



Sermon Notes

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Title: Boldly enter into His rest and grace

#5 in Series on the Book of Hebrews

1. The promise of rest (cf. Heb. 4:1-10)

- a. God has set before a promise of rest, a promise that the writer of Hebrews is concerned some may miss out on if his audience does not persevere in faith and obedience. The idea of “rest” is an important one to all of creation and runs through all the different periods of life: God rested after creating all things, He instituted the Sabbath, the offer of the Promised Land to the Hebrews, the year of Jubilee, by what we now call “our weekends,” and eventually by the promise of Heaven. The Greek word for rest means “a calming of the winds” and “refreshment.”
 - i. Rest of conscience. Jn. 5:24, “*Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life.*” Our sins must no longer burden or grind us down, we are free. Jn. 8:36, “*Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed.*”
 - ii. Refreshment from weariness. Mt. 11:28, “*Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.*”
 - iii. Peace to contemplate. When it is said that “God did rest,” it does not mean that He was wearied with His toil, but merely that He “ceased” from the breathtaking work of creation. He no more put forth creative energy, but calmly contemplated His own works in their beauty and grandeur. (cf. Gen. 1:31)
 - iv. The assurance of a final rest to come. Jn. 14:1-6, “*Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.*” Thomas said to Him, “*Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?*” Jesus said to him, “*I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.*”
- b. The writer of Hebrews takes the time in verses 1-10 to demonstrate that entering into the Promised Land was not the ultimate rest that God intended. It is important in many ways to recognize that peace and rest do not come from the ownership of a piece of property and or the governance of a certain people. The Hebrews for centuries have equated the Holy Land with rest, what God is trying to show them is that there is a “country” further on that is both more precious and rewarding. (cf. Heb. 11:16) The ultimate occupation of a physical land should not be the end goal or objective of a Kingdom oriented believer; that is not where our rest is to be found.
 - i. This is also where his later development of “pilgrim” or “sojourner” is so important, drawn from the fact that the word “Hebrew” is likely derived from the term “to cross over”, meaning “sojourner” in a foreign land. The term “Hebrew” was first used of Abraham in Gen. 14:13 and underscores the importance of the land of promise. By calling Palestine “the land of the Hebrews” in Gen. 40:15 was a deliberate paradox, for sojourners don't have a land.

- ii. Jesus also told us in Jn. 18:36, *"My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here."*
 - c. *"...he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works..."* While our salvation is nowhere based upon our works, our "works" clearly demonstrate our faith which in the Bible are no longer considered works but rather "fruit." We no longer work for our salvation and our rest; rather we abide in a finished work of Christ and allow that organic relationship to develop in us a character and nature that bears much fruit. Jn. 15:5, *"I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing."* And Gal. 5:22-23, *"But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."*
2. The Word discovers our condition (cf. Heb. 4:11-13)
- a. Be diligent to enter into His rest. Strive to abide. There is, again, the natural pull towards chaos, towards sin, towards temptation & murmuring, towards disunity, etc. To attain order, obedience, faith, unity and love requires a concentrated diligence; we can not in any way afford apathy in our lives. Make every effort to appreciate and benefit from what God has already provided. Salvation is not to be taken for granted; to appropriate the gift God offers requires decision and commitment.
 - b. Therefore, abide in His Word. The Word of God [Gr. *rhema*] is *"living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart."* The eyes of the Living God look upon our intents and motives as well as our actions, because these reveal the character of our heart. Who is the character of our heart?
 - i. We read in Ez. 36:26, *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."* God does not want "law-abiding" believers; He wants disciples after His own heart, Ez. 36:27, *"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."* God doesn't want the Law to abide in our hearts, but His very own Spirit.
 - c. Soulical y Spiritual believers. The Word discerns intentions, intentions reveal the source of what we're doing and why. Are we doing out of obedience to the command of God, or are we doing out of guilt, pride, insincerity, self-deception, or some other carnal emotion? Rightly dividing between the invisible parts of man, the soul & spirit, is the next step of maturity every believer must take. (cf. Mt. 7:21-22, Jer. 17:10,
 - d. There is no hiding place from God, in God yes, but not from God. And we must give an account.
 - i. Eccl. 12:14, *"For God will bring every work into judgment, Including every secret thing, Whether good or evil."*
 - ii. 2 Cor. 5:9-11, *"Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him. For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive the things done in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terror of the Lord, we persuade men;"*
3. Our compassionate High Priest (cf. Heb. 4:14-16)
- a. One of the most well known stories of the High Priest is that of Aaron when God's wrath was against the rebellious Hebrews. Num. 16:46-48, *"So Moses said to Aaron, "Take a censer and put fire in it from the altar, put incense on it, and take it quickly to the congregation and make atonement for them; for wrath has gone out from the LORD. The plague has begun." Then Aaron took it as Moses commanded, and ran*

into the midst of the assembly; and already the plague had begun among the people. So he put in the incense and made atonement for the people. And he stood between the dead and the living; so the plague was stopped.” If we confess Jesus as Christ and as Lord, then He stands between us and the wrath of God; His blood and His prayers intercede on our behalf making a pleasing sacrifice to God for the forgiveness of our sins.

- i. The confession is one of faith acknowledging His divinity (Christ) and His lordship (Lord), recognizing His character and therefore confessing His function. By faith, not by intellectual conviction, we are then saved and forgiven.
 - b. Therefore come boldly to His throne of grace. God the Father wants us. He made a Way to come to Him. He doesn't want us to stand afar off from Him, but rather to approach Him and be in relationship as a father with his children.
 - c. Jesus knows our frailties because He lived as Man. He is compassionate.
 - d. We are come regularly to obtain mercy and grace in our time of need. This is not a one-off proposition; this is a continual lifestyle of abiding and drawing measures of mercy and grace so we can live the Kingdom lives He intends. Some hesitate in coming even one time because they are afraid to confess their need; others feel that once they're saved the rest is up to them. But how can we live a Christ like life without the spirit of Christ?
4. These are two of the of five dangers to the believer in the book of Hebrews:
- a. The danger of neglect, Heb. 2:1-4
 - b. The danger of unbelief, Heb. 3:7-4:13
 - c. The danger of spiritual immaturity, Heb. 5:11–6:20
 - d. The danger of failing to endure, Heb. 10:26-39
 - e. The inherent danger of refusing God, Heb. 12:25-29