A Heart That Cannot Feel — Delivery Transcript

Hebrews 3:7–19 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, March 9, 2025 · *Neglecting Salvation*

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On that front. If you have your Bibles, we're going to be in the book of Hebrews this morning. Hebrews chapter three. If you don't have a Bible, there should be one on the chair in the seat in front of you. If you're a front row Baptist, you can just reach behind you. This is what the pew Bibles look like. That's actually what I'm going to be preaching from this morning. And if you're new to Broadview, we typically preach through books of the Bible, and right now we're preaching through Hebrews, but we're not preaching through all of it.

We're just Hammering on the warning passages in the book of Hebrews, and they have been some challenging passages, and we're looking at them in the weeks leading up to Easter as a way hopefully for the Lord to kind of wake us up. That's especially needed on a time change Sunday. In the last service I caught more than one person falling asleep and I know it wasn't my preaching. And I was one. I'm not going to tell you who the other person was. No. It's easy to you it's easy to be sleepy on time change Sunday, but it's also easy to get sleepy spiritually.

And what I've noticed in my life is as things get good when life is great when l when the Lord is blessing and goals are being reached and I'm working hard and everything's doing well and we're reaching new heights, usually that requires a extra layer of diligence and work and activity. And in my life as activity increases, intimacy with the Lord decreases. I don't know if that's true for anybody else. I think that's just true relationally in general. If you've ever had a girlfriend, boyfriend, marriage, children, as activity increases, intimacy, if you're not careful, will begin to decrease.

And what we saw last week in Hebrews chapter two with the first warning is that the default position of the human heart is to tr is to drift. And that drifting is dangerous spiritually and the longer you drift, the more damage it does. And it ends up putting you in a position where God's judgment may visit your life. If there isn't some kind of correction. And we saw that it's one thing to neglect an object that's not all that valuable, but if you neglected an object of

infinite value, namely the great salvation that's in the Lord Jesus Christ, that neglect invites an eternal punishment.

And that's unsettling for us to think about. In fact, all of these passages are unsettling. The passages that we're going to look at in weeks four and five are maybe some of the most unsettling. And they're unsettling because you can read those passages and it sounds like the consequences for failure to heed the warnings is Hellfire. Punishment eternally, the loss of your salvation. So some people read these warning passages and say, well, they must not apply to me because I'm a Christian and Christians can't lose their salvation. And you know, we're a Southern Baptist church.

We believe in the perseverance of the saints, and so I could see why you would think that and read those passages. The problem with that view is the Bible, the way the passages are worded, it's not to unbelievers, it's to believers. These warning passages are for people who profess faith in Jesus Christ as Lord. Now how you make sense of that and what you think the warnings are of and what you think the consequences are, those are all open to interpretation and debate. But what I don't think is open to debate is that these warnings are towards people who profess faith in Jesus.

Now they may be false professions, they may be pretend believers. But we should apply these warnings to ourselves because we are in need of passages like these from time to time to wake us up. From our spiritual slumber and I think that's how the Lord's going to use these in our church family. And I've been really blessed by my studying of these things. And I hope to extend that in our time together. Last week was about God's greater word and Jesus. The whole book of Hebrews is a sermon. Like any good sermon, it's got teaching time and exhortation time.

The teaching time is generally around a thesis that Jesus is greater. Than anyone or anything that came before. He's greater than the old covenant law that was mediated through angels. As we saw last week, he has a greater word. And this week in the second warning we're going to see that Jesus is superior to Moses, who is a great leader for God's people. But Jesus actually is a better leader who performed an even greater work. And so with that in mind, let's pick it up in chapter three, starting in verse five to get that contrast between Moses and Jesus.

Moses verse five was faithful as a servant in God's household, as a testimony to what would be said in the future, but Christ was faithful as a son over his household. Moses' servant in Jesus Son over. And we are that household if we hold on to our confidence and the hope in which we boast. So the superiority of Jesus is seen not in just that he's superior to the angels who delivered that old covenant word, but he's superior to Moses, who led God's people out of slavery. With that in view, the warning comes in verse 7.

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says to day, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. As in the rebellion on the day of testing in the wilderness, when your ancestors tested me and tried me, and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked to anger with that generation. And I said, they always go astray in their hearts. And they have not known my ways, and so I swore in my anger, they will not enter my rest. So, application, verse 12, 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.

Rather encourage each other daily while it is still called today. So that none of you is hardened by sin's deception. This is the word of the Lord. Now you can tell just from reading that warning passage, some words that get repeated over and over again. The other thing I notice right away is that the format of this passage looks a little different in my Bible than it usually does. Is that true of anyone else's Bible? In the CSB, verses 7 to 11 are bold face in their type, type setting. And that's usually because, or not usually, it's always because it's an illusion or a quotation of the Old Testament.

And the Old Testament quotation in Hebrews 3, verses 7 to 11, is of Psalm 95. I believe it's verses 7 to 11. And in Psalm 95, the psalmist is encouraging worship in the heart of God's people and challenging them not to harden their hearts. Like the Israelites did during the Exodus wilderness wanderings. And Psalm 95, if you go back and read it, I don't think we've got it on the screen, so we won't do it today. But the sub but Psalm 95 specifically warns against grumbling and complaining. Because the Israelites were grumbling and complaining at Marah and Meribah, which are Hebrew words for grumbling, complaining, and testing.

And if you allow that kind of spirit in your life, it's going to harden your heart. And so the warning this week I think builds on the warning in week one, namely, if you don't pay attention to what you've heard you're going to drift in your relationship with the Lord, and the greater the drift, the graver the consequence. In a similar way, ears that are not able to hear actually lead to a heart that isn't able to feel. And the more you reject God's word being spoken to you week in and week out, as you read the scriptures, as you hear messages, as you just sense the Spirit of God leading you and you resisting, the greater you enact that kind of response to the Lord, the harder it is for your heart to feel conviction the next time around.

Unhearing ears lead to an unfeeling heart. And so the warning is against the heart that cannot feel. Now how does that happen? Well, if you take the example of the Israelites, it happened really in a very gradual and unexpected way. The event that Psalm 95 has in view, I think specifically, is the event at Kadesh Barnea, which means nothing for some of you because You know, you're not super steeped in the Old Testament and that's perfectly fine. And a lot of you've been Christians a long time and you just totally forgot about Kadesh Barnea, and there's no shame in that.

But the happenings at Kadesh Barnea were the final straw for the Lord. It's the straw that broke the camel's back, and the Lord essentially said, I'm tired of your grumbling and complaining. Go to your room for 40 years and wander in the wilderness for 40 years. And that is the warning that is being cautioned for God's people if we do the same thing. Now I want to take you there to numbers chapter 14, because that's where it's located. If you're new to the Bible study, I'll try to set the table because numbers 14 is the climax of a big story about Moses and the Exodus.

The Israelites had been suffering in slavery to Pharaoh for 400 plus years. God raises up Moses, says, go get him. Moses said, let my people go. Pharaoh said no. Moses says, please. He didn't say please. He said, plague. And Pharaoh said, okay, fine. And so after 10 plagues and a bunch of bunch of bad stuff, they leave Egypt and after they leave they start to grumble and complain. Immediately, as soon as they get to the Red Sea, they're like, why did God lead us out here to the Red Sea? There's water and we can't go through the water and we're going to die.

And here come the chariots. And Moses is like stop grumbling, stop complaining, and he parted the Red Sea and they went through. And that was just first of many miracles that happened in the wilderness. They had manna far from heaven to give them food during the day. They had a pillar of fire to guide them at night, a pillar of cloud to guide them during the day. They had water gushing out of rocks that were struck by this stick and Moses' staff. It was just miracle after miracle after miracle. And even though all of those things were true of God's faithfulness, they still found a way to grumble and complain and grumble and complain.

Finally they get to Mount Sinai, and at Mount Sinai God gives the ten Commandments. If you remember this, Moses goes up on the mountain and the people while Moses is away. They go astray and they put all their gold together and they make a calf, a golden calf, an a graven image, and they begin to worship the golden calf. Which is an idolatrous act before the Lord. And the Lord got angry and he said, I'm done with these people. These people are not worth, he didn't say they're not worth saving, but that's what I would have said if I were God And Moses pleads and intercedes with the Lord, do not destroy them.

And so God relents, He forgives the people and continues to walk with them. Now He gives them the law. He says, you're my people, this is how we do things. And after 12 months or so, they make their way out of Sinai to the land of promise. That's what this storyboard represents. You know, back in the day they had flannel graphs for Sunday school. And then God made artificial intelligence. And so we have AI on L C D screens. So he goes to Pharaoh, let my people go. Pharaoh says, go.

They split the Red Sea. God is faithful in the miracles. They get into Mount Sinai. They ruined the opportunity. God is still faithful. He leads them towards the land of promise.

They're on the cusp of the promised land. And Moses sends 12 spies into the promised land to scout it out and look what's going on. And they go and they discover it's everything God said it would be. It is Fertile, it is awesome. There is milk and honey, it is good. The only problem is there's giants in the land. There's the Philistines and the Nephilim and we're like grasshoppers in front of them.

So I recommend we not go. And when they gave that news, 10 people, negative news, two people gave a positive report and said, yeah, they're there, but God is with us. God is how many times does the Lord have to show that he's powerful and able to deliver us? So let's go. And the negative side won and so all the people began to do what? Can you guess what I'm about to say? Grumble. They began to grumble and complain. And not only did they grumble and complain, they said, I we need new leaders.

And not only did they want to elect new leaders, when those leaders said, hey, it's not that bad, and God's on our side, they said, we're going to get a rock and stone you. So they try to stone Moses and Caleb and Joshua, and the Lord just has enough and he and he makes a statement. All of that to say, the warning, if you use that as the example, if he if Hebrews 3 is saying, don't do what they did at Kadesh Barnea, the warning is against the critical spirit. A critical spirit is what produces a hardened heart.

Let's read numbers 14, just so I can show you how this critical spirit works. If you don't have it should be up on the screen. Numbers 14, the spies come back, they give the bad report, and then it says the whole community broke out into loud cries. I want you to notice the universal language, how often it's used. They broke into loud cries. The people wept that night. All the Israelites complained, there's our word, 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 are going to become plunder. Wouldn't it be better for us to go back to Egypt? That is the consequence of a critical spirit gone amok the warning in Hebrews is against a heart that cannot feel, and a hardness in your heart is created, I believe, first and foremost, by a critical spirit that goes unaddressed. This is the tenth and final time God says I've had enough of the grumbling and complaining because grumbling and complaining, a critical spirit, hardens your heart. And it's and it's really subtle. It's kind of like drifting.

You don't often know the damage that's being done until it's too late. But if you think about the impact of a critical spirit, just looking at the four verses that we read, a critical spirit is very infectious, and that when you have a critical spirit, it has a way of spreading to everybody else. If you if you're married, you know when someone gets a little gripey, the other person gets a little gripey unless you're not normal. Or when you're maybe yelling at your kids, or maybe your kids are yelling at you, your voice gets a little loud.

And negativity breeds negativity. The more negativity you allow into your life and critical spirit that you allow into your life, the more it begins to spread to the other people. That are around you. It's infectious. It's also also word I want to use. It i it grows in its intensity. A critical spirit has a way of not staying where you originally place it. You're critical about this thing, all of a sudden you begin to get critical about all the other things in your life as well. It's like if you've ever had a bad morning.

And then you just decide because my morning is bad, my day's bad. And so every you find everything in your day, even if it's not all that bad a day, you're like, well, this is just bad because this happened and this happened. And you're looking for the bad. Because you have a critical spirit, and a critical spirit is not just infectious in that it spreads, but it also grows in its intensity. But the most dangerous thing about a critical spirit is how it deceives us from what's really happening around us.

A critical spirit clouds our vision of reality. And that's what you see in numbers 14. They say things like, I'd rather die in the wilderness. I'd rather go back to Egypt They look at their circumstances, the Philistines, the Nephilim, the giants in the land, and they are so obsessed by the problems in their immediate surroundings and circumstances. That they have become blind to the fact that God promised them that land. God has demonstrated time and again how powerful He is to accomplish His will in their life. And so they became blinded to the truths that they most needed to remember.

And that's what a critical spirit does to you and to me. It clouds our vision of what's real. And it's pretty obvious in this way this morning's connected to the last week. If you think about drifting from an object that you need to pay attention to, the further you drift from the object, the harder it is to see. Well, you can obviously see if that's true in terms of drifting in your relationship with God, the har the further you drift from something or the harder something is to see the less accurate you will be in describing that thing.

And if the thing that you need to understand and respond to is cloudy in your vision. Because of your perspective, then it's going to deceive you as to what's really going on in the world. The things that you really need to know the truth about, you will not know. Or you will know wrongly because you allowed a hardness in your heart to take effect, because you allowed a critical spirit to go unaddressed in your life. You know, the Bible says that faith comes by hearing. I think one of the reasons the Bible says faith comes by hearing is because the eyes are so easily tricked.

If I don't know about you, but when the iPhone came out, I became a professional photographer. And I have some great I have some great shots no one will ever see the thing I love about the iPhone is the bokeh effect built into the software. You know what I'm saying? That's because you're not a professional photographer like me. The Boca effect is the fuzzy

on the background. And the clear on the foreground. And so you can make yourself look like a model even with the portrait even with the portrait camera.

That is, I think, a spiritual truth. When you're trying to focus on something, if the thing is too up close in your face, you can't focus. You can't even see what's in front of you because it's too close. If you're too far away from something, the lens can't focus on it. You got to be just right. But when you are just right focused on something, when you focus on that thing and it's in the foreground, everything else in the background begins to fade away. It has the bokeh effect. And what happened with Israel is that they it wasn't that they were too close or too far, so much so as it was that they had chosen to focus on the wrong object.

They had chosen to focus on their circumstances, their weaknesses, their challenges, their dissatisfaction, the things that God wasn't doing, the th the things that God wasn't saying, and because they were focused on that, the glory of God and the promises of God and the goodness of God began to fade and get fuzzy in the background. And that's true for you and me as well. Your focus determines your perception of reality. And when you are focused on the wrong object, your perception of what's real will be off. Because your perspective is off.

And there's lots of ways you could apply this. This it deals with why a lot of us get anxious or angry. Ed Welch wrote a book, when people are big, God is small same idea. You can, if you're a photographer, you can take a little tiny grasshopper and make him look bigger than the Rocky Mountains based on where you put that lens. When the reality is the Rocky Mountains are way bigger than the grasshopper. They're way majestic. They're glorious. They're the most compelling thing you've ever seen. But you're absorbed with this little bug because of where you put your focus.

And that's what a critical spirit does. That's why it's so dangerous. A critical spirit, if you think about it, is one of the most grievous sins because anxiety says of the Lord, maybe you don't know, maybe you're not powerful. A critical spirit doesn't say maybe you're not. A critical spirit says, God, you can't, but I can. A critical spirit says, God, I would be better off in charge. A critical spirit basically says, God, I want you off the throne and I'm going to put myself there because I know better. And that's why it's so dangerous, and that's why it invites some of the harshest discipline from the Lord, whether it was Israel and the old covenant or our critical spirit towards Jesus in the new.

But the last thing a critical spirit does is that it kept them from God's rest. If you look at the rest of numbers 14, we don't have time to read it. But when they grumble and complain, they try to stone Moses and the leaders, and God says, that's it, I've had it, I'm starting over. I'm going to do like Abraham 2.0 with you, Moses. And Moses pleads with the Lord, please don't do that. It's actually just going to make you look bad. And as much as I would like to be awesome.

I you know I you need to make good on your promise. You said you're going to deliver us. Please forgive us. And the Lord hears Moses' intercession. He forgives Israel. He says in chapter 14, verse 20, okay I've I will pardon them, I forgive them of their sin, but here's what's going to happen, verse 22. None of the men who have seen my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and then have tested me, how many times ten times and they didn't obey me. None of those men will ever see the land that I swore to give their ancestors.

None of those. Who have despised me will see it. And sure enough, that's exactly what happens. The ten spies who gave the bad report, God killed them immediately. And then everyone aged 20 and over died in the wilderness over the next 40 years, except for Aaron and Joshua, or no, Joshua and Caleb. Who who believed the Lord. They actually inherit the promised land. Caleb's like 80 years old and he's like, I'm going to take over the world. It's a really cool story. We don't have time to tell it. But that's the punishment is that they were not able to enter God's rest because they tested them those ten times.

What were the ten times? I have no idea. I went and I did a word study on the word grumble and complain and here are some of the examples that I found in the Old Testament, just from when they got out of Egypt to the promised Land. They complained before the Red Sea. They complained after the Red Sea about the bitter water. They complained about the food, the manna and the quill. There wasn't enough variety. They disobeyed the Sabbath. They complained again about their thirst. They constructed the golden calf. Then they complained about God's provision and that their suffering was too great.

They complained about the f food again with the food in the water. They just can't seem to enjoy the food in the water. And then they finally didn't trust God to keep his promise at at Kadesh Barnea. And that was the final straw. The Lord said, that's it, I've had it's over. And it was so final, the judgment was so final that after God kills the ten spies who didn't believe the Lord, everyone else in the community was like, whoops. I guess God's serious God, we changed our mind. We'd love to go into the promised land.

And so Moses had to warn them, it doesn't work that way. You've already, you know, you already made him mad. You've already got the punishment. His hand will not go with you. If you try to go and do the battle, you're going to lose. And they didn't listen, and they tried to go to the battle, and they got their rear ends handed to them because God had removed his presence from their midst. And that's really what the rest of God is. God's rest is the presence of God in the land.

The promised land was the land of rest. He said, I'm going to give you rest in this land of promise. It's something he promised to Abraham. But even that promise to Abraham was not so much about geograph g geography and real estate as it was A promise to restore the Eden that had been forfeited through the sin of Adam and Eve. And even in Genesis 3:15, the

Lord says to Eve, I'm going to bring someone from your offspring from your womb, the seed of the woman is going to crush the head of the serpent.

He's going to reverse the curse, and he's going to restore the paradise that you have lost. And Israel getting the promised land was God furthering that promise. But for these people who were God's people, who were forgiven of sin. We're not going to enter into God's rest because they had let a spirit of grumbling and complaining fester so long that it turned them away from the Lord. And that can happen to you. And that can happen to me. And that's why the author of Hebrews says, pay attention. He actually says two things.

Pay attention and encourage each other. If you turn back to Hebrews 3, with this Old Testament example in place. He says, watch out, brothers and sisters. Why? So that there won't be in any of you an evil and unbelieving heart. In other words, there's not a lot of daylight between how you're wired and how they were wired. They had an evil unbelieving heart, and you can get an evil unbelieving heart. And you might turn away from the living God. So watch out, examine yourself. And then number two, verse 13, encourage each other.

Daily while it's still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception. Two commands, two umbrellas, one's personal the other's relational. There's a there's an exhortation to a personal examination. In other words, check yourself before you wreck yourself. Look into your heart of hearts. Look at what's going on in your heart because if you are not on the regular examining yourself your heart might get sick. The phrase evil unbelieving heart we read that and go, well I never had an evil heart. My mom said I have a good heart, you know that's n it's not evil like that.

You could translate the word evil, but it's more the word I think the word sick is much better. Jeremiah talks Jeremiah 17. The heart is desperately sick who can understand it. What happens in our Christian experience, if you're like me, is you can you can love the Lord. You can even be going to church. You can be reading your Bible But by virtue of living in this sinful broken world, things can happen in your life that poison the heart. Words can get said to you, events can happen to you. Goals might not be reached, and the s the brokenness and the sin and the suffering gets lodged into your heart so that it begins to get sick.

It literally is kind of like a germ that gets in there and your immune system just goes to work on it. And if you let that sickness fester, it diseases your heart spiritually such that you then turn away from the Lord. And I think what a lot of Christians mistakenly do is they say, well, I need to examine myself, but only for the big sins. You know, those big bad sins where, you know, if you take the Lord's Supper, you've got to examine yourself for the big bad sins. That's not what Hebrews 3 is talking about.

He's talking about the middle ground between communion with God and turning away from God. He's talking about that Sometimes the sin is of the heart. Sometimes it's not even

visibly expressed. Sometimes it's a grumbling spirit. Sometimes it's Crippling anxiety. Sometimes it's a bitterness and a unforgiveness that you just refuse to deal with and it poisons you. It makes you sick. And because it makes you sick, you struggle to believe. Evil unbelieving, sick, struggling to trust that God still knows what he's doing, struggling to trust God is good, God is present, God will come through.

And all of us have had Experiences in our Christian life where that's where we found ourselves. And all Hebrews is saying is, would you just watch your heart more carefully? Would you just pay attention to what's going on right here more often than what you probably are doing right now? Once a week is not enough. After the sermon is not enough. One of the my favorite books, parenting books, is a book by Paul Tripp called Shepherding a child's Heart, because it talks about discipline. You don't just discipline a child's external behavior because the external behavior is usually motivated by an issue in the heart.

And so much more effective as a dad is to say, son, what's going on in your heart? Did anything get in your heart this week that doesn't need to be there? Did this did someone say something that you have trouble forgetting? Did something happen that you have trouble letting go? Is there anything that's in your heart? That's what the word watch means. It means to guard it, be vigilant, like a like a like a prison guard on a watchtower. Always alert, paying attention to anything that's going to poison the well.

And if there's anything I hope this series does in our church, it's that I hope it normalizes our ability to be frank and honest when our hearts are getting sick. Because we have enough churches that are full of perfect people that pretend really well that everything's great and then all of a sudden out of nowhere a marriage is destroyed or someone ends up on the headlines going to prison and everybody goes, wow, I didn't see that coming. And well and neither did he. Because he wasn't paying attention. Either did she because he wasn't paying attention to what was going on.

And if we could get over the fact that we got to be perfect little Christians who never have any problems and we can start to be honest, and my heart's getting a little sick I'm struggling to believe. I'm really fighting to be here today. Then maybe we wouldn't be so prone to turn away or to have a hardened heart that's that struggles to respond to what the Lord's doing in our life. That leads to the next application, which is to encourage one another. You need to examine yourself because you have a similar inclination, and then you need to encourage one another.

This is in verse 13. Encourage one another daily while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception. Notice that phrase, by sin's deception in your notes encourage one another. Why? Because sin thrives in isolation. When you are isolated, sin thrives. One of the reasons is because it's really hard to see sin in yourself. When you look in the mirror, you don't see a sinful, broken person. You see a nice Lord, it's hard to be humble

when you're perfect in every way. I don't know about you, but when I get out of the shower, if I suck in enough, I feel really good about myself.

That's just human nature. You believe the best about yourself. You're very gracious with yourself. You're very generous to yourself not so much are you generous with others. Much easier is to see the sin and brokenness in the other people in your life. I'm sure. That Audra could come up here and give you fifteen ways in which I am not who I think I am, you know. And she would write that list and I would probably go, I don't see it. I just don't I don't I just don't see what you're saying.

Why? Because that's just the sin thrives in isolation. You don't see your junk in the mirror. That's why you need people. That's why you need other people. And not just any people, you need people who know you well enough to know when you're bluffing, to know when you're faking, to know when you're inauthentic, to know when you're just BSing, and they can call you out on it, which is what the word encourage means. When it says encourage one another, it sounds like emotional affirmation. Oh, you're so good. That is not the word.

It's the word parakeleo. It's where the Hebrew the Hebrew, the Greek word for Holy Spirit is paraclete. And that's this word in noun form. I'm sorry, that's that word in verb form. What does the Holy Spirit do? The Holy Spirit convicts the Holy Spirit exhorts, the Holy Spirit strengthens, the Holy Spirit comes alongside, and that's what you need in your life with other Christians. You need them to challenge you. You need them to strengthen you. You need them to call you out. You need them to come alongside of you. And you don't just need it on Sundays, really, do you?

You need it outside of Sundays. You need it when you have to go to the hospital. You need it when something happened to your children and you're trying to make sense of why is God still good when He let that happen to my baby. You need it when you when you are flirting with sin that could destroy your family and no one else knows about it and you're afraid to tell your spouse but you need somebody you can trust that you can talk to about it. That's when you need those people.

And that's what keeps people in the game. That's what keeps people from falling away. It's community. It's that's why we're always talking about small groups. It's not self-serving, it's not so we can have good numbers, it's so that you won't shipwreck in your faith. It's so that you will have people who know you and love you and are there for you when you need them the most that's the warning and that's how you avoid it you look at yourself and you encourage each other. So get connected to community. I can't I don't know how many times I get how many different ways I can say it and I hope you hear it coming from the right place.

I'm not guilt tripping you. I'm not trying to Judge you. This is, I believe, your Heavenly Father saying, I want to bless you. I want to grow you. I want to give you the rich and

abundant life, but you just cannot do it if you persist in isolation. And I say that as the chief introvert of Broadview Baptist church. I don't know what I do without my small group on Thursday nights. They were a means of God's grace in my life. And the same will be true for you, whether it's a group on our website or just you getting a bunch of Christians together and being real and honest.

It could be a D group, it could be any kind of group, so long as they're Christians who are willing to encourage one another. So examine yourself. You have the same inclination. Encourage each other. Sin thrives in isolation. Finally endure to the end. Verses 14 to the end. 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. For who heard and rebelled?

Wasn't it all who came out of Egypt under Moses? And 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 it wasn't those who disobeyed? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. That's a lot of words, but let me just try to break it down. He's basically saying, you can know that you know that you're saved. If you finish in the faith. And then he points to this Old Testament covenant community.

He says, yeah, they were forgiven of sin. They were the people of God. They saw the miracles. They participated in some way, but they didn't enter the promised land because of their unbelief. And so if you want to enter the promised land, you've got to keep believing. It's not as some wrongly assume, if I'm going to be saved, if I'm going to get to heaven. Maybe God saves me by his grace, but then I've got to work really hard not to sin so that I can earn the rest of the way there.

That is not what Hebrews is saying. Notice the way it's written. He says, we're participants. First off, that's a perfect tense verb, which talks about fellowshipping in Christ. It's a Past action that has continuing abiding effects. So one it's a one and done. You can know that you're saved and always saved. You might say that. You can know that you're forever saved if we hold firmly until the end. What are you holding? The reality that we had at the start. The ESV, I think, says, the assurance of our original conviction.

Does anybody have an ESV? How does it say, Jace? Which person? Which part of the first one. 14. It says, for we have come to share in Christ if indeed we hold our there it is. Our original confidence. NASB. You got it, Dustin? These guys they don't have the best translations. No, I'm kidding. ESV and NASB, I think, get it better I think they do it better. Verse 14, it says something about assurance. We will become partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end.

The beginning of our assurance. Okay, so what he's saying is, you know when you first became a Christian and the gospel lights came on? And you're like, oh, it's not about what I do, it's about what Jesus has done for me. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness. I'm in. That faith, that that Death to self and surrender to Jesus, I'm saved by grace alone, through faith alone, and Christ alone. That is what I would call your original confidence, your beginning assurance. And the author of Hebrews is saying that faith will stay with you to the very end.

So it's not saved by grace through faith and start doing works. It's real, genuine faith perseveres. It keeps on keeping on. It keeps trusting the Lord. To such a great degree that even when you're confronted with your sin and confronted with worries in a critical spirit. That your gratitude for salvation, that your confidence in the Lord is of such great weight in your life that it conquers and overwhelms those inclinations towards sin. And that happens for the rest of your life. Does that mean you will never have seasons of wondering?

No. Does that mean you can't be a prodigal child? No. You're speaking from firsthand experience. There's some brothers from Roby in the room today. They could tell you know, some there's some crazy crazy stuff on me. That's why careful who you talk to when you go to Roby. You can persist in a season of unbelief, but what the Holy Spirit will not allow is for you to turn away. That that critical grumbling spirit, even if it's warning passages, even if it's a preacher on a Sunday morning that got up in your grill and made you mad and you're about to write me an email, the Holy Spirit says, yeah, but he's not wrong.

Where is your confidence? So I am not trying to get you to doubt your salvation. It's the last thing I ever want to do. But I want you to have assurance for the right reasons. And Hebrews is saying your assurance is not some prayer you prayed when you were seven years old. It's not some baptism after the VBS, your fourth grade year. Your assurance is what you do today. You notice how often the word today is used in this passage? Today, if you hear his voice. Today do not harden your heart.

Today, today, today. Because today is how you know that you're genuinely participating. In the great salvation that is through Jesus Christ. The best way to know you have faith in the chair that you're sitting in is to look at the fact that you're sitting in the chair right now. And the best way to know you have a relationship with Jesus that is going to take you to heaven when you die is that you're trusting completely and fully in Jesus Christ right now. And if you are not, or if you are drifting, or if there is a hardness in your heart, because you have been resisting and resisting and resisting.

Then today may be a great gift from the Holy Spirit in your life because he's finally penetrated that thick wall of callousness and rebellion and he's saying I'm asking you one more time I'm asking you one more time will you not harden your heart but listen and come home. Because there is a tenth time, to use Israel's example, there is a there is a point in

which the Lord may not keep pleading. Or he keeps pleading, but you stop hearing because you chose to persist in unbelief. And your heavenly Father would spare you.

The misery that comes from that kind of a spirit, which is why he pleads with you today. Don't harden your heart. Do not harden your heart take that critical spirit and replace it with gratitude and thanksgiving for who I am and what I've done through the Lord Jesus Christ on the cross. Come back to the cross, behold him there, his hands, his feet. Love so amazing, so divine, demands my soul, my life, my all. That's the response that we need this morning to stay in the game. So let me encourage you as we enter into this invitation to do those things.

Examine yourself. And if you are doing that by yourself, you're doing it wrong. So bring people in, connect yourself to community so that you can get the real truth about what's going on. Maybe this morning you need to stop focusing on the gravity of your situations and circumstances and start focusing on the glory of the God who is sovereign over them. So that that grumbling and complaining can get exchanged with adoration and trust. Maybe this morning the Lord's stirring in your heart to start a group, to be the catalyst for community.

And togetherness because it's been such a blessing in your life and you want to give to others what the Lord has used to keep you in the faith. I don't know what it looks like. The applications are many, but the word is the same. And so where the Lord is speaking, would you listen as we respond? Heavenly Father, we thank you for this time and your word. And as we enter into this time of response, we pray that you would give us ears to hear and hearts that are soft and open and responsive to what it is that you're wanting to do.

And we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.