

# OPEN BIBLE CHURCH

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## SERMON TITLE

**Matters of the Heart, part 2**

## SERIES

## DATE

11/9/2025

## KEY SCRIPTURE

**Psalm 86:11**

## SYNOPSIS

A divided heart leads to disaster, but a devoted heart brings delight to the Lord.

## HIGHLIGHTS



## ☞ **Matters of the Heart, Part 2**

### **The Divided Heart: When We're Pulled in Two Directions**

Good morning, church. Last week we talked about how our hearts are desperately sick and in need of renovation. We looked at how God offers us a brand-new heart through Jesus, and how His peace can guard us in the middle of life's chaos. But here's what happens for many of us: we receive that new heart, we experience God's peace, and yet we still find ourselves wobbling. We still feel pulled in two directions. We want to follow Jesus, but we also want everyone's approval. And that tension—that spiritual wobbling—is what we're addressing today.

☞ In **Psalm 86:11**, David prays: **"Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name."** An undivided heart. That's what we're after today. Because most of us, if we're honest, are living, at least occasionally, with a divided heart.

How many of you have ever tried to ride a bike with no hands? You know what happens... you start wobbling, you overcorrect, and eventually you either grab the handlebars or you're eating pavement. That's what it feels like to live with a divided heart. You're trying to go two directions at once, and it's exhausting. You love Christ, but you also love your comfort. You know what's right, but that sin still has its hooks in you.

**James 1:8** calls this being "double-minded"...literally having two souls, two minds. And here's what James says about it: "Such a person is ...unstable in all they do." That word "unstable" means you're wobbling, uncertain, unable to move forward with confidence.

Today we're going to talk about what it means to have a divided heart, why it happens, and how God calls us to something better... a whole heart fully devoted to Him.

### ☞ **DIAGNOSING A DIVIDED HEART**

What does a divided heart actually look like? Let me give you some symptoms.

☞ First, **inconsistency**. You're hot and cold. One day you're on fire for God, reading your Bible, praying, ready to serve. The next week, you can't even remember where you left your Bible. Or, you're passionate about following Jesus on Sunday, but by Wednesday you're living like He doesn't exist.

☞ Second, **internal conflict**. In **Romans 7:15** Paul says, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." So, you know what's right, you genuinely want to do it, but you find yourself doing the opposite. And, since the Apostle Paul admitted to this personal conflict, I'm confident it happens sometimes to us all. There's a war going on inside.



☞ Third, **compromise**. You're constantly negotiating with God. "I'll follow You here, but not there. I'll obey in this area, but that area is off-limits." You want just enough Jesus to feel better about yourself, but not so much that it actually costs you anything.

☞ And fourth, **restlessness**. You never feel settled. There's always this low-level tension because you're trying to serve two masters, and deep down you know it's not working. Jesus addressed this head-on in **Matthew 6:24**: "No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money."

Now, Jesus used money as the example, but the principle applies to anything we're trying to serve alongside God. You cannot serve God *and* your reputation. You cannot serve God *and* your comfort. You cannot serve God *and* your own agenda. A divided heart will always leave you restless and unstable.

### ☞ THE DANGER OF A DIVIDED HEART

The thing about **trying to keep one foot in the world and one foot with Jesus**, is it doesn't work. And it's not just hard, it's impossible. **You end up with neither.**

Look at what happened to Israel in the Old Testament. Over and over again, they tried to worship God while also hedging their bets with the gods of the surrounding nations. They'd go to the temple and offer sacrifices to the Lord, but then they'd also have little idols tucked away at home, just in case. They wanted God's blessing, but they also wanted to fit in with their neighbors. And then they lost everything. They went into exile because God doesn't share His glory with anyone or anything else.

Look at the church at Laodicea in **Revelation 3:15-16**. Jesus says: "I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, **because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth.**"

That's strong language. Jesus would rather you be cold than lukewarm. Why? Because **lukewarm people deceive themselves** into thinking they're fine when they're actually in spiritual danger. They have just enough *religion* to feel comfortable but not enough *surrender* to actually be *transformed*.

A divided heart is like trying to build a house on two foundations that are slowly drifting apart. Eventually, the whole thing is going to crack and collapse. You can't build a stable life on divided loyalties.

### ☞ THE CAUSES OF A DIVIDED HEART



What splits our devotion? Sometimes it's **obvious sin**. There's something we know we need to let go of, but we're holding onto it. Maybe it's a relationship that's pulling us away from God. Maybe it's a habit we've rationalized. Maybe it's unforgiveness we're clutching onto.

☞ But often, it's not obvious sin. It's **good things that become ultimate things**. It's your **career** becoming not just a job but your identity. It's **comfort**, security, control, approval, even **family**... things that aren't bad in themselves, but when they compete with God for first place in your heart, they divide your devotion.

Here's an example that hits close to home for many families today. You love your kids; they're a blessing from God. But somewhere along the way, their activities, their success, their happiness becomes not just important but ultimate. Your family's entire schedule revolves around sporting events, school plays, dance competitions. You're at the field or the gym six days a week. Now, I'm not saying kids' activities are wrong. But when Sunday morning comes and you're too exhausted for church, or you skip because of practice... that good thing has become an ultimate thing. Your kids' achievements have divided your heart's devotion away from God. And here's the tragedy: in trying to give your kids everything, you're actually not giving them the most important thing: a picture of what it looks like to put God first. I've actually witnessed this happen and eventually whole families end up walking away from God.

When Martha complained about her sister Mary not helping with the preparations, she revealed her divided heart. Jesus said Martha was worried and upset about many things, but Mary had chosen the better thing by sitting at his feet just listening. Martha's heart was divided. She wanted to serve Jesus, but she was distracted by all the *doing*. She was so focused on the *many* things that she missed the *one* thing... sitting at His feet.

What's dividing your heart right now? What's competing with Jesus for first place?

### ☞ **REFOCUSING A DIVIDED HEART**

☞ So how do we move from a divided heart to a whole heart? **It starts with a resolution**. Not a feeling, not when you get your act together, not when the timing is perfect. You have to choose.

In **Joshua 24:15**, Joshua is at the end of his life, and he gathers all of Israel and gives them this ultimatum: "But if serving the Lord seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve... But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." You have to choose. You can't have it both ways.

Look again at **Psalms 86:11**. David prays: "Teach me your way, Lord, that I may rely on your faithfulness; give me an undivided heart, that I may fear your name." David's asking God to pull his heart together, to make it whole, to focus it entirely on God. This is a prayer we all need to





pray: "God, I don't want to be divided anymore. I don't want to be pulled in two directions. Give me an undivided heart." But here's what that actually requires: it requires surrender. Not partial 📖 surrender, not conditional surrender... **full surrender**.

Think about it like this. If you're selling a house, you can't sell 80% of it. You can't say, "You can have the kitchen, the living room, and two of the bedrooms, but I'm keeping the master suite for myself." That's not selling the house. It's still yours. The same is true with Jesus. You can't give Him 80% of your life and hold back 20% for yourself. That's not surrender. That's negotiation.

So what does daily surrender actually look like? It's something like this: start each morning with a simple prayer: "God, today is Yours. My schedule is Yours. My decisions are Yours. My words are Yours. Everything I am and everything I have... it's Yours." And then throughout the day, you keep bringing things back to Him. When you're tempted to take back control of an area you already surrendered, you consciously choose to trust Him instead.

📖 **Surrender isn't a one-time event, it's a daily**, moment-by-moment choice to keep giving God access to every room in your heart. It means when He asks you to forgive someone, you do it. When He asks you to give generously, you do it. When He asks you to have a hard conversation, you do it. When He asks you to let go of something you love, you do it. Not because it's easy, but because you trust that His plans are better than yours.

**Romans 12:1** says, "I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship." A living sacrifice means you climb up on the altar yourself. You don't hold anything back. You give Him everything... your plans, your fears, your relationships, your money, your time, your dreams, your hurts. Everything.

And here's what's beautiful about this: when you give God everything, you don't lose. You gain. Because what He gives you in return is so much better than what you were holding onto.

### 📖 **THE UNDIVIDED HEART**

Once we make that decision to surrender everything to God, what changes? What does wholehearted devotion actually produce in our daily lives?

📖 First, it looks like **clarity**. You're not constantly second-guessing yourself or wondering if you're on the right path. When you know who you're following and you're fully committed, there's a freedom in that.

📖 It also looks like **peace**. Not because your circumstances are perfect, but because you're not at war with yourself anymore. You're not trying to serve two masters. Your heart is settled.



☞ It looks like **fruitfulness**. When your heart is fully devoted to God, you're not wasting energy on things that don't matter. You're focused, and God is able to work through you in ways He couldn't when you were divided.

☞ And it looks like **joy**. Real, deep joy. Because you're finally living the way you were designed to live—with God at the center, and nothing competing for His place in your heart.

**Deuteronomy 6:5** says, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength." All. Not most. Not when it's convenient. All.

### ☞ **THE CHOICE IS YOURS**

Church, here's my question for you today: **Is your heart divided?** Are you trying to serve two masters? Are you holding something back from God? Are you living with one foot in and one ☞ foot out? If so, today is the day to make a choice. Joshua said it: "**Choose this day** whom you will serve."

You can't keep wobbling. You can't keep trying to have it both ways. It's exhausting, it's unstable, and it's not what God has called you to. God is calling you to a wholehearted life. A life where He's not *competing* for first place, but He *controls* first place. Where nothing divides your ☞ devotion. Where **you're fully His, and He's fully yours**.

And here's what I believe... when you let go of the divided life and embrace wholehearted devotion to Jesus, you won't regret it. Scripture promises us that those who seek Him with their whole heart will find Him, and in His presence is fullness of joy.

Let's choose today to have an Undivided Heart, where God always has first place and everything comes under his leadership.

### **Closing song options:**

**I Surrender All (1, 3)**

**Worth it All**