

Short Talk

(SHT194)

We need a new heart!

© Jane Hulme 2020

ALL AGE WORSHIP
RESOURCES.ORG



SHORT TALK: “We need a new heart!”

- Aim of Short talk:** To challenge people with the truth that we need a completely new and clean heart before we can enter the Kingdom of God.
- Use of Short talk:** This is a short All Age talk picking out one issue from the Lectionary Gospel reading of the Sunday main service. The talk stands alone and assumes that the Gospel Bible reading may not yet have been read to the congregation. It could be used for example, for the whole congregation before the children go out to their age specific groups, leaving the adults with a full sermon later.
- Main themes:** Jesus, Kingdom of God, Sin, Clean Heart
- Biblical references:** John 3:1-17
- Lectionary:** Year A – The 2nd Sunday of Lent
- Props:** You need 3 white identical t-shirts¹:
- One of them needs to be absolutely filthy ie covered in paint, tomato ketchup, grass, soil, mustard etc.
 - One of them needs to have one stain on it right in the middle of the front of the t-shirt so that it is visible
 - One of them needs to be completely clean / brand new

.....

I want you to imagine for a moment that I have had an invitation to go to a very important person’s party.

- Everyone who has been invited has been told that they need to wear a new and clean white t-shirt.

So, here’s my t-shirt (*Hold up the filthy t-shirt*)

- Let me put it on so that I am ready to go to the party. (*Put on t-shirt*)
- That’s good isn’t it?
- Do you think that they’ll let me in? (*Receive responses*)

I know it’s a bit dirty, but it’s still a white t-shirt isn’t it?

- OK – I accept that it is rather dirty, now I look at it.
- Let’s see if I have got a cleaner one to wear. (*Take off filthy t-shirt and pick up t-shirt with one stain on it*)
- Here we are.....this t-shirt should do. (*Hold up the t-shirt with one stain on it*)

¹ You can buy plain white t-shirts very cheaply at www.plain-t-shirts.co.uk

It's only got one mark on it. *(Put on t-shirt with one stain on it)*

- I know it isn't new, or clean, but it is white!

Do you think that they'll let me in wearing this? *(Receive responses)*

- Ok – so it's got one stain on the front, but surely that's not a big deal is it?
- You think it is....

Let's see if I have another one. *(Take off t-shirt with one stain on it and pick up new t-shirt)*

- Here we are.....a brand new t-shirt.
- It is spotlessly clean.
- Do you think that they'll let me in now? *(Receive responses)*

I think that I would be welcome at the party wearing this brand new spotlessly clean white t-shirt because that is what the invitation has told me I need to wear.

- We need to wear the right clothes at the right time don't we?

Now there is a time in our lives when wearing the right clothes is absolutely essential, but this time I am not talking about wearing a clean t-shirt.

- If we are going to be welcomed into God's Kingdom, then we need to "wear the inner clothes of a completely clean heart,"
- because God is holy.

But how can we be welcomed into God's Kingdom when none of us has a completely clean heart?

- We have all done wrong things that have made our hearts dirty.....
- a bit like these 2 t-shirts are dirty. *(Hold up the 2 dirty t-shirts)*

It doesn't matter whether you have done lots of wrong things *(Hold up the very dirty t-shirt high)*

- or a few wrong things. *(Hold up the t-shirt with one stain high)*
- Your heart isn't clean before God.

So how can you and I be welcomed into God's Kingdom, where we can know His love and live life to the full?

The answer comes from something that Jesus said to a man called Nicodemus who came to see Him one night.

- Jesus said to Him and He says to us: "*no-one can see the Kingdom of God unless they are born again.*" (John 3:3)

That sounds a bit strange doesn't it?

- How can we possibly be born a second time?
- What Jesus meant was that we cannot see God's Kingdom or be any part of it unless something as dramatic as being born a second time happens to us.

Now that dramatic change isn't something that we can do for ourselves, like putting on a clean t-shirt.

- We need God to do it for us.
- We need God to give us a new and clean heart.

The wonderful news is that if we come to Jesus and put our trust in Him;

- believing that when He died on the cross, He paid for our sins,
- then God not only forgives us our sins,
- but through His Holy Spirit, He gives us a brand new and clean heart;
- a heart that wants to obey and love Him.

Now we can come into His kingdom.

- Now we can enjoy living under His loving and kind rule.

So today, I wonder whether you have received the new and clean heart that God wants to give you,

- or whether you are still “wearing the old dirty one”, hoping that it will be good enough to get you into God's kingdom?