

**Hardness of Heart**  
**Part 10**  
**Hardness of Heart in Respect to Reason**  
**Freedom From the Control of Fear**

- *Fear hardens our hearts in the area of reason and we are unable to think rationally and we become incapable of receiving the truth of God's Word into our hearts.*

**Matthew 27:11–26 (NKJV)**

**<sup>11</sup>Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" Jesus said to him, "It is as you say."**

**<sup>12</sup>And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing.**

**<sup>13</sup>Then Pilate said to Him, "Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?"**

**<sup>14</sup>But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly.**

**<sup>15</sup>Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished.**

**<sup>16</sup>And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas.**

**<sup>17</sup>Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"**

**<sup>18</sup>For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy.**

- *Pilate, who was the Roman governor of Judea, found himself in a position of being swept away in a direction that he did not want to go.*
- *Pilate clearly knew that Jesus was innocent and for some reason was not indifferent toward Him.*
- *Pilate's attempt to release Jesus is seen in the fact that he chose the most notorious criminal, Barabbas, to set before the people in order to choose who was to be set free.*

**<sup>19</sup>While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, "Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him."**

- *In the midst of Pilate's inner struggle to see Jesus set free Pilate's wife comes to him with additional troubling news.*
- *Pilate's wife received a dream from the Lord with a warning for her husband.*
- *"Have nothing to do with that just Man" – Her warning to Pilate is clear. "Jesus is not only innocent but He is righteous. Don't be involved in any act of injustice toward Him."*
- *"for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him." – While Pilate was standing on the verge of having to condemn Jesus, his wife sent to him a fearful message warning him that what he was about to do was going to be disastrous.*
- *Why would God give Pilate's wife such a powerful dream warning her husband not to condemn Jesus to death?*

- *Firstly, God does not desire that any should act wickedly.*
- *God had already given Pilate an inner witness that Jesus was righteous and that it would be a great evil for Him to be condemned.*
- *Now God had sent Pilate's wife as a second witness to him with a very strong warning.*
- *Jesus also warned Judas twice that what he was about to do was exceedingly wicked.*

**Matthew 26:24–25 (NKJV)**

<sup>24</sup>The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.

<sup>25</sup>Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, “Rabbi, is it I?” He said to him, “You have said it.”

- *“but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.” – The first time Jesus appealed to Judas' conscience. Judas understood clearly the wickedness and gravity of his choice.*

**John 13:21–27 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup>When Jesus had said these things, He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.”

<sup>22</sup>Then the disciples looked at one another, perplexed about whom He spoke.

<sup>23</sup>Now there was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of His disciples, whom Jesus loved.

<sup>24</sup>Simon Peter therefore motioned to him to ask who it was of whom He spoke.

<sup>25</sup>Then, leaning back on Jesus' breast, he said to Him, “Lord, who is it?”

<sup>26</sup>Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.” And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

<sup>27</sup>Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, “What you do, do quickly.”

- *“He was troubled in spirit, and testified and said, “Most assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.” – Jesus was deeply moved in the depth of His being not because He was contemplating His own suffering and death but because He was contemplating what would happen to Judas.*
- *We have to understand Jesus loved Judas as much as He loves each one of us.*

<sup>26</sup>Jesus answered, “It is he to whom I shall give a piece of bread when I have dipped it.” And having dipped the bread, He gave it to Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon.

- *Jesus act of dipping the bread and tenderly handing it to Judas was an act of endearment.*
- *Jesus was appealing to Judas heart and Jesus' genuine love and deep concern for him.*
- *The first time Jesus appealed to Judas' conscience and the second time Jesus appealed to Judas' heart.*

<sup>27</sup>Now after the piece of bread, Satan entered him. Then Jesus said to him, “What

you do, do quickly.”

- *As Jesus, with a troubled heart reached out to Judas, Judas made the final decision and rejected the love of Christ and opened up his heart to Satan. At that point Judas had sealed his fate and Jesus released him to follow his own wicked choice.*

#### **1 Timothy 2:3–4 (NKJV)**

<sup>3</sup>For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior,

<sup>4</sup>who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

- *God yearns to save all men and He reaches out to all men to be saved and it deeply grieves the heart of God when people reject His salvation.*
- *We see that God gave Pilate’s wife the dream firstly to warn Pilate so that he would not act wickedly.*
- *But also God gave Pilate’s wife the dream to warn Pilate so that he would clearly know that what he was doing was wicked.*
- *God made sure that everyone who was involved in Christ’s betrayal and crucifixion were fully aware that Jesus Christ was a righteous man.*
- *It was the sinfulness of man that nailed Jesus to that cross. There was not one person who was responsible for the death of Jesus that was not aware of what they were doing was wrong.*
- *Jesus died for our sins and it was our sins that placed Him on that cross.*
- *The wickedness of mankind is what moved Jesus to die for our sins and it was the wickedness of mankind that betrayed the Son of Man.*

#### **Matthew 27:20–26 (NKJV)**

<sup>20</sup>But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.

<sup>21</sup>The governor answered and said to them, “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” They said, “Barabbas!”

<sup>22</sup>Pilate said to them, “What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?” They all said to him, “Let Him be crucified!”

<sup>23</sup>Then the governor said, “Why, what evil has He done?” But they cried out all the more, saying, “Let Him be crucified!”

<sup>24</sup>When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, “I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.”

<sup>25</sup>And all the people answered and said, “His blood be on us and on our children.”

<sup>26</sup>Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.

- *Everyone who played a part in Christ’s death was motivated by a different reason.*
- *The religious leaders were motivated because of envy. (Matthew 27:18)*
- *Judas was motivated because of greed. (John 12:6; Matthew 26:15)*
- *The Roman soldiers were motivated by a love of cruelty and enjoyed inflicting pain on the weak and helpless. (Matthew 27:27-31)*
- *Herod was motivated by indifference. (Luke 23:8-11)*

- *The crowd was motivated by an irrational lust for blood stirred up by the religious leaders. (Matthew 27:22-23)*
- *What was the thing that compelled Pilate to do what he fully and clearly knew was wrong and what he didn't even want to do?*

<sup>23</sup>Then the governor said, "Why, what evil has He done?" But they cried out all the more, saying, "Let Him be crucified!"

- *"Why, what evil has He done?" – We can see in this scene that Pilate is not acting like a governor of the Roman Empire but a desperate man trying to plead with an angry crowd not to force him to do something he does not want to do.*

<sup>24</sup>When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."

- *Pilate desperately tried in vain first to release Jesus and then he tried in vain to absolve himself of the responsibility of passing judgment over Him.*
- *What was the thing that compelled Pilate to do what he fully and clearly knew was wrong and didn't even want to do?*
- *The fear of man.*
- *Pilate was incapable of doing what was right because his heart was ruled by fear.*
- *Fear will cause us to go against our own convictions and even cloud our ability to make correct decision.*
- *Pilate's fear of man stopped him from hearing and responding to God's voice.*
- *Pilate's fear was not rooted in the crowd but really stemmed from his fear that a bad report would come to the ears of the Emperor and could result in many possible negative consequences and because of this fear Pilate was reduced to a man pleading with a crowd of people who for the most part lacked even any social status.*
- *There was only one way that Pilate could have overcome the fear of man and acted righteously.*
- *Pilate's one way of freedom from the fear of man was to acknowledge who Jesus really was, the Son of God; the King of the Jews; the Messiah.*
- *With that one act of surrendering to Jesus Christ, Pilate would have been freed from the fear of man so that he could serve God.*

Proverbs 29:25 (NKJV)

<sup>25</sup>The fear of man brings a snare, But whoever trusts in the LORD shall be safe.

- *One cannot serve God when one is bound by the fear of man.*
- *Only those that fully put their trust in the Lord will be free from the fear of man.*
- *Fear is a negative emotion that permeates mankind.*
- *The Scriptures are filled with the admonishment, "do not be afraid", "fear not", "take courage".*

**Genesis 15:1 (NKJV)**

<sup>1</sup>After these things the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.”

- *Even when God has good news He has to admonish us not to be afraid.*
- *Fear is such an underlying response in the heart of man but God wants to free us.*

**Deuteronomy 1:21 (NKJV)**

<sup>21</sup>Look, the LORD your God has set the land before you; go up and possess it, as the LORD God of your fathers has spoken to you; do not fear or be discouraged.’

- *The Lord said to Israel, “I have set before you the Promised Land with all of the blessings for you so don’t be afraid or discouraged.”*

**Luke 1:13 (NKJV)**

<sup>13</sup>But the angel said to him, “Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your prayer is heard; and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you shall call his name John.

- *We can be afraid that we will not have a good outcome but this is really misunderstanding the character of God.*

**Luke 2:10 (NKJV)**

<sup>10</sup>Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people.

- *The Gospel is the Good News and the only response that we should have is joy and peace.*

**John 14:27 (NKJV)**

<sup>27</sup>Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.

- *Christ says I leave you peace not fear or a troubled heart.*
- *That means every time we are troubled or fearful that this is not what God intends for us.*
- *Fear is a real hindrance to walking with God.*
- *Fear is the normal state for the carnal man but peace and joy is the normal state for a spirit led Christian.*
- *One of the root causes of fear for a Christian is not trusting in the character of God.*

**Mark 4:35–41 (NKJV)**

<sup>35</sup>On the same day, when evening had come, He said to them, “Let us cross over to the other side.”

<sup>36</sup>Now when they had left the multitude, they took Him along in the boat as He was. And other little boats were also with Him.

<sup>37</sup>And a great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that it was already filling.

<sup>38</sup>But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, “Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?”

<sup>39</sup>Then He arose and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace, be still!" And the wind ceased and there was a great calm.

<sup>40</sup>But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"

<sup>41</sup>And they feared exceedingly, and said to one another, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him!"

<sup>38</sup>But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow. And they awoke Him and said to Him, "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?"

- "Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?" - *This is the key for us to walk in freedom from fear. We must be fully confident that God cares and that He is in control of our lives as we surrender to Him.*
- "But He was in the stern, asleep on a pillow"- *When God appears to be silent, can we still rest in His faithfulness? Do we require seeing God at work in our lives to be confident that He is still faithful to us?*
- 'But He said to them, "Why are you so fearful? How is it that you have no faith?"' – *Jesus asks a very telling question, "How is it you have no faith?"*
- *Jesus didn't say, "little faith" but "no faith". The disciples' confidence in the character of God had dropped down to zero.*
- "Why are you so fearful?" – *The storms of life can appear huge to us but in reality they are both small and temporal but we must see the storm from the Heavenly perspective of God's faithfulness.*
- *Can we rest in the midst of the storm?*
- *Can we rest even when God is silent knowing that He is still with us?*
- *Can we rest in the goodness of God even when the circumstances of life do not appear to be good?*
- *What is to be our response to fear and anxiety?*

Psalm 56:3–4 (NKJV)

<sup>3</sup>Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You.

<sup>4</sup>In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?

- "Whenever I am afraid, I will trust in You." - *Our response to fear is to put our trust in God.*
- *When we are confronted by fearful circumstances we are to direct our attention from the storms and put our thoughts on the Lord and His faithfulness.*
- "In God (I will praise His word), In God I have put my trust; I will not fear. What can flesh do to me?" - *This is a direct response to the fear of man that would try to bring our hearts into the bondage.*
- *Freedom is praising God's Word and fully placing our trust in Christ.*

Psalm 62:5–6 (NKJV)

<sup>5</sup>My soul, wait silently for God alone, For my expectation is from Him.

<sup>6</sup>He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved.

- "My soul, wait silently for God alone" – *We need to quiet our soul before God. We will never have victory and freedom from fear until we learn to daily quiet our souls before the Lord and enjoy His presence.*

- ***“For my expectation is from Him.” – We are not to have a negative expectation about the “what ifs” of the future but a sure expectation of what God has prepared for us who love Him.***
- ***“He only is my rock and my salvation; He is my defense; I shall not be moved.” - When Christ is our rock and defense then we become immovable in our convictions and confidence.***
- ***We can give thanks and rejoice in those areas in our lives where God has given us victory over fear and anxiety.***
- ***We can give thanks for the growth we have experienced as we have learned to trust in His character and the peace and joy that it has produced.***
- ***We can ask God to show us those areas where we are still failing to trust Him and for us to grow in our confidence in His unfailing love and faithfulness toward us.***