

**Note:**

- Italics used for notes to the speaker
- Regular text for specific discussion points to be brought up in the session
- The option to ask students questions may not be available in larger settings, please feel free to adapt the talk as necessary, while retaining key points

**Goal of the talk:**

- I. Students would acknowledge the wickedness around us and within us
  - II. Students would recognize their need for a change in heart
  - III. Students would look to Jesus and find healing and freedom in Him
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**Symptoms – Talk-sheet*****Dealing with the Core Problem***

*Key Points: Our need for a change in heart that is only possible through Jesus*

**Whenever you have a sickness how do you diagnose the issue?**

You look at the symptoms and try to figure out what is the core problem

**What would happen if you only tried to deal with the symptoms?**

You might resolve the problem temporarily, but the problem will come back, because the real issue has not been dealt with

**What is a symptom?**

According to Wikipedia (4<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2020) – “A symptom is a departure from normal function or feeling which is apparent to a patient, reflecting the presence of an unusual state, or of a disease.”

**Let’s look at the world around us. We can start with the world at large –**Recent headlines:

*Note to speaker: Please look up current news*

**But our country is no different:**Recent events in India:

*Note to speaker: Please look up current news*

**Finally, what if we looked at ourselves?**

We lie, cheat, hurt people, are selfish, proud ... the list goes on.

While, in this talk, we are highlighting the bad news, in reality, we see a mix of good and bad news. However, a lot of it is bad.

When you see symptoms of disease, how do you respond? Do you look at all the good things that are happening in the person's body and tell them to simply ignore the symptoms?

Of course not!

If we wouldn't do that with our physical health, do you think we are justified in doing it in the case of the moral condition of humans?

In the world around us, we see symptoms like - great destruction, hatred, anger, wickedness and suffering. Should we be concerned? Should we do something about it?

Like any good doctor, we should first begin to look for the root cause so we can deal with the core issue.

Adrian Rogers, obviously a very wise man, said "The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart."

This is where the core issue lies. Our hearts are diseased and the only way to rid ourselves of the symptoms we see in our world, is to first deal with our hearts.

Simply knowing what is right and wrong doesn't help us because we don't choose to do wrong due to a lack of knowledge. Often times, we know that what we are doing is wrong, yet we do it, because we do not have the strength or will to resist our desires.

Punishing ourselves every time we do something wrong or doing good things to make up for all the wrong things we have done, won't change our hearts. They only deal with the symptoms.

The problem, however, is that we cannot change our own hearts. No matter how hard we try, we find ourselves falling back into doing wrong things.

### **Romans 7:15-24 (MSG with explanatory note on 'the law')**

What I don't understand about myself is that I decide one way, but then I act another, doing things I absolutely despise. So if I can't be trusted to figure out what is best for myself and then do it, it becomes obvious that God's command is necessary.

But I need something more! For if I know the law (*God's prescribed moral standard*), but still can't keep it, and if the power of sin within me keeps sabotaging my best intentions, I obviously need help! I realize that I don't have what it takes. I can will it, but I can't do it. I decide to do good, but I don't really do it; I decide not to do bad, but then I do it anyway. My decisions, such as they are, don't result in actions. Something has gone wrong deep within me and gets the better of me every time.

It happens so regularly that it's predictable. The moment I decide to do good, sin is there to trip me up. I truly delight in God's commands, but it's pretty obvious that not all of me joins in that delight. Parts of me covertly rebel, and just when I least expect it, they take charge.

I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

### **Do you find yourself in this place?**

Do you see the wickedness, the terror and the destruction in the world and feel hopeless?

Do you see the problems in your family – the struggles, the suffering and the brokenness and feel stuck, like there is no way out?

Do you see your own heart – your pain, the sins you have committed – the lies, the ways you have hurt people, your inability to do what is good, even when you try very hard to be perfect?

Are you looking for hope, a way out, maybe someone who can help you because you know you cannot help yourself?

There is an answer. Praise God! Let's go back to the passage we were reading from the Bible **Romans 7:24-25 (MSG)**

I've tried everything and nothing helps. I'm at the end of my rope. Is there no one who can do anything for me? Isn't that the real question?

The answer, thank God, is that Jesus Christ can and does. He acted to set things right in this life of contradictions where I want to serve God with all my heart and mind, but am pulled by the influence of sin to do something totally different.

The problem of the heart is universal. It is not limited to age. From young children to very old people, across human history, we cannot find anyone who has had a completely pure heart, except Jesus.

Jesus lived a life of perfection without any sin. Yet He died a cruel death and paid for our sin, so you and I wouldn't have to face its consequence. Three days after He died, God the Father raised Him to life. Through Jesus, we not only have the hope of forgiveness for the wrongs we do, but we also have the hope of complete restoration of everything we lost because of our wrong choices – we can now relate to and trust in God as our Father, we are free from shame,

we are healed from sickness in our body and soul and we are given power through the Spirit of God to live free from sin and bring change in the world around us.

**Conclusion -**

Where do you find yourself?

Do you see the symptoms of disease in and around you?

Have you found yourself struggling, being frustrated and disappointed by your failure to do good?

Does this offer of change and healing for your heart appeal to you? If so, pray with me.

*Lead students in prayer to put their faith in Christ and invite Him to change their heart.*