

# *Straight from the "Hart"*

June 2, 2024

## Enemies of Abundant Living (13)



HARTLAND

Sharing the journey  
to know, love, and serve

### The Physical Factor

**Welcome** to the Hartland UMC worship service script. We are glad you are participating in today's time of worship through this printed version.

#### **Affirmation** (P – Pastor C – Reader with Congregation)

P: Do you believe in God the Father?

**C: I believe in God, the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.**

P: Do you believe in Jesus Christ?

**C: I believe 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 to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, is seated at the right hand of the Father, and will come again to judge the living and the dead.**

P: Do you believe in the Holy Spirit?

**C: I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy universal church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.**

#### **Opening Prayer**

Merciful God, the gifts we bring are so small in comparison to the vast needs in our world— yet we have brought what we can. Bless the gifts and the givers, that we may be a blessing to those who need it most. In Jesus name Amen.

adapted from prayer by Christine Longhurst, re:Worship.blogspot.com

#### **Call to Worship**

For those of us who hear discouraging and negative voices, who are stressed and distressed, whose eyes and souls and bodies are fatigued with trouble, grief or sorrow, who feel broken. Jesus welcomes us with all into God's house to hear the gracious good news. Listen, lift your hearts, hear the God of encouragement speak; and let your tiredness roll away.

~ adapted from Ann Siddall call based on Romans 15:4-13, stillpointsa.org.au/prayer/prayers-and-liturgies; blended with words inspired by Psalm 31:9-12

**Music** We gather to be refreshed and renewed from the week. We gather to stand with each other and ask God to stand by us. Let's sing Stand By Me

### **Stand By Me**

Words and Music: Charles Albert Tindley, ca 1906  
arr. © 1989 United Methodist Publishing House

1. When the storms of life are raging, stand by me; (stand by me)  
when the storms of life are raging, stand by me. (stand by me)  
When the world is tossing me, like a ship upon the sea,  
thou who rulest wind and water, stand by me. (stand by me)
3. In the midst of faults and failures, stand by me; (stand by me)  
in the midst of faults and failures, stand by me. (stand by me)  
When I've done the best I can, and my friends misunderstand,  
thou who knowest all about me, stand by me. (stand by me)

### **Theme**

We need the Lord to stand by us. We also need each other to encourage us as we stand strong. Once upon a time, there was a new forest made up of tiny trees that were all growing together. They had been planted by a very old man who took great care that they would grow straight and healthy. This area was often battered by strong winds, and the little trees preferred to avoid the bothersome gusts, so they bent their trunks and branches to shelter themselves.

The old man knew they could never grow well like this. He spent many hours tying their slim trunks to supporting posts, and pulling them into a healthier, straighter posture with ropes and hoping his beloved trees would understand when he promised that he was doing this for their own good and if they would straighten up and fly right a day would come when the wind would not bother them at all.

But the trees had no desire to think long term. They fought against the supports and bent and twisted themselves against the ropes, continuing to try to duck out of the wind as much as they could. Except for one tree in the center of the forest who decided he would force himself to grow up straight, and patiently bear up against the annoying gusts of wind.

Time passed. The old man died. There was no one to secure and repair the supports that forced the trees to stand tall. Over time all the trees were free of the supporting posts and ropes, and it was even easier to crouch from the wind just as they pleased. While all else were bending, the single tree in the center of the forest believed in the dream and the promise of the old man and remained fearless in his determination to stand straight and tall in the face of the fierce winds.

The forest grew. The trees got thicker and stronger, but because of the way they had bent and twisted themselves in their youth, their growth to adulthood was very painful – much more painful than the wind that blew when they were young. Now when the wind blew, the trees cracked and snapped so that it sounded like steady groaning and sobbing, and those who heard it nicknamed the area “the wailing forest”.

It had a special charm since all of these short, twisted, knotty trees surrounded and bowed to one very impressive tree in the center that was tall and straight like none other – the only tree that never cracked or groaned or worried about the wind, just like the old man had said. Adapted from “The Wailing Forest” by Pedro Pablo Sacristán

Her name is Ashley, she was in high school about 10 years ago in one of the churches I served. She granted me permission to quote what she had posted online about what she learned from being a cross country athlete. I’ll tie it into our story as well. She wrote:

- (1) *Pain is temporary, your body can take so much more than your mind can. Your brain tells your body to give up... but it's not supposed to be easy! Pain is temporary, but glory is forever. Remember that.* If the trees had listened to that advice, they may have been glorious like the tree in the center.
- (2) She also wrote, *You're in this battle together, imagine how hard it would be if you had to do it all by yourself. We are a close group — we push each other, motivate each other, and bring each other up when we are down. We couldn't be where we are [without each other].* If the trees had reinforced and supported each other, and received the support the master planter had offered, they'd have been in a completely different place than being all bent over and hurting and having to grow the hard way.
- (3) She wrote, *You have to look past the pain and agony and look toward ... the victory... To sacrifice yourself to this is what will make you successful, you have to be willing to endure the pain to become great....* You must think the end result rather than the immediate ease. If all the trees could have envisioned what the old man and center tree had believed, they could have all been standing tall like the tree in the middle, it would not have been the eerie, but kind of charming, wailing woods, it would have been a majestic forest...

These Bible concepts are spoken of often in the Bible but can be wrapped up in one verse — paraphrased so you will see the connection — Since we are surrounded by so many great examples who are pulling for us, let us also run the

long race marked out for our life, and constantly consider Jesus, who for the glorious joy of the victory that he sees as the end result, he was able to endure the temporary sacrificial pain of the moment, the pain of the cross -- so that he could reach finish line, the throne of God — think about him so you too may be encouraged and not lose heart (bending and breaking to the winds of evil). Look to the Jesus (See Hebrews 12:1-3) who did what is described now in our reading.

**Responsive Reading 1** (R: Reader, C: Pastor with Congregation)

R: We earnestly seek our God. Our souls thirst for him. Our bodies long for him because they are designed to be his temple.

**C: The Word became flesh and dwelled among us.**

R: Jesus taught in the synagogues, preached the good news of the heavenly kingdom, and healed every disease and sickness among the people.

**C: News about him spread everywhere.**

R: They brought to him people with all sorts of illnesses, suffering with severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed.

**C: He healed them.**

R: May our inmost being praise his holy name. Do not forget his benefits. He forgives our sins and heals our diseases. He redeems our lives and covers us with his love and compassion.

**C: He satisfies our desires with good things -- so that our youth is renewed like the eagle's.**

R: Pray that we may enjoy good health and that all may go well with us, even as our souls are getting along well. May the God of peace sanctify us through and through so our whole spirit, soul, and body will be kept blameless.

**C: The one who calls us is faithful and will do it. We are not our own. He bought us at a price. Therefore, we will honor God with our body.**

Inspired from Ps 63:1, Jn 1:14, Mt 4:23-25, Ps 103:1-5,  
3 Jn 2:2, 1 Thess 5:23-24, 1 Cr 6:19-20

**Special Instrumental Music**

Jesus supports and encourages us. He is the foundational source of abundant life. Listen as Donna and Kathy play "The Solid Rock"

**Music**

Jesus is not only the source beneath our feet that keeps us steady, he is also the person who stands beside us on our journey, and he is the one who lifts us up. We

only have the chorus in our hymnal, but hear some of the verses:

Those who dwell in the shelter of the Lord, who abide in his shadow, who say to the Lord, “My refuge, my rock in whom I trust” --- The snares will never capture you, you need not fear famine, or the terrors of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day. His wings are your refuge, his faithfulness is your shield... Let’s sing On Eagle’s Wings replacing “you” with “us” the second time through

### **On Eagles’ Wings (2nd time using “us”)**

Words and Music: Michael Joncas, 1979

harm. by Carlton R. Young, 1988

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And God will raise you up on eagles' wings,  
bear you on the breath of dawn,  
make you to shine like the sun,  
and hold you in the palm of God’s hand.

And God will raise us up on eagles' wings,  
bear us on the breath of dawn,  
make us to shine like the sun,  
and hold us in the palm of God’s hand

### **Prayers**

Our God, we give you thanks, for even when we become lost in all the dysfunctional junk of our lives, you do not give up on us. You draw near to talk and offer to lead us into green pastures and to the life-giving waters. You send your people to us to befriend and encourage us that through them you can restore our souls. Thank you for hanging in there with us. When life becomes too routine and automated, and all we can do is focus on what is next, when we have given up on ourselves through despair, you do not give up on us. Your Spirit comes to help us courageously look up and beyond to right paths that lead to hope. The hope we find when we remember that we are your people, and you have place within us a deep concern for others who are your people, and those who are not your people as well... especially those who are suffering from oppression, injustice, neglect, poverty, loneliness against forces that would undo us.

**Petitions** And we include among them these specific people that we know to name before you: \* Ann Martin, \* Bill Wycoff, \* Karen Nowak’s sister, \* Jim Malott, \* Stephen Brittain, \* for Fran Warthman, for countries and families and individuals who are facing challenges, and for those we have not named out loud but we know

in our minds and hearts, hear us as we take a moment to silently list these to you as well... **Silence**

Our hearts are blessed, O Lord, for you have taken our heavy hearts and exchanged it for freedom from transgressions and the joy of salvation. Now teach us your patterns of healthy living that guide us to live as you taught us to pray and this week we sing it **Lord's Prayer (Sung)**

~ portions of prayer adapted from portions of a prayer by Keith Howard and from [lectionarysermons.com/ARCH-W](http://lectionarysermons.com/ARCH-W)

## Intro to and Bible Reading 2

Throughout most of the Bible, the common religious mindset was that there was *always* a direct correlation between suffering and sin, that if someone suffers it is because they sinned. This is a thinking which the Bible argues against. But we are holistic. There are some instances when spiritual problems, when sin – may leak into and cause damage to our physical, mental, and emotional well-being. First, Isaiah expresses the sentiment nationally (albeit perhaps metaphorically), and at least some believe that his concluding words are referring to the sins of the people being physically put on the Christ. What Isaiah says nationally, David expresses personally. First, Isaiah



Listen, O heavens! Pay attention, earth! For the Lord is speaking: “The children I raised and cared for have rebelled against me. Even an ox knows its owner, and a donkey recognizes its master’s care— but Israel doesn’t know its master. My people don’t recognize my care for them.” Oh, what a sinful nation they are— loaded down with a burden of guilt. They are evil people, descendants of evildoers, corrupt children who have rejected the Lord. They have despised and abandoned the Holy One of Israel and turned their backs on him. Why do you continue to invite punishment? Must you rebel forever? Your whole head is sick, your whole heart is diseased. You are battered from head to foot— there is nothing healthy, covered with wounds, bruises, welts, and infected, festering sores — without any soothing ointments or bandages.

Isaiah 1:2-6 (NLT with some CJB)

And now David:

When I refused to confess my sin, my body wasted away, and I groaned all day long. Day and night your hand of discipline was heavy on me. My strength evaporated like water in the summer heat. Finally, I confessed all my sins to you and stopped trying to hide my guilt. I said to myself, "I will confess my rebellion to the Lord." And you forgave me! All my guilt is gone. Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!

Psalm 32:3-5,12 (NLT)

**Music** Clearly there is a cost to the whole of our being for living in the dysfunction of sin. Charles Wesley reminds us that while we may not escape some of the consequences of our errors, that in Christ, there is remedy that will remove our guilt and empower us to overcome or cope with the consequences. It is an amazing love that God graciously offers us in Jesus. Let's stand, if comfortable, before the sermon and sing.

### **And Can it Be?**

Words: Charles Wesley, 1739 Music: Thomas Campbell 1835

1. And can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood!  
Died he for me? who caused his pain! For me? who him to death pursued?  
Amazing love! How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?  
Amazing love! How can it be that thou, my God, shouldst die for me?
3. He left his Father's throne above (so free, so infinite his grace!),  
emptied himself of all but love, and bled for Adam's helpless race.  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free, for O my God, it found out me!  
'Tis mercy all, immense and free, for O my God, it found out me!
4. Long my imprisoned spirit lay, fast bound in sin and nature's night;  
thine eye diffused a quickening ray; I woke, the dungeon flamed with light;  
my chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee.  
My chains fell off, my heart was free, I rose, went forth, and followed thee.
5. No condemnation now I dread; Jesus, and all in him, is mine;  
alive in him, my living Head, and clothed in righteousness divine,  
bold I approach th' eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own.  
Bold I approach th' eternal throne, and claim the crown, through Christ my own

### **Sermon The Physical Factor**

Today, I have to preach to me, you can listen in if you like. The reason I say that is because I am not doing any of this very well right now. Last week we mentioned

that some people have a tendency to compartmentalize, to live differently between the various activities we have in life, speaking and acting with one set of principles at work and another at recreation and another at church and so on and so forth -- or we vary our behaviors depending upon who we are with at the time. Without a unified center (Christ, for us) from which we are guided to live with the same principles in every scenario, if that doesn't happen, our ability to live joyfully and abundantly is diminished greatly.

Today we are working with another compartmentalization that hinders abundance – not syncing the different “worlds” of our physical life from our spiritual life from our intellectual life, and our social life, and our emotional life, and any other life that holistically makes up who we are as a person. At times, it is valuable to concentrate on one or another. If we want to learn, we will set time aside to focus on our mental life. If we want to focus on the physical life, we may go to the gym or to the doctor. The trouble comes when people pretend that one aspect of our personality has no impact on the other. We know this is true – if we eat poorly, skip sleep, don't exercise, see if that neglect of the physical life doesn't negatively spill over and impact our mental acuity (muddy, slower thinking), slowed reactions, lowered inhibitions, emotively hyper-sensitive, easily angered or depressed or both, your ability to relate well with others, becoming extra withdrawn or extra aggressive than what we normally might be if we took care of our bodies better.

While the Bible sometimes names the components of our life -- love the You're your God with heart, mind, soul and strength (See Mark 12:30) and we read earlier to be sanctified through and through, spirit, soul, and body – (1 Thessalonians 5:23-24) but these are calls to separate compartments but to bring all the compartments into integration by Jesus, our unifying principle – a call to a holistic life.

We've talked about the importance of an other-focused unselfish heart, we've talked about the importance of intellect to help keep us on the right track. I find it interesting that when a character in media is trying to make a decision, they advice they almost always get is to follow their ?? --- heart... I wonder why the advice is so rarely, “maybe you should think that through!” (Or if they do, it usually ends up being “I should” and “I shouldn't” columns which most often gets scrapped because their emotions are telling them something different than what is logical... ) Today, E Stanley Jones lifts the physical life to help keep it in unity with the mind, heart and spirit. The experts in the field have learned a lot since the 40s when Jones'



wrote these words, so some details may (or may not) have changed, but hopefully the general principles are still valid.

I knew a person who had a disease that forced her to live every minute of every day with very significant pain. And I cannot imagine the effort it must take every day for her to get out of bed, much less hold a job – she was on the internet, at the other end of those help lines when people had a problem with their product... as well as take care of two growing children, and all the rest that she did; not to mention the side effects of the medicine used to try and lasso in some of that pain. Sometimes circumstances prevent us from getting the sleep we want, or our body as healthy as we'd like, and we must push through the best we can no matter how we are feeling or thinking or acting.

Jones says there is such a strong link between body and mind that instead of saying “body and mind”, you should put a hyphen between the two words – as if they were one thing, I'd probably add in all the other aspects of the personality as well.

The mind can impact the body to sickness, sickness of body can impact our ability to feel or think straight. A dysfunctional soul, sin -- may burst out in a physical or mental issue. *But we have to be very careful that we do not reverse that thinking.* Just because sin *may* cause some things does not mean people who have these things necessarily got it because of sin. Did you hear that? Understand what I said? They did that in the Bible, and Jesus wasn't happy about it. (See John 9:1-3) The Bible is clear some things happen to us that are completely beyond our power to control or change and are not the result of anything that we did. Paul had a thorn in the flesh that he prayed that God would remove. God replied, “My grace is sufficient.” That's not an answer I'd be happy with, and Paul probably wasn't either, but he learned to live with it because it was beyond his choice. He had to learn humility and how to work around it and overcome it, and where he was weak, God became strong for him and made him an even better person. (See 2 Corinthians 12:8-10)

Does this mean that if we have a deficiency in one area of our life that is beyond our control, that abundant living is beyond our reach? No. A weak body can be helped by a strong spirit. A struggling spirit can be aided by a strong social life. Jones wrote: Many live abundantly despite physical [or other] conditions that may slow us down or try to hold us back.

An overly simplistic example. Jones ate shrimp. It made him sick. He did it four times with the same result. He figured it out that for him, shrimp was not a good idea. Then he ate a dish where he didn't see the shrimp until it was too late. He thought "Oh no, I am going to get sick again." But the problem was, he had a long, important meeting that night. He pushed the sickness out of his mind, went to the meeting and focused on that and felt fine through the whole meeting and thought he had licked this thing -- until he went home and sat at the dinner table and then the physical came rushing back and he realized he had not conquered it after all. But his mind had successfully pushed back the illness for 8 hours. So, at least in some cases, a strength in one area can, at least for a time, overcome or mitigate a weakness in another.

Some things are beyond our control, but what is in our power to do, we should do to make ourselves and help others be as healthy and complete as is possible.

Our first reading says our bodies long for God, designed to be a temple holding God's presence living within us. Christ (the Word) the divine -- came in the flesh -- so that he could enter human flesh. That speaks volumes about why we believe the body is so important, and why we value human life. While Jesus was in human flesh, he healed all types of people with all types of illnesses -- his ideal will is always that we are whole, even if at times we cannot be that way. IF a lack of wholeness develops from sin or its consequences, Jesus, along with the physical healing gave forgiveness (a healing of the spirit) which was even more important. He redeems our lives, and he covers us with love so that our strength (our bodies) can be renewed. It is why John in his letter (and our reading) greeted his friend, wishing him good health and that all goes well -- because he knew how much good health and good situations can impact our overall spiritual health. To bottom line it, we devote our bodies to honoring God just like we do our hearts and our spirits, for it is his temple, the place where God chooses to live (if we allow him).

And to do the opposite can be devastating. If we don't treat it like a temple, if we allow ourselves to harbor in its cells things like anger, fear, self-centeredness, guilt, to name a few of the enemies of abundant living; it will take its toll on our lives.

Isaiah spoke of the nation as a single body. God brought them into existence and raised them. They had turned their backs. "The donkey knows who I am... but Israel doesn't". They filled their lives with guilt and rebellion, and it brought physical results to the nation: wounded in the head, afflicted in the heart, nothing sound from head to toe, only wounds and open sores with no treatment given to them --

just laid bare. Such is what sin does to our physical life – even as a nation, or what we do to Jesus if we see those verses as about the Messiah. And of course, we know from Paul that the church is the body of Christ. The same thing, then would apply. God’s people in Isaiah, God’s people in the church, and God’s people as individuals – how healthy are we? How are we getting along? Where are the weaknesses? Where are the strong spots?

David verified (Psalm 31 and 32) that there are negative physical consequences from unresolved sin issues in our life. (albeit *some* believe that at least *some* of David’s physical laments were not caused by sin, but by age). Let me clarify again — sin MAY lead to bad physical consequences, but just because there are negative physical or other circumstances, does not mean that there is a sinful action that caused it.

Jones says there are 4 types of causes of physical disharmony and disease:

(1) Structural disease – the source comes from the body itself, genetics, or damage from trauma (car accident), an infection, or willful abuse of body by not caring for it properly.

(2) Functional - in which the source is mental, moral or spiritual attitudes; but the result impacts the body in a real way. For example, some ulcers are caused by stress. If the stress is removed, sometimes the ulcers will settle down and perhaps even heal and go away.

(3) Malnutrition – either from poverty, unintentional or willful neglect – such as eating too much of the wrong things and not enough of the right things. We need to be careful with that.

Then, (4) Environmental factors – such as malaria. If you live where the mosquitoes carry malaria, and they bite you, you may get malaria. It is an external cause. PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder) is another external factor that might damage us and make us unhealthy on various levels, and we have to try and deal with it the best we can.

If we find we are not at our healthiest best, here are the steps that may help us get back on track, and this is something I need to do myself.

(1) Keep on top of your health with regular doctor visits – preferably a well-rounded (not physically 😊) but one who believes in the connection between body, mind, and spirit; one who tries to treat causes, not just symptoms.

(2) If there is a physical weakness – try to determine its origin (of the 4 types mentioned above). Knowing the source helps us discover the cure if there is one,

or if not, at least we can mitigate the negative effects as much as possible. For example, if resentment is causing a digestive issue, then we need to not only treat the digestion, ultimately, we've got to get rid of the resentment...(right?) If there is an infection from a cut that wasn't treated right, then we can't just keep retreating the surface, we need to get in there and get the infection out to bring us back to health.

Knowing the source is the first step toward minimizing the problem. But more often than not, we prefer to treat symptoms rather than the causes. And if we do discover it is an emotional or spiritual cause, don't hesitate to get physical and physician help. For sometimes we have to deal with the physical to get us to a place where we can deal better with spiritual, emotional and non-physical causes. Work on symptoms while you are getting to the root causes.

(3) Watch your nutrition. Eat in a timely and relaxed ways and minimize eating out or boredom or for comfort or other non-physical needs. Add in good exercise, and sufficient rest. In my first United Methodist church, I had just returned from a seminar given by the man who wrote the book "Sabbath" which encourages us take care of ourselves by taking our rest and spiritual renewal seriously. I mentioned that in a sermon, and they started laughing because we live in a busy, busy world, especially in America. It is almost like a badge that you have to wear, and rest does not fit into that very well. Even then, I understood the pressures of schedules and tasks that seem never ending and are not compatible with a proper sleeping schedule. So that is a tough one, but we need to do the best we can.

(4) Go over your mental, spiritual, emotional and other compartments of your life – are they helping or hindering your physical health? and vice versa. If it is hindering, get to the root cause of why it is hindering, and work on that so that all of your attitudes and intellect, all of your moral and spiritual life are positively supplementing your physical life, and your physical life is positively supplementing the other areas as well.

Jones gave these examples: A wealthy man refused to give a special portion of the family estate (600 extra dollars) to a sister who had taken care of their parents in their old age. And he was so unhappy and resentful about it that he developed an ulcer over his selfishness. After his doctor made an expensive long-distance call to him just to give him advice, he decided it wasn't worth it; and he gave up his resentments, the money to his sister, and his ulcer went away.

A woman had vomiting spells that was based in financial insecurity. Worry upset her digestive tract.

Ashley said we are all going to have good execution and bad execution — sometimes. We need to give grace to others and ourselves when we fall short, so that we can rebound, bounce up, and try again.

The Jews use the word shalom which I know you know and have heard. It is best defined as “a contented wholeness”, where everything is coming together to work well. The entire person must be redeemed. The good news is that the gospel provides for that. The healing of the body, the cleansing of the mind, the removal of conflicts and divisions, forgiveness and fellowship for the soul—the whole person unified and coordinated and made effective, as much as is humanly possible in whatever stage of life and circumstances we are in.

Dr. JS Hughes (back in those days) was a vitamin authority. He shows a pathetic looking pig going into severe nervous breakdown, with extreme irritability. It was because his diet did not contain the needed vitamins to nourish him. They returned vitamins to the diet, and the pig eventually returned to normal, and it was sedate and poised. See how the physical effects...?

E Stanley Jones said he was about to begin a horrendous travel schedule, (3-5 daily talks for 6 solid months). Hughes gave Jones some grass tablets — compressed blades of wheat when the wheat was about 4 inches high -- a stage when the vitamins were in a very concentrated form – (I’m not promoting this, just telling the story – which was many years ago, it may not even be the same now) But Hughes guaranteed Jones would thrive on these grass vitamin tablets. Jones agreed to be a guinea pig and take the pills throughout his tediously long grinding travel and speaking schedule. When Jones came to the end of that period, he was healthy, fresh and full of vitality. Jones didn’t give all the credit to the loaded grass vitamins. He added God’s grace for the soul and gumption from the mind – gumption is, for the Finnish among you -- that SISU, that get up and keep on going, not give up determination that they are so good at. Grace, grass and gumption sustained him. Of course, when people heard this, they ignored the grace – because you have to stop and receive that. They ignored gumption, because that is hard work. But they were all eager to know more about those grass pills. That is just like us, isn’t it? What is the quick, easy thing to do...

While our culture pushes individualism, comfort, values short term ease over long term sacrifice, and a lack of forgiveness for missing the goal, (I heard on the radio

this past week that many Lions fans are now saying this next season they have to be Superbowl or busted – Super bowl or bust (Same Ol’ Lions if they don’t make the Super Bowl). Ok 😊). We live in a weird world. But instead of all these kinds of things, we must learn how much we need each other, and together, how much we can push beyond our comfort zones, and how we can give grace to others and ourselves in order to rebound from setbacks for a less than best execution; and a long-term vision of victory -- this will serve us well in our life.

So by God’s grace and the Spirit’s power, we do the best we can with what we can control, and what we cannot control or change, we make the best of it that we can – for the love of God and for the love of others. We see it in the life of our Lord, who endured everything for the final victory, not just his own vindication and victory, but for his love for all, which he calls us to remember through his covenant Communion meal.

## **Communion**

### **Invitation**

Christ our Lord invites to his table all who love him, who earnestly repent of their sin and seek to live in peace with one another. Therefore, let us prepare our hearts by a time of confession...

### **Confession – Assurance of Forgiveness**

Lord, many of us are prone to bad habits, to a preoccupation with ourselves, focused on what we selfishly want, and with what makes us feel comfortable, with fulfilling only the obligations that result in personal satisfaction or reward or appreciation. We come before you with mind, heart, soul, and especially today, our bodies which you have created.

Forgive us when we are not as good a steward of our body as you would want us to be. Give us greater insight into the working of this miraculous physical machine in which you have placed us. Help us to respect it and maintain it in caring ways that will help us function at our best – not only physically, but mentally, spiritually, emotionally and socially, and every other way, for they all interact and impact each other. Help us present our bodies to you to as living sacrifices, that they are at their best for your purposes. We offer ourselves to you fully and completely — guide us to your full salvation that will bring thriving vitality to our body, heart, mind, and spirit, for we find in you the Source of our life and our strength, our very hope. Amen. My Life is in You, Lord.

~ portions of confession adapted from portions of a prayer by Keith Howard

**Music** Let's sing together**My Life is in You, Lord**

Words and Music: Daniel Gardner, © 1986 Integrity's Hosanna! Music

My life is in you, Lord; my strength is in you, Lord;  
my hope is in you, Lord; in you, it's in you.

(Repeat)

I will praise you with all of my life, I will praise you with all of my strength;  
with all of my life, with all of my strength. All of my hope is in you.

My life is in you, Lord; my strength is in you, Lord;  
my hope is in you, Lord; in you, it's in you.

(Repeat)

in you.

**The Great Thanksgiving** (Bold Print is with Congregation)

And so the Lord be with you. **And also with you.**

Lift up your hearts. **We lift them up to the Lord.**

Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

It is right, and a good and joyful thing, always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. In the beginning your Spirit moved over the face of the waters. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our hearts became impure and our hands unclean, when our love failed, your love remained steadfast. Your Spirit came upon your prophets and teachers, anointing them to speak your Word. They looked for that day when justice shall roll down like waters and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream, when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise your name and join their unending hymn:

**Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest. Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest.**

Holy are you, and blessed is your Son Jesus Christ. At his baptism in the Jordan your Spirit descended upon him and declared him your beloved Son. With your Spirit upon him he turned away the temptations of sin. Your Spirit anointed him to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovering

of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, and to announce that the time had come when you would save your people. He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and ate with sinners. By the baptism of his suffering, death, and resurrection you gave birth to your Church, delivered us from slavery to sin and death, and made with us a new covenant by water and the Spirit. On the day you raised him from the dead he was recognized by his disciples in the breaking of the bread, and in the power of your Holy Spirit your church has continued in the breaking of the bread and the sharing of the cup. At his ascension, he promised to be with us always, baptizing us with the Holy Spirit and fire. Then you exalted him to sit and reign with you at your right hand.

And so, in remembrance of these your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

**Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again.**

Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here and at home, and on these gifts of bread and cup. Make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood. By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, that we may be your living presence in the world, offering his cleansing and purity and strength of souls, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast together at his heavenly banquet. Through your Son Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy Church, all honor and glory is yours, almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

### **The Bread and Cup**

On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." [Take and eat]



When the supper was over he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." [Take and drink]





## Communion Blessing

Eternal God, we give you thanks for this holy mystery in which you have given yourself to us. Grant that we may go into the world in the strength of your Spirit, to give ourselves to others, in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Music** Let's stand as comfortable and remind ourselves of just how amazing is Jesus' love for us.

### I Stand Amazed in the Presence

Words and Music: Charles H. Gabriel, 1905

I stand amazed in the presence, of Jesus the Nazarene,  
and wonder how he could love me, a sinner, condemned, unclean.

#### Refrain

How marvelous! How wonderful! And my song shall ever be:  
How marvelous! How wonderful is my Savior's love for me!

4. He took my sins and my sorrows, he made them his very own;  
he bore the burden to Calvary, and suffered and died alone.

#### Refrain

5. When with the ransomed in glory his face I at last shall see,  
'twill be my joy through the ages to sing of his love for me.

#### Refrain

## Blessing

The Lord offers possibilities for health and rhythm into the structure of your being. As you go, commit to do your best to cooperate with him so that you may be as effective and as joyful as is possible as he works through you and brings glory to the heavenly kingdom.