

# Holy Brothers, Keep Considering and Clinging Unto Christ Together

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[ 0 : 00 ] Good, well let's turn to our reading tonight and Joel Tay is preaching to us from the book of Hebrews. So please turn to Hebrews and chapter 3. If you don't have a Bible with you, we have plenty of visitor Bibles scattered around the place, so do grab a Bible if you need. And you'll find it on page 1002 if you're using the visitor Bible. So Hebrews chapter 3. And beginning there at verse 1.

Hebrews 3 verse 1. Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who was faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.

For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses. As much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

Now Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant to testify to the things that were to be spoken later. But Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.

[ 1 : 26 ] And we are his house. If indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting and our hope. 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, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for 40 years.

Therefore, I was provoked with that generation and said they always go astray in their hearts. They have not known my ways. As I swore my wrath, they shall not enter my rest.

Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. But exhort one another every day, as long as it's called today, that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin.

For we have come to share in Christ. If indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. As it is said, today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.

For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for 40 years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness?

[ 2 : 58 ] And to whom did he 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.

Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. For we who have believed enter that rest, as he said.

As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. Although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way.

And God rested on the seventh day from all his works. And again, in this passage he said, they shall not enter my rest. Since, therefore, it remains for some to enter it, 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 afterwards, and the words already quoted, Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.

[ 4 : 21 ] For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

Let us, therefore, strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give accounts.

Well, amen. May God bless to us his word this evening. Well, a very good evening.

If we have our Bibles open to Hebrews 3 and 4 at 4 along, that would be great. Now, on 28th November 1979, a commercial flight departed from New Zealand and was bound for Antarctica for a sightseeing trip.

[ 5 : 47 ] The flight had everything it needed. Experienced pilots, a well-planned route, beautiful weather. But there was one issue. The pilots were not informed that there had been a last-minute change to the coordinates of the flight path, just a small one.

The new coordinates was 2 to 3 degrees off from the original course. Seems tiny, right? Almost nothing. But by the time they were hundreds of miles into their flight, that 2 to 3 degree error had taken them miles off course and sadly, straight into a mountain.

Because of that small miscalculation, the plane tragically crashed into Mount Erebus and all 257 people on board lost their lives.

Now, it wasn't a dramatic engine failure. It wasn't because of a storm. It wasn't because of sabotage. But it was adrift.

Slow, subtle, and unnoticed until it was too late. Now, having heard just how dangerous drifting off course can be, let me ask, what then about spiritual drifting?

[ 7 : 03 ] Well, the truth is that it's even more subtle and far more dangerous. And that's what we find ourselves here as we come to the letter to the Hebrews. You see, this was essentially a sermon written to a group of Christians who were at risk of spiritual drifting.

They weren't outrightly rejecting Jesus, denying Him, no, but they were growing dull, discouraged, distracted, even deluded.

They were shrinking back, shrinking away, starting to be tempted to look elsewhere for their security, their identity. They were in the danger of drifting away to return to what felt safe, familiar, culturally acceptable.

For them, then, that was to return to the old religion, to Judaism. Now, you might be thinking, well, I'm not tempted towards Judaism, so what has this got to do with me? But remember what the Apostle Paul says.

All of Scripture was not written to us, was written for us, for our understanding. Our circumstances, our context may be different, but we all, as one humanity, we still share the same problem of sin, don't we?

- [ 8 : 20 ] Our hearts share the same struggle, the temptation to drift spiritually, a slow, quiet pull away from Christ. Perhaps when our lives feel dull, dry, like a slog, or perhaps when things start to feel difficult, in those moments, we too yearn, we long for something that might help us feel more real, don't we?
- To feel more spiritual, more exciting. We long for something that we can see, we can do, to give us a boost, a kick, to help our faith feel more tangible, more real.
- But in these verses, we see the writer gives us a clear and loving warning. He wants them then, and likewise us today, to wake up, to remain resolute and steadfast, to stay on the course, to keep going, not to give up, and not to drift.
- But how does He do that? Well, He gives us three exhortations. First, consider Christ. Second, consider one another.
- And third, consider God's word. Three calls of consideration to help us keep from drifting and to persevere until the end.
- [ 9 : 44 ] So first, look with me at Hebrews 3, verse 1 to 6. We see that God's people are exhorted to consider Christ. What that essentially means is to continually look to Jesus, His person, His work, His glory.
- Look with me at verse 1. Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus. Now notice, even before instructing them, commanding them about what they were to do, we see the writer first begins by reminding them about who they are, of what their identity was, don't we?
- And while striking, that's not entirely surprising. After all, that is the gospel pattern. That is what God's grace is like. As God's people, we don't do, we don't live in a particular manner in order that we might earn our identity.
- No. But rather, we are given our identity and so called to live in light of that reality. That is the pattern we see all throughout the Bible. Gospel imperatives always flow from gospel indicatives.
- We receive from God, so also, we respond to God. So again, who are they? What are they called? Well first, they are a people called Holy Brothers.
- [ 11 : 07 ] And that's made clear for us, given how the writer has spent chapters 1 and 2 expounding on the work of Jesus. We see that it is Jesus who upholds the universe by the word of his power.
- Jesus who has made the purification for sins, who has tasted death for his people. And Hebrews 2.11 plainly puts it, for he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source.
- That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers. So for these believers to be addressed as holy brothers, well it was by no means because of their own merit.
- It wasn't because they were sinless, they were perfect. It wasn't because they somehow managed to climb the ladder of villages' piousness and performance. It wasn't because they had an impressive spiritual villages' resume.
- No. But they are called holy brothers solely on the grounds that they have been reconciled, redeemed, restored in Christ. That it is all by God's grace that they are now called by this new identity.
- [ 12 : 14 ] But also look at verse 1. What do we see them being called? Well they are also a people called to share in a heavenly calling. What that means is that God has now set upon them a new trajectory.
- They are now called towards a heavenly destination. That is the homeland of all of God's people. That is their country. Echoing what Paul writes in Philippians 3, the citizenship of God's people is in heaven.

And so what this means is that for God's people in this world, well we are pilgrims, aren't we? Sojourners. we are in the world, but we are not of the world.

But having laid out the indicators of who they are, reminding them that it was grace that had called them out of darkness and into God's marvelous light, the writer now turns to remind them of who Jesus is.

He presents the imperative. Consider Christ. Look at me again from verse 1 to verse 6. Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession, who is faithful to him who appointed him, just as Moses also was faithful in all God's house.

[ 13 : 32 ] For Jesus has been counted worthy of more glory than Moses, as much more glory as the builder of a house has more honor than the house itself. For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

Now, Moses was faithful in all God's house as a servant to testify to the things that were to be spoken later. But Christ is faithful over God's house as a son.

And we are his house if indeed we hold fast our confidence and our boasting in our hope. Now, on first glance, I'm not sure what most of you thought, but it initially seemed quite strange to me to be told to consider Christ.

After all, in our day-to-day lingo, consider sounds almost like something you would say to a non-believer, a non-Christian, someone who is looking into the Christian faith, perhaps. Yes, Thomas, yes, consider Jesus.

Keep coming along on Sundays to church. Keep reading the Bible. Consider who Jesus is. But as we've already established, the writer was not speaking to non-Christians, but he was speaking to Christians, to the church.

[ 14 : 40 ] They were already called holy brothers, sharers of a heavenly calling. So I think it's important for us to understand, consider here, not to mean something casual, something that is optional, but rather a means to pay close attention to, to be diligent in discerning, to be fixing one's eyes, heart, soul, and mind firmly upon, closely examining.

But why? Why are they to consider Christ? Well, we see the writer gives us three grounds for that. First, because Jesus is the apostle.

Now, an apostle means one who is sent, one who represents and delivers a message. But Jesus wasn't any old apostle, was he? No. Hebrews 1, long ago and 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.

And as the apostle John writes in his gospel account, John 1.14, Jesus is the word who became flesh, who dwelt among humanity, the final and supreme word full of truth and grace.

Friends, you see, Jesus was not only the messenger, but also he is the message to the world. In him and through him is the fullness of God's revelation, of God's glory.

[ 16 : 08 ] And yet many are still tempted to look for God's voice apart from him, apart from his word today, isn't it? To look for Christ for something more spiritual, more mystical.

Whether that means finding something more exciting, more experiential, seeking after dreams, interpretations, to seek for God's revelation outside of, apart from Christ.

Well, friends, understand, to do so will not only prove most foolish, but also most dangerous. For anything that is not in the revelation of Christ, not from the Bible, that is simply not the truth.

And if we turn to any of that, then we are no longer standing on the solid rock, the foundation of truth, anymore. But also we see that God's people are to consider Christ for he is the high priest.

Now, the writer goes on to expound and illustrate on this image later on in his letter. But the problem with many believers back then was that they were starting to turn away from Christ, to turn away from his all-sufficient, all-sustaining work as the high priest, and instead, to turn back to Judaism.

[ 17 : 22 ] And you might be wondering, why would he possibly want to do that? That sounds silly. Yet again, we are not so different today, are we? Even though we know that Christ has made the atonement for our sins, that he is the one interceding on our behalf, that in him, truly we have access to God the Father, but there remain precious temptations from both without the church and within ourselves, isn't there?

Now, come on, Tim. Surely having faith in Christ alone isn't all that's needed. That just sounds too good to be true. Surely you need to be doing more than that. What do you mean you don't offer anything?

What about all the traditions, all the rituals, the rites? What about fasting? What about going on retreats? Surely there must be something you must do, something you can do to make your religion, your faith more tangible, more real.

Because we still live in this fallen world, because we still wrestle against the powers, the rulers of this dark age, because we still wrestle against sin, well, the temptation remains, doesn't it?

To be thinking, to be doubting. Why must we cling on to unseen promises? Why can't we have them now? Why make my life more difficult by not just going to the majority?

[ 18 : 47 ] Why not just blend in, fit in with their beliefs? And so you see, it doesn't take much or long for us to drift, does it? To start shifting the basis, the grounds of our faith, our hope, away from Christ.

Judaism was precisely that back then. It offered tangible, sensory overloaded experience. It appealed the eyes, but in truth, it was utterly meaningless.

It stood for nothing. Now that is not to dismiss the importance, the significance of the Old Testament sacrificial system. I'm not saying that because it was a real means of grace to God's people back then.

But what does Hebrews 1 verse 3 say? After making the purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high. Or later on in Hebrews 10, Christ offered for all time a single sacrifice for their sins.

And that through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ, once for all, all believers have been sanctified. The writer is clear that yes, the sacrificial system was a real means of grace to God people back then, but it was also always pointing forward to find its fulfillment in Jesus.

[ 20 : 05 ] And he declares the finality of Christ's once-for-all sacrifices, all that is needed, so that in Christ, truly all of God's people were not just almost Christians, were not just mostly sanctified, mostly justified Christians, but we are fully Christians.

Christians. Now, brothers and sisters, do you hear that? When we consider, when we cling on to Jesus, our high priest, truly, we lack nothing.

The call of a Christian is to walk by faith, not by sight. So remember that. But thirdly, we see they are to consider Christ, for he is the builder of God's house, the son who is more glorious than the servant Moses.

Now, to us today in the 21st century, that comparison might not seem particularly radical, but for a first-century Jewish Christian, comparing Jesus to Moses would have been shocking.

After all, Moses was the towering figure of the Jewish faith, wasn't he? He was the great leader who led the Israelites out of Egypt. He was the intercessor par excellence. He was the one through whom God gave the law.

[ 21 : 24 ] But don't get this wrong. The writer isn't trying to diminish or discredit Moses. In fact, in verse 2, we see that he acknowledges, he affirms Moses' faithfulness.

Moses' ministry was a glorious one. But the point is this. Jesus' ministry is greater. Jesus is far more glorious than Moses.

Why? Because of who he is. Unlike Moses, who was faithful in all of God's house as a part of it, well, Jesus is the builder of all of God's house.

He's not just in the house, but he is Lord over the house. Both Jesus and Moses, they are on the same side, but Moses was the faithful servant, whereas Jesus is the faithful son.

And so the glory of the son rightfully and remarkably surpasses that of the servant. But then look at verse 6b. What does it say? And we are his house.

[ 22 : 30 ] Now, isn't that just a stunning image? That we, as God's people, we're not just random blocks of bricks scattered across a field, but we are built together, joined by Christ himself into his house, the very place where God's spirit is pleased to dwell.

Isn't that an immense privilege to belong to the house of God, to share in this heavenly calling? But we see that this privilege also comes with a great responsibility.

Look again at verse 6b. And we are his house if indeed we hold fast. Now, just to be clear, the writer is not suddenly trying to undermine grace.

He's not implying that grace is no longer sufficient for our salvation and somehow needs to be topped up, supplemented by works. Our salvation isn't 90% up to God and 10% up to us, nor is it 99.999% up to God and 0.0001% up to us.

No. It is 100% entirely by God's grace, secured in Christ. But we know, don't we? Grace always calls for response.

[ 23 : 44 ] So we see this beautiful pattern that runs throughout Scripture, the relationship between divine sovereignty and human responsibility. A pattern spelled out for us as far back as Deuteronomy 30, where the Lord first having rescued a people for himself, then beckons and beseeches them to therefore choose life.

Love the Lord your God, obey his voice, and hold fast to him so that you might live, that you might continue to live. In other words, while persevering in the faith does not earn our salvation, it is the only evidence to know and to prove that our faith indeed is true, is real.

That if we do persevere with Jesus, if we do choose life, enduring and obeying, then truly, it won't be just like a house of cards.

We're not like a house that is built on sand. But as Jesus says in Matthew 7, we will be like the house built on the rock. The rain fell, the flood came, the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall because it had been founded on the rock.

So brothers and sisters, let's consider Christ again and again clinging firmly unto him. But having reminded us of the supremacy, the sufficiency of Christ, in this next section, Hebrews 3, 7 to 4, 10, we see the writer now turns to address the danger and the cause of drifting.

[ 25 : 24 ] But his focus, however, is not just on the individual, but the corporate. And so his exhortation for all God's people is this, consider one another.

He means to remind us that the call to fight the good fight of faith until the end, it isn't simply a private affair, but it's a corporate calling, a shared responsibility.

A big refrain we see in this section is quoted from Psalm 95, notably the second half of Psalm 95, which speaks of a somber warning of what it will ultimately look like should we presume on God's grace.

The first half of Psalm 95 captures and reflects the beautiful praise, beautiful reassurance that God's people have in the Lord. But suddenly, the tone changes.

The message cuts through any false pretense, any facades that we see in the latter verses. So look with me again at verse 7 to 11. 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, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for 40 years.

[ 26 : 38 ] Therefore, I was provoked with that generation and said, they always go astray in their hearts. They have not known my ways. As I saw in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest.

Now, what is the warning laid out here? What is the warning against presumption, isn't it? Presuming on God's grace, God's patience, God's promises.

The writer's threefold questioning in verses 16 to 18 makes clear that these verses were speaking in particular of the Exodus generation. The people who had seen and experienced firsthand many of the Lord's mighty and miraculous works.

The ten plagues in Egypt, the parting of the Red Sea, the provision of water and manna in the wilderness. And I stated in verse 9, for 40 years they saw my works.

Not just once, not just twice, but for 40 years they had seen and experienced the Lord, tabernacling with them throughout the days of their wilderness wandering, leading, guiding, protecting, providing for them at each and every step of the way.

[ 27 : 49 ] And the thing was, they were nearly at the end. Their pilgrimage was nearly over. They won the verge of attaining all that God had promised, and yet, how did they continue to respond?

Or they rebelled again and again. Take a look for yourself later on Numbers 14, but there we see them grumbling against Moses, against Aaron, against the Lord.

Ah, would that we have died in the land of Egypt or would that we have died in the wilderness? Why is the Lord bringing us into this land to fall by the sword?

Our wives, our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt? Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt?

Now, friends, just think and chew on that for a moment. What exactly do they mean when they're saying that? Because the Lord having rescued, delivered, freed them, yet instead, here they are saying, you know what?

[ 28 : 59 ] We're actually better off back then as slaves. We're better off under the dominion, the tyranny of the evil one. Now, isn't that just a scary and shocking thought?

How could they possibly have thought such a thing? But what was the root problem behind their rebellion, their testing, their presumption? Well, the writer leaves us no room for any ambiguity.

Verse 12, Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart. Verse 18, And to whom did he swear that they will not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient.

So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief. Friends, you see, their disobedience, their rebellion, wasn't just a one-time affair.

It wasn't just a sinful lapse, the kind that you and I still make every day as Christians. No. But it was a persistent, relentless rebellion.

[ 30 : 04 ] It wasn't because they hadn't experienced God's goodness and kindness in the past. It wasn't because God had not spoken to them. But it was because of their stubborn, unbelieving, faithless hearts.

They were, as the Lord described, to be a stiff-necked people. Exodus 32, verse 9. They had a deep distrust, a dogged disbelief towards God, His word, and His promises.

verse 13. They possessed a heart that was hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. Now, we too know the deceitfulness of sin, don't we?

How, if left to fester, left unaddressed, unrepented, then its roots begin to dig deeper into our hearts. Sin starts to stir up, distorting our view of reality, of what is true.

So much so that it actually becomes possible for God's people to look back at Egypt, a time where they were so bitterly, so ruthlessly oppressed, a situation so dire, undeniably recognized as bad, as evil, and yet, now desire and long for it, calling what is evil good, like a dog returning to its own vomit, like a soul returning to wallow in the mire.

[ 31 : 38 ] Friends, you see, when we refuse God time and again, it will only grow to distort our discernment, our perception of what is true.

It will cultivate within us an attitude of relentless doubting towards God, His power, His promises, but also an attitude of abusing and scorning at His patience, His mercy.

Ah, well, since God has called us out of darkness, He has saved me, I belong to Him, it doesn't really matter, does it, if I continue to grumble against Him, disobey, rebel?

Since Christ's atoning work on the cross is sufficient for my sins once and for all, it doesn't matter if I continue sinning, does it? if I continue with my addiction, my lust, my greed, my pride, my self-entitlement, why not just continue with my sinful desires, my sinful ways?

After all, grace may abound all the more. But friends, that is a total misunderstanding, no rather, a total failure to understand and to respond rightly to God's grace.

[ 32 : 53 ] grace. But why lay out the warning and danger? What's so important? What's at stake here? Well, we see that's because God's rest, the Sabbath rest, that is still to come.

By quoting Psalm 95, whilst addressing different groups of God's people, the writer is reiterating clearly that the promise of rest was never meant to be fulfilled by the physical land of Canaan back then.

For verse 8, if Joshua had given them rest, then God would not have spoken of another day later on. Likewise, David would not have warned the Israelites in his day.

Hundreds of years later, they too risked out on missing on God's rest. So we see the rest spoken of then and again. It was always pointing forward towards something greater, to a greater final rest.

the true Sabbath rest that is still to come. It's not just a rest from physical labor, from the burdens of life, but it's a rest from striving, from sin, from sorrow.

[ 34 : 08 ] The day where the curse of Genesis 3 will finally and fully be reversed. And so, because the promise still stands, verse 12, take care, brothers.

Verse 13, exhort one another every day. Hebrews 4, verse 1, let us fear. Verse 11, let us therefore strive.

We now see the writer's second exhortation, but notice the charge, the call. It isn't placed on the individual, but on the corporate. The writer doesn't just exhort individual watchfulness, but instead, he places a corporate responsibility for one another, himself included.

He doesn't just say, so you fear, so you strife, but let us fear, let us strife. He wants his fellow believers to understand that a clear but crucial way in preventing any from being lost, from missing out on that promise, is that we are all committed to one another, committed to caring for one another, spurring one another on to listen, to believe, to obey what God had spoken.

Why? Because now we are all one, one united body, with Christ as the head. The Christian pilgrimage isn't just a solo endeavor, it's not just one Rambo taking on the whole wide world, but it's a band of brothers, striving side by side, shoulder to shoulder, eyes fixed on the same horizon.

[ 35 : 56 ] Faith is personal, yes, but it's not private. We've seen earlier just how dangerous, how deceitful sin is, how prone our hearts are to wander, to drift, to digress.



And often the truth is that no one notices they're drifting until it's too late. So we really do need one another to look out for one another, to stay the course.

We truly need one another at times to remind or even rebuke. Hey, Joel, wake up. Recognize your folly, your fickleness. Stop it.

But at the same time, don't give up. Don't give in. Keep trusting Christ. Keep looking to Him. Now that calls for being present in the lives of others in the church family, doesn't it?

Knowing and being known. That includes perhaps at times having to be bold, courageous to ask the difficult, awkward questions.

[ 37 : 00 ] Beyond just how's your week, how's work, but where are you struggling to believe? How are you battling, wrestling against that particular sin?

Not to condemn or judge, but because we truly care for one another. But also, it means on the other hand, being prepared to listen when asked, when you're on the receiving end of those questions, it's so much easier than it to be picking on others, to be pointing out the speck that is in your brother's eyes.

But what about when it's the other way around? When others come to you about your sin? If your brother or sister is willing to be brave, loves and cares for you enough to be having that difficult conversation with you, to be speaking the truth in love to you, wanting, wishing for your ultimate good, so that you can enter that promised rest, or will you listen?

Will you be prepared to repent when necessary? Or will you simply be outraged, defensive, festering bitterness in your hearts?

Maybe you're sitting here today and you recognize that this is something like you. You're spiritually isolated. You're not really plugged in, not in regular fellowship with others who remind you of God's word, who will not only encourage you, but hold you accountable.

[ 38 : 35 ] But brothers and sisters, recognize that that is to be in dangerous waters. So don't just remain there. Don't let sin fester quietly because you're isolated.

Don't let sin fester and remain and start to distort your discernment, your perception of what is true, of what is good. But understand that the church is one of God's means of grace in preserving his people.

Understand that the promise of entering God's rest, it's not just a distant, abstract, theological idea, but it's the very goal of our faith.

So consider one another. Keep considering one another so that none might fall away from the living God, that together we may enter that final rest.

But finally and briefly, we see the writer's last urgent exhortation, that in order to stay on the path, to persevere to the end, we are called to consider God's word.

[ 39 : 41 ] That means not only to hear God's word, but also to humbly heed it. Look at me again at verse 11 to 13 of chapter 4.

Let us therefore strive to enter that rest so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart, and no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give accounts.

The writer is clear, isn't he? Strive to enter that rest. That implies a serious and a steadfast commitment, doesn't it? It's not just an afterthought, not just a casual, frivolous affair.

No, there can be no room for drifting, for dabbling, but this is a serious call for discipline, diligence. But how are we to strive?

Well, the answer is by considering God's word, submitting ourselves under its authority. Notice how the writer, when quoting Psalm 95 in Hebrews 3-7, as the Holy Spirit says, he doesn't just say, as the Holy Spirit said.

[ 41 : 14 ] Why? Because God's word transcends all time and space, doesn't it? It's eternal, it's unchanging. God's word isn't just another ordinary piece of literature, it's not just a piece of historical text, no, it is living, it is active.

It's the means through which God speaks to us today still, to expose what no one else sees, to confront you and I of our sins. We all can get pretty good at playing pretend with one another, because we know that no one can see into our hearts, but nothing is hidden from the Lord.

His word is the surgical knife that cuts and exposes our hidden sins to the very core. So when he speaks, we don't just need to hear, but also we need to heed.

we need to let his word do its work, driving us once again to repentance, to faith, because that is again God's means of grace.

It is the very means which the Lord God operates heart surgery on each and every one of us, to cut away, to correct, what if left to fester, would only ultimately kill us.

[ 42 : 32 ] but also it is the word that brings life to the spiritually dead, isn't it? It brings comfort to those who mourn, strength to the weak, the weary.

So don't resist it. Don't ignore it. Let us hear and let us heed his gracious warning. And when are we to consider his word?

Well, what is the refrain we see from the quotations of Psalm 95? Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts. Today.

That means not tomorrow, not when my life is less busy, less chaotic, not when there are fewer distractions around, but so long as it is called today, which is every single day, well, let us humble ourselves before his word, to hear it and to heed it.

As John Calvin comments on this passage here, as then we do not know whether God will extend his calling to tomorrow, let us not delay.

[ 43 : 48 ] Today he calls us, let us immediately respond to him, for there is no faith except where there is such a readiness to obey. So brothers and sisters, as we draw our time to a close, maybe you are now sitting there feeling anxious, uncertain.

Am I drifting? Am I growing dull of hearing? Well, the righteous exaltation is simply this, don't. And you do so by considering Christ, fixing your eyes on him again and again.

know that he who is faithful, who is greater, has done and secured all that is needed to save you and to sustain you. But also consider one another.

Walk with, walk beside your brothers and your sisters, encouraging, exhorting them each another every day to stay the course, to run the race with perseverance and with faith, so that we all might together hold fast our confidence and our hope.

But also finally, consider God's word. Don't neglect it. Don't just be hearers of the word, but also doers.

[ 45 : 07 ] Let it shape you, expose you, heal you. For that is the pattern of our Christian pilgrimage, a journey in Christ, with his people, under his word.

let's not harden our hearts, but by grace through faith, let us together strive to enter that rest.

Amen. Well, let us pray. Gracious and loving Heavenly Father, how we thank you for the privilege it is to know you and to be known by you, to be a people called holy brothers, sharers of a heavenly calling.

Thank you, Father, for brothers and sisters that you've given us in our church family, who speak the truth and love to us, who help us to hold fast.

so help us now to be encouraging one another to persevere, not only to run, but to finish the race well. And thank you, Father, for your word, that which is living, active, that speaks with power and authority, revealing our hearts of what they truly are, hearts prone to wander, prone to go astray, and yet your word never leaves us without hope.

[ 46 : 43 ] Your promises are sure and steadfast, so help us today and each day until we enter that final rest, not only to hear your word, but also to heed it.

And we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen.