



## CELL GUIDE

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**TOPIC** Warning Against Hardening of Heart

**SPEAKER** CS David Foo

**THEME** Warnings in the Book of Hebrews

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# MESSAGE SUMMARY

## INTRODUCTION

Trials and setbacks can cause believers to give up on their faith in Christ, and the process begins in the heart. Citing from the Book of Hebrews, CS David Foo urged us to guard against the hardening of our heart, which if left unchecked, could keep us away from God, and cause us to miss out on His goodness in our lives.

## CONSEQUENCE OF A HARDENED HEART

The hardening of the heart against God causes one to doubt Him, such that, when faced with uncertainties or disappointments (for example, an unmet need, unanswered prayer, sickness, loss of job), one's immediate response is to doubt God and His goodness. Over time, this creates an open door for unbelief and sin against God.

This was what happened to the Israelites at Massah. Shortly after God brought them out from Egypt, they blamed God for sending them into the wilderness to die of thirstiness (Exodus 17). Throughout their time in the wilderness, God provided them with water, food, and clothing that never worn out. Despite this, they continued to doubt God's goodness. At Meribah forty years later, in their thirstiness, they tested the Lord again (Numbers 20). Then God said that they have gone astray in their heart, not known His ways, and shall not enter His rest (Psalm 95:10-11).

A hardened heart disrupts our ability to trust and obey God. It tempts us to blame God for our difficult circumstances, when we should trust Him to mould and strengthen us through our challenges. As a result of harden heart, believers can miss out on the pleasing and perfect will of God for their lives.

## CULTIVATING A BELIEVING HEART FOR GOD

Three things that we can do to cultivate a believing heart for God:

### 1. Keep a lookout for the condition of our heart

The word of God is living and powerful, a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart (Hebrews 4:12). When we truly seek God through His word and prayers, the Holy Spirit will convict our heart of the things that displeases God. So, if you will hear His voice today, do not

harden your heart. Be quick to repent. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9).

## **2. Encourage one another (we need community)**

Jesus said: "In the world you will have tribulation; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." (John 16:33). The challenges of life can overwhelm our heart with fears and concerns, and sway a believer to doubt God, especially if the believer does not have fellowship and prayer support from fellow Christians. God desires His children to be united as one body to encourage each other (1 Cor 12:24-27). So, if you will hear His voice today, do not harden your heart. Get connected to a cell group or ministry if you have not already done so. Allow others to encourage you and start encouraging others along the way.

## **3. Encourage one another daily (frequency matters)**

Another purpose of belonging to the body of Christ is so that we can keep watch over each other. The bible reminds believers to exhort one another daily to avoid being hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Sin, especially continual and unrepentant sin, desensitises the heart. If we relentlessly continue to engage in sin, there will come a time when God will give us over to our "debased mind" and let us have it our way. Therefore, we ought to help each other stay accountable to God's commands so that none of us would develop a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God (Hebrews 3:12-14).

## **CONCLUSION**

The text "Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart" is repeated three times in Hebrews (3:7-8, 3:15, and 4:7). The warning is clear. The condition of our heart affects our ability to trust and obey God. A hardened heart pushes us away from God, while a believing heart draws us closer to Him. The proof of God's love for us is Jesus Christ. The proof of our love for God is obedience. Let us purpose our heart to trust and obey God, and let Him work His goodness in our lives.

# QUESTIONS

1. Read Exodus 17:1-7 and Numbers 20:1-13. What can you learn about hardened heart, its cause and consequences?

2. Can you recall a time when you blamed someone else instead of trusting God to work in your situation? What triggered you to lay blame? How ready are you to trust God should the same situation occur again today?

3. How might a hardened heart be affecting a situation in your life (eg. your family, career, relationship, finance, education, ministry, etc)? How may your attitude towards people and situation be contributing to it? What is God prompting you to change? Pray for one another.