

Hebrews 3:7-11

If You Will Hear...

We begin a new section of Hebrews today, and it starts with therefore then a parenthetical reference which will then be expounded and then a warning. So to help us see the whole arc lets take that out for a moment - Therefore, because we are His house if we hold fast -- > beware. The scripture is giving us a strong warning that will be the basic arc of the next 25 verses. The thought concludes in chapter 4 verse 14 and takes us through several approaches to unpack this warning.

But before we get to that warning and its exposition, we need to look at the parenthetical reference. We need some perspective that might have been a little more obvious to NT Jewish believers. Psalm 95.7-9 is quoted here. It is quoted 3 times in this larger section which we are beginning. It is a warning to the people of Israel to NOT be like those who would not enter the promised land. That generation did not receive the promises of God did not enter into the land promised to Abraham. That failure is a cautionary tale for us (a

true one, but cautionary nevertheless) for God withheld from them that which He had shown them because of their unbelief. This generation of Israel was largely comprised of unbelievers but were still the visible representation of God's people. So we are told: do not be like them.

The Spirit is speaking to us through the Word of God. His voice is plainly heard, and yet there is an element of deafness which prevents us from hearing. And so we have a simple question which drives the psalmist and is the basic thrust of the this next section of Hebrews. Will you hear? If you will hear then heed...

I. IT IS THE VOICE OF JESUS

- A. He has known all of your life. Nothing is hidden

Luke 12.2-5

Hebrews 4:13 (NKJV)

And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things *are* naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we *must give* account.

B. He is the Judge to whom you will give an account

We just read Hebrews 4.13

2 Corinthians 5.9-11

1 Peter 4.5-6

C. At that judgement seat, there will be no offer of further mercy. All judgement will be in righteousness according to the law of God

D. The offer of mercy is for TODAY. Be very careful not to miss < ο σήμερον > (the today), for by doing that you defy God in disobedience and lose all chance to yield to Him. There is an urgency in the command given here that is often missed in our preaching, in our speaking and certainly in our living. We have today, only today and nothing more. Period.

II. DO NOT HARDEN YOUR HEARTS

There are 2 aspects of this hardening of the heart that are addressed here –

A. Rebellion - As in the rebellion -

1Samuel 15.22-23

Rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft. God commands obedience to His law, and when we refuse we are not committing small infractions of the law, we are full rebellion against the King.

Rebellion is no small matter, it is no minor infraction, no cute little toddler stomping his foot and telling mommy "no" like we see on AFV. But if we dig just a bit deeper, we see that in truth it is the same, but not in a way that makes us less guilty. It is the same in this; that child is committing heinous sin, it is not cute, it is not funny, it is not to be applauded or rewarded. It should not win \$10,000 as it so often does. It instead should be punished and corrected so that rebellion does not take root in the soul.

For small rebellions left unchecked always establish a beachhead in the soul. They establish a point of attack from which the enemy of our souls strikes against us, from which he seeks to destroy us. Our passé attitudes about rebellion are bearing terrible fruit in our nation right now, and that fruit will be bitter and horrifying at the harvest!

B. Challenge - In the day of trial in the wilderness - this trial is a period of time wherein the people of Israel put God to the test. They challenged God. The word rendered trial is <πειρασμοῦ> the idea in this word is to challenge with an attitude of disbelief. They constantly doubted God though He consistently demonstrated His own faithfulness.

1. Your fathers tested God
2. Your fathers tried God
3. Your fathers saw His works for 40 years

These trials and challenges were something that God allowed to prove His own goodness and

faithfulness, and rather than believing, the people continued to doubt, to deny, to disobey. In the face of overwhelming evidence of God's reliability, of His faithfulness, of His trustworthiness, of His very nature - they did not believe when they came to the moment of culmination, and they would not enter into the promised land because they doubted God. Then when God spoke again and told them that they would not enter, they doubted again and tried to go without His blessing... it did not go well for them.

- C. So, it is this challenge and attitude of disbelief in the face of the constant demonstration of God, who He is and what He requires, which constitutes the rebellion against which we are warned. They had crossed the red sea on dry land. They had eaten manna they had drunk water from the rock, they had seen the glory of God descend on the mountain and had followed the pillar of fire and cloud... they had seen so much in the display of God's faithfulness and yet they doubted.

III. GOD WAS ANGRY

A. His fury was aroused for this people had consistently refused to believe.

1. They always go astray in their hearts –

a. the statutes of God's laws were not precious to them. They have gone astray in their hearts . In other words, the affection they should have nurtured for God was not present. Belief, trust and love are deeply connected. There is a reciprocity of nature in them, we love and we trust those whom we love. We believe the best about them, see the good in them, desire the best for them. The more they show us love, the more we learn to trust, the more we trust the deeper grows our love for love flourishes in the soul where trust is present...

1Corinthians 13.4-7

b. We are constantly misunderstanding the truth of what love is. Love is not a chemical response to beauty, it is not a self-centered obsession with what you do for me, it is not a tit-for-tat exchange of favors... love is a decision, an action, a state of being that says I know you, I want what is best for you, I have given myself FOR you, and will always do so. But in an atmosphere of doubt and denial, where mistrust and apathy rule, love does not grow. Israel had gone astray in their hearts because they did not love God. They saw Him as something to be used, a talisman, a genie in a bottle... and that was their undoing.

c. It is the same destruction that is ravaging our culture today. What the world needs is a vision of God that is worthy of the God who IS. A God worth loving at all costs, worth the sacrifice and the loss of all things...

Philippians 3.7-11

Instead what they hear from the church at large is that God is lonely, weak and apathetic about what He says. They hear that God is so desperate for our attention and starved for affection that He will allow all manner of perversions to be acceptable as long as we don't leave Him. The world hears from the visible church that God's only purpose is to bless us in this life so that we can have the American dream, and can have it bigger, better, and more than anyone else... That god is not worthy of love, that god is not worthy of honor, that god is no god at all and the culture is right in seeking to destroy that weak and pathetic false god... But they are as wrong as the visible church about the nature of the True God. This is because they have not taken the time to know His ways

2. The second thing God says aroused His fury is that they have not known His ways.

a. God has revealed Himself

- i. By His creation
- ii. Through His Word
- iii. By THE Word (Jesus)
- iv. Through His Spirit who speaks to us

b. God has revealed His ways

- i. By the record of His word
- ii. By the faithful teaching of the true church according to that word
- iii. By the enlightening power of His Spirit who works within us to teach us
 - who He is
 - What He wants
 - Who we are
 - Whose we are
 - How to become His

c. God has revealed His wrath

- i. Against all ungodliness
- ii. Against all unrighteousness of men

- iii. Against all who suppress the truth in unrighteousness
- d. God has revealed His offer of mercy
 - i. Mercy is reserved for all who ask for it
 - ii. Mercy is founded in the finished work of Jesus Christ
 - iii. Mercy is NOT about
 - our works
 - our righteousness
 - our choice
 - Our wisdom
 - Our power
 - iv. Mercy IS about
 - Jesus's works
 - Jesus's righteousness
 - God's choice
 - Jesus's wisdom
 - Jesus's power

IV. THEY SHALL NOT ENTER GOD'S REST.

- the final judgment then of God is this.

- A. Those who walk in rebellion,
- B. who do not know Him,
- C. who do not love Him,
- D. who do not trust Him,
- E. who do not cry to Him for mercy,
- F. who do not believe that mercy is possible,
- G. who will not cast themselves upon God

- i. for all their need and
- ii. all their desire
- iii. All their lack
- iv. All their hopes
- v. All their fear

H. These WILL NOT enter into His rest. And we have no warrant to ever assure them otherwise. Those who trust in other gods will have to rely upon them in the day of judgement... and that day approaches faster every moment.