

- Wherefore (Col 1:23,5,27, 1Pet 1:3, Tit 2:13, Heb 3:6-12)

#1. Today, IF You Will Hear His Voice (Heb 3:1,7-8, 9:12, Psalm 95:1-7)

- Harden Not Your Hearts (Psalm 95:7-11, Heb 3:13, Rom 9:18, Ex 8:15)

#2. When Your Fathers Tempted Me (Heb 3:9, Psalm 78:17-22, Heb 3:16, Psalm 78:27-33)

- Wherefore I Was Grieved (Heb 3:10, Gen 6:6)

#3. So I Sware in My Wrath (Heb 3:11, 4:3, Rom 3:25)

- An Evil Heart of Unbelief (Phm 1:24, Col 4:14, 2Ti 4:10, Heb 3:7, 1Cor 16:22)

Please open your Bibles to the Prophecy of Hebrews, Heb 3:7 (2X). The first six verses in this chapter of Hebrews started with the word *wherefore* meaning *because of all this* that we have read in chapters 1 and 2 we should consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus, who was faithful to Him who appointed Him, as also Moses was faithful in all His house, therefore we are commanded to be faithful.

- **Wherefore** (Col 1:23,5,27, 1Pet 1:3, Tit 2:13, Heb 3:6-12)

Now we start a new section in this chapter and we read again in Heb 3:7, *wherefore* referring back to Heb 3:6, since Christ was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, and since Christ was appointed as a Son over His own house; whose house are we, **IF** we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end. *Wherefore*, here are a number of promises **IF** we hold fast the hope unto the end. The hope that is mentioned here refers to the hope made known by the Gospel (Col 1:23), the hope which is laid up for God's people in heaven (Col 1:5), the hope of glory (Col 1:27). Christians have been begotten to a living hope (1Pet 1:3), the blessed hope of the return of our God and Savior Jesus Christ (Tit 2:13) when He shall come to take us to Himself, to make us like unto Himself, to have us forever with Himself, when all God's promises shall be made good. Now we are a little uncomfortable with the words, *IF* we hold fast the hope unto the end. Does this mean that we cannot be sure of our salvation, but we have to wait to the end of time? No, that is not what it means, for that would conflict with many other passages in the Scriptures. It means that when we are truly born Again God has done a miracle within us, and God will make us hold fast the hope of the Gospel firm unto the end. The Biblical doctrine of the perseverance of the saints says that the saints will always persevere unto the end. Christ cannot be an unsuccessful Savior. For example we read in Phil 1:6, being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.

What now follows is a solemn and practical application of this principle. Those whom God has saved will persevere, and those whom God has not saved will not persevere. When we now read of the unfaithfulness of Israel in the past we must remember that in every congregation there are those who belong to God's elect and there are also those whom God has not elected unto salvation. Every church has this condition, both New Testament churches as well as Old Testament churches. Never was there a situation that entire Old Testament Israel was saved, or that an entire New Testament church was saved. Most of the time the majority of the nation of Israel was not saved and only a remnant was truly saved. Our understanding of the Bible must include the sovereignty of God, and must include that our God is immutable. We read in Heb 3:7-12,

Heb 3:7-12, *Wherefore* (as the Holy Ghost saith, To day if ye will hear his voice, **8** Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness: **9** When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years. **10** Wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do alway err in *their* heart; and they have not known my ways. **11** So I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.) **12** Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God.

In the KJV the opening word *wherefore* is followed by parentices which enclose verses 7 through 11. For readability this is actually correct, even though the Greek text does not contain these parentices. The sentence beginning with *wherefore* is completed in verse 12, which then should read as:

Heb 3:12, *wherefore* take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. This then is the essence of the sermon for today. The title of the sermon is taken from Heb 3:8, **“Harden Not Your Hearts” (2X).**

#1. Today, IF You Will Hear His Voice (Heb 3:1,7-8, 9:12, Psalm 95:1-7)

Heb 3:7-8, **“Harden not your hearts, as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.”**

(Put a sticker here in Heb 3:7.)

Whatever was given by inspiration from the Holy Spirit and is recorded in the Scriptures for us, God continues to speak it unto us today. It is an ever-present, living message to God’s people in each succeeding generation. It is a warning to us that we should not harden our hearts, but we should listen to His voice. These words in verses Heb 3:7-11 are an amplification of the word *consider* in Heb 3:1, “consider the Apostle and High Priest of our profession, Christ Jesus. Consider how much He has done for us by shedding His own blood. Please turn in your Bibles to the Prophecy of the Psalms, Psalm 95:1 (2X). Consider the High Priest of our profession, the man Christ Jesus, who has gone for us behind the veil of the temple into the Holy of Holies with His own blood (Heb 9:12), presenting His blood in the place of our blood, for we are the guilty ones whose blood has to be shed. We are the guilty ones who need to pay the penalty required for our sins. But since the penalty includes an eternity in hell, we know that we cannot possibly pay such a great price. Now in Heb 3:7-8, the Lord is addressing us here in Bellflower. Is it possible that any of us would be hardened in our hearts like the children of Israel did after they had been delivered out of Egypt? Would God have mentioned it if it would not have been possible? No, of course not! It definitely is possible that some of us will have a hardened heart.

Psalm 95 is a Psalm that contains an exhortation to praise Jehovah for His greatness and for His works of creation. Men are invited to worship Him as their Maker and as their Preserver; and they are warned against tempting Him and provoking Him by the example of the Israelites in the wilderness. We read in Psalm 95:1-7,

Psalm 95:1-7, **“O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. 2 Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms. 3 For the LORD is a great God, and a great King above all gods. 4 In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. 5 The sea is his, and he made it: and his hands formed the dry land. 6 O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker. 7 For he is our God; and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”**

Let us make a joyful noise unto the Rock of our salvation. Let us recognize what it really is; our singing is only a joyful noise in the ears of God, not much better than the braying of a donkey. It is not the artistic quality that God appreciates, but the condition of the heart; that is what matters. Let us come to Him with much

thanksgiving, and with much appreciation for who He is, and for His condescension in taking notice of us, and for the mighty works He has done in delivering us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. For He is the Rock, the unchangeable solid Rock on which we can depend, for what He said He will do.

Think now of the deliverance of the children of Israel out of Egypt, for this is a great and glorious picture of God saving His people out of the house of bondage. What is the equivalent today of the house of bondage? What does the house of bondage represent? It represents the kingdom of Satan in which we were born; it is the world where Satan is king. We were born there, like the children of Israel were born in slavery in Egypt. We were born as slaves of sin and Satan. But then, somehow, God drew us out of there into the church. One day we were in the world, the next day we were going to church regularly. Does this then mean that everyone in the church is a saved individual? No! And when the children of Israel were delivered out of Egypt was everyone a saved individual? Absolutely not, for their actions betrayed that a considerable number of them was still unsaved. But when God blessed all of them with manna, and with water out of the Rock, and with quail, and with protecting them with a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, God poured these blessings on both the saved and the unsaved because they were The people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.³We can see a similar situation in the New Testament church. Especially during and after the Reformation God provide manna and water and quail for the church by giving us printed Bibles in our hands, from which we could obtain our spiritual food and drink. Essentially we were eating and drinking from Christ, because He had given His life for a sin offering on behalf of us who are saved. And those who were not saved profited as well by being among us. For example, the love and friendship among church members extended both to saved and unsaved members, Bible study groups were open to both saved and unsaved people, and benevolence funds were available to both saved and unsaved people. Everyone profited as long as the church was ruled by loving and faithful pastors and elders who preached the true Gospel. They preached that our response to what Christ has done for us is a response of love for Christ and deep gratitude for what He has done. But when this gratitude dried up the people's response is that of selfishness. And now the murmuring starts. And this is what the passage in Heb 3 is speaking about.

- **Harden Not Your Hearts** (Psalm 95:7-11, Heb 3:13, Rom 9:18, Ex 8:15)

We continue in Psalm 95:7-11, and there we read these puzzling words:

Psalm 95:7-11, Ob style='mso-bidi-font-weight:normal'>7 Today if ye will hear his voice, **8** Harden not your heart, as in the provocation, *and* as *in* the day of temptation in the wilderness: **9** When your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my work. **10** Forty years long was I grieved with *this* generation, and said, *It is* a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways: **11** Unto whom I swear in my wrath that they should not enter into my rest.³

When God writes, Today it has the same force as the words unto this day These words apply to us today as well as to the children of Israel who wandered in the wilderness. And when God wrote in Psalm 95 that their fathers provoked Him, and tempted Him, and God swore in His wrath that they should not enter into His rest, did God say this about every Israelite that was wandering in the wilderness? No! Moses and Aaron were not under

the wrath of God, for they were forgiven. Joshua and Caleb were not under the wrath of God. Bezaleel and Aholiab who worked hard on the Tabernacle and all its furnishings were not under the wrath of God. And many in the congregation who provided for the Tabernacle by their freewill offerings were not under the wrath of God. But a large fraction of the congregation did murmur against Moses and Aaron, and these are the ones whom God is addressing in this passage. And paraphrased God says, ¶hese are also the people for whom I want to warn you, for this is a people who always err in their heart and they have not known My ways.¶Look at the words of verse 10 in this Psalm. Could this refer to saved people who were rebellious for a while and then came back to the Lord? No! They were rebellious for 40 years. Ever since they came out of Egypt were they rebellious. They were never saved. And so, when God writes in [Psalm 95:10](#) about ¶his generation¶ God was not referring to everyone of that generation who came out of Egypt, but God referred to the unsaved people among them. In fact, the expression ¶his generation¶ occurs 19 times in the Bible, and it always refers the unbelieving fraction of the nation of Israel, those who have never been saved; those to whom the Gospel must be preached because they have not yet been saved. I am saying this emphatically, because we must lock clearly in our memory that the saints cannot fall away. The Bible clearly teaches the [perseverance of the saints](#). This is a fundamental property of the saints. Please turn again to the Epistle to the Hebrews, [Heb 3:13](#) (2X). There are no backsliders or carnal Christians in the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. There are no people who first believed, and then fell away, and then believed again. There are no people who live a sordid lifestyle and yet miraculously they are saved. No one is saved by his works, but those who are saved have been Born Again, which means that God has done a marvelous miracle in our soul, which drives us to dedicate our life to serve the Lord Jesus in all our ways. Once saved, we are always saved. But when we turn to [Heb 3:13](#) we read,

Heb 3:13, ¶ut exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.¶

Can this be addressing those in the congregation who are truly saved? No! But can this be addressing the congregation as a whole? Absolutely yes, for there are always unsaved people in any congregation. The word ¶oday¶ applies all the way to the end of time. For this reason we should always exhort one another on the subject of falling away from the church, for the danger is very real. God says it is caused by the deceitfulness of sin. What is meant thereby? What is the deceitfulness of sin? Let me give just one example. When boy meets girl, what is going to take place? In today¶ language they say that the two are having a relationship. That is a nice word for fornication. In these days fornication is all over the place, and it is being reinforced by the movie industry, and by the multimedia, and by the newspapers, and so on. But it is sin, no matter what you call it. But the attractiveness of this sin is that it feels so good. And so, people engage in fornication no matter what penalty God will judge it with. They rather deal with the good feeling here and now, than with the penalty later. And even when the penalty is an eternity in hell, they will say; ¶take my chances.¶ This is the deceitfulness of sin.

And God says that it hardens the heart, because defiance of God¶ laws means that we ignore what God has said. It means that for the next sin we get a little more callous about the law of God, so that it comes a little easier,

and the next sin again will come a little easier. The result is that our conscience is seared, and the ways of God will be further and further from our mind. Who hardened our heart? We can find verses that say, God hardened our heart. But we can also find verses that say, The sinner hardened his heart. For example, God says in Rom 9:18, Therefore hath He mercy on whom He will *have mercy*, and whom He will He hardeneth. But God also says in Ex 8:15, But when Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and hearkened not unto them; as the LORD had said. And so, who hardened Pharaoh's heart? Both God and Pharaoh are accountable for hardening Pharaoh's heart. But this could only take place because Pharaoh was not one of God's elect. Pharaoh was going to pay for his own sins in hell. And even though God was aware of the sins that Pharaoh was going to commit, and even though God would work out His plan through the sins of man, nevertheless Pharaoh sinned voluntarily because God is not the author of Pharaoh's sins. How all this exactly fits together is a great mystery which we cannot understand now. Suffice it to say that God is sovereign, and that God not only knows the end from the beginning, but He causes the end from the beginning, and yet man is accountable for his sins because man sins voluntarily. Let us now turn to Heb 3:9 (2X).

#2. When Your Fathers Tempted Me (Heb 3:9, Psalm 78:17-22, Heb 3:16, Psalm 78:27-33)

Heb 3:9, when your fathers tempted me, proved me, and saw my works forty years.

What did they see for forty years? They saw numerous miracles that the Lord did. They saw the ten plagues in Egypt, and they saw that all the firstborn in Egypt died in one night. They saw that Pharaoh first let them leave Egypt, and they saw how Pharaoh and his armies attempted to bring them back, and they saw how God opened the Red Sea for Israel, and they saw how God closed the Red Sea upon the Egyptian army, and they saw that every last one of the Egyptian army drowned in the Red Sea. This by itself should have struck fear in the hearts of all the children of Israel, and they should have feared Jehovah God all their life, for they saw with their own eyes the power and the vengeance of Almighty God. But here is another principle: The unsaved are not converted by witnessing a miracle, no matter how great the miracle is. And so, those who were unsaved when they left Egypt did remain unsaved for 40 years, even though they witnessed many more miracles during these 40 years. Please turn in your Bibles to Psalm 78:17 (2X). In Psalm 78 God repeats many of the sins of the nation of Israel to remind them of their wickedness in the past. This Psalm is a Maschil of Asaph, where the word Maschil means instruction. In other words, this Psalm is a poem put to music by Asaph, guided by the Holy Spirit, and used for instructing the children of Israel their history. We read in Psalm 78:17-22,

Psalm 78:17-22, **17** And they sinned yet more against him by provoking the most High in the wilderness. **18** And they tempted God in their heart by asking meat for their lust. **19** Yea, they spake against God; they said, Can God furnish a table in the wilderness? **20** Behold, he smote the rock, that the waters gushed out, and the streams overflowed; can he give bread also? can he provide flesh for his people? **21** Therefore the LORD heard *this*, and was wroth: so a fire was kindled against Jacob, and anger also came up against Israel; **22** Because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation.

Do we understand that they sinned more against God and they provoked Him to ask for flesh to eat, because they believed not in God, and trusted not in his salvation? This does not apply to everyone of the congregation, for the words in Heb 3:16 say, "or some, when they had heard, did provoke: howbeit not all that came out of Egypt by Moses." Not all that came out of Egypt did provoke, but some. Nevertheless, the sin of some leaned heavily on the entire nation of Israel, for some does not mean just a few. Even if some means only 10% we are still looking at 60,000 people who rebelled against God. But the identification "because they believed not in God" means that we are dealing here with a group of unbelievers. They asked for flesh to eat. And God accommodated their request. Realize now that there were both saved and unsaved people in the camp, and God gave them flesh to eat, because God also provided the quail for the saved people. We read in Psalm 78:27-33,

Psalm 78:27-33, "He rained flesh also upon them as dust, and feathered fowls like as the sand of the sea: **28** And he let it fall in the midst of their camp, round about their habitations. **29** So they did eat, and were well filled: for he gave them their own desire; **30** They were not estranged from their lust. But while their meat was yet in their mouths, **31** The wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them, and smote down the chosen men of Israel. **32** For all this they sinned still, and believed not for his wondrous works. **33** Therefore their days did he consume in vanity, and their years in trouble."

This is how your fathers tempted Me and proved Me. This is how the Lord gradually killed all those who came out of Egypt during their wilderness wanderings. Their deliverance out of Egypt was a picture of God's work of delivering us out of the house of bondage; their wilderness wanderings were a picture of the church's wanderings through this world until the time that the Lord is going to bring us into our Promised Land, which means the New Heaven and the New Earth. All the while the wheat and the tares are together in the church and the tares are the cause of God's wrath on the church so that the church becomes Babylon.

- **Wherefore I Was Grieved** (Heb 3:10, Gen 6:6)

Please turn again to the Epistle to the Hebrews, Heb 3:10 (2X). Now we enter into a section that theologians have brushed off as an example of anthropomorphism. Actually all we need to remember is that the Lord Jesus Christ was the product of God the Son taking on the human nature of the man Christ Jesus. And thus the Lord Jesus sometimes acted in His Divine nature, whereas at other times He acted in His human nature. When He forgave the sins of a paralytic who was lowered before Him through the roof, He acted in His Divine nature, whereas when He was tired, or when He was hungry, or when He wept over Jerusalem, or when He did not know the day or the hour of His return to earth, He acted in His human nature. We are not separating His human nature from His Divine nature, but it is plain as day that the Lord acted in two different natures. Heb 3:10 says,

Heb 3:10, "wherefore I was grieved with that generation, and said, They do always err in their heart; and they have not known my ways."

Why was it that the Lord was grieved? Did He not know that these unsaved people would always disappoint Him? Did He not know that this generation of evildoers would always err in their heart, for they have not known the way of the Lord? Of course He knew this already before the foundation of the world, for He knew both the elect and the reprobate from before the foundation of the world, and He knew them by name, and He knew what they were going to do. There were no surprises for the Lord Jesus. And so, when the Lord says, "I was grieved with that generation" we conclude that the Lord Jesus Christ in His human nature was grieved with these unbelieving Jews. He too was a Jew, and in His human nature He desired more than anyone else that these unbelievers would stop acting in such an obnoxious way, and that they would stop insulting God with their errors, for their penalty is going to be very great. And so, the next time we read that God said in Gen 6:6,

Gen 6:6, and it repented the LORD that he had made man on the earth, and it grieved him at his heart. We do not have to come up with an artificial answer that this repentance refers to an anthropomorphism. It simply refers to the human nature of the Lord Jesus, who was grieved in His heart that mankind turned out so wicked. And even though Gen 6:6 took place long before the Lord Jesus was born, we need to remember that Melchizedec, who represented Christ as our great High Priest, also appeared long before Christ was born.

#3. So I Swear in My Wrath (Heb 3:11, 4:3, Rom 3:25)

Heb 3:11, for I swear in my wrath, They shall not enter into my rest.)

What is this "rest" that the Lord gives to those whom He favors? Historically it is the rest that the children of Israel had in the land of Canaan by resting from their wilderness wanderings. But that is only the outward sign of a much deeper reality. The land of Canaan represented their Promised Land. The land of Canaan represented the kingdom of God. By denying those rebels the kingdom of God, God was essentially saying that their destiny was the other place, hell, for they were unbelievers and unbelievers end up in hell. God swore an oath that these unbelievers would never enter into the kingdom of God. That is precisely what this verse means, and any softened or watered down explanation is driving us in the direction of liberalism, a watered down gospel. Let us now look a little further. Please move forward to Heb 4:3 (2X). There we read,

Heb 4:3, for we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

What is the Lord saying with these words, "although the works were finished from the foundation of the world"? This is a poor translation in the King James Version. The word "finished" should have been translated "having come into being". Also, it is significant that we remember that this verse does not speak of "before the foundation of the world" but it speaks of "from the foundation of the world", which means from the time of Adam and Eve. And thus this portion of Heb 4:3 should read,

"although the works having come into being from the foundation of the world."

What works are referred to here? These are the works of God concerning who may enter into the Kingdom of God and who may not enter in. Well, the only ones who may enter in are the ones whose sins have been paid at the cross of Christ, and all those whose sins have been paid have been given faith as a sign of their salvation. But

those who are known as unbelievers have not received faith, and thus their sins have not been paid at the cross. And thus, the fraction of those who came out of Egypt who remained unsaved, who remained to be a grief to the Lord, who remained to have an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God, and who died in that sin, may never enter into the Kingdom of God. God swore an oath to that, and we cannot by massaging the Scriptures claim that they eventually did enter into heaven. That is false.

And thus, what the second half of Heb 4:3 says is that the works of Christ in paying for the sins of those in Old Testament time was retroactive all the way from the beginning of time. God also say this in Rom 3:25,

Rom 3:25, whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God;

Here it is, you see, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past. It refers back to the sins of Adam and Eve for whom God made coats of animal skin.

- **An Evil Heart of Unbelief** (Phm 1:24, Col 4:14, 2Ti 4:10, Heb 3:7, 1Cor 16:22)

Please turn in your Bibles to the Second Epistle to Timothy, 2Tim 4:10 (2X). The fraction of unbelievers coming out of Egypt was not the only group of infidels in the Bible. There are many more. But the one on whom I presently want to focus is Demas. Demas was apparently a faithful coworker of the Apostle Paul in his missionary journeys. In his letter to Philemon the apostle Paul mentioned Demas. We read in Phm verse 24,

Phm 1:24 Marcus, Aristarchus, Demas, Lucas, my fellowlabourers.

Again in the letter of the apostle Paul to the church at Colossae he mentioned Demas as a coworker,

Col 4:14 Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, greet you.

But perhaps the last letter that the Paul wrote was the Second Epistle to Timothy. In 2Tim 4:10 we read,

2Ti 4:10 For Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world, and is departed unto Thessalonica; Crescens to Galatia, Titus unto Dalmatia.

Demas has forsaken me. Those are dreadful words, full of disappointment and full of condemnation. Why are they full of condemnation? What have we been discussing in this sermon? God says in Heb 3:7, Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts as in the provocation, in the day of temptation in the wilderness.

Today it can happen again. What we saw come to pass in the wilderness can come to pass again today, here in the church in Bellflower. Therefore watch out. This evil heart of unbelief can manifest itself again by those who apparently were faithful followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. But what was missing in Demas? That same ingredient will be missing in anyone who departs from the living God. What is it? We should ask the Lord Jesus what it is. A lawyer asked the Lord Jesus what the greatest commandment was in the law of God. He answered,

Mark 12:30, and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this is the first commandment.

This is the first and most important commandment. It means we must love the Lord Jesus Christ as our first priority and our first requirement for salvation. Without the love for Christ there is no salvation. The Lord says in 1Cor 16:22; if any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maranatha. In other words, let him

be accused till the Lord comes.³I spoke about our response to hearing and believing what the Lord Jesus has done for us. It is gratitude, an immense mountain of gratitude. But when this gratitude has dried up the man's response is that of selfishness. And now the murmuring starts. And this is what the passage in Heb 3 is speaking about. It is a warning for departing from the Lord because of the deceitfulness of sin; it is the desire to sin because it feels so good; it is the desire to sin because I want satisfaction in the here and now; it is the desire to depart from the Lord because I feel like a hypocrite and I do not belong here; it is the desire to sin because I am overcome with an uncontrollable sex drive, and so on.

But the last item I mentioned is probably the most urgent in this end time society. We are surrounded by sex everywhere we turn, for the movies drive us to it, and the Internet drives us to it, and the schools drive us into it with their slanted sex education, and the homosexual community drives us into it, and the stores have also joined the bandwagon. This is what drives the young people away from the church. This is the most important factor in the deceitfulness of sin which drives people away from the Lord.

Let us candidly look the problem in the eye, and ask the Lord for the grace to overcome these strong drives to sin. Or else we will be like Demas, and we will be like the children of Israel who always murmured against the Lord. Pray for the grace of the Lord in these things.

AMEN. Let us turn to the Lord in prayer.