

# KEEPING OUR HEARTS

## (Sermon Summary)

10<sup>th</sup> July 2022 – Sunday Morning

Visiting Preacher: Tim Berry

### Reading: Proverbs 4. (v23)

We might ask ourselves why we do the things that we do. Or why do we do the things we do not want to do. Then, after that, there is the important question 'How can I change?' We need to rely on God's wisdom and revelation when trying to answer these kinds of questions. He made us and He knows us. If we try to answer these questions ourselves, we will come up with the wrong answers. People say it is all about the mind. So if we think the right things, we will do the right things. Others say it is to do with our environment and circumstances, and that these dictate our behaviour. God gives us a deeper and more complete answer. He tells us that it is to do with our heart. This is the core and centre of our being.

#### 1. How our heart is a spring.

A river comes from somewhere. It has a source. It can come from underground. This is like the heart. What we do gushes out from the heart. In Luke 6:43-45 we learn that we can either produce good or bad fruit. We are either good or bad trees. The roots are important. This is where the heart draws its life. Bad roots produce bad fruit. Good roots produce good fruit. In Luke 6:45 we see that we can treasure and value the right things or the wrong things. Every word and every action comes from the heart. We are meant to keep our heart so that we do not produce bad fruit.

#### 2. How to keep your heart.

James 3:1-12 talks about the tongue. He talks about springs producing both fresh and saltwater and says that this should not be. So we should not one moment be blessing God with our tongue, and then the next moment be cursing our fellow man. If we are cursing people it is evidence that there is still bad in our heart.

Conversion is a seismic shift. We are born again and are now able to love and enjoy the love of God more and more. The Bible tells us that we are new creations. Yet, despite our newness, we are not made pure and perfect within. We long to be loyal to God and

yet we still sin. We still produce fresh and bitter water. When our hearts are indifferent towards God we produce bad fruit. If we are just concerned with our outward behaviour, then we are just looking at the fruit and not the root. We have to trace things back to the bad roots. We have to ask what is happening in our hearts.

Often the problem is idolatry. This is not something external. It is a problem of the human heart (See Ezekiel 14:3). The trouble begins in the heart. The outward acts of idolatry began inside us. God shows us that He will not listen to us if we have other gods. We are still the same as in Ezekiel's day and are to be found inwardly bowing down to gods. In Matthew 6:19-21,24 we see that we cannot have both God and mammon. Mammon is still a modern-day idol. Our allegiance is not towards God but towards possessions and money. It is a matter of the heart, whom we love, whom we serve. It is about false gods that we might have. We are made to worship, to praise, value and to be loyal to something or someone. But we make false gods which are supposed to provide for us, protect us and give us purpose. What we pursue shows what we value. It might be an academic goal, sports, friends or family.

Romans 1:21-25 is a terrible exchange. The human race has believed a lie. The exchange has happened in our hearts. Our hearts are always busy worshipping something or someone. Either God is the supreme object or something else is. The battle is the same for Christians as well as non-Christians. The allure of the world is strong and finds an ally in our flesh. We battle against the world, the flesh and the devil. Colossians 3:5 shows us that covetousness is idolatry. We are drawn and there is the longing of our heart for something else.

We have to kill off sin in ourselves. The battle has to happen as part of our wider turning to Christ. We cannot have an empty heart because that will simply invent a new idol to fill the space. We have to have a greater loyalty to the Son. He has to be the supreme object of our affections. There is urgency in the instruction that we should keep our heart. It is a priority. It is an urgent and serious matter that we should grow our love for Christ. We have to stir our hearts and engage more with Him. We have to reflect more on Him and marvel at His resurrection and its power. We have to know the Christ who is present with us now and will be with us in glory.

It is important to do this at moments of temptation. Then there is an extra urgency for us to keep our hearts. We ask Him and want to know His glory more and more. Then we will love Him more.

May the Lord help us to keep our hearts with all diligence.