

Chapel Devotional

2021-03-26 By Major Brian Coles

The leading cause of death in North America is heart disease; heart trouble.

And if we switched those two words around, we could put our finger on something we all have to endure in life - a troubled heart.

A troubled heart affects us in many different ways.

On some days, it may come to us in the form of anxiety or low-grade depression.

On other days, it may come to us as an inner churning or a sense of discontentment, insecurity, doubt or uncertainty.

A troubled heart lacks peace and a calm assurance.

One answer to a troubled heart is a friend who will provide us with wise counsel.

While there are medications we can take to relieve pain, some of which is stress related,

medications alone cannot relieve the deep pain of a troubled heart for those who are seeking inner peace.

That takes a friend who is able to tune in to our troubles.

The importance of being sensitive to the needs of others cannot be overstated. And you don't have to have a Ph.D in biblical theology

to be used effectively as a friend, an interested listener, in the life of another who has a troubled heart.

Having said that, the better you know God's word the sharper your discernment will be and the wiser your counsel will be.

One of Solomon's sayings in Pr. 20.5 points out the value of a wise counselor. *"The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out."*

And in Pr. 18.4 we read, *“The words of a person’s mouth are deep waters, but the fountain of wisdom is a bubbling brook.”*

Those two sayings tell us, using metaphor, that there is within each of us a pool of water – often troubled water!

But notice also, that a person of insight or understanding is able to draw out what is in that deep pool of water.

For example, you may feel deeply about the circumstances in which you find yourself.

You cannot fully think through the depths of your feelings without the help of one who is able to draw out those feelings.

How important a person, a friend, like that is!

I think this is exactly what Paul had in mind when he wrote in Gal. 6.2, *“Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.”*

Because experiencing a troubled heart is so common, we can tend to overlook it in others. We can often think we are the only ones who struggle with it.

But it’s all around us! And, as I mentioned earlier, it wears many faces. Here are six specified in Solomon’s sayings.

In Pr. 12.20 we read, *“Deceit is in the heart of those who devise evil, but those who plan peace have joy.”*

Pr. 12.25, *“Anxiety [or worry] in a person’s heart weighs them down, but a good word makes them glad.”*

Pr. 14.13, *“Even in laughter the heart may ache, and rejoicing may end in grief.”*

Pr. 14.14, *“The backslider in heart will be filled with the fruit of his ways, and a good man will be filled with the fruit of his ways.”*

Pr. 18.12, *“Before his downfall a person’s heart is proud, but humility comes before honour.”*

Pr. 19.3, *“A person’s own foolishness leads him astray, yet his heart rages against the LORD.”*

If these are some of the different faces of a troubled heart, how can we detect them? Pr. 20.11 says,

“Even small children are known by their actions, by whether their conduct really pure and upright. Ears that hear and eyes that see - the LORD has made them both.”

As the verse says, the LORD has given you hearing ears and seeing eyes. It’s up to us to use them! Listen carefully. Watch the person with whom you speak. Be sensitive.

And hear well the words of Pr. 16.23-24, *“The heart of the wise makes his speech judicious and adds persuasiveness to his lips.*

Gracious words are like a honeycomb, sweetness to the soul and health to the body.”

God will be pleased to use you and your words to help someone with a troubled heart.

In fact, it would be wise for us to claim the promise God gave to Moses in Ex. 4.12: *“Now go; I will help you speak and will teach you what to say.”*

Who knows? You may be the one God wants to use this week in the life of another who is struggling with a troubled heart.