

The Heart

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[0 : 00] Where's your heart? Your doctor will tell you it's right about here on your left side.! But I'm not talking about the blood pumping muscle today.

! The Bible speaks about the heart over 800 times. The heart speaks much deeper of our mind, of our spirit, it's our will, our governing purpose, it's the affections, the soul.

This is the intent of the heart, as the Bible shows us. Diseases and failures of the heart cause thousands of deaths in the world today.

But there is another kind of heart disease and it's damaging lives and disastrous to our souls. In fact, we're born with this dreadful condition.

We read how every man is born with a heart problem. It's a spiritual heart problem. The divine diagnosis is that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

[1 : 04] Who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart. I try the reins even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

So our heart is sick. It's desperately so. Incurable. Essentially, it's unbelief. And it's fatal. Here's the heart of unbelief.

As someone has pictured it to illustrate, Jeremiah 17 verse 9, deceitful, desperately wicked. Mark 7 verses 20 through 23.

Our Lord says, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, which means immorality.

An evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, all these evil things come forth from within and defile the man.

[2 : 14] It's not a pretty picture, is it? The heart. You see the natural state of the heart. The heart of man is naturally not a pretty picture. It's called variously evil, proud, impenitent, hardened, darkened, foolish.

God searches the hearts of man through and through. He knows your heart. And he is the great heart doctor. He sees with his x-ray vision. He searches and he knows the hearts, the reins, the very fibers, the very core of our being.

Sadly, some never get the heart treatment that they need. Now I have a tape measure here. 18 inches. Did you know that you can miss heaven by 18 inches?

Or 45 centimeters. How can anyone get so close? So close and yet in the end hear the Lord say, I never knew you.

Depart from me. Yet this faces many, many who might be in churches today who have only a head acceptance, a mental acceptance of the Lord Jesus.

[3 : 30] Because the distance between the head and the heart is 18 inches. 18 inches. How sad to miss heaven by 18 inches. To have that head, intellectual acceptance, that mental assent that you know it intellectually, but you do not believe it in your heart.

You can miss heaven by 18 inches. To just have a mental assent to know what the Bible says, but yet not to believe in your heart.

Not to believe in him as your savior. It's more than just a mental assent. To just have the knowledge. 18 inches.

The distance between the heart and the head. We can hear the gospel. We can understand. We can engage the intellect.

All things we should do. We should reason together. God doesn't bypass the intellect, the mind. But more so the heart must believe. The heart must believe. And so it's like they work together.

[4 : 39] God doesn't bypass our intellect. The gospel is reasonable. The gospel is sensible. It's rational. It's right. It's right thinking. But the brain must also be engaged with the heart.

You must believe in your heart to be saved. As we see illustrated here. We see the word is heard. It's preached. It's delivered. It's transmitted to the ear. It goes to the understanding. We know. We understand. And faith springs forth in the heart of man. So then faith cometh by hearing. Hearing by the word of God. You must believe in your heart. The word is preached. We hear it. We process it. And faith comes to the heart. You must believe in your heart to be saved. Of course in all of this the Holy Spirit super intends. [5 : 35] The Holy Spirit leads. The Holy Spirit draws. The Holy Spirit convicts. The Holy Spirit regenerates. And of course God is at work here in this whole process. Our Lord rebukes unbelief and hardness of heart. Mark 16 verse 14. A heart can be hard as a rock. God knows the heart. He searches and he tries the heart. God will you yield him your heart. David cried out for this great heart change. In Psalm 139 verse 23. David cries out from his heart. He says search me oh God. And know my heart. Try me. And know my thoughts. And see if there be any wicked way in me. And lead me in the way everlasting. God heard David's heart cry. And David came to be known as a man after God's own heart. Wow. To be called that. [6 : 35] That's something isn't it? David for all his faults became known to be a man after God's own heart. God answered David's prayer. And we fundamentally have a heart problem. Left untreated. Our spiritual heart condition is fatal. The wages of sin is death. The answer for our heart problem fundamentally is this. We need a heart operation. A heart operation. It's essential that we have a heart operation. I know some of them have had some heart worries this last week gone by. Our physical heart sometimes needs attention. But more so spiritually so. The heart operation is something we must have. There's no other way. There's no other treatment that can save us. Our heart must be changed. There is no other way. As we read in Ezekiel 36. It says a new heart also will I give you. [7 : 37] And a new spirit will I put within you. And I'll take away the stony heart out of your flesh. And I'll give you a heart of flesh. So our Lord to Ezekiel is saying there's two kinds of hearts here. A stony heart. A rock heart. A hardened heart. And a heart of flesh. A heart that God can work in. And sensitive to God. So God works in human hearts. I'll put to you today. It's a very important Bible principle. As we say the heart is often referred to. It's a very important thread through your word of God. God opens the heart. God changes the heart. God gives us a heart to fear and to know him. Lydia was one. Who knew such an open heart surgery if you like. It tells of Lydia. A seller of purple. On the banks of the river there. And she was. It says she worshipped God. And it says Lydia heard us. She heard the gospel. [8 : 35] The gospel preacher came. And delivered it. And she heard it. And it says the heart. Whose heart. Lydia's heart. The Lord opened. That she attended. Unto the things. Which were spoken of. Paul. She believed. And was baptized. So. She heard. And the word. Answered her heart. Her open heart. Sadly so many have a closed heart. It's closed. They closed the door as it were. But God wants her heart opened. Sadly so many have a divided heart. They will not fully follow after the Lord. Once while lecturing in Utah. Mark Twain. Got into an argument with someone. There was a Mormon there. Arguing the case for. Polygamy. And the Mormon said to Twain. Can you find a single passage of scripture. That forbids. Polygamy. And certainly Twain replied. No man can serve two masters. You know. We can only have one wife. Because we cannot serve two masters. [9 : 31] Now a divided heart will fail us. Friends. We can only follow the master. Of course it's. It's comparing the master with money. It's comparing the master with anything but the master. We cannot have a divided heart. A divided heart will fail us. We must have the one master. Our heart must be changed. And the old deceitful wicked sinner's heart. Must be surgically removed.

We need a new heart. Christianity is that faith of the heart. It's not a system of moral conduct. It's the life of Christ in a man's soul. Salvation is the work of God in a man's heart.

Again some hearts are closed. God is looking for open hearts. And God can open your heart. To the gospel. As he opened Lydia's heart. And he performed that open heart surgery.

Where he brings that conviction of sin. He shows us repentance of faith. Of worship. These are all works of the heart. And we know the kingdom of God is not in. Meat and drink and things of the body.

[10:31] But in righteousness and peace. And joy in the Holy Spirit. All matters of the heart. So the question is. For all of us. How is your heart condition?

We need to go to the great heart doctor. And get a check up. Because what matters. Are the matters of the heart. I'm adapting here from John Bunyan. His last book was called.

The excellency of a broken heart. What a title. The excellency of a broken heart. I'm paraphrasing a little. He says this. Of how a broken spirit.

A spirit rightly broken. A heart truly contrite. Is to God an excellent thing. David cried. The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit.

A broken and a contrite heart. Oh God. They will not despise. Of course we know David. He was broken up. Over his sin. God accepts that broken heart.

[11:28] He esteems that broken spirit. And he sets a high price upon that contriteness of heart. Isaiah 66.2. It tells how our Lord will look upon the one who is poor.

And of a contrite spirit. Trembling at his word. With this man I will be delighted. A broken hearted sinner. A sinner with a contrite spirit. Is more of esteem to God than either heaven or earth.

And Bunyan writes. For this man will I care. About this man will I care. I will put this man under my protection. The man that hath his spirit rightly broken. His heart truly contrite.

Is of great esteem with God. It reads in Psalm 34.18. The Lord is nigh unto them. That are of a broken heart. And saveth such. As being of a contrite spirit.

Think of these words here. Brothers and sisters today. What a blessing. What a comfort for you. When you're broken up over your sin. When you realise the high and lofty one. Who inhabits eternity.

[12:30] He has a high and holy place. For his habitation. He would choose to dwell with. And to be a companion of. The broken in spirit. And of them that are of a contrite spirit.

End quote. So how is your heart. How is your heart today. Are you willing to come unto him. To this great heart doctor. As a broken hearted sinner.

As we come to the saviour. By the way of the cross. To find his grace. And a new heart. He can grant that to you. By faith. It all happens by faith.

Simple faith. Believe. That's it. And he can make your heart. His very dwelling place. This is the ultimate. Heart change. It reads that. Christ may dwell.

In your hearts. By faith. Ephesians 3. Verse 17. There's some question about those. That say invite Jesus into your heart. That kind of wording. But of course. In a reality.

[13:26] That is what happens. When we believe. Christ dwells. In your heart. By faith. Now I love this word. Dwell. It means house. Permanently. That is reside.

You're not renting. It's permanent. It's your permanent dwelling place. Right? When Jesus comes to dwell. In your heart. He comes to reside there.

Permanently. Live there. Reside there. Your heart. Becomes his residence. When we believe in Christ our Lord. He takes up permanent residence. Right there.

In our hearts. The Bible speaks. Matthew 13. 19. Of how the gospel. Is like a seed. And sown in the hearts of men. And God especially deals with our hearts.

And saves us. So when we hear the word. The gospel. It comes. We. We take it in the ear gate. It goes in the. In the mind. And it goes down. Those 18 inches.

[14:22] To the heart. To the heart. That's where God sows the seed. Into the heart. And here's how Luke puts it. In his gospel. He talks about the seed. Is the word of God.

He says. Those by the wayside. He's talking about the man sowing the seed. As a picture of the preacher. Distributing the Bible. Words. And he says. That the ones by the wayside. Are they that hear.

Then cometh the devil. And taketh away the word. Out of their hearts. Lest they should believe. And be saved. The devil doesn't want the word. To get in the ear. The mind. And into the heart.

He wants to take the word. Out of your heart. He's like this vulture. This. This bird. That sweeps down. And wants to take it out. To take the word. Out of your heart. Lest you should believe. And be saved. The devil doesn't want the seed. To get. Into your heart. He doesn't want the word of God. To get to you. And he'll do everything in his power. To keep you from the word of God.

[15:18] He doesn't want you to hear the preaching. Of the word of God. He doesn't want you to tune into the Bible. He doesn't want you to open your Bible at home. He doesn't want you to get the word of God. In your heart. But if you hear it.

And believe. You will be saved. Friends. We think of how. He tries to. Hinder believers. From hearing the word of God. He wants to hinder your spiritual life.

That's why the devil just loves it. When you miss church. He loves it. He just doesn't want you to be here. He doesn't want you to tune in. He doesn't want you to hear it. He loves you missing church. Every chance you can.

To miss church. Because then you can neglect your Bible. It's life giving seed. Romans 10.10 says. With the heart man believes. God is more concerned with our heart.

Than our heads. Doesn't mean we bypass the head. As I say. Is the most intelligent thing you can do. To believe. But the believing is in the heart. When we come to believe.

[16:15] To love God. So the heart. Is that vital organ. For the believer. We see here pictured. The fruit of the spirit. Love. Peace. Long suffering.

Faith. Meekness. Temperance. The fruit of the spirit. It flows out from the heart. The spirit grows that heart fruit. Where Christ is reigning. Where Christ is king. Of the heart.

And this is the part of us. That hears God's voice. And feels his touch. For you who are the saved. The word speaks to you. Much of God's continuing work. In your heart.

He saves you. And he sanctifies you. He doesn't leave it there. That you're just saved. He keeps working in your heart. He keeps working upon your heart. He calls you to seek God. With your whole heart. To believe in Christ.

With your heart. To draw near to God. With a true heart. To love God. With your whole heart. To serve God. With your whole heart. To do the will of God. From your heart. To walk before God. With all your heart.

[17:10] To trust in God. With all your heart. To praise God. With your whole heart. And as we grow as a believer. God impacts our heart. Our motives. Our resolve. It's an ongoing work.

So we see. We hear it. We receive it. We believe it. We think of it. We understand it. We know it. And we believe in our heart. And that's something that's a continual going on.

As we continue to feed and grow. Our Christian walk. As God continues his work. God continues his work in our heart. So we are to sanctify God in our heart. We're to pour out our heart before him. Our great heart doctor. Continues his heavenly treatment of our heart. We don't just get the heart operation. We don't just get the heart operation. And that's it. The heart doctor wants to keep seeing you. He wants you to keep making regular appointments.

And continuing that heavenly treatment. It's an ongoing thing. I'm kind of being a bit picturesque here. But it's true. Isn't it? Our great heart doctor doesn't want you to not visit him.

[18:08] He wants you to be continually seeking him. And his ongoing work to purify the heart by faith. To put his fear into your heart. To put wisdom into your heart. That he can write his law in your heart.

Many, many verses. Again, as I say, some 800. We only touch on a fraction. We see David was one who knew the depths of sin and unfaithfulness.

If anyone should have been written off, it would have been David. You know, unfaithful, taking another man's wife and getting the husband murdered. David.

You'd think he'd have been written off as a lost cause. But David here cried out in deep contrition, broken up over his sin. He says, create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Psalms 51. Jam-packed full of grace. Grace. God granted that to David. David later cried in Psalm 57.7, my heart is fixed, O God.

[19:10] My heart is fixed. I will sing and give praise. David knew his heart made clean. David came to know a holiness of heart. The root meaning of the word holy in the Greek and Hebrew by the by is different.

Holy means different. We're set apart. God's in that heart changing business. He gives us a new heart. A different heart. And in contrast to that earlier list, here's the heart of the saved. In contrast, this is the heart that can be changed. A heart made clean. A heart good. A heart faithful. A heart true. Soft. Glad. Wise. David's heart was fixed.

David's heart was fixed. It was true. It was steadfast. Faithful. Before God. And friends, we, as we come to that same heart doctor, he can give us the same heart treatment that David got.

As we humbly come to the doctor and seek his treatment. His way. Now, I must confess, sometimes I go to the doctor and they give me prescriptions and write things out.

[20 : 13] Sometimes I think, I'm not going to bother getting that. I don't really like taking pills or stuff like that. And we can go to the heart doctor. He tells us what we need and we don't do it. Isn't that like us sometimes?

But take the treatment, receive his treatment, his way. That you can know his will for you. That your hearts can be soft towards him. And your hearts can be set upon the things of God.

Set your heart upon him. Psalm 37, verse 4 says, Delight thyself in the Lord and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Someone has said, if our delighting is right in the Lord, then our desires will be right in the Lord.

Someone like to memorize this verse and say, God will give me the desires of my heart. But they forget about the first part. Delight thyself also in the Lord.

When the Lord is your delight, your desiring will be right. Amen. When your delighting is in the Lord, then your desires will be right because they will be in the Lord. So when our heart is made right with God, then our heart will long for God and cry out for God.

[21 : 20] As Psalm 84, verse 2. My soul longeth, yea, even fainteth. For the courts of the Lord, my heart and my flesh, cryeth out for the living God.

What a cry from the heart of this psalmist here. We want to grow to fellowship, to worship. I love how someone told me lately that if this church had three services on a Sunday, they would be at the three of them.

Amen. I thank God for that. That's a blessing. You know, to miss fellowship is to miss the opportunity to hear the word of God, to fellowship, and to exhort one another even more so.

So there's a growing there. We want to grow. We want to fellowship. We want to worship. We want, we long for that time we can gather together. And God can do a deep work as we hear his word, as we draw from it, as we heed it.

And we can know a humble heart, a heart for God, a heart made his throne. We see the Bible warns in Psalm 95 verses 7 through 8, today, if you'll hear his voice, harden not your heart.

[22 : 30] Harden not your heart. There's a sense of spiritual heart disease. Just as our physical heart can be damaged by foolish choices we can make. And you know what they are.

Your physical health suffers when you take into your body things that are going to damage your heart. Foolish choices. But what about your spiritual health? That can suffer. Our spiritual health can suffer.

So we must heed the warnings and harden not our heart. Some seem never to grow to spiritual maturity. For some, their Christian commitment can wane.

For all of us, we've got a fight on our hands, a spiritual fight on our hands. And it's for the rest of our days. You get saved, then the battle begins. Amen? You get saved, then you enter the spiritual combat zone.

And so don't forget that. Don't rest on your laurels. You're saved, yes. You're bound for glory, yes. But there's a battle on that you must fight for the rest of your living days.

[23 : 29] Our spiritual life is the internal wrestling match. There's a battle inside of your heart.

We're called to keep our heart with all diligence. Keep your heart with all diligence for out of it are the issues of life.

What can hinder our walk? What can make us hardened? What can make us hardened towards the things of God? Hypocrisy, worldliness, the flesh, self-seeking, lukewarmness.

It's been truly said, every sin begins with a thought. Oh, I'm a bit attracted to this sin or that sin. And it starts in the heart, doesn't it?

That wanting, that desiring, that urge. It's a thought and then it becomes an action. Keep thy heart, people of God. Keep thy heart.

So just five things quickly to close to how to guard your heart. How do we keep our heart? How do we keep our heart? Number one, keep your heart full.

[24 : 33] Don't settle for half-heartedness. Keep your heart full of God, full of heaven, full of your Lord, full of eternity. It says out of the abundance of the heart, mouth speaketh.

Sometimes you see what's in someone's heart by what comes out of their mouth. It shows what their heart is festering on, what their heart is filled with. It comes out of their heart. Watch your words, your heart attitude.

Keep your dispositions sweet. May what comes out of our lives, out of our mouths be to God's glory. May it be words that are uplifting, words that are righteous, words that are godly, words that will bless, words that will uplift, words of love.

Men who are full of God have power with God. They have spiritual power. So let your heart be full, filled. Keep your hearts full. Keep your hearts filled with the love of Christ, and you'll be filled with all the fullness of God.

Number one, keep your heart full. How to keep your heart? Number two, keep your heart pure. Let us keep our hearts pure, and it will show in our life. We read in Philippians 4, Verse 4, And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

[25 : 48] Finally, brethren, you know the one, Whatsoever things are true. Whatsoever things are honest. Whatsoever things are just. Whatsoever things are pure.

Whatsoever things are lovely. Whatsoever things are of good report. If there be any virtue. If there be any praise. Think on these things. These things. Whatsoever things are pure.

He wants you to keep your mind pure. Keep your heart pure. You know, this world will soil you.

There's a defiling. The Bible talks about uncleanness.

Uncleanness. We don't have to labour what that really covers. But it's broad. The world will soil you. And pollute you. And defile you. And the result will be a corrupt heart. Carnality. Covetousness. Division. Strife. Pride.

[26 : 45] Slothfulness. Unbelief. It all comes out of that corrupt heart. So, keep your heart pure. God helping you. Decide that. Thirdly, keep your heart undivided.

Undivided. Give your heart to Christ alone. Serve no master but Christ. Daniel purposed in his heart not to defile himself. Live your life for the glory of God.

Undivided. Fourthly, keep your heart tender. Keep your heart tender. Paul says it be kind one to another. Tender hearted.

Forgiving one another. Even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Don't let any barrier make your heart hard.

Let it be tender. Keep your heart tender towards others. Keep sweet. Christ-like. Walk in love. Walk in love as Christ also hath loved you. Keep your heart tender toward God.

[27 : 46] Friends, life is short. So short. Amen. Beloved brothers in Christ have passed away.

Sisters. And we didn't know how little time we actually had. But now they're gone. Keep your heart tender. Be sensitive to his word, his work, his will, his presence.

Keep your heart tender. And lastly, fifthly, keep your heart generous. Generous. Every man according as he purposeth in his heart. Make a heart decision.

As you purpose in your heart, so let him give. Not grudgingly or of necessity. For God loveth a cheerful giver. Purpose in your heart to be a blessing. Purpose in your heart to abound.

Our Lord tells of the treasures of the heart. Matthew 6, 19. Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal.

[28 : 48] But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. No man can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one and despise the other.

He cannot serve God and mammon. In other words, money. It's talking about where your treasure is. Where is your heart? Your heart is where your treasure is. So where is your treasure?

And what is it that you treasure? What is it that you hold dear? Someone found inscribed on a tombstone, What I spent, I lost. What I saved, I left.

What I gave, I have. Do we invest in the kingdom of God? Put your life into it. Put your all into it. Do we miss out? Our heart reflects our nature as a person.

As the disciples prayed, Lord increase our faith. That's what we want and Lord help us to not neglect every opportunity to bless our soul, for our heart to be fed with your word. If we can't attend, at least we can tune in as every opportunity we can to get together to receive your word, that we can be impacted by it. All to your praise we ask in Jesus name. Amen. Amen.