

"Something Simple & Basic" • 2 Chronicles 32:24-26

I. INTRODUCTION

A. *The Heart*

1. Everyone knows how critical the heart is to our health
2. The heart is the organ that pumps life to the rest of the body
3. With each beat of our hearts, about a gallon and a half of blood is being pushed through hundreds of feet of blood vessels
4. During an average lifetime of 74 years, the heart beats more than 2.5 billion times.
5. The circulation time, or the time it takes for one drop of blood to make an entire circuit through the body, averages just 24 seconds!
6. You can't go to the grocery store without seeing constant reminders of the need to guard the health of your heart
 - a. low fat, no fat, and reduced fat
 - b. low sodium
 - c. healthy choice
7. Even some of the fast food palaces have jumped on the bandwagon of heart health and now highlight items that are supposed to be approved by some heart disease organization or other
8. All of this just points up the fact that the heart is a critical organ and we need to take care of it

B. *Heart Disease*

1. Heart disease is one of the leading killers in the United States;
2. In fact in certain age groups, it is the #1 cause of death
3. While people are giving increasing attention to the well being of their physical hearts, it would be wise for us as the followers of Jesus to consider the health of our spiritual hearts
4. You see, just as the physical heart is the critical organ of our body's health -
5. Our spiritual heart is the critical organ of our spiritual health
6. Is our spiritual heart beset by disease this morning?
 - a. have we consumed too much of the "flesh"
 - b. have we neglected our spiritual disciplines and become out of shape so that our hearts are weak?
7. Let's consider these things as we look at 2 Chronicles 32 this morning

II. TEXT

A. *Vs. 24-26*

{24} In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign.

{25} But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor *shown* him, for his heart was

lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem.

{26} Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

B. Set The Scene

1. It's important that we set the scene for what we read here
2. Hezekiah was one of Judah's greatest kings
 - a. in fact, the parallel passage in 2 Kings 18 says that there was no one else like him either before, going all the way back to Solomon, or after, to the end of the kingdom [v. 5]
 - b. the only king that surpassed Hezekiah's faithfulness to God was David
3. Hezekiah was the one king who was able to lead the people in genuine reformation that resulted in a national revival
4. And while Hezekiah was a man who is marked for his tender heart toward God, he was by no means perfect
5. The scriptures show us some of his weaknesses
6. He was not perfect, but he did have a heart for God
7. In this is was a lot like his ancestor David
 - a. David too loved the Lord and had a tender heart toward the things of God
 - b. but as we all know, David was far from perfect
 - c. David was the kind of guy who did everything BIG
 - 1) so when he was faithful, he dare and did mighty things
 - a) like bringing down the giant, Goliath
 - b) or killing a lion and a bear
 - c) or leading a rag tag group of misfits to greatness
 - 2) but when he was bad, he was awful
 - a) like his feigning insanity before the Philistines so the wouldn't kill him
 - b) drooling all over himself and allowing his appearance to take on the form of someone who was utterly mad
 - c) and then we don't even need to go into the affair with Bathsheba, and the plot to murder her husband Uriah
8. In spite of all David's failures, God still calls him a man after His own heart
 - a. why? Because David was perfect? No!
 - b. because though David wasn't perfect and sin in a really grand fashion, when He sinned, because he did have a relationship with God that was more important to him than anything else, he repented and humbled himself before the Lord, asking for forgiveness with sincere desire
 - c. David was a man after God heart because *his* heart was tender toward God
9. This is what we see in Hezekiah as well - And we see it here

C. V. 24

{24} In those days Hezekiah was sick and near death, and he prayed to the LORD; and He spoke to him and gave him a sign.

1. This takes place 15 years before Hezekiah died
2. In 2 Kings 20 and Isaiah 38 we read that Hezekiah became deathly ill
3. Isaiah the prophet came to him with the announcement that he would soon die and he must put his house in order
4. When Hezekiah heard these words, he became extremely distressed
 - a. the Assyrians had already conquered the northern nation of Israel and were now breathing down the necks of the people of Judah
 - b. in fact, not long before this, they had attacked Jerusalem
 - c. it was only the miraculous intervention of God that delivered them
 - d. Hezekiah knew it was only a matter of time till they returned and renewed their siege
 - e. as he looked at Judah and his own sons, he knew there was no one who could lead the nation in resistance to the Assyrians
 - f. so he turned his face to the wall next to his bed and cried out to the Lord for healing
 - g. God then spoke to Isaiah to return to the king and tell him that his prayer had been heard and he would indeed be healed
 - h. furthermore, God would grant him 15 more full years
 - i. Hezekiah asked for a sign, not that he would be healed; the answer to that would be obvious!
 - j. but a sign that he would have 15 more years to live
 - k. by way of confirming the promise, God caused the sun to reverse its arc through the sky 10 degrees on the sundial

D. Vs. 25-26

{25} But Hezekiah did not repay according to the favor *shown* him, for his heart was lifted up; therefore wrath was looming over him and over Judah and Jerusalem.

{26} Then Hezekiah humbled himself for the pride of his heart, he and the inhabitants of Jerusalem, so that the wrath of the LORD did not come upon them in the days of Hezekiah.

1. The writer of Chronicles only summarizes the events mentioned in 2 Kings 20
2. There we read that after Hezekiah was healed, some officials came from Babylon with a message of congratulations from the King of Babylon
3. This official delegation from another country turned Hezekiah's head and moved him to pride
4. The situation was this:
 - a. the Babylonians were on the rise and wanted to throw off the Assyrian dominance that had held their land for some time
 - b. they looked to Judah as a likely ally because Judah had just gained a notable victory over the Assyrians
 - c. so this delegation from the King of Babylon was really an attempt at forging an alliance between the two nations against the Assyrians
5. The Chronicler gives us some information that both 2 Kings and Isaiah leave out
6. While they tell us *what* happened, Chronicles tells us *why*
7. Hezekiah began to think that he must be pretty important if these officials

- would travel all that distance to convey their concern for his health and to initiate discussions about a military alliance
8. Note the words in verse 25 = "*his heart was lifted up*"
 9. His heart, usually so tender and yielded to the Lord, became filled with pride and turned away from Him
 10. And as a result, God's displeasure was soon made manifest by the rumor of another invasion
 11. But Hezekiah quickly realized his error and repented of his pride
 - a. he was the kind of man that when trouble came,
 - b. rather than crying out against God,
 - c. his first thought was, "What might have I done that has brought about this trouble?"
 - d. and realizing his pride in his time of self-judgment, he quickly repented
 - e. his example, moved the people to the same kind of reflection and repentance
 - f. and the threatened invasion was delayed

III. CONCLUSION

A. Simple

1. My message today is a simple one
2. It is fundamental and basic to the Christian life
3. Chances are, for most of you, this is old ground and oft covered
4. But the task of a pastor is to lead, feed, and protect the flock
5. And that means that I will oft bring you back to pasture you've already grazed many times
6. As Peter said in his letter - the basic things need to be repeated again and again because we are prone to forget them
7. David forgot - Hezekiah forgot - and we forget too

B. The Point

1. The point of these verses is this: God looks on our hearts
2. He is vitally concerned with the posture of our hearts
3. What he wants is our hearts
4. And because we are imperfect men and women, who live in a fallen and sin plagued world, there are times when our hearts are going to stray from the Lord
5. God knows that - but what's vital, is that we turn back to Him
6. Friend, God is ready and willing to receive you back
7. Look at David, consider the example of Hezekiah here
 - a. these men erred - they committed huge sins
 - b. but when they stopped hiding their sins
 - c. and stopped justifying them and excusing them
 - d. and simply confessed them, admitting them to be the black, ugly things they were
 - e. and repented of them

- f. then God forgave them and healed them and filled them with the joy of His cleansing
- 8. Some of you this morning once walked with the Lord and had a tender heart toward him
- 9. But over time, your heart became hard and turned away to other things
 - a. oh, and there is an endless number of things out there that want to claim your heart
 - b. the world is full of distractions and the devil is an expert at making up new things to steal man's heart
- 10. It doesn't matter what it is that has claimed your heart
- 11. What God wants you to know this morning is that if you will but turn back to Him, He will forgive you and liberate you from those things
- 12. God's arm is not short that he cannot save; and His ear is not deaf so that He cannot hear
- 13. He is not reluctant to forgive - He is ready, willing, and able
- 14. And he is waiting!

C. Guard Your Heart

- 1. How important it is that we guard our hearts
- 2. Proverbs 4:23 says

Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it *spring* the issues of life.

- 3. Just as the physical heart pumps life to the rest of our bodies, so our spiritual hearts, our will, directs our spiritual life
 - a. if we eat the wrong kinds of foods, our physical hearts become diseased and we may die
 - b. even so, if our spiritual diet is just what the world offers, our spirit will become weak
 - c. if we consume too much fat, our arteries will clog and our health will be damaged
 - d. in the same manner, if we feast on the things of the flesh, we'll develop spiritual heart disease, and the flesh will dominate our will
 - e. if we neglect physical exercise, we will impair the health of our hearts
 - f. and in the same way, if we neglect the spiritual disciplines of study, prayer, fellowship, and service, our spirit will languish and grow ill

D. Finally

- 1. As I mentioned, I know these things are simple, obvious and basic
- 2. And you may have come this morning hoping for something really deep and meaty
- 3. But I have an urgency to share this message because I believe time is short, if not for all of us, then for some of us
- 4. Let me end with this: What is your heart given to?