

Easter Message

Bastian Fähnrich, 12 April 2009

Psalm 95:7-8; Hebrews 3:8:

“Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts.”¹



Dear fellow brothers and sisters in Christ,

we've gathered this morning to open our hearts to the blessing and saving message of Easter, our risen Lord Jesus.

We came here to celebrate the fact that after the crucifixion², death³ and burial⁴ of Jesus, the tombstone of His grave has been removed⁵ and Christ has risen⁶, and that He is alive⁷.

We may welcome Him in our hearts, make room for Him there, if we truly seek Him⁸. He is out there, knocking on the door, ready to come in⁹.

Let Him enter and dwell in our hearts through faith¹⁰. Surely it is faith in Jesus Christ¹¹ that we need, and that may change our hearts! Why do we need to let our hearts to be changed?

¹ [Psalm 95:7-8](#); [Hebrews 3:8](#)

² [John 19:1-27](#)

³ [John 19:28-37](#)

⁴ [John 19:38-42](#)

⁵ [John 20:1-9](#)

⁶ [Mark 16:1-6](#)

⁷ [1 Peter 3:18-23](#)

⁸ [Deuteronomy 4:29](#); [1 Chronicles 28:9](#)

⁹ [Revelation 3:20](#)

¹⁰ [Ephesians 3:17](#)

The Word of God reveals that our hearts are sinful¹², evil¹³ and unbelieving¹⁴:

Ecclesiastes 9:3:

This is the evil in everything that happens under the sun: The same destiny overtakes all. The hearts of men, moreover, are full of evil.

The Bible tells that our hearts are darkened¹⁵, divided¹⁶, hard¹⁷, yes, they are told to be even hearts of stone^{18, 19}.

Ezekiel 11:19:

I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.

And God knows too well about this condition of our hearts. In fact, He knows everything about us, just as He looks at the heart, to the inside, not at the outer appearance, like we usually do²⁰.

1 Samuel 16:7

The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

¹¹ [Mark 11:22](#); [Acts 20:21](#)

¹² [Proverbs 20:9](#); [Romans 1:24](#)

¹³ [Genesis 8:21](#); [Psalm 140:2](#); [Ecclesiastes 9:3](#); [Jeremiah 3:17](#); [Matthew 15:19](#); [Luke 6:45](#)

¹⁴ [Hebrews 3:12](#)

¹⁵ [Romans 1:21](#)

¹⁶ [Psalm 86:11](#)

¹⁷ [2 Chronicles 36:13](#); [Zechariah 7:12](#); [Ephesians 4:18](#); [Hebrews 3:8](#)

¹⁸ [Ezekiel 11:19](#); [Ezekiel 36:26](#)

¹⁹ These are just but a few descriptions of our hearts' conditions that are given in the Bible

²⁰ [1 Samuel 16:7](#)

God also searches²¹ and tests²² our hearts and thus reveals our wickedness²³ through and through.

Genesis 6:5:

The Lord saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.

So, whichever way we look at it, we have to see that our hearts are deceitful²⁴ beyond cure, and that we are simply too weak and small to bring about a real change by our own means.

But Scripture also reminds us that God is greater than our hearts²⁵.

1 John 3:20

God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything

Indeed, God is almighty, and He alone can renew our hearts; He can get rid of the stony parts, and give us an undivided heart, a heart of flesh.²⁶

Ezekiel 36:26:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Psalms 86:11:

Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name.

²¹ [1 Chronicles 28:9](#)

²² [1 Thessalonians 2:4](#)

²³ [Genesis 6:5](#)

²⁴ [Jeremiah 17:9](#)

²⁵ [1 John 3:20](#)

²⁶ [Ezekiel 11:19](#), [Ezekiel 36:26](#), [Psalm 86:11](#)

And if we accept Christ as Saviour God will enable us to keep His word²⁷, law²⁸ and commands²⁹ in our hearts. He will set our hearts free³⁰ to do so and live a life as Christians!

By letting Jesus come in and stay in our hearts, also God's Holy Spirit³¹ and joy³² will fill our hearts.

Moreover, the love³³ and peace³⁴ of our Heavenly Father will rule in our hearts!

And last but not least, God's eternal light may permeate all the darkness in our hearts; yes, His light may shine in us³⁵ through Christ Jesus, through Him, who is also referred to as the bright Morning Star³⁶.

2 Corinthians 4:6

For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Brothers and sisters, is all of this the case with us? Does the Easter message really get through to us? Do we let God remove our heart of stone on this Resurrection morning? Do we allow Christ to enter and stay inside, reside in our hearts?

²⁷ [Psalm 119:11](#)

²⁸ [Isaiah 51:7](#)

²⁹ [Proverbs 3:1](#)

³⁰ [Psalm 119:32](#)

³¹ [Galatians 4:6](#); [2 Corinthians 1:21-22](#)

³² [Psalm 4:7](#), [Isaiah 60:5](#), [Acts 14:17](#)

³³ [John 5:42](#), [Romans 5:5](#)

³⁴ [Colossians 3:15](#)

³⁵ [2 Corinthians 4:6](#)

³⁶ [2 Peter 1:19](#), [Revelation 22:16](#)

I'd like to give us a few moments of time to ponder on this. Let's search our hearts, and pray to God to reveal to us the condition of our hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is crucial, as later on we'll also be invited to participate in Holy Communion.

So, if there is anything in our hearts or between us and others that keeps us away from God and each other, repent and confess it to the Lord. Ask for forgiveness of Him and, if possible, also of your brother or sister in Christ.

He surely will create in us a clean and pure heart³⁷ by the perfect atonement of Jesus, His beloved Son. Furthermore, He will make sure that through our forgiveness in Christ we won't want to hide His righteousness in our renewed hearts but speak of His faithfulness and salvation in words and deeds³⁸.

Psalm 40:10

I do not hide your righteousness in my heart; I speak of your faithfulness and salvation. I do not conceal your love and your truth from the great assembly.

After all, God wants us to be also the light of the world³⁹, and move other people who not yet know Jesus Christ as Saviour to open their heart for and to Him.

³⁷ [Psalm 51:10; Acts 15:9](#)

³⁸ [Psalm 40:10](#)

³⁹ [Matthew 5:14-16](#)

Let's take the time for reflection and prayer, and then let us conclude with one of King David's psalms⁴⁰:

Psalm 86:1-13:

Hear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Guard my life, for I am devoted to you. You are my God; save your servant who trusts in you. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I call to you all day long. Bring joy to your servant, for to you, O Lord, I lift up my soul. You are forgiving and good, O Lord, abounding in love to all who call to you. Hear my prayer, O Lord; listen to my cry for mercy. In the day of my trouble I will call to you, for you will answer me. Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord; no deeds can compare with yours. All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, O Lord; they will bring glory to your name. For you are great and do marvellous deeds; you alone are God. Teach me your way, O Lord, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name. I will praise you, O Lord my God, with all my heart; I will glorify your name for ever. For great is your love towards me; you have delivered me from the depths of the grave.

Amen.

As a reminder of today's Easter message, please feel free to have a look at the [Easter card 2009](#).

⁴⁰ [Psalm 86:1-13](#)