

Muddy Water

Scriver (edited), 1629-1693

In a vessel filled with muddy water, the heavy sludge soon settles to the bottom. It leaves the water “clearer” until it seems perfectly clean. However, the slightest motion brings the sediment again to the top and makes the water as thick and turbid as before.

Here we have a picture of the human “heart.” The heart is full of the mud of sinful lusts and carnal desires. No good and holy thoughts can flow from it. It is filthy and contaminated, no matter how it appears.

A man’s “heart” is a miry pit and slough of sin, in which all sorts of ugly reptiles are bred and crawl. Many are deceived by their spiritual condition and never imagine their heart half so wicked as it is.

At times, one’s lusts are at rest and sink, as it were, to the bottom. The iniquities of one’s past are



often forgotten. On some occasions, one’s thoughts appear to be holy and devout, desires pure and temperate, words charitable and edifying, and works useful and Christian.

This period of apparent “Christianity” and good living lasts only so long as one is not “shaken.” As long as one is without opportunity or incitement to sin, a wicked heart is hidden. However, when worldly lusts are aroused, one’s thoughts, words, and works show no trace of anything but slime and impurity.

A sinner is meek as long as he is not thwarted, but cross him, and he is like powder, ignited by the smallest spark, and loudly explodes. Some are temperate, if he is separated from the wrong companions or while others’ eyes are upon him. The “mud” is still there, at the bottom, do not shake it up.


“Before men, we stand as opaque bee-hives. Others can see the thoughts go in and out of us, but they cannot tell what work is done inside. Before God, we are like a glass bee-hive. He knows, sees, and understands all our thoughts.” — *Beecher*.

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Heart Problems

Bill Brinkworth

There are many excuses available for any mistake or sin in our lives. Psychologists often blame a patient’s difficulty on their environment. Social workers label many behaviors as peer-pressure related. Income, hereditary, age, and race are also some of the popular excuses for wrongdoing.

Sometimes, the excuses mentioned above are legitimate, but they are often scapegoated justifications for the problem’s real source. The Bible often speaks of the heart as the origin of wickedness.

By “heart,” the blood-pumping organ is not what is referred to but is more the center of thoughts, feelings, and our will. There is no one location where a surgeon could, under dissection, point to and



identify as, “this is where lying comes from” or “this organ generates the desire to steal.”

It is this “heart” that Mark speaks of when he writes, “... *Do ye not perceive that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly...*”

Mark 7:1-19

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A Hardened Heart

Bill Brinkworth

One of the most dangerous conditions for anyone to have, Christian or non-Christian, is mentioned in Hebrews. That condition is having one’s heart “hardened” (Hebrews 3:8). It is not a problem with one’s physical heart. It is the spiritual part of a person that has determined not to do what God had urged it to do. By refusing to do what God has shown it to do, it is directly disobeying God — a most serious situation!

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Heart Problems

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Things entering the body cannot make us do wrong unless our “heart” is in such a state as it would allow our bodies to perform the sin. Although many under the influence of drugs and alcohol do wrong things, it is not totally what went into their bloodstream that is at fault. Their “heart” was most likely in a tolerant-to-sin state to allow such a thing to happen in the first place.

If this were not true, then anyone partaking of alcohol or drugs would have the same desire to fight, rape, curse, steal, and get into more sin. This, however, does not happen every time booze is swallowed. It is the already willing, desensitized-to-sin heart that allows a person to sin further.

Nothing entering the belly can defile the man. There is not one un-Koshered pickle, a third scoop of vanilla ice cream, or anything man puts into his mouth that he should blame as the reason for his wrongdoing. The source of sin generates from man’s own “heart.”

“Don’t put off doing what the Lord has shown you to do today. You may not have another opportunity or another tomorrow!”

A Hardened Heart

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To make it clear to the Hebrews, Paul reminded them what hard-heartedness cost their forefathers in the wilderness. While in the wilderness, the Jews had a wonderful opportunity to follow God to a land He had reserved for them. By day, God led them in His direction by going before them in a column of cloud that stretched from Heaven to Earth. When it moved, they moved. When it stopped, they stopped. At night, it changed to a column of fire. Although they had many proofs of God’s helping them, they still doubted. Unbelief, the root cause of hard-heartedness (Hebrews 3:12), crept into their thoughts, and they doubted God.

This provoked God (Hebrews 3:8) and caused the Israelites to have many unnecessary testings, trials, and tribulations. They missed many of the blessings they could have had because their hearts were fixed not to believe or trust God. Because of their hardened hearts, a possibly six-day march to the land God had prepared for them took 40 years. None of the hard-hearted people ever got to see the promised land, although their offspring did. Their hearts of unbelief cost them much.

A hard-hearted condition can just as easily be obtained today as it was then. When God shows

a person what salvation is and that they should trust Christ as Saviour today, they are hardening their heart when they postpone the decision. When their heart is shown to do something, such as being saved, faithful in church attendance, praying, reading their Bible, tithing, or telling others about salvation, their not doing it is a direct refusal to God. Even slow obedience to a command, or justification in not doing as they were shown, is still unbelief and distrust.

Four times (Hebrews 3:7, 12, 13, 4:7), Paul mentioned the key to not having a hardened heart. The key is “today.” When God shows you something or quietly speaks to your heart in conviction, you must obey Him then! Not tomorrow! Not later! It should not be open to debate! Doing it when we want, and not when He commands, is a step in hardening one’s spiritual heart.

If the Heart Is Right

Author Unknown

*It doesn’t so much matter
What path our feet may tread,
Or, whether the cheering hopes
we knew*

*In youth are vanished — dead.
We shall find a gleam in the
darkness*

*To guide in the dreary night,
And a joyful song as we journey
along,*

If we go with a heart that’s right.

*We sip from the cup of sweetness
And then the bitter gall;
Blossoms and friends are swept
away,
Dreams are forgotten — all.
And you have known the tugging
That comes to the heartstrings
tight,
Know of the balm, the peace, and
calm
That comes from a heart that’s
right.*

*The thorns that beset the
causeway
May fester and wound the feet;
The cup you drink may end with
gall,
Drowning the cherished sweet;
But the nectar for which you
hunger,
The roses that suffered blight,
Will be yours to taste and smell
again
If you go with a heart that’s right.*

Hearts!

☞ “He who makes a watch or engine knows all the workmanship in it. God, that made the heart, knows all the motions and fallacies of it.”
— Watson, 1696

☞ “God sees hearts as we see faces.” — George Herbert.

“To sin is to walk the way of the heart.” — Matthew Henry