



January 6, 2019  
“A Change of Heart”  
Jeremiah 16-17  
Pastor Gary Hamrick

It’s been said before that “the heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart.” This was Judah’s problem. They rebelled against God because they had chosen instead to follow their own stubborn, evil hearts. In this message, Pastor Gary looks at the issue of the “heart” and how Christianity is the only world religion that makes the bold assertion that an individual can be miraculously transformed from within, because God can actually alter the human condition by changing the heart!

### The Human Heart

1. The heart of the human problem is the problem of the human heart.
2. The Hebrew word for heart is levav or lev, and it can mean any of the following: the inner being, the will, the conscience, moral character, or the seat of emotion.
3. Pastor Gary shared a 3:50 video teaching on the heart from “The Bible Project.”
  - a. <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/lev-heart/>
4. Pastor Gary said: “God [challenged] the people of Judah [regarding] their stubborn hearts... and this wasn’t the first place he challenged them about their stubborn hearts. A lot of times he even [referred] to their stubborn, evil hearts.”
  - a. **Jeremiah 9:13b-14** - *“The Lord said, ‘... [They] have not obeyed me or followed my law. Instead, they have followed the stubbornness of their hearts; they have followed the Baals, as their fathers taught them.’ ”*
  - b. **Jeremiah 11:7-8a** - *“From the time I brought your forefathers up from Egypt until today, I warned them again and again, saying, ‘Obey me.’ But they did not listen or pay attention; instead, they followed the stubbornness of their evil hearts.”*
  - c. **Jeremiah 13:10** - *“These wicked people who refuse to listen to my words*

*follow the stubbornness of their hearts and go after other gods to serve and worship them..."*

- d. **Jeremiah 16:12** - *"But you have behaved more wickedly than your fathers. See how each of you is following the stubbornness of his evil heart instead of obeying me."*
- e. **Jeremiah 17:9** - *"The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?"*
  - i. **Jeremiah 17:9** - *"The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked" Who can know it?"* (New King James Version - NKJV)
  - ii. **Jeremiah 17:9** - *"The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it."* (English Standard Version - ESV)

5. Pastor Gary said: "The human heart, apart from God, is deceptive, it is wicked, it is sick, and it is beyond cure. [This means] that we cannot fix our heart, but God can. God can fix every broken, sick, and wicked heart. ... God can save us from our sins, and [God] can transform a person from the inside. You see, wicked, evil behavior is simply the result of a wicked, evil heart. ... Where do you think things like murder, theft, rape, sex trafficking, lying, slander, and such, come from?"

- a. **Jeremiah 17:14** - *"Heal me, O LORD, and I will be healed; save me and I will be saved, for you are the one I praise."*
- b. **Matthew 15:19** - *"For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander."*

6. Pastor Gary said: "The problem is, that apart from Christianity, a lot of other attempts are made at simply modifying behavior, and it never really works, because it never addresses the core issue, which is the heart. Jesus even said the quality and content of our words emanate from the heart. ... So, in other words, what we see happening in terms of behavior is just basically the manifestation of what's going on in the human heart. We can fake things for a while, but the true core of a person is the human heart, and that is what will dictate what ends up being the behavior of that individual. ... [Other] world religions and social science, for that matter, will try to do a lot of things that curb human behavior with external motivation, but Christianity is the only world religion, and the only system at all, that makes the claim of internal transformation. ... Christianity asserts [that] internal transformation is how we change behavior, and internal transformation is something that only happens through a personal relationship with the Lord. See, when you look at other world religions, many of the world religions recognize the problem with human behavior [and] they recognize the problem of the human heart, but they offer no real solutions other than [recommending that people devote themselves] to a structured system of good works that will curtail bad behavior or if you punish your body enough, then that will curtail bad behavior, but [these only address] conduct;

not the core."

- a. **Matthew 12:34-35** - *"You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him."*

7. Pastor Gary said: "Through the power of God, through a relationship with him, he can transform the inside of a person, and he can make you a new creature from within, and he can radically alter a person's heart, and transform the very nature of the individual, through a relationship with Jesus Christ. This is what the Bible teaches. This is the hope of the Church! ... When you get this internal transformation, it then affects the external. ... Your behavior changes, your speech changes, your values change, your perspective changes, your priorities change, because of [the] internal thing that's going on in your heart..."

- a. **2 Corinthians 5:17** - *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"*
- b. Pastor Gary referred to the remarkable revival in Wales in 1904-1905, and how coal production was negatively impacted due to the fact that many of the horses that hauled coal out of the mines were no longer able to understand the commands of their drivers! <sup>1</sup>
  - i. "In the mines, the pit ponies could not understand what had happened to the miners as they spoke to them more kindly. They were so used to being sworn at that they became disobedient!" <sup>2</sup>

8. Pastor Gary said: "Don't make any mistake, however, you get a new heart, but you're still in an old body of flesh, and that new heart wants you to do different things than your old body of flesh wants to do. [Therein] lies the conflict!"

- a. **Romans 7:15-25b** - *"I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that the law is good. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the veil I do not want to do - this is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. For in my inner being I delight in God's law; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am! Who will rescue me from this body of death? Thanks be to God - through Jesus Christ our Lord!"*

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.pisgahchapel.com/about/1904-welsh-revival/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.pisgahchapel.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/Flier-The1904WelshRevivalv4.pdf>

9. Pastor Gary said: “[The] Christian life becomes one of wonderful new joy, [perspective, values, ways of thinking and living and behaving], but there will often still be this conflict within where the old flesh that we are still housed within, with all of its desires, wants to dominate the new heart. That’s why we have to pray as David did [when he asked God to give him a pure heart].”
- a. **Psalm 51:10** – *“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”*
  - b. **Psalm 86:11** – *“Teach me your way, O LORD, and I will walk in your truth; give me an undivided heart that I may fear your name.”*

### God Searches The Heart

10. **Jeremiah 17:10** – *“I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.”*
11. **1 Chronicles 28:9a** – *“And you, my son Solomon, acknowledge the God of your father, and serve him with wholehearted devotion and with a willing mind, for the LORD searches every heart and understands every motive behind the thoughts.”*

### God Tests The Heart

12. **Proverbs 17:3** – *“The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.”*
13. Pastor Gary said: “God will sometimes turn up the heat to expose what’s really in our [hearts]. ... [God allows] situations in our lives to expose what’s in our hearts so that we can get rid of the impurities.”
14. **Deuteronomy 8:2** – *“Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.”*
15. Pastor Gary said: “[God] wasn’t testing them so that he would know [what was in their hearts]; he already knows what’s in our [heart]. He was testing them so that they would know what was in their [heart]. [God] will sometimes allow different tests and afflictions and things to come our way in order to expose the deeper issues of our heart that we need to deal with. ... Sometimes we don’t realize how bitter we are [or how unforgiving or angry or resentful we are] until something [triggers our reaction], and then it comes to the surface. [That’s when] God is dealing with us, so respond and recognize those things [and ask the Lord to help you get rid of those things from your life].”

### God Knows The Heart

16. **Psalm 44:21** – “... [God] knows the secrets of the heart?”

### God Values The Heart

17. **1 Samuel 16:7** – “But the Lord said to Samuel, ‘Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.’ ”

### God Judges And Rewards The Heart

18. **1 Corinthians 4:5** – “Therefore judge nothing before the appoint time; wait till the Lord comes. He will bring to light what is hidden in darkness and will expose the motives of men’s hearts. At that time each will receive his praise from God.”

### Discussion Questions

1. Read **Jeremiah 16:10-13** to provide a foundation for your Bible study time.
2. Spend time talking about the heart after watching “The Bible Project” video.
  - a. <https://thebibleproject.com/videos/lev-heart/>
3. Read and discuss Pastor Gary’s comments and related Scriptures concerning the human heart. (See #5 above)
4. Spend time talking about Pastor Gary’s remarks regarding the fact that there is no cure for the human heart outside of a relationship with the Lord. (See #6 and #7 above)
5. What are some examples of the ways the Lord has been working on changing your heart since you entered into a relationship with him? (See #8 above)
6. Allow the people in your group to share their experiences about the struggles they have with sin and the battle between their new heart and their “old” body of flesh. (See #9 above)
7. In what ways do others see the fruit in your life concerning the ways the Lord is remaking you into a person who has pure and undivided heart? (See #10 above)

8. Read and discuss the Scriptures in each of the five points in Pastor Gary's outline. (See #11 through #19 above)
9. Close your time in prayer by having someone in your group read [Proverbs 4:23](#) and allow the Holy Spirit to lead your time of prayer.<sup>3</sup>

\* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New International Version (NIV 1984).

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<sup>3</sup> [Proverbs 4:23](#) - *"Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life."*