

MCC Midweek Devotion

Thursday - June 18th - 2020

Alyssa Rousseau

Scripture Passage: Hebrews 4:12-16 - "For the word of God is live and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account. Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has ascended into heaven, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are - yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need." (NIV)

Devotional: I admit I was rather insecure in writing this devotional. I was afraid that it was too similar to the devotional that Jeremy wrote just a few weeks ago. But after prayer and contemplation, this is where the Holy Spirit has led me - to a call for confession and repentance. I will start by confessing my pride. I believe it was pride that drove this fear of writing this devotional. I believed I knew better than the Holy Spirit who led me to this topic, saying to myself, "no, that can't be right, there must be something else, something better to talk about." I also believed that my pride would be hurt because others may think that I am taking the easy way out by tagging along with Jeremy's original devotional.

This passage from Hebrews elaborates about God's omniscience of our hearts. There is NOTHING that I can feel, think, or do without God being aware of it. What I find is that oftentimes I hide in my own sin, thinking if I could just change my behavior then I won't have to deal with the brokenness within me that leads me to those sinful actions or inactions. But that is clearly not how it works. Jesus explains multiple times throughout the gospels that it is from within the heart that sin originates (i.e. Mark 7:20-23, Matthew 15:18-19). While reading the book *Soul Care* I was convicted of glossing over my heart to deal with the behavior of my sin; in the book, Dr. Rob Reimer explained that if I get my behaviors in line without dealing with the condition of my heart, I will become a Pharisee at best.

I have spent a lot of time through various retreats, conversations, and book studies looking deep into my past woundedness and how that affects how I operate today. This is hard and quite frankly annoying work that is, in my experience, also absolutely necessary and liberating. Because it is unenjoyable to me, I feel that once I look at sin in my life and where it originated in my heart I like to think of it as over and dealt with, never to be looked at again. Sin is not a single random act of the heart but rather a result of the condition of my heart and it needs to be continually addressed. Earlier in chapters 3 and 4 of Hebrews, the author references a passage from Psalms THREE different times. The reference says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." The author explains how God specifically created a day called "today". And today is that day, whether you are reading this on Thursday, June 18, 2020 or on August 30, 2023. That means that TODAY you can choose whether you will harden your heart or receive the mercy and grace offered to us when we approach God's throne of grace with confidence.

Spend some time today reflecting on this passage, acknowledging any hardness in your heart, and confessing and repenting of your sin. I pray that you are blessed by these words that the Spirit has brought to my heart for you today.