

Today if You Will Hear His Voice

by Edgar F. Parkyns

The sermon emphasizes the importance of hearing God's voice and entering into His promised rest through faith and obedience.

Duration: 44:24

Scripture: Psalm 95:7-8, Hebrews 2:1-4, Hebrews 3:7-8, Hebrews 3:15 - 4:2, Hebrews 4:7, Hebrews 4:11

Topics: "Hearing God", "Spiritual Rest"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the idea of God cracking open our hearts to reveal our thoughts and intentions. He compares this process to the laborers breaking up roads by hand, using spikes and sledgehammers. The speaker emphasizes the importance of hearing God's voice and not hardening our hearts. He also discusses the concept of rest, both in heaven and in the present, and encourages the audience to labor to enter into this rest. The speaker concludes by highlighting the need to mix faith with the Word of God in order to truly benefit from it.

Transcript

Will you please turn with me to Hebrews? I think we'd better read a couple chapters, for surely the written word will convey its own blessing. Hebrews, chapter 3 and chapter 4. Wherefore, holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house. For this man was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, inasmuch as he who hath built the house hath more honor than the house.

For every house is built by some man, but he that built all things is God. And Moses verily was faithful in all his house as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after. But Christ as a son over his own house, whose house are we if we hold fast the confidence and rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

Wherefore, as the Holy Ghost said today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in the day of temptation in the wilderness, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. Wherefore, I was grieved with that generation, said, they do always err in their heart, and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath they shall not enter into my rest.

Take heed, 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 are made partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast unto the end.

While it is said today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation. For some, when they had heard, did provoke, howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses. But with whom was he grieved forty years? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness? And to whom swear he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that believed not? So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Let us fear therefore, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, as I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest.

Although the works, his works, were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a place of the seventh on this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, if they shall enter into my rest.

Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief. Again he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, Today, after so long a time, as it is written, Today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Joshua had given them rest, then he would not spoken afterward of another day.

There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. Seeing then that we have a great High Priest that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession.

For we have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted, like as we, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. I note in passing the contrast in the last few verses about the reasons concerning him with whom we have to do.

And one is a reason for inward examination. For, he says, the word of God is quick, that is, alive and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit. And there are many of God's people who do not understand the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and cannot discern between that which is only the product of the man himself with his aspirations, and that which is the product of God in his new creation.

It divides between those, and of the joints and marrow, just as a sword or a butcher's knife would cut between joints and marrow, so the word of God can divide in us, and is a discerner of the thoughts and

intents of the heart, neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are naked and open unto the eyes of him with whom we have to do. So, if we try to conceal anything, we don't deceive God, we just deceive ourselves, and put us out of the place where God can operate on us. So, as far as we are concerned, we must allow the sharp dividings and the keen searchings of the word of God to have their total effect in analysing and dividing the inward man.

That by itself would be disconcerting and fearful. But he immediately adds the balancing truth from verse fourteen to sixteen, and says, seeing that we have a great high priest, touched with the feelings of our infirmities, those very infirmities which are exposed by the examination which the word brings, we have a high priest, touched with the feeling of our infirmities, who has passed into the heavens, he was in all points tempted like us we are, yet without sin, let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, knowing how the word has cut us to pieces, let it be so, and stand in the assurance of a high priest who undertakes for us as we are, in the most fearful of the revelations and examinations of the word of God. He knows.

And therefore, we may accept the examination and not hide from it, and still come with boldness to the throne of grace, as we look away to the great high priest of our confession. I think that contrast is very, very exciting. But what I want to talk about particularly is that phrase that occurs over and over in these two chapters, quoted from Psalm 95, today, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart.

I guess you've heard it before, and I have heard it before. When I was over in Minnesota on holiday last summer with my daughter and son-in-law, we were seated around the table of our hosts, and we were looking at these chapters, and I was just going to expound on how we entered into rest. And what I had in mind was this.

We which believe do enter into rest. And that's what I was going to talk about. When, to my great surprise, out of the word of God came this thing.

Today, if ye hear his voice, harden not your heart. And I thought, oh, steady, I'd better be careful what I'm saying. It's not quite so evangelically simple as I was going to try and make it.

It's not just believing and entering in. There is something else. There is this today, if ye hear his voice, harden not your heart.

But not only did I find myself having to look at the Scripture again, but when I got back to Elin, I found somebody else talking about the same thing. And then a week later, I heard somebody else saying the same thing. And I thought, what's going on? I was reminded of those old days when they used to break up the roads by hand.

Can you remember them, you older folk, when a gang of four laborers would come, and one would be armed with a spike, and the others with huge sledgehammers. And the fellow would kneel down on the tar road and put his spike in the mecanum, and the others would stand around and swing their great sledges. I used to marvel, I thought, supposing they missed and hit that chap on the head.

But they didn't. They seemed to swing in rhythm, one, two, three, one, two, three, one, two, three, until the tarmac cracked and they got down to where they wanted to go. And so I felt that God is saying, today if you hear his voice, today if you hear his voice, today if you hear his voice, cracking us open to get at the thoughts and intents of our heart.

And I have found, not only that, but almost everywhere I have been, God has been talking to his people out of these things, cracking us open. Hallelujah. Today, if ye hear his voice, harden not your heart.

There is a rest that belongs to God the Great Creator. A rest to which he, about which he spoke to the people who he called out of Egypt, and he promised that when they entered into the land, they would be sharing a little bit of his rest. And they missed it.

And the writer points out that the psalmist says, a long time after, today if ye hear his voice, don't harden your hearts as they did so long ago. And he points out that the rest of God still remains. If you look in Genesis, you will find that the evening and the morning were that first day, second, third, fourth, fifth, and sixth.

But the seventh day isn't closed. It still goes on, so that God says, enter into my rest. The works were finished from the foundation of the world, and he says, come, I'm resting, I want you to share my rest.

And then the psalmist says, a thousand years later, today if ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts. And then the writer of the Hebrews picks it up again and says, this means you. There remains a rest for the people of God.

And once again, in chapter four and verse three, we which have believed do enter into his rest. It's a rest in heaven, and it is a rest now. Verse nine of chapter four, there remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God, which is our birthright.

Birthright of rest. I was down by Long Island, oh, and I was observing the swans. What lovely creatures they are.

And sometimes at Elim, we look up and we see the Canadian geese moving overhead, going north. They're wonderful creatures in flight. You wouldn't think so to see them on land, but when once they're airborne, they are wonderful.

They fly in formation with a leader, and all the others ride in the slipstream of the leader. And you can see them going very, very gently, just the tips of their wings moving, as the leader forges ahead, and all the others are dropping behind, one behind another. And they fly in rest.

They can go thousands of miles. And I'm told that many of them sleep on the wing, keeping close to the airstream of the leader, sleeping as they fly. Isn't that tremendous? They enter into rest.

And if you watch carefully, you'll see one or two of them come out of rest. Those on the extreme end, and then they'll flap as loudly as they possibly can, and labor to enter into rest. And then they come back into line.

Hallelujah. Although God calls us to service and to action, He intends that all our service should be in rest. There remaineth a rest for the people of God.

Not a rest of laziness, a rest like Jesus had in glorious activity, knowing calmly and certainly that His Father had planned the day for Him, knowing that all things were going to work together for good, including the machinations of His enemies. And even those who were plotting His crucifixion, working hard at it, knowing no rest, sweating in their hate and bitterness, even they would be compassed about and gathered in to God's glorious purposes. And Jesus always moved in rest, all the way to the cross.

Praise the Lord. And He calls us to enter in. It says, Be eager, let us labor therefore, to enter into that rest.

And in verse 4, let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. And He's not talking to unbelievers, He's not talking to those who don't know the Lord. All the exhortations in Hebrews, no matter how people try and cut it to pieces, they all belong to the Lord's people.

Every exhortation. He doesn't say you've got to get saved, He doesn't say you've got to get born again, He says you've got to continue. So He's talking to the Lord's people who know Him.

Amen. Let us labor to enter into our rest. I have a railway pass that I got in America.

And the other day, I went to the station, and there was my pass, which gave me a right to travel anywhere in Britain by British Rail. But believe me, between here and the time I sat down in the train, I labored to enter into my rest, doing a scout trot with two bags when the buses didn't come. You see, there was a rest, I had a right to it, it was mine by title.

But in order to enter in, I really had to put myself out a bit. And Hebrews is talking about that kind of thing. Talking about the swans again, they're wonderful birds.

A family of them on the tidal water there. And Father is a wonderful family man. He always seeks the same lady.

And he takes great care of his cygnets. He hates any water skiers, because one of them killed some of his cygnets. But he came up to me out of the water.

He was looking around for little bits of bread, but I didn't have any. So, after having a little fellowship on the shore, he turned tail and made his way back to the water. Poor beast, have you ever seen anything as ungainly as a swan on land? Grey, clumsy body.

Awkward little legs and webbed feet. Struggling through the mud and the weed. There never was a more awkward or uncomfortable creature than a swan on land.

You should see him laboring to enter into his rest. But oh, when he got to the water, and he tucked up his legs, he was in rest, because he was in his right element. And, indeed, our element is God.

And out of that element, we're like the old swan on land. It's all struggle, it's all effort, and nothing goes right, and our very body's a burden to us. But oh, when we're in our element, then we're in rest, and we can move in rest.

Away went Father Swan, gracefully, graceful as a picture, to join his wife and family. Hallelujah. Let us labor to enter into our rest.

And so, it's not just by believing, although believing is important. Verse 2, For unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them, but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. I'm not sure that this is a right illustration, but I have an idea that when you do a bit of amateur building, and you have to mix up your cement, you haven't got it ready made, you get your aggregate and your sand, and you mix that, and you mix in the cement.

But although all the quality is there, it still requires the right proportion of water, which you get from your own tap, to really get the thing going. And it won't profit you unless it is mixed. And they had the word of God, pure and holy, but they didn't mix their faith with it, so they never built anything.

They failed and came short. It didn't profit them. And so, there has to be our faith mixed with the word of God.

But more than that, and this is particularly what I feel God is saying to us in this day, today, if ye hear his voice, that is, our faith is not merely in the written promises, but the present revelation of God who is faithful to your heart and spirit. If ye hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Most of us are good at hardening our hearts.

We're good at making excuses. We're good at listening to other voices and getting the whole thing confused. But God has a way of speaking to his children, and your true rest depends daily.

And today, while it is cold today, my true rest depends here on hearing his voice and not hardening my heart against it. How does he speak? There are several ways outlined in this book, but I would say that the first way that God speaks to a man is spirit to spirit. And especially to the children of God, as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God.

The voice of God is already resident in his children. Even the unsaved hear it sometimes, praise the Lord. How much more should those who are born of his Spirit recognize the inward voice? It is there, very near to your conscience.

Not always the same thing as your conscience, because your conscience can be educated not to eat all sorts of things. But the voice of God is original from him. It doesn't require educating, it requires being listened to, hearken to, so that you don't harden your heart against it.

And very often you'll find that where you are busy rationalizing, you know, working out all the theory, making it all fit, and you find that you have to patch up your rationalizing every now and again, and make sure it all clings together. In those areas, if only you would stop your reasoning and start listening, you'll find that for a long time God has been saying something you didn't want to hear. Today, if ye hear his voice, harden not your heart, as in the day of provocation, as in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

Someone the other day offered me a canoe, and there's a nice little lake near Ealing, and not only a canoe, but lead boards and sail with it, and the paddles and the life jackets all free. That's what I love. And so I was just going to write back and say, um, uh, thanks very much, I'll come and get it, when I stopped a moment and said, Lord, what do you say about it? And to my greater knowledge, he said, no.

So I kept on arguing about it for a long time. But every time I referred back and said, I said, Lord, what do you say? He said, no. Just like that, without any explanation.

God doesn't always explain things to us. I suppose we'd argue too much if he did. But eventually I had the sense to listen to him and write and say, well, thank you very much, brother, but I just have to say no, thank you.

And now, looking back, I can see what God was doing. There were some other things he wanted to talk to me about. And if I had got involved in that, I wouldn't have been able to listen to him a bit.

I'd have been thinking canoes, lead boards, outriggers, and all sorts of things all day long. And so, by his grace, I had the sense to hear him and say, oh my Lord, I won't harden my heart against what you're saying. And I'm glad I didn't.

I hope one day he'll say yes. But, so now he said, no. And I had lots of other little schemes on hand.

You have lots of schemes. I throw them like weeds. But how wonderful it is, how blessed it is, when we have the sense to say, just a minute, Lord, have you something to say? And you don't have to look around far, because his voice is somewhere around near solar plexus.

Uh, saying, either no or yes, he's there. And if you want to walk in the rest which God has designed for your life, you'll have to learn to hear the inward voice and not harden your heart against it. Praise the Lord.

It's one of the great rules. In Hebrews chapter, there are several ways in which the voice of God is mentioned. Hebrews chapter two, therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip.

For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Don't shout it at the lost, it belongs to the Christian. Which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divest miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will. It is a word of the gospel spoken with power.

With power. Please don't, uh, let us think that we are superior to the area of miracle confirming the word. We're not, we're in, uh, saying, I don't know, yes, he's there, and if you want to walk in the rest which God has designed for your life, you'll have to learn to hear the inward voice and not harden your heart against it.

Praise the Lord. It's one of the great rules. In Hebrews chapter, there are several ways in which the voice of God is mentioned.

Hebrews chapter two, therefore we ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip. For if the word spoken by angels was steadfast and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great salvation? Don't shout it at the lost, it belongs to the Christian, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness, both with signs and wonders, and divest miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will. It is a word of the gospel spoken with power, with power.

Please don't let us think that we are superior to the area of miracle confirming the word. We're not, we're inferior. The normal thing is for the gospel to be preached with signs following, the word of God with power.

See that you don't harden your heart to it and become so clever in the in higher reaches of philosophy that you miss out the the simple way that God talks. The word spoken by them that heard the Lord Jesus and confirmed unto us by others and also borne witness to with signs and wonders and different miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost according to his own will. This is a way in which God speaks by the word of the gospel of power.

Beware how ye hear, let there be what the Bible calls the hearing of faith. I tell you all sorts of folk are moving in these days because God in his mercy is releasing again the gospel with confirmation. And people you would never think are coming to know God in a new way.

People who are doctrinally not quite right. Thousands of them who still haven't dropped their rosaries have found the Lord Jesus and are loving him and rejoicing in him and loving their neighbor. I can't understand it but I know I've met them, I felt the thing, I know what's happening.

They're hearing the gospel which is confirmed with signs and they're rejoicing that Jesus is alive and their hearts and lives are being changed. Praise God. I can't understand what's going on but God is speaking to them a gospel confirmed with signs and they haven't hardened their hearts to it.

Isn't that wonderful? Some of them have of course and they go straight back into bondage. Hebrews 1 God has spoken to us in these last days in his son whom he hath appointed heir of all things by whom also he made the world who being the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person and upholding all things by the word of his power when he had by himself purged our sins got sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high entering into his rest in him. God has spoken not just in gentle Jesus meek and mild but in the man who upholds all things by the word of his power.

We have to adjust all of our thinking to the revelation of the deity and power and dominion of our Lord Jesus Christ. Today if you hear his voice concerning the greatness and the majesty of our risen Lord you who are called to be a resurrection company hear his voice and harden not your heart. We are not to think naturally we're not to think on the level of other men.

All our mind is to be renewed and tuned into our great pioneer who who made the world who upholds all things by the word of his power who has by himself in all his greatness purged the miserable detail and entail of my sins. Hallelujah. God has spoken to us in his son and our whole thinking must be renewed from that word.

The word in his son and praise God he comes to indwell us in his mighty dominion. Let us be aware of dropping back to the to the mere gentle Jesus meek and mild aspect. Praise God it's there but we who are resurrection people need to know the majesty of his power and hear that word and be tuned to it.

It'll change us. It'll lift us out of commonplace thinking. Today if you hear the dynamic of that word harden not your heart.

Let it break you. Let it remake you that you may enter into rest with him. Praise the Lord.

In when Peter made that magnificent blunder on the Mount of Transfiguration and offered to go in the booth making business for Moses and Elijah and Jesus he got his theology all mixed up so the Lord straightened him out and as he was a trifle confused removed Moses and Elijah from the scene and said this is my beloved son hear ye him. If you hear his voice are you tuned into the Christ-centered message and there is another remarkable passage in John 6 and 45 which is worth noting. As it is verse 44 no man can come to me except the father which hath sent me draw him and I will raise him up at the last day as it is written in the prophets and they shall all be taught of God one of the new covenant clauses everyone says Jesus therefore that have heard and have learned of the father listening to the inward voice cometh unto me.

Amen.

That's how I can check if I if I'm really hearing the voice of God it will turn me to Jesus in every part of my life and chapter 12 Hebrews 12 we have come he says and he lists those things that we have come to in contrast to the to Mount Sinai and in verse 24 and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel not only the blood shed that blood which speaks of pardon but the blood sprinkled that is the blood that the mediator of the new covenant sprinkles upon those who receive the covenant the blood of sprinkling which speaketh better things than that of Abel see that you refuse not him that speaketh through the blood of that covenant says Jesus he when he took the cup he he linked he linked his death with all that

the old testament had spoken about the the promised covenant he said through that blood it is shed for many for the remission of sins this is my blood of the new covenant and the old testament says that in that blood of sprinkling there is a new heart a new spirit a new obedience a new knowledge of God the blood speaks these things to everyone who lays hold of the covenant which God made with those who couldn't keep the first covenant praise God when you discover yourself to be among those who couldn't keep the first covenant then you are a claimant for the new covenant hallelujah and you can come along in your distress and defeat and failure and say lord i want to come under the blood of sprinkling of the new covenant when God begins to take over inside me see that you refuse not him

that speaketh through the blood of the new covenant and then in the same chapter chapter 12 and verse 25 see that he refused not him that speaketh for if they escape not who refused him that spake on earth much more shall not we escape their little words are stuck in let's read let's leave them out much more we if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven whose or him from heaven whose voice then shook the earth but now he promised yet once more i shake not the earth only but also the heaven and this word yet once more signified the removing of those things that are shaken as of things that are made that those things which cannot be shaken may remain wherefore we receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken let us have grace whereby we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly

fear for our God is a consuming fire the day is coming i believe don't you when God will speak to the creation that men see and the whole lot will collapse in fire in order that he may might bring in says the scripture a new heavens and a new earth that the writer to hebrews is applying this here and now and he says look you are partakers of a kingdom now which can't be shaken don't refuse him that speaketh because his word will come to you and shake everything in you which is not of God hallelujah hallelujah his word will do it not your resolutions not your nice feelings his word will do it see that you refuse not him that speaketh harden not your heart let the word have its disastrously shaking effect on everything in which you have confidence which isn't of God hallelujah because when

he speaks that word that destroys in us in order that new creation might be manifest if you're conscious that in any place or if any of us are conscious that in any area we have been hardening our hearts to God listening to our own schemes listening to men's voices it's time to repent see that you refuse not he doesn't say an awful lot about making up your minds he says the thing is don't harden your heart because the word itself has creative power if you don't harden your heart against it hallelujah born again of the word of God born into newness born into new creation the creation that the creative power that can enable me to stand in the kingdom that cannot be moved comes as my heart opens to his creative word of the new covenant see that you refuse not him that speak oh just one more

thing today hallelujah right here right now he is speaking amen we've heard his voice in the we've heard his voice through the written word but also he speaks somewhere inside you praise his name see that you

refuse not him that speaketh

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