

# Exhortation #2: The Heavenly Calling

by Stephen Kaung

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*We are called to be the house of God, to be companions of Christ, and to enter into his rest, but this requires great responsibility and cooperation with God.*

**Duration:** 1:04:28

**Scripture:** Hebrews 3:1-4, Hebrews 3:12-13, Hebrews 4:1

**Topics:** "Heavenly Calling", "Salvation"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of the theme of salvation and warns against hardening our hearts towards God. The first exhortation focuses on the concept of 'rest' and how it is only possible when the work of salvation is finished. The second exhortation highlights the heavenly calling that believers have received and the responsibility that comes with it. The speaker urges the audience to encourage one another and not to be deceived by sin, as it can lead to a hardened and unbelieving heart.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to Hebrews chapter 3. The letter to the Hebrews chapter 3. We begin with verse 1. Prayerful holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling, consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus, who is faithful to him that hath constituted him, as Moses also in all his house. For he has been counted worthy of greater glory than Moses, by how much he that has built it has more honor than the house. For every house is built by someone, but he who has built all things is God.

And Moses indeed was faithful in all his house, as a ministering servant, for a testimony of the things to be spoken after. But Christ, as Son over his house, whose house are we, if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end. Therefore even as says the Holy Spirit, today if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts, as in the provocation in a day of temptation in the wilderness, where your fathers tempted me by proving me, and saw my work forty years.

Therefore I was wrong with this generation, and said they always err in heart, and they have not known my ways. So I swear in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest. See, brethren, lest there be in any one of you a wicked heart of unbelief, in turning away from the living God, but encourage yourselves each day, as long as it is called today, that none of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

For we are become companions of the Christ, if indeed we hold the beginning of the assurance firm to the end. Let us therefore fear, lest a promise being left for entering into his rest, any one of you might seem to

have failed of it. Let us therefore use diligence to enter into that rest, that no one may fall after the same example of not hearkening to the word.

Let us pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we do commit thy own word back into thy own hands, and ask thee to bless it, and break it, and give to each one of us, that we may be full. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen. We mentioned last time that the book of Hebrew is a book of exhortation, because at the very end of this book, we find the writer tells us that the reason why he wrote this letter was to admonish, encourage, and to exhort these believers in the Lord. So this is a letter of exhortation.

An exhortation in the scripture means to call attention to, to warn against, and to encourage unto. Every time you find an exhortation is given, an important theme is mentioned. A very essential subject matter is presented before us, and because of the importance, the greatness of that theme, the writer encourages us to enter into it, and warn us, lest we miss it.

And this you will find in every instance in this letter. Altogether there are five distinctive exhortations in this letter. And last Lord's Day we mentioned the first one.

The first one is in chapter one and chapter two. And there you'll find the theme is so great salvation. The salvation that our Lord Jesus has spoken to us, and has provided for us, is so great salvation.

It is so great that the prophets in the old days, they were like very much to know about it. And even the angels will like to look into it. That you'll find in the book of Peter.

So here you'll find so great salvation. And this so great salvation is not only concerned with the forgiveness of our sin, which is great. With the receiving of eternal life, which is very great.

And with the promise of entering into heaven, which is exceedingly great. But here you'll find there is something even much greater. And if you read the first and the second chapters of the book of Hebrews, you'll find so great salvation is concerned with glory.

In other words, God is going to lead many sons into glory. Into that inheritance which is incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading. Even the world to come.

That is the millennium. So dear brothers and sisters, let us remember that there is so great salvation presenting to us. And because of this, we need to be careful lest we let it run out, slip by, or drift away.

We need to exercise diligence to hold fast to it. Lest we miss it through negligence. Now this is the first exhortation.

And this morning we would like to enter into the second exhortation, which you will find in chapter three and chapter four. And the great theme that is before us is found in verse one of chapter three. Wherefore holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling.

Now here you'll find a heavenly calling. The children of Israel received a calling from God, but their calling was an earthly calling. But we who are redeemed of the Lord, we receive a calling from God.

And that calling is called the heavenly calling, because we are a heavenly people of God. Now brothers and sisters, what is a calling? What is it that God has called us into? A calling that comes from God

constitutes our vocation. It becomes our lifelong occupation.

It is something that we must be fully committed to, and be totally occupied with. A calling will not only show us our destiny, it will also give us direction for that destiny. So you find that God has called us with a heavenly calling.

We are partakers of a heavenly calling. And the word partakers here means share us. We share that heavenly calling together.

Now brothers and sisters, what is that heavenly calling? If you read chapter three and chapter four of the book of Hebrews, you'll find in that heavenly calling three things are being mentioned. Number one, in verse six. But Christ as son over his house, whose house are we if indeed we hold fast the boldness and the boast of hope firm to the end.

In other words, we are called to be the house of God. Number two, you'll find that in verse 14. For we are become companions of the Christ if indeed we hold the beginning of the assurance firm to the end.

We are called to be companions of Christ. And the word companions is the same word as you'll find in chapter three verse one partakers. In other words, companions means share us, partakers.

Not as some people say, sleeping partners. That is, you are partners but you are not active at all. But it is a full partner.

You are actively engaged together in the business. And we are companions, active partners of Christ. That's what we are called to.

And number three, in chapter four verse one. Let us therefore fear lest a promise be left of entering into his rest. We are called to enter into his rest.

Now these three things form the heavenly calling that we are called with. Dear brothers and sisters, we are called to be the house of God. We are not only being justified.

We are not only being glorified. We are not only as many sons whom these sons will lead into glory. Now that seems to be individual.

But you'll find that we are called corporately to be the house of God. This is our heavenly calling. Can you find any calling more heavenly and more spiritual than this? You know it is the eternal desire of God to dwell among men.

But with the children of Israel, after he redeemed them out of Egypt, he brought them to Mount Sinai and there he gave them his law and he commanded Moses to build him a tabernacle. Why? Because through that tabernacle he was to dwell among the children of Israel. But brothers and sisters, how much better it is today that God does not dwell in a physical tabernacle in order to dwell among his people.

Instead you'll find God has made his people his house. God dwells directly in and among his own people. He has called us to be his house, his holy habitation, his spiritual house.

That is our heavenly calling. But you notice one thing, and that is you'll find in verse six that word if. You know whenever you'll find that little word if, it means that you are not dealing with this matter objectively, as true.

Now it is objectively true, as true. But if you find the word if there, you know that you are now entering into the realm of subjective experience. High privilege demands great responsibility.

The higher the privilege, the greater the responsibility. We are so privileged as to be called to be the house of God. That God will dwell in all men.

God will find his rest in us. God's heart will be satisfied with us. That God will be loved and worshipped and served by his people.

Now brothers and sisters, this is a tremendous privilege. But because the privilege is so high, the responsibility is very great. And that's the reason why you'll find the word if there.

We are God's house, if. Do not think that a house of God comes automatically, because you're saved. Therefore you are the house of God.

Not so. One stone, even if it is a living stone, is not a house. These living stones had to be built up together in order to be a house.

And that's where our responsibility is. Now it is true our Lord Jesus said, I will build my church upon this rock. It is the Lord himself who builds the house.

He is not only the son over his house, but he is also the builder of the house. That is true. He is going to build us, living stones, believers, as living stones.

He is going to build us together upon himself as the foundation to be a holy habitation for God. Now that is the work that our Lord Jesus will do. But remember, he is going to build us up.

Unless we are willing to yield ourselves to his hand, unless we are willing to cooperate with him, he will not be able to build us together in him. And that is where the word if comes. Whose house are we? If.

Indeed we hold fast the boldness and the bones of hope firm to the end. Now what is our hope? Our hope is, one day we will be the finished house of God. That God can dwell among us eternally.

God can make us his eternal home. And then we will find our eternal home in God. Now this is our hope.

Let us hold fast the boldness and the bones of our hope firm to the end. In other words, this is our boast. This is our boldness.

That one day we will become the completed house of God. Now hold fast to that. Don't give that up very easily.

Why? Because in the very process of building us together, there is a lot of chiseling, lot of cutting, lot of sawing, lot of smoothing, lot of refining, lot of reducing, lot of work to be done in our lives. In other words, there is the working of the cross in our life. And because there is such a working of the cross in our life, sometimes we get disappointed, sometimes we get discouraged, sometimes we faint, and sometimes we want to draw back, we want to flee away.

We refuse to cooperate. We give up our hope. And if we do, then the Lord is not able to build us in and build us together.

And that's the reason why you'll find the word if there. But dear brothers and sisters, how can we hold fast the boast and the boldness of the hope firm to the end? There is a secret there. And the secret is Christ in you, the hope of glory.

In other words, it is because Christ is in you. And as a matter of fact, Christ is not taking you and me as the building blocks of the house. He is actually taking himself in you and me to build up the house of God.

And that's the reason why you and me has to be eliminated. In order that he may be increased and we may be decreased, that the house may be built. But thank God, Christ in you, the hope of glory.

Yes, in me, that is in my flesh, there is no good. If it depends upon me, not only I will fail, but God has to give up. But thank God, it does not depend on me.

It depends on the Christ in me. And because he is in me, he is the hope of glory. One day that house will be built.

And this is our heavenly calling. And then again you'll find we are not only called to be the house of God, we are also called to be the companions of Christ. Now how we like to share with Christ in having our sins forgiven? How we like to share with Christ of the gift of eternal life? In other words, we like to share with Christ in what we call common salvation or initial salvation.

But how many brothers and sisters are willing to be a living partner with Christ in his business? That is in the very purpose that Christ has in him. Now the reason why Christ came into the world is that he may build up his house. That he may have a body.

And when that body is fully grown, he may have his bride. Now that is the business that Christ is engaged with. Now are you actively involved in that business? Remember what Apostle Paul says.

He said, I rejoice in suffering for you. Why? Because I'm feeling of the affliction of Christ concerning his body. In other words, are we just interested in our own interest? That is to say, are we just interested to go to heaven? Now sure we are interested.

But are we so interested that it becomes the sole interest? Or are we interested with the interest of Christ? Are we just concerned with our welfare? Or are we concerned with the welfare of God? Now if we are concerned with the welfare of God, then we become active partners with Christ. We become companions of Christ. One day, those who accompany Christ on earth today will become his companions when he shall be crowned and when she shall receive his bride.

You remember in Psalm 45, which is a prophecy of the marriage of the king and the queen. And it is a prophecy concerning the union of Christ and his church. And there you'll find that God has anointed him with all of gladness above his companions.

In other words, there will be companions there. But remember, only those who follow the Lamb, with us wherever he goes, will become his companions at his marriage feast. So here again you'll find we need to hold fast assurance of our hope firm to the end.

There is again the word if there. A great responsibility. And then thirdly you'll find our heavenly calling is this matter of entering into his rest.

When God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, in Egypt there was no rest. Why? Because they were slaves. They were in a fiery furnace.

They were being put to hard labor, slave labor. And they were not even allowed to live. The whole nation, the whole race were to be eliminated.

There wasn't any rest. But God delivered them out of Egypt with the purpose of leading them into Canaan. Now dwell in the land in safety and in peace and enjoying the land that is flowing with milk and honey.

Now this is God's purpose concerning the people. But unfortunately, while God was leading them on the way to Canaan, even though God proved himself to them many times that God was faithful, he was true to his word, that there was nothing too hard for him, that he loved them. And yet you'll find these people rebelled in their hearts.

They hardened their hearts towards God. They refused to believe in God's word. They questioned God's love and faithfulness.

And even though God endured them, suffered them long, and yet finally you'll find when they came to Canaan, that was the end. In other words, they came to a point God said, because this generation, they're urging their hearts, they do not know my ways, they provoke me again and again and again, and therefore this generation cannot enter into my rest. Brothers and sisters, we have a promise to enter into his rest.

And how do you enter into his rest? Or in other words, what is rest? You cannot rest if the work is not finished. But when the work is finished, then you can rest. You remember God used six days to repair the earth, and after the six days work were done, and then on the seventh day, God rested from his work.

Why? Because the work was done. The work was done. Dear brothers and sisters, even though man was created on the sixth day, actually the first day that man lived was the seventh day.

In other words, it was really God's purpose that man was to be created on the sixth day, and immediately he was to enter into God's rest. But unfortunately, you'll find men sin. And because men sin, men not only lost that rest in God, but even God has lost his rest.

Because immediately after men sin, you remember, God came to the garden to seek and to find the lost. Adam, where are you? And immediately God began to work. And that's the reason why you'll find our Lord Jesus, when after he healed on the seventh day, how the Pharisees then said, now seventh day is a day of rest, you shouldn't heal anybody.

And the Lord said, my father worked until now, and I work. In other words, where there is sin, there is no rest. And God has no rest.

He has to work until the work is done. Then he will rest. And thank God on Calvary's cross, you remember the last word that our Lord Jesus shouted in victory, it is finished.

The work is done. And because the work is done on Calvary's cross, you know what our Lord Jesus is doing today, or what is his posture in heaven today, he sits at the right hand of God. Why is he sitting there? Because the work is done.

After the work is done, you sit down, and here you'll find the work of redemption is finished. And dear brothers and sisters, we are called to enter into his rest. And what does it mean? It means that we are to rest in his rest.

It means that we are to rest in the finished work of Christ. Dear brothers and sisters, why is it that we are so restless? You know, when the children of Israel were in the wilderness, they were restless. Why? Because that whole picture is the picture of a person who is living according to the flesh.

We are born of the Spirit, and yet somehow you'll find daily we still live according to the flesh. And even though we try to live according to the good flesh and not the bad flesh, you know flesh is not all bad, there are the good flesh and the bad flesh. The bad flesh is to commit sin, and the good flesh is try to please God, or try to appease God, try to bribe God.

Now that's the good flesh. And brothers and sisters, whenever, as long as we are trying to live in the flesh, what happens? You'll find we become restless. We strive and struggle, we strain, we stretch, we try, but in me, that is in my flesh, there is no good.

And then begin to murmur, then we begin to doubt, then we begin to lose heart, and they begin to distrust. Brothers and sisters, in the wilderness there is no rest. Rest is to rest in Christ, who is clean unto us, and to rest in the finished work of Christ.

You know the reason why we do not have rest is because we do not believe. We believe in ourselves more than we believe in Him and what He has done for us. The moment we enter into the finished work of Christ, our soul enters into rest.

In Matthew chapter 11, you find the Lord Jesus said, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, come to me and I will give you rest. When we were in sin and transgressions, we had no rest. And the Lord said, come unto me, just come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden.

We are heavily laden and we are laboring, you know. We try to make it, we won't make it. And here you'll find that the Lord said, you just come to me and I will give you rest.

I will take away your burden. I will take away your load, because I've taken your load upon me on Calvary's cross already. And that's the reason why you'll find in the pilgrim's progress, when that pilgrim, you know, he fled from the city of destruction and he came to the cross and as he looked at the cross, that burden on his back rolled away.

Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Now thank God we who believe in the Lord Jesus, we have that rest in our spirit. But the Lord said, there is another rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest in your soul. Brothers and sisters, thank God, when we come to the Lord Jesus with heavy burden, he gave us rest. And this rest in the spirit is there forever.

But unfortunately, often times we find ourselves still in the wilderness. We find our soul is still restless. And why is it? It is because we do not take his yoke upon us.

What is the yoke of Christ? The yoke of Christ is the will of God. Because you'll find the Lord Jesus said, Lo, I come to do your will. The Lord took upon himself the will of God as his yoke, to control him, to guide

him.

And he took that willingly, voluntarily, happily, joyfully, victoriously. And when he put that yoke upon him, he was meek and lowly in heart. There was no resistance, no fighting against the Father's will.

Not my will, but your will be done. There you'll find he was selfless, without himself. And he yielded himself completely to the Father.

And how he has accomplished the will of God. And here the Lord said, take my yoke upon you, and learn of me. You know this yoke has two holes.

On the one side is where the Lord Jesus is yoked to. And he is going to yoke you to the other side. Because you are a cow, or you are a horse uncooked.

And therefore he is going to break you by yoking you with the one who has been broken. Who is always broken. And here you'll find when he puts you with Christ in his field, learn of him.

Look at him. When you try to be restless, look at him. When you try to rebel, look at him.

When you feel that it is too hard, look at him. Brothers and sisters, by doing that, you will find rest in your soul. Why? Because you enter into the good of his finished work.

Dear brothers and sisters, this is our calling. We are called into his rest. But you know, I'm just explaining it spiritually.

Actually, if you read very carefully, you will find the rest here is even more than that. Why? Because it doesn't say that you may enter into your rest. It says you may enter into his rest.

You know, when we learn of him, we enter into rest. Yes, it is rest to our soul. But still you'll find that the whole point here is his rest.

We have the promise of entering into his rest. And what does he mean? It means that when everything that he wants to do is done, then he is rested. And when will that happen? That happens at the millennium.

At that time you'll find he will have his bride. At that time you'll find that he will rest in his own rest. And there we will rest with him.

So spiritually, the rest is something that we should experience daily, even today. But dispensationally, it is a promise that is before us. That if we use diligence, we will enter into his rest.

We will reign and rule with Christ for a thousand years. So these three are the things that compose our heavenly calling. In other words, we are called to be the house of God.

But in order to be the house of God experientially, really, not just positionally, but really, we have to yield ourselves to his hand and let him build us. We are called to be the companions of Christ. If we want to be his companions, then we have to be actively engaged in his business.

And we are called to enter into his rest. And if we are to enter into his rest, we have to take his yoke upon us. And if we do that, one day when his rest shall come, we shall rest in his rest, in the millennium kingdom.

So this is the theme that is before us. Now brothers and sisters, can you imagine, can you think of anything greater than these things? Tremendous! This is the heavenly calling. Now with such a heavenly calling, here the writer wants to encourage us.

He said, handing this before you. Now what should you do? Number one, consider. Consider the apostle and high priest of our confession, Jesus.

You know the word consider, the English word consider comes from the Latin word, which is the word for star. So the root of that word is, as astronomer, he looks at the star. He considers, contemplates, gazes patiently, persistently, concentratively.

He gazes at the stars and tries to discover the stars in the sky. Now that is the meaning of the word consider. So consider means that we should gaze upon the Lord Jesus.

Fix our gaze upon him. Contemplate him. Think about him.

Ponder over him. Concentrate our thought in him. And just like an astronomer with a star.

And if we consider him, guess what? As the apostle of our confession. Our Lord Jesus is the apostle of our confession. Now what is an apostle? An apostle is one who is sent on a mission.

Our Lord Jesus is God's apostle. God sent him on a mission. It is the mission of building the house of God.

Moses was faithful in all his house. Moses was an apostle to the children of Israel. He was there to build God a house, a tabernacle, that God may dwell among his people.

And he was faithful in the house. But here you'll find our Lord Jesus is God's apostle, not just to the children of Israel, but to the whole world. He is to gather us out of every people, every nation, every tongue, every tribe, and he is to build us together into the house of God.

He is not only the builder, he is also the owner of the house. How much greater he is than Moses. Now this is what the Lord comes to do.

He comes to call us, to justify us, to glorify us, to build us together to be his house. And he said, I will build my house upon this rock that is himself, as the foundation, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. There will be a spiritual conflict going on, but thank God the victory is already won.

The gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. In other words, he will have his house. He has overcome all the forces of his enemy on Calvary's cross.

He has delivered us out of the power of darkness, and has translated us into the kingdom of the Son of God's love. He has done everything, he has provided everything, and he is able to save us to the uttermost. He is a high priest, ministering to us day by day today in heaven, that he may save us to the uttermost.

In other words, here let us consider him. If we consider him, then brothers and sisters, you know that it is, even though it seems to be impossible with us, but nothing is impossible with him. That is how our boast and boldness are kept, considering him.

Brothers and sisters, it is not what you and I can do. All work is done by him, our apostle. But all that you need to do is hand yourself over to him, and let him do it.

Are you willing to do that? Consider Jesus, the apostle of our confession. He has already entered behind the veil, as the forerunner. Brothers and sisters, there is a man in heaven, sitting at a right hand of God, and that man is beckoning us to heaven.

That gives us hope. He has opened a way for us, and is calling us to join him. This son is to lead many sons into glory.

And he is determined to build us together, that the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it. He will do it. We will trust him.

The third verse, 13. But encourage yourselves each day, as long as it is called today, that none of you be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. First let us consider Jesus, and then let us encourage one another.

Brothers and sisters, first, do not consider your brothers and sisters. If you consider your brothers and sisters first, before you consider Christ, then what will happen? Because all you will see is the weakness and the false of your brothers and sisters. One brother once said, I have considered a brother with microscope.

When you consider your brother, use a telescope. So let us consider him. If you consider the Lord with a microscope, fine.

Consider him. But after you have considered him, then encourage one another. Why? Because we are to be the house of God.

It is not a matter of you and him alone. It is a matter of you and he, and brothers and sisters. So dear brothers and sisters, do not think of your own spirituality alone.

Think of your brothers and sisters. Encourage your brothers and sisters. Because if your brothers and sisters will fail, then you will find the house will be delayed.

So it takes all of us to be together to build up the house. And we are to be companions of Christ. Christ does not have just one companion.

He has many companions. Therefore we need to encourage one another. Daily.

As long as it is today. Now thank God today is the day that God has made. Let us rejoice in it.

I always thank God for today. Often times I tell Lord, Lord I thank you, do you give me another day, a day of opportunity. Because as long as there is a day which is called today, you will find there is hope there.

You will find that the Spirit of God still has a chance to work. You will find you still have a chance to let him work. So as long as it is today, let us encourage one another.

Daily. Let us encourage one another. Lest anyone should fail.

And then thirdly, he said, let us therefore fear. Lest a promise being left until entering into his rest, any one of you might seem to have failed of it. Brothers and sisters you know, holy fear is an important ingredient in love.

You know it is true in 1 John it said perfect love casts out fear. But you know the fear there means the fear of punishment. And perfect love casts out that kind of fear.

But the scripture said the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom. In other words there is a holy fear which is an important ingredient in love. Now if you love a person, are you fearful? Not of being punished, but you are fearful lest you displease him.

You want to please him. And you want to please him so much you are in fear. And that is kind of holy fear.

Oh brothers and sisters today people are so careless. People are so loose. Sometimes your relationship with the Lord is too intimate.

Yeah of course in one sense you cannot be too intimate with the Lord. But in another sense sometimes it is a little bit unholy. Because there isn't a fear there.

As if you can do anything you want to. It doesn't matter. After all he loves you.

So what matters? Brothers and sisters isn't there that holy fear in you? You fear that you may miss out? You may miss his purpose? You may displease him? You may fail him? It is nothing if you fail but to fail him. That makes a great difference. Are you afraid of that? And then fourth way.

Verse 11 of chapter 4. Let us therefore use diligence to enter into the rest. Now isn't that a contradiction? You are to enter into rest but you are to exercise diligence. And exercise diligence is using some energy.

It is not resting. But thank God you find that use diligence to enter into the rest. And wherein is that diligence? To enter into the rest.

You find in the following verses. In other words here you find the word of God is sharper than two edged sword. It penetrates.

It cuts asunder. It divides the bone and marrow, the spirit and the soul. And it reveals the intent and the thoughts of the heart.

For there is nothing that is not naked, let bare before his eyes. In other words using diligence to enter into his rest simply means exercise your will to lay on the altar as a living sacrifice. Do not get off.

Do not struggle. And let the priest, the Holy Spirit use the knife, the living word of God and divide your soul and spirit. And when your soul is divided from your spirit you enter into his rest.

That's where the diligence is. So the diligence is not your working. Your diligence is using diligence to lay there and don't move.

That's where the diligence is. Now these are the encouragements. Now finally the warnings.

And because of the greatness of the things. Here you'll find the warnings are being given. Now the first warning is sounded in verse twelve.

See brethren, lest there be in any one of you a wicked heart of unbelief in turning away from the living God. Now remember, these words are spoken to believers. This wicked heart of unbelief can happen to a believer.

Do you believe that? The example is used of the children of Israel. Psalm 95. How the children of Israel who were delivered out of Egypt.

How in the wilderness they provoked the Lord. They did not believe in Him. They tested Him.

They proved Him. And they erred in heart and they did not know His way. Now these happen to the delivered children of Israel.

So here you'll find the warning is to believers. Brethren, see brethren, be careful brethren. Lest there be in any one of you.

If anyone think that he can stand. Let him be careful. Lest he fall.

If any one of you has a wicked heart of unbelief. You know brothers and sisters, our relationship with the Lord is a matter of the heart. God has created us with us.

And with this heart we are to fellowship with God. In faith and in love. But unfortunately this heart became a heart of stone.

A stony heart. This heart became a stony heart through the deceitfulness of sin. Sin has deceived us.

And make us heart as hard as stone. You know sin is very deceitful. You remember how the serpent tempted Eve.

How deceitful it was. It seems that the serpent suggested something that was very insignificant. It seems as if this is just a matter of eating a fruit.

Oh what a big issue eating a fruit. And it seems as if he is suggesting there will be wisdom. There will be cleverness.

There will be like God. So much was promised. You know sin is very deceitful.

When sin comes it deceives people. It tries to lure people thinking that there is so much pleasure there. It is a lie.

And it offers so much as if to satisfy you. And sometimes it seems so insignificant. Such a small thing.

Maybe it is just a little wordliness. Or a little pride. Or a little jealousy.

It is something very insignificant. But if you yield to it then you will find sin begins to grow bigger and bigger until you are under the dominion of sin. And your heart becomes hard as stone towards God.

You are not able to hear him anymore. You won't be moved by his voice anymore. And that was what human heart was.

There was no fellowship between man and God because the heart was stony heart. But thank God. When you are convicted by the Holy Spirit, when you came to the Lord Jesus, you know what he did? Ezekiel 36.

He said God has taken away our stony heart and has given us a heart of flesh. A heart of flesh simply means that it is a living heart. A tender heart.

A heart that can be touched and moved and feels. Brothers and sisters, thank God when we believe in the Lord Jesus, he has taken away the stony heart and has given us a heart of flesh. That we can be touched by God.

That we can be moved by God. That we can hear his voice. Because our heart is the ear that hears him.

It is the eyes that see him. It is the capacity to receive his communication. This is what a heart is.

But brothers and sisters, it is possible, it is possible, even with this heart of flesh, if you do not hear his voice today, and tomorrow, another today, and tomorrow, another today, if you do not hear his voice, now the Spirit of God is speaking to you. You have a heart of flesh. He is able to speak to you.

But when he speaks to you, do you listen? If you do not listen, if you do not obey, if you do not cooperate, what will happen? You will find your heart gets hardened a little. And the next day, if you do not listen, harden further. And finally you may so harden your heart that it becomes a wicked heart of unbelief.

You just won't believe. Because you do not believe him. You do not mix faith with his word.

You do not yield to his voice. The result is, if you do not believe in him, with such a wicked heart of unbelief, you turn away from the living God. Dear brothers and sisters, high is our privilege, great is our responsibility.

And that is the reason why we have to encourage one another. Let someone among us get deceived by sin. In the beginning it may be a very small insignificant thing.

It may not be a very blatant sin. It may be something very small and hidden. But when the Holy Spirit speaks to our heart, do you yield to the Holy Spirit? Do you believe in God's word? Do you let God's word cut off that sin? And if you harden your heart, you will find that it will get hardened and hardened and hardened until it becomes a wicked heart of unbelief.

May the Lord deliver us from such a wicked heart. And then of course in verse 13 it said, None of you hardened be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. And chapter 4 verse 1, Let us therefore fear lest a promise being left on entering into his rest, any one of you might seem to have failed of it.

You failed it. That means come short of it. It is God's will that you should enter into his rest, today and in the millennium to come.

But if you fail of it, if you fall short of it, you cannot blame him. Like the children of Israel, their generations fell in the wilderness. They did not enter into Cana because of their unbelief.

But thank God there were Joshua and Cana. They had a more excellent spirit. They believed in God and believed in his word and they entered into the promised land.

Dear brothers and sisters, O that we may not be like those who fell in the wilderness. O come short of God's purpose. But we may be like Caleb and Joshua, by faith, mingling with the word that we hear, that we may enter into his rest.

And of course verse 11 says that no one may fall after the same example of not hearkening to the word. That we will not fall by the wayside. That we may continue on until we enter into his rest.

So brothers and sisters, thank God, he has not only put before us a tremendous calling, a heavenly calling. But he has made every provision for us to make it. He is the apostle and the high priest of our compassion.

And we are to encourage one another. Every provision is there. Let us make use of these provisions.

And let us not harden our hearts through the deceitfulness of sin and develop a wicked heart of unbelief. That we may fall and fail. Come short of the purpose of God.

Shall we pray. Dear Heavenly Father, how we do praise and thank Thee that Thou hast called us with a heavenly calling. And what a calling it is that Thou want us to be Thy house, Thy companion into Thy rest.

O Father, we just desire it very much. And we do praise and thank Thee that Thou dost call us to consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession. And Thou dost also encourage us to encourage, exhort one another daily as it is today.

That we by Thy grace may make it. O our Father, do be merciful to us that none of us will fall by the wayside. But we may all enter into that rest that Thou hast provided for us.

And we praise and worship Thee in the name of our Lord Jesus. Amen.

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