

4-3-22 Sermon #12

Cat story

Pray

“Heart vs. Brain”

We've been looking at prayer and talking about posture. In John 17:20 we got to see Jesus praying to God and it helped us to understand that in order for God to answer Jesus' prayer, we need to witness to the lost for God. In Luke 23:34, Jesus prayed for forgiveness and because of the amount of forgiveness we need, when we're feeling wronged or sinned against, we need to forgive. Prayer is such an important part of all Christians lives and when it comes to the different postures for prayer, we can come to the conclusion that prayer is our "life". It's the only weapon we have. Without starting a debate, most Christians believe that God knows all things and sees all things. For [today](#), I would like to challenge all of us with a question that I'm not 100% sure how to answer. I will plead my case. When we see, hear or think about something, does it start in the brain first or does it start in our heart? During the week, I looked at a lot of different writings and many different scriptures. One point that seemed to re-occur was about how we remember something. Medically speaking, you can't have the brain without the heart. Both organs are dependent on each other. One study shared that the easiest way for learning anything, is it needs to touch our emotional receptors. Studies show that all emotions come from the heart and when our brain doesn't align with our heart, we're usually thinking or acting outside the will of God. Also the more we fill our eyes with negative or evil, the more hardened we can make our hearts. **I want everyone to think about "Superman" and when I count to three, look at the person next to you and strike one of his poses.1-2-3. We can also do this with Spiderman or even Jason. Our ability to mentally do this comes from the emotional attachment. Knowing how Superman or spiderman fought evil was remembered by our emotions. With Jason it's the emotional "fear" part of the heart that made us remember Him.** As we journey through life, when we're younger, many people struggle quite a bit with obedience and as we get older, our obedience may become the easier part of our relationship with God. This type of change may have come as a result of bad consequences or because something hurt us real bad. Maybe you just don't have the energy or interest anymore. All of us can relate to the saying, "been their done that" I'd like us to look In Deuteronomy 6:4-6 **4 Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God, the Lord is one.[a]5 Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength. 6 These commandments that I give you [today](#) are to be on your hearts.** Now let's look at Luke [10:26-28](#), when Jesus was being challenged with what is the greatest command. He said this; **26 "What is written in the Law?" he replied. "How do you read it?" 27 He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind'[a]; and, 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'**[b]" **28 "You have answered correctly," Jesus replied. "Do this and you will live."** It wasn't till after Jesus came to Earth, that the mind became an important part of this verse. In Matthew 5, after the sermon on the mount, the rest of the chapter and chapters 6 & 7, Jesus expands and teaches that it's not just the act of sin that is sin but, the very thought of it is sin. Murder/hate, adultery/lust and the need to have love for our enemies comes into play. The way we pray for others to be forgiven starts in our hearts and is completed in our brain. No matter what age we are, our minds can work overtime at finding fault in things and this is what fuels anger and judgement. If we allow evil to stay in our eyes and allow our brain to focus on it, we can harden our hearts and then become what we feed our hearts. We're all guilty of allowing our thoughts to take us for a ride but if we look at 2 Corinthians 10:5 **10 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.** This is our defense, but it can only be done by FAITH. So why is it so hard? If we could just get better at taking our thoughts captive, then we can learn to become content or thankful in all things. Can you remember the last time your FAITH grew? So why would Jesus add mind into what is the most important command. The mind is a terrible place for mankind and the mind is how Jesus continues to prove to us just how bad we all need Him. As people age, since we've experienced a lot things and because we can see that life has beat us up a lot, it doesn't mean that our spiritual growth is going to stop. Just because we don't have the energy to do all the stupid stuff we did when we were younger, doesn't mean that we didn't replace it with sin in our minds. Instead of having too much physical energy, we've got too much time to think about all the things we don't like. When it comes to prayer, through the sanctification process we mature and just because we can tell ourselves that we have a much stronger prayer life, we may just be missing Jesus' point. Last week, I said that prayer is "LIFE". When we make prayer only formal we limit the power of it. We can agree that most of our prayers are about things happening right now in our lives. Things we hear & see. Praying over 2 Corinthians 10:5 **We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.** This may be pretty far down the list of prayers. One article that I really liked about the mind & heart is this. **Distinguishing Mind From Heart: Which One Are You Listening to?** *The heart often speaks to us quietly and with common sense. The mind tends to rationalize our desires and*

reactions. To help you distinguish between how your mind might sound vs. your heart, here an example in the same situations.

The supermarket. *Mind:* Why don't they have more cashiers? They keep us standing here like cattle -- they know we have busy lives. And the prices you have to pay! They're just greedy. That incompetent mother can't keep her kid's hands off the candy -- someone should teach the brat a lesson (head shaking, blood pressure rising). *Heart:* I really didn't plan this right. The checker looks like she's been working 12 hours -- I'll send her some care and a smile. Let me find a good magazine on the news rack I can read while I'm waiting. In the Mind examples, judgments and reactions are in control and you feel justified being judgmental and angry. The Heart, though, is decidedly different -- softer and simpler. It might take courage to listen to your heart because what it suggests often seems too easy. It might say, "Just let it go" or "It's no big deal," and you may be afraid you're going to let someone get away with something or that the other person is going to walk all over you. It's like two different radio stations, the mind and the heart. When you tune into the heart station, your attitude adjusts and you find responses that are much more satisfying to you and better for the whole. Do we really believe that we can hide our thoughts from God? The type of prayer that I'm going to challenge us with is to start believing that our thoughts are actually a continuation of our prayers. When we see that Jesus added the word "MIND", He establish that we can sin because of what we allow ourselves to think, all these sin filled thoughts are also going to come out in our words and actions. We need to pray that Christ will help us stop thinking against the heart. If we're able to act different outwardly based on our surroundings, that proves that we can take that a step further and stop our brain from causing us to sin. We need to ask ourselves if our thoughts are causing us to live a dual life?

Mel Gibson starred in a movie called "What women want". He developed the ability to hear what women think. It was hilarious but the main point was to get a relationship with his daughter. This is only from the heart. This movie brought on a lot of emotions that Mel never knew. Taking our thoughts captive and knowing that God is listening will change what we say in our heads and what we experience through Christ because we have to attach emotions to this. Everything we think, God hears. Until we realize this, we will continually get really messed up in our heads. If we limit "prayer" to only when "WE" choose to be in front of God, then we may never have a reason to be able to take our thoughts captive. FAITH will turn into action when we change our minds and surrender our will over to the control of God. It can only be done if we make our brain stop filling our hearts with bad ugly stuff. Living out Christianity can become more desirable. Satan is going to work on all of us different. For some, it's in areas of pleasure. For others it's in the area of knowledge. Throughout Ecclesiastes, Solomon pursued both and found that without God, neither one ever brought satisfaction. Because we live on this side of the cross, which ever one you pursue, can bring thoughts that are bad thoughts. If it's pleasure that you like or if it's knowledge that you crave. How you think will directly affect your heart for either good or bad. Our brain can really fight with the heart but our minds will never win in a heart for God. We need to give prayer more room in our lives.

One last thought, this is a true story. A couple of years ago I was with an employee of mine and he was asking what we could do if someone steals from our company or if a shop refuses to pay us. Right before this we were talking about how to get better at extending grace to each other. In a humorous way I said that if they would do something like that, "I'm just going to tell God on them" and to this day I still use that. This made me realize that my thoughts are just like that. When I'm whining and grumbling about something that I don't like, I'm usually telling God on someone. It's like being one of my grandkids. It drives me crazy how much they tell on each other for no reason. We went through a period of time when they were telling on each other for everything. Finally, I started asking them what do they want me to do about it. Do you want me to yell at them or spank them? Maybe I should cut off a leg or maybe a thumb. Why are you telling me all this? I finally said that if they tell on someone for no reason, then I'm going to punish "you" and let you receive their punishment. Our thoughts are a lot like this. Do I want God to punish others? Do I want God to forgive them?

We must take 2 Corinthians **10 serious. 5 We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. If I choose to decide that prayer really is needed for all things,** I can tell myself that what I'm thinking is what I'm telling God. How do we make our FAITH grow, try taking your thoughts captive and stop messing with your HEART.

Yes the heart comes first!

Let's PRAY