

Short Talk

(SHT113a)

What spoils our lives?

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SHORT TALK: “What spoils our lives?”

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| Aim of Short talk: | To teach that Jesus says that it is what comes out of our hearts that spoils our lives. |
| 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: | Hearts, Sin |
| Biblical references: | Mark 7.1-8,14,15, 21-23 |
| Lectionary: | Year B – The 13 th Sunday after Trinity |
| Props: | You need three identical mugs. Prepare them as follows: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Mug 1: Cover the outside of the mug with soil/foodstuffs so that it is filthy but ensure that the inside of the mug is clean. ii) Mug 2: Cover the inside of the mug with soil/foodstuffs so that it is filthy, but ensure that the outside of the mug is clean. iii) Mug 3: Ensure that both the inside and the outside of the mug is clean You also need a jug of clean water. |

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I have brought along 3 mugs with me today.

- I wonder which one of these mugs you would choose to have a cup of coffee or juice in after this service.

Who would choose mug 1? *(Hold up mug but don't show the inside of the mug and receive responses)*

- Who would choose mug 2? *(Hold up mug but don't show the inside of the mug and receive responses)*
- Who would choose mug 3? *(Hold up mug but don't show the inside of the mug and receive responses)*

Most of us wouldn't choose mug 1 would we because we can see that it is really dirty on the outside?

- Those of us who have chosen mug 2 would be in for a shock because when we look inside mug 2 it is actually really filthy. Look at it. *(Hold up mug 2 showing the dirty inside)*
- Who would choose mug 2 now to have a cup of coffee or juice in, having seen the state of it inside?

Those of us who have chosen mug 3 will be relieved to see that it is clean on the inside as well as the outside. *(Hold up mug 3 showing the clean inside)*

When we want to use a mug for a drink, it is obvious to us that we want it to be clean on the inside before we can use it.

- The inside of something is often what really matters.

In Jesus' day the teachers of the law got cross with Jesus and his disciples because they didn't follow all of the so called "purity laws."

- These were laws that said that if you were going to be clean in God's sight then before you ate something and between courses of meals you needed to wash your hands in a special way in water kept in special jars.

Listen to what Jesus said to these people:

- *"What comes from your heart is what makes you unclean. Out of your heart come evil thoughts, vulgar deeds, stealing, murder, unfaithfulness in marriage, greed, meanness, deceit, indecency, envy, insults, pride, and foolishness. All of these come from your heart, and they are what make you unfit to worship God."*

(Mark 9:20-23 Contemporary English Version)

Jesus was basically saying to the Jewish people that dirty hands wouldn't make them unclean in the sight of a holy God.

- What spoils people's lives in the sight of God is what is inside their hearts.....

It is the same for us today.

- What spoils our lives in the sight of God is what comes out of our hearts.... *(Hold up mug 2 showing the dirty inside)*
- evil thoughts, stealing, greed, insults and so on.

The good news is that Jesus came to clean up our hearts so that our lives can be filled with the love of our holy Heavenly Father *(Hold up mug 3 showing the clean inside and pour into it some clean water)*

One final thought.

- We can look at the outside of somebody and think that they are not acceptable to God, a bit like we did with Mug 1 *(Hold up mug 1 but don't show the inside of the mug)*
- However, they may be someone who has welcomed Jesus' message and entered God's family and their hearts are actually clean! *(Show the inside of the mug)*

Remember that the inside of someone is what really matters.