

TOPIC: SEARCH ME, OH LORD

We need to know what is in our heart so that we can be led to everlasting life.

KEY POINTS

- ▶ Light reveals what is hidden. The closer an object gets to a light source, the better we see its flaws or its beauty.
- ▶ The closer we draw to the Lord Jesus Christ; we see His beauty, His majesty, His glory, His power, His holiness.
- ▶ And in the brightness of His light we see ourselves.
- ▶ We see our sins, our unworthiness. We cry out like the psalmist, "Search me, know me, look inside me, then lead me to everlasting life" (Psalm 139:23-24).
- ▶ Jeremiah 17:9-10 tells us that "the heart is deceitful above all things, exceedingly perverse and corrupt and mortally sick! Who can know [perceive, understand, be acquainted with] his own heart and mind? The Lord searches the mind, and tries the heart, to give to every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings."
- ▶ When God made man he was perfect. He was upright (Ecclesiastes 7:29). "He had an habitual conformity of all his natural powers to the whole will of God" (John Wesley).
- ▶ Man had an awesome relationship with God. They would commune in the cool of the day. Man knew the voice of God and God knew Man's. With no sin, everything was pure.
- ▶ Then they disobeyed the Lord and ate of the fruit, which He had forbidden. Sin immediately brought shame, fear, hiding, blame, refusal to take responsibility for actions, curses upon the serpent and ground, enmity, sweat and hard work, pain in childbearing and expulsion from Eden (Genesis 3).
- ▶ Man used fig leaves to cover their sin and shame, but God killed an animal, using its skin to make long coats to cover them. To have our sins covered we need the blood of Jesus. Without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22).
- ▶ What happened here was tragic. On the outside Adam and Eve looked the same but inside their hearts were changed.
- ▶ By the time we get to Genesis 6, there are a lot more people and God is ready to destroy all of them.
- ▶ Man's heart today is no different. Jesus gives a list of things that come out of hearts, including: obscenities, lusts, thefts, murders, adulteries, greed, depravity, deceptive dealings, carousing, mean looks, slander, arrogance, foolishness (Mark 7:20-22, MSG).
- ▶ Everyone needs a heart transplant. Our prayer has to be, "Search me, oh God."
- ▶ You might be saved, but have things in your heart that you discover and/or you have tried to deal with. Ask God to do surgery. It may hurt; you might have to lose something, but what you will gain is far better.
- ▶ We can deceive each other and ourselves but not God, so let's be honest. "Search me, oh God."
- ▶ When Isaiah saw the Lord he was overwhelmed with a feeling of impurity. But an angelic being touched his lips with a hot coal and declared him guiltless and forgiven (Isaiah 6:1-7).
- ▶ Likewise, we need the cleansing of Jesus' blood to make us clean in the sight of God.
- ▶ We need His Spirit to shine within us so our impurities can be revealed, repented of, forgiven and forsaken.
- ▶ "Search me, oh God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."
- ▶ I want to be led to everlasting life.

KEY SCRIPTURES Psalms 139:23-24; Mark 7:18-23

DISCUSSION TOOLS

1. The Spirit of God is given to us to do several things. How is each one working in your life?
 - comfort us (John 14:16-18, 26-27)
 - bring Jesus' words to memory (John 14:25-26)
 - testify of Jesus (John 15:26, 1 John 4:2-3)
 - guide us into all truth (John 16:13)
 - seal/mark us as belonging to God (Ephesians 1:13)
 - cause us to receive truth (1 John 4:6)
 - cause us to love one another (1 John 4:7-19)
2. How does the Spirit of God work to i) reveal sin in our lives and ii) move us away from sin and toward the cleansing that we need?
3. How does the Spirit of God and our advocate, Jesus Christ, help us to inherit eternal life?

Discipleship Project Family Connection

During a family devotion this week, discuss:

- How does seeing God's creation help to confirm our faith in Him?
- What is the most interesting thing you have ever seen in creation (don't forget humans)?
- How should we treat God's creation (animals, environment, humans, etc.)? Give examples.
- Make plans to enjoy God's creation together as a family.

Notes

Prayer Time

Lord, my heart is open to You. Please show me the places that need the cleansing of Your Word and of Your Spirit. In Jesus' name, Amen.

WEEK OF SUNDAY, MAY 15, 2016 PRAYER NEEDS/THANKSGIVINGS/COMMENTS:

Life Group ice-breaker: Have you ever had an embarrassing experience based on something you did not see (on yourself or in your environment)? Do tell.