

**Christianityworks**  
**God Wants to Heal My Heart**  
**0060-2**  
**Oh God, Come Heal My Heart**

Rebelling against God is such plain hard work. Because when we do that we're living in a manner that we were never intended to live.

**A New Heart**

Now I don't know about you, but I'm old enough to remember that very first heart transplant. It was performed by Dr Christiaan Barnard on the 3rd of December, 1967. The patient was Mr Louis Washkansky. Sadly he only lived for 18 days and in the end he died of pneumonia. His heart however was beating strongly right through till the end. Since then of course there have been many thousands of heart transplants. And these days they are much more successful.

The doctors have things pretty well figured out. I mean, for me it's almost impossible to imagine, how do they do that? Forty-something years ago heart transplants were a pipe dream. Today thousands are conducted around the world every year. But here's the thing. When the old heart is so diseased sometimes the only option to bring life is to implant a new heart.

A heart that will pump life into each of a hundred trillion or so cells in the human body for a good many years to come. But this heart transplant idea, it's not some new idea. Actually it's been around for thousands of years.

This week on the program again we're looking at our hearts. No, not that fist size muscle that beats two or three billion times during the average lifetime. The series is called "God Wants to Heal Our Hearts", your heart, my heart.

That place deep inside where we live. That place where we take things to heart. Where we lose heart. Where we long for something with all our heart. When God talks about the heart, He's talking the inner being. The innermost part. The seat of our appetites, our emotions, our passions, our courage, our fear. The middle. The central, the innermost part of the person.

And I remember when I first became aware of God. I mean really when I decided to give my life to Jesus. You know the amazing thing is for me is, all my life before then I just thought I was fine. I

wasn't perfect but I was pretty full of myself. I thought I was pretty crash hot. But then one day the Spirit of God came and touched me in a way that opened my heart. And one of the first things I realized was how rotten I was to the core.

It wasn't something I had to think about an awful lot. I just knew. When I gazed upon God for the first time I so deeply, so powerfully, for the first time really understood what He meant by that little word "sin". I was full of it. And you know something, when we get a powerful revelation of God like that, when His spirit reaches out and touches us with His truth like that, it's a really common reaction. We're gripped by our own inadequacies. And I think that's important finally to realize that the clothes in which we once boasted are nothing but insubstantial rags.

It happened to Isaiah the Prophet. If you have a Bible, grab it. Open it up to Isaiah chapter 6. Have a listen to what happens when He sees God down in the temple in Jerusalem in about the 8th Century BC.

*"In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne. High and lofty. And the hem of his robe filled the temple. Serephs were in attendance above him. Each had six wings. With two they covered their faces and with two they covered their feet and with two they flew. And one called to another and said 'Holy, Holy, Holy is the Lord of Hosts. The whole earth is full of His glory.' The pivots on the threshold shook at the voices of those who called and the house was filled with smoke. And I said, 'woe is me, I am lost for I'm a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips yet my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts.'"*

You see his reaction. This is the reaction of a sinner who encounters a holy, pure, perfect, glorious, awesome God. Now if that's never happened to you, you may think I'm getting a bit weird here, but for me when I experienced the warmth and the love and the forgiveness and the glory and the power of God, it was in that place that I came to realise how diseased my heart was.

How desperate my need was. I realized the poverty of my own spirit and yet it was for me and for you that Jesus said: "Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God." And I thought well, "Now what? What do I do? How do I deal with this mess that I'm in?" That was my natural reaction at the time. "I'm a doer. What do I have to do?"

Then one day I stumbled across these words in the Old Testament and they changed everything. Have a listen. God's promise through the prophet Ezekiel. Comes from Ezekiel 36 beginning at verse 26:

*"A new heart I will give you and a new Spirit I will put within you and I will remove from your body the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. I will put my Spirit within you and make you follow My statutes and be careful to observe My ordinances then you shall live in the land that I have given to your ancestors and you shall be My people and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness and I will summon the grain and make it abundant and lay no famine upon you".*

What an amazing promise. A heart transplant. That's what God promises us. A new heart. God's Spirit within us. And that's what changes the way we live. That's how God becomes our God and we become His people. He saves us from our uncleanness and brings a life of blessing. Sometimes when our heart is so diseased we can operate on it and operate on it and operate on it and nothing makes any difference because what we really need is a new heart.

Have you ever felt like Isaiah? Have you ever had that sense that no matter what you do, no matter how hard you try, you'll never be good enough for God? Me too, and I want to share a prayer with you. The prayer of King David after he committed adultery and murder and he came to his senses before God. He felt so rotten, so dirty, and so he cast himself on the mercy of God. And this is what he prayed. You can read it Psalm 51 verses 10-12:

*"Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put new and right spirit within me. Do not cast me away from your presence, do not take your Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of your salvation and sustain me in a willing spirit".*

Just when we thought we had to do it all ourselves, what we discover is that actually God has a different plan. God is going to give us a new heart. Nothing that we do but something that God does. And you know something, that's what I've discovered. In one sense, God changing me is still so much a work in progress, but the closer I draw to God, the more I discover that He changes my attitudes.

I have a compassion I never had before and a desire to serve Him that I never had before. Whereas before I always wanted everyone to notice me, God's given me a heart for people and a passion to serve Him. I never had those things before and somehow they just

happen without me thinking too much about them. God gave me a new heart. Just like that.

## **A Revival of the Heart**

One of the things that happens just about everywhere on the planet I suspect on those special holidays, those long weekends, school holidays, whatever. Many people hop in their cars and head off for a break. Sometimes they drive long distances. I mean, here in Australia, it's a big country. It's nothing for people to drive eleven or twelve hours straight to arrive at a holiday destination.

Of course the longer you drive, the more you become tired, the more your mind wanders, the more you lose concentration and so tiredness combined with the fact that there are more people on the roads leads to a spike in road accidents and fatalities. In the state where I live, a few years ago the police or the road authority or whoever it was came up with a catchy slogan that goes like this:

Stop, Revive, Survive.

Not bad! And it's true. Sometimes we have to stop and revive in order to survive. And you know, it's like that in life sometimes too. Have you been exhausted to the core, you know, so dog tired that you feel as though you can't possibly go on. There are a lot of reasons that can happen, but happen it does. And when it does we need something or someone to revive us.

Fortunately God has a plan. We've been talking these last couple of weeks on the program about our hearts. You know that place deep down inside where we live. The place where we experience joy and pain and peace and turmoil. Deep down in our hearts.

Interesting. I was listening to a social commentator being interviewed on the radio the other day and he was making the point that we are in a phase in western society at least, where it's all about perfection. The perfect latte, the perfect holiday, the perfect meal, the perfect education for our children. And this striving for perfection all the time is making people exhausted.

Because when you go to the coffee shop and the coffee isn't perfect and the service isn't perfect, people get all stressed out as though somehow life is meant to be perfect, and it just isn't. That started me thinking and I thought about it for a while and I came to the conclusion that actually sin is exhausting. You know, selfishness, pride, anger, whatever. All those things take so much energy.

Rebelling against God is such plain hard work. Because when we do that we're living in a manner that we were never intended to live, and you start feeling like you're carrying around these incredibly heavy loads and burdens. I used to be so concerned about my image. Always trying to impress. Like you're living your life for show, always in the limelight.

I was addicted to that stuff and it was exhausting. It was like, you know when you're selling your house, it's got to be perfect and neat and tidy just in case the agent brings some prospective buyer around at a moment's notice. You never relax, you never enjoy, you're always on edge. Listen to me. Millions of people are living their lives like this and it's not the way it's meant to be. Some people out there need to stop, revive and survive.

Have a listen to this. It comes from God. The Old Testament, the Book of Isaiah chapter 57 beginning at verse 15:

*"Thus says the high and lofty one who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy. He says, "I dwell in the high and holy place and also with those who are contrite and humble of spirit to revive the spirit of the humble, to revive the heart of the contrite. For I will not continually accuse nor will I always be angry for then the spirits would grow faint before me, even the souls that I have made. Because of their wicked covetousness I was angry. I struck them, I hid and I was angry but they kept turning back to their own ways. I have seen their ways but I will heal them I will lead them and repay them with comfort creating for their mourners the fruit of their lips. Peace, peace to the far and the near says the Lord and I will heal them. But the wicked are like the tossing sea that cannot keep still. It's waters toss up mire and mud. There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."*

See there's a story playing itself out here. God wants to revive our spirit. He wants to revive our heart. Now, I'm sure you know this but this text was written originally in the Hebrew language. So this word 'revive' I went back to see what it originally meant before it was translated into English. And here's the dictionary definition for the original Hebrew word. "To live, have life, remain alive, sustain life, live prosperously, live forever, be quick and be alive, be restored to life or health." Give me some of that! Says anyone who is exhausted. We have to read the rest of what God's saying through Isaiah. He talks about God's anger towards the wicked and then it talks about His mercy and grace. Isaiah Chapter 57 verses 18 and 19:

*"I have seen their ways but I will heal them. I will lead them and repay them with comfort creating for their mourners and the fruit of their lips. Peace, peace to the far and the near," says the Lord, "and I will heal them."*

See, this promised revival of the heart and the spirit, it's not for everyone.

*"I dwell in the high and holy place and also with those who are contrite and humble in spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble and to revive the heart of the contrite."*

See this is for the humble and the contrite. But for those who are rebelling against God, this is what they should expect. Isaiah Chapter 57 verses 20 & 21:

*"But the wicked," says God, "are like the tossing sea, that cannot keep still. It's waters toss up mire and mud. There is no peace," says my God, "for the wicked."*

The choice is ours really. If we set our hearts on living the life that God intends, a life that's close to Him, in Him, a life that honors Him as God, if we turn from the sin, let me call it what it is, sin that's like a heavy weight on my shoulders, here's what we should expect from God: "Revival of the spirit and revival of the heart." But if we don't humble ourselves before God, if we don't turn back to Him, then expect this: "There is no peace and no rest for the wicked."

They're God's words, not mine. If you ask someone whose heart is to honour God and to serve Him, I want to encourage you here and now to take Him at His Word. Expect Him to revive your heart. Expect Him to give you peace and rest on every side, including on the inside because actually that's what He wants to give you. He wants to give it to me and anyone else who is humble and contrite bowing their lives down to God. It's that simple really. That's it. God wants to revive our hearts. What's the matter with us that we keep running away?

What's the matter with us that we keep turning against Him, and then wondering why our hearts are sick. Wondering why we're struggling. Wondering why it's all so hard. People! Wake up! There is no peace, says God, for the wicked. But on the other hand, God dwells in the high and holy place and also with those who contrite and humble in spirit to revive their spirits and to revive their hearts.

## An Open Heart

I just want to encourage you as we head towards the end of our time together today, to be open to receiving healing in your heart from God. Most of my life I spent as a very proud man. Pride is all about having this mindset that I'm right, I'm better, I know more than you do, it's my way or the highway. That's all well and good but what pride is about, is placing our confidence in ourselves above God. And after 36 years of bitter experience I discovered this was no way to live my life. Pride closes the heart. It shuts it tight. It makes it hard as stone.

Think of our physical heart. The flesh is strong yet soft. Beating and alive, taking in blood and pumping it out, taking it in and pumping it out, with each beat, in and out, in and out. If our hearts were hard as stone we'd be dead in a couple of minutes. And so it is with the heart that God talks about. A hard heart, a closed heart, a heart that's not ready to receive. It's interesting. This is what Jesus was talking about when He said this. It comes from Matthew chapter 13 verses 13-15. This is what He said:

*"The reason I speak to them in parables is that, seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand. With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah who said, 'You will indeed listen but never understand and you will indeed look but never perceive, for this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears hard of hearing, they have shut their eyes so that they might not look with their eyes and listen with their ears and understand with their heart and turn, and I would heal them.'"*

That's what happens when we let pride get in the road. When we have a hard heart. When we see but we don't get it. When we listen but we don't understand in our hearts. I tell you, it is so easy to believe in God, to call Jesus Saviour but not let Him have sway in our hearts. Not let Him be Lord as well as Saviour and so we shut our eyes and we shut our ears and we shut our hearts tight, because we know better. And then we don't receive the healing power of God.

But listen again to what Jesus says in Matthew chapter 13, verses 15 to 17:

*"For this people's heart has grown dull, their ears are hard of hearing, they've shut their eyes, so they might not look with their eyes, and listen with their ears and understand with their hearts and turn and I would healed them. But blessed are*

*your eyes for they see and your ears for they hear. Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people long to see what you see, but did not see it and to hear what you hear but did not hear it."*

You see the blessing reserved for the one who will turn back and open up their hearts, God wants to heal our hearts. And that brings untold blessing. When we open our hearts we let Jesus in, we let in the one whom the prophets longed to see and longed to hear, but they didn't. I know what it's like to have a heart that's hardened and closed through pride.

It's easy to think that all this stuff is for someone else and not for me. I have my act together, I know, it's everybody else's fault that things are such a mess. You know that. You've experienced that. It's called pride. It's about demanding everything on our terms. I know what it is to live my life like that. I'm a past master and all I have to tell and I know what it is to open my heart to God's Word and God's Spirit and accept healing from Him. It was hard for a proud person to open his heart. To have to admit that I was wrong. To have to admit that I was a failure. But King David knew it. It was the right thing to do when he committed adultery and murder. He goes to God, he asks for forgiveness. Listen to what he prays.

Psalm 51 verses 15 – 17:

*"O Lord, open my lips and my mouth will declare Your praise, for You have no delight in sacrifice. If I were to give You a burnt offering, You wouldn't be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit, a broken and contrite heart that God, You will not despise."*

I want to encourage you today to open your heart, open it wide, let Jesus in, and take the healing that He brings.

Something I had to learn to do and it's something I've never ever regretted.