



RE: BIRTH – Part 4

HEART BEFORE HEAD

Mark 4:21-34

INTRO:

- Mary & Jesus talk about Jesus' Birth
- Nicodemus / An Invitation to join in Jesus lineage & family
- Apostle John highlights this again in 1 John 3

- CSF Days – Trying to articulate *how* young people were responding to Jesus
- Not “column A is important & column B is unimportant” – question of sequence
- This week: Heart before Head

Mark 4: 21-34

Jesus tells 3 parables, saying, “**If anyone has ears to hear, let them hear.**”

Jesus is challenging people to wrestle with what he is trying to teach them—

“**Consider carefully what you hear.**” But Jesus knows that not everyone who hears his words has the ability to comprehend them.

The effects of sin inhibit our ability to receive the gospel. Our minds and hearts are damaged by sin.

So I tell you this, and insist on it in the Lord, that you must no longer live as the Gentiles do, in the **futility of their thinking**. 18 They are **darkened in their understanding** and separated from the life of God because of the **ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts**. 19 Having lost all sensitivity, they have given themselves over to sensuality so as to indulge in every kind of impurity, and they are full of greed. (Ephesians 4)

Jesus provides healing for both heart and mind. The gospel certainly must be understood by the mind, but it must be embraced by the heart. If the heart is unwilling to believe, no amount of argument can convince the mind.

We, church, have to become skilled in understanding how the gospel can be sown into these damaged hearts and minds in such a way that the seed can take root and have a chance to flourish. What we are suggesting today is to first cultivate the heart, then convince the mind.

God Desires a Heart Relationship

Isaiah 29:13

The Lord says:

“These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but **their hearts are far from me**. Their worship of me is based on merely **human rules they have been taught**.”

Opening our Hearts can Open the Hearts of Others

1 Timothy 1:15-16

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—**of whom I am the worst**.¹⁶ But for that very reason I was shown mercy so that in me, the worst of sinners, Christ Jesus **might display his immense patience** as an **example for those who would believe in him** and receive eternal life.

Is Your Heart Ready for Service?

John 21:15-17

When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?” He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.” Jesus said, “Feed my sheep.”

1 Corinthians 13:2

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.