

☞ The Tranquility of a Tender Heart

Psalm 95

Verse 8

☞ Don't harden your heart

*Don't let your heart be hardened - don't let your love grow cold
May it always stay so childlike - may it never grow too old
Don't let your heart be hardened - may you always know the cure
Keep it broken before Jesus, keep it thankful, meek, and pure*

Verse 9

They put God on trial

Exodus 17:1-7

... there was no water for the people to drink. 2 So they quarreled with Moses... they grumbled against Moses... the Israelites quarreled and tested the Lord saying, "Is the Lord among us or not?"

They quarreled; they grumbled; they tested God. This all revealed that they didn't really trust God; they were filled with unbelief.

We say, "I'd never do that!"... They saw what God did: plagues on Egypt; crossing the Red Sea; manna and quail... But their hearts were hardened even after they had seen all that God had done. Sometimes we do the same when difficult times come.

What are some things that can lead to a hard heart? We can blame our circumstances, but ultimately, we choose whether we will have a hard heart or a tender heart.

Verse 10

☞ They forgot God's ways.

It was because they didn't remember what God had done in the past. They didn't replay those miracles like they should have.

Last week: Remember! Forgetting leads to destruction. When we don't intentionally remember what God has done, we tend to take the credit for it all ourselves. We tend to falter and fall into disobedience. We tend to waver in our faith. We tend to become complacent. When we fail to remember God's power and don't trust him, it can even provoke him. We need to intentionally remember and rehearse what God has done.

Don't let your heart be hardened... Here's how to keep a tender heart:

Verse 1

☞ **Come** – make a decision; take action... **move closer to God**

Sometimes when life is difficult or we have weakened in our walk, we don't move towards God. We either stay at a standstill, hoping God will intervene or worse, we actually walk farther away from God in our frustration. Instead, we need to come to God.

Sing/shout for joy to the Rock of your salvation – at the very least, can't we be thankful for the salvation God gave us through Jesus Christ? That alone should help us find joy even in the most difficult circumstances. Because of God's grace and your faith in Jesus Christ, you get to go to heaven!

A third-century man penned these last words to a friend: "It's a bad world, an incredibly bad world. But I have discovered in the midst of it a quiet and holy people who have learned a great secret. They have found a joy which is a thousand times better than any pleasure of our sinful life. They are despised and persecuted, but they care not. They are masters of their souls. They have overcome the world. These people are the Christians-- and I am one of them."

You can choose to be joyful. Joy comes from God and is not dependent on circumstances.

Author Leo Buscaglia tells the story about the night after his father came home and said it looked as if he would have to go into bankruptcy because his partner had absconded with their firm's funds. His mother went out and sold some jewelry to buy food for a sumptuous feast. Other members of the family scolded her for it. But she told them that "the time for joy is now, when we need it most, not next week." Her courageous act rallied the family.

You can choose joy and you can sort of jump-start your joy by expressing gratitude.

Verse 2

☞ **Come with thanksgiving**

There's always something to be thankful for:

Don't grumble because you don't have what you want – be thankful you don't get what you deserve.

A sink full of dirty dishes usually means that God has blessed us with plenty to eat.

From last week: When we remember God's goodness, it leads to fear of God, faith in God, and hope for a future. Remember God's benefits: he gives redemption, restoration, refreshing and renewal. Let's never forget, but keep on remembering and talking about those things, expressing our gratitude to God and others.

☞ Continually **tell what God has done** in your life. Don't keep it all to yourself. Don't focus on the problems and obstacles in your life. **Focus on God's goodness.**

Grandma's Glad Game

Extol him with music and song (NKJV – make a joyful noise... *good news if you're not musically inclined*). Our gratitude needs to be verbalized.

Think of things you are thankful for and tell it to people around you.

Verse 3

☞ **God is in control**

The great God; King above all. Your circumstances are not a surprise to God. Your situation is not too difficult for him.

Verse 4

☞ Depths – **when you're down, you're not out of his reach**

☞ Peaks – **when you're up, God had something to do with it**

Verse 5

☞ Sea – **when you're tossed about, God is still the solid ground**; he is in charge

In the frigid waters around Greenland are countless icebergs, some little and some gigantic. If you'd observe them carefully, you'd notice that sometimes the small ice floes move in one direction while their massive counterparts flow in another. The explanation is simple. Surface winds drive the little ones, whereas the huge masses of ice are carried along by deep ocean currents. When we face trials and tragedies, it's helpful to see our lives as being subject to two forces--surface winds and ocean currents. The winds represent everything changeable, unpredictable, and distressing. But operating simultaneously with these gusts and gales is another force that's even more powerful. It is the sure movement of God's wise and sovereign purposes, the deep flow of His unchanging love.

On Christ, the solid Rock, I stand; All other ground is sinking sand

☞ Dry land – **when you feel burned out and weary, God is your strength**

Psalm 63

O God, You are my God, earnestly I seek You; my soul thirsts for You; my body yearns for You in a dry and weary land without water... You are my help; I will sing for joy in the shadow of Your wings. My soul clings to You; Your right hand upholds me.

Verse 6

☞ Come – **choose to stay tender before the Lord**; take action to prevent a hard heart

No matter the circumstance, we can trust God and keep a tender heart. Remember, he is always in control and he will use those circumstances for our good.

In adversity we usually want God to do a removing job when He wants to do an improving job.

☞ Bow down; Kneel – **surrender**; quit fighting God; give up your struggle; **trust God**

--Andrew Murray... God is ready to assume full responsibility for the life wholly yielded to Him.

Bruce Larson tells how he helped people struggling to surrender their lives to Christ: For many years I worked in New York City and counseled at my office any number of people who were wrestling with this yes-or-no decisions. Often I would suggest they walk with me from my office down to the RCA Building on Fifth Avenue. In the entrance of that building is a gigantic statue of Atlas, with all his muscles straining, holding the world upon his shoulders. There he is, the most powerfully built man in the world, and he can barely stand up under this burden. 'Now that's one way to live,' I would point out to my companion, 'trying to carry the world on your shoulders. But now come across the street with me.' 'On the other side of Fifth Avenue is Saint Patrick's Cathedral, and there behind the high altar is a little shrine of the boy Jesus, perhaps eight or nine years old, and with no effort at all he is holding the world in one hand. My point was illustrated graphically. 'We have a choice. We can carry the world on our shoulders, or we can say, 'I give up, Lord; here's my life. I give you my world, the whole world.'"

*There is no problem too big God cannot solve it
There is no mountain too tall God cannot move it
There is no storm too dark God cannot calm it
There is no sorrow too deep He cannot soothe it
Oh, if He carried the weight of the world upon His shoulders
I know my brother that He will carry you*

Verse 7

☞ He is our God – **he is with us**; he never leaves; he has our best interests in mind; he sees the big picture; we can trust him.

☞ We are the people of his pasture – **he provides for us**

☞ We are the flock under his care – **he protects us**

☞ **Hear his voice today**– God is calling to you; he wants to encourage you

God never leaves us; he is always watching over us; he is always reaching out to us... We may wander and stray, but God is always faithful; he is always calling out to you.

Verse 11

☞ Rest in God

When we don't trust God and we try to carry the weight of the world on our own shoulders, then we don't find rest. We get worn out; burned out; and sometimes we ultimately give out. That's what happens when we go astray and don't come near to God. That's what happened to many of those Israelites in the wilderness. They turned away from God and didn't trust him, so they missed out on the rest that he offered.

We're not supposed to carry everything ourselves. This is the offer God is making us: Ultimate rest. When we remember all that he has done and we trust in all that he can do, ☞ we can rest in him. **We don't have to wrestle with all of life's problems; instead we can rest in God's presence.**

Jeremiah 6:16

This is what the Lord says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.

☞ Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Don't let troubles harden your heart. Come to Jesus. Come with thanksgiving. Put your trust in him. Give your life with all its problems over to him. Rest in him!

Pray at the altar.

☞ Video: He will carry you