

Can a wounded heart be restored?

“This Good News tells us how God makes us right in His sight. This is accomplished from start to finish by faith. As the Scriptures say, ‘It is through faith that a righteous person obtains life.’” — Romans 1:17

Our topical question came to me while meditating on the parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20 *NLT*). Jesus mentions four conditions of the heart into which the seed of His Word is cast. My focus today is on the first condition, that of a hard heart. In the parable, the hard soil is described as the footpath that every garden has.

Has anyone ever “walked on your heart?” Of course! Every person who has ever lived has been hurt by another person or by a devastating circumstance. If this happens enough, we will naturally avoid close relationships to guard our heart from further damage—for the sake of survival we harden our hearts. As I pondered, I had these questions: “Does a person with a hard heart always have-to-have a hard heart?” Put differently, “Can a foot path ever become fertile ground?” “Can a wounded heart be restored?”

The answer to the last two questions is “yes.” Jesus tells us that He came to bind up the wounded heart and to set the captive free. Jesus isn’t talking about physical wounds or steel bars. Even with Jesus’ generous offer we also must consider a person’s desire to be healed. A hardened heart can be extremely stubborn and standoffish, which creates an impasse. In many cases, a person with a wounded heart is unable to fathom God’s love. Feeling true love and giving true love are foreign concepts because expressions of love have often been rejected due to fear of vulnerability. That is where prayer comes in—we pray for God’s love to break through the impasse. God will answer our prayers by creating opportunities for the hardened heart to see past the pain and grasp the glimmers of hope that He offers. Our faith-filled prayers will produce eternal fruit. *“This is accomplished from start to finish by faith.”*

The Bible gives ample evidence that Jesus heals all commers. Even the demoniac man, mentioned in the gospels, ran and bowed low to Jesus, despite being hindered by the demons residing in him. The ten lepers, who were rejected and separated from society, cried out to Jesus when He walked by. The point here is to take the risk. Trust in God, who loves you with relentless love. Pursue Him with all your heart. Even in the pain, sorrow, distress and confusion of a wounded heart, Jesus is able and willing to set you free to live in wholeness where you can love again.

It may seem impossible to trust again, but please know this. God assures us that He has given each person enough faith to take the first step towards Him. When we are obedient to step out on that “small” amount of faith, He then gives us “bigger” faith to take the next step, and so on. He tells us that if we will sincerely seek Him, we will find Him. So, the answer to our topical question is “yes” we can be restored, but we also must realize that we are in partnership with God as He woos us and draws us with His goodness. The Great Physician will do heart surgery on those who bow low (like the demoniac man) and submit to His “operating table.” He knows everything about you and what you have been through, so let down your guard and cry out to Him like the ten lepers did, and let Him in. Exercise the faith residing in you and take the first step to your healing. —Ω

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Heavenly Father, thank You for the Parable of the Sower which reveals to me how to receive Your Word. Thank You for the faith You have given me to seek after You and find You. LORD, help me diligently pursue You even in my woundedness, for You are the Healer of my soul—Jesus is the only name under heaven by whom I may be made whole. Thank You for healing my broken and hardened heart. Help me better understand how being healed brings You glory. Help me see that my transformed heart attracts people to know You because they want what You have done for me. The peace, joy and the hope of glory You have given me tells people how good You are. LORD, help me have the courage to share my story with others who have never experienced Your love. Help me know how to pray for the people I know and meet, who are at an impasse and know nothing else but isolation and rejection. Help me rescue the broken hearted and set the captive free... just as Jesus did. I ask the petitions in Jesus’ name for Your glory! Amen.