

Rest_1
Warning: Hear His Voice
Hebrews 3:7-19

Warning against a Hard Heart (Hebrews 3:7-11)

⁷Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, ⁹where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. ¹⁰Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, 'They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.' ¹¹As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest.'"

The readers of Hebrews would have known this story

As we saw last week, Moses was held in high regard for his faithfulness to God, and they would have been familiar with Moses' trials through the Exodus, namely the faithlessness of the followers of Moses. For example, in the book of Nehemiah 8:16-17, as the Nation of Israel confesses their sins, they confess the sins of their fathers in the rebellion. Here, the author quotes David in Psalm 95, who was also calling to remembrance the rebellion in the wilderness found specifically in Exodus 17:1-7, and Numbers 14:21-35

The Fault of the Followers of Moses

1- The Followers of Moses Hardened Their Hearts

As the nation of Israel was coming out of Egypt, they saw wondrous signs including: The Passover, The parting of the Red Sea, God leading them by night in a pillar of fire or by day in a cloud, and he had provided them with Manna from heaven. However, despite seeing the works of the Lord among them, the followers of Moses didn't believe in God's promise. They didn't trust in His character and promise that He would provide for them, despite Him proving it time and time again.

2- The Followers of Moses Tested God

Exodus 17:2-3

"Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, "Give us water to drink." And Moses said to them, "Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the LORD?" ³But the people thirsted there for water, and the people grumbled against Moses and said, "Why did you bring us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our livestock with thirst?""

The Israelites trusted in their own interpretation of reality, and not relying on God's reality. God had proved over and over again that He was indeed among the Israelites in the desert, but because of their hardened hearts they were not able to see that God would provide for them.

3- The Followers of Moses Went Astray in their Hearts

Numbers 14:1-4

"That night all the people of the community raised their voices and wept aloud. ²All the Israelites grumbled against Moses and Aaron, and the whole assembly said to them, "If only we had died in Egypt! Or in this desert! ³Why is the LORD bringing us to this land only to let us fall by the sword? Our wives and children will be taken as plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" ⁴And they said to each other, "We should choose a leader and go back to Egypt."

They followers of Moses lacked a trust in the character of God. They did not believe in His promises, and thus they grumbled and rebelled against Moses and Aaron. The people's hearts were still set on Egypt, not willing to fully embrace the promises of God.

The psalmist gives us a new perspective on "Rest"

Jumping into the context of Psalm 95, we know that by this point in time, the Nation of Israel had inhabited the land of Canaan, God's temporal rest. However, David still reminds the people of the fear of not entering God's rest. So we see that David points to two things: God's rest is both temporal, and eternal!

The Argument of the Hebrews writer:

So we've seen to this point throughout Hebrews that Jesus is superior, He is supreme. The author gave us a stark warning in Chapter 2 that we might not neglect so great a salvation, and he reminds us again. This time, however, he wants us to examine ourselves as followers of Jesus up against the followers of Moses. We see that the Children of Israel saw God, but did not believe in His promise. Now as follower of Christ we are warned again: "Do not harden your hearts!" Do not react the same way.

Hebrews 12:25

“²⁵See to it that you do not refuse him who speaks. If they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, how much less will we, if we turn away from him who warns us from heaven?”

The writer of Hebrews gives us a tall warning to consider and accept the person and work of Jesus Christ. With this warning he also gives us several tools or commands in which to examine ourselves and see where our heart is.

Community is like a helpful physician

- 1- The first prescriptive command is to take care, or *blepo* in the original language. This means to discern mentally, observe, to consider, or to weigh carefully. Literally he wants us to seriously examine ourselves and to put our hearts under the microscope to see whether or not we have an evil and unbelieving heart.
- 2- The second prescriptive command is external in nature by this concept of exhortation. *Parakaleo* means to call along side, like to strengthen one another. This command comes with a timeline, as we see it is something to be done “every day.” This is one of the main reasons for Community Groups.
- 3- The Deceitfulness of Sin – Sin lies to us in several ways. 1) It lies about the value of God (Not as satisfying). 2) It lies about the value of Sin itself (Not as much of an offense). 3) Sin lies by telling us that God won’t deliver on His promises. 4) Sin lies that it WILL deliver (It will bring true pleasure)
- 4- The author warns us again of this notion of “today.” He reminds us that there will be a time when it will no longer be “today.” This is an eminent command! We will not always have the chance to embrace Christ!

Perseverance is the mark and test of salvation for followers of Christ

“For we have come to share in Christ,^(G) if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.”

- 1- The linguistics of the verse pattern after that of Verse 6. Here we see that we “HAVE COME TO SHARE IN CHRIST” if we endure, not “WE WILL SHARE” if we endure. The “if” in this passage hinges on our BEING, not our BECOMING. How can we know our being? Well the author gives us a few things to look for.

Diagnosis of a Rebellious Heart

“As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”¹⁶For^(D) who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not^(J) all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned,^(K) whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did he swear that^(L) they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that^(M) they were unable to enter because of unbelief.”

The Chain of Rebellion

The author of Hebrews gives us a good look at several symptoms and then the ultimate cause rooted in the hardened hearts of people. In verses 15-19 the author interprets the text, verse 7-11, for us. The author works his way backwards with the most obvious, that of **rebellion**. The chain works its way back to **sin**, **disobedience**, and ultimately **unbelief**. So we see that the children of Israel, though they saw God’s work among them, were denied entrance into God’s rest because deep down in their hearts they truly didn’t believe. Well what does a heart that does believe look like? It ultimately is rooted in **faith** by the grace of God, which leads us to **obedience**, **righteousness**, and **faithfulness**.

Time of Examination

So here we are: Where is your heart? Does your heart bend towards rebellion and sin? Or does it bend towards faithfulness and righteousness? Recall the earnest heed to examine ourselves, now in light of what we know about the deceitfulness of sin and being hard hearted.

2 Corinthians 13:5

“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”