

“Jesus Came To Give His Life a Ransom For Many”

Matthew 20:17-28

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December 10, 2023 • Sunday Morning Sermon

This is God's Word, our Lord Jesus, explaining why He came in Matthew 20 and it begins with a prediction, a prophecy of His own death. Matthew 20:17-28 says [17] *And as Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and on the way he said to them, [18] “See, we are going up to Jerusalem. And the Son of Man will be delivered over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death [19] and deliver him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified, and he will be raised on the third day.”*

*[20] Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came up to him with her sons, and kneeling before him she asked him for something. [21] And he said to her, “What do you want?” She said to him, “Say that these two sons of mine are to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom.” [22] Jesus answered, “You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?” They said to him, “We are able.” [23] He said to them, “You will drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father.” [24] And when the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers. [25] But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [26] It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [27] and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, [28] even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*

Our theme today in the second study of Advent is again the purpose of the Incarnation. Blessedly, on about seven or eight occasions, Jesus told us why He came. In the first study we looked at several of those ‘I came’ or ‘Son of Man came’ statements. In this study we're going to focus on one and that is “The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many.” In a broad sense here, the disciples think that following Jesus is a glorious thing that will bring them honor and that's true after a fashion, but Jesus has to tell them that the quest for honor and glory is a little bit misguided. He is telling them and us that it's very common in our fallen condition, to seek activities or roles that give us honor and instead what we should do is serve others as Christ served us.

One way we find honor is through our work, and jobs tend to appear and disappear with a fair degree of regularity. For example, is anybody by any chance, a town crier? That was somebody who said what time it was and the news of the day, yet nobody does that anymore. Is anyone an Ice Cutter? They also disappeared about the time that refrigerators got really good. Now we have new jobs which include AI developer and AI fear mongering commentator who wants to terrify everybody about what those other people are doing, and they make a living at that.

My favorite new job is social media influencer. Lest you think that I am going to speak negatively on this, I myself am a social media influencer for I have 4992 friends on Facebook. That means I've room for eight more and about once a month I will post that I'm reading a book and I tell my followers to read this book also and as a consequence, as many as 13 copies of a book have been sold and I now get up to seven free books a year. So, you can see it's working out very well for me to be a social media commentator. It is interesting to watch this new job because people have always been influencers, or at least since the media grew but in the past we

would get usually entertainers and athletes to say, “I love this product and you should love it and purchase it too” but now you don't have to accomplish anything to get people to buy things. You can just be awesome on Tik-Tok and I don't know exactly how that works, but if you can pull it off, you're famous basically for knowing how to use social media and present things for purchase.

Now what's going on here in part, is a desire for work (income), but even more maybe a desire to be known, to be important, to be glorious, to be honored. It's not just social media influencers who seek that, but athletes, entertainers, and I'll admit sometimes religious leaders, politicians, lawyers, CEOs, surgeons and a variety of people are attracted to jobs that give them honor. Jesus said, “I did not come to be honored.” Now, of course, He came to be worshiped but He says “I came not to be served, but to serve” not to do anything other than give His life as a ransom for many, which of course, is you. That's what He came to do at the Christmas season.

This is two things – this is the Word of redemption, the Word of God's salvation but it's also a Word of example, because Jesus came to give His life as a ransom and He also says that we should serve just as or even as the Son of Man came to serve. There is in a sense that we can never imitate what Jesus does, especially when He's acting in His Deity, but He acts as a Man because He's both God and Man, then we can imitate what He does and indeed we will learn we can serve as He does.

In Matthew 19 and 20, this issue is coming up over and over again. It actually begins in Matthew 19:3 which says, *[3] And Pharisees came up to Him and tested Him by asking, “Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any cause?”* At that time in that culture, men could divorce women yet women couldn't divorce men and they had a debate among the Pharisees, religious leaders about who can divorce who and on what basis. Some said that you can divorce your wife for twirling in the street, which was taken to be a sign of flirtatiousness so that's not good. Others said you can divorce your wife if she simply doesn't do what you say. Still others said you can divorce your wife if she no longer seems pretty to you. These are religious leaders who are having this debate. They didn't realize what Jesus said a minute later and what God had said long before, and that is “A husband and wife were to be joined for life and what God has joined, let no one separate.” The Pharisees were really asking, ‘What is the least I can give to my wife and still be construed as a good man, an honorable man, a religious leader? Can I divorce my wife for ABCDE reasons?’ In essence Jesus said, “No, you're missing the point. God wants marriage to be lifelong. You should serve your wife throughout your life.”

Very shortly after that, Jesus serves families by putting His hands on and blessing little ones, which I'm sure made Mom and Dad very happy that He served them with His time for little children and then in the very next scene, a rich young ruler comes up to Jesus and he's also wondering about honor and service. And in his mind, he has been serving God his whole life. This rich young ruler then says to Jesus in Matthew 19:16, ‘Teacher, what good thing must I do so that I can have or gain or be sure I gain eternal life?’ Jesus said, “If you want to be sure of eternal life, you should follow the law.” And he said, ‘I've done that. I knew that.’ Jesus basically says “I didn't realize you were perfect all the time and so if you want to do something else you could sell everything you have, give it to the poor and follow Me.” And he said, ‘When I said I would do anything, I meant anything but that’ because that's what people do. We say, ‘Lord, I'll do anything’ and then He names it and we say, “Well..., not that.” Jesus names the thing that we that we want to hold back because He wants us not to give our money away per say, but to give our life to Him and if we love our money, yes, for our money, if we love honor, He asks for our honor and this man loved his money. So, Jesus said, ‘Give away your money and follow Me.’

So, He wasn't asking for one more thing, He was asking for everything. This man was wondering 'what great thing can I do to get a reward?'

So, there are the Pharisees asking, 'How little can I do?' And the rich young ruler is asking, 'How much I can do' and in between, Jesus performs an act of kindness and then the rich young ruler trudges off and the disciples see him go. Then Peter says, "Hey, he wouldn't give up everything, we did" and that's true. They did. We know about five of the disciples' occupations. One was a tax collector, which meant he had some money and four were fishermen who owned their own boats, which means they had capital. There were various other signs that they were pretty successful, maybe even very successful businessmen and they did give it all up. So as Peter realizes they did give it up to follow Him and since the rich young ruler want to know what he would get Peter wants to ask that question too, what will we get now that we have given up everything? Jesus says, "you will sit on 12 thrones judging the 12 tribes of Israel. You will have prominence for your service with Me and furthermore, if you have given up or sacrificed anything, I will give you 100 times as much back and I'll give you eternal life."

Then Jesus added one of the most cryptic statements of the Gospels for He said, at the end of that, "But be careful because many who are first will be last and many who are last will be first." Here He is saying, if you live for your rewards, you may end up being the last in the kingdom because you're not supposed to live for rewards, we're supposed to live for the Lord. Then Jesus says what He does for us and that's in the Matthew 20 read at the beginning of this study. For the third time, Jesus predicts His crucifixion at this moment. He has already said He's going to go to Jerusalem. He's already said He's going to die on the cross and be handed over by the leaders of His own day, the religious leaders, the elders, the chief priests and the scribes. Now, Jesus adds that He is going to be betrayed. That's how it's going to happen – condemned, mocked, flogged and crucified. That's what He's going to do for us.

Amazingly, in the very next scene, the mother of Zebedee's sons approaches Jesus and asks for a favor. Now I say it's amazing because Jesus had just said He's going to go to the cross and it's almost as though James and John said to their mother, who was probably some kind of an aunt to Jesus, "Hey, mom, why don't you go ask Jesus from your position of authority if we can sit at His right and His left in His kingdom when He comes. It's amazing because Jesus had just said He's going to die on the cross and it's almost as though they've decided, 'we don't know about this crucifixion business, but a little while ago you told us about seats of honor and glory and rewards. Can we please get back to that? That was a more pleasant topic. This is kind of an obnoxious or proud question, but it's also believer's question. The mother says, "Jesus, I don't really mind whether this one sits at your right or that one at your left for you can decide that, but please give my sons these positions of honor."

I just want to pause for a second and say a word about this. There's not necessarily anything wrong with seeking honor. Certainly, it can be harmless if you work hard and people recognize your labor and they say, 'well done.' That's good. The problem is when it becomes your paramount concern. For example, I have three children. They're grown now, but they still send me Father's Day cards. They tell me that I'm a good dad and I like to receive those. I've saved some from the past when they would write things like, "You are the best daddy in the whole world." Now, some of these were written when they were seven, and some are written with the help of mom when they were four. I don't want to boast here but they also wrote cards like that for their mother – "You're the best mommy in the whole world" and we've saved those because they're so sweet. I will tell you that if your children are still writing those when they're 14 or 30, you want to save those because they have critical distance from you by then, right?

There's nothing wrong with delighting in a card from your child that says you're the best daddy in the world. There is something wrong with saying, 'I am the best daddy in the world and I hope everybody knows it.' There's nothing wrong with wanting to be a great musician like our musicians, but there's something wrong with saying, 'I want to be the greatest in the world and I want adulation for my grandeur.' That's what Jesus is saying. There's nothing wrong with excelling. So He says to James and to John in Matthew 20:22, *"You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am to drink?"* They said to him, *"We are able."* They're not able. Not really. Not exactly the cup that Jesus drank. Maybe they didn't understand what Jesus was saying.

The word cup in the Old Testament, in the mouths of the prophets, means the cup of God's wrath – God's wrath toward the nations for their idolatry and their abominations. In Jeremiah 25:27-29, the Lord says, [27] *"Then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel: Drink, be drunk and vomit, fall and rise no more, because of the sword that I am sending among you.'* [28] *"And if they refuse to accept the cup from your hand to drink, then you shall say to them, 'Thus says the LORD of hosts: You must drink! [29] For behold, I begin to work disaster at the city that is called by my name, and shall you go unpunished? You shall not go unpunished, for I am summoning a sword against all the inhabitants of the earth, declares the LORD of hosts.'* This will be a sign of the wrath they get for committing sin in the way some sins punish themselves by drunkenness.

Isaiah says, 'Give this cup to Israel,' because Israel, by that time was entering into idolatry and all sorts of dreadful sins. Isaiah 51:21-23 says [21] *Therefore hear this, you who are afflicted, who are drunk, but not with wine: [22] Thus says your Lord, the LORD, your God who pleads the cause of his people: "Behold, I have taken from your hand the cup of staggering; the bowl of my wrath you shall drink no more; [23] and I will put it into the hand of your tormentors, who have said to you, 'Bow down, that we may pass over'; and you have made your back like the ground and like the street for them to pass over."* So, Israel through the prophet Isaiah was made to drink from the cup of God's wrath.

So, Jesus says, 'Are you able to drink that cup?' Jesus drank and drained to the dregs, the cup of God's wrath that would fall on all who believe in Him. If you're a Christian, Jesus drank the cup of God's wrath on your behalf. That's what He came to do when He came to give His life as a ransom for many and James and John can't do that. They can suffer and in fact, they did suffer. It's actually true and important to say that if you experience the glory of Jesus, you will also experience the suffering of Jesus. To be truly united to Him, the Bible says this many times is to be united with Him in glory and in suffering.

I've been reading a book about a family from Iran that converted to Christianity, and they had to flee the country because the secret police were after them for if you convert to Christianity and you live in Iran, you can be put to death just for becoming a Christian, just for wearing a cross or letting anybody know you're Christian, it costs to be a Christian in many places. I've heard a couple of times that Birmingham is the buckle on the Bible Belt. I need to tell you that people say that in Nashville, Montgomery, Tulsa, Oklahoma, and various other places. The truth of the matter is, this is a place where it's easy to be a Christian and that's a good and blessed thing. It's good to have so many Christians in a city that it's easy to be Christian because you receive no shame for that. But there are places where it's very hard to be a Christian, and we should pray for people in other lands and even other parts of America where it's scorned to be Christian.

There's always a risk in following Jesus. In fact, any time anybody wants greatness, you have to suffer to seek prominence with Jesus which He is telling those brothers, James and John. He's also telling us that to seek prominence, is always to invite the troubles that come with prominence. To seek power is to have people resist you because they don't want you to have power. They want power. To have wealth is to have worries and to be the center of attention. Some people like to be the center of attention. To be the center of attention is to be the center of attention. Everybody's watching you and hearing every word you say but there's a lot of downside to that. So be careful about your desire for glory and honor, because it leads to pains, labor, and sorrow.

Because that's the way it always goes, James and John did drink from Jesus' cup. James was the first martyr. In the Book of Acts he was slain just for following Jesus and although his brother John lived to be much older into his eighties or nineties, he spent his last days in an island called Patmos, working on what was a prison colony in which the prisoners were forced to labor as slaves. If you're on a slave colony island at the age of 85, you're probably not going to last long. So, they both did suffer with Christ as all of Jesus' disciples must be willing to do. But Jesus says, "I cannot tell you that you will sit at my right and my left, because that's the Father's decision, not Mine."

This conversation goes on with James and John and the other ten hear it and they're indignant. Maybe they wanted to sit on the right and left. Maybe they were hoping everybody would be equal and take turns. Jesus gathers His disciples around and says to them in Matthew 20:25-28 [25] *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [26] It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [27] and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, [28] even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* That's the way it is in the world. He's not criticizing. He's describing in those days that a person would try to signal that they were of greater importance by purchasing land and having a certain number of servants or even slaves. That's how you knew.

Today, we don't have our greatness assigned by having a certain number of servants or slaves. We ask, 'Where do you stand on the organizational chart? How many people report to you? Who do you know? Who do you get to hang with? What nations have you visited?' We ask questions of that nature, but people are always looking to show who they are and how they're great. Jesus says, 'it's different with us' and He does this with a statement that is called by scholars poetic parallelism. It doesn't look like a poem to us, but it is a poem according to the standards of that day. It's a very simple one as each line builds on the one before and it goes like this; 'Whoever would be great among you must be your servant. (If you're high, you have to go low.) Whoever wants to be first, which is greater than great, must be your slave, just as a Son of Man (who was the greatest of all) did not come to be served, but to serve, (lowest of all), gave His life as a ransom for many.' The higher you go, the lower you go.

We have a little bit of a hard time hearing this in our culture today because of the way service has become a commercialized term. So you can actually do very well by offering legal services or financial services or medical services, but in those days, to be a servant was to be low, to go down in rank. So Jesus says, 'I came to go down in rank, I came to give My life in service as a slave and to give My life as a ransom.' That's why He came.

In the last study, we talked about some of the statements Jesus made about why He came. For example, especially the Son of Man came to seek and to save those who were lost. He said another place 'I did not come to call the righteous, but I came to call sinners to repentance.'

Another place He said, “I came to cast fire on the earth.” Fire judges, fire separates, fire purifies. Here He says He came to give His life as a ransom. We might ask, “What’s a ransom?” A ransom is a purchase price and in the ancient world, people understood a ransom. Above all, what was best known was a war in which one army was successful and you wouldn’t kill all the other generals or kill the king’s son or the king’s brother. You would hold them as a captive and demand a high ransom price, a lot of money. The king, to defend his honor and his people would have to send a lot of money as a ransom for his son or his general or his brother. You paid a price to get somebody out of captivity.

There was another feature that people knew better, and that was if you were a slave, you could be ransomed from your slavery by friends who would pay the price to purchase your freedom or at that time slaves got the same wages as anybody else so you could save your money and ransom yourself. So, the use of ransom was pretty well known, or maybe even very well known in those days and Jesus says, ‘I came to extricate you from something like captivity or slavery.’ You were in a situation from which you could not extricate yourself and I came from the outside and bought you out. From slavery to what? Of course, is the question, not slavery to the devil. The devil has no real rights over us. Jesus didn’t pay off the evil one. He paid the price with his own blood. It means is that we were in a situation in which we were held captive by sin, by death, by liability to God’s wrath. That’s what Jesus paid. He substituted, He paid the price for us.

In light of that, this means then, we should think of ourselves apart from Christ as people who are who are stuck, who are enslaved to something, can’t get our way out and if you like to go shopping at Christmas time, you’re not the purchaser. You’re that which is purchased. You’re for sale on a slave market. And Jesus walks up and says, ‘I will buy that man, that woman, that child, I’ll buy their freedom.’ Now, it’s all not a literal payment of money. Jesus didn’t give cash to somebody, but what He’s saying is that when we sin it generally starts as a choice and then it becomes a captivity.

For example, when somebody begins to drink or to take opioids because of pain, they usually start off making a choice. “I’m going to take this pain reliever and I’m going to drink some alcohol so I can relax at a party. I’m very, very tense.” Then if they keep doing it long enough, it’s no longer a choice. It’s bondage and they can’t stop. There are some people who have become slaves to their cell phones. Have you ever found yourself without your cell phone and panicked? You just might be a slave to your cell phone. If you find yourself on your cell phone late at night, seeing what’s on TikTok or Instagram and, you know, you’re losing sleep, you know, you should go to bed and you just can’t stop running through the feeds. You started off choosing it, but by now you may be enslaved to it. Jesus says, “I came to purchase you out of your slavery.” The Apostle Paul says in I Corinthians 6:20 that you are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body. Glorify the One who paid the price to liberate you.

I want to make sure that we understand that this is not the only way Jesus describes His work or why He came. He also says He came to offer Himself as a sacrifice, and the big word for that is propitiation – a sacrifice offered in the temple. For example, in Hebrews 2:17 it says, *[17] Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.* Propitiation is a sacrifice that is offered to remove proper wrath, the proper wrath of God toward sin, which we talked about already under the rubric of the cup.

You may notice that there’s always a protest movement going on somewhere in the world, right? You may think it’s a good protest movement or a bad one but what they protest is

what they believe to be something terrible, some terrible evil. We have to raise up our voices, speak about the evil. Protest movements, actually reflect a part of the character of God, especially when they're protesting about the right things. But a protest movement says this evil cannot stand. I can't ignore this terrible deed. Someone must speak out about it and God has a similar distress or anger or wrath towards sin and Jesus says, "We're not going to handle this the way the protest movement does" for the protest then becomes wrath. We're going to punish you, evildoers. And Jesus says, 'I will bear the punishment for the evildoers.' He turns every protest movement on its head. Jesus says, 'You're half right and all wrong. The goal is not vengeance. I'll take care of that department.' That's what Jesus did.

Jesus also calls His salvation a work of reconciliation. Reconciliation is a word that's taken from the realm of relationships. That is to say, when we are at odds with God, we're far from Him. We run from Him, and He says, 'Come back' even though we did what was wrong to create that alienation. Pretend I'm holding up a pen and it's shiny, expensive and beautiful. I borrowed it from you. Thanks for the pen and I'll give it to you after the service but I don't give it back. In fact, somehow or other, I hold on to it for a day. Then something terrible happens to me later in the day and I'm so upset that I snap the pen and it's your pen. Then I start running away from you because I'm filled with guilt. So you begin to say "Dan is a dirty dog for breaking my pen, and he's a weasel for running away and not facing the music." But let's say we've been friends for 21 years, and don't want to lose my friendship over a pen.' So you come up to me and say "Dan, I heard what you did. I heard you broke my pen and I know you're running away from me. But our relationship matters too much just to be friends again. Let's not worry. I'll take care of it. I'll buy another pen." That's also what Jesus did. We offended God. We wrecked His world, His beautiful property, and we ran away from Him. And Jesus said, 'Let's be friends again' for that's what He came to do, to give his life as a ransom, to make us His sons and daughters again.

Now, I want to apply this to the Christmas season. At Thanksgiving and Christmas, we see a lot of people we haven't seen for a while, including some people where there's estrangement. There was love and then there's a feeling of betrayal or lost loyalty and we don't want to see those people at Christmas time. But if the reconciliation, the ransom of Jesus has touched you, then please have an open mind when you meet that person. Maybe you did something to contribute to that. Maybe you should give them one more chance. I'm not telling you what to do. I'm saying would you examine yourself and consider whether the reconciling work of Christ could be an example to you and allow you to seek reconciliation yourself?

We could consider that Jesus' gift. He gives us the gift of ransom and reconciliation that then washes over into the rest of our life because Jesus' life is a pattern for us, right? When Jesus was at the Last Supper, there were dirty feet so He washed them. He also says to us, 'wash each other's feet. My life is a pattern for you.' Jesus cared for the sick and so Christians have started a lot of hospitals over the years imitating Him. It's really easy to give lip service to this, and say, 'I'm going to be like, Jesus, I'm going to serve people and take care of people.' It's easier to talk about it than it is to do it sometimes. You see the floor is dirty and you hope somebody else does it. You get in there and clean up the floor. If there's a coat on the floor, pick it up. If there's some dirty dishes, wash them. We always hope to serve in a place that matches our skills, but a lot of times there is no match. You look at a child or maybe smell a child with a dirty diaper and you think, 'I'm not very good with dirty diapers' so who is? So, serve, with the work that's there in front of you.

Let me put a little bit more of a point on it and say, can I ask you to see if you're imitating the work of Christ by serving in ways that are more or less invisible (nobody sees), that are more or less thankless, that aren't in your skill set, that aren't your delight? For example, if you have no children or no grandchildren, when's the last time you took care of some children? And if you're really bad at washing dishes, when's the last time you washed dishes? Christians even have lingo that makes us a little bit lazy here. It's the not my gift lingo where they say "I can't serve in there it's not my gift. I can't wash the dishes, it's not my gift." It's not anybody's gift. You just get in there and help.

What's interesting is that it's very easy to talk about this and even speakers who talk about this can fail so I'm to tell you a story about a time when I failed on this very point. A number of years ago, I was invited by two gifted students at my seminary, to speak at a junior high youth retreat. It would be five churches coming together, this would be awesome. I said, "I have doubts about that because I feel like I can communicate with just about every age group except 12 and 13 year olds" and that was my internal dialog. I had a traumatic experience. I don't mean that for the word trauma is wildly overused. I had a slightly difficult experience teaching junior high with a bunch of juvenile delinquents a number of years ago, and they really were juvenile delinquents for they really were in jail. They really came to my youth group and it was hard.

So, when I was asked to speak at this retreat, as a Christian speaker is asked to speak somewhere, you never say 'no' right away. You have to say two things first. The first one is 'I'll pray about it' and the second one is 'I'll check my schedule' and then you check your schedule. You hope you have an obligation and then you pray about it, and then you have to wait a few hours or maybe a day, and then you can say, 'no' but I didn't do that. I just said, 'No, I'm not going to do it.' They said, "Your seventh grade daughter can come with you for free." I said, 'Well, she's not coming with me because I'm not coming.' They said, "You could find out what junior high kids are like if you come." I said, 'That's the whole problem. I know what junior kids are like. That's why I'm saying no to you.' By the way, if you're 12 or 13, I love you and I'm exaggerating wildly for the sake of effect. They said "we'll pay you a lot of money." I said, 'That's a lie.' They said, "The food is great." I said, 'adding a lie to lie does not help anything.' They said, "We'll give you a speaker's cabin three quarters of a mile away, available only by monorail." I said, 'I'll think about it' and eventually, I mean, these are two of my favorite students, I relented and I was working on this passage at the time.

I was ready to give a sermon on sacrificial service, standing around saying, "I do not want to serve these people." And that's human nature. That's the way we are, which is why Jesus had to come to liberate us from our selfishness, to ransom us from our captivity, to thinking of ourselves first, to reconcile us to Himself as we run away from Him. That's why Jesus came. He came to serve and He said, 'I find greatness and you find greatness not by asking how many people serve you, but how many do you serve?' Because that's the way Jesus finds greatness and I hope we find it, too, as we know Him and we become more like Him. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, we thank You for all of Your gifts to us, above all, the gift of our Lord Jesus Christ. We thank You for sending Him and teaching us where true greatness and glory lie. Help us to break away from our sins all the more, as we know the penalty for our sins is covered and we're now united to You by faith. So, Lord, we commit all these things with real prayer to You, and we pray it in Your Name, Amen.