

Dr. David A. deSilva, Hebrews, Session 4, Hebrews 3:1-4:13: The Dangers of Distrust

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All right, let's kick off our deep dive today. We're going to be looking at Hebrews, chapters 3.1 to 4.13. Oh yeah, one of my favorites. And to guide us through this, we've got the insights of Dr. David A. deSilva.

He presents a fascinating comparison of Jesus to Moses. Kind of unexpected, right? So deSilva points out that right from the start, the author of Hebrews uses some pretty powerful language, addressing his audience as holy brothers and sisters, partners of a heavenly calling. Yeah, those are powerful terms, right? Really gives you a sense of identity, like belonging to something special.

Yeah. This new kinship group, sort of set apart from the world, a community with a shared purpose, you know. And that whole idea of a heavenly calling almost makes you think of a new exodus, like they're on a journey from the ordinary to something, well, more divine.

Right. And that sets up this whole comparison with Moses. DeSilva emphasizes that Jesus isn't just another prophet like Moses.

He's presented as something way greater, a son, not just a servant. Exactly. And to illustrate that point, he uses this really thought-provoking analogy.

Okay, lay it on me. Jesus is to Moses as a builder is to a house, and as God is to, well, to all of creation. Okay, I got to admit, that's a little bit of a head scratcher at first.

But stick with me here, folks. If we think about it in terms of community, right? Jesus is the builder. The faithful are the house.

What does that tell us about the kind of community that Jesus is trying to create? Like what makes a house, you know, strong and lasting? That is a fantastic question. You don't just throw a house together, right? It's got to be carefully planned, constructed with intention. Every part, every person has to play a role.

They all got to support the whole structure. Exactly. And our place in this house, deSilva says, depends on our boldness and the boast of hope.

So for us today, what does that kind of boldness look like, practically speaking? You know, I think it's about living out our faith with confidence, even when it's tough. Not being afraid to show what you believe and clinging to that hope. Knowing for sure we're part of something bigger.

Something that will ultimately win out in the end. Makes you think about the Israelites wandering in the desert, doesn't it? They were so close to the promised land, but fear and doubt crept in. DeSilva connects their story to the warnings in Hebrews.

We're not immune to that same deceitfulness of sin. He brings up that whole story of the Exodus generation, you know, from Numbers 14 and Psalm 95. They saw God's miracles firsthand, but they still didn't enter the promised land.

All because they lacked trust. It's wild, isn't it? It is. And deSilva uses it as a cautionary tale.

Like, hey, we can fall prey to those same temptations. Doubt. It's that- it's what he calls the deceitfulness of sin that can lead us astray.

It's those moments when you know you should be focused on what really matters, but you get distracted. Those little choices can pull us away from God, right? So how do we combat that? How do we stay on track, avoid those pitfalls? Well, deSilva emphasizes that God's rest isn't just about reaching some physical place like the Israelites reaching Canaan. It's about entering a deeper spiritual rest.

A place of harmony with God. It makes me think about the Sabbath. That day of rest God created.

But if reaching Canaan was God's ultimate rest, why would the psalmist, centuries later, still be talking about entering into God's rest? What are your thoughts on that? Well, that's where it gets really interesting, right? It suggests that rest is something much deeper, something eternal. It goes beyond just our earthly experience. Right.

And deSilva points out that Jesus, according to Hebrews, has already entered this rest. He's completed his work, and now he's sitting at God's right hand. Quite a powerful image, huh? Powerful indeed.

Yeah, it's a beautiful picture of what awaits us. If we hold fast to our faith, we too can enter that eternal rest, just like Jesus. It's encouraging, isn't it? It gives you hope.

But deSilva also doesn't shy away from some of the, well, the more intense imagery in Hebrews, like when he talks about the Word of God being sharper than any two-edged sword. Oh, yeah. I don't know about you, but that image kind of makes me feel a little exposed.

It is striking, that's for sure. And deSilva connects that image to the idea of being accountable before God. You know, like we can't hide anything from him.

He even uses this phrase that always gets me: naked with our throats laid bare. Wow, okay, yeah. That's intense.

It really makes you think about the weight of our choices, doesn't it? But maybe it's also freeing in a way, like we don't have to pretend with God. He sees us for who we really are. What do you think? More unsettling or more freeing? Honestly, I think it's a bit of both.

There's definitely a sense of vulnerability there, knowing nothing is hidden from God. But at the same time, there's freedom in knowing we can come to him just as we are. No masks, no pretenses.

It's like finally letting go of something you've been carrying for ages, a burden you didn't even realize was weighing you down. And deSilva reminds us it's God's judgment that truly matters, not the judgment of other people. Absolutely.

And that brings us back to this whole idea of God's rest. We're all on this journey towards that divine realm, that place of eternal peace and harmony with God. But just like with the Israelites, it's not always easy, is it? Nope.

Not always a smooth path. There will be moments when we're tempted to give up, turn back, settle for less than what God has promised. DeSilva warns against what he calls the wicked heart of distrust, that inner voice that whispers doubts and fears, trying to pull us away from God's path.

It's like that nagging feeling that we're not good enough, that God couldn't possibly love us, or that his promises aren't really meant for us. So how do we fight that? How do we keep those voices from taking over? Well, deSilva emphasizes clinging to hope. It's the antidote to despair, the light that shines through the darkness, the constant reminder that even in the midst of trials, God is working everything out for our good.

It's what keeps us going when we feel like giving up. Like having that unwavering belief that you can finish a marathon, even when your muscles are aching, and you just want to collapse. Exactly.

And it's not just blind optimism. It's about anchoring our hope in God's promises, knowing that he's faithful, even when our circumstances seem to contradict that. So we've talked about this rest as a destination, a spiritual destination.

But practically speaking, what does that look like in our lives? Is it just about, you know, kicking back and relaxing in heaven someday? Or is there more to it? DeSilva argues it's much deeper than that. He uses the imagery of the Sabbath, the seventh day of creation, when God rested. It's not just about ceasing activity.

It's about entering into a state of complete harmony with God, a state of deep peace and fulfillment. Almost like stepping into a sanctuary, a place of perfect tranquility and connection with God. That's a beautiful way to put it.

But here's the key. We can't just passively wait for that rest to come to us. We have to actively pursue it.

Right. Just like the Israelites had to journey to the promised land, we have to actively participate in our own journey towards God's rest. We have to make choices that align with God's will, even when it's tough.

Exactly. And remember, the Israelites failed to enter God's rest because of disobedience and a lack of trust. We can't assume we'll just automatically reach the destination.

We've got to be intentional about cultivating a deep, abiding, trusting God and resisting temptations that might lead us astray. It's like training for a marathon. You can't just coast along and expect to cross the finish line.

Right. You've got to put in the work, stay focused. You got to persevere, even when it's tough.

And that's where the power of God's word comes in. DeSilva points out that the word is living and active. It can transform our hearts and minds, sharpen our focus, and equip us for the journey.

It's like that energy drink you might grab at a rest stop during a marathon to give you that extra boost to keep going. Yeah, I like that. It revitalizes us, strengthens us, guides us along the path.

But remember that image of the two-edged sword? Yeah. The Sylva reminds us that God's word doesn't just comfort and guide us. It also holds us accountable.

It cuts through all our excuses, our attempts to hide from the truth. He uses that powerful image of standing naked with our throats laid bare before God. We can't fool God.

He sees right through us, knows our deepest thoughts and motivations. It's definitely unnerving, but there's also a strange sense of freedom in that, wouldn't you say? Like we can finally stop pretending and just be real with God. Flaws and all.

It is. That's the incredible beauty of grace. It's not about earning our way into God's good graces.

It's about receiving his love and forgiveness, even when we mess up, even when we fall short. So if we want to experience this rest, this deep peace and connection with God, how do we cultivate that kind of unshakable trust? How do we drown out those voices of doubt and fear? DeSilva offers some practical suggestions. First, stay connected to God's word.

Read it, study it, meditate on it. Let it really sink into your heart and mind. Let it shape your thoughts and actions.

Like establishing a daily workout routine for our souls. Exactly. Gotta keep those spiritual muscles in shape.

So immersing ourselves in God's word is like the ultimate gym for our spirits. What else? What else does he suggest? Prayer. Talk to God.

Share your hopes and fears, your joys and sorrows. Open up that line of communication with the creator of the universe. It is amazing to think that we have that kind of access to God, isn't it? We can just pour out our hearts to him, knowing he's listening, and he cares.

It is. And finally, surround yourself with other believers. Find a community that shares your faith.

People who can encourage you, support you, and hold you accountable. Like the author of Hebrews addressing his readers as holy brothers and sisters, it reinforces the idea that we weren't meant to walk this path alone. We need each other, just like those early Christians needed each other.

They met together, they prayed together, they supported each other through trials, they celebrated their victories together. Absolutely. It's like having an incredible team that you train with for a marathon.

They push you, they inspire you, and they celebrate every milestone with you. So as we continue to look at Hebrews, I'm struck by the fact that this rest isn't just some distant future reward; it's something we can experience right now. In the midst of our everyday lives, it's about cultivating that inner peace and connection with God that transcends our circumstances.

That's a powerful insight, and it's a journey, a process of continually aligning our hearts and minds with God's will, of choosing trust over fear, hope over despair. It's about embracing the fullness of God's promises and allowing his grace to transform us from the inside out. It's about making that choice, that conscious choice to trust God.

Yeah, to say, yes, I'm going to embrace these promises even when things are tough, even when I don't understand, even when I'm afraid. It's like those moments in a marathon when every part of you just wants to quit. Oh yeah, your legs are screaming, your lungs are burning.

But you dig deep. You find that extra reserve of strength. You know that finish line.

It's worth it. And that's the kind of resilience, that strength that we need on this spiritual journey. We're going to face obstacles.

We're going to hit those walls. But we can't let them defeat us. We've got to remember who we are.

You know, those holy brothers and sisters the author of Hebrews talks about. Partners in this incredible heavenly calling. That's our identity, our purpose.

And it's what keeps us moving forward when things get tough. It's such a powerful reminder that we're not alone in this. We're part of something much bigger than ourselves.

We're part of God's family, his chosen people, the inheritors of his amazing promises. And knowing that, understanding our true identity, it gives us the strength to overcome any obstacle. To face any challenge.

To endure any hardship. It allows us to live with that boldness and boast of hope that deSilva talks about. It empowers us to stand up for what we believe in, even when it's difficult.

Even when it costs us something. It's about letting our faith have an impact on the world around us. Shining a light in the darkness and bringing a little bit of that divine realm to Earth.

That's what makes this journey so incredible. It's not just about reaching some far-off destination. It's about the transformation that happens within us and in the world around us.

It's about becoming more like Christ. More loving, more compassionate, more forgiving. More joyful, more peaceful.

And as we immerse ourselves in God's word, as we surrender to his will. We'll start to see those changes taking shape. Both in our own lives and in the lives of those around us.

So let's not settle for, you know, a lukewarm faith. A faith that barely makes a dent in the world. Let's embrace the fullness of God's promises.

Let's live with passion, with purpose. Let's truly make a difference. Let's be those partners of a heavenly calling.

Those agents of transformation. Those beacons of hope that the world so desperately needs. And let's never underestimate the power of that living and active word.

The key to unlocking God's promises. The guide that leads us to his rest. The weapon that equips us for the battles we face.

So as we wrap up this deep dive into Hebrews. Let's take those words to heart. Let's allow them to shape our thoughts, our actions, our entire lives.

Let's live each day with a renewed sense of purpose. With a deep and abiding trust in God's goodness. And with unwavering determination to reach that final glorious destination.

Thanks for joining us on this incredible journey. And we look forward to diving into something new with you next time.