

Jesus in my heart? How can one person be inside another?
One of the plays at the High School last night was about Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde being the same person. Is that it?
What does it mean? Can God, bigger than creation, be inside little me?

Where is my heart? My physical heart pumps blood so it is the place of power for physical life. My spiritual heart pumps love, so it the place of power for spiritual life. It is the seat of the emotions so to operate from the heart means to act out of my emotions. It is the place where compassion is, so to operate from the heart means to be moved to compassion. It is the place where my attitudes are, the location of my outlook on life. It is the place where my ability to make sacrifices is. The conscience is there. The will is there. It is the location of love

If Christ is in my heart, does that mean there won't be room for some other things there?
Well, when your spouse came into your life, did other things have to go? Yes, some of them did. When you got a new job, did other activities get cut out? Some of them did. Things that were not compatible, like staying up till all hours.
Christ is pure, sinless. He also has the power to clean out things that we're ashamed of, things that we didn't have the power to get out of there, things that, when we're in our right mind, we want out of there anyway.

Paul tells the Ephesians and us that we can have Jesus in our heart.

So I asked people in this church what it meant to have Jesus in the heart. One teacher saw it on the others at the teachers meeting this week. They care about the spirits of their students and want him to succeed in his teaching because they have Jesus. So I asked what it meant. Here are some of their answers:

Purpose and direction

I know where I'm going, not geographically but to places that Jesus is going relationally. When I get up in the morning I know why I'm doing the day's projects. The song says "I've got a hope that is steadfast and sure, since Jesus came into my heart

Makes sense out of life

What a wonderful change in my life has been wrought, light in my soul that long I have sought, since Jesus came into my heart

Accepting of people as they are

See value in each person, no matter how unlovable.

Love as Jesus loved. He cried over the Jerusalem that rejected the chances he was giving them to know God. But he still cared for the individuals who denied him.

Strength for trials. Nothing can separate us from the love of God.

Sensing joy, even through nature

When I heard this week about birds that can fly non stop for thousands of miles from north America to south America, I got the feeling again that something is going on in this world that is way beyond me. Jesus is the creator, lives in me, gives me that sense.

The glorious colors of the changing season, that rainbow on Thursday, make my heart jump because the creator is in it.

Lifestyle chosen, not just feeling

Jesus in me shows me how to choose to love people, whether I feel like it or not. Jesus gives me a desire to do the right thing, whether I'm excited about it or not.

Clean heart purity, forgiveness.

Knowing my sin, my bad habits, my failure does not stop Jesus. Sins which were many are all washed away since Jesus came into my heart

Live forever

God has put eternity in our hearts. With Christ there, we feel connected to God's life that started before our bodies and will continue after our bodies. Life is more than our temporary place in the world, and we are part of eternal time, not just temporary time.

"A light in the valley of death, I shall go there to dwell in that City, I know, since Jesus came into my heart"

A joy that's greater than happiness. Happiness is temporary and influenced by outside circumstances. But the Joy of the Lord is my strength. Knowing I am God's child, and an important part of God's family, whether I am good or not, whether I am right or not, whether I am helpful to others or not, is the source of permanent joy that cannot be taken away by outside losses. When Jesus is in the heart, he is running my life, not me. True joy springs from selflessness, from dying to self. How can you be sad if you're dead?

That's why we sang that song "I've got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart.

My reason for doing things is different. No longer am I doing things to make me feel good, but because I enjoy doing what Jesus is doing. It is like being in love with my wife. My satisfaction comes from her satisfaction, my joy comes from her joy. The things that make her happy are the things that make me happy. I get joy from pleasing her. I enjoy making her happy.

Husband and wives get better over the years at knowing what the other is thinking. "I knew you were going to say that". That doesn't come from just living in the same house, it comes from a loving desire to meet the other's needs, so trying to figure out what they are thinking. After a while we get better at it. That's what the Bible means to have the mind of Christ (Phil 2:5). With Christ in the heart, we develop a common mind. We share every feeling, every care, every joy and disappointment. And we more and more see as Christ sees, act as Christ acts.

That's why we grow in compassion. Every person is created a little lower than the angels, precious in the sight of God, every bit as special as we are. Life is sacred in its essence. So we no longer see people as things to benefit us, to manipulate for our sakes, to control to add to our lives. People are not the enemy. People are not tools.

What happens when Jesus is at the controls?

Some of us are good at meeting the needs of others, some at taking care of ourselves only. Few of us can find a good balance on our own. But Jesus knows where it is.

On our own we want to control life. But then we cut out the good surprises. With Jesus there, our control doesn't get in the way of the new surprises.

On our own, we can't find a good balance between responsibility and freedom. Jesus can.
How can we do our job well without it getting in the way of quality time with family and friends? Jesus can show us how.

How can we be humble without selling ourselves short? God knows.
How can we care for the poor and not run out of money without feeling guilty? We can't, without Jesus steering our attitudes and wisdom.
It's not on our own strength. It is by having Jesus providing the strength in the heart.

A man works in a bank. A friend asks him how often he sees counterfeit money. "Almost every day", he says. How do you tell?" He said, "there are many varieties of counterfeit currency. We learn to spot the fake money by recognizing and handling the real thing. Once you know the real thing, you can spot the counterfeit."

How do you know the real thing? By having Christ closer than your own breath. By living with Christ at the center of your life.

You can be in Christ. And Christ can be in you.

Do you want Jesus in your heart? Now is the time to say it. Say it to Jesus in your prayer.

Jesus Christ, my God, I ask that you come to live in me. I open the door. Come and make my house your house, my living room your living room. Move into my heart, Lord Jesus. You are the friend who will never move away. I willingly give you access to my thoughts, my feelings, my dreams, the reasons for what I do. Live here, inside, where no one else can see. Stay.

AMEN