

## **Agape Baptist Zambia – “Possessing a heart for the heart of God” 11-20-11 by Dave Stearns**

**HOOK:** Big white fluffy dog at home named “Sammy” and each year when I take him to the veterinarian for his annual exam something in the veterinarian’s office CAPTURES my attention every time I see it. I have been going to this veterinarian’s office for many years now and every time I see it I am again CAPTURED. Here is what it is ... Picture this .... A **dogs heart in a jar** preserved with formaldehyde and ... Completely surrounded and being overtaken by worms ...HEART WORMS = fatal to any dog!

Just as our physical hearts are essential to the state of our physical lives so our spiritual hearts are essential to the state of our spiritual lives. In your physical lives regardless of how you look on the outside if your heart is not healthy you will not be healthy. The same is true with your spiritual lives.

Regardless of what we see on the outside, it is the ***condition of your heart for God*** on the inside what determines the true state of your CHRISTIAN MATURITY. The title of this morning’s Sermon is “Possessing a heart for the heart of God.”

### **Text: Mathew 15:1-9 READ IT**

Here we see Jesus being questioned about why His disciples break the tradition of the elders by not washing their hands when they eat. The scribes and Pharisees had become so religious that they are now questioning Jesus! Jesus answers them with a question about why they break the commandment of God! The commandment they were breaking was the 5<sup>th</sup>, which said, “Honor thy Father and thy Mother.”

Jesus pointed out an instance in which this was very clear, when their parent’s needed financial assistance, they pleaded, that they had devoted to the temple all they could spare, even though they did not part with it, and therefore their parents must expect nothing from them. This was making the command of God of no effect.

This passage should disturb all of us this morning. The scribes and Pharisees that Jesus is speaking to were of the highest ranking. Our text tells us they were from Jerusalem. ***Jesus ultimately confronts them about their hearts.***

This should disturb us because as believers God has given us so much (His grace, great salvation, keys to the kingdom ... ) and yet we also know in the same way but to a much greater extent He also gave the Jews so much as well. In fact what is so scary is the Pharisees also started off with very good intentions for God and over time they got so off-track their hearts grew so cold that in this encounter Jesus rebukes them for honoring Him with their lips but having hearts that were so far away from Him?

If we are not careful we too can honor Christ with our lips or our actions but yet our hearts can still be far from Him? The Pharisees were hollow on the inside (***like the chocolate Easter bunnies that have nothing on the inside***) and as you recall Jesus in another encounter compared them to white washed tombs. But they started on the right track with intentions to please God?

If we are not careful we begin to focus more in our Christian lives on what others see and not on what God sees and not on what God cares most about.

### **READ I Samuel 16:7**

At David's anointing as King the Lord Himself said to Samuel "... For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the ***Lord looks on the heart***"

The Lord always looks on the heart of those whom He has set His love upon. If the very one who designed and created us cares most about our hearts then so should we!

My QUESTION to you this morning is when the Lord looks on your heart what does He see? What is in there this morning? I want you to reflect on that for a moment.

Did you know that one day what is in your heart would be revealed? If we could see directly this morning into your heart what would we see? The Bible teaches us in **I Corinthians 4: 5** that one day although the things of the heart are now hidden when the Lord comes He will disclose the purposes of the heart.

So when we talk about our hearts as Christians what are we speaking about?

It is that place inside of you where all that you do, think and say flows from. Sometimes as new believers we say, "I gave Jesus my heart". There was a small booklet designed to help young Christians grow in their walk with Christ and it was called "My heart, Christ's home." This book described our hearts as a home and when one is born again then Christ comes to "dwell" inside of him in his home in his heart. Have you allowed Christ to move completely into every room in your heart? Have you opened every door and closet to Him? Are you trying to hide anything from Him?

Charles Spurgeon compares a heart of a believer that has been renewed by grace as a mysterious life that no one else can touch. He compares it to the bride's heart in Song of Solomon. **READ Song of Solomon 4: 12**

In this text we see a wives heart is compared to a spring that is locked and sealed and is reserved only for one person her husband. As you know marriage is the most intimate of all human relationships, and understanding this even gives this comparison more meaning?

Our hearts as believers are like locked springs. In the Far East there were often large buildings built over springs that were hidden and could not be reached without knowing of the secret entrance. A locked spring was reserved for just one special person. These springs were not public springs or common springs but carefully preserved springs. In the same way Spurgeon says that the springs of our heart are only for God and are locked out to all others and reserved only for Him.

And as our passage in Song of Solomon says that the spring bears a particular mark or seal so do the springs in the heart of a believer they bear the King's royal seal! As a Christian your heart bears the seal of the Lord Jesus Christ the King!!!

The Bible teaches us in many places that we who walk with Christ were set a part by God before there was time in the Eternal and Sovereign decree of God. This is where the springs of our heart originate. Even as believers we must in these chambers of our hearts pay very careful attention to make sure that our springs flow unobstructed or polluted.

***READ Joshua 22:1-4.***

They are strong in the Lord and doing very good.

- They have kept all that Moses commanded them
- They have kept all that the voice of God Himself commanded them
- They have not forsaken their brothers at all
- They have carefully kept the charge of the Lord their God

This is a strong report as to their spiritual condition. Any of us would love to claim this type of a report of our spiritual condition before the Lord!

***YET NOW READ in verse 5*** Joshua then gives them a type of warning one ***that we must pay close attention to!*** He tells them to:

- Love the Lord your God
- To walk in all His ways
- To keep His commandments
- To CLING TO HIM and to serve Him with all your HEART and all your soul

Did he say to cling to Him? You know that is not a very theological term or concept is it. We often think of theological words like imputation, predestination, propitiation, justification ... but he said **CLING? CLING?**

Why? Because knowing God is first and foremost **a heart relationship with the one true living God NOT a religion that is void of the heart and rich in works to get to God.** Just as God's heart is always for us God desires our hearts first and foremost be for His heart!

Why else CLING to Him? Because as a Christian **you can and that is not true with all other RELIGIONS.**

A little earlier this year the CCM Seminary invited the Muslim community to a forum to contrast the religion of Islam to Christianity. There were about 12 to 15 Muslim Imams in attendance. It was a spiritually intense atmosphere. Afterwards when they had gone we debriefed as a group and evaluated the forum.

Although there were so many Imams present only one of them spoke. He was very prepared, very passionate, very convicted, very convincing and almost scary. He spoke mostly in Arabic and the translated himself for us. During our de-briefing afterwards we all concluded there was something very telling about him in that something significant was completely missing. It was not there at all! He had no JOY. We observed that his heart was cold, STONE COLD.

He was as cold as ice spiritually. WHY? **CHURCH, he has no God to cling to!!!** Sadly, he is ice. He is a spiritual corpse and he is dead. He still has a heart of stone BUT ***he is very religious going through the motions and maybe even living a holy and moral life but his heart is cold.*** Could this happen to you as believers? Even as mature believers could your heart grow cold? It can!

I want to conclude by giving you ***three practical ways to keep your heart stayed on Thee.***

- 1. Do not rationalize your sin.** We tend to notice other people's sin and take a tough stand on their sin but overlooking or downplaying our own.

In Psalm 51:10 after David committed the sin of adultery David cried out to God to create in him a clean heart. He was pleading with God to create in him a clean heart and to restore unto him the joy of his salvation. This was David a man after God's own heart asking God to create in him a clean heart because losing his heart for God was completely connected to His sin.

Which comes first? You lose your heart for God and sin or you rationalize your sin and so goes your heart? They are always connected. As believers take caution when you sin especially when your sin is hidden to others or is in your attitude or when it is in your estimation a small sin. Be a **CONSTANT CONFESSOR** of your sin. Keep your sin and forgiveness account always balanced or reconciled. **Read I John 1:8 -9 (illustrate the text briefly)**

2. **Guard your heart.** Be judicious about what you even let into your heart. *Proverbs 4:23* says: "Watch over your heart with all diligence for from it flows the **springs** of life" and *Psalm 24: 3-4* says: "Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord? And who shall stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to another"

Be careful about media like TV, music and movies. Media is a powerful force for good or bad and without us even realizing it we are deeply persuaded by it. We both come from "Christian Nations" and I have seen in both cultures a complete lack of discernment and judgment in this area by professing believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

- Story of Majhandu Family bust to Livingstone from solid Praise and Worship to violent and filthy movie. **EXAMPLE** of David with peanut analogy we are all captious with him but no one is as much as him. He reads every label on everything he eats and if he is not sure he just won't eat it. **WHY?** He knows it could be very dangerous even to death. We should be the same way with movies and music ... reading all labels.

WHY? No one would eat poison all at once. It would kill you but what happens if you eat small pieces of it? **READ Colossians 3: 1-2 AND Ephesians 5: 1-13** if it is unbiblical for you to participate in these kinds of things then it must be unbiblical for you to watch others participate in these things on TV and in movies.

Remember not using judgment in these areas will serve to dull our hearts and pollute the springs in our hearts.

Don't deceive yourself. Yes, you are under grace and you now have true freedom in Christ but by God's plan you also are trying to live your Christian life still in the flesh. Your flesh is at war with you and as if that wasn't enough you also have an enemy that wants to destroy you. Be Holy in your conduct and your thoughts and attitudes. You see not lifting your soul to another and having clean hands start in the secret springs of your heart.

Pay attention to what comes out of your mouth because it is a direct view into your heart and its condition. Matt 12:34 Jesus said: "The Mouth speaks out of that which fills the heart."

### 3. **Keep your self in love with Christ Jesus and in His love.**

Zephaniah 3:17 says: "He will quiet you with His love and He rejoices over you with singing!" AMEN! Jude 21 "Keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life."

The best way to keep yourself in the love of God is first to always reflecting on what a great salvation you have and all that God has done in His sovereignty to save you. Second, is to stay in love with Jesus. **READ Lamentations 3: 22-24.**

*The Lord is my portion.* It does not say the Lord is **in my portion** or the Lord is **partly my portion**. He himself makes up the total of all that I have all that my soul has inherited from God. The Lord is my portion not merely is grace or merely His love or merely His covenant but the LORD Himself is my portion.

He has chosen me and I have chosen Him. The Bible teaches I am in Christ and Christ is in me. Spurgeon says: "It is not easy to satisfy man's desires. When man dreams that he is satisfied, he instantly wakes up to the perception that there is still something more, and his longings remain unfulfilled." But the Lord of glory Himself is our all-sufficient portion.

To the believer all that we can wish for is found in Christ. He is our portion. The Psalmist says: "Whom have I in Heaven but you? And there is nothing on earth I desire but you!"

Psalm 18:1 "I love you, O Lord my strength" and Psalm 116:1 "I love the Lord because He heard my pleas for mercy." Do you tell the Lord throughout each day I love you Lord? Don't get caught in the head trap where you think so much on lofty thoughts that you forget your first love.

Discipline yourself to pray every morning before you do anything else. Pursue Christ and run hard after Him. Do you realize how dependant you are on Christ? Daily acknowledge dependence on Christ. You should hear this coming out of your mouth when you pray and so should others. If you are not regularly acknowledging this then start. This will help you maintain a tender heart of dependence on Christ.

**I leave you with this final story.** When I was in vocational Campus ministry ... share story (briefly and quickly) about Tony Compollo *speaking to Campus Ministers much like this group hereof CCM Seminary students! ...*

***"If God pulled out of this I think we could keep it going"***

***May this never be true of your Christian life or Ministry! Cling to Christ! May others characterize your life and ministry as having a heart for the heart of God! Let this be to the praise and honor of His name!!!***