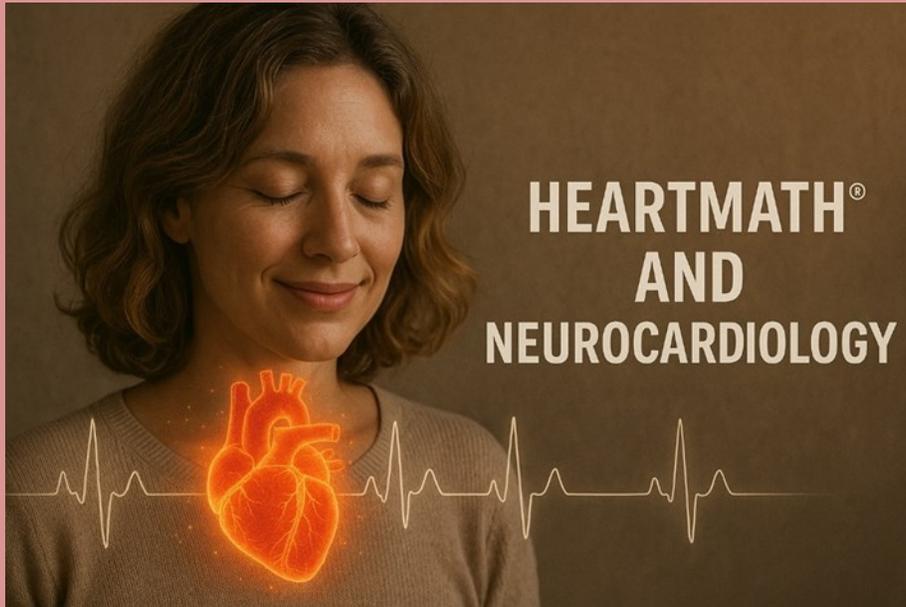


Sermon III – Pillar Two: The Heart

Living From the Place Where God Speaks

Jeffrey E. Hansen, Ph.D. and Pastor Earl Heverly



“And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart.” – Ezekiel 36:26

The promise of healing in Scripture has always been a promise about the heart. Long before we had language for trauma or neuroscience, God spoke of transformation in these words. He did not promise merely new behaviors or clearer thoughts, but a new heart—alive, responsive, capable of communion. And then we are entrusted with the sacred calling to guard that heart, because everything in our lives flows from this hidden center. What modern science is only now beginning to describe, Scripture has been declaring for centuries: the heart is the wellspring of the human person and the meeting place between God and His people.

If the first movement of healing is learning that the body can become safe, the second is rediscovering that the heart was never meant to be silent. For generations we were taught to think of the heart as little more than a mechanical pump, faithfully moving blood through the body while the brain did the real work of thinking and deciding. Yet long before modern science began to look more closely, Scripture had already given the heart a place of breathtaking importance. The heart is where we believe. The heart is where we grieve. The heart is where courage rises and where wisdom is formed. It is the place from which we love God and the place where God speaks to us.

More than eight hundred times the Bible turns our attention to the heart, and every time it does it is reminding us that life does not flow first from the head but from this deeper center of the person. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” “Love the Lord your God with all your heart.” Again and again we are brought back to the same revelation. Transformation is not merely a change of thought. It is a renewal of the heart.

The Heart Is a God Designed Center of Wisdom and Connection

What Scripture has declared for centuries, science is now beginning to describe with remarkable clarity. The heart is not a passive organ. It is an intelligent, communicative, regulatory center that is in constant conversation with the brain and the rest of the body. Within the heart are tens of thousands of sensory neurites, cells that function in ways strikingly similar to neurons. They form networks that process information, influence emotional experience, and participate in memory and learning.

In other words, the heart is not only responding to your life. It is helping shape how you experience your life.

This begins to explain why we have always spoken of knowing something in our hearts before we can explain it in our minds. It explains why a person can think their way through a decision and still feel unsettled until the heart becomes quiet. It explains why trauma drives people upward into their heads, into rumination and analysis, while healing always involves a return to a deeper, more grounded place.

God did not design you to live from your head alone.
He designed you to live from the heart.
And when the heart is engaged, the whole person begins to come into alignment.

Coherence Is the Physiology of Peace

One of the most hopeful discoveries in this field is the reality of heart rate variability and what researchers call coherence. A healthy heart is not rigid and mechanical. It is responsive and rhythmic, constantly adjusting to the needs of the moment. When the heart is in a coherent state, its rhythms become smooth and ordered, and this pattern sends signals to the brain that quiet fear, strengthen clarity, and support wise decision making.

When the heart is chaotic, the brain becomes reactive.
When the heart is coherent, the brain becomes receptive.

And what brings the heart into coherence is not positive thinking alone. It is the combination of steady breathing and regenerative emotion. Gratitude. Compassion. Love. Reverence.

These are not merely spiritual virtues.
They are regulatory forces.

This is why Scripture calls us again and again into thanksgiving and love. Not because God needs our praise, but because our hearts need to enter a rhythm that restores the entire person.

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.”

Not only in your theology.
In your hearts.

The Breath, the Heart, and the Presence of God

Breathing becomes one of the most sacred bridges between the body and the heart. Slow, steady breathing, especially with a gentle and extended exhale, activates the vagus nerve and begins to settle the entire system. When that breath is joined with attention to the heart and with emotions such as gratitude and love, coherence begins to emerge.

It is not difficult to hear the echo of Scripture in this.

God breathed into Adam and he became a living being.
Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Breath and heart together become a place of encounter.

As we inhale, we receive.
As we exhale, we release.
As the rhythm steadies, the heart becomes quiet.
And in that quietness we discover that God has been nearer than we imagined.

A Coherent Heart Becomes a Gift to Others

One of the most beautiful implications of this research is the reality that the heart does not regulate in isolation. The heart generates an electromagnetic field that extends beyond the body, and our physiological states begin to influence one another. Calm invites calm. Peace invites peace. Dysregulation spreads anxiety, but coherence spreads stability.

This is what Scripture has always meant when it speaks of the ministry of presence.

“Encourage one another and build each other up.”
“Comfort with the comfort you have received.”

A regulated heart becomes a refuge for others.

This changes how we understand leadership, parenting, marriage, friendship, and ministry. The most powerful thing we bring into a room is not our words but the state of our heart.

The Heart as the Bridge to Deeper Healing

Within the NeuroFaith® model, the heart becomes the bridge between safety and transformation. When the heart comes into coherence, the nervous system feels safer. When the nervous system feels safer, the inner world becomes accessible. And when the inner world opens, God's grace can reach places that were once guarded by fear and shame.

This is why the promise of Jesus is so profoundly heart centered.

“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you.”

And this is why the prayer of Paul becomes our prayer:

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”

Not merely in your thoughts, but in the very center of your being—because when the heart is awakened, we do not only think differently; we live differently. We love differently. We see God more clearly. The guarded places become places of encounter. The rhythms that once carried fear begin to learn the cadence of peace. What was once closed becomes capable of communion.

So this pillar is not an invitation to sentimentality, but a return to the place God designed as the wellspring of life. The heart you have protected for so long is not only the place where you were wounded; it is the place where you will meet Him, the place where His promise continues to unfold. He does not demand that you manufacture a new heart by effort. He gives one. And as that gift is received, guarded, and brought into the gentle rhythm of His presence, everything that flows from your life begins to change—quietly, steadily, organically—until the prayer of the psalmist becomes your own lived reality:

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

And in that renewed heart, coherence is no longer merely a physiological state. It becomes communion. It becomes the life of Christ within you, the peace of Christ ruling within you, the love of Christ flowing from you—because when the heart comes alive in Him, everything begins to flow again.

If the first movement of healing is learning that the body can become safe, the second is rediscovering that the heart was never meant to be silent. For generations we were taught to think of the heart as little more than a mechanical pump, faithfully moving blood through the

body while the brain did the real work of thinking and deciding. Yet long before modern science began to look more closely, Scripture had already given the heart a place of breathtaking importance. The heart is where we believe. The heart is where we grieve. The heart is where courage rises and where wisdom is formed. It is the place from which we love God and the place where God speaks to us.

More than eight hundred times the Bible turns our attention to the heart, and every time it does it is reminding us that life does not flow first from the head but from this deeper center of the person. “Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.” “Do not let your hearts be troubled.” “Love the Lord your God with all your heart.” Again and again we are brought back to the same revelation. Transformation is not merely a change of thought. It is a renewal of the heart.

The Heart Is a God Designed Center of Wisdom and Connection

What Scripture has declared for centuries, science is now beginning to describe with remarkable clarity. The heart is not a passive organ. It is an intelligent, communicative, regulatory center that is in constant conversation with the brain and the rest of the body. Within the heart are tens of thousands of sensory neurites, cells that function in ways strikingly similar to neurons. They form networks that process information, influence emotional experience, and participate in memory and learning.

In other words, the heart is not only responding to your life. It is helping shape how you experience your life.

This begins to explain why we have always spoken of knowing something in our hearts before we can explain it in our minds. It explains why a person can think their way through a decision and still feel unsettled until the heart becomes quiet. It explains why trauma drives people upward into their heads, into rumination and analysis, while healing always involves a return to a deeper, more grounded place.

God did not design you to live from your head alone.
He designed you to live from the heart.

And when the heart is engaged, the whole person begins to come into alignment.

Coherence Is the Physiology of Peace

One of the most hopeful discoveries in this field is the reality of heart rate variability and what researchers call coherence. A healthy heart is not rigid and mechanical. It is responsive and rhythmic, constantly adjusting to the needs of the moment. When the heart is in a coherent

The NeuroFaith Model for Healing and Restoration
Pastor Earl Heverly

state, its rhythms become smooth and ordered, and this pattern sends signals to the brain that quiet fear, strengthen clarity, and support wise decision making.

When the heart is chaotic, the brain becomes reactive.

When the heart is coherent, the brain becomes receptive.

And what brings the heart into coherence is not positive thinking alone. It is the combination of steady breathing and regenerative emotion. Gratitude. Compassion. Love. Reverence.

These are not merely spiritual virtues.

They are regulatory forces.

This is why Scripture calls us again and again into thanksgiving and love. Not because God needs our praise, but because our hearts need to enter a rhythm that restores the entire person.

“Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts.”

Not only in your theology.

In your hearts.

The Breath, the Heart, and the Presence of God

Breathing becomes one of the most sacred bridges between the body and the heart. Slow, steady breathing, especially with a gentle and extended exhale, activates the vagus nerve and begins to settle the entire system. When that breath is joined with attention to the heart and with emotions such as gratitude and love, coherence begins to emerge.

It is not difficult to hear the echo of Scripture in this.

God breathed into Adam and he became a living being.

Jesus breathed on the disciples and said, “Receive the Holy Spirit.”

Breath and heart together become a place of encounter.

As we inhale, we receive.

As we exhale, we release.

As the rhythm steadies, the heart becomes quiet.

And in that quietness we discover that God has been nearer than we imagined.

A Coherent Heart Becomes a Gift to Others

One of the most beautiful implications of this research is the reality that the heart does not regulate in isolation. The heart generates an electromagnetic field that extends beyond the

body, and our physiological states begin to influence one another. Calm invites calm. Peace invites peace. Dysregulation spreads anxiety, but coherence spreads stability.

This is what Scripture has always meant when it speaks of the ministry of presence.

“Encourage one another and build each other up.”

“Comfort with the comfort you have received.”

A regulated heart becomes a refuge for others.

This changes how we understand leadership, parenting, marriage, friendship, and ministry. The most powerful thing we bring into a room is not our words but the state of our heart.

The Heart as the Bridge to Deeper Healing

Within the NeuroFaith® model, the heart becomes the bridge between safety and transformation. When the heart comes into coherence, the nervous system feels safer. When the nervous system feels safer, the inner world becomes accessible. And when the inner world opens, God’s grace can reach places that were once guarded by fear and shame.

This is why the promise of Jesus is so profoundly heart centered.

“Peace I leave with you. My peace I give you.”

And this is why the prayer of Paul becomes our prayer.

“That Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.”

Not merely in your thoughts.

In your heart.

Because when the heart is awakened, we do not only think differently.

We live differently.

We love differently.

We see God more clearly.

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.”

Closing

So, this second pillar is not about sentimentality. It is about returning to the place God designed as the center of your life. It is about learning that the heart you have guarded for so long is not only the place where you were wounded. It is the place where you will meet Him.

The NeuroFaith Model for Healing and Restoration
Pastor Earl Heverly

The heart that once carried fear can learn a new rhythm.
The heart that once lived in chaos can enter coherence.
The heart that once felt closed can become alive again.

And as that happens, the promise becomes real.

“Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me.”

This is the journey.
From the head to the heart.
From striving to receiving.
From fragmentation to coherence.
From distance to communion.

And if your heart has been longing to live in that place, then hear the invitation of the Lord who has always spoken to the heart of His people.

“Above all else, guard your heart, for everything you do flows from it.”

Because when the heart comes alive in Him,
everything begins to flow again.