Hardness of Heart

“For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.’”

Romans 9:17 (NKJV)

At one time, Pharaoh was the most powerful man on the earth. He was not only the King, but he told his people he was a god and the ruler of all the gods. His army was one of the best equipped and most powerful. Nations avoided a confrontation with them because they knew they would lose. He had a massive kingdom and they were building giant structures, like the Pyramids, with millions of slaves. These slaves came to Egypt in a time of famine, asking for food, and stayed for the next four-hundred years.

What else could Pharaoh ask for? It was all going fine until an old shepherd showed up from the back of some lonely desert country and said that God, the one true God, wanted Pharaoh to release his slaves. They were God’s people and He had heard their cries of desperation and wanted to take them back to their homeland.

Pharaoh didn’t want to lose his workforce, so he hardened his heart. He didn’t know this God and even if he did, he would not bend. He arrogantly said in Exodus 5:2, “Who is the Lord, that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, nor will I let Israel go.” (NKJV)

The interesting point here is that God knew his heart. He foreknew Pharaoh would harden his heart and God, in His wisdom, used this hardness of heart to demonstrate His power. Everything in the plagues—the blood, the frogs, the flies, the boils, the hail, and finally the death of the firstborn—were a direct, frontal attack on all the gods of Egypt and ultimately, the chief god-Pharaoh.

Small or great, rebelling against God with a hard heart always leads to the same place. If we harden our hearts toward God and His will for our lives, God can use the hardness against us. What God wants from us is a tender, contrite heart. God wants us to be open to His Spirit so we will do His will unconditionally. That’s what it means to love God with your heart, soul, and mind.

Today, if you have a hard heart, ask God to forgive you. Ask Him to create a clean and tender heart in you. Ask God to fill you with His Spirit to obey His will and plans. Thank God for your salvation. Continue to thank and praise our God.

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