

## THE GIFT OF A NEW HEART

### Ezekiel 36:26, Deuteronomy 30:6, Proverbs 4:23

Our text clearly revealed God's concern about the state of men's hearts. We learn from it that our heart and thought processes dictates the course of our lives. The Bible revealed that men have different kinds of hearts. These include froward (obstinate, habitually disobedient) hearts Proverbs 17:20, deceitful and wicked hearts Jeremiah 17:9, Proverbs 26:23, hardened hearts Proverbs 28:14, haughty hearts Proverbs 18:12, lusting hearts Proverbs 6:25, proud hearts Proverbs 16:5, 21:4, heavy hearts Proverbs 12:25, and sick hearts Proverbs 13:12. These types of hearts have direct bearing on the lifestyle of its owners. On the other hand, we have God's kind of hearts Acts 13:22, pure hearts Mathew 5:8, trusting hearts Proverbs 3:5-6, wise hearts Proverbs 10:8, 16:21, 23:15, sound (peaceful) hearts Proverbs 14:30, merry (cheerful) hearts Proverbs 15:15, 17:22 and understanding hearts Proverbs 15:14. These too affect and dictate how their owners live. How is your heart?; and what kind of heart do you have? This will undoubtedly tell us the kind of person that you are.

Everything we do and say in life originates from our hearts. Just as water reflects the face, so one's life reflects his heart Proverbs 27:19. All unconverted men have desperately wicked hearts Jeremiah 17:9, Genesis 6:5. God knew this hence He promised to do something remarkable about the state of the heart of those who come to Him through repentance and salvation. Our text described the result and outcome of such divine and spiritual operation including our roles in keeping the experience. This operation by God through His Spirit have been variously described as sanctification, purity of heart, cleansing of the heart, circumcision of the heart, purging of the heart, removal of Adamic nature, Christian perfection, and perfection of God's love in the human heart. It is a definite Christian experience that sets the converted Christian and believer apart for God and for holy use.

We shall consider three subtopics:

1. Sin's magnet in the human heart
2. Spiritual surgery in believer's heart
3. Godly and righteous living after sanctification

#### **1. Sin's magnet in the human heart**

Jeremiah 17:9, Genesis 6:5, James 1:14, 15, Mark 7:21-23, Acts 5:3, Deuteronomy 30:6

The Bible clearly declares the depravity of all unsaved men. The simple implication of this is that all human beings who have not been saved have depraved, corrupt hearts. Their

problems originated in the heart. Every sin that man commits have thought equivalent. We sin first in our hearts or with our hearts before committing actual, practical and physically observable sins. There is a magnet, an inclination and propensity, tendency or affection for sin in the heart of all sinners. It makes sin attractive to them. We all inherited this nature that takes delight and pleasure in sinning. Sin exists in all men first as interests, feeling and inclinations to lust. Lust is love for anything that contravenes the word of God. It is an inward thing. Actually and behaviorally, we are not easily attracted to do things that we are not interested in doing whether good or bad. We do the things we enjoy and love doing because primarily we are interested in them. Hence we cannot really be free from sin unless we first get rid of all lustful intentions, interests, feelings, desires, motives and inclinations towards sins and sinning from our hearts. Interestingly, we cannot do it by ourselves. In the physical, no baby or child can circumcise himself; someone else must do it for him. God knew this hence He promised to do it for us in our text.

## **2. Spiritual surgery in believer's heart**

Deuteronomy 30:6, Ezekiel 36:26, Jeremiah 32:39, 31:33, 1 Samuel 10:9

Our heart is ordained by God to be His royal throne. We are expected to be filled with thoughts about God – His word, His will, His purposes, His programs and plans, and His ways 24/7. This is what happens to all who are sanctified. Those who belong to God who have prayed through and have obtained the experience of sanctification have hearts filled with love for God to a point that there is no room or vacancy for anything else. This is called “*the power of exclusive affection*”. By it we love God with ALL our hearts, mind, soul and strength. God does this by spiritually cutting away from our hearts every desire, feelings and thoughts that finds sin attractive and replace it with complete total desire for Himself, for His institutions and for His ordinances. A pure and holy heart is a heart that is always filled with thoughts about God because God is pure and holy.

Like all physical surgeries, we must prepare for it and present ourselves to God by deliberate choices, decisions and actions; which include abstaining from all appearances of evil, worldly friends and ungodly corrupting environment and companions, followed by whole hearted prayers of consecration of every part of our body and life to God and set apart for strictly holy use. Holy living and godly life elude many believers because of failure in this area. They live more in the vicinity of Egypt than the borders of Canaan. They have left Egypt but their best friends are still Egyptians. We find Egypt expressed in everything they say and do when God said “... *come out from among them and be ye separate ...*” 2 Corinthians 6:14-18

Once we prepare and connect with God through fervent prayer, God through the Holy Spirit instantaneously performs this operation in our heart just like it happened to Saul the first king in Israel (1Samuel 10:9). Like salvation, we will know it once it happens, the Spirit of

God will witness in our spirit that it has been done, the people around us will know it too because they will begin to see how the experience affects our subsequent choices, decisions and actions as we continue to relate with them. *“Blessed are those that hunger and thirst for righteousness for they shall be filled”* (Mathew 5:6)

### **3. Godly and righteous living after sanctification**

Proverbs 4:23, 1 Thessalonians 5:22-23, Philippians 4:8-9, 1Thessalonians 4; 7-8, 1 Peter 1:16-17, Mathew 5:8

Sanctification as a definite Christian experience results in total freedom from sin, purity of heart and life, supreme love for God, holy and righteous living and saintliness. This facilitates divine- human partnership and relationship. We feel more and dwell more in the presence of God Numbers 23:21, Psalm 4:3, and live God honoring and responsible life even among others at home and on the streets where we live, in the office where we work and where we do our businesses. Blessings of continuous divine presence that comes as reward for holy living include peace, protection, courage to witness and power for service. Much more important is the fact that we are more ready and better prepared for rapture. *“Blessed are the pure in heart for they shall see God”*. We shall experience divine manifestation and presence in all that we do here and now in the world and eventually when we leave this world, we shall see the King of Glory in His beauty. We shall be with Him and live with Him forever.

Holiness of life is a calling by God which all true believers must pursue and possess. We are expected to serve God and walk in holiness before God in this present world Titus 2:11 and all the days of our life Luke 1:74-75. We can only do this after sanctification. Furthermore, like salvation, having sanctification is one thing but keeping the experience is another. Just like it is possible to lose salvation experience, we can also lose our sanctified state. Hence our text enjoins us to keep our heart with all diligence. The spiritual environment we patronize often and the company we keep can to a large extent determine whether we keep sanctification experience or not.

Given consistent fellowship with God in the right environment and fellowship with brethren of like minds, decisions and destinations, we shall keep sanctification experience and enjoy it till the end. This we should do because *“... without holiness, no man shall see the Lord”* Hebrews 12:14. God is faithful and will be faithful to us by sanctifying us and pouring abundant grace into our lives, with the help of the Holy Spirit to possess and keep purity of heart; we must be faithful too! God will never force any of His gifts and blessings upon us; neither will He help us to have or keep what we are not interested in possessing or keeping. God will not forcefully keep in His kingdom those who do not want to stay. Our life runs better when lived as partnership project with God.