

Message Series: **If you only knew...truths that can change your life**

Message Title: **'If you only knew...what breaks the heart of God'**

Scripture Source: **Mark 3:1-6**

Teacher: John Garner

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What Breaks Your Heart?

What brings us to tears of pain, compassion and even anger reveals who and what really matters to us. The mix of emotions felt deeply express priorities, values and beliefs. What leads you to say, 'this situation/reality is unacceptable to God, me and others...what can I do, what will I do, God helping me to bring about change that will serve someone well?'

Can you identify heart breaking realities that you deeply identify with? Can you put a name to them? _____

Now, what breaks the heart of God?

This question is making a strong and clear statement of belief...that God exists, and that he has the capacity to not only think clearly but also feel deeply. At Redeemer, we don't believe that God is a cosmic robotic presence, detached from reality...including your reality and the realities of others.

Listen to some of these following scriptural texts: Genesis 6:7: *'his heart was filled with pain'* God felt 'grief.' Psalm 95:10 *"I was angry"* Isaiah 1:14 *"my soul hates..."* Zephaniah 3:17 *"delight"* Now, let's explore some the emotional realities Jesus...God with the skin on felt. John 1:1-2, 14, John 14:1-6, Hebrews 1:1-3. These verses speak about who Jesus is, God in flesh and bone form.

Jesus, depth and strength of emotion manifested: Mark 1: 40-42, John 11:33-36, Mark 6:6, Luke 7:9. Take note of what Jesus felt...compassion, sorrow, grief, joy, amazement, disappointment.

As pastors we believe that God has a heart that brims with emotion and a mind rich with thoughts and intentions.

Do you believe this? If not...stay with me, ask questions, examine what and who you do believe.

Are you at peace with those faith choices? Or those intellectual choices?

And so, what do you think breaks the heart of Christ? What realities cause Jesus distress? Input!

A Different Kind of Church Service: Mark 3:1-6

Let's explore this historical episode in the life of Jesus...and the life of others.

Scene 1: Mark 3:1-2: the central characters, Jesus, some religious leaders, a 'broken world' man and observers. The intent of the leaders is to discredit Jesus, they used the man as a pawn, a prop in their malicious scheme...who knows, did they plant him?

Scene 2: Mark 3:3-4: Jesus brings the man to 'center stage'. He is visible to everyone. Jesus asks a probing question that is met with stony silence.

Scene 3: Mark 3:5-6: Jesus responds to what he sees, hears and doesn't see and hear with deep and thoughtful emotion. And he doesn't hide his emotions. He scans the room, going face to face with people. "He looked around at them in anger and deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts..."

If you and I only knew what breaks the heart of Jesus...well, we can know. We must let this awkward and unsettling moment find a home in our hearts...and instruct and inspire us to become more like Jesus.

Why was Jesus so angry and disturbed at these religious leaders? Because of the cultivated and chosen condition of their hearts. "their stubborn hearts" Read the Message rendering

"He looked them in the eye, one after another, angry now, furious at their hard-nosed religion"

The religious leaders by and large were far more concerned about their status in the community, far more interested in controlling people through oppressive rules and regulations, far more committed to their authority than...a heartfelt love for God and others. Their self-righteousness, indifference to the needs of others, their indifference to God deeply affected Jesus. And he let me know it in no uncertain terms. He

then acted courageously and compassionately. *“Stretch out your hand. He stretched it out, and his hand was completely healed.”* Jesus was resolved in manifesting the love and power of God to a ‘broken world’ person, infusing this man with hope and a future, rooted in a relationship with God.

And the religious elite left, anger brewing in their dark hearts, intent on figuring out how to shed his blood and silence him once for all.

If you only knew...Four Transforming Truths

If you only knew...what breaks the heart of Christ, you would be deeply challenged and greatly encouraged.

What do we need to know and act upon today?

Insight #1: Jesus, God with the skin on, has a heart for people, all kinds of people. He wants to be in relationship with you and others, to forgive us, empower and guide us forward. He possesses a deep love, compassion and love for people. John 3:16-17

Insight #2: If we claim to be followers of Jesus, we are to relate with grace and truth in wise, compassionate and purposeful ways. Understanding that ‘come as you are’ doesn’t mean ‘anything goes’. Understanding that serving each other at times gets messy and awkward. Sometimes Christians won’t appreciate or understand our connection with ‘broken world’ people. Don’t let that deter you.

Insight #3: As followers of Jesus we must address and ‘ditch’ any attitude or behaviour that obscures the grace and truth of Jesus and confuses people about the nature of genuine Christian living. Any attitude or behaviour that intimidates, confuses, shames or seeks to control others must be called out and humbly and courageously dealt with. Illustrate: how people dress, elevating personal preferences over biblical truth, marginalizing people because of choices they have made, with no attempt to help guide them toward Jesus and his path. What might you add?

Insight #4: The integration of ‘grace and truth’ will often be fraught with challenge and the need for honesty, goodwill, compassion and courage...guided by God’s Spirit along the way.

Which insight most instructs, challenges and inspires you? _____

How can I cultivate ‘a heart like Jesus’?

1. Spend time with Jesus, reflecting on his life as recorded in the Scriptures and reading/watching content that is oriented toward this theme.
2. Spend time with ‘broken world’ people, listening to their stories and seeking to bring ‘grace and truth’ to the table.
3. Specific and ongoing prayer: ‘Jesus, where do you want me to serve? What area of ‘brokenness’ and suffering do you want me to step into and contribute to?’
4. Short accounts kept regarding ‘dark side’ impulses: self righteousness and indifference as examples, what might you add?
5. Specific stories of seeing God’s grace, love and power at work, changing lives.

Pop-Up Table Talk – Wednesday, August 1 at noon in the Connections Café.