

The Evil Heart

I just want to talk for a few minutes about a very serious problem with this world we're in. And you've probably noticed it already, it's not difficult to spot. This world is full of evil. Evil everywhere. And I don't mean just in faraway places on the news bulletins, but closer to home. We experience it every day in our lives. People cheating on us. People lying to us. People trying to take advantage of us all the time. People with hatred in their hearts for one thing or another. Why do you think that is? Why do people do that? What's the answer?

The Bible tells us the problem and gives us the answer. The problem is the human heart. Every one of us has got an evil heart. That's the problem. We get told so many times, even by religious leaders, to "have faith in human nature." But how can we, when we see the world in the mess it's in? When we see people cheating one another all the time? And we're told by psychologists that we should have a sense of our own self-esteem, self-worth, self-confidence. But we can't. We've got nothing in ourselves to esteem, nothing in ourselves to have confidence in. We're so evil, selfish and self-centred in our hearts.

Genesis 6:5

And GOD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Psalms 53:2,3

God looked down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there were any that did understand, that did seek God. Every one of them is gone back: they are altogether become filthy; there is none that doeth good, no, not one.

Ecclesiastes 9:3

The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.

Jeremiah 17:9

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

Mark 7:21-23

For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

That's it. There's the problem. The human heart. The heart of each one of us is evil. We were born like this. There's nobody that does good, no not one. Can we not see that yet? Or are we stupid enough to carry on living an evil life, a selfish, self-centred life, and pretending that everything's fine, when it's clearly not? That's foolish. That's stupid.

Now, that's the problem. So, you may say, where's God then? If God exists at all, why doesn't He do something about it? Why does He let the world carry on like this? It's not fair. How can there be a God, if all this has happened to me? These are common, legitimate questions.

Well He has done something. He's solved the only problem that there is, the problem of the human heart. There isn't any other problem. No political movement can solve anything. No religious movement can solve anything. We, as individuals, simply need to re-

cognise our part in the problem. It's not just something out there that I don't have to bother with, that's nothing to do with me. Yes, there's plenty of evil out there in the world, and that's the problem of each individual that causes it. But what about us, our own personal responsibility, our own sins? That's what we're responsible for.

Most people try to laugh this all off, and pretend their sins before God don't exist. But it's exactly the evil of our own hearts that's the problem. And we, as individuals, are responsible for our own sins, whether we accept that or not. If we don't do anything about it, God is quite rightly going to judge us, and give us whatever punishment we deserve.

But God has solved the problem. There is a way out. He sent a Saviour into the world, our Lord Jesus Christ, to save His people from their sins. That's what His name means:

Matthew 1:21

Thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

God sent Jesus Christ, the Son of God, into this world for one purpose, to die on a cross in the place of all those who come to Him. It's very simple. Do we want to be saved from our sins? From our sinful nature? From the evil of our own heart? We can't change ourselves. None of us. It's impossible:

Jeremiah 13:23

Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.

Have we come to realise the evil, the self-centredness, in our own heart and want to be saved from it? Well, we can be. All any of us has to do is to call on our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for mercy. God is a merciful God. But we've got to accept the problem, and be genuine when we approach Him.

We don't have to join this church or that organisation, or do this great thing or that great thing to be accepted by God. Simply call on Him in prayer.

Isaiah 55:4,5

Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the LORD, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon.

God will answer every genuine prayer. And we'll know when He's answered, because He'll give us a new heart and a new nature. A nature that can now begin to live a good life. You know as well as I do that Christians are nowhere near perfect, and never will be in this life. But they've all been given a new heart and a new nature, a nature that can at least begin to hate the evil of their old hearts and begin to change, to become useful people in this world, and not useless and self-centred any more.

That's the answer to all the problems of the world. God changes people, one heart at a time. We all need to call on our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ for salvation, and know the heart change that only He can give.