

Stops on the Journey: What Can Fix a Broken Heart?  
Mark 7:1-23

## **I. The Purpose of Jesus**

### **A. Finding Purpose**

#### 1. The Young Man's Question

A frustrated young man went to see the wise man in his village. He reached a point in his life where he knew he should do something with his life. The options were many, the opportunities abundant, yet his sense of direction was unclear and undefined. Maybe you've been there as well in your life?

"I don't know what to do with my life. How do I find my purpose?" the young man asked.

The wise old man looked at him with the eyes of experience and a heart of understanding. Raising his hand in a gesture of invitation the older man said to the younger, "Follow me."

They walked silently. They trudged together along the road, an ever so slight and knowing smile on the face of the wise man, a puzzled look clouding the face of the seeker. After a time they came to a far away river where they found dozens of prospectors panning for gold.

#### 2. The Wise Man's Answer

"What do you see?" the old man asked. The young man surveyed the scene before him. Men and women kneeling in and along the length of the river on both sides. Some shoveled sand. Others swished water in shallow pans, surveying what was left before they dumped the river gravel back into the water.

Finally, deciding it was not a trick question and it was okay to state the obvious, the young man answered and said, "It looks like people are panning for gold here."

"Yes," the sage said. "If you look closely you will see that there are three types of prospectors here."

Puzzled, because everyone seemed to be busy about the same general business, doing mostly the same things, and appearing mostly the same in their work clothes, the young man asked, "What do you mean?"

"There are those who strike gold straight away. Excited, they take their plunder, cash it in and live comfortably for the rest of their lives. Then there are those who pan for years. They know that there is gold here and they have seen others strike it rich, so they persist until they too find the gold that they've been searching for."

"Oh, I see," said the young man. "And what about the third type?" he asked.

"They are the individuals who get frustrated that they haven't found what they are looking for, so after a day, a week or a year or more, they give up, walk away and never find gold."

#### 3. The Wise Man's Point

Slightly confused but feeling there was something here he really wanted to understand, the young

man asked, “What has this got to do with finding my purpose?”

“My son, there are those in life who look for their purpose and seem to find it almost immediately. From a young age they have a clear sense of purpose and pursue their dreams with energy and enthusiasm. Some others have to look a bit harder, perhaps for many years, but if they persist and keep looking, they will find something to live for. Finally, there are those who want to know their purpose, but they become frustrated with the search and give up too soon, returning to a life of meaningless wandering.

“The question, of course, is which of these will you be? There are no guarantees that you will be able to find your purpose quickly, the only guarantee is that if you give up and stop looking for it, you’ll never find it. Just as those men and women need to get down to the river with a pan to find their gold, so you will need to remain active to find your purpose. You won’t find it sitting around at home doing nothing.”

## **B. The Purpose of Jesus**

### **1. Jesus knows His Purpose**

#### **a. Jesus in the Temple**

I tell you that story this morning because Jesus seems to have been one who from early on knew His purpose. Luke tells us that as a twelve year old, Jesus accompanied His parents to the temple one Passover, and in the commotion of a crowded city, got left behind when the family began their journey home. After two days of travel and three days of searching, his parents finally found Him astounding the elders and teachers in the temple with His insight and wisdom. When questioned by His parents about His absence He said to them, “Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” The KJV translates Jesus’ question as, “Did you not know I must be about my Father’s business?”

#### **b. Other evidence**

- (1) When we are introduced to Jesus early in Mark’s gospel we find that Jesus arrives on the scene “proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’”
- (2) Jesus affirms his mission again when He invites His disciples to follow Him into the villages that dot the surrounding countryside to preach, saying that was the reason He had come.
- (3) Jesus states His sense of purpose in other ways as well. “For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me,” he says.
- (4) In John 12:27 (ESV), Jesus explains to his disciples and the crowd still following Him on that Palm Sunday, “Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.”
- (5) Standing on trial before Pilate just a few days later, Jesus answers Pilate’s question whether He is a king with these words: “You say that I am a king. For this purpose I was born

and for this purpose I have come into the world—to bear witness to the truth.”

## 2. The Purposeful Journey of Jesus

### a. Where He Is Going

Jesus seems to have been a man who knew His purpose. He knew His direction. He knew what He was about and where He was headed. Jesus’ life was a steadfast journey to the cross to do His Father’s will. Starting here in Mark 7, Jesus travels take on a sense of direction. He makes His final, purposeful journey to Jerusalem. There will be stops along the journey as He reveals more of Himself and His purpose to those who follow Him, but from here on out, this journey has one destination: Calvary, the cross, and crucifixion, the fulfilment of the Father’s will.

### b. What His Journey Means for Us

#### (1) Generally

Jesus’ activities illustrate the motivation and conduct of a life lived in utter devotion to the Father’s will. As such, He reveals the game plan for disciples’ lives. He has not come to show us how to live our lives for ourselves, but how to live our lives for the Father’s glory, which is the creation purpose of every human life.

These next four chapters in Mark represent the journey we must all take with Jesus. He will lead us to the cross. He will direct us to unhindered devotion. We will follow Him into unflinching faith, unshakeable understanding, unending joy, and unobstructed glory, with a few stops along the way.

#### (2) Mark 7:1-23 Specifically

The passage before us, Mark 7:1-23 introduces the first stop on the journey to Jerusalem. Here **Jesus reveals three spiritual realities every human being faces. In making these revelations He poses the most significant unspoken question any of us can ever ask.**

## II. The Spiritual Realities in Mark 7:1-23

### A. Perfectly good human efforts at obedience can become spiritual bondage that replace grace.

1. The Pharisees in the story
  - a. Ignore compelling evidence of Jesus’ power to do good
  - b. Focus on the failure of the disciples to observe traditions
    - (1) We still see this today
    - (2) People reject Christ and focus on the weaknesses and sins of the church
      - (a) An internet rabbi seeks to debunk Christianity by pointing to the failings of Christians to meet the expectations of Judaism
      - (b) Unbelievers will point to the worldliness and weakness of believers as justification for rejecting Jesus and faith in Him
2. Washing and the “Tradition of the Elders”
  - a. Exodus 30:18-21 and 40:31 describe a basin to be placed in the courtyard of the tabernacle to be used by the priests for washing their

- hands and feet before ministering in the tabernacle/temple
- b. There are no other commandments for the people washing their hands prior to eating
- c. However, over time, interpreters of Scripture, wanting the general population to be found by God as holy as the priests were to be, not only extended the rule to the general public, they extended the scope of the rule itself
  - (1) May seem like a good idea, but think about it, it this not a means of saying to God, “You know what is best, but we can do you one better!”
  - (2) Isn’t this exactly the sin of the garden? You said no, but we say so.
- 3. “You leave the commandment of God and hold to the tradition of men.”
  - a. The problem is not an effort to please God
  - b. The problem is when we make our efforts of equal or greater authority than God’s word in our lives and in the lives of others.
    - (1) “Jesus does not condemn all tradition, but only the improper elevation of human tradition to sacred status.”
    - (2) We have to remain careful that we do not adopt as spiritual authority that which does not come from God
      - (a) Paul requires modesty
      - (b) Hair up, no makeup or jewelry, long sleeves and no dresses above the knees.
      - (c) When we say that in order to be “modest” you must follow “these rules we made up”,
        - i) we are crossing the line between commandment and tradition
        - ii) and infringing on the authority of God
  - c. Not only do we infringe on God’s authority, we sabotage His grace.

**B. Perfectly good divine commandments meant to reveal God’s holiness can be twisted by selfish people into tools for sin.**

- 1. Difference from the last reality
  - a. Previous: trying to do good but getting it wrong
  - b. This: taking good and making it wrong
- 2. Corban
  - a. Treachery in religious clothing
  - b. “Dedicating one’s assets to God as a promise so that those assets could be excused from supporting one’s parents
- 3. “Making void the word of God by your tradition”
  - a. **Isaiah 55:10–11 (ESV)** <sup>10</sup>“*For as the rain and the snow come down from heaven and do not return there but water the earth, making it bring forth and sprout, giving seed to the sower and bread to the eater, <sup>11</sup>so shall my word be that goes out from my mouth; it shall not return to me void, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it.*”

- (1) Like rain watering the earth and bringing forth its abundance, God intends His word to bring forth abundant grace, revelation, mercy, and righteousness
  - (2) Any time we twist God's word to suit ourselves we violate the purpose of God!
- b. **2 Peter 3:16 (ESV)** <sup>16</sup>*as he does in all his letters when he speaks in them of these matters. There are some things in them that are hard to understand, which the ignorant and unstable twist to their own destruction, as they do the other Scriptures.*
- (1) Why we keep urging you to learn good interpretation principles as you read and study God's word
  - (2) Why we keep urging you to look carefully at words and context in your Bible reading and study as you look to understand and apply God-given principles to your lives
  - (3) God intends His word to accomplish His purpose in your life for His glory and your good, and we would not have you miss the good God has for you by misusing His word.

**C. There are no perfectly good hearts.**

1. Since it is Valentine's Day, let's talk about hearts!
2. What comes out of a person is what defiles him . . .
  - a. All of these evils come from within and they defile a person
  - b. Sermon on the Mount defines sin as an attitude and condition before it is ever an action.
    - (1) We cannot look at this list and breathe a sigh of relief as if our sin is not listed
    - (2) Every one of these is rooted in a broken commandment, a selfish attitude, or a sinful nature (or all the above!)
3. Every human heart is broken and capable of the other two realities
  - a. Becoming self-reliant rather than grace reliant
  - b. Twisting God's word to justify our own self-interest.
4. Every unredeemed, unconfessed, unforgiven human heart stands defiled and condemned before God!

**III. The unspoken question: What can fix a broken heart?**

**A. The implied question: If my broken heart is such a problem, and following man made rules is fraught with danger, then what can fix this broken heart?**

1. We know a fix is called for.
  - a. ***Be ye holy for I the Lord your God am holy.***
    - (1) We were created to bear the moral image of God in the world
    - (2) We remain constrained to finding and conveying the character of God in and through our lives.
  - b. We cannot be "holy" in any sense, whether we want to or not, until our broken heart is mended.
    - (1) Self-effort through external ceremonies and observances will not fix a corrupt heart

- (a) Never the intent of the Law to produce internal holiness
- (b) The intent of the Law was to lead us to Christ!
- (2) Theological gymnastics will not fix a broken heart
- c. So, what can fix a broken heart?

## B. The Fix for One

- 1. You must be born again
- 2. You must be born again through the work of the Holy Spirit and faith in Jesus
  - a. **John 6:37 (ESV)** <sup>37</sup>*All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.*
  - b. **Romans 10:9–10 (ESV)** <sup>9</sup>*because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* <sup>10</sup>*For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.*
    - (1) Confess the brokenness and need in your heart
    - (2) Confess the provision and promise of God in Christ

## C. The Fix for Some

- 1. Jesus sent people like you and me into the world with a living message, people who have embraced their brokenness and God's forgiveness
- 2. The greatest gift you can give the world today is a saved soul's eager testimony
  - a. Christ's purpose was to bring God's saving fix to your broken heart.
    - (1) **Ephesians 3:18-19 (ESV)** <sup>18</sup>*may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth,* <sup>19</sup>*and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.*
    - (2) God's grace through Christ's love
      - (a) overspreads the spread of your sin
      - (b) reaches beyond the furthest extent of your guilt
      - (c) undergirds the deepest depth of your shame
      - (d) overcomes the distant height of heaven and hope
  - b. Your purpose is to take to that fix to the world with the same Spirit-motivated, Spirit-empowered commitment Jesus shared.
    - (1) Broken hearts are being revealed all around us
    - (2) Listen with loving ears
    - (3) Speak with certain faith
    - (4) Pray with real power
    - (5) Live intentional lives that follow Jesus without reservation