

October 28, 2018

- Hebrews 3:7- 19 -

“Harden Not Your Hearts”

## Introduction

A very alarming incident took place last year at the home of Peter Damiano. He was making a sauce using his Nutri-Bullet machine when it exploded leaving him to suffer severe facial injuries. The very hot, sticky sauce ended up in his eyeballs thankfully he was not permanently blinded. “The instruction manual had clear warnings against incorrect and improper use repeated throughout. Stating, “Consumers should not put hot liquids in any of the blending vessels and should not leave the unit unattended during use. Also it warned never exceed the maximum one minute blending time. All of these points are clearly explained in the instruction manual but he didn't act on the knowledge in the instruction manual. He said he never bothered to read them. There are a lot of people like that...

Cornell and the Harvard Medical School research found that people with a greater sense of entitlement are less likely to follow instructions than less entitled people are, because they view the instructions as an “unfair” imposition on them. They would rather lose at something than “submit” to the rules of others. That's the way it is with unbelievers as well as we believers all too often. We know what the Word of God says but we don't “submit” to that knowledge. That's why we are given this warning two times in our text.

## I. Beware of a Hardened Heart (3:7-11)

1. This verse reminds us of the divine inspiration of the Old Testament, the writer of Hebrews begins *...as the Holy Ghost saith* (3:7a). Then, he quotes a passage from Psalm 95:7-11. Every Jewish reader knew this passage from Psalms because it was the opening -line at the synagogue every Sabbath. As we read the Bible, we need to remember it is all the inspired Word of God. In 2 Timothy 3:16 the Bible declares, “**All scripture [is] given by inspiration of God, and [is] profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:** Folks, the Bible is what the Holy Spirit says. What the Holy Spirit said to the Israelites 3,000 years ago, as they were wandering in the desert under the leadership of Moses, is still valid for us today.

2. Did you know the biggest killer in America today is heart disease or hardening of the arteries? Spiritual heart disease is also a killer of our Spiritual life. Preventing this deadly spiritual disease requires hearing God and obeying. The inspired writer of Hebrews tells us to heed God's voice and not to harden our hearts and rebel as the Israelites did when they were tested in the wilderness (7b-8). Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it *are* the issues of life. Proverbs 4:23

3. The verses cited in Hebrews 3:9-11 & 15 reminded the Jews that after their ancestors were in Egypt 430 years-200 or so as slaves. God miraculously brought them out under Moses' leadership. In so doing, God performed miracle after miracle-such as the ten plagues, parting the Red Sea, and the destruction of Pharaoh's army.

4. Then, having more than two million people out in the desert posed a food problem... The people murmured that they were going to starve (Ex 16:23). So every morning, as a reminder

of His power and care, God sent them food they could just pick up from the ground. The Israelites call this heavenly food manna in Exodus 16:31 And the house of Israel called the name thereof Manna: and it [was] like (core re ander) coriander seed, white; and the taste of it [was] like wafers [made] with honey.

5. The Hebrew word for *mana* means "What is it?" They had never seen anything like it, but it was the best-tasting food you can imagine. Even after this daily miracle, they continued to harden their hearts. God's people have always had a tendency to harden their hearts. If those who followed Moses were accountable to surrender to God's leader, how much more are we responsible to do the same with a greater leader, Jesus?

## II. Causes of a Hardened Heart (3:12-15)

1. First, the writer warns his brethren about having an evil heart of unbelief that causes them to depart from the living God (3:12). The writer addresses the original readers as brethren, which is not a reference to believers but to other Hebrew brothers who have heard or are hearing the Gospel. **Look at Mark 6:6 and Mark 16:14.**

2. A true believer cannot have an evil heart of unbelief. One can truly believe God, yet be occasionally troubled by doubts. There is a doubt that *wants* God's promises but is weak in faith at the moment. Unbelief isn't weakness of faith; it sets itself in opposition to faith. Some of the original readers of this epistle had heard the Gospel but had not yet believed and were considering turning away from it; back to Judaism. The term departing does not mean we can lose our salvation (Jn. 10:28).

2 Timothy 2:13 tells us: If we believe not, [yet] he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.

All believers sin, but when we do, God remains faithful. He forgives, restores, and keeps those who are truly saved. Failing to do this would break His promises and deny himself concerning His faithfulness.

In God's sight, an evil heart is a heart of unbelief. The greatest of all sins is unbelief. It is the ultimate offense against God. In Revelation 21:8, there is a list of horrible sinners who will be cast into the lake of fire, or hell. Two kinds of sinners head this list: the fearful, and unbelieving. This is God's warning to those who have not trusted Christ: "Accept Jesus while your heart is still soft. Don't let your heart become hardened and insensitive to God's voice."

2. Second cause of a hardened heart applies to those who are already believers. For believers to avoid a hardened heart, we must exhort, or encourage, one another daily, so none of us will be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin (3:13). The word translated deceitfulness (APATE, a -pot'-tay) means "delusion." When we come under the influence of sin, we become delusional. "Delusional" means "false, persistent belief that is resistant to evidence to the contrary."

3. Jesus talks about this kind of heart in His parable of the soils. He says some seed, which represents the Word of God, falls on soil with thorns, or weeds. What happens to the seed sown

among the thorns in Matthew 13:22; it is choked. The cares /worries of this world cause some believers to become delusional, thinking the cure for worry is to make more money. So, instead of trusting in the Lord, in their delusion they begin to trust in money for security.

After talking about the causes of a hardened heart, the writer of Hebrews describes true believers as those who are made partakers of Christ (3:14a). We know we are true believers because we are faithful to follow Christ.

### III. The Consequence of a Hardened Heart (3:16-19)

1. A hardened heart results in a life without purpose and peace. To reveal this truth, the writer asks and answers a series of questions about the Israelites who rebelled in the wilderness (3:16-18). *For who, having heard, rebelled?*

As a nation, Israel had a good beginning; it took a lot of faith to cross the Red Sea. Yet *all* of that first generation perished in the wilderness, except for the two men of faith - Joshua and Caleb. His final question is to whom was God speaking when He swore they should not enter into his rest (3:18a)? He answers: them that believed not (3:18b).

2. Hardened hearts are not able to enter God's rest. The writer repeats this truth three other times in this passage (3:11b, 4:3 & 5). The word translated *rest* means "to relax" or "to settle down." People with hardened hearts will never find God's rest until they come to Christ. We have looked at the causes of a hardened heart and the consequence of a hardened heart. Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28

### Conclusion:

When we are disobedient, we cannot have God's hand of blessing on our lives. Our belief centers on the superiority of Jesus Christ, the truth of who He is. All of us have different areas that we disobey and fail to submit in (each area is different for all of us.) And I'm not here to condemn anybody I'm just asking you to search your heart today.

What are you putting off when it comes to your spiritual growth?