

Rest for the People of God

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Hebrews 4:1-11 Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. For unto us was the gospel preached, as well as unto them: but the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, And God did rest the seventh day from all his works. And in this place again, If they shall enter into my rest. Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein, and they to whom it was first preached entered not in because of unbelief: Again, he limiteth a certain day, saying in David, To day, after so long a time; as it is said, To day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. For if Jesus had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God. For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his. Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

- I. This is one of the greatest and most precious promises to the child of God that gives hope and courage to press on – “There remaineth a rest for the people of God...”
 - A. To rest is to stop all movement and exertion which exhausts our energy and strength.
 - B. The older we get the more we appreciate and long for rest.
 1. Little children resist rest because they are so excited and occupied with the world around them and all there is to do.
 2. But the older we get, the more we look forward to rest, and yet the harder it is for us to rest.
 3. One of the common things among older folks is that the closer they get to death, the more tired and weary they get
 - a) Physically, as well as just tired of living, of this world, of all the bad things of this world that assail our soul and body and mind all the days of our life.
 4. I used to hurry through work so I could be free to do something else I enjoyed more.
 5. But now I find myself pressing to get finished with my work and my chores just so I can get somewhere and sit down or lie down – to rest.
 - C. So, while this important promise of the Scripture may not ring so much with the those who are young, you will find that the longer you live, the more you will seek refuge for your soul in it.
- II. The hope of rest is part of our testimony for God, and we can SEEM to come short of it.
 - A. We can grow weary in well-doing.
 - B. People talk about being “burnt-out” in the work of God.
 - C. When we are like this we seem to others to have failed of this promise of rest.
 - D. The fact may be that we have indeed failed of the promise, and not just “seemed” to fail.

III. We have rest now in this life on this earth as a child of God.

Proverbs 14:26 In the fear of the LORD is strong confidence: and his children shall have a place of refuge.

Isaiah 4:6 And there shall be a tabernacle for a shadow in the daytime from the heat, and for a place of refuge, and for a covert from storm and from rain.

- A. We have available to us a place of refuge where we can rest from the toil of life.
- B. We have a constant comfort and help in the Lord's presence with us.
- C. He gives us strength when ours begins to fail.
- D. We do not need a "sabbatical" year or month or week, for we can rest in the Lord every day and every night.
- E. Rest is a time of refreshing – and we get that from the Lord here.
- F. Rest is a time when we lay aside the duties and cares of life – and we can do that here.
 - 1. In fact, we do that every night when we turn the lights out and go to bed.
- G. One important point of the moral law of God concerns resting – the Sabbath.
 - 1. It is the one commandment that was established before sin entered into the world and in writing after sin entered into the world.

IV. Then there is the rest that "remaineth" for the people of God – that eternal rest with the Lord in his presence forever.

Revelation 14:13 And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

- A. Eternal rest is the cessation of all that wears us out here on this sin-cursed earth.
- B. Our labor has been toil here, but there it will be pleasure.
- C. The things that trouble us and wear out our mind here will not exist there, so that battle and struggle will cease forever.
- D. The struggle to stay alive which is what life has become about here, will not exist there – we will simply live, and forever, without the threat of death over our heads, and without the constant withering away of the vessel in which we live.
- E. Here we can rest some of the time and it is sufficient to get us through.
- F. There rest and peace will be the theme of our existence.

V. How sad then is it when some come short of it!

- A. To inherit eternal restlessness instead of eternal rest.
- B. To struggle through this life until they are worn out physically, mentally, and spiritually, and then exist forever in the same restless, worn-out state, with infinite misery added to it.
- C. The Scripture here makes it very plain what causes such a terrible thing to happen – unbelief, and nothing else.
 - 1. Simply not trusting God and living instead in fear and looking to self or other people for provision, safety, and rest.

Hebrews 4:11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.