

## Pure In Heart

### Our Pre-Passover Heart Examination

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You can start turning to Jeremiah 17 as we are going to pick up where we left off two weeks ago in our pre-Passover examination of our heart, as Paul exhorts in I Corinthians 11. Now, if this was Netflix or Prime, you could say "skip recap" here, but unfortunately, we do not have that capability.

To examine something is to measure it against the standard. We looked at that last time. And in Revelation 11, we see Jesus Christ, the righteous Judge, measuring His end time church, which aligns to,

**I Peter 4:17** The time has come for judgment to begin at the house of God.

Our judgment is now. Let us read Jeremiah 17:10 as we confirm what God measures.

**Jeremiah 17:10** "I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."

We could tie right into Jarod's opening scripture, by the way, if you caught that in I Samuel 16:7.

**I Samuel 16:7** For man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.

Now, God is actively searching, testing, judging the hearts of His people. The word search here is a primitive Hebrew root word, *Strong's* #H2713, *châqar*. It means to penetrate, it literally means to penetrate.

So God is penetrating our heart and He is examining it very intimately, this Hebrew root word tells us. This is not just a quick glance and then a turn

away, but rather a very thorough examination of our heart. It is as if God is holding up our heart in His hand and He is looking at it from all angles against His holy standard to see how short we are measuring up. We can tie into Hebrews 4.

**Hebrews 4:13** All things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

We could add I Chronicles 28, verse 9 where David tells his son Solomon to know the God of your father and serve Him with a loyal heart, he says, and then he goes on,

**I Chronicles 28:9** for the Lord searches all hearts and understands all the intent of the thoughts.

As God examines our heart intimately, He sees and understands our thoughts, our every thought. We can hide nothing from God. If we have bad feelings about someone else, He sees that mental murder. If we lust, He sees that mental adultery. If we have envy for someone else, He sees it. If there is something material that occupies our hearts, He sees that which we covet. If there is anything or anyone in our heart that we love more than God, that we think too much about, He sees our idolatry. Our soon coming King Jesus Christ tells us in,

**Revelation 2:23** ". . . I am He who searches the minds and hearts. And I will give to each of you according to your works."

So as God penetrates, searches, examines intimately our heart during this pre-Passover time, my question for each of us is: What does He see? Where does He see us falling short against His standard heart measure?

We know our heart represents our inner thoughts, our feelings, our passions, our desires, our affections, our intents. Our heart is the center of our intelligence that underpins our will, our character, and ultimately drives all of our outward actions. It starts in our heart and then it flows and becomes an action.

And during this pre-Passover time, we must actively examine our heart with God by our side and measure it solely against God's heart measure, His holy heart. The comparison of our heart against His creates a proper spiritual bankruptcy. It recognizes that we are nothing. We can do nothing of spiritual value without Jesus Christ's enabling Spirit. When we are poor in spirit, we know that we are unprofitable servants, even at the best of times, as we read in,

**Luke 17:10** "So likewise you, when you have done all those things which are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants, We have done what was our duty to do.'"

We know that we never even come close to doing everything God commands. Every single day, each of us falls short against the commandment to love God with all our heart, brethren.

And with that mindset, then, we can approach God in this pre-Passover time. We can approach Him in prayer as we measure our heart against His, and then follow Jesus Christ's admonition in,

**Matthew 11:29** "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart."

God's heart is both meek and lowly (we looked at this last time), and when we put on Jesus Christ's yoke—the power of His Holy Spirit—we are able then to control our heart to become more like His, in a spirit of meekness, lowliness, gentleness, ready to suffer wrong, ready to forgive and forbear because peace and unity and being godlike is what we treasure most.

We are here in Jeremiah 17. Let us go back and pick up verses 5 through 8.

**Jeremiah 17:5-6** Thus says the Lord, "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness in a salt land which is not inhabited.

So our carnal, evil heart that puts its trust in itself, our self, results in a shrub, thirsting in a desert, a salt-like land that is barren and uninhabitable. When our heart is focused on getting what *we* want, what we treasure, what we think about all the time, our heart actually goes to thinking that it knows best, and we depart from the Lord, and we wither like that grass burned and scorched in the sun. As we examine our heart, what is it that is taking our attention away from God? Do we have a bad attitude about something we think we should have that God has not yet given to us?

Let us read on now. We are going to contrast the heart that trusts in the Lord.

**Jeremiah 17:7-8** "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river, and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green, and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit."

So the heart that trusts everything in the Lord is likened here to that tree planted by the waters. It is not fearing the heat, it is not anxious about anything, not anxious about the drought. It remains green, healthy, vibrant, yielding constant, abundant fruit. When we bring our cares, our desires, our anxieties before God in prayer and pray for Him to help us really accept and want His will, not our will regarding that thing, then we are like that tree that is filled with His refreshing regenerative spirit.

Far too often our heart thinks it knows best and that pulls us away from God. It makes us want to trust in ourselves, not in God. We could jot down Isaiah 44:3-4 as well as Isaiah 58:11, which read,

**Isaiah 44:3-4** I will pour water on him who is thirsty, and floods on the dry ground; I will pour My Spirit on your descendants, and My blessing on your offspring; they will spring up among the grass like willows by the watercourses.

**Isaiah 58:11** The Lord will guide you continually, and satisfy your soul in drought, you shall be like a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters do not fail.

Let us read on as we get to the heart of the problem.

**Jeremiah 17:9** "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it?"

This is no doubt a memory scripture for most of us. We might not be able to get it right word for word. I probably could not, by the way. But we understand the gist of the meaning here. But I wonder, do we *really* understand what this means?

So our heart is described here as "deceitful above all things." Let that sink in for a minute. Deceitful above *all* things, not some things, *all* things. *Deceitful above all things*. The Hebrew word translated deceitful is *Strong's* #H4820, *mirmah*, meaning a swelling up into a knoll, fraudulent, crooked, polluted, deceitful, prideful, and get this one, puffed up just like leavening, corrupting, self-serving.

As we approach these Days of Unleavened Bread, we must do so realizing that above all things, our heart—your heart, my heart—is deceitfully prideful and puffed up with leaven. But that is not all. The heart is described also as "desperately wicked." Not just wicked—desperately wicked.

Is God trying to get a point across here, brethren? It is frail, it is on the verge of death, it is incurable. It is like a heart of stone that is literally impenetrable to God's truth until God takes action and gives us a new heart and a new Spirit, as we read about in Ezekiel 36.

**Ezekiel 36:26** "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

So our carnal hearts, as we do our evaluation, are going to convince us that, you know what? "Eh, we're okay, we're pretty good actually" as we compare ourselves to other people in this world. Huh. It is like that sofa we may have that actually looks pretty good and pretty clean until we take those cushions out and we find what appears to be an entire box of crackers, full of leavening!

That is what our heart is doing to us, brethren. Our hearts will actually deceive us into not properly seeing that underlying it all, we are actually evil, selfish, carnal people.

Over to Proverbs 4 now as we continue this evaluation of our heart.

**Proverbs 4:20-24** My son, give attention to my words; incline your ear to my sayings. Do not let them depart from your eyes; keep them in the midst of your heart; for they are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life. Put away from you a deceitful mouth, and put perverse lips far from you.

We are told here to keep God's words in the midst of our heart, to not let them ever depart. And the only way that happens is if we are constantly pouring in God's words, each and every day. Not just reading them, by the way, but actually giving them attention as we evaluate our heart against God's holy standard.

We are told to keep and guard our heart with all our might. Let that sink in. We are told to keep—guard—our heart with all our might and effort, for out of it spring the issues of life.

The heart is described here as the fountainhead—hold on to that—from whence all streams of life proceed. Just as a polluted upstream water source flows downstream to infect all other waters, so too our heart must be guarded to ensure it is pure and aligned to God's standard, His holy, meek, and lowly heart.

And we see in verse 24, there is a tie here to the outward acts, the outward words spoken, that all come from our inward heart. We will see that here in a minute as we move on to Matthew 12. But as you turn, I want to spend just a minute and create an interesting visual of our heart. I thought about a lot of different visuals we could create, but I have landed on this one. I hope you think it fits as well as I do.

Imagine a bucket being held under a waterfall for a minute. As that bucket is there and fills up with water, what happens? It fills up, it gets full, and then it

overflows, right? And it is a constant. Water is coming in, water is going out. Whatever was in that bucket eventually gets pushed up and flows out. As more water comes in, more water goes out. And our heart, I contend, is just like that bucket. It has limited capacity. It always has things flowing into it. And over the top of that bucket are those various sources of water that would get added to the bucket, the sources of water, and each day as something is added to that bucket, something overflows out. What comes out of our bucket is directly related to what is poured into the bucket.

Imagine for now we had some green food coloring, and we put some green food coloring in the bottom of that bucket, and we have stuck it under the waterfall. At first that water comes in and it is dark green. Then it goes light green and then gradually as more and more water is coming in, the green goes away and it becomes clear. It fades out, right? And there is really then not even a trace left of that original green color.

Imagine above those buckets are different water sources that flow in and that we are in control of *what* flows in. How much TV, books, and entertainment are flowing in to our heart? How much world news, how much home improvement, how much money or lack thereof? On the positive side, how much of God's Word flows in each day? How much of our gratitude for everything God is doing for us flows in each day?

We are told to guard our spiritual fountainhead and carefully monitor the purity of what flows in because what flows in will always flow out. Now imagine below our buckets are the buckets of every other person that we interact with. As our bucket overflows, what is coming out of our bucket is flowing into somebody else's bucket, and that is the influence that we all have on each other.

Let us read the words now from Jesus to the Pharisees in,

**Matthew 12:34-35** "Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things."

The word abundance here, *Strong's #4051, perisseuma*, meaning a surplus, a superabundance that was left over, over and above. *Thayer* adds that in which one delights, of that which fills the heart and that which is left over or remains.

Can we see the analogy here of that heart bucket? What we pour in, our thoughts, our entertainment, the words spoken by others, is eventually what overflows and goes outward through our actions and our words.

Now the Greek word translated treasure in verse 35 is *Strong's #G2344, thsauros*, meaning a deposit, the place in which good and precious things are collected and laid up like a coffer, a receptacle, a treasury, a storehouse, a repository, or in our analogy, a bucket.

Our treasure is the water that we pour into our buckets, that which we avidly pursue in our mind and with our actions. It can be physical and self-focused treasure, like material wealth, a home, a recognition, prestige, control, knowledge. It could be spiritual treasure like God's wisdom, His Word, righteousness, meekness, lowliness, forgiveness, and good works. If our heart is filled with good treasure, God's Holy Spirit, we overflow with good things, the fruit of God's Spirit, which produces peace and unity with God and His Family. But if our heart is filled with evil treasure, we overflow and bring bad fruit, the fruit of the carnal selfish flesh which produces disunity.

Now whenever we speak evil about anyone else, it is because evil is first in our heart. And when we pour out evil from our heart in the form of negative words about someone else to others, we are literally pouring our evil into their hearts and influencing them. It is like a little bit of leavening leavens the whole lump.

Just like that bucket that accepts what is poured in, the hearts of others are easily polluted by any evil words spoken about somebody else. They eventually then start pouring that evil out themselves. "For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks," Jesus tells us, and this is why there are so many scriptures, brethren, about not speaking evil of anyone to anyone. Full stop.

In John Reid's sermonette, "Out of the Abundance of Your Prayers Your Heart Speaks," his message adds that while Jesus directed the scriptures toward our speech to other people, it is also true concerning our speech, that is, our prayers to God. Our treasure on the inside is revealed to God by what we think, by what we say to others, and what we say to Him in prayer.

Now God discerns whether our prayers properly reflect a poverty of spirit and genuine alignment with His will, or whether they actually are prayers of self-centered desires. Prayer speaking God's words back to Him demonstrate a heart that is actually transformed to become like His. Our prayers should acknowledge something we really want, and yet earnestly pray for His will to be done and for His help to not let that become a treasure that displaces God from our hearts. God knows every thought and the intent of our heart, even.

Complete honesty in our prayers when we go before Him is absolutely essential because nothing is hidden from Him! We are not pulling anything over on Him. He sees *everything*, brethren. And when we really approach Him *earnestly* during this pre-Passover evaluation, we should be finding a lot of shortcomings, shortcomings that we are motivated to fix, to repent, to change.

We need to bring forward people with whom we have bad thoughts about and ask for God's help to overcome, forgive, and let go. We need to bring forward the bad treasure that occupies way too much time, way too much of our attention, and ask for His help to create in us a clean heart.

As God examines our heart, He sees our compassion or lack thereof for others. He sees our loving concern for others, and He sees our carnal self-centeredness. Our heartfelt prayers reveal our heart's condition and our treasure.

Over three chapters now. We are going to pick up Matthew 15, verses 18 and 19.

**Matthew 15:18-19** "But those things which proceed out of the mouth come from the heart, and they defile a man. For out of the

heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. These are the things which defile a man."

We will stop there. Please turn back now to Matthew 5 as we once again tie into God's measurement for our hearts. The Beatitudes, which we looked at a couple of weeks back, are eight individual attitudes or mental states that overlap with linked characteristics. When we put them all together, they describe the proper heart that leads to eternal life.

These attributes of our heart are required in order to be blessed by God as they enable us to have the right perspective, the right foundation or context to always think, act, and react properly to life's circumstances. Last time we read verses 3 and 5, we will read those again because they are still very relevant here regarding our examination of our hearts.

**Matthew 5:3** "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

**Matthew 5:5** "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."

And now we are actually going to read verse 8, which we could argue is the summation of verses 3 and 5—3 + 5 does equal 8, after all. When we are poor in spirit and meek, our heart is just like Jesus Christ's. He tells us that His heart is meek and lowly, right? And that heart then is what? It is pure.

**Matthew 5:8** "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

Pure is the Greek word, *katharos*, *Strong's* #2513, meaning clean, clear, pure. And I want us to recall that word picture we had there of our heart as a bucket of water. If that bucket is filled up with God's clear, clean water, the pure water of His Holy Spirit, what do we see when we look into it? We see a reflection, a reflection of God's pure, holy heart and what is flowing out is the fruit of God's pure Holy Spirit.

Turn with me to I Timothy. We are going to see the same word pure used again to describe our heart. It is a real interesting one here.

**I Timothy 1:5** Now the purpose of the commandment is love from a pure heart, from a good conscience, and from sincere faith.

The goal, the outcome we could say, the entire design of God's law is to create in us a heart that is just like His, brethren, pure and full of sacrificial love that puts others first and therefore *always* obeys the great commandments to love the Lord your God with all your heart. That is the daily whole burnt offerings in service and sacrifice to God, and love your neighbor as yourself, the daily grain offerings in service and sacrifice to fellow man.

Over to Hebrews 10 now. Again, we will see the same word pure used again. We will read verses 19 through 22 and this ties perfectly to our pre-Passover examination of our heart.

**Hebrews 10:19-22** Therefore, brethren, having boldness to enter the Holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way which He consecrated for us, through the veil, that is, His flesh, and having a High Priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart and full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water.

During our pre-Passover examination of our hearts, we are admonished to come before God in our bankrupt spirit in a proper prayer and praise and gratitude for the work that God is doing in our lives. We are to draw near with a true, sincere, meek, lowly heart, for Jesus Christ's sacrifice enabled us to come before God and begin a relationship. Being in God's presence is how we grow that relationship each and every day.

By being near to God, our hearts are transformed to become more like His as He pours His Holy Spirit into those heart buckets of ours. And note the result here. As we draw nearer to God, our evil hearts are literally washed, cleansed by His pure Holy Spirit.

Pushing to I Peter now as we start to round third base, I guess I could call it. Baseball did just kick off. Some of you probably did not know that. As you are turning, I am just going to read a few words from one of our favorite psalms and hymns, "In Thy Lovingkindness, Lord." And I am sure that this will ring a bell.

**Psalm 51** (from the hymnal) My iniquities blot out, my sin hide from Thy view, and in me a clean heart make, spirit right renew. From Thy gracious presence, Lord, O cast me not away, and Thy Holy Spirit take not from me, I pray.

We must ask for God's help each day to cleanse our evil heart as we examine it with Him during this pre-Passover time. Reading now I Peter 1, verse 22.

**I Peter 1:22** Since you have purified your souls by obeying the truth through the Spirit for sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart.

Brethren, as we complete our pre-Passover de-leavening and self-examination of our hearts, we must come before God and examine it together, asking for His help to see the many imperfections that He sees as He holds it up to His standard, His holy heart. We must carefully guard our heart buckets and shut off all those distractions that flow in, the evil treasure sources, the polluted water from this world.

We ask for God's cleansing of our hearts, and then we need to point our hearts solely to God's pure and holy spiritual fountainhead through Jesus Christ, His Holy Spirit, as we read in Revelation. No need to turn there, but you can if you wish.

**Revelation 22:1** And he showed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding from the throne of God and of the Lamb.

For when we do, Jesus confirms,

**John 4:14** "The water that I shall give will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life."

**John 7:38** "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."