

Issues of the Heart

by Phil Beach Jr.

Phil Beach Jr. explores the significance of heart issues, God's testing, and the dangers of a cold heart in the Christian life.

Duration: 45:23

Scripture: John 6:5

Topics: "Heart", "Spiritual Integrity", "Heart Condition"

Description

Phil Beach Jr. addresses the 'Issues of the Heart,' emphasizing the importance of being responsive to God's word and the tests He places in our lives. He explains that God often asks questions not for information, but to reveal what is in our hearts, as seen in the examples of Philip and Moses. The sermon warns against the dangers of a cold heart due to lawlessness and encourages believers to diligently seek God and keep His commandments to maintain a warm and loving heart. Beach highlights that our responses to God's tests reflect our spiritual integrity and relationship with Him.

Transcript

Father, we thank you today for your presence in our midst. We thank you, Lord, for your faithfulness. Lord, our hearts are hungry for you.

We long to know you. We long to be obedient to your word. And today, Lord, I pray that you will speak to us through your word.

I'm asking that you'll give us listening hearts, responsive hearts, and that we might hear you speak a word into our spirits, thereby affecting our lives in a significant way. We commit this time of your word into your hands, and pray you'll prosper it. In Jesus' name, amen.

From time to time, while spending time before the Lord, he seemingly puts into my heart, into my spirit, a number of topics, a number of thoughts, as opposed to one particular message. And so therefore, before me, I have five very particular issues that the Lord has placed on my heart. Here's why I believe the Lord has done this.

I believe that as we all listen this morning to the word of God, the Lord is going to address some very particular questions or issues that are in our hearts today. Many of us have before the Lord prayer requests and desires, and many of us are after him in many different ways. And I believe that as we just

carefully listen to the word of God this morning, that God, through his word, because of the Holy Spirit's knowledge of what we're going through, is going to address the very questions and issues in your heart today.

And so, if we can approach these particular exhortations this morning with that perspective, I believe God will wonderfully meet us in a very particular way. I'd like to begin in John chapter 6. John chapter 6, beginning in verse 1. All right, listen carefully. After these things, Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias.

And a great multitude followed him because they saw his miracles, which he did on them that were diseased. And Jesus went up into a mountain and there he sat with his disciples. And the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was nigh.

When Jesus then lifted up his eyes and saw a great company come unto him, he saith unto Philip, Whence shall we buy bread that these may eat? Particularly verse number 6. And this he said to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do. This he said to prove him. The Lord Jesus is oftentimes, in particular as we go on with him in the Lord, proving us and testing us.

He does this in many different ways in many different fashions. But ultimately, when the Lord tests us and proves us, he does it because he wants to see what we do in a given situation. We are being tested.

We are being proved. We are being tried, even today. The circumstances in our lives, whatever they might be, Jesus is in fact asking you and I a question.

Perhaps not the identical question, but he is allowing you to look at your situation. He's allowing you to assess what's going on in your life just as he lifted up his eyes and saw a great company come to him and he asked him a question. Philip, where shall we buy bread that these may eat? And this he said to prove him, for he himself knew what he would do.

You see, Jesus knows what he would do in the situation that you're in. Jesus knows the right course of action. Jesus knows exactly what and how and in what manner he wants to lead you.

But rather than taking the initiative, which so frequently we expect the Lord to do, to take the initiative, instead of taking the initiative, in this example, Jesus asks the question. You know, so frequently we find that we're saying, Lord, what should we do? Lord, how shall I approach this situation? Lord, what is your thought? What is your wisdom? What is your plan? And certainly that is commendable. But in this situation, Jesus asks a question.

Where shall we buy bread? Isn't it strange that Jesus would ask someone a question as if he didn't already know the answer? Isn't it strange that Jesus would ask Philip, where shall we buy bread? Why would he do that? Did he need information from Philip? Did he lack anything? Why certainly not. Don't you find it strange that when Adam and Eve sinned and they hid themselves in the garden, the Scripture says that God came in the evening and what did He say? Where are you, Adam? Do you really think that God did not know where Adam was? Did you really think that God became concerned because suddenly Adam slipped out of His sight and He wasn't sure where He was? Adam! Adam, where are you? Hello, Adam. You were here a moment ago.

I don't see you. Well, certainly not. That's not the case.

God sees everything. So, why does Jesus ask Philip a question? Why does God ask Adam a question? Why does Jesus ask Philip a question? The reason why God asked Adam, where are you, is because that question became, this is very, very important, that question became an opportunity for Adam to speak his heart. You see, God is always after revealing what's inside of us.

He already knows it's there, but He wants it to come out. The Lord is always after revealing what's inside. And this is why He proves us and tests us.

He does it by asking questions. He does it by being silent many times. And in silence, we feel the need, we feel the urge to do something.

We feel compelled to possibly take the situation into our own hands. And God just seemingly, when we feel we need Him the most, He doesn't say a word to us. Why? Because He is testing you.

He is proving you. He is watching your movement. He is seeing what's going on on the inside.

And what it is that God is looking for? God is looking for movement that is based upon the integrity of trusting Him. He's looking for movement based upon obedience to His Word. You remember when Israel literally was driving Moses crazy in the wilderness? And they had grumbled and they had complained and they had accused Moses of wrongfully leading them out of Egypt.

And there, because they were being tempted, and there they were being tested, they got angry and they just basically raised up a small mob and let's kill Moses, let's get rid of this guy. And you remember Moses became so exasperated that God actually said to Moses, Moses, these people are so disobedient. These people are so rebellious.

I'll tell you what I'll do, Moses. This is God talking now. I'm paraphrasing.

This is found in the Old Testament. God's saying, Moses, I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll kill these people.

I'll wipe them out. And I'll raise you up seed and make them a great nation. Come on, Moses, what do you think? Isn't that a good idea? I mean, think about it, Moses.

Look how rebellious they are. Have they ever obeyed my commandments that you spoke to them? Moses, do they honor you? They're not even honoring you. How about it, Moses? I'll kill them because I'm God.

I can do that. I'll make you a great nation. Just think, the children of Moses.

Not the children of Abraham. The children of Moses. You can be the patriarch.

And then what does God do? He stands back and watches. What's Moses going to do with such a challenge as that? And then all of a sudden we see something, perhaps one of the most incredible demonstrations of the divine character manifesting in a human being. We see Moses falling down on his face, saying in a paraphrased way, God, you can't do that.

God, what will the nations think? God, you've committed yourself to this people. What was happening? God spoke something to Moses. And then God tested Moses to see how he would respond.

And what God saw in Moses was a beautiful reflection of what was in His very Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. He saw a man who was not willing that a people should perish because of their sin. He saw a man that

was willing for God to forgive them again.

Pardon their transgression again. So, God was looking to see in Moses the qualities that are in Himself that we see in the Lord Jesus Christ. Well, now, there's an example.

God didn't ask Moses a question, but presented a very appealing proposition. But it was only appealing to a natural man. It was only appealing to a carnal man.

It was only appealing to someone who would not be like Jesus Christ. Because certainly Jesus, when He walked on the earth, everything that He suffered was because of our sins. He could have said, Father, let's start again.

This is ridiculous. These people are so stubborn. Lord, I came to my own and my own received me not.

They spat upon me. They pulled the beard from my face. They placed a crown upon.

Father, send the angels from heaven. Reveal yourself. Smite these awful sinners.

Bring them down to the grave. Let's start again, God. Let's start again.

No, Jesus didn't do that. But He came and He suffered and He died. And He was hung on a cross and He bled.

And He sweat drops of tears. And He groaned and He moaned. And He suffered the perils of being tormented by every devil in hell.

Why? Because He loved us with an everlasting love. And that is what God was seeing in Moses in part. He saw a man who through discipline and chastening and through God walking in his life began to come forth.

And on the inside, there were qualities there that were like God and God liked that. But in order for those qualities to come out, God had to allow Moses to be brought to a situation where he was tempted to be impatient and tempted to be intolerant and tempted to accept the divine proposition. But he said, no God, you can't do it.

And at that moment, I'm sure God wept tears of joy and said, yes, yes, yes. Look at that. The qualities of my son.

There's a foreshadow of what Jesus will do. He'll not come and He'll not smite the earth with a curse. He'll not speak destruction, but He'll hang on a cross and say, Father, forgive them.

Hallelujah. For they know not what they do. Wow.

God spoke to Adam. Adam, where are you? What have you done? Giving Adam an opportunity. But what came out? Confession of sin? No.

Denial and blame. Well, Lord, it's the woman. It's her fault.

And then God said the same thing to Eve. Have you? Asked a question. He knew what Adam and Eve had done, but He asked a question because He wanted them to speak.

For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. God is always wanting to bring what is on the inside out so we speak it, because what we speak reveals what we are. As a man thinketh, so is he.

So Adam, when tested, failed. Eve, when tested, failed. Eve said it's the serpent's fault.

But then when God came to the serpent, He didn't ask the serpent a question. He pronounced a curse because Jesus said He was the father of lies. He was a liar from the beginning.

There's no truth that ever abode in Him, is what Jesus said. So we see this way of God's dealing with His people throughout the Scripture. God asking questions.

God bringing people to crisis situations and then seemingly stepping back. Do you remember when God in Samuel, through Samuel, instructed Saul that he was to go to a particular city and wait there? And in a certain amount of time, I believe Saul said in seven days, or Samuel told him that in seven days, he, Samuel, would come to that city and would offer up the sacrifices required. So Saul went and obeyed Samuel, went to the city, but remarkably, listen carefully, remarkably, it seemed like Samuel broke his word.

You would think a prophet would keep his word, wouldn't you? Samuel said, I'll be there, and he wasn't there. Do you ever seem like God didn't keep His word to you? Did it ever appear like the way the Lord said it was going to happen, it doesn't happen, and you wonder why, what's going on? Well, Saul came, there he was before the people, and he didn't have the right to do the priestly functions that Samuel had the right to do. It wasn't his right to offer up sacrifices unto the Lord for the people.

But, listen carefully, listen carefully, the Scripture says that because Samuel failed to come at the appointed time, the people became upset, and the people started giving Saul a hard time. These sacrifices have to be offered, and Samuel's not here. What are you going to do, Saul? Come on, you're our king.

You're our great fearless leader. What are you going to do? And so what does Saul do? He bows to the pressure of the people and offers up sacrifices when he had no divine right to do it. No divine right to do it.

And so when Samuel came, he rebuked Saul for his actions. So there, Saul was being tested. And then in the New Testament, Jesus tests Philip.

Let me ask a question. Okay, beloved? Listen carefully. What are you doing? What are you saying? How are you acting in the test that you're going through today? Jesus knows the way, but he's wondering, do you? If we could see how deeply this principle is running in our lives, it would really, really amaze us.

We're being tested with so many things, and I'm not going to go into it. I'm just simply going to commit this to the Lord's hands now. What are you doing with the test? How are you handling it? Remember what Jesus wants to see.

He wants to see how much. He wants to know how we're doing. What kind of a test are we going through today? You know, one of the things that I've told my oldest daughter is that she's innocent until proven guilty.

She's not guilty automatically. I said to her also, I said, Christine, as you get older, here's the way I'm going to perceive you. I trust you until you give me reason not to.

You know, don't start out on a negative note. Start out on a positive note. I trust you within the parameters.

That doesn't mean she can do what she wants, but within the parameters that I have given her, I trust her. But if you give me a reason to distrust you, then I will act accordingly. This is why the Lord tests us.

He wants to see what's going on. Matthew chapter 24. I'm going to put that behind us now and go on to something else that the Lord has placed in my spirit, which I believe will, again, address us in a very powerful way.

Okay? Matthew chapter 24. Beginning, actually just one verse. Verse 12.

24, 12. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. And because iniquity, that word iniquity literally means the transgression of law.

Lawlessness. The transgression of law. Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

That's an interesting Greek word there, and actually what it means is to concrete into coldness. To concrete into coldness. So what Jesus is talking about here is a coldness will set in that's so severe it's like concrete.

Now I want to point out the reason for this. Because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold. There is a great danger that we face living in this particular time and this particular age.

Lawlessness, the transgression against God's law is abounding on every hand. There is no longer any respect or any regard for God's law in the land for the most part. And because of this, the love of many shall turn into concrete coldness.

Beware, beware in your own heart, beloved, that you don't allow it to become cold and hard and callous because of the continuous lawlessness that's round about you. Jesus said that we are in the world, but we are not of the world. It is a great danger for the church to become callous and hard and insensitive.

And we must guard ourselves against that. Jude tells us, Jude chapter 1, But ye, beloved, build up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God. If we are not careful in being diligent with the Lord, building ourselves up in the most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, living in the word of God, meditating upon the word of God, as the scripture says, keeping ourselves in the love of God.

If we are not diligent to do these things, you can be sure that your hearts will become cold and callous. Because if you abandon the atmosphere of heavenliness that you can immerse yourself in when you are in the word and in the Holy Ghost and in prayer and in fellowship with one another, if you abandon that, then you hurl yourself into a lawless society, into a lawless world, and the effect of lawlessness is your heart becomes cold. There's no limbo.

There's no neutral ground. You are either pursuing after the things of God, you are either diligently and earnestly applying yourself to the word of God, or you are becoming cold in your heart. There's no middle ground.

Don't play with sin. Don't be passive. Don't just coast.

Sin is abounding. Lawlessness is on every hand. And the effects of it will create a concrete cold stone heart in your life.

How well are you doing in this battle to keep yourself in the love of God? How well are you doing in this call to build yourself up on your most holy faith? How do you build yourself up on your most holy faith? Faith comes by hearing. Hearing by the word of God. Building yourself up on the most holy faith does not simply happen by osmosis.

It doesn't just happen automatically. You just don't go to bed and wake up and, oh, wow, God has done something remarkable in my life. It happens as we are diligently and earnestly seeking the Lord.

Jeremiah said that you shall find me when you seek me with your whole heart. The writer of Hebrews says that without faith it is impossible to please God. He that cometh to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him, who earnestly pursue after Him.

The words of Jesus in the Beatitudes, ask and keep asking, seek and keep seeking, knock and keep knocking. The words of James, the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much. The teaching of the widow woman, it's because of her importunity that she cried out day and night that the evil judge hearkened to her request.

There is no evidence in the Scriptures that God supports a passive, coasting, lazy kind of a life. God does not promise the blessings to those who simply coast, but rather the diligent and the earnest and those who are importune and those who are diligent and persistent after God. They're the ones that God promises that He'll reveal Himself to.

And it's important for us to know that, listen carefully, listen carefully, don't equate those qualities with simply going to church. Just because we go to church or we believe in religion doesn't mean anything, doesn't mean a thing. So, in response to the words of Jesus, and iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold, here's what the Lord put on my heart this morning, and that is this.

Unless we are earnestly and diligently seeking the Lord in the Word, spending time with Him, speaking the Word of God one to another, our hearts are becoming cold. Now, you can have a cold heart and be more religious than you were last year. Has nothing to do with religion, outward form.

It has to do with the state of your inner being, which is evidenced not by what you say, but what you do, your life. What are you doing with this issue? Huh? What you doing? Turn your Bibles to Deuteronomy. This dovetails right along with it.

Deuteronomy chapter 5. These are the Ten Commandments. You know the Ten Commandments describe the moral perfection and excellence of God. And the goal of being saved and filled with the Holy Spirit is that the law of God will be written in our hearts so that we will keep the law, not the religious, but the moral law.

Not because we have to, lest a great terrible punishment come upon us, but rather we keep it because the moral substance of the law has become part of our very being through regeneration. That's why we keep the law. But because we're living in a world that's ungodly and we are clothed with sinful, decaying, mortal flesh, even though, if we're a true born-again Christian, even though we've become partakers of the divine nature and essentially speaking, we are in spirit, one with Christ, yet there is the great temptation to sin.

And therefore, it becomes expedient that we meditate upon God's word because the scripture says that God's word has a cleansing effect upon us. It washes us and cleans us and delivers our minds and transforms us. I just want to read a little bit about the practical words in Deuteronomy 6 that teach us about the diligence that we should have in our hearts regarding God's word.

Listen carefully. Deuteronomy chapter 6. Now these are the commandments and statutes and judgments which the Lord your God commanded to teach you, that you might do them in the land whither you go to possess it, that you might fear the Lord thy God and keep all of his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou and thy son and thy son's son, all the days of thy life, and that thy days may be prolonged. Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do that it might be well with you, that you may increase mightily as the Lord God of thy fathers had promised thee in the land that flows with milk and honey.

Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy soul, and with all thy might. And these words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart. Listen carefully.

And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy children, and thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house. What do you talk about when you are in your house? God says that you should be talking about his word and his law. That means whenever you have discourse with your children, when you have discourse with your family, it doesn't mean you can't talk about other things, but ultimately everything must be interpreted by the word of God.

We've got to get the word of God in our hearts to the point where it becomes our meditation day and night, where we love it, we speak of it. Listen to what God says here. You'll teach it diligently to your children.

Listen, thou shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. This is making God's word and God himself the focal point of everything we do. Thou shalt bind them for a sign upon thy hand, and they shall be as frontals between thy eyes.

Listen to this. Thou shalt write them upon the post of thy house and on thy gates, and it shall be when the Lord thy God shall have brought thee into the land which he swore unto thy fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give thee great cities and houses full of gold, and so on and so forth. Verse number 13.

Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God and serve Him and shalt swear by His name. Ye shall not go after other gods of the gods of the people which are round about you. Verse 17.

Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the Lord your God. Now you see, read through Deuteronomy 6 yourselves and you can get a feel here of how important it is and how earnest the Lord is over this issue of staying in the word and communicating it and letting it be our meditation in our homes and our families. This dovetails with Matthew 24, 12.

If the word of God is not everything and the focal point of our lives, then our homes will be ravaged by the world, by sin, by a cold heart, and we will not please the Lord. We will not please the Lord. And so, this is part of this thought of iniquity abounding, the love of many growing cold.

The only way to combat that, beloved, is to pray that God will give you a passionate love for His Word and a desire to love it, to know it, and to let it change your heart and let it change your life. How well are you

doing with God's Word? Are you speaking it into your lives, into the lives of your children? Is it your meditation day and night? Don't fill your minds with the things of this world. Fill your hearts and minds with God's Word.

It's the only thing that will keep your heart tender and pure. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. Psalm 119.

Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. Verse 11, beginning in verse 9, Psalm 119. Wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way by taking heed thereto according to thy word.

With my whole heart have I sought thee, O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord, teach me thy statutes.

With my lips have I declared all the judgments of thy mouth. I have rejoiced in the way of thy testimonies as much as in all riches. I will meditate in thy precepts and have respect unto thy ways.

I will delight myself in thy statutes. I will not forget thy word. You see here the heart that is expressed in these psalms represents, it shows us the kind of heart that we should have and the kind of heart that we can have as we spend time with the man in heaven, the Lord Jesus.

He can give us this kind of a heart. How important. So, just for a few moments review here.

Jesus is proving us. He's testing us. He's asking questions maybe.

He's maybe taking some restraints off your life and giving you freedom. But if He's given you freedom, does that mean you forsake?

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