

The Heart of Worship

Facts about the human heart

Slide 2

1] the average heart is about the size of an adult fist [go on...I know you want to look at your fist and the size of the fist of the person next to you – we are such competitive beings]

Slide 3

2] your heart will beat about 115,000 times each day – around three billion beats in a lifetime

Slide 4

3] the heart weighs between 250 and 350 grams

Slide 5

4] the heart pumps about 5.7 litres of blood throughout the body.

Slide 6

5] the heart starts beating at four weeks after conception and does not stop until death.

Slide 7

Today I want to talk about the heart.

It is the most romanticised body part.

We can give someone our heart.

Our heart can get broken.

We <3 something or someone to show appreciation.

We are told to listen to our heart

To follow our heart...or not.

If we set our heart on something it means that we want in more than anything else.

The heart is the most important part of our bodies.

The heart is the beginning of all things.

It is the end of all things.

It is in the middle of all things.

It is in the songs that we sing.

It is in poems we recite.

It is in the passions we have.

It is in the people we love.

It is the part of you that connects with God and with other people.

It is where all your dreams and desires live

It is the source of everything that you.

King Solomon called the heart the wellspring of life and warned you to guard your heart "Above all else".

If your heart is unhealthy, it has an impact on everything else. It threatens your family, your friends, your career...everything. It is akin to poisoning a natural spring. If the source of the water becomes toxic, everything downstream will also become toxic.

Your heart is like a tablet which can be written upon. Not like an iPad or an Etch A Sketch. More like a slate tablet perhaps that requires etching. It takes time and effort to inscribe upon and things written are very difficult to erase.

Some things are written by the power of God and some things can be erased by that same power, but what have you inscribed on your heart? What graffiti have you allowed to be written on your heart through the entertainment you absorb, the relationships you've had, the information you have consumed? How does that writing impact your life?

Men and women were created by God and he made them different.

He made their bodies different.

He made their minds different.

He made their hearts different.

And to understand the Heart of God, we need to understand the hearts of his creation.

John Eldridge wrote that

Slide 8

Deep in his heart, every man longs for a battle to fight, an adventure to live and a beauty to rescue.

This is what a man needs to make him feel whole. This is one side of God's heart.

Of a woman's heart John Eldridge wrote:

Slide 9

In every woman's heart of hearts, she longs for three things: to be romanced, to play an irreplaceable role in a great adventure, and to unveil beauty

This is what woman needs. This is another side of God's heart and it is reassuring to note that the two are complementary.

But what about God's heart? God is neither male nor female as we understand the terms. He is God...a form, a being, an entity that transcends our understanding.

Again, John Eldridge asserts

Slide 10

After years of hearing the heart-cry of women, I am convinced beyond a doubt of this: God wants to be loved. He wants to be a priority to someone. From cover to cover, from beginning to end, the cry of God's heart is, "Why won't you choose me?"

God took a great risk in giving people free will. He wants us to choose Him, but free will also means that we can NOT choose him. It is amazing how vulnerable God has allowed himself to be.

Slide 11

In Jeremiah 29:13 God says "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart."

God wants to be sought after.

He wants to be pursued.

He wants to be a priority.

He wants to be chosen.

He wants to be wanted.

God wants to be in the spotlight of our affection.

To show God that we love him, that we cherish him, that we want him we need to worship him. We must replace the negative messages written on our hearts with ones written with love and faithfulness, but more than that we need to get to the heart of worship.

We need to worship with the love language that God desires so much. We need to get to our hearts to get to the heart of God.

Slide 12

In Matthew 6:21 we are warned..." for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Where is your treasure?

Is your treasure in earthly things? Is your treasure the same as what God would treasure?

Where is your heart right now?

Slide 13

In Proverbs 4:23 we are told to guard our hearts above all else, for everything we do flows from it.

How do we guard our hearts? The answer lies in Philippians 4.

Slide 14

⁴ Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! ⁵ Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. ⁶ Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. ⁷ And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

It goes on to say in verse 8

Slide 15

⁸ Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy – think about such things.

Rejoice. Relax. Request. Reflect.

Focus on the good in people. Focus on the good in the world.

Continually and constantly turn to God. Put God above all else. Above all powers. Above all principalities. Above all vain conceit and suffering.

Make every single thing about God

That is the way to God's heart.

We are even given guidance, told how to pray in Matthew 6:9-13.

Slide 16

⁹ Our Father in heaven, hallowed by thy name, ¹⁰ your kingdom come, your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. ¹¹ Give us today our daily bread. ¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. ¹³ And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one. Interestingly the NIV translation leads out 'for thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.'

Your kingdom come. Your will be done. God's. Not ours.

By God's grace we are able to have our sins forgiven and have our hearts cleaned, and by God's grace we are able to forgive the sins that others have done to us. We do not know another person's heart. We do not know what they are going through. We don't know what pain they are dealing with. We do not know what God knows; we just have to trust in him.

It is worth noting that verse 11 says give us today our daily bread. It does not say give us our bread for the week or for the month. Praying to God for our hearts and the hearts of others should be a daily occurrence.

As it says in the words of a song

Slide 17

Heal my heart and make it clean

Open up my eyes to the things unseen

Show me how to love like you have loved me

Break my heart for what breaks your

Everything I am for your kingdom's cause

As I walk from earth into eternity

This is the way to God's heart.

God's heart is in the things unseen, at least unseen to the human eye. It is really important that we consider God's focus and try to see people as He sees them. We cannot see a person's heart, but we can see when people are in need. The Bible is full of stories about helping people – giving them what they need, not necessarily what they want.

In Matthew 25: 40-45 we read,

Slide 18

The King will reply, ⁴⁰ 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. ⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me nothing to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, ⁴³ I was a stranger and you did not invite me in, I needed clothes and you did not clothe me, I was sick and in prison and you did not look after me.'

⁴⁴ They also will answer, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or needing clothes or sick or in prison, and did not help you?'

⁴⁵ He will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these you did not do for me.'

When it is your time to meet your maker face-to-face there are a number of questions that God will not ask you.

Slide 19 - 28

He will not ask you

- What kind of car you drove
- The square footage of your house
- About the clothes in your wardrobe
- What your highest salary was
- What your job title was
- How many friends you had [on social media or otherwise]
- What neighbourhood you lived in
- Why you sometimes strayed from him

There was a story circling around the Internet [so it must be true] that read,

My dad gave 50 bucks to a guy who said he needed to buy medicine for his kids. I told my dad he was probably going to spend the money on alcohol or something, but my dad said that 'whether he was lying or not says something about HIS character, but hearing someone in need and choosing not to help when I have the means to says something about mine.'

Conclusion

We are fallen beings and have grappled with God since the time of the original sin. From that point until now the human race has been on a meandering track – moving close to God...moving away again. Always seeking...sometimes finding.

Why should we focus on the heart of worship?

Why does God deserve our worship?

Why should we demonstrate our affection in a way that is meaningful to God?

Because He is holy and righteous and worthy to be praised.

He is the only one.

There is no other name that is deserving of our worship, affection and admiration.

When we do as we were created to do and worship our Creator, we are joining with all of heaven to lift His name on high.

Look inward at your own heart.

Look outward to see the heart of others.

Look upward to see the heart of God.

When we are incessantly looking to God to clean our hearts; when we are interceding and praying for the hearts of others; when we are focussed on our Creator and his will, then we have arrived at the heart of worship.

We are going to be worshipping Him for eternity so we might as well start practicing now.

Slide 29

Prayer

Lord. Help us to take the focus off ourselves and put it on you. Help us to seek first your kingdom. We pray that you will give us a heart for what breaks yours. Help us to understand that when we get down to the foundation, to the cornerstone of our very being we will find your heart. Remind us, urge us, to turn to you every day, in every situation, to seek your heart

Help us forget all else and get back to the heart of worship.

Amen.