

# Matters of the Heart

“Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to [lit. *‘speak to the heart of’*] Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the LORD’s hand double for all her sins.”

Isaiah 40:1-2



Sanctity of Life Sunday • Lutherans For Life

## Prelude

### Opening Hymn “Holy Spirit Light Divine” (LSB 496)<sup>1</sup>

Holy Spirit, light divine, Shine upon this heart of mine;  
Chase the shades of night away, Turn the darkness into day.

Let me see my Savior’s face, Let me all His beauties trace;  
Show those glorious truths to me Which are only known to Thee.

Holy Spirit, pow’r divine, Cleanse this guilty heart of mine;  
In Thy mercy pity me, From sin’s bondage set me free.

Holy Spirit, joy divine Cheer this saddened heart of mine;  
Yield a sacred, settled peace, Let it grow and still increase.

Holy Spirit, all divine, Dwell within this heart of mine;  
Cast down ev’ry idol throne, Reign supreme, and reign alone.

## Invocation

**P** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**C** Amen.

## Versicles

**P** O Lord, open our hearts to pay attention to Your Word. (Acts 16:14)

**C** **Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. (Psalm 51:10)**

**P** The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;

**C** **A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise. (Psalm 51:17)**

## Confession – Psalm 51:1-6 (spoken by all)

**Have mercy on me, O God; according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight, so that you may be justified in your words and blameless in your judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, you delight in truth in the inward being, and you teach me wisdom in the secret heart.**

## Absolution

- P** Because of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who atoned for your sins and gives you His victory, I am able to speak to your heart and share with you that your warfare is ended, that your iniquity is pardoned, and that you have received from the Lord's hand His boundless grace. Let not your hearts be troubled, your sins are forgiven.
- C** **Amen! My heart is glad and my whole being rejoices! (Psalm 16:9)**

## Hymn of Response – “My Soul Rejoices” (LSB 933)

My soul rejoices, My spirit voices—  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
For God my Savior Has shown me favor—  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
With praise and blessing,  
Join in confessing God, who is solely Mighty and holy—  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!  
His mercy surely Shall rest securely  
On all who fear Him, Love and revere Him—  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!

His arm now baring, His strength declaring—  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
The proud He scatters, Their rule He shatters—  
Sing the greatness of the Lord!  
Oppression halted; The meek exalted.  
Full are the hungry; Empty, the wealthy—  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!  
Here is the token All that was spoken  
To Abr'ham's offspring God is fulfilling—  
O sing the greatness of God the Lord!

## Psalm – 10:12-18

- P** Arise, O LORD; O God, lift up your hand;
- C** **forget not the afflicted.**
- P** Why does the wicked renounce God
- C** **And say in his heart, “You will not call to account”?**
- P** But you do see, for you note mischief and vexation, That you may take it into your hands.
- C** **To you the helpless commits himself; you have been the helper of the fatherless.**
- P** Break the arm of the wicked and evildoer;
- C** **Call his wickedness to account till you find none.**

**P** The LORD is king forever and ever;

**C** **the nations perish from his land.**

**P** O LORD, you hear the desire of the afflicted;

**C** **You will strengthen their heart; you will incline your ear**

**P** to do justice to the fatherless and the oppressed,

**C** **so that man who is of the earth may strike terror no more.**

**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.**

## Collect of the Day

**P** The Lord be with you.

**C** **And with your spirit.**

**P** Almighty God, who searches and knows the heart, speak to our hearts of Your boundless grace, restore in us the joy of Your salvation, and use us to speak to the hearts of others through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**C** **Amen!**

## Old Testament Reading – Isaiah 40:1-2

Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended, that her iniquity is pardoned, that she has received from the Lord's hand double for all her sins.

## Gradual – Psalm 13:2, 5

How long must I take counsel in my soul and have sorrow in my heart all day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? But I have trusted in your steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in your salvation.

## Epistle Reading – 2 Corinthians 4:1-18

Therefore, having this ministry by the mercy of God, we do not lose heart. But we have renounced disgraceful, underhanded ways. We refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God. And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. For what we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake. For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and

not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies. For we who live are always being given over to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus also may be manifested in our mortal flesh. So death is at work in us, but life in you.

Since we have the same spirit of faith according to what has been written, "I believed, and so I spoke," we also believe, and so we also speak, knowing that he who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and bring us with you into his presence. For it is all for your sake, so that as grace extends to more and more people it may increase thanksgiving, to the glory of God.

So we do not lose heart. Though our outer self is wasting away, our inner self is being renewed day by day. For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison, as we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.

## **Gospel** – John 14:1-7

"Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. And you know the way to where I am going." Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

## **Creed**

### **Sermon Hymn** – "Comfort, Comfort Ye My People" (LSB 347)<sup>1</sup>

"Comfort, comfort ye My people, Speak ye peace," thus saith our God;  
"Comfort those who sit in darkness, Mourning 'neath their sorrows' load.  
Speak ye to Jerusalem Of the peace that waits for them;  
Tell her that her sins I cover And her warfare now is over."

Yea, her sins our God will pardon, Blotting out each dark misdeed;  
All that well deserved His anger He no more will see or heed.  
She hath suffered many a day, Now her griefs have passed away;  
God will change her pining sadness Into ever-springing gladness.

Hark, the herald's voice is crying In the desert far and near,  
Calling sinners to repentance, Since the Kingdom now is here.  
O that warning cry obey! Now prepare for God a way;  
Let the valley rise to meet Him And the hills bow down to greet Him.

Make ye straight what long was crooked; Make the rougher places plain.  
Let your hearts be true and humble, As befits His holy reign.  
For the glory of the Lord Now o'er earth is shed abroad,  
And all flesh shall see the token That His Word is never broken.

## Sermon

### Offertory "Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing" (LSB 686)<sup>1</sup>

Come, Thou Fount of ev'ry blessing, Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;  
Streams of mercy, never ceasing, Call for songs of loudest praise.  
While the hope of endless glory Fills my heart with joy and love,  
Teach me ever to adore Thee; May I still Thy goodness prove.

Oh, to grace how great a debtor Daily I'm constrained to be;  
Let that grace now, like a fetter Bind my wand'ring heart to Thee:  
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it; Prone to leave the God I love.  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it, Seal it for Thy courts above.

## Offering

### Prayers

- P** Father, thank You for speaking to our hearts today.
- C** **Our iniquity is pardoned and our warfare ended.**
- P** Give us leaping hearts of joy
- C** **So we are properly motivated to boldly speak Your truth.**
- P** Give us hearts filled with Your compassion
- C** **That we might eagerly show it to others in our deeds.**
- P** For the whole Christian Church on earth,
- C** **Speak to their hearts that they might be a voice upholding the sanctity of life.**
- P** For our nation and its leaders,
- C** **Speak to their hearts that they might see the critical importance of upholding the value of human life.**
- P** For all pregnant women,

- C** **Speak to their hearts that they might value the life You have given regardless of the circumstances.**
- P** For those whose hearts are wounded because of a past abortion,
- C** **Speak to their hearts of Your objective and full forgiveness in Jesus.**
- P** For those who commit abortions and those who support them,
- C** **Strike their hearts with Your truth and bring them to repentance.**
- P** For those of us who are indifferent and silent when God’s gift of life is so blatantly abused and devalued,
- C** **Strike to our hearts with your truth and bring us to repentance.**
- P** For those facing tough questions at life’s end,
- C** **Speak to their hearts and comfort them with Your Spirit of wisdom, strength, and hope.**
- P** For those dealing with matters of the heart in this congregation, especially . . . (special petitions may be offered here) Into Your hands we commend all for who we pray trusting that You will speak to their hearts.
- C** **Amen.**

*(The service of Holy Communion may be inserted at this point according to local custom. Suggested communion hymns might include “I Come O Savior to Thy Table” (LSB 618), “O Gracious Lord, I Firmly Am Believing” (LSB 635), and “You Satisfy the Hungry Heart” (LSB 641).*

## Lord’s Prayer

### Benediction

- P** The Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift His countenance upon you, speak to your heart, and give you peace.
- C** **Amen.**

### Closing Hymn – “Savior, Again to Thy Dear Name We Raise” (LSB 917)<sup>1</sup>

Savior, again to Thy dear Name we raise  
 With one accord our parting hymn of praise;  
 Once more we bless Thee ere our worship cease,  
 Then, lowly bending, wait Thy word of peace.

Grant us thy peace upon our homeward way;  
 With Thee began, with Thee shall end, the day:  
 Guard Thou the lips from sin, the hearts from shame,  
 That in this house have called upon Thy name.

Grant us thy peace, Lord, through the coming night;  
 Turn Thou for us its darkness into light.  
 From harm and danger keep Thy children free;  
 For dark and light are both alike to Thee.

Grant us Thy peace throughout our earthly life,  
 Our balm in sorrow and our stay in strife;  
 Then, when Thy voice shall bid our conflict cease,  
 Call us, O Lord, to Thine eternal peace.

## **(Endnotes)**

- 1 Text and music: Public domain
- 2 Text, Tune, Setting: Public domain Text © 1991 Stephen P. Starke, administered by Concordia Publishing House, [www.cph.org](http://www.cph.org). Reproduced by permission for 2015 Life Sunday observance. All right reserved.

Scripture quotations are from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®, copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

(01/15)



**Lutherans For Life**

[info@lutheransforlife.org](mailto:info@lutheransforlife.org) • [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org) • 888.364.LIFE • Item LFL2015WS