

Introduction:

- While we were in North Carolina we drove to the top of one of the mountains upon which we found an apple orchard. As far as you could see apples! You know how we could tell? APPLES! My parents have a cherry tree in Illinois and in the late spring it is load with lushes red fruit. Do you know how we knew it was a cherry tree? CHERRIES. A fruit tree is know by it fruit! By what it produces. What are you producing???. How do people recognize you?? When God looks at your heart what are you known by?
 - **"For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."** (Matthew 12:34, ESV)
 - **"The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks."** (Luke 6:45, ESV)
- I received a fruit basket last night for my birthday! It was filled with fruit: pineapple, chocolate covered strawberries, cantaloupe, oranges and grapes. I loved the strawberries! It all came as a bouquet! When I ate cantaloupe, they did not taste like strawberries. Blind fold me, give me fruit and I can identify it.
- What we produce defines us. What is it that defines you?

I. It Matters What Is In Your Heart

- A. One, because your heart defines you. What is in your heart will always define you, just like the fruit of a tree defines it.
 1. In both of our passages tonight the statement is made: **"for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks."**
 2. In the Matthew passage, a confrontation is taking place between Jesus and the Pharisees. They are accusing him of casting out devils by being of the devil. He quickly flips that on them by simply saying... "Well, let's look at the fruit of our lives and see which one is of the devil."
 3. In the second passage Jesus is teaching in the Sermon on the Mount a basic principle that all followers of Christ need to understand. What is found most in your heart will be what mostly comes out.
- B. Two, because God looks at the heart.
 1. **"... For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."** (1 Samuel 16:7, ESV)
 2. heart - Heb.-leb. *"heart" became the richest biblical term for the totality of man's inner or immaterial nature.*¹ The heart dealt with a man's emotions, thoughts and will.
 3. If God is the one who is looking at our heart, and He is, then we should be

¹ Bowling, A. (1999). 1071 לבב. R. L. Harris, G. L. Archer Jr., & B. K. Waltke (Eds.), Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament (electronic ed., p. 466). Chicago: Moody Press.

concerned what He see.

- C. Three, others see the fruit. They see what is actually coming out the heart.
 - 1. For the most part, man does not have the capacity to look at the heart of people. Therefore he looks at the externals: actions, attitudes, choices, words, ...the fruit of what is coming out of the heart.
 - 2. God looks and sees the heart...even when you are not moving, and He knows who we are. Man looks at our interactions with each other and he knows who we are.
- D. From the mouth of Jesus, it matters what is in our heart! And it should matter to us. **"The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil..."** Lk 6:45 "You cannot export what you do not produce!"

II. Jesus' Concern Is The Quality Of the Fruit

- A. He gives us two adjectives to work with:
 - 1. Good is what is pleasant, virtuous, high quality.
 - 2. Evil/Bad is what is bad, harmful, useless.
 - 3. He uses these adjectives to define people: Good person, or evil person.
 - 4. Thus people are defined by what they produce. And what they produce comes out of what is in the heart.
- B. Both interactions of scripture from our texts tonight have to do with the heart.
 - 1. The heart reveals who the actual person is.
 - 2. The condition of the heart can be changed.
 - 3. So the command to us from the Word is: **"Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."** (Proverbs 4:23, ESV)
 - a) Nasar - Heb. to watch, to guard. So we are to guard our hearts from what goes into it and what comes out of it. We are to do it with great care, and careful attention.
 - b) The reason we guard it is to keep it clean. Ie. Stir up /muddy the water and you cant see the bottom. We are filled with Living Water so we don't want to send mixed messages.
- C. Jesus is concerned about the quality of the fruit of our lives because He is concerned about our hearts.

III. Let's Talk About The Heart.

- A. How does a heart go bad? How is a heart made good?
 - 1. Originally the heart is born bad. The sin of Adam. So from the start it is programed for selfishness. It is easy to define/see evil
 - 2. When we are born again the heart is made righteous! It is made good. And as we take off the 'grave clothes' and walk in the fruit of the Spirit...Life come out of us!

Good fruit comes out of us.

3. But we have to steward our hearts, watch over our hearts, guard our hearts.
- B. In 2006 I took a group of people from FCC on a tour of Israel. We went to the ruins of a former town of Roman origin. As we looked at the cobble stone street lined with fallen white pillars, our guide described/called this street the "kardia - Gr." It was called the cardia because it was the 'heart' of the city. Every city had one.
1. Everything happens there! Transactions take place as things are bought and sold. Relationships are built. Thievery takes place. Fights break out. Young ladies are romanced.
 2. The human heart continually experiences transactions. For it is always interacting with the world around it giving away and taking in.
 3. As this happens relationships are built or made as those interactions take place. We are hurt by words, (some people never recover). We are rejected, which produces in that heart fear of being rejected, pain of soul...these are what we would call evil. But there are also kind things that are done to us and spoken to us and these help make our heart good.
- C. Jesus is the heart changer! *"because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."* (Romans 10:9-10, ESV)
1. Put the word in your heart! Store it up until you have an abundance. *"I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you."* (Psalm 119:11, ESV)
 2. Be like Mary and ponder the word in your heart. Also Joshua 1 (Meditate)
 3. James 3:2 keep/guard your tongue...perfect man.

Conclusion:

- The heart can be made good by Christ.
- The heart can be filled with good by what you put in it.
- What fills your heart will define you! Be a good tree bearing good fruit.