

Exhort One Another Daily

by Anton Bosch

This sermon delves into Hebrews chapter 3, emphasizing the importance of not hardening our hearts in disobedience to God, drawing parallels between the Israelites' rebellion in the wilderness and the need for believers to exhort one another daily to avoid falling into unbelief and departing from God. The speaker highlights the critical role of faith, obedience, and encouragement in maintaining a steadfast trust in God, warning against the deceitfulness of sin that can lead to spiritual hardening and separation from God's blessings.

Scripture: Hebrews 3:7, Hebrews 3:12, Hebrews 3:13, Hebrews 3:14, Hebrews 3:15, Hebrews 3:16, Hebrews 3:17, Hebrews 3:18, Hebrews 3:19

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Encouragement in Community"

Description

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Transcript

Hebrews chapter 3, and we will begin in verse 13, but let's read from verse 7 through 19 so we can get the context. So Hebrews chapter 3, reading 7 through 19. Therefore as the Holy Spirit says, today if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion, in the day of trial in the wilderness where your fathers tested me, tried me, and saw my works forty years.

Therefore I was angry with that generation and said, they always go astray in their heart, and they have not known my ways. So I swore in my wrath they shall not enter my rest. But where brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, but exhort one another daily while it is called today, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

For we will become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. While it is said today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as in the rebellion. For who having heard rebelled indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? Now with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? And to whom

did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who did not obey? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

So we were in verse 12 last week, but where brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. And so remember the context is the comparison between Israel coming out of Egypt, and the Christian coming out of the world, and the warning that we need to make sure that we don't make the same mistakes that Israel made. And so this very serious warning, and notice again that it's put to believers, not to unbelievers, but where brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief.

Now we're going to speak about unbelief in the next couple of weeks, because this is part of the theme, and you'll see that he ends up dealing with unbelief at the end of verse 19. So we see they could not enter because of unbelief. And so unbelief is a theme in these chapters, certainly up to chapter 4, and then remember chapter 11 again comes back to the concept of faith.

And so, lest there be an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God. And so unbelief prevented them from getting into the land. Unbelief is the thing that can result in us departing from the living God.

Now he's going to give us some solutions, or some answers to the problem. But, there's that word, so there's the possibility of, because of unbelief, departing from the living God. But, exhort one another daily while it is called today.

There's that concept, while it is called today again. Exhort. The word exhort means to encourage, to speak to one another, to admonish, if necessary.

Exhort one another. Again, we read these things, but we don't really pay attention to them. We don't really pay attention to what it is saying.

And so, generally, in most situations, and even in ours, we say, well, it's the preacher's job to exhort. But, he's not saying that the preacher must exhort, but that we must exhort one another. We must exhort one another.

So, no one is excluded from this responsibility. Now remember, the problem is the potential of departing from the living God. So, because that is a problem, and a potential thing, we need to exhort.

We need to encourage. We need to draw one another near. We need to speak to one another.

In fact, later on in Hebrews, he'll say that we need to consider one another, how we may provoke one another to good works. Consider one another. Think about one another.

We live in a selfish world, where everyone is just in it for themselves. And yet, we have a responsibility within the context of the body of Christ to one another. And, it's not the preacher's job, or not only the preacher's job, or the elders, or the leaders.

It is everyone's job. And, he is very specific here. Exhort one another.

Now, if he had elders in mind, because he addresses the issue of elders later on in the book. So, he understands the concept of elders, obviously, because that was how it was in the New Testament. If this was what he had in mind, he would have said, the elders that are among you, exhort the congregation.

But, he's not saying the elders must exhort the congregation. Obviously, they must, because they are part of the one another. But, exhort one another.

So, we must ask the question, when last did you exhort someone? When last did you encourage someone? When last did you say a fitting word to someone in the congregation? Someone that you see is struggling. Someone that you see is having a problem, or having a bad day. But, we come and we go, and we don't recognize that there are others that really have needs.

And, the fact is, just by the law of averages, that whenever we come together, there is guaranteed to be some folk who are struggling. There are going to be some folk who have issues, who have a bad day, that something has gone wrong, and they're just not feeling on top of it. And, just a word of encouragement will help them, and will encourage them to go on with the Lord.

So, exhort one another, daily. Remember this concept of today. The word day, today, appears over, and over, and over in these chapters.

And so, how often do we exhort one another? Well, maybe, in reality, once a month, once a year. And, we say, well, once a week, because we come together once a week, or twice a week, for those who are faithful, and come together on Thursdays as well. No, daily, we need to exhort one another.

And, we say, well, you know, that was those days, and they, because they came together on a daily basis. That says in the book of Acts, the church in Jerusalem, they broke bread in one another's houses, day by day. They met every day.

Now, we can't do that. We don't do that. It's somewhat impractical in our modern world, in terms of the hours that people live, and the distances that people have to travel to get to the meetings.

But, we have modern media. We have phones, and texts, and WhatsApp, and all these kinds of things that we're able to use to encourage one another. We even have Fakebook, which is used for all sorts of nonsense, and yet can be used very effectively to encourage one another, to encourage believers further afield.

And so, we must ask the question, you see, because we say, well, you know, you need to pray every day. You need to read your Bible every day. But, part of that deal is that we should be exhorting one another every day.

And you say, well preacher, that's your idea. No, it's not my idea. That's the text.

And you don't need to be a Greek scholar to understand the text. The text says exhort one another daily. It's simple.

I don't even know why I'm preaching on it, because that's the way it is. And so, I think that one of the things that we need to ask ourselves every day is, have I exhorted someone today? Have I spoken a word of comfort to someone? Have I spoken a word of encouragement to someone? Have I just reached out and said, how are you? And, you know, just that is sufficient sometimes. It's just showing some care and some interest.

Many folk have families around them. There are others of us who have no families around us. And sometimes life is hard, because you don't have friends.

You don't have anyone to talk to. And just someone reaching out and saying, how are you doing? And not, you know, we've spoken about this before. We greet one another, how are you? Well, fine.

Because we understand it's not a real question. You're not really asking, how am I? You're just being polite. But we need to get beyond just being polite.

We need to get real. And we need to care for one another. And we need to say, brother, really, how are you doing? How can I pray for you? But there is not one person in this church, or in any other church for that matter, who does not have needs that need to be prayed for.

Every single one of us have things that need to be prayed for. And yet no one will reach out and say, brother, what can I pray for? I'm very deeply grateful for brothers across the world who reach out to me and say, brother, you're on my heart today. What is it that I can pray for? And that, you know, it's obviously the prayer of faith is powerful.

But it's not just that. It's just the showing of care and of concern. And so exhort one another daily.

And I believe that we need to make that part of our daily exercise. As much as you should be praying every day, as much as you should be reading your Bible every day, you should be exhorting someone every day. And if I don't, you know, if we don't get anywhere further with a study, if we don't, you know, if you fall asleep now and don't hear anything else I'm saying, please hear this.

And please make this a determination in your heart of saying, I'm going to make a point of exhorting somebody every day from here on. We're living in desperate times. We're living in times when it's just bad news on every form of media.

It doesn't matter whether it's the television stations or Facebook or whatever. It's just bad news, bad news, bad news. We need encouragement.

We need to exhort one another. You remember that the book of Malachi speaks about those who love the Lord spoke often to one another. They spoke often to one another.

The devil does his share of speaking to us all the time. We need to hear from one another. We need to hear from the Lord through our brothers and our sisters.

So exhort one another daily while it is called today. So there's that whole concept again, not manana. Not say, well, you know, I'll call him tomorrow.

Call him today. Exhort him or her today while it is called today, because tomorrow is not today. Tomorrow you're not sure of.

So the fact that someone is laid on your heart today means that maybe the Holy Spirit is prompting you to pray for them today. Tomorrow you're gonna forget. Tomorrow the crisis may be over, and maybe the person has made a decision in the wrong direction, because no one reached out.

No one prayed. No one picked up the phone, or texted, or did something. Today.

Today. Because here's the danger. Lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

And so the whole point is that today, if you will hear your voice, his voice, harden not your heart. And so becoming hardened is a very real experience. It's something that happens to every one of us.

And the antidote to becoming hardened is exhorting one another daily. That's why I want people to be in church. I don't want people to be in church so that I can feel good about having a big congregation, or about being able to say to my colleague down the road, you know, we had so many people in church.

It's not about that at all. Well certainly for me it's not about that at all. I don't know the numbers.

I never count. I don't know how many people are in the meetings at different times. I just know that some people are missing when they're missing.

And my concern for them being missing is not because of my audience, but because they're not present to get the only exhortation they're going to get. They're not going to get it from the world. They're not going to get it from the news.

They're not going to get it anywhere. They're only going to get it from here. And God help us that it doesn't only come from the pulpit, but that it comes from one another.

And if we're not here, then how will we be exhorted? And of course the problem then is that that results in hardening. And it's the deceitfulness of sin that hardens us. You see, when we're being exhorted, it certainly is a, it cannot stop us from sinning.

Those brethren who've come out of addictions understand the importance of being able to speak to someone, the importance of having someone speak to you at the times when you feel tempted. And it brings about accountability. And folk, every one of us is being tempted.

Maybe not in the same way as an alcoholic or a drug addict is being tempted, but we're all being tempted to sin. And if you say, well I don't have that problem, well you're in the wrong church then. We all have that problem.

We're all tempted to sin. And sin is deceitful. Sin is deceitful.

You remember the very beginning, Adam and Eve. She looked at the fruit. It looked good.

It was tempting. It was promising. Sin is never repulsive.

Sin in other people's lives is repulsive to us. But when sin presents itself to us, it's always attractive. It always looks good.

But it's a deception. It also promises us all sorts of pleasure, or whatever. But the deception is that when it produces its fruit in our lives, it produces death.

And so remember that the promise to Eve in a sense was, you'll really be alive if you eat this thing. You'll be just like God. This is going to be the greatest thing in your life.

But what did it do? It produced death. And death upon all. And so sin is deceitful.

And it is only in the light of God's Word that we can see it for what it is. When we're on our own, there's no one around us, the temptation to go to the internet and watch things you ought not to watch becomes very real. But when someone is there and is exhorting you, brother, keep your eyes on Jesus, it helps.

I'm not saying that that's the only problem we have. We have dozens of problems, all sorts of temptations. But it's the exhortation that comes from other believers that keeps us out of trouble.

I really think that if I wasn't a preacher, I would be a terrible person, even if I was a Christian, because I'm forced to be here because of my job. I'm forced to be in the Word. Now I'm not saying that we should do it because we're forced to, but I'm glad for the opportunity.

I'm glad that there is a discipline upon my life to be in the fellowship of the saints, a discipline upon my life to be in the Word of God. And that keeps me out of a lot of trouble. It doesn't mean I still don't get into trouble.

But, folk, when we're not under the sound of the Word, when we're not in the Word, when we're not praying, when we're not being exhorted, and when we're not exhorting one another, and we're just living our lives out there in the world, it's easy to be deceived by sin. Just have this pot of stew. You're tired, you're hungry, you've been out there hunting all day, and you found nothing.

Here's a beautiful pot of stew. Just sell your birthright, the deceitfulness of sin. And so the answer is to exhort one another.

It's interesting that he doesn't say, well, you know, here's a magic formula, but here's a system, here's a method that works. And so lest we be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin, exhort one another daily. Because we have become partakers of Christ.

Here's the warning. If, remember this little word if, over and over in Hebrews in his first chapters you're going to find that word if, conditional. If we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end.

Now remember the point that he's making. Israel came out of Egypt, they didn't get into the promised land. Now you need to be careful, he says, lest you depart from the living God.

Lest you become hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. And we are partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Paul says, he who endures to the end will be saved.

And so we must hold our confidence. We must hold our confidence. Now what does that mean? Well confidence is just another word for trust or faith.

What is it that you have confidence in? Well I have, we have confidence in the Lord Jesus Christ. We have confidence in the work of the Spirit. We have confidence in God.

That is who we trust. That is where our faith is. And we need to hold on to that.

We cannot have confidence in ourselves. If anyone thinks that they can have confidence in themselves to keep themselves, you've got your confidence in the wrong place. If your confidence is in me as the pastor to keep you, it's in the wrong place.

Because I can't keep you against your will. If your confidence is in the church to keep you, it's in the wrong place. There's only one who we can trust, and that is the one who said that the work that he's begun, he will complete within us.

And so we need to hold on to our confidence in the Lord Jesus, and his ability to hold us, his ability to keep us, and his ability to see us through to the end. And so we need, because that's how that's how we got

saved. How did we get saved? By having confidence in the church? No, by putting our confidence or our trust in Jesus.

That's how we began, and that's how we need to end. Israel came out of Egypt, and their confidence was to go to the Promised Land. But they didn't get there, because they let go of that confidence.

They had a certain confidence in God, that God would get them into the land. And yet when they came to the River Jordan, they turned around, and they perished in the wilderness. And so we need to hold the beginning of our faith, the beginning of our confidence, steadfast to the end.

Again, notice that there are words here that you can easily dispense of. Sometimes people who write and people who speak use a lot of words, because they think that it's impressive to use a lot of words. But the Bible doesn't use words just for the sake of using many words.

Every word is inspired. Every word is there for a purpose. Now, he could easily have said, if we hold the beginning of our confidence to the end, would that have changed anything? Yeah, it would.

Because it's one thing to hold my confidence that I had at the beginning to the end. It's another thing to hold it steadfastly to the end. You see, some people begin okay, and they will sort of end all right.

But in between, it's like this. It's up and down, and it's all over the show. They're not being steadfast.

We find the same idea, the same word. Jesus, as we're in the book of Luke and coming to the last days, as Jesus goes towards Jerusalem, he is steadfast. He is determined.

I'm going to the cross. Nothing was going to dissuade him. Nothing was going to discourage him.

He doesn't take any deed to us. He lives his life for 33 years from the cradle to the cross. And it's a straight line, if you will, from one to the other.

And yet, for us as Christians, many times it's not a straight line. It's up and down, and it's wandering over there and wandering over there, like the people of Israel. You're going around in circles, never getting anywhere particular.

No, we need to be steadfast. We need to be rooted and grounded in our faith. And the only way we can be is if we are doing the things that we ought to be doing—praying, reading, and exhorting one another.

For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning. When he says being partakers of Christ, obviously he means that we've enjoyed what he has to offer. And obviously, what does he have to offer? Well, salvation, and his goodness, and his grace, and all of those wonderful things.

And so we have become partakers. We have partaken of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. Now verse 15.

Here he comes back to Psalm 95 again. While it is said, today. Now notice again.

Remember from the beginning I warned you that one of the problems, or one of the challenges of Hebrews, is that no single verse stands on its own. Every verse is linked to the verse before it. And so we can't just say, well, you know, he said today if you will hear his voice.

No, again the context is, if we have become partakers of Christ, if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end while it is said today. Again, Lord, I'll be steadfast next week. Lord, we're coming to the end of the year, and I have things to do, and it's just a busy time.

But come January, Lord, I'll be steadfast. No, while it is said today. So if you're hearing my voice this evening, or those who are watching the video, it may be at a later time.

Today, if you will hear his voice, don't harden your hearts. And so he is coming back to the same theme over and over and over and over. What hardens our hearts? The deceitfulness of sin.

What was it that hardened Israel's heart? It was the deceitfulness of what Egypt had to offer. I mean, just imagine this. They had spent hundreds of years in Egypt as slaves, with hard taskmasters, being beaten, because we know that Moses rescued a man who was being beaten by a Egyptian slave master.

Being given straw, well, not given straw, that they needed to make the bricks. Doing terribly hard work. You know, we complain about the mandates that we have to wear a mask and those kinds of things.

Those guys had a mandate that you couldn't have babies, and the babies would be killed if they were born. And yet they come out of all of that. They own nothing except a few sheep and cattle, because the Egyptians despised anyone who kept livestock.

And they come out of that, and God says, I'm going to take you to the promised land. A land that flows with milk and honey. A land that is in every way far superior to Egypt.

And yet the deceitfulness of sin brought them to a place where they said, it's better back in Egypt. How can you think that way? And yet there are Christians who make a decision, and they say, it was better back in the world. Somehow they'd forgotten the slavery of sin.

They'd forgotten the bondage that they lived under. They'd forgotten the guilt and the shame. They'd forgotten the emptiness of the hangover the night after.

All of that is forgotten because sin deceives and says, let's go back there. No, today, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts as in the rebellion. And remember again this concept, they rebelled against God.

And of course, we live in a time when we say, well, you know, every man has the right to make his own choices and to do what he wants to do. Why does God have to tell us what to do? Well, when God told them to get into the promised land, it wasn't because God was going to get anything out of them being in the promised land. It was for their good.

It was a tremendous blessing that he had in store for them. And yet they rebelled against God's will for them. And so God's rules and God's laws and God's desire for us is not onerous.

He wants to bless us. He wants to get us into heaven. He wants to use us in his kingdom.

And yet we rebel against that because we feel that our will has been impinged on. No, don't harden your hearts as in the rebellion. Now verse 16, for who having heard, rebelled.

Now just think about where we're at. If you will hear his voice, the previous verse, harden not your hearts. So he says, but who having heard.

So they heard. So it wasn't like they could say, well, we didn't hear. They heard.

When did they hear? Every day. Every day God was speaking to them, not words, but showing them his faithfulness in the manna, in the water, in the priory pillar, in the cloud, in Moses. Every day God was showing himself.

God was speaking to them. And what was he speaking to them? He was telling them he is faithful. He was telling them, you can trust me.

You see, God's not a man that he should lie. When, when somebody particularly in business says, well, just trust me. Well, you know, you can't trust him.

But when God says, trust me, he is 100% reliable, 100% dependable. And so God is showing them his dependability, his faithfulness, his reliability, his power, and being able to bring water from the rock, being able to make a cloud, cover them during the day to keep them cool, and changes to a pillar. And then when they have to move on, the cloud or the pillar would, would, would lift and begin to move, and they would follow that.

And when they were supposed to stop the next time, the cloud or the pillar would stop, and they would camp, and God would be with them. Every day God was saying to them, I'm faithful, trust me. For God speaks to us.

We have what they don't have. We have his word. We have the Holy Spirit.

We have the New Testament church. These are things that they did not have. But in all of these things, God is speaking to us.

And of course, God spoke to them in the Mount Sinai with an audible voice. He spoke the Ten Commandments in the hearing of the whole congregation. They heard him speak.

They saw his mighty works for 40 years. For having heard, who having heard, rebelled. Here's the problem.

And we're going to move on to this next week. Because you're going to see in the end, the last two verses, which I'm not going to deal with this evening. But verse 18, to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who did not obey.

Verse 19, so we see they could not enter because of unbelief. Now just look at what he's saying. Verse 18 says, why didn't they get in? Because they didn't obey.

Verse 19 says, why did they not get in? Because of unbelief. So which is it? Well, obviously these two things are connected. Obedience is a product of faith.

And we're going to see this in chapter 11 when we get there in many months time. We have the wrong concept of faith. We say, well, faith produces miracles.

No, faith produces obedience. That's the whole point of the book of Hebrews. That's the whole point of Hebrews chapter 11.

Faith produces obedience. And if we trust God, we will do what he tells us to do. If we don't trust him, we don't do what he tells us to do.

And so that concept, we're going to unravel that in the next few weeks. So for whom having, for who having heard rebelled, indeed was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses. What a terrible situation.

All. Well, it wasn't exactly all. Remember, we speak often, I speak often about the fact that when it says all, it's all.

But there are times when it's not exactly all. So what was the number? How many didn't make it? Well, the easy part is how many did make it? Two. So how many came out? And we're just talking about the counting of men over the age of 21.

How many came out? 600,000. 600,000. So you add women and children and men under 21, boys, and you end up with 3 or 4 million people.

Of all of those 3 or 4 million people, how many made it? Two. So how many men, so when it says all, you should know the number by now because I've told you many times, 599,998. Not all who came out of, was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses? Did Moses make it? No.

He didn't even make it. Now it doesn't diminish from the fact that Moses was a great man, and indeed the greatest prophet of the Old Testament, a picture and type of the Lord Jesus, but he, even he did not make it into the land. Why? Why didn't Moses make it? Because of disobedience.

God said speak to the rock, and Moses smote the rock, and God said disobedience will keep you out of the land. And so how many heard God speak? They all heard God speak. They all saw the Egyptians drowned in the Red Sea.

They all ate the manna. They all did all of these things, and yet only two got the message. And so that's the point that the writer is making here.

It's the same point he makes in 1 Corinthians chapter 10, and I wonder if it's any different today. And this is so serious, and I don't know how to emphasize it even more, because we're in a time when we're seeing the great falling away. People say, well I heard.

I heard the gospel. I used to go to church. And obviously we understand going to church doesn't save us, but it helps to keep us saved.

But was it not all who came out of Egypt led by Moses? Now he's asking three questions, and he gives the answer. So the first question is, who having heard rebelled? Did Moses rebel? Yes, he rebelled, because he disobeyed. God said speak.

He said he was angry, and he didn't do what God said. He did what he wanted to do, and that was to beat the rock. All right, the next one, verse 17, the second question.

Now with whom was he angry for forty years? And the answer, was it not with those who sinned whose corpses fell in the wilderness? So with whom was he angry at the end of forty years? No, he was angry with them for how long? For forty years. Now remember when Moses at the beginning says, God I want to see you. I want to know you.

God says you can't see me, because no man can see me. But he shows Moses his hind parts, the afterglow as God passes by. And the Lord declares his attributes to Moses, and one of the attributes is that he is long-suffering.

So is this a long-suffering God who was angry with them for forty years? Yes, it's a long-suffering God. Because by the time he had rejected them, he had borne with them for many, many months. Time after time they complained.

God gives them manna. No, we're tired of the manna. We want meat.

God brings them to water. No, we don't like the taste of the water. God gives them a great man like Moses.

No, we don't like Moses. We want our own guys. And the list goes on and on and on as they rebel against and complain against God.

So God obviously, as we've said before, is righteous. God doesn't get angry for nothing. He doesn't get angry the way we get angry, but he gets angry for the right reasons.

So here's the scary thing. For forty years, did God, the day God said, I'm done with you. Remember, Stephen speaks about this in Acts chapter 7. The day God said, you're not going to come into the land.

Did God just leave them to starve? No. He continued to care for them. He fed them.

He watered them. He still gave them the pillar of fire to keep them warm and give them light and the cloud to keep them cool during the day. Moses still listened to their petty squabbles and arbitrated between husbands and wives and all sorts of stuff.

God provided all of these things, and yet he is angry with them. And remember, he had sworn in his wrath, you will not enter in. Here's the problem.

Many times as Christians, God is angry with us. I'm not now talking about whether you're still saved or not saved. But when we're walking in disobedience, God is angry with us.

He's not pleased when you're in disobedience. He's not pleased when you're walking in sin. He's angry.

But we say, oh well, you are still blessing me. My glasses broke this afternoon, and I had an old pair, and I could put another ear on, and I was fine. So God helped me.

But that does not prove anything. He fed them, and cared for them, and sheltered them, and did everything for them for 40 years. But he was angry with them.

But the fact that God still helps you and blesses you does not mean that he is not angry with you. They are two different things. God is a gracious and kind God, and he cares.

He cares for this world. The world hates him, but he still cares for it. So we cannot measure our standing with God based on his provision in our lives.

The fact that you have a job, the fact that you have a house to live in, the fact that you have things that you have, has nothing to do with your spiritual standing. Absolutely nothing. And so we need to be careful, because we look at these things, and we say, well, you know, things are good.

My life, everything's fine. So I must be good. No, it means nothing.

The two things are totally disconnected. God pours his rain on the just and the unjust. He fed them, cared for them for 40 years, but he was angry with them.

Folks, I don't want God to be angry with me. I want the blessing and the sunshine of his pleasure in my life. And unfortunately, so easily, we get into a place where God is angry with us, because we're disobedient, because we're doing what we should not be doing, or we're not doing what we should be doing.

And we say, well, it's fine, because God didn't strike me dead. There are preachers who live immoral lives, and they get into the pulpit Sunday after Sunday, in spite of living adulterous and immoral lives. And they say, see, it's fine.

God didn't strike me dead. It doesn't prove anything. The book of Romans speaks about the fact that we are treasuring up for ourselves wrath against the day of wrath.

So God's meter is running. The account is adding up. That's why we need to keep a short account with God.

And it's a question we must ask ourselves. It's a question I ask myself frequently. Is God pleased with me, or is he angry with me? Is he pleased with my attitude, or is he angry with me over my attitude, over whatever it is that I'm doing in my life? And for God will not get over it.

In our relationships with one another, we say, well, you know, just deal with it. Get over it. God doesn't get over it.

Until we make right with him, we stay in trouble with him. Now, God's not there with a big stick. God wants the best for us.

God wanted these people in the Promised Land. He wanted them settled. He wanted each man to have his own piece of land, to have his own vineyard, to have his own fig tree that he could sit under, to have his own house.

He wanted them to be at peace with their enemies. He wanted to prosper them in their crops and in their herds. He wanted to prosper them in their families.

God just wanted the best for them, but they didn't want what God wanted. And folks, that's where the problem is. That's where the rebellion lies, because there are many Christians who just don't want what God wants for them.

They want something else, and God is angry with them. Father, I pray that you'd help us. Lord, I don't want to be preaching hard messages all the time, and yet, Lord, this is your Word.

Lord, I pray that you'd give us grace that each one of us may examine our own hearts and our standing before you, Lord, not based on the fact that things are going well with our jobs or our finances or anything else in our lives, but based on the areas that we know that we are being obedient or disobedient. Lord, we need your blessing. Lord, as a church, we need your blessing.

Individually, we need your blessing. For myself, Lord, I need your blessing. I need your approval.

Lord, I pray that you would help us not to be those who, even though we're living under your judgment and your wrath, help us, Lord, to be those who hear. Help us to be those who exhort one another daily by what is called today. Help us, Lord, not to be deceived by the deceitfulness of sin.

Help us, Lord, to be the people that you want us to be, and Lord, that we may inherit the blessings that you really want to shower on us. Lord, we thank you that you don't take pleasure in the death of the wicked, that you don't take pleasure in being angry with your people. And so, Lord, we pray that you'd help us to be the kind of people who make your heart glad.

Lord, like Job, that you're able to say, look at my servant Job. There's no one else like him, even like Moses. Lord, in spite of his failure, in the end, you were able to speak with him as if man speaks with his friend, because Moses was walking uprightly before you.

So, Lord, I pray that you'd help us to hear. Lord, you speak so many times, and Lord, you had spoken to them for 40 years, day by day, and yet they were not hearing. Help us to hear, Lord.

Lord, not just to hear, but to obey, and to enter into the the fullness of what you have for us, individually and as a congregation. And so, Lord, we pray, help us, because we are weak. Lord, the temptations of Egypt are real to every one of us.

The temptations to turn back, temptations to become discouraged because of the hardness of the way, the temptation to become angry at you and your dealings in our lives. Help us, Lord, to be those who willingly submit to your will, knowing that you're only wanting the very best for us. So, Lord, I commit ourselves to you now.

I pray that you'd go with us. Grant that your spirit may make these things real to us, and Lord, that they may become realities in our lives as we live day by day. Go with us now, Lord.

Keep us, protect us, and bring us together again safely on Sunday, we pray, in Jesus' name.

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