

I'm Not Ok; You're Not Ok: Taking that to Heart

By Ty Blackburn

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Providence Church

2146 Buford Hwy
Buford Hwy, Duluth, GA 30097

Website: www.providenceduluth.org

Online Sermons: www.sermonaudio.com/providencechurch

Please turn with me in your Bibles to Proverbs 20. We're going to begin today in verse 5. I want to continue on a theme that we talked about a couple of weeks ago, the last time I preached before Sybrand preached last week and the week before we went to do our D. Min. study at Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. He and I are both taking the course in biblical counseling so working for a doctor of ministry in biblical counseling. One of the reasons that I felt burdened to do that is because I want to understand more of the Scriptures and I wanted to immerse myself in the Scriptures as it relates to the pursuit of holiness because I think that's really what biblical counseling is about and I have wrestled with the issue of how to think about counseling. When I went to seminary, my passion was to preach the word and I wanted to, I knew that we need to have sound preaching. We had not been blessed in our teenage years, in my teenage years being in a sound church where the word was preached clearly and so I was burdened to do that, and I believe that God intends us to be preaching, it's at the heart of everything, but when I was trained in ministry, I was not trained in the one-on-one ministry of the word which is another part of the ministry of the word. You have the public ministry of the word and you have the private ministry of the word. The private ministry of the word is what we tend to call counseling or discipleship. Biblically it's just really discipleship. Counseling is essentially applied discipleship, intensive discipleship applied at a point of real need, obvious need. We use the term counseling advisedly basically because we're trying to communicate that Christians in general have been deceived in the last 50-60 years, really the last 100 years, to think that the problems that we think of as psychological are to be dealt with by professional psychologists and psychiatrists, and the reason that the church uses the word counseling, even though we'd rather not because it's a little bit, it connotes kind of a clinical mindset, the reason we use the term is because we're trying to recover the idea that when you have a problem that is psychological, that you feel like that the world says it's psychological, that the word of God has the answers. So we call it counseling and discipleship because we believe in the sufficiency of Scripture.

So anyway, it's something that I wasn't trained well in when I went to seminary because I was attending seminary in the late 80s and early 90, and even now still it's not emphasized in pastoral training like it ought to be, in my view. The one-on-one ministry of the word, the private ministry of the word, that really every Christian is called to but that the shepherds, the pastors, the elders need to be the most equipped in and particularly the lead elder and preaching elder ought to be skilled at.

So I've been burdened about that for a number of years but in the back of my mind I had wrestled with this stuff about the heart. You read sometimes, you read in the counseling books and I think part of it is once you start looking, getting into some of these things, you can overdo it and at times there's an imbalance, sort of a morbid, an almost morbid introspection. Is that healthy? Maybe we should just, you just preach the word and you let the Spirit apply it. A lot of really good men believe that and there's truth in that. The Spirit does apply it, but I think that also I remember when Wayne Mack told me, the first time I met him, I believe it was his first visit here, he shared how impactful biblical counseling was in his life when he got to know Jay Adams and he started understanding that he wasn't just to refer people with problems out to psychologists or to people that could make a prescription, and he actually speaks of it this way, the three most important moments in his life are when he came to know Jesus Christ, when he got married, and when he was converted to believe in biblical counseling; that those are the three most momentous moments in his life. And he told me as he was talking about this, that it changed the way he preached and you've heard Dr. Mack, those of you who have been here for a number of years. He's been visiting with us for about 10 years so we get to hear him at least one sermon, sometimes two, and praise the Lord for the last 10 years. The sad thing is Sybrand. was telling me this time that he's been instructed no more flights; that if he comes back, he's staying, which we'd love that if he'd stay in Atlanta with us, but that he's not going to be coming back for a visit like he has, that he just can't do that anymore.

Anyway, so Dr. Mack had shared that with me and it had hit me but I still wrestled with, you know, when you read the counseling books, I'm not good at it. The way I approach counseling through my years is I believe the Bible is sufficient. Somebody tells me a problem and I'm basically just looking for an opportunity to preach you a sermon in my office. Some of you, you've been there and you know that. I really, I don't sit there and say my third point, my second point, here's a creative story, stand up. You know, I don't do that but that there's more to it than that.

So anyway, in the back of my mind I've wrestled with some doubts as to is this really, are we really seeing the way the Bible, what the Bible is really talking about? Or are these guys getting into some texts and sort of getting away from the emphasis of Scripture? Do you know what I'm saying? When you look at something too long, you can sort of go beyond what Scripture says? Maybe are we doing that?

Now this was in the back of my mind. It wasn't something I was really thinking a lot about but anyway, but I've been convinced, "No, I think I need to do it." Well, the more that I've been getting into the study of biblical counseling for this last class that I took, I'm just convinced that the Lord is pouring out his grace upon the church and an analogy that might help, I was talking to someone and they said, "You know, you think about," they were talking to their kids. They went to a planetarium and they said, "You know, I was talking to my kids after we went to this planetarium and I was telling them, you know, that in the last 50 or 60 years, since the NASA Space Program has been going, the level of knowledge that has increased about outer space is astounding because of the technology of telescopes, because of the benefit of actually going into outer space and

seeing things out there and the discovery, it's like the knowledge level has just dramatically increased." Now are we smarter than we were 60 years ago? I'd argue we're probably dumber. We know how to handle technology and the kids blow us away at that, right? But they're not smarter. We're not smarter than our grandparents were. But there's been an added, an acquisition of knowledge that we benefit from and we know things that they didn't know.

That's, I think, analogous to what the Lord is doing in the last 50 years in the area of biblical counseling. Since Adams wrote the book, "Competent to Counsel," in the late 60s, basically arguing that, "Hey, the Bible says that we can handle these things." In fact, when you read history, the pastors always did soul care. You know, psuche-psychology, the study of the soul. Psuche is soul, the Greek word for soul. Well, this is the book that tells you how the soul operates. This is the only book that tells you authoritatively how the human soul operates so when you have a psychological problem, you have a soul problem, where is the ultimate answer? It's in Scripture. Now I'm not saying that there aren't physical dimensions. Yes, we are physical and spiritual at the same time. We are body and soul so that in one sense everything is spiritual and everything is physical at some level on a continuum.

We're going to talk more about that in future weeks but I wanted to articulate for you, try to articulate what's been going on in my heart. I basically think that what's happening now is we are benefiting from the last 50 years of in-depth study of the Scriptures with a look at how do we apply the word of God to life. So it's like we have these other men who have come along, Wayne Mack right behind Jay Adams, all of the folks at the Master's University, John Street, all these men writing and adding, David Powlison. You have these men adding, studying the Scriptures and adding to our knowledge so that we're seeing a lot farther than they saw even 50 years ago and this is what I experienced in my week of study.

Now I've read several thousand pages of stuff in the last three months. It's been a race to get ready for that class. I signed up a little late. Anyway, praise God, that part's over but the week of study in the class, spending a whole week listening to Dr. Jeremy Pierre, a young guy, he's 39 years old, expound essentially how the heart works biblically, how God describes how the dynamic experience of human life in a fallen world operates, was just so encouraging. I was just blown away. I was thinking, "This is just amazing, how clear the word of God is but you have to be willing to dig," and now we benefit from those who've dug and the Lord wants us to be digging.

Now I say all of that to say that I want to talk with you and continue to unpack for you something we started to talk about two weeks ago. Remember, the title of my message two weeks ago was "I'm Not Ok, You're Not Ok," based on the argument with the psychological book from the 60s, "I'm Okay, You're Okay." No. I'm not okay, you're not okay. That's the biblical view, okay? Certainly it's true until you're saved, you're not okay, but even after you're saved, the reality is you're still not okay. You're not okay until you die and Jesus takes you into his presence and really you're not okay even in heaven. Now there's no sin, it's wonderful, but for the saints that are there now, they're not okay

because they don't have their bodies. They're not really going to be okay until Jesus makes all things new. Until then, we're not really okay so let's just settle that. I'm not okay. You're not okay.

Now what I talked about two weeks ago was that we are not okay and that especially as believers even, we are to be about pursuing sanctification. We are called to grow in holiness. We are called to be changed from the inside out to look more and more like Jesus Christ and that is a radical supernatural calling. That is not easy. It's not something that just happens on its own. It is a work of God, his Spirit, through his word. It's the only thing that can do it. "Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit says the Lord." But God has chosen to work through means and the means God works through, his Spirit will use his word and his Spirit using his word will use the means we talked about last time of other people; that God has made it so that we need other people to pursue our sanctification. That was essentially the argument I made two weeks ago, that when we think about who God is, how God works, he is a Triune God who works in cooperation, the three persons of the Trinity. Would we not expect that he would have made humans to need each other to work together? Of course. That's exactly what we see in the New Testament.

So Christianity is not a Lone Ranger thing and your faith is not your personal faith that you're operating on your own apart from others. If you are, you're living in disobedience to God. God wants you connected. You're the image of God, you're made to image him in relationship. Not only that but God has made it so that you and I need other people to speak the word to us. Remember we talked about that, that he made it so that he puts his word in our mouths, puny men that we are, and we speak it and someone hearing it actually receives it better than if they were even reading it on their own. Now it doesn't mean you shouldn't be reading on your own. Of course, yes, yes, yes, but there's certain things that you need someone else to speak.

So that's what we said last time. Sanctification is such an incredible task, our holiness is such an incredibly difficult task even though we have the power of God. God has made it so that we need help from others. We need them to speak the word and today I want to talk about another aspect of why it is such a difficult task and why we need help and that is because true change comes through the heart. So "I'm Not Ok; You're Not Ok: Taking It To Heart" is the title. I'm not okay, you're not okay, taking that to heart. Taking that to heart.

The reason that it's such a difficult thing is because our hearts are a mystery to us. In fact, the verse I've chosen for us to look at, Proverbs 20:5 is a point of departure for this message. We're going to start here and we're moving around through the Scriptures in other places, but Proverbs 20:5. This is actually the verse that Dr. Pierre used in our opening devotion. I'm reading from the New American Standard and it says, "A plan in the heart of a man is like deep water, But a man of understanding draws it out." The King James and other translations, the ESV say, the purposes of a man's heart are deep waters but a man of understanding draws it out. Actually in the Hebrew there is no word "like." The NASB supplies that.

Now what we have here is a metaphor and a simile, remember you add the word "like" when you try to compare. A metaphor is when you take two things that are dissimilar, you put them side-by-side because there is one similarity that you want to highlight. Though they're really dissimilar, there's something that unites them that communicates the truth in a wonderful way and God is so gracious to use metaphors all over the word like this. So what's he putting side-by-side? He's saying the purposes, the intentions, the thoughts, the ways of a man's heart on one side, and then he puts deep waters beside that.

So what's he saying? You can't see below the surface of the water. You don't know what's down there. Think about that, you drive by, some of us, you know maybe in your neighborhood there's a pond. You drive by that pond every day on your way out, on your way in. Do you know what's inside that pond? Can you see? Now you look over and you see it, maybe you see the sun shimmering, the wind blowing across the waves and you notice it, it might catch your eye. You might see a fish jump. But basically you don't know what's under that water.

I had a friend who was talking about they had a situation where they were trying to buy a piece of property, it's a church situation, a church property. They bought it and it took a long time to get it done and they had had so much trouble, he said, "I actually had the thought, they told us to dredge the pond. We have to dredge the pond completely." He said, "I hope there's not a truck with a body in it, you know, from like 50 or 60 years ago, because that's going to take us another 10 years then to get this thing done."

Well, you don't know what's under there. Of course there was no truck with a body in there, praise the Lord, but you don't know. You can't definitively know that. I mean, even if you get, if you were to get some snorkel equipment or an air tank and a mask and look in the ponds around here, you're not going to have much visibility. You know what's about this far in front of you when you swim like that, don't you?

Well, he says that's what the purposes of a man's heart are like that. You only see the surface. We don't know why we do what we do. We don't understand the motivations of our hearts. Isn't that the way life really is? I mean, isn't that such a great description? How many times have you found yourself dealing with some strong emotion and not being able to understand how it came upon you? Where it came from? You know, anger. You get angry. Think about the last time you got angry, you got really angry. Maybe you don't have to think very far back. Last night. This morning. This week. Did you make at that moment a conscious decision, "You know, I'm gonna get really angry right now"? You didn't, did you? Doesn't it really feel like it just happens to you? I mean, that's what it feels like. We know it's not. The Bible is clear you're responsible for everything that you do. You're responsible for every decision that you make and that is really good news when you understand it because that means that you can, by God's grace, repent and walk in a different way. The alcoholic who feels like he has no control over that drink is responsible and he's gotten there through a series of choices.

Anyway, there's a complexity about it but even when we feel like we're not in control, we are in control but it feels like we're not. I mean, think about the last time you got really anxious about something, when you were overwhelmed with anxiety. Some of you have probably had panic attacks. That's a common thing that some people experience, right? And they often struggle with what was it that set me off? I didn't even know I was anxious and then bam. I mean, something that provides a little bit of anxiety and then suddenly they're in a panic attack. You don't make a decision to be anxious. "Hey, I'm gonna spend some time worrying right now. I really want to be afraid right now. I'm going to make a decision to be afraid." No, it comes upon you.

Now the reality is that there is a way according to this, it seems like it just happens and I can't understand it, there's no way to figure it out, and it feels like that, doesn't it? I mean, it really, you pray, "Lord, forgive me. Help me not do that again. I know I shouldn't be angry like that." Confess it and we should confess our sins. "What I said was sinful and just was really evil. Please forgive me." That's appropriate. But the real road to repentance goes through the heart. It goes deeper and so we need to be able to get to under the surface of the water to the issues below and Proverbs 20:5 says that the Lord intends to do that. The purpose of a man's heart is deep water, but a man of understanding draws it out. That is, that we are to be growing, to be men of understanding who can help one another by drawing out the water, drawing out the purposes.

Now let me tell you something: the ultimate man of understanding is Jesus Christ himself. We're all fools who need help and he is the man of understanding who can draw out the purposes of a man's heart. The wonderful thing is though, he's going to use other men who are a little farther in understanding about this particular issue we have than we are, the body of Christ.

Now we don't understand why we feel the way we do but there is a way that it can be drawn out and we can see it and we can repent at a deeper level. In this book, "The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life," by Dr. Pierre, he talks about a man, a young man, young woman who were married for a couple of years, both solid Christians who seemed to love the Lord. The man comes home after a day at work. His wife asks one question. She's sitting at the computer. She had gotten home a little before him, usually he gets home first but today she did. She had gotten off a little early from her job. She's sitting at the computer and she says to him as he walks in the door, "What is up with the checking account?" What is up with the checking account? Just one sentence, one question. I mean, she had a little bit of like a perplexed tone but it wasn't a harsh tone. It was like, "What's up with the checking account?" He set off into a rage. He started yelling and screaming, storming around in a way he'd never done in their whole married life. He ends up leaving, slamming the door, goes out and spends the evening away from her. He's just stewing in his anger and trying to drown his sorrows.

A couple of days later, they show up at the church in the biblical counselor, the pastor's office and they're talking about it, and the point that he makes in the book is that it's helpful and it's appropriate to deal with the outburst and to confess that, but that to really help someone, we need to be like this man of understanding and help the person go below

the surface because there were things that were operating in their life that were wrong ways of thinking, wrong ways of desiring, and wrong ways of choosing and patterns of thought, patterns of wanting, patterns of commitments that were working to make this happen. Like he pointed out, you know, what was going on, just to put a little feet on this for a moment.

The man comes home from work, one of the details the pastor found out as he talked to him was, they had been married two years but the guy's salary was significantly lower than his wife's salary and he's feeling probably self-conscious about that. His career track is not, he's not on track yet with what he studied to do and he feels really discouraged about that. She's doing well but she's not giving him a hard time at all but, you see, you start to, as you look at someone's heart, you wonder, "What's this guy feeling about that?" Ask a question, "How do you feel about that?" Well, he's feeling condemned. He's feeling unworthy. So those thoughts are there when she says to him, "What happened? What's up with our bank account?"

Now also what was going on was that he had just gone out and bought like a PlayStation or something. I forgot what it was. It was some kind of, you know, why would...anyway, this is the new generation. I won't say anymore. We all have our recreation that all need to be submitted to Christ. Whatever it is, if it's golf, if it's hunting, if it's PlayStation, submit it to Christ.

Anyway, so he had gone out and he had spent a couple of hundred dollars and he in his mind in talking with the counselor, the gaming was something that really met his needs and made him feel adequate, like he could do something. So playing the game gave great satisfaction to his soul and so he felt like, "Life's unfair to me. I should have a better job." There are all these thoughts going on in this guy's mind. "I should have a better job than I have. My boss doesn't treat me right. I need to find meaning and I'm finding it over here." So he spends the \$200. Really he shouldn't have spent that. That was a bad decision but his desires were driving him. He didn't understand the desire for worth. These thought processes, "My wife should respect me." And in his view as it was worked through, his view of respect was that she should never say anything negative to me. Some of us have had that same view. That is an ungodly, unbiblical view. You need to repent of that. God gave you a wife to be a helper suitable to speak the truth to you, to speak reproof to you. Now to speak it respectfully and still honoring your position but to love you enough to tell you the truth.

So one of the things that he had to work through over a series of weeks of meeting, he had to come to understand, "I've got a wrong view about what respect is. I've got a wrong view of where I should find my meaning. I've got a wrong view of how I'm thinking about so many different things," and when he came to understand that, what happened was repentance was at deeper levels all over the place. He wasn't just repenting for the surface, the tip of the iceberg, yelling and screaming, kicking the wall, leaving and spending hours away. "I don't know why I did that. I'm sorry. Help me." And just meditating and these things are important, just meditating on verses like, "Put off anger and put on joyfulness and thankfulness." Those are important, yes, but to get to the point

of seeing, "Wait a minute, I'm believing things about God and about myself and about my wife that are unbiblical and ungodly. I need to repent of that belief and replace it with the Scriptures. I'm wanting things more than God would have me want them." Wanting respect is an okay thing to want, it's appropriate but you shouldn't want it so much that you're willing to sin when you don't get it. And with him, he even needed to change his understanding of what respect was.

Now do you see what that's doing is showing how the Scripture goes into the heart. That is what Hebrews 4:12 is talking about. Turn with me to Hebrews 4:12. A familiar verse. "For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." The word of God is able to go and to find and to separate. Look how sharp it is. The picture is our hearts, there are problems in them like a deep-seated tumor that's wrapped around our vital organs or a brain tumor and the brain surgeon with skill and precision with a sharp scalpel and with precision instruments and precision focus, separates out the good tissue from the bad tissue. That kind of precision is needed in your heart to divide between soul and spirit, as it were, which are basically the same thing but there are overlaps in these different words. In fact, the Bible uses different words for the inner man, almost interchangeably. Soul and spirit are basically used interchangeably. The heart is used interchangeably. It's like heart is equal, or you could say maybe is congruent to the spirit, the spirit is congruent to the soul, it's congruent to the inner man. They're basically describing the same reality. But the heart is the Bible's favorite term. That's what we just saw in those two verses I shared with you, Proverbs 20:5, the purposes of a man's heart. Here, it's able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

So what God is interested in is heart change but heart change, there is some work to be done. In fact, there are three points we're going to cover pretty quickly today and we're going to start trying to unpack them more in weeks to come. This is kind of an overview of where we want to go.

The first is the complexity of the human heart which I just did the whole point. I always hate when I do that. It happens sometimes. It's like, anyway. You just got number 1 so everything, put number 1 up there close to the top of your note page. Number 2. The first point is the complexity of the human heart. We don't see. We can't understand and God has made it this way. God has made our hearts to be wonderfully complex. There is this interplay in the heart that is a beautiful, elegant, complexity that is a part of God's wondrous creativity and beauty and to reflect him. So the complexity of the human heart.

Secondly, the design of the human heart. The design of the human heart. When we look at the Scriptures, we see that the human heart basically does three things. The human heart is where thinking takes place. The human heart is where feeling takes place. And the human heart is where choosing takes place. So the heart thinks, the heart feels, and the heart chooses. Now you could put a cluster of words around each one of these to fill out what it means, okay?

Like let me just take thinking for a moment. The heart thinks. It's in the heart that reasoning happens. According to the Scriptures, this is where this happens. It talks about the mind, yes, but the heart is also referred to over and over again and there are a lot of different terms used by the Bible that overlap and we need to not just try to pull them apart too haphazardly but be wise about it. But basically the heart is the one that captures, that God captures in the essence of how the soul operates. So in the thinking that happens in the heart, here are some words that you can put beside that. The heart thinks, it means the heart reasons. The heart organizes. The heart interprets and the heart believes. So it's in the heart that we think and we reason and we organize and we interpret and we form beliefs. This is a function, a key function of the heart.

Now just to show you that with some verses of Scripture, listen to these. Matthew 9:4, "Jesus knowing their thoughts said, 'Why are you thinking evil in your hearts?'" That's when the paralytic is brought to him and the Pharisees are sitting around wondering why did he say, "Your sins are forgiven?" He said, "Why are you thinking evil in your hearts."

Here's another one, "But Jesus knowing the reasoning of their hearts took a child and put him by His side," Luke 9:47. Knowing the reasoning of their hearts.

Here where they were having trouble understanding, look what he says, "Do you not yet perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?" You see, the heart is the way that you reason and understand so if you're not reasoning and understanding, your heart must be hardened. That's Mark 8:17.

Ephesians 4:18 explaining the effects of sin on the human heart, they are "darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart." You see, lack of understanding, ignorance, is a function of the heart.

We just looked at Hebrews 4:12, "able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

So the thinking happens in the heart. We said feeling. That's a second area, the second subpoint here under the design of the human heart, the feeling. The heart feels. Here are some other words to put beside that. The heart wants. The heart desires and the heart values. This is an important thing and in reality, think about this, feeling is essentially the fruit or the outflow of value or desire. You value something, you want it in your heart, you have an affection for it. Another word for emotion, affection. It's a related word.

So you have an affection for something, you want it, you value it. If you don't get it, your emotion is going to be in direct proportion to how much you wanted it, right? You're coming home from work after a long day, you're looking forward to sitting down and relaxing, reading maybe, you want supper on the table, you're thinking that you're hungry, you want that food. When you don't get it, you can get angry. Now if you're coming home and you ate something on the way, you stopped and you got something to eat, you're not that hungry, and now you get there and food's not ready, think of the difference emotionally.

An illustration that I heard someone say one time is some people really love their cars and some people not so much, even guys. You know, a lot of guys love their cars a lot, right? And some guys love their cars not so much. But anyway, so imagine that you have a kid riding down the street and he hits your car with his bicycle. You're going to have some emotional reaction but the intensity of the emotion is going to be directly proportionate to how much you value that car. Now if you're godly, you're still going to subdue it but you're going to have to fight the emotion of, "I can't believe that kid just scratched my car!" If your car is a clunker and you don't really care, it's like, "Well, that scratch matches the one over here. Kid, be more careful." It's a totally different thing.

Value is the root, emotion is the fruit. Do you see that? So your emotional response flows from what you want or value, so we're talking about the same thing, that's a function of the heart, the desiring, valuing, emoting, feeling function of the heart. The Bible puts that clearly in the heart as well and we see this as we look through the Scriptures also, listen to this, "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," Matthew 6:21. So what you value, what you place value in, that's a function of your heart. Do you see that? The heart feels intense emotion, "Did not our hearts burn within us while He talked with us on the road?" Luke 24:32. Our hearts burning. It's the heart that burns. The heart is where you experience distress and fear. Jesus said, "Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid." Then he later says, "Listen, your hearts are filled with sorrow because I'm leaving," because the heart is the place where sorrow happens, you see? "But your hearts will be filled with joy," he says later in that same farewell discourse. So it's the heart that emotes and feels.

Now it's also the heart that chooses or let's put some words with that. We talked about thinking in the heart and the words that go, word cluster that goes around that. We talked about feeling and the word cluster that goes around that. Now let's talk about choosing and the word cluster that goes around that. To choose is to decide, to plan, to intend, to commit. That's a function of the heart. It overlaps. These are all, now they're not separate in like you can separate them. They're interrelated. What you think affects how you feel. What you feel affects how you think. What you do affects how you feel. What you feel affects what you do. Do you see how I'm saying it? That's what you choose. It's all very overlapping, interrelated, but it can be distinguished for the purpose and Scripture does distinguish these different functions of the heart so that we know how, because God wants for us to have happen is for our hearts to be like his heart. You could say that God, you could define, this is one of the ways Scripture defines the goal of sanctification is that you would be a man or a woman after God's own heart. That's how he described David. He rejected Saul and he chose for himself a man after his own heart. That is what we should ascribe to.

Now intentions, purposes, decisions, being a part of the heart, these things are as well. Let me just give you a few verses. Matthew 15:8, "This people honors Me with their lips but their heart is far from Me." Their dedication, their commitment is not there, you see? The heart, that's a function of the heart.

Examples from some Scripture we read recently with Ananias and Sapphira. Look what Peter says to Ananias, "Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back for yourself part of the proceeds of the land?" You see, it's in the heart that you made this decision to keep back and to lie. You decided in your heart.

Verse 4 is even more clear, "Why is it that you have contrived this deed in your heart?" So the contriving of the deed, the deciding, the committing, is a function of the heart.

So you think and you interpret and you organize and you believe in the heart, that's that first thing, thinking, right? Then you value, you want, you feel, that's a function of the heart. Then you intend and purpose and make commitments and decisions and choices, and that's a function of the heart. So all these things are going on in the heart and one of the helpful illustrations he used in class one day was he said, you know, it's part of our problem is we treat the heart as we come to it to minister like it's two-dimensional or even like one-dimensional almost, and we just treat it in a surface way like we talked about just the anger. The explosion of anger is wrong. Anger is sin. Confess that. Repent and now try not to be angry, rather than realizing that, "Wait a minute, there in that action to be angry, there are three dimensions going on."

Now think about the difference between a single line which is one dimension, right? A line. Two dimensions is like a graph. It's a page of paper. That's two dimensional, right? So you have a drawing that's two-dimensional. Three dimensions is height, width and depth. It's three dimensions. It's physical bodies. It's real life. It's plotting a point not on a map but on a global positioning system where you know exactly where it is. Latitude, longitude, and even altitude, okay?

So he says when we tend to look at things two-dimensionally or one-dimensionally, when we need to look at three-dimensionally and we need to look at how everything has gone into it and God will help us do that. It looks, it's a little bit overwhelming when you start looking at it, but it's really not as you begin to look more and more at the Scriptures and you open yourself up, but it's harder work but our God is able to equip us and to enable us to do this. He wants us to do it more than we want to do it. That's always the best news. He wants you to be holy more than you want to be holy. He's committed to it. Remember that verse in James, chapter 4, verse 5, "The Spirit lusts for you to the point of jealousy"?

Now that said, I want to wrap up with one last aspect. We're not going to get to the third point today. We've just basically covered the complexity of the heart and the design of the heart. What I want you to see is that I think this is so enriching, our hearts really are made to image God. That is, God made us with the complexity he made us with to reflect his own complexity. It's so important, the idea of the image of God. That was essentially argument for the last message, the reason we should work together is because we're made in the image of a Triune God who works together. Remember? Complement roles and working together and so we work together? We're made in the image of a glorious God who speaks and things happen and we're made to speak so things happen. We're made with a complexity that at first glance is overwhelming but it's not overwhelming because

we're made to be like God. That's the whole point. At the very first page of Scripture, Genesis 1:26, "Let Us make man in Our image and according to Our likeness and let them rule." God made us to look like him and his heart is like this.

When you look at the Scriptures, you see that God is a God who thinks. That's pretty straightforward and obvious, isn't it? Think about this: God is a God who feels. That's not quite as obvious to us. Yeah, we talk about the love of God but he's a God with a whole range of emotions just like we have, with a glorious complexity of emotions the same way we have. He's not impassive. The fact that he's unchanging, that is, his purposes stand, doesn't mean he doesn't feel. In fact, it's really quite instructive.

Let me just share a few verses. Genesis 6:5-6, right there at the beginning of the Bible. We're told that God looked upon man that he had made and he saw that the intentions of man's heart, here's the depravity of the heart, the intentions of his heart was only evil continually. God was sorry that he made man and he was grieved. That's what the Scripture says. God felt, his heart was filled with sorrow and grief.

That's repeated throughout the Scriptures, actually, in other different places. In Isaiah it talks about the Spirit of God, they grieved the Holy Spirit, talking about the people of Israel grieved the Holy Spirit. I think that's behind what Paul brings up in his letter. He's referring back to that same thing. We can grieve the Spirit. The Spirit is grieved. What is grief? Grief is the emotion that flows out of valuing something and losing it. Remember I talked about root and fruit. You value something, you want something, if you get it, what happens? You have joy. If you value something and you lose it, what happens? Grief. And we're made to feel grief because God is a God who is grieved. When something of value is lost, he looks at man, he knows what he created man to be, he sees what man is and something has been lost and he feels, God is so good that he grieves and mourns over that.

This means that grief and sorrow can be at times the most godly thing that you can do. They can be the most perfect expression of faith, to mourn. There are places where mourning is appropriate. We forget that because our culture never wants to feel pain or be sad. Everybody wants to live in Disneyworld, right? So as soon as something bad happens, distract yourself, numb yourself, entertain yourself, get it off your mind. Go to the doctor, get a pill for it because you shouldn't feel like this. You deserve better. Stuff like that. What terrible theology that is. What do you deserve biblically? You and I deserve hell. We don't deserve better, we deserve worse. But the idea that grief is a part of who God is.

God is a God of joy. In Zephaniah 3 he talks about that your God is a warrior who is going to rejoice over you in victory. He's going to take delight over you. That your God is a God who rejoices when his heart is glad because of the outcome. So God is like that and so we are to be like that. He made us like that.

He's a God who has anger. Now his anger is always perfect and appropriate but it is possible to be, in the old expression, good and angry. To be angry in a godly way over what angers God.

We could go on. He's also a God who feels compassion and mercy. Compassion, what a beautiful word. To feel with, that's the Latin roots of that English word compassion, right? Sympathy, from Greek roots, same kind of idea, to feel with. God is a God who is not unmoved. He's not the unmoved mover. He is moved with compassion.

One of the most precious words in the Old Testament is the word *chesed*, lovingkindness. God sees someone in misery and his heart goes out to them to help them. It goes out in lovingkindness to meet that need. And the godly actually in the Old Testament, the word for godly that's translated godly wherever you see it, is actually a word from *chesed*. Interesting, when I saw this the first time that the word translated godly meaning like God, which I think when I think of it, I just think more holy and righteous and it is that, but he's defining it as, "If you're like God, your heart is moved with compassion to the suffering of others." That's what it means to be godly.

So he's saying to us, "Listen, you've been designed to have this complex heart. You think, you feel, you choose in the same way God thinks and feels and chooses and your calling is to imitate him." You can only do it through the power of the cross. You can only do it through Jesus Christ. We must have a new heart, right? You've got to have a regenerated heart and then an ongoing renewal and renovation of your heart. That's what sanctification is. Regeneration happens because of what Jesus Christ did on the cross, his perfect life, his atoning sacrifice. He paid for the sins of everyone who would ever believe and he washes us and he makes us clean and he gives us the washing of regeneration, a new heart. He takes out the heart of stone and puts in a heart of flesh but then the Christian life is renewing that heart daily; to take what God has put into you and to have it worked out into your thinking, into your wanting, and into your choosing.

This is the call of the Christian life and we need one another to do that. We need help and the wonderful thing is God is even now, he's not going to start tomorrow, he's been working on you today even right now, he was working on you this morning when you got up. If you're his, he's always working on you. He's organizing the circumstances of our lives to bring the pressure to bear to expose the stuff in our hearts so that we have those moments where we see what's there and we say, "What in the world is that?" And he wants us to learn how to take that and to look into our hearts and to repent in our hearts, to look to Christ who's the only one who can cleanse our hearts, and to look to him to give us the grace through his truth to change so that we'll look more like him, and this is what he created man for.

When God told Moses to write down that first book of the Bible, Genesis, in 1400 BC, and he told Moses what the dialogue in the Trinity was, "Let Us make man in Our image," and he gives that to Moses and the people, like I said around 1440 BC, the word "image" and "likeness," this was a word picture that meant more to them than it means to us. To be in the image and likeness, what they could see was God, the sovereign King,

has created man to be his image and likeness. The word "image" means "to replicate," and the word "likeness" means "to resemble." So a replica and a resemblance and so when they received that in the 1400s, one of the things that was a reality in that day was and has continued throughout most of history, that when a king, a great king subdued an area, what he would often do to keep those people remembering that he's in charge, is he would have a statue made of himself. "You don't see me here physically, but you see this image that reminds you that my rule and my reign is here." Do you see that? The replica reminds that the force of God is there.

That's what you and I were made to be. We're made to replicate God, not just to be externally like him but to be internally like him; to have hearts that value the things he values; to have hearts that think the things that he thinks and believe the things that he believes; to have hearts that choose the things he chooses. And in doing that, what happens is people see replicas of God and his kingdom is going forth. This is what we're called to do, to help one another, to fashion one another. And another way the Scripture in the New Testament talks about that is to make you into the image of Jesus Christ. The same thing. Who is the King of kings and Lord of lords? The Lord Jesus Christ. You become like him and God is making you into replicas and he's sending you into the various parts of your life, the various parts of the world that you touch, school, work, your neighborhood, your family, and he's putting his image there and he's saying, "Go and be imitators of God as dear children, beloved children." This is the calling. May the Lord help us do that.

Let's pray.

Our Father, how grateful we are for the beauty of the way that you have designed us, the high calling that it is to be a child of God, to be a human being, the high calling that is, but then to be a redeemed human being now with the Spirit of God dwelling in us, the word of God available to us, the people of God around us. Lord, let us set to work with a new level of intensity. Thank you for all the work you've been doing but just help us even more to continue the things we've been doing well but to pursue them with even greater fervency that we might be more like Jesus individually and corporately and we pray this in your glorious name. Amen.