

## Prepare Your Heart Psalm 78:5-8

Longer passages are not quoted in the study sheet, but they can be read in the accompanying transcript.

What is in your \_\_\_\_\_? Do you have a heart prepared to \_\_\_\_\_ what God has to say? Do you have a heart prepared to \_\_\_\_\_ God? Paul said, "But the goal of our instruction is love from a \_\_\_\_\_ heart and a \_\_\_\_\_ conscience and a sincere faith" (1 Timothy 1:5). That's our goal, too! We want to have that pure heart, and a good conscience, and a sincere faith. We fervently want that for each of you as well. We want everyone to \_\_\_\_\_ and to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. That's why we go to the Lord Jesus to \_\_\_\_\_ "the words of eternal life" in Scripture. He is our hope and our delight! He is our Savior, and we need Him.

The Scriptures speak about the heart and how it is the \_\_\_\_\_ of our very being. The heart is where we think, where we feel, where we choose, where we plan, and where we determine what we will or we won't do. The Lord Jesus said, "for where your \_\_\_\_\_ is, there will your heart be also" (Matthew 6:21). Our hearts, more than anything else, \_\_\_\_\_ our character and our disposition. The heart determines whether we \_\_\_\_\_ and to what extent we'll make a commitment. Proverbs 4:23 warns, "Watch over your heart with all diligence, For from it flow the springs of \_\_\_\_\_."

If we're not careful, our hearts can \_\_\_\_\_ us. We can imagine something is true because we \_\_\_\_\_ it to be true. God said, "The heart is more deceitful than all else, And is desperately sick; Who can understand it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, Even to give to each man according to his ways, According to the results of his deeds" (Jeremiah 17:9-10). Don't imagine that God doesn't \_\_\_\_\_ about our ways and our deeds. We can come to the Lord "just as we are," but we cannot \_\_\_\_\_ that way. God expects our hearts to change, to leave the things that oppose His will, and to grow to be people who delight in pleasing Him. What is in your heart?

### **Our reading today comes from Psalm 78:5-8.**

If we are to \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts to have a relationship with God, we must do four things. First, we must put our \_\_\_\_\_ in God. Proverbs 3:5-7 says, "Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And do not \_\_\_\_\_ on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your \_\_\_\_\_ straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the LORD and turn away from \_\_\_\_\_." It's easy to think that we live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century and know more than our ancient God. Of course, God is not like us. He's much \_\_\_\_\_ about life; He's seen men and women fall into the immoral traps that can \_\_\_\_\_ them. He can see the \_\_\_\_\_ that lies hidden to us. That's why we trust Him and hold to His hand.

Second, we must not forget the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. James 1:17 says, "Every good thing given

and every perfect \_\_\_\_\_ is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.” Every \_\_\_\_\_ that we enjoy comes from our Father in heaven. The Lord Jesus said, “your Father knows what you \_\_\_\_\_ before you ask Him” (Matthew 6:8). Our food, clothing, housing, and all of our spiritual blessings – \_\_\_\_\_ of them come from Him. So, we remember the Lord Jesus dying on the cross, suffering for the forgiveness of our \_\_\_\_\_. We remember His \_\_\_\_\_ to care for us, to comfort us, to strengthen us, and to never forsake us. We’re blessed to have a Father who \_\_\_\_\_ our every prayer. We cannot forget what He has done for us.

Third, we must \_\_\_\_\_ His commandments. Love and gratitude lead us to \_\_\_\_\_ and to observe what He’s taught us, His commandments. Some people think of obedience as slavery, or legalism, or a thoughtless ritual. Actually, obedience from the heart is none of these things. Jesus willingly and lovingly endured the \_\_\_\_\_, taking the form of a servant. Obedience humbles us! But it humbles us for the \_\_\_\_\_. If we wish to be great in God’s eyes, we must learn to \_\_\_\_\_ as a servant. The Lord Jesus said, “the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to \_\_\_\_\_, and to give His life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). Though He despised the shame of the cross, He endured it for the \_\_\_\_\_ that was set before Him (Hebrews 12:2).

Fourth, we must not allow ourselves to \_\_\_\_\_ stubborn and rebellious. Our deceitful hearts can lead us to \_\_\_\_\_ that we can challenge God, as if we knew more or we knew better than He does. Selfishness and pride can lead to a \_\_\_\_\_ heart and a loss of faith. It’s folly to think we can do \_\_\_\_\_ without God than with God. Proverbs 1:7 says, “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge; fools \_\_\_\_\_ wisdom and instruction.” Again Proverbs 14:15 says, “The naive believes everything, But the \_\_\_\_\_ man considers his steps.” Once more Proverbs 22:3 says, “The prudent sees the evil and hides himself, But the naive they just go on, and they’re \_\_\_\_\_ for it.” Don’t imagine that you can \_\_\_\_\_ sin, that you can \_\_\_\_\_ against God, and then go unpunished. God sees and God knows!

Instead, \_\_\_\_\_ your heart to be faithful, loving, and obedient. Build up your \_\_\_\_\_ in God and stop doubting! You’re not an accident; God \_\_\_\_\_ you! To believe that you just happened to exist is absurd. The theory of evolution is an unproven \_\_\_\_\_. Every cell in your body \_\_\_\_\_ the wisdom and the intelligence of God. Talk to any microbiologist about the complexity and the incredible resourcefulness of the human \_\_\_\_\_ and know that David was right! He said, “For You formed my inward parts; You wove me in my mother’s womb. I will give \_\_\_\_\_ to You, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made; Wonderful are Your works, And my soul knows it very well” (Psalm 139:13-14).

Prepare your heart, and do it by repentance. Repentance is a change of \_\_\_\_\_ that leads to a change in \_\_\_\_\_. We have to \_\_\_\_\_ whether we will live godly lives or ungodly lives. A godly person is one who takes God and His Word seriously. He turns away from sin and turns to righteousness because he \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord. James 4:8 says, “Draw near to God

and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and \_\_\_\_\_ your hearts, you double-minded.” A godly person \_\_\_\_\_ his old sinful ways and he \_\_\_\_\_ in doing what is right. God said, “Wash yourselves, make yourselves clean; Remove the evil of your deeds from My sight. Cease to do evil, Learn to do good” (Isaiah 1:16-17).

You prepare your heart by having the \_\_\_\_\_ of God. Nothing will cause you to love God more than gratitude. You can't remember the suffering that Jesus \_\_\_\_\_ on the cross, shedding His blood, and not be \_\_\_\_\_ that He was willing to sacrifice Himself. “We love, because He first loved us” (1 John 4:19). This love for Jesus prepares us for the cross that we must bear and the \_\_\_\_\_ we must make. We do so joyfully, knowing that our love and sacrifices \_\_\_\_\_ Him.

We don't want a hard heart; we don't want a rocky heart, or a heart choked with worries and pleasures. We want a good and honest heart. We want the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word to be planted in our hearts, and we want it to bear \_\_\_\_\_. **Read what Jesus explains in Luke 8:11-15.**

In this parable, the seed is the \_\_\_\_\_, and the different kinds of soil describe how people \_\_\_\_\_ the gospel. Some have hardened hearts that never let the seed in to germinate. The devil comes along and \_\_\_\_\_ the seed, so the person never believes or is saved. Some hearts are like the rocky soil that doesn't allow the \_\_\_\_\_ to go deep enough to keep the plant alive. These hearts \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord when times get rough. The third kind of heart is like a plant in the middle of a bunch of weeds that \_\_\_\_\_ out the water and nutrients. They cannot produce \_\_\_\_\_ because they have their hearts set on worries, and riches, and pleasures. They have no \_\_\_\_\_ for God in their hearts.

But an honest and good heart is \_\_\_\_\_ from the others. It takes in God's Word \_\_\_\_\_ and holds it fast. It doesn't let the rocks or the weeds keep it from growing and producing the fruit intended. That heart glorifies Jesus and honors the Father. It lovingly \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord and blesses others. A good heart knows how to love, how to be kind, how to forgive, how to help, and how to encourage. A good heart has hope, joy, patience, and inner peace.

A person who has a good heart given to the Lord is indeed \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount describes three important characteristics of the blessed person that is associated with the heart. First, He said, “Blessed are the \_\_\_\_\_ in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 5:3). The idea of being “poor in spirit” means that I am destitute spiritually on my \_\_\_\_\_. I know that I need the Lord; I cannot \_\_\_\_\_ myself by my own strength. The blessed man knows that apart from Christ he can do \_\_\_\_\_ (John 15:5).

Second, the Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are those who \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied” (Matthew 5:6). The prepared heart knows that it must get right and stay right with God. We must have the \_\_\_\_\_ of Jesus to cleanse us from sin; we don't want to \_\_\_\_\_ the Lord without hope. We desperately hunger and thirst for righteousness; and we must have it to \_\_\_\_\_.

Third, the Lord Jesus said, “Blessed are the \_\_\_\_\_ in heart, for they shall see God”

(Matthew 5:8). The pure in heart are not double-minded; they are \_\_\_\_\_ from guilt and sin. They've made the decision to "flee from youthful \_\_\_\_\_ and pursue righteousness, faith, love and peace, with those who call on the Lord from a pure heart" (2 Timothy 2:22). They hunger for purity and they \_\_\_\_\_ it. They will do their best to be pure in heart and mind and body. Do you have a heart that is poor in spirit, that hungers for righteousness and is pure?

A person with a prepared heart is not \_\_\_\_\_ to sacrifice. When it came time to build the \_\_\_\_\_, the Lord God told Moses, "Tell the sons of Israel to raise a contribution for Me; from every man whose heart moves him you shall raise a contribution" (Exodus 25:2). They brought their \_\_\_\_\_ offerings. In fact, they brought much \_\_\_\_\_ than was needed to build the tabernacle and were told to stop bringing any more.

The selfless Macedonians gave to the needy saints in Jerusalem, and while in a great ordeal of affliction and in deep poverty, they did it; and they did it with \_\_\_\_\_! Paul said they gave beyond their ability and begged for the \_\_\_\_\_ of participating in support of the saints. He explained, "they first gave themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God" (2 Corinthians 8:5). My friend, have you given yourself to the Lord?

A prepared heart gives of \_\_\_\_\_ generously and cheerfully. Paul taught, "Now this I say, that he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and he who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must do just as he has \_\_\_\_\_ in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (2 Corinthians 9:6-7). This is true of our \_\_\_\_\_; it's true of our \_\_\_\_\_; and our \_\_\_\_\_. Give of yourself to God. First John 4:19 says, "We love, because He \_\_\_\_\_ loved us."

Why does this matter? How we \_\_\_\_\_ of ourselves to God affects how God will \_\_\_\_\_ us in the judgment. We should all \_\_\_\_\_ God's favor and love. **Read David's advice in 1 Chronicles 28:9.** Are you seeking the Lord?

**Read what God said in Ezekiel 18:30-32.** Repentance turns the heart away from the ways of sin to the ways of God. Repentance gives us a new heart, new values, and new priorities.

We will all stand before the judgment seat of Christ one day to be \_\_\_\_\_ for what we have done, good or bad. God doesn't want to condemn us; He wants to \_\_\_\_\_ us. "The Lord is not slow about His \_\_\_\_\_, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance" (2 Peter 3:9). Love, faith, and repentance \_\_\_\_\_ our hearts for obedience. When we obey from the heart, we leave an old way of life and begin a new one. "But thanks be to God, that you who were once slaves of sin have become obedient from the heart to the standard of teaching to which you were committed, and, having been set free from sin, you become the slaves of righteousness" (Romans 6:17-18).

We \_\_\_\_\_ when we're baptized into Christ. In baptism, God \_\_\_\_\_ us with the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ according to Romans 6:3-7 and Colossians 2:12-13. It's the \_\_\_\_\_ of Christ that washes away our sins when we're baptized into His death. So, prepare your heart to obey the Lord. Don't wait another day to obey Him.