

Becoming human- giving glory. 15 July_2018.

(PP1) Becoming human- giving glory x 28 Sunday 15 July_2018.

Background text READ ***Jeremiah 17: 5 - 18. God alone knows the heart of humanity.***

This year we are exploring what it means to be truly, fully human. Also, I believe that as we seek individually and together in community to be more human we will bring greater glory to God by the way we live our lives in relationship to others and with God. Transformation through relating in Community as well as relating to God.

(PP2) Last 2 week we began considering the HUMAN HEART....GTH looked at Ezekiel and described the way that the term human *HEART* is used in the Bible. Geoff spoke about stony hearts and open hearts. He spoke about not just the hearts of individuals but a whole nation – the Hebrews. Hardness of heart meant that they became arrogant and unable to hear God and so their practices became unjust and lacking in compassion.



The heart is not just the beating organ but the seat of our emotions, understanding, ethics, where we hope, plan and dream. *HEART – the fulcrum of faith and feeling as well as the mainspring of words and actions. The heart is the seat of our desires.*

Jesus in describing the heart & mind of a people quotes Isaiah 6 in Matthew 13: 14, 15.

“This people will listen and listen but not understand. They will look and look but not see, because their minds are dull, they have stopped up their ears and they have closed their eyes. Otherwise their eyes would see, their ears would hear, their minds would understand, and they would turn to me, says God, and I would heal them.” That's the *Good News* version but v15 in the Greek reads their “hearts that have become grossly waxed.” (hardened)- so that they can't see with their eyes or hear with their ears and thus understand with their hearts.

We have already been considering - The image of God in humans – is NOT seen in a physical form likeness (as God is spirit) but in terms of knowledge and moral awareness and the possibility of relating in friendship to God.

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Human beings, unlike other animals, are able to reflect on and make judgements about our own and others' actions, and as a result we are able to make considered moral choices.

*Human beings have something that no other animal has: an ability to participate in a collective cognition. Because we, as individuals, are able to draw on the collective knowledge of humanity, in a way no animal can, our individual abilities go way beyond what evolution has endowed us with. Our species is no longer constrained by our biology. **Helene Guldberg Ph.D. Reclaiming Childhood***

Human's have hearts which can be open or closed to hear God or be deaf to God.
They can be stony or responsive.

Last Sunday from **1 Samuel 16** involves the choice of a leader/ a King – a national ruler chosen by God. Jesse's sons beginning with Eliab – no doubt the oldest are paraded before him. When Samuel sees the impressive Eliab he says, "Surely this is the one the LORD has chosen?" BUT the LORD says to him:

(PP3) V7 *Pay no attention to how tall and handsome he is. I have rejected him, because I do not judge as people judge. They look at the outward appearance, but I look at the heart.*

So "appearances can be deceptive"! We – you and I can be deceived. We can be impressed by outward appearances, BUT the reality of a person's inner morality and spiritual life can be very different.

V7 God sees differently from human perceptions. Our judgements can be skin deep – God goes deeper – to the very heart of a person.

TODAY in looking at the Scripture in Jeremiah 17 we hear that we need God's insights and discernment to know and understand our own motives and motivations (as well as those of others).

"The heart is deceitful and desperately wicked. Who can know it? Who can understand it?" (Jeremiah 17: 9)

(PP4) ONLY GOD CAN know and only God can cure the ailing (gravely/ terminally ill) human heart. V10 *"I, the LORD search human minds and test human hearts..."*

17: 1 Indelibly sin is engraved on hard heart (diamond stylus). Stone heart from beach to pass around.

We easily deceive ourselves – we can lie to ourselves about why we do what we do and respond as we respond. We need God's help so that we recognize distorted motives and weaknesses in ourselves. In seeking God's help to become more truthful to ourselves our stony hearts become more truly human and we become stronger as people. **1 John 1: 8** *We deceive ourselves if we say we have no sin....*

More on the heart (Vine's). The word heart has come to stand in the Judeo-Christian understanding for humanity's entire mental and moral activity – both the rational and emotional elements. It is used figuratively for the "hidden springs of the personal life".

The Bible places human depravity (moral debasement) as in the heart – or the very centre of our being. "Sin" – the fallenness that effects all our actions is in the core of our being – not just on the edges, in our actions but in our very nature. It is our nature, our

heart that needs to change if we are to please God and reach our full human potential.
Matthew 15: 18,19, 20 JESUS: The things that come out of the mouth come from the heart...For from his heart come the evil ideas which lead him to kill, commit adultery and do other immoral things; to rob, to lie, and to slander others. These are the things which make a person unclean. But to eat without washing your hands as they say you should – that doesn't make a person unclean.

“How pessimistic you are Jane”, you say. No, I believe what the Bible says is realistic. If we recognize how great the need of every human being is to be transformed, then how great is the “change power” – the Salvation that God offers in Jesus. Only Jesus can bring about by his power that deep change of mind and heart that is needed to over time change my thoughts and actions.

The Bible teaches that it is GOD who can change the human heart. It is here that the Divine has real influence if we let him. God can even influence our secret thoughts – deep within, our inner selves can become more beautiful. (*Romans 2: 15; 1 Peter 3:4*).

PSUCHE – the soul or life is rendered as “heart” in Ephesians 6: 6 – with all your heart do what God wants. The heart speaks about the very core or centre of our being willing and wanting to please God. When we speak of “centering” or sing “Jesus be the centre” we are singing of our desire to have our heart totally locked into God’s own heart and desires. We sing “LORD you have my heart and I will search for yours...”. “Come on Jane” , you say “We’re not super saints. How can we talk about our hearts desire really being the same as the LORD GOD’S?” God loves us and wants our love in return (*Hosea 6:6*).

HOW? Because I believe the message of the New Testament – where simple fishermen and despised women became followers of Jesus, and messengers of the resurrection. Because I believe God has chosen to take the “weak and foolish things of the world to confound the wisdom of the wise of this world” 1 Corinthians 1: 27). BUT the eyes of our hearts need to be opened to see this light, to now this hope and to understand this wonderful, blessing and the great power that is at work in those who believe. *Ephesians 1: 18, 19.*

SKLEROKARDIA: hardness of hearts <i>Matt 19: 8; Mark 10:5; 16:14.</i>

KARDIOGNOSTES: <u>a knower of hearts</u> – the thoughts of everyone <i>Acts 1: 24; 15:8.</i>
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(PP5) When I come to God – be sure, be confident that God knows my heart, God knows my thoughts. God is not deceived BUT essentially, I can assume that I am deceiving myself over many things. In that sense true prayer is a coming of light, a dawning of greater understanding of myself. *1 John 1: 8 We deceive ourselves if we say we have no sin.... (“We” ...all humans deceive ourselves).*

Can we say that we seek honesty and to stop fooling ourselves when we come to God?
“Please free my thinking and feelings and the thinking and feelings of others, from all forms of self will, self-centredness, dishonesty and deception.” (J. Veltri, At the beginning of the day)

I believe Jesus when he said that - *“Where my treasure is there is my heart” – Matthew 6: 21.* Stability of heart which is what every human needs – *“Wherever we have fixed our hearts whatever it is to which we have given them, will determine the way we*

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experience all that is happening to us now.” Joan Chittister, The Monastery of the Heart. Stability of heart – gives me stability of purpose.

God promises to change our hearts – if we cooperate with him. (Prayer for an undivided heart: *Psalm 86*)

*Jeremiah 17: 14 “**Heal me, O Lord**” My heart is desperately ill..Before we pray for others we need to pray for ourself. Jeremiah was criticized for being morbidly negative, but he was passing on God’s diagnosis which is true. John as he writes in the NT is clear that it is possible to deceive ourselves about our real attitude of heart and mind. We cannot come near to God when “the truth is not in us”. In John’s writing the truth is embodied in Jesus. (*John 14: 6*). We need to pray as I suggested using Veltri’ s prayer or one like it.*

If we listen to lies: whether they come from other people or our own thoughts we will not be walking with Jesus and we will not come close to the Father God. **Read 1 John 1: 5 – 8.**

Summary. Our heart, the heart of all humanity is desperately ill and there is only one Healer, one transplant surgeon (stone to human heart). Conversion by Jesus is a seeing of reality. A hearing of truth and a change of heart – an awakening of our moral conscience. A change from the darkness of deception to the light of truth. It is truly the work of the Divine Physician, but you and I need to want it. _