

“HOW TO OVERCOME UNBELIEF”

Hebrews 3:7-19

Message 1593

When you begin to analyze the way God has made us, you find that He made us with the ability to choose. We can choose to believe or we can choose not to believe. We have the ability. It's built into the way God made us. The Bible tells us that God has given to every man a measure of faith. That means that we have the capacity to choose to believe.

When the devil invaded the human family in the beginning, unbelief was introduced. He raised the question with Eve, “Did God say?” That was the beginning of unbelief.

Today many do not believe, but many do not know why. Some do not know what to believe. One time a man said to me, “I wish I could believe like you do.” Well, my friend, let me point out to you that belief is a matter of the will. God has given us the ability and the will to choose to believe or not believe.

In this meditation we face the important need, **HOW TO OVERCOME UNBELIEF**, from Hebrews 3:7-19.

7. Wherefore (as the Holy Ghost saith, Today if ye will hear his voice,

8. Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

9. When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

10. Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in their heart; and they have not known my ways.

11. So I sware in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

12. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

13. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

14. For we are made partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end;

15. While it is said, Today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation.

16. For some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses.

17. But with whom was he grieved forty years? was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness?

18. And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not?

19. So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

The writer of this book of Hebrews gives some helpful WAYS by which you can overcome unbelief.

ACCEPT THE INVITATION is the very first thing to do. Did you notice in this Scripture lesson the importance of today? The Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you will hear his voice.” We have no further promise than today. It is important, therefore, that you accept the invitation now.

Also notice the importance of the Spirit. It is the Holy Spirit who says, “Today, if you will hear his voice.” God has sent us His Holy Spirit. He has spoken these words to us by the Holy Spirit. You may wonder sometimes who that is speaking to you. The Holy Spirit may be speaking to you.

It is also important that we get the facts. The writer refers to the wilderness, and he puts it this way, “When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.” Why should God call anyone to belief? Because the facts are there, the evidence is there. He had led the children of Israel for forty years in the wilderness. He had provided for all their needs: protection, food, their shoes didn’t wear out, their clothing didn’t wear out. With that much evidence, the invitation is especially important.

Then I want you to notice the importance of decision. “They always err in their hearts.” That is the seat of it all. Unbelief is rooted in the heart. We have the power of choice. We can decide to believe or not believe, and they decided not to believe.

The invitation comes to you, my friend. Accept it. “Today if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart.”

ATTEND TO THE EXHORTATION is necessary in overcoming unbelief. I found in this Scripture that unbelief leads away from God. Read it again, “Take heed, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.” Unbelief leads away from God. And it is in the heart, an evil heart of unbelief.

The heart is the seat of the emotions. It is a way of saying that there is a place where these decisions are made. It is more than the mind; it is right there where we are, what we are. So unbelief is in the heart, and leads away from God.

Did you notice the further exhortation? “Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.” Sin hardens and makes unbelief easier.

Now, we can do something about our condition. We do not need to be caught by unbelief if we will give attention to the exhortation. We can hold fast. “We are partakers of Christ, if we hold fast the beginning of our confidence stedfast unto the end.” Listen to the call. “Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation.”

We can do something about unbelief. God in mercy has sent His messenger to tell you and me to listen and obey. We must, therefore, attend to the exhortation.

AVOID THE CONDEMNATION is the third way to overcome unbelief. Not only does unbelief lead away from God, but unbelief leads to death--eternal death. In this case their unbelief led them to death in the wilderness. They never got into the land that God had promised them because they would not believe Him. They turned their backs on God. And divine justice required that God act. So when they refused to believe, God said, “You will not enter into my rest.” And He was provoked with them, He was angry with them. Their carcasses fell in the wilderness because they would not believe.

Unbelief leads to death. Unbelief leads to eternal death. And unbelief blocks the entrance to joy. They didn't have the opportunity of entering into the joyful relationship that God had promised them if only they would believe.

We can determine what the outcome will be by our decision. How can we overcome unbelief? Avoid the condemnation--believe. God is merciful. Yes, but He's also just and He must act when people refuse to believe.

Here, then, are the ways you can overcome unbelief: accept the invitation, "Today, if you will hear His voice, harden not your heart;" attend to the exhortation, "Take heed, lest you have a heart of unbelief;" avoid the condemnation, "they shall not enter into my rest."

This is your opportunity. Seize it to overcome unbelief and put your faith in God, even in Jesus Christ.