

Harden Not Your Heart

Hebrews 3:7-11

The text before us is an important one. Our radio broadcast from Ponca City is called “His Voice.” The name of the ministry comes from this text. God has spoken to us in His Word, both the written Word (the Bible) and the Living Word (Jesus Christ). His voice is heard by all.

I. There is an encouragement to harden not your heart (vs. 7-8).

This entire text is a quotation from Psalm 95 where the Lord gives a warning to the Hebrews. *“Today, if you would hear His voice, harden not your hearts as at Massah and Meribah”* (Ps. 95:7-8). In a moment I will explain what happened to God’s people (the Hebrews) at Meribah and Massah, but the encouragement the writer gives to the Hebrew Christians and us is clear.

A. It is possible for a person to grow hard to the things of God.

There is a natural hardness within man, but this text speaks of an *acquired* hardness.

“Today [right now], if you will hear His voice [His Word; see Heb. 1:1], harden not...”

All sin is natural; it is an acquired hardening. Think about how God is speaking to you.

For some, it is a responsibility in relationship, for others, a personal discipline is needed.

B. The opposite of hardening your heart is to “hold fast your confidence in God” (v. 6).

When God speaks He doesn’t mislead; He doesn’t misguide; He doesn’t make mistakes.

II. There is an example of people who once hardened their hearts.

The example given is the ancient Hebrews (“your fathers” v.9). They tried and tested God. The place where they hardened their hearts was “in the wilderness of Sinai” (Ex. 17:2-7).

A. God’s love and goodness toward His people (i.e. the Hebrews) is real.

But after their exodus from Egypt, through the miraculous power and providence of God, the Hebrews found themselves in a desert where there was little food and water.

“Why have you brought us up out of Egypt, to kill us and our children?” (Ex. 17:3).

Think about what the Hebrews are saying: “God, you are cruel, mean and unloving.”

B. When you doubt God’s love for you, your heart is hardening.

The Hebrews said, “Is the Lord among us, or not?” accusing God of mismanagement.

God instructed Moses to “strike the rock” and water came (“the rock of our salvation”).

The place where they accused (tempted) God of cruelty was called *Massah* (to tempt).

C. A symptom of unbelief in God’s faithful love is quarreling with others.

Rather than having a settled peace that all things work for your good, you will quarrel, fight (anger comes from not getting your way), and seek to control other people.

Moses also named the place where the Hebrews doubted God *Meribah* (quarreling).

III. There is an explanation for why you ought to not harden your heart.

A continual and steady doubt in God’s goodness, love and mercy in His Word brings an oath from God--made in His wrath--that you will “never” enter into His rest. The Jews used to have a saying that the Hebrews in the wilderness “will have no part in the world to come.” Even those of us who have had God’s wrath propitiated in Christ will sometimes doubt God. It is important that you learn to always keep your heart soft to the faithfulness and goodness of God to you through Christ because you will be unable to find yourself in a state of rest.

Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts.