

# “Cut to the Heart”

## Introduction

1. **“Cut to the Heart” is only found on two occasions within the New Testament (Acts 2:37 and 7:54).**
  - A. **In both of these cases, those listening were said to be “cut to the heart” after the TRUTH of God’s word was preached with confident force and direct application.**
2. **This piercing of their heart, however, was not the result of a mean spirit or a lack of love on the part of the preachers.**
  - A. **It was the natural result of preaching the gospel!**

Hebrews 4:12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, **piercing even to the division of soul and spirit**, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

## Different Response

1. **People respond differently to a physical wound.**
  - A. **Some calmly seek aid while others go into uncontrolled panic and even shock.**
  - B. **A man's response to the "cutting" message of the gospel is also varied.**
2. **In Acts 2, where Peter and the rest of the apostles were preaching on the day of Pentecost, the "cut" produced very favorable results.**
  - A. **Upon hearing the gospel message it says:**

Acts 2:37 .....they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

Acts 2:41 Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them.

3. **On the other hand, the "cut" produced by the preaching of Stephen, a man "full of faith and the Holy Spirit" resulted in a very different response.**

Acts 7:54 When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

- A. **They eventually went on to stone Stephen!**  
**Acts 7:55-60**

## Why the Difference?

1. **The different responses of those who heard these sermons cannot be blamed on the messages nor their presentation.**
  - A. **On both occasions the listeners were Jews who shared the guilt of rejecting Jesus and putting Him to death.**
  - B. **On both occasions the preachers spoke very pointedly concerning the hearer's sin and guilt before God.**

2. **In Peter's sermon he convicted his audience of sin by telling them to:**

Acts 2:22-23 ...**hear these words**: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death”

- A. **They were guilty of crucifying the Son of God and he let them know it in no uncertain terms.**
3. **Stephen was no less pointed. In a godly fashion worthy of emulation.**
    - A. **Stephen's message would obviously be rejected as unloving and overly harsh by the self-serving and worldly wise of today.**
    - B. **Stephen specifically addressed the guilt of his hearers by stating:**

Acts 7:52 Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And **they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One**, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers

- C. **They were rightfully accused of betrayal and murder!**

#### 4. So, why the different responses?

**A. The answer lies not in what was said, but in the hearts of the individuals who heard the word.**

**1) Jesus said that the preaching of the gospel is like a sower who sows seed on various kinds of soil.**

**a. Three of the four types Christ mentions will not allow the word to grow unto maturity.**

**Luke 8:11-14**

**B. The Devil either has such control of the hearer's life that the seed cannot enter the heart, or the word is given no "root" in their hearts so they fall away when faced with temptation.**

**1) Or, the word is choked out by the "cares, riches, and pleasures of life."**

**C. There is only one type of soil that produces fruit.**

Luke 8:15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, **having heard the word with a noble and good heart**, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

**D. The bottom line: The whole issue is the condition of our heart.**

## How Is Our Heart?

1. **How is our heart? The importance of this question cannot be trivialized.**
  - A. **Just as the physical heart must be kept healthy in order to continue a normal physical life, so must the spiritual heart of man be kept pure and focused on God to maintain a healthy spiritual life.**

Proverbs 4:23 **Keep your heart with all diligence**, For out of it spring the issues of life.

- B. **You and I determine the condition of the heart.**

## Conclusion

1. **How is your heart today?**
2. **When you go to the doctor, the doctor can hook up various electrodes, etc. to test your heart for irregularities, etc.**
3. **No such machine exists for the spiritual heart. The tests for it are much simpler and can be performed by you in your own home.**
  - A. **All you need to do is examine your response to the truth.**
    - 1) **Do you align with those on Pentecost who “gladly received His word and were baptized?” (Acts 2:41)**
    - 2) **Do you align with those who when they heard the truth, “they gnashed at him with their teeth?” (Acts 7:54)**
4. **A very simple test, but its results are a matter of eternal life or death.**

