

Simply Christ

Gospel Newsletter

Sharing the simplicity that is in Christ

January 31, 2019

As He Thinks in His Heart

Shortly after my eighteenth birthday, I made an arrangement with my dad for an old tractor he owned and went into business for myself. Over the years I worked for a lot of good people, and occasionally for those who were not so good. There was one lesson I learned that proved to be true many times over the years. If you see someone cheat another person, the time would come that they will do the same thing to you. You might convince yourself that your relationship with them is different, and they would never do such a thing to you, but when circumstances change it always happens. You see, cheating is not something a person does occasionally, but it is what they are in their heart.

Jesus' words, "*whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart,*" Matthew 5:28 was not a change in the way God viewed sin. The proverbs warn of those who speak kind and flattering words to you while in their heart they are plotting against you. The message was, "Beware! *'For as he thinks in his heart, so is he.'*" Proverbs 23:7. Even God's judgment in the days of Noah and the flood was based, not only on their actions, but on the content of their heart. The Bible says, "*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.*" Genesis 6:5.

God did not destroy them only because of what they did, but because of what they were at heart.

When people try to tell me that a true Christian does commit sin, but they simply do not “practice” sin, I ask, “How many times does a man have to “practice” rape before he is a rapist? Or how often must a person “practice” fornication before they are a fornicator. The truth is that before a person commits the first such act they have already become the thing that is working in their heart. The content of their heart has already defiled them. Jesus said *“For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness: All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.”* Mark 7:21-23.

Modern Christianity has fallen for the lie that sin in the heart is natural for a child of God. Nothing could be further from the truth. The very essence of the gospel message is that Christ died to purge sin from the heart and nature of the believer. I always include “nature” in these statements because that which is in your heart IS YOUR NATURE! When your heart is changed, your nature is changed.

The apostle helps us understand the purpose of the blood of Christ by pointing out how it accomplished what the sacrifices under the Law of Moses could never do. Those sacrifices had to be offered over and over and over for the sins of the people because *“it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins.”* Hebrews 10:4. Paul explains what it means to have sin taken away. He says, *“...because that the*

worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins.” Hebrews 10:2.

A “*conscience of sins*” is sin in the heart. When the blood of Christ purges you from a “*conscience of sins,*” sin is no longer present in your heart. It has been washed away by the blood of Christ. Paul reaffirms this, inviting us to draw near into the holiest “*...having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience...*” Hebrews 10:22.

Some have perverted this passage and presented it to mean that you should not feel bad over your sin. Such a perversion of this passage is what Paul called “*having their conscience seared with a hot iron.*” I Timothy 4:2. Only a person whose conscience has been “seared over” does not feel remorse over sin. One of the greatest “searing irons” in the world today are the words most Christians hear every Sunday morning: “We are all sinners and we sin every day!” The more you listen to that, the more your conscience becomes seared against the convicting power of God’s Spirit.

What is it that is in your heart? Is it a good treasure? Or is it an evil treasure? Matthew 12:35. Perhaps you are like King David who came to understand that sin is always a heart problem. He cried unto the Lord: “*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*” Psalms 51:10. I knew a backslider who said he repented all the time, but was never free until one day God said to him, “Stop repenting of what you do and repent of what you are.” O sinner, do not merely repent of the certain things you do, but repent of the condition of your heart. Call upon Jesus Christ who came to give you a new heart and a righteous spirit. **For as a man thinks in his heart, so is he!**