

“The Heart of the Problem”

April 20, 2008 * Matthew 15:1-20

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me from your presence or take your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore to me the joy of your salvation and grant me a willing spirit to sustain me.”

Psalm 51:10-12

I. Last week’s study on self-control gave us a picture of what a human being is:

To be self-controlled (egkrateia) we must make every effort (agoidzomonai), to mature our _____ (paiduo), renew our _____ (sophronismos), train our _____ (gumnadzo).

II. What is the ‘heart’?

A. Many deny there even is such a thing.

1. What did a UConn bio-prof argue? (Hartford Courant, March 27, 2008)

B. Jesus said in Mark 12:30 that we are to love God with:

1. My _____ which is my _____.

2. My _____ which is my _____.

3. My _____ which is my _____.

C. And my _____. Scriptures about the heart:

“The heart is the center of man’s being and personality; it is the fount out of which everything else comes. It includes the mind; it includes the will; it includes the [emotions]. It is the total man.” ~

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Or I can think of my heart as a:

III. What are the 2 Primary Problems With Guarding My Heart?

A. The control room of my heart is overrun by _____.

1. What do we do with our hearts then?

B. Most Christians are _____ and ignorant of what is going on inside of their hearts.



How is this me?

And what is the end result if I’m not aware of what’s going on underneath?

IV. What’s the way out of this mess? Can my heart be made new?

First – Jesus & I must make regular _____ of my heart.

Second – I need to be willing to _____ to what Jesus shows me.

A. In what 2 ways does God reveal this truth to me?

Third – I need to ask _____ the behavior or attitude is there.

Four – I need to bring myself to the _____ for healing.

Projects:

1. Review my memory verses.

2. Study the following ‘List Verses’ this week and have Jesus take you through steps 1-4 with them.

Exodus 20:1-17; Proverbs 6:16-19; Isaiah 33:15-16; Isaiah 58:6-9; Micah 6:8; Matthew 5:3-10; Matthew 15:18-20; 1 Corinthians 6:9-10; Galatians 5:19-23; Ephesians 4:25-5:7; Philippians 4:8; Colossians 3:5-10; 2 Peter 1:5-8; Revelation 22:14-15

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I. Last week’s study on self-control gave us a picture of what a human being is:

To be self-controlled (egkrateia) we must make every effort (agoidzomonai), to mature our hearts (paiduo), renew our minds (sophronismos), train our bodies (gumnadzo).

II. What is the ‘heart’?

A. Many deny there even is such a thing.

1. What did a UConn bio-prof argue? (Hartford Courant, March 27, 2008)

A few weeks ago in the Hartford Courant, a UConn biology prof named Robert Thorson wrote an article in which he argued that one of the things that gets in the way of a student enjoying the study of science is – *ready?* – believing in God. Never mind the fact that for centuries the belief in God is what prompted the study of science in the first place – some of the greatest scientists in history were devout Christians, whose belief in an intelligent God who created things in an orderly fashion motivated them to discover what that order was. Conveniently ignoring all that history, Thorson claims that in order for a person to truly appreciate science they first must grow up, and get rid of all those silly, childish beliefs they have such as that the world is the product of intelligent design rather than random natural forces, that intercessory prayer works, and that we have a spiritual part of us separate from the body and brain.

B. Jesus said in Mark 12:30 that we are to love God with:

1. My soul which is my spirit.

2. My mind which is my brain.

3. My strength which is my body.

C. And my heart. Scriptures about the heart:

Matthew 5:8; 5:28; 6:21; 13:19; 15:8, 15:18-19; 19:8; Mark 3:5

“The heart is the center of man’s being and personality; it is the fount out of which everything else comes. It includes the mind; it includes the will; it includes the [emotions]. It is the total man.” ~

D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones

Or I can think of my heart as a:

As the inner control room of a human being which directs a person’s actions, feelings, thoughts and will. Behind every TV production or every sporting event, behind every NASA space launch is a control room where all the cameras and instruments out there send their information, and it’s in the control room where unseen directors take that information and store it, process it, channel it, put it all together and the end result is what you see. Deep within every human being is a control room as well, where all your body’s cameras and instruments send their information – the camera of your eyes and instruments of your ears and skin, and in that control room are also unseen directors – the real you, the real essence of your personality, emotions, thoughts and experiences – and these directors process that information, store it, and channel it, put it all together, and the end result is your life.

III. What are the 2 Primary Problems With Guarding My Heart?

A. The control room of my heart is overrun by sin and selfishness.

1. What do we do with our hearts then?

We learned the word “paiduo” last week, which has to do with the disciplining of children. Well – we need to *paiduo* our hearts. Part of learning self-control is to discipline the sinful, selfish child inside of you. A big part of growing as a Christian involves ‘growing up’, leaving behind immature, childish ideas, influences and motivations which drive us from deep within. And for this you and Jesus must regain control of your heart.

B. Most Christians are **oblivious** and ignorant of what is going on inside of their hearts.



How is this me?

What is visible above the water line is what is visible and external about your life. It's all the things you do, say and speak. But what's eye-opening, mindblowing about this picture? The biggest part of you and me by far is the part that is beneath the water line, where no one can see. The part that supports us, props us up, the part that drives us, moves us, motivates us is invisible.

And what is the end result if I'm not aware of what's going on underneath?

I end up becoming what is often called a 'carnal Christians' – a Christian who never grows up in Christlike character. The behavior problems carnal Christians exhibited when they were young still hang off them, visible to everyone. If they grumbled then, they grumble today. If they gossiped then, they gossip today. If they were easily angered then, they're easily angered today. If they messed up with relationships before they still do it today. And on it goes, the only difference is they've lacquered themselves with Christian varnish but it's only skin-deep, so they fool a few, confuse many (who ask themselves, 'That's what a Christian is?') and they deceive themselves.

IV. What's the way out of this mess? Can my heart be made new?

First – Jesus & I must make regular **inspection** of my heart.

2 Corinthians 13:5 – “Examine yourselves to see whether you are in the faith; test yourselves.” 1 Corinthians 11:29 – “A man ought to examine himself before he eats of the bread and drinks of the cup.” Lamentations 3:40 – “Let us examine our ways and test them, and let us return to the Lord.”

Second – I need to be willing to **listen** to what Jesus shows me.

A. In what 2 ways does God reveal this truth to me?

First and foremost, through his Word. The Word of God is a mirror in which we look every time we read it, and we're to do something with the reflection we see.

Psalm 141:5 – “Let a righteous man strike me – it is a kindness; let him rebuke me – it is oil on my head.” Proverbs 17:6 – “Wounds from a friend can be trusted.” What in the world is that talking about? It's talking about letting another trusted brother or sister speak honestly into your life about the condition of your heart. Would you be willing to go up to your very best friends, the ones who know you best, and say, “Would you speak to me truthfully about anything you see in my life that is hurting me spiritually? That is falling short of what God expects of me? Any thing you see in me that is hurting me or anyone else? What you speak truth into my heart?”

Third – I need to ask **why** the behavior or attitude is there.

No healing, not maturing can come to your heart until you summon the courage to ask yourself this question. God came to Cain while he was stewing in jealousy and anger at his brother Abel, and God asked him, “Cain, why are you angry? Why is your face downcast?” God wanted to nip this thing in the bud before something worse happened. God wanted to heal him. “Sin is crouching at your door, Cain, but you must master it,” God said to him. Cain though wouldn't face his heart honestly, wouldn't answer the 'why' question, and went on to murder his brother and ruin his life.

Four – I need to bring myself to the **Cross** for healing.

Projects:

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