

Lenten Devotional February 24, 2021

Scripture

Hebrews 3:12-19

12 Take care, brothers and sisters, that none of you may have an evil, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. 13 But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partners of Christ, if only we hold our first confidence firm to the end. 15 As it is said, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.” 16 Now who were they who heard and yet were rebellious? Was it not all those who left Egypt under the leadership of Moses? 17 But with whom was he angry forty years? Was it not those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, if not to those who were disobedient? 19 So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

Devotional

The Rev. Hannah Loughman '11

“But exhort one another every single day, as long as it is called ‘today,’ so that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” As a parent of a four-year-old child, every day I find myself repeating the instructions I gave to her “yesterday,” and the day before that, and the day before that, and the day before that. You get the picture. You might just know the drill. Sometimes my daughter responds with, “I know, you already told me that.”

Does her response mean that I will stop telling her? No—not until she takes the initiative to “do it on her own.” And there are many activities—such as taking her plate to the sink and throwing away her candy wrappers—she *has* begun to do on her own. But every once in a while she needs a reminder. I give her these reminders because I want her to grow to the fullness of maturity physically, spiritually, mentally, and emotionally. I tell her these things because I love her.

I think that often times we misunderstand what it means to “exhort” someone. Exhortation isn’t a punishment or a condemnation—it’s an act of love. The author of Hebrews 3 isn’t giving permission for Christians to run around putting each other in their “place”; rather, the writer is pleading with the family of God to lift one another up and to help each other stand firmly against sin.

So don’t let your heart be hardened the next time someone exhorts you. Instead, with gratitude and humility, praise the Lord for the people who care enough to help you through.

Prayer

Almighty God, we thank you for your constant love in our lives. We thank you for the people you have placed around us who encourage us to stand strong against sin. May we also faithfully seek to enact that love for one another. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen!