

Luke 6:43-45

“A Tree and its Fruit”

Sunday 19 May 2019
Glenvista Baptist Church

Luke 6:43-45 (ESV) ⁴³“For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, ⁴⁴for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. ⁴⁵The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.”

Introduction.

- a) In our last exposition concerning the Ten Commandments I alluded to the fact that during our Lord's ministry we see Him arguing that it was the tree that made the fruit and not the other way around (Matt 12:33; Lk 6:43-45; Matt 7:15-20). If the tree is bad, so will its fruit be. A bad tree cannot produce good fruit; so, make the tree good and then its fruit will also be good. That, I believe, calls for further study, and that is what I desire doing with you on this Lord's Day. We are called of God to “guard our hearts with all diligence” (Prov 4:23), and it can do us only good to look at yet another passage that speaks to the matter of the heart.
- b) You see, the heart is the one thing that rules us and Solomon was right when he said that from the heart “flows the springs of life” (Prov 4:23). Now that spring is either polluted or there is an abundance of fresh healthy life-giving water coming from it. **The condition of the heart, in other words, determines the condition of the water that flows forth from it.** It's really as simple as that. Yet, I know that once the Spirit of God connects these dots in the believer's life, and we look upon our own sin, it often becomes a horrible discovery as we see ourselves in light of God's Word and God's absolute holiness. The call that shouts loud from such a discovery is a call to holiness, a call to be like our God who is Holy. ***Therefore you see, I need to be confronted with the fact that everything which comes out of my mouth does not come out due to a really difficult day in the traffic, or unruly kids that have driven me up the wall; no you see, everything bad that proceeds from my mouth was there in the first place and serves as a perfect barometer of the condition of my heart.***
- c) In light of this, come with me on a quick journey in terms of some Puritan sayings pertaining the heart. It was the Scottish preacher Thomas Boston (1676-1732) who exclaimed: “Oh how my heart hates my heart”. Thomas Brooks said: “Christ dwells in that heart most eminently that hath emptied itself of itself.”
- d) John Flavel – puritan author in his book “Keeping the Heart”, writes, “O for a better heart! O for a heart to love God more; to hate sin more; to walk more evenly with God. Lord! deny not to me such a heart; whatever thou deny me: give me a heart to fear thee, to love and delight

in thee, if I beg my bread in desolate places." In terms of the destructive capabilities of the heart puritan John Owen said, "Be killing sin, or it will be killing you!"

- e) **Let me illustrate this further in a really practical manner:** Imagine the following scenario: you had a really tense time this morning. You have had a busy week, the weekend itself was filled with many activities, and earlier today before coming to this worship service everything just spiraled out of control. Being tense, the ideal situation would have been one in which nothing went wrong. Well listen to what happens: whilst trying to get all the kids dressed, feeding the cat, the dog, the parakeets, the husband, the rabbits and hamsters, watering the plants that have not seen water in weeks, and trying to make breakfast for the whole family; you burn the eggs, scorch the toast, and the milk boils over in the microwave. You literally explode, you say most unfortunate things, you blame everyone else in the household for everything that went wrong, and you break down in a little heap sobbing your heart out feeling sorry for yourself! **Can you identify with this?** Does this sound familiar? Sounds to me like a very average typical Johannesburg household.
- f) **I aim, to prove to you this morning from God's Word that our behavior is never caused by external circumstances, but that our behavior is always caused by the condition of our hearts.**
- g) You see, it is not the kids, it is not the toast or the eggs, it is not even your lazy husband who would not get out of bed and help this morning; it is none of the above circumstances that caused you to respond like that this morning. The only thing you have to blame is your own sinful heart.
- h) **If that were true, we need help. Part of what we are wanting to see this morning in discovering how corrupt our hearts are, is also trying to see whether there is a Biblical remedy for the condition of our hearts.**
- i) You will see this morning from God's Word that **word problems** are effectively **heart problems**. You will also see that there is an organic consistency between what is in my heart and what comes out of my mouth.

Background to the Text before us:

- j) In order to fully understand the text before us this morning it is also important understanding the circumstances that gave rise to it in its immediate context. The portion of Scripture before us is commonly referred to as "*The Sermon on the Plain*", which is Luke's version of the much longer "*Sermon on the Mount*" found in **Matthew 5-7**. It is generally agreed that Matthew has enlarged a version of the sermon found in Luke, by adding to it other sayings of Jesus on the same or related topics.
- k) The **first part** of the Sermon on the Plain dealt with the disciples' relationship to God; the **second part** of the Sermon deals with the disciples' relationship to other people, and plunges straight into the duty of loving one's enemies. And then the sermon, **thirdly**, ends with short 'parabolic' sayings that bring out the kind of character that disciples should show.
- l) The third part is broken up into three sections: **(1)** the first group of sayings is about spiritual sight; disciples must learn before they can teach others, **(2)** the second group of sayings (which is the passage we are looking at this morning), Jesus makes it clear that good conduct can only come out of a good heart, **(3)** and finally what

matters most of all is actually obeying all of these sayings of Jesus. The person who hears them and does not obey them is utterly foolish. With that as background, we can now launch into the passage before us.

Point 1 – “Man’s heart is like a Tree, and his words and actions are fruit according to the nature of that tree” (vs. 43-44)

Luke 6:43-44 (ESV) “For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush.”

- a) **V43** The thesis of the passage in before us explains that a man can only bring forth from his mouth that which is seated in his heart. A good tree cannot bear bad fruit and a bad tree cannot bring forth good fruit. Just as a lemon tree cannot bring forth red apples.
- b) **V44** And that is why Jesus, as He addresses His disciples here makes it clear that, “Each tree is recognized by its own fruit”. And so, what we need to see here is that the heart of man can be likened to the tree in this parable, and that the fruit of the tree can be likened unto the verbal and physical display coming out of a man’s heart.
- c) **V45** **If a man truly is a good man: then by implication good things will come forth from him from the good treasure that is stored in his heart. So, then, there is a basic presupposition here; in that the good deposit MUST first exist IN the heart, before ANYTHING good can come forth from that heart. Agree?** The same is true of the evil man; he will speak evil as a result of the evil deposit that reigns and rules his heart.
- d) **You see it works like this:** I remember so well when I was a little boy how little I looked forward to Saturday mornings. You see, it was my job on Saturday mornings to help my dad weed the lawns; and we had massive lawns. In the beginning, due to the size of the job, I thought I’d go the easy way around and just take the leaf of the weed off, thinking that would solve my problem. In week two though I soon discovered that you do not get rid of weeds unless you destroy them at their roots.
- e) **The same is true of the sinful words that proceed from our mouths and the actions that are forthcoming from our lives. Unless we deal with that sin at its root, which Biblically speaking is in the heart, we will forever have sinful words coming from our mouths. It is never good to deal with the symptoms, as the symptoms will simply keep on reoccurring. We have to deal with the root by purging that sin from the heart.**
- f) It is in other words a fallacy when a mom says to her little toddler who has just used foul language, that she will wash his mouth out with soap. Soap in the mouth only leaves a soapy taste; it can never purge the heart from sin.
- g) **V44** Just as little as we can expect to pick figs from thorn bushes, or grapes from bramble bushes, so little should we expect good, godly and Biblical behavior to come from the heart of a man that has not come to know Christ as His Savior, such a man can only produce evil, as evil is what controls his heart.
- h) **See how the following Scriptures in the Old Testament confirm this:**

- **Isaiah 32:6** "For the fool speaks folly, and his heart is busy with iniquity, to practice ungodliness, to utter error concerning the LORD, to leave the craving of the hungry unsatisfied, and to deprive the thirsty of drink."
- **1 Samuel 24:13** "As the proverb of the ancients says, 'Out of the wicked comes wickedness.'"

- i) **So let's end this section by asking you:** what does the fruit of your lips say concerning your heart? Do they confirm that you are a Kingdom Citizen, a partaker of the Divine Heavenly Light? Or are they evidence that you are living for yourself and that you are concerned only with your own little kingdom?

Point 2 – “Man’s heart is like a Treasure, and the words and actions of that man are a produce from that treasure” (vs. 45 and Matthew 12:34-35)

Luke 6:45 (ESV) "The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."

Matthew 12:33-37 (ESV) "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or make the tree bad and its fruit bad, for the tree is known by its fruit. You brood of vipers! How can you speak good, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. The good person out of his good treasure brings forth good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure brings forth evil. I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

- a) **V45** Here in **verse 45** the key word that needs to be noticed is the Greek word **θησαυρος (thesauros)**, which literally refers to a **“good deposit”** being made, or could mean **“wealth”** or **“treasure”**. **This good treasure refers to the reigning love and rule of God in the heart of a genuine born-again believer.** And so you see, it is this reigning love of God that makes a man a good man, and therefore good will come from his heart.
- b) **The opposite is also true:** where the love of self, love of the world and love of the flesh reign, this passage tells that evil rules such a person, and therefore that which rules or governs or controls him, will ensure that evil proceeds from his mouth.
- c) **But notice this important principle:** that which continually comes out from a person's mouth defines such a person. If a person on regular continuing intervals breaks down with his tongue, gossips, slanders, destroys, tears down, speaks lies etc. that then is a clear indication of his wicked heart. If a person though speaks godly, talks about that which is praiseworthy, builds up with his tongue, edifies others etc. that then is evidence of a work of grace in such a person's heart.
- d) And therefore it is out of the abundance of his heart that a man speaks. That which is in the heart the mouth WILL bring forth. As an encouragement therefore we should not be worried when people speak ill of us. For it is nothing more than an indication of sin and folly ruling their own hearts.
- e) It is not therefore to say that a godly man may not slip a bad word at times, or that a sinful unregenerate man will have nothing good coming from his mouth. **No, what this text is saying is that which overflows the heart, which dominates the heart,**

which controls the heart, is that which will show you from the person's words whether he is born again or not.

- f) And this in no way is judgmental – observing fruit in another person's life – Jesus himself said, this will tell you whether it is a good or bad tree.
- g) Notice therefore the importance of the passage in **Matthew 12:33-37**, and see the caution that comes from Christ: **"I tell you, on the day of judgment people will give account for every careless word they speak, for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."**
- h) Dear friends, we need to know that by the standard of the **"treasure"** in our heart we will be judged on Judgment Day. If the Blood of the Lamb has made that **"treasure"** righteous, then we will receive the crown of victory and of glory that awaits us in the heavenlies. If that **"treasure"** is of wicked nature, we will be eternally separated from Christ.
- i) Where do you stand today?

Point 3 – "The War of our Hearts" (Galatians 5:13-15)

Galatians 5:13-15 (ESV) **"For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another."**

- a) **It must firstly be made clear, as we have already seen, that word problems are heart problems.** There is an organic chemistry between what is in my heart and what comes out of my mouth. I also need to recognize very clearly this morning that I am my greatest communication problem. And I also need to be reminded that my behavior is never caused by external circumstances; but that my behavior is always an indication of my heart.
- b) **You see, I live in the claustrophobic confines of my own little self-defined world, and by sinful nature I want everything that satisfies my own heart.** And so there is this war at wage within me. And this war is identified by what comes out of my mouth.
- c) I think the **"war of our hearts"** is most adequately described in a little phrase found in **2 Corinthians 5:15** **"Jesus died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised again."** You see folk, sin in essence is anti-social. It makes **"ME"** the primary focus. The Gospel call is for us to live exactly the opposite way. This self-centered living is all about **"I want, I want, I want, I want."**
- d) **Notice therefore Paul's warning here in Galatians:** we are called to love our neighbor as we love ourselves. We can never therefore say that it is OK to say that harsh, proud, unloving, ungracious, communication is ever OK!! **IT IS NOT OK.** God has invested words with power and Paul here says in this passage that people can be destroyed by what you say. **"But if you bite and devour one another, watch out that you are not consumed by one another."** **So if we continue in sinful patterns towards each other in our speech – listen to what God's Word says – it says we**

will devour, destroy and consume each other. You see we will so continue breaking down, till there is nothing left of another.

- e) The entire law is summed up in the commandment that I am to love my neighbor as I love myself. **The reason being, that I cannot love my neighbor as myself until I love God above all else.**
- f) So how do we then fix our communication problems? Well according, to this great commandment, they are not fixed horizontally; they are fixed vertically. When my communication, towards, or about others is continually not glorifying to God or edifying to my recipient, it is an indication of a heart that has either grown cold towards God or a heart that does not know God.
- g) What does this say, precious friend, concerning the condition of your heart?

Point 4 – “The need for Love to Rule the World of our Talk” (1 John 4:7-12)

1 John 4:7-12 (ESV) “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God abides in us and his love is perfected in us.”

- a) Love is not defined by a set of abstract concepts. You define love by action. God's love is defined by what God did in giving up His only Son that all who trust in Him may not perish but be saved from sin and given, due to no merit of their own, the gift of eternal life.
- b) Well known author Paul Tripp says the following: “Love is willing self-sacrifice for the redemptive good of another that does not demand reciprocation or that the person being loved is deserving”.
- c) **You see, if you are God's child, the power to live according to love is already deposited by God into your storehouse. He has given us everything for life and godliness so that we have access to it today.**
 - 2 Peter 1:3-4 “His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire.”
- d) So, if you are a child of God, recognize then this morning that He gives us power to overcome every obstacle, every sinful pattern, and every destructive word or habit, as we trust in Him and surrender ourselves to Him. We are more than conquerors through Him who loved us and gave us life.
- e) **This message therefore is a very particular call for us to check our own hearts; to see the evidence of our own hearts through the manifestation of the fruit that comes from our lips; to recognize that sinful words and actions do not bring glory to God; to recognize how very sinful that is, as we were created to bring glory to God; and to recognize that Christ alone is our help.** To the one struggling the call

is to flee to the Cross and to find mercy in our time of need at the feet of our gracious Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. Ask God to bring your words, your thoughts and your actions under His rule and reign; but above all, your heart under His Loving and Gracious Lordship. Let us hearken the words of the writer to the Hebrews. **Hebrews 4:16 "Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."**

- f) May the Lord help us to season our words with salt. May our words bring healing and comfort to others, and above all may our words bring glory to God. May our words be clear evidence to a world dying in its sin without Christ that we are citizens of the Kingdom of Light and may our words bring that light to those who are perishing in the darkness of their own sin!
- g) The message is a call to repentance. If this message has shown you the condition of your own heart, you need to do two things; you need to turn away from sin and turn towards God knowing that God is gracious and kind and that, **"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."** (1 John 1:9)

Amen!

Soli Deo Gloria

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