

The Bulletin

Meeks Street Church of Christ

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September 11, 2022

“God Wants Our Hearts”

By Brian Meade

Moses begins chapter six of the early part of the book of Deuteronomy by saying:

“Hear, O Israel! The Lord is our God, the Lord is one! “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. “These words, which I am commanding you today, shall be on your heart. “You shall teach them diligently to your sons and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise up. “You shall bind them as a sign on your hand and they shall be as frontals on your forehead. “You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.” (Deuteronomy 6:4-9).



God wanted His people to know that before they can devote themselves fully to God and keeping His commandments, they first must give their hearts to God. Because we know that heart of man must be active in the service of God, we must have the right attitude toward God’s regulations, commandments, and obligations. Anything other than heartfelt service would be miserable for the servants, and also not acceptable to the Master—God.

There are three levels of heartfelt service:

1. The Non-Existent Level— Where one doesn’t feel any emotions, no real involvement in our worship to God. It is even questionable that this sort of worshiper even wants to be at worship services at all. It is the kind that would rather be somewhere else, but for obligation’s sake they are doing the things of God by route. It is the attitude of: “Do I *have* to do all of this?”

2. The Superficial Level— This level of the heart shows us someone who is there to serve God, but they are not fully giving God their heart in what they do. That’s what the word superficial implies, only on the surface, not deep-felt, and not truly penetrating the heart.

It is exactly what Jesus said about those on whom the seed fell on the stony ground, “*But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.*” (Matthew 13:20-21).

They have never learned to go any deeper than the surface level of commitment and love for our Lord. It is more lip-service than heart-service.

The Jews had gotten good at outward displays of service, but not from the heart. That’s why God said in Joel 2:12-13, “*Now, therefore,*” says the Lord, “*Turn to Me with all your heart, With fasting, with weeping, and with mourning.*” *So rend your heart, and not your garments; Return to the Lord your God, For He is gracious and merciful, Slow to anger, and of great kindness; And He relents from doing harm.*”

3. The Heartfelt Level— This level of the heart is wholly given to God and the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the level of King David, as God would say of him in 1 Kings 14:8, “*My servant David, who kept My commandments and who followed Me with all his heart, to do only what was right in My eyes.*”

This is the kind of person who loves the Lord more than the things of this world, and loves to be in the assembly of the saints (Psalm 122:1; Hebrews 10:22-25). They have the attitude: “I *get* to serve God today, and everyday!”

Now let’s apply all three of these to the example of what we know about love, after all, love for God is the true reason for service to Him. But suppose a young man is trying to express what is in his heart to a young lady. What level of the heart should he have in this romance? If he comes with the non-existent level to her, he will fail every time! If he brings a superficial effort to try to win her over, he would just barely put any effort into it, again she will not be impressed with his half-hearted attempts. But it should only be the whole-hearted devotion to win her heart that will succeed. Why? Because she should not have to settle for someone who doesn’t love her enough to be “all in” on the relationship with her! When he tells her he loves her, he needs to mean it with all his heart! Anything else falls short of heartfelt love.

Now let’s apply what we know to our service today. God wants our hearts:

I. God Wants Our Hearts To Love Him.

How do we know that God wants us to love Him? Has He expressed that to mankind? Yes, God has made it known in His Word that He wants us to love Him, and was the first to extend His love toward us. God demonstrated His love by sending His one and only Son, Jesus, to the cross of Calvary (John 3:16; Romans 5:6-8). John even speaks to this as he wrote, “*We love Him because He first loved us.*” (1 John 4:19).

Sadly, God’s love is lost to a majority of the people of the world in that they never return love for God. It is the tragedy of unrequited love in regard to God. It is like the young man who loves the lady, who doesn’t return love for him.

He can demonstrated and profess his love for her all day long, yet she does not show any love back to him. Many in the world do the same to God; they see the great love that was demonstrated at the cross, and simply don’t care. They would rather keep their sin and live their lives without God. No thanks!

But the proper response to the love of God is one of faith, submission, obedience, and thankfulness— because of the grace, mercy, sacrifice, and forgiveness of God! We owe a great debt of gratitude to God for all that!

II. God Wants Our Hearts To Be Prepared.

Notice the contrast in two men,

1. Ezra: “*For Ezra had prepared his heart to seek the Law of the Lord, and to do it, and to teach statutes and ordinances in Israel.*” (Ezra 7:10).

2. Rehoboam: “*And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.*” (2 Chronicles 12:14).

Ezra went on to become a faithful teacher, scribe, and man of God— while Rehoboam is remembered only for his evil that he did. Why? Because one prepared his heart for service to God and the other didn’t. This contrast explains the actions of many who did or did not do God’s will not only during that time, but also in our day as well.

Just look to the parable of the sower in Luke 8, or as it can also be called, “the parable of the soils.” Jesus talks about the sower, and really the kind of soils (hearts) are the main characters of the story. The sower sows the seed into the soils of stony hearts (8:13); thorny hearts (8:14); and the good ground of a noble and good heart (8:15). We prepare our hearts by getting rid of stubbornness, pride, arrogance, selfishness, greed, and all worldliness. It is then that we can truly fill our hearts with His Word in our lives! (James 1:21).

III. God Wants Our Hearts To Be Fully Devoted To Him.

The phrase, “*With a Whole heart*” or “*with all your heart*” comes up frequently in Bible passages (depending on your translation). Note: 2 Kings 20:3; 1 Chronicles 28:9; 29:9; 2 Chronicles 15:15 Isaiah 38:8; Jeremiah 24:7; Deut. 4:29; 10:12; 11:13; 13:13; 26:16; 30:2; 30:6; 30:10; Joshua 22:5; 1 Samuel 12:20; 12:24; 1 Kings 2:4; 8:23; 8:48; 14:8; 2 Chronicles 6:14; 6:38; Psalm 86:12; 119:10; 138:1; Jeremiah 29:13; Matthew 22:37; Mark 12:30; Luke 10:27; Acts 8:37. I put all these references here to show that God is trying to teach us something about heartfelt devotion to Him! He desires it from us!

Everything we do in service to God must be with all our heart:

1. Our Love For God- “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.*” (Matthew 22:37).

2. Our Belief In Him- “*And Philip said, “If you believe with all your heart, you may.” And he answered and said, “I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.”*” (Acts 8:37).

3. Our Trust In God- “*Trust in the Lord with all your heart....*” (Proverbs 3:5).

4. Our Obedience To God- “*Now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul,*” (Deut. 10:12; see Romans 6:17-18).

5. Our Worship To God- “*Praise the Lord! I will give thanks to the Lord with all my heart, In the company of the upright and in the assembly.*” (Psalm 111:1; See John 4:24).

News and Notes: Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Sam Johnson, J F Dancer, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Nannette Chancellor, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Sandra Oliver, Robert Howard (Doug and Pat's son in law), Jerry Trimble, Aaron Posey (Phil Campbell), Danny Cottrell, and Wade Butler.

LuAnne Parrish is at Tishomingo Manor for rehab after her surgery, Room: A3.
Bill Woodall is home recovering from knee surgery.
Avery and Sandi Poole need our prayers for their health.

Our Gospel Meeting- October 9-12.

Those Who Serve:

Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:

Opening Prayer: Tim Harris Jr.
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #1: "Proving Christ Has A Kingdom Now"

Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:

Workbook: Jerry Kennemur
Ephesians (Chris Reeves)
Starting Page & Question: Page #51, Question #15

Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:

Announcements: Paul Busby
Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading: Danny Sheffield
Mark 7:24
Song Leader: Paul Busby
Lord's Supper: Jerry Kennemur
Assisting: — —
Preaching: Brian Meade
Sermon #2: "He Could Not Be Hidden"
Closing Prayer: Russell Briggs

Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.

September 14th:

Auditorium Bible Class: Paul Busby
Workbook: Jeremiah & Lamentations
(John Humphries)
Starting Page & Question: Page #64, Question #1
Invitation: Doug George
Song Leader: Russell Briggs
Closing Prayer: Tim Harris Sr.

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“Proving Christ Has A Kingdom Now”

Lesson Text: **Daniel 2:44-45.**

I. Jesus Predicts And Teaches The Kingdom In N.T.

- **Matthew 3:2; Matthew 4:17; Luke 4:43; Matt. 4:23; Matt. 6:9-10; 9:35; 10:7.**
- Beatitudes Of The Kingdom- **Matthew 5:1-12.**
- Parables of the Kingdom:
 1. The Parable Of The Sower- **Matthew 13:1-23; Mark 4:1-20; Luke 8:4-15.**
 2. The Parable Of The Mustard Seed- **Matthew 13:31-32; Luke 13:18-19.**
 3. The Parable Of The Leaven- **Matthew 13:33; Luke 13:20-21.**
 4. The Hidden Treasure And Pearl Of Great Price- **Matthew 13:44-46.**
 5. The Household Treasures- **Matthew 13:52.**
 6. The Laborers In The Field- **Matthew 20:1-16.**
 7. The Parable Of The Ten Virgins- **Matthew 25:1-13.**

II. The Kingdom Realized In Acts 2 And Onward.

1. **Daniel 2:44-45**, Daniel Predicted “In the days of these kings” — **Luke 2:1.**
2. **Mark 9:1**, Jesus Predicted The Kingdom to Come With Power— **Acts 1:8; 2:1-15.**
3. **Isaiah 2:2**, Predicts Establishment In The “Latter Days” — **Acts 2:16-20.**
4. **Isaiah 2:2-3**, Kingdom Begins At Jerusalem/All Nations— **Luke 24:46-47; Acts 2:39.**
5. **Isaiah 2:2-3** The House Of The Lord Established— **1 Timothy 3:15.**
6. **Isaiah 2:2-3**, Law/Word Of The Lord Would Come Forth, **Jer. 31:31-34; Acts 8:25.**
7. **2 Sam. 7:12-13; Isaiah 9:6-7**, Christ Sit On David’s Throne— **Acts 2:29-33.**
8. **Daniel 7:13-14**, Jesus Receiving Glory And A Kingdom— **Acts 1:9; Phil. 2:8-11.**
9. **Zechariah 6:12-13**, Jesus To Be Priest And King— **Hebrews 7:11-17.**
10. **Matthew 16:18-19**, Jesus Would Give Peter Keys To Kingdom— **Acts 2; Acts 10.**
11. **Matthew 26:29**, Jesus Would Not Eat Again Until The Kingdom, **1 Cor. 11:23-26.**
12. **Col. 1:12-13; Col. 4:11; Rev. 1:9**, Christians Were Already In The Kingdom.

III. The Problems Of The “No Kingdom Today” Theory.

1. The Jews Standing There Did Taste Death Before The Kingdom Came (**Mark 9:1**).
2. All The Parables And Teaching On The Kingdom Was For Nothing To Them.
3. Peter Was Not Given The Keys To The Kingdom (**Matthew 16:19**).
4. We Should Not Partake the Lord’s Supper (**Matthew 26:29**).
5. The Colossians, John, and Others Were Never In The Kingdom.
6. All Those Who Prophesied Of The Coming Kingdom At Jerusalem Were Wrong.
7. Jesus Is Still A King Without A Kingdom.

Conclusion: **Hebrews 12:28-29.**

“...He Could Not Be Hidden”

Lesson Text: **Mark 7:24.**

I. Christ Has Never Been Hidden.

- Christ Was Revealed In Prophecy After The Fall- **Genesis 3:15; Galatians 3:16.**
- Christ Was Revealed To Abraham- **John 8:56; Galatians 3:8.**
- The Pattern For Christ Through Abraham And Isaac- **Genesis 22:1-14; John 3:16.**
- Christ Was With Moses Traveling In The Wilderness- **1 Corinthians 10:1-4.**
- The Jewish Passover And The Atonement Of Jesus- **Exodus 12; 1 Corinthians 5:7.**
- Moses And The Prophets Predicted The Christ- **Luke 24:44-45; 1 Peter 1:10-12.**
- Phillip Made The Connection To Jesus- **Acts 8:30-35; Isaiah 53.**

II. Christ Could Not Be Hidden While Here On Earth.

- John the Baptist Went To Proclaim And Prepare For Christ- **Matthew 3:1-5.**
- Jesus Taught Publicly And Drew Great Crowds- **Matthew 5:1-2; Mark 2:13; 3:9.**
- Many Sought To Be Healed By Jesus- **Matthew 4:24-25; 8:16; 14:14; 15:30; 19:2; 21:14.**
- Jesus’ Enemies Knew His Deeds And Popularity- **Mark 11:18; John 11:47-48.**
- All Knew Of His Arrest And Crucifixion- **Luke 24:13-21.**
- Paul Said Of Jesus’ Deeds- **Acts 26:24-26.**

III. Christ Could Not Be Hidden In The Early Disciples.

- Jesus Trained Them To Be Like Him- **Luke 6:40.**
- Their Preaching Drew Much Attention— **Acts 2:41; 4:1-4; 6:7; 14:1; 17:4-6.**
- Peter And John Were Recognized As Companions Of Jesus- **Acts 4:13.**
- Paul’s Manner Of Life Influenced Others- **1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 1:20-21; Gal. 2:20.**

IV. Christ Cannot Be Hidden With Christians Now.

- How Could Christ Be Hidden By Us Now?
 - If We Are Not Influencing Others- **Matt. 5:13-16.**
 - If We Become A Secret Disciple- **John 12:42-43.**
 - If We Are Ashamed Of Being A Christian- **Luke 9:26; Rom. 1:16; 2 Tim. 1:12.**
- By Following the Example Of Jesus As His Disciples— He Cannot Be Hidden In Us!
 - **Matthew 11:28-30.**