

My Heart and the Desires of My Heart

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 26 July 2015

Preacher: Rev. George Sinclair

[0 : 00] Father, we confess before you that on one hand, Father, we are to use the best of our mind and the best of our heart and the best of our will to understand your word.

But Father, we confess before you that that is never enough, that we are dependent upon you to help us to understand your word. So Father, we ask that you would gently but deeply pour out your Holy Spirit upon us.

Pour out your Holy Spirit upon us. Touch us at our heart and incline our heart towards your word. May you write your word on our hearts, that our hearts through faith in Jesus may be made new and bring you glory.

Father, pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that your word might enter deep within. And all this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen.

Please be seated. So, imagine, this has probably happened to some of you. I'm not going to ask for a show of hands or something like this.

[1 : 06] But imagine that you're a woman that you love or a man that you love and you've dated maybe for a while and then the relationship breaks up and you're very sad, you're heartbroken over it.

But your brokenheartedness over it continues on for months and months. And so I come to talk to you. You decide somebody tells you, oh, you should go talk to the pastor about this, you know, since you've been so unhappy for so many months.

And I sit down with you and I say, well, you know, Jesus loves you and he died for you on the cross. Now, if that was the heart of my counseling to you, do you think I, would you go back afterwards and say to your friends, gosh, the pastor is such a great counselor.

He just said the exact thing that I needed to hear, that Jesus loves me and he died for me on the cross. Many of you, you might not say that the pastor, that I had done a bad job counseling, but you probably, many of us would probably not feel that that was very helpful to the sadness and the sorrow we feel.

If one of us has maybe not got a promotion that we desperately wanted or a particular job that we really wanted and months later we're still feeling heartbroken over the fact that we didn't get the job or we didn't get the promotion, for a friend to say to you, well, you know, Jesus loves you.

[2 : 29] He died on the cross for you. It probably wouldn't feel like enough. In fact, many of us, whether we would want to say it or not, would say to ourselves, what does it matter that Jesus died on the cross for me if person X doesn't love me?

What does it matter that Jesus loves me and died on the cross for me when I can't have that job that I so desperately wanted? We might not entirely put that into words, but that's often what our heart is saying when we continue on in sadness in the face of a particular loss.

It just doesn't seem enough that Jesus died on the cross for us and it wouldn't seem very helpful if somebody reminded us of that. So why is that?

Why is that? I'm not having you all come here today so that you'll feel terribly guilty about yourselves, but what does that say about us that that would be the case? And in fact, actually, you know, to be really honest, if you came to me for counseling and the heart of my counseling is that Jesus died for you on the cross and he loves you and that's sufficient, and you went back and told your Christian friends that that's what the pastor would say, they'd all say you should get a better counselor.

Like that's what most of us would probably say because most of us actually don't think that's sufficient. So why is that? So today we're going to look at a series of proverbs that talk about the human heart that help us to understand how our heart works and how it doesn't work and how it is

that we respond to different things and even why we persist in sadness and sorrow.

[4 : 30] So Andrew, if you could put the first one up, that would be great. And we're going to say it together in a moment. It's Proverbs 14.10 is the first one. And just, you know, normally, those of you who are familiar with my preaching style, usually I have points and today I don't have any points.

My hope is that one or more of these proverbs will be the point. They're all short and that they might be something that you would want to meditate upon more later on.

But could you say this proverb with me? Proverbs 14.10. The heart knows its own bitterness and no stranger shares its joy. Let's say it again.

The heart knows its own bitterness and no stranger shares its joy. I mean, this is a beautiful proverb, isn't it? It's really beautiful. It communicates to us that human beings are deep.

Doesn't it really? I mean, it's funny. And this isn't, Louise would say this of me and I would say this of Louise. Louise and I will have been married 34 years in October.

[5 : 35] But there's still lots about Louise that I don't understand, that I don't know. She'd say there's lots more about me that she doesn't understand or doesn't know.

I mean, on one hand, the current fascination in marriage patterns and romance is that we look for soulmates. And part of the tragedy of that is that, in fact, on one hand, we never really find a soulmate because, at least in the way that it's often talked about in the popular culture, because there's a depth to people that we just never plumb the depths of, even after we've been married for a very, very long time.

And, in fact, actually often if we think that we have plumbed the depth of the other person, that's probably a sign that we've stopped caring about them very much. But we don't actually ever really plumb the depths of another person.

And that's why this proverb is just so true, isn't it? The heart knows its own bitterness and no stranger shares its joy. There's a, you know, we can have some sense of the bitterness that another person's experiencing and some sense of their joy, but on one hand, there really is a certain degree of truth to the fact that we are alone and separate.

And our depths mean that no other person will ever really be able to plumb the depths of who we are. And sometimes that leads us to actually maybe even feel depressed and despairing that people don't understand who we are.

[7 : 17] And then no stranger can share that. It really tells us. But you know what? At the same time, there's a bit of a mystery here in this text.

Why is it that often, like maybe it'll be afterwards at coffee, you'll meet somebody that you've never met before and you'll talk to them for 15 minutes. And why is it that we'll walk away from a person after talking to them for 15 minutes and feel we really understand them?

Yet at the same time, if we're honest about ourselves, we've lived with ourselves all our lives and we don't understand ourselves. Like, why is that? And on one hand, of course, we can have a bit of it, really, you know, get a sense of a person.

Yet on the other hand, there really always is a something more, a deepness to that person that we can start to try to understand or fathom and never reach the end of.

Let's read another proverb, Proverbs 14, 13. Please say it with me. Even in laughter, the heart may ache and the end of joy may be grief.

[8 : 23] Let's say that together again. Even in laughter, the heart may ache and the end of joy may be grief. You know, isn't this also really, really, really true?

In fact, actually, it's even more powerfully put in the Hebrew where it says the end of joy is grief. It's even more powerful.

But, you know, here, think about this for a second. Why is it that once we say something like that, most of us know that this is actually a very good description of human experience? Like, why is it that so often that even while we're laughing that there's also maybe underneath that, very, very closely underneath the laughter is a sense of sadness and grief over other types of things?

And why is it that we often have a sense that when we're having a time of great joy or great success that many of us think that it won't last? We might hope that it will last for quite a while, but we always have this bit of a sense that it won't last.

And why is it that on one hand that, you know, we, why is it that we always would choose if we, I mean, obviously some people snatch sadness from the jaws of grief, sadness from the jaws of joy and do things to make their lives miserable, but why is it that we have some sense that joy is

natural, that we were made for joy, and that grief is unnatural, and yet both of them are things that we experience in the natural world, but why is it that we have a sense that joy is more fundamental or foundational, that, that that's more what we were made for?

[10:09] Like, why is that? Why don't we think that sorrow is what we were made for? Why is it that we don't think that sadness is what we were made for? Why do, why do we experience joy and sadness as being unnatural, I mean, sadness and grief and sorrow as sort of, in some ways, unnatural, but joy is natural?

Why is it that that's sort of a common human experience? Why not the reverse? And, and why is it that on one hand we are never surprised when we go into a period of sadness?

I mean, on one hand we are, we are, and we're, we're bitter about it and we might even rage about it, but on the other hand, you know, if a person told you that they only experience joy and they never experience sorrow, would you believe them?

Never? Like, you mean like never in the last two minutes? Yeah, that's fine. Like never in the last, you know, if the person's 50 years old, like never in the past 30 years, 40 years, you've never experienced any emotion other than joy?

Why is it that so many Christian churches present that the model of what it means to be fully human is to always feel joy? I was just at a church recently and that's, in a sense, part of the message of the sermon and I was thinking, well, Jesus cried at the tomb of Lazarus.

[11:30] He wept tears in the garden of Gethsemane. But why is it that we, why is it that we do that? Yet at the same time, we recognize that this proverb is very true.

Even in laughter, the heart may ache and the end of joy may be grief. Put up the next one, Andrew. Can you say this with me? Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. Let's say that together again. Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. This is a very commonplace type of proverb, isn't it?

It's a sort of proverb that you could well imagine seeing in a greeting card that Oprah would like, Maya Angelou would like, that it almost seems like it's just too common to even talk about or comment.

In the original language that hope, even the word which we translate as hope, which is a good word, but there's this underlying current in the original language of anxiety connected with it.

[12:34] So it's as if, you know, you're hoping but you're anxious at the same time. We've all had that experience. We're hoping but we're anxious. And, you know, maybe we're waiting for somebody to come home or we're waiting for news of what's going to happen with a promotion or something like that or what's happening to one of our kids or our best friend.

And on the one hand we're hoping but on the other hand we're anxious and the longer that it takes for us to hear what's happened, the more heart sick that we feel. But a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. And this actually, it just, you know, it fits in with so much of how our culture would talk about things. I mean, it's a very common thing in our culture that if I would, in fact, Christians often say this to each other, follow your heart.

Follow your heart. We'll say to people, trust your heart. You know, because a hope deferred, you know, that you trust your hope and when you get your hopes it's like a tree of life.

And we'll often say to each other, you're thinking too much, trust your heart. And in fact, actually when we say things like you're thinking too much, trust your heart, it's on one hand, it's a little tiny bit of an opening into what the Bible means by heart.

[13:47] But just so you know right now, probably every single one of us to some extent here doesn't hear heart the way it's intended. In our culture, we sort of pit the mind and thinking against the heart and feelings and emotions.

And in the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, the heart is the source of our feelings, the source of our plans, the source of our thinking.

In fact, if you were to go back in time to the writer of Proverbs and say, you're thinking too much, trust your heart, they would look at you blankly. You're using your heart too much, trust your heart, like it would be a contradiction.

Because thinking, planning, feeling, longing, desiring, hoping, all of them come just from the singular thing called the heart into the Old Testament.

So on one hand, though, when we say, you're thinking too much, trust your heart, on one hand, we're really thinking primarily of emotions, but we go a little bit beyond it. And we're thinking of

maybe the heart as touching something more than just emotions.

[14:58] But here's the problem with this proverb. Can we say it again? Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

Here's the problem with this. How many times have we hoped for evil? And when our hope for evil isn't bearing fruition, we feel depressed.

I don't know if it's a true statistic. I guess you've heard, I think it's just this past week, that the Ashley Madison website, which is, I've been told, is a website that you go to if you want to have an affair with a married person.

And they facilitate people having affairs with married people. And I, it was on a blog, so it must be true. Okay? But I, somebody sent me a blog link, so it must be true, that said that the city of Ottawa has the highest proportion but per capita of people who subscribe to Ashley Madison than anywhere in North America.

I don't know if it's true, but it was in a blog. And, and I guess there's a lot of nervous people that if these hacktivists have in fact successfully hacked the list that they might make it public and many people in Ottawa might discover that they, they've in fact registered for this.

[16:19] But, you know, think about this for a second. How many people who are married desire to have an affair and they long to have an affair with another person and their heart is sick because it's not happening?

And, how many people once they've had the affair at least momentarily will feel like they've had an eruption of life in their life?

Is that what the Bible's teaching? See, one of the problems with trust your heart, you're thinking too much, is it implies that the heart only desires good things.

I mean, if you think of many movies and television series, a lot of what goes on, and I just watched The Drop last night, and partly what goes on is that the sadness of one of the characters and the worry of one of the characters because he's worried that his desire to rob people isn't going to happen the way he wants.

And, you know, and you could well imagine that he thinks at least, and probably he would experience, great emotions of excitement and joy if he is successful in stealing a million dollars.

[17:50] others. So, here's the thing about these proverbs. On one hand, many of them seem to have something which is true about them, but if you actually ask sort of deeper questions about them, you start to realize that there's actually truth and something else going on in him.

If you could, Andrew, if you could put up the next proverb, let's read the next proverb together. read it with me. When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the Lord.

Isn't that a great proverb? Let's say it again. When a man's folly brings his way to ruin, his heart rages against the Lord. Isn't that true? Like, haven't, don't, maybe it's never happened to you, but have you ever been angry because you've had a plan to do something bad and it backfires and you're angry?

And sometimes people are even angry at God over it. And they'll be angry at like, why is God, why is this happening to me? Just this week in a coffee shop, I had a conversation with a guy, no surprise, I have conversations with non-Christians in coffee shops and this is a fellow who, part of his conversation with me is always that Christians are bad and unhelpful because they have a bad view of human beings, that we think that human beings are sort of, you know, that we don't understand that human beings are sort of good.

But he came to me, he had a picture in the paper of that, I think it was in Turkey where there was a suicide bomber and it killed, I think it was a Shiite mosque and I think it was ISIS or ISIL and they did this attack and they killed many, many people at a mosque and so my friend brings the newspaper over to me and he points at it and says, and you say that human beings are made in the image of God and yet human beings made in the image of God do things like this.

[20:07] and he was angry at God, angry at religion. I just listened but inwardly I thought to myself, you're the one who thinks that people are basically good.

Like, how do you square that circle? But it wasn't the time to say it because he was just angry and raging at God and sometimes when people are angry and raging at God all you can do is pray for them.

there's not much you can say to them but the fact of the matter is that even Christians rage at God and get angry at God. Can we go back to Proverbs 13, 12, Andrew?

So just thinking that last proverb that sometimes our hearts rage against God and you could almost picture that when our hearts are raging against God if there was some way that we could hit him if there was some way that we could hurt him it would make us glad.

Or maybe I'm just far more evil than every person here. Can we say this together again? Hope deferred makes the heart sick but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life.

[21 : 22] So here's partly how we have to understand this proverb. You'll see and I'm going to show you again in another couple of minutes that's going to be the very very next I think it's the next proverb that we're going to look at.

I have to look at my list I think it's not quite the next proverb but we're going to get to it very shortly is we have to when we read the book of Proverbs the book of Proverbs never believes that our hearts are pure and only desire good things.

But what it is trying to communicate to us is a very very different model of how human beings function. We sort of operate in our culture with several different ways of how human beings function.

a lot of us function that it's just will that we just use our will power to do what we want to accomplish and sort of complicated with that is that there's actually on the same side a flip side a sense that human beings are very very passive.

Like just to give a Christian example if you've ever read the book The Five Love Languages which has lots of good practical insights but one worrisome thing about that is I was joking with my wife last night when I was talking to her about the sermon I was saying you know I could very easily say that the reason I'm not loving you enough is because you're not filling up my love tank enough and if you just started filling up my love tank more in love language that I can hear that I would love you more and there's a certain other psychological model of the sense that a heart is passive somehow that we're passive and it's because of race it's because of social class it's because of economic things it's because we were victims it's because our love language our love tank isn't being filled up and so on one hand in our culture we have this almost schizophrenic type of approach where on one hand we can be very very passive and on the other hand it's all just about our willpower and the Bible the book of Proverbs presents another different sense here and it's partly how we're to understand this text as being actually very very profound it describes that the human heart is always hoping and trusting the human heart the center of who we are where we that part of us in a sense the command center of the human being out of which flows our emotions our thoughts our plans our desires all of that out of which flows our life that the human heart is always hoping and trusting in something that in fact it's never right to say will I hope or trust but the book of

[24 : 03] Proverbs would say that the question is not will I will my heart hope and trust in something the question is always what is my heart hoping and trusting in excuse me in fact you know here's a very important application of this one of the things that we can really ask ourselves as Christians I mean non-Christians can do this as well because this is not describing Christian experience Proverbs is trying to describe a particular way of us understanding that my heart is trusting in something has in a sense loves that it trusts in and in light of what I put my hope in and trust in in light of this my life flows out of it and in light of what I hope and trust in certain thoughts seem reasonable in light of what I hope and trust in certain things will make me happy and certain things will make me sad in light of what I trust and hope in plans will seem reasonable wise or foolish in light of what I hope or trust in and every human being every one of us every person we see our hearts the center of who we are is putting its trust and its hope in certain things or persons so one of the questions we can ask ourselves in the face of emotion especially persistent emotion or persistent sin a lot of

Christian literature about dealing with persistent sin is basically replicating a willpower model from the world or a passive model from the world but the question we should ask ourselves in the face of persistent sin if a man is persistently going after pornography if a person is persistently going after lies is what is it that I am putting my hope and trust in that makes this behavior necessary for me so that my heart is sick if I cannot have it and I will feel at least temporary joy if I attain it is to call out to God or to help ask him to help you to understand what is it that my heart sees as a treasure so that my mind and my behavior and my life moves in certain patterns and habits you see I might not say that much more about this and I have to be careful of my time but you see part of and I am not mindful of

Jesus who is fully human and he experienced sorrow and this isn't a model that we never experience sorrow because it is appropriate to feel sorrow sorrow the book of Jesus and the Sermon on the Mount says it is appropriate to feel sorrow but if I am acting let's say if I say to myself what does it matter that there is 80 people at church here today I am broken hearted because there is not 300 and I am persistently broken hearted that there is not 300 then what and if somebody says to me George you know Jesus has died for you he loves you he gave himself for you he is fitting you for heaven nothing can separate you from the love of God and if inwardly I say what does that matter if I don't have 300 people coming to church on a Sunday then what I'm saying is that

I have something that I value and that I trust and that I hope in that's far more important than what than God than what Jesus has done for me that my true treasure might be a particular view of my success or a particular view of my power or my reputation that that's actually what I put my hope and my trust in and that's I might say on Sunday morning oh Jesus loves me you know this I know for the Bible tells me so but functionally as I go through my day I have another treasure which is more important and probably others and so one important application of all of this is to understand that the heart the center of who we are the way it functions is always to desire to hope to trust to love and out of that flows my life and your life and so that in the face of emotions in the face of what's going on it's not that we of course

I'm not saying never use willpower but what I am saying is that sometimes what we need to do is in fact ask God to make clear to us what in fact is my treasure and my hope that to not have it I'm feeling sad or that I feel joy at pursuing bad things but here's the problem so that means a very very good application some important application but there's going to be problems with it I mean it's a direction to go but it's not a foolproof technique and part of the problem is remember those earlier proverbs that I gave you about the depths of human beings and why is it that we can meet somebody and 15 minutes have a sense that we really know them but yet we can live with ourselves our whole lives and don't really know us put up the next proverb please

[29 : 59] Andrew Proverbs 27 19 do you like to read that with me please as in water face reflects face so the heart of man reflects the man like on one hand this is actually really true isn't it but you know on the other hand if you think about it you can look if you have very still water I mean now we could use mirror because they didn't really have mirrors like we do back then not as perfect not as good as we do you can look at your face and you can see your face you might not like what you see but you can see it and on one hand it really is the case that if you get to know a person's heart you're getting to know that person and to look into our heart is a way to come to a certain degree of self knowledge but isn't it true that we can never actually know that that's in fact what happens like isn't there in a sense where as on one hand it's really important to try to get out of this model of either being passive or all willpower and ask ourselves what our hopes are but at the same time there's a mystery about ourselves we don't see and understand about ourselves there's a limit to where by merely by seeking and understanding our own heart that we can understand who we are there's a limit to that that's what those other proverbs that we thought were so wise are telling us when we read this one see that's why the book of proverbs it's designed for us to try to one of my earlier blogs

I said we read the book of proverbs with amnesia we read a proverb and then we read another proverb and we don't realize that the two proverbs should go together to try to understand it and if we're saying yeah that's true human beings are really deep we can't understand them and then the next start when we say we only understand ourselves we have to understand ourselves how does that go with that other proverb Andrew could you put the next proverb up 28 26 do you want to say this with me please whoever trusts in his own heart is a fool if earlier on I said that the Bible is going to tell you things that our culture says trust your heart and the Bible says that that's a foolish thing well if we start to realize that the part of the problem about trusting our heart is that the heart has depths that we don't really know what's there and if we're honest about ourselves some of the things in our hearts are scary like listen going back to that

Ashley Madison thing I have no doubt that there maybe are some people who are fully giving themselves to a desire to have an affair with another person but I also have no doubt that there's many people who go to that site and are horrified that they want to do that and yet they don't know how to stop they don't know what's going on inside their lives and even if they try to analyze what their heart is hoping and trusting and there's still just something in there that they can't get to the

bottom and the depths of and so to trust what you don't I mean that would be like trusting having the pilot say that we're going to go we're entering into clouds we're flying at 30,000 feet we're going into clouds and the storm and you know actually I just want to tell you right now is that part of our flight programs were programmed by monkeys and part were by computer engineers and I don't know which parts were which but we're going to trust the instruments would that make you feel comfortable while you're flying at 30,000 feet that you don't know what parts of the instrumentation were programmed by monkeys monkeys can't program just in case you're not familiar with that it would just be random garbage but that's how it is with us as human beings that's what the depths of the heart has

Andrew could you put up the next one Proverbs 11 20 do you want to read this with me those of crooked is that the right do I have the right one yep say it with me those of crooked heart are an abomination to the Lord but those of blameless ways are his delight let's say it again those of crooked heart are an abomination to the Lord but those of blameless ways are his delight so you see here's one of the problems we have with this proverb is we think that this crooked heart thing sometimes it applies to us but usually applies to others I grew up in a home my parents are immigrants from Belfast Northern Ireland and they are orange in other words they are Protestants and there was a saying my parents would say this all the time if something was really ship shape in a room really neat and tidy or very well done they'd say that's very Protestant the implication being is that if it's messy or untidy or not well done it's very

Catholic and whether they would acknowledge it or not it might very well be that they'd say Protestants Catholics have more crooked hearts than don't you think this is a very human problem don't you think that maybe Muslims are thinking that non-Muslims have more crooked hearts isn't it maybe that people who aren't Muslims think Muslims have more crooked hearts isn't it maybe how some people think that let's say black people have more crooked hearts than white people and isn't it possible that Chinese people think that about white people and on and on and on we go this proverb can only be understood if we understand that I have a crooked heart like not only is my heart deep but I have a crooked heart I have a crooked heart and it's twisted and it means that things don't always just go straight

[36 : 05] I don't know if you've ever been with a young kid like a toddler and they've started to learn to throw just a couple of Saturdays ago I was with this really cute little two year old girl and she decided she was going to start throwing her stuffed animal and an excited two year old girl enthusiastically throwing a stuffed animal who knows what she's planning to hit but most of the time if she's trying to hit you that's the safest place to be I mean if it's just stuffed animals don't hurt when they hit you right but you know if she was starting to gleefully throw rocks probably the safest place would be to say try to hit me because most of the time it'll go all sorts of other places in fact sometimes when they throw they fall backwards right they lean to throw and it knocks them backwards or they let go of it and it goes behind them how you can throw forward and go backwards only toddlers know and understand because they can do it regularly and that's in a sense what's just saying here about our crooked hearts is that my heart is crooked my heart is crooked and and and so here's the thing remember I was saying that and it still is an important application is to think through what is it that my heart is desiring and hoping and longing in but and and and to try to fix things we you know we need to fix things but how can a crooked heart make a crooked heart straight like if I have a crooked heart and if there's depths to my heart that I don't really understand how can my heart make my heart straight could you put up the next one Andrew

Proverbs 29 you want to say this with me who can say I have made my heart pure I am clean from my sin this is a very the word pure here in the Hebrew has a sense of it's a word constantly used in the book of Leviticus and it means that it's saying that who can say I have made my heart completely morally intellectually existentially life's in complete and utter way I am completely and utterly like God my heart my life everything about me my thoughts my desires my emotions my behaviors my dreams everything I have made everything in my life completely at one with God that's what it's saying and so and Proverbs says who can say that in fact if somebody in coffee said that to you would you believe them here's the thing for many people in our culture they believe that Christians are making this claim about themselves and sometimes we give that approach off that we are better than other people that we have made our heart pure and just as you wouldn't believe it if somebody said it to you up there in the coffee hour a lot of non-Christians rightly or wrongly they don't they think we're saying that about ourselves who are as followers of Jesus and they don't

believe it they don't believe it no way yet you know the funny thing is is that what is the fundamental thing that people in Canada say about themselves I'm a good person how does that work what's going on in our hearts that we sort of on one hand don't believe it or of others yet on the other hand we sort of say it about ourselves that we should be getting a pass when we do bad things because I'm a good person like how is it that's psychologically working like and how is it that that that like that you know a lot of people don't like religion because it's just going to tell us that we're bad but we like spirituality because it tells us that we're good yet how does that actually work with like how does that actually work like how can that possibly work and and why is it that in Canada even though we don't believe another person if they say I don't have a crooked heart like you don't you wouldn't believe a person like that there's nothing in my heart that's crooked and that my heart's completely pure yet you know on one hand we don't we don't believe it on the other hand if I if I was just to say to people in the coffee shop they'd say you're just depressing like why is it that that goes on in us why is it that that goes on in us can you put up the next proverb please 20 25 20 I think it is grab that right yes do you want to say this with me whoever sings songs to a heavy heart is like one who takes off a garment on a cold day and like vinegar on soda here's the thing that a lot of a lot of spirituality is just singing songs and we know that that the problem of our cure of our crooked heart the problem that a crooked heart can't right make a crooked heart straight the problem of the human heart having depths and yet a lot of times what goes on as spirituality and work is just and religion we just know it can't work it's just merely singing songs can you put up the next proverb 21 1 you want to say this with me please the king's heart is a stream of water in the hand of the lord he turns it wherever he will and here's this idea that god is sovereign that he is so sovereign and the king is used here as an analogy of the most powerful human and yet it's saying that the most powerful human in the face of almighty god the sovereign god that that even though he's the most powerful human that this that the that the lord can turn the different streams of water the things that are they're nourishing his heart he can just turn them wherever he will but that's in fact that if either if there is a god who does exist who's sovereign that god can do that but here's the thing should god use his heart sovereignly like that within us to fix our crooked heart on one hand when we're in deep trouble we want god to come down and just completely rewire us and the rest of the time we don't but here's the thing you know when we were kids probably we've all had this experience that you know you come face to face with a bigger kid a bigger girl a bigger guy and they're a bit of a bully and they get into an argument about who's smarter who's who has the best hockey team or whatever it is you know something stupid and the next thing you know the other person sitting on you and they've got you pinned and they say I'm not gonna let you up until you say I'm right and so you struggle against that other person to try to get them off eventually you realize you can't get them up they're just too big so you say you're right but inwardly you say no you're not you're never right and maybe for some of you if you're fast when you finally let you up and you get away 20 feet you say I said that but I didn't believe it then you run away you're wrong I'm right and you run away so how would it be if God who is sovereign was just to try to fix all of our hearts if he was gonna say you know I'm gonna you just you you you you I'm gonna you just have to say that I'm the best you have to say that I'm your treasure and I'm not gonna let you up because I'm sovereign I'm powerful I'm not gonna let you up until you say that and we wouldn't like it just like we wouldn't like a bully we wouldn't we wouldn't think that that's what salvation's gonna be like or that that's the way to go forward has to be God's power has to be used in some other way but what would happen if we could if I was to say if God was to announce somehow he put a big ad in the paper and he said everybody on the 31st of July on the 31st of July I am going to rewire the entire human race and I'm going to rewire the entire human race so that there's no more hatred and everybody loves me would that make our culture happy would that make you happy would you be fearful about the July 31st if you really thought it was going to happen if he said just to model this I'm going to do it for this human being and zap God just sovereignly rewires who they are in their heart and we wouldn't want that and we wouldn't think that that was the solution and so if God is going to help us to solve the problem of the crooked heart it's going to have to be through some other means could you put up the next verse [45 : 14] Andrew Proverbs 21 2 would you say it with me please every way of a man is right in his own eyes but the Lord weighs the heart what this text is telling us is that God sees and knows my heart God sees and knows my heart I think everything I do is right in my own ways eventually I'll grudgingly acknowledge that I'm wrong but only the Lord weighs means he judges it implies that he has a proper accurate way of judging that he actually knows the depth and the breadth and the

weight and the volume of the human heart and that he weighs it that he can actually go in and see it and it means that he understands things at the level of our motives in fact this text is a profound critique of spirituality and religion because the fact of the matter is that we can do external types of things to try to make ourselves right with God but we can't tithe but maybe we're just tithing not out of the fact that God is our greatest treasure and we're grateful for what Jesus has done for us on the cross but to put

God in our debt and maybe our different ways of serving the poor or serving somebody in church or something like that is really just a way of putting ourselves front and forward to make ourselves look good to other people to impress other people or to make brownie points I remember when I was at a Kiwanis head table because I was the guest speaker and there was somebody there from the University of Ottawa who was part of the Kiwanis club or whatever they called it that club and I said oh wow so you like to do all these things to help the poor and she said no I'm just doing this so I can get into med school because to get into med school they're going to look that you're doing these types of things and in fact she said at that particular time that just about every single person in that club was all doing it so they could get into med school and then moments later she got up and she got praised for her selfless labor but that happens in the church that happens in the church doesn't just happen in Kiwanis could you put up the next one

Proverbs 21:3 it's not on your sheet here you want to say it with me to do righteousness and justice is more acceptable to the Lord than sacrifice say it again to do righteousness and justice is more acceptable than sacrifice sorry to the Lord you got it right I got it wrong so here's the thing and these little Proverbs and these different in a sense riddles that the Proverbs set to us help us to understand how God is to use his sovereign power you see in the incarnation the Bible says that God just doesn't sing songs to us with our troubled hearts but that in the incarnation God himself in the person of his son comes and lives amongst us and when in the book of Hebrews it says that there's no temptation that's undertaken man that didn't also happen to Jesus it's saying that Jesus actually enters into our experience and experiences our experience to its depths he doesn't just sing songs he enters in and the

Bible tells us that on the cross what we see in the cross is that on one hand it's a sacrifice but it's more than a sacrifice because it's also the righteousness and justice of God being displayed it's the righteousness and justice of God being displayed because Jesus has lived a perfect life he's the one man whose heart has not been crooked but is straight and he sees my crooked heart and that I cannot straighten my heart and in a sense he says I'll let my heart be yours I'll give my heart myself for you and it's not then that it's just that it's as if when

Jesus dies upon the cross and he rises again from the dead it comes from the heart of God and the heart of God the heart of Jesus to redeem us and to love us and it's a true loving of us and a knowing of us because of the incarnation he knows the depths of human experience he you and I we have this temptation to do something and then maybe we eventually give into it but every temptation that a human being can possibly have Jesus experiences and he never gives and he knows it right until the temptation loses all of its force and all of its power and this righteous life can stand for you and me and the things that I do that deserve God's justice and that would unmake me Jesus comes and says I will stand in your place I will take that punishment you know the anger over what you've done that's wrong I will take that for you I will take your doom I will offer you my destiny I will take what your crooked heart deserves and I will offer you my heart and I'll offer to live in your heart I'll offer to give you a new heart and in this we see both a sacrifice but more than a sacrifice we see the righteousness and the justice of God and so what are we to do Andrew could you put up the next proverb please 23:26 do you want to say it again my son give me your heart and let your eyes observe my ways let's say it again my son give me your heart and let your eyes observe my ways here's how grace works the fact of the matter is

[51 : 39] I remember I said our hearts always giving ourselves to something this text is addressed it's a it's a fundamental text about the heart God says to each of us son and daughter give me your heart and here's how grace works remember I said that two-year-old who knows where it's going to go if we try to give our heart to God I have a crooked heart how can a crooked heart successfully give itself to God in some ways our hearts are like a balloon you take a balloon you blow it up and then you don't tie it and you let the air out and who knows where that balloon is going to go and it's almost as if we say you know we blow up the balloon that's our heart and say God I want you to have this and you let go of it and who knows where it goes you see what matters is not my crooked

heart's ability to throw but God's ability to catch that's what grace is not my ability to give but God's ability to receive my ability to give is crooked

God's ability to receive is perfect that's the gospel the final proverb please Andrew let's say it together let not your heart envy sinners but continue in the fear of the Lord all the day in the original language the the the in envy and continue are the same word and and what it's saying is stop in a sense giving your heart and being this constant giving of your heart to sinners but give your heart to the God who's worthy of our praise who's sovereign who's awesome who's completely and utterly different who's not crooked but offers to give us a new heart and write his laws on our heart and take that which we cannot fix for it he's he's willing he we we have all sorts of loves that are out of order but we can never when we have God as as the primary thing that we want to give it's never out of order so here's the thing the gospel is all about God's ability to catch and the Christian life is begins by us giving our heart to God and he catches it and receives it but we grow in our Christian life by continuing to give our hearts to the one who out of a heart of love for us was willing to die on the cross for us that in a sense this act of giving of our heart to

God is what grounds our life and it's also what starts to shape our lives that it that the gospel does just leave us alone but starts to shape our lives that our lives are to be characterized by us as we live our daily lives as we're making our plans as we're feeling our feelings as we're thinking our thoughts and and the gospel invites us that now that now that we have in a sense been caught by God and Jesus can live in our heart and and and it's our worth to him is is not because of our ability to throw but his ability to catch that we can have this grounded security to understand how we go through our lives and how we are giving how our loves and our are just out of order and so we have the freedom to go in and say to Jesus Jesus take my heart order my loves help me father to understand this drive to this particular sin or help me to understand this this heart sickness that I have that that that what is that treasure that's going on and Jesus I know you're supposed to be the greatest treasure I know you won't remove all other desires from me that you'll put them straight you'll put them in order Jesus please order my heart my heart is yours please order my heart order my desires please Jesus and the Christian walk is a matter of walking with

Jesus day by day calling out to him to help him asking him to help us order our hearts until that final day comes when we see him face to face and the promise of the new heart that we already start to experience we experience it in its fullness and its perfection in the new heaven in the new earth please stand let's pray father we confess before you that father you know some of us we're struggling some of us are struggling maybe with a very persistent type of evil or persistent sadness father we ask that your holy spirit would break into our lives and help us to understand what what our heart is trusting and hoping in and father we ask that you would bring proper your order your healing order and your healing authority to what our hearts are hoping and trusting in and father maybe there are some here who've never trusted their heart to you never given their heart to you and father we ask that for everyone who's here who's not given their heart to Jesus that they would do that now that you would help them father that that father that they would just call out to you and say father take my heart it is your own

Jesus take my heart as my savior and my lord and father we ask that your holy spirit would move in our hearts help us to understand what we're hoping and trusting in and may you be our greatest treasure in this we ask in the name of Jesus your son and our savior amen