

HE THAT HARDENETH HIS HEART

PROVERBS 28:14; MARK 6:45-56

Text: Proverbs 28:14

Proverbs 28:14

¹⁴Happy *is* the man that feareth alway: but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief.

Introduction:

This is what I feel is one of the most dangerous things that we can experience – Hardening of the heart. You may be thinking that this is speaking of people who have never trusted Christ as their Savior.

I want to remind you that it is possible for followers of Christ to harden their hearts.

Read Mark 6:45-56

Here we see a group of disciples whose hearts have become hardened. They had grown spiritually dull or insensitive to the work of the Lord.

This is perhaps the most miserable but certainly the most dangerous a Christian can ever be in.

I want each of us to consider the truth and the danger of our heart becoming hard.

1. REVIEW THE PAST

- Had just returned from a time of visitation (vs. 7-13)

Mark 6:7-13

⁷ And he called *unto him* the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits; ⁸ And commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse: ⁹ But *be* shod with sandals; and not put on two coats. ¹⁰ And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. ¹¹ And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city. ¹² And they went out, and preached that men should repent. ¹³ And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*.

Mark 6:30-31

³⁰ And the apostles gathered themselves together unto Jesus, and told him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught. ³¹ And he said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat.

- They were witness to an amazing miracle (vs. 32-44)

Mark 6:32-44

³² And they departed into a desert place by ship privately. ³³ And the people saw them departing, and many knew him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came

together unto him. ³⁴ And Jesus, when he came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and he began to teach them many things. ³⁵ And when the day was now far spent, his disciples came unto him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time *is* far passed: ³⁶ Send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat. ³⁷ He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat? ³⁸ He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes. ³⁹ And he commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. ⁴⁰ And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties. ⁴¹ And when he had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, he looked up to heaven, and blessed, and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to his disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided he among them all. ⁴² And they did all eat, and were filled. ⁴³ And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes. ⁴⁴ And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

With 5 loaves and 2 fish the Lord fed at least 5000.

As a matter of fact up to this point they had either heard of, witnessed or was a part of at least 20 other miracles.

Some of those were:

Water to wine – John 2

Nobleman's son healed – John 2

First draught of fishes – Luke 5

Leper healed – Matt 8; Mark 1; Luke 5

Centurion's servant healed – Matt 8; Luke 7

Widow's son raised to life – Luke 7

Demoniac healed – Mark 1; Luke 4

Peter's mother-in-law healed – Matt 8:14; Mark 1; Luke 4

Paralytic healed – Matt 9; Mark 2; Luke 5

Impotent man healed – John 5

Man with withered hand healed – Matt 12; Mark 3; Luke 6

Blind and dumb and demonic healed – Matt 12; Luke 11

Tempest stilled – Matt 8; Mark 4; Luke 8

Jarius' daughter raised to life – Matt 9; Mark 5; Luke 8

Two blind men restored sight – Matt 9

Dumb demonic healed – Matt 9

So following the feeding of the 5000 the Lord instructs His disciples to get into a ship and go to Bethsaida while He sent away the people.

When evening arrived it brought with it a storm.

Mark 6:48

⁴⁸ And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

This storm produced a:

2. REVEALING THE PROBLEM – HEARTS WERE HARD

What are some of the evidences of a hardened heart?

- Fear in Times of Trouble

These men were not novices when it came to traveling on the water – many of them had been fishermen.

- Frustration and Failure

They had entered the ship before evening had begun. By the time evening had come, they were in the midst of the sea. They were unable to fulfill the command of Christ.

We cannot obey God if our hearts are hardened toward Him.

- Fruitless Labor

Mark 6:48

⁴⁸ And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

It is now the fourth watch of the day, which is between 3:00am and 6:00am. They had been out there for hours "toiling and rowing", but they weren't getting anywhere.

Have you ever felt that way in your service to the Lord?

Beating the water to a froth, but not accomplishing anything?

3. REASON FOR THEIR PLIGHT

How does a hard heart develop?

- Failure to consider the blessing of God

They had grown accustomed to His miracles and had lost their excitement.

They had left their first love.

God had admonished His people in Deuteronomy:

Deuteronomy 6:12

¹² *Then* beware lest thou forget the LORD, which brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, from the house of bondage.

When we forget what God has done for us, it is a sure sign that our hearts have become hardened.

I have met some Christians who have forgotten what it was like before they were saved.

Others I have met had the attitude that they were doing God a favor by accepting Christ, and that they deserved all of His blessings!

- Failure to give attention to Christ

Mark 6:48

⁴⁸ And he saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them: and about the fourth watch of the night he cometh unto them, walking upon the sea, and would have passed by them.

They were so busy in the ship that they just barely noticed Jesus as He started to pass them by.

It's a tragic thing when we are so busy that we can't find time to give attention to Him.

Illustration:

Luke 10:38-42

³⁸ Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. ³⁹ And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. ⁴⁰ But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. ⁴¹ And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: ⁴² But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

- There was a difference in their focus

Martha was focused on serving; Mary was focused on the Saviour.

- There was a difference in their fellowship

Mary was a close to the Saviour as she could get – (at His feet); Martha was allowing her task to draw her away from the Lord.

Remember we are as close to the Lord as we choose to be.

There was a difference in their feelings

Martha was cumbered (worried, anxious, and distracted); Mary was at peace resting in His presence.

The Lord said, “One thing is needful.” That was dwelling in His presence.

There are many today rowing and toiling, busy about things that are not bad, but they are being done out of a routine, or in a rut.

4. REMEDY FOR THE PROBLEM

- Recognize that our heart is not right
- Resolve to live in His presence and spend time in God’s Word and in prayer
- Reflect on the blessings of God on our lives.

Close:

We are instructed in Proverbs 4:23:

Proverbs 4:23

²³ Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life.

It's important that we keep our heart with all diligence – because of the dangers of our heart growing hard.

Remember a hard heart doesn't happen promptly, it's a process; gradually, a little bit at a time.

It can happen even when we are doing what we are supposed to be doing, but we go through the motion, or the routine, without putting our heart into it.