

## **Introduction**

1. If you've had the chance to read through the Readings for tomorrow, one would think the hymn of the day could be "Head and Shoulders, Knees and Toes, Eyes and Ears, and Nose and Mouth..."
2. Because all the Readings; Isaiah 50, James 3, Mark 9, and even Psalm 116 detail quite a listing of the parts of the body
3. Perhaps we can use this devotion in preparation for tomorrow's Divine Service...
4. But for here and now, I would like you to consider the brokenness and fallenness of our souls and BODIES – that gives ample evidence that we are indeed insufferable servants – unbearable and intolerable in the sight of God
5. And yet – How God becomes the Suffering Servant – in His BODY – to make us holy in His sight

## **I. Consider the Tongue and the Mouth**

### **A. We are indeed Insufferable Servants...**

1. Go to one of those meetings where you have deal with the conflict between pastor and the congregation – it doesn't take long to believe James when he says, "For every kind of beast and bird, of reptile and sea creature, can be tamed and has been tamed by mankind, but no human being can tame his tongue."
2. Listen to the political party conventions and campaign ads and we see James' words in action, "The tongue is a small member, yet is boasts in great things...the tongue is a restless evil, full of deadly poison."
3. Listen to your own speech at times, as I must hear the sinful words that come from my mouth, and we can soon agree with the Church Father, Ambrose, who said, "How many have I seen fall into sin by speaking."
4. This is not just a matter of saying the wrong thing at the wrong time; this is more than just not using our "filters" of blating out whatever is on our mind – for with the small tongue we are capable of breaking every single commandment of God, for which we are cursed by God with His mouth

### **B. And then there's the Suffering Servant**

1. Through the prophet Isaiah, God is speaking to Israel, giving her hope concerning her Babylonian captivity
  - a. Isaiah writes, "The Lord Yahweh gave to me a tongue of those being taught, to know how to assist a wary one with a Word."
  - b. In his Isaiah commentary, Reed Lessing writes, "Christ does not condemn weary exiles; He saves them."

2. It is this Christ who opened His mouth and ordered creation to exist
  3. It is this Christ who is the WORD made flesh who comes to dwell among us – to speak to us REDEEMING words to save us
    - a. “Like the words He spoke to the demon in Mark’s Gospel, “You mute and deaf spirit, I command you, come out of him and never enter him again.”
    - b. And so this same Jesus commands Satan to flee each and everyone of us, holding us secure the waters of our baptism
    - c. It is this Jesus who uses His tongue to say, “Father, forgive them, they know not what they do” – even as He addresses each and every one of us with those very words this day
    - d. It is this Jesus who uses His tongue to say, “It is finished” – and all the work needed for the forgiveness of your sins and mine has been completed!
- C. There have been parents in the past who would wash out their children’s mouth with soap when the tongue said what it should not have said
1. Our mouths have not been washed with soap, but with the blood of Christ, not to punish, but to forgive us
  2. We drink the blood of Christ from the Chalice and our tongues are transformed to “bless our Lord and Father”
  3. Our tongues are now used to call upon the Lord in every trouble, to pray, praise, and give thanks”
  4. Our tongues have been sanctified to “sustain the weary” by telling them of the love and hope of Jesus Christ
  5. Our tongues are still used for boasting – but boasting in the Lord
  6. Our tongues are still restless – but restless to witness our faith in Christ Jesus
  7. Our tongues are not what they used to be, now they are a new creation!

## II. Consider the Ears

- A. The ears of the Insufferable Servants...
1. Concerning the ears, Reed Lessing says, “Ears are on the outside of our heads and not on the inside. This physical makeup encourages us to listen to God and not to ourselves.”
  2. How about your District Convention these past few months – did your ears hear things that gave evidence to a sinful world?
  3. Will our ears burn with sinful sounds this coming July at the Synod Convention?
  4. Or as God speaks to us in His Word, do we rather despise the preaching of His Word, closing our ears rather than hold God’s Word sacred, and gladly hear and learn it?

- B. And yet take heart – for God hears the cries of his sinful people
  1. Israel cried out in Egypt and God’s ears heard
  2. The Psalmist says, “God inclined His ear to me”
  3. With the Church, we cry out, “Lord have mercy upon us” and God’s ears hear and He has come to save us
  4. He hears our painful repentant cry and He speaks into our ears, “You are forgiven”
  5. Our ears are not what they used to be – now they are a new creation!

### III. Consider your Eyes

- A. The world cries out, “Come, let us fix our eyes on ourselves!”
  - i. And – we do!
  - ii. Look at Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden – how Satan made that fruit look so appealing to their eyes
  - iii. And how Satan makes what’s on the computer screen and on the TV and in the office – look so appealing to our eyes
  - iv. And yet God commands, “You shall not commit adultery, you shall not covet” – and we do
  - v. Our eyes are impaired with sin, and through our eyes we let sin into our minds and hearts and souls
  - vi. And we end up like the Israelites crying by the waters of Babylon – believing we will never enter the Holy Land again nor should we
  
- B. Through the Psalmist, we hear, “God has delivered my eyes from tears.”
  - i. How has this fallen creation moistened you eyes with tears?
    1. A parent’s death?
    2. Standing before one of those dispute resolution panels?
    3. Being blogged about, and slandered, and lied about?
    4. A wayward son or daughter? A turbulent marriage?
    5. Tremendous guilt over sin?
  - ii. Come, let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith...
    1. For it is this Jesus who will wipe away every tear from your eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.”
    2. Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world – feast your eyes on your sin-bearer and rejoice!
    3. Your eyes are not what they used to be – now they are a new creation!

#### **IV. Consider your Back**

##### **A. Sin is a pain in the Back!**

- i. Israel remembers – how they built Egypt on the strength of their broken backs
- ii. And we remember – like Kurt’s District dealing with Hurricane Isaac, or Ray’s District still recovering from tornadoes, and the North Dakota District still recovering from a devastating flood
- iii. Our people have felt broken on their backs, and with their mouths they cry out to God for help and comfort

##### **B. God has certainly felt the pain of sin in his back**

- i. Isaiah tells that “with His stripes we are healed”
- ii. Again Isaiah writes, “I gave my back to those who strike me”
- iii. In His holy flesh Jesus bore our unholy sins – He took our punishment and He gives us His righteousness
- iv. It doesn’t compute, it doesn’t make sense, but this is our God – who becomes our substitute and frees us from sin and death
- v. His every bloody gash and ripped flesh gives health and healing to our backs, to our bodies, and to our souls
- vi. Our backs are not what they used to be – now they are a new creation!

#### **V. Consider the Cheeks and Face**

##### **A. Isaiah prophesies the passion when he says, “I gave my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard”**

- i. We also know He was spat upon, sinful spit on a holy God!
- ii. A crown of thorns was forced upon his head and His redeeming blood poured down the cheeks of God – into His eyes and down his neck
- iii. And while Jesus’ face is bloodied and bruised, Satan comes out much worse – His face, his head, is crushed and the victory is ours!
- iv. Jesus is the face of the cross –

##### **B. You are familiar with this cross, as well as the pastors and Christians in your care – and throughout the world**

- i. More and more the cross is being understood by a world that persecutes Christians
- ii. More and more the cross is being realized – even as a great number of delegates from the Democratic convention vote against God
- iii. More and more the cross is felt – even as the Christian Church is mandated by law to go against her conscience and the Word of God

- iv. But the Cross is our trophy and our triumph; the cross is our Redemption in which we are purchased from sin, death, and the devil
- v. On earth this cross is a burden; But even now and for all eternity this cross is blessing for all who believe in the Triune God
- vi. Our face and cheeks are no longer what they used to be – now they are a new creation!

## VI. Consider your Feet

- A. Oh, how our feet walk in the way of sin
  - i. So often we walk with fellow sinners in our gossip, our theological sides, camping with those with similar sins
  - ii. So often we walk on the other side of the road – omitting to help our neighbor in need
  
- B. But we pause and we look at the feet of Jesus – spiked through with our sins, bloodied to pay the price for our transgressions
  - i. His feet walk to the cross in order to put us on the path of heaven
  - ii. The Psalmist again writes, “He has delivered my feet from stumbling.”
  - iii. Who can fathom this great gift of God saving us, which involved his feet nailed to a cross?
  
- C. To which Isaiah writes, “Let him who WALKS in darkness and has no light [now] trust in the name of the Lord and rely on His God
  - i. A new direction, a new purpose, a new life – is the journey of those who believe
  - ii. And our journey is one of “Life Together” – like in I Corinthians 12 – as the body works together in all its various parts and walk together
  - iii. “Concordia” is hearts beating together
  - iv. Maybe we could start a whole new movement with “Conpedia” – feet walking together – in light of who we are in Christ Jesus – we walk together in the Word and in doctrine and in practice
  - v. Our feet are not what they used to be – now they are a new creation!

## Conclusion

1. We are not Gnostics – in that the body, or matter, is insignificant or evil
2. The Body is a gift of God and part of who we are as the creation of God – God fashioned this body
3. These bodies do realize and feel sin, and exhaustion, pain, and death
4. The very fact that these bodies are covered and clothed is but a sign of sin and death, shame and rebellion

5. But God became body – God incarnate – and in His wounded body, in His broken body, in His dead body made alive again on the third day – we are recreated – body and soul now and for all eternity
6. In the Gospel Reading, Jesus heals a boy possessed by a demon.
  - a. Jesus casts out the demon and boy falls limp as death
  - b. And then Jesus reaches out His own eternal, omnipotent hand and lifts the boy up from the ground, and the boy rose
  - c. It is those same hands that raise you and me
  - d. One chapter earlier in Isaiah, God says, “Even if a mother were to forsake her child, I will never forsake you – see, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands”
  - e. Because of these hands of Christ, this same Jesus will one day call us from the grave, and our dust will return to flesh, perfect flesh – our bodies will be restored and be joined to our souls, and we will live with Christ and all the company of heaven for a day that has no end.
  - f. Our bodies, our souls – they are not what they used to be. Now they are a new creation in Christ Jesus. Amen.