

# Take Away My Heart of Stone

by R. Edward Miller

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*God must change a hard heart into a heart of flesh, and only He can do it through His word and presence.*

**Duration:** 28:14

**Scripture:** Psalm 114:7-8, Jeremiah 23:29, Jeremiah 25:30, Daniel 9:21, Romans 2:5, Hebrews 3:13

**Topics:** "Heart"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the power of the voice of the Lord. He compares it to a hammer that breaks the cedars of Lebanon. The preacher explains that when the powerful voice of the Lord speaks, something will have to give and yield. He then refers to Psalm 114, where the presence of the Lord caused the earth to tremble and turned a rock into standing water. The preacher uses this analogy to illustrate how God can transform the hardened heart of man, breaking it, melting it, and making it sensitive to His presence. The sermon concludes with a prayer for a visitation from God to rend the heavens and come down with a melting fire to soften and transform hearts.

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## Transcript

to the book of Psalms. Psalms 114, 7 and 8. Bow thou earth at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, which turned a rock into a standing water, the flint into a fountain of waters. We're on the subject of breaking.

First we spoke of the emotions that were broken, need to be broken. Then the will that needs to be broken. And then the heart that needs to be broken.

Lord willing, we will speak on the mind that needs to be broken, but we're still on the heart tonight. We're on it last week and we're on it again tonight. Different ones have spoken to me at different occasions, both here and in many other places.

The difficulty they have of breaking before God. The hardness is there, but they don't know what to do about it. The insensitivity is there.

They know it's there. They feel it's there. But what can I do? It is only God that can change a stony heart into a heart of flesh.

It is only a work of the Holy Spirit that can make me tender before God and sensitive and obedient. Man is not born obedient, especially to God. It is not in our natural nature.

It is not in man. It's in man to run away from God. It's in man to go everyone his own way and not follow the ways of God.

His heart is hard. God must change it. God's the only one that can change it.

Turn with me to Zechariah 7, verse 12. Yea, they make their heart as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law. They make their heart as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law.

Man hardens his heart. As we're told in Psalm 95, harden not your heart. We are the ones, especially when we don't want to do what we believe God wants us to do.

We harden our hearts. We harden our hearts by disobediences. It's hard within us.

It's a stony heart. It's an adamant stone. Hard, hard, hard it is.

Turn with me to Ezekiel, to 36, 26. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you a harder flesh.

That's something God's to do. It's there. There it is, like it or not.

It's a hard heart. It's a sinful heart. It's been hardened by a resisting God.

All his gentle influences, all his wooings, all his gentle pleadings have been turned aside. Most parents have found out, and some have found out in a very sad way, that when the child is only dealt with with gentle pleadings, there comes a time when a mother comes to her fast and says, my God, pray for me, my child God. It takes more than gentle pleadings, because they harden their hearts against gentle pleadings.

It takes something else. We harden our hearts before God. We don't want what God wants.

Over in Hebrews 3, 12, I read their hearts were hardened by unbelief. They didn't relieve God. I read also in Hebrews 4, 17, by refusing, by rejecting God's voice, their hearts were hardened.

I read that they're hardened by sin. Hebrews 3, 13, by impenitence, and Romans 2, 5. We do the hardening, but we can't do the softening. We did a good job of hardening with our sin, with our unbelief, with our rejecting the voice of God.

We did a fine job of hardening our hearts. No wonder people have said to me, they've said to me in place after place, and town after town, I want to, but I can't. And that's the truth.

They can't. And no man. We can put on religion.

We can join churches. We can learn their rituals. We can memorize their songs.

We can genuflect at the right moment. But we can't soften our own hearts. All we can do is harden it.

And we've done a good job of that. God's got to do it. He's got to take and break that heart.

He's got to change it, soften it until it's like a heart of flesh. How's he going to do it? Well, let's turn to a scripture in Jeremiah. Jeremiah 23 and verse 29.

Is not my word like as a fire sets alight, and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces? Oh, would you see that? There's hope then, isn't there? There's hope, but it's not going to be by his gentle pleading,

because we rejected that. That's how our heart got hard. But he comes with his word like a hammer.

It breaks the rock. That wonderful word of God, when he comes, even blow upon blow. In Mar del Plata, many homes, it's like here, many homes are built of stone.

I don't know how they do it here. I haven't seen. But in there, they still cut the stone in the old-fashioned way, with a hammer and a chisel.

And I have tried my hand at cutting the stone. I've watched them do it. They're quite expert, really.

But they told me one thing, and that is you can never break a stone open with a hard blow. And I've watched them do it, and they never try. I have tried, and all I did was lose my chisel.

Fortunately, no one was around to get hit by it, because it went sailing. But they take and just blow on blow. And they just mark it.

And they go back and forth. And they go back and forth. And nothing seems to happen.

And you don't quite know when it just opens up, all by itself. And I've done that many a time. And I've tried it with a hard blow, and it doesn't do a bit of good.

It won't open. But his word's like a hammer. That doesn't mean with one great solid blow, he's going to smash you.

In those days, they had stone cutters also. But he knows how to hit right there in that one place, and then again, and again, and again, and again, and again, and before you realize that something's happened. Something's beginning to take place.

Something's beginning to soften. Something's beginning to heal. Psalm 29, verse 4, the voice of the Lord is powerful.

The voice of the Lord is full of majesty. The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars, breaketh the cedars of Lebanon. The voice of the Lord, it's powerful.

His word like a hammer. And then that word spoken by that powerful voice, something's going to have to heal. Something's going to have to yield.

Something's going to begin to feel the pressure. And then we go to the Scripture we read in the beginning. Psalm 114, tremble thou earth, tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, which turneth a rock into standing water.

He, the flint, into a fountain of waters. It was God that opened up the rock and let the waters pour forth, wasn't it? And behold, it is God that can open up the rock and let the waters pour forth. God said to Ananias when he was afraid to go see Paul, he said, don't be afraid, behold, he prayeth, behold, he prayeth.

What a thing. Something had happened, hadn't it? Something had happened. And the rock was a fountain of waters.

That voice and that word, that word like a hammer, that voice like a powerful arm. And then on top of that the presence comes. Oh, that will deal with the rock.

That will deal with a stony heart. Oh, if there's one thing we need, the one thing we ought to cry out for is the presence of God. That will do the job.

Not by power, not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord. Oh, I've been in places where mighty power was manifested. I've been in places where miracles were taking place.

I've been in places where wonderful works of healing were being done, and not a stony heart was melted. The presence wasn't there. The word wasn't there.

Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit. When he, the spirit of truth, shall come, he shall convince the world of sin. He'll convince that high and mighty, self-righteous sinner that he's a sinner.

He'll make him know it down deep. He'll make him cry out, my God, be merciful to me, a sinner. He'll change that pharisaical spirit to a publican prayer.

He's the one that can do it, but he's the only one. That's why we need the presence. Oh, there was a day many years ago when I thought, power's what we need.

So we had power, and I found out that power wasn't what we needed. We needed something far more than power. We needed the presence of God to come.

Isaiah 64, verse 1. Oh, that thou would'st rend the heavens, that thou would'st come down, that the mountains might flow down at the presence. That's when the melting fire burneth. That's when the melting fire burneth.

The fire causeth the waters to boil. There's not only going to be a pool of waters, they're going to be boiling. They're going to be steaming down a person's cheeks, burning as they go with a cry, my God.

The presence of God will deal with the hard heart. I've seen people that were boasting of their hardness, and I've seen them melted like babies. I've seen those that were helpless and hopeless, and yet I've seen them melted completely when that fire comes.

I remember one man particularly who for three years sat there hard, hard, hard, hard as he could be, and I wondered why in the world he ever came and sat through our service. And then we left and were gone a while, and still he came, sat through the service. And then Robert went back and was there a while, year or two.

And a few years later I was down there, and I couldn't believe my eyes. There was that same man in a fountain of tears. I said, Robert, what happened? He said, all of a sudden one day the rock cracked open.

The presence of God arrived, and oh what a difference. What a difference. He's able to do it.

He's able to pull down the strongholds. He's able to deal with them. I read that his word is like a mighty sword, sharp, penetrating, sharp in the heart of the king's enemies or his arrows.

I read how he's able to wound, day to smite, until they're under that smiting power, under that wounding power, the tears come like a child when he's being disciplined. And all his hardness and rebellion is smashed out of him, and he cries out helplessly, be merciful to me, sinner. Been interesting to see, more than once I've been called on to pray for a man that was seriously ill.

I'm thinking of one right now who is a hard-working farmer, and a hard-hearted farmer. Didn't want his wife to go to church, was upset when she did, but now cancer laid hold upon him, smiting him down. Remember one of the things he said to me, I try to get up, do my work, the bed calls to me, the bed calls to me.

I go back and lay down, and you know all that hardness was gone. Please pray for me, pastor. All that rebellion would have been smashed out.

What a shame that we can't hear the voice when it comes, gentle. How many of us have had to be smashed? How many of us have had to feel that hammer? How many of us have had to feel crushed, one way or another, before that heart would yield, and this terrible tone of rebellion would break? What a shame it has to be that way, but what a grace that God will go that far with us. What a grace that he loves us that much.

What a grace that he cares, and he'll go, and if I insist, he'll go. I remember years ago, I told you before, I'll repeat it, under some dealings of God, and I carelessly smarted off before God. It's all right, Lord, my shoulders are strong, lay it on, I'll show you I can take it, and unexpectedly the Lord spoke to me.

He said, Son, I don't want to see how much you can take. I want to break you. How much will that take? I said, God, that's enough.

I'll break now. He wasn't interested in seeing how tough I was. He's out to break us.

He needs to break us, and we need the breaking, but our hearts are hard, hard, hard. God sends your word. God, come down.

Send your presence. God, speak with a mighty voice, with a powerful voice. One way or another, break us until the hardness is gone, and we're tender before God and sensitive.

We don't stand up to see how much we can take. He's changed the rock, and of all things, made it a standing pool. In other words, the waters are always there, just ready to flow at any time.

Any little thing will move it. Have you been in a still pool? Why, just an insect lighting on it will send ripple for it. It's so sensitive.

Have you noticed how a still pool can be so sensitive? The slightest thing will move it, won't it? Will move it. That's what it'll do with a rock. Make it so sensitive that the slightest word, the slightest indication from God, it's ready to respond, and ripples go through it, because he's changed it and made the rock into a standing pool.

Isn't that lovely? Oh, what a picture of a hard, stony heart. What a picture, and a fountain of waters that could just pour out any time, all the time, for fountains in that land were not little wells. They were artesian wells.

They would spring out water, flow, and flow, and flow. That's what he's talking about. Make it a fountain.

Oh, isn't that lovely? Jeremiah was a fountain. He said, My, my head's like a river of waters. My eyes run down waters all the time, because his heart was tender before God.

He comes with that sword. We need his voice. We need his presence.

He would come down. He would speak with our hearts. That wonderful presence would come.

Oh, how we need that presence, that melting presence. Come like a fire and melt us with that wonderful presence of God. That's what our hearts are needing.

Turn with me to Jeremiah 25, verse 13. Therefore prophesy thou against them all these words, and say unto them, The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter his voice from his holy habitation. He shall mightily roar upon the inhabitation.

He shall give a shout as they which tread the grapes against the inhabitants of the earth. The Lord will come, utter his voice. But oh, what a voice when he comes that way.

I don't want to wait till then. I don't want to wait till the grapes of wrath are being tread. I don't want to wait till he roars with a terrible roaring.

God send your voice. Send your hammer. Send your word.

Let it be like a sharp sword. Let it do its work. Let your presence come, that wonderful presence, and make the rock like a fountain, like a fountain.

Oh, that's what we need, that presence to come, that marvelous presence of God to come and melt us, just melt us, just plain melt us, till there's a breaking there. Tremble thou earth at the presence of the Lord, at the presence of the God of Jacob, which turneth the rock into standing water, and the flint into a fountain of waters. God send that presence.

Send that presence, a visitation that will really melt, and it will change that rock into a fountain, into a pool of water. What a difference, what a difference, what a change, what a work divine, a rock becoming suddenly a pool, changing its very form and nature, and becoming water, sensitive. The slightest wind can make it to move.

Just a little breeze will make it to dance all over, cause it to be a beauty, cause it to catch the sun rays and scintillate with its glory. But the wind won't do that on a rock, will it? There's no beauty there, it's just a rock. That's the heart of man, that's the heart of man.

And may God visit us, so it's not only broken, it's gone farther than breaking, farther than breaking, farther than breaking, until it's contrited, farther than contrited. For you take that rock that's been all smitten and broken, and you put it in a crucible, and you put the fire under it, and it melts, and it melts, and it looks like water, it's all liquid. But that's what the presence will do.

It will take you further than a breaking. Oh, perhaps you say, oh, I remember, I remember 14 years ago when God broke my heart. So now it's two pieces.

How about the contriting? How about the pulverizing? How about making it a powder? And then, how about getting into the presence until it's melted and becomes like water? So sensitive, so delicately sensitive, that the slightest breeze will move it. Have you come into a church? Have you seen God moving and nothing moved within you? His breeze was there, but there's no disturbance in you. There wasn't a sensitivity, it wasn't water, it wasn't melted yet.

You say, oh, but I've been broken. Yes, perhaps several times, and I hope quite a few times more, until it's contrited. But oh, that his presence would come down, render heavens and come down with a melting fire.

And you know what a melting fire will do to the rock, don't you? You know what the melting fire will do to the rock? Oh, that's different, isn't it? Father, I pray, God, how we need a visitation. Render heavens and come down. The hardness, the stoniness, even in the breakings, Lord, it's still stone, it's still unmelted, it's still insensitive, it still has to be moved with a great strange power to be moved at all.

Come, oh Holy One, render heavens and come down. Come with thy melting fire. Oh, that that there comes such a faith in your heart, and a dissatisfaction in your heart, a cry in your heart, God, I'm too hard yet.

I'm too insensitive yet. Come and break my heart, and then melt it. Come with your melting fire.

Come with your mighty, powerful voice. Come with your word like a hammer. Come with your sword of the Spirit.

Lord, wherever we are, take us on farther, but oh, let your presence come, that melting presence.

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