

Exhort One Another Daily

Jeremy Richards

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Hebrews, chapter three.

We were talking. Thank you. Thank you. Last week about an evil heart of unbelief. An evil heart.

I think if you and I were to talk about our heart, we would probably not describe it as an evil heart. But you and I at times get glimpses into the real nature of our heart at time. God arranges situations to enable us to see the true depravity in which our heart exists.

Our tendency at the moment is to freak out, blame it on someone else, make excuses for it, get away from it somehow. But the truth is, every person, in at least some way, has been enabled by God's grace to see the condition of their heart. This heart's condition is against the ways of God. It cannot prosper, perceive the ways of God. The heart is interested in its own satisfaction, its own benefit.

But it does not have the ability to see things from a spiritual perspective because it cannot see the same things the Spirit does. It views them with suspicion and chooses to go a different way. When, at the cusp of. Of the entrance to the promised land, the Israelites in the desert turned back and desired the physical things in the land of Egypt, they could not see the glory, the goodness of what God had for them in the promised land and turn back. So this is an evil heart because it leads us to a position of unbelief.

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It cannot be trusted. It is like that broken staff upon which a man leans. It goes into his hand, right? And so we're gonna move on from there. In verse 13, we started talking about this a little bit because you and I should be aware of the spiritual condition of our heart that should enable us to.

To make clear decisions. If you are not aware of the reality of the conditions your body has or a vehicle has, you might trust it to do something for which it is not prepared. But if you understand the limited abilities of parts of your nature, you make preparations to deal with those things to make up for. And so here's a verse that we're going to go into. In verse 13, there is something that prepares us for the damage that an evil heart might do to us in causing us to act in unbelief.

Missing out in that promised land of that promised land that God has for us. It says in verse 13, but exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ. If we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. While it is said today, if you will hear his voice.

Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. I remember as a young man I was going to school in Chicago and went to a missions conference and decided, I'm going to go to Los Angeles and joined a missions organization for the summer and helped prepare a ship going to Honduras. And so by the end of that two months, they were just about ready to go. And they had an old World War II warship and it was piled high with everything you could imagine. They tore down an old chicken ranch in the Hemet Valley in California, brought what have been like \$7 million of new lumber.

It was all stored on the ship. There were three 50 foot boats. There was ambulances, forklifts, everything you could possibly imagine because you couldn't from one end of the ship to the other because there was so much stuff. They built a plank way, a walkway about 10ft off the ground to go over the top of everything to get to the bow to run the lines, right? And so at the very end, they asked me to go with them on this trip to Honduras.

So I gave up everything that I personally wanted and ended up on this ship going at a snail's pace down to the Panama Canal and around to Honduras. And I remember we got there about when the first light was coming over the island and the looked at this island and I wanted to be a part of that. And the first time I was able to get off of the ship, I walked through the town and out into the country a little bit. And I was in my, you know, my college, my nicest college clothes and. But there was mosquitoes, mosquitoes.

And I had heard that mosquitoes gave malaria and I was concerned about it. So as I was walking, I was very concerned, cognizant that I was not taking any medicine that no mosquito get to me. And so I was terrified of these little, you know, the animal that kills the most people out of any other animal in the world, this mosquito, right? But they were encouraging people to take a medicine. And I thought what I heard that it would prevent you from contracting malaria.

I believe it's called chloroquine. And so everyone was taking chloroquine. I wasn't. I didn't want anything to do with it, but I was still afraid of these mosquitoes. But I learned later that chloroquine doesn't prevent you from getting malaria.

Right, it doesn't. It only you are taking the medicine for malaria already when you get infected by a mosquito that has malaria or transmits malaria. So it doesn't prevent it. It's. It only is something that enables you to overcome the effects of malaria easier.

Well, in some way, as I thought about this, this is similar to what we are being called to do today that you and I are affected or in danger of becoming infected with an evil heart of unbelief that won't enter into God's promises because our heart refuses to accept them. It's a danger for you and I. If you looked at the opportunities you have have been presented with within your lifetime, there could be a certain amount of regret. God wants to give good gifts to his children and I am confident that I have not walked in all of them. And I would say by extension that it is my sincere doubt that you have either.

So is there something that we can be taking that is a preventative from this kind of action, this heart of unbelief from taking root? And we see. We began to talk about it last week. It says, but exhort one another daily. Exhort one another daily.

I believe that this is part of why people are here today. It is my hope that why you are here today that a preacher is called upon to exhort people. In chapter four, in speaking to Timothy, Paul says, I charge you therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at his appearing and his kingdom, preach the word, be ready in season and out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort with all long suffering and 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.

I think it is notable, commendable and of good understanding that we place ourselves in a position from hearing from someone exhort from the word of God. Sometimes it's done well, maybe others not so well. But the ability to place ourselves in a position of hearing from a pastor, a preacher is an important thing and I'm grateful that that we have taken that opportunity today. But this exhortation does not say once a week. Make sure that you are exhorted right?

I imagine so. What I am getting, or the feeling that I am understanding is that once a week exhortation is not enough to deal with the consequences of an evil heart. Everyone tracking. It's good that you're here. Nice job.

It's not enough. Let me just say that everyone hear me good or bad exhortation from whatever church you attend. Praise God. I'm Glad you went. But I'm going to tell you, it's like only putting on your shoe halfway.

It's not enough. It says, exhort one another daily. I was reminded of that scripture in Deuteronomy chapter 7. It's called the Shema. I probably say everything wrong, but In Deuteronomy chapter 6, Jews tend to repeat this prayer morning and night.

And you'll see why in just a second in Deuteronomy 6.

And there's much more to it. All of it's really beautiful. But the Shema starts in chapter six, verse four. It says, hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

All these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children. You shall talk of them when you sit in your house, when you walk, by the way, when you lie down, and when you rise up. You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Having just come back from Israel not too long ago, I can honestly tell you I was a little bit disappointed in this spiritual. Maybe little is not the word. I was disappointed in the spiritual condition of the people in Israel. They still. I saw that almost every house had these little scroll boxes at the entrance of their house.

They did these things. I saw people winding the things around their arms as putting the little boxes on their head. But I didn't really see the fulfillment of this scripture. It was strange to go into a house that had the Ten Commandments and other verses on the doorway as you pass in the house, and then find idols set up inside the house. That was strange.

It was strange that the Word of God, though put on the sides of the house, was not talked about in the house. It was something foreign or something that was ancient that you did these things. You wrapped your hands, you put on the headband, you put up the things, but it didn't fulfill this thing. Talk about them. Teach your children.

In Genesis 18, we see the fulfillment of this. I personally believe in Genesis 18 prior to Abraham conversing with the Lord at the eve of Sodom's destruction.

In chapter 18 and verse 18, the Lord says, or verse 17, and the Lord said, shall I hide from Abraham what I am doing? Since Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the earth shall be blessed in him and in verse 19. For I have known him in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord to do righteousness and justice, that the

Lord may bring on Abraham all that he has spoken to him. This daily exhortation places us in a position to receive all that the Lord has promised us. Without this daily exhortation, unfortunately, we fall victim to an evil heart of unbelief.

It is necessary that we place ourself in a position of exhorting one another to keep the Lord's commandments. It is necessary, while it is good, that we do have devotions and such. Very important. But even more important is a daily life filled with walking in the ways of God becoming a normal part of your everyday existence. It is not a religious duty that you strap to your wrists your forehead at certain times of the day.

It is a daily walk. And that daily walk is used to encourage, exhort other people. We're going to go back to Hebrews 3. This exhortation, we talked about it last week, happens in the point called today. That it is in the present that this is happening.

It's not focused on the past or the future, but in the present. And verse 13 is continued. It says, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. This exhortation is for the purpose that sin's deceitfulness would not be allowed to harden your heart. A hard heart leaves you in the position of the wilderness at the cusp of the entrance to the promised land, the land flowing with milk and honey, with clusters that two men can barely carry between their shoulders.

It leaves you at the entrance, at the doorway of an incredible feast, but will not allow you to enter. Unbelief is a wicked thing. It leaves you in drudgery, slaved under the encumbrances of the law. Until your body is consumed in the desert, you have nothing more to look forward to than circling the desert until you die.

I pray that you have a heart, a willingness to consider your heart. In this condition, your life is so important there is no time to waste. The benefit that comes in walking with the Lord is of such tremendous value that our heart should be viewed with suspicion. And in order to counteract the evil nature of our heart, there needs to be a daily encouragement in your life. An exhortation.

Not just telling you that you're good enough, that everything's fine, that it'll be all right, that it all ends up for good people like you. No, you need someone to tell you the

truth, someone to exhort you, to encourage you, to motivate you, to push you on beyond what your own heart wants. And rather to encourage you to live in the life of the Spirit that God has for us to enter into that promised land. It says in verse 14, for we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. So oftentimes we rely upon our motions to determine whether or not we're walking in the right way.

Everyone tracking with me, if sometimes if we don't feel certain things, we begin to question, question if we're doing what's right. We depend upon the feelings that our heart possesses to determine which way we should go. That is not a biblical model everyone tracking with what I'm saying, just for a minute. Our heart is deceitfully wicked. Who can know it?

But there is a different model that we're going to be looking at. In verse 14 it says we have become partakers of Christ if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence firm to the end. A realization of the path that we're walking in being correct is most notably understood by whether or not that walk which we walk is following Christ in the place he is going. Do you think at times those disciples ever wondered, does he even know where he's going? We went on the High Divide, a hike that goes from the north fork of the Quinault and goes along the Divide, the ridge line, 48 mile hike.

And we got to a spot and it was at the top and it was all rock, no more trees, and there was a great mist that came over. And so we were where do we go? And here all these young people think that I know where I'm going. I don't really even know. So we wandered here and there and finally did find our way out of this misty netherland.

But I'm sure the disciples themselves wondered, does Jesus know where he is going? Does he know? But they were willing to walk with him, continue with him. It says again, for we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. The understanding of walking with Christ is a continuance to walk in obedience to his commandments.

It gives us an assurance that we are following him, that he commands us to do certain things which we would not be willing to do otherwise. He has called us to love our neighbors. He has called us to do these things, to lay down our life, called us to walk in integrity in certain ways. And the obedience to those commandments is a more accurate indication of where God is leading us than our feelings. But this obedience lasts.

We talked about it a few weeks ago. It says in verse six, it says, but Christ as a son over his own house, whose house we are if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm to the end. This work of Christ in an individual's heart is a lasting work. It is one that ultimately bears fruit. We see that there were many seeds sown, but the ones that endured, the ones that lasted, the ones that flowered and actually bore fruit, that was the good ground.

Paul encourages that we run a race in order to receive the crown. The goal of the Christian life is not to improve your standing on earth momentarily. It is to enter the promised land. Christ's spirit in the lives of a person produces a quality of life that perseveres under all circumstances. He affects a person.

I always like to think about, you know, there's logging trucks. And if an individual. And I was in my house talking to my kids, if, you know, I walked out across the street and I got hit by a loaded logging truck. And when I came back, I was telling my kids about how bad of a circumstance that was. And they'd be looking at me like, wait, no, if you got hit by a loaded logging truck, you wouldn't just be standing here.

That amount of power would affect you in certain way. And so also the Spirit in our lives, an accurate representation of his work in us is a continued work. He who endures to the end will be saved. It says, at different times, if we deny him, he will deny us. If we are not faithful, he remains faithful.

There is a confidence steadfast to the end. In verse 15, to close, it says, today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion again to finish. Today, you and I are in a position. You and I are in the same position that those Israelites were

wandering in the desert, a position where an open door is in front of us, an opportunity extended to enter into the goodness of God, to enter into the good land. But there is something that is wanting to prevent us from experiencing that goodness of God.

We have to be aware of that. It is a nature that needs to be recognized. And so what we're being called to do today, if you recognize that you are in that kind of position, that there is an open door, that you are being called to come in, that someone's knocking, there is something that this verse is calling us to trust in it says, today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion. Don't place yourself in the same position that they did, that they trusted in something. They trusted in their natural sight, they trusted in their feelings, and as a result, rejected that thing which God had given them.

So oftentimes we are waiting for something before we act in obedience.

When God is calling us to obey today, he is not suggesting it. He is saying, look, I want you to enter. I am commanding you to enter. Any act of following your heart's desire is an act of disobedience, not of prudence. So many times we say, yes, I want to experience the fullness of God, but I have to wait until my feelings are fully behind me.

I can't act now because God hasn't given me the feelings that I require to follow Him. That is an act of disobedience. He is calling us. No, don't wait for your feelings. Your feelings stem from an evil heart.

What God is calling us is saying today, if you hear his voice, don't disobey. Because the effect of disobedience is the same as the Israelites in the wilderness they had to return to for 40 years. It is imperative that our feelings are not trusted in this matter, but an active obedience that states, lord, here I am. I am willing to follow you because it is right, not because of my feelings. That may be a little harsh, but I recognize that it is something that affects.

Affects all of us. Waiting for our feelings is an act of disobedience against the one who is calling us today. My encouragement to you and I, if you are here because you feel that God has presented you with an opportunity to have a willing heart and to say, yes,

Lord, Samuel was called those few times. Samuel, Samuel. He was given those three times.

Praise God, that the Lord was willing to extend that three times to him. But eventually, this little boy had to decide, young boy, whether he was going to obey. God called him to do something which I'm not sure I could do, to rebuke his mentor, his boss, the spiritual leader of Israel. But he said, yes, Lord, the first step in this today is, yes, I am willing. I am willing.

My heart rages and is confused, but I am willing. You are, Lord, and you are calling me, and I am willing to hear your voice and to respond my encouragement today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your heart as in the rebellion. Who wants to be like them? Soften your heart and act in obedience to the one who's calling you. Let's pray.