

Hebrews 3.12-15

My Brother's Keeper...

The cautionary word BEWARE starts this passage... we looked at the idea of being on our guard last week. But the warning is not only about us guarding ourselves. It is a command given to the "Brethren" and it is modified by three other phrases: "Any of you", "one another", and again, "any of you". What is the focus of this warning? Is it self? No, not really. It is a command to watch over one another, to be on guard against the encroaching deception of sin. To love each other enough to risk someone's anger for "meddling" or being a "busy body" when we see a brother or sister walking in paths of harm, WE are the first line of defense that God has raised for them. The body is commanded to watch out for one another in a proactive manner, to actively guard each other from sin. John Stott writes:

"If the church is central to God's purpose as seen in both history and the gospel, it must surely also be central to our lives. How can we take lightly what God takes so seriously? How dare we push to the circumference what God has placed at the center?!"

And Mark Dever writes:

"If you call yourself a Christian but you are not a member of a church you regularly attend; I worry that you might be going to hell."

These statements are provocative and strong, but they are also Biblical, and more, they are statements we need to grapple with.

I. BEWARE BRETHREN

The word "brethren" and the triple warning for one another indicates that the real focus of our caution is for the body. For the brethren, for the ones God has given us here in this life. The danger is that we will all try to stand alone, that we will allow the enemy to pick us off one by one because we are too concerned about guarding our own person, stuff, comforts... This was part of the problem in the OT example of the mixed multitude in the wilderness. They did not really have any sense of responsibility for one another. Could some of the things that

occurred happen if they were committed to caring for each other?

A. Watch over one another

1. Watch for an evil heart of unbelief. This heart begins to creep up on us when:
 - a. The trials don't let up
 - b. The blows hit in vulnerable places
 - c. We begin to doubt the goodness and faithfulness of God
2. Watch out for affections that are not solid for God.

This is really when the heart is the most danger. When our affections are being wooed away from the Savior, from the God who loves us, when our love for God begins to grow cold, and instead we:

- a. Love our money
- b. Love our stuff
- c. Love our amusements

d. Love our hobbies, our games, our pastimes

3. Watch out for drift.

This is the outward mark of the reduced inward affections. The brother who just begins to drift further and further away from the body, and from the outward displays that used to mark his life.

a. It is sneaky

b. It is slow

c. It is subtle

1) Easily explained away

2) Easily denied

3) Easily defended

B. Exhort one another.

To exhort is to earnestly support or encourage a **response or action**. It is aimed at an active response. The word is <parakaleo> it is used 31

times in the NT. It is a form of action that inspires, that encourages, that urges someone towards DOING... in other words, we are neither to BE passive, nor be ok with ALLOWING passivity among the brethren.

1. How?

- a. Daily
- b. Actively
- c. Continually

2. Unto...

- a. Righteousness
- b. Godliness
- c. Holiness

C. Protect one another

- 1. From hardening
- 2. From deception
- 3. From sin

II. BRETHREN IS A LIVING REALITY –

It is not a static picture of a building, nor of a lightly connected social club.

A. Consider the pictures from Scripture

1. Living stones building the house of God -
2. The Family of God
3. The body of Christ
4. The Bride of Christ

B. We must be growing in the relationships, life changes, so must we. The relationships must deepen, they must grow. Every single one of those pictures denote growth over time.

C. We cannot be casually, sporadically involved when we have nothing else going on.

D. They are not able to be replaced by online meetings.

E. You cannot passively distance learn Christ in action

III. BRETHREN IS A TWO-WAY MANDATE.

You are guarding them, they are guarding you.
Which implies that there are others with whom you
are involved in relationship...

A. You MUST have these relationships.

B. This is the dynamic of the body

1. This is the rule of Christ –

John 13.34-35.

2. Fellowship with Christ as Lord is equivalent to
committed fellowship with the whole family of
God. –

1Corinthians 1.9

1 Corinthians 5.2

3. This is the flavor of heaven

Revelation 21.2-4

4. This is a key part of the the target of life toward heaven –

Ephesians 2.14-21

- a. You will spend eternity with all who are reconciled to God
 - b. Fellow citizens
 - c. Members of God's household
 - d. Joined together into one Holy Temple
- C. You MUST actively seek out these relationships
1. Build relationships with other believers – the law and prophets hang on 2 commands - love God above all else. Love your neighbor as yourself.
 2. Be a member of a Biblical Body of believers -
 3. Submit to that authority

Hebrews 13.17

IV. BRETHREN IS A COMMITTED MANDATE

A. You MUST willingly submit to these relationships –

Ephesians 5.21

1 Peter 5.5

Philippians 2.3

B. Accountable relationships

1. Receive the word of God with meekness

James 1.21

2. See chastisement as evidence of God's love

Heb 12.5-10

3. Humbly accept correction from others

Proverbs 27.5-6

Proverbs 1.7

a. Take seriously our responsibility to correct and discipline others

C. Active relationships

1. Pursues Reconciliation

2Cor 5.18-21

Matt 5.23-24

2. Supports the work of the ministry

Rom 12.6-8

2Cor 8,9

3. Prepares for the worship of God

- a. Mentally
- b. Physically
- c. Spiritually

D. Committed relationships

1. Attends Regularly with others as the focus –

Hebrews 10.24-25

2. Bears with others

Matt 5.5

Matt 18.21-22

Romans 15.1

Gal 6.2

3. Seeks peace

Romans 14.19

James 3.18

4. Edifies others

1Cor 12, 14

Ephesians 4.11-16

Mark 10.45

E. This is your only hope of walking out this life in obedience

1. No one can fight the enemy alone
2. No one can see what is sneaking up behind him
3. No one can know what he doesn't know, but if I know something that you don't, if I see something that you don't and I love you, then I can help you see, help you understand, help you defend yourself and you do the same for me. This is the dynamic of the healthy body of Christ, and it **MUST** be the dynamic of our lives.