
Week 8 Sermon, October 8, 2023

Hebrews 3:7-19 – A Warning Against Unbelief

Discussion Questions

1. When referring to Psalm 95, the author of Hebrews writes, “as the Holy Spirit says” (3:7). What is being declared about the authorship of Scripture? See also Hebrews 4:12 and 2 Peter 1:21. Note that the author of Hebrews refers to the Holy Spirit speaking in the present tense (“says”). What implications do the divine authorship of Scripture and the active work of the Holy Spirit speaking have today?
 2. Psalm 95:7-8 is referenced three times in this passage (vv. 7-8, 13, 15) and is also referenced in 4:7. For thousands of years, the Holy Spirit has been exhorting God’s people, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” Notice the urgency: “Today.” Why does the Holy Spirit urge an immediate response? See Isaiah 63:10; Ephesians 4:30, and 1 Thessalonians 5:19. (Note: the word harden means to cause to be unyielding in resisting information; to cause to be stubborn and obstinate, especially with regard to truth. In the context of Hebrews 3, it means to disobey the voice of God and act in accordance with one’s own desires.)
 3. In verse 12, the author exhorts his hearers, “Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.” Believers are urged to watch carefully how they live, lest they fall away from God. The word unbelieving here is the same Greek word that is rendered unbelief in verse 19. It is an unwillingness to commit oneself to another or respond positively to the other’s words or actions. It is a lack of commitment to a relationship or pledge. Used in the context of chapter 3, it speaks about the believer’s relationship with God. Why must we be so careful to obey God and not our hearts (see Jeremiah 17:9)? Discuss real-life scenarios where following your heart is tempting. What are the dangers of falling to those temptations?
 4. One of God’s means of grace in the life of the believer is Christian community—the local church. Since our hearts are not to be trusted, God gives us one another to encourage us in the faith. As an antidote to prevent being hardened by the deceitfulness of sin, we are commanded in verse 13 to exhort one another every day. This demands that we regularly engage in the life of the local church (see 10:24-25). Discuss how you can be more intentional in the lives of others within the church to encourage them in the faith. What are some questions you can ask others to strengthen them in Christ?
 5. In verses 7b-11 and 15-19 the author of Hebrews points to events in history from which Christians are to learn. Refer to Exodus 16-17, Numbers 14, and Psalm 95. How did the Israelites witness the work of God? Yet, even with all that they had seen, what was their recurring response? God’s indictment against them was that they did not believe in Him: their disobedience was rooted in unbelief (see Numbers 14:11). Read 1 Corinthians 10:1-13 and discuss what we are to learn from the Israelites failures—be practical and specific. Spend time in prayer confessing sin and praising God for His faithfulness.
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