

HEART FELT RELIGION

Text: Matthew 22:37

INTRO: Many people talk about “heart felt” religion. That phrase is not found in the Bible, but the religion of the Scriptures is most assuredly a religion of the heart.

Some folks try to make a distinction between a religion of the heart and a religion of the head (mind). We will show the futility of this concept as the lesson progresses.

First, let it be clearly stated that as we speak of the heart, we are not talking about the organ which pumps blood. The heart, as we will use that term, is the center of man’s faith, his emotions, and & his desires.

I. THE FUNCTIONS OF THE “HEART” ARE MANY, BUT THEY CAN BE GROUPED INTO THREE MAIN AREAS.

A. The heart is the seat of intellect.

1. Thinks, Prov. 23:7; Acts 8:22.
2. Reasons, Mark 2:8
3. Understands, Matt 13:15; Prov 2:2 (apply h..)
4. Believes, Rom 10:10; Acts 8:37
5. Knows, (h knows its own bitterness, Pr 14:10
6. Ponders, Luke 2:17
7. Studies (h of righteous studies how to answer Prov 15:28)

NOTE: If we do not serve God intelligently we are not serving Him with ALL our hearts.

B. The heart is the seat of emotion.

1. Despises, (Michal despised David 2 Sam 6:16
2. Loves, Matt 22:37
3. Trusts, (T in the Lord with all h) Prov 3:5
4. Rejoices, (our h shall rejoice N Him, Ps 33:21
5. Suffers anguish.
2 Cor 2:4, Out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote to you, with many tears..,

6. Mirth, sorrow. Prov 15:13, A merry heart makes a cheerful countenance, but by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.

7. Troubled, John 14:1.

8. Joy, (shall sing for joy of h, Isa 65:14)

9. **Anxiety** in the heart of man causes depression (Prov 12:25)

C. The heart is the seat of the will.

1. Determines. 1 Cor 7:37

2. Intends, Heb 4:12

3. Desires, Rom 10:1

4. Purposes, 2 Cor 9:7

5. Obeys, Rom 6:17

6. Wills, (whoever is of a willing h, EX 33:5)

II. THE FUNCTION OF THE CONSCIENCE IS SOMETIMES ATTRIBUTED TO THE "HEART."

1 John 3:20-21, For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart, & knows all things. Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.

Job 27:6, My righteousness I hold fast, & will not let it go; My heart shall not reproach me as long as I live.

1 Sam 24:5, Now it happened afterward that David's heart troubled him because he had cut Saul's robe.

III. SIN IN THE LIFE IS EVIDENCE OF A HEART NOT RIGHT. **Read acts 8:9-24**

A. God is looking for those whose hearts are right.

2 Chron 16:9, For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show Himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to Him.

B. Man often looks at things from a physical standpoint but God looks upon the heart, 1 Sam. 16:7.

C. All sins have their beginnings in the heart.

Prov 4:23, Keep your heart with all diligence,
For out of it spring the issues of life.

Prov. 23:7

Matt 15:18-20, But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile a man."

D. Thus Peter could observe Simon's deeds & have insight into what was in his heart.

IV. THERE ARE TELL-TALE SIGNS THAT SHOULD ALERT US THAT SOMETHING IS WRONG IN OUR HEARTS.

A. Some find worship boring. Come as late as they dare, sit with hands folded, lips sealed, as if to say, "Sing to me, pray for me, make the sermon short & sweet. If you say something I don't like, I may not come back." You couldn't build a church in you had 10,000 of that kind of members.

B. Some have lost all interest & enthusiasm for Bible study. Acts 17:11; John 5:39.

C. Some do not enjoy singing the songs of Jesus & how He saves us by His blood. Acts 4:20; 16:25.

NOTE: Worshiping God in song has nothing to do with how well you can sing. It has to do with how much you value Jesus & what He has done for you.

D. Some do not want to give anything for the cause of Christ. What little they do give, they give grudgingly, 2 Cor. 9:7.

I have known church members who spent more on cigarettes than they give to the Lord. I can't look into their hearts like the Lord can, but I can see enough to know something is not as it should be.

E. Some get angry at the preacher for preaching the truth & rebuking their sins. Even Simon didn't do that. His heart was not right, but it was not that far wrong, vs. 24.

F. Some have lost interest or never had any, in the conversion of lost souls. Their heart is not right.

G. Some have an unforgiving spirit. After all the untold times God has forgiven them, they can't find it in their hearts to forgive others. Their hearts are not right in the sight of God.

CONCLUSION: What must we do if our hearts are not right? If you have never given your heart to Jesus, you need to. You need to believe in Him with all your heart, Acts 8:37. You need to repent of your sins & obey from the heart the form of doctrine taught in Rom. 6:3-5, 17-18. As you are baptized into Christ's death, His blood will wash away your sins & cleanse your conscience, 1 Pet. 3:21.

If you are a child of God but you have not held fast your confession, you need to acknowledge your sin, 1 John 1:9, and repent & pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven, Acts 8:22.

We must serve God with all our hearts.

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