

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

BOOK OF HEBREWS

RESTING (HEBREWS 4:1-2) "LET US FEAR" NEEDS TO BE EXPLAINED

This is the fear the author had that some recipients of this letter would live in disobedience. This is a healthy fear that inspired the author to minister to others

- Most of the Exodus Jews (all people over 20) died before reaching the Promised Land. The author didn't want NT believers to face a similar fate

THERE ARE MULTIPLE FACETS OF SALVIFIC REST

This chapter will touch on several, but this passage focuses on the fact that the NT believers need to **claim the rest God had purchased for them through Christ**

- The Gospel, or good news of Jesus, was available for all, but needed to be received. But **it was not enough to simply hear it.**

IT MUST BE ABSORBED

Exodus Jews heard the message of deliverance but refused to believe it, therefore receiving no value from it. The author didn't want us to make the same mistake

- Without faith it is impossible to please God (Hebrews 11:6), and hearing **the Gospel is of no benefit if we don't believe it and act on it.**

GOD RESTED (HEBREWS 4:3-5)

THOSE WHO GENUINELY BELIEVE ENTER INTO HIS DIVINE REST AT CONVERSION AND GET A FULLER EXPERIENCE OF THAT AS THEY GROW IN CHRIST

This goes back to Psalm 95. It reminds us that rebellion to God angers Him and prevents rest. **Is our "do what we want" culture restful?**

OUR REST SHOULD RESEMBLE GOD'S REST

God took time to enjoy His work (Genesis 1-2) and **we are commanded** to take time **to slow down, reflect on His work in our lives, and recharge** by the power of the Holy Spirit. **Sabbath comes when we take on Christ's yoke** (Matthew 11:28-30)

REST ONLY COMES AFTER DILIGENT WORK

Resting does not mean we sit idly by. It conveys our total acceptance by God into His family, in which we enjoy His presence, leadership, peace, and power.

- **The response of grace is hard work that glorifies the Father. Living in the Father's will produces peace, rest, comfort, and counsel**

AFTER CREATION, GOD MODELED REST BY CELEBRATING IN HIS CREATION.

Again, rest is not an absence of labor, it is a peace that is found in working for God and celebrating what He has done. **Our salvation from His work produces a people who receive divine energy to serve, obey, and work for Him.**

- Eternity will be a place of rest, not laziness. We will have opportunities to "work" in the form of praise and servitude to God (Revelation 5:12-13, 21:1)

WE MUST CHOOSE REST (V5)

Jesus' will is that all enter into his rest (2 Peter 3:9), but some will forfeit rest by choosing a life of disobedience to God.

A CONSISTENT REST (HEBREWS 4:6-10) A CONDITIONAL PROMISE

Though the 1st gen Exodus Jews didn't receive the promise, someone had to for God to keep His word. So, their children who chose to walk with God did

THE FIRST GENERATION STUMBLED

Exodus Jews had clear direction from God through Moses, but disobeyed and never received their reward. We have clear directives from God through His Word

- The author warns that the same rest, or failure to rest, is offered to us. If we choose disobedience to Christ, we choose to let our hearts harden

MORE THAN JUST THE COMFORTS OF THIS LIFE

The great successor of Moses, Joshua, gave the Jews political and social stability, but God had even more in mind for His people

- God gave us governmental structure for our service (Romans 13:4), but **only salvation in Christ can give internal peace and hope.** Ultimately, security comes from God

WHEN DO WE EXPERIENCE THIS REST?

Rest begins at the acceptance of our faith. When we choose to follow Christ and repent, His Spirit gives us contentment now regardless of the burdens of this life

- Jesus completes us (Colossians 2:10), and though we are not perfect, **Jesus grooms us to be more like Him as we grow in our faith**

IF WE WALK IN HIM, WE ENJOY PEACE, JOY, AND COMMUNITY WITH HIM NOW AND LATER

We get a taste now, and its completion in heaven. This life is an investment in our eternal life. Though hard, Jesus aids us through this existence into our final home

DIAGNOSTICS (HEBREWS 4:11-13) THE WORD EXAMINES US

V11 encourages us to seek God's rest by reading the Word of God. This requires obedience, and obedience involves determination on our part. **We must want to grow closer to God,** and know the effort is worth the reward!

THOUGH WE PUT FORTH EFFORT, WE LEAN ON HIS ABILITY TO WORK ON OUR HEARTS AND MINDS

We must "abide in Him" (John 15:5-7) and confess helplessness that shows an ardent trust in Christ as the One that empowers us to live in a way that pleases the Father

THE BIBLE IS RELEVANT, ACTIVE, SHARP, DISCERNING. IT CORRECTS, INSTRUCTS, AND ENCOURAGES

Our primary contact with God is through prayer and the Word. The Word anchors us in times of confusion, gives us hope in times of doubt, and is the compass of good and evil

THE WORD IS LIVING AND DRIVES HOME PROMISES TO BELIEVERS AND WARNINGS TO THE DISOBEDIENT

It is active. It changes us, holds us to a higher standard, and instructs us in every arena of life. It penetrates the soul and softens the hardest of hearts. It is discerning. The Word judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart

THIS IS A VERSE WORTH PONDERING! (V13)

No creation is hidden from God's sight, and every person is "naked and exposed" to the eyes of God. Nothing can be done that God doesn't know about.

- Not only can we not escape His sight, but we must give an account to Him for the choices we have made and the actions we have taken

WHO CAN REPRESENT GUILTY SINNERS TO A GOD THAT SEES ALL? JESUS, THE SON OF GOD.

We cannot hide because God sees our guilt, but Jesus Christ was sent by the all-knowing God to give us the means to escape the slavery of sin.

PURSuing GRACE (HEBREWS 4:14-16)

JESUS IS OUR "GREAT HIGH PRIEST": OUR LEADER, EXAMPLE, AND MEDIATOR TO GOD THE FATHER

He is superior to all other priests because of His work on the cross that bought our sins and opened up the door for our reconciliation with God

JESUS HAS ALSO "PASSED THROUGH THE HEAVENS" AND IS THE SON OF GOD

Though priests, and all true believers, can be in the presence of God, Jesus is beyond all time and space and is one with God the Father

- Jesus is both God and man, so He can connect and sympathize with our needs. Because we know this, we can relate and hold onto Jesus and our faith

JESUS IS ABLE TO HELP US NAVIGATE LIFE

Jesus can help us in temptations because He was tempted. We see that Jesus is not distant and remote, but is a personal God, even living as one of us for 33 years.

- **Jesus' life gives us hope because God lived as one of His creations.** He went through all adversity and has overcome

MISTAKES WOULD HAVE NEGATED HIS WORK

Jesus was tempted by hunger, acclaim, and power (Matthew 4), but He claimed victory. Any sin would've made Jesus an unacceptable sacrifice (1 Peter 1:19)

WHAT IS OUR RESPONSE TO SUCH A SACRIFICE?

First, we must simply approach. We must choose to engage God, and we must have a reverence and awe that He deserves.

- **Second, we approach the "throne of grace".** We must know this is something we have not earned, but is freely given. We must not take for granted or abuse the forgiveness and mercy of God.
- **Third, we approach with confidence.** We are to come to Christ with assurance, not in our abilities or works, but in His. We must trust that God has all the answers, grace, and love that we need to follow Him
- **Lastly, we come to obtain His mercy and grace.** God's mercy prescribes pardon for our failures, and His grace provides strength for the demands of living for God

AN HONEST EVALUATION

- Are we a people that properly rest? Do we work in such a manner that constitutes Sabbath rest?
- Are we restless because we don't believe our distractions are an issue? Do we want the Word to evaluate us? Do we really want to know God's absolutes?

A (NOT ALWAYS EASY) STRATEGY

- Approach, seek, study, attend, repent, ask, and listen. **We must intentionally Sabbath.** A relationship with God must be the highest priority. If this relationship is broken, all relationships and aspirations will be broken. We must have confidence that Christ is capable and willing to save us.