

The Heart of Jesus...In My Hand

Leanna Bolden
Eternally Speaking Now

Our family recently visited my parents in Michigan. As we concluded our final evening there, the five of us sat to take communion together. My mom **tore** bits of bread from a loaf, and my dad **poured** the juice.

We gathered around the table as my husband led us in a time of silence and personal reflection.

When Jesus died on the cross for us,
His body was **torn**.
His blood was **poured** out.
His heart of LOVE was revealed to all mankind.

In the quiet moments that followed, I was reminded of a sin that had crept in that morning: moved to tears, I confessed to Jesus that I'd been **doubting** His goodness. Not only that, but I'd been **questioning** the truth of His word towards me. Quite frankly, in a moment of emotional desperation that morning, I'd been **tempted to wonder** if He was even real.

My head knew the truth, but my heart doubted.

As I prayed about this in my mind, the word '**betray**' pierced my heart.

Yes, to a degree, I'd indeed betrayed my Lord.

I knew better than to entertain such thoughts of **doubt** towards Jesus, but I also knew, if left unconfessed, they'd keep me in some way separated from Him. (Psalms 32, 51) ***That's a dangerous, unhappy, crippling place to be.***

Robin's voice interrupted my thoughts as he encouraged us to take a piece of bread and consider the body of Christ. After doing so, I shut my eyes and listened to my husband's prayer. 'Take and eat, the body of Christ, broken for the remission of our sins,' he concluded.

I opened my eyes and looked down at the bread in my hand.

I was in awe of the Lord as I saw the gift He'd given me,
after I'd confessed my sins with a broken and contrite spirit.

There in front of me was a piece of bread...*in the shape of a heart.*

The truth about the Bread of Life-- Jesus Christ my Savior-- overtook me:



God is a good Father. He cares and provides for me.

(Matthew 6, 7:11)

His lovingkindness toward us never ends. (Psalm 100:5)

He forgives us even though we do not deserve it, and He loves us even when we are or behave like His enemies.

(Ephesians 2:4-6, Romans 5:8)

He never leaves us.

(Deut. 31:6, Matt. 28:20)

He remains faithful to us even when we are unfaithful.

(2 Timothy 2:15)

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"

(Romans 8:30-32)

If I doubt one percent of these truths or any of God's Word, there's a grain (or more) of betrayal in me towards Him.

"Oh no!" my heart cried, looking upon the bread in my hand. "Am I Judas?"

God's Spirit spoke to mine: "No, my dear-- you're Peter."

Suddenly I was filled with some of the most 'love' I've ever had for this great God and Savior who first loved me. *What kindness! What goodness!*

When Judas denied Christ, he was remorseful and hung himself.

When Peter denied the Lord, he wept bitterly and was restored.

Both men betrayed or denied Christ,
but there was a world of difference in their hearts and their reactions.

Peter was sorry, and his sorrow led to repentance, which led to salvation.
Judas was sorry, but it was a worldly sorrow, and it concluded in his death.
(2 Corinthians 7:9-10)

Peter knew the love of Jesus. Judas did not.

The kindness, the goodness, and the love of God is what led Peter
out of lies and into Truth. (Romans 2:4)

God's love melted Peter's heart, and he returned to Him.

Challenge: Because we are human, it seems inevitable that, to some degree, we will experience **betrayal in our hearts**. I don't speak here of a 'falling away from the faith,' but instead to that inkling of **doubt** or even **mockery** towards what God says in His Word-- the little thoughts that will sneak up and into us. *What makes the difference isn't whether this happens or not, but how we react to it when it does.*

Will you respond like Judas or like Peter?

He's given you His heart of love-- will your hand reach out and receive Him?

The Lord knew Peter would deny Him. Before it happened, He said,
"Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to Me, strengthen your brethren." Luke 22:31-32

He has prayed for you. Your faith shall not fail.

You will return to Him.

Then go-- strengthen your sisters and brothers in Christ!

Regardless of how long we've walked with the Lord, whether we know Him intimately yet or not, areas of our heart can fall **blind** to God's love for us.

God is love, and His love never fails.

May that drive us to receive Him with **open hands and hearts**. Amen.