

My Brother's Keeper

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[0:00] Hebrews chapter 3. We will read this chapter in its entirety. Hebrews chapter 3, verse 1.

! Jesus has been found worthy of greater honor than Moses, just as the builder of a house has greater honor than the house itself.

For every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything. Moses was faithful as a servant in all God's house, testifying to what would be said in the future.

But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house, and we are his house if we hold on to our courage and the hope of which we boast.

So, as the Holy Spirit says, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion during the time of testing in the desert, where your fathers tested and tried me and for 40 years saw what I did.

[1:23] That is why I was angry without generation, and I said, their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways. So I declared on oath, in my anger, they shall never enter my rest.

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

We have come to share in Christ, if we hold firmly to the end, the confidence we had at first. As has just been said, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion.

Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? And with whom was he angry for 40 years?

Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest, if not to those who disobeyed?

[2:34] So we see they were not able to enter because of their unbelief. Spring in Arizona is different than spring in Bremen.

And they may have warmer temperatures, but I like our bird songs better. There was some bird, and I'm not sure that I fully identified it, but every morning around 6 would start its cry, and it sounded like a whining brat.

And it was loud. I much prefer our robins and the melodious song that they give us. But it's all God's creation, different birds, different plants, and they all display something of the wonder of God's grace, and perhaps even something of the fall and its effects upon whining birds.

Hebrews chapter 3 says, Not all who set out for heaven arrive there.

Some make a profession of faith. They claim to be saved. They set out for heaven. But before they get there, they fall away. They go right back to the world.

[3:59] And thereby show that they never really were saved and changed from the heart outwardly, from the inside out. And the example given to us here in chapter 3 of Hebrews is that of the Israelites who Moses led out of slavery in Egypt.

They were a very privileged people, weren't they? There they were, slaves for 400 years, and God came to that nation of all the nations in the world, and he said, I'm going to bring you out to be my nation.

And he brought them out of slavery. They all walked through the Red Sea on dry ground and saw the water piled up on either side of them.

And once they were through the Red Sea, they saw those waters close up and destroy their enemies, the Egyptians who sought their blood. They all heard the voice of God at Mount Sinai when he verbally spoke the Ten Commandments to them.

They all ate the manna in the desert and drank water that ran out of a rock. They all saw the pillar of fire and of cloud that hovered over them and led them through the wilderness and sheltered them from the hot sun.

[5:22] And they were all marching towards the promised land in Canaan. And yet for all those spiritual privileges, as the scriptures show us, the greater part of them were not allowed to enter the promised land, but died off in the wilderness, died under God's wrath as God swore that they would never enter his rest.

And why? Why not? Because they rebelled against the Lord, they hardened their hearts and went astray from him. They refused to believe his promises and to obey his commandments. Indeed, not all who set out for heaven make it at last. Twice in our text, we see the need for persevering to the end stated for us.

In verse 3, we read, But Christ is faithful as a son over God's house, and we are his house, if we hold on to the courage and the hope of which we boast.

And then verse 14, We have come to share in Christ, if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first.

[6:48] Many in Moses' day did not hold on firmly until the end. And so a long time later, the Holy Spirit spoke through David in Psalm 95, in which he rehearsed this sad history of Israel in the desert, and about their continually straying hearts, and so David, by the Spirit, issued a warning to the people of his day.

We see it here in verses 7 and following. Today, if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts. That's taken right out of Psalm 95, a psalm of David, to the people of his day.

And 700 years after David, the Holy Spirit takes the same words of warning and gives them to professing Hebrew Christians of the first century, here in the book of Hebrews.

Professing Christians who are now being tempted to turn away from Christ, following Jesus in a community of Hebrews, meant persecution.

People no longer shopped at your shop. Moms and dads maybe disinherited you, have nothing to do with you. One reason after another, persecution would be brought upon Hebrews that turned to the Lord Jesus Christ as their great Messiah, and they were being tempted to leave Christ and to go back to a Christless Judaism.

[8:31] And so the message for them is the same message that David gave to his contemporaries. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

And now, 2,000 years later, here we are. And the Holy Spirit is still speaking the very same warning to you who claim to be God's people by faith in Jesus Christ.

Verse 7. Notice it says, so as the Holy Spirit says, not said, not something that the Holy Spirit said back then and it's over.

No, it's a present tense. So as the Holy Spirit says, he is still saying it today through his written word. And what is he saying?

Today. Today. That's this day, April the 13th. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

[9:32] So this is the warning to his church today. We're in the midst of a study on the church of Jesus Christ. If you're visiting us this morning, we're looking at this phenomenon of the church that we find in the scriptures.

and we've asked the question, what is its purpose? Why has Jesus Christ set out to build this church on earth? And the first purpose we saw was to minister to God in public worship.

That's what we're doing today. But the second purpose is to minister to one another. And we saw that, that just as the physical body has many parts and they all serve each other, the one part serves the other in the physical body, so it is in the body of Christ.

Many parts, one body, and the many parts serve each other to make the overall body of Christ more healthy. Well, we're going to see then how Hebrews, how our text here in Hebrews 3 fits into this theme of ministering to one another.

The second purpose of the church. Our text is verses 12 and 13. And what we have here is a danger and a remedy for that danger. And the first point then is the danger explained.

[10:57] What is the danger that they're being warned of? Well, it's apostasy. It's turning away from the Lord Jesus Christ, the living God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

I want you to notice who this warning is to. Verse 12. See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God.

The warning is for all those who consider themselves to be brethren. Children of God. It's not a warning for the irreligious. It's not a warning for the agnostic.

No, it's for those who claim to be God's family, part of God's family. It's a warning for the church then, isn't it?

For we are the house of God. We've been told in this text. Verse 6. So it's for believers, those who profess to be believers, those who have come to share in Christ by putting their trust and confidence in Him for salvation.

[12:12] Now, you know, there are some Christians that say, since I'm a Christian, I don't need this or any other warning because I'm eternally secure in Christ.

nothing can go wrong with me. I can't fall away from Christ, so I don't need this warning. That is to be smarter than God. The God who teaches eternal security in Christ also calls believers to persevere to the end and warns them of damnation if they don't.

The same God who says that once we are truly in Christ, we can never be out of Him. Indeed, it will be shown that whenever we are really in Christ, whenever we stray, we will be brought back.

Yes, the same God who teaches that warns us about the danger of turning away from Christ. And we find it here in the book of Hebrews over and over and indeed in the whole of Scripture.

We have these two held side by side. We are secure in Christ, but we are also warned that if we stray from Him, we will be lost. If we stray ultimately and finally, we will be lost.

[13:30] Indeed, one of the ways Christ keeps us eternally secure is by warning us. And He works in the hearts of His true people to take the warning and to be diligent with it so that they do not stray from Him.

Finally. So, hold on with confidence in Christ to the end. Don't be like the Israelites in the desert. The danger is apostasy and the danger is real.

See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. Now, the second aspect about this danger is that sin is what we do when we don't believe God.

Notice verse 12 says, see to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart. Those two are found together. Mary had a little lamb and everywhere that Mary went, the lamb was sure to go. Wherever you saw Mary, you find the lamb. So it is with these two. Wherever you find sin, you find unbelief. Indeed, sin is what we do when we don't believe God.

[14:47] Sin has its roots in this heart of unbelief. When we sin, something other than God's word is being believed and is ruling the heart.

So God says in his word that the law of God gives perfect freedom. freedom. And somebody says it doesn't sound like freedom to me.

Going my own way sounds like freedom. And at that point, we're not believing what God has said. God has said this is the way to find freedom. And whenever we step outside of God's way, we're not believing for that moment, are we?

We say, I think I can find freedom and happiness out here. Psalm 1 says that the way of blessedness is the way of God's law. Continuing in his word, walking with him.

And whenever we step outside of God's commands, for the moment, we're saying, we don't believe you, God. We believe there's blessedness out here.

[15:56] And so sin is what we do when we don't believe God. When we break his commands. So, his word says you shall not lie.

And we think, oh, but if I lied and just twisted the truth a little bit, blessing would come to me. I would escape my parents' discipline.

And so you lie. And you find that at that point you're no longer believing God. That the blessed man is the man who, the child who is obeying their parents.

instead of trusting the Lord with all our hearts, we then are leaning on our own understanding, taking the way that seems right to us.

So, sin is what we do when we don't believe God. Look for unbelief behind your sin. When you find sin, ask yourself, what is it that I'm not believing about God?

[16:58] What is it of his word that I am no longer believing at this point? Oh, I might say I believe it, it might be in my statement of faith, but practically I'm no longer believing it. This relationship of

sin and unbelief is clearly seen in the Israelites in the desert.

That's the example set before us in this chapter and you find it throughout the Old Testament. So God brings them right up to the borders of the promised land of Canaan.

He promised them this land, it's yours, I'll give it to you, go in and take it. But why did they disobey? Because they didn't believe God, did they?

Ten spies said, we can't attack these people, they're stronger than us. It was unbelief in God's promise that led them to turn away from God's command to go in and to take the land.

Psalm 106 says, then they despised the pleasant land, they did not believe God's promise, they grumbled in their tents and they did not obey the Lord.

[18:03] They did not believe, they did not obey. Sin is what we do when we don't believe God. Now they're in the desert and there's a problem of no food.

Oh, let us trust in the Lord, our provider. No, no, they don't believe in God's good heart toward them to provide for them. And so they're grumbling and they're saying to Moses, why did you ever bring us out of Egypt?

It would have been better for us to have died back there than to starve here. Again, it was unbelief. Psalm 78 tells us that their sin had its roots in unbelief for they did not believe in God or trust in his deliverance.

Yet he opened the doors of heaven and rained down manna for the people to eat. Then it was without, there was no water. Rather than trusting in God to provide, they again sinned by grumbling and murmuring.

Yet in mercy, God provided water out of a rock for them. Every day, he was miraculously keeping them alive in the desert for 40 years.

[19:12] Psalm 78 32 says, in spite of all this, they kept on sinning in spite of his wonders, they did not believe. The last verse of chapter 3 of Hebrews says, so we see that they were not able to enter because of their unbelief.

So sin is what we do when we don't believe God. Check that the next time you're guilty of the sin of worry. Ask yourself, what is it I'm not believing now? Check it whenever you step outside of any command.

See if there's not this root of unbelief. And don't treat unbelief lightly. You see, it's that that would lead you away from the Lord Jesus. That's the tendency of unbelief.

That just as faith draws us to the Lord Jesus, so unbelief draws us away from the Lord. God is a serious thing.

Deal with it. When sin starts looking good, something's wrong with my faith. I'm failing to see something rightly here. Maybe I'm failing to see the hook beneath that worm.

[20:30] Remember Asaph in Psalm 73? His faith nearly failed. And he says, I almost chucked the whole thing. I saw how the wicked were getting on well and prospering, and I envied them.

I had hardship and difficulty, and I was trying to follow the Lord. And I looked over and I saw the wicked. They had nothing to do with God. They were all about themselves. They stamped on other people, and they kept prospering.

And I was this close. My feet almost slipped. I almost chucked it all and joined them until I went into the sanctuary, and then I saw their end.

Oh, faith. Faith now sees something and believes something that before it didn't. And when sin starts looking good, something's wrong. Faith is sick.

Unbelief is somewhere. And we need to get back to believing all that God has said so that Asaph comes out saying, I have it great, even though I'm in trouble every day.

[21:40] I'm far better than that arrogant rich man because his feet are on slippery ground. He is one breath away from hell, and I have God as my God.

He's my portion in this life. He holds me by his right hand, and he's leading me to glory, and he'll receive me into heaven forever in heaven. I see now that I'm the blessed man because I have God. He is the man to be pitied. Again, it's faith. And when sin looks good, something's wrong with our faith, our belief system.

Thirdly, another thing that makes for the danger of falling away is that we see that sin is a personal thing. It's not just breaking some impersonal law code.

It's not just that there's a law code out there that if you break it, that's sin. It's true that sin is the breaking of the law. But what this passage shows us is that all of our sins are against a person, the

living God.

[22:45] Our hearts are always doing something with God. Did you know that? You're always interacting with God. You say, I don't have a thought about him.

You're doing something with God. You're neglecting him, aren't you? You're ignoring him rather than thinking about him. You're believing in him or you're not believing in him. You're following him or you're rebelling against him.

You're drawing near to him or you're turning away from him. You're listening to him or you're ignoring him. The heart is never neutral toward God.

You're always doing something with God. And when we sin, we're turning away from the living God. Turning away from him, a person.

So God says, walk with me in these paths of righteousness. Walk with me in the light. And we say, I'll be right back, but I'm going to walk over here in darkness for a while.

[23:47] What is that? That is sin, yes, and sin is turning away from the Lord, isn't it? We turn away from him to go in our own way. It's a personal thing to God, our sin.

And if it had its way, it would never return to him at all. That's the reality of sin. If it had its way, we would keep going away from God.

Its direction is away from the Lord, never toward him. There are seeds of full apostasy in every sin. Hence, there's the importance of daily repentance.

repentance. Because when we stray and turn away from God, we need to turn around and come back to him and receive his pardon, receive his power.

Sin is a personal thing. But another thing that increases the danger of apostasy is that sin is a deceitful thing. You see that, don't you, in the end of verse 13, so that none of you may be hardened through sin's deceitfulness.

[24:55] And it just reminds us that sin lies to us. Sin hoodwinks us. Sin tricks us. It pulls the wool over our eyes. It promises things that it does not give.

Sin promises pleasure, and then it leaves us with a guilty conscience, a grieved Holy Spirit, and sorrow for our sin. Sin is deceptive in that it doesn't tell us that what it wants to do is to take us away from God.

It doesn't tell us that, does it? It just pleads just this once, it's just a little thing, won't hurt anybody, God will forgive, but however innocent the beginnings of sin might appear, its mission is clear.

If it could have its way, it would lead you away from the Lord Jesus Christ. God will lead you to go entirely back to the world. So it's just this one little white lie.

Oh, but that leads to the need to tell another lie, doesn't it? And another lie. Until you are a liar, characterized by lying, far from God.

[26:04] Though it only asks for an inch, just give me an inch, it says to you. It's never satisfied with an inch. It always wants another inch, and another, and another. And inch by inch, it is taking you away from the Lord.

That's part of its deceitfulness. It's such a gradual thing. It's like drifting in a rowboat at sea.

You don't feel that you're moving, but you're moving further and further from shore. And so it is with the deceitfulness of sin. It's moving us away from the Lord Jesus.

It deceives and flatters us. You can do this. You can pull this off, but we're being deceived by it.

So sin is a deceitful thing. And then fifthly, sin is a hardening thing. It hardens the heart. Now not overnight again, as we said, but little by little.

[27:03] Have you found in your life that duty is done coldly, without much heart? are soon become duties done sporadically, not as regularly.

And duties done sporadically soon become duties neglected altogether. There's a progression, isn't it? No heart, relationship with Christ in the reading of his word and prayer and worship.

And when the heart's not involved, well then it's not long before we're a bit sporadic in reading and praying and worship. And if it continues to have its way, then we neglect it altogether.

There's this hardening, drifting process away from the Lord. Sins in the beginning are just toyed with in the mind. What would it be like to do this or to do that?

Just toying in the mind. But sins toyed with in the mind become sins dabbled in in life. Well, just once, just twice.

[28:11] And sins dabbled in soon becomes sins habitually done. There's a hardening process that goes on with sin.

Each time you sin, it leaves the heart a little harder than when it found it. Each time you sin, it makes it a little easier to sin the next time, doesn't it? It dulls the conscience so it's no longer sensitive to sinning against the Lord Jesus.

And if it's not stopped by sovereign grace, we would walk away from Christ with a hard heart. So today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your heart.

Do you know it will never be easier to follow Christ than it is today, right now? because if you harden yourself against the inviting voice of Jesus today, your heart will be harder tomorrow, and it will be easier to harden yourself against his call tomorrow.

It will never be easier for you to come to Christ than right now. So today, if you hear his voice, harden not your heart.

[29:24] You know, his word never leaves us as it finds us. It's like the rain, and it either packs down the ground and makes it harder, or it moistens it and softens it.

And so the word of Christ, as it comes to you today, you'll either go out harder or softer, closer or farther from Christ.

If you hear his voice, do not harden your heart today. So these are the dangers of apostasy, of turning away from the Lord. It's furthered by our own unbelief.

It's furthered by sin that is such a deceitful thing. It's furthered by sin that hardens us and pulls us away from the Lord Jesus. And it happens a lot.

It happened to these Israelites. They died by the thousands in the desert. The whole desert was riddled with their bodies. it happened with Judas, one of the twelve.

[30:30] It happened with Demas, a fellow worker with the Apostle Paul. It happened with Lot's wife, relative of Father Abraham. And most of you, I'm sure, know names of people who profess to be Christians and set out for the celestial city of heaven and are nowhere to be found, following hard after the Lord today.

Now, if we appreciate the danger of apostasy, the danger of our hearts becoming hard and straying from the Lord, then we'll be very eager for the remedy. You see, that's what we're given next.

We're not just warned about the danger, we're then given the remedy. Do we appreciate the danger of apostasy?

Peter didn't, not I, Lord, I'll never forsake you, though everyone else should, I will never. And before the night was over and the cock crew crowed, he had denied that he even knew the Lord three times, didn't he?

There's David, one whom the Lord says, he's a man after my own heart, and he made him king of his people Israel, made him the author of many of their worship songs, the book of Psalms, and yet it was this heart of David that became so hardened by sin's deceitfulness, that he committed adultery with another man's wife and then murdered him in order to get her, and spent at least nine months covering it up with lies.

[32:03] It was only God's sovereign mercy that kept Peter and kept David from going astray forever, but renewed their repentance and brought them back.

if we appreciate our danger of apostasy, then we'll be eager for the Lord's remedy. Now, the Lord's remedy against apostasy in this text is the local church, and this is why I'm preaching on this text in our series on the church, because the local church ministering to one another, watching over one another, encouraging one another, is the remedy to a straying heart, to a hardening heart, to an unbelieving heart.

And the first lesson is that we have a responsibility to watch over one another. Now, I personally need to be careful that I don't stray from the Lord, and you do too, but our text here is not so much a personal warning as it is a corporate one.

We need to hear the command of verse 12 as a church, and not just as individuals, and that's how it's given. Notice verse 12, see to it brothers, plural, see to it brothers, all of you, see to this, to what?

That none of you, plural, has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. Grace Fellowship Church, all you believers, all you brethren together, see to it that none of you, none of these traveling to heaven along with you through this wilderness ever turns away from the living God.

[33:42] You see, the corporateness of this text and this command, together we're to watch over each other, together we're to see that not one of us falls short of heaven.

So there's a company of marines and they're being dropped in behind enemy lines and it's dangerous and they're receiving instructions from their commander in chief and he's got them all before them, before him there.

And after he makes sure they each understand their particular tasks that they must do, he then speaks to them as a group and he says, see to it men, that none of you is left behind, that none of you is lost.

They're responsible for each other as a company. They're to have each other's back. They are to cover for one another. And in the same way, Grace Fellowship Church, see to it brethren, see to it brethren, that not one of you has a sinful unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. We are our brother's keeper in the church. Remember, that was Cain's question when God says, where's your brother, Abel? Cain says, am I my brother's keeper? We are our brother's keeper in the church.

[35:00] It's part of our ministry to one another in the body of Christ, to watch over each other. A second lesson we see in the remedy is that we're given something specifically to do to head off anyone in our congregation from falling away.

It's found in verse 13. But encourage one another daily as long as it is called today so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. Here's the second lesson.

We are to encourage one another in a life of faith and repentance and obedience to God.

Encourage one another. The word is parakaleo.

It has a wide range of meanings. Urge, encourage, exhort, admonish, instruct, comfort, cheer up. It's a compound word made of two words.

Para, which means alongside of. Kaleo, to call. And when you put the two words together, you have this idea of coming alongside in order to call out to.

[36:07] Now some of you run long distance and you know something of the real encouragement to have somebody running alongside of you and when you hit the wall and you start to get sluggish and wonder is it worth it.

They're there to call out to you, encourage you, to urge you. Don't quit now, brother. Keep going.

There's a t-shirt at the end. You're encouraged, aren't you?

You're being parakaleoed. You're being urged to not stop. You're being admonished. Now that's what we're to be doing in the local church.

We're not running a 25-mile marathon. We're running all the way to heaven. And God has given us to run together as a group. That's his means of protection.

That's his way of keeping us from falling off and turning away from the Lord Jesus. And so when someone's slowing down in the group and tempted to quit following, the rest of the body is to come alongside and urge them to go on, to encourage them with the promises of God.

[37:13] Do you know what God promises to the one who overcomes, to the one who runs all the way? Look again, brother. Maybe that's just to encourage them with your example.

You're running along with them. Listen, if I can run, you can run. Maybe you're encouraging them by praying with them, calling on the Lord for grace, reminding them of the joys of following the Lord Jesus, warning them of the consequences of turning back.

I love that picture in Pilgrim's Progress where the pilgrim is terrified at what's ahead, but he says, I'm going forward nonetheless because I know what's back there.

And we need to remind each other, what's back there? If I turn back, there's only destruction. You see, that's coming alongside to warn, to admonish, to urge.

When someone's off the path, we come alongside them and we say, brother, here's the path. Come on, come with me. Let's go to the Savior. Let's confess and find pardon and power.

[38:18] we're coming alongside. Three miles down the road, we may be the one needing such assistance. Because sin pulls the wool over our eyes, brethren, and we deceive ourselves.

And we can see everybody else's sin but our own. Sin creates blind spots that hide our faults. It's sin's deceitfulness.

That's what we're being warned about. So I need you to pull the wool off of my eyes, to let me see things as they really are, lest I become hardened to my sin. There's David. He's guilty of adultery, murder, and lies.

His heart is fearfully hard. What kept him from just running on to hell, away from the Lord? It was one of his brethren, wasn't it?

It was a prophet, Nathan. And he comes to David and he pulls the wool off of his eyes. He tells him a story.

[39:24] There was once a rich man and a poor man. The rich man had a large flock of sheep and cattle. The poor man had nothing except one little ewe lamb. And it was the family pet.

They ate with it. They slept with it. They loved it as another child. And when a traveler came along to visit the rich man, instead of slaughtering one of his many sheep or cattle to serve his guests, he took the poor man's little ewe lamb and he prepared it for his guests to eat.

And the Bible says David was livid with anger. And he told Nathan, as surely as the Lord lives, this man deserves to die. He must pay back four times over because he did such a thing and had no pity.

Is it not frightful how hardened our hearts can be to our own sins? And yet how alive to the sins of another? And David is saying he doesn't deserve to live.

And Nathan says, David, you are the man. You're the one who took another man his wife. And suddenly the wool was gone and he sought truth and he repented, he wept, and he sought the Lord.

[40:50] And you read Psalm 51, see how he cries to the Lord for his loving kindness and mercy. Have mercy upon me, he says. But it was a brother coming alongside.

That's what Hebrews 3 is teaching us. We need to do this with each other. we need each other. Whatever the condition, we're to come alongside and give that help to keep each other from turning away, to direct their eyes.

Look again, brother, at the Lord Jesus. Look at his glory as we sung about him this morning. He's the fairest of 10,000. He is full of grace for you. He will forgive all your sins.

He will put them behind his back and remember them no more. Come back to the Savior. What a gracious master we have. And this is something we're to do regularly.

You notice we're to encourage one another daily, as long as it's called today, preventative maintenance to keep us from lagging behind, to keep us from losing heart, to keep us from turning astray.

[41:56] It's not just once we've gone astray, but if we would do this daily, continually, encouraging each other, preventing us from that drift and turning away.

And we're to do it today. There's an urgency about it as well. We're to seize the opportunity while you have it. Do you see or know of one in need of encouragement? Run to them today.

Don't wait. Tomorrow their heart might be harder. They might be further from the Lord. It might be harder to restore them. Go to them today. This is one reason we're to be faithful in our attendance when the body of Christ meets.

If you turn over to chapter 10 and verses 24 and 25, you see it here in Hebrews 10, 24 and 25. It's so that we can engage in this mutual encouragement.

Hebrews 10, 24 says, And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another.

[42:59] And all the more as you see the day approaching, the day when Jesus comes back to judge all men. Now, we can't encourage one another as we ought if we're habitually absent from the meetings of the church.

When the people of God gather, it's a double loss. I miss the encouragement of others and others miss the encouragement from me. So let's be in attendance. Let's take advantage of our opportunities to come together and have an active part in this mutual giving and receiving of encouragement and then pursue it outside of the meeting place.

Meet with each other for lunch. Find ways to be encouraging one another daily while it is called today. Give some thought to it.

Let's consider how we can do this. So the danger of apostasy is real. Jesus says, Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who endures to the end shall be saved.

There's going to be an apostasy, a turning away from the Lord, and only those who endure to the end will be saved. To travel alone is dangerous. So what has God done?

[44:13] He takes his converts to Christ and he bunches them up and he says, Travel as a pack. Travel as a local church that you might be able to encourage, exhort, warn, urge one another along

the way to heaven so that no one's hardened by the deceitfulness of sin and turning from the Lord. And if I take this warning seriously, then at least two things will follow. I will actively seek to encourage others. Love demands it. And I'll think about specific brothers and sisters that I can encourage.

And don't forget the young people. They need encouragement as well. Maybe the children of the church. Maybe it's somebody that's not here today.

Don't forget. Give some thought. Consider. How can we encourage? I must do my part to see that none here turn away from the living God. In order to do that, I must be tasting of the life and the joy of the Lord Jesus myself that I might have to give to others.

But secondly, I will actively seek encouragement from others. I'll need to attach myself to a body of Christ where this sort of thing happens. Where people help one another and watch over our souls.

[45:39] Where brothers will encourage me in the path of righteousness, will seek me when I stray, will pray with me under temptation and trial. I need to be seeking this ministry of the body to me.

when's the last time you shared some temptation or trial you're going through for a brother to pray for you. That's what we're talking about. If I'm serious about this danger, then I need to apply the remedy and make use of those that God has put around me to keep me from straying.

You know, if we went to war against the country, we wouldn't think of sending somebody over there alone, would we? Why do we ever think that we can fight the spiritual battle against forces far greater than ourselves on our own?

Beautiful things happened to me in Arizona. I got an email from a brother that said, I need help tonight. I'm in temptation. I need help. You don't know how that blessed me.

Somebody realizes the danger's real and he's given me, brethren, to pray for me, to help me through this trial. I will actively seek encouragement from others.

[46:55] Are you making use of your brothers and sisters in the Christian warfare that you're having against sin and temptation and trials? Have you welcomed any to come and run alongside of you?

Brother, if you ever see me strain, will you come to me? Sister, can we meet once in a while and just pray for each other? James 5, 16, may be the most neglected one another in the church.

Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another. Don't fight alone. May the Lord make us such an encouraging body to each other that will be a means of grace to keep us from straying, from the heart hardening, sin deceiving us.

Are you without the Lord Jesus this morning? Then you're without hope, you're without life, you're without peace with God. You're just a breath away from unending torments.

But today, if you hear his voice, harden not your heart. Don't go home harder than when you came. Surrender to the Savior today. You know, the book of Hebrews shows us the ends to which the Son of God went to ensure that none that the Father has given to him will ever be lost.

[48:10] He became a man for them. He perfectly obeyed God's commands for them. He suffered and died under God's wrath for them. He rose again for them. He ascended into heaven for them where he now lives and intercedes for them.

So he's able to save completely all who come to God through him because he ever lives to make intercession for them. Entrust yourselves to the hands of the Lord Jesus to save you and he will.

He'll forgive all your sins and give you his own righteous record in heaven. His report card of perfect obedience. He'll give you his Holy Spirit to live inside of you.

To give you power to live a life in a tempting evil world. He'll give you mercy and grace to help you in your time of need. He'll renew your repentance and faith when you fall away just as he did Peter and David.

He'll bring you back. He'll save you completely. Enabling you to hold firmly to the end the confidence that you had at the first. Jesus is a wonderful savior.

[49:15] Put all your weight on him. He'll bear you up. He'll keep you. He is able to keep you from falling and to present you faultless before his presence with exceeding joy.

It's only your unwillingness that keeps you from Christ in heaven. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. And you will share in Christ.

In all that he is. For all of your needs. We bow before you our great God and thank you for your son our savior.

We want to walk nearer to him. Keep us from falling away. Thank you so much for putting us in a church. Putting us alongside of other pilgrims.

Marching to heaven together. Father. Make us a blessing to each other. Make us to see our need for encouragement and our need to give it. And so may we mutually be built up and made strong as a local church.

[50 : 17] To the end that Jesus Christ would be praised. That every one of us might arrive safely there in heaven at last. To the praise of his great grace and keeping power.

We ask in his name. Amen. Amen.