

2006 Proclaimer

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, .. to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord!" -Isa.61:1-2

A teaching and exhortation medium by members of the Carmichael Church of Christ, meeting at 6044 Sutter Ave. Carmichael, CA 95608

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November 26th, 2006

Heart Problems that can Kill Us!

by Steven Harper

The central organ of the human body is the heart. When it quits, we quit. When we have problems with our heart, the rest of our body will suffer; when our heart is fit, we enjoy good health and good life. But in our society today, there is a great deal of information and concern about heart problems that leaves us confused sometimes. We see almost daily news reports about heart diseases: what causes them and what cures them. We also hear almost on a daily basis *different answers* for these heart problems. No two "experts" agree and the rest of us are left confused about what is good for us and what is not.

And if we are concerned for our heart's condition, we may actually eat low-fat foods that are good for us, cut out red meats, and we may even start exercising that we may strengthen our hearts and help us to live longer. We recognize, for the most part, that our hearts are an important part of living.

All of this is interesting and I'm sure we are all concerned with our heart's condition, but that is not the heart we are going to speak about. The heart we will be concerned with is the **other** heart of man: the mind. The heart we speak of is the one referred to so many times in the word of God whose condition is of much greater concern than even our physical, blood-pumping organ that keeps us alive. This heart — the mind of man — has problems of its own, too. Though these problems will not necessarily physically kill us if left unattended, they will separate us from God — what the Bible tells us is **spiritual** death. This is certainly no better a condition than before.

For just a few minutes consider some **Heart Problems That Kill**, and then look to the word of God to know the actions that cure them. These are some heart problems that will kill us spiritually, heart problems that stand between us and eternal life. Let us look at the kind of heart that will condemn us to eternal destruction. Such hearts are:

Dull. **[Matt 13:15]** On this occasion, the disciples of Jesus came to Him and asked why He spoke to them in parables. His answer was that it was done because the hearts of those who would not understand, saying, *"The hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them."* The word for **dull** here literally means **calloused**, or hardened. These people would not hear Jesus because their hearts were hardened against the truth; they just didn't want to hear it!

Such hearts are still found in abundance even today. Many in our society are so hardened against the truth that they want any (positive) reference to God removed from the public eye. If religion is mentioned, it is so watered down that it has no meaning because there is no standard. **Situation ethics** is the rule of the day.

Even among the body of those who claim to follow Jesus and His teachings, there are many whose hearts are hardened against the truth, for it does not "fit" with what they want to practice. Some do not want to hear the **whole truth**, while others simply want to be soothed and eliminate all rebukes. The danger in all of this is that those who teach truth will eventually leave them and go to those who are willing to hear (**Acts 19:8-9**).

Distant. **[Matt 15:8]** In this context, Jesus has been asked why His disciples did not follow the traditions of the elders and, in reply, He asked why they transgressed God's will,

even as they claimed to be His followers. They drew near to God *"with their mouth"* and honored Him *"with their lips"* but their hearts were far from Him. Simply put, they were hypocrites! Their hearts were not with God at all! Their religion was only a show.

Is this how we serve God? What about you? Do we search the word of God to know what **He** wants, or have we already determined what we will do, only searching the word to make it fit with our own desires? We must realize that just because we "happen" to do what God says, that does not mean we are obedient. Obedience is a determined choice to discover His will and then do it. Many people, by pure chance, do the will of God, but only because it happens to intersect with their own will. That is not obedience. If this describes us, the result is the same as those of Jesus' day: our worship is useless.

Divided. **[Hos 10:2]** The problem with the Israelites, here, was that they would not choose **one** to serve, and it had led to their downfall. Their loyalty was divided between the false gods of the nations that surrounded them, and the one, true and living God. It was cause for the prophet Elijah to challenge them to make a choice at Mount Carmel. He called all the people together and commanded them to stop wavering and make a decision: God or Baal. He made the challenge in such a way that they **had** to make a choice because they would see the evidence clearly.

We often have the same problem today, with individuals who claim to be loyal followers of Jesus Christ and His word, but who seem to be serving the gods of materialism and personal pleasures. An outward claim of obedience is made, but He is often set aside when there is opportunity for material gain or personal gratification, and then taken back when they are satisfied. This is where the term "Sunday morning Christian" comes from. The problem with this type of heart is that it will render us unfit for the kingdom (**Luke 9:62**).

Discouraged. [Deut 1:21-28] As Moses re-counts their travels through the wilderness, he reminded them of the day that the spies came back with the bad report and how it had discouraged the hearts of the people to the point they were ready to return to Egypt. For that, they would not enter the Promised Land. If only they would have listened to the two who trusted in God for victory!

Discouragement is still a danger today, and it may arise when we feel like we are outnumbered, when we are persecuted for our faith, or simply because so many refuse to hear the truth. Sadly, much of the discouragement comes from within, from those who do not believe God will give us victory. The sad result of discouragement is that it will prevent us from entering into our rest, just as surely as it did for those Israelites.

--via The Burns Park *BEACON*, North Little Rock, AR.

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DECEMBER ~ 2006

EVERYTHING you intend to finish in the year 2006 must be accomplished in the next 35 days. Also, there are some things that really NEED to be accomplished before January 1, 2007 brings the dawn on a new year.

Is there someone you intended to bring to Christ during this year? Is there an urgent need in your desire to let all know about the Lord ~ to Whom you may be the only link they have? Is there a greater diligence you intended to give to His Service or a notable endeavor or personal accomplishment planned, but yet undone?

There are many things that reside only between an individual and the Lord that no one else can be a party to ... so, doesn't that give us a greater sense of urgency? ONLY to the degree that we're really dedicated HONORING HIM. **v.w.**

THOSE NEEDING PRAYERS

Logan & Julie Agee
Doris Allsup (Irma's sister)
Jason & Marie Anderson
Frank & Tina Ayers
Edith Ayers
Jack & Dorothy Bailey
(*recent heart problems*)
Juanita Dickson
Robert Erickson
Helen Gray
Margaret Holcomb
Chuck House
Catherine Kay (Escalon)
David & Jerica Lovett
Jean McCarty
Jeffrey & Kaye Pennant
Wendell Rapier
Berniece Raven
LaurieAnn Reagan
Rosa Reagan (Bremerton)
Andy & Liz Roadman
Caleb & Jacob Robertson
Taylor Romine
Tom & Boots Royston (Folsom)
Ray Rude (heart)
Billie Rush (Troy's grandmother)
Oliver & Terry Sasse
Rena Schultz
Geneva Shelton
(*still in hospital*)
Shawna Shuck
Connie Taylor
Ola Thornburg
Nancy Valine
Donna Williams (Carol's Sis)
Gordon & Glenda Wilson
Maxine Wilson

TRAVELING IN THEIR WORK

Rick Rittenhouse
Aaron Robertson
David Lovett

IN THE MILITARY

Jason Anderson
David Lovett
Michael Mendez
Aaron Robertson

SPECIALIST NEEDED

A church looking for an evangelist put the word out to other brethren regarding their request. But it contained the caution, "We're not looking for an ordinary evangelist. He must be a specialist. For no ordinary preacher can ever reach these prejudiced people." Did you ever feel that way? Often I hear folks talk that way about their friends and neighbors. They think they are most prejudiced and very hard.

Ironically, at the same time they were looking for a preacher, in one of the congregations they wrote was an illiterate man. This man, wanting to be of greater service to the Lord (in spite of his educational handicap), went to one of the elders of the church with the request: "Here's my Bible. Would you kindly underscore some of the great doctrines of the Bible, each one in a different color?" We will say he was to underscore all the texts on the second coming of Christ in red; everything on the nature of man and the state of the dead in green, and so on. Well, that was a two weeks' job for the elder. And he wanted to put the poor ignorant man off. But the man kept insisting, until finally the elder acceded to his wishes and marked his Bible for him in the manner he requested.

In the meantime this illiterate man had learned from someone the titles and numbers of many songs in one of the evangelistic songbooks. Finally, with his marked Bible in his hand, and a stack of songbooks under his arm, he made his way to the city. He stationed himself on a street corner, and began to sing.

As he sang, somehow the loveliness of Jesus must have shown out through his countenance and voice, for a goodly number of people gathered around him. He passed out the songbooks. "We are singing No. 1, 'More About Jesus,' " he said smilingly. He had his songbook open. But the people did not know that he could not read a word. And they joined in the singing.

After they had enjoyed a good song service he turned to a gentleman standing beside him, a stranger, and said, "Take this Bible and read everything underscored in red, beginning with Genesis." The man read a text, and then this illiterate man, though he could not read or write, explained the text.

The friend read the next text marked in the same color. And the illiterate man explained it also. And thus they continued until they had finished the lesson for the night. Then he announced when he would return. In this manner he completed a series of meetings. While the church was looking, longing, and waiting for the "specialist," this illiterate man had doubled the membership of the church. He learned the lesson that all must learn - that of himself he could not win souls to the Master. So he looked to God for help, through Jesus; while others who were wiser, better educated, and probably more dignified, *did practically nothing*.

--via Path to the Heart, Glenn A Coon

5:00 P.M. CLASSES

*The elders urge you to be present
on Sunday evenings for information
on better serving the LORD*