

Hardness of Heart (Mark 8:10-17)

By B. D. Tate & Andrew Wommack Messages (1/25/09)

Mr 8:17 And Jesus, aware of this, *said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? **Is your heart still hardened?**

What is amazing to me is the subtlety of a hardened heart. Most of us think immediately of someone who has rejected God or is not coming to Christ even though you know they have heard the gospel. We'd be right in thinking that anyone who is anti-god or anti-Christ has a hardened heart. Yet, it may surprise us to realize that we also in *varying degrees* have a hardened heart toward the things of God. Let me explain.

The definition of a hardened heart: (the heart refers to the center of one's being where their affections reside, desires, goals, dreams, imaginations, love, feelings are spawned from...) a hardened heart includes coldness, insensitive, unfeeling, unyielding heart!

From the passage from Mark we also see further signs of a hardened heart such as eyes that see but do not understand, ears that hear but do not perceive, and a mind that does not remember.

Consider the Heart

God has given us a great gift as human beings he's given us a heart. Listen to scripture concerning the *matters of the heart*:

-God is after the heart...

Mr 12:30 'And you shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.' This is the first commandment.

-Out of the heart flows the issues of one's life...

Lu 6:45 "A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

-Out of the heart God's Spirit flows...

Joh 7:38 "He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."

-From the heart salvation is experienced...

Ro 10:10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

-Worship is from the heart...

Eph 5:19 speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord,

-God's grace must be established in our hearts...

Heb 13:9 Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines. For *it is* good that the heart be established by grace..."

-The root cause of all pain starts in the heart...

Pr 12:25 Anxiety in the heart of man causes depression, But a good word makes it glad.

Pr 13:12 Hope deferred makes the heart sick, But *when* the desire comes, *it is* a tree of life.

-All of life boils down to the condition of our hearts...

Pr 4:23 Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it *spring* the issues of life.

The Bible speaks about evil hearts, pure hearts, defiled or perverted hearts, unbelieving hearts, crafty or deceitful and desperately wicked hearts...

We are commanded to keep our heart with all diligence for out of it flows the determining factors of our life...

Pr 23:7“For as he thinks in his heart, ***so is he.***”

The heart mirrors what a man thinks about him/her self and is reflected in the life around them...This great gift God has created possesses our will, mind, and emotions, the thoughts and intents of our life. In the heart are *our imaginations* whether good or evil...

Ge 6:5 Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man *was* great in the earth, and *that every intent of the thoughts of his heart* *was* only evil continually.

God knows what is in the heart of man and judges accordingly. We may judge from external actions but God knows the heart and what is in our hearts...

Grace and faith are matters of the heart. God seeks worshippers who will worship in Spirit and in truth *from the heart!*

Since everything springs forth from the heart our lives right now reflect what is important to us what we value and treasure in our hearts.

Jesus said:

Matt. 6:19 “Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal;

20 “but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal.

21 “**For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.**

The Hardened Heart

Jesus at times rebuked his disciples for having a hardened heart. The scripture reveals that they could not receive, understand, or remember the things Jesus’ had done because...

Mr 6:52 “...for they had not understood about the loaves; **their hearts were hardened.**

When we as Christians begin to understand that our inability to receive from God (what we’ve been given), **is the result from a hardened heart**, we can begin to make corrections. We can be influenced by our traditions (Mk. 7:8), religious teaching, the world views we value, fear, worry, unbelief, so that our hearts actually *become hardened to the things of the Spirit*. **We can reverse this** by valuing, re-aligning, looking to the pure word, being filled with God’s Spirit, receiving revelation; in other words repenting from a life not fully glorifying the God we love.

As we consider the passage, Jesus recounts for the disciples what took place only a few days before how thousands were fed by a few loaves and fishes. He does this because they are worried about food again. Jesus reminds them of what they’ve seen, done, and witnessed yet because of their hardened hearts they are worried or can’t figure out how to address the present situation.

Why is it that we can hear, watch, or see God’s word and it does not impact us? The answer lies in a hardened condition of the heart.

A hardened heart has become cold, dull, insensitive, unwilling, and unyielding to the Word of God. A hardened heart to

God means a heart that is warm, sensitive, willing, and yielding to *something else!* This is why I John tells us:

1Jo 2:15 **Do not love the world** or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

What we value and place as important, what we see as true and trustworthy dominates our heart! Remember the seesaw analogy? When we value God's Word the world and its values go down; when we value the world's ways then God's Word goes down.

The Condition of the Heart!

Another way of looking at it is this, what we consider and give our focus, attention to, **determines the condition of our heart**. For they considered not nor understood the miracle of the loaves for their heart was hardened (Mark 6:52). **Considered can be defined this way: to study, ponder, deliberate, examine, or think upon—to meditate on**. Instead they were studying, pondering, deliberating, examining, and thinking upon what they had now. **They were carnally minded living to the world's conditions, reasoning, facts, and issues**. Jesus actually laments that their hearts are *STILL* hardened. He'd already rebuked them for having a hardened heart in Mark 6.

We have a choice to make and I must admit from a certain point of view it is not a comfortable one. **We have to decide** who we are going to please, who we are going to trust, which we are going to receive honor from, and in whose eyes we are going to look foolish to. For what is wise to the world, reasonable, acceptable, is an abomination to God; and what is wise to God is foolishness to the world.

1Co 1:18 For the message of the cross is **foolishness** to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

1Co 1:21 For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the **foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe**.

1Co 1:23 but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block and to the Greeks **foolishness**,

1Co 1:25 **Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men**, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

We must realize that our Christian walk is not supposed to be a tight-rope between pleasing God and pleasing men. We can't play the middle and expect to receive anything from God (It's not that we never please men it's that we always place the priority of pleasing God first!). Listen again to this verse:

1Co 2:14 But **the natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God**, for they are foolishness to him; nor can he know *them*, because they are spiritually discerned.

When we became born again we entered **a new life, a new realm of existence, understanding, spiritual benefits, and glory**. We are not to have our eyes, ears, mind, sight, vision, imaginations, thoughts fixed on this temporal world. When we continue to live carnally, less than Spirit-filled, we are hardening our hearts towards God's will, ways, and supernatural life. **The continual hearing but not doing of the word of God causes us to become calloused against it**. The continual prodding of the word to our conscience if ignored over and over **will create a build up of resistance in our heart towards God's Word**. Wax candles use to be made by dipping into liquid wax a wick over and over again until the desired thickness was reached. Each dip caused a certain amount of wax to build up on the wick. Likewise our continued denial, disobedience, neglect, will do the same towards anything we do not value in God's Word.

Many Christians live out their entire lives one foot in the kingdom and experiencing the minimum, and missing the full grace that God has already given us—all the while building up a resistance to God's Word. Why because of living to, considering the world and its wisdom, views, education, understanding, reasoning, **greater than the Word and Spirit of God**—that is what hardens our hearts towards God.

Living Naturally When We're Supernatural!

Consider this: If we are more comfortable, more willing, more aware, warm and understanding of this natural world than God's supernatural life we have a hardened heart towards God and a soft heart towards the world. **Another way of looking at it** would be if the Spiritual life, the Holy Spirit movement, gifts, miracles, healings, deliverances, and working of Spiritual phenomenon scare, intimidate, overwhelm, or seem ridiculous, untrue, over the top, hard to believe, we have a hardened heart towards God.

If the whole idea of God working in you the same works that Jesus manifested seems outlandish, out of touch with reality, weird, extreme, then you have a hardened heart towards the things of the Spirit. We believe something else...or maybe we've been taught wrong, or weren't taught at all?

John 14:12 "Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do he will do also; and greater works than these he will do, because I go to My Father.

The disciples were hardened towards the things of God even with Jesus performing signs right in front of them. They were not seeing spiritually, hearing spiritually, their hearts were not warm, sensitive, yielding, considering, pondering upon the things of the Spirit. **Their eyes were on the carnal things** of this world, the temporal things, instead of being on the eternal truths, the promises of God, and the realities of heaven's will being done on earth.

We must understand that our hearts determine the issues of our life and if we continue to feed on the world, take in its imaginations, its visions, its stories of what is true; **we cannot have a warm heart towards the things of God.** We will be saved, know God in certain ways, experience God from time to time, but our daily walk will be carnal and with a natural hearted condition we cannot receive anything from the Lord (I Cor. 2:14).

Jesus said beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Herod. Beware of the influence, the seeds being planted in your life **from religious traditions and political prowess.** Don't set your heart on pleasing religious men nor being swayed by political power or

popularity—people of power and influence. Set your heart on the things of God consider, ponder, deliberate, and meditate upon God's word and Spirit.

In conclusion:

Spiritually minded people are soft towards Spiritual things, desire God's best, want to experience the full grace of God in their lives, please the Lord with their daily living, be used by God, and yield completely to His Will.

What is great about understanding the problem of a hardened heart **is knowing that we can reverse this process and become hardened towards evil, the devil, and the worldly mindset and soft towards God!** Our hearts are conditioned right now by what we have valued and raised up in our imaginations as important, true, and trustworthy. If we find ourselves in a place where the things of God are hard to grasp, hard to remember, hard to see and understand, difficult to process, perceive, and uncomfortable, we've taken some wrong turns.

Make some U turns and get back under the authority of God's Word, get back into the Spirit and become willing, yielding, accepting of God's Ways...**turn our unbelieving, believing into a believing believer...as God intended.**

Why are Christians for the most part powerless, weak, scared, and intimidated by the World? We are not experiencing what the Apostle Paul wrote here:

I Cor. 2: 4 And my speech and my preaching *were* not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in **demonstration of the Spirit and of power**,
5 that **your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

We are to come in the name of the Lord not with persuasive speech and wisdom of this world but in **demonstration of the Spirit and of power that our faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.**

If this seems far and away, strange, fairy tale, whimsical, out of touch with reality, *then we are accepting far less*, being

stolen from, and living with hardened hearts. Instead of being sons and daughters of God we are living as *mere men*. We will never have God's power, experience His best or know the full grace of God. We are not supposed to live in faith within all circumstances holding true to God despite what happens, remaining in peace no matter how it turns out...while the power, promise, and grace already given to us remains untouched, unused, unaccepted, not received...**in other words the grace of God poured out to us through Christ's atonement in many ways lies dormant, or we could say void, or having been given in vain...**

2Co 6:1 We then, *as workers together with Him* also plead with *you* **not to receive the grace of God in vain.**

1Co 15:2 by which also you are saved, if you hold fast that word which I preached to you—**unless you believed in vain.**

1Th 3:5 For this reason, when I could no longer endure it, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means **the tempter had tempted you, and our labor might be in vain.**

Jas 4:5 **Or do you think that the Scripture says in vain,** "The Spirit who dwells in us yearns jealously"?

It is God who desires to manifest his glory and power in us as his workmanship, to demonstrate His compassion; to relieve the ills, and deliver from evil through us (The spirit does so jealously awaiting our full compliance).

It is God's desire that every Christian be full of Christ and be like Christ to the world.

Mark 16:17 **"And these signs will follow those who believe:** In My name they will cast out demons; they will speak with new tongues;

18 "they will take up serpents; and if they drink anything deadly, it will by no means hurt them; they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover."

19 So then, after the Lord had spoken to them, He was received up into heaven, and sat down at the right hand of God.

20 **And they went out and preached everywhere, the Lord working with *them* and confirming the word through the accompanying signs. Amen.**

1Jo 4:17 Love has been perfected among us in this: that we may have boldness in the day of judgment; **because as He is, so are we in this world.**