

# ***THE UNFETTERED HEART***



*Freedom* Gwen Meharg

***But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like, a snare for it will come upon all who dwell upon the face of the whole earth.***

***Luke 21:34-35***

There was a man who for years walked through life with a heart of stone ... so hard, so barren, so unhappy. One day he was invited into a house where he met a king who worked upon him the greatest miracle of his life. The king gave him a heart of flesh for his heart of stone. When the man left the king's house not only was he tender, kind in a way he had never been before, but his heart was light, so much lighter than stone. His family couldn't believe the change in him. His old friends were moved with the fear of God by the transformation.

Then, what perversity was it that caused this man to do a very strange thing? One day as he was walking along the road he saw a stone that struck his fancy. Was it an agate? So fascinated was he by that stone, he picked it up and placed it on top of his heart of flesh. His wife asked him, "is something wrong? You don't seem as lighthearted as you've been these many months." "Oh no," he protested, "I'm just fine."

Perhaps he didn't want it to be known that his heart was being weighed down with this ridiculous stone ... perhaps he didn't realize what it was doing to him.

He just seemed to be getting used to the heaviness that was upon him, when one day he spied a piece of gold colored rock, part of a formation in the side of a mountain where he was walking. He took his pick and hacked at it until it flew loose. He ran, picked it up, and thrust it on top of the other rock on his heart.

Here we have a man who has been given a heart of flesh for a heart of stone. But now this heart of flesh is so weighed down, so burdened, so weary, so heavy by the needless weights laid on it that it is unable to function.

Slowly his heart begins to harden into the likeness of the weights it carries.

So what happened to that carefree, joyful, child-like heart you got when you first came to Jesus?

Did He not give you a heart of flesh for a heart of stone?

Then why all the heaviness, the sadness, the despair, the confusion?

You had peace for a while --- where did it go?

***But take heed to yourselves lest your hearts be weighed down with dissipation and drunkenness and cares of this life, and that day come upon you suddenly like a snare....***

It's possible for your heart, even after Jesus has given you a new heart, to become so weighed down it can't function, can't rejoice, can't think, or see, or decide.

## **1. Dissipation**

What happens to that new, broken, contrite, heaven-filled heart if you lay upon it the stone of dissipation? "Oh, but I don't dissipate," you protest. "I go to bed at a decent hour each night."

But dissipation is not just gambling all night, or throwing your life down the sewer.

Dissipation is the squandering of your life on things that are trivial ... pouring out your strength and your time upon nonsense. You can dissipate yourself on;

- Facebook, You Tube,
- daydreams,
- memories of your childhood,
- some hobby that absorbs your mind and will,
- your latest ambition.

And you will find that every time you dissipate yourself on any of these things your heart begins to feel burdened and weary and too tired to think.

There may be people reading this who are so dissipated, so drained and numbed by their vanities they cannot lift their heart into the presence of God.

They are much too burdened, and will remain so until they remove the stone of dissipation.

## **2. Drunkenness**

The heart can be weighed down by the stone of drunkenness ... actual drunkenness or its equivalent.

We're drunk when we withdraw from reality into an illusion of any kind. People get high to be relieved of the burden of reality. But my friend, the burden of unreality is a million times heavier.

You may think you're cheering yourself up every time you dream of winning the lottery ... but you're actually weighing down your heart.

You may think you're finding relief by going off on that pretend trip with that pretend person, but you're simply putting another stone on your heart.

Or when you imagine what you'd like to do to your boss at work ... how you'd like to push him into the mud, or see him fall on his face - another stone settles on your heart.

Some of us may come to fellowship drunk with wine, and some of us come ... staggering in a stupor of our own false dreams.

Our hearts are so weighed down they cannot worship or praise the living God ... nor hear His voice.

### **3. Cares of this Life**

And who of us needs proof of how the cares of this life are weighing down our hearts like a stone? Of course we can't escape the cares of this life.

- When the roof leaks, it needs to be fixed.
- When the battery in your car gives out you have to charge it or replace it.
- Bills have to be paid.
- Misunderstandings with our neighbors have to be cleared-up.

Of course we are to be responsible for every obligation we make. But do the cares of this life really have to be carried *next to our heart*?

Do we have to get ourselves so tangled up in obligations, financial and otherwise, that we can think of nothing else? When we are bent over by the weight of all our cares we need to ask ourselves whether we haven't overloaded ourselves with unnecessary cares.

Some of us are so loaded down with the stone of cares we haven't thought a truly godly thought in months. How can you lift up your heart in praise to God when it's flattened under the weight of needless, ridiculous cares?

The only reason Jesus tells us to take heed to ourselves lest our hearts be weighed down is because He has made it possible for us to throw off these weights.

It's totally unnecessary for you to walk around with your heart crushed flat under these stones. You can pick up those stones and throw them away and breathe freely, and think clearly, and rejoice in God today.



*Exposed Heart Gwen Meharg*

***...let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely,  
and let us run with perseverance the race that is set before us....***

***Hebrews 12:1b***

## **Laying aside every weight**

**1. Lay aside the weight of dissipation/squandering , beginning the day with Jesus Christ.**

***"Come to me all you who labor and are heavy laden and I will give you rest."***

You don't just do that once, you do it daily, continuously. You won't dissipate your day if you put that day into the hands of Jesus at the outset. Concentrate your heart on Him, see Him, who is the center of all things.

Many of us still think of prayer at the beginning of the day as a kind of duty, "Yes, I know I really should."

- It's not your duty, it's your joy!

- It's your door to life!

Do you think of it as your duty to eat breakfast? Don't you enjoy that hot cup of coffee and toast with jam? Do you think of it as your duty to take a bath? Perhaps after a month it becomes your duty, but isn't it a pleasure to get your body clean and be refreshed?



*Consuming Fire- Gwen Meharg*

**How much more a joy to bathe and feed your heart  
in the light of God in Jesus each morning.**

**2. Lay aside the weight of drunkenness and every escape by facing reality at the  
cross of Jesus Christ.**

Come to the place where the unreal world opens into the real: Calvary.

There you face the reality of the living God who in loving-kindness and tender mercy offers up  
His most precious possession, His everything, His only begotten Son to redeem you.



*Tree of Life Gwen Meharg*

**Here all your warped twisted ideas of God  
end in a vision of His fathomless mercy.**

And in the light of that mercy you begin to face the reality of your own need. All your ridiculous illusions about yourself vanish and you see that you are just another needy sinner who can't live without God's forgiveness.

And you begin to face the reality of the human need around you. Other people are not things to be used, or fools to be belittled, enemies to be hated. But they are sick, wounded, troubled souls as desperately in need of God's mercy as you are.

When you face reality you won't need to get drunk any more.

**Every form of drunkenness among us will end the minute the afflicted ones choose to face reality and keep facing reality at the cross.**

### **3. Lay aside the stone of cares by seeking first the Kingdom of God.**

Decide what you're truly living for.

- What is your purpose?
- Where is your goal?
- Where is your heart fixed?
- Where does your treasure lie?

And if you discover that you're actually aiming at some childish illusion, that your heart is enslaved to mammon, money and the things it buys, do as Matthew did that day in his tax office. Drop everything and come to Jesus. Leave it all back there and put your life, body, soul, and spirit, past, present, and future, at His feet.

***But watch at all times, praying that you may have strength to escape all these things that will take place, and to stand before the Son of man.***

***Luke 21:36***

You'll still have to eat, pay bills, buy shoes, get the car fixed if you have one, but as you seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness your heart will become light again and all the things you need will be added to you.

The hand of God is at work in this world these days in a way that is even causing hard-boiled atheists to stop and think. Yet believers go on their way wrapped up in their petty lives with the new heart God gave them weighed down and fettered.

God help us to throw off the stones, to lay aside every weight, and lift up unfettered hearts to Him in praise, thanksgiving, and service; that we may stand before Jesus not only at the end, but every day until the end comes.



**Heart Flight** Gwen Meharg

*Prayer- Gracious Lord how we long for the hearts of flesh you once gave us. The stones we have placed on those precious hearts of flesh are weighting us down, making us weary, making us bitter, judgmental, and merciless and robbing us of vitality and joy. Lord, we confess that we have squandered ourselves on the trivial, we have been captivated by false dreams and illusions, and we have carried the cares of this world too close to our hearts. Give us the strength to lift these stones off. Give us the strength to stop dissipating ourselves on the unimportant as we open our hearts to your sovereignty, to your majestic presence each day. Give us the strength to sober up, facing the reality of our great need for you and your unfathomable, tender mercy towards us. Give us the strength to exchange the cares of this world for hearts that seek you, your Kingdom, your righteousness above all else. Precious Redeemer, forgive us, heal us, so we may joyfully live these lives with hearts of flesh once again and lift unfettered hearts to you to the end of our days.*

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THE LAMB  
WHO WAS SLAIN  
HAS BEGUN HIS REIGN

