

Hardness of Heart
Part 9
Hardness of Heart in Respect to Reason
Overcoming Fear

- *Just as we have five physical senses to perceive the world around us we have five soul senses to perceive the internal condition of our soul and five spirit senses to perceive God.*

<i>Body</i>	<i>Soul</i>	<i>Spirit</i>
<i>Hearing</i>	<i>Conscience</i>	<i>Faith</i>
<i>Sight</i>	<i>Imagination</i>	<i>Hope</i>
<i>Touch</i>	<i>Affections (phileo)</i>	<i>Love (agape)</i>
<i>Smell</i>	<i>Memory</i>	<i>The Fear of God</i>
<i>Taste</i>	<i>Reason</i>	<i>Revelation Knowledge</i>

- *Hardness of Heart results in the inability of our hearts to sense or perceive things.*
- *The Greek word denoting “hardness” refers to a callus being formed.*
- *Hardness of Heart results in becoming insensitive to the Holy Spirit.*
- *There are five times that hardness of heart is recorded in the gospel of Mark and it appears that each one deals with one of these soul senses.*
- *We have looked at hardness of heart in terms of memory.*
- *The thing that causes our memory to grow callous towards God is distractions.*
- *We looked at hardness of heart in terms of affections.*
- *The thing that causes our affections to grow callous is bitterness.*
- *The third time hardness of heart is mentioned in Mark it refers to the affect fear has on our hearts.*

Mark 6:45–52 (NKJV)

⁴⁵**Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.**

⁴⁶**And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.**

⁴⁷**Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land.**

⁴⁸Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.

⁴⁹And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out;

⁵⁰for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

⁵¹Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.

⁵²For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

- *The context of this passage:*
- *Jesus had just fed the five thousand with only five loaves and two fish and they even had twelve baskets of fragments of bread left over!*

⁴⁵Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida, while He sent the multitude away.

- *“Immediately He made His disciples get into the boat” – The Greek word for “made” means “to compel someone to act in a particular manner”.*
- *The concept of Jesus compelling the disciples to get into the boat insinuates reluctance on the part of the disciples.*
- *Why would the disciples be reluctant to get into the boat?*
- *Firstly they had participated in a great miracle and maybe they wanted to bathe in the after glow of the people.*
- *Secondly Jesus was compelling the disciples to cross the Sea of Galilee at night, which may have made them feel a little reluctant.*
- *“He made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, to Bethsaida” – Jesus sent the disciples on an important journey for their spiritual growth.*
- *“You are going to the other side.” - Jesus gave them an important piece of information – their destination. In other words Jesus was saying, “you are going to make it there!”*
- *What they didn’t know about the trip was there was going to be a fearsome storm that would strike and would fill them with such fear that they would despair even of life.*

- *There are many times we may not feel we are going to make it but God is saying, “You are going to the other side.”*
- *We need to hold onto His Word and trust His character and His promises. “I will never leave you nor forsake you no matter how difficult things may appear.”*
- *They would have presumed that if Jesus sent them on a trip to the other side that the trip would be a wonderful experience or at least uneventful.*

1 Corinthians 13:9 (NKJV)

⁹For we know in part and we prophesy in part.

- *The problem people have with prophecy is that they try to fill in the blanks that God has not yet filled in for us.*
- *God can use prophecy to stir up expectation and faith and direct our prayers but we are not to take prophecy and develop preconceived ideas of how God is going to do it.*
- *God gives us a glimpse into His purposes so that we can pray into them and be encouraged by them.*
- *Prophecy must be interpreted from the viewpoint of the faithfulness of God.*
- *Faith is not, believing for something but believing in Someone.*
- *“Don’t be afraid of My will.”*

⁴⁶And when He had sent them away, He departed to the mountain to pray.

⁴⁷Now when evening came, the boat was in the middle of the sea; and He was alone on the land.

- *We see Jesus is deep in prayer on a hill while His disciples are finding themselves in the middle of the lake with a giant storm.*
- *What was Jesus praying about while His disciples toiled in the storm?*

⁴⁸Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.

- *While Jesus was on the mountain praying He saw them straining at rowing trying hopelessly to push through a powerful storm.*

- *Jesus was interceding for His disciples while they struggled in their journey.*

Romans 8:34 (NKJV)

³⁴Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us.

Hebrews 7:25 (NKJV)

²⁵Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them.

- *Jesus is constantly at the right of the Father interceding for us.*
- *In our times of pain, sorrow, temptation and fear Jesus is constantly making intercession.*
- *If we will surrender our hearts and time to the Lord, Jesus will also intercede through us for the needs of others.*
- *In our time of deepest need we must remember Jesus is there to intercede for us so that we will be victorious.*

⁴⁸Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them. Now about the fourth watch of the night He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.

- **“Now about the fourth watch of the night” – *The fourth watch of the night is between 3 am and 6 am. Therefore the disciples had been rowing for well over 9 hours by the time Jesus came walking on the water!***
- **“Then He saw them straining at rowing, for the wind was against them.” – *The Greek word for straining is βασανίζω (basanizō) and it means, “to be tortured, tormented, to experience anguish.”***
- ***The Greek word “rowing” means, “to drive along; to cause an object to move by means of a strong force or vigorous action.” They were trying to overcome the storm by their own strength and self-effort but the disciples’ strength and best intentions were no match for the force of the storm.***
- **“He came to them, walking on the sea, and would have passed them by.” – *The Greek word for “would” is θέλω (thelō) and means, “to purpose, desire, want to”.***
- ***Why would Jesus want to pass them by as He walked on the sea knowing the extreme turmoil and fear they were experiencing?***

- *What was the disciples' reaction to the storm as they were rowing across the lake? They rowed harder.*
- *What is one thing that is conspicuously absent in the disciples' response to the circumstances?*
- *Prayer!*
- *The disciples' response reflected the condition of their hearts. They continued to put their trust in their own strength and they failed to recognize that God was with them and that all they needed to do to receive God's help was to call out to Him.*
- *Why would they not pray?*
- *They were relying on their own strength and the oars seemed to them as more tangible than God. Their strength was limited but in the midst of the storm they focused their energy on rowing and totally dismissed the possibility of God helping them.*
- *In the miracle of Jesus feeding the five thousand there is one thing that is clearly lacking in the disciples part in that event.*
- *It is recorded that the disciples had the people sit down in an orderly manner, they distributed the loaves and the fish and they even collect the fragments but there is no indication that they actually engaged in prayer.*
- *Without prayer we are not co-labouring with God but we are merely observers.*
- *Why would Jesus want to pass them by as He walked on the sea knowing the extreme turmoil and fear they were experiencing?*
- *The disciples failed to call out to God for help but instead were focusing all their attention on their own strength and self-effort.*
- *If Jesus had helped them at this point they would have failed to understand that they must learn to rely upon God and not to trust in their own strength.*
- *When we work in self- effort God rests but when we rest God works.*
- *Why would Jesus want to pass them by as He walked on the sea knowing the extreme turmoil and fear they were experiencing?*
- *The disciples never called out to God for help and therefore never invited Him to come and help them.*

- *Even though a few short hours ago the disciples had been in the presence of Jesus and seen such marvelous miracles but in the midst of the storm the only thing that appeared real was the waves and the wind.*

⁴⁹And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out;

- *“they supposed it was a ghost” – The Greek word for ghost is φάντασμα (phantasma) and it means an “apparition; ghost, a phantom”.*
- *The disciples saw Jesus walking on the water and they supposed they were seeing a ghost.*
- *When a Christian is filled with fear they can become superstitious and even fail to recognize Jesus for whom He really is.*
- *How can Christians become superstitious?*
- *Depending upon ritualistic prayers or good works to win God’s favour.*
- *Giving room for believing that the devil has power or authority over them.*
- *“If I only pray the right prayer then God will help me.” – This reduces our relationship with God to a ritualistic superstition.*

⁴⁹And when they saw Him walking on the sea, they supposed it was a ghost, and cried out;

⁵⁰for they all saw Him and were troubled. But immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.”

- *And when they cried out, immediately He talked with them and said to them, “Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” – This is an example of a prayer that Jesus responds to.*
- *This is the response of a father who immediately puts everything down and runs to his child who is crying out in distress in order to comfort him.*
- *“Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid.” – The Greek Word “be of good cheer” is θαρσέω tharseō and it means, “to be courageous, to be bold, to have confidence and firmness of purpose in the face of danger or testing.”*
- *“Do not be afraid” – This is the thing that was dominating the hearts and minds of the disciples as they were in the middle of the storm.*

⁵¹Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased. And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.

- *“Then He went up into the boat to them, and the wind ceased.” – When we allow Jesus in our boat the storms within our hearts immediately cease.*

- *The Bible refers to us allowing Jesus in our boats as “abiding in Christ.”*

Psalm 23:5 (NKJV)

⁵You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

- *When Jesus is in our boat it doesn't always mean that the circumstances of this life have changed, but it is possible to feast before the Lord in the presence of our enemies.*
- *“You anoint my head with oil; my cup runs over” – Our minds are at peace and the overflow of His joy spills over to all those around us.*
- *“And they were greatly amazed in themselves beyond measure, and marveled.” - It took five words in the Greek to describe the reaction of the disciples. Maybe we could translate it as “they were over the top WOW”.*
- *The disciples had seen Jesus do many miracles and heal many people but they were so caught up in fear that they thought the storm was beyond what Jesus could handle.*
- *When we are in the midst of the storms of this life do we feel we are drowning and does it seem impossible that God could ever make it right?*

⁵²For they had not understood about the loaves, because their heart was hardened.

- *“For they had not understood about the loaves” – The Greek word for “understood” means, “to bring together; to be able to comprehend; to have insight”.*
- *The disciples were not able to comprehend or bring together the things they were to learn from the miracle of the multiplying of the loaves and the fish.*
- *One of the chief points is that God is faithful to meet our needs no matter how big they are.*
- *For our needs to be met, all we must do is raise our eyes to Heaven.*
- *“because their heart was hardened” – The thing that hardens our hearts in the area of reason is fear.*
- *When we are fearful it is impossible for us to understand or make rational decisions. It is impossible for us to hear from God in the area of our reason.*
- *How can we overcome fear?*

- *Sometimes fear can be a demonic attack and we can rebuke the fear in the name of Jesus.*
- *Many times fear is a result of not being confident in the character of God.*
- *When we have learned to trust in God's goodness and faithfulness we will be able to overcome fear.*
- *"The remarkable thing about fearing God is that when you fear God you fear nothing else, whereas if you do not fear God you fear everything else." Oswald Chambers*
- *The Fear of the Lord is not a terror but a revelation of the greatness and awesomeness of God.*
- *The Fear of the Lord is God conscious faith where we are always conscious of His faithfulness and goodness and we are filled with such a delight and joy.*

Proverbs 14:26 (NKJV)

²⁶In the fear of the LORD there is strong confidence, And His children will have a place of refuge.

- *The Fear of the Lord gives us a strong confidence. It is a place of safety and rest.*
- *We become so confident in Christ that no matter what we have to face we have peace and joy because we know He is with us.*

Proverbs 19:23 (NKJV)

²³The fear of the LORD leads to life, And he who has it will abide in satisfaction; He will not be visited with evil.

- *The Fear of the Lord leads us into experiencing abundant life and a place where we can abide in satisfaction.*
- *When we grasp the wonderful faithfulness of God we will experience a new level of joy and satisfaction.*
- *If our satisfaction and peace is based on the circumstance of life then it will surely lead to a place of despair and disappointment because tomorrow our circumstances will change but Jesus Christ never changes.*
- *"Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God." Corrie Ten Boom*

Psalm 91:1–2 (NKJV)

¹He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High Shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

²I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”

- *“He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High” – The key is to “dwell” in that secret place and not just to visit it. As long as we are in that secret place fear cannot touch us but once we step out of His presence immediately fear is there to meet us.*
- *“I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress; My God, in Him I will trust.”” – God is that refuge and fortress. We need not worry about how to strengthen the fortress we must just learn to live in the fortress of God’s presence.*
- *“The beginning of anxiety is the end of faith, and the beginning of true faith is the end of anxiety.” George Muller*
- *How do we stay in that secret place of His presence?*
- *The secret place is not a feeling or an emotional experience but a training of our hearts and minds to dwell on the thoughts of God’s faithfulness.*
- *The more our thoughts and desires are abiding in the reality of Christ’s faithfulness the more convinced we will be of His goodness.*
- *“A little faith will bring your soul to Heaven, but a lot of faith will bring Heaven to your soul.” Dwight Moody*
- *When we grow in our confidence in Christ the sweetness of His presence will change the atmosphere in our hearts.*
- *“Worry does not empty tomorrow of its sorrow; it empties today of its strength.” Corrie Ten Boom*
- *Worry only leads to torment but dwelling on God’s goodness brings peace and joy.*

Isaiah 26:3 (NKJV)

³You will keep him in perfect peace, Whose mind is stayed on You, Because he trusts in You.

- *“You will keep him in perfect peace” – “Perfect peace” in the Hebrew is “shalom shalom” which means “peace peace”. A beautiful infusion of His peace and comfort will fill our souls.*

- *“Whose mind is stayed on You” – “stayed” in the Hebrew means “to lean upon, rely upon, to be sustained”. When our minds, our thoughts, our imagination is relying upon the Lord it will result in a perfect peace to fill our entire being.*
- *“Because he trusts in You.” – Trusting in God is the key for us to be able to abide in Christ and experience that perfect peace.*
- *“Don’t lose in the darkness what you have gained in the light.”*
- *When God reveals something to you whether it be during a sermon, or while reading the Bible or in prayer or during fellowship, don’t loose it but take note of it and meditate upon it and incorporate it into your very being so that when times of darkness come, you will be able to draw out those treasures to fill your heart with light.*

Acts 20:22–24 (NKJV)

²²And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there,

²³except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me.

²⁴But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.

- *Paul was so confident in God’s goodness and sovereignty that he could say with all joy, “but none of these things move me” even when faced with certain imprisonment and tribulations.*
- *Paul didn’t meditate upon the bad things he had experienced or the bad things he may experience but he meditated upon the goodness of Jesus Christ.*
- *Points of prayer:*
- *To ask God to make His wonderful faithfulness and love more real to us.*
- *To rejoice in the things that He has shown us and the peace He has given us.*
- *To repent of those areas where we have allowed fear and worry to take root in our hearts.*
- *To give thanks because He is going to do infinitely more than we can ask for or even think of as long as we are willing to surrender our lives to Him.*