

As we begin today... please try to imagine with me for a moment... that it is a cold (but sunny) day here in Central Oregon. It is mid-January and you decide to get out of the house and go for a drive. You drive down Burgess until it ends at Century Drive. To your left... Century Drive has not been plowed... but you turn left *anyway* (toward the Twin Lakes and Crane Prairie.) ... Hoping not to get your vehicle “high centered” and therefore stuck... you somehow make it all the way to South Twin Lake. You park your vehicle and walk toward the lake. ... You are all alone with the lake entirely to yourself.

It appears to be frozen solid... so you decide that you will try to walk on water. ... But no more than 15 yards from shore... suddenly you hear the ice starting to crack. ... What do you do...? Do you continue going in the same direction...? ... Do you pay *no heed* to the sound of ice breaking – so you can walk across the lake? ... I would question if you had a “*lick of common sense*” if you did not immediately turn around and go no further.

The same principle holds true in your Christian life. ... If your path is about to destroy you... you should stop immediately what you are doing and turn around into the right direction.

As we approach the sunset of Luke 6... (and the “Sermon on the Mount” that we have been studying these past few weeks)... we are reminded by the Lord of the importance of self-scrutiny or self-examination. ... When it comes to us... we are to be Sherlock Holmes (investigating our own heart for anything that will hinder... hamper... hold up... handicap... or hamstring our spiritual growth... dedication... closeness... and commitment to the Lord Jesus Christ.)

We are urged repeatedly throughout the Bible to keep an eye on our heart. The Bible explains the importance for doing this... and the obstacles we face when we attempt to look at ourselves. Our biggest obstacle is our own heart.

Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV)

⁹ The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

The deceit of our heart causes us to conclude that we don't need to examine ourselves because there is nothing wrong with us at all. ... Why do I need to get right... when I haven't done anything wrong at all...? ... The heart is deceitful ABOVE all things! ... It can be false... foxy... fraudulent... fallacious... and fake. ... If we are not careful... we can be duped by the Trojan Horses of this world and destroyed by our sinful indulgence and pride.

Has your heart ever "duped" you...? Here is one way to know. Just answer (very honestly) a few questions for me. (You don't have to answer these outloud.)

1. What do you want the most? (Is it based in selfishness?)
2. What do you think about most? (Is it your own pleasure?)
3. How do you use your spare money? (Again, is it your own pleasure?)
4. What do you do with our leisure time?
5. What company do you enjoy?
6. Who and what do you admire?
7. What do you laugh at? (Does it glorify God?)

Because we are so easily duped by our own hearts... we have to look at ourselves in the mirror day after day. The person in the mirror knows us better than anyone else. Is he pointing the finger at you to get the garbage out of your life... or do you have confidence because your life is completely right with the Lord?

When it comes to regularly scrutinizing yourself... are you willing to do this? It is easy to scrutinize others... but what about you? ... When you look at yourself... what do you find? ... [P A U S E] ...

We now turn our attention to the closing remarks of Luke's presentation of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount." As Jesus closes His message... He addresses four areas that we need to regularly examine – in our own lives. Here are the four areas that our passage will present:

- * *The Area of Education*
- * *The Area of Examination*
- * *The Area of Emanation* (I will explain this when we get to it.)
- * *The Area of Excavation*

The first area (education) is covered by verses 39-40.

Luke 6:39-40

I must confess... that when I first started studying this week's passage (here) I could not see the connection between these two verses. But I knew that Luke presents the subjects in his Gospel account in a logical order. The subjects are usually associated and flow naturally together. Bible commentators had to help me see why these two verses appear one after the other.

We need to examine the area of our education. (LISTEN!) Watch who you follow – because you will be like your teacher. We will become like those we follow... *so we must decide to choose good teachers to follow.*

I have found this to be true even in who I follow in the political realm. There are many political commentators whose views I have strong agreement with. They word their political arguments in a very clear and compelling way. But I cannot listen very long... or read too much of them... because I find my own spirit... heart... and attitude turns very harsh... cynical... unloving and unChristlike – even when conversations are not about political issues.

I must be very careful – and I suggest that *you be careful too*... if you listen to (or read) very much political commentary. Don't ignore the sound of the cracking ice! Turn back to shore. Don't become *immersed* in their tone and spirit. (I'm not saying do not be aware of the issues. But *be careful* about your spirit. Examine yourself to see if your spirit is becoming like theirs.)

In the area of education... the first part of verse 40 serves as a warning against pride. The Lord stresses that a disciple is not above the teacher... and... of course... Jesus is yours and my primary teacher. ... As we are taught by Him and grow in Him... we will become more like Jesus. More and more... *we are conformed to the image of His Son* (Romans 8:29) and ultimately... *when He is revealed... we shall be like Him... for we shall see Him as He is* (1 John 3:2).

Unfortunately pride sometimes gets in the way of this... so Jesus gives the warning in the first part of verse 40. (*"A disciple is not above his teacher..."*)

The student that adopts *that* kind of attitude... tends to be *unteachable*. In fact... in Jesus' time... one's teacher was *everything*... because there were no libraries or other resources for the student. ... For a person to claim to be above his teacher would have been the *height of arrogance*.

The arrogance of many Christians today leads them to believe they know more than the Lord... when it comes to running their own life. ... Then they wonder at Him when their lives crash and fall apart into pieces. ... Is there any area of your life where you are ignoring His leading...? Have you shut Him out of any area – thinking His way is not for you at this time...? If so... you are arrogantly trying to place *yourself* above Him. ... Don't ignore the sound of the cracking ice! Turn back to shore. ... **[P A U S E]** ...

This is a warning against pride... and nothing blinds a person like pride. So Jesus tells an absurd (but comical) parable to make this point.

Luke 6:41-42

Jesus further highlighted the absurdity of trying to become a spiritual boss on the basis of personal authority by imagining one blind man observing in his peer's eye a "speck" (literally, "a small piece of straw, chaff, or wood") despite the sight-impairing "log" (literally, "a piece of heavy timber such as a beam used in roof construction or to bar a door") in his own eye!

We must be able to see clearly enough to help our brother see better. It certainly is not wrong to help a brother get a painful speck of dirt out of his eye, *provided we can see what we are doing*. The crowd must have laughed out loud when Jesus described an "eye doctor" with *a plank* in his eye, performing surgery on a patient with *a speck* in his eye!

The emphasis here is on being honest with ourselves and not becoming hypocrites. ... It is easy to try to help a brother with his faults *just so we can cover up our own sins!* ... People who are constantly criticizing others are usually guilty of something worse in their own lives. ... Our flesh finds it so easy to turn a microscope on another person's sin... while we look at ours through the wrong end of a telescope! ... We use strong terms for someone else's sin... but mild alternative names for our own faults. ... Furthermore... we especially hate our own faults... when we see them in others.

The wretched and gross sin that is always blind to its own sinfulness is self-righteousness. ... Self-righteousness is a sin of blindness... or of grossly distorted vision. ... The self righteous person looks directly at his own sin and still imagines he sees only goodness.

Because the self-righteous person sees no sin in his own personal life... he/she sees no need for God's grace in their behalf. ... If the self-righteous person is already a Christian... but is struggling with a judgmental spirit... it is difficult for him/her to walk with God... because he/she is unwilling to acknowledge their sin and get matters right with God.

But let's be careful (and not get carried away. (YOU SEE...)) there is an unbalanced extreme to this – which is called “perpetual autopsy.” (What's that?)... In short... it is being overly critical of ourselves. Sometimes we can get so consumed in self-examination that we become unbalanced. We should not look only at ourselves... or we will become discouraged and defeated by the failures of our past.

Satan is the accuser... and he enjoys it when we accuse and condemn ourselves to the point of defeat and despair! ... He loves to remind us of all our mistakes. Self-examination requires that we should look by faith to Jesus Christ and let Him forgive and restore us. No matter how bad you have messed up... the Lord can restore your life and help you to get back on your feet spiritually.

We need to make sure that we have judged ourselves **honestly** before God... knowing that Jesus has forgiven us of all our confessed sin. Then we can help others with their struggles and weaknesses. (You see...) another mistake we can make from these verses is to assume from them that we are never to correct other believers – because we may have a log in our own eye. But this does not tell us never to deal with someone else's problems. ... Rather... it says to take care of the major problem in your life and then you will be able to help someone else — as if by taking care of your own problem... you can see better to deal (sensitively) with someone else's problem.

The purpose of self-judgment (looking for the log in our eye)... is to prepare us to serve others. ... Christians are obligated to help each other mature in Christ and grow in grace. ... When we do not judge ourselves... we not only hurt ourselves... but we also hurt those to whom we could encourage. ... Because when our spiritual sight is clear... we will *then* be alert to problems... to those who are hurting... or drifting away from the Lord.

So far we have looked at two areas for our self-reflection. We have seen that it is to include the area of our education. (Watch who you follow.) And it is to include the area of evaluation. (When we do not FIRST judge

ourselves... we not ONLY hurt ourselves... but we also hurt those to whom we could - otherwise - encourage.) ... Now it is time for us to cover the third area – “Emanation.” ... What do you emanate...?

Emanate...? What’s that...? ... As a light bulb emanates light – what do you emanate...? ... To emanate means “to shine-out whatever is inside...” “to reveal true essence...” “to display an un-hideable character...”

As the Lord continues His theme on self scrutiny, He directs our focus on the area of the emanation or the fruit... the consequences... or the by-products of the actions and attitudes of our lives. (What are you emanating?) ... He illustrates this by describing the fruit of a tree. Good trees produce good fruit (actions and attitudes) ... not corrupt fruit. ... The emanation (or fruit) of a bad tree is corrupt... not good. The fruit or emanation of a tree identifies it. ... Figs don’t grow on sticker bushes and grapes don’t grow on bramble bushes.

Luke 6:43-45

The primary intent is self-examination... not examination of others. Watch what you produce and admit any blind spots. ... Our fruit or our actions... our attitudes... our character... or our conduct - reflect what is going on in our heart. ... We are going to be known... not by what we claim... but by what we do. ... What is really going on inside... will surface on the outside through our lips in our speech. ... Cursing... filthy jokes and stories... and hate come from a bitter... bad heart. ... Like a volcano that spues forth lava... whatever fills your heart (whatever is abundant in it)... **IS** going to spue forth from your mouth.

"Pay no attention to that man behind the curtain!" was the rebuking cry of the Wizard of Oz. ... Everyone who has seen *The Wizard of Oz* remembers that scene near the end of the movie. ... The great... fire-breathing... stern talking... terrifying "wizard" - was nothing more than a normal... little man... standing behind a curtain... working a machine that created smoke... fire... a scary face... and voice.

In spite of all his attempts to fool people... the truth came out. ... The wizard was exposed.... It's the same with people's words and actions. They can put up a good show for a while... but sooner or later... the real "person behind the curtain" shows through.

What do your language and your behavior reveal about the real you? ... As you look at what you are doing... and what you are saying... what is it revealing about your heart? ... This is what Jesus is trying to get across to us. ... If you find that your words and actions are disproportionately angry... depressed... and hopeless... then don't ignore the sound of the ice cracking under your feet! Take it to the Lord and ask Him to transform your heart. Don't merely try to change your words. It is a heart issue. Have God do a work on your heart. ... [P A U S E] ...

Do a self reflection on your education... your evaluations... your emanation... and (4th)... your excavation. The Lord wants us to examine the foundation of our life.

Luke 6:46-49

Jesus asked (rhetorically) why anyone would express such deeply felt devotion with their lips... yet neglect obedience. ... While other teachers prized information and judged their students on the basis of their

knowledge... Jesus defined learning - differently. ... True disciples heed their Teacher's words and then faithfully apply them. ... And NOTICE - they get tested by trials. (Storms - of crashing waves - come.)... [P A U S E] ...

The British form of government is unusual. ... It is known as a “constitutional monarchy”. ... In the days of yore... kings wielded considerable power. But with the passing of time... Parliament cut increasingly into “*the divine right of kings*” so that THEY could wield absolute power. (Today) all that remains (now) is a monarchy that has virtually no political power. ... The British have a “sovereign” who sits in splendor on the throne... but all decisions are made by Parliament. The reigning monarch's function is reduced to signing into law decrees voted into being by the people. ... In a constitutional monarchy... a king sits upon a throne and a representative government makes all of the decisions.

Many Christians try to set up just such a constitutional monarchy in their hearts. ... They are quite willing to own Jesus as King — as long as they can run their own affairs and make all of the decisions. ... They say: “*Lord, Lord*”... but then they proceed to please themselves. ... But Jesus will have none of this!

At the foundation of your life... is Jesus really Lord... or is He MERELY a “constitutional monarch”...? ... The foundation is what gives a building strength and stability. ... If it is weak... cracked... shallow... or if there is none at all... then the building will be unstable and eventually fall or deteriorate.

The difference between the wise disciple and a disciple in name only is the presence of a reliable foundation. ... Those who put the Lord's words into

action are building on a solid foundation (anchored to an immovable rock.) Those who do not... lose everything in the “torrent.”

All of us are builders... and we must be careful to build wisely. ... To “*build on the rock*”... simply means to obey what God commands in His Word. ... To “*build on the sand*” means to give Christ lip service... but not obey His will.

It may **look** as if we are building a strong house... but if it has no foundation... it cannot last. The storm (here)... is not the **last** judgment (the 7 year Tribulation)... but **the tests of life** that come to every professing Christian. ... They might be active in church and other religious organizations... but if they do not have the right foundation... when difficulties come... (and they will) ... they desert Jesus... and their entire spiritual house collapses.

Every believer is building... and either you have a good foundation or a poor one. ... The person who listens to the Lord and is content **with simply giving intellectual assent to the truth** - is on dangerous ground. He/she is building for eternity **on shifting sand**. ... The person who takes the Lord’s words to heart... and **acts** upon them (however) is on the solid rock.

Is Jesus lord – deeply embedded as the **foundation** of your life... or is He merely a constitutional monarch...? ... Scott and Janet Willis had Jesus as Lord for their foundation.

Pastor Scott Willis and his wife Janet had no inkling of what awaited them when they and the youngest six of their nine children piled into their minivan... buckled up... and left their home on Chicago’s south side for Wisconsin. ... It would turn out to be a day of excruciating pain and horror.

While driving north on Interstate 94 in Milwaukee... the van ran over a large piece of metal that punctured the gas tank... turning the van into a raging furnace. ... By the time the van stopped and the parents fell out... their children were hopelessly trapped... as their mother screamed: “*No! No! No!*”

One could suppose that *for the Willises* - God had never been so far away.

(Yet) at a news conference... the burned... bandaged couple (still in physical pain)... gave witness to God’s grace. ... Janet said that when she looked back toward the van and began screaming... Scott touched her shoulder. “He said: ‘*Janet, this is what we’ve been prepared for.*’ And he was right. He said, ‘*Janet, it was quick and they’re with the Lord,*’ and he was right.” ... In their shared hospital room they comforted themselves by watching videos of their children... reading passages from God’s Word... and talking openly about what had happened.

The Willises’ living testimony amidst the tears and heartache is inspiring. “*I know God has purposes and God has reasons,*” says Scott. ... “*God has demonstrated His love to us and our family. There’s no question in our mind that God is good, and we praise Him in all things.*” ... “*It’s His right,*” agrees Janet. “*We belong to Him. My children belong to Him. He’s the giver and taker of life and He sustains us.*”

Storms have fallen on the Willises’ home. Floods of sorrow have roared at its foundations. The thunderclouds still bring pain... but their house stands and will stand! ... The supreme reason for all the world to see is: *they are God’s children... and they have built their lives upon the foundation that Jesus is really Lord!*

Is Jesus really your Lord...?

What emanates from you...?

Do you examine yourself before you criticize others...?

(and) Who are you learning from and becoming like...?

Do you hear any sound of ice cracking...? ... Don't ignore it !