

1Kings 8: 1,6, 10-11, 22-30, 44,43

Ephesians 6: 10-20

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

Harry Goff born Episcopalian, raised Episcopalian, will die Episcopalian. Today's processional hymn takes me back to Sunday mornings at Calvary. We had and still have a very robust choir and an excellent organist. We processed in from the parish hall and to the center of the nave just as we do here, proceeded to choir stand and even I tried to sing but sing we did. One of my favorite songs was we Gather to Gather, our processional this morning. I want to stop and give thanks to our Choir Director for allowing me to make that selection and the recessional Just As I Am another of my favorites.

My reasoning for making these selections was a no brainer, in a very few minutes we will visit Mark and speak to being Heart-Healthy and clean and good fruit and bad fruit. There should be the connection.

Just the words to both hymns say a ton about what God does for us, bear with me for a moment : (Why are here) We gather to gather to ask the Lord's blessing;

(What happens) he chastens and hastens his will to make known, (What else happens?) the wicked oppressing now cease from distressing, (What do they , do?), sing praises to his name; he forgets not his own. Think about those words and tell me they don't resonate in your heart. The same for Just As I Am. George Beverly Shay could belt it out for Billy Graham (my dad and I listened to Billy Graham every Sunday afternoon).

It is truly a good and wonderful feeling to know our God but even greater to love and serve our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He is the lily of the valley the bright and shining star.

Grace to you and peace from God our father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

William Barclay the writer wrote:

One of the great troubles of life is that we do not take the commands and the demands of God sufficiently and seriously.

Somehow, although we know them so well, we are often prepared just to ignore them or not to forget them, as if they did not matter very much. When we disobey God, when we take our own way, we are not so much breaking God's law as we are breaking God's heart. One of the things which keeps us from doing many a wrong thoughtlessness and our disobedience hurt the heart of God, then we would fear and dread to disobey him.

It is not required to give a sermon a title, but it gives what the preacher has to say some fulness and meaning. Building a Healthy-Heart is appropriate for today's sermon because Jesus wants us to nurture our hearts with a heart-healthy diet so that our hearts will produce good fruits rather than bad or evil fruits.

Our gospel today is preceded by activity in John, remember he fed five thousand, walked on water, healing the sick in Gennesaret, throngs following him just to touch his cloak to be healed

Let us not forget his ministering to the Gentiles, he exorcised a demon from the daughter of a Syrophenician woman so you say what does any of this have to do with a healthy heart and I say let's look at the players, who are they, where are they from and how important are they. That look may show us where the healthy heart comes into play.

The players are the scribes and Pharisees men of deep religious conviction. We have met them before, some have appeared to be in opposition to Jesus but are they really? They are not They were really driven by a desire to please God just as many of us today are when placed in a similar position.

The setting for the problems of the scribes and Pharisees is in Jewish law with its broad array of principles and how do you apply them and where and when do you apply them.

An example of a Jewish principle that could cause a problem is found in Exodus chapter 20:8-10 and I quote:

“Remember the Sabbath day, keep it holy. Labor six days, but the seventh day is sabbath to your God you shall not do any work in it.” (Exodus 20:8-10) What does it mean if you are a priest, can you preach? What does it mean if you are a doctor can you help the sick?

Today as yesterday they sometimes went to far and left common sense behind. Here is another example we can identify with: Jewish law required priests to **cleanse their hands before approaching the altar**. Pretty simple right, the scribes and Pharisees decided that this should apply to everyone. It’s not that simple and as today we can and do go to far and forget sense and reason.

If we just stopped and thought there could be a thousand questions for just one law and a thousand answers. This could go on forever, ad infinitum. Something came into play that even today we sometimes forget, **It was called Common Sense and it caused people to think ahead and work ahead.**

There is a but here: Remember cleansing hands before approaching the altar, for priest. Well, if the priests cleanse their hands, scribes and Pharisees should also cleanse theirs, and the disciples of the scribes and Pharisees as well.

Keep in mind that old phrase: **What’s good for the goose is good for the gander or ganders.**

Give them or us a little power or responsibility and we lose our minds and proceed to drive everyone crazy.

They had started out trying to please God and ended up trying to control the world. We are approaching that point, but it is not going to happen!

Questions asked, suggestions made, why not just click on the arrow, use Bluetooth, use the hot spot in in the library someone has the answer to all your needs and wants. Someone was there to tell Jesus to pay attention to the footnotes, so smart he does not realize **FOOTNOTES! What are they or THEM?**

In our lives there are people who have all the answers to all the questions, they believe that you will be OK if you just do what they say, someone who is buried so deep they can’t see the forest for the trees but they want us with them in deep. Don’t they just drive you up those trees or up a wall. Shame shame!

Christians are sometimes like that. That kind of Christian drives people away from the church, because someone made them feel small and maybe not welcome, tried to force them into a mold and made them feel uncomfortable. They ran into

the church KNOW IT ALL! Jesus did not emphasize KNOWING everything. He emphasized LOVING everyone.

At **ST. BARNABAS WE LOVE YOU (3)! Because PRAISE and LOVE is WHAT WE DO!**

There is a big difference between loving someone and knowing everything. We will never win a person to Christ for knowing more than them but just might for loving them.

Jesus warned the scribes and Pharisees that they honored God with their lips, not with their hearts.

I am quoting from today's gospel directly:

HE said:

**“You set aside the commandment of God,
And hold tightly to the tradition of men” v. 8**

Then he said:

**“There is nothing from outside of the man,
that going into him can defile him;
but the things which proceed out of the man
are those that defile him” v. 15**

Jesus went on to say:

**“For from within, out of the hearts of men,
proceed evil thoughts,
adulteries, sexual sins,
murders, thefts, covetings,
wickedness, deceit, lustful desires,
an evil eye, blasphemy,
pride, and foolishness.**

**All these evil things come from within,
and defile the man” v.21-23**

In the first century scribes and Pharisees were very attentive to what they ate but were careless with what was placed in the heart. Look at us today! Nothing has changed but the century.

Cannot eat this.....its not healthy.....its not safe.....calories and cholesterol

It never ceases to amaze me that health is now like a religion or religious like in character and what has happened to our hearts.

Brothers and sisters, Jesus criticized the scribes and Pharisees for missing the target, taking people in the wrong direction, for wanting to control the world, what's good for one is good for all. That is not true. What is for real is that which you have in your heart and our HEARTS !

The question is: What are you feeding your HEART, your children/grandchildren, what kind of heart food does your money support?

My brothers and sisters remember V.21. “For from within, out of the hearts of men, proceed evil thoughts.”

Let us now begin to lead the world toward a HEART-HEALTHY diet.

AMEN