



## Today Matters For Eternity

Series: *Hebrews – An Anchor for the Soul*

Hebrews 3:7-19

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The events with the false fire alarm last week showed in stark reality just how quickly the blessing and the manifest presence of God can depart, how quickly the Word of God can be snatched away by Satan or removed by God, how fleeting every moment really is, how easily we can take God and His voice for granted, how vitally important **today – RIGHT NOW** – really is – that if you hear God’s voice that you do not harden your heart to it, and what a very real battle it is to keep our hearts sensitive to God and to worship Him.

We saw it last week in the text, as far as we got, that all of life is battle for worship – it is a battle for your praise, adoration, faith, trust, obedience, discipleship – your active following, to keep your heart soft toward God, and for Christ’s supremacy in your heart, your mind, your affections, your will – in your very soul – no matter the circumstances or situation. We saw that as we looked at the context of the quote in verses 7-11 here in Hebrews that came from Psalm 95, a psalm that is all about worship. We read, **“Oh come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! For the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the depths of the earth; the heights of the mountains are his also. The sea is his, for he made it, and his hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker! For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand.”** (Psalm 95:1–7, ESV)

And we saw an inflexible and inescapable truth – a life of worship cannot come from a hardened heart. It’s impossible. That’s why the writer of Psalm 95 sets worship over and against hardness of heart. The truth is, corporate worship, in a lot of ways, is a window to your soul, but worship encompasses much more than corporate singing or celebration. It encompasses the whole of your life, right? To whom will you give your uppermost faith,

affection, allegiance and obedience? For whose praise and pleasure will you primarily live? For whose glory? – God or yourself? These are the most significant questions of life.

The exodus generation, those led out of Egypt by Moses through the delivering power of God, did not worship Him as they should and they didn't worship God as they should because their hearts were hardened by unbelief. Unbelief is a matter of the heart and soul. It isn't a passive thing any more than faith is. When the Scriptures speak of belief or faith, it is not a matter of knowledge alone but the posture of your heart and the obedience of your will. You act according to what you truly believe, on what carries weight with you. You act on what you truly believe – that is what guides our actions and what reveals the character of our hearts. You either act, all of us. Out of faith or unbelief toward God. That's why the writer of Hebrews tells these Hebrew Christians who are being attacked in their faith, who are tempted to go back to their old lives, back to the old ways, who are being seduced by the promise of ease:

**Don't Harden Your Heart, Provoke God and Go Astray (7-11)** Read this again with me:

***“Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness, where your fathers put me to the test and saw my works for forty years. Therefore I was provoked with that generation, and said, ‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’ ”” (Hebrews 3:7–11, ESV)*** The writer of Hebrews and the Psalmist have in mind two specific incidents that took place in the history of the Exodus generation, those who came out of Egypt – one from Exodus 17 and the other from Numbers 13-14. Let me remind you of them again. In Exodus 17 they had come to a place called Rephidim near MT Sinai. Now, they had already experienced amazing miracles – the 10 plagues in Egypt, the presence of God to lead them in a pillar of cloud and fire, their salvation at the Red Sea, the bitter waters made sweet so they could drink, and the manna – bread from heaven – by which they had been fed. There at Rephidim, they were thirsty and complained to Moses and grumbled before God, bemoaning their circumstances, accusing Moses, really God, of bringing them out of Egypt to die in the desert from thirst. ***“Therefore the people quarreled with Moses and said, “Give us water to drink.” And Moses said to them, “Why do you quarrel with me? Why do you test the Lord?”” (Exodus 17:2, ESV)*** Then, following God's direction, Moses struck the rock and water came forth. But the account concludes with these words: ***“And he called the name of the place Massah and Meribah, because of the quarreling of the people of Israel, and because they tested the Lord by saying, “Is the Lord among us or not?”” (Exodus 17:7, ESV)*** God mercifully provided for them but

their faithless and hardened hearts were on full display. Theirs was fair-weather, herd-instinct, easily crumbling faith. Rather than trusting God to care for them as He already had, they put God to the test. How quickly they forgot God and moved toward unbelief.

But it didn't stop there. In Numbers 13-14, is the last straw. God sent one scout from each of Israel's twelve tribes to spy out the Promised Land in preparation for the nation's entry. The scouts returned and gave their report, which contained both good news and bad news. The good news: "The land flows with milk and honey." The bad news: "The people who live there are giants and they are too strong and their cities are too well fortified. We will not be victorious" (see Num 13:27-31). However, two of the spies believed God and told the fearful crowd an entirely different message: ***"If the Lord delights in us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. Only do not rebel against the Lord. And do not fear the people of the land, for they are bread for us. Their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them."*** (Numbers 14:8-9, ESV)

The Israelites chose to believe in the majority report and disbelieve God and began to murmur once more that God had brought them out of Egypt only to kill them at the very edge of the Promised Land. They were so scared that they cried out to have the two faithful spies, Joshua and Caleb, stoned to death (14:10) and God had enough. God threatened to destroy the nation immediately for their hardness of heart, but Moses interceded and pleaded with God and God spared the Jews from His immediate wrath but He did punish them, swearing: ***"They shall not enter my rest"*** (Num 14:22-23; Heb 3:11). All those alive over the age of twenty, would wander the desert for forty years and die before they were to enter the Land, all except for Joshua and Caleb. Only when the last of the rebellious adults had died would their children be allowed to enter the Promised Land, also called by God "my rest." They started out well, but the bodies of the faithless filled millions of sandy graves in the wilderness and they never got to see the Promised Land.

Why does the writer of Hebrews reference these stories? Because he does not want the same thing to happen to the Hebrew Christians to whom he is writing. Look, here is the spiritual reality -- not everyone who came out of Egypt in the Exodus was truly a child of God. Now, I'm sure there were some who truly were children of God by faith who were caught up in this rebellion and made a tragic mistake and thought they were not eternally lost, they did lose the Promised Land. But most were not faithful believers at all and had no part at all with God or His salvation. Many did not really trust God. They were a part of the great

company that came out of Egypt, they had seen God's miracles, they heard his words, but their hearts were hardened. They revealed their true condition by their response to God. Their hearts were hardened toward Him, insensitive to Him. They responded to God with contempt, irreverence, negativism, grumbling, complaining, quarrelling and disobedience – a hardened heart.

Think about the hardness of the Israelites. Where did it come from? It came from unbelief, from faithlessness, from dissatisfaction with God. They did not act on what they said they believed. They did not really believe God's character, did not believe His promises, did not believe His faithfulness, did not believe His warnings about going astray. They did not believe His love, His holiness, or in His rights to rule over them as Sovereign King and Lord. A subtle shift took place. They began to think that the Exodus was primarily about them. They became the center of the story. It became for them – not about how God had miraculously rescued them, not about how God was worthy of their worship and devotion, not that they were debtors to God for all things – it became about how they might use God for their own advantage. And when it seemed like there was no immediate and earthly advantage, no tangible benefit to following God, they quickly degenerated into grumbling, murmuring, complaining, accusation against God, and dissatisfaction. Their hearts, as a whole, never really left Egypt, never really left their old lives. It kept drawing them back. We read stuff like: ***“We remember the fish we ate in Egypt that cost nothing, the cucumbers, the melons, the leeks, the onions, and the garlic. But now our strength is dried up, and there is nothing at all but this manna to look at.”*** (Numbers 11:5–6, ESV) ***“And all the people of Israel grumbled against Moses and Aaron. The whole congregation said to them, “Would that we had died in the land of Egypt! Or would that we had died in this wilderness! Why is the Lord bringing us into this land, to fall by the sword? Our wives and our little ones will become a prey. Would it not be better for us to go back to Egypt?” And they said to one another, “Let us choose a leader and go back to Egypt.”*** (Numbers 14:2–4, ESV) ***“And the people spoke against God and against Moses, “Why have you brought us up out of Egypt to die in the wilderness? For there is no food and no water, and we loathe this worthless food.”*** (Numbers 21:5, ESV) This is shocking, isn't it? God had proved miraculously for them all along, and this was their heart toward Him. They gave no regard to the way that they provoked God, and dishonored Him, and mocked His love, and mocked His grace, and mocked His glory. Their hearts were hardened.

And this is what God said of these people. ***‘They always go astray in their heart; they have not known my ways.’ As I swore in my wrath, ‘They shall not enter my rest.’*** Now again, don't

misunderstand this. It is not to say that everyone who did not enter the Promised Land from the original Exodus was eternally lost, most were, but not all – there was a remnant that was faithful even among those who did not enter the Promised Land, **but** – and this is important - the way that the writer of Hebrews is applying this to his hearers **was** to say that not entering God's rest would mean, for them, that they would not be saved. You see, he is using the illustration of the Exodus as a picture of the present life of faith and he is envisioning the Promised Land as the heavenly inheritance of the people of God. For the individuals in the Hebrew congregation to harden their hearts to God was to show that he/she was not a child of God and would not enter Heaven. He did not want that for them.

He did not want for them to go astray or for them to fail to understand God's ways. Here's what the Hebrews to which he was writing needed to remember: Every Christian is sure to be tested, tried and tempted in this life; and how we respond will manifest the reality of saving faith or the lack of it. In great ways and in small ways, the profession of our faith in Christ will be tested. It is absolutely certain.

First, it's just the way that it will be for a faithful Christian in an increasingly intolerant and Christ-hating culture. As Paul said, **"Indeed, all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted."** (2 Timothy 3:12, ESV) Just this week I read of a doctor employed by the Georgia Department of Health, who is also a preacher, who was fired for the biblical content of his sermons. I also read of a student who was kicked out of the master's program for counseling at Missouri State University because of his stance as a practicing and faithful Christian and he refused to counsel that sin was ok. The temptation for both of these men was to slacken in their faith and commitment to Christ. That's the first thing.

And second -- it is trial, hardship, enduring temptation, and testing that drive us to dependence on God, that provide an avenue to behold His glory, that are the means by which He refines our faith, that are some of the ways in which He shows us His trustworthiness, and that He displays His glory by carrying us through them. They needed to remember this and to have hearts that were sensitive, soft, receptive, attentive, and believing toward God, no matter what circumstances were before them.

The Exodus generation failed badly in their response to trials and testing. They questioned God, treated God with contempt and not worship, hardened their hearts toward Him, and lost the Promised Land. The writer of Hebrews did not want that for the people to whom he was writing. Yes, their circumstances were exceedingly difficult, they were enduring severe trial and testing, but they had also heard God's voice, His word, the gospel truth regarding Christ and rather than letting their hearts be hardened by unbelief, he pleads with them that they would respond with hearts of faithful worship and so prove to be the people of God.

This all goes back to what we talked about when we expounded the first verse of this chapter, right? ***“Therefore, holy brothers, you who share in a heavenly calling, consider Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession,”*** (Hebrews 3:1, ESV) The Exodus generation failed to consider God. Now listen, when we talked about the call to “consider Jesus” the point was not to give to us a new religious “catch phrase” or a concept to throw around. The point was that we must actually do it. Not simply to consider Jesus, but to consider Him first, in everything, at all times – in your homes and what you do as families – in our weekends, our commitments, our calendaring, our recreation and entertainment. Consider Him first in our interactions with others, our actions, our speech, and our attitudes; first in our work, first in our attitudes and desires, first in what we give ourselves to and pursue, first in your finances, first in the midst of trial, testing, and hardship. I could go on and on, but the point is that we must consider Him first, and that He would be the one around whom our entire lives are oriented. He is worthy of it! He bled and died and suffered to give us forgiveness of sins and eternal life. He purchased our souls from the hell and wrath that we deserve. He washed us clean of every sin, made us His own people. He is our Lord and God and He deserves our honor, our love, our faithfulness and our commitment. We must consider Him first! Not just when it's convenient. Not just when you can get to it. Not just when you have enough sleep or enough money or enough notice. Not just when there is nothing else pressing. Nothing is more pressing than He is! ***“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.”*** (Romans 12:1–2, ESV) Consider Jesus first, present yourself to Him as a living sacrifice, and don't be conformed to the world, to Egypt, to your old life from which you were delivered. This is how you keep your heart soft toward the Lord.

See, here is what we need to understand about “hardness of heart.” You don’t have to try to harden your heart to God. You don’t have to work to do that. It doesn’t require a conscious effort. It is the natural predisposition of the fallen human heart. It is the natural habitat of the fallen human heart. All we have to do for our hearts to harden is fail to keep our hearts soft, fail to **“Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life.” (Proverbs 4:23, ESV)** And listen, beloved, because that is the case, the ways in which we can harden our hearts are much more subtle what we see in the very open rebellion of the Israelites in these stories. The hardening of a heart once soft and tender and sensitive to the Lord is a gradual process.

If we are not determined to have sensitive, tender and responsive hearts toward God, it is inevitable that the voice of God will become like background noise in our lives. Let me give you an example of what I mean. When we first moved to Salem from Moneta – out in the sticks – every single night I was awakened from a dead sleep by the sound of the trains. It was a strange sound, an unfamiliar sound, and it woke me up. Guess what? I cannot remember the last time a train woke me up – and I am a light sleeper – and you know why, because I am completely desensitized to that sound now. I don’t hear it at all. It doesn’t awaken me like it used to.

That’s a pretty good picture of what can happen to us spiritually. Remember what it was like when you were first saved? You couldn’t get enough of Jesus, couldn’t get enough of His people. You couldn’t wait to hear the Word preached or to read it. You couldn’t wait to worship and to be with the saints. You prayed with fervor and regularity. It wasn’t just saying prayers, it was talking to the God of the Universe and really amazed that you were able to do that, astonished you were forgiven, astonished you were made a child of God. No sacrifice was too much. You were willing and ready to jump in wherever there was a need. You were really bothered by sin, quick to repent, quick to receive instruction, you welcomed correction. Your heart was sensitive, alive, soft, receptive. Let me ask you beloved, how is your heart today? Is it the same or has it cooled. Because the natural, untended predisposition of the human heart is hardness, insensitivity and unresponsiveness toward God, the author of Hebrews gives us a warning here that we cannot fail to heed.

**A Welcome Warning Very Much Needed (12)** Look what he says, **“Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God.” (Hebrews 3:12, ESV)** Take care – take stock of your heart, take heed, think seriously

about what I am saying to you. Examine your heart toward God and see if there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart. Notice what he calls this – an evil, unbelieving heart. We are so good at redefining things to make them sound better or less serious – surgery is a procedure, a lazy person is a couch potato, between jobs, exotic dancer. But not the writer of Hebrews – he doesn't call this an immature heart, a cluttered heart, a confused heart, or a distracted heart. He calls it what it is, an evil, unbelieving heart -- that's what a hardened heart is. He calls it what it is because it is this kind of heart that leads you to fall away, that leads you to apostatize, from the living God. Take care... This sounds a lot like Paul's admonition in 2 Corinthians 13:5, ***“Examine yourselves, to see whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Or do you not realize this about yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?— unless indeed you fail to meet the test!”*** (2 Corinthians 13:5, ESV)

Now he's hoping better for them, right? He calls them his brothers but he doesn't know the condition of all of their hearts before God – he can't. But he does know that the human heart is deceitful and self-justifying and full of good intentions never carried out. He knows that the human heart cannot be trusted. And so he is telling them and telling us to take a good long look at our hearts and the life that reveals in order that you would keep it soft and receptive to God.

How do you do that? How do you keep your heart soft? You avail yourself of the means of grace, not occasionally, not when the mood strikes you, but all the time. Worship and fellowship, real and earnest prayer, serving Christ, hearing and receiving and believing the Word of God as it is preached and as you hear it. Now listen, you cannot do that in your own power; it requires desperate dependence upon God as if your life depended on it – because it does. But we must humble ourselves. We must be continually looking to God for His grace, for His empowerment, for His mercy. “Oh God, help me! Help me to hear and believe your Word, to obey your truth, to worship you as I should, to fellowship with the saints like you have made me to do, to seek you in prayer, to really lay down my life and my rights to my life, to serve you with joy, to consider Jesus first, to kill all excuses and keep my heart only for you.” We all need to be crying out for this grace, continually, and then doing those things, by faith, through which that grace is communicated.

The writer of Hebrews is telling us, “You have the responsibility to keep your heart sensitive and soft toward the Lord. You have the responsibility to regard the Lord and to discipline yourself to hear His voice. Don't harden your heart but instead, make it soft, pliable,



responsive and entreatable. It is your responsibility to abide in Christ, to lay hold of Him by faith.” That’s how you keep a soft heart toward God that does not lead you to fall away but to remain faithful as at the first. You must do this, but you cannot do it alone and it cannot be put off for another day. That’s why he gives us this exhortation.

**A Timely Exhortation (13-14)** He writes: **“But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called “today,” that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.”** (Hebrews 3:13–14, ESV) Do you see the flow of this? Take care of your own heart and take care of your brothers and sisters. Every day is a battle to be faithful. Every day is a war with the flesh, the devil, and the world. Every day is a battle to keep your heart soft to God and we all need help in that regard. And as strong as you think you might be, you will perish outside of the Body of Christ. You must do everything in your power to avoid spiritual isolation. And here’s why...

Sin is deceitful. It’s a liar. It tells you that no harm will come to you if you disregard God in just this one little area of your life. Sin will lie and tell you that it won’t really hurt anything and no one will know about it anyway. It tells you that this rebellion is only for a season and it’s understandable. It tells you that this might be sin if someone else was doing it but not for you. It tells you that you can stop this little, insignificant slide away from God when you reach a certain point. Don’t sweat it. It tells you that it’s no big deal; you can repent sometime in the future, when it is more convenient. Sin is liar, a deceiver and a killer. And we all need our brothers and sisters in Christ to help us see clearly at one point or another in our lives, to speak the truth to us.

We all need this exhortation. That presupposes two things. First, it presupposes that we actually care about one another’s souls more than our feelings, that we are invested in each other’s lives, that we have relationships with more than the back of people’s heads with whom we attend church. And second, it presupposes that when we need exhortation and correction, we will receive it. Listen, I’m just going to say this. If you have to be approached in “a certain way,” if you are unwilling to receive correction and loving rebuke and exhortation from a brother or a sister in Christ, you have a hardening or a hardened heart and you need to see the danger you are in. If, as a pattern, you are bothered by or offended by someone’s loving care for your soul, you are in dangerous place. It is not unloving or condemning to confront a brother or a sister when you see them cooling in their love for

Christ or sliding away from the Lord. The writer of Hebrews does it and we need to do more of it. Yes, in a loving way, but we need to do it. We need to do it with our spouses, with our kids, and with our brothers and sisters in Christ. Don't talk to other people about it, or tell someone that they should talk to so and so. You do it. And we need to do it today, as long as it is called today. When you see someone slipping in devotion, slipping in worship attendance, turning back to Egypt, disregarding God – don't wait. A soul is at stake!

That is why I preach. Look beloved, I want you to hear me on this, ok? I am not preaching for the people who listen on the Internet, not chiefly. I am not preaching for your co-workers, your friends, or your family members that don't attend here. I am preaching **to** you. I am preaching **for** you. And I am not preaching for your approval, for an "atta-boy" or anything like that. I am preaching for your eternal soul, for your faith, and for your response. These words are for you to hear and for you to respond to. I am preaching for your eternal soul and it is a heavy thing, a heavy burden to bear. Oh, how my soul is burdened for you. It is like a burning in my bones! And here is why: **For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end.** The proof of faith is not found in a good beginning, it is seen in the reality of continuance, faithfulness, and perseverance to the end. God is pleased with a faith that endures. That is the measure of true faith. As Jesus said in Luke 13:24: **"Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able."** (Luke 13:24, ESV) The writer of Hebrews felt that burden for his hearers and that is why he says, last:

**This Really Does Apply to You (15-18)** The writer of Hebrews says: **"As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion." For who were those who heard and yet rebelled? Was it not all those who left Egypt led by Moses? And with whom was he provoked for forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose bodies fell in the wilderness? And to whom did he swear that they would not enter his rest, but to those who were disobedient? So we see that they were unable to enter because of unbelief."** (Hebrews 3:15–19, ESV) Do you see what the writer of Hebrews is doing? He is preaching God's word to them and to us, and he is saying, "If you are hearing God's Word through me, do not ignore it, don't disregard it this warning, don't treat it with contempt, don't act like it doesn't apply to you, because it does. Hear what I am saying to you on behalf of God. Don't harden your heart." He doesn't want them to make the mistake of thinking these words do not apply to them. That's the point of these questions. He wants us to see that those who rebelled were those who heard, those who left Egypt with Moses, coming out in triumphant march, singing after the victory of the Red Sea, and then hardening their hearts through unbelief.

They fell away. While there was a truly saved remnant, most of them died in the wilderness. A good start doesn't guarantee a good finish. They lost out on the Promised Land and many of them lost their own souls, because what they heard from God through Moses, what they saw with their own eyes, was not mixed with faith. They did not respond in faith to God. They responded in evil unbelief. And that's the point. Don't be among that company and forfeit the hope and promise of eternal life through unbelief and hardness of heart.

This is a serious warning that we cannot simply hear and then just go about our day. These are words for every one of us. Beloved, put your pens and pencils down, stop taking notes and listen, ok? This danger of falling away is serious, especially in this deceitful and seductive age in which we live. This is a warning that is meant to cause the believing heart, the soft heart, to desire to keep a soft heart toward God, to hear and receive and contemplate and then respond to his words. They are meant to awaken us and to feed a desire to never be guilty of hearing only, but to search the areas of our lives where we are straying and becoming hardened and repent and seek grace and deal with them in Christ.

And it's a warning that is meant to cause those whose hearts are becoming hardened to realize the serious peril that they are in and to repent and change, to stop the slide back to the old life, to realize that confessing Christ goes far beyond what we say with our lips and know in our heads to how we actually live. Professions minus substance, minus evidence, are worthless. I can't help but read this text without thinking of Jesus' words to the church in Laodicea, **“‘I know your works: you are neither cold nor hot. Would that you were either cold or hot! So, because you are lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say, I am rich, I have prospered, and I need nothing, not realizing that you are wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. I counsel you to buy from me gold refined by fire, so that you may be rich, and white garments so that you may clothe yourself and the shame of your nakedness may not be seen, and salve to anoint your eyes, so that you may see. Those whom I love, I reprove and discipline, so be zealous and repent. Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and eat with him, and he with me. The one who conquers, I will grant him to sit with me on my throne, as I also conquered and sat down with my Father on his throne. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.’”** (Revelation 3:15–22, ESV) Hear His voice today, have ears to hear, please.

Today really does matter for eternity. Each of us needs to respond to these words. They are not for someone else; they are for you. There is trend that I've seen that is deeply troubling – a lack of discernable response to the Word of God as personal to me. As soon as the sermon is over, I see the exodus that takes place from the pews to the lobby, as if there is nothing that has been said to consider. People will say, “Well, you don't know what is going on in the pews.” Maybe so, but I have to be honest, there was a time in this church when the altar was not empty at the end of the service, when the elders had people to pray with, when there was serious dealing with God taking place, when the work of God in our midst every Sunday was evident, a time that was encouraging and real and raw, and no one cared about how it looked that they “went to the altar.” There is something real, humble and essential about that kind of response to God by His people. I don't know what happened, but oh how I long for those days to return, for that realness and rawness to return.

And listen beloved, I'm not longing for it so that my ministry is validated – I couldn't care less about that. I am longing for that kind of response to God's Word... for your sake, because I love you, because I want your heart to be soft toward God, and because I love Jesus Christ and He is worthy of it.

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