

“WHAT’S DOWN IN THE WELL, COMES UP IN THE BUCKET.”

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Scripture Texts: Luke 6:43-45

Prayer:

Holy Father, by the help of your Holy Spirit, cause the words of my mouth and the meditations and reflections of all our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock and my redeemer (Psalm 19:14). Amen.

Introduction.

I love good old country wisdom, the kind you hear from grandpa sitting in a rocking chair on the front porch. So when I read what the GLOW girls had been studying in their meetings this year and saw one of the lessons was, “What’s Down in the Well, Comes Up in the Bucket” I took to it like a duck on a June bug. I thought you know, that dog will bark. That will preach.

“What’s Down in the Well, Comes Up in the Bucket.”

There are several ways to say that.

What’s in the pot is what’ll boil over.

You can’t get sweet tea from a mud puddle.

If there’s a skunk in the cellar, it’s gonna stink upstairs.

If you prefer something a little more up to date with all the talk about tariffs and manufacturing:

We can only export what we already manufacture. If you want to know what your factory is producing, just look at what’s being shipped out the door of your mouth.

Computer tech people like to say: GIGO: Garbage In, Garbage Out.

Or we could say it the way Jesus said it:

Luke 6:45 Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Luke 6

In chapter 6 of Luke's Gospel Jesus is teaching His disciples about how to live in Jesus' kingdom with Him as the King. Jesus' kingdom is different from the kingdoms of the world and so there are different expectations and attitudes and actions.

He says things like love your enemies, and do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you. Don't return evil for evil. He who would be first, must be the servant of all.

Another kingdom difference Jesus makes is to be more self-critical than others-critical. For example, don't look at the splinter or speck in someone else's eye, look at the log in your own eye.

Jesus presses this home with a little science lesson from the world of botany. Botany is the study of plants. Jesus states the obvious, what everyone knows.

There is no such thing as a bad tree bringing forth good fruit.
There is no such thing as a good tree bringing forth bad fruit.

You can't pick figs from a thornbush; you can't pick grapes from a bramble bush.
If you plant thorns, don't expect roses.

Whatever fruit you find on a tree, tells you what kind of tree it is. The external fruit reveals the internal condition of the tree. What is visible on the tree is tied to what the tree actually is.

Jesus takes this analogy and applies it to people. He says the same principle holds true with people.

The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth that which is good.
The evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth that which is evil.

Jesus is calling us to self-examination, not other's examination. He is asking us to ask ourselves about the condition of our own hearts. Jesus was saying this to His own disciples. Even if you are a card-carrying believer and call yourself a Christian, He calls us out to look under the hood.

Jesus gives a simple test of to determine the genuineness of our profession of faith and our character. Our words and actions, our conversation and conduct.

Luke 6:45 Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

What is the heart? The Bible uses the word heart over a thousand times. We have all read it and we all sort of generally think we know what it refers to, but have we stopped to consider it.

What is the heart?

The Bible basically thinks of us as having two parts, our outer physical self, our body, and our inner self. The outer self is the house for the inner self.

The Bible uses many words for the inner self, heart, mind, soul, will, affections, spirit. The word heart is like a big basket that holds all these terms, and heart is often used to summarize them. The heart doesn't just refer to our emotions or feelings, but to the core of a our being. It's the control center of the human being. Let me give a Scripture for five aspects of our heart.

The heart is the mind that thinks, reasons, plans, and understands.

Proverbs 23:7 As he thinks in his heart, so is he.

The heart is the will that makes choices, sets intentions and makes decisions.

Proverbs 16:9 The heart of man plans his way..."

The heart is the seat of our affections where loves, joy, desires, and emotions are experienced.

Deuteronomy 6:5 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.

The heart is our spiritual center where faith resides.

Romans 10:10 With the heart one believes and is justified.

The heart is the source of behavior from which flow our words and actions.

Proverbs 4:23 Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.

When Scripture speaks of the heart, it refers to our entire inner life, our thoughts, desires, choices, emotions, and spiritual orientation. It's the seat of our personhood, and the place God must transform for true faith and obedience to occur.

And there is the problem. Our hearts have to be transformed, changed. Why? Because at the fall it was our hearts, meaning thoughts, desires, choices, emotions and spiritual orientation that were corrupted.

Genesis 6:5 The Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intention of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.

Jer. 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Total depravity means every part of our being, including the heart, with its thoughts, desires, choices, emotions and spiritual orientation, is affected by sin. We are not basically good, we are not even just neutral, like a blank slate, we are completely corrupted and sinful. Our well is polluted and poisoned. The only thing that can come up in the bucket is sin.

That's a problem. Any of you who have ever had a well go bad on you, know that's a problem.

But there is a solution. And of course that is the glory of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. He is the only one who can fix our wells, the only one who can transform and change our hearts.

Ezekiel 36:26 I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.

God promises to give His people a new heart and spirit. Only by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit can the heart be changed to love and obey God. This happens through Christ's atonement and the Spirit's work, believers are cleansed and made new. This inward renewal is essential to change our outward words and behavior.

A transformed heart leads to transformed, godly speech, thoughts, choices, desires and actions. The fruit of the Spirit is evidence of this grace at work. Sanctification involves daily repentance and intentional filling of the heart with God's Word. By the Spirit and the Word and prayer we change what is down in the well, and what comes up in the bucket.

Luke 6:45 Out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

Alright, let's get real. None of us believe that. Well, OK, none of us want to believe that.

Have you ever said to someone, "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't mean to say that"? Guess what, if it hadn't first been in your heart, it wouldn't have come out of your mouth. If we were going to speak honestly we would say, "Please, forgive me for saying what I meant."
(Paul Tripp)

Our word problems are heart problems. Jesus used a biology analogy to teach us there is an organic connection between what's in our hearts and what comes out our mouths. But we don't want to believe that, we resist that every way we can. We want to say that our biggest problem is outside of us, not inside of us. It is my kids, my friends, my brothers or sisters, my wife, my neighbor, my boss, my church members. That is the lie we all tell ourselves every day.

And as long as we listen to that lie, we will not look inside ourselves, we will not examine our own hearts and we will not seek the transforming grace we need from the Holy Spirit. No one and nothing make us say or do anything. People are not my problem, my heart is my problem.

Why do I get irritated in traffic? Why do I get irritated with my kids or spouse? Why do you get mad at your brother or sister or parents or friends at school or teammates? Because of my own selfish desires, my own unmet expectations, my thinking more highly of myself and my interests, my sense of entitlement, my pride.

Ill. of two people stuck in traffic. One is angry, the other is calm. Why? What's in the heart.

Only when I can confess that what's wrong with my world is inside me, only then can I hope to find transformation, true change and greater love and joy and peace and patience. Our word problems are our heart problems.

If you could record what comes out of your mouth for a week or month, what would you hear? What words come out of when you are on the phone or in a conversation? What words about other people, leaders, rulers? What words of complaint about what you have or don't have, lack of contentment? What words of jealousy or envy or coveting? What words of anger or resentment or bitterness? What words about earthly things, your activities, yourself? What unwholesome words, impure, lewd, crude?

There is no escaping Jesus' words, we always speak out of our hearts. Our word problems are heart problems. Words are the great symptom of the spiritual condition of our heart.

If we have in our heart love for the world and the flesh, for carnal and corrupt things, then evil will flow from that. Evil treasure produces that which is evil.

If we have in our heart love for God and love for Jesus, then goodness will flow from that.

You will know what is in the well by what you draw out of it.
Every tree is known by its fruit. Every heart is known by the mouth.

This passage is not about judging others, but about self-reflection and personal growth. This is not a question of being without sin. We are all sinners and we all sin. The question is do we excuse our sin, make light of it, blame others for it, or are we in an ongoing battle against sin? Do we desire holiness and obedience? Do we take responsibility for our words? Are we fighting our sin with repentance?

Romans 8:5-6 For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. 6 For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.

Implications and application.

Complacency is the enemy of our sanctification, let's examine ourselves and ask honest questions. Do you bear the marks of being sons and daughters of God? Do you bear the marks of being regenerated by the power of the Holy Spirit? Do you bear the marks of an increasing Christ-likeness? Do you desire the things of God? Are we living in the kingdom of self, or the kingdom of Christ?

Let us all do a heart check up this week and do some spring cleaning in all our hearts.

Listen to your words. Clean up old habits, old ways, the ways of the flesh, confess secret and hidden sin. Take out the trash, turn off or unplug whatever is unpure, unholy, ungodly. Think about what you are putting in the well from videos, movies, music, social media, and stop poisoning the well.

Instead of garbage in, garbage out, make it God in and God out.

In humble reliance on the Holy Spirit ask Him to transform your heart and change your words by His powerful grace.

Galatians 2:20 I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

II Timothy 2:22 So flee youthful passions and pursue righteousness, faith, love, and peace, along with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart.

Psalm 139:23-24 Search me, O God, and know my heart! Try me and know my thoughts!

24 And see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting!

Psalm 51:9-10 Hide your face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

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Prayer: Holy Father, pour out on us your heart changing and heart renewing Spirit. Bring to life our dead hearts, soften our hard hearts, enlighten our darkened hearts, give us wills to obey and holy desires ready to make godly choices. Help us recognize where true corruption and sin lies and admit our need for your help to open our hearts to that cleansing which comes to those who put their trust in Jesus. Wash us all with the water of your Word and Spirit, and give us the good fruit of repentance and faith, in the name of Him by whose blood we are rescued and redeemed from all sin and made holy. Amen.