

## From The Heart

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**Romans 6:17** - But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.

**Ephesians 6:6** - Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;

The bible tells us in **Ezekial 36:26** “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 a heart of flesh.” This statement was made to the Jews, but stands as a prophecy concerning those among humans who are Jews inwardly, though not necessarily outwardly, who have received the circumcision of the heart, in the Spirit (**Romans 2:29**). The “heart of flesh” alluded to in this verse in Ezekiel refers, not to a carnal heart that is bent on sin, but is contrasted with a heart of stone so that we may see in a metaphor that God gives His chosen ones a heart that is sensitive...sensitive in a fashion like flesh which is full of nerves and can feel things, while stone is without any sensation of feeling at all.

The most reprobate thing about human beings in relation to their creator is a heart that is as unreceptive as stone to spiritual things. In our carnal states, God declares that there are none of us that seek after Him (**Romans 3:11**). Our hearts are bent on evil and in such a state of enmity against God, we will not hear any of His things. By the very depraved state that our hearts are in, we are unable to respond to any spiritual thing. We are dead in trespasses and sins, and our heart is as cold as a corpse in a casket.

But our text speaks of something far more full of life than all this. We hear from the scripture that our heart gets involved in our own conversion by the Lord. We experience feelings there and find a new beginning. From the day of our new beginning we launch out into life with a different purpose, and although it is uncultivated, we launch out into life with a converted ability to focus ourselves elsewhere. I want us to look at that awakening time and at what follows in the life of a believer, by looking at what our text verses say. May the Holy Spirit help us to notice:

**I. (Rom. 6:17)** - The conversion of our souls was a heart work: “ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you.”

A. No religious practice can substitute

- ❖ No following a catechism, or ritual, or set of religious rules is required or suitable
- ❖ Something has to happen inside - I quoted Ezekiel 36:26 when I was pointing to the “new heart experience” and there is something in that verse that is very pointed about how the process occurs: God says, “...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 a heart of flesh.**“

- ❖ And so, born again believers receive a new spirit within them which makes them able to receive a new heart as the first gift of their inheritance with the saints in light (Col. 1:12) as the blessed Holy Spirit comes to them in power to take up abode within them, revealing Jesus Christ in them and creating within them a new creature with that new heart...a new creature created in Christ Jesus.

B. Obedience to the Gospel becomes possible when the heart is made capable through the new birth; that is what our text tells us. Now as we think of what this verse says, we realize that if the bible talks about us obeying the Gospel, our next thought has to be, “then there must be some command in the Gospel that we are obedient to.

- ❖ What is the command of the Gospel, if there is something in it that must be obeyed (scripture says “Ye have obeyed from the heart...”)?

- Today, there is an easy believe-ism preached around that suggests that a person may be saved by saying a rote prayer, or by coming to the front of a church, or by coming to a preacher and saying “I want to be saved,” or by being baptized, or by doing some other thing. But the Gospel has a command in it, and that command is there for a reason.

- The reason it is there is because there is **only one way to come to God**...that is through Jesus Christ - **John 14:6** "...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

- and there is only one way to go through Jesus Christ. Let's hear how that is: **Mark 1:14-16** Now after that John was put in prison, Jesus came into Galilee, **preaching the gospel of the kingdom** of God, **15** And saying, **The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**

- (The Gospel of the Kingdom has two elements: **repent** and **believe** the gospel)

- ❖ **REPENT:**

- Paul gives a lengthy dissertation on the human habit of rejecting God and fabricating their own version of God; then says in **Acts 17:30** "And the times of this ignorance God winked at; but now commandeth all men every where **to repent**"

- "winked at" = hupereidō (*hoop-er-i'-do*) : from two Greek base words, "hooper" = over and "ido" = look

- Best explained with scripture in **Acts 14:16** "Who in times past suffered all nations to walk in their own ways."

- Notice in this and many other bible verses, **repentance is the theme** followed by believing the Gospel, or having faith in Christ. What does this repentance mean?

- Change attitude about God - the attitude that has to change is the one that lives in every lost sinner-

- it is the **attitude that God is lying about the sinner** [the lost person declares by His rejection of God's way of salvation that he is not a sinner in need of salvation]; and
  - that God is lying about the provision for washing away sin (by rejecting the Good News about Christ having died, being buried, and being resurrected to make a way for sinners to escape God's wrath against sin, the lost person is saying that **God is lying about the solution**; that the Good News about Christ is a falsehood).
- These same two elements about obedience from the heart is summarized by Paul as he reviews with the Ephesian elders his Gospel ministry and sums it up in **Acts 20:21** where he says, "Testifying both to the Jews, and also to the Greeks, **repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.**"
- Which brings us to the last part of what God commands humans to obey, and what believers are able to obey from the heart:
- ❖ **BELIEVE THE GOSPEL:**
- **The gospel in simplicity: 1Cor. 15:3-4** For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; **4** And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures:
- First, "Christ died for our sins"
    - "For our sins" is the central thing to believe about Christ's death
    - "our" must include me (as part of the belief)
    - So, "died for my sins" (as well as others) makes that death personal
  - "Was buried" must be believed
    - Only the dead are buried intentionally - Christ's burial was a standing testimony ordained of God to show mankind that He truly died.
  - "Rose again the third day" must be believed
    - Only a resurrected Christ possesses the power to save believers from death
      - **Rev 1:18** *I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death.*
  - Again, as with the problem with unrepentance, those who do not believe the gospel are calling God a liar.

**II.** So this is how we come to obey the Gospel with the heart. Now that this is settled, what then? What about what comes after? That is where our second text verse comes in. Where scripture gives guidance to servants in this verse it lays open one of the greatest truths about the new orientation of the Christian life. Notice again that it says: "Not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart;..."

A. True believers are led by their new heart to serve God...it is a heart work...a heart

service

- ❖ They do not serve with “eye service” (meaning they do not serve God while being watched by those who would demand it, or those they want to make an impression on)
  - This wording calls up images of employees or even slaves who work well while they are under the watchful eye of a supervisor, but are poor producers and lazy when there is no watchful eye.

B. Notice in **verse 7 of Ephesians 6** the shape that this heart service takes

- ❖ “With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men.”
  - Good will is very important in representing the Lord in the world.
  - The soul who possesses a new heart can have good will to all kinds of people.
  - A good will that recommends Christ to all kinds of people.
  - Things we do in this world can either be offerings to humans or offerings to God. The quality you offer out there in the world will quickly tell people which one you are making an offering to.
- ❖ The **principle inferred here** is one of the most important element God’s people can get hold of to give them inward peace and satisfaction in the Lord. The feeling that:
  - **“God” has ordered the circumstances of our lives**, and that he has some **wise and good ends to accomplish** by doing what he does with us and around us, **makes us contented in our circumstances**;
    - though we may feel that our fellowman may be doing us injustice. It was this principle that made the martyrs so patient under the wrongs done them by people; and this may make even a slave patient and submissive under the wrongs of a master.
    - A word about being **satisfied with God’s actions in our lives vs. being manipulated by evil men**: See **Acts 25:11**- "For if I be an offender, or have committed any thing worthy of death, I refuse not to die: but if there be none of these things whereof these accuse me, no man may deliver me unto them. I appeal unto Caesar."
      - Notice in this account that Paul is not told by the Lord that he must go before Caesar until after he appeals to Caesar as an ethical act to avoid being railroaded by the trumped up situation he was in (**Acts 27:23-24**).
      - In our lives, it is just as important to stand up for the truth as to submit to God’s ordained intentions for the direction that our lives go. We should not confuse resistance against evil intent as resistance against God’s will.

Remember the song “Our Best.”

*Hear ye the Master's call, "Give Me thy best!"  
For be it great or small, That is His test.*

*Do then, the best you can Not for reward,  
Not for the praise of man But for the Lord.  
Every work for Jesus Will be blest.  
But He asks from everyone His best.  
Our talents may be few These may be small  
But unto Him is due Our best, our all!*

B. Notice next in **Ephesians 6, verse 9** that we are taught: “Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether *he be* bond or free.”

❖ What does this tell us? It tells us that presenting our deeds that we do among men as offerings to Christ will bring us comparable good things from the Lord.

**Conclusion:**

- ❖ A true relationship with the Lord is a heart thing.
- ❖ The heart must be changed by the Lord for this to be a reality. When it is changed, true service to God can be offered willingly from the heart. That service manifests itself among men as an offering to God and the return from God back to us in of the same good caliber.
- ❖ Here is a biblical axiom that really proves itself through this principle we have been looking at.
  - **Gal 6:7** Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.