

Dealing with the Heart

Scripture Reading: Prov. 4:23; Matt. 13:3-8, 19-23; 5:8

- I. **Our heart is composed of all the parts of our soul—mind, emotion, and will—plus our conscience, the main part of our spirit—Heb. 4:12; John 16:22, 6; 1 John 3:20.**
- II. **The heart is the entrance and exit of life, the “switch” of life; though life has great power, this great power is controlled by our small heart—Prov. 4:23.**
- III. **We need to deal with our heart in order to have a heart that is pure—Matt. 5:8; Psa. 73:1, 25; 2 Tim. 2:22:**
 - A. To be pure is more than to be clean:
 1. We may be clean but mixed and therefore not pure; to be mixed does not mean to be dirty but to have more than one goal and one aim.
 2. We may be aiming at God, but at the same time aiming at several other things, such as our position and our career; when we have two things as our aim, we are mixed and complicated.
 3. Our spiritual sky is cloudy when our heart is mixed and not pure; when the heart is purified from many goals, our sky is clear.
 4. We need to be pure, single, in our heart that Christ may grow in us without frustration—Luke 11:34-36; 2 Cor. 11:3; Psa. 86:11.
 - B. We need to purify our heart until we seek nothing other than the Lord Himself as our goal—James 4:8b:
 1. We need to deal with our heart by admitting our condition to the Lord and having a detailed confession under His shining—cf. 1 John 1:7, 9.
 2. To purify our hearts is not a once-and-for-all matter; our dealing with our heart is according to the Lord’s gradual shining.

Excerpts from the Ministry:

OUR HEART

Our relationship with the Lord is always begun and maintained by the heart. Of course, to contact the Lord is a matter of the spirit, but this must be initiated and maintained by the heart, for our heart is the gateway of our whole being. A building with many rooms always has an entrance and an exit; a person comes in by the entrance and goes out by the exit. When the entrance is closed, everyone is kept away from the rooms inside the building, but once it has been opened, people can enter the building and enjoy each room.

The heart is not a separate and exclusive part of our being but is composed of all the parts of the soul and a part of the spirit. Therefore, being such a composition, the heart becomes the very gateway of our whole being. In other words, the heart becomes both the entrance and the exit of our being. Whatever enters into us must enter through the heart. Whatever comes out from us must proceed through the heart.

For example, if our heart is not alert as we listen to a message, we will not get the substance of it. Or, when we are reading, we will receive nothing if our heart is not upon the content. Even while eating, if we do not have the heart to eat, we will not taste the food. This proves that the heart is the controlling organ. In order to control the whole building, we must be able either to close or open the door. So with the heart there is the power to close or open our whole being.

For this reason the preaching of the gospel must be guided by the Holy Spirit that it might hit the human heart. The most effectual way of preaching the gospel is to touch the human heart. If one can break through the heart, many persons can be gained. This is why unbelievers harden and close their heart to the gospel preaching. Regardless of how much we preach, when they close their heart, we cannot touch them. We cannot minister anything into them, because their “entrance” is closed. We must find a way, if we are going to preach effectively, to break through the entrance. The best preacher is the one who finds the key to unlock the heart.

Even the Lord Himself attracts us through our heart. He does not stir our spirit first. The seeking one in the very beginning of Song of Songs asks the Lord to attract her by His love so that she may love Him. The Lord comes to touch our heart with His love. This is why, after the resurrection, the Lord asked Peter, “Do you love Me?” (John 21:15-17). The love of the Lord is the best way to unlock the door of the heart. Therefore, the most effective way to open the heart is to preach the love of God. Once the heart is open, it is easy for the Holy Spirit to touch the spirit and all the parts of man’s being. This is true not only in gospel preaching but even in the ministry of Christian teaching.

DEALING WITH THE HEART

For this reason we must deal with our heart so that we might have a proper relationship with the Lord. How can we deal with our heart? Again, it is quite simple. The Scripture says, “Blessed are the pure in heart” (Matt. 5:8). Some translators have changed the word *pure* to *clean*—that is, “clean in heart.” But the word *clean* is not adequate. It is not just a matter of a clean heart but of a pure heart. We may be clean but mixed and therefore not pure. To be mixed does not mean to be dirty but to have more than one goal and one aim.

This is the problem with many brothers and sisters. They think that they have nothing wrong with their hearts because they are clean and without condemnation. But they are not pure, because they have more than one goal, more than one aim. Yes, they are aiming at God, but at the same time they are aiming at several other things. They may be aiming at God and at a doctor’s degree. When they have two things as their aims, they are mixed and complicated. For example, we cannot see two things with our eyes at the same time. If we try to look at two items at the same time, both of them will be blurred.

Why is it that some say they are not clear about the Lord’s will? It is because they have two goals, two aims. Many brothers and sisters have more than two aims. They are aiming at many things. Yes, they are seeking the Lord, but at the same time they are seeking other things, such as their position and their career. How can they avoid being perplexed and confused? Their heart must be purified from so many ambitions so that the Lord Himself may be their only goal.

Even many Christian workers have too many goals. One brother testified that he had a great goal: he wanted to be the biggest preacher in his denomination. His heart was clean, but he was not pure. His heart must be purified until he has only one goal—the Lord Himself. Some Christian workers have the Lord Himself and His work as their goal. They have two goals. They need to purify their heart until they seek nothing other than the Lord Himself as their goal. Their aim, their goal, and their interest should only be the Lord Himself. When they seek absolutely nothing but Him, their heart is pure, and if they have such a pure heart, the “sky” will not only be open but very clear to them. Sometimes the sky is open but cloudy. Why is the spiritual sky cloudy? It is because the heart is mixed and not pure. When the heart is purified from many goals, the sky is clear.

Another term the Bible uses to describe the heart is *singleness*—“singleness of heart.” Some versions translate *singleness* as “simplicity”—“simplicity of heart.” Singleness of heart means to be

simple. To be simple means, in a sense, to be foolish. Those who really love the Lord and aim at Him are a kind of fool. We must all be Christian fools. This means, "I don't know anything but Jesus. Whatever I do, I know only Jesus. Wherever I go, I know only Jesus." We should not try to be clever. We have only one way—the narrow way of Jesus. People will say, "You are foolish," but we should like to be so foolish. This is simplicity.

Three passages in the Scriptures referring to purity of heart are Psalm 73:1, Matthew 5:8, and 2 Timothy 2:22. The latter reference shows that while the churches are deteriorating, we must pursue the Lord with a pure heart and pray together with others who have a pure heart. There are at least three verses referring to singleness of heart: Acts 2:46, Ephesians 6:5, and Colossians 3:22. If we would seek and serve the Lord, we must deal with these two matters: to be pure and single in the heart. We must learn to have not only a clean and right heart but a pure and single heart. If we would deal with our heart in such a way, our whole being will be opened to the Lord, because the gateway is open. This is not some doctrine but simply instructions on how to deal with the heart so as to allow the Lord to possess our whole being. (*The Economy of God*, pp. 75-78)

References and Further Reading:

1. *The Economy of God*, ch. 8.
2. *The Knowledge of Life*, ch. 10.
3. *The Collected Works of Witness Lee, 1970*, vol. 1, "The Way to Grow in Life," ch. 6.