

Week 11: "A New Heart and a New Spirit"

Memory Verse

But then the right time came, God sent his Son. A woman gave birth to him. He was born under the authority of the law. He came to set free those who were under the law. He wanted us to be adopted as children with all the rights children have. Because you are his children, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts. He is the Holy Spirit. By his power we call God "Abba." "Abba" means Father.

So you aren't slaves any longer. You are God's children. Because you are his children, he gives you what he promised to give his people. *Galatians 4:4-7 NIRV*

Day One

Sunday, December 29, 2002

"A New Heart and a New Spirit"

Read: Ezekiel 36:26-27 (p. 943) and Commentary (p. 944)

Reflect: What evidence do you have that the human heart (your own) needs changing? Does it really seem to you that you were spiritually dead?

Dig: What does confession and Christ's shed blood have to do with this new heart? (see Ezekiel 36:25 p. 943, Hebrews 9:13-14 p. 1430, and Hebrews 10:19-22, p. 1431).

If we are to have the heart of Jesus, what would that be like? (hint: in one place in the Bible, Jesus' heart is described: look this passage up and not the description-Matthew 11:28-30 p. 1091)

Apply: Confess your "old heart of stone" characteristics, ask for the cleansing blood of Jesus and that God would turn your heart of stone into a soft heart of flesh. Carry this prayer with you today: "Lord, give me a gentle and humble heart, like yours."

Day Two

Monday, December 30, 2002

"A New Covenant"

Read: Jeremiah 31:31-34 (p. 866) and Commentary: (p. 867)

Reflect: How do you do things when your heart is not in it? What do you try to do but fail to do because you lack motivation? How does motivation return?

Dig: According to Romans 7:14-25 (p. 1287), why did we need a new covenant?

According to the text from Jeremiah 31:31-34, what are the four or five blessings that God promises in this new covenant?

If communion or the Lord's Supper is called a "new covenant in my blood," what might the benefit be of eating this meal? (hint, what can we expect that our souls will be nourished such that they are changed?)

Apply: Take one or two of the blessings of the new covenant as given in our text for today and simply ask God to miraculously wake up your heart to this blessing. Now walk out this day in that truth.

Day Three
Tuesday, December 31, 2002
"A New Creation "

Read: II Corinthians 5:18-19 (p. 1333) and Commentary (p. 1334)

Reflect: Using the illustration in the commentary on p. 1334, what "suckers" are growing in your life that divert the growth of your new nature?

Dig: What does it mean to regard others from a worldly point of view? To answer this question, read II Cor. 11:18 and the surrounding context (p. 1340).

According to this passage, what is reconciliation and who initiates it and accomplishes it? What is our part?

Apply: What sweet fruit is growing in the grafted new nature that God has given you? See Galatians 5:22-23 (p. 1352) for some of the fruit you ought to be able to observe. In prayer, thank God for this fruit.

Day Four
Wednesday, January 1, 2003
"A New Heart"

Read: Proverbs 4:23 (p. 697) and Commentary (p. 698)

Reflect: List as many idioms (common expressions) that use the word "heart" and think about how and why you use them. Examples: "take heart," "put your whole heart and soul into it," etc.

Dig: How does the context (Proverbs 4:1 and the verses immediately preceding and following 23) help you understand the meaning of verse 23?

What is necessary in order to have a good heart? (see Psalm 37:4 p. 616, for a biblical answer to this question).

Apply: May I suggest that you place your hand over your heart and pray a prayer that includes these three elements:

1. Thank God for giving you a new heart.
2. Ask God to cleanse your heart of selfish desires (name them)
3. Ask God to "create taste buds" on your heart to savor his goodness.

Day Five
Thursday, January 2, 2003
"A New Spirit"

Read: John 3:1-15 (p. 1201) and Commentary (p. 1201)

Reflect: Jesus compares the Spirit to wind. In which ways does God's Spirit possess the characteristics of wind?

Dig: What is God's role in regeneration (becoming born again), and what is the person's role? (see I Peter 1:3 for the biblical answer to this question). Is the phrase "you must be born again" a command?

What effect did this conversation have on Nicodemus? (see John 7:50 and 19:39 to answer this question).

Apply: Ask the Holy Spirit to tell your spirit that you are God's child. Then pray that today as you go through the day the Spirit will remind you to use your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit that it is.