

“An Evil Heart of Unbelief” *Hebrews 3:12-13*

INTRO:

In **verses 7-11**, the writer to the Hebrews quoted from **Psalm 95**, which is a divine commentary on the events of the wilderness wanderings. The writer quoted the **Psalm** to warn his readers of the danger of hardening their hearts against God.

With **Psalm 95** and its warning as his text, the writer begins to expound and apply the spiritual truth found there. The beginning of the exposition is found in the next three verses.

I. A Warning against Unbelief (v. 12)

II. A Remedy for Unbelief (v. 13)

I. A Warning against Unbelief (v. 12)

A. Our writer wastes no time in getting to the point.

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.” (Hebrews 3:12)

The implication of this warning is that unsaved people are not the only ones who can fall into unbelief. Believers, people who are saved, can fall into this pit also.

B. The unbelief the writer warns against presents itself in many ways.

1. We can doubt God’s motives. They certainly did this at Kadesh. Listen again to the awful things they said. In **Numbers 14:2-3** we read:

“If only we had died in the land of Egypt! Or if only we had died in this wilderness! Why has the LORD brought us to this land to fall by the sword, that our wives and children should become victims? Would it not be better for us to return to Egypt?”

They accused God of bringing them to this point to kill them all off.

2. We can disbelieve God’s promises. God promised to give them the land. However, did the Jewish people there in the desert actually believe God’s promise? Their actions said they did not believe.

3. A third way an evil heart of unbelief can manifest itself is when we refuse to obey God’s commands. God said, “Go.” Israel said, “No.” Moses rehearsed what took place at Kadesh in **Deuteronomy 1**.

“Nevertheless you would not go up, but rebelled against the command of the LORD your God; and you complained in your tents, and said, ‘Because the LORD hates us, He has brought us out of the land of Egypt to deliver us into the hand of the Amorites, to destroy us. Where can we go up? Our brethren have discouraged our hearts, saying, ‘The people are greater and taller than we; the

cities are great and fortified up to heaven; moreover we have seen the sons of the Anakim there.” (vs.26-28).

4. We don't ever do things like this do we? Have we ever accused God of dealing with us in an unfair way? Have we let that slanderer and liar, Satan, ever talk us into believing that God is out to get us? Satan loves to tell us, God brought us this far so He could drop us and make us miserable. Do we sometimes doubt God's promises to us? Do we really believe that He will supply our needs according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus? Do we sometimes refuse to do what God commands us to do? How about talking to folks about our faith?

C. The warning from the Bible says we must not tolerate this behavior in ourselves. We must not let an evil heart of unbelief exist in us. The end of an evil heart of unbelief existing in us is that ***“we depart from the living God.”*** This is not saying that we can lose our salvation, but it can mean that we never had it in the first place. Or we can lose the blessings of walking in close communion with God and we have no assurance of our standing with Him!

D. A personal remedy for this problem is to make sure that we are walking in an active fellowship with the Lord Jesus Himself. The Apostle John wrote in **1 John 1:7**;
“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

Walking in the light means time in the Word of God each day and times of prayer as we walk with Him. It is difficult to walk in His presence, and at the same time to doubt His motives and existence.

II. A Remedy for Unbelief (v. 13)

A. Having warned us, the writer now offers us a remedy to help us avoid the danger. The remarkable thing is that it is a corporate solution not an individual remedy. We as a church are responsible for each other. We are to keep one another from this evil heart of unbelief. How are we to do this?

B. ***“But exhort one another daily, while it is called ‘Today,’ lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*** (v.13)

Instead of allowing an evil heart of unbelief to exist in any one of us, we must follow this remedy as a church.

1. The word translated *“exhort”* has several meanings. It can mean *“to help,” “to exhort,” “to comfort,” or “to encourage.”*

2. We see this word again in a similar context in **Hebrews 10:24-25**.

“And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as is the manner of some, but exhorting one another, and so much the more as you see the Day approaching.”

We are not to neglect the public worship or the gathering of the church because we need to provoke, exhort and encourage one another so that we do not have an evil heart of unbelief to take hold in our lives.

C. This ministry is so vital because we all have the potential to become ***“hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.”*** (v.13) We can easily be drawn away from the living God by believing the lies sin tells us.

1. Sin promises us pleasure and blessing without consequences. However, sin does something completely different. **James 1:14-15;**

“But each one is tempted when he is drawn away by his own desires and enticed. Then, when desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, brings forth death.”

2. Sin seduces us. We are drawn away of our own lusts and enticed. When lust conceives sin is born. Then sin grows and works in us to take control and to turn our hearts away from the God who loves us. In fact, sin makes us think that God hates us.

3. John also warned us in **1 John 2:15;**

“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.”

Love for the Father and love for the world (sin) are opposites. As we love God more, we love the world less. However, the more we love sin, the less we love the Father.

D. We must not miss the strong implication in these words. God is going to hold us responsible for each other’s spiritual life. Are we actively exhorting one another daily? Do we understand that we must take responsibility to pray for each other in God’s church here? Do we understand that we must be accountable to one another?