

"Being Mindful"

Introduction. I recently spent three weeks away from church. I needed a break. I needed to get away. I was spiritually in a dry place. Worn out trying to keep all the balls up in the air. Wondering what I was doing and why I was doing it.

Probably not the best time to do a series on Jeremiah...this book is depressing enough on its own...but we are to preach the truth in season and out of season. Welcome to my season of spiritual dryness. It's ok. It happens. There are times in our journey with Jesus where the wind seems to be in our face and path uphill. That is where I was when Tammy and I packed up the RV and escaped.

Fortunately, God has a lot to say about this type of experience. Not surprisingly, there is a passage in Jeremiah that God led me to while I was away. I want to share my journey with you...perhaps in hearing of my struggles you will better understand your own. Let's take a look at ourselves in Jeremiah 17.

Jeremiah 17:1 (ESV) 1 "The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron; with a point of diamond it is engraved on the tablet of their heart, and on the horns of their altars,

God wants us to understand that sin is a big deal. Every sin of Judah He says is literally engraved at diamond point on the tablet of their heart.

We tend to dismiss the consequences of our sins and the impact our sins have on the heart of God and others. But sin is not an isolated act. It brings consequences, plants memories, creates guilt.

The record remains even if we do not read it. God still notes it, and will some day confront us with it. Hence it is not enough to amend our ways for the future. We need to have past transgressions blotted out if we are to be restored to peace with God.

This is a key thing to understand. You and I don't just need forgiveness of our sins we need to be washed, cleansed and saved from our sins. A lot of people think that if they confess sins that they will forget them. Never works right?

What does it mean that the sins of man are etched into the tablet of their heart?

It is written on the memory. We cannot seem to shake off the clinging burden of the memory of them. The criminal is haunted by his crimes. They fill his dreams with horrors; they overshadow his waking hours with gloom. Even when sin is put out of mind it is probably buried in the secret chamber of memory, to be ultimately brought to the light of consciousness

We store everything in our memories. We at times selective recall those events. Sometimes because we just don't remember well and other times because we have shaped how we want to remember what we have done. Often we shape our memories to fit our desires of how we want to remember.

Our sins...leave a permanent record on the tablet of our hearts. It is etched in diamond point. It is accurate, detailed and true. We may remember our sins one way, but the truth is etched in our hearts. The problem for all of us is this....how do I relieve the memory, guilt and shame of my sins? I want to be free from my past....God is going to judge me....He has to....how am I going to solve my sin problem. My sins are etched in diamond point on my heart...They are not going away.

It is, therefore, useless to ignore it. It is vain to try to wash it away by any effort of our own. It is foolish to expect peace with God till this terrible hindrance has been removed out of the way. That is why David cried out to God...

Psalm 51:10 (ESV) 10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

We have to decide how we want to manage the memories, the guilt, the shame....God tells us that we can't fix this in our flesh...on our own...what happens to us is based on where we place our trust. So God gives us a contrast...remember the context here is what we are to do with our sins.

Jeremiah 17:5-6 (ESV) 5 Thus says the Lord: "Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart turns away from the Lord. 6 He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

Let's go back to one of my favorite topics and one of my favorite all time series. We are created by God to operate in three components. Each in sync and in submission to the other.

Adam and Eve were created perfectly by God. He said that their creation was very good. They had three components to their existence.

They were spiritual beings full of the Holy Spirit of God. God explained everything....taught them everything...guided them...guarded them. His Spirit was in them...They were above all else. Spiritual Beings. God's Spiritual Beings on earth.

The second part of their being is what the Greek called Psyche. It is their mind, their will, their decision making process. They had free will to make decisions.

The third part of their being is their body..the physical nature of man.

Not only did man have these three components but they were designed by God to operate interdependently. Each dependent upon the other.

The Spirit of God reveals truth about everything. The Spirit of God is never wrong. God designed us to be Spiritual people first and foremost. We were never designed to ever make a decision in our lives separate from the truth of the Spirit of God.

The Psyche takes the truth revealed by the Holy Spirit and processes the information to direct the body what to do.

Spirit leading Psyche and Psyche leading the Body. All in sync. A perfect design.

The problem is that Adam and Eve decided that they could make better decisions in their Psyche than under the oversight and direction of the Holy Spirit. In their free will they rejected their Spiritual nature and chose man and man's understanding instead of God's ;

God planned to give us His truth, His wisdom, His perspective...He would show us all that is going on around us. He would then share with us the truth about the things we are seeing. He would discard anything that is not true. All of this happens in our Spirit. God leading us...connected to us....guiding us....loving us...telling us truth. Yet Adam and Eve said....No thanks ...We got this...We know better than you do God. That was the sin that destroyed the world. The fruit of the tree was simply the prop God used to test their heart.

Adam and Eve were Spirit led Spiritual beings who had been give the Spirit to Lead, The mind to process and the Flesh to act. Each one dependent upon the other. Perfect harmony. Perfect truths, beliefs and actions all the time. Since the Spirit of God is always right...everything that flows from that is right too.

As soon as they sinned....they died Spiritually. The Spiritual nature left earth as God's Spirit departed from them.

Man had glorified Himself. He would now have to find, determine and create His truth. He would do so without the knowledge, guidance and leadership of God.

This design....Spiritual man decapitated from the Spirit is doomed to fail. Since that time every person born on earth has been born without the Spiritual component of their design.

The problem is...your mind is not the generator of truth it is the processor of information. Your mind takes in all that is around you and you process it and come to a conclusion. The conclusion can be right or wrong but whatever you come to...drives your emotions, actions and responses.

We have spent every moment of our life on earth receiving lies about ourselves, the world around us and about God. All we know is man's truth and that is why God's truth now seems so foreign to us.

The Story of human history is man's attempt to interpret God's world....create some sense of truth...and act on that distorted reality.

Once the mind interprets the data of the world and chooses sin...your flesh will follow. Without the Spirit of God in you revealing truths about the world that only God knows....you are helpless to live in a way that honors God. You live in the flesh...separated from God and God's truth....You have to interpret God sized things with your small human mind. You are doomed to sin. It is your nature. You are no longer a Spiritual Being...The Spirit of God is not leading you, guiding you or protecting you.

So God says...

Cursed is the man who trusts in man.

Remember the context of this lesson is what are you going to do about the sin etched in your heart? Who are you going to trust to manage or solve your sin problem.

We of course in our life have to trust other people. We are not cursed because we trust other people...we trust teachers, doctors, parents, hundreds of people....but here is the Key....We are not to trust them AS OUR GOD!

God is telling us here...In this world you will have to decide where you are going to get your truth. Are you going to let the Spirit of God reveal truth to you so that you process and act on it...or are you going to determine your truth and interpret the world around you based on your psyche? Where are you going to get your strength.

If you choose to trust in man for your truth and trust in man's ability for your strength....you are cursed because you have turned your heart away from God.

Jeremiah 17:6 (ESV) 6 He is like a shrub in the desert, and shall not see any good come. He shall dwell in the parched places of the wilderness, in an uninhabited salt land.

We cannot have a true confidence in God together with a supreme worldly confidence. The one excludes the other.

The tree cannot be growing both in the desert and by the River. This departure is of the heart. In the heart we trust. Outwardly we may still seem near to God, but if faith has gone the heart has forsaken God

Consider the curse of this worldly confidence. It makes one like a desert shrub.

(1) Dwarfed and stunted in growth—a shrub, not a tree—a miserable shrub of the desert. Though departure from God does not involve sudden destruction, it lowers the spiritual energies, dwarfs the whole life.

(2) Not even benefited by blessings received. The shrub "shall not see when good cometh." The breath of spring, which brings fresh bloom and growth to other plants, passes over it with no more fruitful effects than the chill blasts of autumn produce. He who has departed from God and lives only in worldly confidence derives no real benefit from the blessings that God still sends him.

(3) Suffering from lack of the chief good. The shrub is in a parched land, is withered for lack of water

(4) Lonely. "In a salt land, and not inhabited." The soul that is separated from God is essentially solitary, deserted, destitute though immersed in the tumult of worldly society.

But God says...you don't have to live that way....

Jeremiah 17:7–8 (ESV) 7 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord, whose trust is the Lord. 8 He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit."

Note the Blessings of trusting God.

(1) Full and flourishing life—a tree, not a shrub. Those who put their trust in God are not only blessed....the life experience expands and enlarges....Your life is a flourishing growing expanding tree.

(2) Nourished and refreshed. The tree is planted by the waters, and has a continual source of Life. Trust in God brings plants us in the flow of what God is doing. We are carried along by the current that is His Spirit.

(3) Secured against trouble. Note that times of heat are coming. While the shrub derives no benefit from the most favourable weather, the tree planted by the water does not suffer from the most trying. Trust in God does not prevent the approach of trouble, but it fortifies us against suffering real harm from it. Hidden sources supply the Christian with spiritual nourishment when outwardly life is storming and our circumstances seem to threaten us.

(4) Perpetual fruitfulness. "Neither shall cease from yielding fruit." Fruitfulness is a sign of health, perpetual fruitfulness of unbroken health. Fruitfulness is a blessing. The Christian is most blessed in being able to work for good, and to distribute blessings to others as the chief glory of the tree is its fruit-bearing.

So God shows us a comparison. A shrub or a tree. A desert or planted by water. Shallow roots that can't survive difficult times vs. deep roots not really appreciated until difficult times. Parched places....uninhabited places...salt land vs. green leaves, fruit, even in the most challenging times.

When you think about your life right now. At this moment. When others look at your life right now...which is it?

Are you a dwarfed plant, fruitless, in dry uninhabited salty lands? Or are you growing, producing fruit, without anxiety, almost unaffected by difficult times?

This contrast and comparison, I believe works best in reverse. Tell me what type of plant you are and I will tell where you have placed your trust.

Sobering a bit right? How can we get so far off the rails? Particularly as believers. We should know better right?

Yet most believers that I know....if you really pressed them...they would tell you that they live a dry, fruitless, superficial experience with God.

Sometimes we are there for a season, sometimes that is where we have always been. But when you start experience stagnation in your Spiritual life....your first question should be "where am I placing my trust?"

We know this right? There are time in our lives where we now we should trust God...but we find ourselves wanting to take back control again. Why do we do that?

Well God says....here is why...next verse.

Jeremiah 17:9 (ESV) 9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

You and I have a disease. It is the disease of being led by the flesh...A cardiac disease and disease of our psyche...our heart and our mind. We are born with a sick heart. Actually we are not just sick...God tells us through Jeremiah that we are desperately sick. This is not a temporary disorder it is a terminal condition. Terrible right now...only to get worse in the future.

It is in the heart that we find the true essence of man. In fact, the most important question concerning a man is the state of his or her heart. Our thoughts, our affections, and our intentions. From our heart comes all of our actions. It is the character of the fountain that determines that of the stream.

What is wrong with our heart? Our sick heart comes from our pride. We think we can live apart from God's Spirit. We think we can make better decisions than God. We think we are God. How could we be so stupid? Well God says your heart is deceptive...well actually deceptive above all other things. Think about the most deceptive, manipulative, dishonest, thing on the planet. You heart is worse.

All of us were born with a heart of flesh. A heart of self will. A sinful heart of disobedience to God. We weren't once good people who decided to sin. We were born enemies of God with a nature to reject and rebel against Him. We have a heart that worships ourselves. That desires what we want for ourselves. We are born selfish and diseased. Sin is the disease of our soul. It results in suffering...then often life disorder...then eventually death.

God continues....Our hearts are so deceitful no one can understand it.

We know this right? God says, "Who can know it?" We spend our lives trying to decide if we can trust the heart of others....when they make promises to us...when they teach us...when they lead us...when they love us...Can I trust your heart?

It is hard to read the heart of someone else. We can't really know what is in someone else's heart. We can watch their conduct and draw some assumptions, but actions can be deceptive.

We can't even evaluate our own heart. We are blinded to the true state of our heart...to our depravity...by our pride, prejudice, and worship of ourselves. There are nuances, subtleties, and intricacies about the wickedness in us that make it hard to tease out. Satan doesn't want us to see the true condition of our heart.

This diseased heart is the only heart that we have known...so it can be hard to see it as abnormal. If you were born paralyzed the only way you would know it is that others are not. But when it comes to a sinful heart, the condition is universal. Everyone has it.

Our shame forces us to conceal what is really going on inside. We have a falseness about us that is normal to us. The disease has been present through lots of generations, it has penetrated so far, altered our sense of truth so long, changed our expectations of others so deeply, that every function of our heart and soul is so sick that it is beyond measure or comparison.

Jeremiah 17:10 (ESV) 10 "I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds."

I the Lord....I understand your heart. I created it. I understand your sin condition. I am destroying it. I can't be deceived, you are not that good. In fact, I have some of my own examinations to put you through. You see I search the heart...my silent, all-penetrating, all-knowing, gaze detects your darkest secrets. When I look at your heart..I see it all...every bit of it. The world may be deceived but I am not.

I really don't have to look hard...you were born with the same condition as everyone else. Your heart is full of pride, arrogance, self-sufficiency, independence, self-reliance, self worship, self deception....it is all in there...It is ugly. You are born in the flesh....diseased heart....terminal condition. Nothing you can do about it. You have deceived you...but not me.

If you read this passage carefully something very odd and yet very powerful is revealed.

When I went to the cardiologist...He too knew I had a disease, I have had a prior stent....I have coronary artery disease....but he put my heart through every test imaginable. He watched my heart at rest, under the stress of exercise, under the challenge of all kinds of different conditions. He checked it out electrically, with ultrasound, looked at it physically, measured pressures, listened to it...He evaluated the condition of my heart my testing my heart.

Jeremiah 17:10 (ESV) 10 "I the Lord search the heart and test the mind,
Do you see it?

Please don't rush though this...it is so powerful when you get it.

Psalm 26:2 (ESV) 2 Prove me, O Lord, and try me; test my heart and my mind.

God searches the heart.....but He tests the mind.

God searches the heart.....He reveals the condition of your heart to you...He already knows that is there...It is not like He discovers something He didn't know....You discover what He knows.

But the test...is not of your heart....the test is of your mind. You and I have diseased hearts...they are terminal...we don't need to test them...they will fail.

God says....I am going to test your psyche..your mind. I am going to put you though a series of conditions, stressors, experiences.....

Not to see how your heart will do...but see how your mind will respond. You see when God cranks up the heat...the stress...in our lives....it reveals who we are truly trusting.

God is essentially telling us that I need to reveal to you where you have really placed your trust. I need to reveal to you and to me where your truth really comes from. I need to reveal to you and to me if you are truly Spirit led or if you are still taking control and pretending to follow me.

How will we know?....It is in the dark and desperate times....in the stressors of life....where we are tempted to let Psyche take over and ignore the Spirit of God.

Shrubs and trees can look healthy and well under the drought comes and heat is cranked up. Then you see the real character...the real evidence of state of your heart.

God searches and gives to men according to their ways. This judgment is universal—"to every man," discriminating—to each "according to his ways," and natural—"according to the fruit of his doings, according to their natural products, each in its own kind, so that men shall reap what they sow as by a law of nature.

You see God tells us...Your heart is so deceptive that it has convinced you that a dry parched unfruitful solitary spiritual existence is all that you can have. That is the problem of mankind. Our limited minds can only perceive of things that are within the scope of what we have experienced.

We look out over the church and we see a whole bunch of other dwarfed fruitless anxious scrubs who wither and fade when the heat is cranked up. We hear of others living crazy good, fruitful lives, growing spiritually, and full of love, joy, peace....but that is not us. And our deceptive heart...who led us to this place...convinces us that this is the place for us.

If you find yourself living a dull Spiritual life as a follower of Jesus....you are not following Jesus. I didn't say you were not saved...I said you are not following Jesus.

Those who truly follow Jesus...replace their deceptive hearts with the truth of His Spirit.

Throughout the Bible the Spirit of God flows through the people of God like a river.

This is a critical thing to understand. Jesus said that He came so that we could live a new kind of life....We have been imprisoned in our thoughts. Our psyche has misinterpreted the world and the lens we look through is skewed. Thus we miss the experience God has for us.

John 10:10 (ESV) 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly.

Are you living your spiritual life abundantly? Are you experiencing what God wants to do in you life? Are you living above your circumstances- in them but not defined or limited by them? There is a life that Jesus tried to show His followers. A life that was to set us free...a life pulled by the current of His Spirit.

Luke 4:18–19 (ESV) 18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Jesus came to set us free from our Psyche. To give back the Spirit of God was part of our original design. We are transformed...We live a new kind of life...not because our circumstances change but because we are changed.

Romans 12:2 (ESV) 2 Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.

The process of Spiritual maturity is the process where the Holy Spirit reestablishes His authority, rule and source of truth in your life....and your flesh or psyche surrenders.

So God shows us our heart...but He tests our minds. He looks to see if Psyche is in control or if His Spirit has become your truth.

If you are a follower of Jesus and you are living a dry stagnated Spiritual life, imprisoned by your thoughts, your worries, your anxieties, your guilt your shame, your past, your fear of the future....can I just tell you...you are doing it to yourself.

Jesus promised us that we would never be defeated. That the gates of Hell could not prevail against His church....His followers...you and me.

If you are having a desert experience with God...it is because you have placed your trust in you. And you left your trust in God back over by that river when you chose your desert experience... The contrast is so easy to see.

The experience you have in your Spiritual connection to Jesus is directly related to how much of your psyche you have decided to keep.

You have the choice to be transformed by the renewal of your mind or not. It is promised to everyone but most stay imprisoned in their walk with Christ because they have been deceived to try to keep a control that they truly never had.

If you don't like where your thoughts, perceptions and truths have led you....Have another thought. Think differently. Think Spiritually. Stop trying to be in control. Learn God's truth....trust it and live differently.

You can look at a tree and tell if it has been well watered. You don't have to take soil samples or look at rain tables...You know by looking.

Proverbs 27:19 (ESV) 19 As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.

God tells us....if you don't like living dry spiritual lives, then place your trust in me instead of you. The same thing happens with Christ followers. All you have to do is to look at them. There are three groups....those who are trusting themselves and look dry and stagnated Spiritually....those who are trusting themselves and are dry and stagnated spiritually but are better at faking it....and those who are full of life, full of the Spirit of God and placing their trust In Him.

So easy to see it...in others. So hard to see it in ourselves. I hesitated to say this but it is true.

I can almost look across our congregation....our church...and just by looking at folks tell who is spending time alone with God in the Scriptures and in prayer.....just by looking at them.... tell where they are placing their trust. It is as easy as looking over a desert and seeing the oasis.

However, when I look into a mirror....God's Mirror...His Word....I don't always see it. My heart is deceptive. I can see it in others, but refuse to see it in myself. I can so easily deceive myself into thinking I have it all together....but sometimes....I go through times....when I can't seem to find God, hear from God, or know His presence.

Here is how the deception usually goes. I know that I am dry spiritually. I can tell when I am just going through the motions. It happens to pastors or than you know. My first thought is usually....where did God go?

Do you see the deception? God promised abundant life to those who trust in Him. God said He would never leave us or forsake us...God didn't go anywhere. I did.

For a Spirit filled Believer of Jesus to allow Psyche to over ride the truth of the Holy Spirit...is a sin. It is the first sin...you shall have no other gods before me. If your opinion is over riding God truth you are in sin. Unconfessed sin and you will stagnate until that area of your life is surrendered.

Lately, I have been in a valley....tired, disheartened, doubting, and struggling. Yep it is true, Pastors go there more often than you know. We are in the group who know how to hide it better than others

I don't usually see it in myself...others...particularly Tammy and see it in me. When God reveals it to me through them...I know immediately that I have bought a life from my psyche that is hindering God's truth.

But I know....when I start feeling dry and parched....there is only one problem and there is only one solution.

I have to go see my Cardiologist. I need my heart tested. I need to know what condition my condition is in. I have to put my trust in the only One who can truly tell me its condition. I have to go to the only One who can not be deceived by my heart.

I recently had my heart check up. Two of them actually. One of them I passed with flying colors and the other not so much. My stent seems fine. My doctor tells me that my heart is healthy. But he is deceived. My second cardiac exam occurred on my vacation. I asked God to examine my heart and the heart of our church. I asked Him to search my heart...and He did.

It was when He tested my mind that the condition of my heart became evident. I learned that I was still trying to be in control rather than trusting in Him. Let me share with you a part of my psyche that I have had a hard time letting go of. I am on a journey with God to release what happens at this church to Him. I have a tendency to be deceived by my psyche that through my efforts I can keep this thing going. Depending on my efforts, my resources, and my busyness to keep all the balls up in the air. I came back from vacation more exhausted and stressed than when I left.

I need to confess to you that I have sinned. I have been trusting my own efforts instead of God. Nothing wrong with working hard....I am called to it....Nothing wrong with wanting to see this church blow and go...I am called to it.

The problem is that I am supposed to be working hard...For Jesus....wanting to see this church blow and go for Jesus. But instead...there are times when I have been doing it for me.

I spent a lot of time alone on my vacation. In a Spiritually dry, parched, dwarfed place...under the stressors of ministry....

While ya'll were doing the Back to School event, I was asking God...How did I get here? What am I supposed to see?

Look and you will see where you have placed your trust.

You see...here is what I learned that I am still working through.

There is an ugliness in my heart. I realized that many of my efforts here at Remnant have been driven from a dark place in my heart. I have a fear that this church may fail to reach its potential.

I want to see people fill these seats...I want to see our ministries overflowing with resources and impacting lives...I want to see our people living life abundantly and fully trusting in the Holy Spirit....I want us to have enough volunteers to give each other some rest. I want to see the next generation begin to take over what God is doing here...I want to see our church experience the things of God that drive us to our knees.....But here is the problem.

Deep down in my ugly heart....at times...and recently....I care more about me than Jesus. More concerned about my reputation than His. In many ways...my psyche has deceived me into believing that what happens at this church will define my leadership....my character... my teaching..... If we do well people will say I did a great job...if not...people will say...there he goes bringing down another church. I have been far more concerned about my reputation than Jesus'.

I have been placing my trust in me and in what people will think of me....instead of trusting God and His truth about me.

I was dry spiritually because this is an area of my life where I have deceived myself that what happens here depends upon me instead of God.

There is a thin line between doing things for God and doing God's things for yourself. It gets blurred sometimes. I know that I have been out of balance. So Jeremiah speaks to me.

That sin is diamond etched in the stone of my heart.....You can't erase them, you can't forget them, you can't ignore them and you can't overcome them. They are forever engraved on you heart. They terminally condemn you. Your heart is sick...desperately sick....just read the sins that are written all over it. But did I mention that God is not through with our hearts yet?

Ezekiel 36:22–25 (ESV) And the nations will know that I am the Lord, declares the Lord God, when through you I vindicate my holiness before their eyes. 24 I will take you from the nations and gather you from all the countries and bring you into your own land. 25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean from all your uncleannesses, and from all your idols I will cleanse you.

Ezekiel 36:26–32 (ESV) 26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules. 28 You shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers, and you shall be my people, and I will be your God. 29 And I will deliver you from all your uncleannesses.

Note the last line. I will deliver you from all your unclenesses. I will not only erase the sin, I will deliver you from it. I want the kind of Spiritual experience that Jesus promises to all who follow Him. I want to be that tall, healthy, growing tree that produces tons of God's fruit....Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Self Control, Goodness....I want my life to be overflowing with those things....and right now it isn't. I am just being truthful.

I think that God has an experienced planned for me and for all who follow Him that is way beyond what we have thus far experienced in our Spiritual journey with Christ.

I think about the freedom that would come to my life if I would just trust Jesus with everything. If I truly surrendered every bit of me to the Spirit of God in me....I would never make a bad decision...I would never choose sin....I would live just like Jesus.

I want to know that that kind of Spiritual life is like. I want to reconnect with God in a deeper way...I want to walk through the circumstances of my life without fear....anxiety...worry or stress. I want to experience all that Jesus has for me without a filter...without hindrance from my attempts to control. I want to see our church living in the Spirit of God...without hindrance...fully alive...fully engaged...fully surrendered to the Holy Spirit.

I know my heart is deceptive above all other things. I know that God alone understands it and reveals it. God has shown me the condition of my heart and has tested my mind. I see things more spiritually now. I see this church more Spiritually now. I am slowly gaining His perspective on my life....particularly my ministry life...I am learning how to release my grip on a story that was is not mine to define.

I would like to tell you that I have this all figured out and under control...but I don't. I never have. Fortunately, I know the One who does and He is replacing my heart...moment by moment.

Permanently replacing the sins etched in diamond point....with the new heart He promised to me and you in Christ. Let's pray.