



6: ***Believing & Behaving?*** (Hebrews 3:7-19)

Does how you *BEHAVE* match what you *BELIEVE*, or are you the typical hypocrite who says "Do as I say, not as I do"? Let's examine our lives to see if we're trusting God or testing God.

teachingnotes

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* All Scripture is from CSB (Christian Standard Bible)

Catch the Context *Moses* was the faithful servant of the household of God, but *Jesus* is the faithful Son! The ancient author encourages his audience to stay focused on Jesus & hold on to their confidence in Him (Hebrews 3:1-6). But he also issues a warning and an example from the Old Covenant Scriptures from **Ps 95:7-11**.

Hebrews 3:7-9a Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: *Today, if you hear His Voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your ancestors tested Me, tried Me, and saw My works for forty years.*

The Holy Spirit was speaking to people through people. This is how the Scriptures are to be understood. The apostle Peter writes: "**men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.**" (2 Pet 1:21)

➡ **God speaks TO people THROUGH people in the Scriptures.**

The command "**do not harden your hearts**" is emphasized over and over again (Heb 3:8,13,15). Most Hebrews knew this passage from Psalm 95 well, as it served as the opening call to worship in the synagogue every Sabbath which includes the command, "*Today, if you hear His Voice, do not harden your hearts*" (Psalm 95:7b-8a).¹

The audience is supposed to do the opposite of what their rebellious **ancestors** had done - who disobeyed God despite seeing His **works for forty years**. *What are those works?* The Hebrew audience reading this letter knew:

- about the Red Sea parting & God destroying the Egyptian army
- about God's Presence leading the Hebrews in a cloud by day & pillar of fire by night (see Ps 78:12-16, 24-29).
- the stories of God providing manna & quail for hundreds of thousands of people...DAILY!
- the stories of God causing water to flow like a river...from a rock.
- how God even kept their ancestors' clothes and sandals from wearing out (Deut 29:5).

Yet still, although they **saw** God's **works**, their **ancestors** chose to **harden** their **hearts** in **rebellion**. Rather than *trusting* God, they **tested** Him over and over again. The Hebrew people were never satisfied nor appreciative of God's graciousness, even as they stood at the edge of the Promised Land.

Hebrews 3:9b-11 *Therefore I was provoked to anger with that generation and said, "They always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known My ways." So I swore in my anger, "They will not enter My rest."*

What's that all about? Moses obeyed God's command to send 1 leader from each of the 12 tribes to scout the Promised Land (Num 13:1). 40 days later they reported back (Num 13:25),

X 10 of the 12 leaders were terrified reporting the & size of the enemies was overwhelming (Num 13:31-33).

Numbers 14:1-4 Then the whole community broke into loud cries, and the people wept that night. All the Israelites complained about Moses and Aaron, and the whole community told them, "If only we had died in the land of Egypt, or if only we had died in this wilderness! **Why is the LORD bringing us into this land to die by the sword?** Our wives and children will become plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt?" So they said to one another, "Let's appoint a leader and go back to Egypt."

¹ R. Kent Hughes, *Hebrews: An Anchor for the Soul, vol. 1, Preaching the Word* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 1993), 98-99.

✓ **2 of the 12** spies were excited by what they saw, as **they TRUSTED that God** was about to give all this to them.

Numbers 14:6-11 Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who scouted out the land, tore their clothes and said to the entire Israelite community, "The land we passed through and explored is an extremely good land. If the LORD [YAHWEH] is pleased with us, **He will bring us into this land**, a land flowing with milk and honey, **and give it to us**. Only **don't rebel against the LORD**, and **don't be afraid of the people of the land**, for we will devour them. Their protection has been removed from them, and the LORD is with us. Don't be afraid of them!" While the whole community threatened to stone them, the glory of the LORD appeared to all the Israelites at the tent of meeting. The LORD said to Moses, "How long will these people despise me? How long will they **not trust* in Me** despite all the signs I have performed among them? [* NET, ESV, NIV translate this "not believe"]

Yahweh's **glory** appears, ready to destroy this disobedient people. Yahweh relents when Moses intercedes and asks Him to forgive, allowing them to live, but not without a severe consequence to their rebellion.

Numbers 14:22-23 none of the men who have seen My Glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tested Me these ten times and did not obey Me, will ever see the land I swore to give their ancestors. **None of those who have despised Me will see it.**

Numbers 14:29-30 Your corpses will fall in this wilderness—all of you who were registered in the census, the entire number of you twenty years old or more—because you have complained about Me. I swear that **none of you will enter the land I promised to settle you in**, except Caleb son of Jephunneh and Joshua son of Nun.

Although they had been right to the edge of the Promised Land, they would now be turned away and wander in the wilderness for 40 years. God struck down the 10 leaders that spread the negative report, while Joshua and Caleb lived. **Exodus 12:37** - the Hebrews had been **600,000 able bodied men**. Of all those men, only Joshua and Caleb, along with men under the age of 20, actually made it to the Promised Land, while hundreds of thousands of Hebrews were buried in sandy graves in the desert.

THIS IS THE STORY behind the words we have already read:

Hebrews 3:9b-11 *Therefore I was provoked to anger with that generation and said, "They always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known My ways." So I swore in my anger, "They will not enter My rest."*

And now the author presents his Hebrew audience with the real life application from the ancient Scriptures, spoken by the Holy Spirit.

Real Life Application from the Ancient Scriptures

Hebrews 3:12-13 **Watch out**, brothers and sisters, so that there won't be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage each other daily, while it is still called *today*, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.

Despite seeing all God had done, their Hebrew ancestors had **turned away from the living God**, proving that...

🔴 **An unbelieving heart isn't the result of NOT SEEING God at work, but NOT TRUSTING God who works.**

So too, WE are all in danger of an **unbelieving heart** that **turns away from God** and becomes **hardened by sin's deception**.

❓ **Have you ever seen this in the life of one who once called themselves a follower of Jesus?** One day at a time, one decision at a time, that person walked toward sin, away from Jesus, and became **hardened by sin's deception** - the lie that sin is more fulfilling than God.

🔍 **How can we keep that from happening?**

1) **We must GUARD OUR SOULS** - to be on guard against turning from Jesus and turning to sin. *Are YOU doing that?*

🔲 Outside influences are constantly attempting to impact our thoughts, compromise our convictions, and dilute our doctrine. Because of that, we would do well to routinely scan our souls to see if any sinful infection has wormed its way in.

🔴 Do a deep scan of your actions, words, attitudes, thoughts, & relationships and see if they honor or dishonor Jesus. And then ask this question, **"If I'm not seeking Jesus first....WHY IS THAT?"** Then we ask the Lord Jesus to forgive us and get back to daily decisions that honor Him above all others.

2) **We must GUARD EACH OTHER.** We aren't supposed to ride alone. We are commanded to **encourage each other daily** on the journey. The first followers of Jesus had each others' back. They walked in faith TOGETHER. They suffered and celebrated TOGETHER. They even confronted when necessary.

⑦ **Who are you encouraging on the journey?** WHO suffers and celebrates with you on a regular basis? Who are you seeking out to talk about spiritual growth? If you can't answer that...you ARE the LONE RANGER... with no Tonto.

We are all in danger of being enticed to sin and hardened by sin's deception. That's why we must GUARD OUR SOULS and GUARD EACH OTHER.

EXAMINE yourself to see if we are in the faith (2 Cor 13:5).

Hebrews 3:14-15 For we have become participants in Christ if we **hold firmly until the end** the reality that we had at the start. As it is said: *Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.*

Genuine disciples of Jesus don't just start the race, but FINISH the race. Jesus spoke of the same reality using a parable of the seed and soils.

- Some fell on rocky ground and **grew up quickly...but didn't last** because it had **no deep roots.**

Mark 4:16a-17 When they hear the word [*the message of Jesus*], **immediately they receive it with joy.** But they have no root; they are short-lived. When distress or persecution comes because of the word, they immediately fall away.

- Then there was the **seed** that fell **among the thorns:**

Mark 4:18-19 Others are like seed sown among thorns; these are the ones who **hear the word**, but the worries of this age, the deceitfulness of wealth, and the desires for other things enter in and choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful.

- And then there's the **seed that falls on good ground.**

Mark 4:20 And those like seed sown on good ground **hear the word, welcome it, and produce fruit** thirty, sixty, and a hundred times what was sown."

Genuine followers of Jesus start the race and FINISH the race. These people **produce fruit** showing who their lives are rooted in, people who **hold firmly until the end and refuse to let go and walk away.** **That's what we can tell others real Christianity looks like,** rather than communicate a false gospel that has been deceiving people into a false hope (just pray a prayer, get baptized, join a church, and you have the golden ticket to heaven) **FALSE!**

A deadly serious concern

Hebrews 3:16-19 For who heard and rebelled? Wasn't it all who came out of Egypt under Moses? With whom was God angry for forty years? Wasn't it with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, if not to those who disobeyed? So we see that they were **unable to enter because of unbelief.**

They rebelled because of **unbelief.** They did not BEHAVE because they did not BELIEVE. They didn't deny that God existed, but He was not the One they TRUSTED.

- Rather than trust God's Presence & power to go take the land, they cowered in fear of their own inadequacies.
- Rather than follow Moses, whom God had used over and over to speak truth and demonstrate gracious love & righteous judgement, they were ready to vote in a new leader.
- Rather than live in freedom, they wanted to go back to slavery in Egypt.

How we BEHAVE shows Who We BELIEVE.

- We too are commanded to **enter God's rest** (an eternal relationship - more about this next week). Will we rely on God's Presence and power to battle our sin nature and ungodly influences OR will we rely on our own inadequacies and cower in fear?
- **Will we trust our Leader the Lord Jesus...**the One who has consistently spoken truth, demonstrated gracious love, & exercised righteous judgment? OR...will we go back to the leaders who tell us what our itching ears want to hear - even if it's not true?
- **Will we appreciate and walk in the freedom God has given us** OR will we go back to our old life & back to the sin that once enslaved us?

FEET2FAITH

1. ***Examine your soul and see if Jesus is there.*** Does your behavior demonstrate that you BELIEVE Jesus...or not? Do you have a deep desire to know Jesus and honor Him? When you sin, are you convicted to make things right with God and others?

2 Corinthians 13:5 Test yourselves to see if you are in the faith. Examine yourselves. Or do you yourselves not recognize that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless you fail the test.

2. ***Seek out a same-sex Christian friend to encourage in the journey together!*** Suffer & Celebrate together. Talk about the Scripture you read, the questions you have, the concerns you struggle with, and the ways God has been good to you!

Hebrews 3:13 But encourage each other daily, while it is still called **today**, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.

heretoserveyou

Have questions and need some help? ...real soon...how about now? Please **call** or **text** us soon!

- * Contact **Jackie** (850-673-1582), **Justin** (704-618-6144), **Christy** (673-9764), or another follower of Jesus soon!
- * Or call our **deacons & wives:** Alan & Christy Androski (464-1428), Steve & Debbie Bass (673-7952), Tim & Joni Hughey (464-1156), Mark & Dot Mancil (253-5405), Boss & Amelia Mulkey (464-6717), Jim & Derita Pinkard (464-6188), Fain & Linda Poppell (464-1282), or Tom & Martha Waddail (973-0011).