

## The Intent of Your Heart; Acts 8:18-22

### I. Change

- A. Some scholars say it takes a life changing experience to make us change our behaviors
- B. For those who did not grow up in the body of Christ, that is mostly true
  - 1. Some trial or tragedy strikes and we become introspective
  - 2. We see our own mortality and inadequacy to handle this life
  - 3. We see Jesus' offer of salvation (in the middle of our new understanding of our own inadequacies) and we see that He is the answer
- C. But sometimes the change is outward, not inward

### II. Magic

- A. We meet Simon in Acts 8:9, a person who practiced magic (sorcery)
  - 1. To practice sorcery — to perform magical spells that harness occult forces or evil spirits to produce unnatural effects in the world (Bible Sense Lexicon)
  - 2. This was not 'sight-of-hand' like David Copperfield or Penn and Teller
  - 3. Simon harnessed occult forces so that he could have status and power in Samaria
  - 4. Acts 8:9–11 (ESV); <sup>9</sup> But there was a man named Simon, who had previously practiced magic in the city and amazed the people of Samaria, saying that he himself was somebody great. <sup>10</sup> They all paid attention to him, from the least to the greatest, saying, "This man is the power of God that is called Great." <sup>11</sup> And they paid attention to him because for a long time he had amazed them with his magic.
  - 5. And he did have power and status
  - 6. But, nothing can compare to the power of the Gospel of Jesus
  - 7. Acts 8:12–13 (ESV); <sup>12</sup> But when they believed Philip as he preached good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women. <sup>13</sup> Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed.
  - 8. There is a spiritual world in which we don't know much about — But God tells us to leave it alone
  - 9. Leviticus 19:31 (ESV); "Do not turn to mediums or necromancers; do not seek them out, and so make yourselves unclean by them: I am the Lord your God.
  - 10. Isaiah 8:19 (ESV); And when they say to you, "Inquire of the mediums and the necromancers who chirp and mutter," should not a people inquire of their God? Should they inquire of the dead on behalf of the living?
  - 11. 1 Chronicles 10:13–14 (ESV); <sup>13</sup> So Saul died for his breach of faith. He broke faith with the Lord in that he did not keep the command of the Lord, and also consulted a medium, seeking guidance. <sup>14</sup> He did not seek guidance from the Lord. Therefore the Lord put him to death and turned the kingdom over to David the son of Jesse.
- B. Simon was one who had made his living using the arts of sorcery
- C. The Gospel opened his eyes to a bigger, deeper, saving power
- D. He believed in this bigger, deeper, saving power — he believed Jesus was the Messiah and longed for this eternal life
- E. Simon, however, had not changed the intent of his heart
  - 1. He still wanted worldly power and status
  - 2. He wanted to use the power of God for his own personal gain

### III. Intent

- A. Acts 8:18–19 (ESV); <sup>18</sup> Now when Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, <sup>19</sup> saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."
- B. Simon was still entrenched in the world and all of its glitter
- C. He mistook the power of the Holy Spirit for an opportunity to gain his own power
- D. Peter saw through his charade and showed him his problem

- E. Acts 8:20–23 (ESV); <sup>20</sup> But Peter said to him, “May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money! <sup>21</sup> You have neither part nor lot in this matter, for your heart is not right before God. <sup>22</sup> Repent, therefore, of this wickedness of yours, and pray to the Lord that, if possible, the intent of your heart may be forgiven you. <sup>23</sup> For I see that you are in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity.”
  - F. How can someone who just received salvation through the blood of Jesus be in “the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity?”
    - 1. They haven’t changed the intent of their heart
    - 2. Mark 7:18–23 (ESV); <sup>18</sup> And he said to them, “Then are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile him, <sup>19</sup> since it enters not his heart but his stomach, and is expelled?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) <sup>20</sup> And he said, “What comes out of a person is what defiles him. <sup>21</sup> For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, <sup>22</sup> coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. <sup>23</sup> All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.”
    - 3. We must change our heart to fit with God’s perfect Law of Liberty
    - 4. Mark 12:30 (ESV); And you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’
    - 5. Love God with your whole being
      - a) That means we recognize God as our Sovereign Lord, our King of Kings, our Mighty Savior
      - b) That means we allow God to dictate what we do, what we say — how we live the lives He gave us
      - c) That means we die to (deny) ourselves daily and live for Him — Luke 9:23
      - d) That means we renounce all we have and all we are (Luke 14:33) and recognize the Creator who gave us life by living for Him
  - G. The heart is what matters
    - 1. We can behave in exactly the way God wants us to, but if our heart does not belong to God then we are in “the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity — we are just “going through the motions”
    - 2. John 13:34 (ESV); A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.
    - 3. Jesus loved sacrificially
    - 4. Philippians 2:8 (ESV); And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
- IV. Your Intent?
- A. What is the intent of your heart?
  - B. To remain in the gall of bitterness and in the bond of iniquity by living for yourselves?
  - C. Or to love the Lord your God with all your heart — to change the intent of your heart?