



screen 1

What are the meditations of your heart?

These words we hear today are from Psalm 19 ... specifically verse 14 of that Psalm.



screen 2

The verse is a closing prayer

where the psalmist is asking that not only the words that are spoken from the mouth, but also the thoughts that reside in the depth of the heart ... that ALL be acceptable to God.

Now, that's a sobering thought ... its difficult enough sometimes to bite our tongue and not say what we're thinking, because it's not nice, or mean; let alone to put the thoughts of our heart before the scrutiny of God.

screen 3

This verse is a watchdog of sorts for some Jewish disciplines and practices, for instance:

The *shemirat ha-lashon* (guarding our speech)

The *hakarat tovah* (recognizing the good in others, or the kingdom of God in others)

The *ayin tovah* (choosing to see with the "good eye" or, with the "eye of the kingdom")

The *shemirat ha-lashon* (which is the discipline and practice of guarding our speech)  
 The *hakarat tovah* (recognizing the good in others, or the kingdom of God in others), and  
 The *ayin tovah* (which is the discipline & practice of choosing to see with the "good eye" or, the "eye of the kingdom")

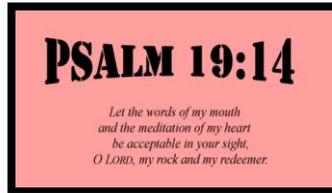
These practices and discipline generate proverbial sayings like this:

It is better to judge favorably – even if we are in error; than to  
 judge critically – even if we are telling to truth.

These practices and disciplines encourage us

to think of the thoughts of our hearts and  
 the words of our mouths ... to think of them as "prayers" we offer to God.

Have you ever considered that ??? ... that your thoughts and everyday words can be prayers you are offering to God?

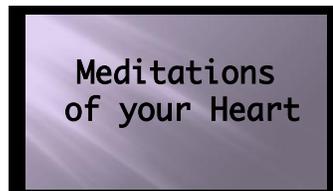


In that light ... the prayer of the psalmist

screen 4

takes on an immediacy worthy of our exploring this morning ... because if our thoughts and words can be prayers constantly offered to God – well, that’s quite extraordinary!!!

PAGE 2



So, what are the meditations of your heart?

screen 5

Understand ... that these can be prayers,  
these can be offerings to God for God’s presence, comfort , or healing  
for the distressed, the hurting, the broken.

When you think of someone’s situation, their struggle,  
their pain,  
their needs ... these can be meditations of the heart,  
not just passing thoughts, especially when  
your sense of compassion & empathy is  
awakened.

Sometimes when these thoughts (or rather, Meditations of the heart) enter our stream of conscious thinking, we feel helpless, that there is nothing we can do ... but, if they are truly meditations of the heart, you have done something, you’ve prayed for another in need.

Further, sometimes  
such meditations of the heart can lead you & inspire you,  
motivate you to take action,  
get involved,  
make a phone call or a visit,  
send a card ... whatever ...so that  
your prayer,  
your meditation takes on  
some concrete expression.

# What are the meditations of your heart?

Let me run you through a few of mine this past week



## Refugees & Immigrants

screen 6

These persons have been in the news a lot  
over the past couple of years ... Especially coming from Syria, the horn of Africa, and  
Central America.

These are people these are people fleeing  
their homes and homeland out of desperation for their safety and to escape violence.

So the meditations of my heart (as much as I can remind myself) is to put myself  
in their shoes ... I cannot imagine what it would be like to pack-up the bare essentials in a few  
bags and walk out the front door of my home with my kids in tow, to begin a  
hundreds of miles journey hoping that it will be better where I am going.

To be willing to risk life & limb in hopes of saving it;  
What would that be like ... to have that kind of desperation?  
I hold refugees in the meditations of my heart because I believe they are  
prayers for their safety and prayers for a solution to their plight.

PAGE 3



## The hurricane (Hurricane Florence) that ravaged

screen 7

the states of North and South Carolina a couple a weeks ago with massive amounts of  
rainfall and the consequent flooding ... it was all the news as it was happening, but now  
that the storm has passed and the initial reports of  
damage hit the news, you don't hear much about  
it anymore ... but it was only fourteen days ago.



screen 8

For those whose lives were dramatically changed  
in just a day or two ... This is a long term crisis and adjustment.

I've never experienced a natural disaster.

I cannot imagine the feeling of losing my home and belongings and  
having to stay in a shelter.

The prospect of almost starting over from scratch seems an ominous task at any age.

And so, I hold hurricane victims

in the meditations of my heart because I believe they are prayers for their healing and prayers for their recovery.

\*\*\*\*\*

This week



I officiated at a funeral of one of our church members, I visited another in the hospital who suffered a stroke, and I talked to a third in hospice and who has been moved to an Assisted Living Facility for more intentional assistance as her condition deteriorates .

I've too have lost loved ones to death ... I know the pain of grief. I cannot imagine the loss of speech and normal awareness that a stroke can induce. And I can only imagine the prospect of facing one's own imminent death.

These are the hard realities of life and living ... along with all the joys and uptimes we experience throughout our lives, we also live with the difficult realities of being mortal human beings.

When I come face to face with those hard realities (as many of you do) and the people facing those hard realities ... the meditations of my heart actively hover over those who are living them at any given moment.

And those meditations are prayers for God's presence,  
God's blessing,  
God's comfort & healing.

PAGE 4

Meditations of the heart ... this psalm asks that not only may the



deepest thoughts of our heart be void of judgment of others, but also that they may they be prayers on behalf of those for whom our heart goes out in compassion and empathy.

In addition, these heart meditations  
can serve as a springboard for you to act in some way so that your prayers become  
some form of action on behalf of those for whom our heart goes out.

This is a powerful verse of scripture ... may you take it home

with you today to be a guide for your words and thoughts and a prayer for those of whom  
we think about with some measure of compassion and empathy as we go through our days.

AMEN