

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

God the Holy Spirit had these words recorded for our instruction in righteousness. They are found in the Epistle to the Hebrews 3:7-19.

Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you will hear His voice, 8 Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' " 12 Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; 13 but exhort one another daily, while it is called "Today," lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. 14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

So far our text. Dear fellow redeemed.

Horace wrote in one of his Odes, Carpe Diem, Seize the day!

When we stop and reflect on life we can see how often this phrase holds true. We and others often do seize the day in many different ways. What football player sitting in the locker room isn't thinking about seizing the day before going out to play in the Super Bowl? What person isn't thinking this when they are going into a job interview? What parent isn't thinking this when it comes to bringing up their child? What husband or wife isn't thinking this in regards to being a loving spouse?

One could even say that seizing the day properly could be reflected in making sure you get enough sleep.

But don't we mostly think of more lofty things? We think of grand things and romanticize about going out and having a hard struggle against a foe but gaining an overwhelming victory! Now that is seizing the day! Isn't it?

In our text the Lord tells us what it is to seize the day. It is that we should **"Exhort one another while it is still today."** That we may not be hardened by sin. That we may enter into His rest.

In our text, the Israelites were being pointed to as an example of what being hardened by sin is. Specifically the rebellion in the wilderness. The Jewish Christians would've been very familiar with what was being referenced here.

While in the wilderness the Israelites were privileged to have the Lord present with them. They had Moses with them who spoke on God's behalf. The Children of Israel could go before God and get answers directly from Him.

They were shown many great things during the time they were in the wilderness. Water being brought forth by the will of God. Food being supplied for them where there was none. Even the sandals on their feet didn't wear out. But after all these things this is what was said of them. **"Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, In the day of trial in the wilderness, 9 Where your fathers tested Me, tried Me, And saw My works forty years. 10 Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, 'They always go astray in their heart, And they have not known My ways.' 11 So I swore in My wrath, 'They shall not enter My rest.' "**

But after all this, the thing pointed to by the Holy Spirit is that the Israelites were continually going astray in their hearts! The fact that man hardens his heart will continue. Nothing has changed. Examples can be given but the attitude that's being described remains the same forever. It remains the same for us.

This is our nature. There is nothing that can cause a man to go too God on his own. John 6:44 **"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day."**

Therefore God has the right to be angry. He is righteous. His Law and Precepts are holy. And when we think about it. How do we seize the day? By nature we seize it for ourselves. We neglect to pray as we should. We neglect having devotions with our families. We neglect reading scripture on our own. We might struggle with sexual sins. We may have a hateful attitude.

In place of this, we certainly make room for a round of golf. We make time for video games. We make time to talk on the phone. None of these things evil in themselves, but it truly shows how our sinful nature can predominate our lives. And this, like it was for the Israelites is a matter of the heart.

These things have an effect on us. Our text says **"But exhort one another daily, while it is called 'Today,' lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin."**

This shows how important it is to be around those who believe the same thing. Throughout the word we are told of the wonderful advantage of being with others who believe. Look at how often we need someone else to show us what we are doing. Our sin is invisible to our eyes at times and we need those who can restore us with the word.

And we are told to do it today! Not in a week. Not once I find my fortune. This is the important thing. This is the thing that you need to seek out NOW!

Sin is deceitful. It tries to trick us to make itself look good. It won't show itself for what it truly is. 1 Peter 5:8 says of the father of sin, **"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."**

But there is something very important to note in our text. **“17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.”**

It wasn't that the children of Israel were sinning that caused their destruction. It was the fact that their sin hardened their hearts to the mercies of God. And when that unbelief settled in, then they were condemned.

Therefore we also need to exhort one another about the mercies of God. **“14 For we have become partakers of Christ if we hold the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end, 15 while it is said: "Today, if you will hear His voice, Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.”**

The Lord has created faith in your hearts. You're are partakers of Christ. But as our text says we need to keep hold to the beginning of our confidence steadfast to the end. That beginning confidence is the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ seized the day in a whole different manner than mankind did.

Even before time was created and a day was a day this is how our Heavenly Father seized the day. **“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, 4 just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, 5 having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself.”**

So much care was taken for your soul by the Father that even before time began He set apart His only begotten Son with power to do what we could not. We orphaned ourselves by our fall into sin. But the Heavenly Father set apart His Son so that He could bring us back into a Father son relationship.

And when we did fall into sin the Lord was there, seizing the day proclaiming what was proclaimed before the foundation of the world. **“And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel.”**

All throughout the Old Testament period the Lord seized the day. We often read “The word of the Lord came to...” The Lord desires that no one perish. He was faithful to send His word throughout the world so that none should perish but instead have everlasting life. This is the same word that gives you that “beginning confidence” as spoken of in our text.

And there was this day the Lord seized. **“Then the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”**

The only begotten Son of God became flesh. And because of this He was able to be tempted just as we are. We are told that the devil tempted Him in the wilderness but actually returned to Him later to continue the temptations. But the Lord was without sin. He came through those temptations so that the perfect life He led could be given to you. When the Father sees you through Christ He sees you as perfect as His Son partially because of the perfect life He led.

But the Lord had to seize another day for us as well. A day in which He was beaten with hands, scourged, spat upon, had a crown of thorns pushed and beaten into His flesh. He was mocked and finally crucified. A day in which God forsook God. Jesus cried out that day, "My God, My God, why have you forsaken Me?" For sins the Father had already told His Son.

And for what sin? Surely none of His own. Jesus, the Christ of God willingly became sin for you! Any time you sin, Jesus paid for it. Any type of sin you commit, Jesus shed His innocent blood for it.

But what kind of day would it be if the payment for sin was made without a living savior. Certainly we want to reap the benefits of this death. Jesus seized another day when He rose from the dead. **"But the angel answered and said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. 6 "He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."**

You have nothing to fear. Your Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is not dead, He is living. And because of that you will live forever as well. His victory over death shows that the Father was pleased with the perfect life and innocent sufferings and death of His beloved Son. What confidence you can have knowing that your Heavenly Father is pleased with you.

And there is yet one more day that the Lord will seize. **"This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven."**

The only thing remaining is the return of your God. What a day the Lord will allow us to seize. Because of that beginning confidence you know that you will stand innocent before the throne of God. Sure that the blood of Jesus alone allows you to enter into heaven; forever living in the presence of God glorifying and praising His holy name.

Exhort one another while it is still today with the simple clear Law and Gospel. So that we may not be hardened by sin and that we may enter into His rest. Amen.