

November 1st, Issues
Part 4 in the series 'The Human Race'

What do you remember from last Sunday's message?

What were some things that resonated with you?

Was there anything you wrestled with?

Explain the diagram that Pastor Jim presented at the end of Sunday's message.

READ Matthew 15:17-20

“Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. For out of the heart come evil thoughts — murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person...”

Do laws change peoples' hearts? Discuss.

Why do you think Jesus says the heart is at the root of things like murder, adultery etc?

READ Mark 12:13–17

13 And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. **14** And they came and said to him, “Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances,[a] but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?” **15** But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, “Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius[b] and let me look at it.” **16** And they brought one. And he said to them, “Whose likeness and inscription is this?” They said to him, “Caesar's.” **17** Jesus said to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” And they marveled at him.

Who was pictured and what was written on the coin used to pay this tax? Why is that relevant? Answer: Caesar's image, inscription “Pontifex Maximus” which meant “high priest,” which was very religiously offensive.

What do you think of Jesus' response to the Pharisees and Herodians?

Why can a Jesus follower acknowledge that they might be wrong on an issue or political position?

Possible answer: Because we know and understand our propensity toward self-deception, toward poor value judgements, toward overconfidence in our knowledge, wisdom, and intellectual capacity, our propensity toward self-righteousness...

READ Psalm 139:23–24 “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

What are we inviting God to do when we ask Him to search our heart?

In what ways does praying this Psalm take courage?

READ Luke 18:9–13 (NIV)

“To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God.”

What do you imagine the Pharisee to be thinking about other people?

Possible answer: *“Now if I can just get everybody else on the right side of the law, which of course is my side. Then this world will be as it should be.”*

What would you say the tax collector recognizes about himself that the Pharisee does not recognize about himself?

How do you think this parable applies to ‘today’?

How can we let God change our hearts?