

Dealing with Our Heart for the Growth of the Divine Seed of Life within Us unto Our Maturity in Life for God's Building in Life

Scripture Reading: Matt. 5:8; 13:3-9, 18-23; Prov. 4:23; Jer. 32:39; Eph. 3:16-17

I. We must deal with our heart in the light of the Lord's presence for the growth of the divine seed of life within us unto our maturity in life; the heart is the conglomerate of man's inward parts, man's chief representative, his acting agent:

- A. Our heart is a composition of all the parts of our soul—the mind, the emotion, and the will (Matt. 9:4; Heb. 4:12; Acts 11:23; John 14:1; 16:22)—plus one part of our spirit—the conscience (Heb. 10:22; 1 John 3:20).
- B. The exercise of the spirit works only when our heart is active; if man's heart is indifferent, the spirit is imprisoned within and is unable to show forth its capability—Matt. 5:3, 8; Psa. 78:8.
- C. The soul is the person himself, but the heart is the person in action; the heart is the acting agent, the acting commissioner, of our entire being.
- D. The activities and movements of our physical body depend on our physical heart; in like manner, our daily living, the way we act and behave, depends on what kind of psychological heart we have.
- E. The heart is the entrance and exit of life, the "switch" of life; if the heart is not right, life in the spirit is hindered, and the law of life cannot work freely and without obstruction to reach every part of our being; though life has great power, this great power is controlled by our small heart—Prov. 4:23; Matt. 12:33-37; cf. Ezek. 36:26-27.

II. Our growth in life builds up the church as the Body of Christ, which takes place by the growth of Christ as the seed of life in our heart (1 John 3:9; 1 Pet. 1:23; Col. 2:19; Eph. 2:21; 4:15-16; Matt. 13:18-23); we need to cooperate with the Lord by dealing with our heart so that it can be kept with the following characteristics:

- A. God wants our heart to be soft:
 - 1. When God deals with our heart, He takes away the heart of stone out of our flesh and gives us a heart of flesh, a soft heart—Ezek. 36:26.
 - 2. To be soft means that our heart is submissive and yielding toward the Lord, not stiff-necked and rebellious—cf. Exo. 32:9.
 - 3. A soft heart is the good earth in which Christ can freely grow; it is a heart that is not hardened by worldly traffic, that is without self-seeking, and that is without the anxiety of the age and the deceitfulness of riches—Matt. 13:3-9, 18-23.
 - 4. God softens our heart by using His love to move us; if love cannot move us, He uses His hand through the environment to discipline us until our heart is softened—2 Cor. 5:14; 4:16-18; Heb. 12:6-7; cf. Jer. 48:11.
- B. God wants our heart to be pure:
 - 1. A pure heart is a heart that loves God and wants God; besides God, it has no other love, inclination, or desire—Matt. 5:8; Psa. 73:25; cf. Jer. 32:39.
 - 2. Our heart should be single for God so that we are fearful of nothing except offending Him and losing His presence—Psa. 86:11; Isa. 11:1-2.
 - 3. To be pure in heart is to have the single goal of accomplishing God's will for God's glory; our goal should be the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ—Phil. 3:7-14.
 - 4. We must pursue Christ "with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart"—2 Tim. 2:22; 1 Tim. 1:5; Psa. 73:1.
- C. God wants our heart to be loving:

1. A loving heart is a heart in which the emotion loves God, wants God, thirsts after God, and yearns for God, having a personal, affectionate, private, and spiritual relationship with the Lord—42:1-2; S. S. 1:1-4.
 2. We must turn our heart back to the Lord again and again and have it continually renewed so that we may have a new and fresh love toward the Lord—2 Cor. 3:16.
 3. All spiritual experiences start with love in the heart; if we do not love the Lord, it is impossible to receive any kind of spiritual experience—Eph. 6:24; Rev. 2:4-5.
 4. Our love for the Lord qualifies, perfects, and equips us to speak for the Lord with His authority; if we love the Lord to the uttermost, we will be filled and overflowing with Him—John 21:15-17; Matt. 26:6-13; 28:18-20.
- D. God wants our heart to be at peace:
1. A heart at peace is a heart in which the conscience is without offense, condemnation, or reproach—Acts 24:16; 1 John 3:19-21; Heb. 10:22.
 2. If we confess our sins in the light of God's presence, we receive His forgiveness and His cleansing so that we may enjoy uninterrupted fellowship with God with a good and pure conscience—1 John 1:7, 9; 1 Tim. 1:5; 3:9.
 3. The result of practicing fellowship with God in prayer is that we enjoy the peace of God, which is actually God as peace mounting guard over our hearts and thoughts in Christ, keeping us calm and tranquil—Phil. 4:6-7.
 4. We need to let the peace of Christ arbitrate in our hearts by forgiving one another to put on the one new man—Col. 3:13-15.

III. We need to see the obstacles that God's life encounters in our heart:

- A. The first problem that God's life encounters in us is that we do not realize the darkness of our human concepts—2 Cor. 3:14; 4:4:
1. We need to see that the only thing that matters in the Christian life is how we take care of the living Christ in us—Gal. 1:16; 2:20; 4:19; Phil. 1:19-21; 2 Cor. 3:18.
 2. Being a Christian means not taking anything other than Christ as our aim; many people have difficulty in their spiritual life after they are saved because they do not know the pathway of life, and they do not take Christ as their life—Rom. 8:6.
- B. The second problem that life encounters in us is hypocrisy—Matt. 6:2, 5; 7:5; 23:13-29:
1. A person's spirituality is not determined by outward appearance but by how he takes care of the indwelling Christ.
 2. Our natural goodness is false spirituality and is actually a great hindrance to life; the expression of life involves the rejection of our natural disposition and preference and simply allowing Christ to operate in us and break us.
 3. If we always do things according to our disposition and natural being, the outcome will always be hypocrisy.
- C. The third problem that life encounters in us is rebellion—2 Cor. 10:4-5:
1. Christ operates and moves in us in order to make us clear about His will and requirements for us and about His leading and dealing with us.
 2. However, if we do not obey but go against the feeling within, not accepting His leading or paying the price, this unwillingness and opposition are rebellion.
 3. The sin that we commit the most frequently and most severely is not outward and visible; rather, it is the sin of disobeying the sense of Christ in us; Christ is living in us, and He is constantly giving us an inward sense of life—Rom. 8:6; 1 John 2:27; cf. Eph. 3:1; 4:1; 6:20; 2 Cor. 2:12-14.
- D. The fourth problem that life encounters in us is our natural capability:

1. Many brothers and sisters truly love the Lord, are zealous for the Lord, and are very godly; nevertheless, their greatest problem is the strength and greatness of their capabilities and abilities; consequently, Christ has no ground or way in them.
 2. We may be capable and talented, but we do not consider these things as sin or filthiness; instead of despising our natural capabilities, we treasure them; if they remain unbroken in us, they will become a problem to Christ's life.
- E. If we want Christ's life to be unhindered in us, we must experience the breaking of the cross and allow these obstacles to be dealt with and removed—Matt. 16:24-25.

IV. We need to see the subjective obstacles encountered by God's life in our heart:

- A. The first subjective problem is the problem of our mind:
1. If the things we want to do originate from our thoughts, then these things will be nothing more than religious activities, even if they are successful; they are not a testimony of Christ lived out from our spirit—cf. Phil. 2:5; 1 Cor. 2:16; Eph. 4:23; Rom. 12:2.
 2. Although we have the life of Christ within, we do not cooperate with Christ's life in our thoughts and actions, and so this life cannot be lived out from us.
 3. When our mind is set on the spirit, our outward actions are in agreement with our inner man, and there is no discrepancy between us and God; He and we are at peace, not at enmity; the result is that we feel peaceful within—8:6.
- B. The second subjective problem is the problem of our will:
1. Even though our mind often understands the intention in our spirit, and we know the will of God, we are unwilling to submit and obey.
 2. We may understand, know, apprehend, and deeply sense that the Lord wants us to do a certain thing, but our will refuses to submit and surrender, and we lose the Lord's presence.
 3. Both a strong will and a weak will to carry out the Lord's will are hindrances to God's life; a will that has been dealt with is both strong and pliable by being subdued and resurrected by the Lord; having a will that can cooperate with God is a great matter—Phil. 2:13.
- C. The third subjective problem is the problem of our emotion:
1. Our emotion needs to have God's emotion, and we need to fully enter into God's emotion—2 Thes. 3:5; Phil. 1:8.
 2. We should love whatever God loves, like whatever God likes, and hate whatever God hates; our emotion and His emotion should become one emotion—Eph. 5:25; 2 Cor. 12:15; 1 Cor. 16:24; Rev. 2:6; Phil. 1:8.
- D. We daily need to be strengthened into the inner man so that Christ as life can make His home in the main parts of our heart—our mind, will, and emotion—Eph. 3:16-17.

V. May the Lord have mercy upon us and open our eyes to see that the central work of God in this age is that man may gain His life and grow and mature in His life; our work should be the imparting and supplying of the Lord's life to others; only the work that comes out of His life can reach His eternal standard and be accepted by Him—John 7:37-39a; 2 Cor. 4:10-12; 1 John 5:16a; 2 Cor. 3:3, 6.