

Date: May 27, 2012

Subject: Give Me thine Heart - Prov. 23:26

Last week, we learned about Galatians 3:11 where we read,

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith."

by this we learned how there is absolutely nothing we can do to remove our guilt before God, and all of the things man does ~~to~~ to justify himself are vain, and actually sinful, in God's sight; even though the acts themselves impress other people so much. One thing is clear in all of Scripture, it is God alone who justifies guilty sinners by renewing their hearts to faith in Jesus Christ.

As I mentioned last week, the target of the Gospel is not the mind of mankind, but the heart. Much confusion is avoided by distinguishing between the two because on the one hand, unsaved people are comforted by thinking they are saved (when they are not), and on the other hand, the true believer (i.e. the man, woman, or child who believe in Jesus Christ with ~~the~~ their heart) is inclined to feel unsaved and diminish the joy of faith which the Scriptures declare/urge them to have.

i believe this distinction to be of critical importance because when the Gospel is preached and the heart targeted - not only do i believe this to be the Scriptural method for us to follow (see e.g. Rom. 10:9-10), but this also leaves each and every reader/hearer alone before God. Every man, preacher, teacher, pastor and so on, are therefore excluded in every way, as each soul must reflect upon its own convictions, "that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (Luke 2:35).

This does not mean that God doesn't gift His people to teach, exhort, minister, ^{etc.} to others - that is not true, God does gift His people in ways to edify each other (e.g. Rom. 12:6-8; 1 Cor. 12:4ff; Eph. 4:11-12); but we are all individually accountable to God,

"So then every one of us shall give account of himself to God." - Romans 14:12

In order to understand more about our heart, we must learn more about the natural (i.e. unsaved) state of our heart, and its condition before salvation. Let's begin by examining the doctrine called, "Total Depravity."

The Doctrine of Total Depravity

The doctrine of Total Depravity teaches that all mankind is utterly wicked. For example, in Genesis 6:5 God gives ~~us~~ us a good description of how evil mankind is by nature. We read,

"And God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually."

God is very specific and exposes our absolute sinfulness before His eyes, "every imagination... only evil continually." There is no way around it, mankind is exceptionally evil - and has been - ever since the fall of Adam. In Job 15:16 we read,

"How much more abominable and filthy is man, which drinks iniquity like water?"

Water is the most abundant resource on this earth and it is absolutely necessary to human life, and here in Job 15:16 God speaks of unsaved man drinking iniquity (i.e. sin) like water. As water

to drinking so is man to sinning. From the moment we are born, our hearts are bent to sin, "like a wild ass's colt." (Job 11:12), totally wild and rebellious.

Finally in Jeremiah 17:9 God gives a description of our heart,

"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: Who can know it?"

The Hebrew word translated, "desperately wicked" is "ānash" and means "incurable". Over and over again, the extreme wickedness of man is declared in the Bible, and it is incurable - meaning there is nothing we can do to "cure" it.

As we reflect upon these things, we may wonder, "How can that be? I know many 'good' people who are not even Christian, but they don't behave 'totally depraved'...?"

It's true, isn't it? We may personally know many people who we wouldn't describe as "totally depraved" or even "only evil continually" as we read in Genesis 6:5, how are we to understand this?

The Key to understand this issue isn't by what we see, but what God sees,

"for the LORD sees not as man sees; for man looks on the outward appearance, but the LORD looks on the heart." - 1 Sam. 16:7

Again, it is the heart of man (i.e. unsaved) that is totally depraved. I had a dear friend of mine tell me how his parents' tears were "crocodile tears," meaning that they weren't truly sad or hurt by the loss of their son to prison, he said this because he thought they were "totally depraved."

This is a totally wrong application of this doctrine, their tears were genuine, they were really grieving the loss of their son.

"Total Depravity," is the total sinfulness of man in God's sight - not ours, it also proves that there is nothing we can do that God commands, with ~~our~~ our heart. So when we read a passage like Romans 10:9-10

"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart

"that God has raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believes unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

This is impossible for an unsaved man to do, because the heart is naturally bent to evil, remember,

"... that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." (Gen. 6:5)

The unsaved man can believe with his mind, but not with his heart. It would be inaccurate to say that "unsaved man cannot do spiritual work," because he can: he can pray, he can read the Bible, even believe (see Acts 8:13, 18-20) - he can do all these things; but what he cannot do, is do them with his heart; it is the heart that separates the wheat from the tares.

A Paralyzed Man

In Mark chapter 2 we read of a paralyzed man who was carried by four men on a bed to Jesus to be healed.

They brought him to Jesus to be healed physically, yet we read in verse 5,

"When Jesus saw their faith, He said unto the sick of the palsy [i.e. paralyzed], Son, thy sins be forgiven thee."

We read of different people being healed by Jesus in the Bible, and they illustrate God's salvation to us. For example, in the previous chapter (Mark 1), Christ healed a leper (vss. 40 ff.); the leper is used to illustrate our natural ~~unclean~~ uncleanness, we are all like lepers - spiritual lepers - before salvation.

Well here in Mark 2, this paralyzed man illustrates our total inability - our spiritual palsy - before God in heart. Jesus says to the scribes in verse 9,

"Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?"

The easier thing to say would be "thy sins be forgiven thee" because how could ~~we~~ prove Christ wrong?
the scribes

Ah, but if Christ says, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk", if this man doesn't arise and take up his bed and walk, the scribes could prove Christ wrong... but, if this paralyzed man does get up and walk it shows also that his sins are truly forgiven as Christ said, something only God can do (vs. 7). We continue in verse 10,

"But that ye may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins, (He saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house."

Keep in mind that Christ is commanding this paralyzed man to get up and walk - this is impossible to us; and look what happens, verse 12

"And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; inasmuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."

A paralyzed man made to walk, totally depraved people made to believe in Jesus Christ with their heart,

do you see the connection beloved? Do you understand how both ~~are~~ impossible? Mark 10:26-27

"And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved? And Jesus looking upon them saith, With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible."

Whether its a paralyzed man walking, or a totally depraved sinner believing with his heart - both require the power of God^{first}. Just as the paralyzed man knew he was healed because he was able to walk, so may we know that God has saved us if we believe in Jesus Christ, with our heart,

"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and truth. And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him."

- 1 John 3:18-19

Therefore the doctrine of "Total Depravity," when correctly understood, helps to assure the hearts of God's people of their salvation, not by an examination of our works... but our heart.

Summary

What we have learned thus far should cause every reader to examine him or herself in the light of the Gospel, "Have I given my heart to God?" So you busy yourself with things pertaining to the Gospel, you read your Bible, you pray, you perform a few good works in His name... but have you given Him your heart beloved? O how many dear souls will be told by Christ on that last day, "I never knew you: depart from Me, ye that work iniquity." (read Matthew 7:21-23) Why? Because they gave Him their money, their time, their lips... but not their heart,

"My son, give Me thine heart,..."

- Prov. 23:26

Some people use the doctrine of "Total Depravity" to teach that just because someone does some good things he must be saved; but we have proven this is not so, there is more than that. Anybody can do good things outwardly and still be wicked inwardly. "Totally depraved people wouldn't read the Bible..."
WRONG! Our assurances don't come from our good works,

our assurances come from a renewed heart, a fully committed heart to God by faith - this a totally depraved person cannot do. The Bible says,

"The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise."

May the Holy Spirit go from soul to soul and open the hearts of faith of His people and encourage them that all who turn to Him with all their heart, not a one, not a single soul, will be cast out.

"All that the Father giveth Me shall come to Me; and him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37

These are the promises of God, let no one turn you away from them; learn them, know them, love them, believe them... with your heart. This Gospel goes forth to all the world... who will respond...?? will you?? Have you...?? "My son, give Me thine heart,..."

Ever gratefully,

Your servant for Jesus' sake,
 di. M. Allen

Lord, I Believe, by R.E.W.

When sorrow and storms are besetting my track,
and Satan is whispering "You'd better turn back",
how oft I have proved it, though dark be the way,
a little believing drives clouds all away.

How easy when sailing the sea in a ~~calm~~ calm,
to trust in the strength of Jehovah's great Arm;
but somehow I find when the waves swamp the boat,
it takes some believing to keep things afloat.

"I'll stand to the end", I have heard people say,
"I'll fight till I die, and will never run away";
but when by temptation so fiercely assailed,
they left off believing, and terribly failed.

And others there are full of courage and zeal,
who go to the battle like warriors of steel;
but right in the heat of the conflict with sin,
instead of believing, they faint and give in.

Then ~~let~~ let us remember in running this race,
that faith is not feeling, and trusting is not trace;
and when all around us seems dark as the night,
we'll keep on believing, and win in the fight.

Lord, I believe, Lord, I believe!

Saviour, raise my faith in Thee,
till it can move a mountain;

Lord, I believe, Lord, I believe!

all my doubts are buried in the Fountain.