



"And this is the commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." 1 John 4: 21

Sunday – December 19, 2010

Heart to Heart...

We should be growing more and more into the likeness of Jesus. If one isn't growing into the likeness of Jesus what does that speak about us? To be conformed to the image of Jesus (Romans 8:29) means we take on more and more the attitudes, desires and nature of Jesus. Someone says, "*I don't like who I am!*" That's what Jesus is trying to take us from...being like we naturally are!

The Pharisees thrived on calling God their Father and worshiping Him. They prayed and fasted. They helped the poor and paid tithes. They read the written word and used it as their source of information and teaching. From all of that we would have to conclude things were well with them. Jesus said "*no*" because they were empty and heartless (Matthew 23:25-28). In fact, Jesus was straight forward speaking to them: "*You hypocrites, rightly did Isaiah prophesy about you: 'This people honors Me with their lips, but their heart is far away from Me.'*" (Matthew 15:7-8) Jesus wanted their hearts. Jesus wants our hearts!

Growing into the likeness of Jesus is all about the heart. The heart is the seat of our actions and words. If the Lord gets our heart He will have us completely! Too many are doing things that look religious and sound religious without their heart. Our heart must be surrendered to the Lord in order to grow into the likeness of Jesus. Our hearts must trade-in freely ourselves so that Christ begins to change us from within and we start looking more and more like Him in our decisions and words. While our physical features change little (other than aging) we can change our entire person from within.

Our hearts are exposed in many ways. Listen to the words we speak, what our lives pursue and our actions when things get a little difficult. We have heard it (and probably practiced it at one time) when someone gets angry and profanity comes from the mouth. Where did those profane words originate? Jesus said our words (and other desires – Mark 7:20-23) proceed from the heart. People refuse to love the brethren, to be kind when someone is unkind, to be gentle when they have been railed upon by another. Where's the heart of Jesus within our heart? If the heart is surrendered to the Lord, what do you think the Lord would be filling our hearts with? The result would be seen in our actions and tongues.

The brethren at the church in Rome had become '*obedient from the heart*' to serve the Lord (Romans 6:17). The Jews in Jerusalem heard about the Christ and some were '*pierced to the heart*' (Acts 2:37). The Christian slaves were to do the '*will of God from the heart*' (Ephesians 6:6/Colossians 3:22-24). Those who teach and preach were to teach the things of God that would bring about '*love from a pure heart*' (I Timothy 1:5). The Hebrew writer warned to take care that we would not '*harden our heart*' when God is speaking to them (and us) through His word (Hebrews 3:12-19). When God is speaking through a teacher/preacher, your heart will determine what is happening within you. When you read His word, something is supposed to be happening in your heart.

You correct a person with a heart given to the Lord and they will love you. You correct a person that just conforms outward, just for a show and they will turn on you! Jesus taught the Pharisees were living

proof of that happening. Paul was living proof of the opposite (Galatians 4:12). Peter too was living proof of a heart for the Lord when corrected (Galatians 2:11-14). When people see you, who do they really see and hear? How's your heart? Think about it!!!

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