

The Inside Out God

"I will write it on their hearts..." – Jeremiah 31:33

A screen printer once told me to try and wash a garment when its turned inside out. Your logos and other printed items will last longer, he stated. Its funny how a simple thing can actually make a difference.

What about spiritual matters? We can spot a stain a mile away, but does it work that way with sin? Some sinful behaviors and habits tend to stand out. A messy life will garner attention if our choices do not align with God's Word.

Jeremiah talks about the transition from the Old Covenant to the New. He says, "I will put my law within them and I will write it on their hearts" (Jer 31:33). The Law was the written code, an external condition and instruction. But in the Gospel, we are introduced to God's inner workings through the Holy Spirit. Once we are a Christian, the Spirit guides our way, teaching and reminding us of the instruction of Jesus. In other words, God works from the inside out.

A change in the heart comes first. Maybe God has convicted us of something, or maybe we are strengthening our walk with Christ. We might reevaluate our life choices. We might conform our lives to the kind of life that Jesus would want for us.

The tendency I think, with the church and outside of the church, is simply to change external behaviors. Can we just change a behavior through incentives or manipulation? Many people try. It might even work for a little awhile, but it will not sustain. Why not?

Beliefs guide our behaviors and not the other way around. To just focus on the external is not going to get us very far. We change, as we allow God to have more real estate in our hearts. We change, as God is working in us and through us. We change, as Christ's reign inside of us becomes stronger and greater.

We all need God's strength, power and wisdom to deal with sin. Spiritual progress doesn't come easy, but it is always worth it. Be assured though that God works from the inside out. That is exactly what Jeremiah is getting at. The OT Law was perfect, but it did nothing for the heart. In the New Covenant, we have God's presence on the inside through the Spirit bringing the Gospel. A life of discipleship is Spirit led and driven. Progress and growth is possible, as God works from the inside out.

Have a blessed New Year!

Pastor Chris

Minister's Musings

