

Heart

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[0 : 00] Well, just before we begin, let me just acknowledge, as I'll probably do with most of the sermons in this series, that my talk is particularly in-depth to this book by a guy called Craig Chokso, called *With All Your Heart*.

I thought it was the best of several books that I looked at, and you would see its influence on my sermon if you read it. Also, as I said last week, in this series, we won't be covering just one passage, but multiple passages, and I've put them all on the outline for you.

But it's probably best not to try to flip through all of them, but just listen, soak in the sermon, and refer to them later. Some of them will be on the screen, not all of them. And if it's particularly important, I will let you know.

But it's probably best just to use the outline to help you to follow along. Now, if you didn't realize already, the outline is available for download every Saturday evening on our website.

If you're part of Home Fellowship Group, your leader should have sent it to you as well. But of course, even more important than any outline is to ask for God's help. So let's ask the Lord of our hearts for his help.

[1 : 05] Father, we just pray that again you would illuminate our hearts. As we hear your word today, please, would you help me to preach as clearly as I can, as faithfully as I can.

We pray again that there would be no technical glitches along the way, but that indeed your word would be able to go out and do what you wanted to achieve.

So be with us, especially in the next 40-45 minutes. We pray all this in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Well, let's begin again and let me get us to focus on Proverbs 4, verse 23, which says, Above all else, guard your hearts for everything you do flows from it.

Or as the older NIV nicely puts it, it is the wellspring of life. And I just want us to ponder on this verse for a moment. What sort of things do you naturally guard? Most nights, one of my jobs is to take the garbage out to the bins just outside our gate for it to be collected the next day.

But that garbage bag sits in the bin the entire night, completely unguarded. Why? Because it's worthless. It's not valuable.

[2 : 19] It's literally rubbish. Not so with the heart. It's extremely valuable. And that's why we guard it. In fact, it's so valuable that we're called to guard it above all else.

Literally, in the Hebrew, this verse could be translated as something like, Keep with all keeping. So it's pretty emphatic. So keep it, guard it, watch it, don't neglect it.

It's too precious to leave alone even for a moment. And yet, what is the heart? What is it that we're guarding? That's the million dollar question.

Now think about our beloved Malaysian word, lah. We all know that for a three letter suffix, it's incredibly flexible. If you say, can lah, you mean, of course I can do it.

Don't worry. If you say, minum lah, you mean, please drink. Or if you say, dai lah, dai lah, dai lah, that means you're in big trouble. And so that three letter word is flexible enough to communicate reassurance, extend an invitation or show apprehension.

[3 : 30] And similarly, the five letter word heart is the same. Think about it. The heart is used in more common expressions than any other part of the body. And they're full of variety.

If you say, I gave her my heart, you mean you were in love with her. But if you say, I had a change of heart, you mean that you've changed your mind. If you know something by heart, you remember it perfectly.

If you lose heart, you're discouraged. You've given up. You stop whatever it is that you're doing. And if you have the heart of a lion, you're full of courage. Now, on the one hand, that flexibility is a good thing as we'll see in a moment.

It means that the word heart is capable of communicating its many rich layers and textures. But on the other hand, it does mean that we can get confused. Think about our Ang Mo friends trying to master the intricacies of the lah.

And you know, we smile when they say, could you please pass the ketchup lah? We know that they're saying it wrong because they lack fluency in Manglish. But sometimes we Christians are like our Ang Mo friends.

[4 : 42] We lack fluency in the language of the scriptures. And so we fall into wrong ways of understanding and speaking of the heart. And so this morning, we're going to try to remedy this.

And how we're going to proceed is by looking at these four questions. First of all, we'll answer the question, what is the heart, biblically speaking? And then we'll ask, how do our hearts go wrong? After that, we'll consider how Jesus reshapes our hearts. And finally, we'll explore how we can guard our hearts. Let's go. Firstly, what is the heart?

Think of a typical village. For most of human history, the well is probably its most important resource. It's necessary for drinking and cooking and for medicinal purposes.

So basically, if you have no well, no village life is possible. And Proverbs 4 verse 23, in the older NIV, describes the heart as the wellspring of life.

[5 : 46] The heart is its source. Nothing can cut. No life can be present if there's no heart. But it goes even further than that. You see, Proverbs 4 verse 23 also wants to convey that the heart is the control center of life.

The newer NIV captures this aspect well. It says, everything you do flows from the heart. From this perspective, the heart is the driver of the car, the captain of the ship, the pilot of the plane.

So the great scholar of Paul, Herman Ritterbos, says that everything we think, desire, choose and live out is generated from this one controlling source.

And it's governed from this one point. It's your control center. And that's why the preacher in Ecclesiastes 10 verse 2 can declare that the heart of the wise inclines to the right, but the heart of the fool to the left.

The heart decides where you're going. You live the life you have now and go the direction you go because of the heart you have.

[7 : 03] And so contrary to modern belief, the heart isn't just about the emotions. Rather, in scripture, it refers to the totality of your inner being.

And that's why the psalmist can cry out in Psalm 27 verse 8 on the screen. My heart says of you, seek his face. Your face, Lord, will I seek.

Notice that the heart and the self are equated. To say, my heart will seek your face is to say, I will seek your face. They are one and the same.

When we look at someone's heart, we are seeing them as they truly are. No more and no less. And so when God looks at your heart, he is seeing the real you.

But while we should think of the heart as an organic whole, we also have to see that it's multifaceted. In the Bible, the heart thinks and judges.

[8 : 05] The heart feels and desires. The heart chooses and acts. To use the technical terms, cognition, affection, and volition flows from the heart.

And sometimes a Bible passage might amplify one of those aspects. So just as the word lah can have different shades of meaning in different contexts, the same goes for the heart.

Let me unpack these three aspects for you. So number one, the heart thinks and judges. In November 2015, Twitter decided to change the way you like something by using hearts instead of stars.

So on Facebook, you know you've got the thumbs up. But on Twitter, you have hearts. And now I know on Facebook, you also have hearts. But to explain this change, Twitter released a statement. They said, The heart, in contrast to stars, is a universal symbol that resonates across languages, cultures, and time zones.

[9 : 16] The heart is more expressive, enabling you to convey a range of emotions and easily connect with people. So according to Twitter, the heart is about expression, emotion, and connection.

That's what it's reduced to. So it might be a shock to find that in the Bible, the heart is often the place of thinking, reasoning, and understanding.

That's pretty different to Twitter, isn't it? Matthew 15 verse 19 says that, And so in one famous episode, Jesus declares forgiveness to a paralyzed man.

And upon seeing this, the Pharisees, in their heads, begin to accuse Jesus of blasphemy. And this is what Jesus says in Matthew 9 verse 4 on the screen.

Knowing their thoughts, Jesus asked, Jesus said, Why do you entertain evil thoughts in your hearts? Notice Jesus locates their thoughts in their hearts, the heart thinks, the heart judges.

[10:28] More positively, David prays in Psalm 139 verse 23, Search me God, and know my heart, test me, and know my anxious thoughts.

Notice again that David assumes that to know his heart is to know his thoughts. They're in parallel. That's how the poetry works. And so in scripture, you could say that the heart has a mind of its own. Certainly heart and mind are not opposites. They are not mutually exclusive. They shouldn't be seen as against one another. In fact, the thoughts of people's hearts are actually significant to the trajectory of their lives.

When our hearts desire something, its thoughts will follow and will lead to either good or bad. Take Proverbs 6 verse 32 on the screen.

A man who commits adultery has no sense. Whoever does so destroys himself. Now, in other words, the adulterer lacks good judgment, and so he goes astray in self-destructive ways.

[11:42] But what we don't see here is that the phrase no sense is literally no heart. The reason the English translators translate it the way they do is not because they have some sinister agenda, but because they know that if they translated no heart, you would misunderstand it to mean no courage, because that's what we mean by the phrase today.

And so they are left with a difficult translation choice. And so they decide to stress the lack of judgment that is intrinsic to the meaning, which I think is the right thing to do.

But as a result, we don't realize that Proverbs 6 verse 32 is really referring to our hearts making the wrong judgment. The heart thinks and judges, and when it does so wrongly, it leads to bad results. There's a cognitive dimension to our hearts. Number two, the heart feels and desires. Now, think of a beach ball.

Have you ever taken one of those to the swimming pool and tried to hold it under the surface? You know, no matter what, it will eventually float up. As you hold it down, it's always trying to come up.

[13:05] Well, that's how our hearts work. What we most desire will eventually bubble up somewhere in our lives. As Jesus himself says, Matthew 6 verse 21, where your treasure is, there your heart is also.

Do you desire approval? It will bubble up somewhere in the way that you talk to others, or the way you dress, or the way you get stress. your heart is a beach ball.

Its desires will eventually surface. And what your heart desires is what you will get emotional about. You feel strongly about what you love, not what you are indifferent about.

And so when Paul says in Philippians 1 verse 7, that he holds the Christians in Philippi in his heart, he's talking about the depth of his love.

He remembers them with affection. He yearns to see them again. He feels strongly about them.

And next week, we'll look at the subject of emotions in a little more detail, so we won't dwell on it here.

[14:18] But suffice to say, in the Bible, the heart can experience sorrow, anger, envy, gratitude, gladness, joy, and lots more.

And God designed our hearts to be desiring hearts. To have desires in and of itself is not a bad thing.

Now look for instance at 2 Corinthians 2 verse 4. There, Paul's deep anguish of heart moves him to write to the Corinthians out of concern for their spiritual well-being.

He values their godliness and as he watches them go off track, we know that they've been going off track from 1 Corinthians, he gets distressed. He sheds tears.

And so that's why he sends the letter. And as he says, it's not to grieve them, but because he holds them in his heart, he wants the best for them.

[15:22] Even if it means admonishing them. You see, desire and emotion can compel us to right and honorable action.

God did not create us as brains on a stick. He makes us creatures of desire and affection that comes from the heart.

And those desires and actions affections rather move us in a particular direction and action.
Number 3 The heart chooses and acts.

When your alarm clock goes off in the morning, you have a decision to make. Do you get up and be a responsible student or employee? Or do you hit the snooze button because the bed just feels so nice?

What's going to influence your decision? It's actually your heart. Scripture conceives of the heart not just as what you think and what you love, but also as what you decide to do.

[16:27] It's the place where resolutions are made. Are you going to say yes or no? Are you going to submit or refuse? And so your heart is going to be making decisions all the time.

Do you give in to your anger or do you not? Do you give in to that craving or do you not? Scripture says it depends on the strength of your heart.

Take Psalm 112 verse 7 for example. Speaking of those who fear the Lord, we are told that they have no fear of bad news. Their hearts are steadfast, trusting in the Lord.

In other words, they have made the decision to keep putting their faith in God regardless of circumstances. They have chosen and they've acted.

Or take Ezra in Ezra 7 verse 10 on the screen as well. He set his heart to study the law of the Lord. In other words, he picked a course of action and he stuck with it.

[17:36] It was a decision of the will. And again, what you treasure most is where your will will incline. And so what is the heart?

It's our control center, our direction center. Our heart thinks and judges, they feel and desire, they choose and act.

And the Bible is clear that God knows our hearts inside out. Psalm 44 verse 21 says that he knows the secrets of the heart. 1 Thessalonians 2 verse 4 points out that God examines our hearts.

But what does God find when he examines our hearts? Well, that brings us to our second question. How do our hearts go wrong? In the 19th century, there was a cholera outbreak in London.

And John Snow, whom I understand is a pioneer in epidemiology, that's a word that we've become familiar with over the past 12 months while he investigated. In one district, he discovered that nearly everyone who died was drinking from the same public well.

[18:49] And so the authorities removed the pump of the well, which definitely helped improve things. But it didn't solve the fundamental problem, which was that sewage was seeping into the well.

And so the water supply was still poison. And the Bible basically says, that's what's gone wrong. The heart may be the wellspring of life, but it's been poisoned with the sewage of sin.

And so we are like septic tank trucks, not necessarily dirty on the outside, but certainly on the inside. In scripture, the very first reference to the human heart is already negative.

Genesis 6 verse 5 says that every inclination of the thoughts, there's that word again, of the heart, of the human heart was only evil all the time. Now it wasn't always that way.

We were made as Alfa Romeos, Ferraris, Mercedes Benz. God's made us very good. But sin seeped in, turned us into septic tank trucks, got into our engines, and resulted in spiritual defects that have afflicted every single model ever since.

[20:14] Someone once observed that evil is simply live, spelled backwards. And that's how human hearts are now like. Anti-God in its orientation and therefore anti-life in its tendencies.

It pulls us towards whatever, to what leads to death. It pulls us towards sin. This is the blunt testimony of the scriptures.

Over and over again, the Bible gives the same negative assessment of our hearts. In Ecclesiastes 9 verse 3, the preacher says that the hearts of people are full of evil.

Famously, Jesus tells us in Mark 7 verse 21 to 23 that out of the hearts of man come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, and the list just goes on and on.

And Jeremiah 17 verse 9 makes clear that the heart is especially deceitful, so much so that it deceives even us. Contrary to popular advice, we shouldn't follow our hearts.

[21:22] When we do so, we're drinking from poison wells. And sometimes our hearts seem like a mystery, doesn't it? You know, sometimes we find ourselves being the easiest person to get along with one day and a complete monster the next day.

And sometimes even we ourselves can't figure out why. We're not sure what's going on in our own hearts. Our hearts are like those distorting mirrors, giving us a wrong picture of reality and of

ourselves.

And so let's hold up the mirror of the word to tell us how exactly our hearts go wrong. Let's consider first how the thinking heart goes wrong.

And it goes wrong by rationalizing our actions. Our hearts don't go wrong because we don't know what God wants or what God says. Ignorance is not the issue.

We know we shouldn't round up those numbers on our tax form. We know we shouldn't be spending so much time with that attractive colleague outside work. But our hearts whisper, it's not like the government knows how to make good use of our money.

[22 : 40] Our hearts whisper, well, he or she makes you feel better than what you're getting at home. Our sinful hearts divert our minds by engaging in a seductive line of reasoning and slowly reeling you in like a skillful fisherman with his bait.

We see this often in scripture. Consider the people in Jeremiah's day. They broke just about every one of the ten commandments engaging in idol worship, committing adultery, stealing and murdering.

But according to Jeremiah 7, they were reasoning, we have the temple of the Lord. We still worship in the temple of the Lord. They thought that since the temple of the Lord was still with them, that must mean that God is still pleased with them.

He's overlooking and excusing their sin. And so their hearts expertly justified their behavior and hid from their minds the warnings God had already given them.

To use the language of Ephesians 4 verse 18, the hardening of their hearts led to a darkening of their understanding. Or to use the language of Romans 1, they exchanged the truth for a lie.

[24 : 03] As their hearts turned away from God, Romans 1 verse 21 says their thinking became futile and their minds became depraved verse 28.

You see, our reasoning isn't neutral. It has a self-serving agenda. That's why we rationalize. We want what we want and our hearts invent reasons after the fact.

That's why our hearts go wrong. Next, let's consider how our desiring heart go wrong. We are desiring factories as we've already seen.

It's how our hearts are designed. It's part of being human. But what sin does is to twist our loves. In 2 Timothy 3 verse 1 to 5, Paul describes the condition of people without Christ.

And what is striking is how Paul repeatedly describes us as lovers. You'll see it on the screen. We are lovers of self, lovers of money, lovers of pleasure.

[25 : 12] We are not lovers of good or lovers of God. And those phrases, lover of self and lover of God come right at the beginning and the end of this section.

And then in the middle, Paul describes a whole list of pretty negative characteristics and attitudes, ungrateful, unholy, unforgiving, and so on. And so Paul is quite careful in how he structured the section.

He's not doing it randomly. It's as if Paul is telling us that our twisted loves are what is driving this entire list of ungodly stuff.

And so when our hearts find something preferable to God, something more compelling than God, that's when it begins to go wrong. And that's what sin always wants to entice us towards.

It dresses itself up well because it wants to capture your imagination. In Joshua 7 verse 21, we're told about how Achan sinned against the Lord by taking a beautiful Babylonian robe that he wasn't supposed to.

[26 : 23] We were told that he coveted it. He couldn't stop thinking about it. He desired something excessively because he wanted it more than obeying God and he desired something improperly because it wasn't his to take in the first place.

That's how it often works. The objects of our desire are usually not bad things in themselves but our hearts twist our desires.

It twists our love such that it becomes deformed. And so for example, we might have a right desire to work hard and well. We set our hearts on our work we might say.

But our hearts can easily take that right desire and turn it into wrongful ambition, wrongful neglect of family, or wrongful treatment of others.

Our desires become corrupted. That's how our hearts can go wrong. Then let's consider how our willing hearts go wrong.

[27 : 29] And what sin does is to turn it into stone. 2nd Chronicles 12 verse 14 describes King Rehoboam this way. He did evil because he had not set his heart on seeking the Lord.

His heart had made the decision no to God, yes to idols. And when the Bible describes hearts like Rehoboam, a word they commonly use is hard heartedness.

I gave you a few examples of verse references on the outline. And that's what sin does. It causes us to become stubborn, to become uninterested in Christ and his word and prayer and worship and living for him.

It causes us to be resistant to change. When Pharaoh's heart was hardened, he did not repent even after God showed mercy by stopping the plague.

Hardened hearts are satisfied with outer relief but not in a change. But here's the irony.

[28 : 39] On the face of it, hardened hearts are about being stubborn and strong willed. There are hearts of stone and stone is made up of strong stuff, right?

But actually we are strong willed because we are weak willed. We set ourselves against God so fiercely because we offer no resistance to sin.

As 2 Peter 2 verse 19 puts it, people are slaves to whatever has mastered them. And the Bible says that our hearts are mastered by sin. We give ourselves freely to it and ironically become its slave.

And so if our hearts are deceitful and twisted and stubborn, what hope do we have? In Psalm 24 verse 3 to 4, only the person with clean hands and a pure heart can ascend the hill of the Lord to stand in his holy place and enjoy his blessing.

More than once, in the book of Deuteronomy, we are called to love God with all our hearts.

Something Jesus also says. But we don't. But thankfully, the Bible promises a solution.

[29 : 54] He promises new hearts. In Deuteronomy verse 30 verse 6, God says he will circumcise our hearts such that we would love him with all our hearts and soul.

That's his way of saying we will have new hearts. The prophet Jeremiah makes the same promise.

In Jeremiah 24 verse 7, the Lord says, I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord.

They will be my people and I will be their God for they will return to me with all their heart. And that brings us to our third question.

How does Jesus reshape our hearts? Now wonderfully Jesus works on our hearts by reshaping our minds our desires and our will. As we come to Jesus, 2 Corinthians 4 6 tells us that God's light shines in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory through Christ.

God is not some distant stranger. He shows us his face in Jesus. As as we watch Jesus live, teach, love, heal, pray, desire, and die in the Gospels, our minds are engaged to behold the plan of God in action.

[31 : 22] Our hearts begin to know the truth, the truth of the Gospel, the truth that will set us free.

As Craig Troxel says, faith and knowledge are not arch enemies, but blood brothers who share a home together in the heart.

And as we watch Jesus, what do we come to know? Well, quite simply, in Christ, we come to know God's very heart for us.

In Hebrews 4, verse 12 to 13 on the screen, we're told that the word of God is living and active, sharper than the double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joint and marrow, it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Nothing in all creation is hidden in God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

God knows all thoughts, all feelings, or desires, or resolutions, all things visible and invisible. He knows the totality of our inner cells inside out.

[32 : 40] He knows how polluted we are. And so as one theologian put it, what may be secret sin on earth is open scandal in heaven and it is the word of God that cuts open what was previously undisclosed.

And if we stop there, our hearts will be terrified. But look at the next verse, Hebrews 4, verse 14.

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess.

For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet he did not sin.

Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence so that find grace to help us in our time of need. This is what we discover.

Jesus knows the ins and outs of our hearts. He is like us in every way. He knows the instinctive tendency to justify his actions before others.

[33 : 59] He knows the temptation to desire what he shouldn't desire. He feels the pull to choose his own way, not God's way.

And yet Jesus guarded his heart in a way that no human being has ever done. He loved God with all his heart. His heart has never gone wrong.

And yet because he is tender hearted towards us, out of his own free will, he gave himself for us, serving as our great high priest who is now interceding for us in heaven.

When we know that, it's no longer so scary that God exposes our hearts because we know that Jesus can meet our exposed hearts every need.

Jesus can cleanse it, purify it, renew it. And that's what he does. Our hearts have been sprinkled clean as Hebrews 10 verse 22 says.

[35 : 05] And so our hearts are made fit for his purpose. That means there is no need to rationalize our actions away. We simply confess and accept his grace.

There is every incentive now to submit to such a savior. We are simply choosing the greatest treasure. For when we truly know his heart, he will be what we most desire.

You see, sometimes we misunderstand the gospel this way. We think Jesus died to make God the father love us.

But the truth is Jesus died because God loves you. God was ready to get into the sewage and clean the septic tank.

Love is the reason for, not the consequence of Christ's death. Romans 5 verse 8 says, But God demonstrates his own love for us in this.

[36 : 12] While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. This is God's very heart for us. We are transformed when we recognize that we can live not so much for the heart of Christ but from the heart of Christ.

When the spirit brings the knowledge of Christ's heart into us, our hearts are reshaped. We'll have different loves, different hatreds, different interests, different commitments, different motivations because we have different hearts from an unbeliever.

Isn't that amazing? But of course, we must keep fanning the flame. Our hearts can still think mistakenly, desire inappropriately, and choose disobediently.

And that takes us to our fourth and final question. How can we guard our hearts? Now there's plenty to say here but I'll just restrict myself to three things.

I think the first thing we must do is simply to study our hearts. Some of us have lived 50 or 60 years on this earth but we barely know our own hearts.

[37 : 38] We don't reflect on how our thought life works or what stirs our affections most or how strong or weak the resolve of our hearts are. We don't pause to think why our hearts are the way they are.

We study other things the stock market the different schooling options the best new cafes in Kuching but we don't study the most valuable thing of all and when we don't study our hearts we leave it vulnerable to attack we don't know its patterns so we have no idea how our hearts are progressing or degenerating or how sin or Satan are assaulting it and the best thing to do to remedy that is to let the word of God dwell in you richly that's the second thing we must do to guard our hearts in Proverbs 4 verse 22 just before that verse about guarding your heart we read this my son pay attention to what I say turn your ear to my words do not let them out of your sight keep them within to those who find them and health to one's whole body to guard our heart you see it's more about feeding our soul than about avoiding sin after all to stay healthy you don't just avoid junk food you feed it with good stuff you know this is not rocket science we all know this if we want our cardiovascular health to remain in good shape we need to eat the right things well and so it is with our spiritual hearts if everything flows from the well spring of our hearts then we want to ensure that it's flowing the right way and what's flowing from it is good and so to keep

God's word in our hearts it's not so much about just mechanically reading the Bible it's really about storing and filling your heart with truth so that you can reach for stressful situations in those situations when temptation is coming so that you can see it barefoot as you live it out and so that you can see where your own heart is moving onto crooked paths and so you can change cause which brings us to our third thing we encourage each other not to harden our hearts to Christ

guarding our hearts in the end is less like installing a home alarm and more like organizing a neighborhood watch in Hebrews 3 verse 12 to 15 we are asked to see to it that none of us have a sinful unbelieving heart instead we are to encourage each other to watch against sin deceitfulness it's a community project but how do we do that

Hebrews 3 verse 14 is key it's by holding on to the Christ we share we all need people whom we can have heart to heart conversations with we all need people whom we can be honest with who can ask us how's your heart doing I was kind of trying to do that with someone I met yesterday and we all need people who can bring the sunshine of the gospel to us I get that phrase from Richard Sips a wise pastor from an earlier century he once wrote this and I modernize it slightly when things are cold we bring them to the heat of the fire and so when our hearts are cold we bring them to the fire of the love of Christ think what great love Christ has shown unto us and how little we deserve it and this will make our hearts to melt and be as pliable as wax before the sun come always under the sunshine of the gospel to keep a tender and melting heart and so we need a community that's always drawing us to the sunshine of the gospel we need people who help us meditate not just generally on

God but specifically on God's love for you whether that's disciplining or comforting love we need to regularly remind each other of the sorrows Jesus underwent the curse he bore the blood he shed the mercy he showed you for your specific sin and the gospel community like that will ensure that your hearts will remain soft ready to delight in God to submit to him and to capture every thought and conform it to him are we in gospel communities like these and so guard your heart as you do so you discover that spending time with God becomes sweeter you discover that you'll be less sluggish in prayer and obedience you discover that you'll be less likely to turn from the straight path to the right or to the left but to keep watch over our hearts is a lifelong endeavor and so we need to pray constantly for

[43 : 20] God to retune our hearts and so let's pray that prayer which we've already sung this morning prone to wonder Lord I feel it prone to leave the God I love here's my heart I'll take and seal it seal it for tie cords above let's pray Father as we come today we pray Lord that indeed you will cause us to examine our hearts afresh help us to study our hearts to know its ins and outs to know how our individual hearts work to know its strengths and weaknesses to know what it desires to know how it thinks please Lord may your Holy Spirit shine a light on our hearts help us to hold up our hearts to the mirror of your word so that we can know its condition Father we thank you that in Jesus we have a heart that is no longer sick we have a heart that is now new renewed by you because of the new covenant that

Jesus has won for us but Father we know that we need still to purify our hearts so please help us purify and guard our hearts and help us every day to know the heart of Christ for us to know how much he loves us and so to respond appropriately and to desire him alone all this we pray in the name of Jesus Christ Amen