

# Follow Jesus, Not Your Heart

## *Part 4: With the Heart one Believes...or Doesn't*

(preached 5/19/24)

Please turn to *Romans 10*.

### LAST WEEK:

- The design and destiny God created for our hearts is to be His expression here on earth, as it is in Heaven!
- God is love! His joy is our strength! He is the King of Peace! He will grant all patience and faith! He is humble and lowly of heart! He is good, generous, and will help us overcome temptation!
- Imagine a Church full of Godly hearts expressing the fruits of the Holy Spirit back to God, to each other and the world!
- Everything would change: our relationship with God, our marriages, churches, family, everything!
- The world needs more expression of Christ and less of us, yes?
- When the heart is allowed by us to lead, it expresses itself.
- A heart full of Jesus shines Jesus.
- The self-seeking heart makes everything about itself and says “I deserve \_\_\_\_\_”
- The God-centered heart seeks the face of the Lord.
- We must repent of PRIDE.
- Heart-led pride says “I’m a good person. I regularly sacrifice, give, and serve others.”
- The only goodness inside of us is the Holy Spirit Who IS our goodness.
- We’re able to love, be generous, and serve because He inspires and fuels it.
- A “hard” hearted person isn’t someone who’s not connected with their emotions like Mr. Spock.
- A hardhearted person is one who doesn’t believe what God has said or promised and can be very emotional, not at all, or anywhere in between.
- Therefore, we ended last week’s message by saying the Lord desires to “circumcise” or “break” the hardness of the heart so that rivers of living water can flow from it.

## TODAY IS PENTECOST!

How fitting that this sermon series should end today when the Holy Spirit was *poured out* upon all those who believed and God expressed Himself on earth as He does in Heaven!

**Last week we read from John 7 where Jesus was talking about this very moment:** when Joel 2 would be fulfilled that Father would pour out His Spirit on

earth like *living water*! After experiencing cloven tongues of fire and the sound of a mighty rushing wind, the 120 disciples appeared before the great crowds gathered and even though they were speaking in their own language, those gathered heard their own! The Gospel was preached and 3000 were Saved that very day! There's only 1 language in Heaven, no one is sick, and everyone has been cleansed by Jesus! Believe me: I did not plan to wrap things up today, but apparently the Holy Spirit did!

**Jesus promised this very thing would happen for those who BELIEVED:**

**[Mar 16:17-18 ESV]** 17 And these signs will accompany those who believe: in my name they will cast out demons; they will speak in new tongues; 18 they will pick up serpents with their hands; and if they drink any deadly poison, it will not hurt them; they will lay their hands on the sick, and they will recover."

## Prepare everyone for altar call at end

Have you ever experienced **THE INTERNAL CONFLICT** that your head says one thing, but your heart says the opposite?

- Your head says you shouldn't date this guy because of his reputation, but your heart really wants to.
- Your head says not to buy this thing because you can't afford it and have bills to pay, but your heart wants it so bad.

**Who normally wins those internal arguments?** I would say that we listen to our hearts more.

**WHICH IS THE PART OF US THAT DOES THE "BELIEVING"** that Jesus and the Apostles spoke of so much? The flesh only wants its needs met and the only thing it believes is that it should receive them. That leaves the mind and heart. *Which one is our belief center?*

Before we answer please keep something in mind: **how we believe determines the entire direction of our lives.** It decides:

- Our relationship with God: how good it is or isn't.
- Our marriages, families, and jobs.
- Our faith: whether mustard seed sized or enough to remove mountains.
- Our joy, love, and peace.
- Whether we live righteously or not.
- Whether our prayers are answered or not.

**Romans 10 is all about preaching the Gospel** to Israel and Paul's great passion for them to be Saved. He's encouraging the Roman Church to not give up or lose hope, but to keep sharing Jesus with both Jew and Gentile alike.

**Have you ever tried sharing the Gospel**, especially with someone you know? If you have, there's a good chance you were met with skepticism, doubt, indifference, and perhaps even outright opposition and hostility.

I'm a mind oriented person, so when I first began trying to evangelize I thought I could **"convince" people into the Kingdom** through proofs, evidence, and facts. I worked out some math and statistics about the likelihood of Jesus fulfilling the 100 prophecies of being the Messiah: the probability is  $1 \times 10^{28}$  the 28<sup>th</sup> power: that's a 1 with 28 zeros! Despite this amazing evidence and the eloquence of my arguments, ***I never convinced a soul*** and didn't understand why. **Until the Lord led me to Romans 10.**

**[Rom 10:8-10 ESV]** 8 But what does it say? "The word is near you, in your mouth and **in your heart**" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and **believe in your heart** that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 ***For with the heart one believes and is justified,*** and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

**The mind merely agrees or disagrees with what it hears and sees.**

## **IT'S THE HEART THAT BELIEVES OR DOESN'T.**

**Let me ask you all this:** we've done 3 sermons on this topic and have any of you had an "aha!" moment about what YOU believe during?

- Have you identified any "balloons" (fantasies and imaginations) that you've created that needed popping?
- Have you realized that you've followed your heart vs. Jesus more than you thought?
- Have you changed (repented) of what you've formerly believed about anything?

**Our lives will only change for the better if we change what our hearts believe.**

- I'm a tongue talker as a private prayer language, but speaking tongues doesn't change me.
- I believe in the gift of prophesy and love to flow in it, but prophesying doesn't alter me.

- ***The only way that I change is when my heart shifts in what it believes.***

I asked earlier if you've ever had the classic head vs. heart conflict and most said "yes." ***Do we understand that applies to everything we see, hear, and read...even what's in the Bible?***

Suppose in reading Mark 16 where those who believe will lay hands on the sick and they will recover.

- Our MIND might say: *"the Bible is God's Word so it must be true."*
- Our HEART might say: *"I've prayed for lots of people and have never seen even 1 of them get healed! Lots of people have prayed for me too and I was never healed! This might apply to others but not me!"*

## **OUR MIND AGREES BUT OUR HEARTS DON'T BELIEVE.**

Suppose Kim shouts during worship *"God is good all the time, and all the time God is good!"*

- Our MIND says: *"I know God is holy and righteous and there's no darkness in Him at all. Amen."*
- Our HEART says: *"where was God when my sister was in her accident?! Why didn't He prevent it or heal her after?!"*

## **Our mind agrees but our hearts don't believe.**

Suppose we read what Jesus said: to not seek after food, drink, and clothes but to seek first the Kingdom of Heaven and its righteousness, then all those other things will be added to us.

- Our MIND says: *"if Jesus promised it, He will deliver."*
- Our HEART says: *"it's only because I went after those things that I have them! I've worked my tail off to put food on the table, keep a roof over our heads, and clothes on our backs!"*

## **Our mind can agree while our hearts can say "no way!"**

**The assent of the mind is good, but the belief of the heart is what changes everything.**

Here's a famous verse:

**[Mat 15:8 ESV]** "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me;"

Is it possible for us to say "*praise God! He is good!*" with our lips but have our hearts feeling:  
***"I just can't praise Him, because I don't feel like He's been good to me lately."***

Is it possible to say "*God is generous!*" and have our hearts say "*I wish He'd be more generous to me!*"

**Judas** was Jesus' disciple for 3 years. Heard His preaching, saw His miracles, and more. Why did Judas betray Him. Which part of Judas turned against Him?

**[Jhn 13:2 ESV]** During supper, when the devil had already put it **into the heart** of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him,

***Judas allowed the devil to write on the tablet of his heart instead of God.***

**Our hearts believe whatever is written on it.**

**IT'S NOT JUST GOD OR THE DEVIL** who write on our hearts. Our experiences, other people, our environment, and we ourselves write on it—or attempt to—constantly.

If we really want change to happen in our lives, we need to identify what we **BELIEVE** and change that, not what we **THINK**.

***Back to Pentecost.*** After the Holy Spirit was poured out on the 120 disciples in the upper room, then went out and preached to the crowds who were gathered outdoors. Peter did most of the talking, quoting from Joel 2 and other places, then telling them about Jesus. When Pete finished, here was the response:

**[Act 2:37-38 ESV]** 37 Now when they heard this they were **cut to the heart**, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" 38 And Peter said to them, "**Repent** and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

**WERE THEY CUT TO THE MIND?** No. When the people heard Peter's preaching the unbelief in their hearts was exposed, which is what its mean by "cut to the heart." What were they "cut" with? The Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God.

**God's spoken/preached/sang/read word is the sharpest and most powerful weapon in the world.**

*[Heb 4:12 ESV]* 12 For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing [cutting] to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

**What's the primary job of God's Word? To discern.**

**What's it designed to discern? The intentions of our minds? Our flesh?**

*Its prime purpose is to reveal what we really believe.*

The reading, preaching, praying, prophesying, singing, and declaration of God's Word is what shows us what we truly believe or don't.

- Do we really believe in healing?
- Do we truly think God is generous to the point of "my cup runneth over"?
- Do we really think He's good ALL the time?

**There's a simple way to tell: how are we feeling?**

**Emotions are the result of what we believe.**

*Results are at the end and not the beginning*...a fancy way of saying they're not meant to lead.

Feelings are part of our discernment, markers for what we actually believe about \_\_\_\_\_.

**IF THERE'S ANGER, DEPRESSION, FRUSTRATION, FEAR, HOPELESSNESS, AND ANXIETY IN OUR LIVES THEN WE DWELL IN UNBELIEF.**

- It's our hearts that need to be convicted that what it believes is wrong.
- It's our hearts that need to be *convinced* that what God has said is true and applies.

Before we were Saved, *maybe already thought we were good people* and if there's a heaven, we're going there.

We needed to be **convicted that we weren't good enough**, that only Jesus was, and that He had to die because of our badness.

We needed to be **convinced that not only was He good enough**, but that He loved us enough to earn us a place with His Father in the Kingdom.

## **What do we really believe about God?**

- Do we truly believe in His moral commands?
- That they apply across the board or do we think there are exceptions? Especially when we're going through a tough time and our needs haven't been met?
- Do we believe in the many promises He makes?
- *Or does doubt for one or more of those things lie secretly or openly in our hearts?*

**Sometimes I ask questions from this pulpit** and most of you answer from your minds: you give me the "right" answer and I normally say that...then I ask you for what you REALLY believe.

**IDK about you, but I need some changes in me.** Some God-inspired and empowered changes that makes me more like Him and less like me!

Maybe we all need a **Lydia moment**? Let's read about her:

**[Act 16:11-15 ESV]** 11 So, setting sail from Troas, we made a direct voyage to Samothrace, and the following day to Neapolis, 12 and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia and a Roman colony. We remained in this city some days. 13 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to the riverside, where we supposed there was a place of prayer, and we sat down and spoke to the women who had come together. 14 One who heard us was a woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple goods, who was a worshiper of God. The Lord **opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul**. 15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, "If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay." And she prevailed upon us.

**Lydia started her day like any other**: down at the river to get water and maybe wash clothes. She wasn't alone: there was a group of other women with her. Paul was saying something: maybe teaching, praying out loud, or what have you. Apparently of the group of people there, she was the only one who heard/listened to what Paul was saying.

Notice it says “*the Lord OPENED her heart.*” Why just her? Why not all the people there? Answer: **because she believed.**

Look how her day ended: Saved, Baptized, and Paul and his team coming to her house. IDK about you but I would have loved for the Apostle Paul at my house for dinner!!!

**DO WE ALL NEED A LYDIA MOMENT?** Satan, the world, other people, and our own desires might be trying to convince our hearts of this or that.

Perhaps we need to be like Lydia: believing in what the Lord would say to us.

# Altar Call