

2021 Midweek Lenten Series

Making Change

March 17, 2021 + Change of Heart

Jesus' words to the Pharisees give us pause: "You honor me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me." Jesus invites us to experience a change of heart that will in fact change every part of our lives.

Opening Dialogue

Beloved, set me as a seal upon your heart,
as a seal upon your arm.

**For love is strong as death;
passion fierce as the grave.**

O God, search me and know my heart;
test me and know my thoughts.

**See if there is any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.**

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

And also with you.

Prayer

O God of our longing, strengthen us and dwell in our hearts, that we be rooted and grounded in your love. Help us to comprehend the breadth and length and height and depth of your mercy shown to us on the cross. Fill our hearts with your grace, that we lead lives that radiate your love to all. In Jesus' name we pray.

Amen.

Psalmody Psalm 119:1-16

1Happy are those whose way is blameless,
who walk in the law of the LORD.

2Happy are those who keep his decrees,
who seek him with their whole heart,

3who also do no wrong,
but walk in his ways.

4You have commanded your precepts
to be kept diligently.

5O that my ways may be steadfast
in keeping your statutes!

6Then I shall not be put to shame,
having my eyes fixed on all your commandments.

7I will praise you with an upright heart,
when I learn your righteous ordinances.

8I will observe your statutes;
do not utterly forsake me.
9How can young people keep their way pure?
By guarding it according to your word.
10With my whole heart I seek you;
do not let me stray from your commandments.
11I treasure your word in my heart,
so that I may not sin against you.
12Blessed are you, O LORD;
teach me your statutes.
13With my lips I declare
all the ordinances of your mouth.
14I delight in the way of your decrees
as much as in all riches.
15I will meditate on your precepts,
and fix my eyes on your ways.
16I will delight in your statutes;
I will not forget your word.

Reading Ezekiel 36:22-28

22Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord GOD: It is not for your sake, O house of Israel, that I am about to act, but for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations to which you came. 23I will sanctify my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, and which you have profaned among them; and the nations shall know that I am the LORD, says the Lord GOD, when through you I display my holiness before their eyes. 24I will take you from the nations, and gather you from all the countries, and bring you into your own land. 25I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. 26A new heart I will give you, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27I will put my spirit within you, and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. 28Then you shall live in the land that I gave to your ancestors; and you shall be my people, and I will be your God.

Gospel Reading Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

1Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, 2they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 3(For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) 5So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" 6He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; 7in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.'

8You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

14Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand:

15there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."

21For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

Reflection

Hymn of the Day – ‘Change my heart, O God’ ELW 801

*Change my heart, O God;
make it ever true.*

*Change my heart, O God;
may I be like you.*

*You are the potter;
I am the clay.*

*Mold me and make me;
this is what I pray.*

*Change my heart, O God;
make it ever true.*

*Change my heart, O God;
may I be like you.*

Prayers

O God our help,
you walk with us through all of life's changes.
Grant us strength, patience, wisdom, and understanding.

O God our hope,
you come to us in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.
Show us your salvation,
and lead us in the way of the cross.

O God our shelter,
you enfold us like a mother hen gathering her chicks.
Watch over all who are sick, grieving, lonely, and in need this day.
O God our home, you claim us as your beloved children.

Lord, remember us when you come into your kingdom.
All this we ask through the one who gave himself for us, Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Let us pray together:
**Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come,
thy will be done,**

on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those
who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom,
and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

Offering
Offering Prayer (Matt. 25:35)
Amen.

Blessing
Based on 2 Thessalonians 3:16
The Lord of peace give you peace at all times and in all ways.
In the name of the Father, † Son, and Holy Spirit.
Amen.

Sending Song – ‘Chief of Sinners Though I Be’ ELW 609

- 1 *Chief of sinners though I be,
Jesus shed his blood for me,
died that I might live on high,
lives that I might never die.
As the branch is to the vine,
I am his, and he is mine.*
- 2 *Oh, the height of Jesus' love!
Higher than the heav'ns above,
deeper than the depths of sea,
lasting as eternity.
Love that found me—wondrous thought—
found me when I sought him not.*
- 3 *Only Jesus can impart
balm to heal the wounded heart,
peace that flows from sin forgiv'n,
joy that lifts the soul to heav'n,
faith and hope to walk with God
in the way that Enoch trod.*
- 4 *Chief of sinners though I be,
Christ is all in all to me;
all my wants to him are known,*

*all my sorrows are his own.
He sustains the hidden life
safe with him from earthly strife.*

5 *O my Savior, help afford
by your Spirit and your word!
When my wayward heart would stray,
keep me in the narrow way;
grace in time of need supply
while I live and when I die.*

Dismissal

Go now in peace, for nothing can separate you from the love of God in Christ Jesus.

Thanks be to God.

Some of the prayers are based on the text of "O God, our help in ages past" (ELW 632; text by Isaac Watts) and Luke 23:42.
Text of the Lord's Prayer from "Salvation unto us has come" (ELW 590). Text © 2006 Augsburg Fortress.
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