

You Have an Unhealthy Heart ... But a Great Cardiologist

Introduction

- What all these terms or phrases have in common: cardiopulmonary testing, angiogram, angioplasty, echocardiogram, electrocardiogram, atrial fibrillation (AFib), stress test, cardiac arrest, triple bypass, Coumadin & Plavix? Common? All have do with heart health/disease. If you've ever had heart surgery or suffered from heart disease, some terms you may be all too familiar with. Heart problems leading cause death in US; more people die of heart disease than of all forms cancer combined.ⁱ So you don't want have dr tell you: you have unhealthy heart (YHUH).
- Yet that's exactly what Jesus says in Gospel for today: YHUH. Not talking re ventricles, atria, your physical heart. Talking re spiritual heart: created in image of God to love God, love neighbor – just like Jesus said, 2 greatest coms: love Lord God all heart, love neighbor as self (Mt 22:37-40). That's the heart, Jesus says, unhealthy – does not beat with love for God/neighbor like supposed to; diseased with sin. So, just like dr speaking to patient, today Jesus says us: YHUH.

The Unhealthy Heart

- Today turn to Mk 7; listen to this harsh diagnosis: vs. 6. What prompted these harsh words? Remem, in Gospel: Phars vs. 2. Mk goes on explain: vs. 3, 4b. Not like Jesus against hand/dish washing. It's imp to wash hands before eat; and got to wash dishes after eat. But this is talking re ritual/ceremonial washing – like priests did at temple for worship – which not wrong for people to do. But what was wrong: Phars making it into law; called it sinful not to do this ritual washing. And Phars did this all time: took God's law, put all kinds extra manmade laws around God's law. (Called "trad of elders.")
- Listen what Jesus says re that: vs. 6-8. They felt: their rules more imp than God's. And what happens when you base your rel w/ God on rules? If focus on following rules to earn God's favor, get on God's good side, instead trusting God's grace: what really doing, saying, "I think God should be happy with me; quite impressed. Look at me: I do what he says; more than what says; I go above, beyond; I do more than what most people do. God ought be impressed." Recognize what that is? Self-righteous hypocrisy. Jesus calls it like it is: vs. 6a. And that self-right hypsyp comes from one place: human heart, our heart. So on outside you may look healthy, strong; but on inside, YHUH.
- Just like how heart disease can run in family, so also spiritual disease of heart runs in family, as well. Goes all way back to parents, A&E; passed down to us (and all people!) sinful nature, UH. Passage from Gen 6:5 comes to mind: "**The LORD saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time.**" That's heart's unhealthy condition: OEAT, bec of original sin & our sinful nature.
- And there are symptoms of this UH. Vs. 21-23. Our heart is source of all sin; overflows with sin. Makes me think of when sewer lateral backs up; black water rises up through basement floor drains – disgusting! That's like what spills out of depths of human heart: whether thoughts (greed, envy), words (slander, arrogance), or deeds (theft, murder, adultery). All you have to do, look into your own heart; won't take long to find these symptoms. Simple fact: human heart is corrupt by nature. YHUH.

The Great Cardiologist

- But, good news in all this: you have great card (GC). I started off with long list heart procedures (angiogram, echocardiogram). When you're dealing with heart disease, you want good card who knows exactly what procedures to use to improve heart health. When dealing w/ sinful nature (far more deadly than even heart attack, bec spiritual heart disease leads to hell), you want good card. My friends, you have one! Your Savior JC, the great physician of body/soul: he is your GC!
- For one thing, he's upfront with you re heart condition. This whole passage is Jesus talking re unhealthy human heart; all law. But Jesus also knows how heal heart. And throughout Bible, many beautiful gospel passages that talk re how our GC brings healing to our hearts.

- Start with **Ezek 36:26** (love!) – **“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.”** That’s spiritual heart transplant. Lord surgically removes your heart of stone (unbelief), replaces with heart of flesh – heart of faith in Christ as Savior from sin. God gives us brand new heart.
- **Ps 51: “Create in me a pure heart, O God”** – new heart, that beats with faith, love for Jesus. We see beating heart of Jesus’ love for us on cross. Was heart of love that drove him to cross in first place. And there on cross, Jesus poured out, for us, love from his heart, blood from his heart – until heart stopped beating, and sacrifice to pay for our sins, as Jesus said was “finished.” No card you’ll ever see: would give his life to save yours; and no card...could revive his own dead heart after it stops beating. But that’s exactly what our GC has done for us: Jesus gave life on cross to save us, and 3 days later started his heart back up again, beating with new life when rose from dead.
- And this death/res of Jesus: this what forgives our sins, renews our hearts; and also calms hearts. **“Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. In my Father’s house are many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am” (Jn 14:1-3, NIV 84).** Someday, after you die, Jesus going to start your heart up again, too. He’s going raise you from dead, get your heart beating again, bring you to live with him in heaven, in our Father’s house. He’s got room ready for you. **“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”**
- Maybe one more passage: **Heb 10:22-23** – **“Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful” (NIV 84).** Your GC never let you down. Even though this heart will someday stop beating, Jesus has given you new, healthy heart, filled with faith. And that’s where Jesus lives right now – in your Xian heart, by faith (Eph 3:17). So hold unwaveringly to Jesus, and draw near to him. He has sprinkled your heart with his blood from his heart to cleanse you from sin; and he has washed you in the pure water of Holy Baptism, where he gave you a brand new heart.
- So while it’s true that in your sinful nature YHUUH, you also have GC, your Savior JC, whose heart filled with love for you. **“Don’t let your hearts be troubled.”** Your heart is under care of a CG!

Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23

¹ The Pharisees and some of the teachers of the law who had come from Jerusalem gathered around Jesus ² and saw some of his disciples eating food with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. ³ (The Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they give their hands a ceremonial washing, holding to the tradition of the elders. ⁴ When they come from the marketplace they do not eat unless they wash. And they observe many other traditions, such as the washing of cups, pitchers and kettles.)

⁵ So the Pharisees and teachers of the law asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples live according to the tradition of the elders instead of eating their food with defiled hands?” ⁶ He replied, “Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you hypocrites; as it is written: “‘These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. ⁷ They worship me in vain; their teachings are merely human rules.’ ⁸ You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions.”

¹⁴ Again Jesus called the crowd to him and said, “Listen to me, everyone, and understand this. ¹⁵ Nothing outside a person can defile them by going into them. Rather, it is what comes out of a person that defiles them.”

²¹ For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”

ⁱ <http://www.aging.com/10-signs-of-an-unhealthy-heart-you-need-to-know/>