THE SWORD

August 17, 2025

LMCC
LAWRENCE & MARDER
CHURCH OF CHRIST

Psalm 28:7 (KJV)
The LORD is my strength and my shield;
my heart trusted in him,
and I am helped: therefore my heart greatly rejoiceth;
and with my song will I praise him.

Sunday Bible Class: 9:00 A.M.
Sunday Worship Experience: 10:00 A.M.
Wednesday Bible Study: 7:00 P.M.

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Word of Week

Blindness: pōrōsis <G4457>

As if man's **vanity** of mind and **ignorance** were not bad enough, Paul also writes of man's **blindness** (Eph. 4:18). Here is a fascinating truth. **Blindness** translates pōrōsis <G4457>, which not only means "blindness," but also "hardness." It comes from pōroō <G4456> and ultimately pōros (not used in the NT), which means "to harden, to form a callous (when broken bones heal), and thus to petrify, to become hard." And may we add, the callous is harder than the bone itself.

Man was, indeed, broken at the Fall, and his heart has deliberately continued to grow calloused toward God, with the result that it is petrified, stone hard. Perhaps you have spoken to someone about spiritual things and actually saw a stone-hard look materialize on their face, and the more you told them the harder they got. That is Paul's point. As one commentator writes: "An inner petrification of the very heart itself was the cause of this inborn ignorance which caused the darkening in spite of all the light in nature and all the light inherited from Adam and from Noah, and with this darkening went the alienation. The very heart was stone-hard, unresponsive to moral and spiritual impression."

Paul painted a similar picture when he wrote to Timothy that man's "conscience [has been] seared with a hot iron" (1 Tim. 4:2). "Seared" is kauteriazō (<G2743>; English, *cauterize).* Just as scar tissue loses feeling because of nerve damage, man has no spiritual feeling because sin has cauterized him.

And who is at the heart of this problem? Satan himself. As Paul wrote, "The god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them" (2 Cor. 4:4).

Thankfully, however, the prophet Ezekiel had a vision of the salvation that would be revealed in the NT when he wrote: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh" (Ezek. 36:26).

And it is in that salvation, that "heart of flesh," that we rejoice.

Scriptures for Study: Read Mark 8:14-21 ("hardened" in v. 17 is pōroō). Jesus here rebukes His disciples for their spiritual insensitivity. This challenges us not to fall into the same error.

Minister's Minutes

Seeking the Lord

"Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." (Jeremiah 29:13)

Our verse today refers primarily to the end of the seventy years of Babylonian captivity for the Israelites. It describes the attitude and practices of the people at that time in regards to seeking the Lord—something they had not being doing well prior to the captivity. Our verse speaks of the essentialness of seeking the Lord and the energy in seeking the Lord.

Essentialness of seeking the Lord. "Ye shall seek me, and find me." The seeking here is the seeking of God in prayer or through His Word. It is not only seeking God for help but also a seeking God in worship. Scripture elsewhere commands mankind to seek God. As an example, Isaiah said, "Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near" (Isaiah 55:6). Not many folk are seeking God today. In fact most people do not want God around. They are seeking the pleasures of the world, not God. But we must have God if we are going to succeed in life where it counts the most. Therefore it is absolutely essential that we seek God. We need to seek Him in worship and in prayer and in Bible study.

Energy in seeking the Lord. "Ye shall . . . find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart." This last part of the verse tells us how to succeed in seeking God. We must not ignore these instructions if we want spiritual success in our lives. The requirement to seek the Lord successfully is simply to do it with "all your heart." There must be energy in your seeking God or you will not do well in this pursuit. Many folk complain that they do not enjoy great spiritual blessings. In their complaint they make it sound like God is to blame. But the cause of their complaint is in this last part of our verse. They do not have great spiritual blessings because they do not seek them earnestly. If you want a closer walk with God, if you want to know your Bible better and have a better prayer life, you will have to put forth some real effort. Diligence is required to possess great spiritual blessings.

Announcements

- Let us keep all those who have lost loved ones, and those hospitalized, in our thoughts and prayers.
- We would like to wish a happy birthday and/or anniversary to everyone who is celebrating this week.
- Attention, church family! To ensure that all announcements and print requests are processed in a timely manner, please submit them by Wednesday at 7:00 PM of the preceding week **to church@landmcoc.org**. We understand that emergencies may arise, and we will do our best to accommodate urgent requests. However, verbal, written, or texted announcements during the Sunday worship experience are strongly discouraged to maintain the flow and reverence of our service. Thank you for your cooperation and support in keeping our worship experience focused and organized!
- Thank you to all those that assisted with the Food Distribution on last Wednesday. If anyone would like to assist with future transportation for Crossroads/LMCC Food Distribution please see brother Mac Fulbright.
- If you would like to volunteer to help with the 100 Year Anniversary please see Felton Davenport, Mac Fulbright, Reginald Osborne, George Robinson, Gary Walker.
- The LandM Homecoming Celebration is scheduled for Sunday, October 19, 2025. To help ensure the success we are asking for the support of all members. Brothers are asked to contribute $100 and sisters $50 by October 5, 2025.
- Sunday Morning Worship experience can be watched on the church website: www.landmcoc.org/broadcast; Church Facebook Page and YouTube Channel. Please "Like" and "Share".
- Children's Worship Hour is for children Pre-K through 4th grade.
- Church Zoom Information for Adults and Youth Wednesday Night Class: **Meeting ID: 915 0578 2664 Password: 859242 Call In Number: 1-346-248-7799**

Continuous Announcements

- Holistic Homeless Haven Support: Please donate gently worn clothing, which will be washed or dry-cleaned, neatly folded, and packaged for the less fortunate. Men's clothing is especially needed. - See Brother Wright for more details.
- Every 2nd Sunday Marsalis Avenue host a Zoom Grief Support Meeting at 4PM (Meeting ID: 880 4065 3591, Passcode: 411521)
- California Avenue Church of Christ in Bakersfield, CA host a Sunday Evening Spiritual Encouragement Hour each week on Zoom at 7:30PM central time (Meeting ID: 875 1387 3553, Passcode: 1020cal#)

What is the Plan of Salvation?

I Peter 1:20 (NASB) says, "For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you." Before God said let there be light, the plan for mankind's salvation had already been created by the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Before God formed man from the dust of the earth, the heavenly trinity had already established a plan for the redemption of mankind. Before God beheld that all He created was "very good" and decided to rest on the seventh day, the Godhead formulated a mystery that would be revealed to reunite mankind with God. We must be thankful to God that His love for us reached back before there was an us. In knowing this, we should follow after the WORD that was made flesh and dwelt amongst us without hesitation. Jesus the Christ is everything that we need (II Peter 1:2–4).

Hear the Gospel of <u>Jesus the Christ</u> (Romans 10:14). One must hear the glorious message that Jesus the Christ sacrificially died for the penalty of our sin, and that he was raised from the dead by the power of God.

Believe in <u>Jesus the Christ</u> (Hebrews 11:6). One must believe that Jesus was more than just a man, but the Christ.

Repent in the name of <u>Jesus the Christ</u> (Luke 24:46–47). Repentance is required; however, it is not said to take away sin, but rather it produces in us a desire to be vindicated by Jesus the Christ.

Confess that <u>Jesus the Christ</u> is the Son of God (Acts 8:36–37). A person must be willing to make the greatest proclamation ever known to mankind, and that is Jesus the Christ is the Son of God.

Be baptized for the remission of sins in the name of <u>Jesus the Christ</u> (Acts 2:38). Baptism is not a sign of salvation, but rather a New Testament requirement for salvation. The action emulates our Lord and Savior's death, burial and resurrection.

Being faithful until death like <u>Jesus the Christ</u> (Philippians 2:4–8). If we stay faithful to God's will, God's word and God's way, we will have a home not made with hands awaiting us some day.

What is the Plan of Salvation? How do I become a Christian?
The Answer: <u>JESUS the CHRIST</u>

Sermon Notes for August 17, 2025

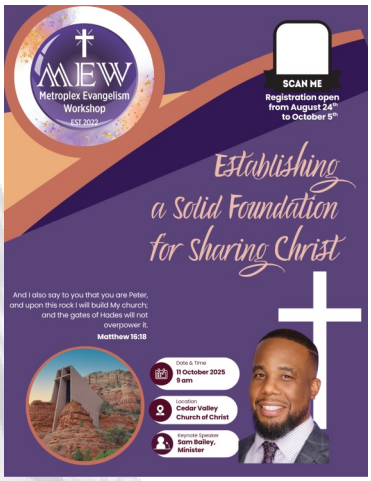
Speaker: Ramon Hodridge

Text: Luke 15:4-72

Title: The Shepherd's Search: A Compassion That Won't Quit

Notes:

Minister's Email: minister@landmcoc.org



QR CODES

VISITOR CHECK-IN

MEMBERSHIP CHECK-IN

RESPONSE CARD REQUEST