

Ex 32:31-32

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32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

KJV

Moses led a stiff necked people whose moral life would descend to the worst forms of depravity during times of unbelief.

This included...

- Drunkenness
- Sexual immorality
- The shedding of innocent blood
- Bowing down to false Gods.

They had witnessed miracles. They saw Moses exercise divine power over the laws of nature. But the smallest inconvenience would cause them to complain and rebel against the leadership of Moses and be willing to go back to Egypt.

There were so many legal problems between the people that Moses had to create an elaborate legal system. The rule of law that God gave to Moses in Exodus 20-23 reveals the immoral practices of the people that had to be controlled by various judgments.

Now in spite of their evil condition and despicable character, Moses loved them!

We see this love in what he offered to God for their salvation.

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This offer is very similar to what Paul said in Romans 9:3.

Rom 9:3

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

KJV

Now this is Valentine's day and I understand the love of a man for his wife who has been the most significant person in his life. You would expect a man to love a woman, who served his every need day and night; who was his greatest fan and support; who was his chief confidant and his most comforting comforter; best friend and only intimate lover. The loss of such a one is unbearable. It would be understandable for a man who had a wife like this to love her so much that he would offer himself to be eternally cursed to save her from divine judgment.

But it makes no sense at all for a man to feel this way about his wife if she is an unrepentant harlot; whose extreme focus on her self keeps her from ever seeing his needs; who betrays her loyalty to him in every way imaginable way even leading his children to rebel against him; who constantly threatens to leave him for a life that he saved her from through his own sacrifice. You would expect such a man to agree with God when God says he intends to kill her.

Instead of agreeing with God when God declares His intention to kill them all, Moses offers himself as a substitute if God will not forgive them.

32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

KJV

Now what we see in Moses is the heart that God has for the lost and that He wants us to have for the lost.

Our heart is changes the moment we receive Jesus. We receive a new heart. But this change does not mean that there is not a further need for growth that makes us more and more like Jesus.

Our spiritual heart is like our physical heart. Our physical heart may be well but its capacity to perform well can be enlarged through the right treatment and exercise.

The same is true for the new heart that we receive from Jesus. It is new but its capacity to love can be enlarged through the right treatment and exercise. The Holy Spirit is always working to enlarge our heart so that we will be more and more like Jesus.

When our heart is mature, we will have a heart for the lost like the heart Moses had for the stiff necked Jews!

How do you get a heart like that? Moses considered the Jews to be his people even in their lost condition. This was also true for Paul.

Not only were they his people but they were in great danger. Moses heard the intentions of God to destroy the stiff necked Jews.

Now the lost are your people and they are in extreme danger. They are in danger of experiencing an eternal curse and suffering that is more severe than any of the plagues of Egypt.

The plagues as they appear in the Bible are...

1. ([exodus 7:14–25](#)) [water turned to blood](#) killing all fish and other water life.
2. ([exodus 8:1–8:15](#)) [frogs](#)
3. ([exodus 8:16–19](#)) [lice or gnats](#)
4. ([exodus 8:20–30](#)) [beasts or flies](#)^[5]

5. ([exodus 9:1–7](#)) [disease on livestock](#)
6. ([exodus 9:8–12](#)) [unhealable boils](#)
7. ([exodus 9:13–35](#)) [hail mixed with fire](#)
8. ([exodus 10:1–20](#)) [locusts](#)
9. ([exodus 10:21–29](#)) [darkness](#)
10. ([exodus 11,12](#)) [death of the first-born of all Egyptian families.](#)

To have a heart like Moses you must change your perspective. You have to have the perspective that the lost are your people and that they are in great danger.

A change of heart is always preceded by a change of perspective.

For example, when I was a young man in college I dated some very nice young ladies. I hoped one day to find one that I would marry and we would be happy. But one day the Lord convicted me that I was defrauding these young ladies who were my sisters. As I would date a young lady, she would begin to have greater expectations for our relationship than what I had. At some point I would tell her that I did not believe that our relationship should be serious or lead to marriage and I would stop dating her. She would be hurt and disappointed as I moved on to the next relationship. After this happened three different times, I saw the Lord's perspective and had a change of heart. I felt badly for them and realized that I was sinning against them and the Lord by defrauding them.

After I prayed about it, my solution to the problem was to avoid any serious dating relationship. Be friends with lots of young ladies and avoid singling one out until I was prepared to make a commitment to marriage. To avoid singling one out meant to avoid physical intimacy which also helped my thought life and avoid emotional intimacy by talking with the same girl or dating the same girl on a regular basis. It basically meant having many good friendships without doing things wrong that developed great expectations. This worked well since I was poor.

My change of heart and my change of strategy came from a change in my perspective.

I have experienced this many, many times since I received Jesus. The Lord convicts me by showing me something from His perspective. This changes my heart and leads to a new strategy.

Now you can reject the Lord's perspective and not have a change of heart. If you have heard the messages the last two Sundays and today's sermon and you have not had a change of heart toward the lost then you have rejected the Lord's perspective. Your mind is arguing with your spirit. Now the strongest arguments are those that are based on scripture. This causes you to war against the Holy Spirit with both your mind and your conscience because you believe you are following God.

It is impossible for a believer to have a change of heart when they are in this condition. If you are in this condition, you must first see how you have been deceived. Because of

pride this is not easy. It is much easier to confess some secret sin than it is to confess you have been deceived in your understanding of scripture. It is extraordinary to confess you have been doing the wrong thing when you have believed you were doing the right thing. Being deceived obviously affects more people than some secret sin. Pride can keep you from even given consideration to the fact that you have been deceived.

Now I do not know all the arguments that rise up in people's minds when I preach this message. But I can tell you there is no legitimate scriptural argument against loving the lost the way Jesus loves them; the way Moses loved them; the way Paul loved them. If you have believed there is, you have been deceived by false teaching. We may disagree over a strategy for reaching them but there is no scriptural argument against loving the lost the way Jesus loves them.

Now I want to close with this. When Moses came down from the mountain after receiving the law and discovered that the people had sinned while he was away, he appointed the Levites to go throughout the camp and kill anyone who was not repentant. Three thousand were slain that day.

Pentecost was the name of the Jewish feast that commemorated when Moses received the law and came down from the mountain. It was on the day of Pentecost that the Holy Spirit was poured out in Jerusalem. After Peter preached, three thousand Jews were saved.

Now only three thousand repented on the day of Pentecost, but the unrepentant were not immediately slain. Why weren't the unrepentant slain on this Pentecost the way they were on the first one?

Peter explains this change in....

2 Peter 3:9

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

KJV

The Lord is longsuffering to us ward. There is much more at stake than just the physical life of the unrepentant. As a result, the Lord is long suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

He loves them. He does not want them to perish. Do you?

Are you willing to offer what Moses offered for the stiff necked Jews.

32 Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

KJV

If you are not willing than you do not have the heart Jesus has for the lost. Will you receive His perspective and allow the Lord to change your heart? Will you lay down your arguments and accept the Word of the Lord?

Now I am very excited about what the Lord will do in us and through us if we will let Him create His heart in us.

The Lord has shown me on various occasions His heart for the lost. I have seen His perspective before now. I have even felt emotionally some of what lost people are feeling in hell. When this has occurred it has always produced in me a burst of enthusiasm for reaching out to the lost. As a result, I have engaged in the following forms of evangelism.

Evangelism can be done cold turkey. This means you go up to total strangers and use diagnostic questions to confront them with the gospel. The Lord uses this approach to help us develop courage. It takes a lot of courage to do this.

Evangelism can be done through events. This means you invite lost neighbors and relatives to an event where the gospel will be preached by a gifted evangelist. The Lord uses this approach to help us develop endurance. Lost people lie to you. They make excuses. You have to stay after them.

Evangelism can be done through developing personal relationships with those who are lost. This means you take the initiative to befriend a lost person. You enter their world and they enter yours. You start treating them like you are their shepherd. This develops a sense of belonging created by trust. You share the gospel with them through a planned bible study that they agree to attend or just during the course of life. The Lord uses this approach to develop genuine love in us. As we have seen with Moses, lost people are not easy to love. They are lost.

I have always been more drawn to the last strategy. I believe in the other two and have been involved in both and have planned both for the church but I believe that the last strategy is the Lord's strategy for every believer to reproduce disciples of Jesus Christ day by day and month by month through out the course of our life. I have seen that events are much more effective when believers have been nurturing personal relationships with the lost. It is also very natural to do follow up with those are won this way. You just move from leading a person to Christ to leading a person to know who they are in Christ. But the main reason I believe most in the last strategy is that it was the strategy that was most prominent with Jesus. Jesus witnessed cold turkey. He preached at events. But what He did most was spend time with 12 men. They were all lost when he first met them and when he first began to develop a relationship with them.

I don't recommend 12. You are not a rabbi and we do not live in a culture that accepts the life style of rabbi's. People cannot just leave everything to follow you and it is cool.

But you can adopt the last strategy. But it will cost you the most. Events come and go. You can plan a specific time for going witnessing for an hour or two each week. Both of these just cause minor changes in your life.

But to befriend a lost person the way Jesus did you have to make a major change in your life style. Just think about how much time he took to nurture relationships with those first twelve?

You have to come along side a lost friend. You share with them the things you've learned through success and failure. You have to spend enough time with them so they get to know and trust and see what difference Jesus has made in your life. They will not see that you are perfect. But they will see why you have a hope for change. You have to be with them during times of crisis. The Holy Spirit uses this to bring them to a place of repentance and faith where they want to copy your decision to follow Jesus.

2 Tim 2:3-7

3 Thou therefore endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ.

4 No man that warreth entangleth himself with the affairs of this life; that he may please him who hath chosen him to be a soldier.

5 And if a man also strive for masteries, yet is he not crowned, except he strive lawfully.

6 The husbandman that laboureth must be first partaker of the fruits.

7 Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

KJV

To evangelize in this way you have to become like a soldier.

To evangelize in this way you have to become like an athlete.

To evangelize in this way you have to become like a farmer. You cultivate, you sow, and then you finally harvest.

If you do not change your strategy and the way that you live, there will not be a harvest for you. What will you say to the Lord?

The elder of a local church was leading the way. He was a constant encouragement to those who were won to live this way. He was like a parent to those who were won while being like a farmer to those who were lost. We need more mature elders in the body of Christ to lead us.

None of us will ever be perfect. But we can become mature. We are not mature unless we are reproducing new disciples of Jesus Christ.

If we are not mature, than we need to become a Timothy to someone who can help us develop the Lord's heart for the lost.

