

THE BLIND AND HARDENED HEART (1)

One's attitude is of utmost importance when confronted with spiritual matters. The Lord states that folks are not just to "hear" (Matt. 13:9), but also to give heed to "what" (Mark 4:24) and "how" (Luke 8:18) they hear. Following this teaching of Christ will prevent the religious confusion and error that runs rampant today.

Spiritually speaking, the only "seed" that the Bible commands to be sown is "the word of God" (Luke 8:11). It is not difficult to understand the principle that seed will always reproduce after its kind (Gen. 1:11; Gal. 6:7-8). In the physical realm, if one sows the wrong seed he will not have the harvest he envisioned. Likewise, in the spiritual realm, the sowing of the wrong seed will not produce the harvest (a heavenly home) that so many are anticipating. The Word of God (proper seed) in its purity must be taught, believed and obeyed if the promised blessing of a home in heaven is to be realized.

Yes, God's promised blessings are conditional, and even a casual reading of the Bible should impress one with this truth.

This heart being discussed is not the physical blood pump, but the mind or intellect of man. It is important what man thinks in his heart (Prov. 23:7) "*for out of it are the issues of life*" (Prov. 4:23). The apostle Paul writes that "*with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation*" (Rom. 10:10). Jesus teaches the first and great commandment is to "*love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind*" (Matt. 22:37).

The parable of the sower depicts different types of hearts (soils) and the seed that is sown in them (Matt. 13:3-8; 18-23). The types of soils commented on in the Bible represents different attitudes toward the precious gospel. This article will focus on the attitude of one who possesses a blind and hardened heart.

The devil, "*seeking whom he may devour*" (1 Peter 5:8), knows that sin will separate one from God (Isa. 59:1-

2). The writer of Hebrews warned Christians, "*but exhort one another day by day, so long as it is called To-day; lest any one of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin*" (Heb. 3:13 ASV). When Paul spoke in the synagogue at Ephesus, there were some who were "*hardened and disobedient, speaking evil of the Way. . .*" (Acts 19:9 ASV). Isaiah prophesied about people with fat hearts, heavy ears and shut eyes—"lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn again, and be healed" (Isa. 6:10 ASV). Jesus mentioned this prophecy in noting people who refused to believe the truth He taught even though they had seen the miracles He wrought (John 12:37, 39-40).

Today countless millions refuse to "see" and "hear" the Word of God! In the parable of the sower, some seed that was sown fell by the "way side" (Matt. 13:4). Even though contact is made with the seed (Word of God), certain people will refuse to understand (Matt. 13:19). The Bible message is the same for every human being, and all mankind can understand the Bible alike! Paul admonishes, "*Wherefore be ye not foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is*" (Eph. 5:17 ASV).

Again, Paul implores of Bible believers, "*Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment*" (1 Cor. 1:10 ASV). It is not that folks cannot understand what God would have them to do, but that they have no desire to understand and be doers of the word (James 1:22).

One may harden his heart to the point that he will not allow God's word to penetrate it. Why would an intelligent person do such a thing? There are many things that can contribute to one possessing a blind and hardened heart. First, pride can keep one from submitting to the commands of God. The Jews of Jesus' day are classic examples of pride causing people to refuse and reject the truth. The Jews were eagerly anticipating the coming of the Messiah, but foolish

pride led them to resist Christ when He came. The problem was clearly identified by Christ when He was confronted by the religious leaders of His day. ". . . *the Pharisees and the scribes ask him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat their bread with defiled hands? . . . he said unto them, Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, . . . This people honoreth me with their lips, But their heart is far from me. But in vain do they worship me, Teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men. Ye leave the commandment of God, and hold fast the tradition of men. And he said unto them, Full well do ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your tradition*" (Mark 7:5-9 ASV).

Multitudes today allow tradition to blind them to God's glorious truths. They base their religion upon the religion of their parents or grandparents. While claiming to believe in the Bible, they worship and serve according to the tradition of their ancestors. Pride will not allow many to cast aside man-made tradition and simply follow a "thus saith the Lord." This is the plight of those in denominationalism today who refuse to give it up when confronted with the word of God. They cannot find "their church" in the Bible, and it is hundreds of years too late to be the church promised and established by the Lord (Matt. 16:18; Mark 9:1; Acts 2). There is only one body (Eph. 4:4), and Christ is the head of that body—the church (Eph. 1:22-23). The name church of Christ simply shows ownership, and denotes those congregations who are abiding by His will (Rom. 16:16). Man-made churches, by the very names they wear, give the glory to some man instead of Christ. It is not that folks cannot see and understand this truth—it is rather that most will not swallow pride and cast aside the traditions of their families.

To be continued...

Marvin Weir from *GospelPreceptor.com*

BIRTHDAYS

Brooke Nemechek, 04-03; John Dodson, 04-07.

ILL

Sunday: Tom Tucker. **Wednesday:** Steve Brown. Janice Carter was admitted to Olathe Medical Center on Monday and had tests. She was released on Tuesday. Allen Scott had outpatient tests last week. Louise Dodson's mother is in Room 421 of Olathe Medical Center recovering from her surgeries last week.

Those battling cancer: Jamal Abyad, Diane Cannon, David Cole, and Ledgia Campbell. Please remember these in your prayers, as well as: Meredith Greer, Millie Robertson, Allen Scott, and Ralph and Helen Franklin.

HOME BOUND

Bob Adams resides at Room D-4 of the Johnson County Nursing Center in Olathe. Marion Stone is at home. Please remember these in your prayers and visitation.

OUT OF TOWN

Chris Edwards was in Florida last week on business. He is scheduled to be in Argentina this week visiting with his sister and friends.

POT LUCK DINNER

Our monthly Pot Luck Dinner will be held this Sunday following our AM worship. All are encouraged to come!

MEN'S BUSINESS MEETING

The monthly Men's Business Meeting will be held next Sunday, April 8, following our AM worship.

AREA EVENTS

There are several area lectureships and meetings taking place over the next few weeks. Check the bulletin board for dates and details.

ATTENDANCE

Sunday AM, 61; Sunday PM, 41; Wednesday PM, 36.

Those To Serve

April 1, 2007

BUILDING AND COMMUNION..... Brown

MORNING WORSHIP

ANNOUNCEMENTS..... George Thomas
SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson
OPENING PRAYER John Carter
PRESIDE..... Gary Cole
ASSIST..... John James
ASSIST..... David Parish
CLOSING PRAYER..... John Cody Carter

EVENING WORSHIP

OPENING PRAYER John Dodson
CLOSING PRAYER..... Jeremy Keifer
LORD'S SUPPER..... Gary Cole

WEDNESDAY 4th

SONG LEADER..... Joel Nelson
INVITATION Jared Nelson

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday

Bible Study 9:30 AM
Morning Worship 10:30 AM
Evening Worship 6:00 PM

Wednesday

Ladies Bible Study 10:00 AM
Bible Study 7:00 PM

Preacher: Ted J. Thrasher

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