

Mark 7:14-  
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15<sup>th</sup> Sunday af. Pentecost

September 2, 2018  
Our Redeemer Lutheran Church  
Pastor Hartwig

Grace, mercy, and peace be unto you from God, Our Heavenly Fathers  
And Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior. Amen.

**[Introduction]** Dear brothers and sisters in Christ:

One of the early episodes of the original Star Trek television series was called,  
“The Enemy Within.”

In that episode, there’s a malfunction in the transporter  
– you, when Captain Kirk said, “Beam me up, Scotty”  
– something unexpected happened.

Kirk was split into two individuals – one of them good, and one of them evil.

The evil captain Kirk was a drunkard and a carouser,  
he had no concern for his ship or his crew  
– he was concerned only for himself.

Eventually, Scotty was able to repair the transporter and “fix” Captain Kirk  
by beaming both Kirks to a planet below  
and then reassembling them into one individual as he beamed them back.

The point of this episode was that there is evil that lurks inside of everyone.  
And on that point, Gene Roddenberry and Star Trek were right,  
there is evil in each one of us.

**[Evil from Within]**

Ya know, we like to think we’re pretty good people – that we have good hearts.  
But Jesus can see into each and every heart and what He sees isn’t pretty.

In last week’s Gospel reading, the Pharisees and the Scribes were so focused on  
what they put into their bodies, that they ignored what came out of their bodies,  
especially their mouths.

But Jesus teaches His disciples that things are actually quite the opposite:

*<sup>18</sup>Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup>since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup>And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. <sup>21</sup>For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup>coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup>All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” (Mark 7:18-23)*

The heart that Jesus refers to isn't the organ in your chest  
that pumps blood throughout your body  
– this kind of heart is never mentioned in the New Testament.

The heart Jesus refers to is the center of your being –  
it's your intellect and will;  
it's the seat of human thought and emotion – your heart is really who you are!

To say something comes from “your heart”  
really means that it comes from “your mind.”  
Over the years, I've come to realize that when someone tells me,  
“I'm going to speak to you from my heart,”  
he's about to give me a piece of his mind!

When Jesus says, “For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, etc....,”	He's saying these things come from you. Your heart – your mind, your intellect, your will, your emotions are what defile you.
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It's kind of hard to say, “The devil made me do it,”  
when your own heart is responsible for its own sin.  
But then again we like to think that we're good people, that we have good hearts.

So I ask, what if someone had a video camera  
that could record all of your thoughts for just one day.  
Would you want that recording posted on the internet, on YouTube?  
What would everyone see? The same thing God sees?  
Would you want the world to see what Jesus sees?  
The hatred, the covetousness, the pride, the envy  
– the whole list that Jesus mentions.

Maybe it's good that only Jesus can see the sin that's so prevalent in our minds.  
[*Sin from Within*] After all, sin really begins in the mind.  
It begins as a thought and then becomes a word and then becomes a deed.  
All of which is sin – thought, word, and deed.  
All of which, according to Jesus, comes from our heart.

It's kind of ironic that many Christians say that you've got to give Jesus your heart.  
It's not the kind of gift I would want. Kind of like getting fish guts for a birthday  
present. No thank you!  
Yeah, you don't give your heart to Jesus. Jesus gives you a new heart!

After King David sinned grievously with Bathsheba, then had her husband murdered so he could marry her, he was feeling pretty good about himself.

But God saw what was in David's heart.

He sent the prophet Nathan to bring David's sinful heart to light and call him to repent. When David saw his sin, he confessed, *"I have sinned against the Lord."* And Nathan said, *"The Lord also has put away your sin; you shall not die."*

From this incident, David wrote Psalm 51 in which he says,

*"Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love; according to your abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Was me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!... Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence, and take not your Holy Spirit from me."*

[**God**]            God is the one who conquers the enemy that is within each of us  
                          – our sinful hearts, by creating in you a new heart.

In Baptism, your sins are washed away.

But God doesn't stop there.

God also transplants into you the only good heart  
in all of human history – the heart of Christ.

None of the things Jesus mentioned in our text came from His heart –  
no evil thoughts, no sexual immorality, no theft, no murder,  
no adultery, no coveting, no wickedness, no deceit,  
no sensuality, no envy, no slander, no foolishness."

Christ was the only perfect man and He demonstrated that perfection in perfect obedience to His heavenly Father. An obedience that led to the cross. Jesus did what He did for us out of perfect and selfless love.

[**Good and Gracious Will**]

For this is the will of God – the good and gracious will of God.

For the past year, we have talked a lot about the good and gracious will of God. We have paused during the Lord's Prayer, and before we paused I explained the good and gracious will of God.

At over 150 services in the past year, Vicar Scheele and myself have explained. We have explained until we are blue in the face.

Like a steady beating drum,  
we have hammered home the good and gracious will of God.  
So I ask...What is God's will? What is God's desire for you life?

Three things:

- 1) He earnestly wants you to know that your sins... are forgiven!  
And were you have forgiveness, then you have...
- 2) Life and 3) Salvation!

These 3 – forgiveness of sins, life and salvation are the good and gracious will of God.

When good things are happening... God desires these three for you!  
When bad things are happening... God desires these three for you!  
At all times and in all places, God's desire is for you to know this!  
Therefore we can always pray – Thy will be done.

**[Illustration]**

Stonewall Jackson, one of the most well-known confederate commanders was on his death bed. As his wife and child arrived at his death bed, Jackson said, ***“Do not be sad. I hope I shall recover. Pray for me, but always remember in your prayers to use the petition, ‘Thy will be done.’”***

When things are bad...  
When things are good... we pray “Thy will be done,”  
because we couldn't ask for much more.

**[Conclusion]**

While Star Trek had a “fix” for Captain Kirk,  
there will never be a human invention that can defeat the enemy within  
– the sinful human heart.

But God has a fix, and He did it with some pretty basic materials  
– wood and nails, and flesh and blood.

In Baptism, He joins you to Christ's death and resurrection  
and creates in you a clean heart, a heart that isn't a defilement,  
but a blessing, because it is the heart of Christ.  
Thanks be to God and my His will be done. Amen.

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“Now may the God of peace... equip you with everything good  
that you may do his will, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever.  
Amen.” (Heb 13:20-21)

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