

Heart Transplants

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Preacher: John Winter

[0 : 00] Well, the power of retention, eh? The power of retention. So, did I tell you how long it takes! For all of that to happen to pump around your body? Do you know how long it takes?

What do you watch, Sansa, Lisa? Go on. Oh, Shy Ben's getting out, you're quite right. About a minute. It's amazing, isn't it? All of that in about a minute. Quite incredible, really, isn't it? And the red one represented what? What kind of blood? Oxygenated one, and the blue deoxygenated ones. That's right. And how many liters of blood in your body? No, that's the number of jugs. 5,000 liters. Sorry, five liters. Not 5,000. Milliliters, maybe, but yeah, five liters of blood. Okay. And how many times does your body, does your heart rather beat in a day?

About 100,000, give or take a few, depending on what you're doing. All right. So, and how many miles does it travel around your body? 60,000. 60,000. That's amazing, isn't it? The heart is an amazing gift of God. And God has got something to say about it. Ezekiel chapter 36, 25 to 29. It's on the screen there. God is speaking to Israel, and he's now not speaking about your physical heart. He's speaking metaphorically about your person, about your life, because the heart is the wellspring of life.

He's speaking about your life, and he's saying you need to clean up your life, just as you need to keep your heart healthy. You need to clean up your life, but you can't do it without him. Ezekiel 36, 25 to 29, says, I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you.

I will remove from you your heart of stone. Remember the heart of stone? It's not very good, is it? Got one of them in your chest. You're not going to feel great, are you?

[2 : 45] I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh, and I will put my spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. You will live in the land I give your forefathers. You will be my people, and I will be your God. I will save you from all your uncleanness. Now, every health professional tells us we have to look after our hearts. We have to be careful what we put into our bodies, the diet we have. We have to be careful how we look after our bodies, the exercise we carry, follow, do, or maybe don't do, but, well, it's better for you if you do it.

And if you sit around all day, it doesn't do your heart very good because you have to get the heart rate up. And everybody talks about heart variability now, heart variability. Be able to get it up with exercise and then settle down again. And the bigger your heart variability, the healthier your heart is.

So it's just an amazing thing. Let's look after our hearts. But, you know, I'm also fascinated that Proverbs 17, 22 says, a cheerful heart is good medicine, but a crisp, crisp spirit dries the bones. There was a very famous doctor who got stage 4 cancer in the late 1950s when this was kind of a bit unknown. And he became very famous because he healed his cancer. He cured his cancer, it's suggested, by spending every day watching the Marx Brothers, repeats of the Marx Brothers. Because he was told he was going to die, he went home and just spent his time laughing. And they suggested he cured his cancer. It's quite a famous story. Quite amazing. Whether that was the only cause, I very much doubt. But nonetheless, it shows the value of laughter. So, some jokes for you. Why did the chicken join a band? Do you know, Lola? Because it had drumsticks.

[5 : 10] Why can't you give Elsa a balloon? Because she will let it go. And this one's for Sophie because of her scurriaphobia. How do you catch a squirrel? Which Sophie would never want to do. Scurriaphobia is the fear of squirrels. How do you catch a squirrel? You climb a tree and act like a nut. See, you've all laughed, or most of you have anyway. You've just done your heart good. But God wants to do your heart even more good. Having a healthy heart will keep you alive longer than otherwise. But if your heart is cleaned and made new by God, he will keep you alive forever.

In December 1967, the first successful heart transplant occurred in South Africa. Dr. Christian Barnard. You quite read, Ken? That's brownie points for you. Extra biscuit. Louis Wachkanski was the first person, a Jewish man, to receive a heart from a human donor. A young lady called Denise Ann Darwald. She's not often as remembered, but it was her heart that was put in to Louis Wachkanski's heart. She was 24 and died in an accident. He was 55. The heart transplant was successful because Wachkanski was only given a few days to live. And when they put the transplanted heart in, they said it was like it started an electric shock. It was like turning the ignition of a switch of a car on.

[7 : 11] But Wachkanski only lived for 18 days after the heart transplant. That didn't mean to say it was a waste of time because actually the skills that the surgeons gained from that, the insights and the development of their medicines that allowed the body to keep that heart and not reject it have got better and better so that some people are living 40 years and on after having heart transplants.

Quite amazing. Over 40 years of life. That's like a generation, isn't it? That can be given to some people who need a complete heart transplant.

Again, it's wonderful. And it'll get even better, you can be sure. But remember this. When God gives people a new heart, it doesn't just last for 40 years.

I give them eternal life, he says, and they shall never perish. So Ezekiel, speaking of the amazing transplants, heart transplants that God gives, says, I will give you a new heart.

I will clean you up, make you right, give you a new life, and you will live forever. Now, let's just think a little bit about Ezekiel and the context here.

[8 : 40] Next slide, please. Next slide, please. Oh, dear. There's just some pictures of, that's of the three people from South Africa.

If you want to see Dr. Christian Barnard, Louis Wachowski, and Denise Ann Darwal. Next slide, please. God gives us an offer in Ezekiel 36.

He's speaking to the Jews in historical context who were in exile in Babylon because they had messed up big time. They had sinned against God.

They had made idols of wood and stone that they worshipped, and they had been taken into exile, and their lives were a mess. They were really, really unclean because of their sin.

And God says, I'm going to bring you back to your land, and I'm going to clean you up. Ezekiel 36, 19. I dispersed them among the nations, and they were scattered through the countries.

[9 : 41] I judged them according to their conduct and actions. Well, that's deserved, isn't it? They got what they deserved. They had become defiled and unclean through their idolatry and the shedding of innocent blood.

And because of that, they were being punished according to their law in Deuteronomy chapter 29. They were being punished deservedly. And God could have said, well, that's enough.

You've gone too far. I'm not going to ever have anything to do with you again. But he didn't do that. Instead, he said, no, no. I'm going to change your hearts. I'm going to completely restore you.

You can't do it yourself any more than those who need a heart transplant to keep themselves alive by the actions of their own will. You can't do it by yourself. I'm going to do it.

I'm going to give you a complete transformation of life and character by changing your hearts and cleaning up your lives. And of course, in the Jewish sense, the heart is more than just the organ that beats.

[10 : 51] It is the very center of your emotions, the center even of your thinking. That's why Ezekiel talks about a stony heart. The problem with the stony heart is it doesn't think, it doesn't respond to God at all.

It has no beat for God. But if you have a heart of flesh, then that heart lives for God, for the creator who made it and intended it to be so.

And so God is going to do a miracle. Ezekiel 36, 24, he says, I'm not going to do this for your sake. I'm going to do it for the sake of my holy name, which you have profaned among the nations where you have gone.

I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations. The name you profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the sovereign Lord, when I show myself holy through you before their eyes.

And we need to remember that, you know, when God does a miracle in our lives, when God does a miracle in anybody's life and changes them, sometimes, you know, people are scandalized. They

say, oh, that person, he's a terrible person.

[12:09] God shouldn't have mercy on him. He's a terrible person. He's done despicably evil things. I'm going to tell you about one in a little while. Somebody who did despicably evil things and they say, God shouldn't forgive people like that.

He should only forgive nice people. Well, well, well. When God changes a despicable person, he doesn't do it because the person deserves it.

He does it because he wants to show how powerful he is and how willing he is to forgive anyone's sin, regardless whether they're massive sins or very small sins, because the problem with sin is it's a bit like arsenic.

It doesn't take much to kill you. It's deadly. The soul that sins shall die. So whenever God does a miracle of salvation, we get the benefits, but he gets the glory.

You know, we sing this song, don't we? Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I'm found. I was blind, but now I see. But that's not how the hymn ends, is it?

[13:14] How does the hymn end? When we've been there 10,000 years, bright shining as the sun, we've no less days to sing God's praise. Than when we first begun.

He gets the glory. Because of his amazing grace. So God promises to do four things here in Ezekiel. The first, as you can see, God offers to clean you up.

Verse 25, I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. Have you ever been out in the garden or kind of working, doing some building work or whatever, and you've got really mucky?

And you're a bit tired, you're a bit achy and you think, what do I want? What do I want? Well, what you want is a bath. And you don't just want one of the showers then, do you? Like showers are no good.

You need a bath. And you need a bath with Epsom salts in, some mineral salts because they take away the aches and pains. And you need a bath, ideally, a little bit of candle blower, candle flickering, a cup of tea, next to your bath.

[14:23] Or Ribena, whatever it might be. And you fill it to the top, then you need a book. You need a book. You're quite right. And then you need nobody to ring you or try to get in touch with you for an hour and a half.

That's me. Lisa will vouch for that. I could be in the bath an hour, hour and a half. The longer, the better. And when I come out, I feel, wow. And wrinkly. Wrinkly, yeah, wrinkly.

But clean. I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean. I will cleanse you from all your impurities. And it feels good.

The blood of Jesus, God's Son, cleanses us from every sin. And boy, it feels good. Not because I deserve it, but because He went to the cross to die for me.

As unworthy as I am to clean me up. God offers to clean us up. The second thing God offers us here is He offers to change our heart.

[15:32] He cleans us up. He changes our heart. Verse 26, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you. I will remove from your heart the heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.

Before God cleaned me up, my heart did not beat for God. It was for self. And my selfish heart did lots of harm.

And sometimes, sadly, I didn't care. But when God cleaned up my heart, cleansed my sin, I suddenly cared. I cared for Him.

I cared for others. I cared for making people's lives better. And I don't tell you that because you need to pat me on the head and say, what a good boy you are.

John Winter is not a good boy. John Winter is a transformed person by the Spirit of the living God who took away my heart of flesh and gave me a heart. Took away my heart of stone, rather, and gave me a heart of flesh and it beats for Him.

[16:34] And when John Winter gets in the way, when his heart of stone gets in the way, the Holy Spirit convicts me of that and says, come on, that's not the way for you to live. Your life is for God.

Let it beat for Him. God offers to change our hearts, to change our human weaknesses, to completely transform us from the inside out.

And that is the wonderful news, the good news of salvation in Jesus Christ. When Nicodemus came to Jesus at night, he said, what must I do to inherit eternal life? He was interested in forever life.

Who wouldn't be? But forever life is not good if you do not change your life. I'm reading a book called Immune to Age.

It's just a medical book, Immune to Age. It's partly philosophical, in fact. And all of these kind of developments in medicine, they're saying, well, you know, some people, there's a man, a multi-millionaire in America, you might have seen the news about him.

[17 : 34] And he's spending millions every year on trying to keep himself alive forever. And he kind of, he has all of these people who work for him and they monitor everything.

He must be a miserable guy. Every day, everything's been monitored. Everything that goes into his system has all been monitored. He's wired up to things. I think, get out and live your life, man. The question that's asked in the book is what's the point of living to 150, 120, whatever, if you're living with pain and arthritis and heart disease and diminishing mental capacity?

What would be the point? It's not about how long we live that matters. It's about the quality of our lives. But here's the thing. When God changes your heart, he doesn't just change the length of your life, eternity, he changes the quality of it so that you can live forever in a sinless, resurrected body. Because Jesus went to the cross and died and conquered death and rose from the dead so that when we die and this mortal body decays in the ground, our corruptible body will become incorruptible by the Spirit of God.

God promises to transform us from the inside out. And next slide. Oh, I should tell you this story.

[19 : 08] This is Teriri. Teriri. Teriri was a Shapra tribal chief of the Condorshi in Peru in the 1950s. And Wycliffe Bible Institute churned out there and Doris Cox was a missionary who spoke to Teriri about Jesus.

And then she said to him, do you understand? He says, my heart understands with a leap. How do you take Jesus? He asked. You say, I want him.

I love him, she said. You let him come into your heart. Do you want to take Jesus? Yes, Teriri answered. I want him very much.

Let's pray then, she told him. I don't know how, he said. Just tell God what you've just told me. So Teriri bowed his head and prayed.

And that was all. At a moment later, he stepped off the port and went home. Later, Doris heard Teriri speaking inside his house a short distance away. His voice was deeper than usual as though he was trying to control his emotions.

[20 : 19] He said, I just took Jesus. I closed my eyes and prayed and now I am a child of God. That moment marked the beginning of his transformation and the transformation of over a hundred shepherds who also received Jesus as their saviour.

Later, he said, I have beheaded at least ten chiefs of my own rank and twenty of their warriors. Now I follow Christ.

I no longer hate and kill. I only want to love people and tell them about Jesus. That's a heart transplant. That's a miracle of God's grace, amazing grace, for which God gets all the glory.

And so lastly, God offers to secure your future. Sorry, next one, Josh. Ezekiel 36, 28, you will live in the land I give your forefathers.

You will be my people and I will be your God. For the Jews, that meant never again in exile, but for Israel, for the people of God, that means I will let you live forever in my presence with the gift of eternal life.

[21 : 39] As Luke chapter 12, verse 32 says, Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. And John 10, 27, 28 says, My sheep, listen to my voice.

I know them and they follow me. I give them eternal life and they shall perish, never perish. No one can snatch them from my hands. Now if we all were to take our hands and put them over our chest and say, How well is my heart doing?

Well, it's hard to tell just from doing that. If you were to put your fingers on your pulse and get a feeling for your pulse, you'd get a better indication of how well your heart's doing.

The stronger it is, the better. Oh, it's pretty good, that. Only joking. But if your heart is for God, your heart is doing really well.

If God has transplanted your heart and given you new life, a great gift of eternal life, you have a heart that lasts not just for now, but for all eternity. Thank God.

[22 : 52] And if you don't have such a heart today, there will be some of us here at the front who will gladly pray with you if you will ask Jesus into your heart, as Terewe did, to become your Savior.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.