

LIVINGHOPE

BIBLE CHURCH

18 | HEBREWS 4:12-17

THREE HELPS FOR REST

We have to work hard to rest! Don't depend on the flesh, but work to depend on God!

Outline

1. TO REST, WE NEED GOD'S WORD (4:12-13)
2. TO REST, WE NEED OUR HIGH PRIEST (4:14-15)
3. TO REST, WE NEED GOD'S THRONE OF GRACE (4:16)

Introduction

How difficult and impossible it is to enter God's rest without God's help. We cannot fix ourselves. We need God's grace. The Holy Spirit presents three aids to entering the rest of God: the word (4:12-13), our high priest (4:14-15), and the throne of grace (4:16).

1. TO REST, WE NEED GOD'S WORD (4:12-13)

God's word helps us to see ourselves as God sees us.

Hebrews 4:12-13 | For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

God's word is like a mirror.

James 1:22-25 | But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. ²³For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror. ²⁴For he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. ²⁵But the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and perseveres, being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in his doing.

We learn how to study God's word and we are sanctified by the truth of God's word. God's word is powerful! It's to be ingested.

Colossians 3:16 | Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

Psalm 119:76 | Let your steadfast love comfort me according to your promise to your servant.

God's word is a comfort to us. It is settled. What God says cannot be changed or improved upon.

Psalm 119:89 | Forever, O LORD, your word is settled in heaven.

God's word is truth.

John 17:17 | Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth.

God's word keeps us from sin.

Psalm 119:11 | I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you.

You don't know what you are capable of (Jer 17:9). No one can know the depths of depravity any one of us is capable of descending to. Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." We are to heed the word of God and heed the God of the word.

Only Christ has the words of eternal life. John 6:60-71 describes how Judas Iscariot would apostatize (*cf* 1 Tim 4:1). True Christians persevere because they are preserved. Christian living is not a passive thing but a relational thing. We need to allow the preaching of God's word to penetrate us in our heart, not merely academically. We need to actively find God's rest. We need to be diligent to rest.

We pursue God. We work to not live through the flesh but live through the Spirit. Hebrews and the entire NT calls all true believers to persevere in Christ, to hold fast to our profession and confession of Christ as Lord and Redeemer.

2. TO REST, WE NEED OUR HIGH PRIEST (4:14-15)

We cannot do this alone! We need Christ to bring us to this rest. We cannot do this alone. Utter dependence on Christ is required (*cf* Heb 3:1, Jesus, the apostle and high priest of our confession). Now we see in more detail the priestly ministry of Christ.

Christ is not merely our high priest, but our "great" high priest. There are many high priests, but only one "great" high priest. Jesus is our Priest of priests. He redefined the office of high priest since even though he was tempted in every way like we are, "yet without sin."

Our High Priest is a Mediator

Hebrews 4:14-15 | Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵ For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Christ stands in our place before God to plead for us. Notice how this is connected to verses 12-13. The written word (the Bible) is used by the living word (Christ). God's word exposes us, God the Father is the judge, and we are in real trouble, so we need Jesus as our high priest to plead and intercede for us. We were sunk. These verses (12-13) teach us that God's word is the standard. God himself is righteous and holy. There's no place to run!

Hebrews 4:13 | And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

No one can hide from God (*cf* Gen 3:8, “Adam, where are you”). Since we cannot hide, we need a Mediator from above. We need Christ as the great high priest and the Lamb of God, both priest and sacrifice to intercede for us.

Our High Priest is Appointed by the Father

Hebrews 4:14-15 | Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin.

Who can help us? Who can intercede for us? No amount of self-help or good works. Many come to Christ before his judgment tribunal, and they will say, “Look at all these things that I’ve done for you.” Jesus says, “Depart from me you all that work lawlessness, I never knew you” (Mt 7:21-23). We need a covering. We need to be robed in the righteousness of Christ. This is why the Father appointed his son, the Christ, to be our great high priest.

Hebrews 5:5, “So also Christ did not exalt himself to be made a high priest, but was appointed by him who said to him, ‘You are my Son, today I have begotten you.’”

Hebrews 7:26-27, “For it was indeed fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, unstained, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens. ²⁷He has no need, like those high priests, to offer sacrifices daily, first for his own sins and then for those of the people, since he did this once for all when he offered up himself.”

Hebrews 9:24-28, “Christ has entered, not into holy places made with hands, which are copies of the true things, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God on our behalf. ²⁵Nor was it to offer himself repeatedly, as the high priest enters the holy places every year with blood not his own, ²⁶for then he would have had to suffer repeatedly since the foundation of the world. But as it is, he has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷And just as it is appointed for man to die once, and after that comes judgment, ²⁸so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him.”

Christ was the only one qualified to make the sacrifice for sin on our behalf. His gift to us of his blood satisfied the wrath of God for our sin for all eternity.

3. TO REST, WE NEED GOD’S THRONE OF GRACE (4:16)

We cannot enter God’s rest without our unlimited supplier of grace. He is our divine Benefactor!

Hebrews 4:16 | Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Run to him with all your needs! Don’t hold back. Bring all to him.

Conclusion

Therefore, our love should be active, not passive. Consider marriage. We embrace our spouse. We work for them. We provide for them. We help them. We tend to their needs. We spend time with them.