



Are You Really Listening?

January 2, 2022

Big Question: Will You Ever Really Listen?

Text: Hebrews 3:7

- 7“**Today**, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,

Introduction: I want you to listen to me today

- To my surprise I contracted Covid-19 after a visit to a city I love, New York, while celebrating my 41st wedding anniversary. We chose carefully a place that had strict rules and guidelines for masking, vaccine passes, and a lot more. I cannot live in a cave and give in to the temptation to live in fear.
- I wore my mask, washed my hands, obeyed all the suggested guidelines and still caught Covid. I recovered within seven days and had a minor sinus issue that is not worth mentioning. I did all I could to avoid being infected.

1. Why I Think I Did So Well?

1. My overall health was good before I became infected
2. I prepared for the fight by being vaccinated and boosted
3. I tested myself immediately after traveling to an area that had rising infections
4. I immediately quarantined myself until I had tests that verified that I was safe
5. I confirmed my diagnosis and approach to recover with my doctor

2. What Did I Learn From My Experience?

1. I am not invincible
2. I am not above being attacked (“The servant is not better than his Lord,” Matthew 10:24-25)

Note: We like all of Psalm 23 except verse 4 (See **appendix below**)

3. I am not above being overrun.
4. I can have expected challenges

Three Questions You May Have:

1. What hope do I have if you did all you could do and still caught Covid?
Answer: Don’t look at what attacked me, look at my outcome and do all you can to have the best outcome possible
2. If you were vaccinated and contracted it why get vaccinated?
Answer: It is my job to do all I can with the tools I have been given. (i.e., the parable of the talents)

Note: If you bury the talent or provision God gave you, he is not responsible for your outcome (Matthew 25:14-30)

3. What are some important truths this experience has reinforced for me?

- A. Some of the **issues I have faced were created or allowed** to exist by me
- B. Some of the issues I have faced were created by people around me
- C. Sometimes **I rebelled against good advice** and prayed for good results

Note: Rebellious Examples

- If you are diabetic but eat like you are not, *you are rebellious*
- If you have no cash at all but you spend like you have money, *you are rebellious*
- If you sleep with every person you fall in love with before marriage, *you are rebellious*
- If you claim to hear a word from God but don't follow through, *you are rebellious*

Conclusion:

3. Five Warnings the Writer of Hebrews Gave To The Rebellious (Hebrews 3:7-19)

1. Don't Harden Your Hearts

- 7 So, as the Holy Spirit says: "Today, if you hear his voice, 8 do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the wilderness,

2. Don't Test God (They rebelled for forty years and lost God's best rest)

- 9 **where your ancestors tested and tried me**, though for forty years they saw what I did. 10 That is why I was angry with that generation; I said, "Their hearts are always going astray, and they have not known my ways. ' 11 So I declared on oath in my anger, **'They shall never enter my rest.'**"

3. Don't Become Unbelieving and Turn From God

- 12 See to it, brothers and sisters, 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 indeed we **hold our original conviction firmly to the very end**.

4. Don't Wait To Listen (Listen Today)

- 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 perished in the wilderness?

5. Don't Assume You Can't Get On The Bad List

- 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.

Next Time: What Is the Truth About Us

Question for the Year: What is the truth about you that you keep running from?

Read Ahead: Ephesians 4:25 Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbor, for we are all members of one body.

Appendix: Psalms 23:1-6

1. The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

2 He makes me lie down in green pastures,
he leads me beside quiet waters,

3 he refreshes my soul.
He guides me along the right paths
for his name's sake.

**4 Even though I walk
through the darkest valley,**

I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me.

5 You prepare a table before me
in the presence of my enemies.
You anoint my head with oil;
my cup overflows.

6 Surely your goodness and love will follow me
all the days of my life,
and I will dwell in the house of the Lord
forever.

Balancing the Theology of Catching Covid

Part 2 Drive-In Questions:

Statement: I had a good result after catching covid, I was vaccinated and boosted. The quarantine process has a lot of emotional elements connected to it. Every day you must adjust your thinking to survive being alone for almost two weeks. Many Christians communicate a conflicting message that people can not relate to.

1. If I am a Christian Who Walks in Faith, How Can I Catch Covid?

Answer (Psalm 34:19, NIV) The righteous person may have many troubles, but the LORD delivers him from them all;

Follow up Question: How Can you Say God will Deliver us, if my Family Member Died?

Answer to follow up (Daniel 3:16-18, NIV) Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, “King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. ¹⁷ If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us^[e] from Your Majesty’s hand. ¹⁸ But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up.”

2. Does God Have the Sovereign “Independent” Right to Deny Our Request for Physical Healing?

Answer 1: Paul embraced the surprise ending of his life with courage (2 Timothy 4:6-8, NIV)

For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

Answer 2: Some were persecuted (Hebrews 11:35-40, NIV)

Women received back their **dead, raised** to life again. **There were others** who were **tortured**, refusing to be released so that they might gain an even better resurrection. ³⁶ Some **faced jeers and flogging**, and even **chains and imprisonment**. ³⁷ They were put to **death by stoning**; they were **sawed in two**; they were **killed by the sword**.

Answer 3: Some were destitute and mistreated

They went about in sheepskins and goatskins, destitute, **persecuted and mistreated**—³⁸ the world was not worthy of them. They wandered in deserts and mountains, living in caves and in holes in the ground. ³⁹ These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, ⁴⁰ since God had planned something better for us so that only together with us would they be made perfect.

Conclusion: We have not done a good job of communicating God’s will in a balanced way. We have not raise our spiritual children well. We need to do a better job of handling the word of truth. (2 Timothy 2:15)

¹⁵ Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth.

Next Time: The Truth About Us