

The HARDENING of the PHARAOH'S HEART

Bertie Brits

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GREETINGS in the wonderful name of Jesus. I'm Bertie Brits and today I am going to minister to you and bring you the gospel of God's grace. We are going to talk about election. We are going to talk about the hardening of the heart of Pharaoh and what took place there.

Before we get into the message I would like to just welcome everybody that is watching for the first time as well as all of our regular viewers. It is an honor for me to minister to you the grace of God. Like many of you know my mother who passed away last week Friday. I went up to do the funeral. It is a difficult time that I am going through, especially last week. But it is wonderful to see the hope of the gospel, the power of the resurrection and what that brings to a person when you know that when God looks at a person who is dying, and when He sees someone who has lost his life in this world, that He says and He shows, in Christ, that He has power over their death and He can bring forth the resurrection. That is what the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ is all about.

When I was at the funeral, I saw people that I met years ago and some of the people that we did not have good relationship with. I saw how they heard the gospel of grace in their church and where they had been watching my messages on television and it just brought a complete change in their life....and what it has done in my life and my family's life.

So, I just want to say that I am so grateful for the gospel! The gospel is not just a theory but it is the power of God unto a brand new life which He has promised to all of us. The beauty is that when it is a promise, all you can do is believe and rest. It's up to the One who made the promise to bring it forth. It's beautiful to see that God, through the love that is being shed abroad in our hearts, the emotion, the compassion and the love that He has shown forth and brought forth in our hearts, that it is already the first fruit, the first fulfillment of the promises that He has made of eternal life. Isn't that absolutely beautiful! We have a faithful Father that loves us and cares for us!

COMMUNION: As our custom is we have Communion every service before we get into the message. The reason why we take Communion is because of the knowledge and the experience of family inside Christianity. It's all about a family. It started with a heavenly family, a Father, Son and Holy Spirit who come and brought forth and reveal who He really was, in a person, Jesus Christ, and then family terms were used all the time. .

As we are partaking of the body and the blood of Jesus, we are doing it as a church family even if we are not gathering in the same place, we are gathering around the same truth at the same time in this live webcast. As we go into the Communion, we are just going to enjoy this knowing that we are a family.

Galatians 4:

1 Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differs nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all;

2 But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

So what he says is although you are a child, you differ nothing from a servant when you are under tutors and governors. Then Paul comes in Galatians and what he is actually saying is that we were still under the elements of this world, the power of the flesh, the power of sin and death, as long as when we were under the tutor, called the law. So as long as you are under the law, you cannot experience the power of God unto sonship. You might be a child, you might be the one God calls to the heir which is He has planned and dreamt for you to be the heir but you cannot experience the life that He has dreamt for you while you are under the law, while you are under tutors and governors. That is why He has come. The reason for that is because the law cannot set you free from sin and death. God has dreamt a life for you where you can experience what He has promised you by His ability to fulfill His promise in those who believe.

He says that He has given His Son. He has given the body. He has given the blood to redeem them or buy people back, to the place where they are not under the law. Where their expectation of blessedness is not by obedience to commandments and rules and regulations or by observing the flesh and observing things like ethnicity, but where they can observe the resurrected Jesus Christ and His fullness as the truth about them. From there you experience the power of God.

In this time when we were at the funeral and I also preached at the funeral, the only thing that I did in that very difficult day and in this time, is I only behold Jesus. The resurrected Jesus is the truth about me. It's the truth about my wife. It's the truth about my sisters. It's the truth about my dad. He is the truth about people! What the Father accomplished in the resurrected Jesus, through His death and the resurrection is the only truth from where we can have our life formed and shaped. As I behold that truth, that is finding its power inside me. Glory to God! That is good news! I have firsthand experience of the power of the blood and the body of Jesus Christ... and also of the peace that what He has promised, He is fulfilling. We can experience the first fruit now and how it will, in the end, even bring forth the resurrection of the dead, bringing forth a new form of physicality which can actually house the life that He has granted to us. Amen

As a web family, we take the bread and you break it, you are breaking it thinking of the old body of separation, the body of sin, the body of death and how that was broken and how it died and how it was destroyed and how we can now say that we are now part of the new body and we can feast on the revelation of the ending of the old. Glory to God!

As we drink the cup, we are talking about the end of the old and the new covenant, the new testament, that we are in where this will and testament is being read and that is that we are heirs of the very life of God. Amen

Father, I want to thank You for the body of Jesus, the death and the resurrection of Christ and our inclusion into that and that we can be blessed by partaking and feasting and calling that our life. Amen.

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Glory to God! God is only good and He smiles over our life. He loves us. He cares for us and He has taken the responsibility to bring forth His life in us on His shoulders. He brings it forth by the Holy Spirit in our lives wherein He is convincing us of His faithfulness to the original plan to share His life with us.

To those of you who watch our web church regularly, you will know that God's plan, the reason why He made you, was to share His life with you. That you can actually feel what it feels like to be like Him or to actually just share in His life. This is what it is all about. If we have that point as the point of departure then we can easily fit the Good News and what is said in the gospel, into that frame. We will see that this message is designed and is born out of a love relationship with us where God's dream was to have people in His image to be His likeness, the very image of God in the earth, where the fullness of God dwells bodily where we can feel His emotions and actually have that that live inside us. Where there would be other people where we can actually express what is inside us. Where we can see the effect of love on others and on this universe. That is what this whole message is all about. It's about a good God that loves us, that cares for us, that is for us.

We are in a series where I have been talking about the fulfillment of the law. We will now continue with that but I want to look at the effect of not accepting the Good News on a person's heart. We will read that from **Romans 9**. Paul wrote that God hardened the heart of Pharaoh. Where it is said that God just hated Esau and all of those things. We are going to look at what is being said there. We are going to look at the dangers of not seeking for mercy. It might sound negative but I want you to hear what I am saying. We are going to look at the dangers of not seeking for mercy. If we are not looking for mercy on every page of the Bible, if we are not looking for mercy in our relationship with God, mercy being, God bowing down and honoring us as His equal where He loves us and cares for us and has respect for us. He has deeds of compassion flowing from the innermost being, the core of God, towards us, blessing us with life eternally free from our works. If we are not looking for that, seeking for that, it will be that our hearts will be hardened towards God and we would see the wrath of God, or what is called the effect of not having mercy in our lives.

There are so many concepts in Christianity that we need to understand. Just in the first three or four minutes of this message, you can pause this and say, "God, Bertie mentioned some concepts here. Speak to me." Hear what God says to you about these different concepts. There is so much truth in the resurrected Jesus and who He is and who God portrayed Himself to be in Christ, that we cannot dare to take any scripture and contradict the truth about who the Father is revealed in Jesus. That means that it doesn't help if we take any passage in the Bible and we want to contradict the life of Christ with it. It is possible but it is impossible to have a quality life and find scriptures and contradict the life of Jesus Christ with it.

I am going to read from Romans 3 and pick it up on what I spoke about two weeks ago. Then we will go to Galatians and then Romans 9.

Romans 3 :31 *Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yes, we establish the law.*

It says that the law talked about living by faith. That is what the law says. If you read the law correctly, then you will come to the conclusion that you will simply have to believe that God will bring forth life in you by His ability and that He will bring forth the fruit of the Spirit in you. Then He will bring forth the resurrection life of immortality inside you, your children, the love ones around you. It will have to be something that you believe in your heart. That is what the law actually says.

If you read the Old Testament correctly, you will see that it's not about a Jewish nation. It is not about some form of an ethnic group. It's not about a physical temple. It's not about the Ten Commandments. It's not about any of those things that we should do. It's not about groups of people like Jews and Gentiles. It doesn't talk about that. The Old Testament law, correctly interpreted, even before Jesus came. And if you could take the Old Law and have no veil in front of you and read it for what God's original intent was in that passage, you will have to come to the bottom line conclusion that it is not about a people group but it's about God loving humanity. It's about Him doing everything to save humanity, to save people, to love upon them, to give them a brand new life, to manifest His life in them and share His life with them and to have a place where He can dwell and live with people, where we are the temple of God. Well, that is how Jesus read the Old.

When Jesus read the Old, He said, "Break down this temple and in three days I will rebuild it." When Jesus read the Old, before the cross, before His death, He declared that the correct interpretation of Scripture is that the physical temple spoke about His body. The lamb that was slain spoke about Him. That is what John declared. So if you read the Old and you read it in any form or fashion about Judaism or about any of those things, you are missing out. You are not seeing it for what it is truly says.

So the passage in Romans says that ***Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid:*** we actually bring forth and manifest that which the law was all about. Amen. That brings peace to my heart. Let me tell you why. It means that God didn't change anything. It was always His plan! It wasn't as if God in the Old Testament was a law driven God and now in the New He is a love driven God. It is a God who had a love story from the beginning and He was reaching out to blind people. He was trying to show blind people and to unveil their minds to show them who He truly is.

When I was at my mom's funeral, I could say to the people there that it wasn't God who came and took my mum's life. It wasn't God who was punishing my father because he missed two Sunday services or something like that. It wasn't God taking her life. What happened was the good God, the good God from the beginning, the God who promised His life from the Fall of Adam and Eve, who even before the Fall made His life available as the only life! And when the fall came we saw how, what He promised from the beginning which was, 'My life is available for you.' we can see how and it doesn't matter what the circumstances, He always sticks to His original love for man. He now makes His life available, maybe in a different form or however it's needed, in the situation where man is. In this case the case of man sinning, He came to the cross, died and was raised again. So the life where He said, "Eat of the tree of life" was shown. That was the only way. It was like that before the world came to a fall, before the world system was introduced to Adam and Eve in our relationship with God and now even after man came and that same God shows forth His love to humanity in Jesus. That truth is now just manifested in this form.

It's like me saying to my son, "I love you!" and then I make a meal and put it on the table and say, "Come and sit and eat with me, my son." When he's on the way, maybe from the shop, he may be in an accident. Then that love that I have in preparing the meal for him is now revealed in what he needs today. That is, if he was in an accident, I would race there or do whatever I want, spend whatever money I have, pray, get him to be well again. So the love that I have for him in a healthy relationship is shown in sharing in a meal. When he is away from home it might be shown in telephone calls. When he is in a motor accident it may be shown in me rushing towards that.

So in the very same way, God, the Father, from before time, said, "I am good to you. I love you and My life is the only life where you can have and share in My quality of life." When Adam sinned, He showed that forth again. Now I could say that God, in His love, comes and grants life to man. Man lives on this earth and while he is on this earth, He comes and He says from the beginning, "Your life is secure in My hands. Let Me take care of your life."

When my mom or anybody passes away, when their body cannot contain that life anymore, then that life is now in the very hands of God and God will then prepare a body through the resurrection of Jesus Christ so what He had promised from the beginning can then manifest. So, if someone passes away and you believe in the Lord, your life is safe in the hands of God because your life is not in your own hands. You're not saying, "I'm taking responsibility to preserve my life. I'm not taking the responsibility to see that my life will exist forever and be forever." No, you are saying, "God, I cannot preserve my life. By my own ability I cannot even reach 120 or 130 years on this earth. I cannot preserve this life but I see that You have conquered my sin and You have conquered my death and my life is in Your hands."

That's exactly what Jesus did when He died. He said, "Father, into Your hands I give my spirit." and the very life that was animated in that human body was then in the hands of God. What did God do? God went and He recreated or raised that body up to be an even better body, a body that can house the very life that God granted to Jesus! Then Jesus came forth immortal in a human body. That is the same God, the God of Jesus, the Father of Jesus, when He was born from Mary and had a corruptible body, that same God is the God of Jesus in His resurrected body. He's the same God from the beginning and that is why it says that through faith we actually establish the law that God had in mind from the beginning and that law is: "You trust Me and I give you life!" Amen!

Galatians 4 says that as long as we are under the law, (Now it sounds like it contradicts here but now he is talking about the way the Jews were looking at the law.) He says that if you want to have life by your obedience to the law, your life cannot be called the life of God. It is the life of your ability. It is your ability animated by looking at rules and regulations. You are actually seeing, in manifestation, the works of yourself. That is what it is and now God comes and says, "I want you to get out from under that thing where you try to manifest life and bring forth life and I will be your life." He says that He came to redeem them who were under the law so that they might receive the adoption of sons. In other words, He said, "I want to take you out from under the law where the life you live is the son of your ability. When you live under the law, the life that comes forth is you cannot say that God is the Father of that life. You have to conclude that your own ability is the father of that life. That's what you have to say. Then you are actually looking at yourself, your own ability. You are not looking at God living in you. You are looking at the end of your intelligence. You are looking at the end of your willpower. You are looking at the end of what you can bring forth and since you are not eternal or immortal in your own power, you can only bring forth that which is temporal which will pass away, which will die away. Amen! Glory to God!

We need to understand that and see that. That is why He says that He wanted to redeem man from being under tutors and governors but actually bring them to what He dreamt from the beginning or to bring what the law talks about, which is Jesus, His death and resurrection where we can just rest in Him. He wants to bring that into manifestation so that we can now be at the point where we say, “The thoughts I have, the compassion I have, the love I have, the good that is in me as well as the eternal life I am now possessing since I believe upon the Lord, is all on account of God bringing it forth where we are now adopted into sonship where God is the Father of the good that is in us.

I've said it many times that sometimes we think that the end goal of the Christian life is simply doing good but that is not the end goal. If doing good is the end goal we can go to many different religions and we can find people that do good. The idea is not for you to do good. The idea is for God to bring forth good in you where He is the Father of the good. Since He is the only eternal, immortal, loving God, the fruit that is in you will be eternal, immortal, born in love from God. Amen! This is what this whole Christian life is all about.

Romans 9

The key verse that I want to get into is verse **16: *So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.*** With that in mind, we will read from verse 1.

1 I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost,

2 That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart.

3 For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

What he is actually saying there is that his heart is heavy for the Jewish people. He is going through a difficult time because he is looking at his people and they are not wanting to believe it. I felt this many times when I think of the time I was in school, the time I was in the universities, especially the time in the primary schools with my friends there. If I think of what the Lord has revealed to me and how this gospel has changed my life and I go and look at those friends and I see how, now I am seeing much more but if I look at five years ago, I would look at all of them and I would say, “These are my people. They are people I grew up with. They are the, people that I love and I find that they are not grabbing a hold of the message of grace and I see the destruction and I see the pain in their lives. I see the emptiness that is manifested in them and not just from a judgmental perspective but you can just see what is happening. It is a manifestation thing and you want to remove that pain from them. This is what he is actually saying in verse 3: .I wish that I could be cursed and they be blessed.” It's actually talking about Christ's redemptive work where He became accursed so that others could be blessed. So what he is saying is, “I want to do anything to get them out of this.”

4 Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption It doesn't talk about the adoption that we have as Christians. This adoption simply means where they were adopted as a group of people to show forth the love of God and what God would accomplish in Jesus Christ. That happened when God said to Pharaoh, we could see that they are far from Abraham. It was especially manifested when He spoke to Pharaoh and said, “Let My people go!” where these were adopted as the people of God. That adoption does not talk about the adoption we are talking about in the New Testament. We need to understand that.

Lets continue with verse 4: “... *to whom pertaineth the adoption* of (I've explained that), *and the glory* (the glory talks about God appearing on the mountain and having a conversation with Moses and the people), *and the covenants* (The old covenants from Abraham and Mosaic, etc. We look at all those covenants that they had was towards those people), *and the giving of the law* (The Ten Commandments), *and the service of God, and the promises* To these people were the promises that were made to everybody. They would be the carriers of these promises so that the world could see the love of God. It talks about these Jewish people.

5 *Who are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed for ever. Amen.*

6 *Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:*

Now Paul comes and he says, “Listen, the fact that you are a Jew or the fact that you are a physical Israel doesn't mean that you are called the Israel of God.”

7 *Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: but, In Isaac shall thy seed be called.* Now he is coming and bringing something very powerful here. He comes and says, “Listen, the whole thing about a physical Israel, the Jewish physical Jewish nation and all those kind of things is not what it is all about because if we look at physical Israel, we have to come to the point where we say that God has failed. But then he says, “But, bless God, not all that are of Israel are Israelites. And he comes and he brings something brand new to the Jewish mind which by then would be called blasphemy. It would be called a contradiction of all scripture. But what he is saying is, “What makes you an Israelite, what makes you a child of God, is not your ethnicity neither your obedience of the law but something completely different. He said, “Trying to think that you have to live by the law is a cursed life and I wish that I could basically do what Christ has done and become a curse for my own people so that they can be free. But since Christ has already done that, I am just going to preach the gospel..” That is what Paul basically says.

Romans 9:8

That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

What he says here is that the physical Jewish people are not counted as the children of God. I can immediately hear some people clicking this off as an antisemitic message. This is not antisemitic. This is a message that can bring forth the power of God, the fruit of the Spirit, inside you. I want to say this: If you, right now, say, “Let me switch this off,” it's already speaking of the first fruit of the hardening of the heart that Pharaoh had. Now I want you to hear me out. Hear what I am saying. The reason I teach this is because we have had this idea that God just came and hardened Pharaoh's heart just because He is God Almighty. That's not the truth.

We are going to look at how the hardening of the heart happened. We are going to look at how God hardened Pharaoh's heart.. what happened there.

So, here he comes and says, “I want to say to you that the Jewish people were given the law, given everything that God wanted to say to the people but they couldn't attain to this law.” If you just look at the legalistic way of looking at the law, you will find that they have failed. God has not failed in giving this to these people because the Israel that God had in mind is not a physical nation but it is people who believe and trust in Him who can actually say, “It's not by my works but by God who promised.! Amen

Listen to this:

6 Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For they are not all Israel, which are of Israel:

7 Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children: What is Paul saying is it means that you can not call yourself a child of God, or son of God, because you have Abraham as your father! That is what John said. John said, "God, from these stones can bring forth children unto Abraham." You think that you boast in being children of Abraham, and that just means nothing. You just find that confirmation right here.

8 That is, They which are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God: but the children of the promise are counted for the seed.

9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls;)

Do you see what he is saying here? He is saying that sonship is not found in obedience to commandments but what the law is actually saying is that God is promising blessing. We can find that God made a promise to Abraham and then Isaac was born and in Isaac we find that these people were blessed but it was not in the physicality of it but it was in the fact that God made a promise and kept His promise. That is what it is all about and this is what Paul is driving at. Paul is driving at the resurrection. He is driving at the promise that we have in the fact that Jesus conquered sin and death. He is actually saying that the children of God are those people who are born out of the promise. That means that the children of God are those who believe the promise and had faith in God who would fulfill the promise. These are the children of God. Now what I mean by that is these people's lives are born from God.

So, as long as you are legalistic, as long as you are under the law, as long as you are seeking justification by works, as long as you seek peace and comfort and a stable future by obedience to principles and commands and all those kind of things, I want to tell you that you cannot make the claim that the good fruit coming forth in your life and the good you do by obeying those commands has its origin of God. That is what it is saying. It must be by promise. That means that whatever you need in life, be it a healthy marriage, be it a good relationship with your children, you have to take it from the perspective of the promise that is revealed as to you fulfilled in the resurrected Jesus, manifested by the Holy Spirit in you... or you will have nothing!

Let me make it very practical. We are not going to have Sunday Services basically for the rest of this year. The reason for that is my son and I are going on a trip to Zambia where I am going to visit eight churches. My son is finishing school and it is basically his "last year" in the house. Next year he is going to Brazil for about nine months if everything works out well. He will come back and start his own business. He might be going to America, we don't know. We will see but this is the last time I am having him in the house. We are going to take our motor bikes and I am going to spend some quality time with my son. It will be a 4-5 day drive. We will preach there for five days and then we will have another 4-5 day drive back.

If I must come and think that by doing this I am ensuring that I will have a good relationship with my son, I am under the law. I'm trying to follow a principle and by this principle, and my ability to do this principle, I am thinking that I am going to bring forth the good relationship with my son. That is not true.

I have found so many people going on vacation with the family but they fight through the whole vacation. There's no blessing on it. It is the works of man. There are expectations. People don't meet the expectations and then the other one is upset, etc. Then the whole vacation was a mess, the trip was a mess... nothing works.

What I am doing, practically, in my relationship with my son, I am saying and I am declaring God to be the Father of my relationship with my son. I'm declaring that God is the Father of his life. There can be areas in many people's relationships where it is not like that. In all relationships, in some form of percentage, one percent or whatever, there is some legalism and law in that which is a works' driven thing where God will work the thing. So in all of our relationships there are certain things that we want to work principles but as we realize this truth and we start to find the promise of union in family. We start to find the promise, or the confident expectation, of what can come forth in our union with God in the unity there is between God the Father and Jesus Christ. We cannot come to the bottom line conclusion that those who rest upon the Lord and rest in this Good News, God brings forth that life that is supposed to be there. So, as I go on this trip, I don't go on this trip to think that this trip will get my son ready for the "big world" out there. It's not going to work like that. The only thing that can prepare us for a life in the "big world", if you want to call it that, is resting in God knowing that He has promised you the fruit of the Spirit, life in abundance, in your heart. That is all.

As I take this practically, I cannot go and say, "I'm now under tutors and governors. This is how you deal with your son. In the case that my mom passed away, this is how you deal with your sisters, how you deal with your father and all those things. I'm not even going to go there. I'm just going to go and say, "Well, what God has promised me is peace! However this peace works out, I don't know, but that is what He has promised and that's how it works out. Financially, that's how I think about things. That's how I think about my relationship with my wife. I can stand and say that God has worked things out. This is what he is saying here. The son is the one who is of promise. In other words, those whose lives are born out of what God has promised, they are counted to be sons. Anything other than that is not son. That doesn't mean that you don't belong to God. It doesn't mean you are not a child of God. It just means the life that comes forth in you, the Father is not the Father of that but you are or the situation you are in.

9 For this is the word of promise, At this time will I come, and Sarah shall have a son.

10 And not only this; but when Rebecca also had conceived by one, even by our father Isaac;

11 (For the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works, but of him that calls;)

What he says here is that while the twins were in the womb, God already chose Jacob above Esau. Some may say that is so unfair. You can go and look how beautifully God also dealt with Esau. It was not as if God hated him as a person. We just see how Paul is trying to communicate here and the purpose of that whole thing and why it was written like that. The correct interpretation of that passage, where it says that God hated Esau and loved Jacob, is simply this: Where does it come from? It comes from the womb. What does that mean? It means it is nothing he has done. It wasn't even about who he is. It's simply to show us that blessing is not by our works. It's not the first born and the law but what it is all about is it is simply about God choosing. So we can come to a place where we see how God has chosen to bless us and we can believe and embrace that. That's what it is all about.

Now imagine Esau if he sees that God has chosen Jacob and he is the first born. The law says that I am the first born. The law says this. The law says that. That is the custom. That is the condition. Don't you think that the mercy of God towards Jacob if he would not be seeking for that mercy, cause bitterness in his heart? It would! But he was seeking for mercy. He was saying, "I'm looking for God to be merciful. I'm believing in a merciful God and where is the mercy of God? I want to see the mercy of God!" When that happens he would have celebrated and he would have said, "Hallelujah! Glory to God! Look at the mercy of God! That mercy that is there is what I can believe on for myself for my identity is not in what I inherit on this earth."

12 It was said unto her, The elder shall serve the younger.

13 As it is written, Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated. What it is actually saying when He says, "The one I've loved and the other one I've hated," that's why it says, "As it is written," meaning it is just saying that one will serve the other one. That's what it means.

14 What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? God forbid.

15 For he said to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion.

16 So then it is not of him that wills, nor of him that runs, but of God that shows mercy.

17 For the scripture says unto Pharaoh, Even for this same purpose have I raised thee up, that I might show my power in you, and that my name might be declared throughout all the earth.

18 Therefore has he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he harden

19 You will say then unto me, Why does he yet find fault? For who has resisted his will?

20 No but, O man, who art you that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus?

21 Has not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel of honour, and another unto dishonour?

22 What if God, willing to show his wrath, and to make his power known, endure with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction:

23 And that he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had afore prepared unto glory,

31 But Israel, which followed after the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness.

32 Wherefore? Because they had sought it not by faith, but as it were by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumblingstone;

33 As it is written, Behold, I lay in Sion a stumblingstone and rock of offence: and whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.

Do you see how the hardening works? I hope you could hear it as I read those verses. This is how the hardening works: God laid a stumbling stone. What is the stumbling stone? The stumbling stone is defined as a stone by where you would stumble should you reason from the law because what people that are under the law stumble over is mercy. So God has come and this is actually a very complicated way of saying that God has raised up Pharaoh for the purpose of blessing Israel.

Remember when Joseph came and he came to the Pharaoh and that Pharaoh blessed Joseph. Then there came a Pharaoh that didn't know God and didn't know Joseph. What happened was that Pharaoh, not mindful of Joseph, became an oppressor. The purpose of that Pharaoh which was to bless the people of God, didn't show anymore and he was not looking at how to be merciful to the people of God. He was not a shower of mercy anymore.

Then God came and He said, "I'm still a God of mercy! So let My people go!" Then he saw how these people would have a promised land, how these people would be dealt with mercifully where they didn't qualify by the law of the country. What happened was he stumbled over the stumbling stone. Since he wasn't looking for mercy, on where God would be merciful to people, and then saw the mercy if he was not looking for it, it hardened him. That is why we can say, indirectly, it was actually God that hardened him.

It would be like if I say to my kids. "Listen, I want to say to you that I am a merciful dad. If you are seeking me, seek for places of mercy. Look for mercy! That's what you look for because if you are not looking for mercy and you are looking for the law, who I am will harden you. It will cause you to say, "That's not right! This is not the way it is supposed to be." That is what it will be and that is how the hardening took place in Pharaoh. Why? In the same way as the hardening took place in the heart of Israel. Why did they become hardened towards God? They are hardened because they are reading the law not to find mercy in the law but to find acts of obedience instead of God's acts of mercy.

If you are looking for anything in the bible but God being merciful, justifying the ungodly free from their works... if you are looking for anything else than that, you will see the goodness of God and it will offend you! It will harden you not because God decides that He wants to harden you. It's by God deciding, "I don't care who believes it or not, but I will be merciful to whom I will be merciful. Blessed is he that is not offended because of Me!"

Remember that Jesus said those words to the messengers of John. He said, "Go tell John that the blind see, the deaf hear, the kingdom of God is now manifesting in the earth and blessed is he who is not offended because of Me!" What He was actually saying to him was, "John, if you are seeking for mercy, if you are seeking for mercy to flood the earth, this will bless you. But if you are seeking for justice where the Gentiles must become the slaves of the Jews, and so forth, what they thought justice would be, the end of the Roman empire and those kind of things, then you will be offended. Why? Because Jesus will be merciful to the very Gentile that you want to die. That will cause your heart to be hardened!

So it is not a God who decides to harden. It is a God that loves. It is God that says, "I will be merciful to whomsoever I want to be merciful. So I want to end this off by saying the correct fulfillment of the law, if you read the law correctly, you will seek for mercy. If you read the story about Sodom and Gomorrah, seek for the mercy in the message, the deeds of compassion that God had towards people. If you read about the flood, seek for mercy. Whatever verse you read, seek for the mercy of God and let the depth of your heart want the mercy of God. Imagine the older brother, if he was seeking for mercy, not mercy towards himself but seeking for the mercy of his father in whatever form it manifests.

If he would have heard the noise of the party and they said, "Your brother has come back and your father has slaughtered the fatted calf!" he would have said, "Hallelujah! I am seeing what I have been seeking for!" Those to whom God is merciful and those who seek the mercy and can behold the mercy and love on the mercy, the love that comes forth from wanting to see mercy and seeing it is called a life that is born from God. Amen!

This whole bible and everything it says, everything about the death and resurrection is all about God being gracious, influential, God being merciful, stooping down lifting us up, seeing us as His own, honoring us as His own, cleaning us up and giving us His kingdom as an inheritance. Amen!

So God didn't come and physically decide, "Well, I harden this one." No, it's a process where it works and Paul explained that. If you are a mercy person blessed are the peacemakers because they will receive mercy. Blessed are the merciful... why? because they are looking for mercy. They are already a channel of mercy. They will see God! Amen! I hope you see what I am saying. Cursed are the legalists, those who are born from legalism. It's not because God curses them but because God moves on channel of mercy. Whenever they see the mercy, because they are seeking the "justice" of the law (I'm talking about the wrong interpretation of the law, the dos and don't justification) they will hate it when they see the mercy of God because the law is not of faith. If we look at the wrong interpretation of the law, or the "Jewish" interpretation of the law, it is not of faith. It is of works! But those who live by faith that God is a merciful God and will show mercy, their lives shall be shaped by God. Amen

Thank you so much for watching. It was a blessing for me to deliver this message to you and I hope that it has really blessed you.

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