

RANSOMED MINISTRIES *Heart*

- June 2002 Newsletter -

“If we believed that...we could do *anything*. We would follow Him *anywhere!*”

A few of us were sitting around last week talking about the Gospel, what it really promises, and what it means for our lives. I was trying to make the case that the New Covenant means nothing less than this: Our heart is good. I was surprised to hear the protests from most of my friends, who are deeply committed followers of Jesus and who have walked with him for years.

“What? That can’t be! I’ve never heard that in church...ever.”

I know. Neither have I. What most of us *have* heard, over and over, is that our heart is bad. “Deceitfully wicked,” as Jeremiah says (17:9). Stay away from your heart. Don’t trust it, for heaven’s sake. Do your duty. Get with the program. This is the whole history of the Old Testament, that sad story of what happened after the fall of man, and how no amount of external pressure could bring us back to the people we were meant to be. Then God announced a new solution:

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. (Ezekiel 36:26)

A new heart. That’s the new deal. But...doesn’t the Bible teach us that our heart is wicked? Well, yes...and no. It all depends on who you mean by “us.” Before a person comes to Christ, before they have been born again, yes – their heart *is* deceitfully wicked. How well we know that. All you have to do is read the paper or watch the news or spend a weekend with your in-laws to be convinced of that. But *after* conversion, after a person is ransomed by Jesus Christ, well then...everything changes:

For you are not a true Jew because you were born of Jewish parents or because you have gone through the Jewish ceremony of circumcision. No, a true Jew is one whose heart is right with God. And true circumcision is not a cutting of the body but a change of heart produced by God’s Spirit (Romans 2:28-29).

Until we embrace that stunning truth, we will find it really hard to make decisions, because we can’t trust what our heart is saying. We’ll have to be motivated by external pressure since we can’t be motivated by our heart. In fact, we won’t find our calling, our place in God’s kingdom, because that is written on our heart’s desires. We’ll have a really hard time hearing God’s voice in a deeply intimate way, because God speaks to us in our heart. We’ll live under guilt and shame for all sorts of evil thoughts and desires that the Enemy has convinced us were ours. God will seem aloof. Worship and prayer will feel like chores.

Of course, I just described the life most Christians feel doomed to live.

Now listen to Jesus:

Each tree is recognized by its own fruit. People do not pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from briars. *The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in his*

heart, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in his heart (Luke 6:44-45).

Later, explaining the parable of the sower and the seed, Jesus says,

But the seed on good soil stands for those *with a noble and good heart*, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop. (Luke 8:15)

According to Jesus, somebody's heart is good and even noble. That somebody is you, if you are his. God kept his promise. Our hearts have been circumcised to God. We have a new heart. Do you know what this means? Your heart is good. Let that sink in for a moment. Your heart is good. And your heart matters to God. What would happen if you believed it, if you came to the place where you *knew* it was true? Your life would never be the same. My friend Lynn got it, and that's when she exclaimed,

"If we believed that...we could do *anything*. We would follow Him *anywhere*!"

Exactly. It would change our lives. It would change the face of Christianity. This is the lost message of the Gospel, lost at least to a great many people. Small wonder. This is the *last* thing the Enemy wants the world to know. It would change everything. Those of you who've gotten your heart back know exactly what I mean. Its freedom. Its life. Its so...from God.

This little fellowship at Ransomed Heart is battling to recover the lost beauty of the Gospel and shouting it from the rooftops! We work out of our homes, to keep our overhead next to nothing. We're staying as small as we can, to let others take this into their part of the world. But we do need your help. If your heart has been captured by this message and this work, please let us know. I won't write often, I won't twist arms, I'll just let you know we've got some bills to pay!

I can't begin to thank you enough for your love, your middle-of-the-night prayers on our behalf, your gracious gifts to us. I know your hearts are *for* us, and for this mission. Its going to be incredible. Next time, I'll tell you about the work on the Center, our advanced training, our women's events, and all the things we've got cooking for the next year. For now, I just wanted you to know...your heart is good.

With love,

John Eldredge

PS. We've got all new tape products and several new books available including the Journey of Desire Journal on our web site now! Visit us at www.ransomedheart.com.