

SOFT HEARTED

THE FINAL WORD: KNOWING CHRIST THROUGH HEBREWS | HEBREWS 3:7-19
MAY 17, 2020 | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God." (Hebrews 3:12)

Hearing God's Word Today (Hebrews 3:7a)
"as the Holy Spirit says"

An Example Not to be Imitated (Hebrews 3:7b-11)
Background: Psalm 95; Exodus 17; Numbers 14
Hardening of the heart
An aside about the heart
Testing and trying God
Losing God's blessing through wandering

Take care to do this (Hebrews 3:12-15)
Watch for unbelief (3:12)
Encourage one another daily (3:13)
Hold on unto the end (3:14)
Every day is "today" (3:13, 15)

Learn what not to do (Hebrews 3:16-19)
they rebelled (3:16)
they sinned (3:17)
they disobeyed (3:18)
their unbelief (3:19)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When you think about well-known examples of people you should not imitate, who comes to mind and why?
2. This week we continue our series on the book of Hebrews, "The Final Word," by spending time in Hebrews 3:7-19. Begin your study by praying that God would speak to you through His Word. Then, whether you're alone or with a group, read the passage aloud.

3. As with other parts of Hebrews, the writer utilizes Old Testament passages as the basis for his words. Here, the writer quotes Psalm 95, which is both a call to worship (Psalm 95:1-7) and a warning against disobedience (95:7-11). How would you summarize the message of the verses quoted in Hebrews 3:8-11?
4. The stories in the background of Psalm 95 are found in both Exodus 17 and Numbers 14. Take a look at those passages and try to answer this question: how do the Israelites lose their way with God in these episodes? If you're with a small group or household, perhaps you could divide into two subgroups each assigned to look at one of the passages.
5. This section is the second of five "warning passages" in Hebrews (2:1-4; 3:7-19; 5:11-6:12; 10:19-39; 12:14-29). What would you say is the main warning in verse 12?
6. What is the role of Christian community in this warning according to verse 13?
7. While we often think about "going to church" on a weekly basis, what do you think it means to "encourage one another daily" as believers?
8. One major theme of Hebrews is persevering in our faith. What do you think is being said about perseverance in verse 14?
9. The last few verses (16-19) summarize what the Israelites did that prevented them from entering into God's rest in the Promised Land. What does each verse tell us that they did or failed to do?
10. What do you think the writer is trying to tell his hearers about walking with God in adverse circumstances through this story about Israel's rebellion?
11. What is one thing God is speaking to you through this study of Hebrews 3:7-19? If you are on your own, write that down. If you are in a small group, discuss your answers with one another. Close in prayer. Choose one person in your life with whom you will share something you learned through this study.

DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper into Hebrews 3:7-19. Here are some possibilities for that:

- Memorize Hebrews 3:12 this week.
- Read about the backstory of Israel's resistance to God in Exodus 17 and Numbers 14. Write about, draw, or paint some aspect of those stories as a way to reflect on them or pray about them.
- Read Psalm 95 and then write your own prayer inspired by those words.
- Spend time looking at all five warning passages in Hebrews, summarizing each one, comparing them, and praying through them in some way:
 - 2:1-4
 - 3:7-19
 - 5:11-6:12
 - 10:19-39
 - 12:14-29