

# The 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: 18 October 2020

Preacher: Walt Alexander

[ 0 : 00 ] The following message is given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.! For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at TrinityGraceAthens.com.

Proverbs chapter 4. We're going to dive into God's Word this morning. Isn't this just an amazing place to enjoy? And I have the hard job of trying to keep your attention.

You're not looking out and about. If you are warm, you can move to this side. These guys are all cuddled up with toboggans on. And this side is nice and cozy in the sun, wearing sunshade.

So Proverbs 4, we're going to dive into God's Word and hear from the Lord. Proverbs chapter 4. I'm going to begin reading in verse 20.

So if you'll look there with me, we will dive into this Word. Proverbs 4, chapter 4, verse 20.

[ 1 : 03 ] This is the Word of God. It says, My son, Keep your heart, Keep your heart with all vigilance, For from it flow the springs of life.

Put away from you crooked speech, And put devious talk far from you. Let your eyes look directly forward and your gaze be straight before you.

Ponder the path of your feet, then all your ways will be sure. Do not swerve to the right or to the left. Turn your foot away from evil.

It's the word of God, the word we get to dive into this morning, trying to figure out how everything's not going to blow away during these few minutes. Well, several weeks ago, my wife and I drove down to the tip of Florida for the purpose of visiting Dry Tortugas National Park.

Now, you may not have heard of that park. I hadn't heard of it until we started researching it. Dry Tortugas is planted in the middle of the Gulf of Mexico, 70 miles west of Key West. It includes seven islands and is the only safe harbor between Key West and Cuba, meaning that it's the only place ships can anchor safely in the Gulf of Mexico.

[ 2 : 38 ] It was discovered years ago by Ponce de Leon. I don't know how to pronounce that, but probably y'all don't either, so we're good. And 1513, it was named for the many turtles he found there, hence the name.

The Dry Tortugas went on to become well-known and well-loved, well-used by many sailors over the years. Numerous sailors dropped anchors there to resupply, to rehab, rebuild their ships, to find refuge from the storms.

More than a few ships were wrecked in that area, leaving their remains at the bottom of the sea and leaving, you know, not spelunkers, but deep divers to go chasing after these treasures and wonder what they find there.

And later, in the middle of the 1800s, America saw its importance and constructed one of the largest forts ever built on American soil there. Millions and millions of bricks and other materials were shipped in to build an incredibly large circular fort.

It was intricately built to ward off enemies with an elaborate moat, tall, thick walls. It housed 425 cannons and within a few moments could train 109 cannons on you and shoot more than two or three miles.

[ 4 : 02 ] So it is quite the thing. But, you know, as you come out to this fort, which is the purpose for which we went down there, was to go to this fort, you would ask, why would America build a massive fort out here?

Right? I mean, we understand Charleston. We understand Key West or something like that. But in the Gulf of Mexico with no one around, why need a fort?

And America built this fort, since you asked, for a very strategic reason to protect the Gulf Stream shipping lanes. So America, in the 19th century, the vast majority of American goods passed

through those waters.

They came down the Mississippi from the heartlands of America through the Gulf of Mexico and around and up to the ports on the eastern United States of America.

Even to this day, our economy is deeply dependent on those shipping lanes. They anticipated recently with some flooding in the Mississippi River that if they were stopped by flooding, it would cost our economy \$295 million a day.

[ 5 : 10 ] That's pretty amazing, isn't it? Now imagine how dependent they were on those shipping lanes before cars, planes, or Amazon. Knowing the significant value of them, America built this ship to stop any potential damage there.

They built Fort Jefferson. Not only did it withstand, or not only was it ready to withstand and defend against any assault, it was a hub for American warships to patrol those waters for years to come. This morning, we come to a familiar passage to protect something more important, much more important than the shipping lanes of the Gulf Stream or even the American economy, our hearts. There's nothing more important than knowing and protecting our hearts. Jeremiah Burroughs writes in his book, *The Rare Jewel of Christian Contentment*, which is fabulous if you haven't read it. You must learn to know your hearts well, to be good students of your heart. You cannot all be scholars of the arts and sciences of the world, but you may all be students of your own hearts. [ 6 : 23 ] Sailors know their books, he writes. Philosophers know their books. Rhetoricians know their books. And the Christian next to the book of God is to look into the book of his own heart and to know it well.

Christians are to know it. Christians are to protect it. You know, it is our Christian duty not only to know our hearts, but to protect it. We know many things.

We protect many things. But do we protect anything like we protect our hearts? So we're going to dive into this by looking closely at verse 23 and we'll see how it fits in the context. And then I'm going to make a number of like applicatory comments about the heart towards the end.

And so let's look in verse 23. He says, Keep your heart with all vigilance. Keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flow the springs of life.

Keep your heart. Now right here, getting into Proverbs 4, we're right back into those opening nine chapters of Proverbs which I told you several weeks ago are structured around these lessons from a father to his son.

[ 7 : 33 ] So he keeps saying, My son, my son. And we see that right there in verse 20. He says, My son. So this is another one of the speeches that opens in verse 20, ends in verse 27. That's why I read all of that and then situated in the middle of it is this exhortation to keep your heart.

This word could be translated keep or watch or guard. It refers to a place under guard like a prison or a bank or a treasure chest.

But here it's even more precise than just a place under guard. It's referring to the act of standing guard, of being at attention, of being ready, of watching.

Like the cadets that stand day and night at the tomb of the unknown soldier, the main action of these verses, the main action is calling, the main action that is called for from us is a readiness for action.

A girding up of our loins is the way Peter would say it. The main action of these verses is a posture of attentive watching and careful guarding. You know, and as you probably noticed as we went through, the Father calls us to guard many things in these verses.

[ 8 : 46 ] Look in verse 20. He says, Be attentive to my words. Incline your ear. Verse 21, he says, Let them not escape your sight. So he calls us to watch our ears, watch our eyes.

In verse 25, he does the same thing. Verse 24, he says, Put away crooked speech. Watch your mouth. That's the one my mom often told me to watch because I could run that mouth and get in trouble.

Even watch your feet. Ponder the path of your feet. So he's calling us to watch everything about us externally, our eyes, our ears, our mouth, our feet. But he places a special emphasis upon watching the heart.

It's right there. Structurally, it's right in the center of the section. It forms the heart of the speech. And so he says, Keep your heart with all vigilance. With all vigilance. The idea is this activity of standing guard is to be done vigilantly.

The Father calls us to guard all those things, but the added emphasis upon all vigilance has an intensifying effect on guarding your heart. The idea is, and some translations used to have it this way, like King James, Above all guardings, guard your heart.

[ 9 : 55 ] Above everything you guard, guard your heart. You know, America built forts along the eastern seaboard, but the biggest, the most prestigious, the most combat ready was Fort Jefferson right out there because they knew they wanted to guard that above anything else they guarded.

And so too are hearts. Above all the things we guard, we must guard our heart. And verse 23b tells us why. Look down there with me. Keep your heart with all vigilance for from it flow the springs of life.

Here, this word heart is referred to again. So keep your heart with all vigilance for from your heart flow the springs of life. It's the most important word used for humans in the Old Testament.

It's 46 times in Proverbs, over 800 times in the Old Testament. It's a word that describes what makes you you. We often think about what makes us us is the things we say and do, but also the things we feel, the things that are going on the outside of us, right?

And, but also the things that are going inside of us, maybe our body and our soul. You know, sometimes when you look back through history, the body and the soul, people often kind of divided those very, very strongly, very hardly, hardly, very, in a hard way, a hard line between the two, sorry.

[ 11 : 21 ] And, and, you know, you would, you would hear that in Greek philosophy or something like that where the soul is spiritual and important and valuable, but the body is like icky and, and, and not spiritual, earthly, unspiritual.

And so kind of the way and a lot of Eastern religions is the way to, the way to purification, the way of getting rid of, rid of the ickiness in my body. And that same line, actually, in a lot of our, in a lot of the way we speak and a lot of the way we think in America, that line kind of divides.

People, people will say things like, even like gender. So, so your body and your soul, right? There's a hard line between the two. And so my gender may say that I am something, but my heart says I'm something different.

It's a really important thing going on there. It aligns with a lot of things, but the Bible never talks that way. The Bible never says that you are something internally that you're not externally.

The Bible removes the line and, and the scriptures bring together in the definition of personhood, and it does in a number of ways, but one of them comes together in the, in the way it defines the heart.

[ 12 : 34 ] It brings together this body and soul. The heart isn't just the place where the warm and fuzzies come from. You know, it's not just the place that produces the goosebumps or something like that. It's not just what makes us laugh or cry or what makes Hallmark movies good or what makes us long for the good all days, you know, of nostalgia or something like that.

According to the Bible, the heart thinks, the heart ponders, the heart remembers, the heart plans, the heart fears, grieves, the heart turns away from God and the heart turns toward God.

The heart rejoices, the heart sings, the heart hardens or softens or tenderizes and so on. The heart does everything we might think that a soul or a mind does, but it does more.

That's what these verses are saying. If it was just what we think and what we long for and what we love, then we should guard it. The Bible says it's even more.

Look down there at verse 23. The again, it says, for from it flow the springs of life. This verse, you know, the way it's set up, it's trying to tell us why we should guard our hearts. For, for this reason, because it flows the springs of life.

[ 13 : 55 ] This word springs is normally used to describe the farthest boundaries of a piece of land. That's the way it's used in Jeremiah and other places than the Old Testament. It's where the surveyors come and cut the lines, so to speak, of your property.

It's a word used for geographical boundaries, property lines, but it's used as a metaphor here.

Here's the idea, is that your heart is a gushing spring. From it comes all you think and all you feel, all you long for, but not just that.

From it comes your whole life. From your heart comes all you say. From your heart comes all you do. From your heart comes all the details of your life. You know, if it was your property, we talk about the hills, we talk about the trees or something like that, but it's not just the hills and the trees.

From your heart comes the direction and all the destinations of your life. From your heart, it marks out, it blazes the boundary lines of your life. Who you really are and who you will be is not prepackaged.

It's not predetermined by your IQ, your family background, your personality, your talents, your advantages or disadvantages. Those things obviously have a mark on your life. The character of your life, what really matters, what really makes you you comes from within.

[15:15] Your life flows from your heart. Now, we're going to work this through because that's kind of a key biblical concept, so we're going to work this through.

A, life does not flow from the outside in. Life does not flow from the outside in. So this passage, in fact, some would say it's almost prophetic. And some people struggle with where you find Jesus Christ in the book of Proverbs.

Well, here's a passage that helps you see Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ took up, I think he had this verse in mind when he said in John chapter 7 verse 37, 38, if anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.

Whoever believes in me, as the scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water. I mean, that sounds like Proverbs 4, 23, doesn't it? I thought it did.

You know, I think I got some nods. But I think the idea that Jesus is trying to say is that our hearts were created with a hunger and thirst that only Jesus can satisfy. Which means nothing outside, nothing coming in from outside can satisfy us.

[16:25] Now, I know this is old hat and you probably heard this and you maybe don't need to hear it again, but have you ever noticed that the people who have the dream wife, the dream house, the trophy wife, the ideal job, and all the rest are not the funnest people to be around?

I don't want them. You know, those aren't the people. They're not happy. Because life doesn't consist in the abundance of possessions. Life does not come from the outside in.

Nothing can happen to you that will give you life and satisfaction from the outside in. That's just the truth, you know. I mean, I swear, I mean, I'm 20, I'm actually not 20, I'm 40.

Man, that was a serious round down. I am not 20. Yes. But I'm on in 40 today, first time.

You know, no matter how many times I hear this, it's so hard to get. And it is for you, too. We work too much. We buy too much.

[17:28] We save too much. We drink too much. We vacation too much. We eat too much because ultimately we believe it will satisfy. I recently read this quote that really was provoking this author that's not a Christian, writing to women.

But you could put men in here, too, in so many ways. But it's very provoking. She says, women turn to food when they're not hungry because they are hungry for something that they can't name.

Now that's incredible insight for someone who doesn't know the Lord. A connection to what is beyond the concerns of daily life. Something sacred.

Now listen. But replacing the hunger for divine connection with double-stuffed Oreos is like giving a glass of sand to a person dying of thirst.

It creates more thirst. More panic. Isn't that amazing? We're born hungry.

[18:36] We're born thirsty. It's God's design. We're born longing for something that satisfies and everything in this world has to offer fails. And so Jesus says, come and drink.

Jesus said, come and take in deeply acceptance and forgiveness and comfort. The problem with running to other things and drink and running to those things to be satisfying that you erect an idol.

And that's what God says in Jeremiah 2. Be a pall, O heavens. You've taken up broken cisterns.

They can't hold water. But Jesus calls us to come and drink. And obviously, I call you to come and drink. You know, regardless of what your background is, regardless of what's going on, you can come to Jesus Christ and drink.

You can come to Him not having a righteousness of your own, but the righteousness that will be proclaimed to you and declared over you in the Lord Jesus Christ. And that's the only satisfaction you'll find east of Eden in this side of heaven.

[19:41] But this verse is also saying, so it says, life does not flow from the outside in. And quite obviously, then it says, life flows from the inside out. Life flows from the inside out.

I feel like, you know, some of the way we look at, we look for things to satisfy us. We often assume that what we need is a new job, a new spouse, a new opportunity, or a new burst of resolve to really change.

We need something to change in order to change. But that would be like rearranging furniture on the Titanic.

What we need is for our hearts to change. That's really what's going on in John 7. And it's really what's going on in John 3 when Jesus says, you must be born again.

The idea is that if our hearts don't change, any change in our circumstances won't matter because life flows from the inside out. And so Jesus illustrates this in a powerful way in Luke 6, which we have for you on that little sheet.

[ 20 : 40 ] He says, for no good tree bears bad fruit. Nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit. You get that. They don't bear the opposite. For each tree is known by its fruit.

For figs are not gathered from thorn bushes, nor are grapes gathered from a bramble bush. The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good. And the evil person out of the evil treasure in his heart, that's assumed there, produces evil.

For out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks. Now Jesus was a master storyteller, a master illustrator. And he's using something very familiar to illustrate something unfamiliar.

But you get the point, right? There's an organic relationship between a tree and its fruit. You know, you don't find pears on an apple tree. Not only that, there's an organic relationship between the health of a tree, of a root and its fruit, a tree and its fruit.

Good healthy trees produce good fruit. Bad healthy trees produce bad fruit. And what did Jesus say? And the same thing goes with us. The good person out of his heart produces good fruit.

[ 21 : 49 ] The bad person out of his heart produces bad fruit. For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. And so Jesus is telling that parable. I mean, he's kind of using that not parable, but an illustration to try to say that the fruit in our lives is our behavior and what we say and what we do and what we say and do at any given moment is literally the overflow of our heart.

So we can't say we didn't mean it. But we don't speak that way, do we? We say, he made me angry. If you had been there, you would have said the same thing, you know?

Or these kids are driving me crazy. But what this turns to say is that nothing that happens to you makes you say anything. Nothing that happens to you makes you do anything. Life does not work that way. Life flows from the inside out.

Everything you say or do is an overflow of the heart. Now, there's probably a number of things going on in your mind right now and maybe I'll try to address a few of them. But it does explain why two people born or operating in very similar circumstances can respond in very different ways.

Why did Jacob follow and Esau rebelled? Why did one leper give thanks and the other nine never did? Why does one child struggle and the others don't?

[ 23 : 08 ] because it's an overflow of the heart. It's an overflow of the heart.

Life is an overflow of the heart. So you can have these two people in very similar situations, very similar opportunities, very similar disadvantage and advantage in the same family. And yet one not respond and one respond.

Oh, I thought that was like a car, but that's a train. So it's going to be here for a minute, so get used to it. You know, slow on the uptake, clearly, 40-20 and a few other things.

This truth, though, is a warning to us as parents. It's not enough to manage your kids' friends and his free time. It's not enough to filter the movies, put filters on the radar.

The greatest problem for your child is not out there. It's not enough to move five miles outside of town and get away from all the people. It's not out there. It's right in here. J.C. Ryle said this.

[ 24 : 24 ] I couldn't help but think of Hunter and Annalise who just had a baby when I read this quote earlier this week. J.C. Ryle said, the fairest babe that has entered life this year, even in the past couple weeks and becomes the sunbeam of a family is not, as its mother perhaps fondly calls it, a little angel.

Now, he does have a sense of humor. This is meant to be received a little bit like that. Or a little innocent but a little sinner. Alas, as it lies smiling and crowing in its cradle, that little creature carries in its heart the seeds of every kind of wickedness.

Doesn't matter how big you build the fence. It's not going to keep that out. The truth is, this truth is a warning to all of us too though.

Your biggest problem is not your husband. It's not your boss. It's not your mother-in-law. It's not your kids. Your biggest problem is and always will be your heart.

That's the way life works. That's what he's saying. Life doesn't flow from the outside in. It flows from the inside out. I mean, obviously you can see how vital this teaching is.

[ 25 : 42 ] I mean, there's nothing more valuable in the heart. There's nothing more significant to the tone and trajectory of your life than your heart. There's nothing more important to the direction of your life than to keep watch over your heart.

There's nothing more important for your life than your heart so watch it carefully. Watch it carefully. Guard your heart above everything you do. Guard it. I want to make a couple comments, other things to watch for.

You know, just kind of, we narrowed down to verse 23 and this is going to, we're going to raise the plane a little bit and look throughout the book of Proverbs to see what it says about the heart as well that I think is vital from an application standpoint.

The first is, watch out for a distracted heart. A distracted heart. You know, all throughout the book of Proverbs, the Father urges us to keep our eyes focused on wisdom, to be undistracted on wisdom. Look down at verse 20. He says, my son, be attentive. Incline your ears. So that's just kind of, just focus on it, right?

[ 26 : 52 ] That's kind of what he's saying. Let them not escape from your sight. It's almost personifying wisdom like it's a runaway running out the back door. So you can't merely listen to it. You got to hold on to it. Chase it down.

Don't let it get away. Don't let your heart be undistracted. That's what it keeps saying all throughout the book of Proverbs. Write wisdom on your heart. Hold wisdom in your heart.

Bind it there. Keep your heart focused on wisdom above everything else. Now, it's nothing new to say that our society is distracted.

I remember Kim's cousin, or cousin-in-law, whatever, worked for Nokia. He lived in New York and I remember driving with him one day. It was probably right now, not soon after the iPhone came out. So it was like 2008 or 2009. And we were driving. And so he worked for Nokia. It's like one of these global Nokia guys. You know, you remember those little Nokia phones? They were all the rage back in the day, so don't make fun of them.

[ 27 : 54 ] You know, before the Razor, there was this Nokia thing. And I was like, what did the iPhone do? And he said, it changed everything in a moment.

Now, apparently Steve Jobs just designed it so that we could listen to music and have a phone and not carry an iPod and a phone. But it has drastically changed our life.

The life as we knew it ended in 2007. Now, experts say, we pick up our phones an average of 2,617 times a day.

And Sam picks up his like twice. So, I mean, some of y'all are in the 5,000s. Let's be honest. You know, we own these phones or numerous apps that are specifically designed and wonderfully designed to take up as much time and attention from your life as they possibly can.

One study said our attention span has been reduced to eight seconds. One second less than a goldfish. Give it up for us.

[ 29 : 05 ] David Wells, a theologian, said every age has its own challenges. This one is ours. It's the affliction of distraction. We must watch for distraction.

It's an affliction of this age. And we must be serious about guarding our hearts. I don't know what that looks like for you, you know. For me, it's, it's, I don't get this, I don't do this well every day, but I mean, I don't touch my phone until after I read my Bible and pray.

Today, I checked to see who won the Alabama game because I went to sleep before that. But, but I'd strive to because once that thing even gets in your room, there's actually studies that say if the, if it's in the room with you, it affects your mind.

Now that's crazy. And there's people that say they carry it in their pocket and they have suspense rings or vibrations. So they keep checking it, thinking they feel it. So it's kind of like, it is just messing us up.

So let's just throw these things away today. But, but, but it's just begging us to direct our heart. I love the way Proverbs 23, 17 says, hear my son, be wise and direct your heart in the way.

[ 30 : 15 ] That's what's so wonderful. If life flows from the inside out, then, then we can direct our hearts to wisdom. Like we're not, we're not like a, a pre-packaged meal.

You know, we're not like a pre-packaged life. Life's not just the way it always is. It can change and we can direct it to wisdom. And I, I just love that. Derek Kidner says, a large part of godliness is

dogged attentiveness to familiar things.

Dogged. Attentiveness. That's what it's going to take. If you're going to be wise in this age, that's what it's going to take. Dogged attentiveness to familiar things.

Point two, a defiled heart. A defiled heart. All throughout the book of Proverbs, Proverbs urges us to keep our hearts pure, but, and it warns us against the things that defile it.

It says, pollution, in so many ways, in Proverbs says, it comes in through the eyes. The longest speech in the book of Proverbs is the speech about the forbidden woman, about looking and desiring her. And so, Proverbs 6, 25 says, don't desire forbidden woman's beauty in your heart.

[ 31 : 20 ] Don't want her. Now, don't be fooled. The forbidden woman doesn't walk out and announce, I am the forbidden woman. She doesn't generally work the streets or wear a scarlet a. She's smarter than that.

She gives you the time and attention you think you deserve, and definitely the time and attention you don't find at home. She's spontaneous and fun. She makes you feel better. She takes you out. But pollution is not merely in the form of lust in the book of Proverbs. Pollution comes in through the form of envy. Proverbs 23, 17, let not your heart envy sinners, but continue in the fear of the Lord. And we've all experienced this envy, the sin of envy. It looks into the eyes of others. It does come through the eyes because it's like kind of always seeing and noting how they're receiving what you think you deserve, and it carefully watches and takes note of the promotions, possessions, and prosperity of others.

Envy turns your attention off the good things God has given you. You can't even give thanks for them anymore because you're so fixed on the good things, the better things that God gave your neighbor, that you think you deserve.

[ 32 : 36 ] It makes us unable to rejoice with those who rejoice. In fact, it makes us rejoice with those who weep because we have a secret satisfaction when people stumble.

It pollutes our hearts, and the way the Proverbs talks about it, and all these papers are blown away over there, the way Proverbs talks about it is that the danger with lust and with envy is not merely the pollution that comes into the stream, so to speak, but that it gives way to the crookedness of those sins.

It gives way to a crooked heart. You know, the Proverbs says that the forbidden woman's heart is guarded. Later, wily is another way of saying it, not because she watches out that she might not fall into temptation, but that she hides the intentions of her heart, and that's what comes with us.

Well, our hearts become crooked such that we don't even know them, and such that we do not live in light of them, we become divided and dishonest. We say things we should not. We do things we should not.

We hide our feelings beneath warm, welcoming, flattering words. Proverbs 26, 24, and 25, whoever hates disguises himself with his lips and harbors deceit in his heart.

[ 33 : 52 ] When he speaks graciously, believe him not, for there's seven abominations in his heart. And that's other places too. It's just this idea that there's a, suddenly there's this disconnection because of this deceit that is taken over between our lips and our lives, between our lips and our hearts.

And so we must watch out for a defiled heart, pollution. Point three, a discouraged heart. I love this. Proverbs never says that if you think the right things and do the right things, you'll have a happy, stress-free life. If it did, it'd suck. I mean, sorry, I shouldn't say that.

It would stink. My mom still listens. She's going to hunt me down. It would stink. Proverbs says, hope deferred makes the heart sick.

A desire fulfilled is a tree of life. What's that saying? What's that saying? Hope deferred, waiting without receiving is hard, but it's more than hard is what it's saying.

[ 35 : 02 ] It's a grinding physical and emotional toll. That's what this verse, waiting is the opposite of life. It's the opposite of what strengthens you and what gives you vivaciousness.

It wears you out. It exhausts you. It makes you question everything and leaves you ready to give up. Another proverb says, even in laughter, the heart may ache and the end of joy may be grief. That stinks, you know? Even when times are good, your heart will ache. But actually, that verse is incredible.

What it's saying is that in this life there's no permanent choice. We know that. Man, seasons change.

Moms die. Children move away. Toys break. Jobs are eliminated. Friends deceive.

[ 36 : 14 ] I mean, we could just go on and on. But what it's saying is that even though those things fillet you, there's joys that are coming and they're still sweet.

I'll never forget years ago we were, well, we had, before we had Rev, we had a miscarriage. Then we had Rev and then we had two more miscarriages.

And, in God's kindness and we were walking and praying, begging the Lord to give us, I want, you make bold prayers, right?

I was praying, Lord, would you give us a daughter and then would you give us a son? How amazing is that? We didn't have another miscarriage. But, in the midst of Wren's pregnancy, we, I went to, we went, we got our, we got a genetic workup on Kim and I.

we found out that I have a rare chromosomal thing. I have all the information just in case you were wondering.

[ 37 : 28 ] But it's just mixed up. It's in the wrong places. And we, we went to a cytogeneticist that my dad knew. He said that we have a 97% chance of miscarriage.

so any conception coming from our bodies has a 97% chance of dying. And then that 3%, they don't know what's going to happen.

And we had about 6 more months with a baby in utero and we refused to take any prenatal test.

And during that time we just, we just, we'd go, actually our doctor was incredible. Kim went for about 20 weeks to 40 weeks. She went every single week to hear the heartbeat.

because we were so worried and all our friends were so worried and the whole family was just kind of carrying this, this baby on our hearts. And, and, and then she came June 14, 2013.

[ 38 : 32 ] And, and I'll never forget my dad's a pediatrician and he came in and he was checking everything out. You know, yeah, I was just, it just broke my heart because he's just carrying it on his heart and such that he's, he's examining his granddaughter.

And the next day a friend, friend of mine called me and said, all that anxiety is being swallowed with joy right now.

He's like, receive it brother. Here I am crying in the, in the hospital room. Receive it. All that joy is being swallowed with anxiety.

I mean, all that anxiety is being swallowed with joy. And I think that's what the Lord's trying to do with the little joys that pepper our lives. And it is a lot of anxiety. It's a lot of heartache and a lot of break. He's just trying to say these, these temporary joys that they're going to soon collapse into a greater joy.

And it's just on the horizon. Like, I think that's what he's trying to say that it's just around the bend.

Oh, if you just hold your head up, just, it's just a few more miles and all that sorrow will be swallowed up with joy forever and ever and ever.

[ 39 : 42 ] And you'll not even be able to remember the anxiety and the heartache in the same way because it'll be reinterpreted in the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ that will be endlessly satisfying forever.

I think that's what's going on. A discouraged heart, yes. And in the, the heart may ache in laughter.

But around the bend is joy. Charles Spurgeon said a Christian can look forward to tomorrow with joy. Tomorrow is a happy day. Tomorrow's a happy day. It's one stage nearer to glory.

It's one step nearer to heaven. It's one more mile sailed across life's dangerous sea, one mile closer to home. Fourthly, a delighted heart.

A delighted heart. This is the heart we all want and this is, you know, this wonderfully peppers the book of Proverbs. The goal of wisdom is not self-protection. It's not a fence around the yard.

[ 40 : 54 ] The goal of wisdom is not robotic responses to the truth. The goal of wisdom is rugged, deep-seated joy. That's what wisdom's about. It's about the happy life. That's what, I think in so many ways, I think that's what Jesus had in mind when he says, I'm calling you the abundant life.

It's not the life of, like, Creflo Dollar would say of a full bank account or something like that. It's an abundant life, a heart drawn up into God and into joy.

A delighted heart brightens the face. You see that? A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed. A glad heart makes a cheerful face. A delighted heart strengthens and gives life a joyful heart.

It's good medicine and a crushed spirit dries up the bones. And there's a medicine Walgreens doesn't sell. It's joy. A delighted heart gives more and more joy.

A delighted heart gives birth to joy, to continuous joy. You know how it is when you're with somebody who's just delighted. It's just, everything's enjoyable. It's like, what about Bob? He's eating this food.

[ 41 : 59 ] He's just going nuts. Oh my, is this hand-shut corn? He's so excited. All the days of the afflicted are evil, but the cheerful heart has a continual feast. It's just more and more joy, more and more joy, more and more joy.

Nothing more important than your heart, so watch it carefully. I don't know if you followed the Senate's hearings this past week and everything going on with Amy Coney Barrett.

I was impressed with her. She seems to be a solid believer, which is not making people happy in Washington. One senator, you probably saw this, criticized her, saying, the dogma lives loudly in you.

I'd be like, heck yeah! I mean, could there be a higher compliment? I think in so many ways. We want to guard our hearts in such a way that those may say, the dogma.

Now, obviously, she's using that in a derogatory way, but we do believe in things, important things.

[ 43 : 11 ] It would live loudly in us because of the overflow of our hearts. It's where our life is headed. So let's pray. Father in heaven, we thank you for these few minutes.

We give you thanks for your word. Lord, we pray. We humble ourselves before you. God, search us and know us. See if there's any unclean way in us. Lead us in the way everlasting, God.

We do. We render our hearts up to you. We want our hearts to be an altar where you reign supreme, where what you love is loved, where what you hate is hated.

Amen. We want our hearts to be places where wisdom is cherished and where we fight to know you more and more.

God, we pray that you would come by your spirit and work that which is pleasing in your sight. God, we don't have great confidence in ourselves.

[ 44 : 21 ] We don't have great confidence in the flesh, but Lord, we have great confidence in you who raises beauty out of ashes. who brings healing out of brokenness, who brings life out of death.

We give you thanks. In Jesus' name. Amen. You've been listening to a message given by Walt Alexander, lead pastor of Trinity Grace Church in Athens, Tennessee.

For more information about Trinity Grace, please visit us at [TrinityGraceAthens.com](http://TrinityGraceAthens.com). Thank you, who brings me to the who brings me to the who brings me to the story, who brings me to the story, who brings me to the who brings me to the who brings me to the who brings me to the who brings me to the story, who brings me to the who brings me to the story, story, who brings me to the story,