**Pondering Scripture: 2 Corinthians 5:9-11**

*by Jeremiah Cox*

In following his thoughts about the temporary nature of life, Paul mentions how that should cause one to act. In Paul’s ministry he made it his aim to please God. This is a fundamental aspect of Christianity. We should always question whether our actions will be pleasing to God before doing them. In all of Paul’s actions God was at the forefront of his mind.

Pleasing God is paramount for we will be judged by Him. When we all *“appear before the judgment seat of Christ”* we will receive the things done in the body. As Paul wrote elsewhere – *“Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap. For he who sows to his flesh will of the flesh reap corruption, but he who sows to the Spirit will of the Spirit reap everlasting life”* (Galatians 6:7-8).

This is the *“terror of the Lord”* – He will either welcome us home, or send us away for eternity! For this reason Paul persuades men to be reconciled to God, for *“It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God”* (Hebrews 10:31). Knowing this he lived an open life before God in obedience. This was manifest to the Corinthians by his character. May we all heed the inspired words of the apostle and live our lives to please God!

**The Human Heart**

*by Jeremiah Cox*

The heart muscle is an amazing design by our God. At only about the size of your two fists, the heart does the most physical work of any muscle during a lifetime. It beats about 100,000 times each day, moving 2,000 gallons of blood throughout the 60,000 mile system of blood vessels in your body. In an average lifetime the heart pumps about 1,000,000 barrels of blood – enough to fill more than 3 super tankers. A kitchen faucet would need to be turned on full blast for 45 years to reach that amount! However, despite being so impressive, the anatomical human heart is very similar to the heart of some animals. So, what makes the human heart so unique? The Bible speaks of a human heart that is completely different than that of the blood pump. In fact, animals do not possess such. This heart is unique to mankind, and it is ever so important.

As revealed in scripture, the heart is used figuratively to describe the *“hidden person”* (1 Peter 3:4). It is the place which contains our *“thoughts and intents”* (Hebrews 4:12). It is at the very core of each man. For this reason it’s easy to understand the use of the word to describe this aspect of the human nature. Anatomically, if the heart is corrupted, or damaged, if it is not working properly, the body will fail. Likewise, if the spiritual heart is not fulfilling its designed purpose there will be dire consequences. Moses recorded, *“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually”* (Genesis 6:5). For this reason God destroyed man. *“But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord”* (Genesis 6:8) because his heart was not corrupt.

The heart is not inherently corrupt. When God created man He saw that His creation was *“very good”* (Genesis 1:31). Adam’s heart was good until he rebelled against God by eating of the tree which was forbidden. The day he ate of it he, along with his wife who also ate, died (cf. Genesis 2:17). It is obvious that his physical heart was not corrupted by his actions, for his death was not physical. Contrary to physical heart problems, spiritual heart problems are never hereditary. The scripture reveals, *“The soul who sins shall die. The son shall not bear the guilt of the father, nor the father bear the guilt of the son. The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself”* (Ezekiel 18:20). The heart fails when an individual sins, *“For the wages of sin is death”* (Romans 6:23). However, there comes a point in every man’s life when he requires spiritual heart surgery, *“for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”* (Romans 3:23).

There is only one physician capable of performing this much needed procedure. Jesus is that physician. He came to *“save His people from their sins”* (Matthew 1:21). However, this heart surgery is elective, and is only offered to *“His people.”* Therefore, we must desire for our heart to be repaired, and we must attain candidacy.

*“The grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men”* (Titus 2:11). However, we must come to attain it – *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”* (Matthew 11:28). The human heart was not meant to be without God. However, our sin separates us from Him (cf. Isaiah 59:2), and puts a burden on our heart. God in Christ can take the burden away if we repent, and are baptized – *“Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit”* (Acts 2:38).

After we have our heart surgery to remove sin – similarly to physical heart surgery – we must live a new, and healthier life. The Hebrew writer warned of the possibility of once again causing our heart to be unhealthy – *“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God”* (Hebrews 3:12). Due to this possibility, it is necessary to feed ourselves with those things that are beneficial to our heart’s health (cf. Philippians 4:8-9). Our Great Physician has also prescribed exercise for our continued health, and growth (cf. 1 Timothy 4:7-8). We must continually give ourselves examinations to ensure our health is as it should be (cf. 2 Corinthians 13:5). If we find something amiss, we must purify our hearts (cf. James 4:8; 1 John 1:9).

The human heart is not a muscle. It is not a part of the physical body. It’s more precious than anything we possess, and should be treated accordingly. Do you have a healthy heart?