

NORTHEAST HOUSTON COMMUNITY CHURCH

Sermon: Why Does God allow Evil Pt 4?

Evil is not the Result of Our Freewill

Scripture Text: Deuteronomy 30:15–20

10/28/2018

"You are not what you think you are; you are what you think"

----(Prov 23:7*7 For as he thinks in his heart, so is he...)

Deuteronomy 30:15–20 (NKJV) ¹⁵ “See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil, ¹⁶ in that I command you today to love the LORD your God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His commandments, His statutes, and His judgments, that you may live and multiply; and the LORD your God will bless you in the land which you go to possess. ¹⁷ But if your heart turns away so that you do not hear, and are drawn away, and worship other gods and serve them, ¹⁸ I announce to you today that you shall surely perish; you shall not prolong *your* days in the land which you cross over the Jordan to go in and possess. ¹⁹ I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that* I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live; ²⁰ that you may love the LORD your God, that you may obey His voice, and that you may cling to Him, for He is your life and the length of your days; and that you may dwell in the land which the LORD swore to your fathers, to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to give them.”

Is Evil the Result of Our Free Will?

Evil is not the result of man’s free will. I believe that evil is the satanic influence upon man’s heart to choose, to exercise what he thinks is freewill and do evil.

Acts 5:3–4 (NKJV) 3 But Peter said, “Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? 4 While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.”

We understand that the main source of physical life is in the blood

Leviticus 17:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ For the life of the flesh is in the blood, ...’ and the blood comes from the physical heart pumped throughout the whole body. The heart is the center of our physical life.

Now the Spiritual heart, sometimes referred as the metaphorical heart, the figurative heart or the symbolic heart is the center of our being, the center of what we believe, how we think, and what we do.

When Jesus was asked “What is the greatest commandment?” His answer included the “spiritual heart’.

Deuteronomy 6:5 (NKJV) ⁵ You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

The preponderance of biblical passages, however, speak of the ‘heart’ as the central, defining element of the human person. The term possesses the nuance of “centrality” since it is used in the Scriptures to refer literally to the inner most part of things, including that of the sea (*Exod. 15: 8; Psa. 46: 2 (NIV); Jonah 2: 3*), the heavens (*Deut. 4: 11,*) and the earth (*Matt. 12: 40*).

In Hebraic thought the heart is comprehensive in its operations as the seat of the intellectual and religious life of a human being (e.g., *Deut. 6: 5; 2 Chron. 16: 9; Ezek. 6: 9; 14: 3*).

Because of this ultimate and vital role, to know a person's heart is to know the actual person. It is the mirror image of a man or woman.

Proverbs 27:19 (NLT) ¹⁹ *As a face is reflected in water, so the heart reflects the real person.*

Thus, while others may take pride in appearance or look outwardly upon the bodily frame, God knows what constitutes a person's essential self, and casts his penetrating gaze upon the heart (*1 Sam. 16: 7;*).

1 Samuel 16:7 (NKJV) ⁷ *...For the LORD does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart.*"

It is the heart of man that defines him before God.

Jesus offers a warning about earthly and heavenly treasures as contrasting options for a person's basic pursuit in life, stating "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (*Matt. 6: 19-21; cf. Luke 12: 33-34*). Once one's treasure is identified, the heart will not be far behind. Jesus knew that the kind of treasure occupying one's heart will manifest itself in practical ways through patterns of speech and conduct.

So, with all that said the questions some have asked is, "when God created man, did he put evil into the character of man and we cannot do anything about it?"

Heaven forbid, the answer is a resounding NO. God did not put evil in the hearts of every man.

Evil began in the heart of Satan while in heaven (*Isaiah 14:12-14*)

Satan was perfect until pride and iniquity was in his heart. (*Ezekiel 28:15-17*). He chose same characteristics to influence men to use man's God given freewill to do his evil will.

We can identify the devil's evil will by the list in Mark 7.

Mark 7:21-23 (KJV 1900) ²¹ **For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders,** ²² *Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:* ²³ *All these evil things come from within, and defile the man.*

How can we, mortal men and women guard against the evil one?

I know I covered this last week but it is worth covering again.

1. Pray to God to deliver us from the evil one. (*Luke 11:4*)
2. Be strong in knowing that Jesus has also prayed for us to be kept from the evil one. (*John 17:15*)
3. Be stronger knowing that the Lord will guard us from the evil one. (*2 Thessalonians 3:3*)

If we allow Jesus into our hearts there will be no room for Satan.

Jesus has done and is still doing His part but there is a part for us to do also.

James 4:7 (NKJV) ⁷ *Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.*

If we submit to God, we will have the strength and help to resist the devil and he will leave for easier prey.

Submitting to God is an act of the heart. We can do so if we will prepare our hearts to seek the Lord.

2 Chronicles 12:13-14 (NKJV) ¹³ *Thus King Rehoboam strengthened himself in Jerusalem and reigned.* ¹⁴ *And he did evil, because he did not prepare his heart to seek the Lord.*

We should allow God to write His laws in our minds through studying the Bible and allow Him to put them in our hearts and write them on our hearts.

Jeremiah 31:33 (NKJV) ³³ *But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, **and write it on their hearts**; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.*

We discussed earlier that there is always a connection between evil and sin. I am confident that it is an evil thought that produce's sin. Evil thoughts come first from the heart and acts of sin follow.

Why did God send the flood?

Genesis 6:5 (NKJV) ⁵ *Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.*

Proverbs warns us to guard our hearts.

Proverbs 4:23 (NLT) ²³ *Guard your heart above all else, for it determines the course of your life.*

Psalms 119:11 (NKJV) ¹¹ *Your word I have hidden in my heart, That I might not sin against You.*

When we say we memorize something we say "I know it by heart." Or we have that information in our hearts.

Our focus passage, *Deuteronomy 30:15–20*, includes God giving Israel freewill to choose. It is a choice with a promise of blessings or a promise of a curse. Freewill was not the problem but the choice made using that free will.

v19 I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, *that I have set before you life and death, blessing and cursing; therefore choose life, that both you and your descendants may live.*

Our freewill choices do have consequences, they will produce blessing our cursing's.

Examples: The three Hebrew boys, Daniel, Noah, Abraham, Good kings and many others. They exercised their freewill and received blessings.

Our evil deeds begin with our thoughts either influenced by Satan or through the deceptions of Satan.

Conversely our good thoughts are influenced by our relationship with God either through His word or His Holy Spirit.

So, what we call our free will is not just our own pure choice. It is a choice that is influenced by good or evil, God or Satan. In our focus passage we read that Moses, on behalf of God is trying to influence the people to obey God's command. To make the right choice, life.

God gives us the free will to choose the right or the wrong. The ability to do so is not wrong. Freewill is not wrong nor is it a curse. Freewill was designed in man from the beginning, but not without instructions or limits.

I believe it is more of a blessing from God. The wrong is in what we choose. Often to obey or disobey.

My freewill allows me:

- To Choose to accept Christ as my savior.
- To believe God and look to spend eternity with Him.
- To preach and teach Gods word
- To participate in the building of God's kingdom
- To love the Lord with all my heart, mind and soul.

END

Message Scriptures: **Deuteronomy 30:15–20**, Acts 5:3, Leviticus 17:11, Deuteronomy 6:5, Exod. 15: 8; Psa. 46: 2 (NIV), Deut. 4: 11, Matt. 12: 40, Deut. 6: 5; 2 Chron. 16: 9; Ezek. 6: 9; 14: 3, Proverbs 27:19, 1 Samuel 16:7. Matt. 6: 19-21; cf. Luke 12: 33-34, Isaiah 14:12–14, Ezekiel 28:15–17, Mark 7:21–23, Luke 11:4, John 17:15, 2 Thessalonians 3:3, James 4:7, 2 Chronicles 12:14, Jeremiah 31:33, Genesis 6:5, Proverbs 4:23, Psalm 119:11