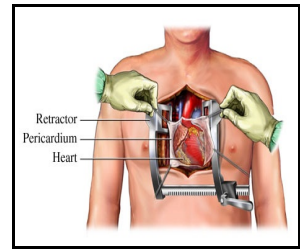




# THE MOST SERIOUS HEART PROBLEM KNOWN TO MAN

A sermon from Hebrews 3:7-8



By Gene Keith

May 2009

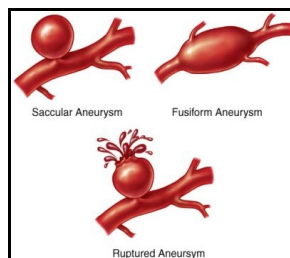
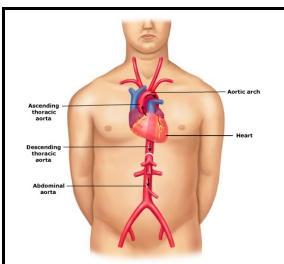
I've never seen so many people with heart problems in all of my life. People are having stints put in their hearts; some are having triple and quadruple by-passes, and some are even having heart transplants. Can you believe that? A few years ago, if a person had a problem with their heart, they died. That was it. But not today.

I'm curious. How many of you in this congregation today have either had a heart problem or know someone who has (show hands)?

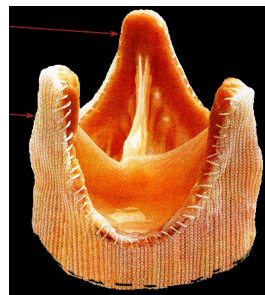
I have three stints in my heart. My son-in-law Robbie has a stint in his heart. Ralph Eng recently had a triple by-pass. Wanda Willis had surgery on her aorta two weeks ago.

Speaking of aorta's, I've heard more about aortas this year (2009) than I've heard in my life.

I became so interested in "aortas" and aneurisms that I looked them up on Google to see what they looked like. Would you like to see an aorta? The pictures below show the aorta and three different kinds of aneurysms. The picture above shows a Fusiform Aneurysm, a Saccular Aneurysm, and a Ruptured Aneurysm.



## Valve From Pig's Heart



Do you know what this is? This is a valve from the heart of a pig. And, believe it or not, doctors have even replaced the valve in a human heart with a valve from a pig's heart. One man had a pig's valve in his heart and he was on his feet and

back to work in no time at all. The only problem, he said, was every time he drove Sonny's or Fat Boy's Bar-B-Q he had a panic attack. He also said, every time he drove by mud, he had a strange desire to get out and roll in it.

## THE MOST SERIOUS HEART PROBLEM

Seriously! Heart problems are serious problems. But this morning, I want to tell you about a heart problem and very serious. This heart problem will not only kill a person, this heart problem will send a person to hell.

Believe it or not, Christians (people who are actually saved) can get this problem and if they do, it will keep them from ever receiving God's best for their lives.

## Hardening of the Heart

The problem I'm talking about is called "Hardening of the heart." Please notice that I did not say, hardening of the arteries. I said, hardening of the heart.

Hardening of your arteries is involuntary. You have no control over it. Hardening of the heart

is voluntary. You do it. And God's warning from out text today says: "When you hear God's voice, don't harden your heart." Hardening your heart is a serious problem. You will die from it if you don't get help.

### **THE WARNING FROM HEBREWS 3:7-14**

7 That is why the Holy Spirit says, "Today you must listen to his voice.

8 Don't harden your hearts against him as Israel did when they rebelled, when they tested God's patience in the wilderness.

9 There your ancestors tried my patience, even though they saw my miracles for forty years.

10 So I was angry with them, and I said, 'Their hearts always turn away from me. They refuse to do what I tell them.'

11 So in my anger I made a vow: 'They will never enter my place of rest.'

12 Be careful then, dear brothers and sisters. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God.

13 You must warn each other every day, as long as it is called "today," so that none of you will be deceived by sin and hardened against God.

14 For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ.

### **THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF HEARTS**

Before I explain the most serious heart problem known to man, let's take a few minutes to be sure you understand what I'm talking about when I speak of "heart problems."

This may sound strange to you but each of us actually two hearts. We have a physical heart and we have a spiritual heart.

#### **1. We each have a physical heart**

There are references in the Bible to the valentine shaped organ we've been talking about so far. For example: Jesus warned that things will be so bad in the Last Days that men will

have heart attacks when they watch the news and see what's happening around the world.

#### **(Luke 21:25-26)**

25 And there shall be signs in the sun, and in the moon, and in the stars; and upon the earth distress of nations, with perplexity; the sea and the waves roaring; 26 Men's hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth: for the powers of heaven shall be shaken."

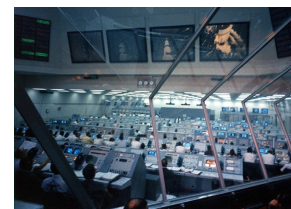
#### **2. We also have a spiritual heart.**

But there are also references to the "heart" that do not apply to the physical organ we've been talking about so far. The heart problem I am speaking about today is a problem with our spiritual heart, which is the control center of our lives.

### **OUR HEARTS ARE LIKE MISSION CONTROL**



Let me illustrate this point. America has a space program and there are satellites, space stations, and space-craft orbiting the earth all the time. At this very moment (May 24, 2009) the space ship Atlantis is trying to return to earth and land, but the weather has been to bad and they are circling the earth. What are they waiting for?



What are they waiting for? They are waiting on instructions from Mission Control. There is a control center on earth that controls the entire space program for the United States. This control center is like the control center in every person's life.

In the same way, there is also, within each of us, a control center that controls every aspect of our lives. Jesus uses the word "heart" to describe the part of us that is the center of our

very being and our emotions. When we speak of "inviting Jesus into our hearts" we are not talking about Jesus getting into the physical organ shaped like a valentine. We are talking about inviting Jesus to sit in the "control center" center of our lives.

## REFERENCES TO THE HEART AS THE CONTROL CENTER OF OUR LIVES

### 1. Holy Heart Burn (Luke 24:31-32)

Another reference to our hearts is found in Luke 24 when, following His resurrection, Jesus appeared to the couple walking on the road to Emmaus. When Jesus had finished talking with them and had left them, they remarked:

31 And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. 32 And they said one to another, Did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures?

### 2. The First Commandment refers to our hearts (Matthew 12:34-40)

34 But when the Pharisees had heard that he had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. 35 Then one of them, which was a lawyer, asked him a question, tempting him, and saying, 36 Master, which is the great commandment in the law? 37 Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. 38 This is the first and great commandment. 39 And the second is like unto it, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

### 3. The heart is the source of all of our sin (Matthew 7:17-23)

17 Then Jesus went into a house to get away from the crowds, and his disciples asked him what he meant by the statement he had made. 18 "Don't you understand either?" he asked. "Can't you see that what you eat won't defile you? 19 Food doesn't come in contact with your heart, but only passes through the stomach and

then comes out again." (By saying this, he showed that every kind of food is acceptable.) 20 And then he added, "It is the thought-life that defiles you. 21 For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, 22 adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, eagerness for lustful pleasure, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. 23 All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you and make you unacceptable to God."

### 4. You can sin in your hearts (Matthew 5:27-29)

27 "You have heard that the law of Moses says, 'Do not commit adultery.' 28 But I say, anyone who even looks at a woman with lust in his eye has already committed adultery with her in his heart. 29 So if your eye – even if it is your good eye causes you to lust, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell."

## NOW LET'S LOOK AT THE MOST SERIOUS HEART PROBLEM KNOWN TO MAN

### 1. The Israelites were slaves in Egypt.



God sent Moses down to Egypt to lead the Children of Israel to the promised land just as Jesus came down to earth to save you and free you from slavery to the Devil.

### 2. The Israelites crossed the Red Sea.



Notice something important here. They didn't cross the Red Sea and enter the Promised Land. They crossed the



Red Sea and entered the Wilderness. It is true that when they crossed the Red Sea they were released from slavery. But they had a long way to go to reach the Promised Land and very few of them ever made it.



When Moses told Pharaoh that God had sent him (Moses) to tell him (Pharaoh) to let the people go, Pharaoh “bowed up” and said, “Who is god that I should obey him?” I will not let Israel go. Pharaoh actually made it harder on them. The Bible says that Pharaoh hardened his

heart. In fact, the Bible says he did it several times.

But then something else happened. The Bible says that God hardened Pharaoh’s heart. When that happened, Pharaoh couldn’t have been saved had he wanted to. He had crossed the line.

God knew he was going to do that so God decided to make an example out of him. Read the story and list all of the bad things that happened to Pharaoh, his family, and his kingdom. His judgment began when God killed his oldest son on the night of the Passover.

**DON'T GET SMART WITH GOD!**

**2. Consequences on the people for hardening their hearts**

Read the 14<sup>th</sup> chapter of Numbers when you have time. I’ve printed it out at the end of the (free) written copy of this message.

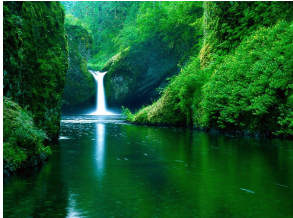
When the time came for them to enter the promised land, so they sent twelve men in to look things over. When the twelve men came back they scared people so bad with their report, the people lost their nerve and voted to elect a new pastor who would lead them back to Egypt.

Only two of the men (Caleb and Joshua) believed God. All of the others hardened their hearts and the people followed their example.

**a. Instant Death**

The first thing God did was to kill the ten who had scared the people into losing faith and turning away from God. God killed them on the spot.

**3. God promised them a land flowing with milk and honey.**



The promised land was literal. They could have walked from Egypt to Canaan in eleven (11) days. It took them forty years and eleven months.

Why did an 11 day journey take 40 years? Because of the sin I am talking about this morning.

**HOW DID THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HARDEN THEIR HEARTS?**

**They hardened their hearts** by refusing to follow Moses.

**They hardened their hearts by** griping and complaining about everything.

**They hardened their hearts** when God told them not to do something - they did it anyway.

**They hardened their hearts** when God told them to do something - they pouted and refused to do it.

God said they “provoked Him.” They made God mad. They “ticked God off.” He said they hardened their hearts.

**WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES OF HARDENING YOUR HEART?**

**1. Pharaoh is an example**

Pharaoh is a good example of what God does to a lost person who hardens his/her heart.

### **b. The Deal is Off**

The second thing God did was to swear that He would not allow any adults over age 20 to ever enter the promised land. They would have to wander and die in the wilderness.

### **c. Punished for 40 years**

The third thing God did was to punish them by making them wander in the wilderness for forty years because the team of men had spent 40 days spying out the promised land. They were punished by having to wander a year for every day.

### **d. Moses was punished as well**

God plays no favorites. Moses gave up the riches of Egypt and spent forty years of his life serving God and he didn't get to enter the promised land. Moses sinned and God refused to let him enter. Moses was saved. Moses died and went to heaven, but he missed out on the big plans God had for him on earth. And so will you.

## **THIS IS A WARNING TO THE CHURCH TODAY**

The warning in Hebrews was given to us today. . . not to Israel several thousand years ago. Let's go back to Hebrews 3 and read verses 15-19.

15. But never forget the warning: "Today you must listen to his voice. Don't harden your hearts against him as Israel did when they rebelled."

16 And who were those people who rebelled against God, even though they heard his voice? Weren't they the ones Moses led out of Egypt?

17 And who made God angry for forty years? Wasn't it the people who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

18 And to whom was God speaking when he vowed that they would never enter his place of

rest? He was speaking to those who disobeyed him.

19 So we see that they were not allowed to enter his rest because of their unbelief.

## **HOW DOES A PERSON OR CHURCH HARDEN THEIR HEARTS?**

Churches don't seem to understand the seriousness of not following the man God sends to lead the flock (shepherd). People gripe, complain, drag their feet, hold grudges, gossip, resist change, etc.

1. We harden our hearts when God speaks to us and we refuse to listen.

2. We harden our hearts when God tells us not to do something and we do it anyway.

3. We harden our hearts when God tells us to do something and we refuse to do it.

4. We can harden our hearts by continuing to rebel against God.

5. We can harden our hearts when we continue to doubt God and His Word. Unbelief leads to a hard heart.

6. We can harden our hearts by being deceived into thinking we can sin and get away with it.

7. We can harden our hearts by refusing to face the fact that we are probably not saved if we are not obeying God's Word.

## **LET ME BE VERY SPECIFIC**

### **1. God built the church and gave us our marching orders.**

The Great Commission is found in Matthew 28:19-20. Christians are commanded to go into all the world and make disciples in all nations. This is not a suggestion. It is a command, These are our marching orders.

A church is not supposed to be a country

club. When a church refuses to do that and begins to think of only themselves they become useless.

This church must go out into the highways and hedges and bring people in.

This church must be a city of refuge for hurting people in a troubled world.

There are churches all over America who are dead and wandering in the wilderness. God has left them and they will die in the spiritual wilderness I' ve been talking about.

## **2. God commands Christians to love each other.**

This is not a suggestion, it is a commandment. This is the real proof that are children of God and not just lost church members. When we refuse to love others we are on the verge of hardening our hearts and dying in the wilderness. We should hold no grudges. We should forgive those who hurt us. There must be unity and harmony in the church.

### **Love is Proof of Discipleship (John 13:34-35)**

34 A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. 35 By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

### **Love is Proof of Salvation (1 John 3:14-18)**

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not his brother abideth in death.

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren.

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?

18 My little children, let us not love in word,

neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth.

## **THERE IS ONLY ONE CURE FOR A HARDENED HEART**

### **A Heart Transplant**

There is a cure for A hardened heart. That one and only cure and that it a complete heart transplant and God says He will give you a new heart, and it's free! God promised that new heart in Jeremiah where He said, "A new heart will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you."

God is not talking about a stint. God is not talking about a valve from a pig's heart. God is not talking about a heart from a cadaver (dead person). Jeremiah is talking about a new heart that will transform your life.

Your pastor had a heart transplant back in 1953 and he's not been the same since.

### **INVITATION**

Do you want to spend the rest of your life wandering in a spiritual wilderness? Or would you like to enter the promised life and taste the milk and honey. It's time to get our hearts right with God?

- Are you trying to win others?
- Do you love others?
- Are you holding grudges?
- Are you doing what God had told you to do?

If we don't get our hearts right we will spend our lives wandering in a spiritual wilderness and never taste the fruit of the promised life.

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