinful nature, could not do it because we were under sin's curse.

Given that truth, Jesus, at the end of His life, should have been rewarded for living a sinless life. But rather He suffered the penalty of the law for our violation of it, and He did it according to God's will, and He did it obediently without complaint and without regret. So how can Jesus take our place, both in obeying God's Law and in suffering the consequences of disobeying it? How can the innocent suffer for the guilty? And we go back to Romans 5 where it talked about Adam, and we skip to verse 19, which says, "For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous." Just as Adam was appointed our legal representative (and failed horribly), Jesus was appointed the legal representative for all that would ever trust in Him. Our

union with Christ is what makes His life effective for ours, and that is the gospel message. Everything that flows out of what Christ did in His life and death gets imputed onto us. And that's what we want to look at tonight. That's what we want to understand. We want to understand the gospel in its entirety because the gospel message isn't just a gateway into heaven, although it is a gateway there. It's more than that, and we need to understand the implications of it in order to live a gospel-centered life, to live like we have \$50,000 in the bank and not just some spare change for some cornmeal.

"The unsearchable riches of Christ" are for us today as well as our security into the next life. We are not to sit around moping in our sin and guilt and condemnation. Jesus has given us so much more than that! So let's look first at what He did, and then we'll look at what that means for us, and we'll finish with how we apply it.

So, Jesus satisfied the justice of God. In our human system, judicial or personal, a tension often exists between justice and mercy. Sometimes one prevails at the expense of the other. But there is no tension with God. Justice will always prevail. God's justice must be satisfied. Otherwise His moral government would be undermined. Simply put, God cannot exalt one of His glorious attributes (such as mercy) at the expense of another attribute; in this case, justice. In the same way that Adam was our representative in the garden, so Christ was our representative on the cross. He bore the full brunt of God's justice that we should have borne. He received the full punishment we should have received. As the Scripture says, "But He was pierced for our transgression, He was crushed for our iniquities, the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him, and by His wounds we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5). Through His representative union with us, Jesus assumed our obligation to perfectly obey the law of God and obeyed it to the letter. Through that same union, Jesus assumed our liability for not obeying the law and paid the liability to the utmost. He fully and completely satisfied the justice of God on our behalf, as our substitute. Because of the cross, there is no tension between justice and mercy. Instead, they meet in perfect harmony. Justice is carried out, while mercy has its full expression.

Next, Jesus emptied the cup of God's wrath. The theological term for this - Jesus was our propitiation. Remember that, by nature, we are objects of God's wrath. We have offended and committed divine treason every day with our lives and stored up the wrath of God. Jesus took that cup and drank every last bit of God's

wrath that was meant for our idolatry, our anger, our selfishness, our lust and deceit and greed; all the lawlessness you and I are guilty of, Jesus took it upon Himself, exhausting the wrath of God so that there would be none left for us who are in Christ. 2 Corinthians 5:21, "God made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him." As the Father turned His back to His beloved Son on the cross, and Jesus absorbs all that we deserve, we in turn receive the promise that we will never be forsaken as Christ was on the cross. Romans 5:8, "But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

Next, Christ removed our sins from the presence of God; theological term - expiation. In the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest would cast lots in the process of selecting two adult male goats. One goat was to be sacrificed and the blood sprinkled on the mercy seat in the holy place where God symbolically dwelt. The other goat was then brought forward, the high priest would lay his hands on the head of this goat, and confess over it all the wickedness and sin of the Israelites. The goat was then sent away into the desert and carried on itself all of the people's sins to a solitary place where the goat was never to be seen again. On the cross, Christ became our scapegoat, bearing the guilt of our sins through His sacrifice and by that act bearing them away from the presence of His holy Father. Psalm 103:12, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us."

Next, Christ redeemed us from the curse of God. Galatians 4:4-5, "God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." By redeeming us from the curse of the law, Jesus opened the way for us to inherit the blessing of obedience to it; blessings that He earned for us by His own perfect obedience. Jesus took off the shackles of the law and dominion of sin over our lives. How did He do this? Galatians 3:13, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us." Christ became a curse, which means He became a curse-bearer. When Jesus emptied the cup of God's wrath, He endured the ultimate limit of the law's curse.

Christ reconciled us to God. That's the next one. 2 Corinthians 5:19, "God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them." By Christ's death, He bridged the vast gulf of divine alienation between us and objectively restored us to a position of friendship and favor with God. The crazy

part about this truth is not only did God, through His Son, pave the way back into a relationship with Him, He pursued us in this reconciliation. Instead of us seeing what He's done for us, and in humility dropping to the floor and asking Him, "Please, have mercy on me, reconcile Yourself to me," God, in His grace and in His mercy, pursues us to be reconciled to Him.

If you've noticed, every work of Christ is directed toward God. It is His law that was obeyed, His justice that was satisfied, His wrath that was propitiated, His holy presence from which our sins were removed, His curse from which we were redeemed, and alienation from His divine presence that has been reconciled. It is true that it is the love of God for sinful people such as you and me that is the wellspring of our salvation. But it is also true that this love could only be shown in such a way that the glory of His holiness, and the honor of His law, would be magnified with the only way. And Jesus, in His sinless life and sin-bearing death, did just that. We truly have a great Savior in Jesus Christ.

So all that being true means the following for us - when we put our faith in the work of Jesus Christ, we stand justified or righteous before God. Right here, right now, in the pew that you are sitting in, no matter how far you have fallen, no matter how disgusted you are at your sinfulness, no matter the shame you feel, no matter the guilt you sense upon your life, if your faith is in the work of Jesus Christ, you stand righteous before a holy God. You can stand with your head held high, a smile on your face, and joy in your heart, clearly not because of what you yourself brought to the table (because those filthy rags belong in the trash); it is because when God looks at you, He doesn't see what you see. He sees His perfect Son in whom He loves and is well pleased. And this isn't just at the point where you accept Christ for the first time. Our justification is a point in time that has an eternal, ongoing benefit for us. Romans 5:2, "Through our Lord Jesus Christ we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand." The grace Paul is referring to is the grace of justification, and he tells us readers to stand in it every day because you cannot be unjustified. But that's the problem, right? Many believers do not live as if justification is a permanent abiding state. They have divorced their hope of eternal life in heaven from their relationship with God today. They think as if they will put on Christ's robes of righteousness at their death. Meanwhile, in this life, they draw their sense of God's acceptance from their most recent performance of Christian duties or their avoidance of certain sins. In essence, you're putting that nice beautiful robe in the closet (where you put all the other nice clothes that you hardly wear), and you've instead put on that old dingy



sweater that you should have thrown out years ago - because that's what you know. That's what you're used to. You feel normal in it. It makes you feel like you. And that's your problem. You're still living like you because you're still thinking like you. You're hoping to spend 50 cents when you have \$50,000 in the bank.

So the question is - you need to ask yourself this - are you looking at your own performance to gain acceptance with God, or are you trusting in Jesus Christ alone, in His performance, for not only your salvation but in the way you live out your relationship with God today?

As we continue on in "the unsearchable riches of Christ," 1 John 3:1 says, "Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God!" The idea that we are children of God is unreal, considering I was once an object of God's wrath. I was sitting on death row, and I should have been executed. However, I'm instead welcomed into His home, I'm given a room, I'm given all the privileges of one of His very own sons, that being Jesus Christ. When you look at your relationship with God, you are not just some drop-in-the-bucket follower that He could give or take. He loves you like a child that He adopted into His family. You are a daughter, you are a son, and He is your Father. And maybe you didn't have such a good relationship with your biological father, but this Father - our heavenly Father - promises that He will never leave you or forsake you (Hebrews 13:5).

Now we have arrived to the gospel truth that has a tendency to trip us up quite a bit. At the point of salvation, when we put our faith in the work of Christ, we are saved, we are justified, we are children of God, and we are sanctified. Sanctified means we are separated unto God for His holy purposes. This is possible because Jesus bore the curse of God, as we mentioned earlier, and freed us from the reign of sin in our lives. This is where Jesus and His Spirit come and live in our hearts. We become a new creation in Christ, with a new heart and new motives and new desires that please God and conform to the image of Christ. But sanctification is different than justification in the sense that it is progressive. When you're justified before God, that's it. You're seen as perfect before His eyes; there's nothing more to attain to in that sense. However, while you are still on this earth, you will find that there is a constant struggle that remains - our indwelling sin. Galatians 5:17 says, "For the flesh lusts against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary to one another, so that you do not do the things that you wish." As a new creation in Christ, with a new heart and new desires, while

you are no longer bound to the law of sin and death, you are still trapped in a body that only knows to sin. So there's a war going on inside of you between the Spirit of God and our flesh. So even though the Spirit is at work in us and is transforming us, He's sanctifying us until the day we die, our sinful nature opposes Him every step of the way. It's like wearing dirty wet clothes that cling to your body. It's disgusting, it's annoying, and you want to get it off, but it's stuck to you. And that's the struggle because all too often we succumb to the desires of the flesh and heap upon ourselves sin's guilt, and insecurity rises, and we alienate ourselves from God and stay in this place of condemnation until our performance and our behavior get better.

That is where a full understanding of the gospel message is necessary in order to apply it to our life in a way that we can truly live as God intends. And we stop with the 50-cent withdrawals for cornmeal, and we start spending the blood-bought "unsearchable riches of Christ." "The unsearchable riches of Christ" are the truths of the gospel when received in faith, and they are unsearchable not in the sense that we can't find them but in the sense that there is no limit to them. They are inexhaustible. They keep going to a point that our finite minds cannot fathom. God's love, God's grace, God's mercy, justification, redemption, forgiveness, sanctification - all these things spilling out of the gospel message. Are they just for when we die and go on to heaven? Is that all they're for, is from one point to that point? NO! They're for you now, they're for you today, to cherish, to love, to accept, to embrace and to share with others. Because His riches are so incredibly amazing, because God is so incredibly amazing, how could you not want all these things for others?

Look, writing this study was just about one of the hardest studies I've ever had to write - for two reasons. The first being there is so much truth and so much accomplished in the gospel message that I hardly made a dent in it. I literally felt as if I was writing (of this message) that I had one of those big old fluffy sleeping bags, and I was trying to stuff it back into that tiny little nylon bag it comes with, and I'm just stuffing it in, and I'm stuffing it in, only to realize that there's so much more to stuff in, and I just can't stuff in any more, and I give up, I can't do it. There's just too much to stuff in! It was extremely hard to get this because there're so many things I left out. There're so many things that I could have just expanded on and blessed you with, and you've just been sitting in awe of everything that Christ did, and I wish I could have done that (and I probably could have done a little bit more - I talk fast). But I just gave you a nugget of everything that was

accomplished, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." Like I said, they're not unsearchable because they can't be found. They're unsearchable because they can't be exhausted. The second reason that this was so hard is because my greatest struggle, as a Christian, is this very topic. I know these truths. I know them well! But sometimes I don't live like I believe they are true, and I fall back on my own performance, and my performance will always leave me feeling guilty and condemned. And so I live on that meager 50 cents a day instead of cashing in that \$50 grand that's available to me every single day, that gets renewed every single day because God's mercies are new every morning. But because God is so good, and because He is a good Father to us, He refuses to let me sit in that condemnation, and He refuses to let you sit in it. He refuses to let you sit in it. And He will pull us out of the dumps by the prompting of His Spirit to our spirit and allow us to see these truths of the gospel, "the unsearchable riches of Christ." It may be through a sermon that you are listening to right now. You might just be going, "Oh, my gosh, that is what I needed to hear right now. I'm feeling condemned, I'm feeling guilty, I'm feeling like I'm the worst person that lives. How can I always sin against my God? And then this message came, and it just kindled something inside of me." And, baam! You understand the complete gospel message, and you're able to then apply it in a way that motivates you to gospel yourself out of the pit you dug yourself into. It might be through a song. You could have heard a worship song. There was one that was played just a little bit ago. That was great. I was like, "Wow, I don't need to teach" because that song covered everything I'm talking about. It could be just flipping your Bible open and just reading, and coming across a verse that just smacks you in the face with truth, and all of that condemnation and guilt you felt is released. And the peace of God, which He gives to us through His Son, just overwhelms us, and we are blessed, and we move forward once again in our Christian journey.

One way or another, my point being, He's going to get your attention because you are a child of God. You are His son, you are His daughter, and He loves you so fiercely that He chases after you! No matter how much you condemn yourself, He goes after you, and He goes after you, and He's like, "Look at everything I've given to you in Jesus Christ! I've given you My beloved Son so that you can have everything He did!" And He imputes it onto you and onto me, and we get to walk in this newness of life, and our desires are changed. And we'll still ask the question, "Why do I sin so much? Why do I continually do this?" Because you have a sin nature that isn't going bye-bye until you die. But it will go bye-bye. It will. One day. And you pray for that day. When you're in eternity, and it's stripped away,

and you can see God as clearly as the sun in the sky. But we see dimly now. We see dimly because we're so tainted with that, and we sin because we're idiots, and we have a sin nature. I mean, that's all I can tell you. We do that because it's inside of us all the time, and that war is going on. But I'll tell you this much, I'll tell you this much. Your obedience always isn't measured by how well you perform. It's also measured by your desire and intent and what you want to do. So sometimes you're going to fail to meet the expectation of God's righteousness. You know what? You're going to fail a lot! But it's the fact that you want God's best, and you continue to gospel yourself into a place where you move forward in your walk, and you leave behind all the stupidity and all the guilt and condemnation that you put on yourself, and you walk forward again.

I actually asked Pastor Gerard to learn a song on short notice (I think it was Sunday) because this song is what I was talking about. It's what does it for me. It's like God just kind of (Pastor Jason hits his palm with his fist) hits me with it every single time when I just want to bury my head in the sand and hope to God I die. I say it in a funny way, but I'm being very serious. I feel those things. I know people feel these things. I counsel people that feel these things. It's very real. And this song just has a way of pulling me out of that depth of misery I put myself in, and it ministers to me, and I hope it will minister to you because I asked him to learn it. So give him grace if.....he only had a couple days. But he's going to play it while we do communion at some point. You'll know when. But what you need to know is the gospel message. You need to know it in its entirety because it is the realest thing you'll ever need to know. There is no truth more important, and there is no real hope found anywhere else but in the gospel.

Father, I thank You for the gospel message. I thank You for Your Son, Jesus Christ, who did everything on our behalf. That I merely just need to acknowledge that I can't do it, that I'm incapable, and put my faith in the One that has and did. If I believe that and I confess that, then I have every unsearchable rich gift of God available to me, as does everybody in this room that trusts in You, that places their faith in You. My God, how good are You to us!! How amazing is the grace that You displayed on the cross, and the love and the mercy and the forgiveness. Lord, You've done so much, and we've done so little. And we couldn't do anything to earn it. And in our relationship with You today, with You now, we don't have to live it feeling guilty and condemned and miserable - because we still make mistakes, and we still blow it at times - because the blood of Jesus Christ covers them all, it cleanses them. And I stand, and we stand, before You now justified, righteous.

You look at us on that judgment day, and You see Your Son Jesus Christ. And we enter in with joy, we enter in not hanging our heads down because, "Wow, how did that even happen?" It's because we can have a confident assurance because how much Jesus loves us and the price that that came at. Jesus, You're good. And as we celebrate communion, I couldn't think of a more appropriate message to celebrate communion with, to say everything You've done (well, at least as much as I could cover) and to sit back, to listen to some worship about how awesome You are because of everything You've done for us; and then to reflect back, as we take the elements, and just sit in awe of everything. Thank You. I pray that anyone that is in this room right now, if they don't know You, Lord, and they want to take communion, they'd better know You. And they know how to. They know what You've now done for them. They have no excuse. They know the truth. They just heard it. Lord, I pray that You prompted their spirit, You open their eyes to the gospel message, and that they would walk in it faithfully and obediently because You're calling them. You're asking for them. We knock on the door, and You open it every time. So I pray if anyone's knocking on that door, you're in! Put your faith in Jesus because He's opening that door for you, and He opened that door for us, and He's not shutting it. Lord, we thank You, we love You. It's in Your name we pray.

Submitted by Maureen Dickson  
February 26, 2017