Guard Your Heart

Proverbs 4:23

Synopsis

This sermon considers the duty of every Christian to guard their heart. This passage teaches us that the heart of a person, is the person. And what we put in our heart, will impact every aspect of our life. As Christians, we have been given a new heart by God, but we have to guard it, and protect it from every pollutant and corruption. While many don't think much about how important it is to guard our heart, faithful maturing Christians know that this is a command of the greatest importance.

Sermon Outline

***Primary Proverb**: "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life."*

1. Exposition
    a. Keep your heart with all vigilance
    b. For from it flow the springs of life
2. Application
    a. Guard your heart against the enemy's advances
    b. Guard your heart against the first motions of sin
    c. Guard your heart against spiritual leprosy
    d. Guard your heart against false loves
    e. Guard your heart against false teaching

Reflection & Discussion Questions

1. **Observing the Text**: First, make sure to have your group spend time looking at the text, and observing the text without reflecting on the sermon. You want the group to get familiar with the text, and the words, and the flow of thought. Keep making observations until you feel the group has a solid grasp of the entire text.

2. **Doctrinal/Theological Question – Original Sin**: The biblical doctrine of original sin teaches us that we are all born with a nature of sin, in other words a corrupt and broken heart that is in need of salvation to come from beyond us. This is opposed to the modern philosophy of the "authentic self," that deep down inside each of us is a pure innocent version of ourselves.

a. What are the places in culture where you see this man-made philosophy of the authentic self on display?
b. How does the biblical doctrine of Original Sin offer a clear and true response to these false ideologies.

Leader Note: If you need a helpful guide on this topic, see this article on the Gospel Coalition.

3. In the application to 'guard your heart against the enemy's tactics', we discussed how the media we consume can function like an open door for the enemy to gain access into our life.
    a. Have you seen this in your own life?
    b. In light of this passage, are you striving to guard your heart when it comes to the media you consume?
    c. Be specific with each other, what are your boundaries on film and television, and why?

4. In the sermon we discussed that we must guard our heart against spiritual leprosy, growing lukewarm or numb towards the things of God.
    a. How do you guard against this?
    b. Have you ever fallen into a season of being spiritually number before? What brought you back?
    c. How do we best help those around us who have fallen into a season like this?

5. In the sermon we discussed that we must guard our heart against false doctrine. Discuss the importance of growing in our knowledge of scripture and doctrine.
    a. What can you do to grow in your knowledge of scripture and doctrine?
    b. What resources have you used that have most helped you?
    c. What "false doctrine" have you encountered recently?

For Family Discipleship

This week talk to your children about guarding their heart. Ask them what they feel are the values that your family holds dear. Have a discussion around those values. And then offer a short lesson on how we must protect our heart to make sure that even if others hold to different values than us, or try to influence us towards different values, that we protect our heart and make sure that we hold those values tight.

For Men and Women

For Men: The sin that was particularly discussed as unique to men was the need to prove ourselves as worthy, strong, or having what it takes. Have you seen this sin in your own life or in other men's lives around you? How do we go about mortifying this sin from our life.

For Women: The sin that was particularly discussed as unique to women was comparison. Have you seen this sin in your own life or in other women's lives around you? How do we go about mortifying this sin from our life.