Heartlessness

(Isaiah 29:8-16 * v.13)

5-22-2024

Introduction: The Heart

I. The Sin of <u>Heartless WORSHIP</u> (v.13a)

II. The Sin of <u>Heartless REVERENCE</u> (v.13b)

Three Tragic Results of Heartlessness toward God:

God judges those who deliberately have no heart toward Him with:

1) Delusional Thinking (v.8)

2) Spiritual Ignorance (v.9-12, 14)

3) Self-Deception (v.15-16)

* Ask God to give you a heart for Him

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The word “heart” or a form of that word occurs 884 times in the Bible (KJV).

"Heart" = kardia (Eng. cardiac, etc.) - "the chief organ of physical life ("for the life of the flesh is in the blood - Lev. 17:11), occupies the most important place in the human system. By an easy transition, the word came to stand for man's entire mental and moral activity, both the rational and the emotional elements. In other words, the heart is used figuratively for the hidden springs of the personal life." (Vine, p. 206-207).

"The heart is the center of the inner life of the person where all the spiritual forces and functions have their origin" (TDNT)

Our heart (kardia) is that inner aspect of man that **thinks** (Lk. 9:47), **reasons** (Mk. 2:6, 8), **ponders** (Lk. 2:19), **imagines** (Lk. 1:51), **remembers** (Lk. 1:66), **purposes** (II Cor. 9:7), **wonders** (Lk. 3:15), **determines** (Lk. 21:14), **questions** (Lk. 24:38), **believes** (Lk. 24:25; Acts 8:37; Ro. 10:9, 10), and **motivates** (Mk. 7:21).

The heart encompasses man's intellect (Mt. 13:15; Prov. 23:7); emotion (Jn. 16:22), and will (Ro. 6:17, Col. 3:15). It enables him to think, feel, and do.

The heart is your "hidden man" (I Pet. 3:4); the real you that lies deep beneath that part of you that everyone sees.

By nature, our hearts are depraved. Such depravity is evidenced by sin.

Because of the inner, deep-rootedness of our hearts, we often do not even know our hearts (Jer. 17:9).

"There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness" (Prov. 30:12).

"The problem that caused God to destroy the earth in the flood was a heart problem" (MacArthur, p. 202). (Gen. 6:5 - *"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.")*

The signs of "heart disease" are revealed by the Great Physician in Mark 7:21-22.

One's fruit is an indication of one's heart (Lk. 6:45 - *"A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh").*

One thing you cannot miss about King David is his heart for God.

1Sa 13:14 But now thy kingdom shall not continue: the LORD hath sought him a man after his own heart,

Ac 13:22 And when he had removed him, he raised up unto them David to be their king; to whom also he gave testimony, and said, I have found David the son of Jesse, a man after mine own heart, which shall fulfil all my will.

I. The Sin of <u>Heartless WORSHIP</u> (v.13a)

The Lord Jesus Christ quotes Isaiah 29:13:

Matthew 15:8-9 This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me. But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men.

Many can pray elaborate, ornate, fancy prayers.

They can seem so spiritual and can impress the listeners with their fair-sounding words and religious phrases, yet their heart is light years away from God.

True love is action oriented, not mere words (I Jn. 3:18 - *"My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed and in truth.")*

Traditions do not require the <u>heart</u> in order to do them. "Tradition can be followed mechanically and thoughtlessly without conviction, sincerity, or purity of heart. Because traditions are made by men, they can be accomplished by men. They require no faith, no trust, no dependence on God. Not only that, but they appeal to the flesh by feeding pride and self-righteousness. Often, as in this case, they also serve self-interest" (MacArthur, p. 455).

Beware of the trap of "mechanical" Christian living. Such as going through the motions, but not putting your heart into it. Doing but not being! Doing the work of the Lord without being close to the Lord of the work!

Their worship was a hollow, empty, void, meaningless ritual!

Evidences of someone who has "religion" but has not a heart for God:

1. He is a hearer of truth, but not a doer
   Jas 1:22 But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

2. He looks good in public, but is decrepit in private

3. Singing & Praying to God is loathsome

4. He is not deeply grieved by sin

5. He has no real concern for the work of God or the needs of God's people

II. The Sin of Heartless REVERENCE (v.13b)

The word ***"fear"*** means not only to have a reverence (respect) for God (because of who He is) but also to tremble before Him; to be terrified by him (because of what He can do) (II Cor. 5:11)

God is to be feared.

Deut. 6:13 - *"Thou shalt fear the LORD thy God, and serve Him, and shalt swear by his name."*

I Sam. 12:24 - *"Only fear the Lord and serve Him in truth with all your heart, for consider how great things He hath done for you."*

Ps. 33:8 - *"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him."*

Eccles. 12:13 - *"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man."*

I Pet. 2:17 - *"Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king."*

Rev. 14:7 - *"Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."*

Rev. 15:4 - *"Who shall not fear thee, O lord, and glorify thy name? for thou only art holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest."*

Fearing God takes faith today! (one day it will not! - Rev. 6:16-17)

"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom" (Ps. 111:10; Prov. 9:10)

The most spiritual people in history had this testimony, that they feared God.

--Joseph feared God (Gen. 42:18)
--The 70 elders of Israel were chosen because they feared God (Ex. 18:21)
--Job feared God (Job 1:9)
--The virtuous woman feared God (Prov. 31:30)

The person who fears God will:

--delight in God's Word (Ps. 112:1- *"Praise ye the Lord. Blessed is the man that feareth the LORD, that delighteth greatly in his commandments."*)

--walk in God's ways (Ps. 128:1 - *"Blessed is every one that feareth the LORD; that walketh in his ways"*; cp. Prov. 14:2 - *"He that walketh in his uprightness feareth the LORD: but he that is perverse in his ways despiseth him."*)

--be blessed (Ps. 128:4 - *"Behold, that thus shall the man be blessed that feareth the LORD"*; Ecc. 8:12 - *"Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him;"*)

--be taught God's will (Ps. 25:12 - *"What man is he that feareth the LORD? him shall he teach in the way that he shall choose."*)

Christians should not fear:

1. Man (Prov. 29:25)
   Fear hinders believers from speaking about Christ (Jn. 7:13).
   Fear has been the cause for "secret" believers (Jn. 19:38).

2. Physical circumstances (Mt. 8:26)

3. Death (Heb. 2:14-15)

Christians should fear <u>God</u> -

The fear of the Lord is "<u>clean</u>" (Ps. 119:9)

1. A fear of <u>respect</u>
   Ps. 112:1; Mal. 1:6; Luke 12:4-5; I Pet. 2:7; Rev. 14:7

2. A fear of <u>displeasing Him</u>
   II Cor. 7:1; Eph. 6:5; Phil. 2:12; I Pet. 1:17

One of the biggest problems (even among some Christians today) is a lack of a fear of God.
Verses from Proverbs on *"the fear of the Lord"*: Prov. 1:7, 3:7, 8:13, 9:10, 14:16, 15:16, 16:6, 23:17.

"Fear God" (1 Peter 2:17) - we must continually live in reverence for God (*"holy and reverend is His name"* - Ps. 111:9).

Stand in awe of God! (Ps. 33:8 - *"Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him.")*

The highest authority (God) deserves the highest respect.

Heb. 12:28-29

Rev. 14:7
Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.

Having a "fear of God" is to fear disobeying Him and to fear displeasing Him.

All of Life's responsibilities can be reduced to a simple axiom:
"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: **Fear God**, and keep his commandments: for this *is* the whole *duty* of man." Eccles. 12:13

The FEAR of the LORD is a Profound Respect for Who God is and What He can do to you.

Someone who has a preceptual Fear of God but not a heart revernce for Him...

1. May show reverencial piety on their face in public, but lack piety in private

2. Does not take God's Word seriously at all
   Isa 66:2 For all those things hath mine hand made, and all those things have been, saith the LORD: but to this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my word.

3. Fears the consequences of sin but not sin itself
   (may fear getting caught, but not fear dispeasing God)

4. Will have no smitten conscience when taking His Holy Name in vain.

5 . May attend church regularly, but has no life alteration by the lessons learned

6. Will gample with their eternal soul (not fearing God's judgment or wrath)

When you have a heart felt fear of God...

A. When you FEAR the LORD in heart… You GAIN WISDOM

Proverbs 9:10
The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the holy *is* understanding.

Why?
One who fears God **LISTENS** Intently to His Word and thereby gains wisdom for Learning (Prov.1:7; 2:5)

Proverbs 1:7
The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of knowledge: *but* fools despise wisdom and instruction.

Proverbs 2:5
Then shalt thou understand the fear of the LORD, and find the knowledge of God.

One who fears God **OBEYS** His Word and thereby gains wisdom for Living

Psalm 111:10
The fear of the LORD *is* the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do *his commandments:* his praise endureth for ever.

B. When you FEAR the LORD in heart…You HATE SIN (Prov.8:13; 16:6)

Proverbs 8:13
The fear of the LORD *is* to hate evil: pride, and arrogancy, and the evil way, and the froward mouth, do I hate.

Proverbs 16:6
By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: and by the fear of the LORD *men* depart from evil.

C. When you FEAR the LORD in heart…You EXPERIENCE BLESSING

Proverbs 10:27
The fear of the LORD prolongeth days: but the years of the wicked shall be shortened.

Proverbs 14:26
In the fear of the LORD *is* strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

Proverbs 14:27
The fear of the LORD *is* a fountain of life, to depart from the snares of death.

Proverbs 19:23
The fear of the LORD *tendeth* to life: and *he that hath it* shall abide satisfied; he shall not be visited with evil.

Proverbs 22:4
By humility *and* the fear of the LORD *are* riches, and honour, and life.

Eccles. 8:12
Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his *days* be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him:

D. When you FEAR the LORD in heart…You <u>WALK HUMBLY</u>
Matthew 10:28
And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.

Three Tragic Results of Heartlessness toward God:

God judges those who deliberately have no heart toward Him with:

1) Delusional Thinking (v.8)

2) Spiritual Ignorance (v.9-12, 14)

Even believers need to search their hearts to make sure that there is an <u>openness</u> to receive the Word, and to make sure there are no <u>obstacles</u> to prevent the Word from being understood.

Illumination describes - the Holy Spirits' <u>enlightenment of man's mind</u> to comprehend the written Word of God.

The <u>Bible's Teaching</u> on Illumination:

1. Illumination is <u>needed</u> by the unsaved.

a. The unsaved ("natural man") is <u>without spiritual understanding</u>. He views spiritual things (as revealed in the Bible) as foolishness (I Cor. 2:14).

b. The unsaved man has a <u>blinded mind</u>
(II Cor. 4:4)

2. Illumination <u>begins</u> at salvation.

a. Heb. 6:4 - "once enlightened"

b. Heb. 10:32 - "ye were illuminated"

3. ***Illumination is a <u>work of the Holy Spirit</u>***
(I Cor. 2:9-16)

a. The Holy Spirit reveals God's Word <u>only</u> to <u>believers</u> (I Cor. 2:9-10)

b. The Holy Spirit reveals the "<u>deep things</u> of God" (I Cor. 2:10)

c. The Holy Spirit <u>convicted</u> men of sin, righteousness and judgment (Jn. 16:8).

d. The Holy Spirit is our <u>guide</u> into all truth (jn. 16:13).

3) Self-Deception (v.15-16)

Conclusion:

Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23
*** Examine the condition of your heart!**

Which type of soil characterizes your heart?

HARD - Hearted (v. 4, 19)
***This soil characterizes the rebellious man**
(one who does not want to hear it at all).
FAINT - Hearted (v. 5-6, 20-21)
***This soil characterizes the non-committed man**
(one who is emotionally interested but not committed).
HALF - Hearted (v. 7, 22)
***This soil characterizes the easily distracted man**
(one who is preoccupied, other things are more important).
WHOLE - Hearted (v. 8, 23)
***This soil characterizes the tender man**
(one who has a sincere and good heart - Luke 8:15).

The problem is often not the preaching (or preacher) but the condition of your heart.

The problem is never the Word of God, but is the condition of your heart.

SEE: Jer. 4:3-4

"Break up your fallow (untilled) ground . . . and take away the foreskins of your heart . . ."

Our prayer needs to be:

"Take me"
"Break me"
"Mold me"
"Make me . . .
a tender-hearted Christian"

"Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." (Ps. 51:10).

* Ask God to give you a heart for Him

Matthew 15:8 - This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.
Mark 7:6 - He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me.

What does Isaiah 29:13 mean when it says “their hearts are far from me”?
their hearts are far from me
ANSWER (from www.GotAnswers.org)

In Isaiah 29, Isaiah is prophesying against Jerusalem and, by extension, the rest of Judah (verse 8). He predicts judgment on the kingdom due to their sin—judgment that will come through invading armies (Isaiah 29:3–4). However, the prophet also affirms that God is incredibly graceful and will restore Judah after bringing justice upon their enemies (Isaiah 29:5, 18–24). In the middle of Isaiah’s prophecy, he diagnoses Judah’s problem of hypocrisy, which is bringing about their judgment: “These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is based on merely human rules they have been taught” (Isaiah 29:13). While the Israelites were saying the right things, their hearts were far from God.

The word heart is a common metaphor. In English, heart often represents someone’s emotions. When we say that someone has a “heart of stone,” we do not mean that his blood-pumping organ has been mineralized; we mean that he is unmoved by emotional appeals. When an ancient Israelite used the word heart metaphorically, he was thinking of the center of someone’s soul, the place where he makes all his decisions and experiences all his emotions. The “heart” was the location of one’s will and intellect. Therefore, when the Bible commands us to love something “with all our hearts,” it means loving with everything we have on the inside.

When God said that “their hearts are far from me,” He meant that they had chosen other loyalties besides God. While they might have sounded religious, they did not love God or obey Him. Their thoughts and their decisions were bent away from God. The NET Bible has a helpful translation here: “These people say they are loyal to me; they say wonderful things about me, but they are not really loyal to me. Their worship consists of nothing but man-made ritual” (Isaiah 29:13). In English, we might say that the Israelites worshiped “but their hearts weren’t in it.”

In the New Testament, Jesus quotes this verse in an important confrontation with the Pharisees (Mark 7:6–7). They, too, had hearts far from God. The Pharisees pretended to care about God’s law by following outward acts like handwashing, but they did not care about God on the inside. When they met God in the person of Jesus, they tried to kill Him! After quoting Isaiah 29:13, Jesus scathingly summarized their heart condition: “You have let go of the commands of God and are holding on to human traditions” (Mark 7:8). The Pharisees still did religious things but had forgotten the reasons behind their actions. They said the right things, but their hearts were far from God.

As Christians, we face the same temptation as the hypocritical Israelites. Sometimes, it is easy to maintain the outward appearance of religious obedience by following basic rules, yet we lack any real relationship with God in our hearts. We start “going through the motions” without growing in love for God or for others. We might faithfully go to church every Sunday but ignore God the rest of the week. Like the Pharisees and the ancient Israelites, “faking it” is not spiritually healthy, and it will eventually catch up with us.

Isaiah 29:13 is a stark reminder that rules and rituals, by themselves, cannot please God. God wants true righteousness. God wants you to love Him with “all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength” (Mark 12:30). “For I desire mercy, not sacrifice, and acknowledgment of God rather than burnt offerings” (Hosea 6:6).