

((READ TEXT & PRAY))

SERIES: **BETTER- Hope from the book of Hebrews**

Clip of a comedian: *“I can explain food, but I can’t explain sleep to an alien who doesn’t sleep”*

Food: *I need energy, so I eat this apple to use the energy from this apple*

Sleep: *At night, regardless of how much energy I’ve consumed, I gotta shut it down*

WE ALL HAVE TO REST!

TITLE: **The Test of Rest** TEXT: **Hebrews 4:1-11**

OUTLINE:

- *The dilemma of rest*
- *3 Purposes of sabbath rest*
- *3 Postures in light of the promise of rest*
- *The sermon in a sentence*
- *A question to ponder*

Most of us haven’t grasped the importance of pursuing rest in Christ.

We’ve learned how to *relax*, but we haven’t understood what it means for our souls to *rest* in Him

The Dilemma- Without Christ, even resting will feel like work

When your soul is not at rest, vacations, and days off are not rest; they are just distractions.

An escape, but the inner anxiety, dissatisfaction doesn’t go away, you just cover it up for a while.

Rest, in the bible, is a deeply theological concept-

What was it Jesus offered? *“come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you **rest**”*

Isaiah 30:15-16 For the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, has said:

“You will be delivered by returning and resting; your strength will lie in quiet confidence.

But you are not willing.” ¹⁶You say, “No! We will escape on horses”— therefore you will escape!— and, “We will ride on fast horses”— but those who pursue you will be faster.

Some of us have been overtaken by what we’ve been trying so desperately to outrun

If that’s you, you’re not the only one, you’re not alone- but there is a better way

The author writes Hebrews because there is a concern for these weary believers to go all the way with Jesus and not bail ship.

And what is it he encourages them with? ***The promise of rest***

Before we look at the 3 postures of rest we find in our text, we need to do some foundational work.

Rest in the bible is deeply intertwined with this idea of what it calls “the sabbath”

3 Purposes of Sabbath Rest-

**Disclaimer: We are not bound to the law to keep any part of it- but that's not to say there are not spiritual principles that carry over- as we will see.*

1. Sabbath rest reminds us that if God gave us life, He'll also give us all we need

Exodus 20:8-11 ⁸Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy: ⁹You are to labor six days and do all your work, ¹⁰but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. You must not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female servant, your livestock, or the resident alien who is within your city gates. ¹¹For the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and everything in them in six days; then he rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and declared it holy.

It's meant to remind us that God is the one who provides-

People say, *“I can't afford to take off the time from work”*... yea that's the point!

So you can give Him a space to provide for you. (Another place this principle plays out... Giving)

2. Sabbath rest compels us to consider that if God has led us this far, He'll lead us all the way

Deuteronomy 5:12-15 ¹²Be careful to remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy as the Lord your God has commanded you. ¹³You are to labor six days and do all your work, ¹⁴but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. Do not do any work—you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, your ox or donkey, any of your livestock, or the resident alien who lives within your city gates, so that your male and female slaves may rest as you do. (here previously reminded of creation, but now 40 years later...) ¹⁵Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the Lord your God brought you out of there with a strong hand and an outstretched arm. That is why the Lord your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.

It's meant to remind us that God is a deliverer despite what obstacles rise up in life or within ourselves

It's not a day to stress on the upcoming week, but to look back on the week that passed,
and reflect on where God showed up in it

3. Sabbath rest ultimately points us to Jesus

Hebrews 4:1 Therefore, since the promise to enter his rest remains...

Hebrews 4:9 Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God's people.

Jesus is our provider, He is our deliverer and His is our Redeemer and Savior;

In Him and in Him alone can our weary souls find true rest

Jesus as our sabbath carries an element of 'already' but 'not yet';

Which leads us to the 3 postures we are to have towards this rest in Him.

3 Postures in light of the promise of Rest-

1. A fear that is alert

Therefore, because the Israelites failed to enter the land of rest due to their disobedience... since the promise to enter his rest remains, that's the promise, here comes the warning let us beware that none of you be found to have fallen short.

“let us beware” (NIV “be careful”)= one Grk word (phobēthōmen) lit= terrified, frightened

NLT- *God’s promise of entering his rest still stands, so we ought to tremble with fear that some of you might fail to experience it.*

Not paralyzing fear that disables; fear as a stimulus to action

- the way fear motivates a skydiver to make sure they check their equipment
- EX: telling my daughters to beware at grocery store since my brother was kidnapped doesn’t mean that every time they see a grocery store they freak out and scream uncontrollably, or wake up with nightmares about the produce aisle it means they are aware of the possibilities and therefore alert

²For we also have received the good news just as they did. But the message they heard did not benefit them, since they were not united with those who heard it in faith.

Israel was right there! Right up to the edge of the land of rest... and they failed to go in!!!!!!!!!!!!

They were coming from 400 years of slavery but failed to go all the way to freedom- WHY?

They were more afraid of the challenge before them than they were afraid of *not* believing God

We should have a healthy fear against not believing God

I’ve seen many come and go- Y not stay? Didn’t really believe God when life hit them

³For we who have believed enter the rest,

The proof that we’ve found the gospel is that our lives are characterized by a kind of profound rest in keeping with what he has said, **So I swore in my anger, “They will not enter my rest,”** even though his works have been finished since the foundation of the world. ⁴For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in this way: **And on the seventh day God rested from all his works.** ⁵Again, in that passage he says, **They will never enter my rest.** Inability to find rest may be due to never believing the Gospel ⁶Therefore, since it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news did not enter because of disobedience,

The warning in V3,5,6,7- watch out that you don’t end up like the Israelites who failed to believe and thus failed to enter the promise...we need a healthy fear that keeps us alert (for ourselves and others)

2. A faith that is assured

⁷he again specifies a certain day—**today**. He specified this speaking through David after such a long time: **Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.**

⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, Moses dies before going in, Joshua led them in

God would not have spoken later about another day.⁹Therefore, a Sabbath rest remains for God’s people.

God’s intention was never the land, entering in was a symbol of what was truly the goal-

It was never about the land, but the lamb;

never about the territory of Canan, but the testimony of Christ

Jesus is the better Joshua (Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua)-
Faith in Him is not just for temporary rest, but eternal sabbath

In Genesis 1, after each day of creation a phrase appears concluding the day:

“Evening came and then morning: the X day.”

But when we get to the description of day 7, it does not record the end of the day:

Genesis 2:1-3 So the heavens and the earth and everything in them were completed. ²On the seventh day God had completed his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. ³God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, for on it he rested from all his work of creation.

Theologians point out that this means His rest continues forever more

It is that what we are invited into (His own rest)

V7 “Today”- David in Psalm 95 warned of the urgency and invited his listeners to believe, have faith;
Then the writer of the book of Hebrews did the same for his listeners- have faith;
The same encouragement is given to us *today*:
hold to faith that is assured because its foundation is on Christ, not you

3. A fruitfulness that is abiding *—(this one may appear counter to the idea of rest, but hear me out)*

¹⁰For the person who has entered his rest has rested from his own works, just as God did from his.

¹¹Let us, then, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall into the same pattern of disobedience.

It is true that we rely on the work of Christ, not our own, for salvation; BUT, it is important to note that this is NOT what verse 10 is talking about.

Notice that we rest from our works JUST AS GOD DID from His.

God rested from His work not because he was *tired*, but because he was *finished*.

There is a certain work we rest from only once we finish (work is pre-fall)

Revelation 14:13 Then I heard a voice from heaven saying, “Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.” “Yes,” says the Spirit, “so they will rest from their labors, since their works follow them.”

Not talking about works made in effort to be saved; works made as a result/ consequence of being saved.

Galatians 6:9-10 Let us not get tired of doing good, for we will reap at the proper time if we don’t give up. ¹⁰Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us work for the good of all, especially for those who belong to the household of faith.

Because the promise remains that eternal rest is available still to those who believe;
and because we know not all will believe, we ought to have:

a fear that keeps us alert,

a faith that keeps us assured, and

a fruitfulness that comes from abiding in Him

Sermon in a sentence-

Enter His rest and trust He'll take care of the rest (Matthew 6:33)

Christianity my sometimes feel like burdensome work; like an alarm clock going off on a Monday morning after a weekend that went by too fast.

It shouldn't feel like that. Yet it does sometimes.

God wants us to get to a place where we know Him so deeply that this path feels like new love; like closing time on a Friday evening on a long weekend.

A question to ponder:

Does your Christianity drain you more than it fills you?

If so, you may be doing it wrong

Psalm 127:1-2 Unless the Lord builds a house, its builders labor over it in vain;
unless the Lord watches over a city, the watchman stays alert in vain.

²In vain you get up early and stay up late, working hard to have enough food—
yes, he gives sleep to the one he loves.

What's the sign in this verse that you know God and even more so, you know His love? REST

What is exhausting you?

I submit to you that most of what is draining us, comes from our own efforts to fill
the voids only God can fill

Now I know, some things that drain us are inevitable,
(kids, commute, difficult family, sickness)

But with Christ, you can rest even while you labor & toil

***Call up Worship Team**

That's the invitation, "come to me...."

-Invitation to the gospel message

BULPEN-

God rested, though He never gets tired

He is communicating something...what?

There is rest (pre-fall even) designed and intended for our existence

They had to literally fight for the promised land

And even then, it was just a picture/ shadow of the real rest,

The burden of the weight of life in a world where sin also resides was still real

V11 leads into the reality of V12-13

God knows everything seen and unseen! His word reaches into the depths

Let the Word read you

V3-4 what does it look like to enter His rest?

It is like joining God in His sabbath

Only the rest of God can satisfy the restlessness of the human soul

This is counterintuitive to what I as pastor strive for- what we as a society aim for- the goal seems to be , do more, do better- the bible presents a selah moment

Illustration- 2 men compete to chop down trees

The younger goes non stop 8 hours= 25 trees

The older takes a break every hour= 40 trees

How! He paused to sharpen his ax

Bluey episode in which the family goes on vacations, but the mom, Chili, doesn't know how to relax, and so her kids have to teach her

In my time as a pastor, one of the most discouraging and frustrating things is seeing waves of people throughout the years who come, but never become. Who attend but never ascend. Who show up but never live out. It's frustrating because what ends up happening is that they inevitably fall away. They stop coming (the issue isn't that they stopped coming HERE; the issue is they stop congregating ANYWHERE). THAT is exactly what this book warns against!

Why? The reason isn't just because we're missing them, but because ultimately THEY'RE MISSING OUT!

We are saved by grace through faith- not works (Eph 2)

But that's not to say that HOW we live doesn't come into play

In Hebrews CH12 the Christian life is compared to a race- the idea there is this:

The prize is already ours (salvation/rest), but we must run to the finish to take hold of it

How well are you running?

Galatians 5:7-8 NLT You were running the race so well. Who has held you back from following the truth? ⁸It certainly isn't God, for he is the one who called you to freedom.

JD Gear- Learning to rest in Jesus supplies the strength to thrive.

JDG-

The Sabbath is a command about a specific day of the week that you take off. But it also points us to Jesus. The command is important... It's one of the big 10!

Exodus 20:9-11

-Sabbath remind them that God was the point.

-Sabbath also reminded them that God was the provider

He wanted them to leave space for Him to provide for them. He promised them that if they would work 6 days and take off the 7th, He would multiply their effectiveness on the other 6 days to make up for what they gave up on the 7th!

- Sabbath= At Creation, God appointed one day a week to stop and remember that God is the point and God is the provider.
- In the book of Deuteronomy, God revealed a 2nd purpose for the Sabbath:

Deuteronomy 5:12-15

Here, the Sabbath was to give them space to reflect on their salvation & identity.

- But there was a 3rd purpose for the Sabbath

Hebrews 4:9-10

The rest that He talks about is Jesus. The Sabbath ultimately pointed to Jesus.

4 statements about Christ that signify your rest in Him:

-Christ is my righteousness (V9)

-Christ is my identity

All of your life trying to prove yourself; justify yourself; establish your worth. That gets TIRING. The gospel speaks differently. It says: "You are held in highest regard by the highest Being."

- Christ is my security

- Christ is my priority