

## Hebrews 3:7-19 – The Danger of Unrest – Lesson Summary

As a father of 4 it's not an uncommon occurrence to have a child who is overtired. You can tell by the look on their face, the irrational behaviors, and general confusion and frustration with life. As adults we aren't that different. Studies show that fatigue affects our ability to make decisions, handle stress, remember things, and respond appropriately to change. I think it's safe to say that spiritual fatigue can do that same. When we exist in a place of spiritual unrest, failing to find rest in our Savior, we experience many of the same symptoms of physical unrest. We make poor decisions, our minds wander, and we forget truth. In the second half of Ch. 3, the author of Hebrews challenges us to remember the danger of spiritual unrest.

Having taken the first 6 verses of Ch. 3 to remind his audience of the faithfulness and supremacy of Christ, he now transitions into a warning about spiritual unrest. Verse 7-11 are a direct reference to Psalm 95 in which the Psalmist addresses Israel's failure to trust God in the wilderness. As a result of their unrest they are forbidden true rest in the promised land. Understanding that his audience is a group of former Jewish converts the author reminds them of the consequences of unrest. He focuses on **two major causes of unrest** and warns his audience against them. Unrest is a result of **hardened hearts** and **wandering hearts**. The OT often refers to hardened hearts as diseased hearts. Anger and bitterness, opposition to God, and the ultimate denial of God and Christ are the result of hardened hearts which refuse to trust in the promises of God. Wandering hearts are those that are tempted to pursue other things. They are attracted by things of this world. We forget God's Word and allow something or someone else to be in the position of authority in our lives. The ultimate result of unrest is a relentless pursuit of rest without the hope of finding it. We must challenge ourselves to avoid unrest in our spiritual walk lest we find ourselves denied true rest.

The next verses reveal the pastoral heart of the author of Hebrews as he offers encouragement on how to find true rest. He addresses **three key ways in which we can rest in Christ**. He challenges us to **care for our hearts**. Keep our hearts in check. Evaluate our lives in accordance with Scripture. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal the sins of our hearts. We must continuously care for our hearts as we seek rest in Christ. We are also challenged to **exhort one another**. We must not try and live our faith in isolation. We need the accountability of others. We are blind to our blindness. It's important to be a part of a broader community that will encourage us to rest in Christ. Finally, we need to **stand firm in our confidence in Christ**. This verse is a near repetition of verse 6 in which we are told to hold fast our confidence and boasting in Christ. In order to find true rest, we must hold fast to Christ, His promises, and His faithfulness. Despite our circumstance we must not harden our hearts toward God or we will never know His rest.

So where is our hope for spiritual rest? Is it in our ability to behave as God calls us too? Is there a standard in which we need to perform in order for God to offer us rest? Or, is it simply in the person and work of Jesus Christ? Chapter 4 will address where true rest can be found. In the OT God uses the promised land as a representation of His presence. In a sense, Israel was to return to the Garden. This was only a foreshadowing of God's presence through Christ and His Holy Spirit. We once resided with God, but now He resides in us. There is no rest apart from the person of Jesus Christ. Have you experienced His rest? "Today, if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion". Instead, embrace Christ, and rest.

### Discussion Questions:

- 1) What were some of the things that the Israelites did in their unrest (struggle to trust God)?
- 2) What are some of the ways you find it hard to "rest" in the promises of God? What are some behaviors/sin struggles that may be a result of your unrest?
- 3) The author of Hebrews encourages his audience to take care of their hearts, exhort one another, and stand firm in faith. What are some ways that you can begin to do these things?
- 4) How does the reality of a future eternal rest encourage you to stand firm in your faith in the midst of trials?

## **Physical fatigue affects our:**

- Ability to make decisions
- Ability to do complex planning
- Communication skills
- Productivity and performance
- Attention
- Ability to handle stress
- Reaction time
- Ability to recall details

## **Spiritual unrest affects our:**

- Ability to make wise decisions
- Ability to be Kingdom (present & future) minded
- Profess the truth and hope of the Gospel
- Participation in God's work through our gifts
- Focus on what's truly important
- Ability to handle the stress of brokenness
- Willingness to wait on the Lord
- Ability to remember the promises of God

### **Physical Fatigue:**

Over the long term, fatigue can result in negative health effects, such as loss of appetite and digestive problems, and other chronic health conditions, including depression. These effects can result in:

- Increased sick time, absenteeism, and greater risk of turnover
- Increased medical costs

### **Spiritual Unrest (Fatigue):**

Over the long term, spiritual unrest can result in negative spiritual health effects, such as loss of desire for God's Word and sanctification struggles, and other chronic health conditions, including spiritual apathy. These effects can result in:

- Prolonged seasons of poor spiritual health, absenteeism from church, and greater risk of spiritual inconsistency
- Increased personal costs of our sin

### **One study has shown that fatigue can have similar effects to drinking alcohol:**

- 17 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.05 (the legal limit in British Columbia)
- 21 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.08
- 24–25 hours awake is equivalent to a blood alcohol content of 0.10

\*Apparent in these statistics is the cumulative negative affects of physical unrest. We must consider that the same is true for spiritual unrest. The longer the season of unrest, the more devastating the consequences.