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Proverbs 15:26

Pastor Bill Farrow

“The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words.” - Proverbs 15:26.

The have been quite a number of other times, as we have looked through the Book of Proverbs and the teaching of the Prophet Solomon as he speaks to the people of God, when he speaks of the dramatic difference between acts or thoughts that demonstrate one’s nature, good/pure versus evil/wicked. This is certainly the truth here. One of the things that we MUST take to heart as we ready ourselves to think through what Solomon is saying in this verse is that there actually IS something that is wicked versus something that is pure in the way we all handle our thought and words on the basis of the time that passes by.

It seems also that we need to get to mind that there is a sure relationship between our thoughts and our words. The word “thought” is the Hebrew word “maḥšēbôt” and is used 56 times throughout the OT and is given as “thought” 28 times, “device” 12 times, “purpose” six times, “work” three times, “imagination” three times, and then as “cunning” once, “devised” once, “invented” once, and “means” once each. The basic idea is that of some mental construction that assigns meaning to the production of the mind.

The words “of the pure”, on the other hand, are the formation of a single Hebrew word with only 7 occurrences. It is the word “nō’am” and translates as “beauty” four times, “pleasant” twice, and “pleasantness” once.

The basic idea of the word is that of kindness, pleasantness, delightfulness, beauty, favor. And can be understood as delightfulness, here being a delight to God as He hears what we say. It is the basic thought of that which is as it ought to be and as one would “want” it to be and take pleasure in the usefulness of said thing or idea. When speaking of ones’ “words” it speaks of the communication being rightly appropriate to what is their intention, not hurtful or distressing.

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The implication here, and it is not merely an implication so much as it is an outright statement of truth, is that what a wicked has rattling around in their heads are an “abomination” to the Lord. We note that there is little question as to the “is it” or isn’t it and no discussion of exactly what the content of the thinking is. We must conclude that what Solomon is saying is not so much that the wicked are not capable of the acceptable thought to God so much as what their habit of thought is (it is abominable to God).

Compare 11:20.—**But pure** (in His sight) **are gracious words**, here probably specifically words sweetly consoling, words of love and compassion

toward troubled souls, comp. 16:24. Such words are in Jehovah's judgment pure or precious, *i.e.*, with a pure and genuine ring; comp. Ps. 19:8, 9 (9, 10).

Just as an aside, it is interesting to ponder a moment the truth that this is categorically the opposite of what so much of our modern era thinks about "everyone"!! Everybody is basically good - right? All men think good things and want the best for everyone! The point here is that the thoughts of ANYONE, anyone not a redeemed person, are an abomination to God. No matter what WE think of them, God, Whose evaluation is far more accurate than our own, is that they are, as it says here, an abomination! The word is the Hebrew "tô' ábat" (pronounced "tow ébah"). It speaks of a disgusting thing, that which is an abomination or is abominable. In many uses it refers to a ritual sense of that which offends God (of unclean food, idols, mixed marriages). It can also speak in an ethical sense (of wickedness etc). It is used some 117 times in the OT and sees a variety of definitions based on the context. In this case, it functions as what is called "a subjective genitive: namely, "the LORD abhors" meaning that the Lord "possesses" the abhorrence based on something inherent to Himself.

And so we need to mention that the second line has its meaning brought out in RSV: *the words of the pure are pleasing to him* (i.e. the Lord). *Thoughts* (AV, RSV), in the first line, mean 'plans', and the contrasted language of the second line emphasizes the fact that such plans are hateful to God even before they issue in words or deeds. As in quite a number of places in Proverbs, it is likely that Solomon is NOT necessarily talking about each individual word that is said, but the plan and thought that one ponders and then how those plans and thoughts work themselves out into action. Then, it follows that that what goes on in the mind and in the actions, those that are pure and acceptable to God, are far more pleasing and godly. It is these that we ought to be sure are what are what occupies our minds and work themselves out into our daily actions. If we truly wish to please our Lord and Master, we MUST be certain that they are pure and holy.

Interpretation

To take a moment to rethink the verse... We should ponder the truth that to bring out the antithesis, and meet the requirements of the Hebrew text, some transposition is needful here. Thus: "*An abomination to Jehovah are evil devices, but pure (in His sight) are gracious words*" - better expresses the original and puts the intention of King Solomon before us. The contrast is between *thoughts* of evil towards others, which are equally with injurious words hateful to God, and *gracious words* expressing gracious thoughts which He accepts as pure, having the genuine ring of true piety. Note also that it seems that Solomon's intention is to emphasize that it is entirely possible for us to see that our minds are occupied with pure and acceptable thoughts and intention and NOT wicked and abominable ones.

Illustrations

As always, there are several Biblical examples for us to see and use to drive home Solomon's point...

- There were thoughts in Cain's heart, finding expression afterwards in words and deeds (Gen. 4:8, 9), which caused *him* as well as his offering (Gen. 4:5) unacceptable to God.
- The sacrifices of the Jews in Isaiah's time were an abomination to the Lord by reason of the state of their hearts towards their afflicted brethren (Isa. 1:10–20).
- In similar manner, in Christ's parable, the Pharisee looking askance at the publican is rejected; and the unkind thoughts of Simon about the woman that was a "sinner" proclaim him unforgiven.
- Interestingly, it was special reward that were promised to those Jews of Malachi's time (and not to them only), who "*spake often one to another*"—gracious words, we may be sure, which God hearkened to and approved.

Application

By way of application, it was regarded as a very clever saying, that "*words were invented to conceal thoughts.*" But the saying is really without point, unless we banish God from His world. For to Him thoughts are words, and by them, no less than by their words, mankind will be judged. Whether carried out or not, whether uttered or suppressed, they are equally known to the all-wise Searcher of hearts. They are the seminal principles of sin, containing within them the embryo murder or adultery (Matt. 15:19). They are the index of character, for "*as (a man) thinketh in his heart so is he*" (Prov. 23:7). To be watchful over the thoughts, then, is of the essence of true religion. To be careless about the thoughts is to be careless about the soul. To indulge unkind, sarcastic, revengeful thoughts about a neighbor, though concealed by hypocritical smiles and smooth speeches, is hateful in His sight, who is "a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." But, on the other hand, how acceptable to Him are those thoughts concerning others which issue in gracious words; alas! how comparatively rare in this sorrowful world! And why? Because the heart is not naturally kind.

Be it mine as a Christian, by the grace given me, to multiply such words!
