

Hebrews 3:7-19

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Date: 08 May 2016

Preacher: Arthur Jackson

- [0 : 00] Good morning. Let's pray. Father, thank you for the morning.
- This wonderful day that we have the privilege of being in your presence with your people. We're humbled today, oh God.
- Blessed be your name. And may the words of my mouth and meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, oh Lord, our strength and our redeemer.
- Pray, Lord, that you would be glorified in these days as the text speaks about today. Be honored in our midst today.
- It's our prayer in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Some years ago, a family photo from Shirley's side of the family made its way somehow into our home.
- [1 : 09] It's old, black and white, and it includes the likes of Shirley's mother, Mama, Celia Jones, and Shirley's grandmother, Lula McMillan.
- What really amazes me about this picture is that I see in Shirley's family members today, her brothers and sisters and even her nieces and nephews, I see them in that picture of old.
- The likenesses of the family have been transferred from generation to generation. They bear family traits that can be seen.
- They bear the family traits of those who are generations removed. When I looked at the picture, I said, oh, there's Melanie.
- And there's Rosie and there's Thelma. But this was long before they were born. Last week's text ended with a defining family characteristic.
- [2 : 42] A distinctive trait, if you will, of those who are members of the household of Christ, his family. You say, well, Pastor Jay, what are we talking about?
- Look at verse six and we'll see. But Christ is faithful over God's house as a son. And we share, excuse me, and we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.
- Huh? You see it there? What's in view is a dynamic, active confidence in God that embraces whatever he says, even when other voices and circumstances challenge the voice of God.
- It is the mark of faith. A dynamic, active belief in God on the basis of hearing his word.
- Unwavering confidence in God who was spoken in the end of the age in and through the person and work of his son.
- [4 : 03] Persevering faith as a characteristic of Christ's family. Huh? You have that trait here on this morning?
- When you look in the mirror, do you see that family trait that has characterized God's people down through the ages?
- As a matter of fact, in Hebrews chapter 11, we're going to get a whole catalog of people who bore that kind of characteristic.

So, he's highlighted persevering faith as the characteristic. So, the preacher, the writer of Hebrews, he goes on to reinforce what he says as far as the need for such faith.

And he does this by noting the dangers of doubt. The peril of unbelief. One of the things that he brings clearly into our focus is this.

[5 : 08] He says, unbelief is unhealthy. It's poisonous. And it's perilous. And not only is it that, but it is punishable.

There are consequences for unbelief. Our text this morning is a warning text. Did you hear it?

Clearly, that's the tone throughout this text that we hear. It's a text that warns. It warns the hearers then, but it warns those of us who are listening today.

You ever struggle with doubt or disbelief? While we have here, it's a word for those who were saved, but they were saved and they were struggling.

Perhaps you're like that hero today. You're looking for easy answers to life's complex questions. You're looking for quick fixes.

[6 : 13] And they don't come exactly at the pace that you want. Or perhaps you find yourself here today and you're really confused and struggling.

You're on the outside of the Christian faith. You're looking in. Trying to make sense of life and to find your way in this world. And you're wondering if Christ is actually for you.

If you can find what you're looking for. If you can feel the void in your soul. The void in your life. By the person and through the person and work of Christ.

But regardless of where you find yourself on the faith continuum. Inside or outside of it. One thing the text helps us to see.

Is that unbelief. Is really unhealthy. Particularly. It's not heart healthy, if you will. You know, we're concerned about our hearts.

[7 : 10] And you can look and see labels on food that advertise. This is really heart healthy. Oatmeal is heart healthy. Shredded wheat is heart healthy.

And you can go on. Dave says mercy. Everything that is heart healthy. It doesn't taste good, does it? Huh? And even so.

In a spiritual sense. All kinds of heart healthy stuff. It may have a distaste to it. But when you get it in your system.

Your blood flows differently. You get a different spring in your step. A pace in your gait. Because your heart healthy.

Huh? It's about the heart. You see. Our text mentions hearts several times. Huh? Eight, ten, twelve. We'll talk a little bit about them. But if you're trying to make sense of the Christian faith.

[8 : 11] With your head alone. Without engaging the heart. You'll find out, friends. Doesn't quite work that way.

For we walk by faith. And not. By sight. So the question this morning.

How's your heart? Huh? And beware of unbelief. Our text warns us clearly. About unbelief. So what text would it be.

That the preacher would go to. In order to strengthen faith. On the one hand. And to challenge unbelief. On the other. Oh, he could go to a number of texts.

Then the Bible that he had in that day. What we have here. Actually. Is a summary of sorts. It's looking back. An occasion.

- [9 : 09] That really. Indelibly. Marked the people of God. It was a significant part. Of their history. That they could look back. And those who would hear.
- The preacher on that day. They would understand. What he's talking about. Psalm 95. Would be his text. And if he could take a title.
- For the text. The peril. Of unbelief. Or beware. Of unbelief. Oh. Did you notice he had an outline? Huh?
- He gives us a warning. From yesterday. In verses. 7 through 11. And then. In verses. 12 through 8. 12 through 19.
- It's a warning. For that day. As well as. Today. That day. That you and I. Live in now.
- [10 : 04] Did you notice in. Verse 7. That it was a spirit. Spirit. Inspired. Warning. Huh? Therefore. As the Holy Spirit. Says. Huh? A spirit.
- Inspired. Warning. That has been recorded. On the pages. Of scripture. God. Breathed. God. Inspired. Scripture.
- Huh? Scripture. Scripture. Scripture. Is the record. Of God. Speaking. To. His people. Paul. Both. In the old. And new. Testaments. And a warning.
- Had been recorded. In scripture. That was appropriate. For the writer. Of the Hebrews. To. Minister. To the people. Of God. In his day. It was an incident.
- Of the rebellion. Of God's people. That prevented them. From inheriting. What God. Had promised them. So he begins. With this historical. Incident.
- [10 : 58] And in it. There is. A timeless. Warning. For the people. Of God. Of any era. You see it. Today. If you hear his voice. And here's the command.
- Do not hearten your hearts. As in. The rebellion. And. And really. As you look at back. At Psalm 95. It mentions. Two.
- Different. Place names. Names. Of places. Meribah. And Massa. But what happened. At Meribah. And Massa. There was. Rebellion.
- And testing. That went on. And in this version. Of the Old Testament. It is rendered. In these more broad terms. As far as.
- Rebellion. And testing. In the wilderness. It's a warning. From. The past. And did you know. Warnings from the past. Have a way of. Echoing.
- [11 : 53] With effect. And with power. For an impact. Even. In the day. That we live in. Huh. A warning. That was recorded. Actually.
- In Psalm 95. And it concerned. The experiences. Of God's. People. Up to. The. Up to. And including. In vents. Right on the threshold.
- Of the promised land. That God. It promises. People. He was going to give them. A place. That they could call. Their own. Huh. Huh. Numbers. Chapters.
- 13 and 14. Speak about. The. The. The point. Where they were. At condition. Right there. On the threshold. Of going into the land. Something drastic. Something life-changing.
- Life-altering. Happened. Huh. That was the final straw. The whole experience. From Egypt. To being on the edge. Of the promised land.
- [12 : 47] Was marked. By rebellion. Huh. Historical point of reference. We see there. As we've noted. In verse eight. And what actually happened there.
- Huh. Your fathers. Put me to the test. Saw my works. For 40 years. Therefore. I was provoked. With that generation. And said. They always go astray. In their heart.
- They've not known my ways. As I swore my wrath. They shall not enter. My wrath. Huh. The psalmist. Picks up. On this incident.

In Psalm 95. It actually begins. Matter of fact. Turn over to Psalm 95. With me. This morning. Just going to take a brief look at that. Because.

What I want you to see. Is how. The psalm. Actually. Begins. And continues. And how we. How is it that we get. To verse.

[13 : 43] Seven. Seven. Seven. Be actually. The way. That we have it. In the text. It begins. With a call. To worship. In verse one.

Oh come. Let us sing. To the Lord. Let us make a joyful noise. To the rock. Of our salvation. And highlights. Certain things. About God. As savior.

And creator. And king. And then. There is a second. Call to worship. In verse six. Oh come. Let us worship. And.

Bow down. Second call. So what we. See in. Hebrews. Back in. Hebrews chapter three. Could appear to be. Rather disjointed.

As you. As he enters into that. But what really seems to be in view. Is that. We really cannot. Understand. Worship. Unless we recognize it. As tender hearted.

[14 : 40] Obedience. Before God. Yeah. It is. In tender hearted. Obedience to God. Is foundational. For true worship. Regardless. Is this.

Joyful singing. Or reflective. Bowing down. Before him. What is. Unto be. Underneath that. Is tender hearted. Obedience.

To God. Which is the ultimate. Posture. Of worship. For God's people. Huh. It is. It is. From this. Spirit. Inspired.

Warning. Text of old. That the writer. Proceeded. To warn. The hearers. Of his day. Again. He's going to say more about it. But what he. What he's. What he's got here.

He's. First of all. He is selecting his text. It is a text that is appropriate for that particular situation. It's a warning. About. Unbelief.

[15 : 33] So what was the message? There was a generation of people. Who though rescued from Egypt. They had failed to possess what God had promised.

Because they refused. To listen to his voice. To hear him. With. Faith. Huh. Huh. He selects his text.

That was a warning. From yesterday. And then he proceeded with. A warning. For. That particular day.

At the time of writing. The first word. Is a word. To. The brothers. Did you see that there. In verse 12.

Take. Care. Brothers. Lest there be. In any of you. An evil. And listen to this. Let this grab you.

[16 : 30] An evil. Unbelieving. Heart. Leading you to. Fall away. From. The living God.

So. It's interesting. He's text selection. But then he goes to text. Application. And then he follows that up with a little bit of text explanation.

On the other side of the application. And the exhortation that he's giving them. It's a warning. To be discerning. To take care.

So that you will not be led astray. By an unbelieving heart. An unbelieving heart. Can lead you.

In so many. Different directions. It will lead you. Into. Dead. In. Living. It will lead you. Away from God.

[17 : 25] Rather than. To God. Don't. Abandon. Belief. Huh? Because. And notice the nature. It is an evil.

That is descriptive. Of the kind of heart. That does not. Take God. At his word. And trust him. And trust what he says.

Unbelief. Keeps us. From God's best for us. And we must. Friends. Be on guard. Against that kind. Of heart. Oh.

I love. Proverbs. Guard your heart. With all. Diligence. For out of the heart. Proceed. The very. Very. Issues. Of life. How's your heart. This morning.

Huh? One of the worst things. Can happen. To our hearts. Is. It to be gripped. By unbelief. It's evil. It's perilous. And it causes us.

[18 : 23] To fall away. And that's what happened. With that generation. Oh. Here comes. The report. From. The spies. You remember. When they were sent out.

Into the land. Numbers chapter. 13. Check it out. God. Is going to give you. This land. And here comes. The report. We can't do it. We cannot.

Overcome. They are. Big giants. That are there. We seem like. Grasshoppers. In their sight. Oh. The.

An evil. Unbelievable. And that was. Infectious. With. The multitude. There. Uh. It's an act. Of refusal. Not.

To believe. God. No. With the results. Of turning. Away. From. The God. Who gives life. Oh. Think about it. Think about it. Faith.

[19 : 17] Causing you. To come. To the life giver. Turning away. Causing you. To turn away. From the very God. Who gives life itself. Jesus says this. You will not. Come to me.

That. You. Might. Have. Life. Huh. Unbelief. Will cause you. To turn. From him. It's a warning.

Take care. Watch out. So you won't. Be led astray. By an unbelieving heart. And friends. An unbelieving heart. Will lead you astray.

Every. Time. Huh. Notice the next verse. And again. This is a word to the brothers. You see it. Take care brothers. Rather than. Being.

Allowing yourself. To be led astray. By an unbelieving heart. What is supposed to happen. Within the context. Of. Christian. Community. If you will. Exalt. One another.

[20 : 11] Every. Day. Huh. It's sort of like this. The power. That happens. In Christian community. Can have a way.

Of galvanizing. Insulating. Those who are within. Christian community. From. Unbelief. By what happens. In. And among them.

Exalt. Or encourage. One another. Every day. As long. As it is called. Today. So that none of you. Will be hardened. From the deceitfulness. Of sin.

Well. Here's the idea. It's talking about. A culture. Of encouragement. That has a way. Of countering. The deceitfulness.

Of sin. Is sin deceitful. You better believe. It will. Because it promises. You much. And it delivers. Sometimes.

[21 : 06] Nothing. At all. Huh. It's deceitful. Huh. The value. Of healthy. Christian community. Comes into focus. Huh. An atmosphere.

Where believers. Are encouraging. Believers. Huh. In ways. That banish. Discouragement. Let me ask you. Who are you. In conversation.

With. In community. With. Are you. Isolated. And alone. You're. That keeps you. So vulnerable. To.

The forces. Of the evil. One. And the deceitfulness. Of sin. Itself. If you got. Someone. Who. Who you're. In conversation.

And in community. With. They can help you. To test. A. B. And C. And you're. You're not alone. In your. Particular. Judgment.

[22 : 00] Huh. Amongst. The. Wilderness. Generation. Joshua. And Caleb. Were the. Encouragers. Huh. Ten spies. Came back. With a.

Bad report. But Joshua. And Caleb. Huh. The. The. The grumblers. Discouraged. Faith. Amongst. God's people. And what. In essence. He said. Don't be like.

That generation. Huh. Who were. Overthrown. In the wilderness. Wilderness. The value. Of Christian. Community. Comes through. Huh. Again.

Do you have. People. Who you're in relationship. With. With whom. This is likely. To happen. The potential. Of this kind. Of dynamic. Exists. Amongst.

God's people. It's the encouragement. Of family. That is being. Urged. And encouraged. Here. Huh. Sin.

[22 : 59] Is deceitful. It's. Appealing. To though. Oh. How appealing. It is. It's appealing. To the eyes.

It's appealing. To the flesh. Huh. It's appealing. To. The pride. Of life. Has. Various. Kinds. Of appeals. But it's deceiving.

Huh. Adam and Eve. You remember them. In the garden. She saw. That the food. Was. Was good.

The appeal. To the eyes. So forth. And they fail. Huh. She was apart. From her partner. From Adam.

Huh. And she was vulnerable. To the suggestion. And temptation. Of the enemy. What can't. Appear harmless. But in reality.

[23 : 56] It's like a trap. That will snare. Those. That fall into it. Huh. The awareness.

Of our inheritance. Comes into focus. In verse 14. Well. We have come. To share. In Christ. Huh. Huh. If indeed.

We hold our original confidence. Firm. Until the end. Huh. We're holy brothers. We're in the family. We are those who share.

In a heavenly calling. Chapter 3. Verse 1. Huh. We are part of the household. Over which. The faithful son. Is. The head.

Huh. With these things in mind. When we then listen. To him. We hear him. We don't rebel. Against him. Huh. And again.

[24 : 51] Here. Here's again. Persevering faith. Comes into view. That's the family characteristic. That's being highlighted here. Huh. Huh. So.

It's a word to the brothers. In verses 12. Through. 14. 15. But it's a word to the others. That are there in verses 16.

In 17. 16 through 18. Huh. It is. The preacher's explanation. He's already applied the text to his audience.

As far as. How do they function. In community. Huh. This is to those who are in the family. But then. Notice what he says. As he moves from 15.

To today. If you hear his voice. Do not. Harden your hearts. As in the rebellion. Again. Another point of reference. To that historical time. Where they.

[25 : 48] Refuse to hear God's word. And suffer the consequences forward. Look at verse 16. For who are. Those.

Who heard. And yet. Rebelled. Was it not all those. Who left Egypt by. Moses. And with whom.

Was he. Provoked. Or irritated. For 40 years. Was it not. Those who. Sin. Huh. Whose bodies. Fell in the wilderness.

And indication of God's irritation. Of provocation. With them. Because of their incarceration. In the wilderness. The consequences. Of unbelief.

Huh. And to whom. Did he swear. That they would not enter his rest. But to those. Who. Were disobedient. Huh.

[26 : 43] Huh. He speaks. Of. The people. In terms. That are really not flattering. At all. Huh. They are.

A rebellious. Generation. Verse. 16. They had been rescued. Huh. They had come out of Egypt.

Huh. They had been. Uh. Delivered. As it were. By the blood. But. They ended up. Being. Rebels. After their rescue.

Huh. Huh. The opposite. Of. What we see. Persevering faith. On the one hand. Perilous. Unbelief. Rebellion. On the other. Rather than hearing. And rebelling. Let's be those who hear. And.

[27 : 38] Believe. They were a rebellious. Generation. Was it not all those who. Left. Egypt. By. Moses. They were a. Sinful. Generation. Verse 17. Sinning and perishing. In the wilderness. Under. Moses.

Sinners who grieved. God. Huh. Those against whom. Had. God had a grievance. They. Irritated him. They provoked him. Huh. Let's not be people. Who are relegated.

Permanently. To places. To places and spaces. That are meant to be temporary. Huh. And for our growth and development. Why did he let him.

Suffer. Some of the wilderness. That they might know how to. Love him. And depend on him. The. Journey was supposed to be. A temporary. It was. It was. It was. From going.

[28 : 33] From point A. To point B. But they got stuck. In the wilderness. Because they did not. Believe God. It was supposed to be. Just temporary.

It wasn't supposed. To be a permanent. Home for them. It was a place of testing. Not a place of resting. Huh. But they ended up.

Staying there. Let's not fail. Life's test. And be incorporated. In the wilderness. And end up being buried there.

Huh. Let's be people. Who. Understand. How to navigate. The wilderness. That. Is this world.

If you will. Huh. They were a sinful. Generation. They were. A rebellious generation.

[29 : 28] They were a disobedient generation. Verse 18. Disobedience. And failure. To enter the rest. Because of. Unbelief. The rest. That God had prepared.

For them. And it remained. For them. They just did not. Enter. Into it. Huh. Those. Are. These are.

Again. Are not flattering terms. Rebellion. Rebellious. Sinful. Disobedient. Friends. These are not terms. That are meant to describe.

Family members. Those who should be characterized. By persevering. Faith. But so. The writer. He. Gives this negative. Example.

And in essence. He's saying. Don't be like. These here. Who failed. To enter into. God's. Provision. For them. Huh.

- [30 : 23] That's the essence. Of what he's saying. And so. In verse. 19. He gives this summary. Statement. If you will. So. We see. That they were. Unable.
- To enter. Because. Of. Unbelief. Huh. Those under. Moses. Failed. To enter. Because. They didn't hear.
- In faith. The word of God. God's voice. Through. The servant. Moses. Is they didn't embrace it. By faith. Rather. They were crippled. And disabled.
- And unable. To enter. And that's what. Unbelief. Friends. Would do. Every time. Huh. Passage. In a roundabout way.
- Calls you and me. To obedient. Persevering. Faith. And the one. Who has graciously. Delivered his people. Huh. And the error.
- [31 : 19] Of the wilderness. In this generation. Was a failure. To believe God. And his servant. Moses. Huh. We must not.
- Repeat their error. A failure. To believe God. And his son. Jesus. Who is. Greater. By far. Than Moses. The todayness. Of God's word. Comes through. Comes through. In this particular text.
- Huh. The spirit's word. Through scripture. Yesterday. Is the spirit's word. To God's people. Today. Huh. That's the todayness.
- Of God's word. His eternal word. Is emphasized here. God's word. And it's God's word. To his people. Throughout. The ages. Huh. And therefore.
- [32 : 15] As you look. Down a little bit. In chapter. Four. In verse 12. God's word. Is alive. And it's powerful.
- And it's sharper. It is what God's spirit. Uses. In your heart. In your life. In mine today. Huh. Our world.
- Friends. Needs people. Who are characterized. By persevering. Faith. Characterized. By Christian faith. Huh. Our world. Needs the likes.
- Of you. And me. As we embrace. Christ. And all that he is. Huh. After all. Has he not called us. The salt of the world. Salt of the earth.
- And the light. Of the world. Huh. This world. Desperately needs. People. Who are robust. In their faith.
- [33 : 11] Not flagging. In their zeal. People. Who take. God. At his word. When everyone. Else. Is doubting. And even.
- When. Sometimes. It seems like. This world. Comes. Crashing. Down. Around us. Huh. People. Who follow Christ. In faithfulness.
- And thereby. Demonstrate. The fact. That we. In fact. Are. Indeed. Our. Family. Probably. A number. Of people. Recognizable. Names.
- That can be used. As examples. Of that. But did you know. That there are people. With that kind of faith. That you don't even know about.
- They're living. In our city. They're living. In communities. Like you. And that we were. Have been hearing about. In our adult CE class. Amen. You saw all of those.
- [34 : 04] Lines. This morning. Those of you. Who were there. That. That have impacted. Communities. In need. Down through the decades. And guess what.
- In the midst of. All of those things. You've got people. Who are characterized. By persevering faith. You don't know their names. But they're there. There's one such lady.
- In the book. Known as family properties. And as we've talked. Learned about. The whole idea. Of contract selling. And buying. And how properties.

Were really. Taken away from. Different people. Under unjust circumstances. And the author. Highlights. One such woman. And she had.

Suffered. Injustice. From. On the left. And on the right. And then somebody. Asked her. What is. How is it that.

[35 : 00] You're. Taking. This kind of. Injustice. Her response. Was this. Somewhat. Broken English. But she says this.

We be Christians. We be Christians. That's. Persevering. Faith. In spite. Of circumstances. Holding on.

To. Family. Identity. Being salt and light. In an unjust world. Huh. Our world. Needs people.

Like that. Who. Because of. Faith. In Christ. Persevere. Through the. Ups and downs. Of life. When. When. When. Life throws you a curve.

Ever have that. Happened to you. Huh. You endure. In the midst of that. Beware. Friends. Of unbelief.

[35 : 57] Because. It's unhealthy. It's poisonous. And perilous. And punishable. And let. Unbelief. Be banished. From every. One of us.

Who are listening. Today. Now. You can't do that. On your own. But as you cry. Out to God. He could. He will help you. In that regard. This. Passage.

In a sense. It calls us. Calls you. And me. To tenderhearted. Obedience. That perseveres. In faith. In the living God. Who's made himself. Known. The person.

And work. Of his son. Huh. We can be tempted. To ask. Where's God. In the midst. Of the madness. Of the world. That we live in. Temptation.

To jettison. Faith. Altogether. Because. We don't think. That it's. Practical. But it is. Practical. Huh. And it's. It fuels.

[36 : 51] Us. To live. In this. Ugly world. Oh that we would pray. This morning. Search me.

Oh God. And know. My heart. Try me. And know my thoughts. So. The question. When you look. In the mirror.

Do you find yourself. In chapter 3. Verse 6. Or chapter 3. Verse 14. That speaks about. Persevering faith.

Or do you find yourself. Say in chapter 3. Verses. 8. Through. 11. Or verses.

16. Through 18. Huh. Where are you. Persevering faith. Or perilous.

[37 : 49] Unbelief. May God help us. To be people. Who are characterized. By. The latter. Let's pray. Heavenly Father.

We look to you. This morning. Our faith. Indeed. Has found. A resting place. Not in the vice. Or creed. But we found.

In the everlasting. One. Whose. Moons. For us. Do plead. So we bless you. And we give you. Praise. This day. Blessed be your name.

Amen. Let's stand together.