***Isaiah 29:13-14 Therefore the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips, But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men, 14Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder; For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.”***

Draw near with the mouth, honor with the lips, but the heart… Ever felt that way? Can you feel what God is feeling here? Someone says all the right things, does all the right things, but the heart is far away… We call that – manipulation. Jesus called those who did this Hypocrites in Matthew 15:7. From 1 Samuel 16:7 we learn this - *for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.* With God, it is always a heart thing*.* The most eloquent words, great prayers, wonderful poetry, scripture shouted from the rooftops is all for nothing when our heart is far from Him. God wants the heart… nothing less… God is Love, so why would it surprise us that, without love in our hearts, we are only a clanging cymbal and a sounding brass? Every single morning the question must be asked and answered – **where is my heart today**?

 Verse 13 begins *Therefore the Lord said: “Inasmuch as these people draw near with their mouths And honor Me with their lips,* In as much- God says pay attention, “Listen up!” These people call themselves My people, walk around looking like My people, sound a lot like My people when their mouth moves. Sweet words roll off the tongue, beautiful prayers are heard in the marketplace. Hypocrite! Where is the real allegiance? And God is saying that about many of His followers today – they wear crosses around their necks, have fish symbols on the back of their car, have a dusty Bible sitting on their coffee table, and verses posted on their walls.

 Verse 13 finishes *But have removed their hearts far from Me, And their fear toward Me is taught by the commandment of men.* Now, God doesn’t say their hearts are faraway… no, He says something very interesting – They have removed their hearts far from Me. A choice is made! How did the heart get faraway? By choice, by neglect, by focus on other things, by the WORSHIP of this world. Their fear – meaning reverence and respect – is based on human law, human expectations, and human approvals… not on the things of God. Hearts were removed then and they are removed now because we follow the world and turn our backs on God. If this were not so, our nation would look different, our leaders would sound different, we’d choose our celebrities differently. We’d turn our back on filth and greed and demand a return to love, honor and morality. Many have removed their hearts far from God, even as their lips profess to love Him.

 Verse 14 starts *Therefore, behold, I will again do a marvelous work Among this people, A marvelous work and a wonder.* Behold – meaning see – God is about to do a marvelous work – He is about to bring a wonderous distinction in the nation. Recall that the prophet Isaiah is speaking to kings and princes. He’s talking to the leaders of the nation, bringing a warning that they do not want to hear. Wise men are listening, prudent men – men of understanding – are his target audience. The Assyrians were threatening Israel and the people had grown apathetic towards God and His commandments. God is about to get their attention!

 Verse 14 ends *For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, And the understanding of their prudent men shall be hidden.”* Because they have removed their heart far from God, started pursuing the thoughts of man, given their focus to unbiblical beliefs, their wisdom – things that were once common sense – will perish… literally, wander away. It will no longer be found, but the absurd and unbelievable will be called right. Understanding will become hidden and will disappear. Isaiah 5:20-21 says *Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; Who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes, And prudent in their own sight!* When we turn from God and remove our focus from Him and insist on pursuing evil He will give us over – Psalm 81:11-12 *“But My people would not heed My voice, And Israel would have none of Me. So I gave them over to their own stubborn heart, To walk in their own counsels.*

 This week - let’s take stock of our relationship with God. Are our lips honoring Him while our hearts are moving further away? Does He have our heart or only our words? Sit in silence and listen for His still small voice. The world would have you believe that God no longer speaks – the shouting, the screeching, abundance of sound! But God does speak – He speaks in the silence, when we are listening, heart is hand, making our way back to Him. As we read in James 4:8 *Draw near to God and He will draw near to you*. May we cleanse our hearts and draw nearer to Him this week.