

Father in heaven, you are the absolute Sovereign over the shaking of the earth, the rising of the sea, and the raging of the waves. We tremble at your power and bow before your unsearchable judgments and inscrutable ways. We cover our faces and kiss your omnipotent hand. We fall helpless to the floor in prayer and feel how fragile the very ground is beneath our knees.

O God, we humble ourselves under your holy majesty and repent. In a moment—in the twinkling of an eye—we too could be swept away. We are not more deserving of firm ground than our fellowmen in Japan. We too are flesh. We have bodies and homes and cars and family and precious places. We know that if we were treated according to our sins, who could stand? All of it would be gone in a moment. So in this dark hour we turn against our sins, not against you.

And we cry for mercy for Japan. Mercy, Father. Not for what they or we deserve. But mercy.

Have you not encouraged us in this? Have we not heard a hundred times in your Word the riches of your kindness, forbearance, and patience? Do you not a thousand times withhold your judgments, leading your rebellious world toward repentance? Yes, Lord. For your ways are not our ways, and your thoughts are not our thoughts.

Grant, O God, that the wicked will forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts. Grant us, your sinful creatures, to return to you, that you may have compassion. For surely you will abundantly pardon. Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord Jesus, your beloved Son, will be saved.

May every heart-breaking loss—millions upon millions of losses—be healed by the wounded hands of the risen Christ. You are not unacquainted with your creatures' pain. You did not spare your own Son, but gave him up for us all.

In Jesus you tasted loss. In Jesus you shared the overwhelming flood of our sorrows and suffering. In Jesus you are a sympathetic Priest in the midst of our pain.

Deal tenderly now, Father, with this fragile people. Woo them. Win them. Save them.

And may the floods they so much dread make blessings break upon their head.

O let them not judge you with feeble sense, but trust you for your grace. And so behind this providence, soon find a smiling face.

In Jesus' merciful name, Amen.