

We come together today with our sisters and brothers all around the world to partake in this table of grace. This table where there is a seat for everyone and all are equal. Equally loved and equally worthy. Now we are to partake in the cup of the new covenant.

Just as God had made a covenant with Abraham and Jacob, so God makes a covenant with us. A covenant that is a promise that God loves us and favors us. A promise that we are forgiven for our wrongdoings and loved unconditionally. But, I wonder how many of us truly believe that we are forgiven and loved unconditionally by God? How many of us trust that we are favored by God, simply because he has said it is so?

My friend and I were talking this week and it came up that sometimes she feels that she must be good to receive God's grace. This feeling goes beyond her logical understanding of God's promises, because she knows deep down that none of us are perfect. None of us are completely good, but as this friend talked, she expressed that she felt that it was okay for others to receive God's grace and forgiveness without being good or perfect, but for herself, it was

unimaginable that she could receive that same unconditional grace.

That same unconditional love and forgiveness. \*slight pause\*

I wonder how many of us feel that way. How many of us believe God's promises, but only when it comes to others? How many of us feel that we must be good in order to receive God's grace? This cup is a reminder that God's grace and favor is for all of us. Jesus did not say his blood was going to be poured out only for those of us who were good. He said it was poured out for many- poured out for all of us.

That pouring out of the new covenant was so every child of God would have a seat at the table. So every child of God would know God's grace and forgiveness. This is why we partake of the cup. It is to symbolically remind us of God's unconditional forgiveness. It is to remind us that we are loved. It is to remind us that we do not have to be good or perfect to be favored- we are favored simply because God said it is so. Just as God simply spoke the universe into existence, so he has spoken you into favor.

Maybe the greatest act of faith is trusting God at his word.

Maybe it is accepting that we are favored and forgiven, even when we

don't feel it. I wonder, church family, what would happen if we were to trust and really believe this about ourselves? What would our lives look like if we were not scared, if we really believed that we were fully and totally loved by God? \*pause\*

Today as we join our sisters and brothers around the world and partake in the cup of the new covenant, I invite you to fully be washed in the love of God. To drink from the cup of forgiveness and to know that you are favored. That you are forgiven and loved for who you are- not because you are good or perfect, but because you are a child of God- \*pause\*

May you be wrapped up in the blessing that is the cup. May this blessing overwhelm you. May it consume you. May it cause your cup to overflow, so that you may carry God's unconditional love and grace into the world- knowing that every person you meet is a child of God. A child of God, who is loved and adored, just as you are. May you know God's love for you has no bounds. May you know that you do not have to be good or perfect. May you come just as you are- loved fully by the God that created you. Amen.