

Navigating Uncertainty

Lesson 6

Jeremiah 16-17

October 18, 2020

That Nasty Three Letter Word

Introduction

Our culture loves to use the heart as an analogy for love. We write songs and use phrases using the heart as an example of how we feel. We say things like, “Listen to your heart,” “the heart wants what it wants,” “you have a heart of gold,” “from the bottom of my heart,” “get to the heart of something,” “your heart’s in the right place,” and “have your heart set on it.”

These all characterize the heart as naturally good and right, yet the Bible has the opposite to say. In Jeremiah, the prophet wrote that the heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. That doesn’t sound like a number one hit record.

The Bible also says that out of the heart’s overflow, the mouth speaks, so if our hearts are pointed toward wickedness, our words and actions will be as well. Is there hope for the heart? Can it be fixed or made new? Luckily for us, we have the best heart surgeon there is. God can change the heart, but what is our role in His plan?

Memory verse: “The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?”—Jeremiah 17:9

Pray and read Jeremiah 16-17. What questions or observations do you have about this passage?

What does the passage say?

1. What is to happen to those who marry or have sons and daughters in Babylon? (Jeremiah 16:1-4)
2. What was it that provoked God's anger? (Jeremiah 16:10-12)
3. On what are the eyes of the Lord? (Jeremiah 16:17-18)
4. Whose fault is it that the inheritance is lost? (Jeremiah 17:4)
5. To whom will they be enslaved? (Jeremiah 17:4)
6. What is the imagery of those who trust in man and those who trust in the Lord? (Jeremiah 17:5-8)
7. Fill in the blanks: "The heart is _____ above all things and beyond _____. Who can understand it? (Jeremiah 17:9)
8. What does the Lord do with the human heart? (Jeremiah 17:10)

What does the passage mean?

1. Instead of humbling themselves, the Jews justified their actions or blamed others when hearing of their sins. Who is at fault for the sin of these nations? Can any of these people claim to be without sin? (Genesis 6:5; Jeremiah 17:4; James 4:17; Romans 3:23; 1 John 1:8, 10)
2. What role does the heart play in this sin? (Proverbs 4:23; Jeremiah 17:9; Mark 7:21-23; Luke 6:45) Why is it important to note that the heart is wicked, and sin is not merely an outward show of rebellion?
3. People see these passages and claim God to be unjust and vengeful. Why is this not the case? (Isaiah 30:18; Jeremiah 17:10; Romans 1:18-20; 2 Peter 3:9)
4. Amidst all the doom and gloom, toward what hope do these passages point? (2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Ephesians 4:24; Colossians 3:10)

3. When confronted with your own sin, what has your reaction shown: a humble heart or a stubborn heart? What needs to change in your life to produce a humbler disposition?