

Soft Rock

Ballad of a Broken Heart

November 2, 2025



Welcome back, *Fat Cats, Cool Cats, and Heart Breakers!* I'm Bruce, I'll be your DJ, and **today we'll be listening to the ballads of a broken heart.** Which question do you prefer:

How hard is your heart? Or ... **Do you despise God's kindness?**



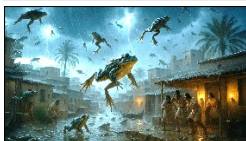
Because, according to *Paul*, the *indicator* of *both* has to do with **passing judgment**. "Uh-oh." He *doesn't* mean *discernment*. He means **condemning, in our heart, someone else's heart**, as though we're the *final authority* rather than a *fellow sinner* in need of the *Savior*. "Uh-oh." It's *easy* to *excuse*, but:



You have *no excuse*, *whoever* you are, **[believer or not]** when you judge others; for in **passing judgment** on another you **condemn yourself**, because you, the **[self-appointed]** judge, are doing the *very same things*. ... Do you imagine, *whoever* you are, that ... you will *escape* the *judgment* of *God*? Or **[as a believer]** do you **despise** the *riches* of His *kindness* and *forbearance* and *patience*? Do you *not* realize that *God's kindness* is meant to *lead you* to *repentance*? **[For things like passing judgment]** But **by your hard and impenitent [defiant] heart** you are *storing up wrath* for *yourself* ... when *God's righteous judgment* will be *revealed*. – Romans 2:1-5 NRS



This is *like* the *old analogy* of **drinking poison so the person you're condemning will die**. But this *isn't* a *sermon* on *judging*; we're *talking* about *softening* a *stone-cold heart*. And *one* of the *hardest hearts* in the *Bible*, has to be *Pharaoh*. Because, in *one* of the *most controversial* verses ...



[The Lord said to Moses] "Do all those wonders before Pharaoh ... But **[you should know in advance that]** **I will harden his heart**, so that he will not let the people go." – Exodus 4:21 NKJ

"What? Why's He hardening Pharaoh's heart?!" So *many* think *this* is so *controversial*. But *God* is simply *stating a fact*: "No matter *what* I *do*, he's gonna harden his *hatred* for *My authority*."

[So, after] The *frogs* came up and *covered* the land. ... When *Pharaoh* saw that there was *relief*, **[that's when]** he **hardened his heart** – Exodus 8:6, 15 NIV

And when *Pharaoh* saw that the *rain*, the *hail*, and the *thunder* had *ceased*, he *sinned* yet *more*; and he *hardened his* **[hardened]** heart, he *and his servants*. – Exodus 9:34 NKJ

But, an *even harder heart* has to be the *thief* on the *cross*, who *mocked* his *only chance* at *life*, as he himself was *dying* in *agony*! And *this* is an *incredible example* of the *old saying*: **The same sun that melts the wax, hardens the clay**. Because, when the *sun* rose that *day*:

Those crucified *with* Him also heaped insults on him. – Mark 15:32 NIV



But Jesus was saying, “Father, forgive them” – Luke 23:34 NAS

And they both heard His same words and watched His same actions. But only one of ‘em softened his heart as it dawned on him, that he was just a few hours from death but only a few feet from life. So then:

[As the] [One] hurled *insults* ... [the other] rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God? ... We are getting what our deeds *deserve*.” ... Then he said, “Jesus, *remember me* when You come into Your kingdom.” Jesus answered ... [remember you] “You will be with Me” – Luke 23:39-43 NIV

And during the course of that fateful day, **the Son softened one while hardening the other.**

So, how did God harden Pharaoh’s heart? By showing him His power and authority and mercy, nine times! It wasn’t until plague #10 that God’s wrath finally came. If I was God, I would’ve started with the plague of hammers-to-the-head, and been done with it! But you know why He didn’t: It wasn’t hammer time. Which begs the question the Lord asks every believer:



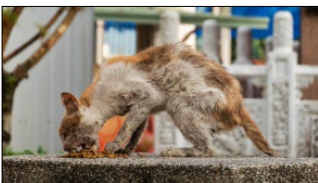
“Do you think,” asks the Sovereign Lord, “that I like to see wicked people die? Of course not! I only want them to turn from their wicked ways and live. ... Yet you say, ‘The Lord isn’t being just!’ Listen to Me ... it is you who are unjust, not I. ... Turn from your sins! Don’t let them destroy you! Put all your rebellion behind you, and get for yourselves a new **[living]** heart and a new **[Holy]** spirit. For why should you die? ... I don’t want you to die, says the Sovereign Lord. Turn back and live!” – Ezekiel 18:23-32 NLT

Turn back from what, exactly? So glad I asked!

Each one follows the dictates of his own evil heart ... no one listens to Me. – Jeremiah 16:12 NKJ

[Listen!] “I will give you a new heart **[inside your old heart]** and put a new Spirit in you; **[and if you’ll allow]** I will **[gradually]** remove from you your **[old, cold]** heart of stone and give you a **[warm, living]** heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit **[of life (Rom 8:2)]** in you and move you to follow My decrees” **[instead of your own evil dictates]** – Ezekiel 36:26-27 NIV

And they said, “That is hopeless! So we will walk according to our own plans, and we will everyone obey the dictates of his **[own] evil heart.**” **[MY kingdom come!]** – Jeremiah 18:12 NKJ

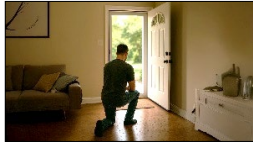


Ever touch something dead? Growing up in the wrecking yard, our back porch was often overrun with feral cats. They kept the rats in check. You couldn’t pet ‘em, but we could catch the smallest, sickest, and most likely most diseased. I always wanted to take ‘em to the vet. But the vet would’ve just put ‘em down. So, mom opted for the shotgun. She was practical that way. So, my sister and I would put ‘em in a box with a little blanket and try to treat ‘em (while dodging bullets). And we’d get up in the morning and go reach under the blanket, **hoping to touch something soft and warm.** Which, sadly, was not generally the case. Early on I learned the cold, hard fact that: **Dead things are cold and hard.** And that: **Living things are soft and warm.**

In the same way, *Jesus* wants *our heart* to remain *soft* and *warm* to *His touch*. **Ever molded clay?** You know how you need to knead it to make it soft and warm, so it can be formed and shaped into what you intend to create? **That's a very Biblical analogy for our heart.**

For we are [God's] handiwork, created in Christ Jesus – Ephesians 2:10 NAB

We are the *clay*, and *You* are the *Potter*. We all are *formed* by *Your hand*. – Isaiah 64:8 NLT



[Oh come] let us kneel before the Lord our *Maker*. For ... we are the *people* of *His* pasture, and the *sheep* of *His hand*. [So] Do not harden your hearts – Psalm 95:6-8 NKJ



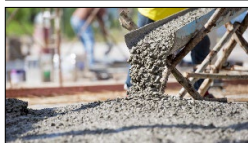
Have you tried *kneeling*, as you take on the day, to say: **“YOUR Kingdom come!”** Which is the same as, **“Soften MY heart!”** Cuz as we saw, we're given a “secret heart ... a clean heart,” (Ps 51:6) “obedient hearts of flesh,” (Ezek 36:26) **a kingdom heart hidden within our stone cold, rebellious heart. And they're at war!**

They have closed up their fat hearts ... [like a] lion lurking in secret places. – Psalm 17:10-12 NKJ

These fat cats have everything their hearts could ever wish for! – Psalm 73:7 NLT

His words are as smooth as cream, but in his heart is war. – Psalm 55:21 NLT

Smooth lips and an evil heart are like silver coating on clay. – Proverbs 26:23 CEB



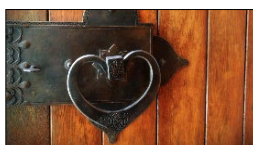
If clay could run away, like us, it would begin to grow cold and harden, like rigamortis, the moment it left the molder's hands. Like us. **His Spirit whispers, “Soften toward that person.” And we softly reply, “No thank You.”** ignoring that we've just left His hands and His kingdom of freedom to return to self-imposed slavery in our old, cold, dead heart of stone. So beware, because we're told that those with Moses “refused to obey” ...

And [in so doing] in their hearts turned back to Egypt. – Acts 7:38-39 NIV

They [simply, ignorantly] refused to pay attention ... [and thus] they made their hearts as hard as flint and would not listen – Zechariah 7:11-12 NIV

[You see] [The sentence] is not executed speedily, therefore the heart ... is [slowly] fully set in them [like concrete!] – Ecclesiastes 8:11 NKJ

[Whereas] My heart is set on keeping Your decrees to the very end. – Psalm 119:112 NIV



Because the *One* who said, “I am the Door”, (Jn 10:9) also said, “I stand at the door and knock”. (Jn 10:9) And **when you lie very still in your bed** at night, just before practicing dying, which He calls “sleeping”, **you can hear Him! TA-BUM, TA-BUM, TA-BUM.**

He's practically beating His way in, by way of the ticker He created as **a countdown-timer and reminder of our date with destiny.** And that familiar rhythm is literally the sound of little valve-doors opening and closing.



So, welcome back, *Fat Cats*, *Cool Cats*, and *Heart Breakers*! Because it's *time to break out the broken heart ballads* with some *classic Psalms*. For instance, *Ballad 34:18* first says:

The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart. – Psalm 34:18 NLV

Know *why*? Cuz ***He's the One doing the breaking!***

Is not My Word ... like a HAMMER that *breaks the rock in pieces*? – Jeremiah 23:29 NKJ

It *is!* And, you *know* what *that means!* It's *hammer time!* Cuz *Ballad 34:18* then says:

And He saves those who are broken in spirit. – Psalm 34:18 NLV

[You see] The [pious religious] *sacrifice of the wicked* is an *abomination* ... but by sorrow of the heart the [prideful] spirit is broken. – Proverbs 15:8, 13 NKJ

[And ballad 51 says] The *sacrifice God wants* is a broken [humble] spirit ... [made that way by] a heart that is broken and sorry for sin. – Psalm 51:16-17 NCV

[So] *Why then do you harden your hearts?* – 1 Samuel 6:6 NKJ

Let's *bust on in* and *load up* and *warm up* those *ice-cold cats* with the *light from within!*

[For God] made *His light shine in our hearts* – 2 Corinthians 4:6 NIV

[So] *Sing* and make *music in your heart* to the *Lord* – Ephesians 5:19-20 NIV

[Sing] with *gratitude in your hearts* to God. – Colossians 3:16 NIV

Let the *peace* of Christ rule in your hearts – Colossians 3:15 NIV

Let the *Word* of Christ dwell in you richly [in kindness and mercy] – Colossians 3:15-16 NIV

[And] [Now] *love one another deeply, from the heart*. – 1 Peter 1:22 NIV



Cuz it's *all* about what you *choose to store up in* your heart. So, ***what's in your heart?*** Cuz every *moment* of every *day* ***we're either in the process of softening or hardening.*** Which is why it's crucial that we put *our heart* in *His hands* every *morning* and let Him *keep us warm* and *pliable* in His *Biable!* Until the *day* you can *honestly say*:

I *delight* to do *Your will* ... [and] *Your instruction lives within me*. – Psalm 40:8 HCS

Know how *hard* it is to *truly delight* to do *Thy will* over *my will*? *Only as hard as my heart!* Because ***it's the desire of the heart that determines the outcome.*** So, *try not to despise His kindness.*

Respect Christ as the holy Lord *in your hearts*. – 1 Peter 3:15 NCV

[And] *Today*, if you hear *His voice*, do *not* harden *your hearts* – Hebrews 3:15 NIV

[Cuz] *Though my flesh and my heart fail*, God is the [only] *Rock of my heart* – Psalm 73:25-26 NAB