

“Achy Breaky Heart”

Jonah: Renegade Prophet, Pt 6

We’ve been looking since the start of the year at the book of Jonah, and we’re in the last chapter. And we have a couple of more weeks left, because this is a tremendously surprising chapter. As you know, God called Jonah to go to Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and preach. And almost everybody knows the part of the story where Jonah runs away and God reclaims him. But I think most people’s knowledge of the story stops with the the big fish part. But that’s just the halfway point. Then he goes to Nineveh in chapter 3 and he preaches, and we’re told that there was a massive turning to God; that the whole population got up and repented and they turned “from violence and from their evil ways.”

Now, for a preacher, you need to understand that this is our day-dream equivalent of winning an Oscar or getting to say after the Super-Bowl that “I’m going to Disney World!” This is amazing. Imagine if my sermons went viral in Austin and the result was a massive decrease in crime and physical abuse, the end of drug addiction, fixed homelessness...reduced traffic on MoPac! This is what Jonah experienced in the greatest city in his world. He saw repentance that was culturally transforming.

Which leads all the more to the surprise of **Jonah 4:1**, where we’re told the response to this miracle, “*But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry,*” and we immediately are confronted with this question. It’s a profound theological question. It goes like this: Huh? “Jonah, wait a minute. Let me get this straight. You’ve reached the climax of your career. You’ve done something that people in an Austin, a Washington DC, a New York, all kinds of people, Christian and non-Christian would give their *right hand* to see this kind of culturally transforming repentance so that the violence and the evil ways have been overturned. What are you mad about? What’s wrong?”

I’ll tell you what the answer is. The answer actually is in **James 1:8 (ESV)** where we’re told, “*He is a double-minded man, unstable in all his ways.*” Or just earlier where it says, such a person (**v.6**) “*...is like a wave of the sea that is driven and tossed by the wind.*” Just up and down, back and forth. You see, Jonah is a case study, an illustration, of that principle. How can we explain Jonah’s mood swings? His tremendous emotional instability, able to praise God in chapter 2 and a few days later saying, “I am angry enough to die.”

Why is he like that? And the answer is a divided heart. Or put it another way. Jonah believed in and served the true God, but he also believed and served a rival god. Big G and little g! And as a result of that, his heart was divided between worshipping two different things. And we're told, therefore, in James 1, a person like that is finding *constant* emotional turmoil, *tremendous* instability, praising God one day and virtually cursing Him the next.

And this morning I want you to look at your own hearts and ask this question. Do you ever experience what Jonah is experiencing? What about your own instability? What about your own bitterness? What about the fact that sometimes you also, like Jonah, feel like there is nothing to live for? Why is it that sometimes your belief in God is of no comfort to you in times of trouble? Is it possible that your own instability is due to a divided heart? Is that at least a possibility?

Let's find out, because divided hearts - hearts divided between more than one god - create that kind of instability. They create the kind of behavior you see in Jonah. They create the kind of misery and drivenness of Jonah. And the thesis this morning is that it could be true of us as well. Now let's just ask two questions of the passage. What *is* a divided heart? And how do you heal it?

First, What is a divided heart? Actually, in James 1, the phrase "divided heart" is a great little Greek word *dipsychos*, which means two psyches, or two souls, a "double-hearted person". What is that? Let's take a look. First of all, **verses 1-3**: "*But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry. He prayed to the Lord, 'O Lord, is this not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity. Now, O Lord, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live.'*"

What do we see here in Jonah that is a sign of a divided heart? Well, first of all, the clearest thing to see is his racism or his nationalism – they kind of blend. We talked about this earlier, but here's what it is. He says, "This is why I fled the first time. I knew you were gracious." Jonah was a Jew, and God had come to Israel and had shown Israel His grace. It's a very important word, *checed*, which means steadfast love, covenantal love, commitment love, saving love.

See originally, God had come to Israel and had chosen Israel and had forgiven Israel and had poured out His *checed* on Israel, and now Jonah says, "I was afraid of this. I was afraid you might give your grace to them, too. I *knew* that you are a God who is kind of promiscuous about your graciousness. I was afraid that you might forgive them." Therefore, he says, "That is what I was mad about to start with. That is what I was afraid of originally. That is why I fled the first time. I don't want *them* to have your grace...that's *ours!*"

Now that is bigotry of the most obvious sort, and on the surface you see racism. And we say, “Yeah, that is what Jonah’s sin is.” But my friends, there is something deeper going on because he also says in verse 3, not only did he not want them to get the grace of God, and now that it looked like they *would* be getting the grace of God, he says, “Ok, then I’d just assume die.” And at this point, we have an idea about what a divided heart is.

When a person says, “I would just as soon die,” they’re saying, “I don’t have any meaning in life. *Something* was in my life that gave my life meaning, and now it’s gone so I have no purpose left.” Whatever that thing is, it *has* to be a god. It has to be something they got their identity from, something that gave them meaning and purpose, something that gave them a reason for being, and it’s gone. That’s why Jonah is able to say, “...*it is better for me to die than to live.*”

And look at who he’s saying this to. Who is talking to Jonah.? *God* is talking to Jonah, and Jonah is saying to God, “I have no meaning in life.” Jonah is looking at the *only* source of meaning in life and saying, “I have no meaning in life.” Jonah is looking at the *only* reason to get up in the morning and he’s saying, “I have no reason to get up in the morning.” Something has been more of a god to Jonah than God.

How blindly foolish to be sitting and saying to God, “I have no reason in life,” looking right at the only reason there is for life.

Now listen, you may not have used such words as this – I *have* by the way, if we’re keeping score - but what Jonah is saying is, “I don’t feel like getting up in the morning.” Why? “I have no reason to get up. I have no motivation. *Why* get up? What is there out there for me?” Maybe some of you have had that kind of feeling? Actually, there is a good philosophical name for that. Heidegger calls it “angst”, existential despair, a sense of feeling like, “What am I really here for?” Cosmic alienation. “There is nothing out there for me.”

If you haven’t felt like Jonah, you’re young, maybe; you haven’t lived a very long time; or you’ve lived, so far, a charmed and unreflective life. And I can absolutely guarantee you it won’t last. Jonah has lost his meaning in life, and when that happens, it’s because he has lost his god – little g. There was some other god. Now what was that other god? Well, without taking too much time on it, because we want to really be looking at ourselves, here, that other god was the national security of his people. We know that Assyria eventually *did* sack the nation of Israel.

Quick history; there were originally 12 tribes of Israel and about 200 years before the Jonah story they had a civil war and split into two kingdoms – 10 northern tribes made up Israel and 2 southern tribes made up Judea. And about 50 years *after* our story, Assyria, Nineveh, did make war against Israel, devastated the nation and led the people off into captivity, never to return. So Jonah wasn't wrong! Judea lasted another couple of centuries before the Babylonians did the same thing to them. The Babylonians defeated the Assyrians, which by the way, the prophet Isaiah says was God's punishment on Nineveh for what they did to Israel! Oh what tangled webs we weave...

Which goes to show that just because your enemy is wrong gives you no right before God to be wrong also. Oh, if I could get the American church to own this – that the bedrock Christian ethic is cheek-turning, not counter-punching! Ok, so look, Jonah loves his people. That's good. Jonah is a patriot. That's good.

But... when it has turned into bloodlust, when it has turned in his heart so that now he wants to see these dirty pagans nuked by God, that good thing had become an idol. That good thing, which is love for his people, had become a god. When he realized that Israel was not certain to win this power struggle, when he realized that Israel's national interest had not been secured, he lost all of his meaning in life. *And* he became angry at God, which shows in Jonah's heart there was a true God and there was a rival god.

And as long as serving the true God – Yahweh - enabled him to serve his rival god – nationalism - everything was fine. But on the day that to serve the true God meant he'd have to stop serving his rival god, which was the national security of his people, his own pride and his ethnic pedigree, his religiosity and so on... On the day in which he had to choose between the true God and the rival god, he turned *against* the true God. Which proves Jonah was *using* the true God to serve his rival god. He was making the true God a means to an end.

Can you look at yourself for a moment here? You don't see that? Look at it like this. Do you have anything in your life that you simply *must have* to be happy? You simply *have* to have it. You may be Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, you may say, "Here's what my faith is," but what I want to know today is not what you *say* you believe, but what is your *real* religion, what is your *real* salvation, what are you *really* living for?

Don't just tell me who your professed god is. Who is your *functional* master in your day-to-day life? Your *functional* master; those gods, those things that you must have. If you don't have them they drive you into the ground with despair. To get them they'll drive you in your goals and in your schedule and in your spending. What are your functional masters?

There's a classic quote from a great book by Becky Pippert that I read way back in college. She says, "Whatever controls us is our lord. The person who seeks power is controlled by power. The person who seeks acceptance is controlled by the people he or she wants to please. We do not control ourselves. We are controlled by the lord of our life. If Jesus is our Lord, then he is the one who controls, he has the ultimate power. There are no bargains. We cannot manipulate him by playing, 'Let's make a deal.'" (*Out of the Saltshaker*, 53) There is no in between; God doesn't share custody of your heart.

Somebody says, "Ok, you're scaring me. I know what you're talking about. I sense this loss of meaning. The true god that I think I believe is no comfort to me. All right. I understand. But how do I know what these functional masters are?" Well, let me give you two little tests, and they're brief. First, look at how you respond to unanswered prayers and frustrated hopes. You see, *if* you ask God for something - or if you're not a praying person, if you just hope and work real hard for something - and you don't get it...you get sad, you feel down, but then you go on. You say, "Hey, life isn't over. You win some, you lose some." Then those are not likely your functional masters.

But when you pray for something and then you work for something and you strive for something and you don't get it, and you respond like Jonah does, "I am angry enough to die," existential despair, loss of any future orientation, nothing to live for, the only reason I had to get up in the morning...At that point, you're looking at God and you're saying, "I have no security," and you're saying that to the only true security that there is in the universe.

Look, think of it like this. Look at your chair; are you sitting still? No. We are all of us on this little ball of rock called Earth spinning through space at billions of miles an hour. If the gravitational mix wasn't just right, we'd all be spun into oblivion, or our heads would explode or something. Now, we're not the only, and certainly not the biggest, object in the universe and we can't steer this rock. So there is absolutely no guarantee we don't have a collision with an object which State Farm does not cover. But even if we don't join the dinosaurs in mass extinction, it doesn't matter because there will come a day for every single person in this room, on which a trap door will open underneath us and we will fall off of this little ball of rock. And underneath the trapdoor are either the everlasting arms of your loving Heavenly Father or existential nothingness. Now, *where* is your sense of security?

Friends, God comes to you and says in His Word and in the gospel, “My dear children, if *I’m* not your security, if I’m not your meaning in life, you’ve *got* none. Where will you build your nest? What tree is sturdy enough to weather the storms? Eventually every tree in this forest of life is coming down. Build your nest in the rock.” So the first test is how do you respond to unanswered prayers and unfulfilled dreams.

Secondly, look at when you get the most down on yourself. An idol, a false god, in your life *speaks* like a god. It whispers in your ear and it says, “If you satisfy all my standards, then you can feel good about yourself, you’re an acceptable person. But if you do not - if you fail to live up to my standards - you’re not a worthwhile person. You are nothing.” A false god speaks like that. And when you feel the most down on yourself is when you are dissatisfying one of these gods that is operating in your life. The gods are displeased!

Don’t you see, these are the voices that *drive* you? Drive you right into the ground if you’ll let them. And Christianity is kingdom power to topple the gods that *drive* you. Christianity is a whole new approach to your life. The psychologizer and the moralizer will both tell you how to deal with the voices, and they are pretty much who we most often turn to.

The psychologizer says, “The reason you’re unhappy is because you have low self-esteem. You’re acceptable just as you are. Guilt feelings are bad. Just ignore them.” The moralizer says, on the other hand, the opposite. He says, “Oh no, no, no, no, no. The reason you *feel* bad is because you *are* bad! You’re not living according to the rules. Obey the rules and then you’ll feel good.”

The gospel-centered Christian comes and says, “Listen, the reason you feel bad is because, like all human beings, you want to be your own savior. And so you choose certain things, that if you do that, if you accomplish that, then you can feel good and acceptable about yourself.” But most of our deepest desires for success are efforts for us to try to be to for ourselves what only Jesus Christ can be for us.

In other words, we find *some* area of life that we say, “I’ll do well there – with money, with fame, with family, with respect, with intelligence, with appearance, whatever - and *that* will be my life and *that* will be my righteousness,” and those are *gods* that are in your life and they’re driving you. And until you turn from them and turn to Jesus Christ - whose yoke is easy and whose burden is light - these gods will crush you. That is what it means to have a divided heart. And those are a couple of tests to look for those gods. They’re there. If you know yourself, you know they’re there.

See that is what we've seen in Jonah. We see the signs of a divided heart. Don't forget the superficial signs usually are not the same as the underlying problem. The symptoms are not the disease. You may have superficial problems like Jonah, who was a bigot. Jonah was racist. Jonah was a nationalist. But underneath it came from a divided heart.

So in your own case, you may need spiritual discernment to look *beneath* the superficial problems, and look underneath and say, "Well, my real problem is a divided heart; a rival god to God, a functional god versus a true God, and they have to have it out in my heart. No wonder my heart feels like a battleground." Can't just sweep the cobwebs, got to find that spider.

Ok, what is the next thing? **Second question is, How can we heal a divided heart?** What is the solution? I'm going to suggest three things we get from this chapter, three ways a divided heart is healed, three ways God helps Jonah with a divided heart. The **first** thing you have to know is the task of moving from a divided heart to a pure heart is a process. In the Bible whenever you see the word "pure" ("blessed are the pure in heart"), we're not talking about a perfect heart but about a *single* heart. The opposite of a pure heart in the Bible is not an impure heart; it's a *divided* heart.

How do you get a pure heart? It is a process. Very important to understand that it is a process. If you think in a single catharsis here this morning you're finally going to get rid of it forever – a single emotional response - you're going to be very disappointed. In fact, what you'll likely do is trade in one false god for another. You'll swap a secular idol for a religious idol and you'll still be miserable – probably just nastier.

You need to realize that it is a process. This morning don't say, "Do I have a divided a heart or not?" You do. It's a question of, "How bad is it?" Do you have a rival god? Yes. The question is...has that rival god worked it's way up over the *true* God? Has it gotten the upper hand? Anybody work with computer security? Do you set up a firewall on your network and say, "Well, *that's* done! So long viruses. I'll never have to deal with that again." You'd be dead in the water.

Let me tell you what the process is like. A couple of weeks ago I played a clip from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*, and I enjoyed it so much, I want to show you another. [**Swamp Castle :34**]. How do you build a castle in a swamp? You've got to keep digging down through the muck and through the goop until you hit bedrock. And the first few times you try it's likely to burn down, fall over and sink into the swamp!

Jonah's heart was a castle in a swamp. Again and again it looked like he was getting to the bottom, reaching bedrock. See, To reach bedrock is when you get to the place where you're serving God not for what you're going to **get out of Him**, but when you're serving God **for who He is** in Himself.

Jonah chapter 1, Jonah chapter 2, Jonah chapter 3, we keep thinking we're going to get to bedrock here. We think we have the pilings all the way down to the bottom of Jonah's heart, and what do you know, you turn around and the castle has burned down, fallen over and sunk into the swamp! The same mud, the same anger, the same bigotry. And it means we have to go deeper. We have to go further. There is a certain sense in which you've spent all of your life drilling to what you think is the bottom, and then you find out it's a false bottom.

A mature Christian is not somebody who has hit all of the way to the bottom but somebody who is pretty close. And there are other false bottoms that you're eventually going to get to. Crashing and burning and finally finding out, "Wait a minute. I *thought* I was serving God for who He was and not for myself, but look, there's another bottom here." You fall over and you sink into the swamp yet again. Christian life is like that.

In the very beginning, almost always, when you first come to God, you come completely for selfish reasons. Anybody who has done any kind of growing in the Christian life will look back and realize the original reason you sought God was totally selfish. It might have been because you're a lonely person and there were a bunch of people who you liked and you wanted to be included and they turned out to be Christians, so you tagged along.

It could be that you originally went to God because a problem came up in your life and you thought, "Disaster!" It was the main god of your life and you saw a disaster – divorce, disease, bankruptcy - so you came and you started bargaining with God. You said, "What do you want me to do? I'll clean up my life. Will you make sure you keep my functional god – happiness, health, success – keep that intact?" We almost *always* come to God like that. But when we do, we end up meeting the real God. And the real God, in spite of our bad motives, will actually meet us through those efforts. God is so gracious.

He comes to us and says, "My dear friend. I am not your pet. I am not somebody you can put on a leash and get out and do tricks when you want. I'm not somebody who can be negotiated with or bargained with. You *can't* bargain with me. You have nothing to bargain *with*. I created you. Only by my sustaining power every moment do your molecules even hold together. And only at the infinite cost of my Son can your sins be dealt with and forgiven and can I know you personally. Bargain? Every chip you have is mine!"

God comes and says, “Therefore, do not use me. I am not someone to be used. Love me and care for me and serve me for who I am. It is unreasonable, it is immoral, and it is impractical for you to use me to some other end and worship anything more than me – put anything in your life above me. It’s absolutely foolish because your heart was built for a nobler object to worship than that. And if you *do* worship that, you will find your soul withering, hardening, and eventually turning cold as ice.”

So God comes to us with all of our bad motives and says, “Love me for me. I love you for you. Don’t use me. I didn’t give you my love to use you, because I don’t need you. I’m God, you’re a human being – you have nothing I need - I love just because I love you. Love me for who I am. Love me for me.” Don’t you see how reasonable it is to say, “Oh Lord, reign without a rival in my heart.”

We *always* come in using God. We always come trying to use Him to get to our real god, trying to play the true God against the real god. But when we meet the real God, He comes and says, “Ok, it’s time to move on from that. That will be bad for you. I’m so glad that your bad motives enabled you to finally come to me. But now learn who I am, seek me for who I am, and let’s build a sure foundation for your heart.”

It’s a process. It goes on the rest of your life. If you think you’ve come to the end of it, you have hardly begun it. That is the reason why you must be very careful not to be too devastated when you find yourself crashing through a false bottom and there is more goop down there. No shame. Don’t avoid church. Nope, just come on in and admit your latest castle sank into the swamp. So, first thing, it’s a process.

The **second** thing you have to know if you want to be healed of a divided heart is that you must see that God often takes away a comfort so that we can see what we really rely on. Now we’ll talk much more about this next time, but after Jonah’s little pout, God graciously brought a little comfort. Look at **v.6**, “*Then the Lord God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine.*” May not seem like that big a deal, but this is modern day Iraq remember – desert – we’re Texans, we know the value of a good shade tree.

But look what happens next, (**v.7-8**), “*But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered. 8 When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah’s head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, “It would be better for me to die than to live.”* God takes it away. *Why?* To show Jonah his divided heart. We’ll look at it next time, but a perfect example of it is what happened in the book of Job.

We did a series a few years ago on Job called “When Life Sucks” – we don’t pull punches at SWFF. And yes, it’s spelled J-O-B, but it’s pronounced Job. On the new Kanye West post-conversion album, there’s a place where he says “Job used to be a job to me.” I love that! But quick set-up, Job was a prosperous man. And the story says one day Satan drops by to visit with God – there’s *lots* of mystery in the story - and God says to Satan, (**Job 1:8 NLT**) “~~Then the Lord asked Satan,~~ “*Have you noticed my servant Job? He is the finest man in all the earth. He is blameless—a man of complete integrity. He fears God and stays away from evil.*””

And Satan turns around and says, (**v.9**) “*Does Job fear God for nothing?*” What is Satan saying? He’s saying, “He doesn’t serve you for you. As long as everything is going good in life, as long as his *true* god and his *real* god are working together, everything is fine. But he worships his wealth and he worships his prosperity. Get rid of it and then we’ll see how he deals with you.”

And what happens is God does allow his wealth to be swept away and Job does spend a good deal of time running around and getting angry. Like Jonah, Job was saying, “I’m angry enough to die.” Finally God appears to him in the whirlwind and he says, “Job. Job! Why so down, buddy? Because I stopped

serving you? Because I stopped helping you reach your goals? Is *that* it? Who is the servant in this religion? Let me get that straight now again. Who is the servant and who is the god? Job, serve me for who I am.”

And when Job finally sees who he is, he says, (**Job 42:5-6**) “*My ears had heard of you but now my eyes have seen you. Therefore I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes.*” And finally he’d hit the bedrock of his heart. Only now could God build a castle in Job’s swamp that would stand. And sometimes the only the way God can get you down to bedrock is by taking away a comfort to open your eyes to see that there is still a lot of goop down there.

Lastly, a divided heart is healed not only by a process and not only by God allowing discomforts into your life, but **third, and finally, a divided heart is only healed when you finally get a grasp of the radical grace of God.** The first time Jonah broke through to a kind of bedrock was in Jonah 2. We saw the the climax of that prayer where Jonah says, (**Jonah 2:8-9**) “*Those who cling to worthless idols forfeit the grace that could be theirs...Salvation comes from the Lord.*”

And what he was saying is, “I finally see that salvation is completely of God, totally of grace. And whether you’re a dirty pagan or a respectable moral person, we both need the grace of God.” And when Jonah finally saw that, he was free from earning his own acceptability and he was empowered to preach. But he has forgotten about that and he needs to remember it if he’s going to have that same peace. So God’s trying to bring him back to it again.

In the New Testament, in **Hebrews 10:22 ESV**, it says, “*Let us draw near with a **true heart**...*” – a pure heart – “*...in full assurance of faith, with our hearts **sprinkled clean from an evil conscience**...*” Sprinkled with what? The writer tells us in the previous chapter. What purify’s our conscience? (**Hebrews 9:14 ESV**), “*How much more will **the blood of Christ**, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, **purify our conscience**...*” – and what does our conscience need to purified from? - “*...from **dead works to serve the living God**.*”

Now this is the bottom line. If you want a pure heart, if you want a *single* heart, it has to be sprinkled clean from dead works. What that means is we all have a desire, as we’ve been saying here all along, to *earn* our salvation, to be acceptable through our own performance. And until we see that these idolatrous pursuits are crushing us because we can never live up to them, we’re going to always find our hearts divided.

But until you finally hear God coming to you in the gospel, and God comes and says, “Listen, aren’t you tired of being driven by what your parents say, by what your culture says, by what your peers say? Aren’t you tired of being driven by these gods because you feel like you won’t be *acceptable* unless you live up to those standards? If you come to me in Jesus Christ, I accept you *now*. My opinion is the *only* one that matters. Do you hear me?” This is what God is saying to you. He says, “Sprinkle your heart clean from dead works, and the idol’s power is broken.”

Let me just conclude. A radical grasp of the grace of God, coming to God during times of suffering when your comforts are removed, realizing it’s a process ...that is how you have to get rid of a divided heart. Thankfully, God will keep after you until you break down through to bedrock. And do you know why God will do it?

Because, anything you *add* to Jesus Christ as a requirement to be happy; anything you say, “I love Jesus but...” as a requirement to be happy, that thing or those things will strangle you. They will kill you. It will make it impossible for you to really get any of the sweetness and joy out of your Christian faith. God has to break their hold on you. They are crushing burdens of dead works, those things that you *must* have.

“It’s not enough that I’m a Christian, I have to have that, too.” Anything you add to Jesus Christ as a requirement for being happy will develop a strangle hold on you, and it will eventually kill you. And until God breaks that strangle hold, you will be a miserable person. Get rid of the “dead works” that are burdening your conscience. As the old hymn goes...

Cast your deadly “doing” down
Down at Jesus’ feet;
Stand in Him, in Him alone,
Gloriously complete.

And if there is anybody here who is thinking, “Wait a minute, let me get this straight. If I want to receive Jesus Christ as Savior, I have to love him perfectly from the heart with no bad motives?” That is *not* what I am saying. Absolutely not. Do you hear the radical grace of God? You are not accepted by God on the basis of the purity of your heart. Oh no. No way.

Instead, you have to turn and trust. Turn means to say, “Lord I see these things in my life. I recognize now that I’m trying to be my own savior and I’m serving other things. So forgive me for that. I intend to forsake them.”

Then you turn around and trust and you say, “Lord I see now that *Jesus* has lived a life of greatness for me. *Jesus* has taken my punishment for all my sins. And therefore, if I come to you now, you can accept me finally and conclusively because of what he has done.” *That* is what it means to become a Christian.

Your heart, will *never* be pure enough for God. Not while it’s still beating in this body. But the good news is, Jesus heart *already was* pure enough. And it can be applied to your life. He will put that new heart in you. And all you have to do it to some extent this morning.

I’m going to ask the band to come and lead us in a song, and if you want to make some kind of commitment to God today, whether it’s saying, “Lord, break me through to bedrock,” or maybe for the first time, “I want to receive you as Savior,” let’s take some time to pray. Afterwards I’ll come and close us out.

Sing with us...