

NINTH SUNDAY OF PENTECOST

Jesus Softens Hardened Hearts

July 25, 2021

AS WE GATHER

Scripture describes the Pharisees as having hardened hearts. (Mk 3:4-5) At times Israel also is depicted as having hardened their hearts to God. (Zech 7:12) You may be surprised to learn in today's Gospel reading that Jesus' disciples are described as having hardened their hearts about Him. How can those who were daily living with Jesus have hard hearts? This morning in the miracle of Jesus walking on water we look at how Jesus softens the hearts of the disciples and the hearts of the world. Welcome to worship this morning as we lift up praise to God and hear His Word.

WELCOME

OPENING HYMN "Praise the One Who Breaks the Darkness"
LSB 849

849 PRAISE THE ONE WHO BREAKS THE DARKNESS

1-Praise the one who breaks the darkness
with a liberating light.

Praise the one who frees the prisoners,
turning blindness into sight.

Praise the one who preached the Gospel,
healing every dread disease,
calming storms and feeding thousands
with the very bread of peace.

2-Praise the one who blessed the children
with a strong yet gentle word.

Praise the one who drove out demons
with a piercing two-edged sword.

Praise the one who brings cool water
to the desert's burning sand.
From this well comes living water,
quenching thirst in every land.

3-Let us praise the Word Incarnate,
Christ, who suffered in our place.

Jesus died and rose victorious
That we may know God by grace.

Let us sing for joy and gladness,
Seeing what our God has done;
Let us praise the true Redeemer,
Praise the One who makes us one.

✠ PREPARATION ✠

(stand)

INVOCATION

P: In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

OPENING SENTENCES *Ezekiel 36:24-28*

P: For I will take you out of the nations;

C: I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.

P: I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean;

C: I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.

P: I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you;

C: I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

P: And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

C: Then you will live in the land I gave your ancestors; you will be my people, and I will be your God.

CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS

P: Lord God, we come before You with sinful hearts and deeds. Look with mercy upon us as we seek forgiveness for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ.

(Silence for personal reflection and confession)

P: Almighty God, our maker and redeemer, we admit we are sinners and confess that we, in our very nature, are sinful and unclean. We have sinned against You in our thoughts, our words, and our actions. We look to Your unending mercy, asking for Your grace on behalf of our Lord Jesus Christ.

C: Merciful God who has given Your only Son to die for us, have mercy on us and for His sake forgive all our sins. By Your Holy Spirit help us to know You and Your will for us. Enable us to be obedient to Your Word until we come to everlasting life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

P: As the called and ordained servant of the Word and pastor of God's church of St. Paul's Lutheran, it is my joy to announce God's grace to all of you, and by the command of our Lord Jesus Christ I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the

the ☩ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C: Amen.

(sit)

HYMN OF PRAISE "Give Thanks"

LSB 806

806 Give Thanks with a Grateful Heart

1

Give thanks with a grateful heart,
Give thanks to the Holy One,
Give thanks because He's given
Jesus Christ His Son. (2x)

And now let the weak say "I am strong,"
Let the poor say "I am rich,"
Because of what the Lord has done for us. (2x)

Give thanks, give thanks.

☩ **WORD** ☩

(stand)

SALUTATION

P: The peace of the Lord be with you.

C: And also with you.

GREETING

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P: Lord Jesus, You saw that the hearts of Your disciples were hardened but by Your mighty works You brought them to a deeper faith in You. In Your Word and with the Holy Spirit change the places where our hearts are hardened and lead us to an ever growing faith. In Your name, who lives and reigns with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

(sit)

OLD TESTAMENT READING

Genesis 9:8-17, NIV

(God Gives the Rainbow as a Sign of His Covenant)

⁸ Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: ⁹ “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you ¹⁰ and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. ¹¹ I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

¹² And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: ¹³ I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth. ¹⁴ Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, ¹⁵ I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. ¹⁶ Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

¹⁷ So God said to Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all life on the earth.”

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

PSALM

Psalms 136:1-9 (NIV)

M: Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good.

W/Ch: His love endures forever.

M: Give thanks to the God of gods.

W/Ch: His love endures forever.

M: Give thanks to the Lord of lords:

W/Ch: His love endures forever.

M: to him who alone does great wonders,

W/Ch: His love endures forever.

M: who by his understanding made the heavens,

W/Ch: His love endures forever.

M: who spread out the earth upon the waters,

W/Ch: His love endures forever.

M: who made the great lights—

W/Ch: His love endures forever.

M: the sun to govern the day,

W/Ch: His love endures forever.

M: the moon and stars to govern the night;

A: His love endures forever.

EPISTLE READING (*Scriptural Letter*) Ephesians 3:14-21, GNT (v. 15 NET)

(Paul Prays for the Ephesian Church)

¹⁴ For this reason I fall on my knees before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and on earth receives its true name. ¹⁶ I ask God from the wealth of his glory to give you power through his Spirit to be strong in your inner selves, ¹⁷ and I pray that Christ will make his home in your hearts through faith. I pray that you may have your roots and foundation in love, ¹⁸ so that you, together with all God's people, may have the power to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Christ's love. ¹⁹ Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the very nature of God.

²⁰ To him who by means of his power working in us is able to do so much more than we can ever ask for, or even think of: ²¹ to God be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time, forever and ever! Amen.

P: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: Thanks be to God.

VERSES

1 Peter 2:9, NIV

A: But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the

praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

(stand)

HOLY GOSPEL

Mark 6:45-56, NIV
(Jesus Walks On Water))

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the sixth chapter.

C: Glory to You, O Lord.

⁴⁵ Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. ⁴⁶

After leaving them, he went up on a mountainside to pray.

⁴⁷ Later that night, the boat was in the middle of the lake, and he was alone on land. ⁴⁸ He saw the disciples straining at the oars, because the wind was against them. Shortly before dawn he went out to them, walking on the lake. He was about to pass by them, ⁴⁹ but when they saw him walking on the lake, they thought he was a ghost. They cried out, ⁵⁰ because they all saw him and were terrified.

Immediately he spoke to them and said, “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” ⁵¹ Then he climbed into the boat with them, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, ⁵² for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened.

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C: Praise to You, O Christ.

(sit)

CHILDREN’S MESSAGE

715 JESUS, SAVIOR, PILOT ME

1

Jesus, Savior, pilot me
Over life's tempestuous sea;
Unknown waves before me roll,
Hiding rock and treach'rous shoal.
Chart and compass come from Thee.
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

2

As a mother stills her child,
Thou canst hush the ocean wild;
Boist'rous waves obey Thy will
When Thou say'st to them, "Be still!"
Wondrous Sov'reign of the sea,
Jesus, Savior, pilot me.

3

When at last I near the shore
And the fearful breakers roar
Twixt me and the peaceful rest,
Then, while leaning on Thy breast,
May I hear Thee say to me,
"Fear not, I will pilot thee."

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SERMON Jesus Softens Hardened Hearts

(stand)

THE APOSTLES CREED

A: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried. He descended into hell. The third day He rose again from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy Christian Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen

(sit)

OFFERING

OFFERTORY “Take My Life and Let It Be”

LSB 783

783 Take My Life and Let It Be

1

Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

2

Take my hands and let them move
At the impulse of Thy love;
Take my feet and let them be
Swift and beautiful for Thee.

3

Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

4

Take my silver and my gold,
Not a mite would I withhold;
Take my intellect and use
Ev'ry pow'r as Thou shalt choose.

5

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

6

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be

Ever, only, all for Thee.

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(stand)

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P: Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus,
and for all people according to their needs.

(Silence for personal prayer and meditation)

P: Lord Jesus, we have places in our lives where our hearts
are hardened and unwilling to follow in Your ways. Powerfully
work to soften those places and mold us according to Your will.
Sanctify us and grow our faith so that our lives give You glory.

Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Son of Man, we pray for all teachers, administrators, and
support staff as they prepare for the upcoming school year. Give
them wisdom and strength. Provide students with everything they
need to learn and safely return to school. Bring them back ready
to learn and work hard. Lead them to respect and care for
themselves and those around them. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: King of Kings, we pray for our nation's leaders. Move them
to govern in ways that benefit their constituents and promote life
for the born and unborn. Lead them to work in truth and justice
that they may bring You glory. This morning we lift up all

Nebraska State Senators, Governor Ricketts and His
administration, and the Nebraska Board of Education. Show them
Your ways and give them strength and wisdom to act according to
Your Word. Lord, in Your mercy,

C: hear our prayer.

P: Son of God by whom all things were made, as crops and
livestock grow we see Your many blessings and power over
creation. We lift up all farmers. Provide them with sunshine, rain,
and all their needs to make a profitable and safe harvest. Lord, in

Your mercy

C: hear our prayer.

P: Good Shepherd, look with grace and mercy upon all those
who suffer in body, mind and spirit. We pray for the sick, those in

chronic pain, the recovering, the addicted, the depressed, those suffering from dementia and alzheimers, and the grieving. Remind them of Your mercy and grace. Lead them to understand how broad and long, how high and deep, is Your love. This morning we specifically name ... along with all those we now name silently in our hearts ... Lord, in Your mercy.

C: hear our prayer.

P: We pray these things not because we deserve them, but in Your name Jesus Christ, Our Savior with God the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

THE LORD'S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

A: 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.

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24-26, ESV*

P: The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you. The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

C: Amen.

(sit)

CLOSING HYMN "Be Still, My Soul; the Lord Is On Your Side"
LSB 752

752 Be Still, My Soul

1

Be still, my soul; the Lord is on your side;
Bear patiently the cross of grief or pain;
Leave to your God to order and provide;
In ev'ry change He faithful will remain.
Be still, my soul; your best, your heav'nly Friend
Through thorny ways leads to a joyful end.

2

Be still, my soul; your God will undertake
To guide the future as He has the past.
Your hope, your confidence let nothing shake;
All now mysterious shall be bright at last.
Be still, my soul; the waves and winds still know
His voice who ruled them while He dwelt below.

3

Be still, my soul; though dearest friends depart
And all is darkened in this vale of tears;
Then you will better know His love, His heart,
Who comes to soothe your sorrows and your fears.
Be still, my soul; your Jesus can repay
From His own fullness all He takes away.

4

Be still, my soul; the hour is hast'ning on
When we shall be forever with the Lord,
When disappointment, grief, and fear are gone,
Sorrow forgot, love's purest joys restored.
Be still, my soul; when change and tears are past,
All safe and blessed we shall meet at last.