

# Sermon Notes

## FREEDOM FROM A HARD HEART

— August 2021 | Pastor Ben Dixon —

We can all acknowledge that there are many beautiful and wonderful things about life. Yet, at the same time, we experience all kinds of situations and circumstances that are quite difficult. Things like loss, betrayal, confusion, disagreement and disappointment which provide opportunities to be hurt, wounded and offended. In those moments, whether we know it or not, we will make decisions to soften our hearts toward God or harden them. This is why the Bible warns us NOT to harden our hearts – because so much is at stake. As we look at our passage today, my hope is to provide a path of freedom out of or away from a hard heart so we can stay open and useful to the purposes of God in these difficult times.

**Hebrews 3:15** – *Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts...*

**Psalm 95:1-11** – *O come, let us sing for joy to the Lord, let us shout joyfully to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the Lord is a great God and a great King above all gods, in whose hand are the depths of the earth, the peaks of the mountains are His also. The sea is His, for it was He who made it, and His hands formed the dry land. Come, let us worship and bow down, let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you would hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as in the day of Massah in the wilderness, “When your fathers tested Me, they tried Me, though they had seen My work. For forty years I loathed that generation, and said they are a people who err in their heart, and they do not know My ways. Therefore I swore in My anger, truly they shall not enter into My rest.”*

### A HEART OF WORSHIP

1. A heart of worship acknowledges who God is and what God has done
2. A heart of worship expresses the praise and honor that God is due
3. A heart of worship believes that God will continue to do what He has always done

### A HEART OF HUMILITY

1. A heart of humility will seek to hear and heed the voice of God

**John 10:4-5** – *When he puts forth all his own, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. A stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers.*

2. A heart of humility will learn from the failure of the past

**1 Corinthians 10:11-12** – *Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come. Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.*

3. A heart of humility will trust God more than anyone or anything else

**Proverbs 28:14** – *Blessed is the one who always trembles before God, but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble.*

**Ezekiel 36:24-26** – *For I will take you from the nations, gather you from all the lands and bring you into your own land. Then I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How would you describe the condition of your heart today?
2. Have you ever discerned a hardening of your heart? How did you deal with that?
3. What has a tendency to harden you toward God or people? How can you move beyond that?