

From the Inside Out

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Slide Notes



Morning Coffee...

- Suppose you are drinking your morning coffee in a beautiful cup with an inspiring Christian message...
- After drinking about half the coffee, you look inside the cup and see...

How would you like to find this in your cup as you drink down the coffee? Would you finish drinking the coffee?



Too Often This is Us

- We worry more about how we look to others
- And excuse or overlook how we really are inside
- We work on the wrong thing, then wonder why we keep failing
 - We try to fix the symptoms
 - But ignore the cause

We often want to look like a committed and successful Christian, even when we're not. If you fix the root problem, the symptoms go away.

Which is Better?

- To look like you are right to people... but are wrong in God's eyes
- To look like you are wrong to people... but are right in God's eyes
- Galatians 1:10 — Obviously, I'm not trying to win the approval of people, but of God. If pleasing people were my goal, I would not be Christ's servant.

We often worry more about what people think about us than what is really going on inside. We then become people pleasers.

I remember consciously and deliberately making the decision that I would rather be right in God's eyes even if people thought I was totally wrong. The goal is to be right, not to just look right.

The Inside

- **1 Samuel 16:7 — But the Lord said to Samuel, “Don’t judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The Lord doesn’t see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.”**

“God knows my heart” is often used as an excuse for disobedience. Generally, by that they mean they would “like” to do better, but just can’t.

This passage is scary. We can put on a good show when necessary. But God sees what we really are inside. It’s a good thing that He loves us and doesn’t want to leave us as we are.

Matthew 23:25-28

- **“... you are so careful to clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside you are filthy—full of greed and self-indulgence! You blind Pharisee! First wash the inside of the cup and the dish, and then the outside will become clean, too.**
- **“... you are like whitewashed tombs—beautiful on the outside but filled on the inside with dead people’s bones and all sorts of impurity. Outwardly you look like righteous people, but inwardly your hearts are filled with hypocrisy and lawlessness.**

Jesus said this to the religious leaders of His day. For us, this is not a condemnation, but a declaration of the real source of the problem—our heart—and the answer for our victory.

What’s Our “Inside”?

- **Man is a three-part being: Spirit, Soul & Body**
- **Spirit & Soul is the “inside” or “heart”**
- **Spirit**
 - Made new at salvation – this is an essential step
 - Totally clean (Heb 10:14)
 - Instantaneous, not a process
- **Soul**
 - Needs on-going work
 - Cleaning is a life-long process
 - Will regress if not tended

Your spirit is either spiritually dead or spiritually alive. Everyone must begin cleaning the inside by forgiveness and salvation in Jesus.

Once born again (saved), you need to pay particular attention to your soul. It regresses like a garden or lawn that grows weeds if you don't pay attention to it. So what is the soul?

The Soul

- **Our mind, will, & emotions**
- **Where the battle rages (Rom 7:14-25)**
 - Your born-again Spirit always wants to serve God
 - Your flesh/body wants to do its own thing
 - Your soul is caught in the middle
- **Soul casts the deciding vote**

For example: Your Spirit wants to attend the worship night... But your body argues that you had a tough day and a new movie is out. "Let's just veg out." Which one will your soul go with? It depends on what you've been feeding your soul.

Cleaning the Soul

- **Romans 12:2 — Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.**
- **Two parts involved**
 - Quit following the world's ways
 - Learn & follow God's ways

"Transform" — a fundamental, foundational change

Transformation

- **God doesn't just want you to be good on the outside**
- **He wants you to be transformed on the inside**
- **He wants you to know Him and to see things the way He sees them**
- **Then your words and actions on the outside will automatically conform to God's will**

Christianity is not something you DO... It's something you ARE!

Renewing Your Mind

- **Ephesians 4:21-23 — Since you have heard about Jesus and have learned the**

truth that comes from him, throw off your old sinful nature and your former way of life, which is corrupted by lust and deception. Instead, let the Spirit renew your thoughts and attitudes.

- **Joint effort**

You have an important part to play, but you cannot transform yourself without God's help. And God can't do it without your participation. Your participation IS part of the process.

Practical Steps...

- **Read & study the Bible daily (Jam 1:21)**
- **Meditate on God's Truth (2 Tim 3:16-17)**
 - Think about what God is saying
 - Determine how it applies to your life
- **Pray constantly (1 Thes 5:17)**
- **Apply & change (Jam 1:22-25)**
 - Do what God says – obedience
 - Develop new habits – consistency
- **Worship – Intimate relationship**
- **Patient endurance (Heb 10:35-36)**
- **Avoid Garbage (1 Pet 2:11-12)**

Reading and Studying the Bible alone is not enough.

Meditate – We know how to meditate! Just think about the last time someone said or did something that offended you. You probably spent much time mulling over what was said and done, put analyzing what was meant, what you should do next, etc. If you spent that kind of focus and time on the things of God, it would change you.

Prayer – how can you get to know God and His ways without spending time with Him?

Worship is an extremely close, interactive relationship experience between you and God. If you are only worshiping God during church gatherings, you are missing out on most of the worship that God has for you.

Patient – it takes time, effort, and consistency.

Avoid garbage – you don't use your coffee cup to scoop water out of every ditch you pass by to see what it tastes like. In the same way, be careful what your soul (mind) is scooping out of the things you run across through the day.

Obedience Cleans

- **1 Peter 1:22 — Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart,**
- **Consistent obedience transforms...**
 - What you would like to believe (preference)
 - Into what you truly believe (conviction)

Purify means to clean.

A preference is a belief that one will change under certain circumstances. A belief that is simply a preference is one you PREFER to follow, but sometimes you don't. A belief that is a conviction is one you will always follow, no matter the circumstances.

Example, suppose you believed it was important to thank God and bless your food before every meal. Would you do something different if...

Your boss was at a nearby table at the restaurant?

No one was watching?

You felt hurt or discouraged?

Hear & Obey

- **Matthew 7:24-27 — “Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. ... But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash.”**

Fooling Yourself?

- **James 1:22 — But don't just listen to God's word. You must do what it says. Otherwise, you are only fooling yourselves.**

So we must ask... “Does the evidence show that I am only fooling myself?” Do I listen to God's Word, but don't do it?

Our Natural Tendency

- **Problem focused**
- **Critical**

- **Complaining**
- **Fault Finding**
- **Negative**
- **Unthankful**
- **Unappreciative**

Change Your Focus

- **Philippians 4:8 — And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.**
- **1 Thessalonians 5:18 — in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.**

“Fix”, like glue! Often – I find my thought fixed/attached to just the opposite of this list!

We need to join the AA Club and be Actively Appreciative!

It's work to follow God's way! (If it was easy, everyone would do it.)

Set Your Mind...

- **Colossians 3:1-3 — If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth. For you died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.**
- **Maintain a heavenly, eternal perspective from which to judge and correct your life and actions**

Seeing Your Heart

- **Matthew 15:18-19 — But the words you speak come from the heart—that's what defiles you. For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, all sexual immorality, theft, lying, and slander.**
- **Seeing my heart**
- **Time for an honest heart evaluation**
 - **Words & attitudes (angry, selfish, prideful?)**
 - **Choices & actions (ungodly, hurtful?)**

- Habits & attention (time wasters, destructive?)

Self evaluation. Fix the heart problem and the symptoms will go away. We need to work on our soul.

The Heart Fix

- **You wouldn't just clean the outside of the cup a little more and keep on drinking your coffee!**
- **But this is what we try to do with our lives!**
- **Instead, clean out the garbage**
- **Then your coffee/life will taste much better**

If you found garbage in your coffee cup after drinking it half-way down, you wouldn't take a cloth, polish the outside of the cup, and go back to drinking.

No Room for Garbage

***“Put so much of Jesus in your heart there's
no room for trash.”***

Then you will be clean & ready for use by the Lord!

True Change Only Comes... From the Inside Out