

Beware of Unbelief

Hebrews 3:7-19

Introduction:

- This is the second warning in this book: not to come short of God's promised rest (3:7-4:13)
- Part of this comes from hardening our hearts against He who is greater than Moses
- If those who followed Moses were responsible to surrender, trust, and persevere in following God's leader Moses, we are much more responsible to do the same with a greater leader, Jesus.
- Our author is quoting from Psalm 95:7-11
- This book is all about our assurance of faith. It is a call to persevere in our faith. All because of what our faith is grounded upon! The Word of God, and the power of our High Priest- the Son of God- Jesus!
- Therefore, it stands that the opposite of faith- unbelief- must be addressed.

I. Harden not your hearts- v. 7-11

- a. V. 7- Holy Ghost saith- II Tim 3:16. What the Holy Ghost has spoke, only He alone can make plain- I Cor. 2:7-14
- b. If you will hear his voice- This first implies a great privilege- God speaks to His people
- c. Notice in Hebrews 3:12, "Take heed, brethren..." These warnings in the epistle to the Hebrews are addressed to Christians.
- d. They are not teaching that a believer can lose his salvation. But they do teach that a Christian can lose his joy, lose his blessing, lose his peace of mind, and lose his reward.
- e. II John 8 says, "Look to yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."

- f. I Corinthians 3:14 and 15 says, "If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned, he shall suffer loss: but he himself shall be saved; yet so as by fire."
 - g. How sad when we become hardened to God's voice! To avoid this danger we must have the right disposition before we receive anything from God- Is 66:2
 - h. Soil must be broken up by the plow and softened by rain before it can receive the seed
 - i. There are prerequisites for hearing from God- if not met the word is unfruitful in our hearts- Illustr- Lydia's heart was opened by God (Acts 16:14)
 - j. Significance of the word "today." There is urgency to the voice of the Holy Spirit. He never prompts us to get right with God tomorrow, or to trust in yesterday – the Holy Spirit only moves us to act today. Satan's favorite lie is "tomorrow."
 - k. Significance of the heart- this is where sin is conceived oftentimes
 - l. V. 8 It speaks of Israel's refusal to trust and enter the Promised Land even after seeing God deliver them from Egypt. God did not accept their unbelief and condemned that generation to wander for 40 years and die in the wilderness (Numbers 14)
- II. Beware of unbelief- v. 12-16
- a. This is strong language, but we often underestimate the terrible nature of our unbelief. Refusing to believe God is a serious sin!
 - b. "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).
 - c. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).
 - d. "Unbelief is not inability to understand, but unwillingness to trust... it is the will, not the intelligence, that is involved." (Newell)
 - e. Unbelief isn't weakness of faith; it sets itself in opposition to faith.

- f. Salvation: belief is not mental acknowledgment of God. James 2 says even the devils believe and tremble. Saving faith is a total trust that is evidenced by repentance and commitment to Christ
- g. UNBELIEF AFFECTS CHRISTIANS AS WELL AS THE UNSAVED
- h. Unbelief is the giving of God the lie [calling God a liar], and what can be worse?" (Spurgeon) (I John 5:10)
- i. See Psalm 78:41. Application: giving, praying, witnessing, besetting sins
- j. The Christian's battleplan- v. 12-13
 - i. Take heed- be vigilant!
 - ii. Exhort each other- If we will strengthen our faith and avoid the ruin of unbelief, we must be around other Christians who will exhort us (seriously encourage)
 - iii. Daily! Regularly! When we forsake the assembling we are vulnerable
 - iv. The "hardening of the heart" is a spiritual disease. Once a person adopts a fixed attitude of rebelliousness and disobedience, his heart gets hard to the things of God.
 - v. Donald Guthrie wrote, "A hardened state of mind becomes impervious to God's voice and leads to increasing ignorance of his ways, not because God does not want to make them known, but because the hardened mind has no disposition to listen."
 - vi. Christians must be vigilant against hardness of heart. That hidden sin you indulge in – none suspect you of it because you hide it well. You deceive yourself, believing that it really does little harm. You can always ask forgiveness later. What you cannot see or sense is that your hidden sin hardens your heart. As your heart becomes harder, you become less and less sensitive to your sin. You become more and more distant from Jesus!
- k. Unbelief and heart hardness are inward things that manifest themselves outwardly. Vice versa!
- l. Our assurance- v. 14

- i. V. 6, 14- demonstration and evidence. Present tense, not future tense
- ii. Partakers of Christ: Believers – those who turn from sin and self and put their life's trust in Jesus – are gloriously called partakers of Christ. A good picture is John 15- vine and branches. We must abide in Him!
- iii. If can be translated "since." A true believer will take heed, abide, and hold fast. This is not to cause doubt in a true believer, but to encourage faith, and explain why others have not continued in faith.
- iv. It's the careless Christians who need to be worried about their standing. They treat salvation like a vaccination. Done once and no need to care any longer (remember Heb 2:1-3)
- v. If we hold fast to our assurance, it shows we have become a partaker of Christ; if we do not, then we have not become a partaker of Christ.
- vi. In other words persevering in faith and hope, holding fast to your confidence in God, is not a way to keep from losing your standing in Christ; it is a way of showing that you have a standing in Christ. That standing can never be lost!
- vii. Unbelief falls away, faith draws near!

III. God's rest- v. 17-19

- a. Isaiah 48:22 says, "There is no peace, saith the LORD, unto the wicked."
- b. God's rest is accessed by faith
- c. The Israelites had enough faith to get out of Egypt but stopped short of entering into the Promised Land
- d. Many Christians have enough faith at conversion, but yet fall short of the rest God has for them in their Christian life

Conclusion:

- Our Lord said in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."
- Many Christians miss out on the joys of that abundant life by unbelief and disobedience.
- As we pray tonight, may we cry out Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.