

Hard Hearts

Mark 10:2-9
Charlie Brackett

When the Pharisees said to Jesus, "Moses permitted a man to write a certificate of divorce, and to dismiss her," Jesus explained to them the reason. His explanation is in verse 5. "Because of the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept." Jesus goes on to say, "But from the beginning of the creation, God 'made them male and female.' For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, 'and the two shall become one flesh'; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate." They practiced divorce for any reason not because God wanted it, but because their forefathers were so hard of heart Moses allowed it.

The Bible speaks against this condition of a hard heart. Listen to Hebrews 3:12,13. "Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin." A hard heart is a product of the devil. He uses our unbelief to harden our hearts against the truth, thus driving us away from God. Divorce in Moses time is an example of God allowing His people a practice contrary to His will because their hearts were hard.

Jesus often encountered hardened hearts among the Jews of His time. He even had to put up with the apostles' hardened hearts while He trained them. Do you remember in Mark 6 after Jesus had fed the 5,000, He walked to the disciples' boat on the sea? They were amazed at the feat. Verse 52 explains they marveled not understanding the miracle of "the loaves because their heart was hardened."

Why does God put up with our hard hearts when they are clearly hearts of unbelief, products of the devil? Paul puts it in perspective for us in Romans 2:4,5. "...do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and long suffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? But in accordance with your hardness and your impenitent heart you are treasuring up for yourself wrath in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgement of God, who 'will render to each one according to his deeds'..."

God wants each of us to increase in belief. He wants us to repent and grow strong in faith. By doing so, our hard hearts are softened. But failing, our hearts grow harder, storing up the wrath of God against us. Lord help us not be hard of heart. Help us be obedient to Your will.