

## Order of Worship August 29, 2021 8:30 AM & 11 AM

### Prelude:

P: The Lord be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

### Opening Hymn: *“Lord, I Lift Your Name on High”*

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

C: **Amen.**

### Old Testament Lesson: Deuteronomy 4:1-2, 6-9

R: [Moses said] And now, O Israel, listen to the statutes and the rules that I am teaching you, and do them, that you may live, and go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you. You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. ... Keep them and do them, for that will be your wisdom and your understanding in the sight of the peoples, who, when they hear all these statutes, will say, ‘Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people.’ For what great nation is there that has a god so near to it as the LORD our God is to us, whenever we call upon Him? And what great nation is there, that has statutes and rules so righteous as all this law that I set before you today?

“Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children.

R: This is the Word of the Lord.

C: **Thanks be to God.**

### Confessing Our Sins and Receiving God’s Forgiveness (Based on Deuteronomy 4)

P: Lord God, You call on us to obey the statutes and rules that You teach us as we prepare each day to go into the “promised land” of living as Your people.

**C: Yet we find ourselves adding to what You have given to us, making Your commands seem harsh and arbitrary, unfair and with our love, so that we can blame You when things go wrong in our lives.**

P: We forget what You have placed before our eyes, the precious salvation You have given to us in Jesus, living our lives as if Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection had no connection to our lives.

**C: So we not only break Your rules, we live in a way so that other cannot see how near You are to us as Your people and how righteousness are Your laws.**

P: We fail to share Your ways with our children,

**C: Or with our children’s children. Forgive us, Lord.**

P: Christ Jesus took on Himself the way that we should have lived and lived it perfectly for us. He died on the cross with all our failure to be God’s people. Because of all He did I therefore forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

C: **Amen.**

## **Entrance Psalm**

P: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

**C: and cleanse me from my sin!**

P: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;

**C: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.**

P: Create in me a clean heart, O God,

**C: and renew a right spirit within me.**

P: Cast me not away from Your presence,

**C: and take not Your Holy Spirit from me.**

P: Restore to me the joy of Your salvation,

**C: and uphold me with a willing spirit.**

**ALL: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.**

P: Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,

**C: and cleanse me from my sin!**

**Hymn: “Oh, That the Lord Would Guide My Ways” - Hymn #707**

## **Prayer of the Day**

P: O God, the source of all that is just and good, nourish in us every virtue and bring to completion every good intent that we may grow in grace and bring forth the fruit of good works; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C: Amen.**

## **Holy Gospel: Mark 7:14-23**

P: The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the 7<sup>th</sup> chapter.

**C: Glory to You, O Lord.**

P: [Jesus] called the people to Him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him.” And when He had entered the house and left the people, His disciples asked Him about the parable. And He said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus He declared all foods clean.) And He said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit. Sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

P: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

**C: Praise to You, O Christ.**

**Sermon Hymn: “Not What These Hands Have Done” - Hymn #567**

## **Sermon: “Evil Within” - Mark 7:14-23**

Among the many construction changes and improvements done in Ames over the summer was a beautification project of the medians on Lincoln Way here in Campustown. In addition to just

making them look nice, the changes also improved sight lines for traffic and pedestrians, a goal the city of Ames and ISU has had for several years.

A few years ago, after a student was struck and killed by a CyRide bus on the corner of Lincoln Way and Ash, which prompted a study of traffic safety. When the results were released, they were somewhat surprising. The problem was not with the road. The geometrics, sight distance and lighting of the area complies with current design guidelines, and traffic operations in the peak hours are also within acceptable ranges, according to the project consultant's report. Instead, the problem is with the people themselves. Compliance with the traffic lights, the walk and don't walk signs, was less than fifty percent, and that doesn't include all the people who walk across in places where there are not crosswalks or traffic signals. Since then, the addition of the delayed walk signals at these traffic lights has helped, but the bigger change was education and awareness. The problem wasn't something that could be solved by only engineering. The problem wasn't something outside of the people. The problem was something inside.

The Pharisees often get a bad reputation from us, but what they were doing was trying to fix people's insides by controlling what happened outside of them. They followed the rules from Leviticus and elsewhere where God had commanded them to be holy, set apart. And so they weren't supposed to be in the presence of death or sickness or unclean things. But the Pharisees had added their own traditions onto what God had commanded, and had put their trust in their abilities to keep themselves ritually clean.

Jesus knew that wasn't going to work. Their problem wasn't that they were being made unclean by what was outside them. Their problem was they were unclean because of what was inside them. Jesus had seen the real source of the problem.

We have the same problem. Uncleanness has nothing to do with what we take into our body or with what we touch or what touches us. Instead, it has everything to do with what's inside us, what's in our heart. And when what is in our heart comes out, we defile not just ourselves, but those around us. If John 3:16 is "the gospel in a nutshell," then Mark 7:21-23 is a nutshell of the Law. "From within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

If our hearts are only full of evil thoughts, then maybe we do just need a Pharisaic legal structure in place. After all, if our hearts are the problem, then maybe we need something outside of us to help keep them in check. If we just come up with the right boundaries, the right rules and regulations, then we can control our hearts, or at least our actions. But that doesn't deal with the root of the problem.

As tempting as it is sometimes to label evil as something out there, it's instead important to remember evil is in here. It is in us. And if we don't acknowledge that, if we don't think we could fall to temptation, we can't battle it. Only when we face our own heart of darkness can we begin to let the light shine in.

Like the Pharisees, it's easy for us to try to put the focus on the evil out there. It's easy to

condemn the sins we don't struggle with. It's also easy for us to put the problem of sin on those other people instead of on ourselves.

G.K. Chesterton's legendary (though perhaps apocryphal) response to a question The Times of London allegedly posed in the 1900s, "What's wrong with the world today?" shows us the true problem. Chesterton's response was succinct:

Dear Sir,

I am.

Yours, G.K. Chesterton

We are what's wrong with the world. The problem isn't the sin out there. It's the sin in here. It's the sin inside. It's our own selfishness and pride and greed.

Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn wrote a book about his time in the gulags of the former Soviet Union entitled *The Gulag Archipelago*. One of the most famous passages in it reads, "If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being."

We may think that if we could just get rid of those people around us who think differently than we do or act differently than we do, that everything would be fine. We may think that if we keep those who are unclean or bad influences away, we will easily stay on the straight and narrow path. But it doesn't work that way, and it's not something we can fix on our own.

Because the problem is internal, it's not something we can fix on our own. As much as we may want to, we can't go in and take our hearts out on our own. But we're not on our own. At the college student fellowship Wednesday night, we talked partly about Psalm 51, written by King David after everything had happened with Bathsheba. David knows his heart is unclean. He knows that what came out of his heart; lust, anger, and pride; led to adultery and murder and lies and an attempted cover-up. David knew his heart was sinful, and that had led to the death of a loyal soldier and an innocent baby, a series of events that broke every commandment. It only took one confrontation with the prophet Nathan for him to see the darkness of his own heart, how he had defiled the throne he sat in, the God he represented, and himself.

Yet the Bible calls David a man after God's own heart. How could that be? He's a murderer and adulterer, and that's just one of the several stories in the Bible that show David in a negative light. But if he is pure and holy, it is because God answered his prayer of repentance. God created a clean heart within him. God purged him, cleaned him, washed him, and made him whiter than snow (Psalm 51:7). And God does the same thing for you and me. Yes, we are sinners; but when God looks at us, he sees us with the clean hearts He has transplanted within us.

The Blood of Jesus washes away our sins and gives us a clear conscience so that we can stand before God in his presence without being rejected or destroyed. As God's forgiven children by faith, we become more and more like him each day as we hear his Word, receive his forgiveness, and receive the Body and Blood of our Lord Jesus in Holy Communion.

God speaks a word from the outside, a word of forgiveness, in order that it becomes a word inside us, unseating our intentions and seating us to feast on God's grace, God's mercy and God's righteousness. In Lord's Supper, we receive into our own bodies Jesus' body and blood. We receive that which we could not make or earn ourselves: forgiveness and new life.

In the 2003 remake of *The Italian Job*, one of the repeated bits of advice is "I trust everyone. It's the devil inside them I don't trust." We cannot trust our hearts. We cannot trust the devil inside us, the sin that dwells within us. We can trust the God who has promised to give us clean hearts. We can trust the God who came into the world in Jesus, to fulfill the law and take the punishment our sin deserves.

**Nicene Creed** (inside back cover of hymnal)

**Prayers** (based on Ephesians 6:10-20)

P: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm. Stand therefore, having fastened on the belt of truth . . ."

P: Christ Jesus, place Your belt of truth around us:

**C: "Righteousness is Your belt, and faithfulness the sash around Your waist." (Isaiah 11:5)**

P: "May it be like a cloak wrapped about us, like a belt tied forever around us."  
(Psalm 109:19)

**C: "Belt up our minds, so we set our hope on the grace to be brought to us when You are revealed at Your coming." (1 Peter 1:13)**

P: Put on us the breastplate of Your righteousness:

**C: "You put on righteousness as Your breastplate and put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped Yourself in zeal as in a cloak." (Isaiah 59:17)**

P: You say, "My righteousness draws near speedily, My salvation is on the way, and My arm will bring justice to the nations." (Isaiah 51:5)

**C: "Fill us with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to Your glory and praise." (1 Thessalonians 5:8)**

P: Place on our feet the readiness given by the gospel of peace so we say,

**C: "How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, 'Your God reigns!'" (Isaiah 52:7)**

P: "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.

**C: For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17)**

P: Give us the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one:

**C: “You LORD are my strength and my shield; my heart trusts in You, and You help me. My heart leaps for joy, and with my song I praise You.” (Psalm 28:7)**

P: “You are my loving God and my fortress, my stronghold and my deliverer, my shield, in whom I take refuge, who subdues peoples under me.” (Psalm 144:2)

**C: “Cover us with Your feathers, and under Your wings we will find refuge; Your faithfulness will be our shield and rampart.” (Psalm 91:4)**

P: Move us to take the helmet of salvation:

**C: “You put on the helmet of salvation on Your head; You put on the garments of vengeance and wrapped Yourself in zeal as in a cloak.” (Isaiah 59:17)**

P: “But since we belong to the day, help us be sober and put on the hope of salvation as a helmet.” (I Thessalonians 5:8)

**C: “Surely Your salvation is near those who fear You, that Your glory may dwell in our land.” (Psalm 85:9)**

P: Give us the sword of the Spirit, which is Your Word:

**C: “For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.” (Hebrews 4:12)**

P: “Coming out of Your mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. You will rule them with an iron scepter. You will tread the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty.” (Revelation 19:15)

**C: “Your Word is lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path.” (Psalm 119:105)**

P: Help us to live at all times in the Spirit, with all prayer and supplication. To that end keep us alert with all perseverance, making supplication for all the saints: (Special petitions . . . )  
All this we pray in Your name.

**C: Amen.**

**Prayer Hymn: “Be Strong in the Lord” - Hymn #665**

**Invitation to Holy Communion (Pastor)**

**The Words of Our Lord**

**Lord’s Prayer**

P: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

**C: Amen.**

**Distribution of Holy Communion**

*“Draw Near and Take the Body of the Lord” – Hymn #637*

*“Let Us Ever Walk with Jesus” – Hymn #685*

**Prayer after Communion**

P: O God, we thank You for Your Son who chose the path of suffering for the sake of the world. Humble us by His example, point us to the path of obedience, and give us the strength to follow His commands; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

**C: Amen.**

**Blessing (Pastor)**

**C: Amen.**

**Closing Hymn: “In Christ Alone”**

**Postlude:**