

A Really Bad Example

Hebrews 3.7-19

Focus: a warning to us to encourage one another lest our hearts grow hard and we fall away from God and His Rest

RESOURCES:

I found John Piper's brief sermon notes very helpful again this week:

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/do-not-harden-your-heart-in-the-day-of-trouble>

and

<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/eternal-security-is-a-community-project>



2017 Annual Priority:

To embrace & exalt Christ as most worthy in our lives, that we might: know Him truly, Love Him supremely, obey Him faithfully, and share Him gladly

Discussion:

- Share a bad example that had a positive impact on you.
- Read 3.7-19. What is the bad example in this account? Why are they held up as a bad example for us not to follow?
- Both v. 6 & 14 make our place in the body of Christ conditional. You may want to read and discuss this explanation from John Piper:

Verse 6b: "We are his [Christ's] house [= his household, his people] if we hold fast our confidence and the boast of our hope firm until the end." Notice carefully. It does not say: we will become Christ's house if we hold fast to our hope. It does say: we are his house if we hold fast to our hope. In other words the holding fast to our hope is the demonstration and evidence that we are now his house.

Then look at the if of verse 14: "We have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end." Again, notice the wording carefully. It does not say: "We will become partakers of Christ in the future if we hold fast to our assurance." It says, "We have become partakers [in the past] if we hold fast our assurance." In other words, the holding fast to our assurance verifies that something real and lasting has happened to us, namely, we became partakers of Christ. We were truly born again. We were truly converted. We were truly made part of Christ's house.

What then would be the conclusion if we do not hold fast to our assurance? The answer is not that you stop being a partaker of Christ, but that you had never become a partaker of Christ. Read it carefully: "We have become partakers of Christ if we hold fast to our assurance." And so, "If we do not hold fast to our confession, then we have not become partakers of Christ."

- What are the signs that our hearts might be hardening to God's voice? (start with the example of Ps. 95 and Num. 13-14 and then branch out)
- How do you think these warnings (v. 7-8 & 12) are supposed to affect us? How is it affecting you? (be especially sensitive to anyone who is troubled by this warning and has doubts concerning their standing with Christ)
- Discuss what it will take for your group to better fulfill the command to encourage one another in v. 13?