

“Some fell on stony places, where they did not have much earth; and they immediately sprang up because they had no depth of earth.” – Matthew 13:5



Breaking the Chains of a Hardened Heart

2nd Sunday of Hatour



The Condition of a Hardened Heart

- "He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, lest they should see with their eyes, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them." (John 12:40)

Causes of a Hardened Heart



The Accumulation of Sin

- Unconfessed sins:
 - Desensitizes the conscience
 - Accumulates over time, becoming harder to recognize.



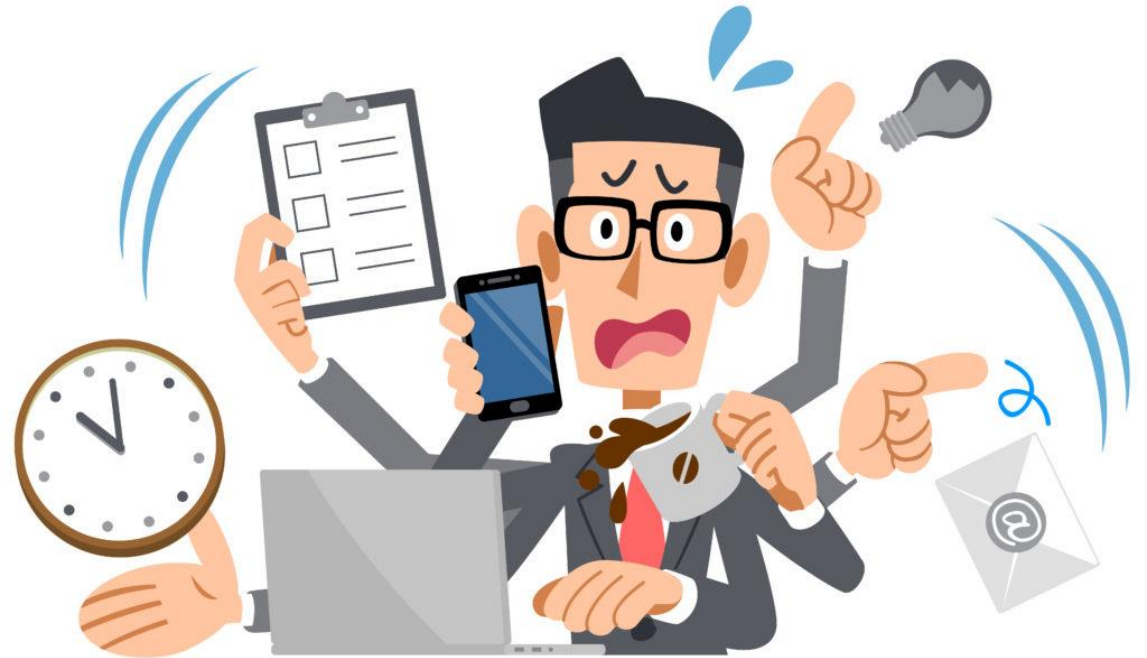


Pride and Arrogance

- Pharaoh
- **"The pride of your heart has deceived you, You who dwell in the clefts of the rock, Whose habitation is high; You who say in your heart, **Who will bring me down to the ground?"** (Obadiah 3)**
- King Nebuchadnezzar

Being Consumed by Worldly Cares

- "Surely they busy themselves in vain..." (Psalm 39:6)
- *"If the devil can't hinder our relationship with God by making us immoral, he'll simply make us busy."* (A godly man)



The Pleasures of Life

“The soul is wax if it cleaves to God, but clay if it cleaves to matter. Which it does depends on its own will and purpose. Clay hardens in the sun, while wax grows soft. Similarly, every soul that, **despite God’s admonitions, deliberately cleaves to the material world, hardens like clay and drives itself to destruction**, just as Pharaoh did (cf. Exod. 7: 13). But every soul that cleaves to God is softened like wax and, receiving the impress and stamp of divine realities, it becomes ‘in spirit the dwelling-place of God’ (Eph. 2: 22).”

- St. Maximus the Confessor

Rebellion

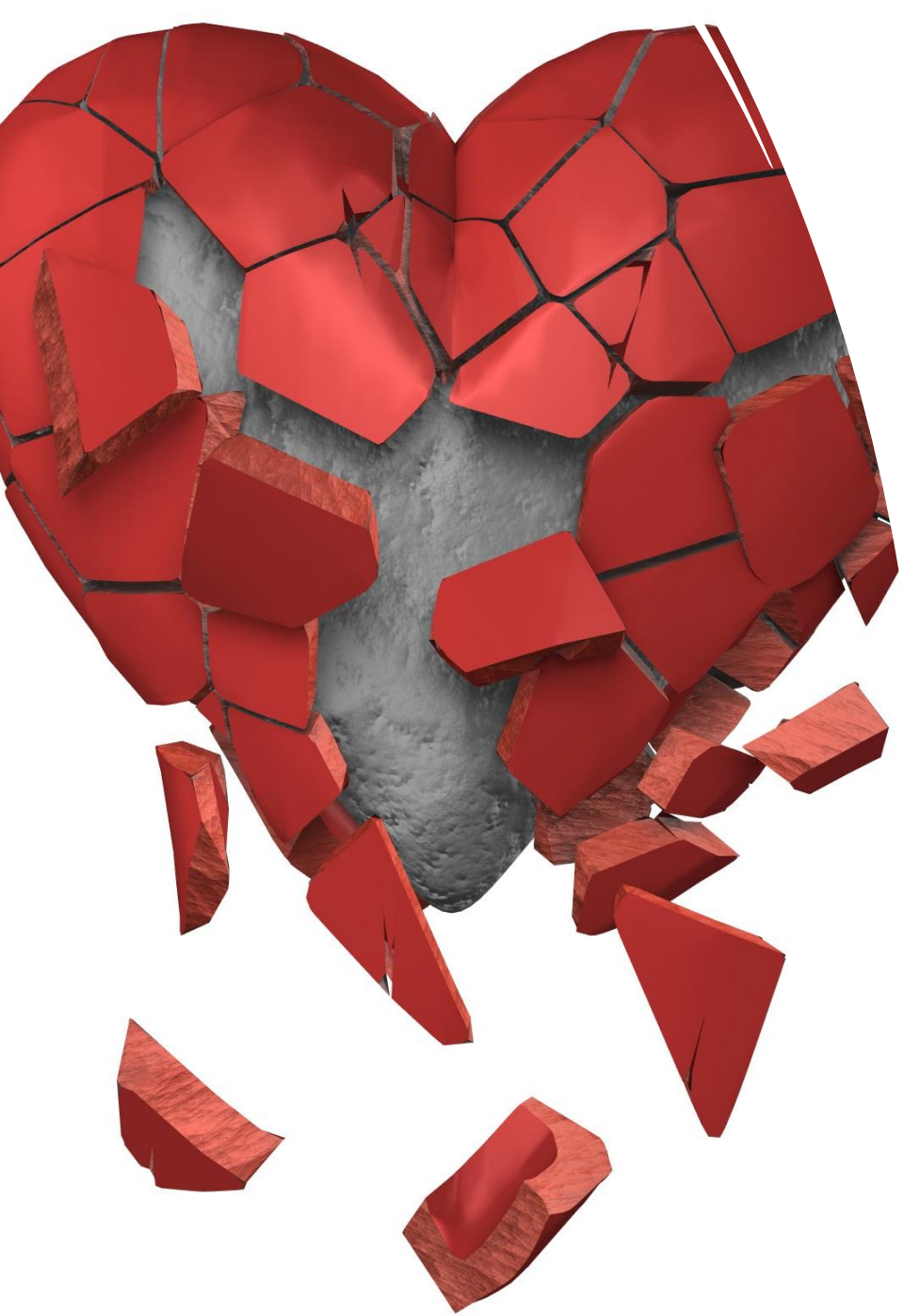
- "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness." (Ps. 95:8)



Perceived Negative Experiences with God

- Disappointment in unanswered prayers or unmet desires can harden the heart.
- *Warning:* Avoid surrendering to despair





The Remedy for a Hardened Heart

Repentance and Confession

- Regular confession breaks the cycle of sin and opens the heart to God's grace.
- King David
- So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD." (2 Sam. 12:13)



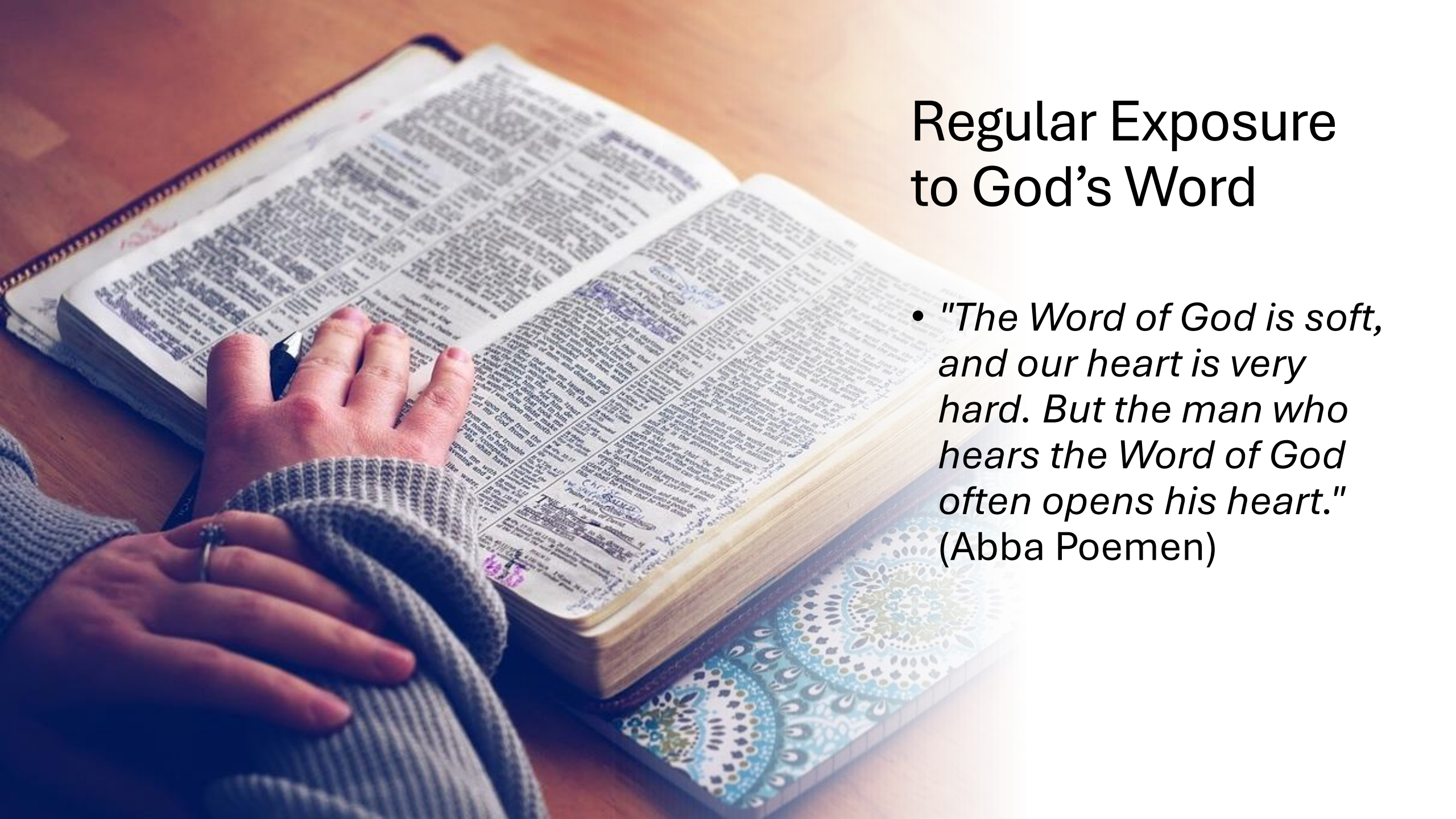
Connecting with God in Prayer

- David the Prophet
- *"Silence with prayer is the beginning of purity of heart."*
(St. Isaac the Syrian)



Regular Exposure to God's Word

- "The Word of God is soft, and our heart is very hard. But the man who hears the Word of God often opens his heart." (Abba Poemen)*



Partaking of the Eucharist

"He who eats My flesh
and drinks My blood
abides in Me, and I in
him." (John 6:56)



Challenges in Keeping a Softened Heart

“Be sober, be vigilant;
because your adversary the
devil walks about like a
roaring lion, seeking whom
he may devour.” (1 Pet. 5:8)



Conclusion

- A hardened heart results from:
 - The Accumulation of Sin
 - Pride and Arrogance
 - Being Consumed by Worldly Cares
 - The Pleasures of Life
 - Rebellion
 - Perceived Negative Experiences with God
- The remedy is:
 - Repentance and Confession
 - Connecting with God in Prayer
 - Regular Exposure to God's Word
 - Partaking of the Eucharist

"Today, if you will hear His voice,
do not harden your hearts."

Psalm 95:7-8