

Pure Hearts – Pr Jim Sprengle – (LWML) Lutheran Women’s Missionary League Sunday – October 10, 2021

- I. **1 Peter 1:22** – “²² Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart” ¹
- II. **I want to begin today’s message with a question for you...**
 - a. Why did you come to church today? What motivated you to get up, get ready, and get here?
 - b. All of us drive by many different churches as we go around town... and many of them have welcome signs.
 - i. I’m not sure about you, but I would find it pretty hard to go into a random church just to see what I might experience.
 - ii. However, if I knew someone in that church – a friend or someone I respected who invited me... then I would feel much better.
 - iii. It might get my defenses to come down a little, and it gives that place a little more credibility in my mind.
 - iv. So, back to my question, what motivated you to come to our church today? I think the beginning of the answer is the people... you.
 - c. So today is LWML Sunday.
 - i. As I mentioned earlier, “LWML” stands for the “Lutheran Women’s Missionary League” which supports mission and outreach efforts as an auxiliary of our church body, the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod.
 - ii. The word “missionary” in their name means that they help fund mission all around the world – including our own servant event and soccer clinic... and our Guatemala mission people Child Beyond received funding for a medical mission bus as well.
 - iii. Do you know how that’s done? The funding for mission? With those little mite boxes that we throw our change in... and all those little bits add up to millions of dollars...
 - d. As we think about 1 Peter 1:22, “love one another earnestly from a pure heart” – I’d like you to look at the cover of your bulletins and the logo...
 - i. “Our Hearts in HIS Hand.”
 - ii. Think about a heart in a hand... I mean literally, think about holding a real heart in your hand.
 1. That’s exactly what a transplant surgeon would do... take out the diseased heart with their hand and put in a new one.
 2. God did that for us – for you and me too...
 - iii. There’s a heart in a hand, and see the cross and drop of water?
 1. First of all, the cross is a symbol of Jesus dying to forgive our sins... Secondly, the water is a symbol for Baptism...

- a. I talk about Baptism all the time, but it's important to remember that it gives us a new heart... a heart that is able to take in all the benefits that Jesus won.
 - iv. Last week I talked about the prophet Ezekiel and God's promise... "I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you," (Ezek. 36:26)
 - 1. Well, God kept His promise... because we have a new heart...
 - 2. And the heart you get from a surgeon will only last a finite number of years... but the new heart God gives us through Baptism allows us to live forever.

III. **So why did God give us this "transplant", what's wrong w/ the old one?**

- a. Because I have inside my heart... thoughts and feelings, ideas, and urges that are sinful... and none of us sitting here today can say that we're perfect, or that our hearts are pure.
- b. Every human being is born with something called original sin, which got passed down from person to person since Adam and Eve.
- c. The problem with original sin is that it comes out of us in the form of actual sin – meaning what's in our hearts will sooner or later come out in what we do... or what we fail to do.
- d. So this sin in us, original sin and the actual sins we commit daily, is what we call the Old Adam.
 - i. Yes, the Old Adam is even in us who are forgiven... thank the Lord He forgives us... but we don't stop sinning until we die.
 - ii. When the day comes that we close our eyes for good, we are released completely from our Old Adam... the sin in us.
- e. I guess that is the wonderful mystery of Baptism.
 - i. You see, Baptism not only brings us the forgiveness of Jesus Christ – right now... but also gives us grace to live a new and holy life – right now.
 - ii. St. Paul says that we were buried ... with [Christ] by baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life (Romans 6:4).
 - iii. It's a mystery... but Baptism is our death and new birth every day.
 - 1. I always look at the cross in my shower remembering my Baptism as the Old Adam is drowned, and the New Adam rises.
 - iv. So in Baptism and faith, God has mysteriously given us a new heart, a pure heart... which in turn is able to pour out God's love.

IV. **Listen to verse 22 again...**

- a. "Having purified your souls by your obedience to the truth for a sincere brotherly love, love one another earnestly from a pure heart." (1 Pet. 1:22).
 - i. Now, I want to clarify, we don't purify our own souls by obedience...

1. In other words, we don't obey God to get forgiveness and a pure heart, but only God does that by grace...
 - ii. So maybe we can just paraphrase it this way: Now that the cross of Jesus has come into your hearts through Baptism, love one another.
- b. Once again, our LWML logo shows how this whole thing works...
 - i. The cross, or forgiveness, comes through Baptism into our hearts... and every new heart is surrounded by a much bigger heart... which is the church, and all of it is in God's hand.
- c. You could say the Church is a place with a big heart.
- d. When I asked what motivates to you come to church... a big part of the answer is the people.
 - i. As we gather – which certainly changed a lot during Covid – but being here in person is different than online or recording.
 - ii. When we gather around the Word, it is the best reason for coming together...
- e. I suppose when we look at worship in that way – the gathering place of many hearts around God's Word – then nowhere else measures up.
 - i. We have many clubs and organizations that we belong to... even fitness clubs and hanging out with friends.
 - ii. That's totally fine, but isn't there something different about being together here... something unique and special about a fellowship of believers, who gather around the Word of God, our Baptisms and the Lord's Supper?
 - iii. That's a part of how we "love one another earnestly from a pure heart"... and a powerful reason we come to church.
- V. **And we might stop there**, but we are called to love outside the Church too.
 - a. Jesus is not okay just holding us in His hand.
 - b. He is all about reaching out His hand out to others.
 - i. Consider all those times in the Gospels when Jesus reached out to the leper (Mark 1:41), the people outside the Jewish faith (Mark 5:1), the lowly little children (Mark 10:16), and all those who needed a new heart.
 - ii. Today, Jesus reaches out His hand through... you... and me...
 1. He wants to give life to people who don't know about His love – people who have spiritually diseased hearts and desperately need a new heart.
 2. Remember all those organizations outside the church, like civic organizations, clubs and groups, and whatever else?
 3. It's awesome when you are involved in those organizations... because you have the chance for an invitation...

- a. You can be with people who are struggling and hurting – you can be a part of their hopes and joys, and if they don't know Jesus, you can invite them!
- c. This is what the LWML is all about – sharing Jesus... and I thank God for their example in our church and the world.
- d. So take this logo home to remember the new heart God has given you, and the big heart that reaches out with love... to everyone! Amen.

¹ Sermon based on Dr. Dale A. Meyer's LWML Sunday resources