

SERIES: **BETTER- Hope from the book of Hebrews**

TITLE & TEXT: **A Cautionary Tale of Trust | Hebrews 3:7-19**

'DIVE TALK'- 2 Pro divers talking about diving incidents gone wrong...

almost always because of **nitrogen narcosis**.

When a diver goes past a certain depth, they need to breathe a mixture of gases, otherwise they'll experience narcosis: drunken-effect, extreme calm, delusional, poor decision making..... death

The Greek word νάρκωσις (narkōsis)= "the act of making numb"

Most of us will never have to worry about *Nitrogen Narcosis*, but all of us will experience **sin**.

Like N.N. -Sin numbs and blinds us to the dangers it brings;

it gives us a false and deadly sense of safety, satisfaction.

**The Danger: Sin produces one of the most dangerous effects in human beings,
and one of the greatest enemies of the gospel:**

I'm gonna tell you what that is, but first:

OUTLINE:

- *The Danger*
- *A troublesome truth from the text*
- *An example from history (V7-11)*
- *A warning for today (V14-19)*
- *2 ways to overcome (V12-13)*
- *The sermon in a sentence*
- *An uncomfortable but needed invitation*

**The Danger: Sin produces one of the most dangerous effects in human beings,
and one of the greatest enemies of the gospel: UNBELIEF**

When sin entered the world, it did so first in the form of unbelief. (The conclusion of our text V19)

This book, and its warnings, was written to those IN the church (don't stray, drift, fall away)

Even if Not-Yet-Christian, take heed, if the gospel is true & U don't believe, U better be right ^{John3:36}

A troublesome truth from the text:

Because everyone is susceptible to sin, anyone is prone to unbelief

You may not think your sin leads U to full unbelief in God's existence or even Lordship (*"that's dramatic"*)

All sin demands that we trust something/one else over God, in some small area of our lives...

But that small area today, expands just a bit more tomorrow, and the next time, etc.

The message that Jesus is better will go on attack against the number one enemy of the church- unbelief.

An example from history (V7-11)

⁷Therefore,

What's the 'therefore', there for?

Since God dwells with those who dwell in Him and hold on to that confidence
as the Holy Spirit says:

The author is about to quote Psalm 95, yet makes the claim that it is The Holy Spirit who says-

Where scripture speaks God speaks.

2 Peter 1:20-21... Above all, you know this: No prophecy of Scripture comes from the prophet's own interpretation, ²¹ because no prophecy ever came by the will of man; instead, men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.

2 Timothy 3:16 All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness

More on this in 2 weeks when Gavin will be leading us through **Hebrews 4:12-13**

Interesting to note that it is not in the past tense (*said*) but in the present (*says*)-

Every time we dig into scripture God speaks.

Today, if you hear his voice, ⁸ do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, ⁹ where your ancestors tested me, tried me, and saw my works ¹⁰ for forty years. Therefore I was provoked to anger with that generation and said, "They always go astray in their hearts, and they have not known my ways." ¹¹ So I swore in my anger, "They will not enter my rest."

Quoting **Psalm 95**- the 1st half praising God for all He has created and done, but the 2nd half takes a turn

Points back to an interesting point in Israel's history:

- God has miraculously (literal miracles!) led the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt
- Now at the edge of the promised land, Moses sends 12 scouts in to check out the land
- 2 return saying "*we can do this because God is with us*";
10 say, "*the people are too tall, they'll squish us!*" (excuses always sound silly when said aloud)
- Apparently, this was a test of their faith (trust, belief) which they failed.

God says they've tested Him and now they're gonna find out. So none of them, Except Joshua and Caleb (and the younger generation) are able to enter the promised land.

The events of Psalm 95 unfold in the 4th book of the bible-

Numbers 14:11 The Lord said to Moses, "How long will these people despise me? How long will they not trust in me despite all the signs I have performed among them?"

The Israelites committed many sins on their way to the promised land, but only one kept them from entering its rest- the sin of unbelief

"The wilderness generation tested God instead of trusting in Him"- Thomas R Shreiner

Numbers 14:22-23 none of the men who have seen my glory and the signs I performed in Egypt and in the wilderness, and have tested me these ten times and did not obey me, ²³will ever see the land I swore to give their ancestors. None of those who have despised me will see it.

It is entirely possible to see what God can do, and benefit from it, yet still resist His ways

How did God describe their unbelief? “...*those who have despised me*”

The *only time* in the first 5 books of the bible that the people of God are called evil is in **Numbers 14:27** “How long must I endure this evil community that keeps complaining about me? I have heard the Israelites’ complaints that they make against me.

The essence of all evil is unbelief in God- hearts that do not trust God

A warning for today (V14-19)

¹⁴For we have become participants in Christ if we hold firmly until the end the reality that we had at the start. TAKE HEED: It is entirely possible to set off on this Christian path but never finish... Why? *Unbelief*

¹⁵As it is said: **Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.**

‘TODAY’= urgency

Some of us have been hardening our hearts far too long and have traded the momentary pleasures of sin for the eternal weight of glory, not realizing that our days are numbered

¹⁶For who heard and rebelled? Wasn’t it all who came out of Egypt under Moses?

¹⁷With whom was God angry for forty years? Wasn’t it with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who disobeyed?

If the nation of Israel who heard the message from Moses rebelled and did not escape punishment, what do you think that means to those who hear the message from Jesus?

Look what Paul warns about, regarding the Israelites unbelief and us who have believed-

Romans 11:20-22 True enough; they were broken off because of unbelief, but you stand by faith. Do not be arrogant, but beware, ²¹because if God did not spare the natural branches, he will not spare you either. ²²Therefore, consider God’s kindness and severity: severity toward those who have fallen but God’s kindness toward you—if you remain in his kindness. Otherwise you too will be cut off.

The warning isn’t that we somehow might lose our salvation (the context of the bible disproves that); the warning in the text, simply is that God takes a lack of faith (unbelief) deadly serious.

Make what you will of that- but we cannot escape the warning as it is laid out plainly.

¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Valuable Lesson: You can’t ask God to lead you, and then not trust Him where He takes you

Ask to be a better husband/wife/mom/dad/son/daughter/friend/person-

but then bail when He starts doing the work of pruning and purging out sin

Ask to find a good church-

But then ditch it when the church people try to be a part of your life,

or ditch because they’re too churchy and preach from the bible,

or ditch because they sing loud for the God who radically saved them from their sins

Ask to give you purpose and reveal your calling-

But bail out when He starts to mold the character U need for the calling you're asking about

Ask Him to save you-

Then ignore His conviction and prodding

2 ways to overcome unbelief (V12-13)

¹²Watch out, brothers and sisters, so that there won't be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

¹³But encourage each other daily, while it is still called **today**, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.

1. WATCH OUT- (v12)

The Grk word (*blépō*)- carries the idea of seeing something in the physical realm and seeing what the results will be in the spiritual realm.

Q: What are my actions and affections doing to my soul?

Heart disease is the #1 cause of death for both men and women in the US and worldwide.

In most cases, it's preventable....This passage warns of spiritual heart disease, also preventable

We have to be honest with ourselves

2. ENCOURAGE EACH OTHER OFTEN- (V13)

People are usually hesitant to open up in community. The argument sometimes is-

What will I get out of this? They are not pastors. They are not professional counselors.

What credentials do these people have that would let them into my life?

Here are their credentials: **They are not you.** You need "*not you's*" in your life.

Here's an example why: Have you ever heard your voice on a recording and thought that's not what I sound like? And everyone else around you says what? Yes, *it is*.

Community breaks through sins deception

when we can't be honest with ourselves, or perhaps have not yet seen the dangers.

*DIVE TALK- never dive alone, always with a buddy

The Sermon in a sentence:

Since we all sin, and all sin ultimately leads to un-believe God, we have to watch out for ourselves and others.

An uncomfortable but needed invitation

Assign sin-hunters & hope-givers

Believers you trust, who know you, to hunt down sin in your life; and you do the same for them

*Think Dog the Bounty Hunter

(not to beat each other down...but to build each other up).

I've learned that the worst thing that could happen is not that my sin would be exposed, (that's actually good for me); the worst thing that could happen is that we would hide our sin because shame would convince us that there is no forgiveness or grace for us

The point of this warning is not to say: NEVER SIN OR YOU'RE OUT!

The point is we've all sinned, BUT JESUS did not, and He stands in the gap...

SO TRUST HIM!

Jesus is the man who went into the desert to be tested yet did not test the Lord as the Israelites did, as we do- He bridged the gap, He made a way.

***CALL UP WORSHIP TEAM**

If you're not-yet a Christian: **Trade your unbelief for belief** (Mark 9:24 help my unbelief)

Jesus is better.

BULPEN-

V14 Reality- also translated 'confidence' or 'assurance' - the idea is that what brought us will keep us (the Gospel)

V19 lack of trust in God will always lead us away from His best for us

V19 UNBELIEF- *apistía* (the negated form of [4103](#) /*pistós*, "faithful"; "no-faithfulness" (unfaithfulness)

You can ignore the message of life, but you can't outrun inevitable death

V13 what do we encourage each other with? Primarily the Gospel

John 3:36

You can't force your way in, but you can prevent your way in

What's the therefore there for?

To bridge the last section with this one, in essence saying:

We are those with whom God dwells if we are the ones who take hold of the gospel

V10- Rebellious, resistant, hearts were not occasional or temporary;

They were characterized by callousness

Genesis 6:5 consistently and continually evil

To resist His way is to resist His rest

The goal isn't that if you find yourself hardened by sin you would ask "have I been hardened by sin?" - the ultimate goal is "that there won't be in any of you"...

Recovery is good, prevention is better

If unbelief leads to falling away, belief (faith) leads to perseverance

Hardness of heart (V8,13,15); testing God (V9); going astray (V10); rebellion (V15,16); sin (V17); disobedience (V18); UNBELIEF (V19)

Disbelief leads to disobedience

V12- we have a responsibility to maintain our heart health, and that of one another (V12)

Josh Patterson:

2 ways to ensure bad spiritual heart health

Stay away (no check ups)

Withhold information

2 ways to ensure heart health

Continual check ups

Encouragement

Spence Shelton-

"The fundamental flaw sin has stamped on the human condition is a bent towards unbelief."

Nitrogen Narcosis- At its most benign, narcosis results in relief of anxiety – a feeling of tranquillity and mastery of the environment. It also resembles the effects of alcohol.

The most dangerous aspects of narcosis are the impairment of judgement, multi-tasking and coordination, and the loss of decision-making ability and focus.

Narcosis reduces both the perception of cold discomfort and shivering and thereby affects the production of body heat and consequently allows a faster drop in the core temperature in cold water, with reduced awareness of the developing problem.

V13 notice that encouragement prevents hardening before it happens! 'so that none of you...'

Everyone needs to be encouraged (with the gospel) because anyone may be hardened (by sin's deception)

'Watch Out' - Greek- (*blépō*) suggests "to see something physical, with spiritual results (perception)." That is, it carries *what is seen* into the non-physical (immaterial) realm so a person can take the needed action (respond, beware, be alert).

For those living in sin, secret, destructive sin, we conclude that the worst thing that could happen is that someone might find out, that we would be exposed.

NO! the worst thing is that we wouldn't believe there is forgiveness and grace and restoration

As the Israelites were in the desert/. Wilderness eager for rest, we too find ourselves in the desert of life.

Canan was not the ultimate rest God had in mind- that is to come when we are in the presence of God forevermore

The author feels the effect of a broken, fallen world on his audience.

In the face of everything you are dealing with: •Job loss, Persecution, Depression, anxiety, Infertility, Kids rebelling, Death of a loved one or abandonment by a loved one, loneliness, or maybe something else.

In the face of all of this, CHRIST IS BETTER.