

# *Mt. Lebanon Church*

Teaching Ministry

2.23.2025

Please look up and read all verses in their entirety. I have only written partial verses.

Make your own notes, write down other scriptures that you run across while studying, write down questions that you may have or comments as well. Allow the Holy Spirit to reveal to you that he would have you to see through the study of God's word.

A Hardened Heart

## **Luke 16: 23 – 31**

A hardened heart can diminish a person's ability to perceive and to understand that which is God's will for their life. This is because we fail to remember the many times that God has graciously provided for us in our time of need. We must not forget that God has promised that he does not leave us, nor does he forsake us. Now, if we allow sinfulness to remain, it will cause our hearts to grow hard, especially when we continue in those things that are not pleasing unto God. But God will help us to see these sinful desires in our heart, if we ask him, by faith believing, to reveal them unto us through the help of the leadership and guidance of his Holy Spirit. Once that we recognize our disobedience, and repent, it is then that God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Now, this is just the beginning of how that God heals the hard – hearted. As believers, we now must begin living according to God's word, through study, through prayer, and through meditation, we begin to gain wisdom, knowledge, and understanding, which will bring us into the obedience of his word.

**Psalm 119: 9 – 11**,....wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word....let me not wander from thy commandments....thy word have I hid in mine heart that I might not sin against thee....

If we are to live our life to the fullness of that which God has intended for us to live, then we must be obedient to his word. For no one is immune to deception, to trials, or to tribulations, but everyone can be strengthened because of the circumstances in their life, if we will allow God to work within us.

**Romans 5: 3 – 5**,....we glory in tribulation....tribulation worketh patience, and patience, experience, and experience, hope: and hope maketh not ashamed....

The suffering that we experience as believers is a benefit of our salvation. For those who are in Christ, our suffering matters, and since we are destined for greatness in our life in Christ, our suffering will accomplish God's good works within us. This means that our salvation is an opportunity to grow in our faith more and more in our daily lives, for he is continually calling us into a closer relationship with him, and to trust in him more deeply. Suffering produces endurance, and endurance gives unto us the ability to keep going even when we feel like giving up.

Let us look at the consequences of a hardened heart.

**Luke 16: 23 - 31**,....in hell he lift up his eyes in torment....he cried....have mercy on me, and send Lazarus....and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame....Abraham said remember....thy good things, and....Lazarus evil things....now he is comforted, and thou art tormented....between us and you there is a great gulf....I pray....that thou wouldest send him to my fathers house....that he may testify unto them....if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent....if they hear not Moses....neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead....

Everyone eventually passes from this earth, from mortality into immortality. Everything contained within the word of God is written to prepare us for this moment in our life. Preparation has nothing to do with our worldly stature as some might think, but it has everything to do with the choices in which we make concerning our obedience to the truth of God's word. Therefore, whether we are rich or poor, well-educated or not, members of a religious organization or church, good or bad in our worldly characteristics, none of these things have any bearing on our eternal state. That which does make a difference, is whether or not we have depended upon God, and heeded to his warnings, concerning the choices which we must make, the choices whether or not to believe in the work that God has accomplished in Christ, through the crucifixion and the resurrection. This work was not only for all of mankind's saving grace and eternal state of being, but it was also to give unto all believer's guidance, for the life that he has intended for us to live while we are here upon this earth, once we have made the choice to follow after Christ.

**Proverbs 28: 14,....**happy is the man that feareth always, but he that hardeneth his heart shall fall into mischief....

A man with a hardened heart will not, by faith believing, put their trust in the Lord. For it is through the heart that we either accept or reject the spiritual truths that God desires to share with us. Many believe that faith is an involuntary reaction that takes place when the right information is offered unto us in what we believe to be the right or wrong. Faith is not blind; it does not just come out of nowhere. We come to faith, when we see or hear something that gives unto us the evidence that God is real. Through our obedience to the truth of Gods word, we believe, realizing that God has forgiven us through the sacrifice of his Son Christ Jesus. The problem that arises, and clouds our understanding, is that we all have personal agendas that go against the idea that God is at work in our life. The journey of our faith requires that we make choices, and the outcome of our journey is dependent upon whether or not we have chosen to believe in the word of God, for without his word, we will be like the rich man who found himself suffering in the consequences of his sinfulness, and he knew exactly how that he got there.

**Matthew 13: 14 – 15,....**the prophesy of Esaias....by hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand, and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive....their ears are dull of hearing....their eyes they have closed....lest....they should understand with their heart, and convert...

A hardened heart will prevent us from understanding the life-giving, life-altering, challenging words that God wants to share with us through the Holy Spirit. Our lack of understanding means that we have failed to understand Gods will. God wants to use those who have believed in his Son, Christ, to further the gospel of salvation. He cannot use us if we allow sin to dwell within us and harden our hearts. If we abide in him and live obedient to his word through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, it is then that the work which he has begun within us through salvation, he will perform it until the day of Christ.

**Philippians 1: 6,....**being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ....

So, what is needed to be born again, and come to an understanding of our salvation. Faith is needed, which comes from our obedience to the word of God. If, as Christians, we are not obedient to the truth of God's word and allow it to make the necessary changes in our life that God wants to make, it is then that our continued hearing, without heeding, allows a hardness to set into our hearts, a hardness that disrupts our relationship with God. Sadly, we do not want to see, or hear, or understand, for in doing so we would need to repent. How a believer receives the truth of Gods word is determined by the condition of his heart. Therefore, our salvation is more than just a superficial, joyful, hearing of the gospel, for those who are truly saved will have the desire to prove it.

**2 Peter 1: 3 – 4,....**his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him....whereby are given....great and precious promises, that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature....

As believers, our human nature, when we allow it to do so, will take us into situations that we will have no other choice but to rest our faith on the promises of God. If we do not rest our faith on his promises, then because of our hardness of heart, we will have to live our lives in worldly frustration. The sooner that we commit to God and stay committed unto God, the sooner that we will live in the joy and peace of his righteousness. The word of God contains everything that we need, so that we may come to know, and understand what the truth of our salvation is truly all about. So, let us find comfort in that truth.

Let us Pray.

If anyone has any questions, comments or would just like to discuss any of the scriptures, feel free to call, text or email me. Keep praying for each other and all the God lays upon your heart. Hope to see everyone soon. God Bless.

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