

A Good Reminder About a Bad Heart

by Jack Hayford

A humble heart is necessary for God's highest purposes to be realized in one's life, and we must avoid heart-hardness by being teachable and humble before God.

Scripture: Exodus 5:2, Exodus 8:15, Exodus 9:12, Proverbs 16:9, Jeremiah 17:9, James 4:10

Topics: "Heart Hardness", "Gods Sovereignty"

Description

Jack Hayford delves into the story of Pharaoh in Exodus, highlighting the dangers of heart-hardness and resistance to God. He emphasizes the importance of humility, teachability, and avoiding presumptuous knowledge about the Lord. Through Pharaoh's example, Hayford warns against being unaffected by the miraculous works of God and the tendency towards unbelief and thanklessness despite witnessing God's power. The sermon concludes with a reflection on God's dealings with Pharaoh, showcasing the balance between God's sovereignty and human responsibility, urging listeners to keep their hearts humble before God to fulfill His purposes.

Transcript

In some recent studies of Exodus, I have again been impressed with the frightening capacity of the human heart to resist God. Pharaoh, ruler of Egypt and emperor of the most powerful nation of his time, is a case study which ought to be a good reminder to

us all.

Don't make the mistake of supposing yourself incapable of heart-hardness. Jeremiah reminds us that all hearts are self-deceiving (Jeremiah 17:9). The lessons distilling from Pharaoh's self-damning mindset make it unnecessary for anyone to make the same mistake. That's why I took care in noting a few observations:

He supposed he knew everything about the Lord.

When Moses first demands Israel's release in the name of the Lord, Pharaoh's "Who is the Lord?" (Exodus 5:2) is more a smart-aleck remark than a question. He says in essence, "There's nothing about that God that I don't know or can't beat."

My spirit may not be the same as Pharaoh's, but I need to guard against the presumption that because I know the Lord, that I know all about Him that I need to know. Heart-hardness is the price of presumed

knowledge. A humble heart is characterized by confessed ignorance and teachability.

He was unaffected though surrounded by the miraculous.

If there is anything miracles do not guarantee, it is obedient faith. The alarming capacity of the human heart to behold the power of God and still remain unchanged is terrible in its potential. Pharaoh watched Moses' rod become a serpent, consume the magicians' rods, and then become a rod again in Moses' hand. He saw the Nile turned to blood. He saw plagues devastate his nation while Israel was protected through divine intervention, and STILL "he hardened his heart" (8:15, 32).

What evidences of God's power do you see as you look around you? You and I are surrounded by phenomenal displays of God's power, grace, and miraculous operations. Yet unbelief and thanklessness survive too easily. Beware, my heart!

He was finally given over to his own devices.

When the Bible says, "The LORD hardened the heart of Pharaoh" (9:12), we are not dealing with a case of predestined destruction. Let no one misunderstand the Lord's forecast of this occasion (4:21, 7:3). To the contrary, God never predestines a person's failure, even when His prescience foresees it. Exodus 9:16 makes clear that God raised Pharaoh up with the possibility of becoming one of the most remarkable rulers ever. He might to this day be remembered as the Great Emancipator, had he taken his hour of opportunity responsibly and obediently before God.

But... the sad fact of history is that Pharaoh repeatedly hardened his own heart until God finally said, "Then have it your way!"

The Holy Spirit has a gentle yet pointed way of dealing with each of us. Lessons like this, from the eternal Word of God, serve as a strong warning as well as a comforting assurance: If I keep my heart humble before God, I can be certain of His highest purposes being realized in my life.

That's the kind of heart I want.

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