HARDEN NOT YOUR HEART

**DATE: 10/16/2013 Wed.**

**TEXT: Hebrews 3:7-19; Psalm 95; Exodus 17; I Cor. 10**

**INTRODUCTION**

In our text there are 3 prepositional phrases that give us a summary of the Christian life

In **v. 16** we find the phrase ***“out of Egypt”***

In **vs. 8 & 17** we have the phrase ***“in the wilderness”***

Then in **v. 11** we have the phrase ***“into my rest”***

The phrase ***“out of Egypt”*** speaks of a *Converted Life*

Just as the children of Israel were delivered and brought out of Egypt’s bondage,

The Christian has been delivered from the bondage of sin

The phrase ***“into my rest”*** is descriptive of their entrance into Canaan and speaks of a *Conquering Life*

It’s God’s desire that His people live in victory / promise

The phrase ***“in the wilderness”*** speaks of a *Carnal Life*

The wilderness symbolizes a Christian who has been saved but has not entered into the life that God has promised

Tragically, many Christians are living ***“in the wilderness”***

They have gotten saved but they have never gone in

Why is it that so many Christian haven’t enter into God’s rest?

One of the reasons is found in the warning in our text

It has to do with a Hardened Heart

We read in **vs. 7, 8a** - ***“Wherefore, (as the******Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear His voice,” “Harden not your hearts…”***

We see that a Hardened Heart will keep us from Entering Into, and Experiencing the Fullness of, our life in Christ

Keep in mind what I mean by the word *Heart* here

We are talking about who we really are – **I Thess. 5:23**

Intellect, Emotions and Will (how we think, feel & what we do)

Therefore, we are given a warning to guard ourselves from this tragic spiritual condition

It’s so Tragic and Dangerous …

That the Warning stresses the Urgency of dealing with the matter Immediately

3 times in **chapter 3** we find the word - ***“Today”***

In **vs. 7b & 8a** we read - ***“Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts”***

In **v. 13** we read –

***“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”***

Then in **v. 15** – ***“While it is said, To day if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation”***

It is also found in **Hebrews 4:7** where we read –

***“To day, if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts”***

The word ***“to day”*** does not speak of *a 24 hr. time period*

It literally means *now*

The writer is saying that this is so important …

**-** It’s something that you can’t put off until tomorrow

**-** It is something that needs to be confronted - *right now*

**Quote:** It is said that D.L. Moody, in his early ministry, often would end his message with the appeal, *“Go home and think about what I’ve said.”* He would encourage the people to come back the next meeting and make a decision. On one occasion, while preaching in Chicago, he closed the service this way. But that very night the Chicago fire broke out. Some of the people who had been in that service died in the fire and Moody never again asked people to go home and think about it. He from then on stressed the importance of making a decision at that very moment.

In this warning, the Holy Ghost is telling us that this is something that needs to be dealt with right away

Not in a few days, or even in a few hours, No!

There is Urgency about this Warning

Why is a Hardened Heart such an urgent matter?

Let’s pray and then look at the warning to …

***“Harden Not your heart”***

… and see why

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First, let’s look at -

**I. THE “DANGER” OF A HARDENED HEART**

This warning is actually a quote from **Psalm 95:7-11**

**Psalm 95** is a description by David of what happened to the children of Israel in the days of Moses

David used the children of Israel as an example for his people

The Holy Ghost does the same when He quotes **Psalm 95** and warns us of a Hardened Heart

The Holy Ghost is telling us to consider the children of Israel and be warned of the Dangers they succumbed too

So, let’s look at what they did

When we look at the children of Israel we see -

**A. A ‘Favored’ People**

In **v. 9** the children of Israel are referred to as ***“your fathers”***

When refer to as ***“fathers”***, he is talking about their ancestors

These Jewish ancestors were a people that had been especially Favored by God

Again in **v. 9** we read they ***“saw My works forty years”***

For 40 years this generation had the privilege of seeing the mighty hand of God

There has never been a generation in history so favored of God as to see what they saw

They saw things happen; that generations to come would talk about

It all began on the first Passover (relate)

That night, 600,000 men, plus women and children (1.5 million) began a journey that was marked by the miraculous

(That was just the beginning of what they would see)

Their very departure from Egypt was the result of a series of miracles

God used Moses to deliver the 10 plagues

Then they had the Pillar of Cloud by Day and the Pillar of Fire by Night

Shortly after that, God opens the Red Sea and lead Israel thru and then destroy Pharaoh’s army

For 40 years they saw the evidence of God’s ability to sustained them by a miraculous provision of food and water

**Ill.** Food - Someone has calculated that it would have taken 1,500 tons of food per day to keep them from starving. To understand how much food that is, they estimated that it would have taken 2 freight trains each 1-mile long to haul that much food in each day

**Ill.** God also fed them with quail. To feed a family of 5 with 1 quail would require 750,000 quail to fly into camp

**Ill.** Water - Considering they would require 11 million gallons of water per day for the bare necessities. To understand how much water that is, it would take a freight train (of tank cars) 1,800 miles long to haul in that much water.

Every day was a miracle

Every day they witnessed the works of God

As I said earlier, they saw things that generations to come would talk about and their still talking

They were indeed **‘Favored’**

Yet, in the warning that is given in **Hebrews 3**

We see that they were also …

**B. A ‘Foolish’ People**

In **v. 10** we read God’s Indictment of that generation

***“Wherefore I was grieved with that generation”***

The word ***“grieved”*** means more than just being sad

It describes someone being *disgusted* or *angry*

This was a generation that Greatly Displeased God

Literally, it was a generation with which He was wroth

What happened is described in **v. 8** as ***“the provocation”*** and ***“the day of temptation”***

**-** The word ***“provocation”*** speaks of being *provoked*

Meaning *to move someone to respond in anger*

**-** The word ***“temptation”*** speaks of a *trial*

There were times in Israel when they faced great needs (whether for Food, water or from enemies)

But instead of trusting God to meet those needs …

They Complained!

And that’s the attitude that Provoked God

**I Corinthians 10:1-14 …**

We read in **v. 11 (**of our text) **–**

***“So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest”***

We read down in **v. 17** that they ***“sinned”*** and their ***“carcases fell in the wilderness”***

With the exception of two; Joshua and Caleb – **v.16b**

Every Adult (over 20) of the 1.5 million who left Egypt died in the wilderness

The Bible says in **Leviticus 25:38 -** ***“I am the LORD your God, which brought you forth out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan, and to be your God”***

God had brought them out of Egypt that He might bring them into Canaan (The Land of Promise)

However, that generation died in the wilderness, having never realized God’s great promise

They were indeed a **‘Favored’ People**

But they were also a **‘Foolish’ People**

Their story is both Thrilling and Tragic

They would see God’s Works, but they would also see God’s Wrath

They would forever serve as an Illustration and Example of Hardened Hearts

They serve as an Illustration to all who will Heed …

… The Warning of the Dangers of a Hardened Heart

Secondly, think with me of not only …

**THE “DANGER” OF A HARDENED HEART**

But also -

**II. THE “DESCRIPTION” OF A HARDENED HEART**

We not only see (in Israel’s example)

The Danger of a Hardened Heart

But we also see What it means to have a Hardened Heart

The word ***“hardened”*** literally means *to render stubborn*

It is descriptive of a Heart that has become Calloused and Insensitive

When the Heart becomes Hardened, someone is no longer Sensitive to the Word and Spirit of God

They are no longer moved by the things of God

In the example of Israel we see such a Heart

As we look closer we see -

**A. The ‘Symptoms’**

Just as certain diseases and conditions reveal themselves through various symptoms

A Hardened Heart is revealed in certain Attitudes and Actions

Notice again **vs. 8 & 9** - ***“Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:” “When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years”***

I want you to Notice the words ***“tempted”*** and ***“proved”***

The word ***“tempted”*** carries the idea of *rebellion* and the word ***“proved”*** speaks of *testing*

The Hebrew word ***“tempted”*** is *meribah* and the word ***“proved”*** is *massah*

These words take us back to a particular event in Israel’s history

We read in **Exodus 17:1, 2** - ***“And all the congregation of the children of Israel journeyed from the wilderness of Sin, after their journeys, according to the commandment of the LORD, and pitched in Rephidim: and there was no water for the people to drink” “Wherefore the people did chide with Moses, and said, Give us water that we may drink. And Moses said unto them, Why chide ye with me? wherefore do ye tempt the LORD?”***

The word ***“chide”*** means to *quarrel*, or *wrangle*

They had come to a place in their journey when they found themselves without water

They began to quarrel with Moses about their situation

**Exodus 17:3** says - ***“And the people thirsted there for water; and the people murmured against Moses, and said, Wherefore is this that thou hast brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children and our cattle with thirst?”***

The word ***“murmured”*** means *complain secretly*, *to complain behind someone’s back*

Moses indicated how bad things were in **v. 4** –

***“And Moses cried unto the LORD, saying, What shall I do unto this people? they be almost ready to stone me”***

The people were so upset they were ready to kill Moses

With that; God provided them water

Moses took his staff and struck the rock and water began to flow from the rock

We read in **v. 7** - ***“And he called the name of the place Massah, and Meribah, because of the chiding of the children of Israel, and because they tempted the LORD, saying, Is the LORD among us, or not?”***

The place was called ***“Massah”*** because the children of Israel *tested the Lord*

It was called ***“Meribah”*** because they *were rebellious*

These are the Actions and Attitudes of a Hardened Heart

When a person’s Heart is Hard …

They will be Murmuring and Complaining

Notice that they question God’s Leader and even question God Himself

Every Church members who constantly Grumble and Complain

It doesn’t matter what the preacher does, there is something wrong with it

It doesn’t matter what the Church does, they find fault with it

This attitude reveals that they have a Serious spiritual condition

It is the Symptoms of a Hardened Heart

Look at God’s Attitude Toward it

We read in **v. 10 -** ***“Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known My ways”***

The word ***“err”*** means *to wander away*

It speaks of someone who is away from God

Those that are always Grumbling and Complaining have ***erred***

They are not right with God

The children of Israel were Complaining and the real problem was not because they were without water

The Real Problem was that they were not where they should be with the Lord

Their Complaining was simply …

**The ‘Symptoms’ of their Heart Problem**

Where does a Hardened Heart come from?

Notice with me -

**B. The ‘Source’**

We read in **v. 12 -** ***“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God”***

Let’s look at the word ***“departing”***

It has its root in the word used for *apostasy*

*An apostate is someone who after knowing the truth, willingly turns away from it*

The idea here is not so much of *unbelief* as *disbelief*

Unbelief comes from *ignorance*

Disbelief is *willful*

The writer warns his readers to beware of such a heart

They departed from God because of their ***“evil heart of unbelief”***

If they had believed God, they would have not been Complaining

They would have known that God would supply the water they needed

We read in **vs. 18, 19 –**

***“And to whom sware He that they should not enter into His rest, but to them that believed not?” “So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief”***

Their Hardened Heart was due to their disbelief

They were not trusting God or taking Him at His Word

**Leviticus 17:7 – *“Is the LORD among us, or not?”***

Whenever people cease to believe God, they always end up Complaining

It never fails

I’ve seen it time and again

People getting upset with so-called situations

When the real problem was they were not trusting God

I have seen church members get all out of sort about something when they needed to be trusting God

I have seen problems arise in Churches when the people did not believe God

We read in **v. 13 -** ***“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”***

The word ***“deceitfulness”*** means *trickery*

Sin is tricky; it seldom appears as it really is

It always masks itself

It lies and deceives

When a person becomes spiritually hardened,

They are rarely aware of it

The example of disbelief of the children of Israel is an example of how serious God takes this

He calls it a sin!

**Hebrews 11:6 …**

**Romans 14:23 – *“And he that doubteth is damned (condemned) if he eat, because he eateth not of faith: for whatsoever is not of faith is sin”***

We read in **Psalm 95:7 - *“For He is our God; and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. To day if ye will hear his voice”***

He is our God and we are to trust Him

As the sheep of His pasture He will take care of us and we are trust Him to do so

Disbelief is really saying that God can’t do what He said He would do

Disbelief says that He is not able to take care of His people

**THE “DANGERS” OF A HARDENED HEART**

**THE “DESCRIPTION” OF A HARDENED HEART**

Lastly, notice -

**III. THE “DENIAL” OF A HARDENED HEART**

We must Not Allow ourselves to become Hardened!

Notice again **vs. 12, 13 -** ***“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God” “But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”***

The writer is calling for Action

Taking steps so that we don’t miss out on God’s Promises

To do this he first calls for -

**A. ‘Self Examination’**

He tells the believer to ***“Take heed”***

That word ***“heed”*** means *to look at*

It is more than a casual glance,

It is to look at something with understanding

He is Calling for every believer to Consider the Example of the Children of Israel

**-** Their Rejection of the Truth

**-** Which Resulted in Disbelief

**-** Then the Consequences of their Actions

He is telling us not to let the same thing happen to us,

That is …

Possessing ***“an evil heart of unbelief”*** and ***“departing from the living God”***

The Psalmist prayed in **Psalm 26:2 -** ***“Examine me, O LORD, and prove me; try my reins and my heart”***

In a similar fashion the Psalmist prayed in …

**Psalm 139:23, 24 – *“Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thought:” “And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting”***

Paul said in **I Corinthians 11:28 -** ***“But let a man examine himself”***

It takes being honest with ourselves, and with God, to ***“take heed”*** to the true condition of our heart

It is essential that we keep ourselves from being …

***“hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”***

**‘Self Examination’**

Secondly, the writer calls for -

**B. ‘Public Encouragement’**

When the writer says in **v. 13 -** ***“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day, …”***

He is not only calling us to a Self **Examination**

But also a **Public Encouragement** to guard one’s self

***“… lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”***

The word ***“exhort”*** is a form of the word Jesus used for the Holy Spirit when He referred to Him as the ***“Comforter”*** in **John 14:16**

The word speaks of *coming alongside to help*

As believers, we are to Exhort, or Encourage ***“one another”***

This exhortation is 2 things

- Comprehensive, including all

We are to exhort ***“one another”***

We are to watch out for one another lest we become hardened in our hearts

- Continual, uninterrupted

We are to ***“exhort one another daily”***

This exhortation is more than a Sunday sermon

It is to be a Daily matter

This implies that the matter of taking heed is constant

There must never be a time when we drop our guard

… for the moment we do, our Hearts begin to grow hard

**CONCLUSION**

In **v. 19** we see the Reason for this Self **Examination** and **Public Encouragement**

We read - ***“So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief”***

God brought them out of Egypt that He might bring them into Canaan, the land of promise

Yet, because of their Hardened Heart

What manifested was Unbelief / disbelief

For they saw the Miracles of God

Yet they willfully refuse to believe

Therefore they all died in the wilderness

The Condition of their Heart Deprived them from ever experiencing all that God had for them

The sad reality is that a lot of believers will never enjoy or experience all God has for them

Even though they have been brought out of Egypt

The Wilderness is all they will ever know

There is so much that believers are deprived of spiritually because of Hardened Hearts

There is a Rest that God has for every believer;

However, that Rest will not be entered into, if our hearts are hard

***“Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness:”***

***“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God”
“But exhort one another daily, while it is called To day; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin”***

Are you missing God’s Rest because of a Hard Heart?

**THE “DANGER”**

**THE “DESCRIPTION”**

**THE “DENIAL”**