

Devotions with Matt

May 5, 2020

PURE IN HEART

It is said that our hearts produce in one hour enough work to lift a 150 pound man to the top of a three story building. In 12 hours the heart works enough to lift a sixty-five ton tank off of the ground to the height of one foot. In 70 years the energy that our hearts produce can lift the world's largest battleship out of the ocean. The heart is a very powerful organ, but as the Prophet Jeremiah reminds us, it is also deceitful above all things.

Jesus says in Matthew 5, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God". To the people of Jesus' day, the heart reflected the total substance of a man or woman, the inward part of us that is unseen by the naked eye, but is reflected in our outward being. The heart, to Jesus, is the center of our faculties and our

personalities. It is the seat of our knowledge and understanding. All of our thoughts, words, decisions and actions proceeded from the heart. Jesus would later say to a group of Pharisees that out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks. The heart is a very powerful organ and it is deceitful above all things We would do well in keeping with Jesus' understanding of the heart.

For us moderns, the heart is reserved for love and feelings. We don't have the same understanding of the heart as Jesus and His hearers did some two thousand years ago. They were heart people, we are brain people. We like Truth. I keep hearing these days from our government officials that they will make decisions only based on science and data. I saw a commercial for a product yesterday and it said the only thing that matters here is science. Let's get to the facts, the figures and the right calculations and we will proceed based on them. Life becomes sanitized by numbers, data and projections. The heart is deceitful above all things, but is too important a part of us to bypass on the way to decision making.

I am not belittling science, nor am I discounting our brains when it comes to making decisions and moving forward in life. God tells us to use our brains and to know Truth. He tells us to be as wise as serpents and as innocent as doves. Wisdom, we are told, is more precious than rubies. Science is good. In fact, the first scientists saw the created world and wanted to know more about it, so in turn would know more about the God who created it. Truth (with a capital "T") is also good. We are to seek it and to know it. All Truth is God's Truth, we all have heard, and therefore it is good to pursue it. But, knowing Truth by itself, apart from the God who reveals it, becomes legalism, self-righteousness and judgmentalism. Truth wasn't meant to be the only way of seeing the world and others, it was revealed to us so that we could know who God is and what His will is for us and the world. It was given to draw us closer to God.

This is where the heart comes back in. We must apply God's Truth to it. We must understand that it is truly deceitful, above all things. Our hearts, the center of our personality and being and where all of our thoughts, words and decisions flow, must be understood and seen for what they are: Our True self. That's how Jesus sees the heart. When Jesus says, "Blessed are the pure in heart" He is not saying that the heart is not deceitful or wicked or lost. He is saying that the person who understand its broken condition is the one who is blessed.



The one who recognizes the heart is deceitful above all else, and has lead us away from God, is the one who is blessed. It's not a matter of already having a pure heart, but rather the one who seeks to have his or her heart redeemed, changed and made pure, is the one who is blessed. That person, who seeks God with all his heart will find Him. That person who desires to find God with all her heart will find Him. The one who recognizes our hearts are broken and are in need of God will see Him.

The brain can't get us there, science can't get us there and Truth alone can't either. The deceitful heart says we can reach God through those things alone. The deceitful heart says it is good enough, wise enough or powerful enough to cross the chasm between us and God- but it is not. It is only when we realize we are not pure in heart and are in need of the God who created us, will we become pure in heart. When we realize our hearts are far away from God, and desire to be near Him, will we be healed and able to see Him. Until we recognize our hearts are broken, we will remain in their deceitfulness and remain apart from God. The heart is a powerful organ, but God is the only one with the power to heal it and make it new. Let us submit our broken hearts to Him so they will be made pure.

¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you. ¹³ You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart. Jeremiah 29:11-13

In Christ,

Matt