

**"The Rest Available in Jesus Christ"**

**Part 6**

**Hebrews 3:7-4:16**

**Introduction:** Last week in our study of Hebrews we started into chapter 4 and we looked at verses 1-2.

**Notice Hebrews 4:1**

As we enter into this chapter the writer now takes the previous verses from chapter 3 and he then applies them to the lives of his readers. In chapter 3 the writer had told of the tragedy of Israel not entering into the land of Canaan and in this verse he warns the Hebrew Christians that the same could happen to them also.

**Notice Hebrews 4:2a**

Here the writer explains to them that they had heard the "gospel" (the good news) just as the people of Israel had also heard the good news. The good news preached to the people of Israel was if they would walk by faith into the land of Canaan then God would give them victory over the inhabitants of the land of Canaan.

The good news preached to the Hebrew Christians who received this letter was that God would give them the victory in the midst of the persecution they were facing. It did not mean they would not suffer but it meant that through the suffering God's will would be carried out in their lives. It meant that the suffering in the persecution they were facing was permitted by God and it was part of the path God had ordained for them to walk. He would provide all they needed for their journey but they had to walk by faith in His promises.

**Notice Hebrews 4:2b**

Israel had the promises from God but they did not mix them with faith. Therefore they were unable to enter into the land of Canaan. These Hebrew Christians also had the promises of God but if they desired to enter into God's rest they would need to mix the promises with faith. If they refused to walk by faith they too would fail to enter into God's rest. They would still be saved but they would have no peace or rest in their lives.

**Application:**

The same is also true for our lives. We must learn to walk by faith if we are going to enter into the rest which God has for us in this life. I want to quickly look again at the two main areas in which we must trust God, or I could say they are the 2 areas that will quickly steal away your rest and your peace if you do not appropriate the promises of God.

1. **The first area is the area of storms, trial, tests, and the all difficulties in our Christian life.**

When these times come we must be anchored to the promises of God because if we are not them we will be tossed about with the wind and the waves of the storms. You will find yourself living in fear and panic. But there are promises that will give us peace and rest if we BELIEVE them and we walk by faith. Here are 3 of the promises:

#### **Philippians 1:6**

*<sup>6</sup> Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:*

#### **Romans 8:28**

*<sup>28</sup> And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.*

#### **Isaiah 43:2-3**

*<sup>2</sup> When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

*<sup>3</sup> For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour:*

These are just 3 verses which contain promises and there are hundreds more. But the point is when we encounter the storms of life we must BELIEVE these and walk by faith in these promises. Otherwise we are no different than Israel in the wilderness.

There is also another area that can steal away our rest and our joy.

2. **The second area is the area of sin.**

There are so many believers who struggle with besetting sin and they try everything in THEIR OWN power to overcome the sin and they continually struggle and fall. In order to gain victory over sin a believer must KNOW and BELIEVE the promises which God has given to us pertaining to His power that is within us. You see in our OWN power we will

never overcome sin. Again we are required to walk by faith. A life of faith releases the power of God within our lives to give us the victory over sin. Let me show you 2 promises.

**2 Peter 1:2-4**

<sup>2</sup> *Grace and peace be multiplied unto you through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,*

<sup>3</sup> *According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:*

<sup>4</sup> *Whereby are given unto us exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.*

**Romans 6:6-7**

<sup>6</sup> *Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.*

<sup>7</sup> *For he that is dead is freed from sin.*

God has given us everything we need to overcome sin. Our sin nature has been rendered powerless.

These 2 points must be understood if we are going to enter into the rest God has for us.

I. **The Warning**

**Part 5**

**Notice Hebrews 4:3a**

The first part of this verse is connected with the thought in the previous verse. The writer is telling us that we too can enter into God's rest if we are willing to walk by faith in the promises of God. It is faith that APPROPRIATES the promises. Faith is the door which leads us into God's rest. We will never have rest in this life if we do not learn to walk by faith in what the Word of God tells us.

**Illustration:**

I need to give you an illustration here that will help you to understand what the writer is telling his readers and us. Before you were saved you attempted to live a life pleasing to God because you believed that you could win God's approval by your own power and works. Then as you came under the conviction of the Holy Spirit you became aware that you could

not win God's approval or His forgiveness. You were a sinner and you were lost. You then abandoned your works and your efforts and you **BELIEVED** the promises of God which told you that Jesus was your Substitute. You came to believe that Jesus did all the work on the cross so you rested in His finished work. When you came to that place and you were saved there was a huge burden lifted off of your shoulders and you experienced a taste of God's rest. The point I want you to grasp here is that when you **BELIEVED** the promises of the Bible that told you Jesus Christ died for you and paid for all of your sins and that He was buried and He rose again on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day, that **FAITH** set you free and took you right into God's rest. Now that we are saved we are expected to live this new life in Christ by faith in His promises. This is how the rest of God can be entered into.

Now the writer of Hebrews is going to continue and he will speak of 3 different rests.

#### A. Creation Rest

##### Notice Hebrews 4:3b

This verse is difficult to understand in our translation so let me show you how this verse reads in the Amplified Bible:

*For we who believe [that is, we who personally trust and confidently rely on God] enter that rest [so we have His inner peace now because we are confident in our salvation, and assured of His power], just as He has said,*

*"As I SWORE [an oath] IN MY WRATH,  
THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST,"*

*[this He said] although His works were <sup>[a]</sup>completed from the foundation of the world [waiting for all who would believe].*

Here in the end of this verse we see that the writer refers back to Israel and he says that God swore an oath in His wrath that they could not enter into His rest **EVEN THOUGH THE WORKS WERE COMPLETED FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.**

I believe the end of this verse contains a very valuable Truth that is often overlooked. The writer connects the entering into of God's rest with the fact that God finished the works at the foundation of the world. Let's move on then we will come back to this.

##### Notice Hebrews 4:4

The first word of this verse connects with the previous thought. But here we see the writer is referring to the rest of God when He rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day after the 6 days of creation.

**Notice Hebrews 4:5**

Again we do not see the true meaning of the verse. It should read:

*"THEY SHALL NOT ENTER MY REST."*

Let me now give you some thoughts here. When God created the world in Genesis it was all finished in 6 days. Then God rested on the 7<sup>th</sup> day.

**Genesis 2:1-3**

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.*

*<sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.*

*<sup>3</sup> And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

This 7<sup>th</sup> day of rest is a picture of the rest which God desires for His people to enjoy. This rest was later pictured in Exodus 20.

**Exodus 20:8-11**

*<sup>8</sup> Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy.*

*<sup>9</sup> Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:*

*<sup>10</sup> But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates:*

*<sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.*

The Sabbath Day was also a picture of the rest which God had provided for His people. In the Sabbath Israel was to do no work. They were to completely rest on this day. This again was a picture of the rest which God had for His people. I need to just say that those who declare today that we are to keep the Sabbath are missing the point that the Sabbath was a shadow of the rest that is available in Jesus Christ. When we enter into the rest God has for us today we are then fulfilling the Sabbath as God intended.

So the creation rest was a picture of the rest God has for His people. The next rest the writer points to is:

**B. Canaan Rest**

**Notice Hebrews 4:6**

Here the writer tells his readers that God's rest is available for them because Israel did not enter in because of unbelief. The point is that at the time of the writing of this letter the rest was available to the Hebrew believers.

**Notice Hebrews 4:7**

Long after Israel failed under the leadership of Moses God offered to the people of David's day an opportunity to enter into the rest.

**Notice Hebrews 4:8**

The name "Jesus" here refers to Joshua.

So let me pull this together. Moses failed to lead the people into the rest. Joshua led them in but they failed to exterminate the people of Canaan as God had commanded and therefore they did not enjoy the rest. David in all of his victories failed to lead the people to enjoy the rest. Then came Solomon and he also failed due to his weakness with women and softness toward pagan religions.

Now the writer will point to one more rest and this is the rest for us.

**C. Calvary Rest**

**Notice Hebrews 4:9**

When Jesus died upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished!" He had finished the work that the Father had given Him to do. God the Father rests in Christ's finished work and so do we. This is why we do not keep the Sabbath because we do not rest in a day but we rest in a Person.

Now we rest in Him for salvation and that speaks of our POSITION in Christ. But often our position does not match our PRACTICE. Too many believers live in the wilderness and not in God's rest.

**Notice Hebrews 4:10**

The believer who has entered into God's rest has ceased from his or her own works just like God ceased from His. This makes me ask a question here:

What does the writer mean by this? Let me take you back to a verse we looked at earlier.

**Hebrews 4:3**

<sup>3</sup> For we which have believed do enter into rest, as he said, As

I have sworn in my wrath, if they shall [they shall not] enter into my rest: although the works were finished from the foundation of the world.

In this verse the writer tells us that Israel did not enter into God's rest **ALTHOUGH THE WORKS WERE FINISHED FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.** This means that before the foundation of the world in the mind of God Israel was given the power to enter into the land of Canaan. In eternity past it was already determined Israel would have the victory. But they refused to believe and apply that Truth. They did not need to use their strength or power God would defeat the Canaanites.

**Application:**

The same is also true for us.

**Revelation 13:8**

<sup>8</sup> And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

In the mind of God Jesus Christ was slain before the world was created. Our victory comes from His finished work on the cross. That means the victory we have in Him was already completed before the world was created. Therefore we can say "the works were finished from before the foundation of the world".

**Conclusion:**

To cease from our works is to stop attempting to gain victory in our own strength and to appropriate the promises of God by walking by faith in His promises.