

# If Your Heart Is Right

by Richard E. Bieber

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*The sermon emphasizes the necessity of having a right heart to truly recognize and respond to God's voice and guidance in our lives.*

**Topics:** "Heart Transformation", "Spiritual Humility"

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## Description

Richard E. Bieber preaches about the importance of having a right heart to discern God's voice and presence in our lives. Using a dream analogy, he emphasizes the need for a tender, humble, and open heart that is receptive to God's leading. Drawing from the story of Jesus in the temple and the sinful woman anointing His feet, he contrasts the hardened heart of Simon the Pharisee with the repentant heart of the woman, highlighting the power of a contrite spirit before God. Bieber challenges listeners to examine their hearts, seek God's transformation, and cultivate a heart that is sensitive to God's promptings and the needs of others.

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## Transcript

Suppose that tonight when you go to bed, you fall into a deep sleep. You begin to dream....You're standing before a magnificent modern building. A woman in uniform comes out and welcomes you by name. You follow her into the building, down a hall with marble floor to a door with your name etched in the glass.

"This is your office," says your guide. "Go in and make yourself comfortable."

You seat yourself at a huge desk with nothing on it but a pad of paper and a pen. No phone. No computer. There's a knock on the door. Its another guide.

"The Boss is in his office on the top floor," says your guide. "You will probably never see him. He will send you a messenger with instructions from time to time. But let me warn you, this place is crawling with men and women who claim to be messengers of the Boss, but they're not. Don't let them deceive you."

"But how will I know a real messenger from a phony?"

"If your heart is right, you'll know," says your guide as she leaves.

You're starting to feel uncomfortable. How am I going to know whether it's a messenger from the Boss or whether it's an imposter? If my heart is right? What does that mean?

There's a knock on the door. "The Boss wants you to fill out these papers." He puts them on your desk and leaves.

A little later there's another knock. "The Boss wants you to go to this address." He puts a card with the address on your desk and leaves.

Soon there is another knock. "The Boss wants you to take the day off."

So what am I supposed to do? Fill out these papers? Go to that address? Take the day off? Why can't the Boss come and tell me face-to-face what he wants? I don't even know if I belong here.

Just then there's another knock, and in hobbles an old woman, crippled, walking with a cane. "I need a drink of water," she says. You invite her to sit down while you go find water.

You return to your office and give this woman a glass of water. She drains it dry. "Thank you," she says, and hobbles out the door. A chill runs down your spine as you suddenly realize that you were just in the presence of the Boss.

How do you know it was the boss? You just know.

So that's it! "If your heart is right, you'll know."

As you wake from your dream, the thought lingers. "If your heart is right, you'll know."

If your heart is right, you will know when God is speaking.

If your heart is not right, whatever "inspiration" you may think you're getting will be dubious.

Even though we say our prayers, go to church, try to do the right thing, our actual connection with God is often very uncertain. It's like we're sitting in that office, and the Boss is out of sight. How do I connect with him? How do I know that those people who claim to be his messengers are for real?

How do I know that my own thoughts that claim to be inspired are true? And those days when I feel comfortable in my own skin----is it the peace of God, or just my own vanity?

If your heart is right you'll know.

About the middle of the feast Jesus went up into the temple and taught. The Jewish leaders marveled at it, saying, "How is it that this man has learning, when he has never studied?" So Jesus answered them, "My teaching is not mine, but his who sent me. If any one's will is to do his will, they shall know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own authority."

John 7

.....if your heart is right, you'll know.

What a strange thing! God Incarnate was teaching in his Temple. And instead of falling on their faces in awe at his gracious words, these religions experts nit-picked about his credentials!

But if your heart is right, you'll know. You'll know whether these words of Jesus are true. You'll know whether the power behind these words is from the Kingdom of Darkness or from the Kingdom of Light. If

your heart is right, you'll know.

So what does that mean---"If your heart is right"?

This much is clear: if our heart is not right, God himself could sit down at our table, and we'd never recognize him. If our heart is not right, heaven could blow a thousand trumpets in our ear, and we'd hear nothing. Until we have a right heart, we will be taken in again and again by false prophets and phony guides, and walk right past the door that leads to Life and miss it.

So what is a right heart, a heart that hears the voice of God?

One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisees house and took his place at table. And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was at table in the Pharisees' house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him for she is a sinner."

And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "What is it Teacher?" "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they could not pay, he forgave them both. Now which of them will love him more?" Simon answered, "I suppose the one he forgave more." And he said to him, "You have answered rightly."

Luke 7

Two hearts are on display here: Simon the Pharisee, and a sinful woman whose name we don't even know. Simon is deeply religious. Simon knows his Bible. But look at his heart: polished, polite, proper, and hard as nails! He's looking down his nose at Jesus. "If he were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman is kissing his feet. She's a sinner!"

This man's cup is shining on the outside, cruddy on the inside. His heart is not right. No wonder he can't figure out the miracle taking place before his eyes! Blind as a bat to the glory of God!

Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house, you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little."

And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." Then those at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Luke 7

This woman has a bad reputation. Everybody knows who she is! But look at her heart! Bathing her Master's feet with tears of gratitude. Why? She knows who Jesus is more clearly than anyone in that room --- because her heart is right.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit,  
A broken and a contrite heart, Oh God,  
Thou wilt not despise.

Psalm 51

This woman is connecting with heaven as she wipes his feet with her hair. Heaven is healing her spirit. Raising her up. Giving her a new start. Because her heart is right.

So what about us?

We will know God, receive the redeeming touch of the Lord Jesus, when our hearts are right.

Our hearts!

Forget everything else. Where's your heart? Where's my heart? Is it looking down on folks without even realizing it? Is it hiding behind a poker-face mask, so nobody can see what's going on inside? Is it dragging a carload of regrets, resentments, fears wherever it goes?

To have a heart that's right before God is very simple. A right heart is a heart that's tender toward God. Tender, open, humble, thirsty----toward God. And tender toward the ugly old woman who hobbles into your office, looking for a drink of water. Tender toward a stranger who obviously needs a few dollars. Tender toward an annoying neighbor who needs someone to simply listen to her.

It's amazing how many religious hearts are hard as nails.

It's amazing how many intelligent hearts are blinded by arrogance.

Once we get a glimpse of how brittle our hearts are, the best thing we can do is cry out to God for help, as David did.

Create in me a clean heart, O God,

And renew a right spirit within me.

Psalm 51

Lord God, give me the humility to kneel in my spirit beside that woman and throw myself on the mercy of the One Being in the universe who can make me whole!

Many of us reading this have the heart of Simon the Pharisee.

God grant that we may make sure that we have the heart of that woman today.

For if we have the heart of the woman, we will know the difference between a false prophet and a true.

And we will obey the Shepherd's voice calling us, even now, to get over ourselves, get under his yoke, and walk with him---all the way.

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