

Encourage to Endure!

Hebrews 3:12-19

East Berlin Community Church

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Introduction

- The need for a “cheerleader” to encourage in the completion of home remodeling projects
- Many “Christians” start well, but encounter problems and hardships which cause them to question their faith
- **Jesus’ Parable of the Sower and the Seed--** Matthew 13
 - The “seed” is the gospel, the Word of God, the message regarding the kingdom
 - **The Four Types of Soil**
 - **“Hardened” soil--** clearly unbelievers
 - **Rocky Soil**
 - Matthew 13:20b-21-- *“who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; yet he has no root in himself, but endures only for a while. For when tribulation or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles.”*
 - **Thorny Soil**
 - Matthew 13:22b-- *“hears the word, and the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful.”*
 - **Good Soil**
 - Matthew 13:23b-- *“hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and produces: some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.”*
 - **Questions which have plagued me for years.**
 - *Which of the four soils represent genuine believers?*
 - *Is there anything we can do to prepare the soil?*
 - The Spirit of God prepares the “soil” for the reception of God’s Word.
 - Our part is to encourage spiritual growth and endurance .

Encourage to Endure!

- Hebrews 3:12-19-- *“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called “Today,” lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, while it is said: “Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”*

A. Two Safeguards

1. **We need to examine ourselves, the condition of our hearts.**
 - Hebrews 3:12-- *“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God.”*
- a. **We should periodically examine the quality of our faith.**
 - 2 Corinthians 13:5-- *“Examine yourselves as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you? —unless indeed you are disqualified.”*

- b. **Tests as to the genuineness of our faith.**
- 1) **Awareness of the presence of the Spirit of Christ in us.**
 - Romans 8:9-- *"if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His."*
 - Romans 8:16-- *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God."*
 - 2) **Obedience to the Word of God and commands of Christ.**
 - 1 John 2:3-- *"Now by this we know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments."*
 - 1 John 2:5-6-- *"But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him. He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked."*
 - 1 John 3:18-19-- *"My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue, but in deed and in truth. And by this we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him."*
- c. **Failing the Test-- *"Lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God."***
- 1) **All apostasy begins in the heart and then manifests itself in life.**
 - 2) **Doubts lead to questioning God's goodness and Word.**

2. **We need the encouragement of others**

- Hebrews 3:13-- *"but exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."*
- a. This is not public exhortation, but rather private watch and care for others.
 - b. **It is our duty to encourage one another.**
 - 1 Thessalonians 5:11-- *"Therefore comfort each other and edify one another, just as you also are doing."*
 - Hebrews 10:24-- *"And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works."*
 - c. **The encouragement is to be "daily"-- need encouragement on a regular, consistent basis.**
 - d. **The Danger-- *"Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin"***
 - e. **The Safeguard is to have brothers or sisters in Christ who love us enough to confront us when we are going astray from the truth.**
 - Galatians 6:1-- *"Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted."*

B. Our Primary Concern

- Hebrews 3:14-- *"For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end."*
1. **Have we become "partakers of Christ"? That is, are we genuinely saved?**
 - a. Salvation is by God's grace through faith apart from our works.
 - b. **But genuine, saving faith works.**
 - James 2:17-- *"faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead."*
 - Ephesians 2:10-- *"His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."*
 - c. **Genuine, saving faith endures and we need others to encourage us to keep on.**
 - Hebrews 3:15-- *"Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."*

2. **Not everyone who begins well ends well.**

- Hebrews 3:16-18-- *"For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?"*

a. **Three Questions from the wilderness experience.**

- 1) *"Who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? (Hebrews 3:16)*
- 2) *"With whom was He angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness?" (Hebrews 3:17)*
 - Numbers 14:29-- *"The carcasses of you who have complained against Me shall fall in this wilderness, all of you who were numbered, according to your entire number, from twenty years old and above."*
- 3) *"And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey?" (Hebrews 3:18)*

b. **Bottom Line Answer: They could not enter because of UNBELIEF.**

- Hebrews 3:19-- *"So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief."*

APPLICATIONS FOR US TODAY

1. **Be careful against indulging unbelief in our hearts.**

2. **Let us live a life of faith.**

- Galatians 2:20b-- *"the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."*

3. **Let us encourage one another to keep on.**

4. **Let us persevere to the end!**