Compelled by Love - a sermon to see God's heart in a way that will compel your heart.

A man is rushed to the ER after suffering a heart attack. The doctor tells him that he will not survive without a heart transplant right away. After checking on available donors, another doctor says, "Good news—two hearts are available that are perfect matches. One belonged to an attorney and the other to a social worker."

The patient immediately responds, please give me "The attorney's heart."

The doctor asks him why

And the patient says, because social workers usually have bleeding hearts, but attorneys hardly ever use their hearts"

**HEART**

Heart is used in Scripture as the part of our being where we desire, deliberate, and decide.

It has been described as "the place of feelings, passions, thought, understanding and will," and "the center of a person.

It is the place in us that God is most interested

**1 Samuel 16:7 (NIV)**
7  But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."

Why?

Because God made us with a heart after His own heart – capable of feeling and experiencing a part of what He, Himself feels and experiences

Today, I hope we can see God’s heart in a way that compels our own heart – to be like His

So let’s go back to this idea that God made us with a heart capable of feeling and experiencing a part of what He, Himself feels and experiences – for we know He desired a being that could come to know Him and love Him, like He, Himself loves.

We understand, that took giving us freedom, for love can only exist it the atmosphere of choice.

And even though God knows all things, even future things, - this doesn’t mean that He doesn’t feel pain when His special creation – mankind – makes wrong choices

We read in Genesis

**Genesis 6:5-6 (NIV)**
5  The LORD saw how great man's wickedness on the earth had become, and that every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil all the time.
6  The LORD was grieved that he had made man on the earth, and his heart was filled with pain.

God's response of grief over the making of humanity, however, is not remorse in the sense of sorrow over a mistaken creation; our verse shows that God's pain has its source in human sin.

The making of “man” is no error; it is what “man” has made of himself. God is grieving because this sinful “man” is not the mankind whom he has made to bear his image.

The intensity of the pain is demonstrated by the use of *nāḥam* for grieved - it describes mourning over the loss of a family member due to death.

This “grief” is explained by the ending of the sentence, “and his [God's] heart was filled with pain” (v. [6b](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=ge%206:6)).

By referring back to the “pain” and “painful toil” in God's pronouncement of punishment for the crimes of our first parents ([3:16–17](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=ge%203:16-17); cf. [5:29](http://www.crossbooks.com/verse.asp?ref=ge%205:29)), God indicates that human sin has become his source of pain.

As I mentioned, it’s not like this took God by surprise, but that doesn’t mean it hurt Him any less

God did, however, have a plan.

The first part of that plan – we call the Old Testament, and in particular, we see the first part of this plan through the life of the nation of Israel.

Why is Israel so special?

Because God chose them to be an example – for the whole world – of what it could be like to have a covenant relationship with Him .

Through God’s interaction with Israel, we learn more about God, and His heart

We also learn about how important the human heart is to God

And what God’s desire for mankind is

Even though Israel did not fulfill that desire

God gave Israel and Law – the commandments and said to them

 **Deuteronomy 6:4-9 (NIV)**
4  Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.
5  Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength.
6  These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts.

But we also know that something was very wrong – for from the beginning, Israel did not keep those commandments

We read in Deut 8:2 as God was trying to lead Israel into the promised land, Moses said

**Deuteronomy 8:2 (NIV)**
2  Remember how the LORD your God led you all the way in the desert these forty years, to humble you and to test you in order to know what was in your heart, whether or not you would keep his commands.

To know what was in our hearts.

This is a big deal

The heart is deceitful

**Jeremiah 17:9-10 (NIV)**
9  The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?
10  "I the LORD search the heart and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve."

As we will see, when time and time again, God tried to help Israel, giving them the promised land, and sending them prophets who would speak God’s word – warning them not to turn away from God and worship false gods, and do the shameful things that those other nations were doing, Israel would not listen.

He had told them clearly the blessings for obedience, and also the curses they would bring upon themselves if they turned away

**Deuteronomy 30:17-20 (NIV)**
17  But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them,
18  I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess.
19  This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live
20  and that you may love the LORD your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the LORD is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

When the nation of Israel got divided into the northern and southern Kingdom, after Solomon’s son levied a terribly high tax upon the people, the ten tribes of the northern kingdom built their own altar and also began to worship false gods there, engaging in practices that were detestable, God sent them prophets like Elijah and Elisha to try to turn them back, and eventually, when they refused to listen, God brought the Assyrian army in to carry them away.

This, scripture says, was also intended to be a warning for the remnant in the southern kingdom of Judah (from which we get the name Jews)

God sent them the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel

But we also know that Judah did not listen.

**Jeremiah 3:9-10 (NIV)**
9  Because Israel's immorality mattered so little to her, she defiled the land and committed adultery with stone and wood. 10  In spite of all this, her unfaithful sister Judah did not return to me with all her heart, but only in pretense," declares the LORD.

**Jeremiah 3:11-20 (NIV)**
11  The LORD said to me, "Faithless Israel is more righteous than unfaithful Judah.
12  Go, proclaim this message toward the north: "'Return, faithless Israel,' declares the LORD, 'I will frown on you no longer, for I am merciful,' declares the LORD, 'I will not be angry forever.
13  Only acknowledge your guilt-- you have rebelled against the LORD your God, you have scattered your favors to foreign gods under every spreading tree, and have not obeyed me,'" declares the LORD.
14  "Return, faithless people," declares the LORD, "for I am your husband. I will choose you--one from a town and two from a clan--and bring you to Zion.
15  Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.
16  In those days, when your numbers have increased greatly in the land," declares the LORD, "men will no longer say, 'The ark of the covenant of the LORD.' It will never enter their minds or be remembered; it will not be missed, nor will another one be made.
17  At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD, and all nations will gather in Jerusalem to honor the name of the LORD. No longer will they follow the stubbornness of their evil hearts.
18  In those days the house of Judah will join the house of Israel, and together they will come from a northern land to the land I gave your forefathers as an inheritance.
19  "I myself said, "'How gladly would I treat you like sons and give you a desirable land, the most beautiful inheritance of any nation.' I thought you would call me 'Father' and not turn away from following me.
20  But like a woman unfaithful to her husband, so you have been unfaithful to me, O house of Israel," declares the LORD.

Do you hear God’s heart?

**Jeremiah 31:20 (NIV)**
20  Is not Ephraim my dear son, the child in whom I delight? Though I often speak against him, I still remember him. Therefore my heart yearns for him; I have great compassion for him," declares the LORD.

**Jeremiah 29:10-14 (NIV)**
10  This is what the LORD says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my gracious promise to bring you back to this place.
11  For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.
12  Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.
13  You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.
14  I will be found by you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back from captivity. I will gather you from all the nations and places where I have banished you," declares the LORD, "and will bring you back to the place from which I carried you into exile."

So what was the problem?

It was in the human heart

In particular, God said it had turned to stone.

So, when the Bible diagnoses that our hearts are made of stone, we can see that we have a very serious problem.

As far as God is concerned, our hearts are just lumps of rock.

They are not doing their job; they are not taking God's life-giving essence and pumping it around our inner being.

If our physical hearts were made of stone, we'd be stone dead, wouldn't we?

And that's the point of the picture: towards God, we are by nature stone cold dead.

We do not love him, we do not believe him, we do not trust him, we do not delight in him, we do not obey him.

As far as God is concerned, our inner beings are as responsive as rocks.

Ever since the Fall, we have inherited a defect that has left us with a heart problem; a heart made of stone; an inner being that is dead towards God.

We cannot make our cold, stone, lifeless hearts beat with warmth towards God any more than we can take a rock and make it live.

But God looked forward to a day when hearts could be changed

**Love from the heart**

**Song of Songs 8:6-7 (NIV)**
6  Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame.
7  Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

A new heart

**Jeremiah 24:4-7 (NIV)**
4  Then the word of the LORD came to me:
5  "This is what the LORD, the God of Israel, says: 'Like these good figs, I regard as good the exiles from Judah, whom I sent away from this place to the land of the Babylonians.
6  My eyes will watch over them for their good, and I will bring them back to this land. I will build them up and not tear them down; I will plant them and not uproot them.
7  I will give them a heart to know me, that I am the LORD. They will be my people, and I will be their God, for they will return to me with all their heart.

**Ezekiel 11:16-25 (NIV)**
16  "Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Although I sent them far away among the nations and scattered them among the countries, yet for a little while I have been a sanctuary for them in the countries where they have gone.'
17  "Therefore say: 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I will gather you from the nations and bring you back from the countries where you have been scattered, and I will give you back the land of Israel again.'
18  "They will return to it and remove all its vile images and detestable idols.
19  I will give them an undivided heart and put a new spirit in them; I will remove from them their heart of stone and give them a heart of flesh.
20  Then they will follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. They will be my people, and I will be their God.

**Ezekiel 36:24-38 (NIV)**
24  "'For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land.
25  I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols.
26  I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh.
27  And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.
28  You will live in the land I gave your forefathers; you will be my people, and I will be your God.
29  I will save you from all your uncleanness. I will call for the grain and make it plentiful and will not bring famine upon you.
30  I will increase the fruit of the trees and the crops of the field, so that you will no longer suffer disgrace among the nations because of famine.

**Circumcise the heart**

**Deuteronomy 30:6 (NIV)**
6  The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.

Transition

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**Romans 2:29 (NIV)**
29  No, a man is a Jew if he is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a man's praise is not from men, but from God.

Christ’s love compels us

**2 Corinthians 5:7-21 (NIV)**
7  We live by faith, not by sight.
8  We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.
9  So we make it our goal to please him, whether we are at home in the body or away from it.
10  For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.
11  Since, then, we know what it is to fear the Lord, we try to persuade men. What we are is plain to God, and I hope it is also plain to your conscience.
12  We are not trying to commend ourselves to you again, but are giving you an opportunity to take pride in us, so that you can answer those who take pride in what is seen rather than in what is in the heart.
13  If we are out of our mind, it is for the sake of God; if we are in our right mind, it is for you.
14  **For Christ's love compels us,** because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.
15  And he died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves but for him who died for them and was raised again.
16  So from now on we regard no one from a worldly point of view. Though we once regarded Christ in this way, we do so no longer.
17  Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!
18  All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation:
19  that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them. And he has committed to us the message of reconciliation.
20  We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.
21  God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

**Matthew 5:8 (NIV)**
8  Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

**Matthew 5:28 (NIV)**
28  But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.

**Matthew 6:21 (NIV)**
21  For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

**Ephesians 1:17-18 (NIV)**
17  I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.
18  I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints,

**Warning to us**

**Hebrews 10:19-39 (NIV)**
19  Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus,
20  by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body,
21  and since we have a great priest over the house of God,
22  let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.
23  Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful.
24  And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.
25  Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.
26  If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left,
27  but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God.
28  Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses.
29  How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace?
30  For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people."
31  It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.
32  Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you stood your ground in a great contest in the face of suffering.
33  Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated.
34  You sympathized with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions.
35  So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded.
36  You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.
37  For in just a very little while, "He who is coming will come and will not delay.
38  But my righteous one will live by faith. And if he shrinks back, I will not be pleased with him."
39  But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who believe and are saved.