

Ridin' High Cowboy Church

8771 FM 35

Union Valley/Royse City, TX

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September 11, 2016 – Modifying Behavior and Monitoring our Heart

Whenever I said a “bad” word and my mom heard it, I got my mouth washed out with soap. Mom was really strict on not saying any cuss words or even words that were a substitute for cuss words. My friends didn't get the memo. Playing football, I said a bad one and my mom heard it from inside the house. I **NEVER** said that word again if my mom were in the same county! The problem though, is nothing my mom could do would keep me from thinking it!

Contrast between modifying our behavior and monitoring our heart. All of Jesus' sermons, parable and actions downplayed bad behavior and shine a bright light on the condition of the heart.

Spiritually, we get good at covering up our heart by not doing things outwardly, but have you ever let something slip out of your mouth and you covered your mouth and said, “Where did THAT come from?” Or you do something and people look at you like you're crazy cause it's something you usually don't do! God says I know where that came from ... it was in your heart.

Spiritually, it shows up in what we say, what we do, but in reality – it's a heart problem. Scripturally, we find this all the time.

What is in your heart expresses itself the most to the people we love the most.

The great thing about Christianity is that our God is in the heart changing business!

Background: A discussion between Jesus and the Religious leaders about breaking a law that leaders set up to keep people from breaking the law. Rules to keep from breaking rules! Example – the priests had to wash their hands from fingertip to elbow to make sure they were not eating something bad.

Matthew 15:1-2; 17-20 ***1 Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, 2 “Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!”***

Skip to 17

17 “Don’t you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? 18 But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man ‘unclean.’ We don’t need a stethoscope to check each other’s heart, just listen to what they say.

This verse, this principle is why you say things like ... “he’s not the man I married, he’s changed so much” ... the filter gets thinner, the modifying behavior goes away.

19 For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. 20 These are what make a man ‘unclean’; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him ‘unclean.’”

A large number of people when asked, “If you knew there were no consequences and you wouldn’t get caught, would you _____” ... cheat, steal, lie, kill, have an affair ... an alarming number of people said yes to that question.

Proverbs 4:23 Above all else guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life or all of life comes from there...

To guard your heart means to monitor what goes in and what goes out. It’s not your brain or your eyes, ears, hands...it’s deep inside you.

Nobody ever taught us to do this, they just taught us to modify our behavior.

The Good News is that God is in the heart changing business.

Four things that lead to Spiritual Heart attacks from Jesus’ list ...

Guilt – as long as there is a barrier between people there is also a barrier between you and God, it’s a heart issue...

Anger – this usually stems from something done to us and we carry that anger with us all through life, again it alienates us from God. Most of the time it can’t be repaid anyway...

Greed – I’m gonna get what’s coming to me and nobody messes with my stuff. This separates us from God cause he won’t compete with our stuff. The root of this is fear that God can’t take care of us. The people around you feel that they have to compete with your stuff and your money.

Jealousy – better health, more money, better looking ... I’m not happy with what God gave others and not me...

Solution to These Problems – just what you would think it is...

Guilt – Confession

Anger – Forgive (illustration – meeting with a couple for marriage counseling and the husband just walked on egg shells all the time cause the wife was so angry. She laid out a long list of all the people who she was angry with, all the things that had happened to her. She had her phone with her and I said, “Open up your calendar, pick out a date on the calendar when you will decide that these people you are angry with have had control of you long enough.” And she was furious, and added me to her list!

Greed – Give

Jealousy – celebrate other peoples’ successes.

Illustration: We want God to fix our heart without doing our part. A man goes to the doctor for heart problems and the doctor says exercise and lose weight. The man says I can’t, I have a bad heart...fix my heart and then I’ll exercise. The doctors says exercise and then I’ll fix your heart!

Is your heart OK? Today?

The result of guilt, greed, anger and jealousy is always the inability to have a relationship, with people and with God. If any of these things cause you to want this sermon to end right now, those are the areas you need to let God work on your heart.

No doctor can force you to get your physical heart in shape and God has chosen not to force us to do these things, but you can’t imagine how much weight is lifted off of you if you will rid of guilt, anger, greed and jealousy.