November 1, 2026

REDEMPTION & HOPE

Mark 7:1–23; Deuteronomy 31:6; Ephesians 2:4–5; Isaiah 43:1

INTRODUCTION

This past month I have been away on a sabbatical. I want to thank you, the church, for praying for me and my wife, Mary, over the past month.

I want to thank Pastor Zach, Pastor Dan, and the deacons for orchestrating it.

And, last but not least, thank ALL the staff that stepped up and helped organize and cover my responsibilities while I was away. You guys are great teammates, and I appreciate you!

During my sabbatical, I wrestled with two words:

REDEMPTION & HOPE.

At times, I felt like I was wrestling with God!

Because I believe that Jesus gives us redemption, and because of that, we should live with **EXPECTANT HOPE!**

Unfortunately, many of us—myself included—do not. Not fully.

At least I wasn't before my sabbatical.

AND I DID NOT EVEN REALIZE IT!

I believe I had been deceived by the tempter.

There was something in my own heart that I had allowed to become far too important to me—the **NEED TO BE NEEDED.**

I didn't necessarily see it. I didn't recognize it for what it was. But God began showing me something about my own heart during this sabbatical.

We'll come back to that in a moment...

Our Lord Jesus' main purpose for this earth is redemption. Eventually redemption for the world, but specifically redemption of people.

Of you and me.

Of us!

If you do not hear anything else from me today, please hear that!

What I would love to do today is sit in front of each of you, either at my desk or at a coffee shop, have a cup of coffee with you, and explain to you what God has placed on my heart to share.

I believe everyone in this congregation needs to hear this and can take something from it—to be encouraged, challenged, and totally and completely **REDEEMED!**

LET'S DEFINE SOME TERMS

1. REDEMPTION

To buy back, release, or deliver someone through the payment of a price.

In biblical times, redemption was associated with purchasing someone's freedom from slavery or bondage.

2. HOPE

The confident expectation that God will fulfill His promises because of who He is and what He has accomplished through Jesus Christ.

3. THE GOSPEL

The death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus.

Literally means: **GOOD NEWS.**

But to have GOOD news, we must have BAD news.

AND FOR IT TO BE GOOD NEWS, IT MUST INVADE THE SPACE OF BAD NEWS!

Today, we're going to see both - redemption and hope.

We're going to see the bad news about the condition of the human heart.

And then we're going to see what happens when the GOOD NEWS—the Gospel of Jesus Christ—invades that space.

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1. WHAT IS THE CONDITION OF YOUR HEART?

Before we get into our text, I want you to ask yourself a question:

What is the condition of my heart today?

As I thought about the people who may be listening today, I kept thinking about Jesus' parable of the soils in Mark 4.

The same seed falls, but the condition of the soil is different.

And I wonder what the condition of your heart is today.

There may be four types of people listening to this message:

FIRST:

When you hear this message, you will be moved by the Spirit because you already know Him as Lord and Savior.

The Spirit will agree with what is read and taught. You will automatically see yourself in the text and agree with what is presented today.

Your heart is receptive.

SECOND:

You were once living with a vibrant faith.

You have felt close to God, but now you feel far from Him because of circumstances or situations in life.

At times, you feel hopeless.

Your eyes see nothing but the context in which you live—what is right in front of you.

The circumstances.

You no longer see God in the situation... only the situation.

THIRD:

Maybe you have only "come to faith" to appease someone or something.

You have tried Jesus—like He is an article of clothing, like a coat—and now you are here out of ritual.

Perhaps you are here because saying no to your spouse or parents would cause bigger issues.

You came to Jesus for the wrong motives.

To you, coming to church is not a faith issue; it's a social issue.

It's what you DO... not who you are or WHOSE you belong to.

FOURTH:

Then there may be some here who just don't care about letting Christ change you.

Or maybe you are so caught up in what you do and have such a hard heart that you think you are OK.

You think you can handle anything or everything.

You truthfully feel you do not NEED "a Savior" because you're fine without one—or you simply do not want to admit that you need one.

So I ask you:

Which one are you?

Is your heart receptive?

Has life crowded out your hope?

Are you going through the motions without truly surrendering?

Or has your heart become hardened?

Because today, Jesus is going to take us past everything we show on the outside and go directly to the **HEART.**

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2. OUR GREATEST PROBLEM IS INSIDE OF US

MARK 7:1–23

Lets now turn in our bibles to the book of Mark.

This takes place in Galilee, actually near Capernaum.

Jesus has already started to gather a following and caused issues with the Pharisees

In this text, we will see the Pharisees again trying to question Jesus and his disciples.

And again, Jesus doesn't *just* give them an answer…. He gives an answer that can possibly shatter their way of thinking and believing.

READ VERSES 1–5

Now when the Pharisees gathered to him, with some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem, they saw that some of his disciples ate with hands that were defiled, that is, unwashed. (For the Pharisees and all the Jews do not eat unless they wash their hands properly, holding to the tradition of the elders, and when they come from the market place, they do not eat unless they wash.And there are many other traditions that they observe, such as the washing of cups and pots and copper vessels and dining couches.) And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not walk according to the traditions of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?"

Jewish custom was to wash everything so that they remained clean before God.

They believed that touching something or putting something in their mouth could make them "unclean" or "defiled."

Basically, they followed a list of ceremonial do's and don'ts to live by.

Their focus was on what was happening on the **OUTSIDE.**

But Jesus is about to turn their attention to what is happening on the **INSIDE.**

VERSES 6–13

And he said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the commandments of men.' You leave the commandments of God and hold to the tradition of men.' And he said to them, 'You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to establish your tradition! For Moses said, Honor your father and mother and Whoever reviles father or mother must surely die. But you say, If a man tells his father or his mother, "Whatever you would have gained from me is Corbin (that is, given to God) - then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother, thus making void the word of God by your tradition that you have handed down. And many such things you do."

Jesus quotes Isaiah 29:13, basically calling out the Pharisees:

"This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Let's pause here.

Even though Jesus is speaking to the Pharisees, I believe people are living this very verse today.

Maybe some in this room or someone hearing these words today.

And here's the frightening thing about deception:

WHEN YOU ARE DECEIVED, YOU DON'T KNOW YOU ARE DECEIVED.

Unfortunately, it is extremely easy to be deceived by Satan.

We see that in Genesis 1–3, when Adam and Eve are overcome by his twisting of the truth.

They were not looking to rebel or even thinking about rebellion; however, they chose to rebel without fully recognizing what was happening.

Satan took the truth and twisted it and made them doubt God.

And during my sabbatical, God began showing me an area where I believe I had been deceived too.

I believe Satan had taken a part of who God made me and twisted it so my desire was off of God!

TELL MY STORY:

Before my sabbatical, I was nervous.

If anyone asked me about it, I would tell them, “I’m excited, but I’m nervous.”

And honestly, I was afraid of **failing my sabbatical**—as weird as that might sound.

I didn’t really understand why.

But during my sabbatical, God began to show me that I had been deceived. I had allowed something to become far too important in my life—something I had never really thought about before.

And through it, God showed me just how easy it can be to be deceived.

Now, this may sound trivial to some of you, but please understand: **this was a revelation to me.** God opened my eyes to an aspect in my heart that needed to change.

I have always had a hard time delegating.

And it’s not because I think I can do something better than everyone else. I truly **DON’T** believe that.

I’ve always told myself:

“I will never ask anyone to do something that I’m not willing to do myself.”

And I still believe that.

But somewhere along the way, I began using that as an excuse to take on whatever task needed to be done.

Anything.

If something needed to be done, I would do it glady!

But then I went away on sabbatical.

And when I was away—and removed from my normal responsibilities and was no longer needed in my normal capacity—I began to realize something about myself:

I LOVED TO BE NEEDED.

As everything else became quiet and my focus narrowed to my Lord and my beautiful wife, Mary, the reality began to hit me.

I wasn't doing all of those things simply because they needed to be done.

Somewhere along the way, I had begun doing them because **I desired to be needed.**

I had developed a **NEED to be NEEDED.**

And my focus had subtly shifted from what was truly important—Jesus and following Him—to, if I dare say it, **worshiping the need to be needed.**

I didn't recognize it while it was happening.

That's the deception.

Something that looked like service on the outside had become something very different in my heart.

And when God showed me that, I repented of it.

And it was as if a burden had been lifted off of me.

I was being freed from a deception that I believe had quietly crept into my heart and mind.

I began to think more clearly.

I didn't have to be needed.

I needed Jesus.

And that was freeing.

I could be doing good things.

Serving God.

Helping people.

Doing ministry.

And yet allow my heart to begin finding its identity in something other than Christ.

I didn't even realize it.

And that's why we ALL need to allow the Word of God to examine our hearts daily.

I'm not standing here today pointing at the Pharisees.

I'm not standing here pointing at you.

GOD MADE ME EXAMINE MY OWN HEART.

And maybe today He wants you to examine yours too.

You may think what you are doing is sufficient.

But listen again to Jesus' words:

"They honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me."

Have you truly surrendered your heart to Jesus?

Or are you being deceived into unintentionally worshipping something else?

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3. THE BAD NEWS: WE ARE SPIRITUALLY DEAD

Read MARK 7:14–23

And he called the people to him again and said to them, “Hear me, all of you, and understand: There is nothing outside a person that by going into him can defile him, but the things that come out of a person are what defile him” And when he had entered the house and left the people, his disciples asked him about the parable. And he said to them, “then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him,, since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled? (Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”

Jesus sets the precedent and understanding here:

IT ISN'T WHAT YOU DO ON THE OUTSIDE... IT IS ALL ABOUT THE HEART!

WHAT COMES OUT OF THE HEART IS WHAT THE MAN IS!

Our greatest problem isn't something outside of us.

It's inside of us.

Our problem isn't simply that we sometimes do bad things.

Our problem is the condition of the human heart.

MAN IS DEAD SPIRITUALLY.

That's the BAD NEWS!!!

We are ALL dead inside until the GOOD NEWS—the Gospel—invades that space.

When the Gospel invades our heart, it changes our heart!

Jesus didn't come to make bad people good...

or make good people better...

JESUS CAME TO MAKE DEAD PEOPLE ALIVE! JESUS CAME TO MAKE DEAD PEOPLE ALIVE!

So my question to you is this:

Have you truly surrendered fully to Jesus?

Or, like me, is there something else that has captured an area of your heart?

Maybe you have NEVER been redeemed by Jesus.

His death, resurrection, and Lordship need to make your heart **ALIVE IN CHRIST.**

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4. THE GOOD NEWS: JESUS REDEEMS DEAD PEOPLE AND MAKES THEM ALIVE

There are two truths about redemption that I want us to understand:

1. WE ALL NEED REDEMPTION.

2. ONLY JESUS CAN REDEEM US.

We are all dead and in rebellion against God.

We cannot redeem ourselves.

We cannot clean ourselves up enough.

We cannot perform enough religious activities.

We cannot do enough good things.

We cannot make a dead heart alive.

BUT GOD CAN!

EPHESIANS 2:4–5

> "But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved."

BUT GOD!

We were dead.

BUT GOD!

We were unable to save ourselves.

BUT GOD!

Being rich in mercy...

Because of His GREAT LOVE...

MADE US ALIVE TOGETHER WITH CHRIST!

When we are REDEEMED, He sets us free from the penalty of sin and makes us alive in Christ!

That's redemption.

That's the Gospel.

That's GOOD NEWS invading the space of BAD NEWS!

LET THE GOSPEL INVADE YOUR HEART.

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5. BECAUSE WE ARE REDEEMED, WE CAN LIVE WITH HOPE

And this brings me back to that second word God kept placing on my heart during my sabbatical:

HOPE.

Because Jesus gives us redemption, we should live with **EXPECTANT HOPE!**

Sometimes in life, we find ourselves in situations—whether from our own actions or actions we cannot control—where we feel like we are drowning.

We feel like there is NO hope in the situation.

It is a constricting feeling.

We begin to feel **HOPELESS.**

That is a horrible place to be.

When you cannot see any way out...

You may have to experience the consequences of your actions—or even someone else's actions—but that does not mean you are without hope.

Maybe today all you can see is the situation.

The diagnosis.

The marriage.

The child.

The finances.

The mistake.

The loss.

The consequences.

The circumstances.

Maybe you no longer see God in the situation.

You only see the situation.

Our responsibility in those times is to pull back and rest in the HOPE that God will fulfill His promises to us!

DEUTERONOMY 31:6

> "Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the Lord your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you."

Your circumstances may feel hopeless.

BUT IF YOU BELONG TO JESUS, YOU ARE NEVER WITHOUT HOPE.

Why?

Because your hope isn't ultimately in your circumstances changing.

Your hope is in the One who has **REDEEMED YOU.**

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6. "I HAVE REDEEMED YOU... YOU ARE MINE."

ISAIAH 43:1

> "Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine."

Look at what God brings together in that one verse:

"FEAR NOT..."

There is our HOPE.

"FOR I HAVE REDEEMED YOU..."

There is our REDEMPTION.

"I HAVE CALLED YOU BY NAME..."

This is personal.

"YOU ARE MINE."

Do you hear God calling your name?

Today, answer that call.

Maybe today you realize you have been going through the motions.

Maybe today you realize a specific area of your heart has become hard

Maybe circumstances have consumed your vision and you have forgotten where your hope comes from.

Maybe, like me, God has revealed something else that has quietly taken a place in your heart that belongs only to Him.

Or maybe you realize today that you have NEVER truly surrendered your life to Jesus.

You have never been REDEEMED.

Today...

LET THE GOOD NEWS INVADE THE BAD NEWS.

Let the Gospel invade your heart.

Let Jesus take what is DEAD and make it ALIVE.

And once He does, you will experience the ONLY HOPE that this world will ever know...

OUR LORD JESUS.

Today...

Do you repent from the ways of this world and proclaim Jesus as your Savior?

Have you truly surrendered to Jesus?

He has come to redeem.

And because of redemption...

THERE IS HOPE.