

LEARNING TO REST

Hebrews 4:1-11

Rising Pressure Leads to Downward Spiral Heb 3

1. People who've seen God's power begin to doubt
2. Doubting God produces complaining.
3. Complaining produces a hard heart.
4. Hard-heartedness produces rebellion.
5. Rebellion produces loss of blessing and judgment.

All around us people are struggling;

struggling to “make things work out”—the way WE think they should! It'd be great if the *only* people struggling were “*pagans* down the street Christians are caught up in the struggle too.

We have our idea of how things are “supposed” to be. When it doesn't go *our* way, we churn & struggle, trying to make things happen—according to *our* plan.

“What am I supposed to do, just sit back, and ‘let God do it?!!”

There's always a certain tone behind that question.

“That's not realistic!” “If I do that, it won't work out way I want it to!”

Fighting for *our* way doesn't work!

You never find peace by fighting for it!

Swindoll: “Stop Churning & Start Resting!”

No amount of success, physical comfort, psychological counseling, or religious activity provides the peace & rest God has promised.

We only find peace—learn how to rest—

when we trust GOD with our problems & rest in Him.

The problem: we don't really believe that. *We have a better idea!*

“Excuse me God, while I work this out my way!”

Then we wonder why we never find rest.

Problem illustrated from Israel's history Heb. 4:1-11

Israel never entered the rest God offered them

because they never learned to trust Him.

They seek to work things out their way; they're always struggling.

When they can't see how it will work, they panic & try their own way.

Finally God says, "That's enough!"

He swore they would never enter His rest

because of their unbelief & disobedience.

PROMISE CONCERNING GOD'S REST 4:1-11

Warning concerning God's rest 4:1 *"While the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it."*

If Israel was denied entrance to *their* rest because of unbelief,

it's *more* important that *WE* trust God, so we might enter His rest.

Reference to God's judgment goes back to Kadesh Barnea.

God wanted to give them land & inheritance He promised them.

They were ready to enter and receive it.

Spies' confirmed it was just like God said.

But they didn't trust God to give it to them.

Instead of being filled with faith, they were filled with fear.

Unbelief kept Israel from entering God's rest,

and enjoying what God wanted to give them.

God has promised to give us rest also.

We can trust God & enjoy it, or miss out on it.

What is this rest that God wants to give us?

Explanation of God's Rest 4:2-8

For O.T. people—**It isn't about *salvation***

They're redeemed by blood. They didn't lose that!

They're still God's people.

They miss out on God's blessing; forfeit peace & rest He wants to give them.

Follow the sequence:

God promises blessing, for trusting *Him* to take them into the land.

They doubt God => They begin to grumble

They harden their hearts => They rebel against Him

They experience God's *judgment*, instead of His *rest*.

Israel had a problem 4:2-3a *"For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. ³For we who have believed enter that rest,"*

They hear good news about what God wants to do for them –as we do. They *heard* the message.

God's blessing, His rest, doesn't come from just *listening* to the right message.

They didn't take advantage of offer; didn't find rest, because...

Hearing the good news wasn't united with faith.

Just hearing message that God offers rest isn't enough!

We'll never experience peace, until we trust Him & stop struggling

HEARING + TRUSTING => REST

Universal principle God established: 4:3a

"We who have believed enter that rest"

He established principle before He made the world.

God's work has NEVER been in doubt—from the creation!

Want to stop fighting & struggling? *Trust Him! HE can handle it!*

God is Author of rest 3b-5 *"He has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his works were finished*

from the foundation of the world. ⁴For he has somewhere spoken of the 7th day in this way: “God rested on the 7th day from all his works.”

⁵Again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.”

Creation presents pattern to teach what God’s rest’s like
Gen. 2:2-- even God stopped work & entered into rest.

He quit working after 6 days. It was finished.

Now Christ’s work is completed. It is finished.

No additional work is necessary. Therefore, we can rest.

We can enter & enjoy the rest He has already provided for us.

Offer still extended to us. 6-8 “Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, & those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, ⁷again he appoints a certain day, “**Today**,” saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, “**Today**, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” ⁸For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on.”

Today it’s available.

Long after Joshua led them into land, God still offers rest to His people
He warns us not to harden *our* hearts & miss what He wants to give us

“**Today**, if you hear His voice, don’t harden your heart!”

That’s how *they* missed it!

Joshua later led them into Canaan... God fulfilled that promise.

But the rest God promised means more than just entering Canaan.

Rest is still out there.

God offered it again after Joshua led them into the land.

It’s promised to us.

It’s for those who leave work behind—stop struggling—& trust Him.

Jesus said those who’re tired & loaded down can come to Him,

=> He’ll give us rest. The offer still stands.

Many who trust Him with our sin, continue to try to carry other burdens ourselves. We're tired & loaded.

We don't trust Him to take the load & give us rest.

God's rest *became* available when He set pattern at creation.

God's rest was *available* to Israel at Kadesh,
but they missed out on it.

God's rest was *available* to Israel under Joshua,
but that wasn't final rest.

God's rest was available to Israel in David's day.

God's rest is *still* available to us TODAY!

Throughout history God has offered REST to His people, but we resist His offer.

Today is the issue. Will we take advantage of the offer today?!!

OFFER OF GOD'S REST 4:9-11

The promise 9-10 "*So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.*"

Still doesn't refer to salvation—includes himself in promise.

Does refer to blessing God promised.

Promise finds *ultimate* fulfillment in millennium.

Here emphasis is general: ***He who trusts God, enters rest.***

He who trusts God, experiences His blessing in their life.

2 obstacles stand as road blocks to enjoying God's rest

1. Panic

Like Israel, when we come up against giants in our life

& don't see how God will give us victory over them, we panic.

We fail to trust God because there's no escape in sight to get us out of the mess.

When we panic, we don't rest. We fight.

Philip of Macedon—Father of Alexander the Great trapped by Persian forces. Wild animal backed into corner with no escape fights way out. Drunk walking through a graveyard at night.

"It's no use mister, you can't get out of here!" But he did!

Panic *may* get us out of man-made messes—sometimes!

Panic will *never* produce rest. *It won't bring God's peace!*

2. Pride

Some of us grew up thinking we could get ourselves out of anything.

If we break it, we can fix it.

Pride tells us we can fix it ourselves!

We can handle problems without God's or anybody else's help

Pride keeps us from trusting God. We have to help Him out!

So, we claw and struggle to "make things happen!"

Pride motivates us to pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps, instead of reaching out to God for help.

Do you want to enjoy God's blessing in your life?

Don't panic

Don't be filled with pride

Don't get discouraged

Don't be unbelieving

Don't reject the promise

Don't turn back. Don't give up

Keep trusting *Him*.

10 *"whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works"*

What does it mean to rest from our own work?

It means: ***stop churning and start resting!***

Stop trying to fight the battle for ourselves.

Entrust ourselves and our battles to Him.

The urging 11 *"Let us therefore strive to enter that rest!"*

Sounds contradictory: ***“Struggle to rest!”***

Like intro. to passage: *“Let us fear lest we fail to enter His rest.”*

If you’re going to fear something . . .

If you’re going to strive for something . . .

If you’re going to invest your energy, put it in something that works!

Faith isn’t a passive, fatalistic, *se la vie!* attitude.

It’s an active, diligent, surrender of self.

We *decide* to trust Him and enter His rest.

Invest your energy in Him. Dedicate yourself to trusting Him.

WHAT DID THAT MEAN FOR 1ST CENTURY CHRISTIANS?

Trust God to protect them from enemies that want to destroy them.

It meant hang in there when going gets tough.

WHAT DOES GOD WANT US TO DO?

Learn to enjoy God’s rest. => RELAX!

That’s what rest is about.

To be wherever God wants us, doing what *He* planned, confident in *His* resources, . . .

Trust God to handle the stress.

We can trust Him with the stressors.

What good have hypertension, migraines, ulcers, nervous exhaustion, illness, insomnia, or angry frustration ever done us?

We must trust Him with our concerns & enjoy His peace.

Stop churning & start resting!

Are we tired of churning?

How about learning to trust Him & enjoy His rest?

That’s what our writer is urging us toward this morning:

“There remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, ¹⁰for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. ¹¹Let us therefore strive to enter that rest”