



Date: 4-7-2024

Scripture: Exodus 7

Sermon Title: The Battle for Hearts and Minds.

1. God Hardens Pharaoh's heart.

Exodus 7:1-7 (LSB)

V1,2:

1 Then Yahweh said to Moses, "See, I set you [as] God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet. 2 "You shall speak all that I command you, and your brother Aaron shall speak to Pharaoh that he let the sons of Israel go out of his land. What does it mean that God hardened his heart?

V 3:

3 "But I will harden Pharaoh's heart with stiffness that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.

V 4-7:

4 "But Pharaoh will not listen to you. And I will set My hand upon Egypt and bring out My hosts, My people the sons of Israel, from the land of Egypt by great judgments. 5 "Then the Egyptians shall know that I am Yahweh, when I stretch out My hand against Egypt and bring out the sons of Israel from their midst." 6 So Moses and Aaron did [it]; as Yahweh commanded them, thus they did. 7 Now Moses was eighty years old and Aaron eighty-three years old, when they spoke to Pharaoh.

We are active _____ in the hardening of our hearts.

1 Samuel 6:6 (LSB)

6 "Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had abused them, did they not allow the people to go, and they went?"

2. The sign of the serpent.

Exodus 7:8-13 (LSB)

V 8-10:

8 And Yahweh spoke to Moses and Aaron, saying, 9 "When Pharaoh speaks to you, saying, 'Work a miraculous wonder,' then you shall say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and throw [it] down before Pharaoh, [that] it may become a serpent.'" 10 So Moses and Aaron came to Pharaoh, and thus they did just as Yahweh had commanded; and Aaron threw his staff down before Pharaoh and his servants, and it became a serpent.

V 11-13:

11 Then Pharaoh also called for the wise men and the sorcerers, and they also, the magicians of Egypt, did the same with their secret arts. 12 And each one threw down his staff, and they became serpents. But Aaron's staff

swallowed up their staffs. 13 Yet Pharaoh's heart was hardened with strength, and he did not listen to them, as Yahweh had spoken.

Hard hearts _____ against God.

3. The sign of the water turning to blood.

Exodus 7:14-25 (LSB)

V 14-18:

14 Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Pharaoh's heart is hard with firmness; he refuses to let the people go. 15 "Go to Pharaoh in the morning as he is going out to the water, and station yourself to meet him on the bank of the Nile; and you shall take in your hand the staff that was turned into a serpent. 16 "And you shall say to him, 'Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, sent me to you, saying, "Let My people go, that they may serve Me in the wilderness. But behold, you have not listened until now." 17 'Thus says Yahweh, "By this you shall know that I am Yahweh: behold, I am about to strike the water that is in the Nile with the staff that is in my hand, and it will be turned to blood. 18 "And the fish that are in the Nile will die, and the Nile will become foul, and the Egyptians will be weary of drinking water from the Nile.'"

V 19-21:

19 Then Yahweh said to Moses, "Say to Aaron, 'Take your staff and stretch out your hand over the waters of Egypt, over their rivers, over their streams, and over their pools and over all their reservoirs of water, that they may become blood; and there will be blood throughout all the land of Egypt, both in [vessels of] wood and in [vessels of] stone.'" 20 So Moses and Aaron did thus, as Yahweh had commanded. And he raised up the staff and struck the water that [was] in the Nile, in the sight of Pharaoh and in the sight of his servants, and all the water that [was] in the Nile was turned to blood. 21 And the fish that [were] in the Nile died, and the Nile became foul,

so that the Egyptians could not drink water from the Nile. And the blood was through all the land of Egypt.

V 22-25:

22 Yet the magicians of Egypt did the same with their secret arts; and Pharaoh's heart was hardened with strength, and he did not listen to them, as Yahweh had spoken. 23 Then Pharaoh turned and went into his house, and he did not set his heart even on this. 24 So all the Egyptians dug around the Nile for water to drink, for they could not drink of the water of the Nile. 25 And seven full days passed after Yahweh had struck the Nile.

Hard hearts are _____.

Signs of a Hardened heart.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.

How does our heart become hardened?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

How do we combat hardness of heart?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Ezekiel 36:26 (LSB)

26 "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.

The human will is our capacity for choice and action, which we can exercise for good or evil.

The will is the human capacity to choose and to act responsibly. As such, it enables humans to respond to God's word in obedience or disobedience. For the Christian faith, the will of man is a necessary presupposition for the doctrine of sin and of man's responsibility for sin. It is only because humans have a will, because they are the author of their own actions, that they can be held responsible and can in fact sin.

While the human will is exercised in all sorts of mundane choices, it comes to the fore in Scripture as the capacity to act for or against God. In Scripture, while God is sovereign over history, the source of sin is not God but man. Man was created upright, but an act of man brought about the fall (Gen 3; Eccl 7:29). Thus, humans cannot blame fate or God for their temptation and their sin.

Christians who differ on the question of free will and its relationship to God's sovereignty nevertheless agree that humans are without excuse for sin but are fundamentally responsible. Some have argued that human freedom of will excludes the possibility of divine control or predetermination of human decisions; such predetermination would undermine human responsibility. Others have argued that God's control over events extends even to human decisions, yet without undermining human responsibility. In spite of these differences, both agree that human beings are responsible to obey God and are responsible for their sin.

This fundamental responsibility for action and for sin continues even after the fall. Man is not reduced to the level of a mere animal, driven by instinct, no matter how much he becomes enslaved to sin and to his own desires. After the fall, man's responsibility to obey God exists alongside his slavery to sin. The human will is weak and is controlled by desires, by nature, by habit, by all that constitutes original sin. Humans' activity is not simply the outcome of entirely free and separable choices but of a habit of wrongdoing and the desires of the heart. For this reason, after the fall, humans are *not able not*

to sin. Their hearts are so affected by the fall that their wills perpetually fall short of the mark set by God's character and will. No act humans do can be free from the stain of sin.

Accordingly, the renewal of the will is an essential part of salvation. Even an initial response to the message of salvation requires the softening of the human heart and God's enabling of the human will by his Holy Spirit. Regeneration itself includes a renewal of the desires and a redirecting of the will. Whereas humans previously willed themselves, they are now enabled to will the good of others and the glory of God. The renewed will continues to fight against the remnants of sin, but it is unmistakably different than man's old will, as the "new man" is distinct from the "old man."

Only in the state of glory will the human will be entirely free from sin and, then, not able to sin. But this "inability" will be nothing but the *ability* to will the praise and glory of God without hindrance.

Passages

Key Verses

Ec 7:29; Php 2:12–13; Dt 30:11; Dt 30:14; Eph 2:1–5 (Dead in sin = inability of will.); Jn 1:12–13; 1 Co 10:13; Ro 6:16 (Willful slavery.)

Additional Verses

Ro 7:15–25

Harden; Hardened[Heb *ḥāzaq*] (Ex. 4:21; 7:3, 13, 22; 8:19; 9:12, 35; 10:20, 27, 11:10; 14:4, 8, 17; Josh. 11:20); NEB "make (be) obstinate," "make stubborn," "offer an obstinate resistance"; [*āmaṣ*] (Dt. 15:7; 2 Ch. 36:13); NEB "be hard-hearted," "be stubborn"; [*kābēd*] (Ex. 7:14; 8:15, 32; 9:7, 34; 10:1; 1 S. 6:6); NEB "be (make) obdurate," "be stubborn"; [*qāšā*] (Dt. 2:30; Job 9:4; Ps. 95:8; Prov. 28:14); NEB "make stubborn," "stubbornly resist," "grow stubborn"; [*qāšaḥ*] (Isa. 63:17); [*rāga*] (Job 7:5); AV BROKEN; NEB omits; [Aram *t□qēp*] (Dnl. 5:20); NEB "become stubborn"; [Gk. *pōrōō*] (Mk. 6:52; 8:17; Jn. 12:40; Rom. 11:7; 2 Cor. 3:14); AV also BLINDED; NEB CLOSED, DULLED, "make blind," "make insensitive"; [*sklērynō*] (Rom. 9:18; He. 3:8, 13, 15; 4:7); NEB "make (grow) stubborn"; **HARDENING** [Gk. *pōrōsis*] (Rom. 11:25); AV, NEB, BLINDNESS.

"Harden" occurs most frequently in the phrase "to harden the heart." This hardening of people's hearts is attributed both to God and to people themselves, e.g., with reference to the hearts of Pharaoh and the Egyptians (Ex. 4–11). The verb *ḥāzaq* ("make strong") is used in both the qal and the

piel, with the piel occurring where God hardens the heart and the qal where man is the subject. With the exception of Ex. 10:1, *kābēd* (in the piel and hiphil) is used where the hardening is attributed to man's own act, and means literally to "be heavy, dull, or insensitive." The verb *qāšâ* occurs only in the hiphil and is used both of hardening that is God's work and hardening that is man's work; this term is also used figuratively in the phrase "stiffen the neck" (see Stiff-Necked). In the NT the verbs *pōróō* and *sklērynō* are used only in the figurative sense of "harden the heart (or mind)."

The hardening of people's hearts by God is a way of punishment, but it is always a consequence of their own self-hardening. In Pharaoh's case we read that he "hardened his heart" against the appeal to free the Israelites. Hardening himself, he became more confirmed in his obstinacy, till he brought the final doom upon himself: sin is made to become its own punishment. In Hebrew religious thought everything was directly attributed to God, and the hardening *is* God's work, but it is always the consequence of human action out of harmony with God's will (cf. Rom. 1:18–32, esp vv 21, 24, 26, 28).

Key Passages

Ex 7:3

"But I will harden Pharaoh's heart with stiffness that I may multiply My signs and My wonders in the land of Egypt.

Ex 9:34–10:1

But Pharaoh saw that the rain and the hail and the thunder had ceased. So he sinned again and hardened his heart with firmness, he and his servants. And Pharaoh's heart was hardened with strength, and he did not let the sons of Israel go, just as Yahweh had spoken by the hand of...

1 Sa 6:6

"Why then do you harden your hearts as the Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? When He had abused them, did they not allow the people to go, and they went?

Mk 6:52

for they had not gained any insight about the loaves, but their heart was hardened.

Jn 12:40

"HE HAS BLINDED THEIR EYES AND HE HARDENED THEIR HEART, LEST THEY SEE WITH THEIR EYES AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART, AND RETURN AND I HEAL THEM."

Life Group Questions:

1. As a child were you a rule follower or breaker? What is the most trouble you ever got in and why?

Read Exodus Chapter 7 (prior to life group): When you read through the scripture take note of anything interesting, unique, or questions that come to mind when reading. Take some time and dig in deeper in the following areas.

2. How does the Bible define the term heart? Look up other scriptures to help define this. What does it mean to have a hardened heart and what role do we play in the process? (1 Sam 6.6)
3. How has “hard hearts” impacted us as believers? How do we guard our hearts? (Prov 4.23)