

“Evidences of a Changed Heart”  
(Deuteronomy 30:1-10)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Remember that the book of Deuteronomy was addressed to the second generation of Jews who had been delivered from Egypt.
  - a. The first generation had been disobedient and were destroyed in the wilderness:
    - (i) Ultimately, they didn't have faith, they didn't believe the promises of God; the author to the Hebrews writes, “*So we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief*” (Heb. 3:19).
    - (ii) That's hard to believe, especially in light of the miracles they witnessed (Ten Plagues, Red Sea, quail, manna, water from the rock, fiery serpents, etc.).
    - (iii) It's often said that seeing is believing, but not in the case of salvation.
    - (iv) They saw, they knew what God was capable of, but they still weren't willing to trust Him.
    - (v) Something more was needed.
  - b. But now it was time for their children to enter the Promised Land.
    - (i) That's why the Lord was renewing His covenant: this was a new generation: they must not live as their forefathers.
    - (ii) Moses repeated God's Law so that they would know what He wanted – the right way from the wrong.
    - (iii) He also repeated the promises and curses for both positive and negative incentives: He dealt with them as with children: reward for faithfulness, discipline for failure.
2. But He also pointed out that this and later generations were also going to fail.
  - a. Not everyone of them, but many: eventually, they were going into exile.
  - b. But God would return to them, and turn them back to Him.
    - (i) The way He would do this was by changing their hearts.
    - (ii) That's where the problem lay, and so this is where the problem must be resolved.
    - (iii) The Lord was going to take away their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh: in other words, He was going to grant them the new birth, something their parents didn't have.

B. This evening, we want to look at the evidences the Lord gives in our passage that would show that this change had taken place.

1. We see at least three:
  - a. Love for God (v. 6).
  - b. Turning to God (vv. 2, 8, 10).
  - c. And obedience to God (v. 2, 8, 10).
2. What is most important to see here is that once the first occurred, the rest would follow.
  - a. Once we love Him, we will turn to Him (trust Him) and submit to Him, because that's what we'll want to do.

- b. Especially when we consider the intensity of love the Lord promises to give: not a half-hearted kind of love barely raising up above the level of indifference, but He says, “With all your heart and with all your soul” (v. 2, 6, 10).
- c. Certainly it will rise and fall according to several things:
  - (i) How much grace the Lord gives.
  - (ii) How well we use the means of grace.
  - (iii) How careful we are to preserve it by avoiding sin and walking in obedience.
- d. But no matter how it varies, the Lord will sustain it forever.
- e. Since love is the fountain from which all the marks of grace flow, this is the mark we’ll look at this evening.

## II. Sermon.

- A. First, we need to remember that the heart is the source of all our actions: so then what controls it, will control us.
  - 1. This is clear in both the Old and New Testaments:
    - a. Solomon wrote, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it *flow* the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23).
    - b. And our Lord Jesus said, “Out of the heart come evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, slanders” (Matt. 15:19).
    - c. Whatever fills our hearts will also fill our lives.
      - (i) When faced with a choice, we will choose what is in our hearts to choose, and we will do what is in our hearts to do.
      - (ii) If we love evil, we will choose evil; but if good/holiness, we will choose good/holiness.
  - 2. We saw last week that it is the circumcision of the heart by the Spirit that creates love for God who alone is truly good.
    - a. We can’t bring this about in our hearts, only God can.
    - b. But once He does, we will incline *towards* Him.
- B. Second, we see in our passage in the circumcision of the heart, the Spirit produces a very powerful and compelling kind of love. “Furthermore, the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, in order that you may live” (v. 6).
  - 1. It will cause us to love God with all our whole being:
    - a. With all our mind (intellect).
    - b. With all our heart (affections).
    - c. Causing us to choose (to will) things pleasing to Him, because we will want to please Him.
    - d. In other words, in the new birth, the Lord gives us the ability to do what He commands us to do: “And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might” (Deu. 6:5).
  - 2. If we could have done this without fail from the beginning of our lives to their end, we could have fulfilled the Law. But since we couldn’t, the Lord had to do it for us through Jesus Christ.

- a. But notice that God didn't send His Son into the world merely to atone for the guilt of our sins.
  - b. He also sent Him to change us from rebels to sons and daughters who love Him intensely.
    - (i) Not perfectly, but so deeply that nothing else compares.
    - (ii) As Asaph wrote in the psalms, "Whom have I in heaven *but Thee*? And besides Thee, I desire nothing on earth. My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever" (Psalm 73:25-26).
    - (iii) This is the same love that Jesus requires of us in the New Covenant: "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me" (Matt. 10:37-38).
    - (iv) This is what the Spirit gives in the new birth.
- C. This love the Spirit produces is love for the true God.
- 1. Obviously love for any god won't do – we must love the true God.
    - a. So many today make a god of their own liking and then love and serve him.
    - b. But the evidence that our hearts have been circumcised is love for the true God: the One who reveals Himself to us in the Scripture.
  - 2. This should be obvious.
    - a. We can't truly say we love God, if the god we love isn't the real God.
    - b. Far from loving Him, we would actually be hating Him.
      - (i) God is a jealous God, who will not allow any other gods before Him.
      - (ii) To do so would be to commit spiritual adultery, and to commit spiritual adultery would be to fall under God's wrath.
      - (iii) Moses told this new generation about to enter the land, "And it shall come about if you ever forget the LORD your God, and go after other gods and serve them and worship them, I testify against you today that you shall surely perish" (Deu. 8:19).
- D. The love the Spirit produces will cause us to love everything God reveals regarding Himself.
- 1. What this means is that we will love God in the totality of His Being.
    - a. We won't pick and choose what we like or don't like about Him.
      - (i) I once asked someone a question to bring this truth out to him: "Do you love the Lord revealed in Scripture? Do you think He is perfect? If you could change God in any way, would you?"
      - (ii) Think about his answer, "Yes. I would make Him more gracious. I would make it so that He would save everyone."
      - (iii) Do you love God, even though He sovereignly chooses whom He will save? Do you see this as a perfection and not as a blot on His perfect image?
      - (iv) The one who loves God will love Him as He is, not in spite of what He is.
    - b. The one who loves God will love Him especially for the very thing that makes Him repulsive to the unbeliever: His holiness.
      - (i) Anyone can love the gracious characteristics of God - His love, mercy, patience, kindness, and compassion.
      - (ii) But what about His love of righteousness, and His anger and wrath against sin?
      - (iii) What about His holiness, that He cannot tolerate sin in His presence?

- (iv) If we love God, we will also love these things about Him.
  - (v) This is something the ungodly can't do.
    - (a) They love sin (what God hates) and hate righteousness (what God loves).
    - (b) God's holiness makes them afraid, because of His infinite power to execute His justice and to punish them.
  - (vi) But this is the very thing that makes Him lovely to the believer.
    - (a) Just think what God would be like if He had all the power He has but was infinitely evil?
    - (b) It is His infinite holiness that makes Him infinitely lovely.
- E. The love the Spirit creates in the believer is for God as He is in Himself, not just for what He gives.
1. Do we love the gift, or the Giver of the gift? Sometimes it's hard to tell.
    - a. It would be easy for someone to love God, or at least to think that he did, if he believed that God had saved him from hell and given him eternal life, or if there was no doubt that He would.
    - b. When someone gives us a very expensive gift, we feel affection for them.
    - c. Certainly, Christians love God for the gift of His Son.
  2. But do we love God for who He is, apart from what He gives us? This is how we truly know that we love Him.
    - a. Suppose there was no heaven or hell, no life after death, no reward or punishment, no blessing in this life for following God, but persecution for doing so? Would you still love God? Would you still follow Him?
    - b. If you can honestly say yes, then you must love Him, apart from His gifts.
    - c. This is what the Spirit of God creates in the heart of a believer.
- F. Finally, the love the Spirit creates will hate those things contrary to God.
1. If you love the Lord, you must love holiness, because He is holy.
  2. But if you love the Lord, you must also hate those things contrary to Him.
    - a. You will hate those who openly oppose Him: "Do I not hate those who hate Thee, O Lord? And do I not loathe those who rise up against Thee. I hate them with the utmost hatred; they have become my enemies" (139:21)?
    - b. You will hate all sin and evil: "Hate evil, you who love the LORD" (97:10).
    - c. The love that inclines to toward God will also disincline us from everything that is contrary to Him: We cannot love God and sin.
    - d. Do you love God, the true God, with all your heart and soul? Do you love everything He reveals about Himself? Do you thirst for God, yearn for Him, seek Him, call on Him, and meditate on Him and His works, irrespective of what you might receive from Him? And do you hate the things that are contrary to God? Do you hate sin? If so, you truly do love the Lord.
    - e. May the Lord grant that each of us may have this love and know that we do, and if not, may He graciously give it to us through His Son that we might love Him and have eternal life. Amen.