

Title: Do You Know Christ?
~~Our Relationship to Christ~~

Text: Hebrews 3:14-19

Take your Bibles, and turn to the book of Hebrews ...Hebrews chapter 3 and let's begin with Vs 14.....Hebrews 3:14

(Read Hebrews 3:14-19)

Prayer

The book of Hebrews was written to Jewish believers who were part of the church and yet, they were tempted to go back to Judaism because of the persecution that was happening to Christians. And Paul is warning the believer not to be tempted to fall away.

And I believe this can be applied to us today. Even though we are not being persecuted for our faith. Yet, there is a tendency for the believer to become complacent....in his attitude towards the purposes of God in his life.

And so Paul is warning us that if we are not careful, unbelief will find its home within our life. And when that happens, we ~~will~~^{could} fall away. ~~Now~~ he is not talking about losing your salvation. He is talking about the Christian who hardens his heart towards the things of God. And thus, he is falling away from that position of victory and blessings that occur when we are close to the foot of the cross.

We began this subject of Unbelief ~~last Sunday~~^{This} morning. In Vs 12-13 Paul challenges the believer concerning unbelief that can find its way into the life of a person. And in Vs 12 and 13 we looked at the reasons for unbelief.....^{Final}

(2E) Now, this brings us to the second thing that Paul mentions about this challenge of unbelief. And that is our relationship to Christ.

Vs 14 says: "For we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our assurance firm until the end."

Now, some of you might have read that verse and conclude that the verse indicates that you must hang on in order to be saved.....And it sort off looks that way, doesn't it?

Two things about our relationship to Jesus Christ.

(1F) First of all, it is a result of faith not unbelief. Paul says "for we have become partakers of Christ.".....In talking to the general group to whom He is writing he is saying: "Praise God, we have become partakers of christ."...

That is not a momentary tast of Christ or a limited exposure to the Gospel. ~~It~~ is talking about someone who has really gotten ahwoled of it. It is the perfect tense...THEY HAVE BECOME....partakers of Christ.....

And that is good news. Although what he has just said in Vs 12 and 13 is important. There maybe someone in the midst, lest any one of you be ~~hardened~~ hardened by the deceitfulness of sin."

Well, he says that ^{to} the group as a ~~whole~~ whole, ^{yet} and there could be unbelievers in the midst. Just ~~like~~ like here. So, he says "WE HAVE BECOME"...

Now, that last phrase: "if we hold fast the beginning or our assurance firm until the end"...

(2F) That talks ^{secondly} about the responsibility we have: and you know that and so do I. But what does it mean:...

Well, when I read the word "hold" the first thing that comes to my mind is the idea of "continuing to hold on"....Right?.....You know, if we hold the beginning ~~of~~ of our confidence or assurance."

What is the beginning ~~of~~ of our assurance?.....Beginning would refer to your salvation as a believer when you started..

Now, if you continue to hold that...is what it seems to say on first reading....Which seems to me to indicate that if you stop holding it you have lost it...Right?.....^{Wrong}

^{You see} ~~However~~, the word "to hold" isn't the word at all. It means "to hold down"....And it is not even continuous...It is just a moment of time.

And the "if" means "maybe you have ~~had~~ maybe you haven't".....

~~And~~ ^{How} the point is that everyone who has...is a partaker of christ....
and everyone who hasn't, isn't.... *a partaker of christ - You see*

If maybe you will....maybe you willn't....But you hold fast. Meaning,
"hold down"....And it is at a point in time...~~Not~~, continuously holding on...
Yes Christ ^{who} continuously holds on to you.....The Bible, nowhere, says you
continuously hold on to Christ..

No, it is hold ~~down~~ ^{down}...At a moment of time....WHAT MOMENT OF TIME?....
The beginning of your assurance or confidence.....

What does assurance mean?.....The word "assurance" or "confidence"
is the word for "standing under"....It is in opposition, really, to the concept
of Apostacy...."standing apart from"..... *It is standing under*

What were these Jewish ~~believers~~ ^{believers} standing apart from?.....What ~~are~~ ^{are}
they ~~are~~ afraid of?.....ANSWER: PERSECUTION...

What a great word then to describe the Christian experience....
ONE WHO CAN STAND UNDER IT.....All the pressure.....What a great word to
share with these Jewish believers tempted to go away from Christianity
because of persecution....

To say to them: "Listen, have you...held fast...did you, grape hold
of the beginning of steadfastness and remaining under it, then you have
nothing to worry about, if you have.....

You see, if you have, God will sustain you. Did you grape hold? Or,
didn't you?....Because what was begun by God he will finish as it says in
Philippians 1:6...

And this truth is going to be held "firm until the end". No need to
worry. That is not asking you to hold onto God. If it were it would use
a different tense...That I continually hold on....But, it doesn't. I, at a
moment of time took ahold of Christ....And I have this assurance that it
will stand firm until the end of time.. ~~It is standing under~~ ^{IT SAVES}

The question is "THE IF"...."If" means: Maybe you did and maybe you
didn't.....DID YOU?.....If you did, then cheer up. Don't worry about
the persecution....Did you receive Christ? Did you become a partaker?...Then
you don't have anything to worry about.....

Do you know why?....Because Christ has promised you that even in the midst of the most severe pressure, his power will be in your life. His strength will be made perfect in your weakness. God will be glorified in your life. And the pressures will only build you to make you more powerful and committed believer.....Don't even worry about it. Christ will give you the strength.....That is the point of the encouragement.....

(3E) *Concerning This Challenge of Unbelief.* Now, number three. There is a remainder of the past, here, in Vs 15.

This takes us back to Israel.

First of all, the simple principle is stated again in Vs 15 that was stated back in Vs 7 and 8....He says: "while it is said". Which means he is going back to what he talked about before. "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts, as when they provoked me."

The principle here is very simple....The Holy Spirit is speaking. We learned this back in Vs 7...."Therefore, just as the Holy Spirit says." ~~The point is:~~ if you are resisting what God is doing, if there is unbelief, you are resisting what the Holy Spirit has said. You have no right to question God's Word. This book is from God. It is inspired by the Holy Spirit. ~~And the Holy Spirit said that.~~

The point is that many of us take lightly what we read in the Word of God. And we don't respond to it. And that unbelief continues to harden our hearts. And that sin of unbelief deceives us. We think we are allright. And we don't think that sin is so bad. And we get worse and worse and we know even know it. We think we are all right. It is a terrible thing.

(4E) *OK. Fourth Concerning the Challenge of Unbelief* let's look at it in Vs 16-17-18 as to three problems involved.

I hope this will crystallize in your minds the danger of unbelief. And notice, they all begin with a question. The first one is WHO....The next two deal with God; WITH WHOM AND TO WHOM....Three things.

(1F) One, in Vs 16 we have a refusal to heed God's Word. A simple refusal to heed God's Word. He said: WHO DID THE PROVOKING? But notice ~~notice~~ that little phrase: WHEN THEY HAD HEARD?....

May I translate a little more literally...WHO, AFTER HEARING, DID PROVOKE...

Now, a lot of people like to excuse the children of Iszrael for all their complaining in the wilderness. But, the Bible says they already knew what God would do. God gave them his word, gave them his promise. But after hearing it, then they provoked God. *A WILLFUL Act of Disobedience*

Have you ever done that?....No, I don't suppose you have.....You heard the Word of God at some point. You knew what God's Word said. Yet, you still went out and provoked God.....

You tested him...Tried to do it your own way...Just refused to hear what He said.....

(2F) Number two, in Vs 17, it says: "AND WITH WHOM WAS HE ANGRY FOR FORTY YEARS?.....Was it ~~only~~ with those who had sinned. *Those* bodies fell in the wilderness? A complete generation of people died in the wilderness. They never did make it into the promise land. And that is the point....

(2F) So, this second problem involved rebellion against a loving God. Rebellion....With whom was he angry? You see, God get's angry when we don't respond to what he has provided for us. God can continue to provide for you and for me like he did for the children of Israel. And it can continue to cause bitterness in the heart when unbelief is there....

You know, some people when you talk to them and they think God is against them. And as you talk, you get a little jealous of them because you can see how God is blessing them. And yet they are not responding....And it makes you mad.....HAVE YOU EVER EXPERIENCED THAT?

Someone who has obviously been experiencing the blessings of God. And yet they are bitter. And you think: HOW IN THE WORLD CAN YOU BE BITTER WITH ALL THAT GOD IS DOING IN YOUR LIFE.....MAN, YOU OUGHT TO HEAR WHAT I AM GOING THROUGH.....Have you ever thogught that sometime? Well, maybe you don't. I am carnal....But, anyway, sometimes I think about that....

You are sharing with somebody and they are telling you all about there problems. And you think: boy if they only knew what I am going through...

What is it with all of us?.....Why do we do that?...UNBELIEF..UNBELIEF. THAT IS WHY....

And unbelief hardens our heart. It is deceitful and deceives us. Instead of hearing God's word and rejoicing in his provisions. ~~We~~ ^{we} rebell against a loving God who is providing all ~~our~~ blessings.

Are you questioning, right now, what God is allowing to happen in your life? ... We belong in this passage if we are....

(3F) ^{OK The Third problem} ~~Number three~~, is rejection by God and entering his rest, because of unbelief. Vs 18..And to whom did He swear that they should not enter His rest, but to those who were disobedient?

~~And~~ And you see, we miss the blessing of God because we are disobedient. God tells us what to do. And we think we have a better plan. And we reject his plan for our lives. And thus we miss his rest....

Now, remember, Canaan for the children of Israel meant rest, victory. And rest here means living the abundant life. He is ~~not~~ talking about heaven. He is talking about living a victorious life....And why don't we have victory in our life?.....WHY....DISOBEDIENCE...

And maybe that is why some christians never have ~~victory~~ ^{Victory} and peace in their life....They are ~~not~~ disobedient and there is unbelief in them...

If you don't believe that you can have victory over sin, then you never will. You must believe it....God wants us to believe that he is a God who can do what He claims....And that is our problem. We need to believe God,

(SE) ^{Then Finally} ~~the~~ the simple result in Vs 19 is that they had no power. "and so we see that they were not able to enter because of unbelief."

Do you sometimes feel like you really want to have victory over sin in your life, you really want to have peace and rest and victory, do you sometimes feel that you just haven't got any power?....

I mean, you are just out-of-gas....There is no way at all.....Well, God tells you why.....IT IS BECAUSE OF UNBELIEF....UNBELIEF.....

And dear friends, that is why we stay in the wilderness....And we never enter into the joy and promise of a blessed land for the believer.... Peace and victory in daily living..... God wants you to have it. ~~But~~ it is unbelief that keeps you from having it.....

Let's pray