

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: “Checking Under The Hood” * 3/8/09 * Mark 7:14-23

I. Review of last week’s teaching

A. What did Jesus claim?

B. What was the target of this life-change?

C. Why are there so many 1-yr-old Christians 10 and 20 times over (Christians who change very little if at all?)

II. So what’s the way out of this mess?

We need to reconnect _____ to our hearts (our emotional selves) or, another way Pete Scazzero puts it:

We need to connect the practice of _____ Christianity with emotional health.

A. What is “contemplative” Christianity?

B. Was Jesus busy? How did he cope with it?

C. We can summarize an emotionally balanced life in 2 words:

_____ - _____

D. Linking contemplative Christianity to emotional health suggests several logical steps:

- 1. First, we must look _____, giving God access to our hearts.***
- 2. We then must look _____, to find ways our present reality has been shaped by our past.***
- 3. Next, we look _____, to break past the wall of pain & shame we’re going to encounter.***
- 4. Finally we look _____, to accept heaven’s help as we grieve what we’ve lost & accept limits.***

Looking In: Knowing Myself That I May Know God

III. Does the Bible tell us to know what’s going on in our hearts?

A. Verses:

B. Why is self-examination of my heart important?

1. The heart is the _____ - _____ of my life.

2. I _____ change without it.

“How can you draw close to God when you are far from your own self...Grant, Lord, that I may know myself that I may kneel to thee.” ~ St. Augustine

C. Why is self-examination so difficult? Why do we resist it?

1. We so easily _____ ourselves into thinking we’re fine.

2. Self-examination _____!

IV. The Procedure For Looking Under the Hood

A. Let Jesus _____ you.

B. Let Jesus _____ you.

C. Let Jesus _____ you.

Emotionally Healthy Spirituality: “Checking Under The Hood” * 3/8/09 * Mark 7:14-23

I. Review of last week’s teaching

A. What did Jesus claim?

That if we followed him, we would experience a measurable increase of joy, love, peace & rest in our lives

B. What was the target of this life-change?

Himself. He would make us like himself in our character and conduct.

C. Why are there so many 1-yr-old Christians 10 and 20 times over (Christians who change very little if at all?)

Because we do not really let Jesus rule in our hearts.

II. So what’s the way out of this mess?

We need to reconnect Jesus to our hearts (our emotional selves) or, another way Pete Scazzero puts it:

We need to connect the practice of contemplative Christianity with emotional health.

A. What is “contemplative” Christianity?

Contemplative Christianity means the understanding that God wants to have a real relationship with me – this is not just religion – God wants to very much walk alongside me in my life and speak into my life, and guide my life, and my part in allowing that to happen is to learn how to slow down, quiet myself before him, learn the blessings of solitude and silence, and listen. It’s a way of practicing our faith that is foreign to so many Christians, especially evangelicals who are trained and disciplined to do, do, do, *build the kingdom, share your faith, push the devil back, come on people, there’s no time to be wasting!* There’s a place for that. But there’s also a place for this, and until we start getting in touch with this way of doing our faith, get in touch with our inner-Mary (for those of you who know the story of Mary and Martha) emotional health will continue to elude us.

B. Was Jesus busy? How did he cope with it?

Jesus was amazingly busy. He packed a lot in for only having a brief, three-year ministry. Yet he never lost control, but was able to experience and express the full range of emotions without ever sinning. His secret? It’s more than just saying, “Well, he was God.” Jesus intentionally modeled for us what we were to do to experience this same balance. Read the gospels carefully, and what you see during those years, is that Jesus relied on the Holy Spirit, just as you and I must do, and he leaned on his Heavenly Father, just as you and I must do.

C. We can summarize an emotionally balanced life in 2 words:

Be - Do

Some Christians are just Be-Be’s. Doing nothing, and keeping it all to themselves. And like a bee-bee, their lives will be small and consequential, having little impact. But then there are lots of Christians who are just Do-Dos, and they *make* a lot of Do-Do living like that. Doing things Jesus never called them to do, doing things in their own power, not his.

D. Linking contemplative Christianity to emotional health suggests several logical steps:

- 1. First, we must look in, giving God access to our hearts.*
- 2. We then must look back, to find ways our present reality has been shaped by our past.*
- 3. Next, we look through, to break past the wall of pain & shame we’re going to encounter.*
- 4. Finally we look up, to accept heaven’s help as we grieve what we’ve lost & accept limits.*

Looking In: Knowing Myself That I May Know God

III. Does the Bible tell us to know what’s going on in our hearts?

A. Verses:

Psalm 139:23; 2 Cor.13:5; Psalm 51:6; Prov.4:23

B. *Why is self-examination of my heart important?*

1. *The heart is the well - spring of my life.*

2. *I cannot change without it.*

“How can you draw close to God when you are far from your own self....Grant, Lord, that I may know myself that I many knee thee.” ~
St. Augustine

C. *Why is self-examination so difficult? Why do we resist it?*

1. *We so easily deceive ourselves into thinking we're fine.*

2. *Self-examination hurts!*

IV. *The Procedure For Looking Under the Hood*

A. *Let Jesus love you.*

Pastor Pete says, we must be absolutely anchored in the love of God. You must know at the front end of this journey, before the surgery even begins, that God loves you and cares for you far more than you will ever realize. What's so absolutely mind-blowing to me about real Christianity is that it's the only faith or religion I know where God's acceptance is given to me on the front-end. Everything else out there says to me in so many words, God will accept you if you do A, B and C. You tow the line, you act like this, then maybe God will love you. Only Christianity says, “No, you are radically loved and accepted right now. There is nothing you can do to earn God's love, to secure God's acceptance, to get God to like you. He already likes you, he loves you, he has compassion on you, his heart yearns for you. “But I'm such a mess.” I know, and he knows, but he still loves you. He hates the mess. He sees it hurting you. And he's going to help you take care of that mess. But first things first, he wants you to know how much he loves you.

B. *Let Jesus wound you.*

Once you are secure in the thought that you have nothing left to prove to God, that you have his acceptance, that you can take off all those masks you are wearing, and stop judging everyone else, now Jesus your Healer wants to touch you where it hurts. You must let him wound you. Must let him put his fingers on the things in your heart that are crippling you, destroying you, keeping you from the rest he promised you. There was a time when the disciples were all full of themselves. Jesus had allowed them to do a few miracles. They came across a town in Samaria where the residents kicked them out. The disciples asked Jesus, “Lord, shall we call down fire from heaven on them.” (Luke 9:54) Such idiots. And the Bible says that Jesus rebuked them, and said, “You do not know what spirit you.” When we allow Jesus to wound us, we are giving him permission to rebuke in us the sinful attitudes and behaviors that have taken up residency in our hearts.

C. *Let Jesus heal you.*

There are no quick fixes here. This healing will probably be bloody, and dirty and protracted and painful. It's probably going to require you giving up things that you've been hanging on to with every fiber in your being. It's probably going to demand of you forgiving people you'd rather go on hating. It's going to require of you learning things about yourself that are as ugly as ugly can be. You cannot fathom the full depth of your sin and selfishness. Just when you think you're starting to see the blackness in you, God peels back another layer, and the foulness and the stench of it will be almost too much to bear. And that's why this journey begins with letting Jesus love you. Only if you are fully anchored in the love of God will you be able to endure what your healing requires.