

## **Sermon 10- 14-2018 Hebrews 3:12-19 It is the time!**

Dear Students of God's Word:

Why should we spend time on the past? Why should we spend time on the history of past events and past people?

So, we don't make the same mistakes that people have made in the past.

For example, by examining....

- Why the Titanic sank in April of 1912 which cost 1500 people their lives changes were made to make sure there would be enough life boats on every ship for every passenger.
- Why the stock market crashed in October of 1929 which cost many people their life savings changes were made to ensure that people would not lose their life savings again in that manner.
- Why our Navy bases were bombed by the Japanese at Pearl Harbor in December of 1941 regulations were put in place to prevent such an attack like that again.
- Why 9-11 occurred back in 2001 changes were made to how we track down terrorists and safety measures were created for the airline industry to prevent such an event again.

We study the past so we don't make the mistakes of the past.

### **Now is the time!**

- I. To listen to God v12, vv15-19
- II. To speak to each other vv13-14

May we believers today learn from the past mistakes of the Children of Israel! The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians to warn them of the mistakes their ancestors made when it came to hearing and obeying God's Word in the Old Testament.

May we learn from Israel and her mistakes of disobeying God's Word!

You know the story of the Children of Israel and their exodus out of Egypt.

God had delivered His people from Egypt and had cared for them revealing His power in many signs and wonders. Israel experienced God's great miracles in their deliverance and benefited from God's power but it did not bring them closer to God. They hardened their hearts against God!

The heart of every problem is a problem in the heart. Jeremiah 17:9 "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" Acts 15:9 "God purified their hearts by faith."

- People of Israel erred in their hearts. Hebrews 3:10 "Their hearts are always going astray."
- Their hearts wandered from God and His Word
- They did not believe that God would give them victory in Canaan when God commanded them to go into the Promised Land
- They had seen God perform great signs in Egypt yet they doubted God could give them victory over their enemies of Canaan.

When a person has an erring heart the result will also be a hard heart. A hard heart is a heart insensitive to the Word of God. So hard was the heart of Israel that the people even wanted to return to Egypt. Imagine wanting to exchange their freedom under God for slavery in Egypt.

The readers of this letter were in danger of going back themselves to the slavery of sin and death rather than live in the light of God's will and Word.

God's judgment fell on Israel in the wilderness at Kadesh-Barnea. An entire generation was condemned to die and only the new generation would enter the Promised Land. I Corinthians 10:1-5 "For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact...God was not pleased with most of them; their bodies were scattered over the desert."

Israel had seen God's mighty hand deliver them yet they fell to the lure of sin, evil and unbelief.

Are we tempted to give up on God today? Are we tempted to go back to this old world's ways and beliefs? This book was written to us as a warning. Don't make the same mistake as God's people did in the past. Take heed and recognize the spiritual dangers that exist.

### **Sin is deceitful.**

- Sin becomes altogether too common and familiar and so "safe."
- The writer here in Hebrews screams the contrary alert: Sin kills!
- Sin is never what it seems
- No one is immune from the deceit and danger of sin

Our hearts lead us away from the living God when we refuse to believe in him. If we persist in our unbelief God will certainly leave us alone....all alone.

But the Lord gives us new hearts, new desires and a new spirit. Ezekiel 36:25ff "I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities...I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you..."

Ephesians 4:23 "To be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

The Israelites failed to enter the Promise Land because they lacked trust in God. They did not believe God would help them conquer the Promised Land. Numbers 14 and 15

The author of Hebrews quotes Psalm 95:7-8 in Hebrews 3:15 as God's response to Israel's tragic spiritual condition. "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."

The Apostle Paul warns us in the New Testament that now is the time to listen and believe in God's Word. II Corinthians 6:1-2 **"We urge you not to receive God's grace in vain...Now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation."**

The time to act is today!

Now is the time to listen to God and the time to speak to one another. The word did not help the Israelites who were condemned in the wilderness because they

did not combine faith with hearing. God's word should not be taken lightly because it is "living and active" sharper than any double-edged sword.

One antidote to a wayward heart is steadfast fellowship with other believers.

- Talking daily about our mutual faith
- Encouraging one another with love and concern
- Hebrews 10:24-25 "Let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together...but let us encourage one another..."

It is important that we encourage each other to be faithful to the Lord. V13

In I Thessalonians 5:11 and 14 we are to...

- Build each other up in the faith
- Comfort the frightened
- Care for the weak

True believers have eternal life because they trust in a living Savior who constantly intercedes for them. I John 2:1 "But if anybody does sin, we have one who speaks to the Father in our defense ---Jesus Christ, the Righteous One."

This confidence is no excuse for sin. Romans 6:1-4 "Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin; how can we live in it any longer? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead...we too may live a new life."

Rather, we offer ourselves as "living sacrifices" to the Lord. Romans 12:1-2  
Therefore...in view of God's mercy...offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God which is your spiritual worship."

These words in Hebrews are calling us...

- To persevere in the faith
- To be responsible for resisting sin
- To give and receive mutual encouragement

- To believe in God's promise of an eternal rest and to hold on to it by faith
- To look forward to the end of all our labors and God's eternal rest

How do we fight the good fight of faith and persevere?

### 1. Hold on to God's Word

- Make the Scriptures part of our lives
- A biblical mentality is the secret to surviving the aimlessness of our day
- Daily soak ourselves in Scripture
- "To eat into the very soul of the Bible until...the very essence of the Bible flows from you." C.H. Spurgeon
- Hebrews 4:12-13 "For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God's sight...before the eyes of him to whom we must give account."

Scripture touches the soul, the spirit, thoughts, attitudes, the very essence of our being.

### 2. Realize who we are - Saint and Sinner

- I Peter 2:11 "As aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires which war against the soul."
- II Corinthians 5:17 "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"
- Acts 15:9 God has purified our hearts by faith

### 3. Live in God's grace

- Receive God's grace through Word and Sacrament
- Share God's grace as we fellowship with one another
- Give God's grace by forgiving others as God as forgiven us

### 4. Walk by faith, not by sight - Trust God He has given us a

A. New life – sin's power is broken we are no longer under sin's control Romans 6:2-3, 6

- B. New nature – look upon your old sinful nature as dead and unresponsive  
Romans 6:5,11
- C. New freedom – you are free to live for God Romans 6:12-16

Hebrews 4:3,9 **“Now we who have believed enter that rest...there remains...a Sabbath-rest for the people of God...”**

We are tired. We are weary.

- Weary of being slapped by the waves of broken dreams
- Weary of being stepped on and run over in the endless marathon to the top
- Weary of trusting in someone only to have that trust returned in an envelope with no return address
- Weary of staring into the future and seeing only futility.
  - “From Six Hours One Friday” Lucado

Jesus provides rest for our soul. Rather than be disheartened by bills, quotas, deadlines, and turmoil in our lives, may we rest in Jesus who gives us the peace that is out of this world.