

The University Heights Messenger

November 7, 2010

Jealousy

By Richard Dowdy

The headlines read “Heart Disease Leading Cause of Death in US.” The article described the research done to determine what had killed the most Americans in 1995, and the steps needed to reduce the number of cases of heart disease.

Citizens in the kingdom of God are more concerned with another kind of death. Spiritual death, that is the falling away of the faithful, or the unwillingness of some to spread the gospel, means more to the Christian than a heart attack. Spiritual death means eternal separation from the Father.

If we did our own research the headline would probably read: “Heart Disease Leading Cause of Death Among Christians.” Jealousy and envy, most assuredly diseases of the heart, may have killed as many Christians and spilt as many congregations over the centuries as doctrinal issues. When a disciple looks at what others have or can do and despises them for it (envy), or covets it for himself (jealousy), trouble is right at hand. Envy and jealousy are expressions of selfishness. They begin when a person looks to himself first. His need, his wants, his desires, and his concerned take first place.

It would be difficult to overstate the danger of jealousy and envy. These death plagues reeked destruction throughout the Scriptures every since Cain slew Abel. Because of jealousy the sons of Jacob broke their father’s heart and sold their brother Joseph into slavery. Saul tried to pin David to the wall with a spear. Envy and jealousy drove the Jews at Antioch and Thessalonica to blaspheming and murder. Paul later

identified the root of the problems at Corinth. **“You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere men?”** (1 Cor. 3:3).

Some say, “But I would never act the way Cain or Saul did.” Yet when jealousy and envy are present they have already killed one person--the carrier. Read **Galatians 5:19-21**. All the hopes of the Christian are shattered when their heart becomes polluted with this plague.

Yet this disease is rarely confined to the one infected. This scourge reaches out to those around the carrier and begins a bitter cycle of destruction. Trouble can begin with just a whisper. The members take sides and become polarized over “hurt feelings” and jealousy. Because of the fighting no one remembers to teach those in the community, and who would want to bring a friend into this cauldron of resentment? New Christians are driven away and left with a sour taste in their mouths. The congregation splits. The result is the spiritual death or maiming of everyone involved, the confounding of the Gospel, and the loss of precious souls.

This plague can be stopped, but it must be stopped at its source. Jesus said, **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God”** (Matthew 5:8). Motives matter. If we are going to be productive citizens in God’s Kingdom, we must change our heart to be like our King’s: meek, counting others better than self, being content.

The writer of Hebrews said that our innermost thoughts, motives, desires, and hatreds will be put on display. **“For the word of God is living and active. Sharper**

than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to the dividing of soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account" (Hebrews 4:12-13).

We can stop jealousy and envy. It will require that each of us examine our thoughts and motives. It will require open heart surgery at the hands of the Great Physician Himself. To do less means death to ourselves and many others.

IN NEED OF PRAYERS:

Donald Dawson. father-in-law to Jay Dixon, had a cancerous tumor removed from his neck. It is thought that all the cancer was removed yet time will tell. Donald is not a Christian and Jay requests prayers for that even more than the cancer.

Our members: **Glenn Davis, The Tirey's, Glenn Kimberlin, Janet Brundige**

Others: **Ann Sego, John Bennett, Dennis Brennan, Sara Phillips, Robert and Sarah Brundige, Kay Montgomery, Jean Gartland, Wes Kidd, Vera Howerton, Gail Stein, Glenn Goldy, Shannon Gilbert, Chuck McDavitt,**

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Streaming Bible study Tuesday at 7. Begin at Mark 1:35.

Brother Ed Hurley will be preaching for us next Sunday morning and then speaking with the men that afternoon in the men's meeting.

BIBLE READING SCHEDULE

Sunday: Isa 29-30, Ps 90, Acts 14
Monday: Isa 31-33, Ps 91, Acts 15
Tuesday: Isa 34-36, Ps 92, Acts 16
Wednesday: Isa 37-38, Ps 93, Acts 17
Thursday: Isa 39-41, Ps 94, Acts 18
Friday: Isa 42-43, Ps 95, Acts 19
Saturday: Isa 44-45, Ps 96, Acts 20

SERMON TOPICS:

Sunday AM. "Sir, We Wish To See Jesus" 3
(Romans 1:1-4)

Sunday PM. "Sir, We Wish To See Jesus" 4
(Matthew 23:37-39)