

Connection to Romans 11

Paul reminds the Roman believers that a person's hard heartedness can be overcome. God's mercy is extended to all people, including the hard hearted.

Introduction/Opening

In Scripture, we find people who are simply oblivious to God or His truth. Pharaoh dealt with Moses as if they were playing some type of game. He is identified several times as having a hard heart.

Most of us know people who just seem to be indifferent to the gospel. They may attend the same worship service that impacts us greatly, but when we talk to them we wonder if they were even in the same room as we were. Just like some develop immunity to a disease, some seem to be immune from the message of the gospel.

Outline

1. What Causes a Hard Heart (v. 25).

Paul stated that a partial hardening had occurred to Israel. The word used by Paul carries the idea of being incapable of mental discernment or mental dullness. Israel had become insensitive toward the things of God or insensitive to the ways of God. But, how or why?

Israel did not find what they were looking for; therefore through this they became hardened. A hardened heart occurs when we reject the ways of God and go our own way.

Rejection of Jesus Christ and His gospel will result in a hard heart. We may have friends, family members, neighbors, and coworkers that are experiencing a hard heart because they have rejected Jesus. Each time one rejects Christ, the heart will grow more hardened. We also see this in the believer who refuses to walk in obedience to Jesus Christ in a certain area of his or her life.

2. There is Hope for a Hard Heart (v. 25).

Israel's hardness was partial. Not all of Israel was hardened. There was still hope. The Scriptures indicate that this rejection and hardening would change in the future, and they would become sensitive to the leading of God and Jesus as Messiah.

God is capable of breaking through even the hardest of hearts. We must be patient and prayerful, trusting God to do what only God can do.

3. You are Part of God's Plan (v. 25).
Part of God's plan was bringing the Gentiles to Himself. Paul states that the Gentiles were part of God's plan to bring the Israelites to Jesus.

We are part of God's plan in breaking up the hardened hearts of others around us.

4. There is Hope for Every Person in Christ (vv. 26-27).
Even though Israel had a hardened heart, there will be a time when Israelites will receive Jesus Christ and He will deliver them from the penalty of their sins.

As long as a person has breath, there is hope in Christ for their salvation.

Conclusion

I remember praying for a cousin along with our youth group. I didn't think he would ever come to Jesus. Our church conducted one of those old-fashioned revival meetings. One week we met inside then the next week outside. We were in a tent that second week, and that was when I saw my cousin give his life to Jesus Christ. It was a glorious day.

There is hope for every person in Jesus Christ, no matter how hard their hearts may be or how long they have dealt with a hard heart. Jesus can deliver anyone from a hardened heart conditions and we must carry that same belief and hope.

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