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Hebrews 4:1-11

How to Rest: Sabbath & Simplicity

Rest Follows Jesus

Jonathan M. Romig

CornerstoneWestford.com

Introduction: (S#1)

1. I learned at a young age that I was not one of the cool kids.
2. When I was in high school, a friend of mine tried to get me and another kid into the “cool kids” party.
3. We showed up and they asked us to leave (it was a good thing).
4. We’ve all had that experience... how do I get into that party, friend’s group, elite squad?
5. It doesn’t change with age... how do I get into the school I like, the job I want, box seats, first class?
6. Today we’re asking a similar question... how do we enter into God’s Sabbath rest?
7. How can I get into God’s party, his vacation, his presence? (S#2)

I. We enter God’s Sabbath rest by faith. (Read Heb. 4:1-3a)

A. God’s Sabbath rest is eternal peace. (v. 1)

1. “Rest” means: 1) to cease work; and 2) to share in the peace God feels right now.
2. This rest is the final throwing off of sin and the sharing in God and his "heavenly" rest.
3. “Pax Romana” means “Roman Peace” which lasted from 27 BC to 180 AD (206 years).
4. The Romans were united, had no major invasions or civil wars, and experienced prosperity.
5. During this time the Romans persecuted Jews, Christians, and crucified thousands.
6. God’s Sabbath rest is external, internal, paternal, maternal, fraternal, and eternal (Isa 2:4). (S#3)

Isaiah 2:2a, 4 In the last days... He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. (NIV®)

B. It’s possible to miss out on this eternal peace. (v. 1-3a) (S#4...I)

1. Our 1st verse warns us to “be careful” it’s more like “be afraid, be very afraid” (phobéo).
2. The Fly is the movie of Jeff Goldblum turning into a fly—it’s comical, but this fear is reverent.
3. To “fall short” is to miss out on God’s rest and instead suffer God’s judgement.

C. The author of Hebrews uses the story of Israel to warn us.

1. In Numbers 13-14 Moses leads the nation of Israel to the edge of a land God promised them.
2. He sends 12 men to spy out the land and they come back reporting its life, wealth, and fruit.
3. 10/12 return claim the land is filled with giants, fortresses, and is unbeatable.
4. Moses and two of the men, Caleb and Joshua the son of Nun, say God can overcome.
5. Numbers 14 say Joshua and Caleb “tore their clothes” when the people rebelled against God.
6. The 10 men are struck dead and Israel is sentenced to wander the wilderness for 40 years.
7. All adults but Caleb and Joshua are sentenced to die and not enter the promised land.
8. They didn’t have faith so they didn’t get to enter God’s rest.

(What are we supposed to have faith in? God? Jesus? The Bible? Yes...)

D. We have faith by believing the good news of Jesus Christ. (v. 2)

1. The Israelites didn't believe in God's promise to bring them home—they didn't trust God.
2. God calls us to express even greater trust in his word, which "is alive and active" (Heb 4:12-13).
3. Nowhere in the book of Hebrews does it say to have faith in Jesus, it's implied, but not stated.
4. Instead, in Hebrews 12:2 Jesus is called "the author/pioneer/champion and perfecter of faith".
5. Faith in Hebrews is more like "persevering in the way opened by Christ" (EDNT). (S#5)

Hebrews 11:1 Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. (NIV®)

(We enter God's Sabbath rest by faith.)

(There's a call to... persevere in faith.)

(Faith isn't separate from how we live our lives.) (S#6)

II. We enter God's Sabbath rest by obedience. (Heb. 4:3b-7)

A. God invites us into his ongoing rest, but on his terms. (Read v. 3b-5)

1. We started our first sermon in this series in Genesis 2:1-3, the seventh day.
2. There's no evening or morning on the seventh day, God completed creation and now rests.
3. We can taste God's eternal rest now when we take a day to rest—he's enjoying creation now.
4. We purchased our first home two years ago, and the first thing I did was re-paint the deck.
5. I got soaked when I power-washed, grimy and sweaty when I scraped, and painty when I painted.
6. It took me about a month, but now I have a beautiful deck to invite my neighbors and friends too.
7. Phil Vischer said in his podcast that God's rest is like how you feel after buying a house.
8. God has invited us one day a week to BBQ, enjoy his sunny blue creation, and play corn toss.
9. Just like I have to be home for you to enjoy my deck, God has rules (you have to love his Son).

(God invites us into his ongoing rest, but on his terms.)

(We enter God's Sabbath rest by obedient faith.)

B. Our obedience shows our belief. (Read v. 6-7)

1. The Israelites had the "good news" proclaimed to them but didn't enter b/c of disobedience.
2. You would think the reason they wouldn't enter is not "disobedience" but "disbelief".
3. The Bible doesn't define belief apart from obedience (belief = active trust).

James 2:18, 26 But someone will say, "You have faith; I have deeds." Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds... As the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without deeds is dead. (NIV®) (S#7)

4. Our obedience shows our belief but our disobedience shows our disbelief. (S#8...II)

5. We don't have faith because of a much deeper issue—hard heartedness. (v. 7)

6. The Israelites didn't get to enter the promised land b/c they had hard hearts (Psalm 95:7-8).

7. We disobey because we don't believe, and the consequence is death.

C. Many people in the U.S. didn't believe Germany and Japan were threats to them.

1. WWII started in 1939, but the U.S. didn't join till December 7th 1941.

2. On a beautiful Sunday morning the Japanese bombed the Pacific fleet (2,403 died).
3. The U.S. had put embargoes on Japan and helped form the League of Nations, but didn't join.
4. We went through the motions of taking WWII seriously, but we didn't really believe.
5. The consequence of not really believing in God is much more serious... eternal damnation.
6. But there's hope my friend! "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." (v.7)
7. God is extending a peace treaty to you today, welcoming you home as one of children.

(We enter God's Sabbath rest by faith and obedience.)

(Persevere in faith and obedience.)

(The temptation is now to think you have earned it... that your works will win you this rest.)

(But that's not what I'm saying... I'm saying faith that's alive is real faith.)

(This is the call of the this last section...) **(S#9)**

III. Persevere in faith and obedience till you enter God's rest. **(Read Heb. 4:8-11)**

A. We can persevere because God perseveres for us (v. 8-11)

1. After 40 years of exile, God calls his people to trust him once more. **(S#10)**

Deuteronomy 31:8 The LORD himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged." (NIV®)

2. Like the Israelites, God calls us to step forward in obedience, but he fights our battles.
3. God not calling us to perfect faith or obedience but to follow him through life.
4. We follow God by following Jesus.

B. We can enter into God's rest because God has already won the battle through Jesus. **(S#10)**

1. Joshua (v.8) means "Yahweh is salvation"—in Greek "Joshua" and "Jesus" are spelled the same.
2. Even though Joshua led his people into their promised land, there was still sin and brokenness.
3. The second Joshua, leads all who believe in him into a new promised land of eternal rest.
4. He did this by perfectly trusting and obeying God every moment of every day his entire life.
5. On the cross Jesus experienced infinite unrest and God's wrath so you and I don't have to.
6. Jesus now offers you his perfect faith and obedience on your record, how God sees you.
7. I'm calling on you to persevere in faith and obedience because you already have in Jesus.

(As we follow Jesus, we'll experience a taste of that future rest now... Rest follows Jesus.)

(Do you follow Jesus? If not, you can begin today.)

C. Persevere in faith and obedience till you enter God's rest.

1. What's one way you can express faith in Jesus this week?
2. Release a circumstance to him; remember how he loves you; read about him in the Bible.
3. What's one way you can obey God this week?
4. If you know you're disobeying God, repent and ask Jesus to forgive—he will.
5. Take a Sabbath tomorrow, don't try to earn your salvation, just rest.

Conclusion:

1. This series has been really challenging for me personally... I'm not good at resting.

2. I don't know if I'm doing Sabbath right... some days I feel like I read Bible enough and get outside.
3. Other Sundays I play too many video games, watch too much television, and take about 30 steps.
4. But I do think I'm trying to learn what it means to trust God with these days.
5. In Jesus, I have perfect faith, obedience, and rest, and so I persevere.
6. Persevere in faith and obedience till you enter God's rest.

Philippians 4:19-20 And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus. To our God and Father be glory for ever and ever. Amen. (NIV®)