

WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

July 6, 2014

Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!

Prelude

Worship Theme

God is Good

Psalm 27:11-14: "Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and lead me in a level path, because of my foes. Do not deliver me over to the desire of my adversaries; for false witnesses have risen against me, and such as breathe out violence. *I would have despaired* unless I had believed that I would see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living. Wait for the Lord; be strong, and let your heart take courage; yes, wait for the Lord."

God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross

Ps. 29:1-2

+We Adore Him

Hymn #292, "Who Shall Ascend"

Based on Psalm 24

We Confess Our Sin

Great God of justice and judgment, we confess that we richly deserve the wrath which Your word promises to those who do evil and practice iniquity. But while we adore Your holy justice in punishing sin, we also trust in Your mercy and grace to forgive sinners; for you alone are good!

For Jesus' sake therefore, forgive us our pride, our haughtiness, our unbelief, and the countless sins which flow from them. By Your Spirit's power, replace them with meekness, lowliness, and faith, and lead us in the paths of righteousness for Your name's sake. Amen.

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #263, "Lift High The Cross"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication

Ps. 27:7-8

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #402, "Abide With Me"

God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship

Ps. 25:12-14

We Read His Word

Sermon

*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #300, "Blessing And Honor"

God Blesses us in the Benediction

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

Keeping the Heart
Proverbs 4:20-27
Study Notes for July 6, 2014

Proposition: Because the heart controls your life, you must keep it in close communion with God!

Introduction: “To be a Christian, you don’t try to avoid sin; you simply pursue Christ!”

Context: 7th appeal; path of righteousness

I. Heart-Keeping Begins by Heeding the Word of God, vv. 20-22

A. The Command, vv. 20-21

Reading vs. Understanding; Listening vs. Heeding (Prov. 2:2)

“Might as well get in the right lane”

Not getting “John 3:16” tattooed onto a muscle in your chest

Not just listening to a Father; listening to God’s Word!

B. The Reason for the Command, v. 22

John 6:63—the Word is life

Deut. 32:45-47—the Word is life when kept

John 15:9-10—“Communion with God is found in obeying His commandments from the heart—and conversely, one can only obey the commandments from the heart when one is living in a state of communion with God.”

Heeding God’s Word is the path of life. Listening doesn’t give you a right to life—but it does lead to the possession of life!

II. Heart-Keeping Is Superlatively Important, v. 23

A. The Command, v. 23a

Literally, “Above all guarding watch thy heart!”

Guarding the heart = restraining it from wickedness

But this presupposes a redeemed heart! John Flavel put it this way: “Thus the soul which sin had universally depraved, is by grace restored. This being pre-supposed, it will not be difficult to apprehend what it is to keep the heart, which is nothing but the *constant care and diligence of such a renewed man to preserve his soul in that holy frame to which grace has raised it.* For though grace has, in a great measure, rectified the soul, and given it an habitual heavenly temper; yet sin often actually discomposes it again; so that even a gracious heart is like a musical instrument, which though it be exactly tuned, a small matter brings it out of tune again.” (*Works*, 5:426, emphasis original)

B. The Reason for the Command, v. 23b

Does your arm or toenail control your actions?

Don't let your heart wander after the things of this world! Don't let your heart have its own wicked way! Don't let your life be ruined by a wayward heart! Brothers and sisters, like the father speaking here in Proverbs, I plead with you to guard your heart above everything else! A bad arm won't ruin your life; a bad leg may keep you off the baseball team, but it won't keep you out of heaven. But a bad heart, a heart not kept in communion with Christ, will certainly send you straight to hell! I implore you not to treat your hearts lightly, not to simply let them wander after whatever takes their fancy.

"My son, give me your heart, and let your eyes observe my ways" (Pro 23:26). It is this kind of giving of the heart which dominates our imaginations today. So where will you bestow your heart? Your heart will choose Facebook over Christ if you let it do so; it will prefer that car, that experience, that pleasure, that piece of stuff or that bit of status over a close fellowship with Christ.

Your heart follows your treasure—and where have you put your treasure?

Christ's glory is the ultimate treasure!

III. Heart-Keeping Continues by Outward Right Actions, vv. 24-27

Pious feelings are not heart-keeping! A heart issue is an action issue.

A. Putting off Sin, v. 24

Starts with the tongue

External truth-telling → internal truth-telling!

Herman Witsius well said that to keep one's heart close to God requires "frequent intercourse with God; so that worldly cares being for a little while laid aside, and a pleasant retirement sought out, you may by frequent and repeated exercises of reading, meditation, and prayer, with a modest boldness, obtain familiarity with God, Job 22:21, 'Acquaint now thyself with him, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee.' It was a fine advice of Jerome to Eustachius, *De Custodia Virginitatis*: 'Let the privacy of thy chamber always keep thee: let thy bridegroom always delight himself within thee: when thou prayest, thou speakest to thy bridegroom; when thou readest, he speakest to thee: let foolish virgins wander abroad; be thou within with thy bridegroom, because, if thou shuttest thy door, and according to the precept of the Gospel, prayest to thy father in secret, he will come, and knock, and say: "Behold, I stand at the door and knock."'"
(*Economy of the Covenants*, 1:440)

B. Following the Righteous Path, vv. 25-27

This is not a mystical process!

Focusing your energies toward a goal . . . Psalm 119:37

"It is our duty not only to be found in the ways of God in general, but to take care that we walk carefully, circumspectly, uprightly, and diligently in them. Hereon depend our own peace, and our usefulness to others." (Owen, *Hebrews*, 7:282)

"Make level" your paths—remove stumbling blocks

"Turn away your foot" but it's okay to turn your hand toward it?

"It cannot be imagined that he should keep his heart with God, who has lost himself in a wood of earthly business. Take heed you do not pinch your souls, by gratifying the immoderate desires of your flesh. I wish many Christians could truly say what an heathen once did, "I do not give, but only lend myself to business." It is said that Germanicus reigned in the hearts of the Romans, Tiberius only in their provinces. Though the world be in your hands, let it not banish Christ out of your hearts.

"Take heed, Christian, lest thy shop steal away thy heart from thy closet. God never intended earthly employments for a stop, but rather for a step, to heavenly ones. O let not Aristippus the heathen, arise in judgment against thee, who said, that he would rather neglect his means, than his mind; his farm, than his soul. If thy ship be overladen, thou must cast some of the wares overboard. More business than thou canst well manage, is like more meat than thou canst well digest, which will quickly make a sickly soul." (Flavel, *Works*, 5:505)