

“Evidences of a Changed Heart, Part 2”
(Deuteronomy 30:1-10)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Last week, we looked more closely at the changes the circumcision of the heart should make in our lives:
 - a. This change of heart is all that is needed to change us from unbelief to belief, from rebels to servants, from those who hate God to those who are willing to lay down their lives for Him.
 - (i) Remember it is the heart that controls our thoughts, words and actions: we think what we want, say what we want, do what we want – that want or desire is our affection, and it dictates what we will and will not do.
 - (ii) Solomon wrote, “Watch over your heart with all diligence, for from it *flow* the springs of life” (Prov. 4:23).
 - (iii) Whatever our hearts are filled with, that is what our lives will be filled with – so if you want to know what is in your heart, look at your life.
 - b. It is the circumcision of the heart that fills our hearts with holy affections:
 - (i) A love for holiness, moral uprightness, righteousness.
 - (ii) Once our hearts are filled with this, it changes the way we live.
2. The first thing it does is make us love God.
 - a. Since God is holiness itself, it produces the greatest love for Him.
 - b. But as we saw we need to define what this love is because our hearts can deceive us.
 - (i) This love is not a love for a false god of our own making, but for the true God.
 - (ii) It’s not a love just for certain aspects of God – His love, mercy, grace – but for everything God reveals about Himself – justice, wrath, sovereignty, especially His holiness.
 - (iii) It’s not a love just for what God gives to us – though we love Him all the more for the salvation He has given us from hell in Christ – but for who and what God is in Himself: It is the Giver we love, not just the gift.
 - (iv) It’s not a love that raises us barely above indifference – so that we struggle to come to church, to worship, or to serve Him in this world – but a love for God with all our heart and soul.
 - (v) And it’s not a love that leaves room for sin, but hates the things God also hates.

B. Preview.

1. Love is the first mark, but there are two more in our text:
 - a. The circumcision of the heart will also bring a turning to God (v. 2, 10).
 - b. And it will cause us to obey Him (vv. 2, 8, 10).

2. These are the two we'll consider this evening, remembering that these two are also the fruit of a true love to God and His holiness.

II. Sermon.

A. The second mark is turning to the Lord (vv. 2, 10).

1. Notice that there are two conditions mentioned in our passage that must be true of those who will receive the blessings of God.
 - a. Moses tells them they must *return/turn* to the Lord and *obey* Him.
 - (i) "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call *them* to mind in all nations where the LORD your God has banished you, **and you return** to the LORD your God **and obey Him** with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the LORD your God has scattered you" (vv. 1-3).
 - (ii) "Then the LORD your God will prosper you abundantly in all the work of your hand, in the offspring of your body and in the offspring of your cattle and in the produce of your ground, for the LORD will again rejoice over you for good, just as He rejoiced over your fathers; **if you obey** the LORD your God to keep His commandments and His statutes which are written in this book of the law, **if you turn** to the LORD your God with all your heart and soul" (vv. 9-10).
 - b. What this means first is that they will have been moving away from Him in their hearts, but now they must turn and move towards Him.
 - (i) They will have left the Lord to trust in other gods – but they must return to Him.
 - (ii) They will have left the paths of righteousness – but they must come back and submit to Him.
 - (iii) This prophecy sees them as having turned away from the Lord, and for this, they will be scattered and dispersed among the nations (vv. 1, 3, 4).
 - (iv) But He promises that He will turn to them, change their hearts and cause them to return to Him (vv. 6, 9).
 - (v) They will turn to Him and obey Him with all their heart and soul.
 - (vi) He will make them love Him; when He does, they will return to Him.
2. Man in his fallen condition can't trust in the Lord or follow Him.
 - a. He might think he can and convince others that this is what he is doing through his profession of faith and obedience.
 - b. But God knows the heart:
 - (i) He knows whether or not we are trusting and turning to Him from love or some other motive.
 - (ii) Moses told the Jews that, for the most part, the Lord had not given them "a heart to know, nor eyes to see, nor ears to hear" (Deu. 29:4).

- (iii) Defection was therefore inevitable. Man cannot do what is not in his heart to do.
- (iv) But the Spirit of the Lord can change this:
 - (a) He can incline the heart back to God and away from the world.
 - (b) He can change our path so that we no longer run away from Him, but turn to Him in trust and obedience.
 - (c) What Moses is describing here is conversion, as it was represented in the Old Covenant.
 - (d) Without the circumcision of the heart, they will not be converted; and without conversion, they will never be faithful to the covenant.
 - (e) The same, obviously, is true of us.

B. We must turn to the Lord and trust in Him to be saved, and if we do, then He has circumcised our hearts. But there is something else: we must also obey Him.

1. If the Lord changes our hearts, giving us a love for holiness, and therefore for Him, this change will, at the same time, give us a love for God's Law.
 - a. This is something many dispensationalists don't want to accept.
 - (i) They have a hard time dividing between the works of the Law that are attempted for salvation and those done out of thankfulness – the fruit of salvation.
 - (ii) Many don't want to accept the validity of the Ten Commandments for today, at least as they were given through Moses.
 - b. But this is wrong-headed, and more importantly, wrong-hearted.
 - (i) The one whose heart is circumcised has such a high regard and love for God's Law, he would rather look for ways in which it applies rather than for reasons why it doesn't.
 - (ii) The reason is that God's Moral Law reflects the same holiness that is in God Himself – it is an expression of His holiness – which is why the Christian will love it.
 - (iii) This is the most obvious evidence of salvation, because it's one that we and everyone else can see: that one loves God's Law and desires to conform to that standard of holiness for God's glory.
 - (iv) This is exactly what Moses was prophesying would happen:
 - (a) "So it shall be when all of these things have come upon you . . . and you return to the LORD your God and obey Him with all your heart and soul according to all that I command you today, you and your sons, then the LORD your God will restore you from captivity, and have compassion on you" (vv. 1-3)
 - (b) And you shall again obey the LORD, and observe all His commandments which I command you today" (v. 8).
 - (c) Why will they do this? Because of love. They will do this with all their heart and soul, which means out of very strong affections.
 - (v) Obedience is what the Lord requires, and so this is what He will give them by His grace: the desire – the love, the will – to obey from the heart.

- (a) The Lord clearly shows us the requirement in Deuteronomy 10:12, “And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require from you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways and love Him, and to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”
 - (b) But He also clearly shows us its fulfillment in our text, and through other passages such as Jeremiah 31:33, “‘But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days,’ declares the Lord, ‘I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.’”
2. The Jeremiah quote is referring to the blessings of the New Covenant. But this blessing was already being given by God in the Old Covenant, through faith in the Christ who was to come, as evidenced by the expressions of love and adoration for God’s Law in the OT Scriptures:
- a. We see this especially in the book of Psalms: consider the psalm that introduces the book: “How blessed is the man who does not walk in the counsel of the wicked, nor stand in the path of sinners, nor sit in the seat of scoffers! But his *delight is in the law of the LORD*, and in His law he *meditates day and night*” (Psalm 1:1-2, emphasis added).
 - b. There is perhaps no psalm that brings this point out as clearly as Psalm 119.
 - (i) In it, the psalmist recognizes that the blessing of God comes to those who are obedient to His Law, “How blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the Lord. How blessed are those who observe His testimonies, who seek Him with all their heart” (vv. 1-2).
 - (ii) Not being satisfied with his present understanding of the Law, he prays, “Teach me, O Lord, the way of Your statutes, and I shall observe it to the end. Give me understanding, that I may observe Your law, and keep it with all my heart” (vv. 33-34). “I shall give thanks to You with uprightness of heart, when I learn Your righteous judgments” (v. 7).
 - (iii) Not being satisfied with his current level of obedience, he pleads, “With all my heart I have sought You; do not let me wander from Your commandments” (v. 10). “Oh that my ways may be established to keep Your statutes” (v. 5)!
 - (iv) And realizing how precious it is, especially because it reveals how to please God, he expresses the most ardent desire for it, “Your word I have treasured in my heart, that I may not sin against You” (v. 11). “The law of Your mouth is better to me than thousands of gold and silver pieces” (v. 72); “I love Your commandments above gold, yes, above fine gold” (v. 127). “My soul is crushed with longing after Your ordinances at all times” (v. 20). “I shall delight in Your commandments, which I love. And I shall lift up my hands to Your commandments, which I love; and I will meditate on Your statutes” (vv. 47-48). “My soul languishes for Your salvation; I wait for Your word. My eyes fail with longing for Your word” (vv. 81-82a). “How sweet are Your words to my taste! Yes, sweeter than honey to my mouth!” (v. 103; cf. 19:10).

- (v) The whole psalm is an exquisite expression of love for God's commandments: this is the kind of love that the true saint will have for it.
- c. It shouldn't come as any surprise to us then that our Lord would also have this most ardent desire for God's Law when He came in human flesh, "Sacrifice and meal offering You have not desired; My ears You have opened; burnt offering and sin offering You have not required. Then I said, 'Behold, I come; in the scroll of the book it is written of me; *I delight to do Your will, O my God; Your Law is within my heart*'" (Psalm 40:6-8, emphasis added).
- (i) Jesus told His disciples, "My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work" (John 4:34).
- (ii) If this is true of Jesus, then how should it be true of His followers:
 - (a) Jesus said, "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied" (Matt. 5:6).
 - (b) And Paul wrote, "So then, the Law is holy, and the commandment is holy and righteous and good" (Rom. 7:12).
 - (c) That being the case, should anyone be able to say with Dr. Chafer that the Israelites' response to God when He presented the Law to them should have been, "Away with this Law; give us grace"?
 - (d) No what they should have said was, "All that the LORD has spoken we will do, and we will be obedient!" (Ex. 24:7).
 - (e) The Lord desires obedience, not whatever we might care to give Him (1 Sam. 15:22).
 - (f) Grace and Law are not enemies, but friends: it was grace that brought about the fulfillment of the Law and that we might be given the ability to walk in it.
 - (g) If we are believers, this is what we will desire. Amen.