

A CHANGE OF HEART

Int.

1. Aim: To discuss the importance of the heart and how it is changed.
2. Text - Lk. 13:3
 - a. Repent - the word means to think differently, reconsider
 - b. "A change of mind that brings a change of life"
3. Why change the heart?
 - a. Prov. 23:7 "For as a man thinketh in his heart so is he...."
 - b. Ill. A man went to a clock repair shop and brought only the hands of his clock. He said the hands were the things that were losing time. The repairman told him he'd have to go inside the clock in order to make the hands function properly.
 - c. Ill. It used to be said that when someone used filthy language that the person needs their mouth washed with soap. Actually what he needs is a cleansing of the heart.
 - d. When the inside, heart, is working properly then the outside will work in the right manner.
4. No doubt some people need a new heart. --- Their old blood pump is diseased or worn out.
5. But many more need new hearts of a spiritual nature - they need a change of heart".
6. Ezekiel 36:26a "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you:"
New = fresh, to rebuild, repair,
7. We will notice: 1) What the heart is; and 2) How it is changed

Discussion

I. WHAT IS THE HEART ?

- A. The heart is not something that can be seen, felt, smelled, heard, or tasted.
1. It is something that God has given every person but it is totally invisible.
 2. Everyone has a heart - some good, some bad, but just what is this thing called the heart ?
- B. The scriptures do not give us a precise definition of the word, but we can find out from the word what it is by what the scriptures teach that it does.
- C. From the scriptures we learn that the heart does a number of things which can be placed into 4 categories: [Intellect, emotions, will, conscience]
1. **THE INTELLECT** --- It thinks (Mt. 9:4; Heb. 4:12); reasons (Mk 2:8); understands (Mt. 13:15); believes (Rom. 10:9-10); All of these are processes of the INTELLECT.
 - a. The heart is used to Think -- MATT 9:4. "And Jesus knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore **think ye evil in your hearts?**" [Scribes at Nazareth]
 - b. It used for reasoning MARK 2:8. "And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so **reasoned within themselves**, he said unto them, **Why reason ye these things in your hearts?**" [Scribes at Capernaum]
 - c. It understands _MATT 13:15. "For this people's heart is waxed gross, and [their] ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with [their] eyes and hear with [their] ears, and should **understand with [their] heart**, and should be converted, and I should heal them."
 - d. It believes - Rom. 10:9-10

2. **THE HEART HAS EMOTIONS** --- It loves (Mt. 22:37); despises (2 Sam. 6:11); rejoices (Ps. 105:25); and desires (Rom. 10:1). These are processes of the EMOTIONS.
- a. It Loves -- MATT 22:37. "Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind."
 - b. It despises - 2 SAM 6:16. "And as the ark of the Lord came into the city of David, Michal Saul's daughter looked through a window, and saw king David leaping and dancing before the Lord; and she despised him in her heart."
 - c. It can rejoice PS 105:3 "Glory ye in his holy name: let the heart of them rejoice that seek the Lord."
 - d. It desires ROM 10:1 "Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is, that they might be saved."
3. **The processes of the WILL** -- It purposes (2 Cor. 9:7); decrees (1 Cor. 7:37); and intends (Heb. 4:12). These are processes of the WILL.
- a. It purposes 2 COR 9:7 "Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver."
 - b. It decrees 1 COR 7:37 "Nevertheless he that standeth stedfast in his heart, having no necessity, but hath power over his own will, and hath so decreed in his heart that he will keep his virgin, doeth well."
 - c. It intends HEB 4:12 "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."

4. **OUR HEART HAS THE PROCESSES OF A CONSCIENCE** -- It may be pricked (Acts 2:37); may be cut (5:33); condemns or approves (I Jn. 3:20,21).

These are processes of the CONSCIENCE.

- a. It may be pricked ACTS 2:37 "Now when they heard this, they were **pricked** in their heart, and said unto Peter and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?"
- b. It may be cut ACTS 5:33 "When they heard that, they were **cut to the heart**, and took counsel to slay them."
- c. Our heart condemns or approves 1 JN 3:20-21 "For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things. 21. Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, then have we confidence toward God."

D. When we speak of a change of heart, we mean that the INTELLECT, the EMOTIONS, the WILL, and the CONSCIENCE, must be changed or purified before God will accept its service.

E. Obviously the spiritual heart is not the blood pump.

1. The scriptural heart is the entire "inner man".
2. It is that "inward man" which Paul speaks of as being "renewed day by day" 2 Cor. 4:16. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day." Inward man = heart

II. HOW THE SPIRITUAL HEART IS CHANGED

A. A general answer is given in Acts 15:9 “And put no difference between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith”.

1. This passage tells what is done, but only in a general way as to how it is done.
2. We might say that a man knows the needs of his family and supplies them by working.
 - a. Thus, only in a general way does this statement tell what he does, but it does not indicate the particular kind of work that he does.
 - b. “Faith” is a general word and we need to get it down to specifics as to how the heart is changed.

B. First, the INTELLECT is changed by testimony.

1. Citizens are sometimes asked to serve on a jury.
 - a. Just suppose you are on a jury and the prosecuting attorney presented evidence that led you to conclude that the fellow on trial was guilty.
 - b. But the defense attorneys' job is to change your mind so that you will believe he is innocent. HOW DOES HE PROCEED?
 - c. He submits testimony to support his case, and he asks you to examine it.
2. Neither can men believe in God, or Jesus as the Son of God, without testimony: hence, God has provided an abundance of evidence for all who will study it honestly and accept it.
3. It is a fact that where there is no preaching and hearing of the gospel, no knowledge of the gospel message, there is no faith, no repentance, no conversion, and no church of the living God.

4. The first activity necessary to initiate a change of heart is the preaching and hearing of the facts of the gospel of Christ.
 - a. That Jesus lived, died, was buried, and raised up from the dead, and now sits at the right hand of God, and is king of all who will yield their wills in loving obedience to his will.
 - b. We sing, "Tell me the Old Old Story" etc.
 - (1) This is it.
 - (2) Included in the story is the apostolic testimony concerning the type character that he was - the great love that He had and showed - offering his life as an atonement for the redemption of mankind from the guilt and consequence of sin.
 - (3) Also included in this story is the apostolic testimony concerning the miracles, touching nature at almost, if not every point, proving His claims to being the Christ. (Jn. 20:30,31) "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: 31. But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name."
5. And so it is that by hearing the Old Story, one is moved to serious thinking; thinking leads to reasoning; reasoning to understanding; understanding to believing; and believing to turning to God.
6. Thus it is that the person so taught and moved by this Great Story is made ready and eager to confess with his mouth the faith that is in his heart, that "Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Mt. 16:16).
7. ROM 10:17 "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."

C. The affections or Emotions are changed by the loveliness of Christ.

1. When a young man seeks to win the affections of a young woman he does good things for her - opening doors, flowers, tells her nice things, etc.
2. God has done so much for us - Jesus...
3. Divine love, when properly considered, will change the sinner's feelings toward God (2 Cor.8:9; Jn.3:16; 1 Jn. 4:19; Jn. 12:32; 1 Cor.2:2).
 - a. 11 Cor. 5:14 "For the love of Christ **constraineth** us; because we thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead:" "For the love of Christ **compels** us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died;"
 - b. Jn. 3:16
 - c. 1 JN 4:19 "We love him, because he first loved us."

D. The will is changed by motives.

1. To illustrate how God seeks to change our will let us consider how a parent seeks to change the will of a disobedient child.
 - a. Parents encourage their children to do right, and they assure them of their love.
 - (1) The child's recognition and awareness of parents love leads them to do right.
 - (2) They want to please their parents who love them.
 - b. Also, the parents promise things which help to motivate the child.
 - (1) Promise rewards if they are good.
 - (2) Promise of punishment if not obedient.

2. The hardest thing for man to do, that is necessary to bring him into a right relation to God, is to change the will.
 - a. There must first be a change of Intellect - that is, the mind must know what the body needs to do or quit doing.
 - b. Then there must be a change of Emotions. If no feelings of love for God, or fear of Him, no motive to change heart to where acceptable.
 - c. God seeks to change our will to bring us to repentance by His "precious and exceeding great promises": (2 Pet. 1:4). HEAVEN
 - d. He also seeks to change our will by the promise or threat of eternal punishment (2 Thes.1:8-9). HELL
 - e. The promises that He has made are sufficient to prompt any man with an honest heart, and who knows what to do, to repentance and obedience to the gospel, and faithfulness thereafter as a Christian.

E. The Conscience is changed by right doing.

1. What makes our conscience hurt? One of two things:
 - a. Realization that one has disobeyed God outright;
 - b. Or, realization that one has failed to measure up to what God would have him to do and to be (I Jn. 3:4; Jas. 4:17).
 - (1) 1 John 3:4 "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law."
 - (2) James 4:17 "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

- c. Awareness of personal sin is that which makes one's conscience hurt -it pricks the heart (Acts 2:37).
 - d. This being true, the opposite must also be true, namely, that right-doing, obedience to God's law, will purify the conscience and set it at rest.
2. It takes "will power" to do that which we know we must do to have a changed conscience or heart.
- a. For some to become a Christian there are a great number of things that must be given up - a major change in life's habits is necessary.
 - (1) While with others there are few habits...
 - (2) Obedience to gospel is much easier.
 - b. Many of us who are Christians need to use our will power to do that which we know to do so that we might have a right conscience.
3. Everyone has sinned against God, and obedience to the gospel is the only thing that will change the sinner's conscience (when he learns...)
- a. Noah ... "There is also an antitype which now saves us, namely baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Pet. 3:21; NKJV).
 - b. When one understands and believes what the N.T. teaches, he can never have a clear conscience until he does it.
 - (1) But, if he does not understand nor believe what the Bible says, then he may have a clear conscience without doing what the Bible teaches, provided of course, he does what he believes to be right.
 - (2) However, a clear conscience alone will not suffice, as is clearly shown in Paul's case before his conversion.

Conclusion

1. Prov. 4:23 - Ps. 119:11
 2. Illustration: A preacher talked with a young woman and asked her: "Why are you not a Christian?"
 - a. She said: "I am waiting for a change of heart."
 - b. "Do you believe, with all your heart, that Jesus Christ is the Son of God?" She said: "I do."
 - c. Do you love God and God's people?" "Yes, sir."
 - d. "Do you hate the world, and are you tired of sin?" "Yes."
 - e. "Do you want to be a Christian?" "Yes," was her answer.
 - f. "When?" "Right now."
 - g. "Then why do you wait?" "For a change of heart."
 - h. "But I would not ask God to change your heart for anything?" "Why not?"
 - i. "You said that you believed that Jesus Christ is the Son of God; if he were to change your heart, you would not believe that. You said you wanted to be a Christian; if he changed your heart, you would not want to be. You said you were tired of sin and hated the world; if he were to change your heart, this would not be the case. It is not a change of heart, ..., you need; that has come already. The thing you need is to arise and be baptized, and wash away your sins, calling on the name of the Lord."
 3. She understood. She obeyed, and rejoiced in the liberty of the gospel.
 4. If you are not a Christian and you understand what you need to do, we will be glad to assist you....
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Evans Church of Christ

515 Gibbs Road

Evans, Ga. 30809

706-855-1249

arthurpigman@cybrtyme.com

www.evansgachurchofchrist.org