

Spiritual Heart Condition

Spiritual Heart Condition, that's a big phase. But what does that mean to have it? The Bible talks a lot about a person's heart. In 1 Samuel 16:7, "But the Lord said to Samuel, do not look on his appearance or the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees, man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart."

In Psalm 51: 10-12, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from your presence and take not your Holy Spirit from me." Here we see the Psalmist is writing about a spiritual heart condition he was having.

In Ezekiel 36: 26-27 the prophet of God tells the people in the land. "And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you...". Here we find that Ezekiel was telling the people that if they would follow their Spiritual Heart Condition what God was wanting to do for them.

In Matthew 7: 7-8 "Ask, and it will be given you; seek and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

Over and over we see that there is a Living God who wants to have a personal relationship with us. But first we must have a spiritual heart condition, that is when God is extending his call for your life. I would like for us to look at three people in the Bible who had a that spiritual heart condition and wanted to do something about it.

Nicodemus

The first person that I would like to show had a spiritual heart condition was Nicodemus. His story can be found in John chapter 3. Nicodemus was a member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council. Only the well-educated wealthy and highly respected in the community served on this council. Nicodemus was also a Pharisee, which were the teachers of the Mosaic Law. In short Nicodemus had spent his entire life climbing the social, religious and moral standards of his day.

But something started happening to Nicodemus, he started having a spiritual heart condition. He could not at first understand why. He only knew that Jesus a young rabbi had come to his town preaching about the Kingdom of God. As Nicodemus listen to Jesus words his spiritual heart condition only grew more.

Then a question grew in Nicodemus. It was exceedingly small, but it was there. More and more the question grew, louder and louder until Nicodemus himself was able to say it. "Have I done everything I can do to go to Heaven?" Before Jesus came to his town, Nicodemus felt confident in his accomplished to get him to Heaven. But now... Nicodemus had a Spiritual Heart condition. A lot of people today, walk around with spiritual heart conditions and sadly, they will not do anything about it.

Nicodemus did want to do something about his condition. That night Nicodemus came to Jesus, not to debate him as the other teachers of the law had done, but to show respect to him. John 3: 2-3 reads: "Rabbi, we know you are a teacher who has come from God. For no one could perform the miraculous signs you are doing if God were not with him."

Jesus, knowing all things, turned and look into Nicodemus heart and then he said, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." The words to Nicodemus question, was ringing in his ears as Jesus spoke. John 3: 5-8 reads: "Jesus answered, I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to Spirit." John 3: 13-16 reads "No one has ever gone into heaven except the one who came from heaven__ the Son of Man must be lifted up, that everyone who believes in him may have eternal life. For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life."

The Sinful Woman

The second person with a heart condition I would like for us to look at can be found in the Luke 7:36-50. Here we find a woman that her name is not given, only the title a "Sinful Woman" that has been placed on her is used.

A few years ago, our government ran some TV commercial ads about the effects of using illegal drugs. Remember the commercial about the hot frying pan and then someone drops an egg into it and then the egg starts frying. The commentator then says this is your brain on drugs, ANY questions?? But for me, the best TV commercial was shot in Black and White. It was of a camara fixed upon a busy city street. People were walking quickly back and forth to get to their jobs. As the camara slowly moves into the crowd of people, you could hear children talking in the background one by one. "When I grow up, I'm going to be a fireman." "When I grow up, I'm going to be a doctor." "When I grow up, I'm going to be a lawyer." Then the camara keeps slowly moving into the crowd until it stops right in front of a street beggar, on his knees with his hands raised up asking for money from the people who walked by. Then

the camera freezes everybody in the picture, and the commentator speaks: “Nobody says, when I grow up, I’m going to be a drug addict.”

In truth, nobody says when I grow up, I am going to be a drug addict. Nobody says, when I go up, I am going to steal from my job and get caught. Nobody says, when I go up, I am going to leave my spouse and kids for somebody else. Nobody says, when I grow up, I am going to be addicted to porn or an alcoholic. But things happen, people go down roads that they cannot make a U-turn. Words are said that cannot be taken back and before you know it, you are left alone, broken and with a “title” put on you.

This woman in Luke:7 had the title of a “Sinful Woman”. She had made choices in her past she could not go back and change. She had gone down roads she could not return from. But for her, she only knew she had started having a spiritual heart condition. It all started when Jesus came to her town and started teaching about God’s love and the Kingdom of Heaven. Then a question grew in the Sinful Woman. It was exceedingly small, but it was there. More and more the question grew, louder and louder until she was able to say it. “Can I be forgiven of my sins?” This Sinful Woman was now ready to do something about her spiritual heart condition.

Simon a Pharisee also had been listening to Jesus’s sermons and invited him to come eat at his home. Jesus agreed and came into his home and took his place at the table. In Jesus’s day the proper invitation for a meal in your home, the host was to provide water for his guests to wash their feet before reclining at the table. The table was low to the floor. Cushions were used for the guests to drop to their knees on. Then the guest would lay on their left hip with their feet behind them and use their right hand to eat.

As the Sinful Woman came into the Pharisee house to see Jesus, she knelt behind Jesus and started crying on his feet. As she cried, she washed his feet with her tears and then took her hair to dry his feet. Then she started kissing his feet. She then took ointment and anointed his feet with it.

Here is a question to ask yourself. When was the last time you washed the feet of Jesus with your tears? When was the last time, you were truly broken about your sins and asked Jesus to forgive you? You might say “When I got saved, I washed Jesus’s feet with my tears” or “When we had a family tragedy, that I washed Jesus’s feet.” But maybe, as you read this, you realized you have never really been broken about your sins, you have never asked Jesus to save you.

As Simon the Pharisee was watching all this unfold in his house. He thought to himself if Jesus were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman was touching him. Jesus knowing all things spoke. “Simon, I have something to say to you.” And Simon answered, “Say it Teacher.”

Luke 7:41-47 “A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more? Simon answered, “The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt.” And Jesus said to him. “You have judged rightly.” Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. And he said to her, “your sins are forgiven.”

That night, as the woman left Simon’s house, she still had to live with a “label”. Life for her would still be a struggle, but for the first time God’s Holy Spirit was living in her heart. Maybe for the first time there was truly Peace and Joy in her life.

The Rich, Young Ruler

The story of the of the next person that had a spiritual heart condition that I like for us to look at can be found in the books of Matthew, Mark and Luke. Here we find this man is not named like the Sinful Woman, but he is described with (3) adjectives that we all wish we had. The Bible says he was rich. Oh, to be rich, to never have to worry about if you have enough money to pay your bills. Then the writer says he was young. Wow to be Rich and Young at the same time. You would be able to see and do all the things in life you want to. But we are not done, the Bible also says he was a Ruler. You would think to be rich and young would be enough, but to have people listen and do what you say is like icing on the cake.

And now we find this man started having a spiritual heart condition. The only thing that has changed in his life is that Jesus has come to his town, teaching and preaching about God’s love and the Kingdom of God. As the rich, young ruler listened to Jesus’s words his spiritual heart condition only grew more and more. Then, just like the other ones we have looked at, a question grew in the rich, young ruler. It was exceedingly small, but it was there. More and more the question grew, louder and louder until he himself was able to say it. “When I died, will I go to Heaven?”

Remember, as I have said before. Many of us are walking around today with a spiritual heart condition. For some of us, we will do what it takes to come to the foot of the cross and ask Jesus to forgive us of our sins and live a life pleasing to him. But for others, they are still waiting.

In the book of Mark 10:17-20, we find the young ruler running to Jesus and falling at his feet. He asked Jesus what must I do to have inherit eternal life? Jesus told the young man, you know the commandments: "Do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not give false testimony, do not defraud, honor your father and mother." The young man replied: "Teacher, all these I have kept since I was a boy."

Then Jesus does something he does with all of us. He looks into the young man's heart. There Jesus found doors that were completely open, but one door in his heart was closed. Then as Lord of lords and King of kings, Jesus walks thru the door to see what is on the other side. Then Jesus told the young ruler: "Sell all that you have and give to the poor. And then come and follow me."

For many years I have read this scripture and only thought about how rich people will have a hard time going to heaven. But I believe there is a lot more to God's word here. You see Jesus, no matter how much he loves us, will not take second place in our lives. Examples of that: Luke 9:57-62 "As they were walking along the road, a man said to him, I will follow you wherever you go." Jesus replied, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head." Jesus said to another man, "Follow me." But the man replied "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." Jesus said to him. "Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and proclaim the kingdom of God." Still another said, "I will follow you, Lord; but first me go back and say good-bye to my family." Jesus replied, "No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the Kingdom of God."

You see, for some of us, we call ourselves Christians, we do all the right things like the young ruler did, but we keep one door of our heart closed. We don't want to open that door for anyone but ourselves and somehow, we think Jesus will understand. We still want to hang on to a bad habit, a bank account, an unhealthy relationship.... the list can go on and on. Doors to our heart we do not want anyone else to open.

You ever wonder how the rich young ruler felt. In Mark 10: 22 it says his face fell and he went away sad, because he had great wealth. If there was ever a time God's Holy Spirit convicted, you of your hidden sin behind the door of your heart and refused to give it to Jesus. Then you already know how he felt.

As we have looked at these (3) Bible characters we find that they all came to Jesus looking for answers. The scriptures show that the "Sinful Woman" came to Jesus wanting forgiveness at any cost. The "Rich Young Ruler" wanted to be saved but when the cost of his salvation meant giving up something he coveted, he went away sad.

But what about Nicodemus, what did he do? We do not know in John chapter 3 what decision he made. We do see in John 7: 45 that the chief priests and Pharisees wanted Jesus

arrested and to stop his ministry. Nicodemus was one of those members there and he stood up for Jesus in their meeting.

In John 19: 38-42, we see Jesus has gone to the cross and died for our sins. The plan that God the father had made for Jesus was carried out and has been accomplished. "After these things Joseph of Arimathea, who was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly for fear of the Jews, asked Pilate that he might take away the body of Jesus, and Pilate gave him permission. So, he came and took away his body. Nicodemus also, who earlier had come to Jesus by night, came bringing a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds in weight. So, they took the body of Jesus and bound it in linen cloths with the spices, as is the burial custom of the Jews. Now in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb in which no one had yet been laid. So, because of the Jewish day of Preparation, since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there."

I often wonder why does the Bible say that Nicodemus brought seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes? Why was it important that it be recorded in the Bible? Doing some online research, it is discovered that the value of the seventy-five pounds of myrrh and aloes in today's pricing would have been anywhere from \$150,000 to \$200,000. That was a great expense for Nicodemus to have made for a young radical rabbi, yet we see him working with Joseph to prepare the body.

A proper Jewish burial meant that the body be thoroughly washed and cleaned. That would mean both men would have to wash Jesus's hair, carefully removing any broken thorns that might have come from the crown of thorns the Roman soldiers placed on him. Then both men would have to wash the body, cleaning the sand, rocks and dry blood out of each cut and gash Jesus had. Then the spices that Nicodemus brought were applied on the body and wrapped in linen.

That evening, both men who were high-ranking Jewish religious leaders had completed their task and walked out of Jesus's tomb. They knew what they had done, that touching a dead body would disqualify them from the upcoming Jewish Passover. They were not going to be able to sit in their respected places on that day and be seen and heard. Did Nicodemus become a disciple of Jesus? Did Nicodemus finally understand the words of Jesus that night in John chapter 3? Did Nicodemus become born again? Well... only his heart knows for sure.