

Enlarging Our Hearts - Part 1

by Zac Poonen

We must enlarge our hearts through faith in God's love and love for others to avoid spiritual immaturity and achieve spiritual growth.

Duration: 9:50

Scripture: Ephesians 1:15

Topics: "Spiritual Growth", "Gods Love"

Description

This sermon focuses on the importance of having a wide and enlarged heart as opposed to a narrow heart like the Corinthian Christians. It emphasizes the need for faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints to enlarge our hearts spiritually. The message highlights the tragic outcome of having a narrow heart despite being believers for many years and encourages believers to trust in God's perfect love and to embrace love towards others to experience the fullness of God's love.

Transcript

I want to turn to a verse in 2nd Corinthians. We know that the Corinthian Christians were very carnal, they were babes, there was a lot of conflict in that church. And Paul writes to them in 2nd Corinthians chapter 6, verse 11, our mouth has spoken freely to you, O Corinthians, our heart is opened wide.

You are not restrained by us, but you are restrained in your own affections. Now in a like exchange I speak as to children, open wide to us also, or as King James says, be enlarged. See, the problem with the Christians in Corinth was their heart was so narrow.

Paul's heart was very wide, whereas the Corinthian Christians, their heart was very narrow. And that is a problem also with a lot of believers. As I was saying, in 2nd Corinthians chapter 6, the Corinthians, their heart was narrow, and that was the reason why they were fleshly and babes and never grew spiritually.

And I found through the years that that is the problem with many, many believers, that their hearts never seem to get enlarged, even though they've been believers for many years, they've asked Jesus to come into their life, but their heart is so narrow. And it's a great tragedy, brothers and sisters, that we spend all our life and end up with narrow hearts, never becoming what God wants us to be. I think of two areas, it says in Ephesians chapter 1, Ephesians chapter 1, verse 15, Paul says to the Corinth Ephesians, when I heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love for all the saints, there are two things that make a person's heart narrow or large, faith and love.

The thing that Paul always looked for, you see, what is it that the Ephesian Christians had which the Corinthians did not have? It was faith in the Lord Jesus and love for all the saints. When Paul wrote to the Christians in Ephesus, it's one of those unique episodes where he's got nothing to correct in them, no wrong doctrine that they were going into. It was just encouragement and exhortation.

Imagine if we can be a church like that where the Holy Spirit looks at us and He gives us a word, He's got absolutely nothing to correct in us. I want to be like that. Where, in other words, it's not that there's nothing wrong in us, but that we're so quick to respond.

The Lord does not have to say something to us twice. Many of you are parents. You know the children who you say something and they don't listen, and you have to say that a second time, and you say that a third time, and you get frustrated.

Can you imagine the frustration God has with some of us to whom He has said something 50 times? We're still doing the same thing. Remember that the next time you get frustrated with your children, be a little patient with them. Think of the number of times God has said something to you, and you just listen.

That's something we must take heed to, brothers and sisters. It's wonderful when I think, I say, Lord, this church... Now, this church in Ephesus became pretty bad after some time, and that usually happens. Churches that start so well end up, you know, declining spiritually.

But when it started out, it was a wonderful church. It was a church that was spiritually on fire. Everything was right, and they had faith in the Lord Jesus, and love for all the saints.

Their hearts were large, whereas the Corinthians, their faith was so narrow, and their love for other people was so narrow, and so their hearts were narrow. That's something that we need to think about. What is it that's making our hearts narrow? You know, if I, first of all, think of faith.

If my attitude towards the Lord is one where I can't believe that he loves me perfectly, in spite of what I am, if I can't believe that he knows everything about me, every little... We know some of the rotten things inside ourselves. God knows much more. He knows everything that I'm going to do in the future.

I don't know. I may be going to do some stupid thing next week or next year. I don't even know that, but God knows it.

He knows everything all the way till the end of time. I'll tell you, this will really help you. You know, faith is to believe that God loves us, and if you can believe, if you can know, and it's really true, that God knows everything that's going to happen, that you're going to do, all the way till the end of your life, and he still loves you.

And it's not that he chose you without knowing all that you're going to do. He knows everything you're going to do, and he still chose you. That is the basis on which we have faith, that God loves me just as I have.

This is the thing that will enlarge our hearts. Otherwise, we'll find that our hearts become narrow. I can't believe that God loves me, and that leads to discouragement.

It leads to self-condemnation. This is the first area. If I don't really seek to fight the battle here and say, Lord, I'm going to trust you.

I'm going to really trust you that you love me just as I am, that you know everything about that's going to take place all the way till the end of my life, and you still love me. Absolutely no doubt about it. That will lead us to a larger heart, and that will also lead us to an attitude towards others, which is the way God wants us to have it, love towards all the saints.

In Ephesians chapter 3, Paul says, Ephesians chapter 3 and verse 17 and 18, that Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith, that you being rooted and grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth to know the love of Christ, which passes knowledge that you may be filled up to all the fullness of God. Here it says that if you want to know the love of Christ, you have to know it along with all the saints. You can't know it all by yourself.

If you seek to know the love of Christ just by yourself, you won't know it, and if it means all the saints, that means if I cut off somebody for some reason, I got a prejudice against that person, or a grudge against that person, or a bitterness against somebody, you know who's going to be the loser? I'm going to be the loser. My heart's going to be narrow. You know, if only we could see this, what happens inside us when our attitude towards other changes, I tell you, we would stop sinning quickly.

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