

“Let Every Heart Prepare Him Room”
Luke 2:7; Ephesians 3:14-21

“Making room in your heart for Jesus Christ”

I. *Our hearts are not by nature “Christian” or in any other way compatible or fit to be dwelling places for Jesus Christ –*

⁹ “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; Who can know it? Jeremiah 17:9 (NKJV)

¹⁹ **For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies. Matthew 15:19 (NKJV)**

1. *Deceitful above all things, meaning we tend to deceive ourselves, we are not “basically good.”*
2. *Desperately wicked, not partially wicked, not half-wicked but “desperately wicked” אַנּוּשׁ anush incurably, disaserously wicked / sickly, morally sick / like a wilted plant*
3. *Nothing good comes from the human heart, see Jesus Christ’s list above of what comes from the “heart” of man “evil thoughts, murders...”*

II. *Our hearts NEED dramatic change, even for our salvation –*

²⁶ **I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. Ezekiel 36:26 (NKJV)**

What Ezekiel 36:26 is talking about is spiritual heart surgery / heart replacement! The New Birth, becoming a new creation!

III. *Hearts are compared to soil, most is not ready, Jesus’ parable of the sower – 3 out of 4 soils are not ready for the Good News!*

¹⁸ **“Therefore hear the parable of the sower: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the word of the kingdom, and does not understand it, then the wicked one comes and snatches away what was sown in his heart. This is he who received seed by the wayside. ²⁰ But he who received the seed on stony places, this is he who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹ yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. ²² Now he who received seed among the thorns is he who hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful. ²³ But he who received seed on the good ground is he who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.” Matthew 13:18–23 (NKJV)**

1. *Note verse :19 sown in his heart. Hard soil does not receive the Seed of God’s Word at all! The wicked one snatches it away!
:20-21 Stony soil may receive it but without ROOT it does not endure, grow!*

:22 Thorns – deceitfulness of riches chokes God’s Word, even if it does grow some...

:23 Only good ground bears FRUIT ...

2. We must prepare our hearts for God’s Word and Spirit; this is what the Puritans called “heart-work.” This heart-work is spoken of in Scripture –

¹² **Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For it is time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you. Hosea 10:12 (NKJV)**

A. Sowing and reaping here are agriculture terms.

B. To “yourselves” sowing righteousness is getting RIGHTEOUSNESS into our hearts (the soil of our hearts)

C. Break up your fallow ground

- Breaking up because hard
- Fallow means “virgin” soil that has not been planted, soil that needs to be fruitful rather than barren ...

We break up the fallow ground of our hearts by confessing and forsaking sins, even and especially heart sins! We confess not only murder, but anger! Not only adultery but LUST!

Have you ever done this?

Confession of sin during a church service / a moment of silence ... it is NOT ENOUGH TIME!

Breaking up fallow ground would mean confessing sins like pride, prayerlessness, lack of time studying God’s word, ... writing things down on paper or typing them on a computer screen! If we ask God, as the Psalmist did –

¹² **Who can understand his errors? Cleanse me from secret faults. Psalm 19:12 (NKJV)**

How many of my faults are secret? Secret and hidden even to me?

D. Time in God’s Word is like time before a mirror –

²¹ **Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. ²² But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. ²⁵ But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues *in it*, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does. James 1:21–25 (NKJV)**

- :21 God’s Word is called “implanted” – like Seed
- :22 Doers
- :23-25 look, continue, see in it how you must change ...

E. *Because He "God" rains righteousness on you –*

¹² **Sow for yourselves righteousness; Reap in mercy; Break up your fallow ground, For *it is* time to seek the LORD, Till He comes and rains righteousness on you. Hosea 10:12 (NKJV)**

⁶ **I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. ⁷ So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. 1 Corinthians 3:6–7 (NKJV)**

I plant when I preach! You plant the Word in your own heart when you read, study, meditate on it or memorize it!

Confessing and repenting of sin makes us more receptive to God's Word!

God the Holy Spirit brings about the fruit of the Spirit –

²² **But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. Galatians 5:22–23 (NKJV)**

Weeds (of sin) come up NATURALLY –

¹⁹ **Now the works of the flesh are evident, which are: adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lewdness, ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies, ²¹ envy, murders, drunkenness, revelries, and the like; of which I tell you beforehand, just as I also told *you* in time past, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God. Galatians 5:19–21 (NKJV)**

The fruit of the Spirit requires cultivation, breaking up our fallow ground, confession of sin, repentance, clearing rocks and weeds from our hearts --- and PRAYER for God's Spirit –

⁹ **“So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a fish? ¹² Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will *your* heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” Luke 11:9–13 (NKJV)**

IV. *Our hearts are not only gardens to grow spiritual fruit, but they are houses for Christ and God –*

⁹ **For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, *you are* God's building. 1 Corinthians 3:9 (NKJV)**

¹⁶ **Do you not know that you are the temple of God and *that* the Spirit of God dwells in you? 1 Corinthians 3:16 (NKJV)**

¹⁴ **For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵ from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, ¹⁶ that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, ¹⁷ that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, ¹⁸ may be able to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the width and length and depth and height—¹⁹ to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.**

²⁰ Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, ²¹ to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen. Ephesians 3:14–21 (NKJV)

1. *We are the temple* – 1 Corinthians 3:16
2. *Note Paul's prayer* – Ephesians 3:14-15 – 1 Kings 8:54 & 2 Chronicles 6:13 *Solomon is praying on his knees dedicating the temple, maybe the only other time praying from knees is mentioned... Paul here is dedicating God's Spiritual Temple, the Church, he is praying for our fitness for this task!*
3. *Note this is a multi-step process, a growth process, not an instant thing or an immediate answer to one prayer.*
 - A. *For inner man strengthening* – Ephesians 3:16
 - B. *That Christ may dwell in our hearts* – Ephesians 3:17 A
 - C. *Rooted and grounded in love* – Ephesians 3:17 B

Rooted has to do with the stability of a plant / Grounded the stability of a building, we are the living Temple of God!

- D. *Eventually we are filled with all of God's fulness* – Ephesians 3:18-19
- E. *This is an amazing answer to PRAYER ...* Ephesians 3:20-21

4. *Before Jesus is born the Angel tells Joseph two Names* –

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. ²⁰ But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹ And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name **JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.**”

²² So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, **and they shall call His name Immanuel,**” which is translated, “**God with us.**”

²⁴ Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, ²⁵ and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS. Matthew 1:18–25 (NKJV)

Let us prepare room in our hearts for Immanuel Who would be with us through His Spirit!

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