

GROWING IN GOD

PODCAST



GIG157 – The Eyes of Our Heart

Hello and welcome to the podcast today. I am glad that you could be with us. I am titling this, *The Eyes of Our Heart*. I want to begin to talk about our emotion in relation to our walk with the Lord, in our growing in God, because I think that we are living in an age where there is a lot of battle over the heart. And so, I want to look at some Scriptures where Paul talks about our heart. We will get started with Ephesians the first chapter. In verses 16-21, he says,

[I] do not cease giving thanks for you, while making mention of you in my prayers; that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to you a spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.

Now these are some very powerful verses, and they are talking about the surpassing greatness of God's power. Paul is stating that that power is being beamed toward us by God; and his prayer was that the eyes of their heart would be enlightened, so that they would know and understand and have revelation and wisdom concerning what it is that the Father is doing in beaming toward the believer this great power. And I think it is interesting, because we do not always relate to the idea of our heart being the instrument of revelation and wisdom, and the fact that we necessarily lead, and are led, in our relationship with the Lord by the heart. This is because the heart is seen as our emotions, and it is correctly looked at that way; but many times, in our education as Christians, we are told to be very careful about our emotions. Emotion is not necessarily seen as a good thing, or as something that is coming from God. We see in the history of the church, in fact, that there was a great deal of persecution against the Pentecostal movements, or the Spirit-filled movements, down through history, because they were seen as being too emotional; and it was that emotion that people felt was wrong, and was really amiss, and was taking away from the truth of orthodoxy and the true practice of church and worship. So we see there is this kind of negative feeling that comes along with the thought of being emotional, or having a great deal of emotion.

Yet Paul here is talking about the fact that we need the eyes of our heart to be enlightened. In other words, something needs to open up in our hearts. Our hearts need to become literally an instrument of understanding wisdom and revelation, understanding the Spirit coming from God of wisdom and revelation, and understanding the calling that God has toward us. So, when we think about the heart, the heart is an instrument of emotion. It is moved by emotions; it is open to receive through emotion and relate to God through emotion, and to relate out from ourselves the things of God by emotion.

So I think there is a need that we have to open up in a way to the emotion of our heart. We need this prayer to be answered that Paul prayed for the church, that the eyes of our heart be enlightened. Something needs to get us to open and receive. He was looking for enlightenment of the believer; and that enlightenment was necessary, because they were not being able to perceive in their heart the things that God was trying to show and what He was doing. When you read verses 19-20, what God is doing toward us is amazing. It says, "What is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead." So he is talking about literally the power of resurrection that He is beaming toward us. And even though it is a power, it is something that requires our heart being open to receive it; so we can assume that this is going to come toward us with a great deal of emotion. And that emotion is there; we know the Scriptures talk about the joy of our salvation. So, much more than we realize, the heart is an instrument that God prepares for us in our walk with Him. And I want to really make us aware of how much this idea of emotion comes to play when we are relating to the Lord.

We see the problem again that Paul was addressing with the church when we go to Second Corinthians 6. In verses 11-13, it says, "Our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide. You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange — I speak as to children — open wide to us also." Paul, in dealing with the church at Corinth, was running into problems; and the problem again was that the eyes of their heart were not enlightened. They were not able to open their heart to Paul, therefore they were not able to receive what he was speaking to them. So this idea of our heart being an instrument that literally is capable of receiving what God is striving to impart to us by His Word, by the power of His Spirit, is very evident here. Paul was entreating the church at Corinth to open their heart. And he was saying, "You are running into a problem, but the restraint is not coming from us. The issues, the problems are not coming from us; we are wide open in our hearts to you. But you are restraining yourself."

I think this is true. As we move forward in the things of God, I think there is a lot that God is trying to do, that He is trying to impart, but there is this restraint on our hearts that literally refuses to receive. Now whatever that restraint comes from — there are many things it can come from, but that is not really the issue. The issue is that the result of having a bondage on your heart, or a restraint on your heart, is that you are just incapable of receiving what it is that God is trying to impart. So we are seeing that Paul, again, is trying to break this issue of the heart in its inability to receive.

Second Corinthians 7 also addresses this. In verses 2-3, it says, "Make room for us in your hearts; we wronged no one, we corrupted no one, we took advantage of no one. I do not speak to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts to die together and to live together." So once again, Paul was completely open in his heart to the people, but they were not being open to him. And therefore, once again, in their heart being restrained and their emotions being restrained, they were unable to receive what it was that Paul was imparting to them.

Now I want to go on and read one other Scripture in Colossians the third chapter, at verses 12-17.

So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with

psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
Whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

Look at the abundance of emotion that is being spoken of here; because I think a lot of times it goes over our head how much of what the Scriptures talk about, they talk about in the context of a feeling, of an emotion that must be in place in order for us to receive what it is that God is imparting. Again we go back to the first verses we were reading, Paul praying that the eyes of their heart would be enlightened – “I wish your heart could receive, because right now you are not.” How does your heart receive? What does your heart feel? Your heart feels emotion. So, if you are going to understand with your head what the Word of God is saying, there has to be first something of an emotional connection in your heart with the Lord, or with the vessel who is speaking that Word to you, before your mind is able to receive the impartation of what is being ministered. And this is really something I think we are talking about here with the church back under Paul. But I am going to read a Scripture that is going to bring it into our day and age as a very acute issue.

Going back again to the beginning in verse 12 of Colossians 3, look at all of the emotion that he is talking about. “Beloved” – that is an emotion; “put on a heart of compassion” – compassion is a feeling, it is an emotion; “kindness” is an emotion – when somebody is kind to you, you feel it. And what feels it? your heart feels it; “humility” is an emotion; “gentleness and patience, bearing with one another, and forgiving” – forgiveness is an emotion. How you feel when you are forgiven, that is the foundation of our salvation, the feeling of God forgiving us for our sins and removing those sins. That is not just something you understand with your head, it is something you have to feel; because when you feel it, you turn and fall in love with the Lord. And love is an emotion. He talks about that in verse 14; he says, “Beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity.” Then verse 15, “Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.” Peace, again, is a feeling. Boy, if you are taken out of a situation where your life is endangered, you feel peace. It is an emotion to you, it is a relief that comes to you by feeling. See, all of these things are really feelings. And he goes on to talk about singing psalms and hymns with thankfulness. Thankfulness is one of the greatest emotions, next to love, that we can have that opens us up to receive what God has for us. If you are not thankful, you will never open your heart or open your hands to receive and take what it is that God is trying to give. So here, Paul again is dealing with this issue he was facing, that as believers, these are the emotions that should be living and being expressed to and from our heart in our relationship with the Lord.

Now I want to read Matthew 24; and maybe in the beginning, this will seem a little out of place because we are talking about the tribulation and the return of Christ. But I think it shows us why this issue of emotion is so important for us right now as believers. Matthew 24, starting at verses 6-8, says, “You will be hearing of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not frightened.” What is fright? It is an emotion. Fear is a great emotion; it really impacts you in your life. People are restrained by fear to the point where they are frozen and cannot do anything. So, again, these emotions, these feelings in our heart, are the things that really allow us to live and move.

He says, “See that you are not frightened, for those things must take place, but that is not yet the end. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there will be famines and earthquakes. But all these things are merely the beginning of birth pangs.” We have seen all these things down through the years. And, as the Lord is saying, these are the beginning of birth pangs, so we go deeper and deeper into this time of tribulation. And that happens in verses 9-12. It says,

“Then” – then when? then after these other things, then these steps begin to transpire: “Then they will deliver you to tribulation, and will kill you, and you will be hated by all nations because of My name. At that time many will fall away and will betray one another and hate one another.” Notice the emotion there. “Many false prophets will arise and will mislead many.” And, “Because lawlessness is increased, most people’s love will grow cold.” Then it says in verse 13, “But the one who endures to the end, he will be saved.” Well, if you connect that with verse 12, what endures? The love needs to endure, the emotions, the feelings of your heart. But because we find ourselves literally living in this age that is being spoken of here, this is the time when all of this is happening – which could be a sign that we are deeper into days of tribulation than we might imagine. You say, “What is one of the greatest signs of it?” One of the greatest signs is that people’s hearts are being closed. And this is what Paul was trying to deal with then, but how much more now is this an issue, that our heart must be open?

We must not let our love grow cold. We must not let any of the emotions that God is bringing to the believer fade away. Remember what he was talking about there in Colossians, these deep things of putting on a heart of compassion and kindness and humility and gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, forgiving one another, being thankful, worshiping, singing. See, this is the kind of thing that begins to grow cold and fade away. And as it does, what we do not realize right off the bat is that it means we are not really receiving what God has for us. Remember, the truth of the end time is that it is all about what God is doing. It is not about what the devil is doing, or the beast is doing; it is what God is bringing forth. It is God wrapping up His plan for the world. And in that plan, there is tremendous impartation to the believer. It should be one of the greatest times of our walk with God as believers.

So you can see how what is taking place around us in the world right now is such a great affront to what God is trying to do in our lives. God is trying to bring this impartation, like Paul was talking about, of this great power, of the gifts, of the impartation. But if our heart is being closed, if our love is waxing cold because of the iniquity that is abounding in this age, what is the purpose of it from the counter side of the enemy? It is to make the believer close his heart. If our heart is closed, we cannot receive. If these emotions that we should be having, these feelings that we should be having, are dying away, then we cannot receive. That is what Paul was saying to the Corinthians: “Look, you are restraining yourself because your heart is restrained.” And if our heart is becoming restrained in this age, because of the emotion of this age that is surrounding us, the hatred; it is amazing in this day and age how we see that natural emotion is leaving mankind. How do you have murder on the level you do? How do you have abuse on the level that we do in this age, without something just of the natural human emotion, even, much less godly emotion, disappearing from mankind? And it is all part of the enemy’s desire that the heart of the believer would be that which closes up and restrains itself. And if it does, we are not able to receive from God, nor are we able to minister out from God; because it is this ministering out that comes from us once we have received impartation by these same feelings and emotions.

I am going to read one more Scripture to us out of Galatians 5, just to try to drive these points home. Verses 22-23: “The fruit of the Spirit” – now, what is fruit? Fruit is what a tree produces as it grows and matures. So as we grow – this is given sort of in a parabolic format – as we grow in God, and as we mature in God, then we should be growing these fruits. And what is the fruit of our maturity? What is the fruit of our growth? It is “love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.” You see, it is these passions, these emotions. If you are filled with the Spirit, what should be coming from you? Most of the time, people emphasize the gifts of the Spirit. All right, those can function; there can be miracles, or whatever. But I’ll tell you that faith without love does not work. There is not going to be manifestation of gifts if there is not first the

manifestation of the emotion from our heart that comes by the infilling of the Holy Spirit. And the chiefest of these is love. Next to that is joy, then peace. See, we must have these feelings. We should be driven; it tells us that we should be led by the Spirit. If we are led by the Spirit, that means we are being led by emotion. What emotion? the emotions that are the fruit of the Spirit.

This is the point that I want to make to us as we come to the end of this podcast. The Word admonishes us that we should not be conformed to this age. Romans 12:2 is very clear about that. And this, to me, is one of the main ways: we should not be conformed to the emotions of this age – the feelings, the way people feel, the emotions that they have, what comes out of their heart. Don't be conformed to this age. We should be transformed. As believers, we must not take on the emotions of this age surrounding us. We are to put on, according to the Scriptures we read, a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.

And as I last said, when we grow in God, when we mature, then we should be manifesting the fruit of the Spirit – all of which are emotional feelings that we must have in order to receive what God is imparting to us; and also, what we must have in our hearts in order to impart and minister to others. Those are love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.

So I encourage us to open our hearts, as Paul encouraged the Corinthians. Let's not be restrained in our own emotions, but let us open up to the emotions that come as the fruit of the Spirit imparted to us by God, that we might walk in the Spirit.

Amen.