“Resist Not The Spirit”

(Selected Scriptures)
6/14/09

Introduction: Psalm 95:6-11

Four examples of people who resisted the working of God’s Spirit:

I. **The people who heard the preaching of <u>NOAH</u> *resisted God’s Spirit***
(Genesis 6:3)

II. **The people who heard the preaching of <u>JOSHUA & CALEB</u> *resisted God’s Spirit***
(Numbers 14:6-11 *v.9)

III. **The people who heard the preaching of <u>JESUS the Messiah</u> *resisted God’s Spirit***
(John 12:35-41)

IV. **The people who heard the preaching of <u>STEPHEN</u> *resisted God’s Spirit***
(Acts 7:51)

Conclusion: Hebrews 3:7-19

How can you avoid becoming spiritually hard hearted?

A. Examine the condition of your heart (v. 12)
B. Stay in constant fellowship with fellow believers (v. 13)
C. Beware of the hardening effects of sin (v. 13b)

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Introduction: Psalm 95:6-11

Re 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.

The ministry of the Holy Spirit is to give understanding of God’s Message:

He convicts of sin, righteousness, and judgment

Joh 16:8 And when he is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment:

He opens eyes to God’s Word (illumination)

Joh 3:8 The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

He draws on the heart (so that we come to God)

2Th 2:13 But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth

However, The Holy Spirit can be resisted:
Acts 7:51
Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye.

God gives severe warnings to those who resist His working:

Proverbs 29:1
He, that being often reproved hardeneth *his* neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.

What happens when people resist the working of the Holy Spirit?

1. You <u>close</u> yourself up to God's Truth

Ro 1:18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness;

2. You <u>open</u> yourself up to gross Wickedness

Romans 1:21-24 - Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:

3. You <u>Harden</u> yourself up against God's Voice

You become calloused in heart. Truth can no longer penetrate. And you don't even recognize God's voice.

Ephesians 4:19
Who being past feeling have given themselves over unto lasciviousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness.

2 Timothy 3:8
Now as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the truth: men of corrupt minds, reprobate concerning the faith.

- We should resist sin, not God

- We should resist the Devil, not God

Jas 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

Four examples of people who resisted the working of God's Spirit:

I. The people who heard the preaching of <u>NOAH</u> *resisted God's Spirit*
(Genesis 6:3)

Genesis 6:3
And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also *is* flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.

<u>Rebellion</u> against the pleading of God's Holy Spirit (6:3)

"Strive" – A judicial term meaning "to plead the case for someone" (as Prov. 31:9; Jer. 5:28; 22:16) or as here "to plead with someone." God's spirit who convicts people of sin, righteousness and judgment (cp. Jn. 16:8) was working in men's hearts, yet they ignored Him and with stubborn wills they resisted Him (cp. Acts 7:51) God's Spirit patiently strove with man prior to the flood, but because they did not respond, but rather increased and continued in wickedness (Gen. 6:5-6), God judged that generation (v. 7).

Note: Though God in His mercy and grace does exercise control over the proneness of man's depraved heart, He is under <u>no obligation</u> to do so.

"An hundred and twenty years" – God mercifully would patiently wait in the days of Noah (I Pet. 3:20), giving man ample time to repent before He would send the judgment of the flood. Noah would preach during this time while building the ark.

--God's patience today in being good to those without Christ is to lead them to repentance (Rom. 2:4).

--His patience does not mean that He will not judge (he will), but He is giving ample time for people to come to salvation (II Pet. 3:9-15).

When men persist in sin, and rebel against the "light" God gives them (Ex: creation and conscience), God will let go of them and let them plunge into the depths of sin and subsequent ruin (Romans 1:18-32).

II. The people who heard the preaching of <u>JOSHUA & CALEB</u> *resisted God's Spirit* (Numbers 14:6-11 *v.9)

At Kadesh-Barnea, twelve spies were sent out to survey the land of Canaan (Num. 13:26-27). Ten returned with an evil report which discouraged the faith of the nation (13:28-33), and two (Joshua & Caleb) returned with a good report (Num. 14:7-9). The nation determined unanimously to <u>not</u> follow God's will and to <u>not</u> take the land by faith (Num. 14). As a result, a curse was pronounced on the nation: all would wander for 40 years in the desert, and everyone 20 years old and upward would perish there.

With evil hearts, the nation put God to the test time and time again.

Ten times God had displayed His power, and ten times the nation displayed unbelief.

Ten times God was put to the test:

1. At the Red Sea (Exod. 14:11-12)
2. At Marah (Exod. 15:23-24)
3. In the wilderness of Sin (Exod. 16:2)
4. In connection with manna (Exod. 16:20)
5. In connection with manna (Exod. 16:27)
6. At Rephidim (Exod. 17:1-3)
7. At Horeb (Exod. 32:7)
8. At Taberah (Num. 11:1)
9. The mixed multitude (Num. 11:4)
10. At Kadesh-Barnea (Num. 14)

III. The people who heard the preaching of <u>JESUS the Messiah</u> *resisted God's Spirit* (John 12:35-41)

v. 35
Because Christ, as far as His earthly ministry is concerned, would soon die and would physically be seen no longer by the masses, He admonished the people to take advantage of His light while it was present.

"Walk while ye have the light" – Take advantage of the opportunity, redeem the time, make the most of the moment. Most work (whether in construction or agriculture) is done during the daylight hours. The night brings with it many hindrances, obstacles, and restrictions.

That generation had the privilege of physically seeing "the Light of the world."

v. 36
"Believe in the Light" – Christ is calling for people not merely to know about the Light but to trust in it. To depend upon the light, i.e. to believe on Him.

"That ye may become. . ." - "They were not 'sons of light,' a Hebrew idiom (cf. 17:12; Lk. 16:8 with the contrast); an idiom used by Paul in 1 Thes. 5:5; Eph. 5:8." (Robertson, p. 231).

'Children of light" – Those who believe on Christ are immediately transported out of the domain of darkness and become "translated into the kingdom of His dear Son." They are illuminated or enlightened (Heb. 6:4, 10:32).

"Did hide Himself from them" – To further emphasize the point of Christ's urgent warning to "believe in the light" while the opportunity still exists to do so, Christ vanishes from their sight. The Light hid Himself.

v. 37
Signs and wonders do not (by themselves) produce faith. Man's hardness and blindness of heart requires a supernatural working.

God's Spirit, taking God's Word and enlightening the spiritual eyes of the blind is required for saving faith to result.

v. 38
"Esaias" = Isaiah 6:10 & 53:1

"The arm of the Lord" – is a reference to Jesus Christ.

Why is He referred to as the "arm of the Lord?" Just as arms do things, make things, accomplish things, so everything God the Father ever did, He did through the instrumentality of His Son.

---He created through His Son
---He led Israel in the Old Testament by His Son
---He provided redemption by His Son
---He sustains creation by His Son
---He will rule and reign by His Son
---He will judge the world by His Son

"They could not believe" - They were not able to believe; did not have the independent ability to believe.

Because they "would not" believe, God made their hearts so that they "could not" believe (EX: Pharaoh – Because he hardened his heart the Lord then solidified that hardness and kept it that way to fulfill His purposes through Pharaoh.

Once light has been rejected, God is under no obligation to grant sinners more light.

"When a person starts to resist the light, something begins to change within him; and he comes tot he place where he cannot believe. There is 'judicial blindness' that God permits to come over the eyes of people who do not take the truth seriously." (Wiersbe, p. 343).

v. 40
Truth must be known ("eyes")
Truth must be understood ("heart")
Truth must be applied ('converted")

v. 41
Isaiah saw Christ's glory (Is. 6:1ff). The reference to "His" is the same reference as "Him" (v. 42), which is Christ.

Christ is the "arm of the Lord." He is the Lord, high and lifted up to whom the angels cry out, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. . ."

v. 42
Not everyone is permanently kept blind by the sovereign Lord. He does choose to open the eyes of some.

IV. The people who heard the preaching of <u>STEPHEN</u> *resisted God's Spirit*
(Acts 7:51)

Acts 7:51
Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers *did*, so *do* ye.

Resist = oppose by being hard against

How does one "resist the Holy Spirit"?

a. By hardening their hearts and deafening their ears to His Word (His message)

The Jews resisted the Holy Spirit by rejecting God's Word (Pride!)

They refused to accept anything new.

They "embalmed" the O.T. Law and didn't see that Christ fulfilled it.

Then they replaced the true intent of God's living truth with dead traditions (Mt. 15:1-20)

How does one "resist the Holy Spirit"?

b. Further, by rejecting His messengers (prophets in O.T.; apostles in N.T.)

They rejected God's <u>Prophets</u> (v. 52)

They rejected God's <u>Messiah</u>

NOTE: Joseph (7:9-19), Moses (7:20-43), and Jesus ("the Just One" - v. 52) all have this in common (and Stephen points it out) -- they were all rejected by Israel!

<u>Joseph</u> - sold into slavery by his brothers (v. 9)
<u>Moses</u> - misunderstood (v. 25), rejected (v. 27)
<u>Jesus</u> - betrayed and murdered (v. 52)
But NOTE: They were all rejected the <u>first</u> time but accepted the <u>second</u> (Joseph - v. 13) (Moses - v. 35ff) (Jesus will be accepted at His second coming - Rev. 1:7; Zech. 12:10).

We will not always be heralds of a popular message.
It's easy to preach (witness, etc.) to people who want to hear! You need special grace to preach to those opposed to your message.

Conclusion: **Hebrews 3:7-19**

V. 7

"As the Holy Ghost saith" - The writer of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95:7-11, a psalm most likely penned by David--yet he attributes it to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit is the Author of Scripture!

"Today" - God never promises us a tomorrow on earth. His exhortations are always to be applied today. *"Now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation"* (II Cor. 6:2). *"Boast not thyself of tomorrow"* (Prov. 27:1). *"Ye know not what shall be on the morrow, for what is your life. . . vapor"* (James 4:14-15).

The devil's biggest lie is: "You can do it later". . . "Procrastinate" . . . "You have plenty of time."

"Today" - D.L. Moody - "Go home and think about what I've said" (MacArthur, p. 88).

This may be the last time (final day) God ever speaks to you on earth.

Listen to God especially well when you are young. The most difficult people to reach are old people because they have a tendency to become set in their ways. Many hearts have been closed for so long that they have "rusted shut."

"Hear" - A commonly repeated phrase of Jesus: "*He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."*

"His voice" - God's voice is specifically heard in the pages of His Word, the Bible.

V. 8

"Harden not" - God softens hearts, but man hardens his heart.

"Provocation" - Refers specifically to the time when the nation of Israel had a conflict with God's will and rebelled against God by refusing to believe Him and to conquer the land of Canaan.

Today if you hear His voice,
***Harden not your hearts!**

Nothing saddens God's heart like unbelief. *"Without faith it is impossible to please Him."*

"He that, being often reproved hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy" (Prov. 29:1).

--he looses his inner moorings and drifts astray (v. 10b)

"Err" - to go astray, to wander off course.

Before one errs in actions, they will err in their heart.

Deluded thoughts and reasonings in the heart lead to a misdirected lifestyle.

--he remains willfully ignorant of God's ways (v. 10c)

"Ways" - God's path, the right road.

A lack of direction will result in the life of one who hardens himself against God.

--he forfeits God's best for life and eternity (v. 11)

"Rest" - Temporally: the Promised Land of Canaan (and all of its blessings) was forfeited

Eternally: Heaven

How can you avoid becoming spiritually hard hearted?

A. Examine the condition of your heart (v. 12)
--Today, so you don't depart from God tomorrow

"Take heed" - A word of <u>caution</u>. Look out! Pay attention!

Just as periodic visits to the cardiologist can aid you in knowing the condition of your heart, so a simple request for God to reveal to you the condition of your spiritual heart is in order.

Has He given you a new heart? (cp. Jer. 31:33-34; cp. Heb. 10:16-17)

"Take heed <u>brethren</u>" - This admonition is given to people who call themselves"brethren." (They are "brethren" in the sense that they profess salvation, profess to be children of God)

There is a need for all of us to examine ourselves (II Cor. 13:5 - *"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?")*

"Departing" *(apostenai)* - to apostasize; to abandon a view once held; to depart from the faith (I Tim. 4:1).

People don't depart from God because they once had a believing heart and lost it and became an unbeliever. They depart because they were never genuine believers to begin with. Inside themselves was ***"an evil heart of unbelief."***

Take a personal inventory. Could there be an evil heart of unbelief in you today? (It is better to find out ow than to find out after death)

The test of your faith is:
1. The peace of God imparted to your heart (Jn. 14:1-2)
2. The fruit (works) of God (the results that faith has produced in your life - James 2)

B. Stay in constant fellowship with fellow believers (v. 13)
--Who will encourage your heart

"Exhort" - *(parakaleo)* to encourage. The Encourager (the Holy Spirit) uses human vessels to encourage His people.

All of us need our faith encouraged. We all need a Barnabas in our life.

"One another" - emphasizes the reciprocal nature of the encouraging (Mutual encouragement).

We need each other (we are in a sense mutually dependent).

If you faith to gather with God's people, you will simply fail.

"Daily" - Emphasizes the continual need for encouragement (not just once a week or once a year).

Perhaps we cannot gather all together every day of the week, but you can. . .

--use the phone
--visit a friend from church
--mail a card

This idea of encouraging each other is most clearly stated in Heb. 10:24-25.

ILLUS: the coals in the fireplace

C. Beware of the hardening effects of sin (v. 13b)

We provoke each other unto love and good works so as to live holy and Godly. Such provocation helps us to sin less and to keep our hearts soft.

"Hardened" - sin has a hardening effect on our hearts.

--It hardens us against loving God and others (Mt. 24:12)

--It hardens us against obeying God

Hard-hearted people are too stubborn to accept God's will; they want their own.

EX: *"Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives. . ."* (Mt. 19:8)

Every time you give in to a sin, you become more and more calloused to it, more and more insensitive to its abhorrent nature, less and less afraid of its damaging effects.

"Deceitfulness" - Sin says, "You can flirt with me and not be hurt." "You can from time to time dabble around with me and not be affected."

Use the ILLUSTRATION of "Plastic Steel" putty (when the two elements are mixed, the catalyst of one hardens the other).

Your faith at the finish line reveals whether or not you belong to Christ
(v. 14-19).

V. 14

"Partakers" - sharers; one who possesses Christ.

Those whose faith endures manifest by their endurance that their faith was real.

V. 15

A repeat of 3:7-8, also re-emphasized in 4:7.

V. 16

"Not all" - Not Joshua and Caleb; not those under 20 years of age.

V. 18

The sin which keeps a soul from Heaven is unbelief.

V. 19

Unbelief bars the door to eternal life. Faith (belief) opens it.

SEE: John 1:12, 3:15-18, 3:36, 5:24, 20:31

The condition of you heart will determine your reception of the seed of God's Word (Matthew 13 - the four soils).

--Cement is workable when soft
--Clay is moldable when soft
--Plaster/compound is pliable when soft
--Bonds Plastic Filler is useful when soft

If God is going to alter/grow/mature anything in our lives, we must have tender hearts.

Have you grown insensitive to the "*still small voice"* of God?

Has your reception become calloused?

Are you as easily moved (touched), affected by God's Word as you used to be?

If not, it may be time to ask God to tenderize your heart once again.

> God does not promise you a "tomorrow" on earth; He calls for you to heed His voice <u>today</u>!
>
> II Cor. 6:2 - *"For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation."*

Re 2:11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death.