

**Midweek Lenten Series: 2025**  
**The Cross, our Comfort: Making Change**

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**Week of Lent 4: 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.

**Invocation and Response**

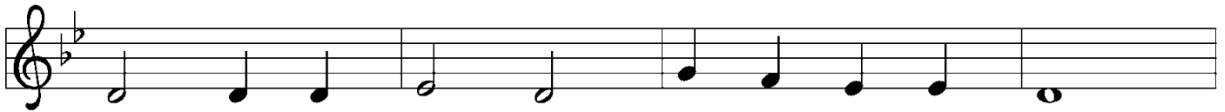
Beloved, set me as a seal upon your heart, as a seal upon your arm. For love is strong as death; passion fierce as the grave.

**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.**

**Song**

*Spirit of God, Descend Upon my Heart*

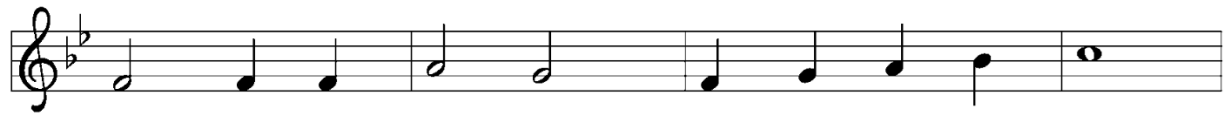
ELW 800



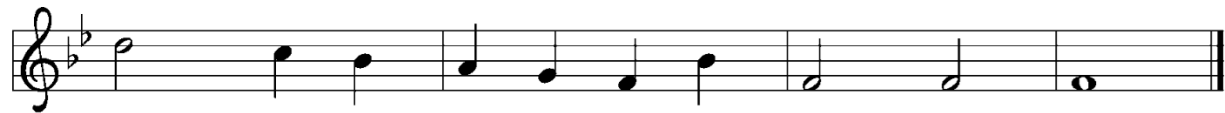
1 Spir - it of God, de - scend up - on my heart;  
2 I ask no dream, no proph - et ec - sta - sies,  
3 Have you not bid me love you, God and King;



wean it from earth, through all its puls - es move;  
no sud - den rend - ing of the veil of clay,  
all, all your own, soul, heart, and strength, and mind?



stoop to my weak - ness, strength to me im - part,  
no an - gel vis - i - tant, no op - 'ning skies;  
I see your cross; there teach my heart to cling.



and make me love you as I ought to love.  
but take the dim - ness of my soul a - way.  
Oh, let me seek you and, oh, let me find!

**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.**

Together we pray,

**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

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

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

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

**4 You have commanded your precepts to be kept diligently.**

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

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

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

**11 I treasure your word in my heart, so that I may not sin against you.**

**Reading**

Ezekiel 36:22-28

<sup>22</sup> Therefore 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. <sup>23</sup> I 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. <sup>24</sup> I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup> I will sprinkle clean water upon you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you. <sup>26</sup> A 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. <sup>27</sup> I will put my spirit within you and make you follow my statutes and be careful to observe my ordinances. <sup>28</sup> Then 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

<sup>7</sup> Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, <sup>2</sup> they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. <sup>3</sup> (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders, <sup>4</sup> and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash, and there are also many other traditions that they observe: the washing of cups and pots and bronze kettles and beds.) <sup>5</sup> So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, “Why do your disciples not walk according to the tradition of the elders but eat with defiled hands?” <sup>6</sup> He 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; <sup>7</sup> in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.’

<sup>8</sup> “You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.”

<sup>14</sup> Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: <sup>15</sup> there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.”

<sup>21</sup> For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: sexual immorality, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup> adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, folly. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

## Reflection

Pastor Brian

## Song

*How Clear is our Vocation, Lord*

ELW 580



1 How clear is our vo - ca - tion, Lord, when once we heed your call  
4 In what you give us, Lord, to do, to - geth - er or a - lone,  
to live ac-cord-ing to your word and dai - ly learn, re-freshed, re - stored,  
in old rou-tines or ven-tures new, may we not cease to look to you,  
that you are Lord of all and will not let us fall.  
the cross you hung up - on, all you en - deav - ored done.

## 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.**

**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, Prayer and Blessing

Steadfast God, you bless us amid all the changes and chances of life. Grant us servant hearts, that we may feed the hungry and welcome the stranger in the name of Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. **Amen.**

The Lord of peace give you peace at all times and in all ways. In the name of God: Father, ✝ Son, and Holy Spirit. **Amen.**

## Sending

### *Chief of Sinners Though I Be*

ELW 609



1 Chief of sin - ners though I be, Je - sus shed his blood for me,  
2 Oh, the height of Je - sus' love! High - er than the heav'ns a - bove,  
5 O my Sav - ior, help af - ford by your Spir - it and your word!



died that I might live on high, lives that I might nev - er die.  
deep - er than the depths of sea, last - ing as e - ter - ni - ty.  
When my way - ward heart would stray, keep me in the nar - row way;



As the branch is to the vine, I am his, and he is mine.  
Love that found me—won-drous thought—found me when I sought him not.  
grace in time of need sup - ply while I live and when I die.

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

**Thanks be to God.**