"HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS"

Hebrews 3:7-19

3-14-2021

Introduction: Verses 7-8

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

When a person's heart is hard . . .
--he tests God rather than trust Him (v. 9a)
--he refuses to believe despite visible evidence (v. 9b)
--he grieves God's heart and invites His indignation (v. 10a, 11a)
--he looses his inner moorings and drifts astray (v. 10b)
--he remains willfully ignorant of God's ways (v. 10c)
--he forfeits God's best for life and eternity (v. 11)

How can you avoid becoming spiritually hard hearted?

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

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

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

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

"HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS"

Hebrews 3:7-19

3-14-2021Introduction: Verses 7-8

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.

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 not follow God's will and to not 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.

V. 9

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

(Num. 14:22-23)

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)

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

When a person's heart is hard . . .

--he tests God rather than trust Him (v. 9a)

One who tests God is one who seeks after signs and wonders rather than trust God's promises (EX: the rich man in hell - Lk. 16).

--he refuses to believe despite visible evidence (v. 9b)

The evolutionist is an example of one who has all the visible evidence of a Creator around him (Ps. 19:1; Rom. 1:20), yet he refuses to acknowledge the Creator.

--he grieves God's heart and invites His indignation (v. 10a, 11a)

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?

I. Examine the condition of your heart (v. 12)

--Today, so you don't depart from God tomorrow

"Take heed" - A word of caution. 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 brethren" - 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)

II. 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

III. 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).

Conclusion: 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.