

Post-Exile Prophets: Zechariah  
**HARD HEARTS & DEAF EARS**

Tuesday, July 8

Reading: Zechariah 7:8-14

**Zechariah 7:11** *"But they refused to pay attention; stubbornly they turned their backs and covered their ears.  
12 They made their hearts as hard as flint..."*

As Zechariah continues God's answer to the people's question about continuing the fast to remember the temple's destruction, he points them back to the words of Isaiah and many of the other prophets.

Isaiah 58:6-7 "Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen: to loose the chains of injustice and untie the cords of the yoke, to set the oppressed free and break every yoke? Is it not to share your food with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter— when you see the naked, to clothe them, and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?

Isaiah and Zechariah are reminding us that our relationship with God cannot be right if we do not have a right relationship with each other. True justice and mercy, caring for those who can't care for themselves, and living godly lives are proof that our hearts are right with God.

Unfortunately, the people of Israel had not learned this lesson. They had been warned as far back as Moses that disobedience would lead to judgment and exile (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28). The prophets had continually repeated God's warning and called them back to repentance. (Notice that these words had been "sent by His Spirit"). But the people "refused to pay attention." The more God's messengers preached, the more "they turned their backs and covered their ears." Finally, their stubbornness had made their "hearts as hard as flint." And so God brought the judgment He had promised. "When I called, they did not listen; so when they called, I would not listen," says the LORD Almighty (7:13).

What a said situation! But are we any better today? How often do we feel our prayers are not being heard when the problem lies with us – not with God. We do not do what God has commanded in His Word. We live in disobedience in some area of our life and wonder why God does not answer our prayers. Zechariah has described the negative impact of not living for the Lord. The prophet Isaiah (in the passage above) gives us the positive results when we do live for the Lord:

Isaiah 58:8-9 Then your light will break forth like the dawn, and your healing will quickly appear; then your righteousness will go before you, and the glory of the LORD will be your rear guard. Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and He will say: Here am I."

"Your righteousness will go before you." How do we show the world the love of God? By having a right relationship with Him that extends to those around us. And by living in obedience to His Word.

How do you respond to God's Word?

What might you need to do to grow your relationship with God?

When others look at your life, what will they learn about God?

How do they see His life shining through you?

How can you be a better representative for God to those around you?