

Heart Condition

Matthew 12:33-37

Intro

If a doctor were to tell you that you have a ***heart condition*** — there would only be one way to interpret that statement — *something is wrong with your heart...*

- And we find the same sort of thing when we come to the Word of God...

Because the Bible makes it clear that we each have a spiritual heart condition...

Jeremiah 17:9-10 (NKJV)

**9 “The heart is deceitful above all things,
And desperately wicked;
Who can know it?**

**10 I, the LORD, search the heart,
I test the mind,
Even to give every man according to his ways,
According to the fruit of his doings.”**

So, even though our physical heart may be working properly, spiritually speaking we have a *heart condition...*

- *And it is important to understand that the Lord Jesus is perfectly aware of our heart condition...*

John 2:23-25 (NKJV)

23 Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did.

24 But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men,

25 and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man.

We also read in...

Hebrews 4:12-13 (NKJV)

12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Now, even though the omniscient God is perfectly aware of our heart condition — *we are not...*

- We have a tendency toward self-deception that blinds us to the real state of our heart...

And in the passage that we will be studying this morning, Jesus will give us some diagnostic tools — He will give us a spiritual EKG so that we might now what is really going on inside...

With that said, let's briefly remind ourselves of the scriptures that we studied last week...

Matthew 12:22-32 (NKJV)

22 Then one was brought to Him who was demon-possessed, blind and mute; and He healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw.

23 And all the multitudes were amazed and said, "Could this be the Son of David?"

24 Now when the Pharisees heard it they said, "This fellow does not cast out demons except by Beelzebub, the ruler of the demons."

25 But Jesus knew their thoughts, and said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand.

26 If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand?

27 And if I cast out demons by Beelzebub, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore they shall be your judges.

28 But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, surely the kingdom of God has come upon you.

29 Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

30 He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad.

31 Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men.

32 Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy

Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come.”

This is our context as we move into our passage this morning...

Because of their heart condition, the Pharisees are saying things that are untrue — things that are blasphemous — they are misrepresenting God *through their words...*

- *And this is no accident — the Pharisees were not merely misspeaking...*

Instead, the words that they were speaking was revealing who they really were — their words were an indicator of their heart condition...

So, if you would, please follow along as I read the passage that we will be studying this morning...

Matthew 12:33-37 (NKJV)

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

Let's move into our first section...

1) Fruit Trees (vs 33-34)

Now, in these first two verses of our study, the Lord Jesus reveals that human beings are like fruit trees...

- *And in this context, the **fruit** that we produce are the **words** that we speak...*

33 "Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit.

At this point we must once again remind ourselves that the Pharisees have been using their words to speak against Jesus and against the Holy Spirit...

- The Pharisees have been using their **words** to plot against Jesus, they have been using their **words** to convince the crowds that Jesus is a false prophet...

Ultimately, they have been using their **words** to lead the people astray...

With this in mind, let's look again at vs 33...

Either make the tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad;

This is very interesting...

The Lord Jesus is presenting the Pharisees with a choice — with the choice of which type of tree that they will be...

- *Either be a good tree or a bad tree...*

Now, it seems clear that they were currently ***bad trees*** producing ***bad fruit*** because of their ***bad heart condition***...

- And this ***bad fruit*** was their words — the deception, the misrepresentation, the intimidation...

Unfortunately, this is how it goes — *bad trees* produce *bad fruit*...

- [ex. Chinaberry trees — trees that produced inedible fruit — used the green fruit to throw at each other or to use as slingshot projectiles — inedible fruit rotted and became a mess...]

But the good news is that no one has to be a Chinaberry tree...

Instead of being bad trees which produce bad fruit, we have the choice to be good trees which produce good fruit...

- [ex. friend who loves apples — he declares that Evercrisp apples are the best — and I trust him because he eats a lot of apples...]

Now, if we choose to **make the tree good**, we can become the spiritual equivalent of an Evercrisp tree...

And the fruit of our lips — our words — can be a blessing that nourishes those with whom we speak...

Galatians 5:22-23 (NKJV)

22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.

- [expand — speaking words that are loving, joyful, that bring peace, etc...]

For another picture of this opportunity to bear good fruit, please turn to...

John 15:1-5 (NKJV)

1 “I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.

2 Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit He prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

3 You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.

4 Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.”

Please turn back to Matthew 12 as we look at the last phrase in vs 33...

for a tree is known by its fruit.

This is a straightforward truth — if you see peaches growing on a tree then it is a peach tree — not an orange tree...

And so it is with us...

If we want to know what kind of tree we are then we need to take an honest look at the fruit that is being produced by our lives — and this fruit is an indicator of our heart condition...

- In the context of Matthew 12, the fruit that we should examine are the words that we are saying...

If our words line up with the fruit of the Spirit — if they are the words of a disciple — then this is an indicator of a spiritually healthy heart...

- But if our words align with the values of this fallen world system — with the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh and the pride of life — then that is an indication of a serious heart condition...

And it is vital that we be honest with ourselves...

It is vital that we listen to the counsel of mature believers around us so that we might do what we can to be good trees that produce good fruit...

And to produce good fruit we will need good soil, proper nutrients and clean water...

I love the picture of the good tree that we are presented with in...

Psalm 1 (NKJV) [please turn there...]

1 Blessed is the man

**Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;**

**2 But his delight is in the law of the LORD,
And in His law he meditates day and night.**

**3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,
Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And whatever he does shall prosper.**

**4 The ungodly are not so,
But are like the chaff which the wind drives away.**

**5 Therefore the ungodly shall not stand in the judgment,
Nor sinners in the congregation of the righteous.**

**6 For the LORD knows the way of the righteous,
But the way of the ungodly shall perish.**

- [ex. Commit to being a disciple, read the Bible and other edifying books, listen to solid Bible teaching, serve others in some capacity, seek guidance from mature disciples, etc...]

Now, as we turn back to Matthew 12 we see in vs 34 that the Pharisees to whom Jesus was speaking to were not currently interested in being good trees who bear good fruit...

34 Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

This is a radical indictment of the Pharisees — and the Lord begins by referring to them as a...

Brood of vipers!

And what are vipers most known for? — using their mouths to poison their victims...[expand — apply to their words...]

The Lord Jesus continues in vs 34...

How can you, being evil, speak good things?

Jesus doesn't pull any punches — the Pharisees were **evil** — they were a **brood of vipers** — they were **bad trees** — so they could not speak good things...

- The evil heart condition of the Pharisees was being revealed by their words...

And Jesus explains that this is how it works here in vs 34...

For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks.

In other words, the mouth is the revealer of the heart...

If we want to know what our heart condition is — then all we have to do is pay attention to the words that we are speaking...

“What’s in your well comes up in your bucket”...[expand]

Now, as we move into our second section, the Lord Jesus continues talking about the heart as the source of our words but switches the metaphor from fruit trees to...

2) Treasure Boxes (vs 35-37)

35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

This is a very interesting picture...

A good man has a **heart** of **good treasure** — his good heart is a treasure box filled with good things...

- And those good things are *brought out* — *they are revealed* as he speaks...

But the opposite is also true...

An evil person has a heart of evil treasure — his evil heart is a treasure box filled with evil things...

- And those evil things are brought out — they are revealed as he speaks...

Now, since this is true — how can we have good hearts filled with good treasure?...

I believe the Lord Jesus has already given us the answer in Matthew 6:19-21...

Matthew 6:19-21 (NKJV)

19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.”

So, if we want a heart that is a treasure box of good things — then it must be a heart that is set on heaven — it must be a heart that treasures the things that God treasures...

- *And in order to understand what God treasures it is vital that we get to know Him better and better...*

We spend time with Him — getting to know Him — as we read the Bible...

- We spend time with Him — getting to know Him — as we pray...

We spend time with Him — getting to know Him as we fellowship with others who are more spiritually mature than we are...

- We spend time with Him — getting to know Him — as we serve...

And all of this will aid us in understanding what is truly valuable — what is truly treasure and what is not...

- [ex. Geology lab — Pyrite - “fool’s gold”...]

If we want to discern between fool’s gold and true gold — then we need to spend time with the Lord — He will lead us to treasure what is truly valuable...

- He will lead us to fill the treasure box of our hearts with good treasure...

And out of that good treasure we will be able to bring good into the lives of others through the words that we speak...

*Now, as we move on in Matthew 12 to vs 36 the Lord Jesus makes it clear that **what we say matters** — so let’s look at how vs 35-36 fit together...*

35 A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things.

36 But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment.

The Lord Jesus makes the radical declaration that **every idle word** — every careless word — will require an accounting **in the day of judgment**...

And if **every idle word** will require an accounting then it seems obvious that *every deliberate word will also require an accounting...*

The Lord Jesus continues this thought in vs...

37 For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.”

This is why *even idle words will be judged* — because words are a revelation of the heart condition...

- Now, at this point we must remember that vs 37 is being directed to the scribes and Pharisees who are rejecting the Lord Jesus...

Their words against the Lord Jesus will result in their condemnation because words revealed a heart of unbelief...

- And that is what words do — they reveal what is really going on in our hearts — they reveal our heart condition...

Now, *it is possible* for us to lie — it is possible for us to *fool some people some of the time*...

- But it is not possible for us to *fool all of the people all of the time*...

And most importantly, it is not possible for us to fool God any of the time...

So, when the Lord Jesus says **“For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned”** — *it’s not for Him — it’s for us...*

In other words, the Lord Jesus is not waiting to see what we say so that He can know how to judge us — as if we can just say the right thing and be ok...

- He has always known what is in our hearts — but He wants **us** ***to know what is in our hearts...***

He wants us to understand that our words are an indicator of our heart condition...

- And if our words are evil then that is a revelation of a serious heart condition — and something needs to be done about it...

Conclusion

We will stop here for today and Lord-willing pick up in vs 38 next week...

- *But before we close, please understand that the Lord is ready and willing to improve our spiritual heart condition...*

But we must make the choice to submit to Him so that we might be good trees that bear good fruit to the benefit others...

- *And we must have our hearts set on Him so that we treasure what He treasures — and out of that good treasure we will be able to bless those around us...*

Let's pray...