

Wednesday, April 23, 2013
Television Program, MESA, AZ

WHAT TYPE OF HEART DO YOU HAVE?

Greetings. My name is Thomas Thornhill from Bellflower, California. I am here today visiting with the brethren at the 8th Street church of Christ in Mesa, Arizona. I have been invited to share with you a portion of God's word this morning. I thank you for taking the time to listen to this program and I invite you to open your Bibles and follow along.

This morning I would like look at the heart as it is discussed in the Bible.

What is the Heart?

- a. The human heart is an amazing organ. It beats about 100,000 times a day, pumping some 2000 gallons of blood through 60,000 miles of blood vessels. Through this circulatory system, nutrients are delivered to every cell of the body. Over an average lifetime, the heart will beat about 2.5 billions times.
- b. Yet the heart we are discussing today is NOT the blood pump, though I believe the author had that in mind because of its essential purpose to survival. As the heart pumping properly is essential to the survival of the human, so the spiritual heart properly trained is essential to sustaining our spiritual lives. As the heart delivers nutrients to the physical body, so the spiritual heart delivers elements essential to our spiritual survival. Just as a neglected or diseased heart will affect the quality of one's life (and survival) so if we neglect our spiritual hearts it will affect our spiritual lives. It really is a great comparison.
- c. ***The whole of the inner man*** – the heart we speak of in the Bible is ***the control center of the inner man*** as opposed to his physical body (which simply houses the soul). It is where religious life is rooted and the determiner of our moral conduct.
Prov. 4:23 says, "*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it springs the issues of life.*"
Prov. 23:7 says "*For as he thinks in his heart, so he is.*"
Jesus in ***Luke 6:45*** said, "*A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.*"

In these verses we can see that the heart is that which governs our lives. It is at the foundation of what we do and in essence it is who we are. When our bodies die, our souls will return to God. Just as our physical body is governed by the blood pump in our chests, so our spiritual body (soul) is governed by the spiritual heart.

The spiritual heart is the seat of our emotions, thoughts, understanding, attitudes and will.

Emotions –

Joy – Acts 2:26, *Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope.*

Sorrow – Jn. 16:6, as Jesus warns His disciples that He is going away, he notes that sorrow had filled their hearts., Rom. 9:2 – Paul, had continual sorrow in his heart because of his Jewish brethren who had rejected Jesus.

2 Cor. 2:4 as he wrote his 1st letter to the Corinthians, here he says he did so “out of much affliction and anguish of heart.”

Conviction – Ac. 2:37, 7:54 – they were cut to the heart

Concern – 2 Cor. 6:11 – “Our heart is wide open”, Phil. 1:7, “I have you in my heart

Comfort – Col. 4:8, as Paul sends Tychicus to these brethren he does so, “that he may know your circumstances and comfort your hearts.”

Understanding and thought –

Matt. 12:34 – as Jesus rebukes the Pharisees He says, “*Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.*”

LK. 9:47, as His disciples disputed, Jesus teaches them about humility. He did so because he perceived the thought of their hearts.

Heb. 4:12, “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”

Will and attitude –

2 Cor. 9:7 – give as he purposes in his heart

Ac. 11:23, after a positive response to the gospel in Antioch, the church at Jerusalem sent Barnabas to them. “When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord.”

All of these verses help us understand that the heart we find in the Bible is the essence of who we really are. BUT, the Bible also speaks of different types of hearts.

What type of heart do you have?

I invite you at this time to turn your Bibles to Luke 8:4-8.

In this text we find what has become one of Jesus’ most famous parables. It is the Parable of the Sower. IT is called “the parable of the sower.” (cf. Matt. 13:18) In it Jesus describes a farmer who broadcasts (sows) his seed in a field. IT is noted that the seed lands on different types of soils with different results. **READ the parable.**

Jesus then explains this parable in **Luke 8:11-15**. The seed is the word of God (vs. 11). The sowers is the one who broadcast the seed (preaches the word – Jesus is speaking to His disciples). The ground or soil is the HEARTS of men. Jesus then describes the different ways men’s hearts RESPOND to the gospel. (READ)

What type of heart do you have? Jesus describes four types of hearts. EVERYONE as they hear the gospel will fall into one of these four categories.

Hardened – the wayside is descriptive of a heart that refuses to receive the word of God. The message is preached and outright rejected. Before it can do anything, Satan comes and snatches it away.

Jesus spoke OFTEN of this hardened heart: **Matt. 13:14-15** – In explaining why He spoke in parables, Jesus quotes from Isaiah 6:9-10, a passage that describes Israel's rejection of God's message through the prophets. He said, "*Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, And seeing you will see and not perceive; For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.*" Jn. 12:40 quotes the same Old Testament passage, as on another occasion Jesus is rejected by the leaders.

An interesting observation to be made is that at times Jesus rebuked His own disciples for hardened hearts. Mark 16:14 notes that when Jesus appeared to the eleven after His resurrection He rebuked them **for their unbelief and hardness of heart**. We need to take this seriously as we too, even as His disciples, can become hardened in heart (cf. **Heb. 3:7-12**)

Tragically, this is most of the world. Far too many don't care about serving God. Others are so set in their own ways and beliefs that the word of God cannot penetrate their hearts.

Stony ground – descriptive of one who hears the word and initially responds by obeying the gospel. He serves for a little while, until there is trouble. At the first sign of problems he either drifts away or quits. The problem is he has no firm rooting because his obedience is superficial. Often times one's response to the gospel is emotional or an impulsive reaction. He doesn't fully understand what he is doing or why. Thus, it doesn't take much for him to become discouraged and wither away. THAT IS WHY we need to ensure that someone UNDERSTANDS the commitment required to become a Christian. And AFTER one responds, we need to continue feeding that babe "*the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby*" (1 Pet. 2:2).

Thorny ground – describes one who obeys when he hears, but even in his obeying the commands, he is not fully committed to serving the Lord. He has divided interests. HE still has worldly desires that he doesn't want to let go of. As a result, while the seed may take root, because it is competing with the weeds (worldliness – the parable mentions *cares, riches and pleasures of this life*) that are present (and thus undernourished), the word of God is choked out and there is no fruit.

Sadly there are many believers who fit into this category. In fact some of the harshest rebukes in the Bible are directed toward those in this category. This is where you will find the hypocrite. This is where you will find one who compromises the word of God. **James 4:4** warns about them saying the friendship with the world is enmity with God.

Good ground – the final soil is the good and receptive heart. The heart is good and honest (shall we say – PURE?) and thus it receives the word of God, takes DEEP root and then begins to produce fruit. In time it will mature and continue to be productive. This is the heart we are seeking to have! This is the heart that God is pleased with.

EVERY one has a heart. Depending upon the type of heart you have will determine how you live your life. So as we conclude I ask, WHAT TYPE OF HEART DO YOU HAVE? Is it good and honest or is it something else. Depending on the type of heart you have will determine if you will receive the word of God. By receiving the word of God I mean that you are willing to obey Him. Jesus in Matthew 28:18-20 as He gave the great commission to His disciples, *“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹ Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰ teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.”* Are YOU willing to observe all things commanded?

ONE FINAL NOTE: I am convinced that hearts can change. Just as soil can be changed – stones and weeds removed, hard ground tilled and fertilized – so hearts can change from one condition to another. BUT IT TAKES GREAT EFFORT! And it begins with a willingness to change. Conversely, you can take perfectly good soil and neglect it and in time it will become useless to produce fruit.

We sometimes sing a song entitled, “Is thy heart right with God”? If your heart is not right, let me encourage you to change. HOW can you know if your heart is right? Turn to His word of God (cf. Heb. 4:12).

If you would like to learn more, the 8th St. church of Christ in Mesa invites you to come and study with them. For now, we bid you a good day.