

Hearts of Stone

One of the oldest metaphors still part of living language is to have a “heart of stone”. Hard-hearted people have always existed and the condition is still common among us.

The first use of the metaphor may be in Exodus. After nine of ten plagues, God “hardens Pharaoh’s heart” and he refuses to let the Israelites leave Egypt.

God had to intervene because a heart of stone is not a healthy human condition, even for a king. To carry a heart of stone is a heavy burden.

Most of us have living hearts – we love our families, we love our cats and puppy dogs. But we can still have a stone lodged in our hearts.

To bear a heart entirely of stone is to feel nothing ... an organ essential to your humanity is dead. To have a stone in your living heart is to be in constant pain ... the pain of stones in your kidneys or gallbladder is nothing by comparison.

Why else would you not see the truth, except that the truth hurts so much?

Heart-stone pain can be tolerated only by medication with denial ... with detachment from injustice and oppression ... with pretense that all are equal under the law. Those who carry hearts of stone easily believe their condition is normal ... that we naturally care for no one but ourselves. But this is a lie.

You can numb your heart until it feels no pain. You can wrap your heart-stone in plastic foam and paper it with righteous slogans, but it will still be a burden to you.

Now is the time to lay that burden down ... to march side-by-side with those who have been oppressed ... to kneel and raise your fist with them ... to carry a stone in your heart no more.

Letting go your heart-stone does not mean you will feel no pain. Rather, a living open heart feels others’ pain as equal to your own. Letting go of denial, detachment and pretense means your heart will have the strength to bear the truth.

Let go the stone and fill your heart with love instead.

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