

Straight from the "Hart"

March 26, 2023



Welcome to Hartland UMC's "Straight from the "Hart"". We are glad you are participating in today's time of worship by reading this service script. Our Lenten Series is called "Journey of Stones" and is very loosely based on a book by the same title, written by Steven Molin.

Opening Prayer O God, we give of our resources and ourselves as a reflection of what we value. Receive us and these gifts as a sign of our commitment to you and your mission in your world. You seek to bring order to your world and to our lives. We have gathered so we can better understand your expectations and promises, and desire to follow your will in every area of our lives. In Jesus name, Amen. Please remain standing for the Call to Worship.

Call to Worship Come away from temptations. Come away from the fiery trials of evil days. Let's set aside our needs and temptations, and lay down the crosses we boldly bear, and cast our souls and cares into never ceasing prayer. Come with humble confidence and look to Jesus. Receive his strength and affirm your hope. Come to the Almighty to create and renew within you -- a sober mind, standing on its guard. A will that tramples down and casts behind the bait of pleasing ill. A fresh discerning godly fear that quickly looks to Jesus when sin is near and sees the tempter fly. Come, let this be the cry of our hearts: to receive, and to never let go - of his perfect love, Come.



Inspired by Charles Wesley's "Shepherd Divine, Our Wants Relieve" and "Jesus, My Strength, My Hope"

Music Our desire is to be renewed with discernment because all through the Bible we find people who felt they were being faithful finding themselves on the opposite side of that fence – and while we know better now, it is still easy and tempting to repeat our modern version of the same mistakes. So as we near holy week with crucifixion, and the end of Lent, let's sing, To Mock Your Reign, O Dearest Lord...

To Mock Your Reign, O Dearest Lord

Words: Fred Pratt Green, 1972 © 1973 Hope Publishing Co.
Music: English melody; arr. by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 1906

1 To mock your reign, O dearest Lord, they made a crown of thorns;
 set you with taunts along that road from which no one returns.
 They could not know, as we do now, how glorious is that crown;
 that thorns would flower upon your brow, your sorrows heal our own.

2 In mock acclaim, O gracious Lord, they snatched a purple cloak;
 your passion turned, for all they cared, into a soldier's joke.
 They could not know, as we do now, that though we merit blame,
 you will your robe of mercy throw around our naked shame.

3 A sceptered reed, O patient Lord, they thrust into your hand,
 and acted out their grim charade to its appointed end.
 They could not know, as we do now, though empires rise and fall,
 your kingdom shall not cease to grow till love embraces all.

Theme "...until love embraces all". When you read the news, or scroll the internet, it often feels like we are going backwards instead of that way. I do think that at its root, there is a need and desire to be accepted and loved, but that love is now too often measured in clicks and likes and attentions, and they don't care what kind of attention it is. And among all the people clamoring for attention, the easiest way to grab the most attention is to be controversial and deceptive and extreme. So, a desire to be loved is substituted for a desire for attention – any kind of attention – and it is then just a small step moving from all the way from *the desire to be secure in someone's love to an unhealthy greed for popularity and power*.

In the context of the story that I am about to tell you, somebody responded to it by saying this: Back in the "old days", and they were your ages, so it was "way back when 😊) one of the favorite games to play was marbles. How many or you played marbles when you were young? You shoot them and you get closest to the target, and the other would shoot and try to get closer or knock yours away and whoever gets closest wins. And there were special marbles that everyone wanted. But when it was all over, they would trade or share their marbles with each other [and everyone go home happy]. I don't know if they would play marbles like that today, at least the "everyone going home happy" part. This story tells us how easy it is to move from this healthy play to – something else.

The Angry Brothers

Once upon a time, there were two brothers. They were great friends and always played together. But one day they had a huge argument about one of their toys. In the end, they decided that each of them could only play with their own toys. They had a lot of toys. They spent the whole of the next day arguing, negotiating, and

sorting into separate piles which toys belonged to each. They only managed to sort the big toys. So the next day, they went after it again, this time dividing up the smaller toys. The next day they started dividing up who could be in what parts of the house. And it became a daily pattern – everything they became about what belong to who, no matter what they saw and no matter what they did.

Anything would set them off: seeing an animal, a tree, or even a stone. In the end, they had accumulated two large mountains of stuff which had to be kept out in front of the house. As the years passed, nothing changed: every morning they would meet up to argue about which things belonged to whom. They became known to everyone as "the grumpy old men", for the constant battles had taken its toll and no one ever saw them smile.

One morning they went out and found that someone had been there, and had started mixing up their two mountains of stuff. They were furious, for they had spent all their lives separating their possessions. All that time and effort... who could have done it? Then they heard some noises on the other side of their mountains of stuff. They circled around and found two children happily playing together, picking any toy and playing with it together and they when they were done, carelessly throwing it back into whichever pile they happened to be closest to at the time.

The grumpy brothers were going to yell, but they were stunned to silence for a moment as they watched the children playing together with so much joy, and it brought back some old memories. They saw in them what could have been. And they felt foolish because instead of playing together, loving and being loved, they had selfishly spent their lives angrily competing and arguing about what was theirs alone to play with, but they had no time to play with because they spent their whole time arguing.

Luckily, these two brothers, though a little late, learned their lesson and they spent that day, and the rest of their days, playing together with those two children, mixing everything up, and sharing it all. And over time people began affectionately calling them "big kids" instead of "grumpy old men" and in fact they couldn't even remember why they had called them that in the first place.

(ad. from The Angry Brothers by Pedro Pablo Sacristán)

The Bible says that early Christians shared everything. They shared themselves, their time, their energy, their skills, their resources. (See Acts 2:42-47, 4:32ff) God loved them and so they wanted to love each other and they did. From what I have

heard at various places, and at various times, that it is people who have the least that share the most, or at least, have the most generous spirit -- I think it is because they understand what it is like to not have, and how precious it is and makes life better for all when we do share, while many who seek their own toys, their own clicks, have lost any sense of others, except for what those clickers can do for them. Paul reminds us not to get caught up in the attention seeking controversies and stick to the truth that builds people up.

Responsive Lenten Confession

(P: Pastor Chuck, C: Lay Reader with Congregation)

P: Repeat these basic essentials over and over: Do not engage in word-battles, in pious nitpicking. They accomplish nothing and chip away at the faith, wears everyone out, and threatens to be a catastrophe -- ruining those who listen to it.

C: We will concentrate on doing our best for God, becoming worthy of his approval, dealing accurately handling the Word of Truth.

P: Avoid pointless and empty "pious" talk. It will accumulate as poison in the soul and push people further towards ungodliness.

C: We will not let any unwholesome, harmful language escape from our mouths.

P: Meanwhile, God's firm foundation stands as firm as ever, and is sealed with these words:

C: "The Lord knows his own" and "Everyone who claims they belong to the Lord must leave wrongdoing behind and steer clear of evil."

P: Therefore, only say words that are helpful in meeting needs, words that will give grace to those who listen, and are useful in building people up.

C: For words that benefit those who hear them are a gift.

P: Don't break the heart of God's Holy Spirit, for he has sealed you with his mark until the day of final redemption and freedom. Don't take such a gift for granted.

C: We will make a clean break with all bitterness, rage, anger, violent assertiveness, spite, backbiting, and profane talk.

P: Instead, be gentle and kind to each other, be sensitive, cherishing tender feelings for each other,

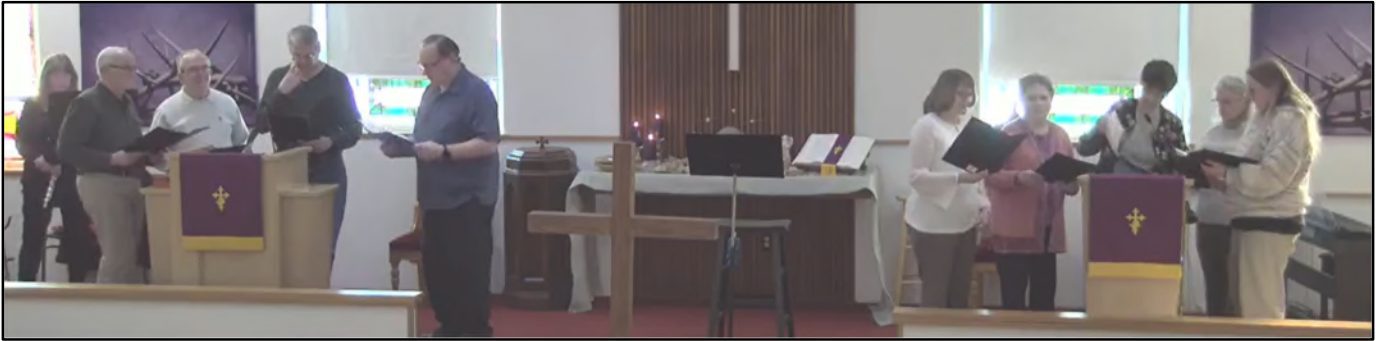
C: We will forgive one another as quickly and thoroughly as in Christ God forgave us.

(Inspired by 2 Timothy 2:14-16, 19 Ephesians 4:29-32)

Special Music It is so easy to read those words of encouragement and hope for the best isn't it? That we can put away all negative actions and feelings words. But it is also easy, during the storms of life, to forget that we have been sealed as God's children, with his values and priorities -- and we see only the storm. In a tune that almost reminds us of rolling waves, James Rowe reminds us of how easy it is, like Peter on the water, to take our eyes off of Jesus and sink in the storm – but Jesus picks us up and restores us with his forgiving love. We are going to sing for you Love Lifted Me...

Love Lifted Me

Words: James Rowe, 1912 Music: Howard E Smith, 1912



1 I was sinking deep in sin, far from the peaceful shore,
Very deeply stained within, sinking to rise no more;
but the Master of the sea heard my despairing cry,
from the waters lifted me—now safe am I.

Refrain

Love lifted me, love lifted me, when nothing else could help,
Love lifted me; love lifted me, love lifted me,
when nothing else could help, love lifted me.

2 All my heart to him I give, ever to him I'll cling,
in his blessed presence live, ever his praises sing.
Love so mighty and so true merits my soul's best songs;
faithful, loving service, too, to him belongs.

Refrain

3 Souls in danger, look above, Jesus completely saves;
he will lift you by his love out of the angry waves.
He's the Master of the sea, billows his will obey;
he your Savior wants to be – be saved today.

Refrain

Intro to and Bible Reading 1

And once we are lifted from sin and into God's love, it is important to be intentional about living in that love and letting it spill out and flood the dark places of the world with its light. Paul put it this way.

My dear friends, you always did what I said when I was with you, it is even more important that you keep on doing what you've done now that I am away from you. Better yet, redouble your efforts. Your task is now to be energetic in your life of salvation, reverent and sensitive before God, and naturally you'll be taking this with utter seriousness. After all, God himself is the one working among you, with his energy deep within you, providing both the will and the energy to enable you to do what pleases him.

Do everything readily and cheerfully, without kvetching, bickering, second guessing, disputing or arguing. That way, nobody will be able to fault you, and you'll be pure and spotless children of God. Go out into the world uncorrupted, a breath of fresh air in a twisted and polluted society. Provide people with a glimpse of good living and of the living God. You are to shine among them like stars in the sky, clinging to the Word of Life. If you do this, I will be proud of you on the day Christ returns.

Philippians 2:12-16a (NTE, CJB, MSG)

Music If our lives are going to shine with the love of Jesus, then we have to invite Jesus to enter our hearts, to be at the guiding center of our values and our will. Let's prepare our hearts for prayer by singing

Into My Heart

Words: Harry D. Clarke, v 2 anon.

Music: Harry D. Clarke © 1924 renewed 1952 Hope Publishing Co.

Into my heart, into my heart, come into my heart, Lord Jesus;
 come in today, come is to stay; come into my heart, Lord Jesus.
 Out of my heart, out of my heart, shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus;
 shine out today, shine out alway; shine out of my heart, Lord Jesus.

Repeat

Pastor's Prayer Lord, you have done great things for us. You comfort and restore us, you dry our tears and fill us with joy. Help us to seek you with all our hearts. Keep us on that restored path, directed by what you teach us in your Word. May we experience happiness and joy before you, whose name is above everything. You give company to the lonely, you defend the oppressed, you remove us from

whatever holds us captive, or help us stand firm against it, while leading us to green pastures -- where you provide our every need. This is why we come before you -- to sing and pray our praises to you, to recognize your power, which you expend on behalf of your people. It is because of that that we lift our praises and our needs and the needs of others before you.

Praises and Petitions Today, we pray for * Jan Martin's brother who is asking for prayers for his health and for his son Calvin, and the decisions they have to make about him; as social services are involved and they don't want him to have to live away from home, so please pray for that family situation. * Donna Webber asks for granddaughter Jordan who is diagnosed with scleroderma, * and Mary Jo requests prayers for Terri and Michael as they return from Florida arriving Saturday. * We continue to pray for comfort for the family and friends of Gar and Vivian Lemon's aunt Eva Freel who passed away at 99 years. * and for Linda Oldford recovering from knee surgery this week. * For those impacted by the record-breaking, long lasting cyclone that has hit Africa's southeastern coast, and those who are there to help the survivors, * and for others in the world facing natural disasters, be they personal or widespread, caused by natural events, accidents, or human conflict -- * and for all those unnamed among us-- and beyond us -- who are recovering from illness or injury or facing tests or loss or other types of challenges or setbacks in their lives, for these and others on our hearts and minds, we lift our prayers in this moment of silence . [Brief Pause] And now Lord teach us to live as you taught us to pray.... **LORD's PRAYER**

Music Today we have been taking an advance peek into holy week and we sang how Jesus was treated as he headed toward the cross for us. If comfortable, let's stand before the sermon and reading, and sing another song about what his crucifixion does for us. **Hallelujah! What a Savior**

Words: Philip P. Bliss, 1875 Music: Philip P. Bliss, 1875

1. Man of Sorrows! what a name for the Son of God, who came
ruined sinners to reclaim. Hallelujah! What a Savior!
2. Bearing shame and scoffing rude, in my place condemned he stood;
sealed my pardon with his blood. Hallelujah! What a Savior!
3. Guilty, vile, and helpless we; spotless Lamb of God was he;
full atonement can it be? Hallelujah! What a Savior!
4. Lifted up was he to die; "It is finished!" was his cry;
now in heaven exalted high. Hallelujah! What a Savior!

Intro to and Bible Reading 2

And after it was all finished, this is what everyone, at that moment in time, thought was the end of the story of Jesus.

Towards evening, a wealthy man from Arimathea, a disciple of Jesus, arrived. His name was Joseph. He approached Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Pilate granted his request. Joseph took the body and wrapped it in clean linens and laid it in his own tomb which he had only recently carved out of the rock. Then he rolled a large stone across the entrance to the tomb and went away. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary stayed, sitting opposite the grave.

After sundown, the chief priests and the Pharisees arranged a meeting and went together to Pilate. They said, "Sir, when that deceiver was still alive, we remember that liar announced, 'After three days, I will be raised.' Therefore, order that the grave be made secure until the third day. Otherwise, there's a good chance his disciples will come and steal him away and then go around saying, 'He was raised from the dead', and the final deception will be worse than the first."

Pilate told them, "You may have a guard. Go ahead and make it as secure as you know how."

So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and posting the guard on watch.

Matthew 27:57-66 (NTE, CJB, MSG)

Sermon: Sealing Stone: What's In? What's Out?

We are nearing a week in human history when the power of loyalty and love was seemingly temporarily transcended (overcome) by ambitious jealous hatred, mob rule, and fear. We sang Jesus saying, "It is finished." His work of salvation is completed. The plan the Father crafted to bring humankind back into a secure relationship with himself is over. That part is done. The life project of Jesus was, at least in part, to allow himself to be sacrificed in the hopes that people would stop doing bad things to each other, and especially in the name of God.

The work of God that makes possible and offers salvation from sin and freedom from its power is completed. But in another sense, it is only the beginning of deliverance. It is not completed until we – and everyone -- hears it, sees it, grasps it, and owns it as their story, or it is our rescue, and our assignment, for we are not done yet. But the stones laid at the foot of the cross are beginning to pile up and take their toll, and we still have a few weeks of stones to go. Nevertheless, Jesus

invites us to lay them at the cross and he takes them unto himself. The entire load, the enormous weight of them all, the sins of the world, pressing down on his body as he hangs on the cross.

What these stones have represented and will represent -- have littered our world and our lives and they weigh us down, for as much as we'd like to think it -- literally putting the stone at the foot of the cross, while it is symbolic, and hopefully is a renewed commitment to accept Christ's power to forgive AND to leave that piece of our life with him to do what he needs to do about that -- to resolve that part of our life -- it is symbolic, but it doesn't just magically happen because we've done that. There is always work that he still needs to do to be done -- he will carry on to completion his work that he started in each of us. (Philippians 1:6) But that work can only begin unless we allow him to do the work, for he does not force his will on anyone, he only offers himself -- we need to give him permission and cooperate with his deeds and with his wisdom. Our stones. Our sins. His cross. His tomb. Which is why today, we hold the sealing stone.

We have several seals to deal with today.

The first comes from the reading we just heard where Joseph of Arimathea takes the body of crucified corpse of Christ, placed him in a new rock-carved tomb. Most of you probably know this, but let's get the image back in our head again -- once the body was inside, such tombs were generally closed shut with a several inch thick stone disk that was 6-8 feet in diameter which was on a sloped channel and once you were ready, you kicked the block out and it rolled down into place. That is a pretty heavy seal! You may remember that the ladies who were bringing perfumes for the body that Sunday morning were wondering how in the world they were going to get that stone back out of the way so they could get in to do what they needed to do. And if that wasn't secure enough of a seal, Pilate also agreed to a guard and a seal. We don't know how many soldiers are in a guard for sure -- When Peter was imprisoned, they guard consisted of 16 soldiers, and that wasn't during Passover when masses of people had descended into the area and in the city of Jerusalem, many of them cheering for and following Jesus at the beginning of the week. And knowing the religious leaders as we do, it'd be very likely that they would have sent some of their Temple guards as well. Jesus took on the sin of the world and it was buried with him, sealed away with him in his death.

This truth was hoped for from near the very beginnings of our faith. The Bible is arranged more topically, primarily, more so than chronologically, but if you read it

in a chronological order, you would still get creation first, of course. And then you would get the story of Adam and Eve, and then you would get – Job. So chronologically, almost from the very beginning, we have Job, and Job says this to God: If only you would hide me in the grave and conceal me (seal me away) till your anger has passed!... Surely then you will count my steps (count the life I lived) but not keep track of my sin, for my offenses will be sealed up in a bag; my sins would be covered, taken care of -- by you, God...

This sealed bag alludes to an ancient method of accounting in which pebbles are moved from one container to another as a way of keeping tallies. With this sealing the bag, the sealing of, in this case, the sins, it meant the offenses, the sin is all paid for and the account is closed. Job says he will wait patiently in death for that appointed day when God's wrath will subside, and God will focus his attention on and longingly call for his creation (Job), and Job will awake to answer, and receive his renewal, his restoration to life, and to borrow words from Isaiah, he will be able to mount on wings like eagles... vindicated and victorious, because his sins were sealed away in that bag.

His divinely inspired thoughts seem to be temporary, but that doesn't stop it from becoming a reality in Jesus Christ. He became sin for us, is sealed away from us -- so that we may be righteous – made right in our relationship with God. The tomb becomes a place to seal away from us the evil that's within – that is from the very beginning of the Bible.

But the seal is also there at the end of the Bible. Revelation tells us that the sources of evil are cast into an underworld which was created just for them, and they are sealed there, given a brief reprieve, and then thrown back again -- sealed away for eternity. So from the beginning to the very end we hear about God's redeeming work that seals evil and sin away from us.

But let's go back to the tomb; secured with a stone, guarded by who knows how many sentries, but also sealed, the literal world. I guess one of the best modern analogies might be in crime shows where you see them put up that tape that says "police" or with a message that indicates you are not allowed to go passed that unless you are authorized to do so. Or more accurately, if it is an apartment or house, they will put a large sticker on the door, and not only on the door but across the door and onto the door frame so that if anyone tries to break in the seal will be broken. Pilate gave permission for a seal to be placed on the tomb. In ancient days, the seal wasn't sticky paper that you peel off and stick on the door, it was a

wax seal, that was often used for contracts and letters and it was usually sealed by a signet ring – which would have a monogram or some sort of symbol representing who that was, and it would be put into that wax -- kind of like a notary, I suppose... that means that this seal was authorized, validated, and warned people that the seal was authentic and breaking it would invite the wrath of the ring's owner upon them. In the case of Christ's tomb, it is possible it was the ring of the high priest – the authority of the highest religious leader, but I tend to lean more toward Governor Pilate himself giving this seal – thus breaking it would bring the full force of at least the local Roman army down on your head if they caught you.

As I said, these signet ring seals were often used for letters and contracts, to indicate authority and ownership -- in this case, to authoritatively seal shut the tomb in which Christ was laid. In Job's case, it sealed shut the bag of offenses that Job committed so that his sins could never be used against him, in the case of the final times, it permanently sealed away evil; but there is one we haven't talked about – Paul mentions it several times, sometimes it is called a mark, but it is also called a seal -- that the receiving of the Holy Spirit is like a receiving God's *seal* --- of ownership and authority over your life, a guarantee that we are indeed God's children and rightful heirs of all God has to offer us in this life and in the next.

Many people want to kick against such oversight of their life. Understandable, especially when religious or political leaders, in the name of God, begin to twist it into some type of overbearing control over every aspect of our lives – even Jesus kicked against that – he kicked at it so hard that (looking at it strictly from an earthly point of view) it was one of the primary reasons he ended up on the cross and in the tomb. I've already said he doesn't use force, he offers; and he will do nothing to you or for you without your permission. On the other hand, the alternative isn't being free “to be your own boss” – as one standup comedian put it this way recently -- talking about the strained marriage relationship of Albert Einstein who worked on “the Universe” at the office by day, and by night (the comedian joked) that one of them said, “Well what have you learned about the Universe” to which the other replied, “Lots of things, but one thing is that “it doesn't revolve around you”. The Bible lays out the choice – we are free to live as God's children as he intended and created us, or we are captive to the power of sinful drives – our own or of others, that will ultimately cause dysfunction in our lives, all the while deceptively telling us we are free and in control when actually it is leading us to something else.

I like the way Max Lucado begins his book "It's Not About Me" by talking about how it took 50 years for the world to even begin to accept the wild notions of Copernicus who said the earth is not the fixed center around which the Universe revolves. People didn't take well to demotion back then. And we still don't today. What Copernicus did for the earth, God does for us. He points to His Son and says, behold the center of it all. He is in charge of it all, He has final word on everything. At the center of all this, Christ rules.

[We are] appreciated, valued, loved dearly, but the world does not revolve around us... God does not exist to make a big deal out of us. We exist to make a big deal out of God. It's not about you, it's not about me. It's all about him.

The moon models our role, Lucado says. What does the moon do? She generates no light. Contrary to the song lyrics, this harvest moon cannot shine on. Apart from the sun, the moon is nothing more than a pitch black, pock marked rock. But properly positioned, the moon beams. Let her do what she was made to do, and this clod of dirt becomes a source of inspiration, even romance. The moon reflects the greater light, and she's happy to do so...

Let cows jump over her or astronauts step on her, she never objects, even though sunning is accepted while mooning is the butt of bad jokes, you won't hear old cheese face grumble. The moon is at peace in her place, and because she is, soft light touches a dark earth.

What would happen if we accepted our place as Son (S-O-N) reflectors? Such a shift comes stubbornly. We've been demanding our way and stomping our feet since infancy. We are all born with a default drive set on selfishness. I want a spouse that makes me happy, co-workers that always ask my opinion, I want weather that suits me, traffic that helps me, and a government that serves me. It's all about me. I've learned since a little child that this is the basic definition of sin, the centrality of I -- wanting what I want instead of what God wants. End of quote.

(ad from Max Lucado It's Not About Me)

For Job, it was the covering and sealing away of this sin -- this center stage selfishness -- so that we may find our proper place in the Universe reflecting God.

For the people of Jesus day, it was the people covering and sealing away God so that God would not interfere with their lives, so that they could remain central to their world, and keep it revolving around them. [Pause]

What will it be for us in our day? To paraphrase Colossians, if we want to be raised with Christ, we must, for once and for all, put to death and seal away evil,

by Christ's guiding grace and merciful forgiveness, every last pebble must be thrown in the bag and sealed away from our living ... even as we are sealed by the Spirit and in a relationship with the Christ the King! (Colossians 3:1-4)

Meditation – Procession of Stones

So now, with the labeling stone in hand, bow your heads and ponder the questions I'll read now but they are printed for extended meditation later:

- 1) Have I put to death and sealed away all the sins in my life? Are there still some areas of my life that I let sin out and seal Jesus in? Areas I need to work on?
- 2) Have I been forgiven and sealed into God's family through the Spirit -- by allowing Jesus to be at the center of my life's "control room"? Are there areas of my life where I am still sealing Jesus out?
- 3) As an authorized, sealed-by-the-king member of the family of God, is my representative example as his child "shining"? How might I allow God to "polish" it up more?

Music The instruments will play through our meditation song once, as it begins again we will stand as quietly as possible, and sing the first verse while we bring our stone to leave at the foot of the cross in front of me – if you have trouble moving, you may give it to another to carry it forward for you – today we bring it as a symbol that we want Jesus to take our sins and seal them away in the accounting bag, in the tomb, and that we want to be sealed as his children and that we want to reflect that sonship, that daughter-ship to the world by the way we live our lives – or if something else is weighing you down, more pressing on you today, use your stone to represent that -- whatever else God has laid on your heart -- then and return to our seats, remain standing and continue singing to the end of the song...



Open My Eyes

Text: Clara H. Scott, 1895 Music: Clara H. Scott, 1895

1. Open my eyes, that I may see glimpses of truth thou hast for me;
place in my hands the wonderful key that shall unclasp and set me free.

Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.

Open my eyes, illumine me, Spirit divine!

2. Open my ears, that I may hear voices of truth thou sendest clear;
and while the wave-notes fall on my ear, everything false will disappear.

Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.

Open my ears, illumine me, Spirit divine!

3. Open my mouth, and let me bear gladly the warm truth everywhere;
open my heart and let me prepare love with thy children thus to share.

Silently now I wait for thee, ready, my God, thy will to see.

Open my heart, illumine me, Spirit divine!

Blessing Now as we go, with sin sealed out of our lives and ourselves sealed into the family of God, let us claim the freedom Christ gives us by his self-giving on the cross. May he enable us to serve together in faith, hope, and love. May the God of love, who shared his love, strengthen us in our love for others. May the Son who shared his life grant us grace, that we might share our life. And may the Holy Spirit dwelling in us empower us to be only and always for God and others. Amen.

(ad from Worship & Song Leader's Edition)

