

The Lord Set His Heart Deuteronomy 10:12-21

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. Amen.

After a protracted conversation with an individual, they said to me, “I know in my heart that what I believe about God is truth.” What was it that they believed in their heart? Well, it had been an interesting conversation before this statement was made, and there were a number of things which this person believed “in their heart” that were contrary to what God has revealed in His Holy Scripture.

This individual believed that people are reincarnated after they die and live another life as another person – interestingly, this individual believed they had lived previously as a soldier in the continental army during the Revolutionary war.

I have not done a full investigation on this, but the people whom I have met or heard talk, that believe in reincarnation have always had the same gender in every reincarnation. What is further interesting, is that this individual also believed that homosexuality is a God-pleasing alternate lifestyle choice. They believed that if Jesus were to come back today, He’d do so as a woman. They also believed that they did not sin, there is no hell, and everybody goes to heaven. I was also told that when I get to heaven and see this individual there that they would come to me and say, “See, I was right!”

As for me, I prayed that this individual would repent of their false beliefs, for some of their beliefs, if held until their death, would lead to their eternal destruction. And pray they would also realize their sinfulness and repent of it, so that they might live in the forgiveness Christ has purchased – and finally attain heaven.

I will say this, it is interesting what people believe in their hearts – and scary. It is rather amazing that so many times people believe what they want to believe from their hearts and disregard anything that God’s Word says they must believe. And even more amazing that they still want to call themselves Christians. Why not call themselves what they are – Hertha Herpolsheimerians, or Sherman Schmedlapians, or whatever their nameians.

In our text, we have an amazing thing stated. "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I am commanding you today for your good? Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it. Yet the Lord set his heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day."

Dear friends, we are to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength. Everything in all of creation belongs to Him – you, me, every single thing that exists is His – and He gives us all that we need. He simply asks that we love Him and obey what He commands.

But too often we love our own desires more. We want to do and believe what we want, we love ourselves, our own fleshly desires, more than we love God. But you know what? God knew that the hearts of mankind would be like this. After Noah, his family, and all the animals got off the ark, Noah built an altar and made a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God. And when the Lord smelled the pleasing aroma, the Lord said in his heart, "I will never again curse the ground because of man, for the intention of man's heart is evil from his youth." (Gen. 8:21) God knew that man’s heart, by its own inclination, is evil.

Why is this? Paul explains it. *For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God, for it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God.* (Rom. 8:5-8)

After the fall of Adam and Eve, all mankind has inherited sinful flesh, the desires of the flesh are opposed to the will of God. There is not a single person who does not want to satisfy those desires of their flesh, and it is the heart which is the center of our flesh. Jesus states, “out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander.” (Matt. 15:19) All these are sins against our neighbor.

And how are we to respond when the fleshly desires of someone else’s heart causes them to sin against us? We are to forgive – even from our heart. Remember the parable Jesus told of the slave who was forgiven a debt of millions of dollars by his master when he asked for more time? That slave then turned around and had a fellow slave who begged him to be allow him more time to pay a debt of a couple hundred dollars thrown in prison. When the master heard of this, he then had the first slave thrown in jail, never to be released.

And what did Jesus say to conclude this parable? “So also my heavenly Father will do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart.” (Matt. 18:35) We are to forgive all those who sin against us. It is a serious thing to be unforgiving, it is a pollution that corrupts the heart. After giving the Lord’s Prayer, Jesus says, “But if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.” (Matt. 6:15)

We have a hard time with this. Our tainted hearts cause us many problems. First our sins come from our hearts. We also like to hold grudges in our hearts. If that were not enough, we let our hearts burn with rage and unforgiveness against others for whom Christ died upon the cross to forgive.

Our hearts have serious problems. It would be right for God to say, “You want to follow your hearts? So be it! I leave you to your heart’s content. You want to love what you want to love, other than what I command? No problem! I have given you the ultimatum – love me and love your neighbor, in other words, do what I command – or you can rot in hell. You choose to love what your flesh desires? Fine – so be it, that is your choice! You have followed your heart, you have made your choice, now you can deal with the consequences for all eternity.”

This is what God could do, but He didn’t! Our text from Deuteronomy, it is God’s Word to the children of Israel after the forty years they spent in the wilderness. They had followed their hearts, they had grumbled and complained against God at every turn. They had sinned and followed the desires of their flesh at any opportunity. And God’s response was what? “Yet the Lord set His heart in love on your fathers and chose their offspring after them, you above all peoples, as you are this day.”

One little word gives us a clue that something else is coming, **YET!!!** **YET**, His heart was to keep the promise He’d made to them, although they had broken their word, their promise to Him. **YET**, He was bringing them into the promised land. **YET**, He was going to be their God, and He was going to make them his people.

YET, dear friends, this text is also for you, for you are the offspring of Abraham by faith. **YET**, even though you have also set your heart on other things, God set His heart, in love, on you.

God set His heart in love. God's heart of love took on human flesh in the person of Jesus Christ. His heart of love loved the Father, obeyed the Father, kept the commandments and statutes of the Father. God's heart of love, Jesus, loved all His neighbors with His whole heart, loving even all those who did not – and do not – love Him, and He did so with His whole heart.

When nailed upon the cross He loved with His whole heart until His heart was stopped with His death upon the cross – giving His perfect loving heart unto death to forgive those who love themselves more than God or their neighbors – to forgive you and me.

The miracle of baptism is where the loving heart of God comes to you and me. His heart of love chose you in water and His word. While your heart was weak, God's strong heart called you by name and made you His own. God's heart, set in love, chose you, and chose me, to be His own.

The Lord set His heart in love upon you today, commanding His Word to be spoken to you, that you may hear that all your sins are forgiven.

The Lord sets His heart in love upon you today saying, "Take and eat, this is my body given for you."
The Lord sets His heart in love upon you today, "Drink of it, this cup is my blood of the New Testament, shed for you for the forgiveness of sins."

The Lord set His heart in love upon you from the foundation of the world. It has been the eternal plan of His heart of love to work out forgiveness for you, and to deliver unto you, forgiveness, life, and salvation. Thanks be to God in Christ Jesus, the very heart of God, which He set in love for you. Amen.