

PRAYER OF CONFESSION

People: Lord Jesus, we confess that our hearts are often hard -- that our eyes are often filled with sinful images -- and that our ears are often blocked with stubborn selfishness. We need soft hearts that ache for others, clear eyes that are fixed always on you, and open ears that are filled with your teaching and words of forgiveness. When we hear your grace well, then we will be eager to share your grace. Give us ears to hear, Lord Jesus. Forgive us and shape us by your Spirit. We trust in your mercy to save and so ask boldly in your name. Amen.

Scripture Readings

March 15, 2009

Isaiah 6:6-12

Then one of the seraphs flew to me with a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with tongs from the altar. With it he touched my mouth and said, "See, this has touched your lips; your guilt is taken away and your sin atoned for."

Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?"

And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"

He said, "Go and tell this people:

" 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.' Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed."

Then I said, "For how long, O Lord?"

And he answered: "Until the cities lie ruined and without inhabitant, until the houses are left deserted and the fields ruined and ravaged, until the LORD has sent everyone far away and the land is utterly forsaken."

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

Acts 28:23-31

They arranged to meet Paul on a certain day, and came in even larger numbers to the place where he was staying. From morning till evening he explained and declared to them the kingdom of God and tried to convince them about Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets. Some were convinced by what he said, but others would not believe. They disagreed among themselves and began to leave after Paul had made this final statement: "The Holy Spirit spoke the truth to your forefathers when he said through Isaiah the prophet:

" 'Go to this people and say, "You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving." For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them.'

"Therefore I want you to know that God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles, and they will listen!"

For two whole years Paul stayed there in his own rented house and welcomed all who came to see him. Boldly and without hindrance he preached the kingdom of God and taught about the Lord Jesus Christ.

Leader: This is the Word of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

Matthew 13:10-17

The disciples came to him and asked, "Why do you speak to the people in parables?" He replied, "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand. In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah: " 'You will be ever hearing but never understanding; you will be ever seeing but never perceiving. For this people's heart has become calloused; they hardly hear with their ears, and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts and turn, and I would heal them .'

But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

Leader: This is the Gospel of the Lord

People: Thanks be to God!

APOSTLES' CREED

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

Sermon Outline ~ March 15, 2009
"Open Wide!" • "With Open Ears"
Matthew 13:10-17

Introduction: "Can you hear me now..?"

- We've got a hearing problem...

This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or understand." v. 13

- We're _____.
- We're all "_____."
- We talk _____.

- But... "He who has ears, let him hear!"

"But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For I tell you the truth, many prophets and righteous men longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it." v. 16-17

- Listening _____ (v.15a)
- Listening _____ (v.15b)
- Listening _____ (v.15c)

- God has inclined His ear to us!

The LORD said, "I have indeed seen the misery of my people in Egypt. I have heard them crying out because of their slave drivers, and I am concerned about their suffering. So I have come down to rescue them..." Exodus 3:7-8

I love the LORD, for he heard my voice; he heard my cry for mercy. Because he turned his ear to me, I will call on him as long as I live." Ps 116:1-2

Answers to Sermon Outline: tuned to the wrong channel, blocked up, talk too much, gives a soft heart, allows understanding, provides for healing

BENEDICTION

Leader: The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

People: **And the people took the blessing and held it in their hearts.**

Leader: Go in peace, serve the Lord.

People: Thanks be to God!