



Sermon Notes

US N°. 67

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Title: Listen and obey today

#4 in Series on the Book of Hebrews

1. The faithful Son and His house (cf. Heb. 3:1-6)
 - a. *"Therefore..."* Once more the author is building upon his explanation of Jesus as supreme over and far above the prophets (including Moses) and the angels.
 - b. *"Holy Brothers,"* we are a family in Christ that is set apart from the rest. There is a sovereign selection by the Heavenly Father who elects and separates His people from the world. (cf. 1 Pet. 1:1-2)
 - c. *"Calling"* to the reward and happiness of heaven, and not to the pleasures and honors of the world.
 - d. The Son, as God, is worthy of more glory than Moses. Moses himself prophesied of one to follow after him in Dt. 18:18-19, *"I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him."*
 - e. We are the *"house of God"* if we hold fast to the confidence and joy of hope until the end. 1 Pet. 2:4-8, *"Coming to Him as to a living stone, rejected indeed by men, but chosen by God and precious, you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. Therefore it is also contained in the Scripture, "BEHOLD, I LAY IN ZION A CHIEF CORNERSTONE, ELECT, PRECIOUS, AND HE WHO BELIEVES ON HIM WILL BY NO MEANS BE PUT TO SHAME." Therefore, to you who believe, He is precious; but to those who are disobedient, "THE STONE WHICH THE BUILDERS REJECTED HAS BECOME THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE," and "A STONE OF STUMBLING AND A ROCK OF OFFENSE." They stumble, being disobedient to the word, to which they also were appointed."*
2. Let us be faithful and attentive (cf. Heb. 3:7-15)
 - a. Notice the present tense of the verb *"says,"* and again *"today."* The Spirit is still speaking through words written by a prophet thousands of years ago. The author of Hebrews was convinced that what the psalmist sang about the Israelites in the wilderness (centuries earlier for his own audience) had relevance and meaning for the community of faith in its time of pressure in the first century. One of the chief evidences of inspiration is the Holy Spirit's ability to take words written to and about people centuries ago and make those words speak with the power of God to a new generation
 - b. *"Do not harden your heart... in the day of trial."* There is training and then there are trials. God works in and around us to prepare us for each consecutive step of our growth and ministry; we *"are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory ... by the Spirit of the Lord."* (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18)
 - c. Hard heart and hard soil. It is essential that the voice of God seep into our hearts, softening it so that the holy seed may push its roots deep and branches wide. Grow where you're planted. The consequence of a hard heart and unbelief is exclusion from *"the rest"* He promised.
 - i. The particular *"rest"* referred to here was that of the land of Canaan, but which was undoubtedly regarded as emblematic of the *"rest"* in heaven. Into that rest God solemnly said they should never enter. They had been rebellious and all the means of reclaiming them had failed. God had warned and

entreated them; he had caused his mercies to pass before them, and had visited them with judgments in vain; and he now declares that for all their rebellion they should be excluded.

- d. The children of Israel were willing to exchange a life of promise for one of slavery
 - e. Take note that unbelief is evil; it's the opposite of faith. Unbelief angers God. Unbelief leads us away from the Living God who is Life, therefore unbelief leads us unto death. This psalm was used regularly in synagogue worship, so his readers would have known this passage well. The psalm is exhortation to worship both in the recitation of God's qualities but in the call to self-examination of ourselves in face of such a God.
 - i. Ps. 95:1-11, *"Oh come, let us sing to the LORD! Let us shout joyfully to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us shout joyfully to Him with psalms. For the LORD is the great God, And the great King above all gods. In His hand are the deep places of the earth; the heights of the hills are His also. The sea is His, for He made it; and His hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; Let us kneel before the LORD our Maker. For He is our God, and we are the people of His pasture, and the sheep of His hand. Today, if you will hear His voice: "Do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, as in the day of trial in the wilderness, when your fathers tested Me; they tried Me, though they saw My work. For forty years I was grieved with that generation, And said, 'It is a people who go astray in their hearts, and they do not know My ways.' So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' ""*
 - f. This passage invokes the two stories of the rebellion at the waters at "*Massah* [temptation] & *Meribah* [murmuring]" (cf. Ex. 17:1-7) and the refusal of Israel to enter the Promised Land at Cades Barnea. (cf. Num. 13-14) Here God is challenged in His very goodness as the Shepherd, and His anger & wrath are highly aroused.
 - i. The people of Israel sided with the ten and decided to not obey God and invade the land, but after they realized their mistake they presumptuously attempted to invade Canaan in their own strength in spite of the fact God had sworn that all but Caleb and Joshua would die in the wilderness. Their self-based invasion failed miserably. Failure to trust God (unbelief) makes it impossible to possess the promise whether that promise is land, time, or some other blessing.
 - g. Exhort one another daily lest we be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. Beware of the seduction of sin and don't be deceived that we are talking only about the more "apparent" sins. An unbelieving heart is a heart that does not trust God. It is a heart that tries to manipulate God into accomplishing the human will instead of the divine will. It is a heart that gripes and is bitter because it does not see the ways of God in the painful circumstances of life. A heart that turns from the living God has no place to turn to except to one's own self. The apostasy of turning away is doubly tragic because there is nothing to turn to when one turns away from God.
 - i. 1 Thess. 5:11, *"Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing."*
 - ii. 2 Tim. 4:2-4, *"Preach the word! Be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables."*
 - h. Partakers of Christ if we remain steadfast until the end.
3. The warning of our forefathers' failure (cf. Heb. 3:16-19) This passage specifically draws from the rebellion at Cades Barnea.
- a. Who rebelled in the desert? Those that had been delivered out of Egypt.

- b. Who was God angry with? Those that had sinned and disbelieved the word and promises of the Lord. Both Joshua and Caleb were blessed because of their faith in the face of giants.
 - c. And to whom did God swear would not enter into His rest? All those that disobeyed, but those that had believed (Joshua & Caleb plus the younger generation) were promised entry into the Land.
 - d. Disbelief prevents entry into God's rest.
4. Conclusion
- a. The church is a family and is considered the house of God.
 - b. We partake in a holy calling.
 - c. Be faithful & attentive, not hard & unbelieving.
 - d. Beware of Massah & Meribah
 - e. Exhort one another
 - f. Walk in the steps of Joshua & Caleb, seeing & believing, as opposed to those who doubted.
 - g. Perseverance is essential to enter into His rest.