Please join me in The Prayer to the Holy Spirit – found on Pg. 48 in your Worship Books

Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in us the fire of your love.

Send forth your Spirit, and we shall be created.

And you shall renew the face of the earth.

O God, who by the light of the Holy Spirit did instruct the hearts of the faithful, grant that by the same Holy Spirit we may be truly wise and ever enjoy your consolations.

Through Christ our Lord.

AMEN.

YOU MAY BE SEATED

MEANS OF GRACE

Introduction

Everyone loves to receive presents for Christmas, birthdays, and anniversaries. A lot of times they’re something we wouldn’t buy for ourselves. Sometimes they are something we don’t deserve. That’s the way it is with God’s presents to us.

\*Grace is God’s gift of love to each of us through Jesus whether we deserve it or not.

\*The title of this talk is Means of Grace and my name is Greg Inboden.

\*What are means of grace?

1. \* The means of grace are sacred moments where Jesus is re-presented or becomes present to us anew.

\*They are symbols of God’s great work in our lives that reminds us of the covenantal relationship with Jesus.

1. \* Sacraments are sacred moments that Jesus gave us by clear instruction and example in the scripture. \*They are an outward and visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace.
2. \*Most Christians recognize two sacraments: \*baptism and the Lord’s Supper or \*Holy Communion
3. In Matthew 28:19. Jesus said “Go…make disciples..baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”
4. Jesus said to his disciples, “This [bread] is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me” (Luke 22:19). “Then he took the cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you” (Matt. 26:27).
5. Some churches consider other rites or practices to be sacraments as well, including penance, marriage, holy orders (ordination), confirmation, and healing (also know as extreme unction, the last rites, or anointing of the sick or dying).
6. Christians must have an attitude of love and humility toward the different practices of various traditions. John Wesley said, “We may not all believe alike, but we can all love alike.” We may disagree on important matters like Christian baptism. However, we can still find the foundation for our fellowship with one another and treat one another with genuine respect—as members of the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:1 - 14:40).

II.The two sacraments observed by most Christians

1. \*Baptism (pitcher and bowl)
2. Baptism \*marked the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry (Matt. 3:13-17).
3. \*John the baptizer made it clear, “I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming….He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit” (Mark 1:8, parallel passages Matt. 3:11, Luke 3:16, John 1:26,33).
4. \*Jesus entrusted the ministry of baptism to his disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). At Pentecost, the promised baptism of the Holy Spirit and fire gave birth to the church (Acts 2). The promise of baptism “is for you, for your children, and for all who are far away, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to him” (Acts 2”38-39).
5. \*Christian baptism marks our new identity in Christ.
6. Baptism marks each person as a member of the body of Christ.
7. The congregation echoes God’s acceptance by promising its support for the newly baptized person on his/her spiritual journey.
8. In the history of the Christian church, \*baptism has been experienced in different modes and at different ages, depending on the denominational understanding. \* The three modes of baptism include:
9. \*Immersion (put under the water)—symbolized being buried with Christ and raised with Christ to walk in newness of life (Rom. 6:3-4).
10. \*Pouring (where large bodies of water were not available)—another form of anointing; see Exodus 29:7 and Psalm 133:2. Third=century Christian are shows John the Baptist pouring water over Jesus.
11. \*Sprinkling (washing by sprinkling water)—“I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean…”(Ezek. 36:25). “You were washed…” (1Cor. 6:11).
12. \*The age for baptism varies among Christian traditions:
13. \*When adult are baptized, we celebrate both God’s love and justifying grace together in one act. God’s offer of a relationship is accepted; the person is cleansed and incorporated into Christ’s body.
14. \*In the baptism of infants and children, congregations celebrate God’s unconditional love and promise for children’s lives.
15. Jesus said, “Let the little children come to me; do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of God belongs. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will never enter it.” (Mark 10:14-15).
16. Through the commitment of parents or guardians and the congregation, God’s love is made real, and the action begun in the baptism of children comes to completion in confirmation.
17. \*Holy Communion (cup and plate)
18. Read 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

23 For I received from the Lord what I also passed on to you: The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.” 26 For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

1. \*Various Christian traditions refer to this sacrament by different names, including: Holy Communion, the Lord’s Table, the Lord’s Supper, the Eucharist (which means grateful).
2. \*Jesus instituted the sacrament of Holy Communion during his last supper with his disciples, and he commanded them to continue sharing the bread and cup of the new covenant in remembrance of him (Luke 22:19-20).
3. In the first supper after the Resurrection, \*Jesus shared a meal with the travelers on the road to Emmaus. When he broke the bread, their eyes were opened, and they recognized him (Luke 24:13-35).
4. \*Since the time of the earliest Christians, disciples have shared in the sacramental meal that re-presents the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ to all who come to receive in faith (Acts 2:42, 1 Cor. 10:16, 11:23-26).
5. We experience inward and spiritual grace through these outward and visible elements
6. All are welcome at the Lord’s Table

\*BREAK----BREAK----BREAK----BREAK

Before the break we considered 2 sacraments that most Christians agree are means of grace, in other words, ways that God meets our deepest human needs. \*While every sacrament is a sacred moment, not all sacred moments are sacraments.

1. In addition to the sacraments (however your congregation defines sacraments), there are many \*other means of grace we can describe as sacred moments.
2. \*Some sacred moments come as a surprise. God may come to us in an infinite variety of ways, such as through the birth of a child, the beauty of a sunset, or a timely visit from a Christian friend. Each means of grace connects us to the living God and provides the grace we need.
3. \*Other sacred moments can come by divine appointment. God has given the church special ways to remember and experience Jesus Christ. These sacred moments within the life of the church are called rites, ordinances, and ceremonies—for example, worship, morning and evening prayer, giving money to the poor, visiting the sick and imprisoned.
4. \*In the sacred moment of confirmation, the church celebrates the spiritual growth and conscious choice of the confirmand. Confirmation marks the confirmand’s decision to accept the relationship offered by God—begun in baptism and affirmed now in a public profession of faith in Jesus Christ—and the commitment to take responsibility for living as a disciple. (confirmation booklet)
5. In infant baptism, God and the Christian community said, “You are marked as a beloved child of God. You belong to this family, and you are loved”. In confirmation the confirmand says, “You are my God. I love you, and I want to live my life in relationship with you and this family of faith.”
6. Confirmation signals a transition to a new level of personal responsibility for one’s own faith. Just as a bar mitzvah for Jews marks the transition from childhood to young adulthood, confirmation marks the transition from spiritual childhood to the personal acceptance of responsibility for living as a disciple of Jesus Christ. (Eph. 4: 1-16).
7. Various Christian traditions view confirmation differently.
8. In traditions that practice infant baptism—United Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Roman Catholic—confirmation is understood as the time when the young person accepts for him/herself the gift of salvation.
9. For Baptists, the Church of Christ, and others within the Anabaptist tradition, the individual’s profession of faith, confirmation and baptism happen at approximately the same time.
10. \*Ordination
11. In the PREISTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS talk, you learned that in baptism, every Christian is called to a life of ministry.
12. Every Christian has spiritual gifts that equip him or her for ministry (Eph. 4:11-13)

(baptism and membership certificate)

1. Every Christian has a calling and a ministry that are essential to the health and well-0being of the body of Christ.
2. Every Christian has a spiritual gift, and every gift is needed (1 Cor. 12:12-27).
3. Every Christian is called to be a disciple and a member of the body of Christ, the church.
4. However, not every Christian is called to ordination.
5. The church can celebrate and confirm a person’s call to ministry in a variety of ways.
6. Anointing with oil
7. Services of installation
8. Laying on of hands and blessing
9. Consecration
10. Ordination is the sacred moment when the church marks the transition of those called to pastoral leadership or some other form of specialized ministry within the body of Christ (See Luke 2:41-52; Matt. 4:18-22; 28:19; John 6: 66-68; Josh. 24:15; Rom. 12:1-2; and Acts 6:1-6). (stole) The stole worn by ordained persons symbolizes the yoke of Christ.
11. Ordination affirms and challenges those called by God to use their unique gifts to equip others for ministry (Acts 12:1-3).
12. Ordination confirms those called to be set apart for the specialized ministry of preaching and teaching the Word, administering the sacrament of baptism and the Lord’s Supper; caring for the worship, order, and nurture of the church.
13. \*Marriage and singleness—The grace of God empowers us to live a loving and productive life, both in our singleness and, for some, in marriage. ( ring)
14. Every Christian is called to a live of ministry, and every Christian is called to meaningful and loving relationships.
15. We are all members of the body of Christ.
16. We all find our true selves as we share our lives with one another in the Christian community.
17. Persons called to singleness can experience abundant grace and joy.
18. The single person can find in Christ all that is needed for complete holiness and happiness.
19. Every Christian is called to live his/her life in covenant relationship to God and to other Christians.
20. Persons called to marriage can also experience abundant grace and joy.
21. Christian marriage joins two lives in the presence of God (Matt. 19:4-6).
22. Christian marriage is characterized by mutuality, love, and the intimate knowledge that comes from a shared life (Eph. 5:21-31).
23. God intends for marriage to be a means of grace for the children, the extended families, and the whole society. Each spouse is to re-present Christ to his or her mate, family, and community.
24. \*Henri Nouwen wrote, “Marriage is not a lifelong attraction of two individuals to each other, but a call for two people to witness together to God’s love.”

\*BREAK----BREAK----BREAK----BREAK

1. \*Sacred moments are divine appointments with God. There are six.
2. Sacred moments can be found in the daily practices that help connect us to God. ( Bible, towel and basin)
3. \*Prayer
4. Jesus invested time daily with Godin prayer, providing an important spiritual model for us (Luke 6:12; 9:18; 11:1; Mark 1:35;6:46).
5. Prayer means living each moment with our hearts open to God (1Thessalonians 5:17)
6. Like Paul, we are called to pray for others (Eph. 3:14-19; Phil 4:6-7). Mention 72 hour prayer vigil and pages in the worship book for help
7. \*Searching the scripture—spending time each day reading the Bible, hearing it expounded, meditating on it, and applying its truths to daily life. (See 2 Tim. 3:16-17; Ps. 119:103-105; Matt 4:1-11; John 8:31-32).
8. \*Worship
9. “I was glad when they said to me, ‘Let us go to the house of the Lord!” (Ps. 122:1).
10. If we do not center our lives in the worship of God (Deut. 5:6-14; Heb. 10:19-25), we will begin to worship false gods.
11. \*Participating actively in the body of Christ
12. Jesus invested time with his disciples. Mutual accountability in a small group is an essential aspect of Christian discipleship (John 13:34-35; Acts 2:42-47).
13. Regular participation in the Christian community is an essential means of grace. It provides spiritual nurture and support (Heb. 10:25).
14. \*Fasting is a means of grace that connects us to God.
15. Both the Old and New Testaments teach fasting (Isa. 58:5-7; Matt. 4:2-11; 6:16-18). This discipline can be understood as fasting from the things of earth to allow time for feasting on the things of the Spirit.
16. The spiritual practice of fasting should be learned from a pastor or spiritual director.
17. Fasting can include refraining from activities that hinder our relationship with God. We can fast from television, from complaining, or from any activity that keeps us from God.
18. \*Generosity
19. Jesus invested time and energy in serving and helping others. He willingly sacrificed all power and position in heaven in order to take the lowest position of service (Phil. 2:5-11).
20. Before he gave himself for us on the cross, Christ took the most humble role of a servant to teach his disciples the importance of serving others with humility and grace (John 13:1-20).
21. Jesus had much to say about giving money. The way a person spends his/her money reveals his/her heart (Luke 12:32-24; Matt. 25:14-29).
22. \* Sacred moments occur in the shared experiences of confession, forgiveness, healing, and reconciliation. These means of grace restore us to physical and spiritual health, true freedom, and Christian community. (healing oil)
23. The Greek word for healing in the Gospels is the same word used for salvation: sozo (Luke 7:50; 9:24).
24. All of us need healing and wholeness of some sort: spiritual, physical, emotional, mental, or relational. God to make us whole (Luke 7:18-23; Matt. 12:15-21).
25. Healing played an essential role in the ministry of Jesus and the disciples (Matt. 9:18-34; Luke 9:1-6; Acts 4:9).
26. Confession and forgiveness clearly relate to spiritual healing within the body of Christ. “Confess your sings to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed.” (James 5:16).
27. The ministry of healing belongs to the church and should not be left to just a few people who make it a show of their own power and glory rather than allowing healing to serve as an expression of God’s love, power and glory (James 5:13-15).
28. In every authentic healing ministry, Jesus Christ is clearly present and acknowledged as the healer. In fact, Christ re-presented is the only authentic and authoritative means of grace for the forgiveness of sin, physical healing, or inner spiritual healing and human wholeness (Matt. 9:2-8).
29. Reconciliation is the restoration of a relationship; this is the will of God and the mission of God in the world (2 Cor. 5:18-19).
30. \*We are called to open ourselves to God’s amazing grace in an infinite variety of ways.
31. \*In human relationships—in situations life the birth of a child, the return of a loved one, the surprise of a random act of kindness.
32. \*In nature—the beauty of a flower or a sunset, grandeur of a mountain peak or the mystery of a valley stream, the birth of a kitten, the playfulness of a newborn colt.
33. Conclusion
34. \*To make room for the new life in Christ, something old has to die.
35. John 15:1-2 makes clear that God prunes away the dead branches and the unproductive parts of our life in order to make us more fruitful and productive.
36. Now we will move to the sanctuary for a special service of Holy Communion—to share in this sacramental meal where the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ will re=presented to us.
37. Just like the first disciples, we go to the Lord’s Table with all our human weakness and brokenness.

Please go in silence and sit with your table group. The assistants will direct us.

\*De Colores

**Scripture References:**

Matthew 28: 19

Luke 22: 19

1 Corinthians 12: 1 - 14: 40

Matthew 3: 13-17

Mark 1: 8

Matthew 3: 11

Luke 3: 16

John 1:26, 33

Matthew 28: 19-20

Acts 2

Acts 2: 38-39

Romans 6: 3-4

Exodus 29: 7

Psalms 133: 2

Ezekiel 36: 25

1 Corinthians 6: 11

Mark 10: 14-15

1 Corinthians 11: 23-26

Luke 22: 19-20

Luke 24: 13-35

Acts 2: 42

1 Corinthians 10: 16, 11: 23-26

Ephesians 4: 1-16

Ephesians 4: 11-13

1 Corinthians 12: 12-27

Luke 2: 41-52

Matthew 4: 18-22; 28: 19

John 6: 66-68

Joshua 24: 15

Romans 12: 1-2

Acts 6: 1-6

Acts 12: 1-3

Matthew 19: 4-6

Ephesians 5: 21-31

Luke 6: 12; 9: 18; 11: 1

Mark 1: 35; 6: 46

1 Thessalonians 5: 17

Ephesians 3: 14-19

Philippians 4: 6-7

2 Timothy 3: 16-17

Psalms 119: 103-105

Matthew 4: 1-11

John 8: 31-32

Psalms 122: 1

Deuteronomy 5: 6-14

Hebrews 10: 19-25

John 13: 34-35

Acts 2: 42-47

Hebrews 10: 25

Isaiah 58: 5-7

Matthew 4: 2-11; 6: 16-18

Philippians 2: 5-11

John 13: 1-20

Luke 12: 32-24

Matthew 25: 14-29

Luke 7: 50; 9: 24

Luke 7: 18-23

Matthew 12: 15-21

Matthew 9: 18-34

Luke 9: 1-6

Acts 4: 9

James 5: 16

James 5: 13-15

Matthew 9: 2-8

2 Corinthians 5: 18-19

John 15: 1-2