

Introduction:

- I started out several weeks ago by asking several questions. What are you producing in your life? How do people recognize you? When God looks at your heart what are you known by? Two scriptures have been our running theme or starting point.
 - “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)
- The truth we have been looking at is: What is in your heart defines you, it allows others to see who you are. And God is a God who looks at the heart and not the outside. Jesus is concerned about the condition of our heart, or what is in our heart because He is looking for us to produce good things! We also talked about the Kardia - heart of the city. The heart is the main thoroughfare of you life!
- A guarded heart is a heart that will love well.

I. Guard Your Heart

- A. Guard your heart with vigilance. Keep watch. “Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23, ESV) We are to watch what goes into our hearts and also what comes out of our hearts. If we make our hearts good then good things will come out of it.
 1. We are to guard it at all times. This requires diligence on our part.
 2. We are to take extra care at guarding our hearts. IE. There were several weeds on the farm that I loved as child but hated as teenager. They were milkweed, thistle, and dandelion. As a kid I liked them because they would produce these fluffy ball types of seeds. We would blow on them or pick them and hold them up to the wind. And the wind would carry these seeds all over the garden, the field, the pasture, fence lines. So fun to watch. And my dad, mom and grandpa would say, “What are you doing, son!” “Those weeds are going to grow all over now.” I did not care until I was tasked with weed pulling. Now it mattered what went into the garden, the field, the pasture, the fence lines. You might say I quickly learned diligence. “Kill the weeds before it seeds!” That is what we have to do with our hearts. Some things look innocent at the moment but they last a life time. Guard your heart with all diligence.
- B. Guarding your heart is watching what you allow into it. Eyes gate, ear gate, mouth gate, all these have to do with our senses. We have already discussed and noted this in prior messages.
- C. Guard your heart with peace! Or we can say, “Peace guards your heart”.

1. Peace guards the heart. "And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." (Philippians 4:7, ESV)
 - a) Let me clarify: The Peace of God that surpasses understanding guards the heart.
 - b) Erine - Gr. not merely rest, but a state of well-being or wholeness, so that one can even be said to die in peace!¹
2. Connection of peace and troubled heart. "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." (John 14:27, ESV) The believer is armed with a peace that has power over that which would trouble most people. With this in mind, our peace of heart should be a sign as to how well we are doing guarding our hearts.
3. Heart is established by grace. "Do not be led away by diverse and strange teachings, for it is good for the heart to be strengthened by grace, not by foods, which have not benefited those devoted to them." (Hebrews 13:9, ESV)
 - a) For it is good - καλῶς - beautiful, attractive, good, lovely.
 - b) βεβαιουσθαι *ḗbébaios* means "firm," "steadfast," "steady," "reliable," "certain." *bebaióun* has the sense "to make firm," "to confirm," "to keep truth" (absolute), "to assure for oneself" (middle).²
 - c) Grace - "God's ability in me to do the things I cannot do in and of myself"
 - d) It is a beautiful thing when we are made firm/strengthened by the ability of God.

II. What We Guard, The Devil Attacks – Attacks only serve to build a better heart!

- A. The first things he comes to steal is our treasure...the Word hidden in our heart. The devil comes to take the word out of our hearts. "The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved." (Luke 8:12, ESV)
- B. The devil comes to sow doubt. IE. Like the dandelion seeds.
 1. Guard against doubt in the heart. "Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, 'Be taken up and thrown into the sea,' and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him." (Mark 11:23, ESV)

¹Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 208). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

²Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 103). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

2. Don't go astray in your heart. *"Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.'"* (Hebrews 3:10, ESV)
 3. Unbelief leads us to fall away from God. *"Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God."* (Hebrews 3:12, ESV)
- C. He sows hard-heartedness.
1. Guard yourself of hard heartedness. Their hearts were hard. *"for they did not understand about the loaves, but their hearts were hardened."* (Mark 6:52, ESV)
 2. Jesus is grieved over hard hearts. Hard - means dry, hard, rough. *"And he looked around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, and said to the man, 'Stretch out your hand.' He stretched it out, and his hand was restored."* (Mark 3:5, ESV)

III. We Guard Our Hearts To Love

- A. We guard our hearts so that we can love well. *"And he said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God **with all your heart** and with all your soul and with all your mind.'"* (Matthew 22:37, ESV) Love with all your heart. (Mk 12:30)
- B. Love earnestly from a pure heart. *"Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart,"* (1 Peter 1:22, ESV) A pure heart has the ability and capacity to love well.
- C. Word is a discerner of the heart. *"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."* (Hebrews 4:12, ESV)
 1. To judge, to assess, to determine.
 2. The Word that is alive does this assessing of our hearts.
 3. Another reason to keep the word of God alive in us and among us.
- D. The goal is love that flows from a pure heart. LIKE JESUS! *"The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith."* (1 Timothy 1:5, ESV)
- E. The Holy Spirit not only helps us guard our hearts but can turn hearts. *"and he will go before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready for the Lord a people prepared."* (Luke 1:17, ESV) The Spirit and Power...

Conclusion:

- The heart can be trained. *"They have eyes full of adultery, insatiable for sin. They entice unsteady souls. They have hearts trained in greed. Accursed children!"* (2 Peter 2:14, ESV)

- Here they were trained for evil. But it can also be trained for good. Heb 12:11
- And a heart trained in righteousness can love well
- What a great way to be defined...He loved well!

- *You must be saved. "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)

- Go and ponder this message. Mary pondered these things in her heart. *"But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart."* (Luke 2:19, ESV) Mary treasured the things of God in her heart and thought about them.