

Series: Come Bodily Unto the Thron

# RECOVERING OUR CLOSENESS TO GOD PSALMS 95

Text: Psalms 95:7-8

## ***Psalms 95:7-8***

*<sup>7</sup> For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*

Introduction:

Losing the intimate sense of God's presence is a sobering experience. This can come about as a result of flagrant rebellion, or it could be the result of a culmination of many seemingly minor choices to resist God's clear leadership. Whatever the cause it's troubling to sense in ourselves or others a growing hardness of heart and the helplessness to recover from it.

The plea of Psalms 95 is that we guard against the hardening of our hearts. To illustrate the danger of such a spiritual state the psalmist refers to a critical moment in Israel's history.

While the people were camped at Kadesh Barnea, God instructed Moses to send spies into Canaan (The Promise Land).

When the spies returned they discouraged the people focusing on the giants. Joshua and Caleb however acknowledged the land abundance and blessings.

In the eyes of the spies they were like grasshoppers when compared to the giants, but in the eyes of Joshua and Caleb, God was greater than the giants.

As a result of the discouraging report, Israel refused to follow God, and their refusal brought God's wrath, and the disobedient generation was sentenced to wander and ultimately died in the wilderness which they preferred over Canaan.

It's interesting to consider. After a night of reflection on God's judgment the children of Israel repented and returned back to Moses expressing willingness to go in and conquer Canaan, but it was too late.

The lesson was clear; God had opened a window of opportunity that they neglected and their refusal to obey immediately was costly.

Their hardened hearts had cost them and their families dearly. God would give Canaan to another generation – a generation of faith.

God calls believers to prayer, and the same consequences will result in our disobedience. With every delay, opportunities are lost.

## **1. A CALLING MASTER**

### ***Psalms 95:7***

*<sup>7</sup>For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,*

The call to prayer tests our comprehension of God. If we know Him and what He desires of us, prayer is a welcome invitation.

Notice:

#### **A. Profound Significance of this Call**

The urgency of our response to any voice is directly related to the personal significance of the one who is calling.

*Illustration:*

Watch a group of mothers sitting and talking with each other in a crowded room, while their children are playing outside.

One of the children begins to cry and call out and HIS mother hears the cry and voice of her child and rushes to comfort them. That is a voice that she knows and a voice she cannot ignore or disregard.

The One who is calling you to prayer is:

1. Our Savior

***Psalms 95:1***

*<sup>1</sup> O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.*

2. Our Sustainer

***Psalms 95:4***

*<sup>4</sup> In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also.*

### 3. Our Source and Maker

#### ***Psalms 95:5-6***

*<sup>5</sup>The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. <sup>6</sup>O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.*

### 4. Our Shepherd

#### ***Psalms 95:7***

*<sup>7</sup>For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,*

He has charged Himself with the responsibility for our welfare.

### B. Personal Subject of the Call

Occasionally I have been asked how we can recognize the call of God. Knowing HIM is the answer.

### *Illustration:*

When I was growing up my mom would come to the front door of our house and call for my brother and I to come in and wash our hands. “It’s time for supper.”

Some things were obvious.

That’s was my mother, and she was calling me.

I knew what she wanted, and I also knew that as far as my mother was concerned, obedience was to be immediate or it wasn’t obedience at all.

“Today if ‘ye’ will hear His voice” is the plea. When God speaks you know He is speaking to you, and as far as He is concerned, obedience is either immediate or it’s not obedience at all.

### C. Particular Sound of this Call

People often excuse their disobedience behind the excuse of ignorance, stating they didn’t know what the Lord wanted them to do.

Our faith must come to a level of maturity that accepts the fact that God holds us accountable for all our decisions.

Sufficient knowledge of His will is always available so that we can respond appropriately.

***Psalms 95:7***

*<sup>7</sup> For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice,*

The “voice” the Psalmist refers to is not some muffled indistinguishable sound. This is the clear voice of God, and God is a clear communicator, not the author of confusion.

Our Savior is calling us to pray, will you harden your heart or will you obey?

## **2. A CONTRARY MINDSET**

***Psalms 95:7-8***

*<sup>7</sup> For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*

Why does the psalmist say, “Harden not your heart?” Why does the writer of Hebrews draw attention to the same kind of heart in chapters 3-4?

Could it be that the results of hard heart is more costly than we can imagine?

Why is God so concerned about the hardening of our heart?

Here are three reasons why:

A. Hardening Your Heart Requires a Conscious Effort

This is something that we do to ourselves. We have the privilege of choice. We can choose to respond to God or resist God's directions in our lives.

B. Hardening Your Heart Produces a Cumulative Effect

The effect of wrong choices increases with each successful resistance making further disobedience easier the next time.

Hardheartedness can easily become habitual.



### 3. A CRITICAL MOMENT

#### ***Psalms 95:7-8***

*<sup>7</sup> For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. To day if ye will hear his voice, <sup>8</sup> Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, and as in the day of temptation in the wilderness:*

Note the sense of urgency; “Today” .

God is calling, and He wants our response without delay.

Why is it critical that we respond now?

#### A. This the Obvious Time to Respond

Delayed response results in a hardening of the heart and hard hearted believers miss opportunities that can never be recovered.

#### B. This is Time Opportune for Us to Respond

#### ***Isaiah 55:6***

*<sup>6</sup> Seek ye the LORD while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near:*

Today while He may be found it the opportune time.

Today while our heart is still sensitive, moldable, and pliable is the time to seek Him.

### C. This is the Only Time for Us to Respond

Yesterday is past and tomorrow has not arrived and may not.

Today is all that we have.

Close:

What is God saying to you about your prayer life?

What is He calling you to do?

Is your heart pliable in His hand or is it becoming hardened because of rejecting His leading?

What response do you need to make to God today?