

THE PROMISED REST -- WE DARE NOT MISS

Hebrews 4

INTRODUCTION:

Our consideration is still that Christ is superior to Moses. And the fearful judgements which fell upon those which disbelieved the teachings of Moses, having shown the cause of the failure on the part of the Israelites who perished in the desert. He now proceeds to a point of similarity of the condition of those whom he wrote. And this is where it has a vital application to your life and mine. Moses' ministry had been incomplete, because of the failure of the people to whom he ministered. Now the Hebrew Christians were exhorted, not to come short by their failures. But they were well able to carry through and reach the rest which God offered to them.

We must keep in mind that the word "rest" as used here in three connections -- first, the rest of God, as at the completion of his creative work, was emphasized. Sabbath

Second, the rest promised to the children of Israel upon arrival in the land of Canaan. Promised land

Third, the rest which was to be the experience of the Hebrew Christians, under the leadership of Jesus that would be or bring them to Heaven. Acts 7:49.

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A Christian is destine to arrive in Heaven. And here once more we find a reference that Christ is superior to Moses in the rest that they were going to receive. Gal. 4:22, 26. That Canaan's incomparision or Sabbath rest was

compared to God's redemptive rest for his people.

Now the Israelites prevented entering into their rest because of their repeated sins -- the sin of provocation. When they refused to enter into the land. And had they entered into that land it does not mean that their work would have ceased but it would have been a relief. Their struggle to attain a destiny would have been wonderful.

Time after time, he calls upon them to examine themselves in the light of God's revelation. Now this is really not an easy passage to understand. But I think if we prayerfully look at it, I think that we will see that better things are offered, under the new Covenant. That in the Son, we see that which is better than the prophets, better than the angels, better than Moses, better than Joshua, and the rest that he offers - is better than even Canaan land.

Let us discuss this under two or three ideas. First, the promise remains. V. 1. Second, the promise rejected. V. 6, V. 11. Third, the promise revealed. V. 12, V. 13. Fourth, the promise received. V. 14-16.

#### I. THE PROMISE REMAINS - V. 1

It is to be observed that a rest for the faithful has been provided and determined from the very beginning. He helps us to know this then.

Let us therefore fear, lest this promise, being left us entering into rest that we should (come short of it)

Elevator - one woman said let's walk up stairs - have claustrophobia & frightens to death, small elevator

We should put emphasis first upon us - let us. Now it has been shown that others to whom the promise of rest was made, failed to enjoy the fulfillment. Therefore, let us not be exhorted to make the same mistake.

This runs through the entire section and is repeated - a warning lest the Hebrew Christians come short of the worthy goal. The same glad tidings were preached to the Israelites but they did not profit by them, because of the lack of their faith in God. Now the simple Gospel has been preached with all of its realization.

For unto us, was the Gospel preached. The world is a great laboratory. And this is God's wonderful way of bringing experience and example to us. The Israelites, for instance, in our text, had the opportunity of hearing the word of the Gospel but that furnishes no guarantee or certainty of their salvation. The Jews heard it and yet it did not profit them. But through unbelief they were excluded from the Promise Land.

Herod also heard the teachings of John, with gladness, and did many things - but afterwards, died hopeless, unpardoned of his guilt.

And there are many now who are going down into Hell with the very words of life ringing in their ears.

Paul never have one Phobia

Let us emphasize for a moment the word fear he says, but let us therefore fear. V. 1. We must labor. Then to make certain of our salvation. The work of salvation is difficult. And it is only by the most strenuous exertion that the rest can be obtained. If you have any doubt, as to your favorable standing in the sight of God, then you need to search out the cause. But the careless

Jews, God dealt with them. Much more severely will he deal with you. In other words, beware lest any of you be a judge to have missed the rest of God.

Beware lest your disobedience and your lack of faith and reponse may mean that you have shut yourself out of the rest and peace that God offers you. Now that is a good translation and a correct one.

It means, beware lest you think that you have come too late to enter into the rest of God. Beware lest you get the idea that you have arrived too late in history to enjoy the rest and the peace of God. There is a warning, and it is very easy to think that the great days of religion are passed. Times of church life are behind. It is told that a child being told some of the great Old Testament stories said, "God was much more exciting then".

Then is a continual tendency in the church to look back. To think about the great manifestations of God - that they are past. To believe, if we are honest enough to say so, that God's arm is shortened. His power had grown less. That the golden days lie behind.

The writer of Hebrews sounds the trumpet call. Never think, he says, that you have arrived too late in history. And never think that the days of great promise and achievement lie behind. This is still God's day - today. There is blessedness for you as great and as blessed as for all the saints, and the martyrs of the past. God is as great today as he ever was. The promise remains.

V. (2) In which the preaching did not profit them - helps us to know that there are different kinds of hearing. People are indifferent in their hearing. Some are disinterested when they hear. Some critical when they hear. The hearing that

matters is the hearing that listens eagerly and believes, and then acts. The promise of God to give you rest is not merely a beautiful piece of literature. It is not merely a sweet saying which means nothing. These are promises of which a man can stake his life by.

That is why in V. (1) - beware, lest you miss the promise. Now we have translated the word beware for the word fear. The Christian, (fear), is not to fear as to run away from a task. It is not a fear that makes him inactive. But it is a fear which makes him (put) every ounce of strength which he possesses in the great effort not to miss the one thing in life that is worthwhile. Now God has provided future rest. Man may labor in vain and be defeated, but if he works in God's plans, he will never be defeated. Abraham received the glad tidings but many other people - it was profitless to them. They failed because of their unbelief.

V. (4) - He gives a marvelous (example) and illustration about the character of rest. He does so by talking about the (Sabbath) institution. That this was an emblem of the promised rest, that was to come. And it was when God sanctified the seventh day at the creation. It was the determination of God upon such a rest, he adds, for he spake in a certain place in the seventh day on this wise. And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. The rest, itself, he plainly declares that which is a type that God did. He rested.

In the creation, God brought some new excessions to his great work. As you notice in the creation, the darkness which covered the face of the deep, and then - the production of light, and the history of man coming. And the dividing of the waters. And the moon, and the stars, and all of this. And then God rested. There was that glorious rest. The Sabbath rest is compared to that of the Israelites who had an opportunity to enter into rest. And they did not do so because of unbelief. V. 6. To whom it was first preached, entered not in.

Because of their unbelief.

V. 7 Here again we have the quote from the 91st Psalm. He argues that Joshua did not give them complete rest when he led them into Canaan. Or else, David could not or would not have spoken of it yet as a future time. He repeats, today, if you will hear his voice, harden not, your hearts. So the promise had been rejected.

V. 9 There remains therefore a rest to the people of God.

V. 10 For he that is entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

So the rest here promised, there remains a rest for God's people. Just as God entered into a rest after making and creating the earth. So Jesus, after completing his work, has now entered that rest.

And this seems to be a promised possession for the Christian. There will come a wonderful time when the people shall beat their swords into ploughshares and their spears into pruning hooks, and nation shall no more lift up swords against nations, neither learn war anymore. A rest from the trials, the anxieties from our problems, the wicked are overtaken and there will be an inheritance or a reward. He that enters into his rest, ceases from his work as God did from him. Our temptations and our mental struggles will then cease and be over. The Christian will then lay down his armour. The weary soldier will then come home, in final

triumph over every foe. The ship will no longer be tossed upon the stormy seas but will come into the harbor to be undisturbed.

It will be a rest of the church for the conquest of the world. The church from its nature is aggressive. It breaks in upon error, prejudices, false religion, depraved humanity.

Whatever opposition may be brought against it, the Lord has said it will succeed. The earth shall become full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. When every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. All the end of the world shall remember that and turn unto him. That mystic (stone) of prophesy cut out from the mountains without hands, which has these 1800 years been moving among the nations, is destine to roll on with increased strength and power. And crushing thrones, dominions, wickedness with it.

Even the trees will wave with gladness. They will clap their hands and all nature will rejoice in universal jubilee. That will be blisful rest, and the church so often depressed, dismayed, so often hung with mourning, and sackcloth - shall then sing Hallelujah!

The period of triumphant for the church and for Christianity will be characterized by holiness. In that day there shall be upon the bells of the horses, holiness unto the Lord. And the pots in the Lord's house shall be like the bowls before the altar. Yeah, every pot in Jerusalem and Judah shall be holiness unto the Lord of hosts.

Vice and impurity, if not entirely vanished from the earth, will be entirely unknown in that land of promise. There in no wise shall enter, into it anything that defileth. Neither, whatsoever things worketh abomination or maketh a lie.

Wars and strife shall cease. The wolf shall lie down with the lamb and the leopard with the kid. And men of all dispositions shall be turned to sweet communion. Instead of thorns there will come up the fir tree. Every valley shall be exalted. Every mountain and hill shall be made low. The crooked shall be made straight and the rough places plain. For the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it. You could think of the families of that vast number as the sands upon the seashore, redeemed from a world of trouble and tears. Gathered into a land of plenty and security. Where there will be worshipping the same God all linked together in the sweet bond of relationship. All singing the same song. All filled with the same spirit. We could but exclaim, eye has not seen nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive the things which God hath prepared for them that love him. The voice of Jesus saying, come unto me and I will give you rest. Matt. 11:28.

V 11 - Let us therefore labor to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

## ✓ II. THE PROMISE REVEALED - V. 12-13

Faith is the answer that opens the door - for he that believeth shall be saved. And he that believeth not, shall not be saved.

Now fix in your mind about this promised rest. And God rested after he created the world. And the prophets foretold that another day of rest was coming. And Jesus finished his work and went to rest and the message and the directions - telling us about this promise, come to us through His Word.

Word of

V. (12) God is quick and powerful - sharper than a two-edged sword. Even to the dividing the soul and the spirits, the joints and the marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Here is a world of truth. This is sufficient within itself, to consume much study. Here is the great importance of giving our attention to the manner and the revelation in the ways in which God communicates to his people.

The word of God is such that it has come to man and it cannot possibly be disregarded. It is a word of power and force, that goes forth and accomplishes things. When Isaiah heard God speak he heard God say that the word which went out of his mouth would never be effected. It would always do what God designed it to do. And would never be ineffective. The word had life. It was quick, living, and active. It operated, it always produced effect. It is not a dead but a living spirit wherever it is proclaimed. In clearness, it will work.

(MINISTER) visited woman - offered to have Prayer & Read Bible - And Granddaughter  
I waited for Jesus taught that the kingdom of Heaven says it is like unto leaven, which a  
The little woman took and hid in three measures of meal, til the whole was leavened. The  
Helper - Returned point of the whole illustration here is, the operating agency of the Gospel which  
with Montgomery is destine to work, until everything shall be brought under its influence. And  
was what is the great instrument under which the Gospel operates. Is it not the Word,  
catalog the preaching of the Word. The Word of God then is like the leaven. Now we know  
woman, are all it is the nature of leaven to work, when put into uncorrupted flour, it cannot  
(Kana) grain be stopped into its operations until the whole is brought under its influence.  
the Bible in 1966  
Found seed  
to her house  
searching for  
since 1937  
We might illustrate it with the seed sown. The springing up of all good seed  
there is a living principle, which when brought into contact with the moisture  
of the earth will develop itself.  
No good  
seed  
it is living word  
Now this seed, put in the earth, that life in the seed will begin work and will

make its way. Man can hear the word of God and not in some way be effected by it. The influence which it exerts may even move in him and bring about new relations and new facts which it brings for him to think upon and benefit by.

Now if the Word is rejected and denounced, then his soul will settle down. And the light will grow dim and he will forever seal his doom.

If, however, it be received with reverence and obedience, this activity will still be felt with Heavenly feelings and desires - transforming a very corrupt heart.

Man's obedience or disobedience, his acceptance or bitter rejection, does not in the least hinder its development. If it does not prove a sayer of life, it will prove a saver of death. Now the truth for us is to treasure this in our hearts. Reading the Word of God - whenever you receive it from the Preacher's lips, or you learn it from the Words that are written on a page - you reflect on these and these same words quicken your facilities and bring you salvation or you strengthen your damnation. Now this is an awful reflection. The message which you hear from week to week from this Pulpit will advance you to the seat at the right hand of God. It will sink you to the firey depths of despair and Hell. Now you may complain that the Word of God is dry and uninteresting. But God's doomsday book will finally open with your name in it. The truth of God will work whether or not you think it will.

As for (neutral ground), there is none, for you to occupy.

The word is quick and powerful. It's power is manifested in the authority which it exercises over your conscience. Now the words of man lack this power to carry a teaching home to the heart of man. The word of God brings fear as in

Adam's case when he hears the voice of the Lord from among the trees of the garden, he sought to hide himself. When David heard Nathan announce the word of God to him, he trembled. When Peter proclaimed the word on the day of Pentecost, there was a cry from the people. When Felix listened to the word from Paul, he trembled. When the jailer heard the word of God, he said, what must I do to be saved.

Now the word has power to put fear, but it also has power to calm the waters that are troubled. And to bring to you holy feelings. And to bring to you something of Heaven. It is a great instrument that moves in this way.

He says it is sharp and piercing. When you compare the sword with the word of God, which is the sword of God's mouth, comes out with two edges - cutting each way. These two edges enter in, and nothing else can. It pierces the heart. In fact, there are some human hearts that only the word of God can cut into. It enters the middle and the hidden chambers of the heart. It goes beyond what philosophy can do to quicken and pierces even to the dividing asunder of the joints and the marrow. There is no depth in man which it does not penetrate. There is no height which it does not scale. There is no length which it does not go. Now flesh and blood cannot stay it. Nothing can stop it. It is sharper than lightning and more vivid than a flash of lightning.

The sword is an instrument of death. And according to the representation of this text, the word of God produces on the soul a certain kind of death. The word of God is felt in the rotten beams - they must be cut out. The whole fabric must be changed. Paul was a proud Pharisee but as soon as the word of God was brought to bear, upon his conscience, he began to examine his character by the piercing light from Heaven, he sunk in despair. The sword of the word

can slay pride. Every self-righteous individual can be cut down. His flesh withers. His bones are consumed. His heart melts. Every hope that he has - as a human disappears. It is sharper than any two-edged sword.

The Word is also a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart. God does discern the thoughts. It is a very clear point here that all things are open to the eyes of him, with whom we have to do. The secret movings of the inner heart, of the inner man. He brings into the view the hidden thoughts. And the intents of a man.

No man without the word of God can form a correct estimate of his own character. No man knows his own feelings or his own heart until the divine word discerns it for him.

What unsoundness of the heart, what selfishness of purpose. What hellish plots of undeveloped wickedness, are then brought up into contemplation. What undiscovered crimes are detected. What flaws appear. What dark morality is revealed.

Some of you who now hear me have experienced exactly what I am now speaking about. Some can refer to periods in their lives, when under the faithful preaching of the Bible, The Word, their sins and impurities that had long escaped their memories began to come before them. The acts of wickedness. Has the Word of God ever shown you your character, in a light in which you never saw it before. The glaring impurities, the imperfections. Has it never made you see yourself covered with shame and guilt. Have you never even previously suspected it. The Word is a discerner of the very intents of the heart. No man can hide his

emotions or conceal his sins, but what God will open them up. All is open and naked to the eyes of him who instituted and sends it. No coverings can hide it - all will be searched out. It is quick and powerful - and sharper than a two-edged sword. Piercing even the dividing of asunder, of soul and spirit - and joint and marrow. And is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Now this is the very thing we need because it will awaken us and convert us. We are dead in trespasses and sin. And it can work in a dead life. And the Devil is trying to put us in danger by deceiving us.

But the truth is how we are going to regard the hearing of the word. And preaching is the fundamental agency. And hearing the preaching is the first step - the first work of our salvation. None can hide from God. Although there may be fools who think they can hide from God. But there are none who can hide from a microscope. Our inner most secrets are layed open before him.

Men think they are critics to sit back and criticize and judge, even the Word of God. But here we are told that the word itself is the supreme critic. We can just even the critic that sits back and judges the word.

Therefore the word, which is quick and means to live - the word of God which has life in it, and powerful and active - which will not put us to sleep - but will change us and cut out what needs not to be there. And it tells us that we must not handle the word of God with irreverence or carelessly or lightly. Almost in every household there is a Bible. The living book - it is a saving book and it has discerning power. We must not forget that if it is not heeded, our hearts become hardened. Does it cleanse you. Does it comfort you. Does it guide you. Does it rebuke you. Does it guide you. Does it master you. Does it

thrill your soul and bring joy.

What I am saying to you is, God has promised rest and the promise is still good and the promise is revealed to you through the word of God. Now, I come to the final point as to whether you will receive it or reject it.

✓ III. THE PROMISE RECEIVED - V. 14-16.

What will be your verdict today.

V. 13 - Knowing this, that all things are naked and open to the eyes of him, with whom we have to do, what do you plan to do.

V. 14 - Points you to the great High Priest - to the son of God. Who is urging you to hold fast to your profession. For here you have a high priest as V. 15 reveals to you, who has had the experiences of trial and struggle through life. Jesus occupied the High Priest office. And now the Hebrew Christians had no tabernacle, they had no temple. They had no priests, they had no sacrifices that were being offered in the temple day by day. And here is Jesus Christ, his priesthood, coming into being. He was touched in all points and tempted like we are. And it makes a difference when someone has had an experience similar to yours. And Jesus knows our cares and the tremendous truth is that the High Priest, because he is fully God, is able to help - that he is the one who can, this hour, meet our needs.

V. 16 - In conclusion, let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need. The last words

(Help in Time of Need) -15-

of this text literally mean well, timed help. And a good free translation is Dr. A. T. Robertson renders it help in the nick of time or before it is too late.

The word boldly which sometimes means brazen, is not the meaning here. But the word comes from two Greek words which mean with (liberty and frankness). In other words, we need not to come to the throne of grace in despondency. But with liberty, telling it all out. Since he is our high priest, tempted like we are. Let us boldly come to the throne of grace telling it all to him. Who cares and intercedes that we might obtain mercy and find grace and help in the time of need. In the hour when it is needed most. Come very boldly with confidence and receive this mercy and this grace.

Queen Elizabeth was the occupant of a mighty throne. The resources of half of Europe were at her command. Nobles, attendants, and armies - yet, in that dread hour of death - she was over-whelmed with horror and dismay. She died with a frantic and despairing exclamation on her lips. Millions of worlds for an inch of time.

Now the Word of God says that help will come - it is well-timed help and it is help in the nick of time. If you will but receive it.

Voltaire was a man - a genius. He had great intellect. But he was an Apostle of infidelity. He was hardened in his heart and he was always working against God's Word. When he came to that moment of the last hours, he was so furious - in such a rage, that even his physicians retired and left the room. They declared that the death of the wicked is too terrible to be witnessed. Now that was a man who was hopeless in his death. He will never enter into God's promised rest. But Jesus thanked God, our High Priest, has provided for every emergency. The

throne of grace is accessible and is ready to furnish assistance. Here is the grace that will help you in every time of need, and support you, even in the time of death. That dreadful thing, he is going to give you grace for that and take away the ~~fear~~. Let us therefore, come boldly to the throne of grace.

Let no consideration keep you away from it today. Come right on to the gates of ~~mercy~~ this morning and become a partaker.

As we come today to sit at the Lord's table, this will be an emblem of a Heavenly feast that we shall one day sit down with him and our Master in a great assembly, with believing hearts as we have partaken of the bread of everlasting life. Christ has not given up and he never will. And he is there with grace to help in the nick of time. And in that truth, is your hope and your peace.