

The Danger of a Hard Heart

by Keith Malcomson

This sermon emphasizes the dangers of having a hard heart, focusing on the examples of Pharaoh, the disciples, and Judas. It warns about the potential consequences of hardening one's heart, whether as a sinner, in dead religion, as a saint, or becoming a vessel of wrath. The importance of repentance, humility, and avoiding spiritual callousness is highlighted to prevent hardening of the heart.

Scripture: Hebrews 3:7, Mark 8:17, Romans 9:22, Mark 16:14

Topics: "Hardness of Heart", "Importance of Repentance"

Description

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Transcript

Praise God. I want you to turn with me here this morning to Hebrews chapter 3, Hebrews chapter 3, and I'm changing my direction, my theme, though it's always Christ is the eventual destination on every message. But I want to start just a few new messages here this morning, dealing with the heart.

And I've got a few messages I want to deal with our heart, what it is to be, what it shouldn't be, and the dangers of fighting for your own heart. My message here this morning, the danger of a hard heart, reading from Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 7, Hebrews chapter 3 and verse 7. And it says, Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith, Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation, in the wilderness, when your heart grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways, so, or because of this, I swear in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

But exhort one another daily, while it is cold today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Let's pray together here this morning. Father, I do thank you for your grace and your love and your mercy.

It's an act of your grace that your Holy Spirit speaks to us so clearly, so openly, so wholeheartedly, so continually, so personally, so individually. And Lord God, we don't want to lose that voice. We don't want

to reject it.

We don't want to quench the voice of the Holy Spirit. Lord God, we don't want to hinder the speaking of the Holy Spirit. We don't want to be those that are dull in hearing.

We don't want to be those that are hard-hearted, who cannot, who will not, who do not desire to hear the voice of the Holy Spirit. Father, I pray that your Holy Spirit will speak through this preacher, that it won't merely be preaching. It won't merely be the ministry of a man.

But Lord God, we seek in this church that your Holy Spirit would speak clearly to those listening. Lord God, here in this room this morning, as well as online, even to the ends of the earth, we look, O God, that the Sovereign Spirit could reach into homes, reach into hearts, O God, and change them, and circumcise their heart. O God, in this last hour, in this evil hour, in this hour of abounding iniquity, do not let our hearts grow cold.

Don't let them be hard against your Holy Spirit. We're praying that even this morning, this message would be an exhortation, an encouragement, a strengthening, O God. Lest, O God, any of us would be hardened in the heart.

Lord God, thank you that your Holy Spirit constantly points to the Lord Jesus Christ. We love him this morning, and we're so grateful for the written scriptures, the Word of God. We bless you.

We love you. We thank you. In Jesus' mighty name.

Amen. I want to begin this morning to lay before you the importance of your heart. God doesn't just deal with your outward man.

Are the thoughts of saying, well, I believe in God, God does not deal with that. He deals with the heart. Your words could be right.

Your beliefs could be right. Your outward actions could be right, and yet your heart be wrong. That's what the Bible shows us.

In fact, from Genesis to Revelation, we see all through the Bible, almost in every single life, every story of scripture, we see the importance of the heart of a man or a woman. The condition of your heart is vital. There are those who believe right, they used to believe right, they still believe right, but their heart is wrong.

And to have the right beliefs, the right word actions, the right words, and yet not the right heart is a tragic thing. Listen to the importance of the heart and how God looks in the heart. It says in 1 Chronicles 28 and 9, and this is David speaking to his son Solomon.

Solomon is a godly young man who loves God with all of his heart. And David is going to die and he's speaking to his son, listen, what would you say to your son? If you're passing off the scene of time and you're passing everything onto your son, what would you say to your son? Listen to what David says to Solomon, and thou Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father and serve him, notice this, with a perfect heart. David is asking him, serve God with a perfect heart and with a willing mind.

For the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all of the imagination of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee. But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off forever.

And so David is telling his son, your heart condition is important. Your attitude before God is important. Your thoughts in your mind before God is important.

And God searches the hearts. Do you realize each one of you from the youngest to the oldest here in this room, that God literally gets inside of you. God isn't on the outside merely listening your words and listening your little stories and looking at you and saying, well, if you say you're okay, that's fine.

God actually searches inside the heart. God gets right inside the heart of each one of us and he searches the hearts. He knows your heart better than you ever will know your heart.

He knows things about your thoughts that you have forgotten about. He gets inside you and he searches your motives, why you say little things, why you act in a certain way. When you lie and pretend, he searches all that up.

He knows you better than you know yourself. He knows you better than your wife knows you. He knows you better than anyone else.

And David is telling Solomon, have a perfect heart. Serve God with a perfect heart. Have a willing mind or a mind that says, yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. Do you know why? Because God searches the heart and depending on the condition of your heart, he's either going to cast you off and reject you for all eternity, or he is going to bless you and keep you and walk with you for all eternity. And so we see the importance throughout scripture of the heart.

The heart is very vital to God. The condition of your heart, you can reject God with the heart or you can receive God with the heart. You can draw God to you because of your heart, or you can chase the spirit of God away because of the condition of your heart.

It also says in 1 Samuel 16 and 7, but the Lord said unto Samuel, look not on his countenance, his outward appearance, his size, his smile, his grandeur, his strength, or on the height of his stature. And this is the reason. Samuel, prophet of God, preacher, you're looking at this young man saying, he'd make a good young king.

He could do as the anointed of God. You know what God says? Don't look at that because I have refused him. I've utterly rejected him.

Here's a prophet saying, man, he would make a good king. God is saying, oh no, I have refused him. Why did God refuse this young man? Was he not a good enough sword fighter? Was he not disciplined enough? Did he not know enough? Had he not spent enough years in the college? Not at all.

This is the reason God rejected him. For the Lord seeth not as man seeth. For man looketh on the outward appearance, but the Lord looketh on the heart.

Why did God refuse this man? Because his heart. God searches the hearts and he said, you know what? I have rejected you. I have refused you.

We need to wake up and realize God refuses individuals just like he receives individuals. A heart can be such that you cause God. You see, God doesn't desire that anyone perish.

He wants all to believe, all to come to repentance, all to believe on him. And yet your heart can be such that you cause God to refuse you. Do you know you can provoke God to refuse you either from salvation or from ministry or from certain blessings in the will of God? Do you know that you can cause that God says, I could never anoint you.

I could never raise you up to lead my people. I have rejected you because of your heart. Now I think David's brother was a believer.

I believe he probably was saved. I believe he was a follower of God and in the house of God. And yet God says, he'll never be anointed.

He'll never be a king. He'll never be in my ministry. He'll be on the battlefield, standing, trembling with fear at soul, but he'll never be the anointed of God.

He cannot be. I have refused him. Why? The condition of his heart.

Or what about 2 Chronicles chapter 16 and 9? For the eyes of the Lord run to and through throughout the whole earth to show himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him. Do you know right now, this moment, in an hour where Russia is in Ukraine and world government is rising and they've just spent two years trying to bring us into this new world order and much more is to come? We're only at the beginning of this. Do you know right now, this morning, the spirit of God is searching every town, every village, every home.

He is searching every family, every nation, every city. The spirit of God is moving right across the earth, and he's looking for something. Do you know the spirit of God is in this room this morning, and he's going from heart to heart, searching, looking.

Right now, he searches the hearts. This scripture actually says, the eyes of the Lord, or the spirit of God, goes to and through throughout the entire earth, and he's looking for people. He is looking for a perfect heart, whose heart is perfect towards him.

No man's sinless, none. But there is a condition of heart that is perfect. It's sincere.

It is upright. Can I ask you this morning, are you sincere? Are you genuine? Are you real? Or is it sham? Is it pretense? Is it a mere front? You see, the spirit of God is here in this room, and he is actually looking. We think that we're trying to get God to use us, God to look at us, God to listen to us.

Oh no, God is trying to get your attention. He is here saying, I want to find such a heart. I am looking for such a heart.

I'm the one going looking. You're not looking for me. I'm actually looking for you.

I'm just looking for a heart that I don't have to say, not again. I have to refuse them. Not again.

I can't use them. They're clay that I have to throw away, or else begin again with. All these verses and hundreds of others show us that God looks for a certain kind of heart.

If God can find that heart, he'll do wonders. He'll strengthen you. He'll save you.

He'll change you. He'll anoint you. He'll send you.

He'll speak to you. He'll do all of these things. My message this morning, I'm just showing you where I'm going in the next few weeks concerning the heart.

But here this morning, I'm going to deal with the danger of a hard heart. Before I go to the search of hearts, the kinds of heart that God blesses, I want to start here, the danger of a hard heart. In 2009, doctors used their x-ray scanning equipment on 20 Egyptian mummies.

And each of those mummies dated back 3,500 years to the time of Moses. When Moses brought Israel out of Egypt, it goes right back to that era or that time. As they scanned these 20 mummies that had lain dead for 3,500 years, they noticed something about all of those dead mummies.

Every single one of them had a heart problem, a physical, natural, human heart problem. Some of them had died very early from a heart attack. You see, heart problems aren't a 21st century phenomena.

It's not of our era. Men have always had heart problems. And when you go back 3,500 years, you go into those mummies, into those close graves, and you find in these bodies at 40 years old, a young lady dying at 40 years old from a heart complaint.

And you know why all these pharaohs and all this hierarchy of the nation died with heart problems? Because of their lifestyle, because of what they ate. Everyone doesn't die with a heart problem. They don't.

They don't. Not everyone has a heart issue. But you know, amongst them, because of their lifestyle, they did.

When I was very young, I used to hear it all the time. You never hear it now. And we always heard, always heard talk about the hardening of the arteries.

And as a kid, you didn't really know what that meant. But it was bad. And it was usually someone older.

And it's because they ate a lot of fatty food. Usually that's what you knew. Now nobody talks about that.

But they did when I was young. What is the hardening of the arteries? Now I'm going to deal this morning with a hard heart. You see, it's a physical complaint that was in the pharaohs of Egypt.

But it's also in our day. People in this room, if you neglect your body, you can have the hardening of your arteries. And it's very, very serious.

And it can be very, very dangerous. Do you know what the hardening of the arteries is? It's where cholesterol, too much cholesterol comes in. And plaque begins to build up and restrict the blood vessels in your heart.

And as that plaque builds up, it builds up and then it hardens. And then the veins become very tight, very restricted, very solid. And they're not pliable or movable or usable anymore.

Your heart is literally becoming hardened because of what you're eating and the lifestyle that you're living. And instead of being pliable and it becomes thickened and hardened. And you can have a heart attack from this.

Your heart can stop functioning. Or you could have a stroke where you lose the power of half your body. You know why? Blood can't flow through your body properly.

You know why? Because you've got a hardened heart, hardened arteries. You're not eating right. You're not looking after yourself right.

The doctors say, if you don't change your eating habits, if you don't change your lifestyle, if you don't begin to take exercise, you're going to shorten your life. Some people die early because they've got a hardened heart. What is true of the physical natural world is true of the spirit.

And so in our Bible, we read about the danger of a hardened heart. What can happen with a Pharaoh in Egypt naturally and in Limerick today can happen spiritually. I've got four things for you here I just want to give you.

First of all, the danger of a sinner's hard heart. The danger of a sinner's hard heart. You know what the Bible says? We're all sinners.

You're all born sinners. You're born with a hard heart. You don't know God.

You don't believe in God. You don't experience God. You don't know the voice of God.

You may mentally say, I believe there's a God, but you don't know him. And so the Bible says, all of us have a heart of stone. You're born like that.

You grew up like that. You may be religious. You may be moral.

You may be wicked. You may be evil. You may be an atheist, but all have a hard heart.

All have sin. All are going to hell. The Bible says we've all fallen short.

All of us have failed. All of us are lost. We're born sinners.

No one is born righteous. No one is born good. A missionary's wife in this city once said to Canis, oh, I've always known the Lord.

You know with us when we have conversations in different places and someone says, I always knew the Lord. You better have a very remarkable testimony. You better be a Samuel or a John the Baptist or some unusual character.

And I'm not against believing it's possible. It is possible. But you better be very unusual.

I was a very unusual kid that met God at four and a half years old. But I tell you, he showed me I was a sinner before he saved me. Four and a half years old.

I'm sitting in a meeting like this. And I suddenly realized if I die tonight, I'm lost. Who showed me that? The Spirit of God.

The Spirit of God didn't come and say, aren't you moral? Aren't you good? Aren't you a nice little boy who does everything your mommy says? Oh, and patted me in the head. The Spirit of God says, if you die tonight, you're lost. But there's an answer.

And his name is the Lord Jesus Christ. This is the first danger I want to deal with this morning. The Bible is the danger of a sinner's hard heart.

You see, Christ died for sinners. Christ came to save sinners. But a sinner can have such a hard heart that they refuse the salvation of God.

They reject the voice of God. God reaching out to you, trying to draw you. You say, no, no, no.

You may not say that, but yet by your actions. Listen to what the Bible says about a sinner's hard heart. In Proverbs 28 and 14, happy is the man that feareth always, or feareth God.

If you fear God, you are going to be happy. I mean, if you tremble at the presence of God, that is going to bring happiness into your life. I assure you.

Then it says the other half of the verse, but he that hardens his heart shall fall into mischief. It's saying here, he who hardens his heart is always getting into trouble, always doing the wrong thing, always going wayward. Do you know why you go wayward? Do you know why you keep falling into it? I just don't know why.

Brother Keith, I don't know why. I just always keep saying or doing or thinking or acting in the wrong. I just don't know why I always get myself in trouble.

I do. Your heart is hard. See, if your heart is hard, you'll always do the thing that you ought not to.

Your heart is hard, and it's very, very dangerous. If you feared God, you wouldn't have a hard heart. It's impossible.

Proverbs 29 and 1, it says, he that being, listen to this carefully, often reproveth, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed and not without remedy. It's talking about a sinner who the spirit of God comes to deal with them, to show them salvation, to tell them that God loves them, to bring them to repentance. And as they are reproveth, their sin is pointed out.

They're convicted in their heart. They're shown their sin. Do you know what their response to the Holy? Because you're not dealing with men.

You're not dealing with the church. You're not dealing with a preacher. The Holy Spirit reproveth sin within a heart in order to save you.

You harden the neck. That's a hard heart. You harden.

So you keep getting reproveth. Don't sin. That's wrong.

That's not right before God. And you harden yourself so it doesn't affect you anymore. Do you know what it says? Suddenly you'll be destroyed and not without remedy.

No second chance. It's going to happen in an hour where you least expect it. You think actually nothing's going to happen.

It's gone on for so long. I've heard the rebukes. I've hardened my heart.

Nothing is going to happen. Suddenly God will come to deal with that and there won't be a second chance. There won't be another warning.

There's a time when God stops speaking to a sinner. There's a time when a sinner can seal his fate or her fate by saying no one time too many. None of us know when that is.

But I've seen too many go out into a real hell who had the moving of the Holy Spirit of God. Listen to Romans chapter 2. The apostle Paul deals with the hard heart of a sinner and how dangerous it is. You see a sinner can humble himself and we have examples in the Bible.

A sinner can soften their heart. What does it mean for a sinner to soften their heart? They don't reject the Word of God. They don't hide from the Word of God.

They don't excuse themselves before the Word of God. They become honest, transparent, sincere, open. They begin to listen.

Paul says in Romans chapter 2 and 4, speaking to sinners, or despises thou the riches of his goodness. Now look at this. This is God's heart towards a sinner with a hard heart.

What's God doing towards the sinner? His riches of goodness and forbearance and long-suffering. Paul is saying here, are you despising this? God is actually being good to you. You don't deserve it.

You shouldn't be getting it. God should be destroying you. But he's being good to you.

He's also sharing forbearance. That means he's holding back his wrath. Forbearance means he's giving you a long time.

Long-suffering means he's putting up with an awful lot from you, your words, your thoughts, your actions, your deeds. And he's there seeing it all. He knows your heart.

He knows everything about you. So he's showing you goodness. He puts up with much.

He endures much for a very long time. And this is all his riches he's pouring out upon a sinner. Do you despise that? Do you know what despise means? You treat it lightly.

You treat it of little consequence. You treat it like just another meal on the table in another day. You don't realize that it could be the means of your salvation.

And so he's talking about someone here, a sinner with a hard heart, and you despise it. You're despising God's good. Sure, God will always be good to me.

Sure, nothing's going to happen. Sure, I'll just keep going on. Not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth to repentance.

Do you know why God is good to you? He wants to lead you to repentance. Do you know why some of you haven't ended up in hell in this room? It's because God is very patient and very good, and he's shown you goodness. He'll answer prayers.

There's prayers being answered for sinners sitting in this room, and you shouldn't have had prayers. You don't have any right for God to answer your prayers. But do you know why he's being good to you? To lead you to repentance.

Every prayer he answered, every intervention, every act of mercy. Do you know it's to bring you to repentance? He looks and he says, I want to bring them. I want to bring them to a place where they're broken over their sin to say, God, forgive me.

God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Oh God, help me. But do you know what that goodness does? Paul goes on here to speak about this goodness.

But how do you respond to that? But after thy hardness, hardness, an impotent heart, a heart that will not change, will not repent, will not break. You're so hard that you can be like this. The goodness, the mercy, the love, the kindness of God, the benevolence of God.

Hell is below your feet. God is holding back his wrath. And yet, do you know what? Through your hardness and impotent heart, you treasure up for yourself wrath against the day of wrath at the revelation of the righteous judgment of God.

Do you know, coming to our world is a day of righteous judgment. Every sinner, every saint is going to be judged one day very soon. There's a day where God is going to reveal himself.

Time's over. Everything's going to come to an end. And see at that point, God's wrath is going to be revealed.

Do you know a sinner who is hard against God, knows the command of God, and yet doesn't repent and get right with God, do you know what they're doing? And they keep walking. God keeps speaking. The Holy Spirit's speaking.

The door is open for you. Mercy is being offered to you. The love of God reaches out to you.

And you keep walking, keep walking, keep walking. And you don't change. And you keep making excuses.

And you keep saying, tomorrow, tomorrow, tomorrow. Do you know what you're doing? You're storing wrath up for that day. It gets worse.

Every single day, you are building up wrath. Every word, every action, every attitude, every denial, you are storing up for that day. And you go, but it hasn't happened here.

It's not happening now. I know. Because you're storing it up.

Do you know, if you store your money up for a rainy day, you're not spending it now. I've met a few people like that. They never spend anything.

You know, my great Aunt Chippy, you went to her house, and she had this little broken cup. It had no handle on it. And it had cracks on it.

And she had flies in the milk and all the rest. And you walked into her house, and it was in disrepair. But you went to her cupboards, and all this immaculate china had never been used.

She was storing up for a wreck. Well, she died. She never did get to use it.

But do you know someone who stores up for the future? They use nothing now. Well, what is Paul speaking about? He's talking about a hard-hearted sinner. No wrath comes on you now.

No judgment falls on you now. No consequence comes to you now. A week goes by.

A month goes by. A year goes by. A decade goes by.

And you think nothing's happened. I mean, look at all the sinners out there. There's no consequence for their sin.

It never catches up with them. Just wait. There's a day of wrath.

They're storing wrath up. And when that wrath comes, it's going to be a mighty outpouring of the wrath of God. You see, they don't realize that it's an act of God's mercy that wrath hasn't fallen yet, or judgment hasn't fallen.

And he says there, who will render, God will render to every man according to his deeds. A hard-hearted sinner doesn't realize they're going to be held accountable for every word, every action, every deed, every attitude, attitude towards God, every hearing of the gospel that they just set aside or forgot or ignored or moved on from. And then in verse 8, but unto them that are contentious, that do not obey the truth and obey unrighteousness, indignation and wrath, tribulation, anguish upon every soul that doeth evil.

Adam Clarke, the great Irish Methodist preacher, he once said, the same sun that hardens the clay softens the wax. The same sun, the same heat bakes that clay rock hard, but it melts the wax. Do you know what he was saying? The same sun that makes a great Christian out of a sinner hardens other sinners and they become children of the devil, children of wrath.

The same influence, the same goodness, the same love, the same gospel can make two different people go in very different directions. One becomes very, very soft. The other becomes hardened under the gospel.

You know, if you don't get saved after hearing the gospel time after time after time, you don't stay the same. You're not going to just carry on the same. You're either going to break under the hand of God.

If you have a hard heart, it's not because it's not your fault. You have a hard heart because you've chosen that. You've made your heart hard.

You've deliberately acted in certain ways that has hardened you in that condition. Listen to what salvation is. It's not all bad news because all of us had hard hearts.

All of us had a heart of rock of stone. Every one of us in this room, me at four and a half years old, I had a heart of stone. That's why I took the conviction of God.

Not merely said, I believe in God. I'll just say a little prayer, Jesus, make sure I don't die and go to hell. I needed the Holy Spirit to come to me and he changed me radically.

Listen to what the gospel is. Ezekiel 36, 26. This is the born again experience, salvation.

A new heart also I will give you. And a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away, notice this, this salvation, a new heart I'm going to give you.

I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. Do you

know every sinner has a hard heart? The religious ones down the road who worship Mary, they've got a hard heart.

The Protestants down the road that think they're free from statues and idolatry, they've got a hard heart. Most of the charismatics of this hour have a hard heart as they speak in tongues and weep tears. Do you realize the hard heart? You need an experience with God where God does heart surgery.

Candice has been begging to do the message for three days. I told her this morning, I said, we're doing heart surgery and there's no anesthetic this morning. I tell you, we're going in.

It's deep heart surgery. Do you know what the spirit of God does in conversion? He takes out of you the stony heart. All of us had a stony heart.

You need a miracle of God's grace. You need a work of the spirit of God. Do you know what he says? I will take out of you.

You can't take your heart of stone out. What is a heart of stone? You're not moldable to the spirit of God. You don't listen to the spirit of God.

You don't follow the spirit of God. You don't respond to the spirit of God. You're hard.

You're callous. You're unfeeling. You're unmoved.

You're unaffected. You keep going on. You hear things.

You know what is being said. You know how serious it is, but you just keep going. That is a hard heart.

You're in great danger. The danger of a sinner's hard heart. If you die with a hard heart, you go to hell and yet the gospel is be born again.

I will take out of you the heart of stone. I'll put a brand new heart in. Can you imagine having a brand new heart? I mean, what is the heart? It's who you are.

Your heart is who you are. It's you. If you're a liar, if you're lustful, if you're prone to anger, that's who you are.

You know what the new birth is? It's surgery where he goes in and he takes that heart out. He goes, what a stinking rotten heart. And he takes it out and he says, I'll put a new heart within you.

Listen to what else it says. And I'll put my spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes and ye shall keep my judgments and do them. You need this new heart to walk with God, to obey God, to follow God.

If you don't repent of your hard heart, if you don't admit it and own it and seek God, that heart will take you to hell. That's the consequence of a hard heart. And yet God has said, I'll change your heart.

I'll do the work. I love you. I'm good to you.

I'm holding back my wrath as long as I possibly can. But one of these days, it's going to be too late, too long, too far, too deep, but not today. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart.

Second of all, the danger of dead religion hardening the heart. James deals with this a lot. He says, you can be a hearer of the word of God.

You say, I believe all this. I know all this. I follow this.

I believe in God. I pray, oh God, help me. But you're not a doer of the word.

So dead religion hardens the heart. The hardened heart of dead religion. Dead religion's horrible.

It believes in, I believe in Jesus. I believe in God the Father. I believe in heaven.

I believe in salvation. I believe in eternal life. But yet religion hardens your heart.

What does a dead religion hardening the heart looks like? You believe in all these things. You believe the Bible. You believe the sermons.

You believe the teaching. You believe it all. You want it all.

You desire it all. And yet you never change. James speaking about this, he says, you're a hearer of the word, but not a doer of the word.

Or listen to Jesus in Mark chapter three, verse two. There's a man there who he's going to heal the man with the withered arm. In Mark chapter three, verse two.

And it says that Jesus entered into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. And it's all religious folk. They're preaching from the Bible.

They're praying prayers. They've got dressed in their Sabbath best. They're very devout and they're all gathered together.

And it says, and they watched him, whether he would heal him on the Sabbath day, that they might accuse him. Now look at these religious folks. They're in around Jesus and they're looking at it.

There's a sick man. There's a man who he could heal. Is he going to heal on the Sabbath? What do they care about? The Sabbath.

You know, there's people in this city, very religious, but they don't care about God. Oh, they believe. I mean, they're dominated every day, every waking moment by religion.

Yet they have a hard heart. Jesus is here surrounded by religious people, praying people, preaching, listening people. And listen, he saith unto them, because he knows their hearts.

Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath day or to do evil, to save life or to kill? He's asking them a question and they held their peace. No one answered. He's asking them a simple question.

Should we not be able to do good? You see how hard religion can make the heart. You can have lots of religious ideas. You can justify yourself by religion.

And yet you can't even say it's right for God to do good on the Sabbath day. All these religious people, their heart was so hard that they couldn't even answer to say, of course God should do good on the Sabbath. Of course you should heal on the Sabbath.

No, they're looking and saying, we're going to judge you. We've got you. We're catching you out with religion.

We can say, are you going to do what's good? And they're using their religion for hypocrisy. When religion is used like that, it's damnable. You've got a very hard heart.

If you use the things of God, it is damning you. You know what it shows? You've hardened your heart. What a terrible thing when Christian things are used to that end.

Look what Jesus says then. And when he had looked around about on them with anger. Do you know Jesus gets angry? I actually know when Jesus gets angry, because if I see a situation of people playing religious games in the house of God and using it, they don't care about the sick man.

They don't care about him. They don't care about salvation. They don't care about God doing good in the house of God.

It's all these intricate arguments. You didn't say this. You should have done that.

You didn't do this. Do you know Jesus looked around and he was angry, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts. He saith unto the man, stretch forth your hand.

He's surrounded by hard hearts in a religious place of worship. They're all religious. They're all worshiping.

And he's looking around saying, I'm angry with you because your hearts are hard. You don't care about the sick. You don't care about truth.

You don't care about holiness. You're actually religious and religious is dangerous. Do you realize religion hardens the heart? You become hard to truth, reality, goodness, righteousness.

In the old Testament, we read about the last king of Israel, Zedekiah. And it says he did that which is evil in the sight of the Lord. He's a very religious man, always in God's house, always got prophets around him.

And it says he'd done that which is evil in the sight of the Lord. Can you be religious and do evil? Yes. The city's filled with it, sleeping around.

The Bible says if you're sleeping with someone who you haven't married, you're going to hell. It's damnable. There's no means of salvation while you're in that condition.

Zedekiah here was religious but doing evil in the sight of God. And he humbled not himself before Jeremiah the prophet who was speaking from the mouth of the Lord. I don't need to listen to Jeremiah.

We put him in a hole in the ground. He's a prophet of doom. He's negative.

I don't like the preaching. He never humbled himself. He never acknowledged there's a spirit of God speaking to me.

And it says he also rebelled against Nebuchadnezzar. You'll make mistakes in your life choices when you're not listening to the word of God. Then it says, listen to this carefully, who has made him to swear by God, but he stiffened his neck and he hardened his heart from turning unto the Lord God of Israel.

Jeremiah said, turn to God, repent of your sin. And he hardened himself. I'll be fine.

I'm not going to submit to Nebuchadnezzar. I'm not going to submit to the new world order. That doesn't make you righteous.

I'm not going to have a chip put in my hand. I'm not going to drink their water. The new world order is trying to poison us all.

And I'm not going to take their mark and I'm not taking their vaccination and I'm not wearing their mask. Can I ask you, are you listening to the preacher? See, there's lots of people out there. They're against all of that.

They're like Zedekiah. They're religious and they've got a type of morality, but you know what? They won't listen to Jeremiah. Repent, soften your heart.

Their heart is hard. It says here, Zedekiah actually hardened his heart so that he wouldn't turn to God. In fact, he could feel that urge, repent, humble, turn, break before God and man.

And he went, I'm not going to do it. I'm not going to do it. He hardened himself.

What a dangerous place that is. Do you know what happened to him? He gets taken a prisoner and he gets blinded. His eyes get put out.

The very last thing he sees is his own children being killed in front of him as a judgment. Well, Jeremiah, you're not very popular. You certainly don't get 10,000 views on YouTube.

Jeremiah was the most rejected preacher of that hour, but he was God's man. You better be careful how you judge. Well, nothing much is happening here.

Obviously God isn't speaking. You could be taking your life in your hands. Like Zedekiah.

Remember Saul done the same in the Old Testament. He was very religious. He had lots of dead religion, but he had a hard heart.

Or what about Judas, one of the 12 apostles? He's there, very religious, chosen to be an apostle. He's a preacher. He's a healer.

He's a deliverer. He's obeying the commands of God, but he hardened his heart. Lots of religion, but damnable.

Third of all, the danger of a saint's hard heart. Do you know the Bible talks about a real born again Christian? I mean, blood washed, the Spirit of God indwells you. You're set for heaven.

Your name is in the Lamb's book of life. You know that you're born again. You're not out there living like a sinner.

And yet there's certain warners in the Bible of the danger of a saint's hard heart. You know when I come across Christians and they say, I know I'm born again. I know of an eternal life.

I can go out and drink, and I can cause fights, and I can cause trouble, and I can take hash, and I'm eternally secure. I know that person doesn't even read the Bible. They don't believe the Bible.

And you know what? They're a child of the devil. If anyone comes to you and they're living like the world, but saying, I'm born again. I had an experience with God.

They're a liar. What a dangerous game to play. You see, a real Christian knows there's a danger of my heart.

When I'm really born again, the closer I walk to God, the more that concerns me. If I find a real born again Christian to go, I don't want coldness. I don't want hardness.

I don't want casualness. Oh God, have mercy on me. I don't want prayerlessness.

I want to be close to the Lord. Lord, what's wrong with me? This little sin that others would laugh about, this little sin comes in of unforgiveness, or lust, or attitudes of the heart. And I go, oh God.

Sure, lots of people in the church would laugh. And I'd say, you don't need to worry. You're secure.

You're fine. But a real healthy Christian who's got a healthy heart, and their arteries are pumping. You know what? They're grieved.

They're saying, oh God, help me. The danger of a saint's hard heart. I remember years ago reading a sermon by Charles Spurgeon.

I couldn't even find it again. But he said about, he went through a stage. You see, I'm not talking about going through those wilderness periods that Christians go through, or those times where you don't feel anything, or a dry patch, or your feelings become numb.

I'm not talking about that. Every Christian has those times. And we get worried, don't we? As soon as I go, I don't feel anything.

I get worried. But it's normal for a real Christian. Charles Spurgeon, the great preacher in London.

He was preaching to thousands. He's only a young man in his 20s. Preached to thousands every Sunday, every week.

20,000 he was preaching to. Amazing preacher. He went into a time where his heart seemed cold.

And I read this in a sermon. And he said he broke. He went, he couldn't feel anything, and see anything, and feel anything, or hear anything.

And he read the word of God. No emotion, no tears, no joy, no blessing. And here he is preaching to people every week.

Thousands of people. And he got so worried about his own heart. And he said, oh God, I need you.

And he took a week off. And he went away to a very far distant place in England, into a little rural place, into a little village. And there was a little church there with a handful of people.

And on the Sunday he went, oh God, I just want to slip in there and sit at the back, and oh God, speak to me. And that Sunday as he sat there, just a handful of people, and that young preacher stood up and began to preach the word of God. And Mr. Spurgeon could feel the conviction of God, and the presence of God, and the power.

And he started to weep, and he said, thank you Lord. Thank you God that you haven't left me. Thank you that you're speaking to me.

You'd send a word here. At the end, with tears rolling down his cheeks, he couldn't wait to get to the door. He went up to the young preacher, and he shook his hand, tears rolling down, saying, young man, thank you for the word of God.

The young man recognized him, said, Mr. Spurgeon, I knew it was you. He said, you don't understand. This is one of your sermons I preached this morning, from one of your pulpit sermons sent out.

You see, Christians do face this. But let me just mention here, the temporary hardness, the danger of temporary hardness in a genuine Christian. It is a danger.

We read in Mark 8, verse 17, Jesus speaking. There's multitudes have been ministered to, but yet there's no food, no food for them. This is the second time this has happened.

It's happened before, and God done a miracle and fed the multitudes. Now here's the second time, and the disciples come to him. And when Jesus knew it, he saith unto them, why reason ye, because ye have no bread? Perceive ye not, neither understand that ye, that ye, your heart, sorry, let me say, have ye your heart yet hardened? Having eyes, see ye not? And having ears, hear ye not? And do you not remember? This is Peter, John, Matthew, the 12 disciples, the miracle workers, his closest apostles.

And what's Jesus saying? They're saying, how are we going to feed these multitudes? Look, what are we going to do? How are we going to manage? Christ is in their midst. And you know what? He'd already just a short time before, less than a year, done an amazing miracle, feeding thousands miraculously. Do you know what he says? He says, your hearts are hard.

They're born again. They're really saved. They're followers of Christ.

They want him with all of their heart. And yet he said, are your hearts hard? Are your eyes blind? Are your ears deaf? You're a believer. He says, have you forgotten what I've done in your life? Have you forgotten the miracles? You're actually faced with a problem saying, what are we going to do in this trial? How are we going to manage? How are we going to feed the multitude? Don't you know I've done the exact same miracle for you before? And you don't remember.

Do you know when your heart is temporarily, and I know it's mild compared to the sinner, having the wrath of God outpoured, but you as a Christian, you forget the power of God. You don't remember the miracles God has done. Do you know why you don't see it and don't feel it and don't think about it? Your heart is hardened.

Christ actually rebukes it and said, you don't even believe that I can do this. He has to rebuke them and said, have you so soon forgotten all your eyes shut and your ears deaf? When we do not remember God's power, when we forget his ability to do it, your heart can be encrusted so you can't even, miracles in the past, but you can't believe for miracles in the future. You've got to be careful that your memory hasn't become hardened.

The blood isn't flowing anymore. It's not functioning right. Or what about Mark chapter 16, 14? This is just after Christ is raised from the dead and two witnesses have come saying Christ has risen and they didn't believe them.

Then Jesus appears in the room with them. Mark 16, 14. Afterwards, he appeared unto them as they sat at meat and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen.

You know, in the church you go, there's a lot of skepticism in the church. People have really seen miracles. I haven't seen it.

You're all old grump. You don't pray and believe. You know what's happened? Your hearts become hardened.

I can remember sitting with brother Clendon. We were driving up from Cork one time and there was a testimony given somewhere else in another country, an extraordinary testimony. There was a man with us and he started to say, I don't believe that.

That didn't happen. That's all made up. Brother Clendon, because he had a childlike heart in his mid and late eighties, childlike heart, quick as any turn, he said, isn't it sad? That's your initial reaction that you don't even believe that's happened.

Isn't that a sad thing that you don't even have the evidence and you don't know, but you're willing to say, I don't believe it. I don't believe God can do that. You see, here's the disciples.

They heard the promise. I will rise again. I will come again.

I will see you again. I won't just die. And you know, the sad condition, their hearts were hard.

When you do not believe what is most basic, your heart is hard. Jesus didn't mind saying to Matthew and all of the rest of them in that room, here's his church. And he says, you've got a hard heart.

I actually believe Christ ought to come. Maybe he's doing here this morning to tell us as a church, oh, aren't we blessed? Hasn't God used us in these videos? Don't we have a reputation here as a church? God help us. It could destroy you.

And Christ would come here and say, you know, LCC, you've actually got a hard heart. Oh no, we're Christians. We're born again.

We're redeemed by the blood. We believe in revival. And yet God would come here, Christ, and say, you actually have a problem.

And he has to rebuke you because he said, you've got a hard part. You don't even believe. You've got a callousness over spiritual things.

In Hebrews chapter three, and I'm going to, I'm cutting across the field and closing here, but listen to me. In Hebrews chapter three, it gives a warning. Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost saith today, if you will hear his voice, there's three warnings he gives.

Harden not your hearts. You realize who's he speaking to? Believers, Christians, the church. Oh, a Christian can't have a hard heart.

Really? Not according to my Bible. Jesus has rebuked his best. And then he said, go preach the gospel in all the world to hard-hearted Christians.

I know it's mild, but it's serious enough for him to say that's a hard heart and it needs corrected. And so he says, harden not your hearts like Israel in the wilderness. Do you know when they hardened their hearts as a nation, what happened next? They didn't get into the promised land.

They're there. God says, go and take it. All of this is revival, missions, giants, battles.

Oh, I don't like giants. I'd rather have the wilderness. Fine, then have your wilderness.

You won't fight giants. You won't run into those valleys and face those iron chariots. You don't want those battles.

You're not willing to fight those battles. Fine, go back into your wilderness. And for the next 38 years, you won't see a giant.

Or an iron chariot. Or an army. 38 years.

And all you generation that have been hardened and hard, you're going to die in that wilderness over the next 38 years. None of you are getting into the land. And you know what? I'm actually building into my plan.

I did want to take you in, but I built in, the Bible talks about a breach of promise in his covenant. In other words, he presses the pause button and says, I will do it. I'll do everything.

I said, but not with you bunch. So I press the pause button. 38 years.

I'll wait till you all die. It'll only be Joshua and Caleb are going in. They're of a different spirit.

They followed me wholly. They said, let's go into the land. What do you think? You can fight giants better than us? Absolutely not.

It's just, we believe God can. God said he would give us the land. And we believe.

Do you realize what a hard heart is? I believe certain churches have died in the wilderness over 38 years because they drew back. They had a hard heart. Oh, they believed it all and prayed it all and said, we're going to see it all.

You won't see anything. This church would be better. Be very careful.

It doesn't get a hard heart. And the spirit of God speaks to us, says, go forward, go forward. Oh, we believe it all.

I didn't say that. I said, go forward. Fourth and lastly, the danger of becoming a vessel of wrath.

And I'm closing with this. The danger of becoming a vessel of wrath. It says in Romans chapter 9, 22.

I want you to hear this as we close. I need to preach a whole message on this last one some other time. It's not for this time.

The danger of becoming a vessel of wrath. I'm going to go into this in detail at some point. I've studied this several times over the years, but we're not going into it here.

I'm closing. But Romans chapter 9, 22. What if God willing to show his wrath in time, not just eternity, in time, willing, wanting to show his wrath and to make his power known.

What's he going to do? If God wants to show his wrath and make known his power at the same time, both together. See, some people want his power, but not his wrath. Do you realize if God's power comes down in this church, it can mean his wrath coming as well in this city.

We want his power. We're praying, Lord, manifest your power like you did with Moses and Aaron, with Israel to get them out of the land of Egypt. Do you realize if his power comes like we want it to come, do you realize his wrath could come at the very same time? And so God willing to show his wrath and make his power known, what did he do? He endured with much long suffering, the vessels of wrath fedded to destruction that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had a fore prepared onto glory.

Do you know who he gives an example of this? Pharaoh at the time of Moses. Listen to what it says just before this in verse 17, for the scripture saith unto Pharaoh, even for this cause, same purpose, have I raised thee up. God raised Pharaoh up.

Why? He's about to reveal his wrath and his power at the same time, in the same situation, in the same land, in the same city. God's going to reveal his power and his wrath together. So what does he do to do that, to bring about his purpose? He raises up Pharaoh to be a vessel of wrath.

Pharaoh is going to become a vessel of wrath. God has a plan to raise up Pharaoh, even for the same purpose, have I raised him up that I might show my power in thee and that my name might be declared throughout the earth. Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy on whom he will, he hardness.

Do you realize Pharaoh become a vessel of wrath? Every sinner is not a vessel of wrath. Every wicked person or politician is not a vessel of wrath, but God raises up certain vessels of wrath and disobedience and acts of rebellion and they harden their heart and he hardens their heart because he's going to use them. Do you know when you go back into the story in Exodus from chapter 4 through to chapter 10 and chapter 14, you read certain statements where it said God hardened Pharaoh's heart and when God hardened his heart he could see miracles and he wouldn't repent and things could happen.

All the cattle of Israel, not one of them died, all the cattle of the Egyptians died and it says Pharaoh come out and looked and not one single cow of the Jews was killed. All of our cows are dead and he hardened his heart. He got angry and bitter and detested them.

Do you realize when God hardens your heart you can hear prophecies and see signs and wonders and miracles. Do you know when you go into this you see that first Pharaoh hardened his heart. Never think God hardens anyone's heart just because he desires it.

Do you realize Pharaoh was already a wicked man, his heart was already hard, he was already doing evil things and God sends a prophet to say let my people go. Look we'll bring signs and miracles and wonders so that you can know to display the power of God but God's wrath started to appear as well because you've got a man who says I will not and this is what I want you to hear as we close. God at times chooses certain vessels to become instruments in his hand to display his glory.

If a man will not repent and God deals with him in unusual ways and he will not repent and will not get born again and will not bow the knee to Christ, God can reach in and make him a vessel of wrath and that

vessel no longer is it him hardening his heart. God takes it out of his hand and God says you won't be hardening your heart against me anymore. I'm going to harden your heart from this point on.

I will harden you. I wonder if that's happening to Mr Putin at the minute if we believe western media. Maybe he's being fitted to a vessel who'll go and invade Israel very shortly.

Is that possible? Could this present situation be hardening him, fitting him, preparing him to invade Israel? Or the nation, the military of Russia, could it be getting fitted at this time and that's the purpose of what's happening now? No Russia won't get ashamed at the moment. No it won't fall yet but it's being prepared for a prophecy that's in this book and God says I'm going to bring you on those mountains and destroy you. Do you know Judas was a vessel of wrath? You see my miracles.

I wash your feet. I love you. You see my goodness and my kindness.

I commission you. I send you and you know what betrayal entered his heart. I'll sell Jesus for 30 bits of silver.

Some people said I wouldn't be a Judas or sell Jesus. You'd sell him for drink and friends and the world or for sex or for something else or for religion or for pride and for that price you would sell Jesus out and it says the devil put in his heart to betray Jesus. Do you think that come overnight? Several times Jesus warns one of you is going to betray me.

You don't have to. You do not have to but one of you's is and whoever that is it'd be better that you'd never been born. You see it move from a place of God warning them helping them reaching out to them wanting to save them to a point where he says you know what you're going to betray me.

What you do do quickly tonight because you're not you're going to be in hell within 24 hours and it says Judas walked out into darkness. Do you know Judas was being fedded. He hardened his heart.

He made his choice. He made his bed and he lay in it and finally he walked out a man who kissed the cheek of Christ. Can you imagine being in hell and through all eternity you'll say I kissed the cheek of the Saviour.

I kissed his he washed my feet physically and mentally. Of those who are given much, much is expected. I'm dealing with a hardened heart and the weeks ahead we're going to deal with some other things about a beautiful heart that God desires to create within a believer but this is where we start.

I'm warning you about a hard heart. Little things are in soul damning things. If you think anything's too small to not care about you're an absolute fool and if you take this meeting and say that's Malcolmson preaching.

That's just a pastor in a church preaching. You don't have the first clue because the Bible teaches that God uses clay weak vessels and his Holy Spirit speaks through them. Will you pray with me here this morning.

Let's bow our heads. Let's just be still in his presence. We're not going to have a song.

I'm not going to sing. I'm just going to close. I want you in the presence of God right now.

If you can hear the Spirit of God do not harden your heart this morning. Do not harden your heart. For some of you it could mean the loss of your soul.

For others it could mean the loss of a ministry. I sure hope as a church it wouldn't mean missing out on God's plan for 38 years. Walking, walking, working, working.

Missing out on his plan that he had for us. I don't want that. God have mercy upon us.

Father I pray right now for those who need you who need to be born again. I pray oh God that you'd soften the hearts. You'd make their hearts tender and pliable, broken before you.

You said that you do not despise a broken and contrite heart. And Father I pray will you come in power to save individuals that today they would hear the Spirit of God. Today while they may be saved that they'd be born again, repent and cry to Jesus.

Father I pray for us as a church Lord God that we wouldn't become casual because God is speaking and working and answering prayers and doing things and drawing lights. I pray as an entire church there would be a breaking within us that we wouldn't go through the motions of the Lord's table and of worship and of church life and of family life and of work without a desperation gripping us. Father we need our hearts softened oh God.

Lord God break our hearts oh God, our hardness oh God that we would be swift to hear the Word of God and to respond to the Word of God that we wouldn't be hearers only but that we'd be doers of the Word of God. We want tender hearts and broken hearts. And Lord God you said exhort one another daily lest our hearts become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

Lord God I pray don't let sin harden the hearts. Lord God I pray let an exhortation break out in this church even amongst us oh God exhorting one another to keep us back from any hardness in Jesus mighty name.

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