



LAY not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: ²⁰ But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: ²¹ For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. (Matt 6:19-21)

The most important organ of the physical body is the heart. Comprised of chambers of the right and left Atrium, the right and left Ventricle, and an Aortic, Pulmonary, Mitral, and Tricuspid valve among other features. Each of these is critically important to our continued life. If we are wise, we will guard our heart against such conditions as Congestive Heart failure (the cause of death of our Lord according to medical experts), arteriosclerosis, and a sedentary lifestyle. At birth, your Maker assigns a specific number of heartbeats to your heart, the last of which will close your eyes in death. So, the heart is of a paramount, physical importance and interest to every living creature.

But there is a heart organ of the Spirit as well which has no limit of beats. This heart is that of the soul. In many ways, it is subject to the same maladies as the physical heart, only more crucial to our eternal being. The Chambers of the spiritual heart are filled with many false rumors about others, hatred, vitriol, deceit and a host of other sins that began to grow there the small seeds of childhood, and have now matured into full blown sins of both omission and commission. Our outward character will usually reflect our inward depravity. The wedges of gold (unrepented sins) that we have surreptitiously

stored in the hidden chambers of our spiritual hearts are the poverty which we must bear as the outcasts of God's Kingdom.

Our tongues are merely the organs that may reveal what is in our hearts. Vile and unsubstantiated gossip flow freely from the unregenerate tongue. It is the conduit of the heart whereby our dark sins are made manifest. Though not as crucial as the heart in survival, it is the most powerful in doing great harm to others and revealing our future eternity. The Book of James provides strong proverbs about the evil potential of the tongue:

FOR in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. **3** Behold, we put bits in the horses' mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body. **4** Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth. **5** Even so the tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! **6** And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell. **7** For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and of things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind: **8** But the tongue can no man tame; it is an unruly evil, full of deadly poison. **9** Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God. **10** Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be. **11** Doth a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter? **12** Can the fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries? either a vine, figs? so can no fountain both yield salt water and fresh. (James 3:2-12)

All hearts shall be opened on the Judgment Day. What filth and shame may they expose of our treasures. Perhaps we have lived a life of dignified sophistication, and have gained the respect of society; yet, we have harbored the most sinister of thoughts in the dark chambers of our hearts. All will be revealed on that Day unless our sins have been remitted.

There is a telling story of how the tongue takes charge of its owner as told by a native of the Aniwa tribe of Vanuatu (Coral Sea) named Titonga. It is related by FE Marsh in Points, Pearls, and Parables (1908):

A native of Aniwa, named Titonga, recently gave the following sound advice to his brethren: I see many things among us that are not right. There is often bad talk. When you hear a whisper of scandal, you bend forward your ear, and exclaim, 'Say that again: say it again, that I may hear it well !' and then you take it and put it in your heart, and go about looking for someone to tell it to. You come to church and take the Word of Jesus, and open it and read it and then you shut it and leave it there. You go to school in the morning, and open the Word of Jesus and read it ; then you shut it and leave it there. You go to your work and forget it. You do not lay it up in your hearts. My friends, this is not right; we must close our hearts and ears to bad talk, and open our ears and hearts to the Word of Jesus.

We can carry none of our ill-gotten treasure to heaven. The only treasures we may possess must be on deposit there when we arrive.

A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things. But I say unto you, That every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned. (Matt 12:35-37)

Instead of being so consumed with the faults of others, why not take a long, deep look into the treasures of our hearts and see what may be lurking there. Before we scold

our neighbor for the mote in his eye, let us first remove the beam that is in our own. Then we shall be of right mind and vision to point out our neighbor's failing. (Matt 7:5)

Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. (2 Cor 7:1) Paul, of course knew that we could not cleanse our hearts under our own force of will. We must rely upon a Will that formed the earth and stars, that built the mountains and molded the valleys. We must take upon ourselves that Mind that was in Christ Jesus if we will be found perfect. It is His own righteousness, not ours, which He imputes to us.

The heart is a *Garden enclosed, a spring shut up, a fountain sealed.* (Song 4:12) It is the only thing we bear in our breasts beyond Jordan Banks. It must be protected from rodents, foxes, insects, weeds, and all manner of worldly mischief. The water of the heart must be the pure, living water of life. We must protect it at all cost: *My son, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my sayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midst of thine heart. For they are life unto those that find them, and health to all their flesh. Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. Put away from thee a froward mouth, and perverse lips put far from thee. Let thine eyes look right on, and let thine eyelids look straight before thee. Ponder the path of thy feet, and let all thy ways be established. Turn not to the right hand nor to the left: remove thy foot from evil.* (Prov 4:20-27)

American society, and even the whole world, is fraught with sinful thoughts and actions that were not even mentioned by hardened soldiers only a few decades ago. We live in a time very much like the days of Noah. *And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.* (Gen 6:3) Man's natural heart has not undergone any improvement since that day. In fact, we are turning to perversions that may blush the pre-Deluge multitudes. What does God do when the whole world turns to such abominable sins? *"And it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. And the LORD said, I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth; both man, and beast, and the creeping thing, and the fowls of the air; for it repenteth me that I have made them.* (Gen 6:6-7)

God has already predestined an end to all things as we know them. He destroyed the old world before with floods of water – but He will destroy the world that now is with such heat as the elements will melt and their atomic structure violated. *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also and the works that are therein shall be burned up.* (2 Peter 3:10)

Where will your treasure be when that day arrives – in Heaven or upon the world that then was?