



FEED MY SHEEP

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Heart Problems, Part 2

We began, in the last FMS, to examine physical heart problems, such as arteriosclerosis and coronary arteriosclerosis, and likening them to spiritual heart problems. There is one further major category of heart problems to examine and correlate and then we will provide the only known cure for all heart problems.

Hypertension is a very common form of heart disease, although it is much better known simply as high blood pressure. It is caused by an increased resistance to the flow of blood. The increased resistance occurs as a result of prolonged constriction of the smallest arteries, the arterioles. As a result, the heart has to beat harder to pump the blood. In time, that takes its toll on the old ticker.

Since we are talking about the smaller arteries here, then we can assume that some of the symptoms would include numbness in the extremities, particularly the hands and feet. We can see the application here to the spiritual feet and hands of the body of Christ. If the Christians who comprise the Feet Company and the Hands Company of the Body of Christ do not receive proper spiritual nourishment due to the arterioles being constricted, then they will not be able to effectively perform their respective functions.

The fear and guilt factors

Not only that, there is the risk of a sudden heart attack due to the heart being overworked in trying to get the blood through those tiny constricted arteries of the hands and feet. In recent decades medical science has learned that fear and stress cause the arteries to constrict. Man's science, though, is always slow to catch up to the wisdom of God's Word. Of course, if the

stress or fear is severe enough, or prolonged enough, it can and sometimes does lead to heart failure and death. We have an example of that in the Scriptures:

KJV Psalm 55:4 My heart is sore [severely] pained within me: and the terrors of death are fallen upon me.

5 Fearfulness and trembling are come upon me, and horror hath overwhelmed me.

This is not just flowery and figurative language. Fear, terror and panic can literally cause severe pains in the chest (i.e., heart) and worse. In the gospel of Luke, Jesus himself predicted such worse outcomes for some of those living at the end of the age.

Luke 21:26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken.

Thus fear is a potential cause of heart attacks. Fear is one of the most powerful emotions we experience. If that emotion of fear becomes so overwhelming, it will cause the arteries to constrict so much that... WHAM! ...a heart attack results. Obviously, if arteriosclerosis has already narrowed down the arteries, then the possibility is all the greater for fear to result in death by heart attack. It is also apparent that, in addition to fear, guilt can also cause a rather severe reaction in the heart. We have a case of this witnessed for us in the book of Acts.

Acts 5:1 But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession,

2 And kept back *part* of the price, his wife also being privy *to it*, and brought a certain part, and laid *it* at the apostles' feet.

3 But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back *part* of the price of the land?

4 Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God.

5 And Ananias hearing these words fell down, and gave up the ghost: and great fear came on all them that heard these things.

It seems likely that both fear and guilt caused Ananias to “pop the big one” on the spot. We have other examples in the Word of God that demonstrate the effect of sin guilt on the human heart. Listen to David’s plea to the Father after he had sinned.

Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.

David was beset with guilt for his sin and so he sought “cleansing” of the heart, which we understand is concerned with his mind, will and emotions. David desired God to remove the guilt feelings from his emotions; to remove the knowledge of his guilt from his mind, and to convert his sin-prone will to that of a man after God’s will. David knew that the only way God would answer his plea was for David to first acknowledge his sin and guilt before the Father, which is exactly what he had done previously:

Psalm 51:3 For I acknowledge my transgressions: and my sin *is* ever before me.

4 Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done *this* evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, *and* be clear when thou judgest.

Let us look at another example from David’s life which demonstrates his guilt-awareness and his physical complaints which he realized were a direct result of his sin and guilt.

Psalm 38:1 ... O YHWH, rebuke me not in thy wrath: neither chasten me in thy hot displeasure.

2 For thine arrows stick fast in me, and thy hand presseth me sore.

3 There is no soundness in my flesh because of thine anger; neither *is there any* rest in my bones

because of my sin.

4 For mine iniquities are gone over mine head: as an heavy burden they are too heavy for me.

5 My wounds stink *and* are corrupt because of my foolishness.

6 I am troubled; I am bowed down greatly; I go mourning all the day long.

7 For my loins are filled with a loathsome disease: and there is no soundness in my flesh.

8 I am feeble and sore broken: I have roared by reason of the disquietness of my heart.

9 Lord, all my desire *is* before thee; and my groaning is not hid from thee.

10 My heart panteth, my strength faileth me: as for the light of mine eyes, it also is gone from me.

David understood the very real relationship between sin, guilt and our physical health. The health of the heart and strength of the entire body is directly related to the spiritual state of the person. It is refreshing to see that in the past couple decades that many in the medical community are turning from their formerly, purely mechanistic view of physical health. The ancient wisdom is slowly surfacing, albeit in fancier language (e.g., “psychosomatic illnesses”).

Schizophrenia, MPD and DID

As we have mentioned several times in recent issues of FMS, the word *soul* is usually translated from the Greek word *psuche*. Thus, the many words derived therefrom (such as psychology, psychiatry, psychosis, psychedelic, psychopath, etc.) all have to do with the realm of the human soul (i.e., the mind, will and emotions). With that in mind, there is a curious statement made by the apostle James.

James 1:8 A double minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

That phrase translated “double-minded” is *di-psuche*. Therefore, it could also have been translated “double-souled.” We have a scientific term for this mental condition today. A double-minded person is said to suffer from schizophrenia. In some cases, there are three or more personalities resident in a person. Other current terms include: multiple personality disorder (MPD) or dissociative identity disorder (DID). There is a classic b & w movie called “The Three Faces of Eve” which has MPD as its theme.

In reality, though, MPD is a disorder of the soul which is caused by a severe spiritual problem. There may be exceptions—such as its being induced by an accidental blow to the head, or it may be an inter-generational curse; but at its root, MPD is usually due to deliberate and wanton sin.

Sin has an automatic consequence called guilt. Guilt is a spiritual safety device. Look at it like spiritual nerves. In our physical body, there is a network of nerves—thousands of miles of nerve pathways—and one of the most useful purposes of the nerves is as a safety device for the body. For example, when you accidentally touch a hot skillet on the stove, almost instantaneously, the nerves in the pads of your fingers send certain urgent messages to the brain, which after being processed by the speech center are emitted from the mouth and sound something like this: “Oooo! ooww! Ouch, ouch, ouch! Oooo, that’s hot” Because God created the nervous system in our bodies, we have the capability to take action to protect ourselves from further harm and to preserve our live.

But what would happen to a person who is so annoyed or upset with the burning sensation that his nerves transmit, that he decides to have surgery and have the nerves to his fingers cut off. That way, he figures, he will not experience those uncomfortable burning sensations anymore. What a fool, we all agree. He has now become desensitized to the pain which is a warning signal that something is seriously amiss in his physical body. The nerves are a safety mechanism.

So it is also with our soul and spiritual aspects. Guilt is to the conscience as nerves are to the body. When one knowingly sins, the guilt mechanism nags our conscience, telling us something is amiss in our spiritual life. At that point, we have a decision to make. What will be our response to the feeling, the sensation, the sense of guilt?

God designed guilt to bring us to repentance. But if we repress the guilt and try to ignore it, it would be like feeling something hot on our fingertips and then saying to our self: “I’m going to ignore those heat sensations because I want to keep my fingers on that hot skillet and I don’t care what my nerves are telling my brain; I will do what I want!”

So when serious sin continues over a period of time and the guilt is continually repressed, when there

is no repentance, at least two things happen: (1) Somewhere along the path to utter depravity, the person becomes seriously double-minded.¹ That is, the conflict in his heart and soul becomes so great that it is manifested in his personality as though there were two distinct personalities. The story of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde is a classic piece of literature based on this very phenomenon. (2) Eventually, the willful and continuously unrepentant sinner degenerates so far down spiritually, that the condition is manifested in his soul as reaching a point that the Scriptures call a “reprobate mind.” (Romans 1:28).

What happens to a person who continues to leave his fingertips on a hot stove? Eventually, the pain will cease because he has seared the nerves so badly that they no longer function. Likewise in our spiritual lives. When we reject the grace of God which calls us to repentance, when we ignore the feelings of guilt and continue to try to repress it, eventually the guilt goes away. That is because we have so desensitized our spiritual nerves that we reach the stage described by the apostle Paul in:

1 Timothy 4:2 Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron;

The heart solution

Every single son and daughter of Adam has heart problems, physical and spiritual. Physically, the old ticker will someday weaken and fail to function. Spiritually, the heart is deceitful above all things and incurably ill. But there is a cure for our heart problems. Our loving Father in heaven did not leave us without a remedy for our sins. He sent his son, the Divine Surgeon, to offer heart transplants to us. Doctor Jesus extends his arms to us:

Matthew 11: 28 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly [humble] in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

30 For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

Do we understand what He is offering us by this spiritual heart transplant? Yes, eternal life, of course—but in the here and now, He offers us an easy yoke and a light burden (His commandments are not burdensome) and He offers rest for our soul. What

does that mean? It means that our mind, will and emotions will be conformed to His mind (Put on the mind of Christ); and we will be enabled to the will of the Father; and we will have peace and gladness of heart, peace of mind and joy. We will have rest in our souls, and that, despite all the trials of life. We will have the peace of Christ that surpasses all understanding.

The great covenant promise to Israel is this:

Hebrews 8: 10 For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, saith the Lord; I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts: and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people:

By the pen of the prophet Ezekiel, God foretold that we would receive heart transplants:

Ezekiel 11:19 And I will give them one heart, and I will put a new spirit within you; and I will take the stony heart out of their flesh, and will give them an heart of flesh:

When we became Christians we entered the operating room to go under the knife of Dr. Jesus. The surgery is a long one. Removing the stony heart and obtaining the new heart is a process which lasts the rest of our life. Since we are to be conformed to the image of Christ, it is obvious that the heart donor is none other than the Divine Surgeon Himself. He “gave at the office,” i.e., in His office as priest, when He presented Himself as the lamb for the altar of the cross.

While we await the totally new heart, available only at our resurrection, we are given a Pacemaker to guide the stony heart as, through the course of life, it is being broken and repaired, broken and repaired. The Pacemaker is the Holy Spirit. By the grace of God, our heart, soul, mind, will and emotions are made pliable to the leading of His Spirit. Our hearts become more and more conformed to Christ as we grow in our Christian walk, but because we have only the down payment of the Spirit, the actual transplant occurs at the resurrection, whereupon we will have that perfect spiritual (and physical flesh-without-blood) heart.

Meanwhile, as we grow and feast on the Word of God, we sometimes will experience “heartburn,” which is not a heart problem per se, but a digestion

problem. It is the kind of problem experienced by the two disciples on the road to Emmaus.² After His resurrection Jesus came upon two men on the road and began talking with them. They were depressed about the death of Jesus. The Savior had obviously veiled their eyes and minds from recognizing Him. Jesus mildly scolded them for being “slow of heart” to believe all that the prophets had foretold about Him. Later on, at the “steakhouse,” he revealed Himself to them and then vanished from their sight.

Luke 24:32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

These two disciples on the road to Emmaus got such a spiritual feast poured into their souls by the Master Himself that they perhaps could not digest it all. They had spiritual heartburn. Since the knowledge of God is infinite, I suspect we will be susceptible to “overload,” even in our glorified bodies. Won’t that be a wonderful day when the only heart problem we face is “heartburn” from our difficulty in digesting all the wonderful wisdom and knowledge of the Father and His creation! Then we will truly know the full meaning of the greatest commandment:

Matthew 22:37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

ENDNOTES

1. I say “*seriously* double-minded” because every son of Adam is double-minded to some degree as a result of the fall.

2. We give an exposition of the whole story in our two-tape message (#361 362): *Is the Resurrection of Jesus Credible?: The Steakhouse at Emmaus*. \$10 ppd.

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