

Hebrews Part One

Lesson #13, Chapter 3:13-19

Read Chapter 3 before beginning this lesson.

1. Each local church is made up of believers at various stages in their Christian walk, some strong and mature, others young and immature in the faith, while some are weak and weary in the faith. Also, within each local church are unbelievers, some who are honestly seeking to know Jesus Christ, some who think they are saved, but are not, and others who know they are not saved and yet still come to church for a variety of reasons. The local church is a mixed group, and those groups are always in the preacher's mind as he prepares his message each week. Our writer to the Hebrews is no different. As we study this book, no doubt, you have become aware of the different groups of people the author is addressing. What group does he seem to be especially concerned about as he writes Chapter 3?
2. Define *encourage* [Strong's #3870 (ESV, NKJV *exhort*)].
3. What observations can you make about that command to encourage from vs. 13? Begin by asking, "Who are we to encourage? How often are we to do this?"
4. Refer to Acts 20:20 to see how Paul put this into action in his life. What do you learn from him?
5. Why is obeying this command so important? See vss. 12-13.
6. What do you learn about sin in vs. 13?

7. Why would these truths be essential for every Christian to understand?

8. There is a sense of urgency in vs. 13 that calls us to consider our lives and the lives of those around us, so that we won't fall prey to sin's hardening influence. What are some specific ways you can put vss. 12 and 13 into practice this week? Who are you going to encourage and strengthen to trust the Lord this week?

9. A person can only enter into the rest (vs. 11) of God by placing their faith in the completed work of Jesus Christ and trusting in Him alone to save them from their sins. Some of the Hebrews, however, were convinced that returning to the old ways of Judaism would please God better than living by faith in Jesus Christ. What kind of sin do they need to be careful not to be hardened or deceived by? See vss. 6 and 12.

10. Verse 14 provides a reason to encourage the believers not to return to Judaism. What is it?

11. Define *partakers* [Strong's #3353 (ESV, NIV *come to share in*)].

12. Jonathan Edwards once said that the sure proof of our election [salvation] is that we hold out to the end. What does *holding fast* to our assurance prove about us according to vs. 14? See also vs. 6.

13. What do you learn about true believers from the following verses? See Jn. 10:28-29; Rom. 8:1, 38-39; 1 Cor. 1:8-9; Phil. 1:6; 2 Tim. 2:11-13; 1 Pet. 1:3-5; 1 Jn. 2:19.

14. Verse 15 contains the second time the writer quotes from Ps. 95:7. What is the connection between verses 14 and 15?

15. Who provoked the Lord when they heard His voice (vs. 16)?

16. What did they do that provoked the Lord? See vss. 7, 15.

17. With whom was God angry for forty years (vs. 17)?

18. How did they sin against the Lord? See vss. 7-11.

19. Who did God promise would not enter His rest (vs. 18)?

20. In what way were they disobedient? See vs. 19. Also see Num. 14:2-23.

21. God made Himself known to the Israelites, performed wonders and miracles for them, and faithfully cared for them, but still, they did not trust Him. *God has done the same for us.* He has made Himself known to us through Jesus Christ and His perfect Word; He has miraculously transferred us from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of His Son; and He faithfully cares for us, yet still, we do not trust Him. How does the sin of unbelief manifest itself in your life most often?

22. Recognizing the symptoms of unbelief in your life is crucial to overcoming this sin. How have you learned to recognize those symptoms? What steps do you take to overcome this sin?

The way to keep from hardness of heart, and from the deceitfulness of sin, is to believe. So, we see that “they could not enter in because of unbelief.” Believe! — Faith has saved you. Believe! Faith will save you! Believe! — Faith has brought you to Christ. Believe! — It will keep you to Christ. Believe against the present temptation. Believe against all future deceitfulness of sin. You shall find that, just in proportion as faith grows strong, the deceit of sin will be baffled.

The next advice I would give is this — if you would be saved from the deceitfulness of sin confess it honestly before God. It is necessary to lay bare your heart before the living God. Though sin call itself by another name, do thou call it by its right name. Cultivate great tenderness of heart. A conscience seared as with a hot iron is the sure prelude of destruction. God save us from a heart over which sin has cast a coat of callous insensibility!

But now the text itself says, “Exhort one another daily;” from which I gather two lessons. First, hear exhortation from others; and, secondly, practice exhortation to others. I have known people of this kind, that if a word is spoken to them, however gently, as to a wrong which they are doing, their temper is up in a moment. Who are they that they should be spoken to? Dear friend, who are you that you should not be spoken to? We must all learn to hear what we do not like. The question is not, “Is it pleasant?” but, “Is it true?” We ought to be able to take a loving exhortation from our brethren and sisters. We must do so if we are to be preserved from the deceitfulness of sin. Let us be thankful that some saints love us well enough to give themselves the pain and trouble of exhorting us.

And then let us endeavor to “exhort one another daily.” We are not to scold one another daily, nor to suspect one another daily, nor to pick holes in one another’s coats daily; but when we see a manifest fault in a brother, we are bound to tell him of it in love; and to stir him up to greater zeal by a loving exhortation. Alas! We do not care enough for the souls of our brethren. If we thought more carefully of others, we should probably think more carefully about ourselves. “Exhort one another daily.”¹

¹Charles H. Spurgeon, *Spurgeon’s Sermons, Volume 36*, Electronic ed., Logos Library System (Albany, OR: Ages Software, 1998).