



Proverbs 4:23

***Above all else,
guard your heart,
for everything you do
flows from it.***

PURITY OF HEART

Ruby's Story

Philippians 4:8

****Whatever is true***

****Whatever is noble***

****Whatever is right***

****Whatever is pure***

****Whatever is lovely***

****Whatever is admirable***

If anything is excellent or praiseworthy—

Think about such things.

Introduction

The word “heart” is used 105 times in 98 verses in the New Testament, and 725 instances in the King James version of the Old Testament; signaling it to be the emotional, spiritual, and mental center of a person. Therefore, when we speak of the heart in this manner, it must be considered as the epicenter of man’s inner most being.

Consequently, in Matthew 6: 21, the purpose for Jesus boldly stating, **“Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also”**, was made abundantly clear to individuals then, as well as today.

Adding to this focus, read out loud the Scripture from Romans 10:9, **“If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation.”**

Yet, as we read on in Scripture that our hearts are wicked, and that we are born with a natural predisposition towards sin, our mere human minds become puzzled, don’t they? Scratching our heads, we probably ask, “How in the world am I to remedy this situation, especially, given the state of the human condition?” Have you ever met a seemingly perfect individual that always demonstrates total purity, where malice and guile are absent? This writer certainly has not. Thus, if you have observed someone good-naturedly interacting with another person in an incredibly pure manner, you might have even heard him/her labeled as a “goody two shoes”; cruel words from another, perhaps brought on by feelings of one’s own inadequacy.

Yet, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus exclaims, **“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”** However, since his children are innately sinful, how can this be? Afterall, God is holy and without sin; so much that the children of Israel dared not even call him by name.

However, when our Lord refers to the importance of purity of heart within his children, he is speaking about those, although still sinful, whose sins have been forgiven through repentance, followed by a renewal on the inside; all because he now lives within their heart. In other words, the transformation from inside that is occurring due to the presence of Jesus in the lives of each person; allows one to conclude that purification is only possible through Christ, not from the actions of a single human being. Without God, nothing is possible.

At this point, although we still are imperfect beyond measure as mere humans, it does mean that after making a commitment to Christ, he is then firmly established as Lord of our lives. Given this action, you might declare, “Now I am home free. I am all set! Isn’t that right?” Read on friends and see what is expected from members residing in the kingdom of God.

Although, for certain your name is now written in the Lambs Book of Life for all eternity, in addition, as his followers, we should be so in love with him that we allow him to become our Shepherd every moment in time; meaning, we listen to his still small voice for guidance and encouragement. This new relationship, if cultivated through reading Scripture and prayer, will motivate us to become so in love with him that others will see his reflection through, not only

our countenance, but also our behavior. Simply stated, a closer walk with Jesus will truly cause him to be our One and Only! The thought of life without him will be horrifying; just like sheep minus a shepherd; without his rod and staff, the journey of life would be impossible. On the other hand, through his guidance, the road home will be within our site always and forever.

Then, no matter the circumstances we must endure in this life, our Lord will be right beside us the entire way. Sometimes, we might avoid pitfalls through his guidance, while in other instances, be given the strength and courage to face even the most difficult of challenges.

Ruby's Story

Ladies and gentlemen, it was under the most difficult of circumstances for one of God's truly precious children that the story belonging to Ruby that you will now read, began and ended. Given the fact that she had been bedridden for a long period of time, it is the only image of her the writer will ever possess.

Also, since she was still so mentally astute, and having to spend such long hours alone, totally confined to her room, the writer was assigned to walk beside her the rest of the road home; meaning until her earthly journey was no more.

Since she spent every hour, both waking and sleeping in bed, one would imagine her heart to be filled with bitterness and anger. However, in the case of God's child, Ruby, it was just the opposite; so much so, that both staff and strangers gravitated to her bedside like bees to honey. Due to her sweet countenance, young and old alike desired her company.

Perhaps, if you refer back to her picture above on the second page, you will immediately solve the mystery as to her popularity. Note the peaceful, kind, welcoming eyes; all due to being totally saturated by the love that poured continuously from her heart.

Certainly, a case that proved this to be true was when a young man named Preston, still in elementary school, met her out of the clear blue one day, and was so smitten that he was convinced that she would thoroughly enjoy hearing him read his all-time favorite book.

Therefore, in preparation for this event, he not only repeatedly practiced reading his chosen book, but also carefully selected his wardrobe. Thus, prior to the big day, he proudly modeled his chosen garments for his grandmother that consisted of his favorite jeans, shirt, cap, and his grandfather's tie, (that totally clashed and reached his knees), all just for his new friend.

Consequently, when the date rolled around, feeling great confidence that he was well prepared and dressed to the nines, he entered Miss Ruby's room with great pomp and circumstance, calling out, "Hello Miss Ruby, I could not wait to see you. I have my favorite story here under my arm that I know you will want to hear!"

In response, her face absolutely glowed with delight upon seeing this young fellow; a little guy that immediately was saturated by the bountiful love that streamed tenderly from her heart.



Ladies and gentlemen, these two children of God, though generations removed, were so well suited for one another that they fit just like a glove. Having taught all ages of children in a one room school, this offered the opportunity for Ruby, the retired teacher, to use skills she had honed so well earlier on in life. On the other hand, the little boy she was meeting for the first time, was hungry for love due to difficult circumstances he was having to endure, and was like a sponge waiting for the moisture of her affection.

Therefore, as Preston read his story that centered on a pony, Miss Ruby asked him to imitate the sound the animal made; a request that caused him to look at her with a totally blank expression. Thus, immediately realizing this little boy had not been around horses, she began to whinny just like a horse; a reaction that caused the room to be filled with laughter; behavior that prompted bystanders to playfully follow suit. At this point, are you imagining the sounds coming out of Miss Ruby's room? Folks, in just a few moments spent together, these two special people formed an everlasting bond. In short, they both gave and received equally; behavior that served as a poignant example of the love that flowed from this great lady's heart; truly a reflection of Jesus at work in her life.

Let the photograph speak to your heart.



Now that you have an idea of Miss Ruby's personality and the impact, she had on everyone she met, even though bedridden, you are now able to ascertain why people enjoyed her company so much. Certainly, the writer can attest to the fact that not once did Miss Ruby wear any expression on her face other than a smile; an amazing happening given the fact that she was enduring so much physical pain.

No matter, this was a child of God who was absolutely unstoppable when it came to impacting her fellowman. Not allowing her limitations to get in her way, when the writer invited her to be interviewed by the local newspaper, she replied with a resounding, "Yes!" It did not bother her one bit to speak and be photographed as a bedridden nursing home resident. Thus, as you might imagine, the interviewer and photographer fell immediately in love with her.

In addition, when the writer asked if she would serve as a model for a book that was in the works called "In Gramme's Shoes"; a project that meant a young artist would need to be in her company for a large amount of time, with great eagerness, she consented.

Therefore, over time, it was interesting to note that Miss Ruby's walk with God that had begun at a very early age, now served as the firm foundation she would use for climbing the final mountain of her earthly life; all the while, holding to his unchanging hand. Given this intimate relationship, it is no wonder she handled her life experiences with such grace and humor.

One example of this was, as a young woman, having obtained her teaching degree from the University of Central Missouri, then called a teacher's college, she taught in a one room school located in a rural area; a position that required flexibility on her part. Therefore, the stories she told about her time with the students would sometimes cause the two of us to laugh until tears rolled down our cheeks; especially when she recounted the unique gift a young man brought to her that caused the entire box that held it to rock and roll in her hands. You see, he loved Miss Ruby so much that he bestowed on her his favorite pet; that being an enormous black snake. Hiding her fear, she accepted the gift with such grace that he left, raring his shoulders back and wearing a big grin that met his eyes.

Then, over time, having discovered that Miss Ruby and the writer were both alumni from the same university, a unique surprise was prepared just for her. Journeying to the university, the writer met with the staff regarding this special student, now in her 90's, that had graduated with a teaching certificate many years prior, and invited them to assist in a planned celebration.

As a result, one day, a large package arrived to the nursing home addressed to Miss Ruby that sent her into a state of awe and wonder. Spotting the return address as that of her old alma mater, her mouth dropped open and her eyes absolutely sparkled with excitement. Beneath the wrapping paper, she found a personal letter addressed to her along with an assortment of memorabilia; all treasures that she examined carefully for a very long time. Folks, as the writer looked on through watery eyes, her greatest wish was that other people in the extended community could witness this special happening. In doing so, the importance of reaching out to the elderly through community service would be paramount in their priorities.

Another thing that came to light during the relationship between the writer and Miss Ruby was how much she had done in the community as a mother, grandmother, and citizen. Having adopted her son when he was only 3 days old, her role as a mother always took special preference in her life. Unable to have biological children of her own, he was more priceless than gold to this sweet lady. When she spoke about him, the love that shone on her face made it glow with a radiant brilliance; a reaction that let the world know how much she adored this gift from God. As they enjoyed one another's company, it felt as though you could literally physically touch the adoration with your fingers, they each exuded.

Then, just prior to Christmas one year, it was obvious that Miss Ruby's time on earth was quickly reaching its conclusion. Now in her nineties, her physical body was simply wearing out;

so much that it was difficult for those attending her to witness the suffering she endured every moment of her existence. Thus, although the wonderful team from hospice tenderly and professionally met her every need, many of those that loved her began praying for God to take her home.

Unfortunately, Miss Ruby just seemed to linger endlessly; never displaying any signs of anxiety, but appearing to simply be patiently waiting... waiting...waiting. Concerned for her friend, the writer would spend many hours at her side reading Scripture, praying, and singing her favorite hymns as a way of showing support.

Then, one day, after leaving her company, and totally overcome with sadness, the writer pulled her car over to the side of the road, placed her head on the steering wheel, and loudly pleaded with God. Filled with unbearable sorrow that Miss Ruby was in such a state of suffering, the writer cried out, "Why? Why? Why? She has been a faithful follower of yours all her life. Why are you not taking her home? When will it all end? Her physical body is literally rotting away!"

Thus, having reached her office just a few minutes after this intense conversation with God, and sorting through the mail on her desk, the writer opened a Christmas card that felt like a hot potato. You see, the words that appeared to jump off the card into the writer's face read, "BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD!" Startled, the writer jumped up and dropped the card as if it had burned her skin. In the writer's mind, God was saying, "Back off. It is impossible for you to think like your Creator. You don't have any idea what is going on. Be quiet!"

As a result of this conversation, the writer apologized to God through prayer and assured him she had learned her lesson.

Consequently, just a few days later, the writer learned that a family member was immensely struggling with Miss Ruby's departure. Fully cognizant of the challenge, out of love, Miss Ruby was willing to suffer as long as needed; all the while trusting in God to handle the issue. And... that is what happened. She waited patiently, hour after hour, trusting her Great Promise Keeper to handle it in his own way.

Thus, in God's good and perfect time, Miss Ruby departed to her heavenly home and joined the saints around the throne.



**“Blessed are the pure
in heart for they shall
see God.”**

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THAT YOU WILL ENJOY CAN BE FOUND ON
WWW.DEVOTIONALEMBERS.COM, TITLED:**

“IN GRAMME’S SHOES”

