

2 Tim. 4:10,14). Are you and I following Jesus' example as did Paul and many others? We will give answer to God!

**Remember:** "Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; reprove [even when they do not like it], rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine. <sup>3</sup>For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; <sup>4</sup>And they shall turn away *their* ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables. <sup>5</sup>But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (2 Tim. 4:2-5).

**Please consider the following questions:**

- ♥ Will we follow God, or men?
- ♥ Will we give in to those who have "itching ears"?
- ♥ Do we seek to please men, or God (cp. Gal. 1:10)?
- ♥ Do we want to be politically correct with men, or free from their blood (Ezekiel 3:17-21; Acts 20:26-28; Col. 1:28, above) and therefore right with God?
- ♥ Do we fear men more than God (Matt. 10:28)?
- ♥ Do we really love, even our own families, when we do not warn them of things of eternal damnation?
- ♥ Are we willing to see our loved ones lost rather than upset them?
- ♥ Why should we be afraid (cp. Acts 18:9)?
- ♥ Why should we be ashamed (Mark 8:38)?
- ♥ Where is our love (Matt. 10:37 below; 22:37)?
- ♥ Will we follow God in all things?
- ♥ Is our heart right with God?

"He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me" (Matt. 10:37).

"O that there were such an **heart** in them,  
that they would fear me,  
and keep all my commandments always,  
that it might be well with them,  
and with their children for ever"  
(Deut. 5:29)! ♥



## "Hold fast the form of sound words"

SW

(2 Tim. 1:13 cp. Tit. 1:9; Jude 3)

SW

### Church of Christ (Rom. 16:16) Mission USA

Perry Sexton 1763 Highway 166 N. Mt. Pleasant, TN 38474

Email: [jpsexton@peoplepc.com](mailto:jpsexton@peoplepc.com)

Website: [www.mission-usa.org](http://www.mission-usa.org)

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## One Sermon: Four Hearts

by Perry Sexton

**Heart # 1** asked the preacher not to mention denominational names that morning because her son was visiting and it would upset him. The preacher's lesson that morning was "Identifying the True Church." The preacher did not intentionally want to make anyone angry, but he wanted to warn the audience of denominational error and the sinfulness of division. Naturally, and without even thinking about it a couple of denominational names were mentioned in representation of the whole denominational world: Division is sinful (1 Cor. 1:10-13); our Lord prayed for unity (John 17:20,21), etc.

**Heart # 2** (the son) passed by the preacher after the sermon and extended the usual pleasantries. No indication was given that he was upset.

**Heart # 3** came by with tears in his eyes, and said to the preacher that he was the only who was ever able to convince him that the church of Christ is the one and only church. The preacher told him that now that he had come to that conclusion he needed to act on it and obey the gospel.

**Heart # 1** said nothing to the preacher after the sermon at the church building but rather avoided him. Later she told the preacher she was angry with him because **heart # 2** (her son) was really upset and said he was never going back to the church of Christ.

**This was the preacher's last service there** because he was only temporary, and was leaving that afternoon going to another congregation on his way to his next work. Before leaving, the preacher told **heart # 1** about **heart # 3**, who was her brother and visiting from out of town that morning. The preacher told **heart # 1**

what **heart # 3** had said about being convinced that the church of Christ was the only true church. The preacher admonished **heart # 1** to encourage her brother (**heart # 3**) and to study with him further, and to encourage him to obey the gospel.

**Some months passed** and the preacher's wife called **heart # 1** to encourage her and see how things were going. In the conversation **heart # 1** said again how she was upset with the preacher because of mentioning denominational names. The preacher's wife also found out that **heart # 3 had passed away** and had never obeyed the gospel. **Heart # 1** had not studied with him, nor did she encourage anyone else to study with him. She simply did nothing!

**Heart # 4** had the courage, the love of God, and the love for lost souls to preach the truth on this matter and to make it as plain as he could, even though he knew **heart # 1** and perhaps other members there would be upset with him. In fact, he suspected that several would be upset with him because of the sermon.

**Herein is seen a great problem in the church** today and is one of the major reasons we are dwindling in numbers, in my opinion. Many of us have lost our love for God, His Word, and the lost. How can one say he loves God and His Word when he will not obey God (cp. John 14:15; Eph. 5:11)? Clearly anyone who will see knows that our members, and a great number of preachers among us are not warning the lost about denominational error. It is not politically correct, and in the minds of many it is more important to be politically correct than to preach as God would have us to preach.

If **heart # 1** had been right with God, would she not have stood with the preacher on this very important matter? And therefore stood with God? The preacher taught the truth and showed much more love for **heart # 1's own son and brother** than she did.

If **heart # 1** had the right heart, she also would have warned her son and brother of the sinfulness of being in a denomination; and that there is only one church wherein salvation is found. Had this been done through the years she may not have lost her son to the denominations in the first place. And she may have converted her brother before he went into eternity – lost forever! It is certain that with the position of her heart she will never convert her son from a devil's hell, like she did not convert her brother!

**God warns us to warn them.** Learn (Rom. 15:4) from this: "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them **warning** from me. <sup>18</sup> When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou

givest him **not warning**, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked *man* shall die in his iniquity; **but his blood will I require at thine hand.** <sup>19</sup> Yet if thou **warn** the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; **but thou hast delivered thy soul.** <sup>20</sup> Again, When a righteous *man* doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou **hast not given him warning**, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; **but his blood will I require at thine hand.** <sup>21</sup> Nevertheless if thou **warn** the righteous *man*, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, **because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul**" (Ezekiel 3:17-21).

**Paul preached the whole council of God** and therefore was free from the blood of all men (Acts 20:26-28). Note what Paul said, "Whom we preach, **warning** every man, and **teaching** every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus:" (Col. 1:28). "I write not these things to shame you, **but as my beloved sons I warn you**" (1 Cor. 4:14).

**It is amazing how in any other realm of life people can see and understand**, but in religion many seem to not want to understand. Consider: "And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall **not understand**; and seeing ye shall see, and shall **not perceive**: <sup>15</sup> **For this people's heart is waxed gross**, and *their* ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes **they have closed**; lest at any time they should see with *their* eyes, and hear with *their* ears, and should understand with *their* heart, and should be converted, and I should heal them" (Matt. 13:14-15).

**For example:** Do you warn your children of poisons and **identify the poison**? And a great host of other things and **identify them**! A good parent does. When it comes to matters of eternal importance do you warn your loved ones and friends and indeed all people as you have opportunity? Many in the church do not. Many will not even stand with the preacher and therefore God when the preacher does warn according to God's Word. Perhaps the members are this way today because their preachers want to tickle ears.

**Jesus warned of false teachers and therefore error** (Matt. 7:15). Jesus **identified** the ones who taught the error in His day (cp. Matt. 16:6,11; Mark 12:38, etc.). Paul, and surely all the faithful of God have done so and still do so (please read Phil. 3:2; 1 Tim. 1:20;