

My name is Geoff Ashley. I'm the discipleship resource pastor here at the church, which means I develop and evaluate a lot of the theological resources that the church produces. I've been a member for about seven years and on staff for the past four. For the first year and a half I, was Chandler's intern, and then the past two and a half years, I've been in my current role. I remember having a conversation with Matt whenever I was his intern where he asked me, "What's in the future for you?" At this point I was a seminary student and he says, "What do you want to do?" And I thought, "I don't really know." He said, "Do you want to preach?" And I said, "No, I don't want to preach." He said, "Why not?" And I said, "Because I have a little fear of public speaking." And so he's like, "Explain that to me." "Well, I love to teach, but the idea of a stage, microphone, a large crowd or any sort of recording audio or video device just totally terrifies me and paralyzes me." I once walked out of the public speaking class as I was supposed to be giving a speech at A&M. So when Matt asked me if I would be interested in preaching today about six weeks ago, my initial response was just sheer terror. He was actually getting out of my car as he asked. He actually said, "How would you like to teach on July 4 th ?" My thought was, "I'm just going to leave, drive somewhere else and leave him there in the parking lot." So my initial thought was not excitement; it was fear. But I don't want to be shackled to fear.

So if you would take your Bible open up to Hebrews Chapter 3, that's where will be. After deciding I'm not going to be debilitated by this fear and I'm going to preach, I had to decide what I wanted to preach. I knew instantly if was going to be from the book of Hebrews. I've just been in the season where I've been reading Hebrews over and over and over again. Every Wednesday I'm spending three hours in the book because there are three different guys I spend one hour with each, walking through the book of Hebrews. So I knew it was Hebrews. And then I knew it was going to be from chapters 3 and 4. Because Hebrews 3 and 4, for some reason, just really resonate with me every time that I read it. Something just jumps off the page at me. So I knew it was going to be Hebrews, I knew 3 or 4, but I really didn't know what. So I just started reading those chapters over and over again. It really felt like the Lord had pressed upon me verses 7 and 8. So let me start by reading that, and then I want to give some context for the book of Hebrews.

Once again Hebrews 3, starting in verse 7, "Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, . . ." Now in order to understand the book of Hebrews, you really need some context. Certain books of the Bible are a lot easier to read without context than others. And then there are other books of the Bible where you really need to pull in what's going on within that particular culture between the particular geography, within that particular climate that is influencing the author to write what he writes. Hebrews is one of those books. As we look at the book as a whole, here's what we find. We find that the author, whomever he is, is writing to this group of former Jews who are now converted Christians. That's why it's called the book to the Hebrews. They're facing some form of persecution. Once again we don't know a whole lot about their persecution, but we do know that some of them are having their houses taken from them, their goods are being plundered from them and some of them are being imprisoned. We know certainly from just the history of the Roman Empire that a great number of Christians were being sporadically killed. We don't know if this actual group was facing that type of persecution, but we do know they were being persecuted. So in light of that persecution, there is a temptation for them to depart from the faith, to commit what we call apostasy, to leave the faith and go back. And here's what I think the thinking is. "You know what? I used to worship just fine within the Old Covenant. I used to worship just fine within the sacrificial system and within the temple. And you know what? My fellow Jews aren't being persecuted. So why don't I

just depart and go back to that?" So this persecution is tempting them to fall away from the faith. And it's of such grand importance that this is the major theme of the book of Hebrews.

I went through and read the book and just picked out words and phrases that the author uses to describe the dangers that this group of men and women were facing. So these are some of the words and phrases he uses. These are dangers to the souls of believers: drifting, neglecting, hardening, going astray, following away, failing to reach, falling, being sluggish, throwing away, shrinking back, growing weary, failing to obtain, refusing him who is speaking, rejecting and being lead astray. These are the dangers that the Hebrews are facing. So in order to fight these dangers, he commends certain duties to them. And then I went through and picked out some of those as well: holding fast, taking care, holding firm, striving, drawing near, showing earnestness, entering, enduring, being preserved, seeking, laying aside wait and sin, running with endurance, struggling against and resisting sin, striving, going to Jesus and seeking the city that is to come. The book is set up like this. For all of those who profess to be believers they fall into one of two camps: either those who are sluggish and fall away or those who endure, remain faithful and persevere until the end. This book and its theme are absolutely critical to us who have made a profession of faith in Jesus Christ. Are we going to be like those who are sluggish and fall away? Or are we going to be like those who endure to the end?

With that context in mind, I just want to talk a little bit about the Exodus, because that's what the author of Hebrews is going to reference in Hebrews 3. You're probably familiar with the story of the Exodus. Israel is enslaved within Egypt, they cry out to the Lord, the Lord sends them a deliverer through Moses and Moses goes to Yule Brynner and says, "Let my people go." And Pharaoh (Yule Brynner), says, "No, I'm not going to do that." The Lord sends sign after sign after sign, these ten plagues upon Egypt and ultimately Pharaoh decides to let them go. They start to head out when Pharaoh changes his mind he starts to chase them. They get to the Red Sea, Israel passes through the sea on land because the Lord has divided the waters and Pharaoh and his army go to pursue them and it collapses upon them.

Israel is preserved, they're delivered and so forth, but they're still not there yet. They're not in the Promise Land at this point. So they wander through the desert on the way to Canaan, on the way to the Promise Land. And before they get there they stop at Mount Sinai and the Lord gives them Law, the Mosaic Law. They head out from there, get to the edge of the Promise Land and they say, "Let's send in some spies." So they send in twelve spies, ten of whom return and say, "We can't go in. Those people were tall. There's nothing we can do against them." But Joshua and Caleb are like, "Um, guys do you remember the ten plagues? If the Lord can turn water into blood, if the Lord can slay the firstborn, if the Lord can part the Red Sea, I think He can take care of tall people." But they're fearful, so the ten go back and convince the Israelites, "It can't be done." The entire nation rejects the Lord's purpose for themselves, so the Lord curses them by having to wander in the wilderness for forty years.

Here's why that story is important, because the Bible is going to elude over and over and over again to this narrative as being really what you and I have experienced. You and I have also experienced a release from slavery. We were once enslaved, not to Egypt but to sin, to ourselves, to Satan. The Lord has sent a Deliverer for us, not Moses, but Jesus, who has delivered us from our slavery, carried us through the waters, not of the Red Sea, but of baptism and has promised us rest, not the Promise Land of Canaan but the rest of eternity and the new heavens and the new earth where the Lord Jesus will dwell in our midst. We share these similarities, but we share one more similarity in that period between our being ransomed out of slavery and entering into God's rest is defined for us by the wilderness, by the desert. Our lives right now are lived out within the spiritual desert, where we don't fully have what God has promised for us. None of us know the fullness of joy and infinite gladness of His presence. None of us know full release from sin and sickness now in this place. Our lives here are defined by the desert. This book is written to tell us our duty in the desert. Are we going to be like the Israelites who grumbled against God and said, "I wish we were back in slavery?" Or are we going to persevere and endure in faith?

So with that context in mind, look back at Hebrews Chapter 3:7, “Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, . . .” The first thing we want to talk about is the word “therefore.” It’s kind of a dictum of Bible study. You want to ask, “What is the therefore, there for?” Go back up to verse 6 and you’ll see why he starts the verse with “therefore.” “. . .but Christ is faithful over God’s house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope.” The “therefore” in verse 7 is grounded in the reality of verse 6, that we are God’s house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. That’s the same idea that we’ll see if you look down in verse 14 where it says, “For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.” What does this mean? What is that kind of “if” statement there? I think the idea is this, that our salvation is not dependent on endurance our salvation is demonstrated by our endurance. Our salvation is not dependent upon persevering; our salvation is demonstrated by persevering. Those who are saved shall persevere. If you don’t persevere, if you fall away, it’s because you weren’t a sharer in Christ, you’re not His house. The Scripture says if you are His house, you will endure through the end. I think that’s important for us to begin with and say, “What’s my response to the text going to be?” Those who are God’s house, those who share in Christ will heed this warning when the Bible says, “Today if you hear his voice, don’t harden your hearts. Those who are God’s children this will stir up some sort of angst in you where you find your heart is hardening against the Lord.”

We start with “therefore,” and he moves on from there and says, “As the Holy Spirit says. . .” We’re not going to spend a whole lot of time there except to simply say this is the idea of inspiration, that the Scriptures are inspired by God. The author of Hebrews is quoting Psalm 95, which was obviously written by the psalmist. And yet the author of Hebrews says it’s the Holy Spirit who says it. Is it the psalmist or the Holy Spirit? Both. It has dual authorship. As the psalmist is using his words, his experiences, his phrases, it is the Holy Spirit who is inspiring this entire process. He says, “Therefore as the Holy Spirit says. . .” The Holy Spirit spoke this message to Israel in the time of their rebellion, the Holy Spirit spoke this message to the psalmist, the Holy Spirit spoke this message to the author of Hebrews as he was writing to them and the Holy Spirit is speaking this message to us today.

He says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” When I read this verse first 15 or 20 times I ever read it, the importance of the word “today” did not really jump out at me. It’s just a word that we use all the time. It didn’t have any sort of emphasis. It didn’t leap off the page. But the more I started to study it, the more I looked around at the context and so forth, the more that I understood, the word “today” is crucial within the argument of the author of Hebrews. Look in verse 13, “But exhort one another every day as long as it is called ‘today,’ that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.” As long as it is called “today.” In other words there is a day that is coming that is no longer going to be called “today.” But until we get to that day, until we get to the day that is God’s perfect rest, this is the imperative for us. This is the command for us. “Today if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” You’ll notice in the ESV that the word “today” is in quotation marks because they’re trying to show that’s an allusion back up to Hebrews 3:7.

Look in Hebrews 4:6. “Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, (that is God’s rest) and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, again he appoints a certain day, ‘Today,’ saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.’” This word today is essential. It doesn’t say “yesterday.” If it said “yesterday,” you and I would be out of luck because it would be too late to do anything about it. Because I can’t go back and change yesterday. If my heart was hardened yesterday, it was just hardened yesterday. I cannot go back in time and change that. The Bible doesn’t say “yesterday,” the Bible says “today.” In other words, a promise of entering His rest remains right now. It doesn’t say “yesterday,” but it also doesn’t say “tomorrow.” And since it doesn’t say “tomorrow,” therefore it should create angst in us to do this now. How presumptuous of us to think, “You know what? I’ll have opportunity to repent tomorrow. I’ll confess my sin tomorrow. I’ll pursue the Lord tomorrow. I’ll do these things tomorrow. I will obey tomorrow. I’ll believe tomorrow. Today I’m just going

to sit down and eat and drink and be merry and do absolutely nothing." God has not promised that tomorrow you will have the opportunity to repent. God has given us today. Today is the day we need to operate in.

He says, "Today, if you hear his voice. . ." What does that mean? I think it means God is always speaking. All of His speech though is centered upon revealing one thing, that is the person and work of His Son, Jesus Christ. Look in Hebrews 1:1. It says, "Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days, he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world." So it contrasts in the past, "God spoke through the prophets." Later on the text will say He mediated the Word through the angels, but now something is decisively different. God has spoken to us not through prophets with a message mediated by the angels, but He has spoken to us through His Son. This is the final, the decisive Word of God. There's no future coming Word of God that's going to somehow supersede the person and work of Jesus Christ. Everything that is future, in terms of God's promises to us, relates back to the person and work of Jesus Christ. So when it says, "Today, if you hear His voice," I think the voice is about Jesus Christ. It is the message of Jesus Christ, not just, "Oh yeah, I believed it once and now I'm good." No, it's a continual thing. The gospel is something that is preached to us over and over and over and over. We never graduate beyond the gospel. We simply grow up into it and understand it more deeply. Listening to the gospel is inherent to the Christian faith. It is one of our chief obligations as believers to continue to listen to and look at and consider the person and work of Jesus Christ. Consider these passages. Romans 10:17 says, "Faith comes from hearing and hearing through the word of Christ." Galatians 3:5 says, "Does he who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law or by hearing the faith." Once again, hearing and listening, these are imperative for us as believers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Here's what I bet though. Most of us are far too distracted by the things of this world to actually consider the person and work of Jesus Christ. Most of us are far too distracted by whatever it is that we choose rather than Him. So we may give a little lip service, we may spend fifteen minutes in the Scriptures and in prayer each day and just check it off of our list, we may sit in silence for a minute or two but then we just get overwhelmed by the dread of silence and the numbness of it but we ultimately move on. We are far too easily distracted. I think for you and me, the greatest danger in the desert is complacency. The greatest danger in the desert is apathy. We're far too easily distracted.

About two months ago, I got to go with my family to Japan. We got to see the orphanage from which my dad was adopted. It was a really cool trip for my family to get to do together. Not only did we do the adoption, but we also got to see a little bit of the Japanese country. One of the trips we got to take out of Tokyo was on a bullet train. Are you familiar with the bullet train? They go like 150 to 200 mph. We got to take one of these down to Hiroshima to go to see the site of the atomic bomb. As we're going, we know we have to change trains. So somewhere along the line, we know we have to get off the train that we're on and get on to another train that is going to Hiroshima. We got on the train. We sit down and I start reading a book. My dad and mom start having conversation. The people we are staying with start having a conversation also. My brother and nephew start having a conversation. Next thing we know, we look up and this gentleman is standing over my dad, just kind of staring at him. It was kind of an awkward experience for everybody. We didn't really know why he was just staring at my dad. Finally, very polite in their culture he finally says, "I think you're in my seat." My dad says, "Oh, I'm sorry." He takes out his ticket and it says 3B and the guy hands his ticket and it says 3B. We're just confused we have no idea what to do. We're in a foreign country. We just look at them both, just stare at them and have no idea where to go. The gentleman goes, "Your ticket was for the last segment of the train. You missed your stop." Now there are seven of us, and we have no idea where we're actually going. We just know we've missed our stop. We don't know how we're going to get from wherever the next stop is back to our old stop or to Hiroshima. In the end, it worked out well, but here's my point. Most of us are like that. We've simply made some sort of profession of faith. We've walked down the aisle, we've prayed a prayer and then we just sit on the train, read our book, talk to our friends or watch a program and that's it. That is the entirety of our faith. It's just simply coasting and drifting. We're far too easily distracted.

For me I found this was really the state of my soul for a couple of years in seminary. I just gradually began to stop listening to the Lord. I'd have to read books on religious topics and read the Scriptures and write papers on them and so forth, so I was engaged in some form of my duty. Yet, I really wasn't listening to the Lord. Right after I graduated from seminary, this really started weighing on me heavily. I talked to both my roommates and said, "Hey can we just get rid of the TV? We got rid of the TV, not because TV is evil but because I found for me it was a distraction. The Bible is going to tell us look in Hebrews 3:1, "Therefore holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession." Here's what I found in that season of my life, TV was not helping me to carry out the command of this verse, to consider Jesus. I had a choice. Am I going to be obedient to the Scriptures or am I going to be obedient to something that's more comfortable for me? Am I going to allow the distraction of TV or am I going to do what the text says which is to listen to Jesus, to consider Jesus, to look to Jesus?"

Nine months ago we turned off the satellite. Pretty soon afterward, I discovered that if you remove one idol from your life, another one just quickly comes up underneath it. For me it that was Words With Friends. Are you familiar with Words With Friends? It's the little Scrabble like game on iPhone. Words With Friends because I'm a hypercompetitive person and like to win, so I'll sit and think about what the next word should be and the person that I'm playing is like, "Just play." I know but I want the perfect word because I want to win. I found that too can distract me. Rather than praying, I played Words With Friends. Rather than reading the Scripture, I'd play Words With Friends. I'd already just gotten rid of TV and here I just simply had replaced it with something else. I had to message all the people I was playing and say, "I'm out with Words With Friends." Now hear me, I'm not saying that TV is evil, I'm not saying Words With Friends are evil and I'm not saying that you have to get rid of them. I'm saying that you need to listen to Jesus. If there are distractions in your life that are preventing you from listening to Jesus, then do something about that. Get rid of those distractions, because the Biblical imperative is clear: consider Jesus, look to Jesus. Anything that gets in the way of that, throw it off. This is elsewhere in Hebrews where will say to throw off not only the sin but also just anything that entangles you. Throw it off. Have nothing to do with it. It's not helping you to do what you need to do, which is to consider the gospel and it's implications in your lives.

So the text says, "If you hear his voice." What if you don't? I think there's two groups of people who don't. There are those of you who have never heard the voice of God, those of you who have never truly considered the claims of the gospel and embraced the person and work of Jesus Christ. My admission would be to just start there with a confession of, "I've never really listened." Come up after and talk to one of our pastors during response time. They would love to talk to you about that and help you walk through that. There are those who have never heard the voice of God because they are spiritually deaf. There's another group of people who have, at some point, considered the claims of the gospel. You have embraced the person and work of Jesus Christ and yet you've become dull. No longer do you hear Him. Rather you've become apathetic. You've become complacent and so forth. My admission to you is the same, start with admitting that. Don't stay there where you are in this state of complacency. Do something about it. Come up and talk to somebody. Call your home group leader or a good friend or the person who brought you here tonight. Have a conversation on the car ride home and just say, "You know what, honey? I just feel like I'm not hearing from the Lord very clearly." We all have time to hear from the Lord.

I am just amazed at the story of John Wesley's mom. She had seventeen kids. If you think you don't have time because you have kids or because you have a job or something, she had seventeen of them. This is in a context where she is also cleaning, and she's also probably working out in the garden and so forth. So she's busy. You know how she had quiet time alone with the Lord? She raised her apron up over her head and her kids knew when mom has her apron over the head we don't disturb her. That's her personal time with the Lord. I'm not saying you need to wear an apron and pull it over you head. I'm saying you need to listen to Jesus. You need to take time to consider Jesus every day. I know that it involves prayer. I know it involves reading of the Bible. Beyond that there's not a lot of rules. Some people like mornings,

and some people like nights. Some people like to do it inside, while some people like to do it outside. There are no rules here. The only rule is, read the Bible, pray, think about the person and work of Jesus Christ and embrace him daily. Otherwise you will begin to become complacent, and that's where the text goes next.

"Therefore as the Holy Spirit says, 'Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden his hearts.'" I doubt that many of you woke up this morning, thought through your day, put it on a planner and thought, "I have lunch with this person, I need to get ready because I have the big presentation on Tuesday that I need to prepare for today, I need to set out some stuff for the picnic tomorrow, I need to get ready to go to the service at 5:00, and oh yeah, I almost forgot, I need to harden my heart against God today. I felt like last night for a moment there it started to get really soft on me and I don't want that because I really want to rebel against God." I doubt that many of you are having that sort of inner monologue going on within your head. That's not the way that hardening works. I love the imagery that the author of Hebrews is going to use in chapter 2. So let's flip over to there to get kind of an idea of what hardening looks like. Hebrews 2:1 says, "Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard." Once again, that same idea, consider Jesus, listen to Jesus and pay much closer attention to what we have heard lest what? "Lest we drift away from him. For since the message declared by angels proved to be reliable, and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation." He describes it as neglect. He describes it as drifting. This is the idea that Matt has been talking about the past few weeks. He talked about this idea called grace-driven effort and he referenced a book by D.A. Carson called *For the Love of God*. I think he even quoted parts of this, but I wanted to quote it to you as well, because it just goes along so well with what we're talking about today. About hardening your heart, about drifting. D.A. Carson writes:

*One of the most striking evidences of sinful human nature lies in the universal propensity for downward drift. In other words it takes thought, resolve, energy, and effort to bring about reform. In the grace of God sometimes human beings display such virtues. But where such virtues are absent the drift is invariably toward compromise, comfort, indiscipline, sliding disobedience and decay that advances sometimes at a crawl and sometimes at a gallop across generations. People do not drift toward holiness apart from grace driven effort people do not gravitate towards godliness, prayer, obedience to Scripture, faith and delight in the Lord. We drift toward compromise and call it tolerance. We drift toward disobedience and call it freedom. We drift towards superstition and call it faith. We cherish the indiscipline of lost self-control and call it relaxation. We slouch towards prayerlessness and dilute ourselves into thinking we have escaped legalism. We slide towards godlessness and convince ourselves we have been liberated.*

People won't drift towards holiness. The author of Hebrews is saying that life is like a river but it's not flowing towards God; it's flowing away from Him. If you simply pull up the paddles and let go, you will drift away from Him, not toward Him. That's the nature of the fallen human state. Worldliness simply creeps in little by little and we drift farther and farther away. The hardening of the heart is the exact same thing. If you want concrete to harden, you just simply stop stirring it. It's the same way with our hearts. If you want your heart to harden, all you do is simply stop doing anything. It's not hard to harden your heart; simply do nothing. If you do nothing, your heart will harden, you will drift from God. It takes effort not to be hardened. It takes effort not to drift. If you're in a river and you want to go upstream, you must paddle and paddle hard. If you want to pursue holiness you must be intentional. You must put effort into it. Scripture says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." In other words, don't drift, don't neglect such a great salvation. Once again this is why it's so inherent, so important that we get the idea that this is for today. If you say, "Tomorrow I'll repent, tomorrow I'll confess, tomorrow I'll pursue obedience," do you really think you'll be more inclined to pursue obedience tomorrow when all you've done is simply drifted in the span of time between today and then? You're not going to drift overnight toward the Lord; you're going to drift away from Him. So the Scripture says, "Today, if you hear his voice do not harden your hearts." Life is like a river, and it's flowing away from God. We need to be intentional in pursuing Him.

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." This is the last phrase that we want to talk about. What is the rebellion? When I think of "rebellion," I think of Star Wars. That's not what the author of Hebrews is talking about. When he says "rebellion," he's talking about the period in the wilderness where Israel was presented with the opportunities to enter into God's rest and yet they didn't enter in. If you read 1 Corinthians 10, Paul would say that there are four symptoms of the rebellion. 1) There was blatant idolatry, like the golden calf incident, 2) there was sexual immorality, where they linked themselves to a foreign people and thus to the foreign god, 3) there was a time of testing where they tested the Lord and then ultimately 4) they grumbled against Him. In 1 Corinthians, Paul says it like this, "And with them God was not pleased." Why wasn't God pleased? Well Hebrews 11:6 says this, "Without faith it's impossible to please God." The essence of the rebellion is disbelief. We see that same idea there in Hebrews 3. Verse 18 says, "And to whom did [God] swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient. So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief." He uses two words to describe why Israel was not able to enter into the Promise Land: disobedience and unbelief. They are not two unrelated concepts. They're talking about the same thing. Because all of our disobedience flows from a disbelieving heart. The reason that you and I disobey is because we disbelieve God and the promises He's made and the warnings that He's made and the seriousness and consequences of sin. The essence of our rebellion the essence of that which hardens our heart is disbelief or unbelief. If we're going to take this Scripture seriously where it says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts," we must fight for faith. Faith in what? Faith in God's promises.

I love Hebrews 10:23. It says, let us consider how to stir up one another, "for he who promised is faithful." All of God's promises revolve around, are focused on and fulfilled in the person and work of Jesus Christ. Once again, we're back to the idea of Hebrews 3 and considering Christ. Our fight against the hardening of the hearts and our fight against the drifting is to consider the person and work of Jesus Christ. Because if we see Him for who He is we will gravitate toward Him. That's the idea of the book of Hebrews. Over and over again, the author of Hebrews is going to do this. He's going to contrast of Christ with elements of the Old Testament and the old covenant. And he's going to basically say, "Why would you depart and go back to this inferior thing when instead you have this superior person?" So Hebrews 1 ways that Jesus is superior to the angels and the message that they mediated. Chapter 3 says that Christ is superior to Moses. Why would you go back to Moses when you have Christ? Why would you go back to the Levitical priesthood when you have a greater High Priest? Why would you go back to sacrifices that can never remove sin when you have the greatest sacrifice and the altar is closed and God is no longer accepting sacrifice for sin? Why would you depart from that which is inferior when you have the promise of that which is superior, the person and work of Jesus Christ? That's the question we should ask ourselves when we give in to compromise, when we find ourselves complacent when we find ourselves drifting away from the Lord because of apathy and being far too easily distracted. Why am I going to turn back when I have such a great promise in the person and work of Jesus Christ, who is more valuable, more precious, more beautiful, more glorious and more worthy of all of my worship, all of my heart's affection and all of my mind's attention. Jesus Christ is better than all of these things. If you read the book of Hebrews, you see over and over the word "better," the word "greater" and the word "superior." Jesus Christ is greater, He's better, He's superior to anything else that we can spend our life pursuing. That's how we fight the hardening of our hearts, by faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ, who He is, what He has done, what He has accomplished for us and what He ultimately offers for us in eternal rest with Him. The Scripture says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

Let's pray. "Father, I thank You for Jesus. Thank You that You have sent Him to be a perfect sacrifice for us. He has risen from the dead, He reigns victorious and one day He will return. And I pray, Lord, that You would grant us the faith that perseveres and endures to the end, the type of faith that is satisfied with Your Son in all of His glory and all of His goodness. Lord, I pray specifically against complacency and distraction and apathy as we walk through this desert and wait for Your rest. We love You, and we are grateful for You. We pray in Christ's name. Amen."