

WHY SUCH HARD HEARTS

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"Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your heart" Heb. 3:15.

"Who hath hardened his heart against Him and hath prospered" Job 9:4.

It seems as if in this age everyone is looking for a bargain. We will drive miles to save money in almost any purchase that is important to us. Prices are usually inflated and then cleverly marked down to give the appearance of a real deal. It is of course possible to save if you are a wise and careful shopper. The tragedy develops when so many refuse to apply wise actions when it comes to the gift of God. There is no bargain on this earth that can compare with the gift of Eternal Life offered to all who will believe. Surely you have heard of the greatest offer ever offered to man. To refuse this is not a matter of bad judgment or choice, but a deadly mistake that will haunt you forever. It is clear that those who hear the Gospel today seem to be harder than ever before. This is a tragic mystery that needs to be examined.

It just doesn't make sense. It is a matter of life and death. What sense does it make to harden one's heart against a God of infinite goodness who desires only that which is the best for us. How can one harden his heart against a God of all wisdom and knowledge who created man and from whom no secrets can be hidden. After all, He is an all powerful being that holds our very life and breath in His hands. He is man's creator and wants to be his best friend. He gave His life on the cross and paid the full price for our redemption. An ever loving God wants to end the rule of sin in you life, forgiving those of the past, and providing a new life of victory guaranteed by His presence and power. One has everything to gain by accepting His salvation or everything to lose by rejecting it. Please let me try to expose the things I believe most harden hearts today; the things that make it easier to say NO to the Gospel.

I am sure one of the first is **CONTINUED SINNING**. The Bible gives clear warning when it

states man is *"hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"* Heb. 3:13. It is clear to me that the longer a person waits and the more sin he commits, then the harder he becomes. Facts say 68% of people saved accept Christ by age 12. 93% will have accepted Christ by the age of 20. Only one half a percent make a salvation decision after 50. Certainly the earlier one comes to Christ the better. Time and repetition can harden the heart, making it far more difficult to respond to the loving call of Christ. Man's nature is clearly that of sin. The Psalmist said *"I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me"* Psm. 51:5. We owe the beginning to Adam for *"as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for all have sinned"* Rom. 5:12. Refusal to accept Christ is simply to ignore the fatal disease with which you were born. Romans 3:23 says *"all have sinned and come short of the glory of God."* Failure to face your problem only complicates your condition. Meanwhile, the more days the disease of sin is allowed to continue the worse you become. This is easily seen in the individual sins that enslave the sinner. The smoker knows he is destroying his health but cannot seem to stop. The drinker is enslaved and bound deeper with every additional drink. The immoral becomes progressively more filthy as sin leads to more shameful practices. The longer the indulgence, the mightier the hold. Sinning years are like links in the chain of despair. Only faith in Christ can set you free.

People are further hardened by the **FEAR OF THE OPINION OF OTHERS**. This certainly is a powerful tool in the arsenal of Satan's weapons. A man will go to a football game and yell and carry on with no thought of appearing strange. At a party women can be seen doing all kinds of crazy things with no worry about what others think. Not so with the decision to get right with God. When it comes to trusting God, *"the fear of man bringeth a snare"* Prov. 29:25. It seems everyone outside of Christ is afraid to change. Teens will do almost anything to be "in" or "cool" with no thought to the consequences. After all, one must conform to that which is accepted by the crowd to which you belong. Adults who need Christ, worry what their spouse will say or those who work with them at the job. The powerful force of acceptance by friends

can eclipse the need for the crucial change. *"There is a way that seemeth right unto man, but the end thereof are the ways of death"* Prov. 14:12. As long as the fear of man is stronger than the fear of God the heart becomes harder with each passing day. Isn't what God thinks far more important than the opinions of those around you? Certainly so.

Another clever hardening agent is **SELF RIGHTEOUSNESS**. Since the beginning of time man has tried to justify himself before God with his own works. It goes against the grain of human nature to have the Bible inform us we are all human depraved beings that cannot save ourselves. All the false religions of the world try to justify man by the works of his own hands. Wrong again! *"By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified"* Rom. 3:20. I find religious church going people the hardest to win to Christ. Years of church profession and good deeds become heavy insulation, blocking the message of salvation. *"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and the renewing the Holy Ghost"* Titus 3:5-6. One's baptism, confirmation, dedication, offerings, service and membership in a church are not substitutes for redemption through Christ. When modernistic clergy say that we are all children of God they lie. Those believing such foolish statements are only made harder as their true condition is masked. When caught in the quicksand of religious profession one needs true salvation. Remember Isaiah said *"all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags"* Isa. 64:6. Nothing man can conceive can replace God's plan for *"neither is there salvation in any other"* Acts 4:12. Only Christ can break the chains of your self imposed religiosity.

I cannot forget to mention **JUDGING AND ACCUSING OTHERS**. This is the favorite pastime of millions of unsaved sinners who have eyes for the sins of others, but blindness towards theirs. It is easy to spot hypocrites everywhere, but they don't offer true escape to those who spot them. You will find them everywhere in every business. It is only in the church that this is made such a big thing and a reason for the rejection of Christ. Would you throw away a whole bushel of apples if you found a bad one? Would you stop

using money because you were given a counterfeit bill? Certainly you would not do so. Why then do you allow a church phony to influence you away from Christ? Remember "thou art inexcusable O man whosoever thou art that judgeth another, for thou condemnest thyself" Rom. 2:1. You must simply get your eyes off of men and on the Lord. No one's failure to do right is worth the eternal loss of your soul.

Lastly, I want to mention **PROCRASTINATION**. It has been called the thief of time. Certainly many have been lost forever in spite of their good intentions. Hell is full of suffering souls that thought they had time to make the right decision. It seems so easy to put off those things that seem not to be convenient at the time. Our teeth suffer decay and loss simply because we do not care for them. Paint peels and houses decay. Health problems are neglected in spite of body warnings. All of this makes no sense, but when it comes to the soul it is shameful. God himself has warned "my Spirit shall not always strive with man" Gen. 6:3. You'll not get saved when you are finally ready, but when the Lord calls you. No Bible verses promise you will have the opportunity at any later date. "Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation" II Cor 6:2. Not one verse promises you can be saved tomorrow. The need of the sinner is urgent and must be dealt with very soon. We are certainly living in the last days and the rapture is soon to occur. Those who foolishly miss it will not be saved. All hope will be gone and the opportunity squandered forever.

Remember, all the things you count most dear can vanish in a moment. The bank account and your stocks and bonds do not apply beyond the grave. No one knows how many more days of living they will have on this earth. There is no place to hide and no earthly hedge of safety from the end time judgments to come. In the words of the song writer, *"He is able to deliver thee."* Only faith in the finished atonement provided by Jesus Christ can spell peace and safety to the troubled soul. If you have never done so, be sure to believe in Christ as your Lord and Saviour. Remember *"Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved"* Rom. 10:13. Wait no longer. Do it today! Better still, do it NOW! Then get baptised,

join a good fundamental church and make your
final days on earth count for eternity.