

VALUE THE TRUTH

JAMIE MCNAB

16.5.20

I have spent a few weeks looking at the subject of having a hard-heart.

Biblically ... this is not someone who is uncaring — but someone who is spiritually dull. Slow to grasp spiritual truth.

And it can affect believers. Jesus on occasions rebuked His own disciples a number of times for their hard-hearts.

We shouldn't assume that we are immune. We should remain watchful.

We need tender hearts — quick to recognise Biblical Truth — quick to respond.

Hebrews 5:9-14

9 And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him,

10 called by God as High Priest “according to the order of Melchizedek,”

11 of whom we have much to say, and hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

12 For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you again the first principles of the oracles of God; and you have come to need milk and not solid food.

13 For everyone who partakes only of milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, for he is a babe.

14 But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, that is, those who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.

Don't become dull of hearing. We should be able to teach — mature enough ... bright enough.

Hebrews 6:1

1 Therefore, leaving the discussion of the elementary principles of Christ, let us go on to perfection, not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God,

Go on to maturity!

Hebrews 6:11-12

11 **And we desire that each one of you show the same diligence to the full assurance of hope until the end,**

12 **that you do not become sluggish,** but imitate those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

Don't become sluggish! Don't become dull! Remain alert!

The impression is that over time we can drift ... lose our zeal ... lose our spiritual sharpness. Become spiritually unfit?

We need to continue to value the Truth so that we don't become dull — even hard-hearted. Bible Truth should be worth working for ... holding onto.

Matthew 13:44-46

44 **"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.**

45 **"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking beautiful pearls,**

46 **who, when he had found one pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had and bought it.**

Hidden treasure ... the Truth — you have to be a person who is actively looking for it.

Someone looking ... hunting and searching for beautiful Truths — the Pearl of great price.

Seeking the Truth which is so valuable that you are willing to give up everything to possess it.

Historically ... some have given up their lives to find and publish the Truth of The Bible.

Think of William Tyndale — burned at the stake in 1536 for translating the Bible into the English language. He gave his life to give the Word of God to English speakers. That's a big price to pay. Ninety percent of today's KJV is Tyndale's translation.

Even today ... there are organisations that smuggle Bibles into some countries to spread the Truth (like North Korea). People risk their lives to do this. What about us? It's easy for us today to access the Truth. Are we complacent?

We need to value the Word of God. How much time we spend reading it ... or studying it — will reveal how much value we place on it.

How have you done since last Sabbath? How much time have you and I found to read the words of righteousness?

We know we need to guard our hearts ... and feeding on the Word of God — the Truth — is one of the main keys.

Psalms 119:9-11

9 How can a young man cleanse his way?

By taking heed according to Your word.

10 With my whole heart I have sought You;

Oh, let me not wander from Your commandments!

11 Your word I have hidden in my heart,

That I might not sin against You.

Your Word I have hidden in my heart. God's Word is on the inside. Received. Valued. Protected. It strengthens us.

Not casual ... uncaring. Not a duty to be undertaken with gritted teeth. ☺

We live in a crazy world. We are surrounded by bad influences all of the time. Both visible and invisible foes.

Ephesians 6:10-17

10 Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might.

11 Put on the whole armour of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil.

12 For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, (as we might often suppose) but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. (4 types of spirit beings on the dark side)

13 **Therefore take up the whole armour of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.**

14 **Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness,**

15 and **having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace;**

16 **above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one.**

17 **And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God;**

This is spiritual warfare.

The battle is over the Truth. What God says versus what the world says.

We get the latter 24/7. **That's why we need the real truth — to guard our hearts.**

But ... if we become sluggish ... dull — with the Truth — we've relinquished our armour.

The “Belt of Truth” is the first item of armour. The key to our protection.

It's the Truth that sets us apart from the world.

John 17:13-19

13 But now I come to You, and these things I speak in the world, that they may have My joy fulfilled in themselves.

14 I have given them Your word; and the world has hated them because they are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

15 I do not pray that You should take them out of the world, but that You should keep them from the evil one.

16 They are not of the world, just as I am not of the world.

17 **Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.**

18 As You sent Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.

19 And for their sakes I sanctify Myself, that they also may be sanctified by the truth.

Sanctify — separate — set them apart — by Your Truth ... which is Your Word.

John 8:12, 30-32

12 Then Jesus spoke to them again, saying, "**I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.**"

30 As He spoke these words, many believed in Him.

31 Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed.

32 **And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free.**"

It's not the Truth that sets you free — **it's the Truth you know that sets you free.**

And not the Truth that we have forgotten ... or to which our hearts are hardened.

We have a responsibility. We put on the Belt of Truth. We search out the Truth.

Unless of course we're too lazy?

Romans 12:1-2

1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, **that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.**

2 **And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.**

Our minds are to be renewed.

God's values and standards — not the world's. Even if they are common and popular.

Romans 12:2 (THE VOICE)

2 **Do not allow this world to mould you in its own image. Instead, be transformed from the inside out by renewing your mind.** As a result, you will be able to discern what God wills and whatever God finds good, pleasing, and complete.

The main way to renew our minds is to read ... study and reflect on the Bible — its teachings ... its instructions ... its histories. Perhaps supplemented by audio/video messages ... but not in place of the Word itself.

Acts 17:1-3

1 Now when they had passed through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews.

2 **Then Paul, as his custom was, went in to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures,**

3 **explaining and demonstrating that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead,** and saying, **“This Jesus whom I preach to you is the Christ.”**

Paul preached Jesus from the Scriptures — the Old Testament.

Acts 17:10-12

10 **Then the brethren immediately sent Paul and Silas away by night to Berea. When they arrived, they went into the synagogue of the Jews.**

11 **These were more fair-minded than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.**

12 Therefore many of them believed, and also not a few of the Greeks, prominent women as well as men.

The Bereans were more fair-minded ... more noble. They received the Word readily. Some translations say they searched the scriptures with “Great Eagerness”. There were no hard-hearts here! Their hearts were open to the Truth.

Psalms 1:1-3

1 **Blessed is the man**
Who walks not in the counsel of the ungodly,
Nor stands in the path of sinners,
Nor sits in the seat of the scornful;

2 **But his delight is in the law of the LORD,**
And in His law he meditates day and night.

3 He shall be like a tree
Planted by the rivers of water,
That brings forth its fruit in its season,

Whose leaf also shall not wither;
And **whatever he does shall prosper.**

Psalms 1:2 (HCSB)

**2 Instead, his delight is in the LORD'S instruction,
and he meditates on it day and night.**

These verses describe someone who delights in God's Word. Not a tiresome duty. This is someone who has zeal ... readiness of mind. Someone who values the Word.

How we deal with the Word ... reveals our heart.

Luke 8:15-18

15 But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

16 "No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light.

17 For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light.

18 **Therefore take heed how you hear.** For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

Take heed how you hear.

We must be careful not to hear (or read) casually. Is the Word valuable?

Do we hunger and thirst for the nourishment that comes from God's Word?

Psalms 42:1-2

**1 As the deer pants for the water brooks,
So pants my soul for You, O God.**

2 My soul thirsts for God, for the living God.

When shall I come and appear before God?

"My soul pants" — describes a strong desire ("longs for") ... not casual or lukewarm — "take-it-or-leave-it".

Psalms 19:7-11

7 **The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul;**
The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;
8 **The statutes of the LORD are right,** rejoicing the heart;
The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes;
9 The fear of the LORD is clean, enduring forever;
The judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether.
10 More to be desired are they than gold,
Yea, than much fine gold;
Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.
11 Moreover by them Your servant is warned,
And in keeping them there is great reward.

The Word or instruction of God is pure ... precious. Better than gold and honey — “rejoicing the heart”.

Psalms 19:14

14 **Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart**
Be acceptable in Your sight,
O LORD, my strength and my Redeemer.

A heart which respects and values the pure Word of God is acceptable.

Is this how we look at the Word of God?

Simple Test: How long do we spend on Bible reading? How much time since last Sabbath? How much time do you expect to spend in God’s Word till next Sabbath?

If we meet Jesus at His Judgment Seat ... would we be embarrassed by how much time we did ... or didn’t — spend on His Word?

Ultimately ... we’re not pursuing the Word for academic or technical reasons.

The purpose is to KNOW GOD — TO KNOW JESUS.

John 5:37-40

37 **And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me.** You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form.

38 But **you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe.**

39 **You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me.**

40 **But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life.**

The Pharisees read the scriptures ... but failed to see that they were about Jesus. We come to know Jesus through the scriptures.

Luke 24:13-17

13 Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem.

14 **And they talked together of all these things which had happened.**

15 **So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them.**

16 **But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him.**

17 And He said to them, **“What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?”**

Luke 24:21-27

21 But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened.

22 Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.

23 When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive.

24 And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.”

25 **Then He said to them, “O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!**

26 **Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?”**

27 **And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.**

Jesus can be found in all of the scriptures.

Luke 24:30-32

30 Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them.

31 **Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him**; and He vanished from their sight.

32 And they said to one another, **“Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?”**

Their heart burned as the scriptures were expounded.

Their hearts were on fire! Ours ought to be too! Not hard-hearted! Not casual! Not cold!

What have we seen?

- Hard hearts — are slow to believe. Dull.
- Can be found among believers.
- Generally develop over time — we become dull.
- Key protection is to value God’s Word and hide it in our hearts.
- God’s Word should be a delight — that our heart meditates on.

The Litmus Test: There are 168 hours in a week. How many hours of scripture reading are in our average week?

Do we pass the test?

We have got to value the Word of God.