

“Keep Thy Heart!”
Proverbs 4:23

Introduction:

1. This Morning - I Would Like For Us To Turn In Our Bibles To:
 - The Book Of Proverbs:
 - Proverbs 4 - And We Will Begin By Reading 4:20-27:
 - “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. / Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. / For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. / Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. / Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. / Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. / Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. / Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil!”
 - These Words Were Written Long Ago By A Loving & Concerned Father:
 - To His Son:
 - To Help Him Know How Handle The World In Which He Lived!
 - And He Wanted His Son To Listen To His Words & To His Wise Counsel!
 - But These Words That Were Written Between A Father & A Son 3,000 Years Ago Continue To Echo Down To Us:
 - Because They Are Inspired Words!
 - They Are In Fact God’s Words!
 - God Himself Is Speaking:
 - To **His** Sons & To **His** Daughters!
 - To **All** Who Are Part Of His Family, Through Their Relationship With His Eternal Son, The Lord Jesus!
 - And God Is Speaking To Us This Morning:
 - As The Most Loving & The Most Concerned Father!
 - And He Wants **All** Of Us To Know How To Live:
 - In This Fallen & Dangerous World!
2. So In The Middle Of This Passage He Tells Us This:
 - 4:23 - “Keep Thy Heart With All Diligence; For Out Of It Are The Issues Of Life!”
 - Because Of What We Face In This World:
 - Our Father Tells Us:
 - To Keep And To Guard Our Hearts!
 - **IE:** Now - Because We Live In A Dangerous World:
 - There Are Many Things That We Need:
 - To Keep & To Guard & To Protect!
 - We Need To Keep & To Protect:
 - Our Money!
 - Why? Because There May Be A Thief Out There Who Wants Our Money & May Try To Steal Our Money!
 - So What Do We Do?
 - We Keep It – In A Bank Or In A Safe!
 - Because Our Money Is Valuable To Us!
 - We Need To Keep & To Protect:
 - Our Family!
 - Why? Because There May Be Someone Out There Who Wants To Harm You Or A Member Of Your Family!
 - So What Do We Do?
 - We Do Our Best To Keep Our Family Safe & To Protect Them!
 - We Have Locks On Our Doors! You May Have A Weapon At Home To Defend Yourself & Your Family From Those Bad Guys!
 - And We Do This Because Our Family Is Precious To Us!
 - In This Day & Age - We Also Need To Keep & To Protect:
 - Our Own Identities!
 - Why? Because There Are Criminals Out There Who Know How To Steal Important Information About You That Can Benefit Them!
 - So What Are We Told To Do?

- Become A Member Of Some Identity Protection Organization! Or To Put A Lock On Our Credit Information!
- And So We Do This Because Our Identity Is Important To Us!
- But There Is Something Even More:
 - Valuable & Precious & Important:
 - Than Anything That We Just Mentioned That Needs To Be Kept & Guarded & Protected!
 - And That Is:
 - Your Heart! And Your Soul! Your Inner, “Hidden Man Of The Heart!”
- So Our Loving Heavenly Father Tells Us This:
 - “Keep Thy Heart With All Diligence; For Out Of It Are The Issues Of Life!”
 - We Need To Keep Our Hearts Because:

1. *There Is A Great Problem With Our Hearts!*

- We Don't Need To Keep Or Guard Something:
 - Unless There Is A Potential Threat!
 - In A Perfect World:
 - You Would Not Need To Guard Your Money Or Your Family Or Your Identity!
 - The Fact That We Do:
 - Tells Us That We Live In A Fallen World:
 - And There Are Problems!
 - And Because Of These Problems:
 - We Even Hire Guards - To Keep & To Protect Things For Us!
 - And Really, There Are Only 2 Kinds Of Guards!
 - There Are Guards To Keep People Out!
 - Like A Night Watchman At A Store Or A Bank!
 - Want To Keep The Bad Guys Out!
 - To Protect The Things Inside The Building!
 - But - There Are Also Guards To Keeps People In!
 - Like A Guard At A Prison Or A Jail! (Paul!)
 - Want To Keep The Bad Guys In!
 - To Protect The People Outside The Prison!
 - We Need To “Keep Our Hearts” In The Same Way:
 - And For The Same Reasons!
 - Because There Is A Great Problem With Our Hearts!
- Our Hearts Are Very Impressionable!
 - And So We Need To Keep & To Guard Our Hearts:
 - From Outside Threats!
 - From The Evil That Is On The Outside!
 - Threats From The Devil & From Sinners & From The Fallen World Around Us!
 - So What Do We Do?
 - We Try To Put Up Barriers & Filters Us Between Us And Those Outside Threats!
 - We Will Watch Only Certain Rated Movies & Shows - So We Won't See Or Hear Certain Things!
 - And We Do This Especially For Those Who We Care For:
 - Like Our Young Children!
 - And We Need To Do This! We Need To Guard Our Hearts From Those Outside Threats!
 - But We Often Forget That:
- Our Hearts Are Very Influential! (As Well!)
 - And So We Need To Keep & To Guard Our Hearts:
 - From Inside Threats!
 - From The Evil That Is On The Inside!
 - We Too Often Focus On Guarding Ourselves:
 - From The Outside Problems & Threats:
 - That We Forget About The Inside Problem & Threat!
 - We Forget What Our Natural Hearts Are Really Like!
 - And So - The Lord Himself:

- Who “Looketh On The Heart!”
 - Can Remind Us About The Problem Of Our Hearts Apart From Him!
- From The Very Beginning - Genesis 8:21 - “For the imagination of man’s heart is evil from his youth!”
 - Ecclesiastes 9:3 - “The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, and madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead!”
 - Jeremiah 17:9 - “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?”
- This Is What Our Human Hearts Are Really Like:
 - When They Are Apart From The Lord!
 - And This Is Why They Need To Be Kept & Guarded!
 - The Threat Is Not Just From The Outside:
 - It Is From The Inside!
- So - God Tells Us To:
 - “Keep Thy Heart With All Diligence!”
 - Because There Is A Great Problem With All Of Our Hearts!
 - Is There Any Hope For Our Hearts?
 - We Also Need To See That:

2. ***There Is A Great Potential In Our Hearts!***

- A Potential For Good Or For Bad!
 - We Are Told In Proverbs 4:23:
 - “Keep Thy Heart With All Diligence – Why? – For Out Of It Are The Issues (Or Springs) Of Life!”
 - The Heart Is Like:
 - A Spring:
 - That Is The Source Of A Stream That Can Flow For Miles, And Bring Life-Giving Water To The Earth & Animals & People Who Need It!
 - “Out Of Our Hearts” – “Are The Issues / Springs Of Life!”
 - And That Is Why We Need To Keep & Guard Them!
 - So We Need To Take The Time To ***Consider*** Some Things About Our Hearts!
 - Because There Is Great Potential In All Of Our Hearts!
- What Is ***In*** The Fountain Of Our Hearts?
 - Is The Water There:
 - Pure Or Poisoned?
 - The Difference Is A Difference:
 - Between Life & Death!
 - True Faith In Your Heart:
 - Will Issue Forth Life!
 - But Unbelief In Your Heart:
 - Will Issue Forth Death!
 - What Is In The Fountain Of Our Hearts?
- What Comes ***From*** The Flow Of Our Hearts?
 - Is The Water That Flows From Your Heart:
 - Sustaining Or Stale?
 - Does It Bring Glory To God?
 - Or Does It Keep Glory For Itself?
 - What Comes From The Flow Of Our Hearts?
- There Is A Great Potential In All Of Our Hearts!
 - Luke 6:45 - “A good man out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil: for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh!”
 - What Kind Of Heart Do We Have?
 - All Of Our Hearts – Given To Us By God:
 - Are Very Precious & Valuable!
 - And At The Same Time Are Very Vulnerable!
 - And This Is Why We Are Told In Proverbs 4:23 To:
 - “Keep Thy Heart With All Diligence!”
 - Above Anything Else!

- “For Out Of It Are The Issues Of Life!”
- Is There Any Hope For Our Hearts?
- There Is Hope!
- When We Realize That:

3. ***There Is A Great Power For Our Hearts!***

- And As We See In 4:20-22 - That Power Is The Word Of God:
 - “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. / Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. / For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh!”
 - Did You Hear That?
 - Especially In Verse 22?
 - There We Find What Every Heart Needs!
 - Life & Health!
 - Though Our Hearts May Be Full Of Poison!
 - And Though Our Hearts May Be Stale & Stagnant!
 - They Can Be Given:
 - Life & Health!
 - Through The Power Of The Word Of God!
- And This Is Really The Only Way:
 - We Can “Keep” And Guard Our Hearts!
 - To “Give God The Keeping Of Our Hearts!” (Spurgeon)
 - The Truth Is:
 - We Can’t Keep & Guard Our Hearts:
 - At All Places & At All Times!
 - We Need The Lord:
 - To Keep & To Protect Our Hearts!
 - He Is Omnipresent / Omniscient / Omnipotent!
 - Proverbs 24:12 Describes God Himself As:
 - “He That Keepeth Thy Soul!”
- The Word Of God Is:
- The Power To Save Our Hearts!
 - One Thing That All Of Our Hearts Need:
 - Is What His Word Provides:
 - And That Is Life!
 - And This Can Only Come Through:
 - The Word Of The Gospel – The Word Of Christ!
 - John 6:63 - “It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life!”
 - The First Way & The Primary Way:
 - To “Keep Your Heart” Is To:
 - Have It Safe In The Arms Of Jesus Through Faith In Him As The Living Word!
 - He Is The True Guardian Of Our Hearts!
 - And He Alone Can Give Life When There Is Nothing But Death In Our Hearts!
 - John 7:38 - “He that believeth on me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water!”
 - But The Word Of God Is Also:
- The Power To Sanctify Our Hearts!
 - Another Thing That All Of Our Hearts Need:
 - Is Also What His Word Provides:
 - And That Is Health!
 - And This Can Only Come Through:
 - The Words Of Grace!
 - Ephesians 5:25-27 - “Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; / That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word, / That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy and without blemish!”
 - The Second Way:

- To “Keep Your Heart” Is To:
 - Let It Be Restrained & Renewed By The Written Word Of God!
- And The Word Of God Is Also:
- The Power To Strengthen Our Hearts!
 - The Vitality Of Life & Health:
 - That Comes From The Lord:
 - Through The Living Word & The Written Word!
 - Will Give Us Strength:
 - To Live In This Dark & Dangerous World!
- This Is The Hope That God Gives Us Through His Word!
 - Hope For Our Hearts!
 - And Then - With That New Life & Health - And Through Them - We Can Realize That:

4. ***There Is Great Path For Our Hearts!***

- What Must We Do:
 - Now That God Is Keeping Our Hearts?
 - And He Does So Completely & Perfectly!
- Keep Your Heart Full!
 - Full Of The Words Of God!
 - Proverbs 4:20-21 - “My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. / Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart!”
 - Keep The Words Of God:
 - In Your Ears!
 - “Incline” - To Stretch Out!
 - In Your Eyes!
 - Reading!
 - In Your Mind!
 - Thinking & Meditating!
 - Keep Your Heart Full:
 - Of The Word Of God! This Is The Greatest Pathway Of Life!
- Keep Your Heart Pure!
 - Through The Words Of God!
 - Proverbs 4:24 - “Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee!”
 - When Your Heart Is Right, Then The Word Of God Can Continue To Purify You:
 - From The Inside On Out!
 - Psalm 19:7-10 - “The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul: the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple. / The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart: the commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes. / The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring for ever: the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. / More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb!”
 - Keep Your Heart Pure:
 - Through The Word Of God! This Is The Greatest Pathway Of Life!
- Keep Your Heart Fixed!
 - On The Words & The Ways Of God!
 - Proverbs 4:25-27 - “Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. / Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. / Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil!”
 - Keep Your Heart Fixed:
 - On The Word & The Ways Of God! This Is The Greatest Pathway Of Life!

Conclusion:

1. The Most Valuable, Precious & Important Possession You Have:
 - Is The Heart You Have Been Given By The Lord!
 - And That Is Why God Himself:
 - As A Father To His Child - Tells You This:
 - “Keep Thy Heart With All Diligence; For Out Of It Are The Issues Of Life!”
 - And He Knows That:
 - The Life & The Health That Your Heart Needs:

- Can Be Found Only In Him!
- He Is The Only Hope For Our Hearts!
 - He Is The Only One Who Can Keep Our Hearts! For:
 - He Is The Only One Who Can Change Our Hearts!
 - Ezekiel 26:26-27 - "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. / And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them!"

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