

# The Deceitfulness of the Human Heart

By Paris Reidhead\*

Will you turn please, if you have your Bible to Jeremiah, Chapter 17. Many of you have been in attendance on each of the Sunday evenings when we have been speaking from these themes, Scriptures intended to Awaken Sinners. I am sure that what is happening in my heart is in some degree more or less happening in your heart as well, that the pressure of the word considered week after week is giving you an increasing concern for the unsaved around you and about you. I trust that this is the case.

Tonight's message, tonight's text, is on a very serious, a very difficult portion of Scripture, because it leaves absolutely no escape for the unconverted mind and heart. You will note that as I read. I am going to begin reading with the 1st verse, conclude with the 10th verse, even though our text actually is verses 9 and 10.

“The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond: it is graven upon the table of their heart, and upon the horns of your altars; Whilst their children remember their altars and their groves by the green trees upon the high hills. O my mountain in the field, I will give thy substance and all thy treasures to the spoil, and thy high places for sin, throughout all thy borders. And thou, even thyself, shalt discontinue from thine heritage that I gave thee; and I will cause thee to serve thine enemies in the land which thou knowest not; for ye have kindled a fire in mine anger, which shall burn forever. Thus saith the Lord: Cursed be the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the heath in the desert, and shall not see when good cometh; but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness in a salt land and not inhabited. Blessed is the man that trusteth in the Lord, and whose hope the Lord is. For he shall be as a tree planted by the waters and that spreadeth out her roots by the river, and shall not see when heat cometh, but her leaf shall be green; and shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.” Now comes the text, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? I the Lord search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.”

This text brings us right into the very heart of God's controversy with Judah. Judah had sinned against the Lord, idolatry, pretense, superficiality, immorality was all part of God's case against the Jews. And all reason for this prophecy concerning the destruction of the Jews and of Jerusalem. He said, Your sins are graven upon the table of their heart, and thus were seen by him upon his heart, and He also realized that the minds of their children had been shocked and marred and scarred by the abominations of the worship of Moloch. You understand something of what he refers to here, making the children to pass through the fire. Moloch was one of three gods that Israel served. First was Baal, the god, the evil spirit of any locality that gave possessions to the worshipper. The second was Ashtoreth, the goddess of sex, that gave license for immorality and the promise of progeny. And the third was Moloch. Moloch was the god that was appeased and placated and entreated in order that he would give status and position, power and authority. The purpose of the worship of these gods or goddesses, as the case might be, was that the individual who made the sacrifice might get something for himself. They never served the god for his own sake, never gave to these gods because of their worth and merit, but simply out of fear of being deprived of something they wanted or in the hopes that by the sacrifice they would have certainty of getting what they wanted.

Now in the case of Moloch, the parent would bring the child, usually the first born son while still an infant. He would stand before the god, make his prayer, his entreaty for power, for position, for the blessing of Moloch, and then he would take the little child and throw it up into the kindled fire of coal, charcoal that was made on the knees and between the folded arms of the statue-god, and the child would thus rest right in the lap of Moloch, cast into the fire. If the child would rollout, it was the sign that Moloch didn't want him, the prayer wasn't answered; or, if the child should pass over in such a way that it passed through the flame but wasn't killed by it, then again, and so said he the little children of Israel have watched the sins of the people, have witnessed them and they've been scarred by it. (As I have become acquainted with the homes and situations of some of the children that come with us in our afternoon Sunday school, I have been made to feel something of the way God must have felt as He looked upon Israel in her idolatry. The scars, the shocking stains produced in the minds of the children.) All of this enraged God, kindled His anger, not a capricious anger that burned in hatred, but an anger that rested upon

righteous ground because of the continued and persistent rebellion of His people against Him. And they added insult to injury, because then they made covenant with the nations around them and said, Yes we have sinned against God but why should we fear because these nations have promised to protect us, and they put their confidence in man.

I am sure that everyone that ever sinned feels he has a good reason to do it, and he has made some subtle clever manipulation of his mind to justify him in it and protect him. And it's a strange thing you know, we've dealt with this previously. Why it is that sometimes the wicked go on for such a long time after their sins have been seen. And sometimes the hearts of the righteous are caused to faint because they see wicked people prospering. But you remember how patient God has been with Judah. He sent His servants to them, and Jeremiah has come and ministered now, entreating them to return to the Lord. God gave them a well of living water. They spurned that and they hewed for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns that could hold no water. They chose Egypt; they chose Assyria; they said we'll trust in these nations: And thought thereby to protect themselves from the judgment of God, but I know, you know, that it is impossible to do it. And I am speaking to someone tonight that's come into this house with sin. You perhaps don't even know why you are here. And yet somehow you are here with the realization that you have not dealt honorably, not dealt as God demanded that you do with the sin in your life. You thought that it was covered. You thought that it was hidden. You thought that God had forgotten. But here He speaks to Judah and He said, "My anger burns against you. Your sin is not covered; it is not forgotten, But just patience, patience until I see that you are absolutely set on your impenitence, then when that is the case," says God, "I'll take the matter in my own Hands."

His word comes to you, comes to me. This is a universal Word. There is not a one of us that is omitted. Not a one of us that can pass it on to someone else. Not a one of us that can say, it doesn't apply. Listen to it. The heart is deceitful above all things. The heart, your heart, cheats you. You have been cheated, foiled, deceived, and robbed by your heart. First it deceives you in respect to sin. It's made sin seem a little thing, a light thing, and an inconsequential thing. Everybody's doing it. It must not be so bad. Well it's the day we live in. Things are like that now. It can't be so bad. This is the way your heart has tried to minimize God's law. God's too strict. God doesn't understand me. He doesn't know my problems. If He were in my place, what would He do? These are some of the ways that your heart has deceived you in trying to make sin appear something less than God has said it is, a crime against Him. Then your heart has deceived you in respect to the pleasure of sin. Satan is a great specialist in neon lights. The glitter, the spangles, the bunting, all that adds color and attractiveness. This is his specialty.

I was rather overwhelmed when I was in California a few years ago for ministry...to go by the various pieces of country property that they said was owned by Movie Companies and to see whole villages, three feet thick, that's all. Here was a whole town three feet thick, just a facade, just a front. And one day I asked the Pastor with whom I was riding, our Brother Erickson, I said, "Would you mind pulling over to the side of the road. I want to see this and never forget it again." And as I sat there and stared at this facade, beautiful houses in some places, magnificent mansions three feet thick, nothing more I said to my own heart. "Don't ever forget that this is really the best that the devil can do. It puts on a good show of reality, but it has height, breadth, but it doesn't have any depth." How many times your heart has deceived you into thinking that this particular pleasure, this particular sin, this particular act of disobedience, was the "not without which" of your happiness if you didn't have it, you couldn't survive. And then you disobeyed, did what God forbade, and it turned ashes in your mouth, bitter saline ashes, because there is no reality. He promises so much, does the god of this world, but he yields no real pleasure. It is all fancy, all imagination, and all an illusion, all a dream is this matter of sin.

Stolen waters are sweet, someone has said. No, they are not sweet. They are advertised as sweet. But it is like cyanide. It smells sweet but it kills. Your heart has been deceived. Don't look back and say, that's the way it is on Times Square where all the million lights are gleaming. It's that way on Times Square, but you don't need to go that far to find victims of this deceit of the human heart. You're one, in some time, some area, some place, some phase, you have listened to the subtle siren voice. Oh how many times the student in school thinks, "If I can just pass this test and so he cribs." I hope the Doctor that you go to when you're sick didn't crib on his final examinations to get his degree and his license to practice. And how many times the person thinks that if he could just change a little bit.

I was talking with someone that has to do with people that fill out their income tax. The wife said to her husband, "We don't need to report the income from these stocks. They'll never catch up with us." And so a matter of a few hundred dollars, and

now these hearts are filled with shame and grief and heartache. It looked so alluring, so enticing, the way to save a little bit. Their heart deceived them your heart has been deceived that way. And so has mine. What the god of this world gives is for such a little while just a few moments, just a season. Remember what Moses said, He chose to accept the afflictions of Christ rather than the pleasures of sin for a season...a season. It always ends in bitterness, and ends in death. Will you remember that? And then of course deceived not only in respect to sin, in respect to pleasure, but your heart deceives you in respect to profit.

How many times men have thought that they could get rich quick by a sinful way, and be happy. They have said that there is a psychological compulsion for people that get money in an illegal way to spend it as rapidly as they can. This is the reason why you will often find those that have gotten it as the gangsters squandering it in some futile, useless way because of the fact that it has promised so much and brought so little. And whatever you get by dishonesty, whatever you get by deceit, whatever you get at the compromise of your character and the sacrifice of your virtue, causes you to be the loser, rather than the gainer. This is a subtle thing that we as Christians face today.

I was talking just today with one of our folk in the hospital, a young man. He said, I have been so shaken. I went to a man in the City of New York to make a purchase. And in the course of the conversation he said, "Well you know the Federal Government demands a 10% tax but none of my competitors give it. What am I supposed to do, go out of business?" My friend said, "I made him take the 10%" and I said, "Yes, you'd better go out of business than stay in business at the expense of your character."

No, how many times we've been deceived into thinking that we could profit dishonestly. But it always comes back to pierce the heart through with many sorrows.

Then your heart deceives you in respect to honor and preferment and position. How many times people have thought that if somehow they could just get to a certain place they'd be happy, and they've used means, dishonorable means, unfair means, even unchristian means, but all it's done is promote them to shame. The enemy comes along and promises honor, promises satisfaction, but what he does is to bring bondage, bring grief, and bring heartache. The enemy says to your heart, your heart responds to it, you do this, you'll be protected, you'll have security, you'll have peace, but then sudden destruction comes. Will you remember that? I am pointing at you tonight. I'm talking just as personally as I know how to talk, but I've not only got my finger pointed at you, but I've got three fingers pointed at me. My friend there will never come a time as long as you live when you can trust your heart.

You say, I've been a Christian twenty years. That doesn't change anything. You can't trust your heart. It's deceitful. They say there are two times when an aviator, a pilot (haven't heard that word aviator for a long time) when a pilot is in greatest danger. Two times or more. That is, when he's been in the air, 500 hours, when he's been in the air a thousand hours and when he's been in the air 10 thousand hours, he begins to feel complacent because he is such a good pilot. And you've been in the Christian way for ten years, 20 years, and you say, well now, but my friend there has been many a grey hair brought down to shame because someone thought at long last he could trust his heart, but you can't do it. You can't trust your heart in regard to knowledge. Oh how many times your heart persuades you that you are a very knowing person.

I remember in Africa when I had Malaria, very seriously, almost went into Black Water Fever. Everybody who came along gave me another ten something or other. I had seventy units or grains of quinine in one day. Everybody who came either shot me with a hypodermic or made me take three tablets. "Well," I said to my wife, "My it's getting dark early isn't it?" She replied, "That it was still quite bright. It's only three o'clock." I said, "No, you're wrong. It's getting dark." And something had already begun to affect my optic nerves. Well at any rate, during this time of delirium from the fever, I told her that I was sure that God was giving me insights into spiritual truth that no one ever had before. I said, "I want you to bring a pad and a pencil and I am on the verge of one of the greatest spiritual discoveries that anyone has ever made." And you know I wrote it down, put it there. Well in a few days I was over my sickness, and the fever was broken, and I said, "Dear, where is that pad?" And she said, "You won't want to see it." "Oh," I said, "Bring it to me. Will you." And there she brought me this pad, and of all the inane trivialities that anyone had ever penciled there were those that I had scribbled on that pad. This is the deceitfulness of the

human heart. You begin to think that you have arrived at truth, instead of that, blind and ignorant, know nothing as you ought to know.

Down in Greenville, South Carolina, in a Meeting, and after the service the janitor came to see me. "Brother Reidhead, do you remember today when you were talking about the Trinity?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Can you define and explain the Trinity?" I said, "No, I can't; I don't know anybody that can." He said, "I can." "Oh," I said, "Fine. Would you say on for me. Tell me what it is." So he began, and here was this janitor that was just cheated by accident from being one of the great preachers of the age, and unfortunately wasn't recognized, and had to stay the janitor of this Southern Baptist Church down in Greenville, and I listened to him. And you know, he'd been there thinking and pandering and putting it together and his heart had deceived him into thinking that he'd found the secret, and all he had was the old Aryan heresy. That's all, just a heresy that had been condemned at the Council of Nicaea. The deceitfulness of the heart.

You can't trust your heart in respect to sin. You can't trust your heart in respect to pleasure. You can't trust it in respect to profit. You can't trust your heart in respect to honor and position. You can't trust your heart in respect to knowledge, and certainly you can't trust your heart in respect to religion, to Christianity. It persuades a person to believe that he is very holy and righteous and on a fair way to heaven, when actually he is poor, and wretched and naked and blind, and worthy of death.

If you go out on the street and talk to the first ten people you meet. And you ask them, do you think if you were to die and there is a heaven and there is a God, do you think that you are bad enough to go to hell or good enough to go to heaven. If one of them says, well look friend, if there is a God and a Heaven, I shouldn't be there, if you get one that's honest enough to say that. I'll be surprised. Every time I have done this, I have found that almost without exception their heart has deceived them into thinking that, though well of course they steal, and of course they swear, and lie, but who is moral and who doesn't cheat on his income tax, and who doesn't his and who...but I am a good man at heart, a good man at heart.

I remember up in Little Falls, Minnesota, I stayed in a home and this man had one of the foulest imaginations, though he was an intelligent man, had his own business, one of the foulest imaginations and most subtly evil tongues, and one of the slipperiest fellows that I'd ever met, and his wife said to me, "You know if my husband dies, he'll go straight to heaven. Why there's never been such a good man as my husband." Now she was wrong in regard to herself, and she was equally wrong in regard to her husband, but the unfortunate part, he thought the same way about himself as she did.

And, you can't trust the human heart. It's deceitful. It's deceitful in everything. It's deceitful, we read, above all things to a very great degree -- superlatively deceitful. It's the most deceitful thing in all creation, is the human heart. It's deceitful in everything; it's deceitful about everything; it's deceitful concerning everything; there's not a single thing, a single area in which the human heart can be trusted.

Luther understood this. He said, "I am more afraid of my own heart than of the Pope and all of his Cardinals. I have within me the great Pope Self, and I fear it." Do you have this understanding of your heart?

Now it's deceitful, but that isn't all that the text says. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Everything in the heart is wicked. Webster defines wicked in this way, "Morally bad, evil in character, evil in conduct, evil in principle, evil in purpose and influence. It is being or acting contrary to divine and moral law." Synonyms for wicked and wickedness are sinful, criminal, guilty, unjust, unrighteous, unholy, irreligious, ungodly, profane, vicious, atrocious, nefarious, heinous and flagrant.

Now that is some of what you have in this Hebrew word wicked, and he says that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

David understood it in the 5th Psalm and the 9th verse. He said, "Their inward part is very wickedness." That's you; that's me. It is wickedness itself. "No faithfulness in their mouth. Their throat is an open sepulcher. They flatter with their tongues." (Psa. 5:9) "The poison of asps is under their lips." (Rom. 3:13)

Want to go home? Am I wrong? Is this, do you have any inward testimony in agreement? Oh, you're overdrawing the case. This is not my heart. If that's your attitude, you're the one we're praying for. The one that's seen it agrees with it. The one that knows himself says, yes it's me you're talking about. It's me you're talking about.

I think of the time down South in the black community there was a funeral and the preacher was eulogizing the deceased. And after a little while the widow said to her oldest boy, "Would you please go up and look in the coffin and see if that's your Daddy they are talking about?"

And I'd like to have you look into your heart and see if this is your heart I'm talking about, or whether or not it's somebody else. Is this your heart that we're talking about? Everything in the personality, everything in the life is corrupted because of this wickedness. Let me illustrate it. The thoughts of the heart are wicked. The motives are selfish. Do you believe that? In other words, the human heart in its natural state is committed to selfishness, I, Me, My, Us and Ours. My happiness is the highest good; my wellbeing is the end of all being; my satisfaction is the reason the world exists. This is wickedness because it puts self in the place of God and thus the thoughts of the heart are wicked. The imaginations of the heart are evil. In Genesis the sixth Chapter we find, that God brought a flood upon that generation because their imaginations were only evil continually. The affections and the emotions are all selfish. You think this is true? The affections, the emotions are selfish? I do. I believe the Spirit of God has absolutely found me out. He's found you out when He is saying that your emotional center is yourself.

You've heard it said, there's no town in the world that isn't the center of the Universe to its local inhabitants. And that is exactly true. Go into the smallest little community anywhere and they're sure that the North Pole isn't up where they say it is, but the center around which the whole world revolves is this community. Now this is just a reflection of something else, which makes the heart the center of the social universe. The affections and the emotions are all selfish. The judgment is perverted. They call evil good. They call good evil. It's certainly the case. How many times we've gotten excited about something of no consequence, and things of great consequence, great importance are completely overlooked.

A gentleman came down from Radio City, one of the Studios. He got on the elevator. A young girl about 16 was standing over in the corner, sobbing, just sobbing as though her heart would break. He knew that such sorrow could only come from someone that had had news of the loss of loved ones. Not knowing exactly the girl's age, he thought perhaps she was an employee that was going home in the middle of the day because of a great tragedy in the family. So he stepped over to her and, solicitous and kindly, he said, "Miss, I do not know, what the sorrow is; I do not know what the tragedy is, or what the suffering is, but this I know that you need help, and if there is anything I can do to comfort or console you I'll be glad to do it." "For," he said, "sorrow and tragedy strike us all." "Oh," she said, through her tears, "but nothing ever happened to anyone like this." "Well what do you mean, what is it?" She said, "I just lost the Amateur Contest that I'd been counting on for so many months." And the preacher made this observation, In American there is more first class emotion lost on more second class causes than any other place on the face of the earth.

The heart is deceitful in respect to judgment, and in respect to affections and emotions. The heart is deceitful in respect to the conscience. Through much abuse, the conscience is seared, with a hot iron. Its warnings are unheard, it's testimony ignored. What a picture! What a picture! The very essence of this heart, wickedness, is exposed when we see it as selfishness – self-love, self-gratification, self-pleasing. That's the wickedness. The policy of life, the purpose of life, the government of life - to please self. This is where the wickedness resides. This is where it rests. The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it?

May I say this? That those who do not know that what we have said is true are not to be blamed. You might challenge everything I've said. There might be someone here, that if you were given an opportunity would say, "You're entirely misrepresenting the human heart." It isn't that way at all. I know my heart. I know how honest and fair and upright and sincere and sacrificial it is. I'm not blaming you for your attitude if this is it. I'm simply pointing out that even in this appraisal the deception and the wickedness is revealed. Those of us that have seen God, and in the light of what God is have seen ourselves know that our hearts are wicked, but we, couldn't have known it apart from Him. Angels don't know the wickedness of the human heart. They've not known sin. And so whereas I know it, and God knows it, angels don't know it. Demons, even Satan,

cannot know the wickedness of the human heart; they know the wickedness of their own, but not ours. You and I as sinners blinded by the god of this world and drugged by lust and pride did not know our own hearts. God knows it. He said, I know it; I search the heart. And when God reveals it by the light of what He is to you, you know it. It's imperative that a man know his own heart if he is ever to be converted. Unless God can somehow bring you to see yourself, you'll never be able to see Christ aright. The only value that people place on the death of Christ is in proportion to the discovery of their own heart. Did you know that? That's why it is such folly to preach the Gospel before we've preached the law. You've heard this, but have you gotten it; do you see it?

Do you realize that by the Law is the knowledge of sin, that the Ten Commandments are God's sharp saw that go through the conceit and the arrogance and the pride of the human heart and open it up for the light to enter. Before any man will ever be truly converted, born of God, he must know his heart. And the only way that God has ever armed Himself to cause a man to know his heart is through the Word, administered by the Holy Spirit.

You have unsaved loved ones. Do you know why they haven't come to Christ? Largely at least, or most of them? Because they've never seen themselves. You've been trying to get them to see the beauty of Christ before they've seen the heinousness of their own hearts. It won't work. I'm afraid that too many people that we think would come to Christ these days come because they are in a human dilemma. Did you hear that? Too many people that are apparently converted have come to Christ because they are in a human dilemma. Their home is breaking up. They are unable to control a habit. They have a sickness. They have some problem. In their human dilemma, which they are not able to handle, then they are candidates it seems for grace. But actually they are not coming to God because of what they've seen themselves to be. They've come to God because of what they've seen they need from God. And the question in my mind is, when such a person comes with such motivation, a human need, a human dilemma, can he be saved at that time? Is it not imperative that he should see himself? It seems to me it is. It seems to me obvious and clear that we are facing ground now where we've got to agree that a man must see his own heart if he is to be truly saved. Now if salvation is from a problem then all he needs to do is see a problem. If salvation is from a dilemma, all he needs is to see his dilemma. If salvation is from sickness, all he needs to do is see his sickness. If salvation is from hell, all he needs to do is to discover that there is a hell. But if salvation is from sin, then he must see what sin is and he can only see it when the cover is taken off the lid of his heart, and he gets a glimpse of what he is. This is the reason why we have so many ungrateful professing Christians in the Church, because all they have done is come to Christ in answer of a particular problem at a particular time. Believed, told they were saved, and gone on their way rejoicing in what? Well, that their problem was solved and they won't go to hell. But they've never seen themselves. Never had the discovery of what they are. Repentance can never be complete until the work of conviction is complete. God the Spirit must show a man the nature of his crime before he can truly repent of it. It's the uncovering of the human heart in its selfishness, its arrogance and its pride, its treason and its rebellion that causes one to realize that the whole of the crime is that he's put himself in the place of God and ruled as God. Now before he has seen this, and seen that out of this one act of treason and rebellion all the other acts of sin and uncleanness have come, he can't do it. It would be like someone trying to destroy the liquor traffic by just going into the saloon and breaking the bottles that will be on the shelves. Be a foolish way of dealing with it. You'd never finish. If you want to stop the liquor traffic the place to do it is to padlock the factories. And consequently a great many people have seen that they lied or have stolen; they've been caught in some dilemma or circumstance and they've wanted to be saved from the consequence of their circumstance, and they have come to Christ simply as the means of alleviating their problem. I am sure this is true on the Mission Field.

In fact it was Mrs. Timian who mentioned just this Friday past, that everyone with whom she had ever prayed in their station in the Ivory Coast had on the initial occasion of praying simply wanted to use God to help them in the situation and the Word had to come in loving ministry by the Holy Ghost to cause them to see themselves the sinners that they are. Do you know it? Have you seen your heart? Has God ever taken the cover off, the lid off and let you peer down into it? -This world of iniquity, this universe of uncleanness in your bosom? Have you seen yourself? I am sure that God answers prayer on the level of people's response. I am sure that the man who comes in perplexity will have God answer his prayer. But the tragedy of it is, when he interprets that meaning that he is saved. I am confident that many people were healed by the Lord Jesus that had never been saved from their sin. I am satisfied that many a boy whose aero plane had been struck by the shrapnel and was plunging to the

ground, cried out in the name of his mother's God, and the plane was steadied and he was brought to a landing, but I am sure that many a boy who had foxhole religion was delivered from the terror that affrighted him at the moment, but he wasn't saved. God is gracious and shows His graciousness. He is loving, and shows His love. But if you were to say today, "Well I must be saved because I know God answered prayer," I'd have to say, "No that's not the reason at all." There are no grounds of satisfaction or peace in that. And you turn around and say, "Listen God has opened my heart; God has shown me the world of iniquity that's there; God has shown me the deceitfulness of it; God let me see that the seat of every sin was residing in my bosom, and that the serpents of all the ages had made their hole in my heart, and God showed me that there wasn't a sin or crime that anyone had ever committed of which I was not capable. And He broke me and brought me to the foot of the cross, a world of iniquity with nothing to offer, but my uncleanness. Have you seen yourself? Who can know it?"

My dear, you've got to know it. You're only going to be saved from what you've seen, and you've got to see it. You've got to see it. Who can know it? I, the Lord search the heart; I try the reins Jehovah alone ultimately in that final sense, He alone is qualified to search and try the heart. I can't do it. Far be it from me to come to you and say, "Now look I've searched your heart. I've tried your reins, and I know. Oh no. How many times I've had people come and say, Now listen, It's this and it's this, and it's this; Am I saved or am I not. I can't try your heart. I don't know how. I have to stand on the outside. Jehovah can do it. He knows your heart. You say, well I don't know it. I haven't seen it this way. You know there is Someone to go to, don't you.

You know there is a prayer you can offer. You can go to Him and say, "Lord, your Word says that this is what the human heart is, but I've never seen it that way. Set in motion now the chain of spiritual events that are going to bring me to see myself as I am in your eyes. Would you dare to pray that prayer? You must. You've got to know it. You've got to know it. Show me what I am. God alone has the knowledge for such a task. He brings to it His omniscience. He knows everything, perfectly, eternally, everything which is an object of knowledge, whether past, present, whether actual or possible, everything, God knows.

Listen to these Scriptures,

Acts 15:8 God which knoweth the heart

Psalms 139:2 Thou understandest my thought afar off

Job 7:20 Oh Thou watcher of men

Psalms 56:8 Thou numberest my wanderings

Hebrews 4:13 Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do

And Genesis 16:13 Thou God seest me.

God knows your heart. This is what the Lord Jesus said about it, "For from within out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, all these evil things come from within and defile the man." (Mark 7:21-23) Thus the Lord declares the heart to be known to Him, and the source of all evil. All of its intentions are selfish. All of its motives and actions are wicked. All of its designs and contrivances are simply to implement its wickedness and selfishness. And God says, "I try the reins." I judge the kidneys, the inner part of you, the seat of your motives. Motives are what make men act, makes an act sinful. You know that the car that runs over the man in the street is booked for man slaughter until they can prove that he sat at the corner, knowing that the man crossed the street every day at the same time and that he drove as fast as he could, and then when they assign motive it's no longer man slaughter; it's murder. Man slaughter is just an accident; murder carried with it capital punishment. And God says, I try the reins, and I find the reason that people do such a thing is because their motives are wrong. Their purpose is to please themselves. God says, I try the reins even to give to every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings. All judgment that will ever be given by God in that future day will be in justice and knowledge. When the wicked dead stand before the Great White Throne, the Books will be open and they will be judged every man according to his ways. God knows the heart. In the future revelation of the righteous judgment of God, every secret motive and every action will be recorded. The counsels of the heart will be made manifest. The spurning of conscience and truth will be revealed. The ignoring of the entreaties to repent will also be unveiled. Think of it. All you can possibly do for yourself is to ask God to show you your heart, and bring yourself to the Word where He speaks and tells you what he has seen there, And believe what He says. It's a revelation.

But listen. You never, as long as you live, will ever know why anybody else does what they do. Did you know that? Now this is what happens. Most of the time we give to ourselves the benefit of the doubt. And most of the time, we construe the other man's action to be as vile as it can be. And our judgment is utterly perverted. You cannot trust your own heart's discernment in another's action. You do not know why anybody does what he does. All you can possibly know this side of the veil is what they do. And there's been more heartache come, more grief come, because mortal men and women have usurped the prerogatives of sovereign wisdom and justice by judging motives of others that they can never know. You'll never know why your husband did this, why your wife did that, why she said, why he didn't say, you'll never know why until that day when God shall give a righteous judgment and the motives shall be revealed that relate to the act, but until that time there's not a thing you can do about it.

But you can know your own heart, and you go to Him. Listen. "Not everyone that sayeth unto Me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, but he that doeth the will of My Father which is in Heaven. Many will say unto Me in that day, Lord did we not prophecy in your Name? Did we not cast out devils in your Name? Have we not done many wonderful works in your Name? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you. Depart from me ye that work iniquity." (Matt. 7:21-23)

They didn't even know their own heart in respect to their church activities. Their motive was wrong. What is yours? Have you seen your heart? Do you know it? Do you understand it? Has God shown it to you? Have you been willing to face it with all of its deceitfulness and desperate wickedness? And come to Him with that heart just as foul as He sees it, and break before Him as that one said as he came, "Lord You've surely got something on your hands now when you take me."

Every one of us that rightly understand ourselves come just that way. We've seen our hearts and put no confidence in the flesh. You see God provided grace and cleansing and power for what He saw. You'll never have what He provided until you see what He saw. Face the worst about yourself, openly, honestly, freely, and bring that wretched, deceived, deceitful, wicked heart and take from God the grace and love that He has provided to make you what you ought to be.

Hear the Word. "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. Who can know it? I the Lord who search the heart."

Let us pray. I want you to think for just a moment. You are soon going to be on your way. We are not going to have a prolonged invitation. Simply saying, that if you are here and God has spoken to you (we trust He has) and you have need, when others go to the street, you go into Wilson Chapel and I'll come and we'll talk and pray together there, a quiet place to meet. This is the invitation. So in just a moment you are going to be on your way. I don't know what has happened to you as I've been speaking. I know what I've been praying: That God would open the eyes of your mind, intellect and your spirit, and cause you to come into agreement with Him, if you haven't already done so; And that you would bring what you see to Him for cleansing, for purging, for deliverance. Have you seen your own heart? Have you? If you have, you know that what we have been saying is true. If you haven't, why don't you just now cry out, Oh God, take the veil off my eyes, the veil which the enemy put, less the light of the glorious gospel should shine in unto me. Open my eyes. Show me what I am. Help me to see myself as You see me. I know that Your grace is sufficient for the worse in me. Show me what I am, so that I will want everything that the Lord Jesus died to make mine. Will you pray that prayer? I wonder while we wait for just a moment, if there are any that would say, pray for me, God has shown me my heart, He's been speaking to me in the days past and brought it to focus tonight. I need prayer, pray for me. Would you put your hand up? Yes, God bless you. I see it. Anyone else? Yes, God bless you, I see it. Yes, I see your hand. Still another? Yes, I see it, God bless you. And another? Somewhere? Now I'm going to ask you that raised your hands if you wish, and will, when we stand for prayer in just a moment to slip out quietly to the rear of the room and to the right into Wilson Chapel and I can come and talk with you and we can talk further about this. And we'll remember you in prayer even as you go. Shall we stand.

Father, it's not a pleasant thing to see ourselves. We've had such illusions about ourselves. We've put on pink glasses when it came to ourselves. We've been able to see the mote in our brother's eye, but we haven't seen the beam in our own. Now Lord we are asking that the eyes of our hearts may be opened to see ourselves, and there have been these hands raised of individuals that have said, "Oh, I need prayer." We do pray for them. We pray that they may not let go what they have felt,



that they may move on and march on with Thee. Might it even be that tonight, instead of going to the street to their homes, they'll come to Thee in the place of prayer. Others with them that didn't raise their hands. Father, for every one of us, we continue to pray. Oh God, we must, if we are to be united before Thee be people that have seen ourselves all in the same way.

Open the eyes of any among us that haven't seen themselves. And may this truth lay hold upon us. And may it do its work. We pray that salvation may come to every weary burdened heart, that a revelation may come to every blind heart. Go with us as we part. May the Holy Ghost continue to work, even in the night hours and on in the days to come, and bind this truth between our eyes upon our foreheads as a frontlet that shall never depart from us, may it be before us constantly as Thy revelation of what we are by nature. May Thy grace and mercy and peace continue and abide with us. Amen.

\* Reference such as: Delivered at The Gospel Tabernacle Church, New York City on Sunday Evening, July 24, 1960 by Paris W. Reidhead, Pastor.

©PRBTMI 1960