

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

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SPEAKER

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SERIES

What A Name!

PART

1

TITLE

Wonderful Counselor

SCRIPTURE

Isaiah 9:6-7



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Well, it's great to see you Providence family and to all of our ... There's so many guests here and we're thrilled that you are here. It's our honor that you have joined us. Isaiah nine is where we're at. So, if you want to head there, there's lots of Bibles in the chairs near you. If you don't have one with you, you can use that one. If you don't have one at home, take that home as a gift. We would love for you to have your own Bible.

But, Isaiah nine is where we'll be over the next four weeks. We are in it, aren't we? It is now advent season. There's lights and there's decorations and there's TV and there's movies and Hallmark is just making the killing and we're in it. And I want you to know that we are entering a season that often plays us like a fiddle. And what I mean by that is this, is that by nature God created us to anticipate.

We love to look out at something like a date or a vacation and we sort of make it really beautiful. What it's gonna be like, what it's gonna feel like, and the fact is, is that our nature naturally sort of romanticizes whatever it is that we anticipate because what we anticipate is this world that is fulfilling and magical. It's simply better than what we're at now. That's why we can't wait to get to that.

What's interesting is advent is actually built on the back of a word and the word is anticipation. Advent means "coming." It's to look at the coming of Jesus Christ. It's to anticipate all month the celebration of the day when Jesus Christ as born and the celebration of when he will return. But, what's interesting is this, is the culture leans on how God created us to anticipate and culture then dangles the promise of this magical world before us called Christmas.

And many people are going to find on December 26th that their anticipation was sweeter than reality. What do I mean? What I mean is this. Some of you are not getting a Lexus. Okay? Some of you have a boyfriend who's not gonna go to Jared.

You have a family time and in your mind you think, "You know, it is the time when we get in the car and we go and we pick out the tree, and this year, unlike all those previous years, not only are we gonna agree, but there's gonna be this magical halo light that just falls down from heaven and rests over the right tree that's meant for our living room and all the kids are gonna say simultaneously, "That's the one, Mom and Dad. That's the one."

And, it's not gonna happen, right? Some of us, we dream, we think of this world where maybe just a meal, maybe just one meal where the entire family sits unhurried at the table after someone has worked so hard and that meal simply may not come, where everyone just sits and waits unhurriedly and tells their favorite memories and their stories and laughs and there's no contention whatsoever. The fact is, is this is the real world.

What I want to do is, is this month, I wanna drop and anchor into the sea and I wanna fix it to the bedrock of Christmas so that we can anticipate in the right direction. What I mean by that is this. Advent looks at a day, at least it asks us to look at a day; but actually, what advent is doing is not asking us to look at a day, but to look at a person who came on a day and who will come on another day.

And you see, if you anticipate in this way, and you can wake up on the 26th of this month and you can know for certain that your anticipation is not gonna out pace reality. I'm gonna pray for us, okay?

Father, I pray that as we seek to celebrate, as we seek to even leverage the gift that you gave our hearts, and that is to anticipate, you naturally created us, you made us to have expectations and to think and to dream about what is to come. We know that you've done that, that you've planted that in our hearts so that we would think of heaven. We know that we're not there yet, so I pray that you, I ask God, that you would protect us as a church family. Would you protect us from unrealistic expectations? Would you protect us, Lord, from placing on this holiday, this month, anticipation that reality simply can not keep up with?

And I pray, Father, that you would help us to see Jesus as big and bold and bright and consequential, just as he is and that you would help us to celebrate this month in a way that we don't have to fear how we anticipate.

I also pray this morning for all of our students right now who are over at Metta. I pray, Father, for those 110 students and for all of those leaders, and for Trey even now as he speaks. God, we pray that you would show yourself big and bright, bold, and consequential to these young lives, young hearts, as they think about their future. I pray, God, that you would show them that you, that you have a plan for their life, and that you desire for them to grow deeper in their faith and knowledge of who you are and how to live in your world.

God, as we open up your word now, as we read from Isaiah nine, we pray, that you would give us the gift of belief, that you'd fill our hearts with hope, that you would give us courage to apply it to our life, but God, would you help us to have humility in our hearts so that when we apply it, we apply it in meekness and not in harshness? We love you, we need you, speak to weakness, we pray. In Christ's name, Amen. Amen.

Isaiah nine, in verse six actually starts with this idea that there's a child and there's a son, and even before I read it, I want you to think about this for second. Okay? Is that you and I, we just naturally go through this process, is that the good news of a pregnancy naturally leads to the process of naming this baby, naming this person. It's really interesting because parents naturally want to pick the right name that matches this person they're ... what they look like, who they are, and it's a total mystery.

The fact is, we don't ... we can't even look at them and know what they look like and we have to choose a name. It's a fascinating thing. So, what I wanna do is to just kind of shed some light as we think about the names of Christ this year, I want you to think about some of the trending names in 2018 here in America.

Now, still to this day, over the last four or five years, Jackson and Sophia, they are the gold standard. So, if you're a Jackson or a Sophia, you're in really good company. Okay? More parents in America name their son or daughter that name than any other, still this year.

But, there's some trending names. And these names, oftentimes what they do is they go with things that sound cool, but we are introduced to them by other means. Our hearts, in this country right now, we long for this idea of peace, so there's all kinds of names that are being used right now that ... like Harmony and Peace and Hope. But there's also two that are really trending high right now are Ocean and Sky, which is kind of cool, I guess.

"Hey, this is Ocean."

"Which one?"

"It's that one. That's him right there. That's Ocean."

And if you're an Ocean, your parents love you, they do. And that's a cool name. It's an ocean, okay? We're also being inspired by things that are a little more cultural. There's this game right now, many of you know about, 200 million people are playing it, and clearly not all of them are kids, it's called Fortnite. And what you can do on this game is actually use real money to go, and you can buy ... Well, they call them skins, but it's basically a costume so that your person can look a certain way. Then you play the game in this skin.

Well, they've named the skins. An lo and behold, in 2018, in the real world, parents are naming their kids after two of them. One of them is Rogue and the other is Leviathan. Now, nobody ever thinks about what these words mean. Rogue actually means "unprincipled man" is what rogue means. It means "dishonest one." Right?

And Leviathan means "sea monster." Okay? And yet, there we are. Of course, then there's some, and I don't know if they just have a favorite dish and their like, "This is some really good food," and that's the last thing they think of, because two trending names are Kale and the spice Saffron right now in America.

People look down at their dish, and they think, "This is a hardy salad. You know, we're gonna have a daughter. I'm pretty sure her name is gonna be Kale." And if you're Kale or Saffron or Leviathan or Ocean or Rogue, I'm Brian, it's nice to meet you and we're really glad that you're here.

What parents don't consider, and we can't consider are names that are synonymous with the baby's character and life purpose, and the reason is because we don't know what their character or life purpose is when they're in the womb unless that baby is Jesus Christ, who is the eternal son of God, who came from heaven to earth, who had a character and had a life purpose. So, God gave him a name.

What we're gonna do this month is we're gonna look at the four names that we read right here in verse six when he says, "For to us, a child is born and to us a son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulder. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, and on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to withhold it with justice and with righteousness. From this time forth and forevermore, the zeal of the Lord of Hosts will do this." He will do this.

So, there's four Sundays in this month and we're gonna use each one of those Sundays to look at one of these names of Jesus given by God the Father to him, revealed to us so that we can know something about who we are worshiping and who we have, the treasure we have in Jesus Christ. His character, what he wants to do in our lives, and this morning, we want to look at Wonderful Counselor.

Now, most sermons we do here at Providence, what we do is we have a text, we unpack that text, and that text then gives light to the rest of the Bible. What you find in this text, though, is that we have to lean on the rest of the Bible to help us understand something of these titles, these names, because all we get here is two words, Wonderful Counselor.

He doesn't pause and say, "Now, this is what this Wonderful Counselor will do." And the reason is because he's written that in the rest of the Bible. We want to ask and then answer this central question. And it's, what does it mean for you and for me that Jesus Christ is our Wonderful Counselor?

The first thing we see within scripture is that as our Wonderful Counselor, Jesus illuminates our darkness. The first thing that has to be done in a counseling room is people has to see what's real and what's not real, what's true and what's false, what happened and what didn't happen. And sometimes life can get so dark that we ask a counselor to be able to help us see what's real and what's not real.

We ask somebody who's not in the situation, who's not in the marriage, who's not in the family, who's not in the broken relationship in order just to help us to see that if our eyes can't see, some of it because it's too dark. It's sort of like this picture right here to where it's a room full of darkness. You can not see the edges of the room. Sometimes you can not see the edges of the conflict in your home or maybe where you work.

You can't see where to walk. You can't see what to say. You can't see why things have been done, and yet you know that it hurts. Sometimes this darkness is not just you can't see, but sometimes it's a darkness that just prevails within the heart and the mind. It's called depression. And we look and we go and we need somebody to help us sort out what we can not see, 'cause it's simply too dark.

And what the Bible says here is that Jesus can cast light on every single one of those dark shadows. He is the light that can pierce through our house, through our room, through our marriage, through our family, through our workplace in order to give light. You see, Isaiah nine, what we just read, it did not occur at Christmas, but it did occur during crisis. And this is the wonderful thing about a Wonderful Counselor.

Only people with problems need one. And this is exactly who he came to be. He came to be a wonderful counselor and he did so because we are a people with a bunch of problems. Let me get a running start into Isaiah nine so you can feel the full brunt. To do that, we're gonna back up to "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." The Bible says that we sinned against God after he created us in love and we broke our relationship with him.

Instead of crushing us that moment, the Bible says that God made a promise and he was gonna send a rescuer. Several pages pass and suddenly he looks at a guy and he's not warmed by the worship of this man because Abraham, he looked down and he had this drive to worship within his heart, but he didn't know who God was and so it says he was bowing down to rocks, worshiping the rocks.

God says, "You don't need to worship the rocks anymore. I'm the one true God. This is what I'm gonna do. You don't have any kids right now. You're 75 years old. But I'm gonna make you into a nation and not only that, I'm gonna bless you, I'm gonna make you into a nation. You have no kids now, but one day from your nation that comes from you, I'm gonna bring the rescuer. He's coming through your line."

Well, this people, they're called Israel, certainly there was a nation. And the Bible shows us that they were a mess. They were sinful, they were confused. They lived in darkness and one day they asked for a king and God says, "I'm gonna relent. I am your king, but you wanna be like the nations. You're supposed to be holy. I made you to be holy. But you demand the king. I'm gonna give you a king."

So he gave them Saul. Didn't work out so well. And then David. That didn't work out so well. Then Solomon. We go down the line and we get to a king, his name is Ahaz. Ahaz is the king in Isaiah seven, eight, and nine. Ahaz was a pretty messed up guy. He clearly did not love the Lord. One of the greatest misstatements, in the Bible it even really shoots low, it says that Ahaz did not do what was right in the eyes of the Lord.

His highlight reel of evil included making all kinds of idols and stationing them all over Israel, sacrificing his own infant kids in order to worship these idols, and then locking down the temple so that nobody could worship or make sacrifice to the one true God. One day, Ahaz, he's in his castle and he's trembling because he's at the wall and he looks and he sees two armies, invading armies coming to him. He doesn't know what to do, so he's worried about it.

God in his mercy sends Isaiah to him. And he says, "I don't want you to be worried about this. I'm gonna act." And Ahaz, he doesn't believe God. And so, he says, "Look, ask God for a sign. Ask him for a sign that you don't have to worry about this." And Ahaz says, "You know what? I'm not gonna ask him for a sign."

So, he goes, "Okay. I'll tell you what. The Lord himself will give you a sign. The virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel."

This should give everyone of us hope in this room. Because, the first ears to hear the promise of a virgin born messiah was one of the most ungodly individuals in the entire Bible. And if there's hope for Ahaz, there's hope for you and for me.

Well, Israel, historically, was attacked from the North. On the West there's the sea. The South and East there's mountains. So, when people would invade Israel, they would come from the North, and the North was Galilee. They would come through Galilee, pillage and loot, rape and kill and burn things down, leaving things in a state of darkness and gloom on the way to Jerusalem. On the way to Jerusalem.

Now, this is really interesting, you understand this, right? What we find within this passage is that there is going to be somebody that has the capacity to actually take all of that gloom and darkness and turn it by bringing light. Notice what he says in verse one. He says, "But there will be no gloom for her who was in anguish." Why? He says, "For he has made glorious the way of the sea. The land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations."

In verse two it says that these people are walking in darkness and they've seen a great light. And then in verse three, four, and five, it says that these people who were burdened down by a yoke, they were slaves to other countries. What he's saying is this, is that this special one is going to come to deliver them to rescue them and give them joy. And who is it? "For to us a child is born, and to us a son is given."

What's my point? Think about this. Galilee was ground zero for centuries of gloom and anguish and pain and death and darkness, and now because of Jesus Christ, he came into Galilee. Galilee became ground zero for the divine invasion of the Wonderful Counselor. People who need problems, they need a counselor. He went to the darkest places on the map. Think about this. If God almighty can bring light to the darkest spot in the nation of Israel, then he can bring light to the darkest regrets of your life.

This is what this Wonderful Counselor can do. He can take what's so dark, so regrettable, so confusing, and he can just shine light so that he can then begin that process of healing. The second thing we learn within the scriptures about this Wonderful Counselor named Jesus is that he discerns our depths.

He discerns our depths. Now, the very pronoun there, our depths, what I'm saying is that you have depth. We need to understand, what are those depths? What depths am I talking about here? Well, Proverbs 20:5 tells what I'm really referring to. It says that the purpose in a man's heart is like deep water. But a man of understanding will draw it out. This is what he's saying.

He said the inclinations and motives and the rationale, not only of our heart, but sometimes even our interpersonal problems, sometimes we have a hard time seeing to the bottom of those to identify what is the source. What he's saying is this, is that Jesus, as our Wonderful Counselor can literally discern all the way down, even to the darkest waters of our heart. He's unlike anyone else.

No other human counselor can do this. Oh, we can give a little bit of wisdom, but the fact is that no human counselor has the vision to be able to discern your motives and their motives, why they said it to you and why you said it back to them. Only Jesus can do this. I want you to think about this picture. It's getting a little cooler, so, this looks appealing, doesn't it? Wouldn't that be nice? Just go there and hang out.

Isn't it cool at the beach though? For a while you can see the very bottom. You drop your watch or ring, you look down and you go, "Oh, there it is right there," because the water's six inches. And sometimes we have problems, and sometimes we make decisions, and the depth of it is really about six inches. So we can see all around. But then there's other times, that if you keep walking out into the water, what happens? It gets deeper.

Not only does it get deeper, it gets darker as it gets deeper. Eventually, you can't stand to look down. Now you have to swim and look down. And eventually, you simply can not find the bottom. The ocean has a place, it's called Challenger Deep. It's the deepest place in the entire world. It's so deep that you could cut Mt. Everest, the tallest peak at it's foot, drop it down into Challenger Deep, and there would be a mile left between the top of Mt. Everest and the water's edge.

What the Bible says, is that Jesus can find and see every grain of sand in Challenger Deep. And if he can do that, he can do it in your heart also. He sees everything. Everything. He sees the bottom of all things. Just imagine sitting before Jesus, like we try other counselors, trying to share just enough information in order to get help, but not too much to be exposed.

This happens all the time. People come, "Hey, so here's my problem." I start asking questions. "Don't ask those questions. Let's just talk about this." Well, I can't talk about this unless I understand a little bit more. This is what we do. We don't want to be shamed, so we limit the amount our counselor knows. Let me just tell you something. Jesus is just simply not limited.

He comes to us in those very moments when we say, "This is what's going on, but I don't want you to know too much," and he says, "Listen to me. I the Lord search the heart and I test the mind." Every part of it, I see. Everything. Proverbs 5:21, "For a man's ways are before the eyes of the Lord and he ponders all his paths."

Psalm 139:1, “Oh Lord, you have searched me and you have known me.” He sees your depths.

In John chapter four, Jesus, he has to talk to a woman. She’s a Samaritan woman. He goes to a town called Sychar and he sits down at a well and he waits for her. She doesn’t know she’s there. She doesn’t know that he came for her. She comes and he says, “Hey will you give me some water?”

You have to understand some of this cultural moment is here in Isaiah, Ahaz. This Assyrian army that was assembled against Ahaz eventually did come, years later, they did invade, they did exile the people. But some of the people were left behind, and some of those people they intermarried with the Assyrians, so when all the other Jews came back and they looked at the Samaritan people and they said, “Wait a minute. You stayed and you were not true. You intermarried.” Now they looked at them like half breeds.

There was this racial problem. It was your people and my people and that’s your drinking fountain and that’s my drinking fountain and that’s your bathroom and that’s my bathroom. He says, “Give me a drink of water,” and she says, “You’re not allowed to ask me that. You have your fountains and we have ours.” Happened all the way back then, too. He looks at her and he says, “If you know who’s asking your for a drink of water, you’d be asking me for a drink of water.”

She’s like, “You don’t have a bucket and this is a deep well. Are you superior to Jacob who gave us this?” And Jesus is like, “Look, I just came out of heaven. Jacob was just worshiping me. So yeah, I’m more superior than Jacob. And not only that, you drink from this well, you’re gonna be thirsty in an hour. But you drink the water that I give, you’ll never thirst again.”

Now, the fastest way to the heart, which is where Jesus wanted to get, is through the wound. So, you know what he does, he goes, “Hey, why don’t you go call your husband. I want to talk to him too.” She said, “I’m not married.” He said, “I know. You’ve had five husband and the man you’re not shacking up with is not your husband.” She’s shocked, we’re shocked, and Jesus is not shocked at all. You know why? Because, no creature is hidden from his sight but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give an account.

He knows, sees, discerns the depths of every single one of us. Every problem, every breach of trust. Every angle, every behavior, every motive, and get this. He still loves us. He knows it all and he still loves us. Our Wonderful Counselor. Illuminates the darkness, discerns our depths, third, he listens to our prayers.

Jesus never needs coffee to care about the details of our life. Whether they’re riveting or routine. Jeremiah 29:12 says, “You will call on me and come and pray to me and I will hear you.” Now, listen Providence. When you consider the fact that Jesus already discerns the depths of everything we intend to say, this is remarkable. We could come to him and he says, “Don’t say it. I already know it.”

No, but what we have in Jesus is a sympathetic listener to what spills out of our heart. He loves to hear your voice. He loves to hear your voice. That gets to the fourth. Not only does he illuminate our darkness and he discerns our depths, and he listens to our prayers, but fourth, last, is he speaks the truth.

He speaks the truth. These words Wonderful Counselor, wonderful means “beyond understanding.” It’s the word that would come when he would do a miracle and people couldn’t understand it. They were amazed by it. They were startled by it. There’s a problem and Jesus fixed the problem in a miraculous way and they’re like, “Wonderful.” That’s what that means.

It also means, “full of wonder.” It’s so full of wonder we can’t understand it. Then the word counselor is a little different sometimes than how we think of our friends as our counselor, like where we call them and like, “Hey, this is what she said. I’m just so mad.” And she says, “Yeah, I don’t like her either.” We may look at that and go, “I got counsel. I just got some advice.” No, no, no. Listen.

When Jesus says that he’s the Wonderful Counselor, the word counselor here, it means “advisor from a seat of authority.” What does that mean? It means when Jesus speaks to you in the Bible, it’s not a data point, it’s the data point. The Bible is not written as a suggestion to us. It is the word of God. 2 Timothy 3:16, “All scripture is God breathed,” and he never changes his mind when it comes to what he’s promised and what he said.

Psalm 89:34 says, “I will not violate my covenant.” I made a promise, I’m sticking to it. He says, “Nor will I alter the word that went from my lips.” And you know what’s amazing, is these words, they could spell out our doom, and yet they help us. Psalm 119:105 says, “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.” His word is good for us.

I want you to think about this for a second. How is Jesus so capable as our Wonderful Counselor? How is it possible for this person, this God, this savior to do all of these things and to do them for us? And the reason is because Hebrews 4:15 says this, “We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weakness, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet was without sin.”

You know what that means? He can identify with temptation. He can identify with poverty. He can identify with being falsely accused. He can identify with being sinned against. He can identify with somebody who’s being gossiped about. He can identify with you. Whatever it is, he can identify. What’s the response, what’s the Bible’s response on how we’re to respond to this Wonderful Counselor is the next verse. He says this, “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find help in our time of need.”

When he says, “Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace,” you can translate it when you’re thinking about Wonderful Counselor, “Draw near to the counseling room.” Draw near to where he is at, where he’s doing these amazing, wonderful, gracious things for you and for me, and how do we draw near?

Just a few things before we take the supper. The first is this. I would encourage us as a family of faith to draw near ready to be honest. When you come to him, don’t try to evade him. He already knows. He sees it. And he knows that until we’re honest, we’re never gonna get the help that we need.

Tell him what bothers you. Tell him what confuses you and what keeps you up at night. Nothing’s gonna surprise him and there’s not a sin that you’ve ever committed or will commit that his blood has not already covered. There’s hope for you. There’s hope for me. We can come to him and be honest.

The second way that we come to him is let’s draw near, ready to be healed. Now, I use the word ready, and what I really want you to think there is wanting to be healed. Wanting. Do you want to be healed? It doesn’t mean, do I want to get out of my problem. I’m saying, “Do you want to be healed.” You see, there was once a man who had been paralyzed for 38 years. Jesus walked up to him.

And do you know the first question? “Do you want to be healed?” What a thing to ask a man who’s been paralyzed for almost four decades. Why would he say this? Because Jesus frequently used physical problems in order to show universal spiritual problems. You see, you can identify this problem in a man named Augustine. Augustine, many, many, many 100s of years of ago, he said, “God, would you make me pure, just not yet.”

He had guilt and he had been caught, and he had a problem. So, he went to God and he said, “God would you heal me of this, would you make me a pure man?” He was riddled with lust and immorality. He goes, “But I just don’t want to leave it yet.” Two sides to one heart. Jesus does not clean our mess without also intending to clean our motives that got into the mess.

If we come to him and we say, “Hey God, would you just fix this?” Oh yeah, how do we get there? Let’s not worry about that. Would you just get me out of this problem right here?

Jesus always says, “I always fix the heart as I fix your situation.” And so, let’s draw near ready to be honest, ready to be healed, and third is ready to obey. It’s interesting Jesus often asks people to do some really strange things. In John 9 there’s a guy who’s blind. Jesus makes some mud, wipes it on his eyes and says, “I want you to go and wash.” What a thing to say to a blind man who can’t see where the water’s at.

Why would he say that to him? I mean, snap a finger, just say it, think it. Whatever. You can heal anyway you want. Why make that conditional? This is why. Because, he's teaching a lesson that obedience doesn't always make sense. He tells us to give without telling us how he's gonna provide. He tells us to forgive without telling us who will avenge. You see, with Jesus, what we have to do is unlike a counselor, you have to put your yes on the table before you ask him the question.

That's simply not how we normally deal with counselors. We ask them a question, they give advice, and then we say, "Now, do I want that or not? Jesus' advice to you is not a suggestion, it's not a data point, it's not a variable in the equation. It is the data point. It is the truth. And no matter what he contradicts, no matter how many counselors, how many psychologies, no matter how many philosophies, how many cultures, how many parents and friends you have that's telling you something different, Jesus is true. He is the data point of our life.

I urge you to draw near ready to obey. Advent culminates on a day but Providence, advent itself tells us to fix our eyes on Jesus and not the day. You see, the same God who promised a wonderful counselor has promised that he's going to return. And the fact that we spend so little time thinking of the day when he returns is the reason that we live such silly lives, such unaccountable lives.

When he comes back, he's not gonna be a baby that needs to be swaddled, the Bible says he's gonna have a tattoo on his leg and a sword coming out of his mouth. He says that people that have loved him will love his appearing and people who have rejected him will be terrified at his appearing. And so, we don't want to live a silly month, do we?

We have a Wonderful Counselor, who when he comes back, the increase of his government and peace, there will be no end. And you know what he's given us to remember these things? The Lord's supper. So, for those who will be serving us, if you wanna go ahead and head back to the back to get these elements. The two elements, the bread and the cup, they're symbols of Jesus' body and blood. They were broken and shed in order to bring us into a relationship with him.

Don't forget, these are only the symbols though. Symbolically, though, they point to something that's real. That's why the Bible says that if you've never trusted Jesus Christ as your personal savior and Lord, if you've never placed your faith on the fact that he died for your sin and rose from the dead, the Bible says, "Don't take these things." Because to take them is to admit to yourself and to others that you treasure them.

If you've not trusted Christ, we invite you just to let it pass, just as the Bible says, but if you have trusted Christ, we welcome you to the table. And as the elements are being passed, I welcome you to confess your sins to the Lord. Think about what he's done and just think about what one day he will do.

Let's pray together. Father in heaven, thank you for your great love for us, your mercy, and kindness and pray now that as we take of supper that we do not deserve, that you would not only stir our gratitude, but also our affection, our dependence, our longing to be real and honest and obedient to you our wonderful counselor. Thank you for making this available to us. And we pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.



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