

The Heart of God

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The Bible is a wonderful book to know the heart of God. The more we know the heart of God the more the more we love Him. The heart symbolizes the nature of the person. The Bible says God called David a man after His own heart.

"And Samuel said to Saul, 'You have done foolishly. You have not kept the commandment of the Lord your God, which He commanded you. For now the Lord would have established your kingdom over Israel forever. But now your kingdom shall not continue. The Lord has sought for himself a man after His own heart, and the Lord has commanded him to be commander over His people, because you have not kept what the Lord commanded you.'" (1 Samuel 13:13-14)

"He also chose David his servant, and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the ewes that had young. He brought him, to shepherd Jacob His people, And Israel His inheritance. So he shepherded them according to the integrity of his heart" (Psalms 78:70-72).

David was just a young shepherd boy when God sent the prophet Samuel to anoint him to be the King of Israel. It was many years before David assumed office as king. David was shepherd, fugitive and king. David had a shepherd's heart, God's kind of heart.

We can learn at least three things about a shepherd's heart from David and subsequently know about the heart of God.

1. A Shepherd's Heart Loves and Protects

"And so it was, whenever the spirit from God was upon Saul, that David would take a harp and play it with his hand. Then Saul would become refreshed and well, and the distressing spirit would depart from him." (1 Samuel 16:23). When Saul was rejected by God, the Spirit of God left him and an evil spirit came upon him. King Saul would then act irrationally. Music was found to be a way to help Saul. David was a skilled harpist and whenever he played the harp, he brought healing and deliverance to Saul. Here, we see the heart of David as one reaching out to the tormented Saul. That is the heart of God.

God reaches out to the tormented because He loves them.

On the occasion when David was requested by his father to visit his brothers in the army, he left the sheep with a keeper, and took the things and went as Jesse had commanded him. And he came to the camp as the army was going out to the fight and shouting for the battle" (1 Samuel 17:20). This shows that David loved his sheep and did not abandon them. He made sure that they were provided for. In the same way, our God never leaves us nor forsakes us. As God's sheep, we too can enjoy the same kind of love and protection.

David was a good shepherd. He risked his life to protect his sheep from wild animals. He did not run away when trouble came but stood by his sheep and destroyed the enemies. "But David said to Saul, 'Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it' " (1 Samuel 17:34 -35). Likewise, God, our good Shepherd loves, protects and delivers us from all our enemies.

2. A Shepherd' Heart Provides

When David was king of Israel, he said, "Is there anyone who is left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness for Jonathan's sake? (2 Samuel 9:1) He was told that Mephibosheth, Jonathan's son, was alive but crippled. When Mephibosheth was brought to see him, King David, remembered his covenant with Jonathan. David said, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually." (2 Samuel 9:7) David was kind to Mephibosheth because he honoured his covenant with Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:14-17). In doing this, David illustrates the heart of God as one who keeps His covenant and provides for you. God has made a covenant with you through His son, Jesus Christ. A blood covenant that cannot be broken. When you believe in Jesus, you can come to know God as the One who provides.

3. A Shepherd's Heart Forgives

In 2 Samuel 15, we read of Absalom's conspiracy to overthrow David and to seize the throne for himself. David had to flee for his life as a result of Absalom's treason. In the final battle to reclaim his throne, King David commanded his captains to be kind to Absalom, Jesus, the good shepherd, is ever willing to forgive sinners.

Much as David was a shepherd, he was also the Lord's sheep. When David sinned against God, He sent Nathan to confront him (2 Samuel 12:1). Nathan told David a parable of a rich man who sinned by depriving a poor man of his

only lamb instead of taking one from his own numerous flocks and herds to feed his guest. When David realized he was the villain in Nathan's story, he was convicted and repented (Psalms 51). God forgave David when he confessed and repented of his sin, and He will forgive us when we do the same.

God's heart is indeed like the heart of a shepherd. Come to Him as sheep in need of the Good Shepherd. He will not reject you. He will save you, protect you, provide for, love and forgive you. He will never abandon you. "Cast away from you all the transgressions which you have committed, and get yourself a new heart and spirit. For why should you die, O house of Israel?" (Ezekiel 18:31) "I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. I will put My Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them. Then you shall dwell in the land that I gave your fathers; you shall be My people, and I will be your God" (Ezekiel 36:26-28).

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