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# Sermon Notes

February 12, 2017

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Testing and Resting Hebrews 3:7-19

### Why Warnings?

- ❖ "I'm warning you..."
  - why do parents give warnings?
  - why are there warning signs on the highway?
- ❖ Why does God give His people warnings?
  - so that they don't derail their lives by plunging headlong into sin and ruination (Ezekiel 33:11)
  - God did not create people so that He could doom them to an eternity in hell (2 Peter 3:9)
- ❖ Hebrews 3:7-19 is a warning from God
- ❖ Some to whom the author of Hebrews writes are unwilling to throw their whole weight on Jesus

### A Warning from Psalm 95

- ❖ The concluding verses of Psalm 95 speak of a tragic event that happened during the life and times of Moses

- Israel's disobedience and rejection of God during the time when they are enroute from Egypt to the Promised Land
- almost 1000 years after Psalm 95 is written, the author of Hebrews comes back to it and sounds the same warning for those to whom he is writing
- almost 2000 years since the book of Hebrews was written, this warning is still just as valid and important for us to hear and heed today
- ❖ Slavery... 10 plagues... Deliverance... Red Sea... Grumbling
  - the Israelites exhibit unbelievable levels of unbelief in the face of overwhelming evidence that God cares for them
  - the people never REALLY believe in God
  - they will not submit, they will not obey
  - ungrateful, untrusting, unbelieving
- ❖ In Exodus 17:1-2, the people are unaware that it is really God who is testing them!
- ❖ In using this example from Israel's history book, the author of Hebrews calls both his original readers and us not to fall into this same trap
  - do not harden your hearts!!
  - unbelief, doubt, and disobedience make the Lord angry
- ❖ The "clincher"! (Numbers 13-14)

- God swears that those who despise Him with their unbelief will never enter into the land God promised to Abraham
- out of all those whom Moses led out of Egypt, only 2 will survive to enter into the Promised Land

### Heed God's Warning... Enter God's Rest

- ❖ For Israel, **REST** meant an end to the toil of wandering in the wilderness for 40 years
- ❖ For us, entering into God's **REST** is a picture of salvation
  - resting in/trusting in Christ
  - the issue for us today is still the same: unbelief
- ❖ God is patient and long-suffering, but there comes a time when it is no longer "today" and it becomes "tomorrow"
  - "tomorrow" is too late for you to make a decision to trust in Jesus
  - the evidence is in, the evidence is secure, the evidence DEMANDS a verdict
- ❖ Fix your eyes on Jesus: the way, the truth, the life
  - respond to Him TODAY while your heart is sensitive
  - don't let Satan sneak in & deceive you with his evil tricks & strategies and cause your heart to harden up again
- ❖ It is YOUR job to sound this warning every day (3:13)

### Personal Application

1. What is your general attitude toward warnings? (neglect them? reject them? ignore them? respect them, respond to them?)
2. Why does the author of Hebrews reach back to Psalm 95 to set the stage for the warning he sounds in this passage?
3. What are some ways through which God has worked to give you warnings in the past? How have you reacted to those warnings?
4. The issue in Psalm 95, Hebrews 3 and today is unbelief. Have you responded to God with belief and unwavering trust in Jesus as your only way to be cleansed of and saved from your sin? If not, why not?
5. In 3:13, the author of Hebrews calls us to sound this warning for one another every day. Are you doing that? If not, why not?