

## #136 “Jesus’ Treasure Principle of the Heart”

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In God’s mind, the heart is the central issue (1 Timothy 1:15, 2 Timothy 2:22, Matthew 5:8). He is not interested in externalities, showmanship, performance, or smiles falsely pasted on our faces. He cares about who we really are on the inside, and therefore, so should we (1 Samuel 16:7). When we come to Christ, He gives us new hearts that can and do desire the things of God (Ezekiel 18:31, 36:26, 2 Corinthians 5:17), though our hearts can be corrupted and definitely need continued sanctification (2 Corinthians 7:1, James 4:8). But we ought to consider the state of our hearts because it will affect everything we think, do, and say.

The heart is the seat of desires and affections and the true measure of a person. Do we have Christ living in our hearts and are we letting Christ have full control of all that we desire and possess affection for? These are the key questions. Jesus gives a treasure principle as a means to assess the true state of our hearts. He says in Matthew 6:21, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” There is a direct correlation between what we treasure and the state of our hearts. How do we know what we treasure? Frankly, we probably do have a pretty good idea of what we really get excited about and really desire, but in case we have deceived ourselves, here are some criteria. *First, what we treasure is what we spend a lot of time thinking about.* Mary, after experiencing the birth of Christ and the miraculous events associated with it, treasured those things, pondering them in her heart (Luke 2:19). The events were so wonderful that she just couldn’t stop thinking about them. Her heart was filled with joy and delight in what God had done, and she was thrilled to keep thinking about it. *Second, what we treasure will be born out in what we do and what we say.* Jesus said in Luke 6:45, “The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth what is good; and the evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth what is evil; for his mouth speaks from that which fills his heart.” The state of our heart affects the actions we will take and the words we will speak. **We can suppress our actions or words for a time with extreme willpower, but ultimately the heart will win out because it is who we really are.** God’s desire for us is that we would not be springs that yield both fresh and bitter water. Such things ought not to be (James 3:10-11). What we say and what we do, as with what we think, should be driven by the leading of the Holy Spirit Who must transform our hearts so that we are no longer conformed to the ways of the world (Romans 12:1-2). It is only He Who can give us self-control which can provide more consistency and persistency in our Christian lives. Sanctification is a process (Philippians 2:12-13), but as we submit to our Lord, it will be accomplished.

Proverbs 4:23 says, “Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life” (KJV). So if the heart affects our thoughts, attitudes, actions, and words, it is crucial that we take care that it is not corrupted or deceived. The Bible says we can accomplish that by keeping it with all diligence. The idea here is to watch over, guard, and blockade the heart from any corrupting influence. The imagery created by the original words used in the text are of a guard posted at a prison cell standing watch over a prisoner so that

everything remained secure and as it should be. There would be no escape and no unlawful entry. Nothing would get in to that cell unless the guard gave his approval and consent. This is what the Bible wants us to do with our hearts, guarding them fervently and vigilantly, not letting anything in that could corrupt us and take us down.

The battle for the heart is very much related to the battle for the mind. 2 Corinthians 10:5 says that we are to take every thought captive to the obedience of Christ. This involves thinking only on what is true, honorable, right, pure, lovely, of good repute, excellent, and worthy of praise (Philippians 4:8). Our mind is to dwell on these things, for in so doing, we will help shape our heart's affections.

Staying pure and guarding our hearts involves following the directive of Psalm 119:11 when it says, "Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You." When God's Word becomes the treasure of our hearts and good and right things become the subject of our thoughts, we will be able to walk in purity before God. But if our thoughts are compromised as we take in unholy things, we will quickly begin to treasure evil things. This sin of the mind and heart can quickly carry over into sin of word or deed. Colossians 3:17 says, "Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father." Doing something in the name of the Father and giving thanks to Him implies that Christ is our treasure. Without God as the treasure of our hearts, we cannot give thanks properly, and we will not be able to do His will in word or in deed.

We need to ask ourselves what it is that we treasure, and we need to make sure that it is God and His will (Matthew 13:44). If we treasure other things as much as God or more than God, we will be in trouble, and our words and actions will bear that out. God must be our chief delight, and His priorities must rule in our hearts. We must never underestimate the connection between what we treasure and who we really are. May God change us where we need to change, and even if we don't want to change, may He change our hearts still. May He be always that which is our greatest treasure of all.