

Bible Study, Series 2, Week 8, Following Christ

Personal Bible Study

Day: 1

Read: Mark 7: 14-23 and Ezekiel 2: 8-3:3

1. In verse 19-21 Jesus is speaking about the heart. What does the Bible mean by it, exactly? Read Proverbs 4: 23 for a Biblical definition of "The Heart"
2. What is the big message of Mark 7: 14-20?
3. Verse 21-23: What a spring of dirty water the heart of a lost sinner is! This is the heart we are all born with - this is what the fountain of our lives look like? You can read it in Psalm 51: 7 as well. What is the miracle needed for us to be able to change our lives and to live in a different way, a new way? Have a look at John 3: 3 and 5 and also Ezekiel 36: 25-27.
4. If we have received a new heart from God, what is supposed to be very important according to Ezekiel 2: 8-3: 3? With what is our heart supposed to be filled with? Why does God tell Ezekiel to fill his intestines with it and not his head or his mind as we would say today?

Day: 2

Read: Matthew 5: 27-32 and Philipians 4: 8-9

1. Verse 27-28. What is the big message of these words from Jesus?
2. What do we learn about this truth if we also have a look at 2 Peter 2: 14a and Psalm 25: 15 as well? Have a look at what Peter says about people with such eyes and their nature and personality in verse 12!
3. Verse 29-30: Does Jesus means this literally; does He expect us to really do it? Would literal obedience to this command really solve the problem and make it possible for us to live a life without sin? Motivate your answer. What is Jesus then actually saying to us in these verses? What is the big disaster He wanted to warn us against?
4. The big problem then, lies in the heart. (Verse 28) The heart has to be made by being reborn otherwise a person is lost.
5. If you are reborn, what are you supposed to be keeping yourself busy with? With what do you have to fill your heart? Have a look at Philipians 4: 8-9. How does one do it?

Day: 3

Read: Colossians 3: 1-7

1. Verse 1: "So" Is it true? Have we really been resurrected with Christ? Have a look at Colossians 2: 12-14. We are! We have God's word for it - even though we cannot understand all of it, we can trust the word of God and accept it.
2. Verse 3-4 stresses it again!
3. For such people verse 1b-2 gives very clear instructions. Do you do it? Are you obedient to it?
4. Verse 5-7 once again has a very clear instruction for the believer: There are things we have to get rid of. Do they still live in you? Then you are disobedient, kill them all!
5. How are we supposed to understand "Your old life is dead" (verse 3) and "killing off" (verse 5)
6. All these things start in ones heart with thoughts and attitudes. Have a look at what James 1: 14-15 says to us. The big message is: As soon as you notice these weeds in the garden of your heart you have to get rid of it. Do not feed it and let it grow!

I think one of the biggest mistakes we make in modern times is to think that all the things mentioned here is not part of our lives. A little introspection will show us "weeds" even worse that we are harboring, feeding and watering in our lives.

Day: 4

Read: Colossians 3: 8-17

1. Verse 8-9: We have to love each other; our old dirty clothes have to be removed. Read Ephesians 4: 22. What is it that we have to get rid of and how? If I see a stream of dirty water (verse 8), I must not try and dry up the dirty stream, I must close the tap that is the source of the dirty stream of water (verse 9 - the old person)
2. How does one get rid of that "old" person, the old sinful nature? You'll get the answer in Zechariah 3: 3-4, Galatians 2: 20 and Colossians 3: 3.
3. Verse 10, 12 and 14 proceeds to tell us what we should wear, name them all.
4. How does one put on these "festive clothes?" Verse 10 speaks of the new person (reborn) that has been made new (sanctification) Have a look at what verse 16a and 2 Corinthians 3: 17-18 say about it. Do you look into that mirror, to Jesus, enough?

Day: 5

Read: Romans 7: 14-25

1. Verse 24: Is the key verse for the understanding of this verse. Paul says: My old sinful nature is like a corpse tied to me and I struggle with it every day. Verse 14-26 draws a picture of the struggle that is the result of this battle with the old nature. Every Christian understands what he is saying; it is as if he is writing about each of us.

2. A Christian is a person with two natures, the sinful nature he has been born with (Psalm 51: 7) and the new nature of the reborn Christian. The old nature is the body of death that Paul struggles with in verse 24.
3. Take note of the two natures as it is described in verse 17, 20 & 23. Everything is summarized in verse 25.
4. Verse 14 gives us the statement and verse 15-17 describes the result. Verse 18 states the same truth in different words and then verse 19-20 shows the results of this.
5. The only secret to overcome this is described in verse 24-25: The rule of Jesus Christ. He must sit on the throne now and for ever and He must rule my live completely.
6. What is the important lesson this piece teaches us about a life of following Christ? Why is it that some Christians are so slow and unfaithful in following Christ? Are you one of them?

Day: 6

Read: Romans 8: 1-10

1. In these verses the conclusion is drawn out of all the previous verses: "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."
2. What does verse 1 says about Christians? (Verse 1b does not appear in many of the good manuscripts)
3. How does verse 2 picture the conquering of the flesh? What does "life in Christ Jesus" means? Why is it called the law of the Spirit? (Look at Romans 7: 23 as well)
4. Verse 3-4: what are all the things that God did for us? Name them one by one and do not leave one of them out!
5. Verse 5-8: A person is what he thinks (what he thinks of all the time) what does the sinful nature think of? Name them all.
6. Verse 9: What is the very important lesson this verse teaches us about each and every believer? Can one be a Christian without the Holy Spirit dwelling in us?
7. Verse 10: Put this verse in your own words. What does this summary of the previous verses teaches us about following Christ?

Group Bible Study

Read: Hebrews 12: 1-13

Verse 1: "Therefore since" what follows is encouragement build on the previous chapter, all of Hebrews 11 is about spiritual "heroes" and their acts of faith that is motivation for the message of chapter 12.

"Let us lay aside" have a look at Hebrews 11: 40. The church of the New Testament are seen as a unit: "that they should not be made perfect without us"

Verse 2: "the Author and Finisher" is the same as "by whom are all things" used in Hebrews 2: 10. The beginning and the end of our life of faith are thanks to Him, all his works.

"Looking to Jesus" looking only at Him and looking away from everything that can take our attention away from Jesus.

Verse 4: What are you complaining about? Everything you have to suffer is very small indeed in comparison with what He suffered for us!

Verse 5-6: "chastening" discipline as that of a father towards his child in the upbringing of a child. Everything God allows in the life of His child is meant to build and form character. It is not wrath that is punishing but love that forms.

1. In verse 1-2 the Christian life is described in a way that is well known to all of us. What is being described here and which elements are mentioned to complete the picture?
2. Why are we encouraged to get rid of all the weight and all sin? Is there a difference between the two and are there "weights" that are not sin? Give practical examples to illustrate and demonstrate your answers.
3. What exactly does "looking to Jesus" mean? How does one do this, in practice in everyday life? Answer the question in the light of the personal Bible studies of this week.
4. What is the big danger Christians are warned against in verse 3 and in 12-13? (Have a look at Hebrews 10: 32-33 to understand why they needed this encouragement.) What is the advice of verse 2-3 against it?
5. If Christians have to suffer for their faith, what is the consolation given by verse 4-11? What is the purpose and the fruit of such suffering? (Look at verse 10 in special)