

Journey Through the Bible

A New Heart and a New Spirit

Message 1: A NEW HEART (1): A New Heart and A New Spirit

Outline:

- I. God has a good pleasure—to make Himself one with us and to make us His sons; in view of His good pleasure, He created man in a special way—Eph. 1:4-5, 9:**
 - A. God created man in His image and after His likeness (Gen. 1:26) with a spirit for man to receive and contain Him (2:7), and implanted eternity in man's heart (Eccl. 3:11):
 1. God created man with a spirit for man to receive and contain Him that man may live by Him as man's life—Gen. 2:7-9.
 2. God also put eternity in man's heart; in man's heart there is a divinely implanted sense of a purpose working through the ages which nothing under the sun, but only God, can satisfy— Eccl. 3:11.
 - B. The human heart is different from the human spirit—Ezek. 36:26; Matt. 5:3, 8; Heb. 4:12:
 1. The function of the heart is to incline toward God and love Him (Mark 12:30; Psa. 42:1-2); the function of the spirit is to receive and contact God (John 4:24).
 2. The heart is related to willingness (cf. Exo. 25:2) and the spirit to ability; when our heart is willing and our spirit is exercised, we can contact God.
- II. Because of sin, our heart became corrupted and our spirit became deadened:**
 - A. Man's corrupted heart is evil and hardened toward God; because of the fall, it did not love God, did not want God, and had no delight in God; on the contrary, it was full of hatred and rebellion toward God, and it turned away from God and rejected Him—Jer. 17:9; Eccl. 9:3; Matt. 15:19; Eph. 4:18.
 - B. Because of the fall, our spirit was deadened toward God and lost its function toward Him—Eph. 2:1 and footnote 2; Col. 2:13 and footnote 1.
- III. In His recovery by life the Lord gives us a new heart and a new spirit—Ezek. 36:26:**
 - A. While we are in a fallen or backslidden state, our heart toward the Lord is stony and hard, and our spirit is deadened:
 1. When the Lord saves us or revives us, He renews our heart, making our stony heart a heart of flesh, a heart that is soft and loving toward Him—cf. 2 Cor. 3:3.
 2. Furthermore, He enlivens and renews our spirit with His divine life—Col. 2:13.
 3. As a result, we love the Lord and desire Him with our renewed heart, and we can contact Him, receive Him, and contain Him by exercising our renewed spirit.
 - B. The Lord gives us a new heart to love Him—Mark 12:30:
 1. Our heart represents us with regard to our inclination, affection, delight, and desire.
 2. God gives us a new heart because He wants us to incline toward Him, adore Him, desire Him, and love Him—1 Cor. 16:22; 2:9.
 3. In order to maintain the newness of our heart, we must keep our heart turned to the Lord and seek purity, loving Him with our whole heart—Mark 12:30; 2 Cor. 3:16-18; Matt. 5:8; Prov. 4:23; Psa. 119:2, 11.
 - C. The Lord gives us a new spirit to receive and contain Him—John 4:24:

1. For us to have a new spirit means that our old, deadened spirit has been enlivened through regeneration—Eph. 2:1; John 3:6.
2. In his subtlety Satan has hidden the matter of the human spirit from most Christians; the spirit is an overlooked part of man—Gen. 2:7; Zech. 12:1.
3. In order to maintain the newness of our spirit, we must continually exercise our spirit to contact the Lord by calling on His name (Rom. 10:12), pray-reading His word (Eph. 6:17-18), rejoicing always (1 Thes. 5:16), praying unceasingly (v. 17), giving thanks in everything (v. 18), fanning our spirit into flame (2 Tim. 1:6-7), not quenching the Spirit (1 Thes. 5:19), and practicing to prophesy for the building up of the church (v. 20; 1 Cor. 14:4b).

Focus: For the fulfillment of His purpose, God created us with a heart to love Him and a spirit to receive and contain Him; although Satan corrupted our heart and deadened our spirit in the fall, God, in His salvation, has given us a new heart and a new spirit so that we may love Him, seek Him, contact Him, receive Him, and enjoy Him continually.

READING EXCERPT

RECEIVING A NEW HEART AND A NEW SPIRIT

First, at the time the Lord regenerated us He gave us a new heart. Our heart has been changed. Ezekiel 36:26 says, "I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh." Our old heart is hard, like a piece of stone. Here it is called the heart of stone. However, at the time the Lord regenerated us, He renewed our heart and changed our heart from a stony heart to a heart of flesh. A heart of flesh is a softened heart, a soft and tender heart. It is also a conscious heart. Since our original heart was old, it was hard for it to have a proper consciousness.

At the same time, the Lord also gave us a new spirit. Our old spirit was a dead spirit. Before we were regenerated, we were dead in our spirit, but at the time the Lord came in to regenerate us, He renewed and enlivened our spirit. Our spirit became a living and new spirit. A new heart is a softened heart, and a new spirit is an enlivened, living spirit.

Here we must point out the difference between the functions of the heart and the functions of the spirit. Many Christians consider that the heart is the spirit, and the spirit is the heart; they take it for granted that these are synonyms. However, these are two items with different functions.

The heart is an organ for loving and for desiring. We love and desire to do things by the heart. For example, I love to read the Scriptures, and I may love a certain drink. This is the function of the heart. However, we cannot receive something with our heart. I may love to drink water, but I cannot drink water with my heart, and I cannot store water with my heart. I need another organ—the mouth—in order to drink the water, and yet another organ—the stomach—in order to store the water. Similarly, we may love a certain color with our heart. We can shut our eyes and say, "I love this color," but we cannot contact and realize the color with our heart. We need another organ, the seeing organ, the eyes, to substantiate what the heart loves. It is the same with music. The heart is an organ that can love music, but we need another organ, the hearing organ, the ears, to hear music.

Do you love the Bible? To be sure, you do, but with what part of you do you love it? You love the Bible with your heart. However, if I hand a Bible to you, you cannot receive it with your heart.

You love it with your heart, but you must take it with your hand. In the same principle, we love the Lord with our heart, but we receive the Lord with our spirit. Why, after giving us a new heart, did the Lord also need to give us a new spirit? It is simply because the heart is a loving organ and not a receiving organ. It is the spirit that can contact God. John 4:24 says, "God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness." Strictly speaking, we cannot contact God by our heart. We must contact God by our spirit. We love the Lord, but we must realize that the Lord is Spirit, so we need our human spirit as a receiving and contacting organ to contact the Lord. At the time the Lord came in to regenerate us, He gave us a new heart and a new spirit. A new heart is for us to love Him, and a new spirit is for us to contact Him.

How can we know that we are saved? We simply love Jesus. Even while we are sinning, we still love Him. Perhaps some may not agree with this. They may ask, "How can someone who is sinning still love the Lord?" Yes, on the one hand, a person is weak while sinning. But on the other hand, there is something deep in his heart longing to love the Lord. It is the longing heart that causes believers to repent after they have sinned. They may feel shameful to come back to contact the Lord, but they know that the Lord is within them. Our longing heart to love the Lord is a strong proof and confirmation that we have been saved.

In addition, before we were saved, we did not have a living spirit, so we could not contact the Lord, but at the same time that we received a longing heart to love the Lord, we also received a living spirit. The Lord is the Spirit, and we have a living spirit, and with this spirit we can contact the Lord as the Spirit. Receiving a new heart and a new spirit are the two main matters related to ourselves that took place in regeneration. Our heart has been renewed, and our spirit has been renewed. So now we are able, qualified, and equipped to love the Lord and to contact Him.

Question:

1. What was the Lord's purpose in giving us a new heart and a new spirit?
2. What happened to man's heart and spirit when man fell?

Scripture Reading:

Zech. 12:1 The burden of the word of Jehovah concerning Israel. Thus declares Jehovah, who stretches forth the heavens and lays the foundations of the earth and forms the spirit of man within him,

Gen. 2:7 Jehovah God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living soul.

Eccl. 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its own time; also He has put eternity in their heart, yet so that man does not find out what God has done from the beginning to the end.

Mark 12:30 And you shall love the Lord your God from your whole heart and from your whole soul and from your whole mind and from your whole strength."

Eph. 2:1 And you, though dead in your offenses and sins,

Col. 2:13 And you, though dead in your offenses and in the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our offenses;

Jer. 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, / And it is incurable; / Who can know it?

Eccl. 9:3 This is an evil among all that is done under the sun, that one thing happens to all; moreover the heart of the children of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live; and after that, they go to the dead.

Matt. 15:19 For out of the heart come evil reasonings, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witnessings, blasphemies.

Eph. 4:18 Being darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance which is in them, because of the hardness of their heart;

Ezek. 36:26 I will also give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you; and I will take away the heart of stone out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.

Gen. 1:26 And God said, Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of heaven and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.

John 4:24 God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truthfulness.

Matt. 5:3 Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of the heavens.

Matt. 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

Heb. 4:12 For the word of God is living and operative and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing even to the dividing of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow, and able to discern the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Psa. 42:1 As the hart pants / After the streams of water, / So my soul pants / For You, O God.

Psa. 42:2 My soul thirsts for God, / For the living God. / When will I come and appear / Before God?

Exo. 25:2 Tell the children of Israel to take for Me a heave offering. From every man whose heart makes him willing you shall take My heave offering.

Eph. 2:1 And you, though dead in your offenses and sins,

2 Cor. 3:3 Since you are being manifested that you are a letter of Christ ministered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God; not in tablets of stone but in tablets of hearts of flesh.

1 Cor. 2:9 But as it is written, "Things which eye has not seen and ear has not heard and which have not come up in man's heart; things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

2 Cor. 3:16 But whenever their heart turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.

Eph. 6:17 And receive the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which Spirit is the word of God,

Eph. 6:18 By means of all prayer and petition, praying at every time in spirit and watching unto this in all perseverance and petition concerning all the saints,