

Title: Don't Forget To Pick Up Your Prize... - Hebrews 3:13 - 4:7a

Read:

For as long as it's still God's Today, keep each other on your toes so sin doesn't slow down your reflexes. If we can only keep our grip on the sure thing we started out with, we're in this with Christ for the long haul. These words keep ringing in our ears: Today, please listen; don't turn a deaf ear as in the bitter uprising. For who were the people who turned a deaf ear? Weren't they the very ones Moses led out of Egypt? And who was God provoked with for forty years? Wasn't it those who turned a deaf ear and ended up corpses in the wilderness? And when he swore that they'd never get where they were going, wasn't he talking to the ones who turned a deaf ear? They never got there because they never listened, never believed. For as long, then, as that promise of resting in him pulls us on to God's goal for us, we need to be careful that we're not disqualified. We received the same promises as those people in the wilderness, but the promises didn't do them a bit of good because they didn't receive the promises with faith. If we believe, though, we'll experience that state of resting. But not if we don't have faith. Remember that God said, Exasperated, I vowed, "They'll never get where they're going, never be able to sit down and rest." God made that vow, even though he'd finished his part before the foundation of the world.

Think:

If God's promises are so great and God is so loving, why doesn't everybody receive the benefits? That's what some people ask, and for some people it's an obstacle to even believing in God. But as today's verse states, nothing has ever been missing from God's promises. His part of the bargain is complete. A famous monk called Anselm explained it this way: if you don't receive an apple from me it can mean one of two things. Either I did not offer you an apple, or I did offer you an apple and you just didn't take it. The Israelites didn't enter God's rest, and it's not because God wasn't holding the door open. It's because they didn't have faith to enter. Lots of Christians will tell you they spent years wondering why God wasn't giving them the comfort, or peace, or salvation they expected from Him, only to eventually find that He'd been there with His arms outstretched all along. They simply needed to reach back in faith.

Pray:

Father give me the faith I need to enter into all the promises You have made. Thank you that you never take back Your word, and You never forget to do what You've said You'll do. Amen

Action:

God has made lots of promises, and He keeps them all. But Jesus said that because humans sometimes forget the promises they've made, it's actually better not to make a vow that you'll do something, but simply think about it and say "yes I will" or "no I can't". Try that principle out for a week, and see if it saves you from making a few hasty promises you won't be able to keep!