



**Hebrews 3:7-19**  
**Warning: Do Not Resist God**

Summary: Christian hearts are in danger of being deceived by sin as they follow God.

Every three to five thousand miles you need to change the oil on your car. Every now and then you need to free up some storage on your X-Box or your phone. Well, this morning we have the chance to do a little maintenance, a little tune up, on our souls so I encourage you be listening expectantly, to consider, how is God speaking to you and what does He want you to do about the things we'll hear this morning? Because at the end of our time together you'll have the chance to talk with God about it all and then receive communion.

We're studying the book of Hebrews which is one big argument that Jesus is better. Better than the angels, better than the prophets of old, better than Moses, better than any human priest or pastor, Jesus is better. But there are also five major warnings in the book, passages alerting us to the dangers of slowly drifting away from Jesus or resisting God and the consequences of that drift or resistance.

We've come to the second warning this morning. We saw last week that Moses was great, but Jesus is better. The problem is, at times people were reluctant to follow Moses and now we're warned, the same can be true for those who follow Jesus. It's a chance for us to look back at the people of Israel and then look down at the dashboard of our lives and see if there are any warning lights going off. We read:

**Hebrews 3:7** Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,  
8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,  
In the day of trial in the wilderness,  
9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me,  
And saw My works forty years.  
10 Therefore I was angry with that generation,  
And said, 'They always go astray in their heart,  
And they have not known My ways.'  
11 So I swore in My wrath,  
'They shall not enter My rest.'"

I want to begin by noticing that this is a divinely issued warning – **Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says** – in other words, God wants you to know this, He's trying to set you up for success.

Did you ever have one those teachers who said, 'You might want to pay attention to this, because you might see it again on the test?' In the military our instructors would refer to it

as foot stomping: 'I'm telling you, this is important.' Well, here the Holy Spirit is foot stomping something you're going to see again on the test of life.

So here's what you need to know. Last week we mentioned the fact that God used Moses to lead the people of Israel out of slavery in Egypt. If you know the story from the book of Exodus, you know that Pharaoh was not willing to let them go. No one presently in power is ever really enthusiastic about a separatist movement.

So, Pharaoh resisted and God sent Moses to perform miracles to authenticate the message. But Pharaoh continued to resist. So God began sending plagues. And this is important to know – all along God kept sending Moses to repeat God's command: 'Let My people go.' And Pharaoh continued to resist. So, God kept turning up the heat making things progressively worse, culminating in the tenth and final plague, the death of the firstborn of everyone and everything in the land.

Finally, Pharaoh relented, he sent Moses and the people away. But then, as they were leaving he changed his mind and pursued them which led to God miraculously parting the Red Sea so that the people of Israel could cross and then allowing the waters to rush back in and drown the Egyptian army.

So, think about this, if you were alive at that time, you watched and witnessed some pretty amazing miracles. God suddenly showed up, gave you freedom, and said, 'C'mon, let's go, I'm leading you to the Promised Land, a place that flows with milk and honey.' Which was a way of saying it was going to be a great place to live, full of resources and opportunities, you're getting up out of the trailer park or the hood and you're moving to some really nice community.

And God led them to the borders of Canaan, the land that would be later known as Israel. They sent in twelve spies to see what the place was like. But when they came back, these men who had seen God set them free from Egypt, who saw the plagues, who walked through the sea that had been parted, who were rescued from the army of Egypt without ever swinging a sword in self-defense, said, 'The land is great, it is filled with opportunity, but it's also filled with giants – they're all like NBA stars, 6'6" and 220lbs. We're like grasshoppers to them, if we try to move in, they'll wipe us out.'

Ten of the twelve men said, 'We've got no chance.' Two of them responded, 'Yeah, but we have God. We had no chance of escaping Egypt either, but He is with us, He is for us, He is doing things on our behalf, and this is the way He says to go.'

Unfortunately, the majority ruled and the people talked themselves out of following God by faith. They allowed discouragement and disobedience to shape their decisions. And so, God said, 'Fine, I'll still watch over you, I'll still provide for you, but you're going to be living out of your wagons and backpacks for the next 40 years instead of moving in and settling down. You will not receive and experience the good things I had in store for you.'

That should slap you sober my friends.

These people who knew God, who had seen God move, who knew where God wanted them to go and what He wanted them to do resisted, they caved, they collapsed, they gave in, and they missed out.

And look, maybe they were right – maybe it was a big thing God was asking of them. Maybe the odds did seem stacked against them. Maybe the outcome did seem unlikely. Maybe their assessment was right, but they still *knew* this is what God wanted and they walked away. They didn't pray. They didn't throw themselves on God's mercy. They didn't ask for confirmation. They didn't encourage their souls by reviewing the things they had already seen God do, *they gave in and they missed out*.

And now, the message in Hebrews, *the footstomp from the Holy Spirit is*, Church, don't be like that. Don't give up. Don't give in. Don't miss out. God is calling you closer and closer.

You're not going to reach the point where He says, 'Alright that's it, you're close enough.' He's calling you into a deeper and deeper relationship and there is a sense in which each of us is as close to God as we want to be. We know what He wants of us. We know where He's calling us. But we see the giants in the land. We see the reasons it won't work. Or, we have another idea instead. We get distracted. We hear other voices. We are tempted and tried. The world, the flesh, and the enemy of our souls offer us alternatives.

**Hebrews 3:7** Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,  
8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion,

Friends, God is speaking. He is speaking *to you*. When you hear Him, pay attention. Do not **harden your heart** by giving in to other voices, turn to Him, invite Him further and further into your life. Talk to Him about your disappointments. Tell Him, 'I followed You here and now all I see are giants!' Tell Him you didn't expect that. You don't like that. But then ask Him what He wants to do about it.

Pray like the father who told Jesus, 'I believe but help my unbelief.' Faith is a gift from God, ask for more of it. Talk to God about your spiritual doubts and questions. Talk to Him about the desires you keep struggling with. Talk to Him about the powerful temptations you want to conquer and ask Him for help.

God's perfect plan was to lead the nation of Israel out of slavery and into an experience of blessing, *but they resisted it*. You have to know that! You have to know that God is leading you toward blessing. It may be hard along the way. It was hot in the desert as they walked up from Egypt. They ran out of water. You might see some giants like they did. You might have all kinds of reasons why it won't work, or why it should be someone else, or why maybe you could do it later, but listen to me church, *God was trying to do good for Israel*, and He is trying to do good *for you*, so, the Holy Spirit says, *do not resist Him*. Listen:

## Hebrews 3:12 Beware, brethren

Notice, this is a call *to the church*. This is a warning to the people of God, this is warning to you and me:

**Hebrews 3:12** Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said:

"Today, if you will hear His voice,  
Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."

How much more of a footstomp can God give us? What else can the teacher do except tell you directly: here's the question that is going to be on the test. We're told the **Holy Spirit** says this. And then, the warning is repeated twice: **if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts.**

Friends, God wants our attention because He knows this is an issue for us. It is very, very, possible for us to hear God's voice, to know His call, to know His character and direction for our lives, and to still fall into depression, doubt, desire, and defiance, and harden our hearts in a spirit of rebellion that keeps us from the blessings and rest He has prepared for us.

So here's some good news for those of you who are struggling, for those who have felt the drift in your soul: it's not just you. It's not just your problem. It's not that you're that bad of a Christian, or that weak. It's a common struggle. We're being warned to watch out for it, *because* this is a common problem that happens over and over again throughout history:

**16** For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? **17** Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? **18** And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? **19** So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Once again my friends, if you really love Jesus, if you really care about your soul, if there is any spiritual life in you at all, *give heed to these words*. Listen to them. Feel them. Let them haunt you.

God had something good for His people. He had already done good for them. He wanted to give and do even more, but **they would not enter His rest, they did not obey, and therefore, they could not enter into all that God had planned for them because of their unbelief.**

God has more for you than you currently experience. He wants to continue to grow you, strengthen you, use you and help you. And that last point is super, super important. God wants to help you believe and obey so that *you can receive what He has for you*. So, ask Him

for help. Invite Him in. Don't resist or rebel or excuse yourself. Fire your inner lawyer and cast yourself completely on God.

And do it **TODAY**. Notice, that's the call. *Today, if you will hear His voice, do not harden your heart.* Why miss out on what God wants to give you?

So, let's talk about a few relevant factors here. First, notice that the call is to guard your heart. Now, you need to know that when the Bible talks about the heart it's not talking about the physical organ protected by your rib cage with four chambers pumping blood, and it's not talking about your emotions, like someone stole your heart, or as if you have to be all gushy for Jesus.

It's talking about the core of who and what you are, what you're driven by, what you're consumed with, what you're seeking in life - the center of your affections and ambitions. What do you want, what do you desire, what are you seeking?

May the answer be, God. At times, I'm sure it is. I'm sure you've had moments when the Lord was real to you, close to you, when your affections and ambitions were ordered in the proper way, but you know, from personal experience and what you've seen in others, how hard that can be to keep. Things come along and distract you, tempt you, cause you to doubt and question.

This is why we find wisdom like this in Scripture:

**Proverbs 4:23** Guard your heart above all else,  
for it determines the course of your life.

Each of us has the responsibility to guard our own hearts, the things we're attracted to and affected by. Each of us has a personal responsibility to attend to our hearts and desires, to check what direction our heart is leading us and how well it responds to the things of God - is our heart hard and rigid or soft and flexible? Are we wandering or focused? Are we giving our attention and affection to things that lead us closer to God or to things and people that lead us away from Him?

That's a very real question you should be asking frequently. And mom and dad, you should be asking it not just of yourself, but of your entire family - are the things you allow in your home, the things you personally bring into your home, leading your family closer to Jesus or farther away? Notice we are told **not to harden our own hearts** - don't do these things to yourself or those you are a part of.

Next, notice that we are also warned of the deceitfulness of sin (vs 13). You need to be on the lookout for this in your life. Sin is deceitful, it's an attractive and impressive door that leads to an empty, disappointing room. It's like fairy tales in reverse. It's falling in love with a prince and discovering he's really a beast. Kissing a prince who turns into a frog. That's why you have to be on guard against it, that's why we fall prey to it. If sin wasn't fun at first, people wouldn't do it.

I heard it put this way once: sin isn't bad because it's forbidden, it's forbidden because it is bad. What does that mean? It means, God doesn't make up some random list of things and people and say, 'These things are all going to be sin now, so that makes them bad.'

No, it's the opposite. God says these are the behaviors, the attitudes, the actions, that will destroy and devour what is good, right, holy, and pure in life, these are enemies of righteousness and justice in the world, and He calls those things sin and calls us to resist and reject them; to understand, that if even if they are fun at first, or for a moment, they will ultimately not lead us where we should go and will compromise our ability to enjoy the good things along the way.

God calls things sin and tell us to avoid them, because He's looking out for us. He's leading us to the Promised Land, offering us His rest and warning us about the things that will slow us down, disappoint us, or do damage to others. Unfortunately for us, they're often hard to resist, they are deceitful and they harden, dampen us, deaden us spiritually.

So, again, we're called to watch out for this, to take action personally, but notice, God also puts us in community and we're told to watch out for each other.

[13 ... exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.](#)

We are meant to be in community, brothers and sisters in the family of God, doing good to one another and experiencing good from one another. Mutual exhortation sustains our faith. I give to you and receive from you. You receive from me and give to me. We belong together, we thrive together, we watch over, defend, help, protect, encourage, and serve one another, by design. This is God's plan. That we would ask for, and receive, help from actual human beings and not from the Internet.

You're told to watch out for your heart. I'm told to watch out for mine. And we're both told to encourage each other. [Daily](#). Do you see that, in Scripture: [13 ... exhort one another daily?](#) Friends, I think this is a growth area for all of us. So, I want to encourage you to look for ways to encourage and strengthen each other. To share your joy and be a blessing. And notice what happens in the process – it's like collagen for the aging skin of your soul – exhorting one another daily – protects us from the dangers of being [hardened by the deceitfulness of sin](#).

Church, listen to me, listen to Scripture – isolation might be good for controlling the spread of infectious disease, but it terrible, horribly damaging, spiritually toxic, for your soul. It is dangerous for you to be alone and unaccountable, to be living off your own resources spiritually, not using the spiritual gifts God has given you for the benefit of the rest of the body, excusing yourself to yourself.

And, it's not much of an improvement to be here in church, or around other people, but always with your guard up. Never letting anyone in. Always smiling but never really talking. Exhort one another. Be exhorted by one another.

Sin is trying to deceive us all. You're not the only one. Listen to me Church, we're all failing Christians. None of us have this figured out completely. Only Jesus is perfect, so let that pressure and expectation fall off of you. I'm not shocked by your temptations or your thoughts or your past – though you might be by mine.

We want this church to be a very, very, comfortable place to be human. To be full of people who are not Jesus, but who know they need Jesus. A place where people are willing to share their scars and their stories with each other so that we can encourage one another with how we've been helped by God or are being helped by God, and a place where God can use us to help one another, a place where we hear His voice and know the deadly danger of hardening our hearts and so we watch out for ourselves and for each other.

God wanted to lead Israel into the Promised Land. He had good things in store for them. But they saw the giants. They paid attention to the deceitfulness of the sin. They forgot the faithfulness they had seen and experienced in the past. They did not invite God into their doubts, depression, desires, and discouragement, and when two men tried to exhort the rest, the majority would not listen.

This morning the Holy Spirit stomps His foot and says, 'Don't be like that.'

'Watch over your heart, today. And, exhort one another, today.'

We're going to receive communion this morning, a reminder of what God has done for us. And as we do, I want to encourage you to take a few moments and work out whatever you need to do in your own soul.

Where do you need to turn from the deceitfulness of sin? Where do you need to invite God in? Where do you need to confess your doubts, your questions, your failures, or your fantasies to God? Where do you need to confess that you have been lured in by the deceitfulness of sin and ask for deliverance?

The elements for communion are available for you up here. Come, receive them, receive these reminders of what God has done for you, reminders of what He has made available to you, reminders of the high and horrible cost of sin. Reminders that your Heavenly Father is calling you to come eat from His table. Come up, take the bread and the cup back to your seat, and we'll partake together in just a moment.

Let's pray.

*Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*

- Rom 15:13



## Sermon Application and Discussion Questions

### Hebrews 3:7-19

#### Warning: Do Not Resist God

Summary: Christian hearts are in danger of being deceived by sin as they follow God.

- Where, when, and how have you sensed God calling you to the equivalent of Promised Land? How has sin kept you from following closely and receiving all that God wants to give?
- Why is it possible to experience a miraculous exodus and then fall into distraction or disbelief? In other words, why do people who have seen miracles still struggle to trust and follow God?
  - Examples: Adam and Eve, the nation of Israel, crowds following Jesus, Judas, Ananias and Saphira, others?
  - Any personal examples of this in your own life?
- What makes it easier for you to resist sin and follow Jesus?
- What is the evidence or indicators of a heart that is becoming hardened by sin?
- Read Ps 119:9-11. What do you learn about guarding your heart from sin?
- Has anyone ever exhorted you and kept you from the deceitfulness of sin?
  - Was it effective? Why or why not?
- Who or what is the most effective at exhorting you to keep from being hardened?
- Have you ever exhorted anyone else? What did you learn in the process? Was it easy? How did they respond? How did you know it was something you were supposed to do?
  - How do you best exhort your close friends and family members?
- Read James 5:19-20. What do you learn about exhorting and encouraging fellow Christians to avoid the deceitfulness of sin?
- What are some ways that see sin being deceitful today? What promises is making but not delivering on? Or, how is it twisting the truth? What are its lies?
- What are some additional ways that you individually, or this church corporately, could exhort one another?