At the end of the book of *Hebrews* is a very short two-verse prayer in chapter 13, verses 20 and 21.

"Now may the God of peace who brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen."

This prayer was offered to God not at a Lord’s Supper observance but at the end of a book whose purpose was to exhort Christians who were faltering in their faith to remain faithful in their commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ. In that prayer are five short phrases that are worth remembering at the Table of our Lord.

The FIRST short phrase is "the God of peace.” In the epistle to the *Ephesians* the writer says in chapter 2 and verse 14 that Christ Jesus “is our peace, who has made both one.” Of course, in the context the “both” who had been made into “one” were the Jew and the Gentile. But, here at the Table, consider the truth that because of Jesus the many of us who have varied backgrounds and who are different from each other in so many ways and who share in this Supper also have been made “one” through His blood – the blood that is the “cup” of which we are about to drink. As *1 Corinthians* says, we are “one body” – His body, the church – but “many” members and we are at peace not only with God, our Savior, but also, because of the power of the cross, with each other at a time when the world is fighting each other in so many venues.

The SECOND short phrase is “brought up our Lord Jesus from the dead.” Of course, this is referring to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. Do we not think of this while at the table? He gave His life on the cross for us but He also arose for us. *1 Corinthians* speaks at length concerning the hope that we have because of His resurrection. Before we were Christians, we were like the Gentiles addressed in Ephesians 2 who had "no hope and without God in the world.” But the Table is a reminder of the hope that we now have in Him. It is because of His resurrection that we too will resurrect. The Table of our Lord not only reminds us of His death but also of His resurrection.

The THIRD short phrase is “that great Shepherd of the sheep.” It is good and necessary for us to reflect upon the truth that before knowing Christ we were all
wayward sheep without any lasting purpose or direction in life. But because "He first loved us" and demonstrated that love by going to the cross for our sins we now love Him and are His sheep with His purpose and His direction guiding our lives. There are earthly, underling shepherds of the flock, elders or pastors, but He is the "great Shepherd" – the heavenly Shepherd. Through His Word He has shepherded us who were lost in our sins to this Table. We would never have come here on our own. We had no desire to be here. But the "great Shepherd" Who calls men and women to Him through His gospel, Who "calls his own sheep by name," Who knows His sheep and His sheep know Him and His voice, and Who has gathered us to this spiritual feeding place, hear His voice once again: "Do this in remembrance of Me." Through the loaf and the cup we hear our God, our Savior, and our Redeemer. This is a good place to be.

The FOURTH short phrase is "the blood of the everlasting covenant." When we hear this short phrase at the Table we remember our Lord’s words at the supper table of the last Passover Feast that He attended. "This cup is the new covenant in My blood, which is shed for you." The new covenant is the "everlasting covenant." It is the "covenant" that was bought with His blood and that bought our redemption. Peter said it well: "...you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your father, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

The FIFTH short phrase is "make you complete in every good work to do His will, working in you what is well pleasing in His sight." The world looks upon us with pity and embarrassment as if we are ignorant, backward, deceived people clinging to something that has long ago been disproved and rejected by those who are more enlightened. For the most part we are not powerful or influential or wealthy. We have no academic standing. We are not in the company of blue-blood elitists. We do not measure up to those who are the movers and shakers of the world. But in Him we are "complete in every good work to do His will." Nothing is more important than to be in or "to do His will." That is why we have come to this Table. That is why we are here. It is "His will" that we remember Him in this way at this time on this day. It is "well pleasing in His sight" that we are seated at this holy Table with Him. Sitting at tables where great, monumental decisions are made in government or academia or corporate headquarters pales in comparison to sitting at the Table of the Christ.

So, this was a good closing prayer in Hebrews that was uttered for those who were faltering in their faith. And it is a good prayer for us at this time regardless of whether we are strong or weak in our faith, failing or succeeding in our Christian walk, encouraged or discouraged in life or in our ministries.

When we are finished and we leave this Table may God help us not to leave the One Whose Table it is until next Lord’s Day at this time for then we would not be "complete" nor would we allow the "great Shepherd of the sheep" to work
PRAYER

Our dear, gracious, heavenly Father, we stand before Your throne stripped of any righteousness other than that which You have imputed to us through Jesus Christ. We stand here in great need of your forgiveness, mercy, and grace. You are giving us a privilege that is so undeserving and beyond comprehension – that of communing with your holy Son and our holy Savior. We will eat the loaf and drink the cup in remembrance of Him, our great Shepherd. We thank you for the peace that we have with you and our brethren because of the work that Jesus did on the cross. We ask that you arrange the events in our lives in such a way that we will do that which “is well pleasing in [Your] sight.” And especially at this time we pray that the way in which we remember Your Son will indeed be “well pleasing in [Your] sight.” As your servants we ask this in His name which is above all names. Amen.