

A new heart also will I give you (Quality Good)

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- [0 : 0 0] In the prophecy of Ezekiel, and in chapter 36 and verse 26, Ezekiel 36 and verse 26, A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a heart of flesh.
- I want to speak to you this evening, as the Lord may help me, about that which God takes away, a stony heart, and that which God gives, described here as a heart of flesh.
- Not a fleshly heart, in that sense, but a heart of flesh, as compared with a heart of stone.
- And you will notice that this work is totally ascribed to God himself. It is God who speaks, and it is God who declares. It is something which he alone can do.
- As you have been singing in the first hymn, this is one of the wonders God alone can do. And he says a new heart. We are told in scripture, Behold, I make all things new. And this is fundamental to that truth. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.
- [1 : 5 5] And I will take away the stony heart. You know, it's a complete work. Something has got to be taken away, and something has got to be put in its place.
- It's not a patching up of the old. It's a taking away of the heart of stone, and it is a giving. I will give you, not something that you and I can do, but something which God alone can give.
- And so, within the context of this birth, we see something which testifies of what we rightly describe as a work of grace.
- Because it is all of grace. The prophet Ezekiel refers to it earlier on in chapter 11.
- And there, in the 11th chapter, and in the 19th verse, again he speaks to the Jews of his day and says, May I briefly remind you of the ministry of Ezekiel.
- [3 : 1 3] There is much in this prophecy which is mysterious. Many things hard to be understood. There are other parts which are very, very clear.
- Certainly the portion referring to the dry bones. Certainly the portion referring to the flock of God, and such like. There are things that are clear.
- There are things that are not so clear. We may need much wisdom in dealing with such portions of scripture, and much enlightenment that they may be rightly expounded.
- But this we see as something very clear and very plain. That this dear man of God, laboring as he was amongst captivity in the early days of the captivity, preaching a message that the people did not want to hear.
- They did not want him to say these things. They thought the captivity was only going to last for a short time. They would not believe Jeremiah in Jerusalem. These men were contemporary, you know.
- [4 : 1 8] One was preaching in Jerusalem amongst those who remained there. Ezekiel was preaching in those who had at the first gone into the captivity. Both were preaching the same message.

Both were testifying of divine judgment and of the destruction of Jerusalem, and the way in which God for a period would turn away from his people, and no one would listen to them.

It is amazing, isn't it, that the message of God should be so misunderstood by his people. They said to Ezekiel, they said that the words he spake, they were like a singer with a beautiful song, one that could play well upon an instrument, but they took no notice of what he said.

You know, is that how you come to chapel? Is that how I sit under the means of grace? Do we approve of the preacher, of his doctrinal soundness, of the clear way in which he expresses the truth, or do we listen to what is being said, if it is indeed the word of the living God?

Some people make much of the messenger, and nothing of the message. Oh, may the Lord open our eyes and our ears and our hearts, that we may understand and receive divine truth.

[5 : 39] You know, this then is the message. He preached under these difficult conditions. He saw no success, really, for his ministry.

He was a faithful steward, yet his words have been recorded eternally in the word of the living God. And so as we look at this Old Testament message this evening, a promise of God, he says to his people, A new heart will I give you, a new spirit will I put within you, I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.

Now it is always good to establish an Old Testament principle by New Testament confirmation. And this we can clearly do in this instance by turning to the second epistle of Paul to the Corinthians.

And there he speaks in these terms when he writes to the believers in Corinth, Ye are our epistle, written in our whole hearts, known and read of all men.

For as much as ye are manifestly declared to be the epistle of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but with the spirit of the living God, not in tables of stone, but in the flashy tables of the heart.

[7 : 09] So undoubtedly, as we look at this verse this evening, we are looking at a promise, we are looking at a prophecy, and we are looking at something which is evidently fulfilled in the power of the gospel of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ, as it had been preached by the Apostle Paul, received by those Corinthians who were idolaters, and ungodly, and ignorant, yet this great promise had been fulfilled, their hearts had been renewed, and they had become true believers in the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now, as we proceed with the subject, we would remind you again that God takes all the glory for this amazing work.

And we look at it, and we see that he says in the context here that he does it for his own sake, not for your sakes do I this, saith the Lord.

Be it known unto you, be ashamed, and be confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel. There was never yet a sinner that was worthy.

There was never yet a sinner that deserved this. There was never yet a sinner that merited such an act. It is all of grace. Let us underline it.

[8 : 35] Let us recognize what grace is. Grace is grace. Totally free. Totally undeserved. Totally unmerited.

Absolutely, sovereignly given. Otherwise, it would not be grace, would it? And God says he does it for his sake, for his name's sake, for the glory of his great and holy name.

Now, let us consider, then, the two hearts that are referred to here, a heart of stone and a heart of flesh, and compare them.

What does it mean, a heart of stone? In the prophecy of Zechariah, and in the seventh chapter, excuse me, in Zechariah 7, and verse 12, it says, concerning those who refused to hearken, that was to the word of the prophet here, and poured away the shoulder, and stopped their ears, that they should not hear.

Yea, they made their hearts as an adamant stone. They made their hearts as an adamant stone.

[9 : 58] This, then, is something that is, we're talking about something that is very hard, aren't we? Very hard indeed, a stone. Something that is cold, something that is dead, something that is lifeless, something that will not respond in any way to anything that is applied to it, something that is utterly unfruitful.

Remember, that which fell on the stony ground. You see, here is a heart, which is described as a heart of stone, and that stoniness is seen in the light of the gospel, the word of God, the divine commandments, and anything that is relative to that which is good and right and holy.

That is the stony heart. On the other hand, a heart of flesh, a repeat, not after the flesh. In that sense, that is not a carnal heart or mind, no, but a heart that is warm and soft and responsive, a heart that really is feeling.

The heart, of course, described here is the very center of our being. Obviously, not just the organ that pumps the blood around our body, but no, it is what lies at the very center, the heart of our being, the very depth of our nature.

The inner man, Paul calls it. Well, this is what we are looking at when we look at this question of the heart. stony heart or a heart of flesh.

[11 : 38] What sort of a heart have I got? Has God taken away this stony heart? Has God given me a heart of flesh? Well, let us look further at the heart of stone for a moment.

In the portion that we read in Jeremiah, we are told something there very clearly about our heart by nature, the heart that we are born with, the heart that is taken up with the things of the world and the things of the flesh and the things of this life.

And Jeremiah solemnly describes it in this way, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Desperately wicked. There's some people that can't understand what's going on around them today with all the crime and the violence and the wickedness and the evil that sadly abounds around us.

They say they can't understand why people should be like it. Well, I'm very sorry to say that I can understand why people should be like it. When the restraints of Christianity are removed and when the old nature takes over and is unrestrained, desperately wicked, wicked.

[12 : 58] The heart is deceitful, deceitful above all things and desperately wicked. It is a heart described by the prophet Isaiah in chapter 44 when he draws the solemn but pathetic picture of the man that cuts down the tree and uses some of it to light a fire and warm himself and cook his food and then he turns part of it into a god and worships it.

He falls down to the stock of a tree. He feedeth on ashes a deceived heart hath thrown him aside that he cannot deliver his soul nor say is there not a lie in my right hand so that this foolish heart, this deceitful heart, the fool that saith in his heart there is no god.

This is the heart of fallen man. The scripture rightly says he that trusteth in his own heart is a fool and that is the folly of utter godlessness.

It is an unbelieving heart, an unclean heart, a proud heart, an idolatrous heart, a disobedient heart, a foolish darkened heart.

Paul says in Romans chapter 1 their foolish heart was darkened. It is in darkness. It is a heart that cannot turn to God.

[14 : 27] Sin is engraven in it. In that chapter, I turn again to it. In Jeremiah chapter 17 it says, The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron and with a point of a diamond that is graven upon the table of their heart.

You know what is written on your heart by nature? Sin. Sin. The effects of the fall. You have an inbuilt propensity to sin.

We sin because we are sinners. Such is our Adam nature. Such we are. Born in sin and shapen in iniquity. That is the heart which God speaks of in his word and describes as a stony heart.

Nor can we lightly treat this fact because of course some may just adopt the spirit of fatalism and say, Well, I cannot do anything about this.

I must just leave the matter. I do not think myself to be better than other men but then no doubt somehow we shall all get to heaven.

[15 : 38] Somehow God will put things right. My friends, we have a God that searches the heart. Going back to that passage in Jeremiah, I the Lord search the heart.

Search the heart. Remember this, the very depth of your being are open to the one with whom we have to do. God is not mocked.

He searches the heart. I the Lord search the heart. I try the reins. That means the very depth of your being even to give every man according to his ways and according to the fruit of his doings.

It's a very solemn subject, isn't it? We start and think about it. I've only touched upon one or two scriptures relevant to this subject. but you and I by nature have such a heart.

It is a stony heart as far as God is concerned. Yet sin is written deep upon it with a pen of iron and cannot be erased or eradicated.

[16 : 45] That is our state as far as we are concerned. And this God searches, this God knows, and we are before God accountable creatures.

We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ. Now if I had to leave it there, what a solemn condition we should be left in.

But our text is a gospel text. It faces the fact. It tells us precisely what the problem is. We have a heart of stone, humanly speaking.

What then is to be done about this condition? Oh may we stop for a moment and consider how futile is every human effort to rectify this situation.

Some people think we take a hard line upon the doctrines of grace and the sovereignty of God. My friends, we do not take a hard line.

[17 : 49] We take a biblical line. There is nothing softer, there is nothing more loving, there is nothing more gracious than the voice of love and mercy that comes in the gospel.

But God's word is a faithful word and it tells us the truth. And the truth is that by nature we have a heart of stone and that by nature we cannot change that heart.

Who can say I have made my heart clean? Says the wise man in the book of prophets. Who can say I have made my heart clean?

It says I have not seen nor ear heard neither have entered into the heart of man that is by nature the things that God has prepared for them that love him.

Hollywood efforts are of no avail. The human heart is what it is.

[18 : 54] A heart of stone and a heart that is hardened to the gospel and to the word of God. Isaiah chapter 6 is a most amazing portion of the word of God that touches upon this subject.

And in Isaiah chapter 6 as you know it is that portion which describes the prophet's experience as he saw the glory of God and his eternal throne.

As he felt his utter sinfulness before God as he cried out woe is me for I am undone. And how the Lord graciously sent that seraphim to take a live coal from the altar and laid it upon his mouth and said lo this has touched thy lips and thy iniquity is taken away and thy sin is purged.

And I heard the voice of the Lord saying whom shall I send and who will go for us. Then I said here am I send me and then it was go.

Tell this people hear ye indeed but understand not see ye indeed but perceive not. And here's a solemn thing. This man has had a commission from the very throne of God as it were and has been prepared and suited for that ministry and God says this make the heart of this people fat and make their ears heavy and shut their eyes lest they see with their eyes and hear with their ears and understand with their heart and convert and be healed.

[20 : 37] Who hath known the mind of the Lord or who being his counselor hath taught him? God proposed as it were to show that even though this man went forth in his name went forth with the message that God had given him yet apart from divine grace they would not respond their hearts could not be changed and it is a proven thing as it were in the history of the ancient people of God that as the prophets came among them they despised them they rejected them they slew them until the Savior himself came and those same hard hearts rejected the Savior and led him away and crucified him such is the hardness of the human heart it cannot be changed by nature it will not in and all itself respond to the pleadings of divine grace and yet there is something in the chapter here that encourages us perhaps you're troubled because you have a hard heart because it seems to be unresponsive to the gospel because you do not feel that love shed abroad that you would like to feel well it does say this

God said he will do it all for his own glory and he says thus saith the Lord God I will yet for this be inquired by the house of Israel to do it for them to do it for them now I cannot change my heart you cannot change your heart in and of yourself but he does say I will be inquired of I will be inquired of so that David cries out in Psalm 51 create in me a clean heart oh God and renew a right spirit within me now let us consider what it is that God is able to do he's able to take it away the hymn writer puts it this way the appointed time rolls on a pace not to propose but call by grace change the heart renew the will and turn the feet to Zion's hill a new heart

I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh I will give you a heart of flesh it is a work of divine grace and it is a work that is accomplished through the gospel and through the preaching of the word and I feel that the case of Lydia gives us a very encouraging and very direct picture of what happens when God does this act of grace in the 16th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles Paul has come to Philippi I'm sure you're familiar with the historical content of this chapter and on the Sabbath day we went out of the city by a riverside where prayer was wont to be made what a fruitful spot outside of the city a place where prayer was wont to be made and we sat down and spake unto the women which resorted thither what a humble scene isn't it nothing very imposing about it nothing that would impress the world is it a few praying women by a riverside on a

Sabbath day morning and Paul sitting amongst them and speaking to them but see a miracle takes place a certain woman a certain woman oh how specific God is do you believe in the doctrine of election I'm sure Lydia did do you believe in predestination I'm sure Lydia did you read the account of how Paul was directed to Philippi and how this will stop them that will stop because there was Lydia loved with an everlasting love a vessel of mercy appointed unto salvation the good shepherd is seeking them and he sends his servant Paul all those miles to that little prayer meeting to meet with a few women some people say to me why do you bother to go down to Bath there's only half a dozen people there my friends were not told how many were there we're by the river so you know in Bath a place where prayer is wont to be made and so

Paul comes to that place and a miracle takes place a certain woman how specific whose name was Lydia a seller of purple we're told her trade a business woman just an ordinary person like you and me a seller of purple of the city of Thyatira which worshipped God heard her whose heart the Lord opened whose heart the Lord opened I would venture to say that in one way or another this miracle has been repeated thousands and thousands of times since then and by the same means she attended unto the things that were spoken of Paul now you know the things that were spoken of Paul you've read the Acts of the Apostles haven't you you've read some of the sermons you've read

[26 : 58] Romans you've read the two Corinthian epistles you've read them all yes you have haven't you you know the things that were spoken by Paul have they had that effect on you whose heart the Lord opened that she attended Paul says himself that his speech was his bodily presence was weak and his speech was contentable he said that he was amongst the Corinthians there with fear and much trembling and this apparently unworthy instrument who so many treated with content sat amongst these women and I say a miracle took place this prophecy this promise was fulfilled in this case and has been in countless others a new heart the heart was opened the heart was changed and she attended it's so simple isn't it and when she was baptized when she was baptized and her household she besought us saying if you've judged me to be faithful to the Lord come into my house and abide there now we mustn't stop there there's a sermon in itself in consideration of what took place but I am giving you this evening a simple but biblical illustration of what is promised in our text

I will take away the heart of stone I will give you a heart of flesh dear Lydia was a praying longing soul and God changed and renewed her heart and we could cite of course other instances as we consider this miracle of grace was Paul himself what a stony heart he had as he was determined to persecute and to destroy the church of Jesus Christ making his way to Damascus until there shines that light from heaven and Paul is brought upon his face before the Lord Jesus Christ oh what a changed heart that was heart of stone could it have been a harder heart I ask myself take it right away so this is the dear man that can write 1 Corinthians chapter 13 about the very essence of love divine and pray about that love of

God that passes knowledge what a transformation you see heart of stone heart of flesh think about the prodigal there in the pigsty when he came to himself when he came to himself was there ever a more hopeless case than that he rejected his father's love he'd misspent the gifts his father had bestowed upon him he'd run the score to length extreme but there was a point in time when grace reaches out when God lays hold of him and when he came to himself he said I will arise and go a changed heart you see the affections had once been set on the world and the things of the world and give me that which is mine you see and now penniless empty a beggar hungry miserable in red he makes his way home and what a reception changed heart you see now during the remaining moments

I mustn't keep you too long tonight and we ourselves have a long journey may I just give you a few points that I observe in scripture concerning this new heart this changed heart the first thing I would note is this that it is a broken and a contrite heart it is a broken and a contrite heart penitence and repentance go together they are in a sense two distinct things but we must recognize it repentance is to be cursed that is the new heart but a godly sorrow worketh repentance not to be repented of and if there is true repentance then there will be penitence that is what psalm 51 is all about from which I know now quote you see a broken heart a contrite heart this is essentially an evidence of that new heart once it had no concern once it was would reject the gospel once that heart was unmoved by the sufferings of the dear redeemer on behalf of his people upon the cross of calvary but now such a heart will embrace this truth blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted one hymn writer says oh may I a mourner be over my sins and after thee this new heart this heart of flesh this heart that God has changed and renewed will know what it is to weep to mourn over sin and it will be broken and contrite too as it views the sufferings of the

Saviour himself who bore our sins in his own body on the train my friend can you read Isaiah 53 with a dry eye can you read Isaiah 53 with a dry eye the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all oh the sufferings there depicted of the Lord Jesus Christ who was made sin for us he who knew no sin how does your heart respond to the gospel to the suffering of Christ to his death on the cross is it moved is it touched not with a mere emotional sentimentality but with a sense of love and of thanksgiving and praise that such a one should come and bear your sins in his own body on the train such is the new heart it will be a broken and a contrite heart the hymn writer says the contrite heart and broken

[33 : 48] God will not give to ruin this sacrifice he'll not despise for tis his spirit doing oh may the Lord soften our hearts more and more as we hear the gospel as we read the sacred page of scripture and realize what it cost him the one that loved us and gave himself for it this heart will also be a believing heart we touched on the matter of faith this morning faith cometh by hearing and hearing by the word of God and in the same chapter you will read with the heart man believing and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation and by faith resting upon the substitutionary death of the Lord

Jesus Christ and as we have access by grace into this faith wherein we stand we find that the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts God that commanded the light to shine out of darkness to shine into our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ this heart of flesh is an obedient heart there is such a thing as the obedience of faith we are not saved by works but faith without works is dead remember it is spelled out in Ephesians chapter 2 not of works ye are his workmanship unto good works which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them we are described in some quarters as antinomian of course we are not under the law we are under grace we are not slaves we are sons and yet there is the son that serve it is love that makes the willing thee in swift obedience move faith that worketh by love if ye love me keep my commandments you know this heart is a heart that trembles at the word of

God that will be troubled and concerned about matters of disobedience and walking in any other way than the way of his commandments the new heart rejoices in psalm 119 not in a spirit of legalism but a response to the love of God in Christ there is all the difference between a slave and a son isn't there and that is drawn out very clearly in the New Testament in the epistle to the Galatians and such like and we see there the glorious liberty of the sons of God and yet a love that makes the willing feet in swift obedience move it is an obedient heart and it is a burning heart it came to me this morning as I came into the prayer meeting here and one was praying there concerning the services this day and asking the Lord for an Emmaus Road experience well you know what that was did not our heart burn within us my friend what an experience they had didn't they when Jesus himself drew near and went with them but what did he do what did the son of

God do what did the word made flesh do he opened unto them the scriptures he opened unto them the scriptures he spoke of the things concerning himself and their hearts were burning they were warned there was something about those precious truths that affected them does your heart burn when you read the bible does your heart burn when you hear the gospel preached I don't mean the heart burn that people speak of in a natural sense of course I don't I mean that it becomes warm that it becomes lively that it responds because it's a heart of flesh and when the gospel of divine grace is preached this new heart will respond to it it won't be looking at the watch to see when the sermon is going to be open it won't be shuffling the feet and showing evidence of boredom and so on no when there's a new heart and when the gospel is preached even though the preacher be a poor instrument it will recognize divine truth for what it is and spiritual food for what it is and the heart will be warm it's a burning heart it is a clean heart it is a clean heart oh the precious blood that sprinkles and cleanses the heart my friends you and I need it don't we our best is stained and dined with sin are all is nothing worth but there is a fountain open for sinful uncleanness it's always a mystery to me how David could have fell so far as he did fall he was a man after

God's own heart he was the sweet singer of Israel the Holy Spirit spanked by him he was the Lord's anointed and yet as we read that solemn aspect of his life I refer of course to Bathsheba and Uriah and all that was involved with it you see that to himself that was his old nature that was his heart to murder to commit adultery to lie until that shaft came home there are the man and then we get some fifty-one creating me a clean heart wash me with this up and I shall be clean wash me that I may be whiter than snow you know and I know there's only one place where we can find cleansing the blood of Jesus Christ his son cleansing us from all sin but this heart will long for it will desire it will be concerned about the stains of sin and come again and again to the fountain you know we sin daily we need to keep short accounts don't we

[41 : 04] Jesus spoke of those who were clean but needed to wash their feet and you and I continually need to be crying out wash me that I may be whiter than the snow this heart is you know it's an amazing statement but I have to make it it is the dwelling place of Christ the believer's heart is the dwelling place of Christ your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost it is Christ in you the hope of glory that Christ may dwell in your heart said Paul what claim isn't it unworthy dwelling glorious guest dare I claim such a gift as this well you might long for it you go on longing for it I will not leave you comfort lads I will come unto you yes the very dwelling place of Christ himself he takes away the stony heart he gives a heart of faith a feeling loving obedient receptive heart and he comes himself through the person of his gracious spirit and takes up his abode in the heart of a believer

Christ in you the hope of glory it is a heart that the psalmist describes as a fixed heart oh God my heart is fixed we read in two of the psalms another it says he shall not be afraid of evil tidings his heart is fixed trusting in the Lord what does that mean it means prepare it means establish is your heart being prepared has God done this work of grace in your heart the preparation of the heart in man is of the Lord one says prepare me gracious God to stand before thy throne before thy face the spirit must the work perform for it is all of grace my heart is fixed established are you on a rock are you in Christ on Christ the solid rock

I stand all other ground is sinking sand you've sung it many a time or heard it sung is that your standing my heart is fixed you know the soul on Jesus leaned for repose he'll never know never desert to his foes that heart that soul all hell should endeavour to shake oh never no never no never forsake my heart is fixed oh God said the psalmist this new heart is fixed upon him and upon none other this heart is a humble heart this heart is a willing heart this heart is a joyful heart I don't mean the superficial joy of those who may engage in services where there is little but singing and little but fleshly excitement and entertainment no but nonetheless the dear hymn writer says solid joys and lasting pleasures none but

Zion's children knows and there are no and there's many exhortations to rejoice in the Lord and to be glad in him rejoice in the Lord always says the apostle and again I say rejoice on the heart this new heart is a heart that will praise him oh for a heart to praise my God a heart from sin set free now I must leave it because of the time I trust I have not wearied you I have sought to set before you one or two thoughts concerning this promise and its fulfillment this God that says he will take away the heart of stone and give a heart of flesh now the witness is within isn't he the witness is within oh may the Lord bear witness in our hearts that we are born of God

Amen