

## Spring Cleaning of the Heart!

June 19, 2016

When I was young, my grandmother would start spring cleaning as soon as the snow was gone and the dandelion blossoms poked their yellow heads up out of the ground. She would ask me to help her so we would clean starting with the attic and work our way down to the main floor. I remember asking her why she bothered to clean the attic and sweep down cobwebs that no one would ever see. She replied, "The attic gets really dusty and every once in a while I sweep the upstairs and sweep down the cobwebs, then go through the house to keep dust bunnies from making nests in the places where nobody sees but I know that they are there."

I think of her so often and especially at this time of year for I would get uncomfortable sweeping the unfinished boards and the attic would be hot from the sun and it sure felt good to get back down to the kitchen where the air was fresh and cooler and the windows were open with a breeze coming through. Grammy would be satisfied for a few months and then the job was repeated.

The Bible speaks a great deal about the things that defile a person. What people attribute behavior as to one's personality may not be that at all, but a condition of the heart.

Jesus' goal is to make us perfect. People say "Well, nobody is perfect except God." God looks at those who have accepted Him and trusted in Him to mold us and shape us as a potter works with clay until he molds it and shapes it to be the form that he has desired.

He is the potter and we are the clay. He will work on us; allow us to go through trials and tribulations until his perfect will is perfected in our lives. He may put us next to someone who rubs us the wrong way in order to rub off the undesirable works of the flesh that cling to our hearts.

When we recognize the sins that cling to us and so easily trip us up and we call on his name asking for forgiveness and deliverance, He answers those prayers.

In Hebrews 12:1, it reads like this: Such a large crowd of witnesses is all around us. So we must get rid of everything that shows us down especially the sin that just won't let go and we must be determined to run the race that is ahead of us. We must keep our eyes on Jesus who leads us and makes our faith complete." It goes on to say that He endured the cross and the shame because He kept his focus on the goal that was the end result of His sacrifice that would be the saving of souls. The joy that was set before Him was the wonderful blessing of many souls being delivered from the bondage of sin and gaining eternal life. After He ascended, Jesus is seated on the right hand of God in heaven and He makes intercession for the saints. When you think of what Jesus endured that mankind could have salvation, the insults, the shame, the torture, the beatings, the verbal abuse, for He endured many things that we might have eternal life, we shouldn't get discouraged and

**give up when evil people persecute us. The key is to have a clear conscience before God and to keep our hearts unspotted from the world.**

**I have known many religious people who had long lists of do's and do not's, and they knew about everyone in the congregation that didn't measure up to those standards. However, the Bible says that there is a measure that God uses to determine those that are his.**

**In James 1:16, it reads like this: If you think you are being religious, but can't control your tongue, you are fooling yourself, and everything you do is useless. Religion that pleases God the Father must be pure and spotless. You must help needy orphans and widows and not let this world make you evil.**

**If you have never read the whole book of James, I encourage you to do that. There is much wisdom written in the pages of the small book of James, the author was the Lord's brother.**

**He wrote "Be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to wrath. Anger will hinder you from doing the good things that God wants done. You must stop doing anything immoral or evil. Instead be humble and accept the message that is planted in you to save you."**

**We should clean out the dark corners of our hearts on a regular basis. Then ask Jesus Christ to fill our hearts with the fruit of the spirit that Satan cannot take advantage over us.**

**In Luke 11:24, Jesus spoke a parable that should be a warning to everyone who has accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior. Jesus said that when an evil spirit leaves a person, it travels through the desert, looking for a place to rest. But when it doesn't find a place it says, "I will go back to the home I left." When it gets there and finds the place clean, mopped and fixed up, it goes off and finds seven other evil spirits even worse than itself. They all come and make their home there and that person ends up in worse shape than before." You must be diligent to keep your heart in good condition and your desires focused on maturing in the Christian faith.**

**In Matthew 7:21-23, Jesus gives a sober warning to all who have heard the gospel. He said, "Not everyone who calls me their Lord will get into the kingdom of heaven. Only the ones who obey my Father in heaven will get in. On the Day of Judgment many will call me their Lord. They will say, "We preached in your name, and in your name we forced out demons and worked many miracles." But the Lord will answer, "I will have nothing to do with you! Get out of my sight, you evil people." If you continue reading this chapter you learn that those who are wise and will be accepted by Jesus Christ in the Day of Judgment are those who hear and obey the teachings of Jesus Christ. The obedient servants of God will hear "Well done, good and faithful servants" when Jesus returns to give to every man according to his deeds. See Romans 2:6. It reads like this: God will**

reward each of us for what we have done. He will give eternal life to everyone who has patiently done what is good in the hope of receiving glory, honor and life that lasts forever. He will show how angry and furious He can be with every selfish person who rejects the truth and wants to do evil.”

In 1 Corinthians 13, there are Scriptures that are thought provoking. It isn't enough to be able to repeat these verses by memorization, but it is important to meditate on the meaning of what Paul was teaching the Corinthian Church. Take a look at the contents of this chapter.

What if I could speak ALL the languages of men and of angels? Without the ingredient of LOVE it is worthless and is like a noisy gong or clanging cymbal.

What if I could prophesy and understand all secrets and all knowledge? What if I had so much faith that moved mountains? None of this profits anything without LOVE.

What if I gave away everything that I owned and gave my body to be burned? I would not gain anything without LOVE.

Look at the qualities of love: Love is patient, kind, is not jealous, boastful, proud or rude. It is unselfish or quick tempered, and it doesn't keep a record of wrongs done by others. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. It is always supportive, loyal, hopeful and trusting. Love never fails.

It continues by explaining that many things that we have now will be done away for God has something better in store for us. We don't know everything here, but then we will, just as God completely understands us. There are three and they are faith, hope and love but of these three, the greatest of them is love.

Philippians 4 tells us to be gentle with people. Paul writes that we should meditate on things that are true, pure, right, holy, friendly and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. Paul encouraged the Philippians to follow the teachings that he presented to them and to follow his example. If someone listened to your speech daily and followed the example that you set before them, where would they end up spiritually? Would they enter the narrow gate that leads to eternal life or the broad way that leads to destruction?

Paul didn't hesitate to say to them, “Follow me as I follow Christ.” 1 Corinthians 11:1.

Luke 6:45 tells us that a good tree cannot produce bad fruit and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. You can tell what a tree is like by the fruit it produces. You cannot pick figs or grapes from thorn bushes. Good people do good things because of the good in their hearts. Evil people do evil things because of the evil in their hearts. Your words show what is in your heart. Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks.

Jesus said, “You call me Lord, yet you refuse to do what I command.”

In Proverbs 4:20, King Solomon spoke these words to his son. "My child, listen carefully to everything I say. Don't forget a single word but think about it all. Knowing these teachings will mean true life and good health for you. Carefully guard your thoughts because they are the source of true life. Never tell lies or be deceitful in what you say. Keep looking straight ahead without turning aside. Know where you are headed and you will stay on solid ground. Don't make a mistake by turning to the right or to the left."

We live in a day where we are pressured on every hand to give in to compromise so we won't be judging others, being unloving to others who live contrary to the teachings of the word of God. Romans 3:4. Paul is speaking about the Jews that refused to believe the gospel. He asks the question, "It is true that some of them didn't believe the message. But does this mean that God cannot be trusted, just because they did not have faith? No indeed! God tells the truth, even if everyone else is a liar." His commandments will stand firm even if the majority of the people refuse to accept, believe and follow his teachings. In the Day of Judgment, they will be rewarded according to their decisions to either believe or reject Jesus the Son of God.

I want Jesus Christ to find me watching, waiting and looking for his return. To be found faithful to my calling is my one desire. I ask him to give me strength, courage and determination to be loyal to the gospel that Paul preached, that the apostles taught, and that Jesus gave as a foundation of faith. We are told to build on that foundation. In 2 Peter 1:16, Peter declares that when they were declaring the gospel, it wasn't clever stories that they made up. These men saw with their own eyes the true greatness of Jesus Christ. God, our wonderful Father truly honored him by saying, "This is my own dear Son and I am pleased with him." They were there with Jesus on the holy mountain and heard this voice speak from heaven. He declared that all of these happenings convinced them that what the prophets foretold in the Old Testament was truly from the Father and was now being fulfilled before their eyes. He exhorts us to pay attention as we would use a shining light to help guide us through darkness. Keep on paying attention until daylight comes and the morning star rises in your hearts. He warned that no one should depend on their own private interpretation regarding the prophecies written within the Holy Scriptures. The prophets didn't think these things up using their own thoughts, but they were guided by the Spirit of God. We must take heed to allow the Holy Spirit to reveal the Scriptures to us as we meditate and worship Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior. It is important that we study to show ourselves approved unto God a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. 2 Timothy 2:15

James 1:22 tells us not to just listen to the word, but be doers of the word. If you hear the word and don't apply it, you deceive yourself. He is like the person who looks in the mirror, sees himself and then walks away without taking the time to correct what is

**needed to be presentable. Those who look into the perfect law of liberty and continues, he is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the word and this man shall be blessed in his deed.**

**Pure religion is this:**

**Visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction and keep yourself unspotted from the world.**

**Let's pray for one another that we may become mature in our walk with the Lord that we won't falter and fail, but will stand strong and when we have done all within our power to stand, stand and see the glory of God. Ephesians 6:13.a**