

# Jesus' Concern for the Heart

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[ 0 : 0 0 ] And the scripture reading comes from Matthew chapter 15. Please follow along either in your bulletins or in your Bibles. Starting in verse 1 we read, Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders?

For they do not wash their hands when they eat. He answered them, Why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of tradition? For God commanded, Honor your father and your mother, and whoever reviles father or mother must surely die.

But you say, If anyone tells his father or his mother, What you would have gained from me is given to God. He need not honor his father.

So for the sake of your tradition, You have made void the word of God. You hypocrites! Well did Isaiah prophesy of you when he said, This people honors me with their lips, But their heart is far from me.

In vain do they worship me, Teaching as doctrines the commandments of men. And he called the people to him and said to them, Hear and understand, It is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, But what comes out of the mouth, This defiles a person.

[ 1 : 3 5 ] Then the disciples came and said to him, Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying? He answered, Every plant that my heavenly father has not planted will be rooted up.

Let them alone. They are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, Both will fall into a pit. But Peter said to him, Explain the parable to us.

And he said, Are you still without understanding? Do you not see what goes into the mouth, Passes into the stomach, And is expelled?

But what comes out of the mouth, Proceeds from the heart, And this defiles a person. For out of the heart, Come evil thoughts, Murder, Adultery, Sexual immorality, Theft, False witness, Slander.

These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone. This is the word of God. Awesome.

[ 2 : 5 3 ] Thank you, Gary, for that reading. Good morning, Watermark. Thank you. Oh, that's so encouraging. My name is Alan.

I oversee the youths here at Watermark. So I'm the youth guy you've been hearing all about. I'm that guy. We've been doing, Going through the Gospel of Matthew for some weeks now.

And today we are here at chapter 15, Which is a very awesome passage. You'll see why. It's challenging. It's in many ways harsh. But then you'll see, We'll start to see the beauty in this passage.

One of the thing about the internet, I mean, We all know the internet in this generation, right? The internet can be a scary place. I don't know if you agree with me or not.

You know, In matters of seconds, It can destroy someone's life. Or in matters of seconds, It can make a person successful like anything. And there was this one particular advertisement That went viral a few years back.

[ 3 : 55 ] The advertisements were around, Around the idea of plastic surgery. And it destroyed this model's life. So basically the advertisement, There was an image, There was a picture, And there was a picture of a husband and wife, And then they got kids all around them.

And the husband and wife was really good looking. Like they were really good looking. But their children were, Not really good looking. In kind words. So the advertisement was about plastic surgery.

You know, You can look really good, But then your kids can come out the way you were. And that destroyed this model's life. Because in reality, She did not really do plastic surgery.

But it stuck with her throughout her career. And literally destroyed everything. But what was very interesting is that, This advertisement actually had a very powerful message.

And the message was this, That you can change all you want, Your outer appearance. You can do whatever you want with your face, Your body. But your inside is going to remain the same.

[ 4 : 59 ] The mess is still going to remain. The ugliness is still going to remain. And the interesting thing is that, This model was so ridiculous. She got so many feedback, So many criticism.

Everyone was against her. And they were like, Oh, Look at this woman trying to look good. And stuff like that. And what is interesting about that is, Actually, All of us actually live in that reality.

Where we try to cover up our ugliness, Our messiness inside, With tons of good works, And tons of masks, And facades, And a lot of things.

And today's scripture, We'll find Jesus cutting straight through, This fakeness and mask, And go straight to the thing that really concerns him. That really matters.

We'll be looking at one of those things, That Jesus is most concerned about. And that is the heart. Now, Before we really dive in, Let's take a short journey through the scripture. Let's see what's happening here.

[ 5 : 58 ] The Pharisees and the scribes, The religious leaders, Come to Jesus all the way from Jerusalem. And then, If you go back a few verses, You'll see that Jesus is in a place called Gennesaret.

So basically, He's very far away, And this, Religious leaders come all the way from Jerusalem, And I can assure you, There were no Ubers, There were no taxi from Jerusalem, They just walked, Well, Walked, Camel, I don't know.

But it was a long journey, And they come all this way, To ask, A question. And you'd expect a question to be important, Right? If you're taking such a long journey. But the question they ask here is, Why do your disciples break the traditions of the elders?

Traditions. For they do not wash their hands when they eat. Now, Washing of hands, In the Old Testament, In the law, There were certain situations where, There were washing of the hands rituals.

So that was pretty normal. But what they're talking about here, Is, A tradition. Something they came up later on. Something they looked at the law, And they thought, Okay, This is the application. This is the interpretation.

[ 7 : 03 ] So we're going to come up with this tradition of washing the hands. So they used to wash their hands a lot. And they were talking about this tradition, Which is, Mind you, Not the law. Now, In Jesus' response, He does not really answer the question.

But what he does is, He counters the question with another question. Typical Jesus. And he says, Why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? Now, Here's what Jesus is talking about.

The people had commandment. And one of the great commandments from the Ten Commandments, Was, Honor your father and mother. Now, The commandment was an extremely important thing.

And this commandment in particular, To honor your father and mother, Was so important that, It was actually punishable by death. And he says, Whoever, There you go.

Whoever reviles father, Our mother must surely die. Now, You can imagine anything that is punishable by death is serious. I mean, If you're just going to get a spank on your hand, That's not really serious, Right?

[ 8 : 07 ] But if you're going to get punished by death, Man, That's some serious business right here. Now, Here was the problem. Now, They had a tradition called, Kurban. I mean, If you're Indian, You know the word, Kurban means literally sacrifice.

And then you'd usually hear that in a love song. I'll Kurban my heart to you. And stuff like that. But Kurban, In their tradition was, Where they would dedicate their property, Money, And stuff like that, To God.

To the temple. And basically, What that meant was, That whatever those things, Those property, Money, That they could have used for helping their parents out, Or taking care of their parents, Since it was devoted to God, They cannot use it to help their parents.

Do you see what's happening here? So they would devote their money to the temple, And when their parents were in need, They were like, Oh, I'm sorry. It's devoted to God.

But what was more interesting is that, Whatever they devoted, The property and the money to God, They themselves could actually use it, For themselves. Do you see what's happening here?

[ 9 : 12 ] Let me modernize it. Imagine you got your salary. Imagine you got your money, And you're like, And you don't want to help your parents, You're like, Parents, I'm sorry, I can't really help you out, Because I got to give an offering to the church, Which is good.

I got to steward my money, Because God has told me to steward my money, So I can't really help you, My parents. But then you yourself, Is living a very comfortable, If not an extravagant life.

So that's what's happening. And Jesus, Points that out straight. He sees it, And he's telling them, You got your tradition, But you're canceling out this commandment, Which is more important, Because of your traditions, That came out from the law.

Now, Finally, After all this happens, Jesus uses the word hypocrites. Now, Which is another interesting word, Because it was never used, To describe a person, I mean, Never used to insult, Or call out a person.

It was a pretty normal word, It was actually a word, To describe actors. You know, If you see an actor in those times, You would call, Oh, It's a hypocrite. Oh, It's my favorite hypocrite. Stuff like that.

[ 10 : 23 ] So, Actually, Literally, It meant, One who wears a mask, Or someone who pretends to be, Something they are not. So that's, That's what hypocrite is. And Jesus is one of the first people, To use it in a, Very different context, And call out to the Pharisees, He says, You guys are hypocrites.

You are pretending, To do, Be something, You're not really. And he, And finally, In verse 8, He says, These people honor me with their lips, But their heart is far away from me.

So basically, He tells, See, You guys are doing all these good things, And you have all these things to cover up, What's really wrong inside. And he tells them, But your heart is far away from me.

That's where the problem really lies. Now, What do I mean by the heart? Why does the heart matter so much? Why is it so important? You see, Nowadays, We look at the heart, And we say, Like, Oh, It's a place of emotion.

Oh, My heart is breaking. Oh, My heart, I love you in my heart. And stuff like that. Take me to your heart. Take me to your soul. And stuff like that. You know, All the pop songs. And we actually, If you look in the Bible, In one way, The heart is the control center of who we are.

[ 11 : 28 ] In other words, It is the core of who you are. It is who you really are. It is the place of your deep desire. It is the place, Where everything flows out. If you look at Proverbs 4, 23, It says, Above all, Guard your heart, For everything you do, Flows out from it.

So, Heart is the central, And the core, Of who you are. And that is why, Jesus is so much concerned with that. And you see, Even if you look throughout the Bible, You see God welcoming a contrite and broken heart.

You can see in Ephesians, Where he says, God dwells in the heart through faith. Jesus dwells in the heart through faith, Where he says, We believe in our heart through faith. And everything revolves around the heart.

So, That is why a heart is a massively important thing to Jesus. So, The first thing today we will be looking into is, The exposed heart. In the words of Kevin, Like any other sermon, We got three points.

Yeah, So, The first thing we are going to look into is, The exposed heart. Now we are going to dive into a little, We are going to magnify it. Let's see what is really happening in this place. So, The religious leaders come to Jesus, To question why he is not following.

[ 12 : 40 ] Okay, Are we all there with me? I feel like I have gone really fast. You are good? Okay, Alright. Religious leaders come to Jesus with a question, Why are you not following the tradition? And Jesus does not really answer them, And tells them, You guys are here to talk about tradition, But, You have been cancelling out the commandment, Which is so much more important than the tradition.

Now think about it, Traditions are usually formed, Or introduced, With good intentions. Right? For them, In this situation, The tradition was formed, Because they wanted to help in obeying the law.

They wanted to make sure that people were obeying the law. They wanted to make sure that, They were close to God and stuff. So the tradition was formed to, Almost like a protect themselves. And they would look at the law, Apply it, Interpret it, And then they got, That's tradition, Which is a good thing.

But then Jesus here, He's telling them like, Hey, You guys are trying to, Obey the law, With all these traditions. I mean, You're doing everything that's good, But, You're ending up with an opposite result.

I mean, You have been doing good things, You've been, You're trying to be, Obey God, Faithful, You're doing all these religious things, And, But, At the end of the day, You have missed, The most important thing.

[ 13 : 50 ] Again, Going back to verse 8, He says, You honor me with your lips. I mean, You're doing all this thing to honor God, But what's happening is, Is that, Your heart, Is far away from me.

Basically, Jesus is saying, Okay, You can have your traditions. Go, You can go on with it. You can do what you want. But if you're missing the point, You're missing the point above all things. You see, You can look good outside.

You can look great. You can be serving. You can look awesome and shiny, And floating two inches from the ground. But then, If your heart is not there, You're missing the full point.

Now, Think about it. When you're missing the point, It's like, It's like going to McDonald's, And ordering a salad. You're missing, I mean, If you, I'm sorry.

Yeah, It's good. If you order salad, Good for you. It's like going to, I mean, I can see some people, Oh, Island, How could you say that? But I see that as, You're missing the point.

[ 14 : 56 ] It's like going to the gym, And sitting on the bench, Watching video for 30 minutes, And hitting the shower. And then, You're missing the point of, All that, All those things, Right?

And then the point here was that, With all this religion, With all this traditions, They had a heart, That was far away from God. You see, God was more interested, In dealing with the issues, Of the heart, And Jesus, I mean, Jesus is brilliant.

What Jesus does is like, He takes a hot knife, And like cutting through butter, He cuts through all this facades, All this fakeness, All this religion, All this, Mask, To go down, Deep down, And reveal, And expose, A heart, That was far away from him.

Now think about this, Church, We, We too many times, Put religion, To cover our heart, That is far away from him.

Do we not? I mean, We can be serving at church, While harboring bitterness, And unforgiveness in our heart. Never really dealing with them, Never really bringing it before God.

[ 16 : 05 ] We could be leading ministries, We could be leading song worship, We could be leading kids, Youth, Serving at church, Serving at CG, Serving wherever there is place, Loving the city, And doing all these things, But our heart, Is filled with pride, Or filled, With something else, That leads us away from God.

I mean, We could, We do a lot of things, But we never have that, Difficult conversations, That we need to have, Or we never resolve the conflict, And we make excuses, And we say like, Oh man, Let me just pray about it.

But we never really, Get down to it. You see a heart, That is far away, Or it could even be, We come on a Sunday, To church, Just to fill a quota, And then from Monday to Saturday, We live our own life.

You see, That is also, Doing certain things, But then you leave, The hall with, A heart that is still far away, From God. Do you see what God really, Is interested in, Rather than all these things, That we are doing.

You know, Even in my life, There have been so many times, Where I had led song worship, And I went up to stage, With so much pride in my heart, And I can see it sometimes, And thinking, Man, I can make this happen, Because I am musically talented, I can make people cry, With the strum of my guitar, And I leave the stage, Thinking, Man, That was just great, Alan, You sang so well, And then, The opposite of that would be, If someone says like, Alan, That did not go well, And I am like, I am devastated, Because it was all about me, It is not about God, I mean, I have even preached before, When I had bitterness in my heart, Towards one person, I went up stage, And talking about love, And now I think about it, This passage has spoken, To me, Throughout this week, About how much, And what God is really, Concerned about, You see, We can do a million things, For God, But if our heart is far away, If we are really missing the point,

[ 18 : 14 ] And in one of, In the words of one of my mentor, He would say, Hey, It would rather be better, To go to Starbucks, And spend our Sunday, If we are missing the point, You see, It is so easy to cover up our heart, And in verse 9, Finally, Jesus says, In vain, In vain, They worship me, You see, Because worship is not about, What we do inside this hall, Worship is not what, Julian did in from here, Singing songs, Or what we do here, Worship is not only about, Preaching, Or, Discipleship, And stuff like that, Worship is about a lifestyle, A heart that is surrendered, A heart that is in love, With the Savior, Surrendering to him, Day by day, In faith and repentance, And rejoicing in him, And making him, The source of our identity, Hope, Joy, And everything, And security, And life, And finally, Jesus says, Teaching as doctrines, The commandments of men, Because you see, When the heart is not engaged, When the heart is not surrendered, Everything just becomes rules,

Everything just becomes do's and don'ts, Everything just becomes, Something we do, On a Sunday, Something we sing on a Sunday, Something we say on a Sunday, Something we do on a CG night, And it's just mere human rules, And we can't tell, Can't we, When someone does not have his heart, When they're doing something, When a wife is speaking to her husband, And he goes, Yep, Yep, Yep, Yep, But then he's on his phone, Or doing something else, You know a wife can tell, When the husband's heart, Is not really in the conversation, I mean, I'm not married, I mean, You can just nod your head, If you agree, Yeah, Okay, Or you can, As teachers, I mean, You can tell when a student is really, Or just doing your work, Just to pass, Just to get that passing mark, Or if the student is, Really has their heart, In that work, In that subject, Right, You know, You can tell when a person has their heart,

But imagine for a God, Who sees their heart, Who can see the heart so clearly, Man, He can see it in, Crystal, Crystal, Clarity, Whether a heart is, In, Far away or not, So if God, If Jesus, Was to expose our heart this morning, What is he going to find?

If you are going to look at your own exposed heart, Are you going to find a heart that is far away, Or a heart that is close to God? So in the first part, Jesus exposes the heart of the religious leaders, But he does not just stop there, He goes on to show, The fruits of the heart, The heart, What does this result in?

What is, What do you, What comes out from the heart? Which leads us to our second point, The fruits of the heart, So, If you look at verse 10 and 11, In your bulletin, Jesus makes an incredibly offensive, And controversial statement, Where he says, Yeah, The panda is really offended, So, It is not what goes into the mouth, That defiles a person, But what comes out of the mouth, That defiles a person, Now why is this offensive?

[ 21 : 29 ] Why is this so, How could you say that? Now imagine, In Chinese culture, Now, I'm gonna, I'm speaking as non-Chinese, So correct me if I'm wrong, For a person to not attend, Not, Not be there when their grandparents are, In the hospital, Maybe in the last moments of our life, And for a family member to not be there, It's like, Whoa, That's, You don't do stuff like that, You have to be there, Is that, Am I right?

If someone is not there, That's incredibly, I don't know, Offensive? Incredibly unthinkable, Every family member has to be there, In the hospital bedside, I mean, In my culture, Maybe true for some other cultures, It's incredibly, Offensive to walk over someone, Now you might be thinking, Who walks over someone?

I mean, For us, We usually sit on the floor, So in my previous church, We used to have house gatherings, And everyone's sitting on the floor, So if I wanted to go to the washroom or kitchen, I would go like, Excuse me, Excuse me, Excuse me, So everyone has to move their feet away, Because I cannot walk over anyone, And then the younger kids, Who'd walk over all the adults, And the uncles and aunties would be like, Oh, You, Come back, What are you doing?

Don't say, Say sorry, And then, Because walking over anyone is incredibly offensive, Now Jesus does something in a similar way, Something that makes the people go, Oh, Oh man, That's harsh, Oh, And what Jesus says is, It's not what's outside that matter, It's what's inside, And then if you look here, In verse 12, In your bulletin, The disciples come to Jesus, And he's like, Oh, Jesus, Do you know that the Pharisees were offended?

Did you realize that? So, Because Jesus was making a statement that, Where he was telling the religious leaders, Hey, You can have your outward laws, You can have all these things that you do, All these traditions you have, All these things you gotta obey and stuff, And for them, It was the extremely important thing in their life, It was of utmost importance, It was the most important thing in their life, And basically, Jesus comes to them and said like, That's not gonna make you clean, In a way, That doesn't really matter, In a way, He just tells them like, That's not gonna make you clean, Because the problem is inside, And then the disciples are like, Oh man, That was harsh, And Jesus goes on to explain what he meant by that, Which is pretty straightforward, I mean, Verse, From verse 17 onwards, He says, Do you not see, That whatever goes into the mouth, Passes into the stomach, And is expelled, Yep, I'm gonna laugh there,

[ 24 : 13 ] Basically, I mean, If it's not expelled, You gotta see a doctor, But what comes out of the mouth, Proceeds from the heart, And then this defiles a person, For out of the heart come, Evil thoughts, Murder, Adultery, Sexual maritality, Theft, False witness, Slander, These are what defile a person, But to eat with unwashed hands, Does not really defile anyone, You know, It's quite easy and natural, For us, For humans, To look at what people do outside, And not really think about what's happening in their heart, Imagine a child who's really naughty, Who's breaking stuff, Who's doing all those things, But while deep inside, That child, All the child wants is attention and love, Or maybe it could be a person doing charity, A lot of charity, But in their heart, He's just feeding his own ego, Just filling up with pride, A different story could be told in the heart, I mean, I've been dating for a long time,

Six years to be particular, And I've had these conversations with my girlfriend, Where I've told her, Hey, I've met this person, I've met this group, They're amazing, And I feel like they are the best thing in the world, Like they're so strong in God, And my girlfriend goes like, Hey, We don't really know what's happening, And I'm being a guy, I'm defensive, I'm like, I know my stuff, They're the best, And I argue my stuff, And she, Being patient, Let it go, Let it go, And after a few months, I come back to her, Totally forgot that conversation, I say like, Hey, I saw this group, And they're not really good, I think there's something wrong with them, And she goes, I told you, I'm like, No, You did not, And we have another conversation around that, And that has happened multiple times, Do you want to guess, When was the last time it happened?

Five days ago, Just five days ago, And this time, She sent me a screenshot of that conversation, I had previously, There you go, And I'm like, So I had to work on my heart, Saying, Okay, Alan, It's pride in me, I'm sorry, Yep, You're right, So, It's so easy, To look at a person's outside, And not really think about, What's happening in their heart, Now, Let me be clear, I'm not saying, We should not be appreciative, I'm not saying, We should not support, Or, Say like, Good work is a bad thing, I'm not saying that, We should not be grateful, For what, What, What people do, But let me take you back, Last week, Do you remember, The mission statement, We talked about, Kevin shared about, Oh, It's already up on the screen, I was going to ask, So our disciple, Mission statement is, Making, Mature disciple, Making disciples of Jesus, To impact Hong Kong, For the glory of God, Now, What does it mean, To make a disciple, And one other thing, A disciple, To make a disciple,

Is not, To encourage them, To do a lot of good things, To serve a lot, Which is actually necessary, Which is important, For their growth, But to also be asking the question, What is happening in their heart, You see, Making disciple, Looks like, For a parent, To look at their kids, And not only discipline, Their outward behavior, But to also ask the question, Where is the heart of my child, It's for us, To ask each other, And just being aware, Of each other's heart issues, And heart location, And for ourselves, As disciples, Of Jesus, To be always examining, Our heart, And thinking about, Where is my heart, You see, Because it's so easy, It's so easy, To cover up, Our heart, Now, Jesus says, It's the inside of the thing, That defiles, A person, So just to show an example,

I picked up something, Something, Something that dogs, Leave behind, Yeah, I'm not going to touch it, Don't worry, It's not, It's not fresh, Oh, It's fresh, No, Just kidding, It's chocolate, Don't worry, Alright, So, Jesus says, It's the inside, That,

[ 29 : 07 ] It's chocolate, Seriously, It's chocolate, Trust me, Trust me, It's chocolate, So, Jesus says, It's the inside, That, I just crumped it, And put it in the fridge, So, It's the inside, That's really defiling, Defiles a person, So, What we do is, Okay, I got to be good, I got to pray more, I got to, Do more devotions, Which are great things, I got to, Serve more, Serve in the kids ministry, Serve at church, Serve in the youth ministry, Which is very important, Allie needs that, So, Serve and, Shiny, Does anyone want to drink from this still?

Sometimes, We try to cover it up, I'll cover it up with a smile, No one's going to see the defiled thing now, I'm like, I'm looking good, I'm serving, I'm preaching, I'm crying, I'm lifting my hands up, When Julian is leading worship, I'm doing all the things, That marks it up, I'm doing well, I mean, I'm praying, I'm doing one-on-one Bible studies, Hey, By the way, Those are really good, Good, Good things, Okay, I'm not saying don't do, But the point I'm making is, Even though it looks shiny, Silver, At the end of the day, You still got your, It's chocolate, You still got your chocolate, No, You still got dirt, That's inside, Do you see the point, Jesus is trying to make here, It's pretty simple, But then it's reality, It's so much of, So much importance, Because, We could look like that, We could look shiny,

We could be clean outside, But if you still got mess inside, It's still defiled, It's still dirty, It's still far away, From God, And do you know, That eventually, Eventually, The dirt that is inside, Will one day, Come out, And do you know, How it comes out, In verse 18, It says, What comes out of the mouth, Comes out of the mouth, What comes out of the mouth, Proceeds, From the heart, You see, We might be drilling, Oh sorry, We might be doing a lot of good things, And serving, But one day, But our words that come out, From our mouth, Could totally be different, Let me read this, Quote by John Newton, It says, There is perhaps, No one test, Or proof of the reality, Of a work of grace, Upon the heart,

More simple, Clear, And infallible, Than the general tone, Of our language, And conversations, So basically, What Newton is saying, Here is, One of the ways, To really see, Whether God's gospel, Is working in our hearts, Is to think about, The tone of our conversations, And language, Now think about this, What do you love, Talking about, What are you most comfortable, Talking about for hours, I mean, I used to be in a small group before, And we used to have a worship, And preaching, And as soon as we sat down, We used to start talking about, Money, And, Jobs, And stuff like that, As soon as we sat down, And that happened, All the time, Because that was in our heart, As soon as we sat down, That's what came out, Now, I mean, Even every time, Think about social media, We share things we love, We share things we find interesting, In our social media, Right?

Stories, And images, And pictures, And, I found one of this quote, Said by one of the greatest leaders, Oh, There you go, It's already up, By Kevin Murphy, He said, Out of the abundance of our heart, We speak, And out of the abundance of our heart, We tweet, Which is brilliant, What do you share in your social media?



[ 33 : 22 ] That's something to think about, I mean, I'm just going to leave it at that, What do you share? Now, We can wrap up today's preaching, By saying, Okay guys, Go off into the week, Just make sure your heart is proper, And close to God, And make sure you're good with God, When you meet someone, Ask them, How's your heart?

And we can finish at that, But here's the problem, In Jeremiah 79, It says, The heart is deceitful, Above all things, It is desperately sick, Who can understand it?

Because here's the thing about the heart, It's extremely, Almost impossible, To see what's happening deep underneath, It's like an iceberg, You got a little bit showing on top, But then, The workings of the heart deep inside, Is, Is deep, And mysterious, I mean, There's a, Andrew Cate, He mentioned, He actually describes heart as an iceberg, And the witch has tentacles, Which is going all over the places, I mean, I wanted to draw that, But, But, The point being, Heart is extremely, Extremely deep, And extremely, Hard to see, And the only person, Who can actually see it is, God, Where he tells Samuel, Hey, I don't look at the outward appearance, I look at the heart, In the Bible, We see, That a heart that is far away from God, Is what, Is something that always separates from God, In the beginning, When we wanted, When our hearts wanted to be our own God,

We just rejected God being far away, When our hearts wanted, Hearts, When we became jealous, When we became envy, We committed the first murder, We, We became far away from God, When lust came in, When pride came in, When we started worshipping everything except God, When we, When all these things came in, We became far away, From God, And being further away from God, God meant that we are being further away, From the one who created us, And truly loves us, And time after time, God calls his people back to him, He calls his people back to him, Because he says, He tells them like, Hey, You guys got to come back, Time after time, He calls them, And because you see the heart problem, Which is, In other words, Sin, Does not only harm you, This heart problem, Does not only harm you, It harms the people, It harms the relationship, Between you and God, And it also harms the people around you,

And that's the thing about sin, And a heart problem, It harms people around you, It harms the people you love, It harms the people in your community, And so here we are, People with a heart problem, That has been harmed, Hurt, By the sins of other people, And that have hurt other people, With our own heart problems, Then God makes an amazing promise, About 590 years before Jesus, God makes this amazing promise, He says in Ezekiel 36, And I will give you a new heart, And I will give you a new spirit, I will put within you, And I will remove the heart of stone, From your flesh, And give you a heart of flesh, Which leads us to our last point, The new heart, You see, For God to fulfill this promise, It was costly, It needed to be bought, It needed, Someone needed to pay the price for this,

[ 37 : 07 ] So God sent his son Jesus, Who came, And told us about this heart problem, Who exposed a heart problem within us, And who told us, Hey, You guys are doing good, But then, You guys are having a heart problem, But at the same time, He also showed us, What it looks like, To have a heart, That is close to God, He did it, He did that by living a perfect life, He did that by living a life, By healing, By having compassion on people, By living a life, To show us, Hey, This is what a heart, That is close to God, Really looks like, Jesus came, And finally, He gave his life on the cross, Where he offers his life, And at the same time, He offers this new heart, To each one of us, Now here's the thing about this new heart, It was offered to you, When you did not deserve, To deserve it at all, 1 John 4 19 says, We love because he loved us first,

I mean that's a massive statement, I wonder if you guys have just sat down, And thought of that, That God loved you, We love because God loved you first, Can you imagine that?

For us to be walking in our own path, For us to be just enjoying our sin, And just being, Doing all sorts of things, And God just coming in, To the world and saying, I love you, And I'm reaching out to you first, John 3 16 says, God so loved the world, That he gave his one and only son, Because the people were faithful, And deserving, No, It just ends there, God so loved the world, He gave his son, And that's it, You see, God offers this heart to all of us, And we come to receive it, Not by works, But by faith and repentance, You see, Faith is to believe what God has done, Faith is to put our life and trust on him, And repentance is to turn back to God, And you see, Faith and repentance is like the pedals on a cycle, You cannot have one without the other, Nor can you move forward without this too, Faith and repentance,

And the church, This is the thing, Sometimes we think faith and repentance, Is something we do once in a lifetime, Or once on a week, When we come down Sunday, But it's actually something we gotta do every day, Because we have a heart, That's constantly trying to forget, Trying to be pulled towards other things, So we need, We need actually faith and repentance, To always draw close to God, We need to be aware of a heart, Which is, Because we can easily forget, About our heart, And get busy with the outward thing, It's so easy to start doing, It's so easy to start preaching, It's so easy to start leading, Start serving, Start doing, When we forget, But we forget our heart, We naturally try to hide our mess inside, And not deal with it, Now talking about heart, Do you know there's one place in the Bible, In the gospels, Where Jesus actually reveals his heart, I mean, We talked about heart being,

The core of who you are, The very essence of who you are, And Jesus finally reveals, In only one place, And he says, Come to me all you who are, Labor and heavy laden, And I will give you rest, Take my yoke upon you, And learn from me, For I am gentle, And lowly, At heart, You see, And Dan Autland in his book, Gentle and lowly, He says, Jesus is not trigger happy, Not harsh, reactionary, Easily exasperated, He's the most understanding person, In the universe, The posture most natural to him, Is not a pointed finger, But an open arms, Think about it, The Pharisees, And the religious leaders, They're very harsh, If someone made a mess, They would point them, They're very cruel, Strict, And sometimes we expect God, To be like that also, I can't bring my heart, Messy heart before him, I can't bring my sin before God, What is God going to think of me, Ah,

[ 41 : 24 ] I've messed it up again, But what we see, Is a heart that is gentle, And lowly, And what Dan Autland, Is basically saying is, When you come to God, What you're going to be met by, Is not a pointed finger, Is not, Ah, It's you again, No, No, No, No, What you're going to be met by, Is an open arm, I mean, When you run to him, You're going to be met by, Not harshness, But an open arm, God is like a father, Who's waiting for his son to return, And when he sees his son, He'll start running to you, When we start walking to him, And that's our God, He's a father, And let me just speak to, If you're new here, Or if you're just on your, Beginning journey, To be Christians, I just want to welcome you to our God, Because many times we expect laws, And rules, And do's and don'ts when we come, But what I want to welcome you, Is to a God, Who welcomes you with no open arms, Who calls you by name,

Who's willing to take your brokenness, Who's willing to take your worries in life, And fill you with hope, And his life and joy, So church, Just to think about, When you open our hearts, What do you see, When Jesus exposes your heart, What are the things in your heart, That you have not really dealt with, But covered up, With so many things, Serving and doing, And religion, So just on that note, If you have pen, Or if you want to just spend some time, Writing, I want to encourage you, To write those things, Let's just pray in your hearts, And let the Holy Spirit, Show you in your hearts, What are the places, That you feel like, You have not really dealt with, Yeah, And can I pray for us, Before we, Go into communion, Father God, We come before you, With our hearts,

Surrender to you Lord, And we confess, I confess Lord, That there's so many times, I've done a million things, Good things, But when my heart, Is so far away from you, But Father, I want to come before you, We want to come before you, We want to thank you Lord, That you have died on the cross, And that you call us back, In grace and mercy, With open arms, So Father, We come before you, Trusting and putting our faith, In joy, Father, Before you welcome us, Help us to be a church, That is really concerned, About the heart, Help us to be a church, That is not so concerned, About production, And all these outward things, Though they are important, But to be a church, That is really making disciples, That loves you, From the heart, That has a heart, That is surrendered to you, So that we can really impact, The city of Hong Kong, For your glory Lord, So come and be glorified, In your name Jesus we pray, Amen,