

The Heart Is Deceitful and Desperately Wicked

by Peter Hammond

Peter Hammond's sermon emphasizes the deceitfulness of the human heart and the transformative power of trusting in God.

Scripture: Proverbs 28:26, Ecclesiastes 9:3, Isaiah 1:18, Jeremiah 17:5, Mark 7:21, Mark 10:18, Romans 8:37, Titus 2:11, James 4:7, 1 John 1:8

Topics: "Deceitful Heart", "Gods Grace"

Description

Peter Hammond preaches about the dangers of trusting in man and the deceitfulness of the human heart, emphasizing the need to trust in the Lord for true blessings and security. He highlights the wickedness that resides in the hearts of men, as described in the Bible, and warns against the lies of the age that promote self-righteousness and false beliefs. The sermon also touches on the importance of acknowledging our faults, the possibility of transformation through God's grace, and the victories that can be achieved against all odds with God on our side.

Transcript

"Thus says the Lord: 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord. For he shall be like a shrub in the desert and shall not see when good comes, but shall inhabit the parched places in the wilderness, in a salt land which is not inhabited. 'Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose hope is the Lord. For he shall be like a tree planted by the waters, which spreads out its roots by the river and will not fear when heat comes; but its leaf will be green and will not be anxious in the year of drought, nor will cease from yielding fruit. 'The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the Lord, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.'" Jeremiah 17:5-10

Madness and Wickedness in the Heart

"I am a good person!"

Jesus said no one is good except God alone (Mark 10:18). When we evaluate ourselves in the light of God's Ten Commandments, recognising that Jesus is the standard, no one should deceive themselves by claiming that: "I am a very good person!"

"If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us... If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His Word is not in us." 1 John 1:8,10

"...truly the hearts of the sons of men are full of evil; and madness is in their hearts..."

Ecclesiastes 9:3

"For from within, out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, thefts, murders, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness." Mark 7:21-22

Lies of Our Age

Man is good by nature, but corrupted by society!"

Actually, it is man's depravity which corrupts society.

"Every man possesses an innate moral goodness!"

It would be more accurate to say that there is bad in the best of us because we are fallen creation.

"Happiness is the measure and goal of our lives."

No, it is not. God's Word, God's Will, God's Worship and God's Work is the measure and goal of our lives!

"Only fools restrain their desires."

Actually, it is only a fool who gives in to selfish desires, fuelled by pride, greed and lust.

"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered." Proverbs 28:26

"Everything is relative."

No, that is not true. There is objective truth and reality. Without the God of the Bible, who has a mind and is rational, logic and intelligent design would not even be possible!

"All you need is love!"

What do you mean by love? Emotion and sentiment are not enough. Biblical love is unselfish giving, duty, integrity, doing the right thing, loving God and loving our neighbour (1 Corinthians 13:4-7). True love is measured by sacrifice.

"Only material and economic change can produce a social change."

Not at all. Only regenerate lives, transformed hearts and renewed minds can change society for the good.

The Greatest Fault is to be Aware of None

Dr. Martin Luther was overwhelmed by the burden of his sin. When asked which pope had caused him the greatest trouble, Luther answered: "pope self." He maintained that the pope that sits on the throne of his own selfish nature gave him far more trouble than all the popes in Rome.

Mixed Motives

Dr. David Livingstone, in his Journals, expressed his frustration that even when he was engaged in the best of actions, it was with mixed motives.

We Are Our Own Worst Enemy

When Charles Spurgeon was asked which of his 5,600 members gave him the most trouble, he responded: "Charles Spurgeon!" When asked how it was that he also had a member by his own name, he explained that he referred to himself. No other member of Metropolitan Tabernacle had given him more trouble than he himself had. The fact is that we are our own worst enemy.

"I Cannot Change!"

On the other extreme of the spectrum is the claim: "I cannot change!"

However, the persecutor of the Church, Saul of Tarsus, became the Missionary of the Church: the Apostle Paul.

Bernard Nathanson, once head of the National Abortion Rights Action League, became an avid pro-life activist and the producer of The Silent Scream documentary film.

Abby Johnson, once a Planned Parenthood Abortion Clinic Director, became a pro-life activist and author of Unplanned.

Before my conversion, I was a shy, quiet, introvert. After my conversion, I became an Arminian, antinomian, dispensationalist, rapture fever, end times enthusiast. I was also a pacifist and one who taught that you should not get involved in politics. I was convinced that we were living in the last days, so I was negative about marriage and children. God has changed and transformed me continually on this adventure of discipleship to where I am now a Reformed, Post-Millennial Missionary, father and grandfather and still being challenged to change in response to the renewing of the mind through studying the Word of God.

Can God Forgive Me?

Then there are those who claim: "God can never forgive me!"

However, Church history is full of details of enemies of the Gospel and frightful criminals, even persecutors of the Church who were converted and became trophies of grace. "'Come now and let us reason together,' says the Lord, 'Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool.'" Isaiah 1:18

Unchangeable

"God cannot change me!"

"For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men, teaching us that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously and Godly in the present age, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works." Titus 2:11-14

Hopeless

"I am done!"

This new expression has spread like wildfire with so many people claiming about a whole host of subjects: I am done! Actually, God is the only One who can say when it is finished, when you are done, when you are dismissed and when you are free to go! Just as nobody may excuse themselves from the presence of the King, or Queen. That prerogative is up to the Monarch. Even more so, the King of kings and Lord and lords is the only One who can say when your work is truly done, when you are dismissed, or free to go.

Are Things Only Going to Deteriorate?

"Things are always only going to get worse!"

Well, that is just not true. There have been extremely many bad times in history and then dramatic turning points. For example, 1517, when Dr. Martin Luther nailed The 95 Theses on the church door in Wittenberg. The resultant Reformation unleashed forces of Faith and freedom that the world had never before seen. Nations were transformed. The Scientific Revolution and Industrial Revolution grew out of the Protestant Reformation, creating the most productive, prosperous and free nations in the history of civilisation. The great Revivals of 1859 and 1860 transformed Western civilisation.

Impossible

"We cannot win!"

Well with that kind of attitude, it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy! If you think you can, or you cannot, you are right! If you think you can, you can. If you think you cannot, you cannot. Attitude is everything. A defeatist and negative attitude will inevitably lead to defeat.

Against All Odds

However, consider the facts of history. Against all odds, just a few hundred knights of St. John defeated over 40,000 Muslim Jihadists during the four-month siege of Malta in 1565. Against all odds, Christians of Europe defeated the vast numbers of Turkish invaders at the Siege of Vienna, 1683.

In Our Lifetime

In our own lifetime, we have seen how the Tutsi David, defeated the Hutu Goliath during the Rwandan holocaust and ended the genocidal campaign in 1994.

Victory over Communism

In our own life time we have seen decisive victories over communism, the conclusion of the Cold War, the fall of the Berlin Wall, the collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe, the removal of the Iron Curtain and freedom for Eastern Europe from the prison house of nations. In 1982, Christians launched a Seven-Year Jericho Prayer March/Prayer Focus on bringing down the Berlin Wall, the Iron Curtain and opening up Eastern Europe and Russia to the Gospel. In 1989, the Iron Curtain collapsed.

Victory over Islam

In 2011, we witnessed the Independence of South Sudan from Islamic Sudan.

Victory over Globalism

Just in recent years, we have seen Brexit voting against the EU globalist agenda in Britain and the President Trump Republican victory, against all odds and against all the predictions of the mass media and establishment in the United States.

Against the Unbeaten Foe

Just 464 Voortrekkers, against all odds, defeated over 10,000 Zulus at the Battle of Blood River. The Zulus had never before been defeated. But they were on 16 December 1838.

Remember Majuba

Nobody expected the farmers of the Transvaal to defeat the Redcoats of the British Empire, but in 1881, at the Battle of Majuba, they did.

A Vision of Victory

We have seen communism defeated in Russia and Eastern Europe and we will go on to see Islam and the New World Order defeated as well.

"Ask of Me and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance and the ends of the earth for Your possession." Psalm 2:8

"All the ends of the world shall remember and turn to the Lord and all the families of the nations shall worship before You. For the Kingdom is the Lord's and He rules over the nations." Psalm 22:27-28

"In His days the righteous shall flourish... He shall have dominion also from sea to sea... to the ends of the earth... His enemies will lick the dust... all kings shall fall down before Him; all nations shall serve Him." Psalm 72:7-11

"...'Not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit,' says the Lord of Hosts." Zechariah 4:6

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us." Romans 8:37

"Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you." James 4:7

"...because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world." 1 John 4:4

Unreachable

"Some people will never change, so do not even try to share the Gospel with them."

Church History is full of the testimonies of individuals whom Christians could not imagine ever being able to change, yet the Gospel is the power of God for the Salvation of everyone who believes. KwaSizabantu Mission was built with the conversion of witchdoctors, terrorists, murderers, gangsters and drug dealers transformed by the Grace of God.

Converted

I remember meeting Pastor Musa, a ZAPU communist terrorist leader, who had been converted at an Evangelistic Rally in Rhodesia, which he had intended attacking. My Father was secular and seemed very closed to the Gospel. Yet after eight years of prayer and witnessing, I saw my Father transformed by the Grace of God. We should never place limits upon the Gospel.

Helpless

"I cannot make any difference!"

I was one of those who thought and said that. When I was converted at age 17, I did not know much about anything in the Bible and felt quite helpless to make any kind of impact for the Lord at all. Yet, the challenge on the night that I was converted: "All this our Lord Jesus Christ did for you. What have you ever done for Him?" At that moment, 3 April 1977, I had to confess that I had done absolutely nothing for Christ, not even given thanks to Him.

Set Free to Serve Christ

Within weeks, I was involved in a Scripture Union Holiday Mission. Within months I was teaching in the Sunday school, running the church book table, involved in mass Gospel literature distribution, placing Gospels of John in every home in Pinelands, putting up posters, inviting people to Evangelistic Rallies, such as the one that I had been converted at.

Called to Missions

When Missionary, Francis Grim, ministered as a guest speaker at my congregation, I went forward and joined his Mission - Hospital Christian Fellowship. Soon I was enlisted in the South African Infantry for my two years Military service. The daily Bible Study and Prayer Fellowship I established in July 1979, at 6SAI, grew into our Mission, Frontline Fellowship.

Crossing Borders for Christ

By 1982, I was crossing the border on my first Mission to Mozambique, Missions to Angola, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Malawi, Rwanda, Kenya, Uganda and Sudan followed. Soon there were outreaches in Eastern Europe, behind the Iron Curtain. In the last 40 years, I have ministered in 38 countries, conducting over 18,000 meetings.

Salt and Light

Marches to Parliament. Mobilising opposition to the ANC's plans to paganise South Africa. The 30,000 people we mobilised onto the streets of Cape Town in 1995 and 1996, compelled the government to backtrack on their declared intention of preventing churches meeting in school halls, classrooms, town halls, or any other facility "owned" by the state. In 1998, when the government announced their intention to close all Christian Community Radio Stations in the country, we promptly mobilised and marched 10,000 people and persuaded the politicians to run up the white flag and recognise the rights of Christian Community Radio stations to exist. When legislation was drafted to infringe on the freedom of Christian schools and other independent private education, we mobilised thousands more to protest and persuaded the politicians to back off with interfering with religious freedom. Operation Clean Sweep from 1991 to 1994 persuaded over 9,000 stores to no longer stock pornography. We should never use any excuse to justify disobedience and inactivity. "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Philippians

4:13

Too Young

There are those who declare: "I am too young for God to use me!"

David, the shepherd boy, saw himself as the youngest, of the least. Yet God raised him up.

Jeremiah protested: "'Ah, Lord God! Behold, I cannot speak, for I am a youth.' But the Lord said to me: 'Do not say, 'I am a youth,' for you shall go to all to whom I send you and whatever I command you, you shall speak. Do not be afraid of their faces, for I am with you to deliver you,' says the Lord." Jeremiah 1:6-8.

Timothy thought that he was too young, but the Apostle Paul declared: "Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity." 1 Timothy 4:12.

The Apostle John and the Evangelist John Mark and so many others, are examples of young men whom God used in a dramatic way. Esther, Ruth and Mary are examples of young maidens whom God used in powerful ways.

At the beginning of our Mission, there were many who declared that I was too young, Mozambique was closed. It was too dangerous. It was the wrong time. This was the wrong way. But looking back with hindsight, it is clear that God was the One who called, led and opened doors. If God can change you, then He can use you to change things that are wrong in this world.

Too Old

Others declare: "I am too old for God to use me!"

Moses was 80 years old when God, from the Burning Bush, called him to lead His people out of Egypt. "But Moses said to God, 'Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the children of Israel out of Egypt?'" Exodus 3:11.

"Then Moses answered and said, 'But suppose they will not believe me or listen to my voice; suppose they say, 'The Lord has not appeared to you.'" Exodus 4:1.

"Then Moses said to the Lord, 'O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue.'" Exodus 4:10.

"So the Lord said to him, 'Who has made man's mouth? Or who makes the mute, the deaf, the seeing, or the blind? Have not I, the Lord? Now therefore, go and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say.'" Exodus 4:11-12.

Caleb in his 80's could declare: "Give me that mountain!" Not satisfied with the easy tasks in the valleys and flatlands, he wanted the tougher challenges of the mountains!

Grey Haired Missionaries

Frederick Baedeker was only converted to Christ in his 40's, yet he packed the second half of his life with such strenuous journeys to evangelise Russia that would have depleted the energy of much younger and healthier men. We have seen Missionaries such as Dr. Fritz Haus, Rev. Erlo Stegen, Brother Andrew and Rev. Bill Bathman, working well into their 80's proclaiming the Gospel, teaching, serving the Lord fervently.

When Rev. Bill Bathman was in his 70's, he undertook an Africa Overland Mission, driving 8,000km from Cape Town to our Mission base in Equatoria, Sudan to deliver a vehicle and supplies to the beleaguered Christians during the war.

Reject All these Excuses for Disobedience

We need to recognise that all these lies of our age and lies, which we should never believe, are actually excuses for disobedience. You are never too old, or too young, to make a difference and be used of God. You can change. God can forgive you. God can change you and use you for His Kingdom and for His Glory.

Do Not be Deceived

The Bible continually warns us: "lest satan should take advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices." 2 Corinthians 2:11

"But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ." 2 Corinthians 11:3

"Whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the Gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them." 2 Corinthians 4:4

Spiritual Warfare

That is why we are to "Put on the whole Armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the Heavenly places." Ephesians 6:11-12

"Thus says the Lord: 'Cursed is the man who trusts in man and makes flesh his strength, whose heart departs from the Lord... Blessed is the man who trusts in the Lord and whose hope is the Lord... The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked..." Jeremiah 17:5-9

"He who trusts in his own heart is a fool, but whoever walks wisely will be delivered." Proverbs 28:26

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