

## DEVOTION for PENTECOST 9

### Psalm 136:1-9;23-26

**Give thanks to the Lord, for He is good. His love endures forever.**

Give thanks to the God of gods. His love endures forever.

**Give thanks to the Lord of lords. His love endures forever.**

To Him who alone does great wonders. His love endures forever.

**Who by His understanding made the heavens. His love endures forever.**

Who spread out the earth upon the waters, His love endures forever.

**Who made the great lights, His love endures forever.**

The sun to govern the day, His love endures forever.

**The moon and the stars to govern the night; His love endures forever.**

To the One who remembered us in our low estate. His love endures forever.

**And freed us from our enemies. His love endures forever.**

And who gives food to every creature. His love endures forever.

**Give thanks to the God of heaven. His love endures forever.**

*Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;*

*As it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen*

### Ephesians 3:1-21

*The unsearchable riches of Christ are for all people*

Why does Paul call the gospel message to the Gentiles a mystery?

Why does Paul refer to himself as “the very least of the saints?”

What is the reason Paul bowed his knee before the Father?

### Mark 6:45-56

*Jesus crosses the sea and heals the sick*

What don't the disciples understand about Jesus?

Why don't they understand after all they have already seen?

What things hinder our faith?

### “THEIR HEARTS were HARDENED”

A sudden storm arose as they crossed the Sea of Galilee. The disciples worked frantically to keep the ship from being swamped and sinking to the bottom. As they bailed water, Jesus slept. Fear gripped their hearts. They woke Him and cried, “*Teacher, don't you care that we are perishing?*” Jesus awoke, rebuked the wind and said to the sea, “*Peace! Be still!*” Instantly the wind abated and the sea became calm, smooth as glass. The disciples wanted Jesus to help them bail water. They hadn't expected this. Now they were even more afraid and asked each other, “*Who then is this, that even wind and sea obey Him.*”

Who is this? In the following days they saw more amazing things. Demon possessed people were set free from their oppression. Sick people were made well, one woman simply by touching the hem of His garment. A young girl was raised to life. Five thousand plus people were fed from five loaves and two fish, with twelve baskets of fragments left over. They heard Him teach the gospel of the kingdom of God. But when He came to them in a storm, walking on the water, they were again filled with fear. They did not understand about the loaves, or anything else for that matter. Their hearts were hardened.

Why were their hearts hardened? Who hardened their hearts? Sometimes God hardens people's hearts. In the book of Exodus, the Lord hardened the heart of Pharaoh, so that He would make His glory known through Pharaoh's obstinance, but only after Pharaoh first hardened his heart. Sometimes people were kept from recognizing Jesus, such as Mary Magdalene in the garden and the two disciples on the road to Emmaus. But that's not the same as hardening the heart. The truth is the disciples hardened their own hearts, by closing their minds to what they heard Jesus teach and closing their eyes to the power He displayed. It doesn't matter what we see or hear, we can all harden our hearts if we don't want to believe.

What is the cure for a hardened heart? Jesus softened the disciples' hearts, not by continually castigating them. Although a well timed and pointed rebuke was sometimes in order and not without effect. Jesus' main method of healing the disciples' heart problem was to continue to nourish them with the word. Jesus didn't give up on the disciples and they didn't give up on Him. Do you have a hard heart? Jesus' word, spoken, heard, read, received in absolution and in the sacrament, is the most effective medicine for a hard heart. Don't give up on Him. He won't give up on you!

### **“ALMIGHTY GOD, YOUR WORD IS CAST”**

**(Public Domain)**

**Almighty God, Your Word is cast, like seed into the ground.  
Now let the dew of heaven descend and righteousness abound.**

**Let not the sly satanic foe, this holy seed remove.  
But give it root in every heart, to bring forth fruits of love.**

**Let not the world's deceitful cares, the rising plant destroy.  
But let it yield a hundredfold, the fruits of peace and love.**

**So when the precious seed is sown, life giving grace bestow.  
That all whose souls the truth receive, its saving power may know.**

### **PRAYER**

**Heavenly Father, with St. Paul we bow our knees before you in humble reverence for the riches of your glory expressed to us in Christ Jesus and given to us through Him. In Christ we have boldness and access to you, as dearly loved children to their loving Father. Bless us in all the struggles, trials, afflictions and troubles of our lives to remember the riches of your glory in Christ Jesus and to hold fast to Christ as you hold us fast in your love. In Jesus' Name. Amen**

### **THE LORD'S PRAYER**

**Our Father who art in heaven. Hallowed be Thy name. Thy Kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread And forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Forever and ever. Amen**

### **THE 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**

### **BENEDICTION**

**Ephesians 2:22**

***“In Him you are also being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.”***

### **Bible Knowledge Quiz**

What did the prophet Jeremiah tell the king to do when the Babylonians were at the city gates?  
What did the prophet Isaiah ask the king to do when two kings were conspiring against him as Judah?  
What sign did King Hezekiah ask from the Lord to show his prayer for healing would be answered?

### **Answers to last week's quiz**

Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia and Laodicea (Rev 1:11).  
Damascus Acts 9:3-6).  
Haran (Genesis 12:4).