

SECOND SUNDAY OF LENT

HEBREWS 3:12-19 FIREPROOF

¹² See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. ¹³ But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. ¹⁴ We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first. ¹⁵ As has just been said:

"Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion."

¹⁶ Who were they who heard and rebelled? Were they not all those Moses led out of Egypt? ¹⁷ And with whom was he angry for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the desert? ¹⁸ And to whom did God swear that they would never enter his rest if not to those who disobeyed? ¹⁹ So we see that they were not able to enter, because of their unbelief.

The Christian life is not about outward obedience to laws or individual acts of spiritual strength or promises to be a better person tomorrow. Being a Christian is having a transformed heart that causes you to want to live in mutual accountability with other believers right now and right here. The Christian life is a mission through the wilderness to God rather than a solo flight over the chaos to the seat of power.

A soft heart is one that can be tenderized by accountability and strengthened by encouragement. A soft heart is one that is not unmoved by the spiritual plight of its fellows. A soft heart is one that is willing to sacrifice for the success of the other members of the community or the community itself. A soft human heart is the evidence to the world of the nature of the heart of God.

God has made a covenant with all believers, making us covenant partners. In the movie "Fireproof," the unifying theme was that a fireman never leaves his partner in a fire. In the military the rule is that you never abandon one of your own. In both cases this oath is lived out at great peril to those who faithfully follow through. The movie graphically applied this oath to marriage, which in turn is the metaphor used by God to describe his relationship to the body of believers. Therefore, the soft heart of God, the fulfillment of his oath to never abandon one of his own is seen in the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. He came to rescue us from the chaos and bring us into his rest.

The only way to avoid his rest is to harden your heart toward him and refuse him. Then like the cat that hides from the fireman you will not enter his rest but perish in the flames.

Create in me a soft heart, O Lord, that I might accept your correction, rebuke and even chastisement in order to better serve you and my neighbors. Strengthen me accept your word through my brothers and sisters. Empower me to be an encourager rather than a competitor within your Body the Church. Let me not rest in this life as long as there is another who is in danger of being abandoned. Amen.