





What Fills Your Heart?

Matthew 12:34-37

Luke 6:45

Parables of Jesus

The passages are short, but slightly different. You may choose to teach from Matthew as it contains slightly more information.

Jesus so often taught about the condition of the heart, and continuously went back to this theme.

He was speaking to people, primarily the Pharisees and religious leaders and rulers of the day. They knew the laws given Moses in the Old Testament, and their primary focus was to obey these laws. But what Jesus pointed out over and over was that their hearts were not pure, and they were doing things with the wrong motives. They were doing it all for selfish gain.

The gospel of Matthew shows us that in this particular instance Jesus was responding to the Pharisees. This sermon started after the Pharisees accused Jesus of being a prince of the devils because he had cast out devils. They did not say these things to him directly, but he knew their thoughts and he began addressing examples of things that seemingly contradict. Jesus gives examples of how a kingdom that fights itself cannot stand, it will self-destruct or fall apart.

He speaks of trees, and how good trees have good fruit.

Bad fruit does not come from a good tree, and good fruit does not come from a bad tree. Jesus is speaking with double meaning; he is not merely speaking about trees. He sums it up by speaking directly about your words, and how they reveal your heart.

Discuss:

If an apple tree has bad fruit, and all of the apples are rotten and taste poorly, what would you think? Would you try to treat the apples themselves, or would you try to find out what was wrong with the tree?

If you studied plants, you would realize the problem was with the tree, not the fruit. Does it need better soil? Is it attacked by insects? What would be some solutions?

Jesus says, How can you speak good things if you are evil?

Out of the abundance of heart the mouth speaks.

Another translation says, *For the mouth speaks from the overflow of the heart.*

What is in your heart comes out when you speak. The things that come out of you are your fruit, just like a tree has fruit. What is in your heart naturally comes out, it spills out.

Discuss:

If you have a cup completely full of milk, and you spill it, what comes out?

If you have a cup full of tea, what comes out? Whatever is in the cup is what is going to come out.

It is the same with your words. Whatever is in your heart is what is going to “spill” out when you speak.

How do you know what is in a person’s heart?



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How do you know what they are really thinking? A person can try to hide their true feelings for a time, but eventually what they are thinking in their heart will come out in their words. A person's words will give them away. If their heart is full of evil, they will not speak good things. A person's true emotions come out in their words. Your words are what come out of you, and they are what defile you - what corrupts a person, or pollutes them (Matthew 15:11, 16-20).

Jesus said,

A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil things, (Matthew 12:35; Luke 6:45).

Discuss:

What is your heart? It is the part of your mind with your thoughts, your passions, and your character.

The original word in the Greek in Matthew 12:34 for heart is where we get medical terms relating to the heart such as cardiac and cardiovascular. It means the organ in the body which circulates blood, but it also means the center of all physical and spiritual life. It is the soul or mind, the fountain and seat of the thoughts, passions, desires, appetites, affections, and purposes. It is the understanding, will and character, the seat of all affections, emotions, whether bad or good. It is the central or innermost part of anything. This is the inner YOU.

The heart is the source of the words you speak.

Then Jesus says that we will give account for every idle word we speak on the day of judgment.

Discuss:

What does this mean? What is an idle word? Some translations say "careless."

The meaning of the original word that Jesus used was inactive, lazy, unprofitable.

It would be a word that does not accomplish what it was supposed to do.

Words are very important to God.

He used words to create the world, and they have creative power.

Our words are meant to create, not to destroy. They are meant to accomplish something. What Jesus is speaking of here is just "talk."

Discuss:

What could be some examples of idle conversations?

Discuss useless talk, destructive talk, gossip, speaking negatively, or speaking of anything that goes against what God has said.



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Then Jesus closes by saying, *By your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.*

One day we will have to explain to God all the useless words we have spoken (Matthew 12:36). That is a sobering thought! It is so important to watch our words and watch what we say. We think it's just a conversation, but God takes it much more seriously! We have to guard our thoughts, to guard what goes in our hearts, to control our tongue and our words.

Proverbs 4:23 says, "Guard your heart above all else because it determines the course of your life."

Wow. This is incredibly important! Many people will say that the things that happened to them determined the outcome of their life; other people caused them to be like they are, and do the things they've done. But God says YOU determine what your life looks like by what you allow in your heart. No matter what your life looks like, you can determine how you respond and how you react. Will you give it to God and let him take care of it, or will you allow bitterness to grow in your heart. What is in our hearts comes out when we speak and reveals a lot about what is on the inside. Our words will either create life or death for us (Proverbs 18:21). Your words are like creative seeds that grow when you speak them.

Discuss:

Do you want to have a good heart? How do we have a good heart?

We should listen to God's words, and keep them in the center of our hearts; they are life and health to our flesh. Proverbs 4:20-22

A righteous man will study his answer before he speaks. Proverbs 15:28

The heart of a wise person will teach his mouth...Proverbs 16:23

Understand the importance of your words: You are snared with the words of your mouth, you are taken with the words of your mouth (Proverbs 6:2).

Jesus in the Story



Jesus always addressed the issues of the heart.

The Jews were focused on *doing* the right thing and obeying all of the laws, but they did not consider the motives.

Jesus said it was about the attitude.

It was not about obeying the letter of the law. They were doing the right things and missing the whole point. Jesus said whole law could be summed up in these two commandments:

...You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets. Matthew 22:37-40

Lesson Questions & Memory Verses

37. The Lost Coin

1. What did this lady do when she lost her coin?
2. What did she do when she found it?
3. Who did she tell?
4. What do the angels of God do when someone repents?

Zephaniah 3:17

For the Lord your God is living among you. He is a mighty savior. He will take delight in you with gladness. With his love, He will calm all your fears.

38. The Lost Son

Read Romans 8:35-39

1. What can separate us from God's love?
2. We cannot be separated from God's love by death or?
3. We cannot be separated by angels, heavenly rulers, or?
4. We cannot be separated now or?

1 John 4:7-8

Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. He who does not love does not know God, for God is love.

39. What Fills Your Heart?

1. Where do our words come from?
2. What comes out of the heart of a good man?
3. What comes out of the heart of an evil man?
4. What will we give account for to God?

Luke 6:45

A good man out of the treasure of his heart brings forth good; an evil man out of the treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

40. Workers in the Vineyard

Read Ephesians 2:8-9

1. What have we been saved by?
2. What have we been saved through?
3. Were we saved by anything we did?
4. What was our salvation from God?
5. If it were by our works then we could do what?

Titus 3:5

Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit....

