

Virtual Bread

Week 40 (Trinity 19): Day 2 (Tuesday)

Meeting the word of God with faith

Hebrews 3:16–19

1. Opening prayer

God of faithfulness and truth; help us to receive your word of truth with faith that we fail not to enter into your rest; through Jesus Christ we pray. Amen

2. Read Hebrews 3:16–19

Today we read [Hebrews 3:16-19](#) (*click on the link, see below or turn to p.1003 of the Church Bible*).

¹⁶For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? ¹⁷And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? ¹⁸And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? ¹⁹So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief.

3. Commentary

The writer to the Hebrews ends chapter 3 with three questions:

- Who were they that heard and yet were rebellious? It was God's people rescued from Egypt.
- By whom was he provoked for forty years? With those who sinned in the wilderness.
- And of whom did God swear they should never enter his rest? They who were disobedient.

Now, in our reading today, we are reminded that God's rest 'remains', which means His rest may still be entered into; God has not closed the door on this eternal hope and promised reality. When God's ancient people heard the Good News, it did not benefit them because, though they heard it'... it did not meet with faith in the hearers.

This is the lesson we are to heed today. Have we heard the Good News? Then be sure, hearing alone is not enough. When the wilderness people heard of the promised land, they did not take hold of it

and trust God to bring them safely into that place, even if it meant facing opposition and difficulty along the way.

4. Reflection

We all know what it is like to hear a great sermon and inspiring teaching. We can return home with a rekindled light to our faith and with renewed vigour to follow Christ. But have we built into our lives the truth we heard; maybe about a need to handle our impatience with greater resolve trusting in God's provision of patience beyond our own efforts; or a need to deal in a more compassionate way with a difficult person at work by drawing on the indwelling compassion of Christ? If we have not done anything to turn our hearing into practical effort, trusting in the presence of Christ within us, then the word has not been received with faith and we risk barring ourselves from entering God's rest. This is why our writer says *'let us fear lest any of us be judged to have failed to reach it.*

The meaning of faith in this context is active living trust in Christ. We might think of the relationship with a loving parent who asked you to make sure you get home in time for a brother or sister's birthday party. How diligently will you make sure nothing else gets in the way of being there? That is love or trust in action – it shapes your determination to obey, not as an unwilling duty but as an act of love both towards your parent and towards your brother or sister. So it is with trusting Christ; we must let his word shape the way we act if we want to experience his rest. But what is this rest? We look at this tomorrow.

5. Prayer

Dear Lord, you know the times when we have grown weary and been tempted to ease off serving and worshipping you as did your chosen people in the wilderness; help us to rekindle our love and devotion to you as we discover again the wonder of the Lord Jesus Christ promised in the Jewish Scriptures and realized in Christ. In His name and for his glory we pray. **Amen**

6. Pray the Collect for this week:

O God, forasmuch as without you we are not able to please you; mercifully grant that your Holy Spirit may in all things direct and rule our hearts; though Jesus Christ your Son our Lord, who is alive and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. **Amen**

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