

Hebrews 4:3-5

The Rest of Believing

Sometimes when we read the words of scripture the whole sense of what is being said in the original language gets muddled up in ours. For no two languages ever translate exactly, there is always structure and nuance that is lost in translation. This statement about entering our rest is a good case in point... in the Greek this statement is present tense - it should thus be rendered as "we who believe" rather than we who have believed - the act of ongoing belief in God is where our rest finds its fulfillment. This is the Sabbath rest that God speaks of, it is the rest that rests in His ongoing eternal rest from all His work... the rabbis asserted that God's Sabbath (i.e. "the Day of Rest") never ceased because the regular formula of Gen. 1, "there was evening and there was morning, day ...," is never mentioned in connection with this seventh day of creation in Gen. 2:2. The breaking of the pattern is important for us to note, for it tells us that God is not still trying to sort out His work, manufacture His plan, determine the end game... it is all accomplished and all perfectly managed. As we

considered last week, God has not failed, and this has implications for us, and for our **rest**... we rest in Him who rests and our rest is as complete as His own rest is.

I. ENTERING REST –

We enter in to His rest when we believe what He promises, faith is the God ordained, singular manner of obtaining what God has promised, it is our only means of appropriating the blessing. The statement is a promise, we are sure to enter in, we have, in fact, **already entered** in to the present-day possession:

a. We have fellowship with God

- i. Ceasing from striving
- ii. Ceasing from worry
- iii. Ceasing from scheming, plotting, seeking to make your own way
- iv. Believing that what God plans is absolutely better than anything you might otherwise have arranged.

b. We have union with Christ –

Romans 6.5-7

- i. Freedom from sin
- ii. Pardon for our old sin
- iii. The promise of ongoing forgiveness when we fail in the future
- iv. Peace of Conscience

Romans 8:1 (NKJV) *There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.*

c. We have joy in the Spirit

d. We have growth of and growth IN grace

e. We have the death of fear in the midst of trials and temptation...

II. REST IS A MYSTERY-

The rest that comes to us in the midst of all life's trials is a shocking mystery to those who do not possess it... consider the anger and vitriolic rhetoric being bandied about regarding the virus among those who do not believe, who do not rest in God and thus do not have rest even as an option.

a. Just think about the difference between Joshua and Caleb and the other 10 spies... the ten were only afraid, the 2? Only knew that God could be trusted no matter what.

b. Without trusting God and resting in Him there is no hope

- i. Of entering our rest
- ii. Of entering into peace
- iii. Of entering into heaven
- iv. Of living a life of purpose and dignity

c. This is why they did not enter into His rest. They did not believe. They did not trust. They did not rest upon Him, they did not rest with Him. This is the same urgent need today, we must believe

God. We must cast ourselves upon His promise with all we are and all we have.

III. UNBELIEF IS FAILURE TO REST –

Those who do not believe DO NOT enter in to His rest, for doubting God is the core of what it is to have unrest. Trusting and believing God is a condition of the heart. Failure to do so is also a condition of the heart, and God has given us some tools to guard our hearts against this insidious evil

Hebrews 3:12-13

a. Regular Spiritual health checks –

see to it brothers that ...

b. Mutual encouragement which can only come from active involvement in a loving, honest church fellowship –

c. Personal investigation and repentance –

2 Corinthians 13:5 (NKJV) ⁵ Examine yourselves *as to whether you are in the faith. Test yourselves. Do you not know yourselves, that Jesus Christ is in you?—unless indeed you are disqualified.*

d. Believing that God has not, will not, cannot fail!! It is casting yourself upon that promise, it is swinging into eternity upon a scarlet thread, it is the full and complete confidence that if God is false, there is no hope in anything else. That He is worth the risk of anything and everything, that He can absolutely be trusted. And faith is the only means of access to this promise!!!

e. Faith is **believing** God -

Hebrews 11.1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things unseen.

You do not have to see the proof, do not have to experience the fulfillment in order to believe that what He has said is the truth without exception and without error.

- i. Everything He says
- ii. Everything He asserts
- iii. Everything He promises
- iv. Everything He will do
- v. Everything He is

IV. THERE IS NO OTHER OPTION –

God will not provide a back door into rest when someone denies Him. Seeking the blessings of knowing God while rejecting Him is utterly without hope.

a. Knowing God IS eternal life!

John 17:1–3 (NKJV) Jesus spoke these words, lifted up His eyes to heaven, and said: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify Your Son, that Your Son also may glorify You, ² as You have given Him authority over all flesh, that He should give eternal life to as many as You have given Him. ³ And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent.

- b. His rest is what He promises us and He rested from all his work on the Sabbath - for it was complete. The Hebrew in Genesis 2 is singular, God rested from all His WORK. A singular work defined all that God did and created. There was nothing else to add, no further refinement was needed. For Him to be forced to prepare a way for someone to enter into His peace without Him would be utterly ludicrous... the idea of God's rest and peace without God is empty and lifeless.
- c. Thus the culmination of having absolutely no desire for God, for the rest that is inherent in His presence is to be denied the possibility of having that rest at all... ("they shall not enter in to MY rest") the real tragedy is that there is no rest to be had anywhere else. We sacrifice the real for the imagined and find that the imagined holds nothing... Thus in one sense our only work is trust in God, and when we have done that we rest from our work... when we have NOT done that, we do not rest.

d. This is particularly important to be mindful of in regards to our salvation. We please God not because of our work but because of His. Resting in His promise rather than striving and laboring with our own impotent works.