

## Bid My Anxious Fears Subside

Heb 3:7-19

Bernard Bell



### Background

God delivered his people from slavery to Pharaoh in Egypt. Their destination was Mount Sinai, to meet with the Lord, then the Promised Land, the land flowing with milk and honey. But at every step of the way the people were afraid: of Pharaoh and his army, of hunger, of thirst, of giants in the Land, even of the Lord. They kept thinking they were going to die. God brought them to the edge of the Land, but they refused to enter. They wanted to go back to Egypt, redefining it as the land flowing with milk and honey. They never got there because they died in the wilderness under God's judgment. The Christian life is a journey, as allegorized in *Pilgrim's Progress*. We are easily beset with fears which test our faith. We don't make this journey alone; we travel together, encouraging one another.

### Sermon Text: Heb 3:7-19 (NIV)

<sup>7</sup>So, as the Holy Spirit says:

<sup>8</sup> "Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts  
as you did in the rebellion,  
during the time of testing in the wilderness,  
<sup>9</sup> where your ancestors tested and tried me,  
though for forty years they saw what I did.  
<sup>10</sup> That is why I was angry with that generation;  
I said, 'Their hearts are always going astray,  
and they have not known my ways.'  
<sup>11</sup> So I declared on oath in my anger,  
'They shall never enter my rest.' "

<sup>12</sup> See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that

*none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.* <sup>14</sup> *We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end.* <sup>15</sup> *As has just been said:*

*"Today, if you hear his voice,  
do not harden your hearts  
as you did in the rebellion."*

<sup>16</sup> *Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt?* <sup>17</sup> *And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies perished in the wilderness?* <sup>18</sup> *And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed?* <sup>19</sup> *So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.*

## **Discussion Questions**

### **1. Preparation**

- a. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- b. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?
- c. What stands out to you the most from this sermon?

### **2. Sunday questions**

- a. The Christian pilgrimage is "best done with others." Have you ever felt lonely in your Christian walk? If so, did you intentionally do something to restore fellowship? Explain.
- b. This Hebrews passage obviously drew a great deal on the story of the Israelites in the wilderness. The Israelites didn't walk with God to a large extent because they viewed God as being against them, not for them. How do you view God? Do you feel like he is for you? Can you say with the Psalmist, *"This I know, that God is for me"* (Ps 56:9)? Why or why not?
- c. The one great command in our passage is to "encourage" one another daily, verse 13. *"Encourage one another daily, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness."*
  - Who have you encouraged lately?
  - Name some people you can encourage this week.
  - Can you name a time in your life when someone's encouragement kept you from falling into sin?
- d. As we continue on our journeys, Bernard made a point of ensuring we "persevere in faithfulness." What do you practically do to "persevere in faithfulness?" Some answers might include:
  - Making fellowship with others a priority
  - Keeping our eyes fixed on Jesus
  - Receiving other's encouragement
  - Ensuring that we listen to the right voices (as Bernard pointed out later)