

Heart-Healing for the Righteous vs. Heartsickness of the Wicked

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[0 : 00] I'm going to skip around a little bit this morning because we already covered most of chapter 13 three weeks ago when we were going through Proverbs 11, I think.

So I think we're going to start verse 12, chapter 13, go through verse 9, and then we're going to jump to chapter 14 and read verses 1 to 15. So I'll start in chapter 13, verses 12 to 19.

Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.

The teaching of the wise is a fountain of life that one may turn away from the snares of death. Good sends wind's favor, but the way of the treacherous is their ruin.

Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly. A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful envoy brings healing.

[1 : 16] Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honor. A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.

Let's skip ahead a little bit to chapter 14, verses 1 to 15. The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tears it down.

Whoever walks in uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is devious in his ways despises him. By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them.

Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox. A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies.

A scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding. Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge. The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.

[2 : 28] Fools mock at the guilt offering, but the upright enjoy acceptance. The heart knows its own bitterness, and no stranger shares its joy.

The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

Even in laughter the heart may ache, and the end of joy may be grief. The backslider in heart will be filled with the fruit of his ways, and a good man will be filled with the fruit of his ways.

The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps. This is God's holy and authoritative word. We have an oversized box of Cheerios at our house that we've been trying to finish for the last few months.

It has a picture of a red heart-shaped bowl on the cover, and a caption that says, It can help lower cholesterol as part of a heart-healthy diet.

[3 : 43] But even though it's supposed to be a healthier alternative to virtually all the other sugary breakfast cereals, our family still hasn't managed to finish that one box over the last several months.

And the reason for that is quite simple. It only has two grams of sugar. And if it had any less sugar, it will taste like you're eating the cardboard box itself.

And that's because we want healthy hearts in theory, but not necessarily in practice. And this illustrates kind of the spiritual problems that we have all experienced, that the desires of our hearts are not aligned with the will of God.

We don't desire the things that we should desire. We don't want the things that God wants. We don't have a strong enough appetite for godly, heavenly things.

And so we need new hearts, realigned hearts. And this passage teaches us that only those who humbly receive God's word will have the desires of their hearts fulfilled.

[4 : 52] It speaks of the desires of the heart, chapter 13, verses 12 to 19. And it speaks of the deceptiveness of the heart, chapter 14, verses 1 to 15. And I also bring in chapter 15, verses 11 to 19 later, which I didn't read earlier, and talk about the delight of the heart.

And since, as I mentioned, I already preached on Proverbs 13 three weeks ago, along with chapter 10, I'm not going to dive into those verses in detail this morning.

But just to remind you of the context, chapter 13 teaches that the righteous gain lasting wealth by working diligently and saving gradually. And so chapter 13, verse 11 gives us a flavor of that.

It says, Wealth gained hastily will dwindle, but whoever gathers little by little will increase it. Now, it's in that context we get the teaching of chapter 13, verses 12 to 19, which talks about the desire of the heart, desires of the heart.

And verses 12 to 19 is a subunit of its own, and it's structured concentrically. First half is mirrored by the second half. So verse 12 is matched by verse 19, verse 13 by verse 18, verse 14 by verse 17, and so on.

[6 : 03] And it's helpful for interpreting when we look at those matching verses together. And so verse 12 and 19, they bracket this unit, and they both speak of how the desires of the righteous will be fulfilled.

Verse 12 says, Hope deferred makes the heart sick, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. And similarly, verse 19 says, A desire fulfilled is sweet to the soul, but to turn away from evil is an abomination to fools.

The wicked cannot resist the lure of get-rich-quick schemes, whether it's by cheating or stealing or gambling. But wealth, Proverbs teaches us, wealth that is gained hastily will dwindle.

Only he who gathers little by little through hard work will increase it. And for this reason, they will not have the wicked who seek to gain quickly through unjust means, will not have their desire fulfilled.

To the wise, however, who desire the things of God, the fulfillment of a righteous desire is sweet to their soul. But to the fool who does not desire the things of God, turning away from evil is an abomination to him.

[7 : 20] He says, So the wise, this is telling us, the wise have a taste, an appetite for godly things, while the fools have a taste only for ungodly things. And they have a great distaste, in fact, for the righteousness of God.

So it prevents them from turning away from evil. And this is why, Proverbs teaches us, the appetite of the wicked will not be satisfied, ultimately speaking. And that's why verse 12 goes on to say, hope deferred makes the heart sick.

The wicked will have their hope deferred, meaning not merely delayed temporarily, but denied indefinitely. This disappointment and frustration will lead to sickness of heart.

Earlier in Proverbs chapter 4, verse 23, it said that, it said, The Bible describes the heart, which represents the inner being of the person, as a source from which our lives flow, what we say, what we do.

It is like the root of a plant. When the root is rotted, the plant does not long survive. Likewise, a sick heart ultimately leads to death. A sinful heart leads to eternal death.

[8 : 37] And this is why verse 12 continues, but a desire fulfilled is a tree of life. This is not a shallow statement about how people who get what they want are happy, but people who don't get what they want are sad.

It's rather contrasting the desires of the wicked from the desires of the righteous. And we know this because an evil desire fulfilled is never described elsewhere as a tree of life, which is a symbol of vitality, healing, and ultimately eternal life.

So the wicked's desires then are thwarted, and because their hearts are contrary to the will of God, for this reason they end up getting hearts sick. But the righteous desire are fulfilled, because their desires are aligned with the will of God.

And so they find healing, life, walling up to eternal life in the end. The wicked might flourish, this assumes, for a little while, but when they do, they are like a plant that sprouts up quickly, because it has only a shallow root.

And it will soon wither away, for the lack of its depth. In contrast, the righteous might suffer for a little while in this life, like a plant that seems to have trouble sprouting up, but all the while it's laying deep roots, and soon it will outgrow and outlast the wicked, and the righteous will be rewarded in eternity.

[10 : 04] And that's the reason why verse 13 exhorts the reader to heed the divinely inspired wisdom of God's word. Read with me in verse 13. It says, Whoever despises the word brings destruction on himself, but he who reveres the commandment will be rewarded.

Now verse 13 is matched by verse 18. Poverty and disgrace come to him who ignores instruction, but whoever heeds reproof is honored. Poverty and disgrace stalk those who ignore instruction, but honor accompanies those who heed reproof.

In other words, those who think highly of God and his word will be honored, while those who think God's word beneath them, because they think too highly of themselves, will be disgraced.

And as we have seen throughout the book of Proverbs, the word poverty is used consistently in a negative way, in contrast with the word poor, which is used primarily in a positive way.

The poor refer to those who are poor because of injustices in the world, through outside circumstances, outside of their control. Poverty, however, is used to refer to God's judgment on those, on people, on sinners and the wicked, for their, for example, laziness, stinginess, love of luxury, or carelessness.

[11 : 26] And poverty and disgrace come to them, prideful sinners who ignore God's instruction. And then in verses 14 and 17, Solomon commends himself as the wise instructor who faithfully conveys the wisdom of God.

He says in verse 14, the teaching of the wise is a fountain of life that one may turn away from the snares of death. Right? This is compared to verse 12, which spoke of a desire for the foot as a tree of life.

So here now it says, the teaching of the wise is a fountain of life. If you wish the fulfillment of the desires of your heart like a tree of life, then you should heed the teaching of the wise, which is a fountain of life.

And this is matched by verse 17. A wicked messenger falls into trouble, but a faithful envoy brings healing. There are wicked messengers who do not faithfully convey the message that they have been sent to relay by the author, the sender.

They sow discord through their failure, or intentional or not. They sow discord between the sender and the recipient. They separate us from God through their false teaching.

[12 : 40] Their words are like snares that ultimately lead to death. And these messengers, these wicked messengers, will become subject themselves to the trouble that they cause others. But in contrast, if you listen to the wise, like Solomon who's teaching here, the faithful envoy brings healing.

There are wisdom teachers like Solomon and other contributors to the book of Proverbs, and their teaching leads to life. And so he's encouraging us to heed it, listen to it. And then verse 15 is matched by verse 16.

This is the center of the concentric structure. It continues the exhortation. Good sense wins favor, but the way of the treacherous is their ruin.

Every prudent man acts with knowledge, but a fool flaunts his folly. And this is really the main point of this entire passage, that only those who humbly receive God's word will have the desires of their hearts fulfilled.

The fool desires treachery and folly, and so he will not follow God's word, and will not therefore be rewarded in the end. So that's what this passage teaches us about the desires of the heart.

[13 : 51] Now, only if it were easy to discern the desires of the heart, we would have no trouble distinguishing right from wrong and aligning ourselves and our desires with the will of God.

Unfortunately, however, it's not easy, and that's due to the deceptiveness of the heart. It's what chapter 14, verses 1 to 15 speak of. Solomon builds his case gradually by continuing the contrast between the righteous and the wicked first.

He says in verse 1, The wisest of women builds her house, but folly with her own hands tear it down. As I mentioned before, the word house, like in English, can refer to a physical building, but also to your family, to your household.

And so here, the building and tearing down of the house figuratively represents what a wise woman does to her household. The wisest of women builds up her household.

She makes her family flourish. In contrast, folly with her own hands tears it down. Of course, no one in her right mind would tear down her own household with her own hands, but the woman of folly, that's the point, has no idea that's what she is doing.

[15 : 04] By her own incompetence, by her own lack of discretion, by her own hot temper, by her own failure to bridle her tongue, these are the things we see throughout Proverbs, the foolish woman tears down her own household.

And in verse 2, continues the contrast between the righteous and the wicked. Whoever walks in uprightness fears the Lord, but he who is devious in his ways despises him. Whoever walks upright, whoever fears the Lord, walks in a straight path, uprightly, but he who despises the Lord, goes astray, deviates.

He has devious ways, crooked ways. And then verses 3 and 5, both contrast the speech of the righteous with the speech of the wicked.

By the mouth of a fool comes a rod for his back, but the lips of the wise will preserve them. So the foolish speech of the fool is his own doing.

It's as if his tongue itself becomes a rod with which he lashes his own back. In contrast, rather than being attacked and jeopardized by their own words, the wise are preserved, it says, by their words.

[16 : 15] And the things that the wicked say are not only characterized by folly, but also falsehood, as verse 5 says. A faithful witness does not lie, but a false witness breathes out lies.

Whenever he opens his mouth, there is a lie. He lies as frequently and mindlessly as he breathes. He does not care for the truth. He has no regard for God and his commands, but only about getting his own selfish way.

And then this brings us to verse 4, which shows us that the wicked person's folly is not seen only in his speech, but also in the way he works. It's a very cool proverb.

Verse 4 says, Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox. A farmer can save himself a lot of labor and cost, of course, associated with keeping oxen by getting rid of all of his oxen.

But if you did that, you would have no oxen to do the work so that you could have and enjoy an abundant harvest. And the word clean and word abundant are right next to each other in this verse.

[17 : 25] And the two words in Hebrew are spelled exactly the opposite. So if you spell clean backwards, it would be abundant in Hebrew. So this kind of highlights the contrast and this inversely, this inversely proportional relationship between having a clean manger and having an abundant crop.

Yes, it's nice not to have to clean a dirty manger, but if you don't have a dirty manger to clean because you have no oxen, then you lack abundant crops only oxen can bring.

There's so much wisdom in this verse. Foolish people do not want to roll up their sleeves and work and get dirt under their fingernails. They want easy money. Their mentality is cheat on that exam, plagiarize that paper to get a good grade, fudge the data or forge the evidence to win your argument.

They want all the pleasure without any of the pain, all the acclaim without any of the work, but that's not how God has created this world to work. Human flourishing comes through the hard and messy work of life.

If you are hospitable, your house is not going to remain in its pristine condition for long as people come and go. If you haven't raised children, they're going to derail some of your plans, perhaps some of your most cherished plans.

[18 : 50] If you cook and eat, you're going to have dirty dishes to clean. If you form a team to work on something you can't do by yourself, you're going to have to deal with interpersonal conflict.

If you want to grow and scale up your business, you're going to have to invest in new systems, staff, and equipment. But this wisdom is beyond the reach of the fool.

It says in verse 6, The scoffer seeks wisdom in vain, but knowledge is easy for a man of understanding. And that's because wisdom entails humble submission to God.

The scoffer, one who scoffs at God's wisdom is by his very nature incapable of gaining wisdom because wisdom requires humbling oneself before God.

In contrast, knowledge is easy for a man of understanding. The person who is in right relationship with God readily gain new knowledge. So it says in verse 7, Leave the presence of a fool, for there you do not meet words of knowledge.

[19 : 56] But telling the fool apart from the wise is the work of wisdom, isn't it? Verse 8 says, The wisdom of the prudent is to discern his way, but the folly of fools is deceiving.

The prudent are discerning, they are careful in their way, and therefore will not be fooled. The fools, however, are deceiving. They deceive others and are themselves deceived by their lack of discernment.

And verses 8 to 15 here in chapter 14 are also structured concentrically, like chapter 13 verses 12 to 19. And so the second half mirrors the first half.

So verse 8 is matched by verse 15. It says, The simple believes everything, but the prudent gives thought to his steps. Again, prudent discerns his way, gives thought to his steps, but the folly of fools is deceiving.

The simple believe everything. Things are not always as they seem because the folly of fools is deceiving. Therefore, it's imperative that the prudent, the wise, the shrewd give thought to their steps instead of believing everything.

[21 : 06] And fools who do not take heed to their ways are incapable of making amends. Verse 9 says, The fools mock at the guilt offering, but the upright enjoys acceptance. They laugh at the idea of a guilt offering because they always see themselves to be in the right and therefore see no need to make amends.

They see no need to make the guilt sacrifice. And so they, and so that, but the righteous, on the other hand, they acknowledge their guilt freely and because they humble themselves in that way, they make the appropriate sacrifice and in doing so, find acceptance before God.

And this verse is matched by verse 14, which also speaks of the consequences of sin and righteousness. The backslider in heart will be filled with the fruit of his ways and a good man will be filled with the fruit of his ways.

Exact same phrases highlight that they will both get what they deserve. The backslider in heart who does not repent, but instead mocks at the guilt offering, will be filled with the fruit of his ways, what his pride and scoffing deserve.

And likewise, good man who perseveres in his righteousness will be filled with the fruit of his ways. In the final analysis, God is perfectly just and he sees into every human heart both the righteous and the wicked and therefore they will get what they deserve.

[22 : 32] And so in the end, there will be a clear separation between the righteous and the wicked, but we need to remember that in the present, things are not always as they appear. The heart has its own secrets that no one knows of.

It says in verse 10, the heart knows its own bitterness and no stranger shares its joy. Such a poignant proverb.

Bitterness and joy represent the full range of human emotions. And your heart, it is saying, has secrets that are known to no one else but you. The heart has its own secrets.

This proverb speaks to the profound loneliness of human existence apart from God. Of course, your family and friends can share your joys and sorrows in part, but there is a sense in which everyone outside of you is a stranger to your emotions, to your own heart.

They cannot fully share the bitterness or joy of your heart. In fact, even you do not fully understand the motivations and emotions of your own heart.

[23 : 44] Only God sees us wholly and knows us perfectly. And this verse is matched and complemented by verse 13. Even in laughter the heart may ache and the end of joy may be grief.

Even those who are laughing and playing and partying and living it up might be masking a deep heartache. A smile on one's face might be hiding deep bitterness of heart.

The end of joy may be grief. For them, it actually simply says the end of joy is grief. Why is the end of joy grief for such people?

To understand this, we need to look at verses 11 to 12. It says, The house of the wicked will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish. There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.

These two verses match each other. First, the house of the wicked is contrasted with the tent of the upright. The house is a more permanent and secure dwelling place than the tent.

[24 : 53] That's why King David expresses his desire to build a temple for God in this way in 2 Samuel 7, verse 2. He says, See now, I dwell in a house of cedar, but the ark of God dwells in a tent.

He saw the incongruity of that. He saw that that needed to be corrected. So, but surprisingly, this proverb says, The house of the wicked, that more permanent and secure seemingly dwelling, that will be destroyed, but the tent of the upright will flourish.

Even though during this short lifespan here on earth, the wicked may seem to be more established and secure. They might seem to prosper more. In the end, it's the righteous who will be established, who will endure.

And that's because there is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. This teaches us that it's not always wise to follow your heart.

it is not always wise to obey your conscience because of the deceptiveness of our hearts.

[26 : 12] It's not our consciences sometimes need to be recalibrated, adjusted, realigned with the teachings of God's Word. Our sense of right and wrong itself can be wrong.

There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death. Our deceptive hearts must be subjected to the truth of God's Word.

Only the all-knowing and all-seeing God can be a sure guide to eternal life. That's what this passage is teaching us. We can't rely on sinful humanity to discover spiritual truths on its own.

We must rely on what God has revealed to us in His Word. No matter how right and true and good a way of life might seem to you, if it is not the way of the Lord, its end is the way to death.

And this illuminates verse 13. Even in laughter the heart may ache and the end of joy may be grief. The end of joy is grief.

[27 : 19] For those who do not know God, for those who do not possess the wisdom of God, no matter how much you flourish and thrive in this life, the end of joy is grief because it ends finally in death.

There's a way that seems right to a man and its end is death. One Bible commentator puts it this way, quote, since humans die, joy inevitably ends in grief.

The party always ends. Acts of love cease. We have a similar English proverb don't we? It says, all good things must come to an end.

The unavoidability of death means that all the joys of life eventually come to an end, leaving only regret and resignation.

If you look at an electrocardiography reading, the heart measuring the graph has all these spikes and imagine that that's like the joys of life.

[28 : 23] But the depressing reality is that that graph in the end always ends in that flat line. That's the reality of life.

That's the backdrop behind all of your joys that is the destiny of every human being. If you do not have the eternal life that God offers you.

If even in the laughter the heart may ache and the end of joy may be grief, if there's a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way to death, if our hearts are deceptive and cannot reliably guide us to the way of life, where can we turn?

Jeremiah 17, 9-10 says this, the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately sick. Who can understand it? And here's the answer, I the Lord search the heart and test the mind to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.

The answer is we need to turn to the Lord because only those who humbly receive God's word will have their desires fulfilled. heart. And that brings us to the third point, the delight of the heart.

[29 : 44] We need to realign our hearts to the ways of the Lord by delighting ourselves in him. Turn to chapter 15 verses 11-17 with me. We'll preach on this in two weeks, so I'm not going to get into too much detail, but this makes an important contribution to the understanding of the human heart that we're talking about today.

It says in chapter 15, verse 11, Sheol and Abaddon lie open before the Lord. How much more the hearts of the children of man. Sheol and Abaddon are figurative, poetic terms for death and destruction.

They're the shadowy realms that are completely inaccessible to humanity. And yet even they lie open before the Lord.

The mysterious realm of the dead is like an open book to God. If that's the case, how much more than do the hearts of the children of man, which, even though yes, it's complex, are far less mysterious than Sheol and Abaddon, how much do they, our hearts, lie open before God who is all knowing and all seeing.

Our hearts are transparent to Him. He sees through it all. He knows all the hidden murmurings and motivations that even we ourselves are not aware of.

[31 : 02] And for this reason, we need to humbly submit to God His sober judgment and assessment of ourselves and our condition rather than relying on our own indulgent assessment of ourselves and our state.

We need to be corrected, we need to be receptive to learning. And so verse 12 says, A scoffer does not like to be reproved, he will not go to the wise. But those who humbly receive God's word will have the desires of their hearts fulfilled.

So it says in verses 13 to 14 of chapter 15, A glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed. The heart of him who has understanding seeks knowledge, but the mouths of fools feed on falling.

It's the heart that has understanding that seeks further knowledge and that kind of heart is a glad heart. and a glad heart cheers up even our face, uplifts even our own spirit.

And verses 15 to 17 continue, All the days of the afflicted are evil, but the cheerful of heart has a continual feast. Better is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it.

[32 : 15] Better is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it. The word cheerful is repeated in verse 15 from verse 13 and the word better is repeated twice in verses 16 to 17.

And the two words, word cheerful and better are actually variations of the exact same Hebrew word. And so if we render the word better as cheerful, we can see the logical connection between these verses a little more clearly.

Because it says that all the days of the wicked are afflicted with evil, right? But the cheerful of heart has a continual feast. But how can this be the case when we know from other proverbs that we've seen that this world is full of injustice, where other proverbs acknowledge that sometimes the wicked prosper?

How can the cheerful of heart have a continual feast? The answer is in verses 16 and 17. Cheerful, better, remember the same word, cheerful is a little with the fear of the Lord than great treasure and trouble with it.

Cheerful is a dinner of herbs where love is than a fattened ox and hatred with it. The cheerful of heart has a continual feast. Even when he only has meager herbs for dinner, even when he only has little treasure, because his heart is satisfied in the fear of the Lord, because his heart is characterized by his love for God and his neighbor, the cheerful heart that loves the Lord has a continual feast.

[33 : 50] his cheerfulness does not depend on health and wealth, and therefore it overcomes all affliction.

So then all the days of the wicked are afflicted with evil even when they enjoy health and wealth. In contrast, the cheerful of heart has a continual feast even when he is sick and poor, because the delight of his heart is in the Lord.

No matter what happens, I will be making my food to do the will of him who sent me. That's the attitude, that's the heart that has a continual feast.

As Psalm 37 verse 4 says, delight yourself in the Lord and he will give you the desires of your heart. this doesn't mean that he will cater to our every whim.

This doesn't mean that God is a genie or a butler, but those who delight in the Lord. In other words, those who think God's thoughts after him, those who love the things that God loves, they will find that God gives them the desires of their hearts because every true Christian's deepest desire and longing is the glory of God.

[35 : 16] to love and serve him with our whole life. And that desire will never be disappointed. It's those whose hearts delight in the Lord, those who humbly receive God's word who have the desires of their hearts fulfilled.

So we've talked about the desires of the heart, the deceptiveness of the heart, and the delight of the heart, but I've been dancing around the question that I posed at the beginning of the sermon. What are we to do when the desires of our hearts are not aligned?

When we, when our hearts don't delight in the Lord and desire the things of God? If you are not yet a Christian, please don't think that this is something that you can attain with little adjustments in your desires and habits here and there.

You can't fix a spiritually malfunctioning heart by being a little more religious and observing a few more rules. This is not something that can be remedied with spiritual antacids.

It requires a heart transplant. And that's precisely what God promised us in Ezekiel chapter 36 verses 25 to 27. I will sprinkle clean water on you and you shall be clean from all your uncleanness.

[36 : 35] And from all your idols I will cleanse you and 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.

And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. That is the only hope for change, only hope for salvation and God fulfilled this promise to give us new hearts through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

He says in Hebrews chapter 10 verses 19 to 22, Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the holy places by the blood of Jesus, by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain that is through his flesh, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near with a true heart, in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.

This is the way God gives us new and true hearts. This is the way God gives us a new nature, and gives us full assurance of faith.

This is how God sprinkles our hearts clean, just as a heart transplant physically requires someone else's death. spiritual regeneration, receiving of new hearts, requires someone else's death, and Jesus died that death for us.

[38 : 17] He bore our sins, he took our place, he shed his blood for the cleansing of our own hearts, and it's when we repent of our sins and believe in him for our salvation that God pours out his holy spirit into us so that we have a new life principle pulsating from within us.

And it's only then can we walk in the statutes and be careful to obey rules. Now, this doesn't mean that everything is smooth sailing once you become a Christian.

Even after someone has a heart transplant to replace a defective heart, though he has a new heart, he still needs time to learn to breathe and live on his own.

So for a little while, after the surgery, he'll still be hooked onto a ventilator and a variety of catheters. And it's only when the patient after surgery has grown much stronger that those things can be removed from his body, and the new heart begins to pump blood and life into the rest of his body so that he can start a new life.

similarly for us, we have been made new in Christ, and we have been given new hearts, but our flesh is still accustomed to the old life.

[39 : 45] It still operates like it has a defective heart. And it takes time for us to be weaned off from those old ways and to function fully with the new hearts God has given.

And that's what is happening throughout our entire lives. That's the process that we call sanctification. Until we die and we shed our old flesh, and then when Christ returns, we will be retrofitted with these new glorious resurrection bodies that will be worthy of the new hearts we've been given through Jesus, through his costly sacrifice.

And I want to encourage you, brothers and sisters, those of you who are already Christians, followers of Christ, are you discouraged that you do not love the Lord as you ought to? Are you disappointed that you do not desire God and delight in him as much as you should?

Let me ask you, isn't that desire, isn't that desire to desire him more? Isn't that desire to be more pleasing to him? Isn't that desire also a sign of your new birth?

A sign of your regeneration? Is that not evidence that you have tasted and delighted in him? Is not God tenderly and patiently walking beside you to strengthen you every step of the way?

[41 : 09] Remember what Christ did for you. Take hold of him by faith and his love poured into your hearts will renew you, renew your love for him and enable you to persevere to the end.