

DEVOTIONAL

Pastor Joel Seifert
Beautiful Savior
Marietta

"This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything." (1 John 3:20)

God is greater than our hearts. That's worth hearing again and thinking about often: God is greater than our hearts.

Of all the troubles of the last year, some of the hardest to deal with are our personal failures. In a year of conflicts, did I make things worse by failing to speak up – or by not speaking with patience and love? In a year with so many extra demands, did I fail to keep my family safe or give them what they really need? Did I balance faith and wisdom as best as I could?

That guilt is hard to move past because we know ourselves – we see the ways we've failed! We know some of the sinful actions we chose!

But God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

There are two truths to keep in mind. First, we don't always know ourselves as well we'd like to think. Sometimes we take on guilt that really isn't ours. We tell ourselves that God should hate us for things that were out of our control. That's a favorite trick of Satan!

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The other truth: our hearts can be slow to trust that God's forgiveness is real, and really for me. We think of all the reasons he really shouldn't forgive us.

But God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.

He knows his forgiveness. He knows the price he paid to wash away your sins. He knows the faith he planted in your hearts. And he doesn't condemn you. If your heart tells you all the reasons you're on your own and God's love isn't for you, well, what of it?! You don't need to listen to your heart. Listen to God's promises and set your heart at rest.

Prayer:

Dear Heavenly Father, in this first full week of this new year, we want to take a step back and say thank you. Thank you for this new day, this new year, and that your mercy, your grace, and your forgiveness are given to us new each morning. Forgive us for the times when we've doubted this. And help us to hold to the Cross of Jesus so that, when guilt threatens to overwhelm us, we can confess our guilt when we've done wrong and that even as we confess, we may also believe wholeheartedly that you are who you say you are. That we are forgiven.

In Jesus' Name, we pray, Amen.