

# *How to Soften a Heart*

**Zech 12:10-11**

**1**

**10** “I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication, so that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn. **11** “In that day there will be great mourning in Jerusalem, like the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the plain of Megiddo.

Hadadrimmon was the location of a battle fought in the plain of Megiddo, a battle in which King Josiah was mortally wounded...

**2 Chron 35:23-26**

**2**

**23** The archers shot King Josiah, and the king said to his servants, “ Take me away, for I am badly wounded.” **24** So his servants took him out of the chariot and carried him in the second chariot which he had, and brought him to Jerusalem where he died and was buried in the tombs of his fathers. All Judah and Jerusalem mourned for Josiah. **25** Then Jeremiah chanted a lament for Josiah. And all the male and female singers speak about Josiah in their lamentations to this day. And they made them an ordinance in Israel; behold, they are also written in the Lamentations.

Zechariah uses the nationwide sorrow at the loss of King Josiah to illustrate the sorrow that the nation would feel when they realized the great loss of Christ. Prophesying for God, he says...

**3**

***“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication”***

Remember the words of our Savior as He hung upon the cross, looking out at the people, His brethren, the Jews that had demanded Him to be crucified, the ones that had beat Him, spat upon Him...

**Luke 23:33-34**

**4**

**33** When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. **34** But Jesus was saying, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."

I see here two components of love. The first is seen in this magnificent display on the part of Christ, giving Himself up for these people who didn't want Him. But, you see, He knew that even though they didn't want Him, they needed Him. That is the true manifestation of love. When your children are rebelling and fighting at every turn your authority, you still make every effort to do for them what you know to be best. When the world seems to be attacking your every step, its loving your neighbor as yourself. When there is absolutely no reason whatsoever to do so, it is giving yourself wholly and completely for someone else, even unto death. That is the love that God showed when He gave Himself, as Jesus Christ, for all men, for us. This love is what the Jews, in their hardness of heart and unfaithfulness have rejected.

Hardness of heart is such a vile and deceptive sin. It creeps into the mind and heart and disguises itself as righteous indignation, or passion, or intellectual discretion. When its deception takes hold, we become convinced that the decisions we make, regardless of what they are, are absolutely right, even when they fly in the face of God's Word. Part of its deception is that it makes us think that it is always the other guy who is Pharaoh, never ourselves. We look at the world and attribute the lack of desire of it to their hardness of heart, and that's true, but we need to understand that it exists not only out there, but in many who profess to be children of God.

It's like a deck of cards, pick a religion, any religion, it doesn't matter which one, if they have tenants, beliefs, or practices that are not scriptural, they have deceived themselves into accepting those things as being right, and ignoring the truth of the Word, that, by definition, is...

**5** ***“Hardness of Heart”***

Beneath the clothing of religion, there lies a hardness of heart that makes Pharaoh's seem mild in comparison.

That is what Zechariah is describing for us. He is prophesying about the crucifixion of Christ, he tells how that the people pierced Him because they, in their hardness of heart, rejected Him and His teaching. But Zechariah also tells us to defeat hardness of heart.

**6** ***“I will pour out on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplication”***

Note, for a moment, the progression of what Zechariah says.

- 7** 1. The tenderness of the Love of God came from His compassion

***“I will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications”***

- 8** 2. Man's love for God is brought about by seeing with faith, God's

***“And they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him.”***

- 9** 3. This love for God should lead man to mourning for his hardness of heart

***“They shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn. In that day shall there be a great mourning in Jerusalem, as the mourning of Hadadrimmon in the valley of Megiddon.”***

In this lesson we are going to look at these thoughts from Zechariah because the progression has not changed, man still comes to God by the same path of defeating the hardness of his heart.

- 10** 1. The tenderness of the Love of God comes from His compassion

*Ps 25:5-6*

**11**

**5** Lead me in Your truth and teach me, For You are the God of my salvation; For You I wait all the day. **6** Remember, O Lord, Your compassion and Your lovingkindnesses, For they have been from of old.

God's compassion has no boundaries, no limits confined by anger or even vengeance. This isn't to say that God doesn't have these feelings, He does, but the real impact of His compassion is that He can and will put His anger and His vengeance aside. Then there is the second component of true love. Loving, even when what you feel isn't necessarily love. God hates sin. According to James, the wages of sin is death, spiritual death, a separation from God. Sin brings about the wrath of God...

*Col 3:5-6*

**12**

**5** Therefore consider the members of your earthly body as dead to immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and greed, which amounts to idolatry. **6** For it is because of these things that the wrath of God will come upon the sons of disobedience,

God's response to sin is, plain and simple, wrath, vengeance. It is only the love and compassion of God compels Him to offer man an opportunity to be saved from his sin...

*Rom 5:8*

**13**

**8** But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

Even when man has proven himself to be unfaithful and disobedient because of his stubbornness, his hardheartedness, and rejected God, Christ, and the truth of the Spirit, man has been given the chance to be saved. Even when wrath has been promised to the sinner, that sinner has been given a chance to have his sins wiped away. That is love.

*Rom 8:12-14*

**14**

**12** So then, brethren, we are under obligation, not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh— **13** for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live. **14** For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God.

God's love has given man the opportunity to be a child of His through His Spirit, through the truth that was revealed through His Holy Spirit.

*1 Peter 1:22-23*

**15**

**22** Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, **23** for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God

The truth is the avenue through which man comes into contact with the blood of Christ. God's living and enduring Word reveals His great love to man. It illustrates His compassion.

**16** 2. Man's love for God is brought about by seeing with faith, God's

John tells us that...

**1 John 4:19**

**17**

**19** We love, because He first loved us.

This thought is crucial to an understanding of the process by which man comes to God. Coming to God requires that man comes to a love of God and what he has done for man. We love because we come to the recognition and understanding of God's love for us. We love because we believe that God loved us so much that He gave His only begotten Son for us. We love because we know that there is no way possible that we deserve His love for us. We love because we know for absolute certainty that we should be punished because of our sin.

**18**

***"We love, because He first loved us"***

What is seen when looking at God with the eye of faith? The story is that God created everything in six days and rested on the seventh. Most of the world has heard that story, but the eye of faith looks at the creation and sees the handiwork of God in everything he looks at. Man looks at the story and questions everything about; the whole universe in six days, the complexity and perfection of man, the stars and the planets, and all in six days? The eye of faith looks at the universe and marvels at the power and wisdom of God. The story is that Jesus was a good man, maybe a prophet of God, taught some very good morality, but seriously, the Son of God. The eye of faith sees Jesus as God incarnate, God manifested in human flesh that lived as man so that He could give Himself as the perfect sacrifice for all man.

In Phil. 4, God promises to take care of man's need. The world looks at that and says I have all sorts of needs that God hasn't supplied. The eye of faith looks at that and understands that man's greatest need was to be saved from his sin, God has supplied that. God promises a victory over death. The world looks at that and scoffs, saying everybody dies, even the so-called faithful. The eye of faith sees that and knows that there will be a resurrection of everyone. Christ tells us this in...

**John 5:26-29**

**19**

**26** For just as the Father has life in Himself, even so He gave to the Son also to have life in Himself; **27** and He gave Him authority to execute judgment, because He is the Son of Man. **28** Do not marvel at this; for an hour is coming, in which all who are in the tombs will hear His voice, **29** and will come forth; those who did the good deeds to a resurrection of life, those who committed the evil deeds to a resurrection of judgment.

This life we live is not just a one and done affair. There will be a life after this. Whether that life is one of peace and comfort or one of torment, is up to us.

The world looks at the story of the crucifixion of Christ and says; of well, the Romans killed another person in their reign of tyranny. The eye of faith sees the Gospel account of Christ's crucifixion and mourns for the Son of God. Here then is our last point...

**20**

3. This love for God should lead man to mourning for his hardness of heart

**2 Cor 7:9-10**

**21**

**9** I now rejoice, not that you were made sorrowful, but that you were made sorrowful to the point of repentance; for you were made sorrowful according to the will of God, so that you might not suffer loss in anything through us. **10** For the sorrow that is according to the will of God produces a repentance without regret, leading to salvation, but the sorrow of the world produces death.

Paul makes such an interesting and important point here. He had written to the Corinthians in the book of 1 Cor. concerning many different issues and problems that they had within the Church, and he is saying that the point of his first letter was not to make them sorry, but rather, to make them sorry enough to do something about it. The crux of his point is that they be made sorrowful according to the will of God. That means that when God's Word is looked at with an eye of faith, it should and will evoke within the honest heart a desire to repent, to change one's will to God's will. That's what Paul is talking about, that when the Gospel is read, heard, heeded, it will work within the listener a faith grounded on the truth, a love for what God has done for us, and a desire to obey.

When the love of God truly becomes real to a man, his reaction is immediate. Now, I'm not trying to say that there is an instant of belief that someone immediately has to respond to. No, but that when the fullness of someone's faith becomes so convincing to them that they can no longer wait, then they will respond in faithful obedience. When the truth revealed by the Spirit of God, becomes real and is truly seen, the believer mourns for his sin, mourns for the future torment they will have to face. That is the mourning, that is the Godly sorrow that the truth of the Spirit works within us.

The text from Zechariah indicates that they...

**22**

***“So that they will look on Me whom they have pierced; and they will mourn for Him, as one mourns for an only son, and they will weep bitterly over Him like the bitter weeping over a firstborn.”***

Keeping in mind that this is a messianic prophecy concerning Christ, what is it you think they are mourning.

**Heb 6:6**

**23**

**6** and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame.

Zechariah talks about their mourning because they had realized what they done. When someone looks with the eye of faith at the scriptures and sees that it was because of sin that Christ had to die, he realizes that his own sin is as responsible for the sacrifice as is anyone's. That is cause for sorrow, sorrow brought about by the will of God, His Word.

**24**

***Godly sorrow softens the hardheart***