

Glimpses of Glory God's Rest

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[0 : 0 0] What picture comes to your mind when you hear the four-letter words, rest? Do you think of normal assignments, assessments, or other deadlines that are breathing down your neck?

Or, holidaying somewhere that's warmer, or with your favorite climate? Like, being somewhere alone, or with only a few people who follow everything you tell them to do without arguing?

Or, having everything taken care of, so you don't have to think. Don't need to think about what to do. Don't need to think about what to cook to feed all those hungry mouths.

You know, those hungry and angry type. I know someone who likes to do some small upper-fixer job around their home or their office as their rest.

Some think of gardening, mowing the lawn, or cleaning up their house. Most people will have a glass or two of their favorite drinks to celebrate their job well done.

[1 : 1 2] If you have been following our preaching series in the Book of Isaiah, you may find it strange that I am asking you to imagine rest. From the beginning of the book to chapter 27, it has been a restless picture of imminent judgment and a call to repentance.

The Book of Isaiah is about the Holy Creator restoring His holiness among His people by prophesying and allowing them to be taken captive and subject to a ruthless, unmerciful, ungracious ruler.

God revealed His glory and grace to His people by giving them a negative example of life without Him. At this point in the book, the topic of rest reminds us that God is gracious and glorious.

The God who made the world and all the things in it, who the Bible reveals and all Christians believe in, is not as promoted by many other religions as a God that manipulates His believers' lives to keep them in fear, so they will keep bringing their offerings and serve it with their hands.

God does not take joy in playing with our life or punishing His creations. God, the Creator, is not as many people choose to believe, especially many atheist philosophers, that is unloving and distant.

[2 : 5 4] God did not create this world to leave it to run itself. God has cared for you in every minute of your life since the world was created, whether you have reached out and found Him or not, or realizing these threats or not.

The Apostle Paul highlighted this fact about God's creation and God's interaction with His creation when he visited the city of Athens in Acts 17, verse 26 to 27.

From one man He make all nations that... From one man He make all nations that they should inhabit the whole earth, and He mark out for their appointed time in history and the boundary for their land.

God did this so that they would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He's not far from any one of us. If you have reached out and found God, and you have been a Christian for a while, however, God seems so far from your life and you are restless and troubled, or you have never reached out to find God, let's get back to some basics about our world, about the God who made it, and our life by looking at the three aspects of rest.

Rest installed, rest interrupt, and rest restored. From Messiah 28, another part of the Bible. There's the outline...

[4 : 3 3] Sorry. There's the outline in our SingPause app that you can use, and also you can use this app to drop some notes for yourself to review later.

A few weeks ago, our Senior Minister Steve highlighted that the Book of Isaiah began with calling the creation as witnesses against God's people.

First 1 to 4 of chapter 1 says, A book full of woes, warnings, and images of restlessness.

The session beginning from chapter 28 up to chapter 35 presents seven woes. They provide stark contrast to the creative order, the original bootlines where the concept of rest is installed.

In Genesis 1 to 2, as we read about how God created this world in six days, the faith God saw that it was good is repeated so many times that it required great faith for anyone to think or believe that this world come about by some accidental explosion like a Big Bang.

[6 : 10] I do not know about you. I do not mind receiving negative comments when I know I have not done an excellent job.

But if it's something I'm proud of and consider a job well done, I do not like criticism or being accused that I don't care about what I have done.

Suppose the God of the Bible didn't make this world and consider his creation as good. How absurd and insulting would it be to him, the creator, for humans to believe that this world and our life are meaningless and without purpose, as proposed by some atheist philosophers.

Humans rightly deserve our woes if we forsake our creator. Sprung the holy God and turn our back on him. God's original blueprint for our life was not to be dysfunctional, under or unfulfillment or restless.

Genesis, tell us that after six days of creating the world and everything in it, God was pleased and satisfied with his creations and rest from all his work on the seventh day.

[7 : 32] Genesis 1, 31 tell us that God saw all that he made and it was very good and there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Thus, the heaven and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day, God had finished the work he had been doing. So on the seventh day, he rests from all his work.

Then God blessed the seventh day and make it holy because on it, he rests from all the work of creating that he had done. Rest is installed in God's creative order and the creation were meant to enjoy resting with God.

God even stipulated for us to rest with him as part of the first set of law that he gave humans. He called it the Sabbath day. Exodus 20, verse 8 to 11, commands that, remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy.

Six days you shall labor and do all your work. By the seventh day, is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it, you shall not do any work. For in six days, the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.

[8 : 47] But he rests on the seventh day. Therefore, the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and make it holy. God take rest from his work. He blessed that one day of rest and make it holy.

It is for our good that we rest from our work regularly. God knows it and cares enough about us to set it as a command for us to follow.

The day of rest is a Sabbath to the Lord our God. Only in God's rest can we grow our appreciation towards our Creator and be made holy.

Human and God's creation were not designed to keep going without resting. Our passage today in Isaiah 28, verse 24 to 25, used a few rhetorical questions to highlight this fact.

When a farmer plows for planting, does he plow continually? Does he keep on breaking up and working the soil? When he has leveled the surface, does he not sow caraway and scatter cumin?

[9 : 57] Does he not plant wheat in his place, barley in his pot, and spout in his field? We are not meant to work continuously.

Earlier this month, a ferry captain in Hong Kong collapsed and died at his work after being on duty for 23 consecutive days.

The workers at that ferry company have a 25 days on and five days off roster. Death by overwork in Japan is so common that there is a specific Japanese word for that incident.

A sad reality of our modern world that has been true throughout the ages. Modernity has some benefit, but its damage and consequences far outweigh its usefulness, especially as it denied the assistance of God and ignored God's original plan for his creation to rest with him.

During the time of Isaiah, facing the imminent threat of invasion, God's people think that they have the situation worked out by turning their back on God and agreeing with the neighboring nation to give them protection.

[11 : 15] They even boast about that arrangement in verse 14 and 15, and they were celebrating that treaty to the point of getting drunk and vomiting in verse 1 to 8.

However, God calls their arrangement a covenant with death, an agreement with the realm of death. When humans think they are wiser than God, the God who created them, and forsake, and turn their back on him, what do you think is the most reasonable thing to do by a loving and

righteous God?

When humans interrupt God's plan, rest, a holy, loving God will take action to restore that rest. Ever since humans disobeyed God from Genesis 3, which started with the question that twisted God's command, did God really say?

The rest that God installed in his creation was interrupted. Since then, God has warned and called his people back to the rest that he installed, calling us back to him like in verse 11 and 12.

God will speak to his people to whom he say, this is a resting place, let the weary rest, and this is the place of response. But the result has always been, but they would not listen.

[12:43] We are very similar to the people in Isaiah's time in our attitude towards God's message and teaching. When it comes to listening to God, we are like in verse 9 to 13.

Every word coming from God becomes, do this, do that, a rule for this, a rule for that, a little here, a little there. God's people would not listen to God has been an issue from the fall of human after creation to now.

The creative order was interrupted because we turn what is meant to be a relationship into a transaction or something mechanical.

We are not looking into God's word to have a relationship with our creator. We are looking for a way to justify our way of living, looking for the bare minimum requirement to put our restless soul at ease.

Many people are interested in looking at the Bible to find out what they must do instead of what God has done for them. God's word has become a set of rules for them, not the words from the heart of their gracious creator that they want to treasure.

[14:01] Many people are looking into the Bible for religion instead of a relation. What about you? If you have been coming to St. Paul's for a while, how is your relationship with God?

Have you been growing in your faith? God created us to enjoy a restful relationship with the Trinity, finding our fulfillment in life in our relationship with Him, but many treat God as a vending machine to become happy and secure.

As a result, our life becomes restless and troubled. Theologian Tim Keller said in one of his devotional, when we are in trouble, our soul chatter to us.

We have to have this or we won't make it. This must happen or all is lost. The assumption is God alone would not be enough.

Some other circumstance, condition, or possession is necessary to be happy and secure. God's people would not listen to God because they do not treat God as the God that created the world and everything in it, as the Lord Almighty that is glorious, full of justice and strength.

[15:23] God's rest is interrupted because we do not listen to God. How often do you hear when God say to you, I've got you, but you turn your back and push him away and say, I've got it.

I know what I'm doing. You are the only one who would know the answer to the following questions. Have you sacrificed your relationship with God and his people to build a buffer in your bank account?

Have you worried more about your job security or finances than your relationship with God and his people? Have you concerned more about how your kids are doing at school than their knowledge and understanding of God?

Are you finding rest in God? Is God your resting place, your place of refuge and hiding? King David wrote in Psalm 62, in verse 1 and 2, he said, Truly, my soul finds rest in God.

My salvation comes from him. Truly, he is my rock and my salvation. He is my fortress. I will never be shaken. It is God's full intention for us to find rest in him.

[16:51] He installed that rest in the creation, but humans were unwilling to listen and interrupt God's rest. Isaiah told us in a couple of chapters later, in chapter 30, 15 to 18, that this is what the Sovereign Lord, the Holy One of Israel, says, In repentance and rest is your salvation, in quietness and trust is your strength, but you will have none of it.

You say, No, we will fleet on horses. Therefore, you will fleet. You say, we'll ride off on shift horses. Therefore, your pursuer will be stripped.

Yet, the Lord longs to be gracious to you. Therefore, he'll rise up to show you compassion. For the Lord is a God of justice. Blessed are those who wait for him.

our restlessness, like those experienced by God's people in Isaiah's time, is a direct result of us not listening to God.

Because you try to flee from God, you will always be running. You will always be pursued because you try to run away from God. As determined to have us rest with him in the blueprint of the creation, God is also determined to restore rest in his world and into your life.

[18 : 19] What humans have done did not follow God's original plan. God has restored the rest by pursuing us to repent. The Lord, our God of justice, has righted the wrong humans committed against him and reinstalled righteousness.

Isaiah 32, verse 17 and the 18 said, the fruit of their righteousness will be peace. Its effect will be quietness and confident forever.

My people will live in peaceful dwelling, in secure home, in undisturbed place of rest. Verse 16 to 17 of our chapter today, in chapter 28, tell us a picture of God's rebuilding works.

God rebuilds his peaceful dwelling place, a secure home, the undisturbed places of rest by laying a precious cornerstone at his true foundation.

So, as with the Chauvin-Law say, see, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone for a true foundation. The one who relies on it will never be stricken with panic.

[19 : 35] I will make justice the measuring line, and righteousness the plumb line. A cornerstone is the first stone laid when building a house in the ancient time.

It determines the orientation and the size of the house by setting the mesh lines of it. It will also help to secure to ensure the walls are straight by setting the plumb line against it.

Apostle Peter has personified this precious cornerstone as Jesus Christ himself. He rephrased these verses in 1 Peter 2, 4-6 by switching him into it.

As you come to him, the living stone, rejected by human, chosen by God, and precious to him, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For in the scripture it says, see, I lay a stone in Zion, a chosen and precious cornerstone. The one who trusts in him will never be put to shame.

[20 : 50] Anyone who trusts in Jesus will never be put to shame or be stricken with panic because God, Jesus, did not run away from God or God's plan for him to save the world.

He died for us and raised us up from death to show us God's compassion. Jesus was rejected by humans so we can be accepted back to God, and we are given a new role on this earth.

No longer are you to run away from God. Every follower of Jesus is being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood of God for his people.

As believer in God's mercy and grace, your central role is no longer building your bank account or credential, nor your family or business.

As believer, God has given you a new role to offer spiritual sacrifice acceptable to God. Make every moment of your life a living sacrifice.

[22 : 00] When you write up your report for work or your assignment for university, write them as an offering to God. When you cook for your family or serve your customers, do it as an offering, a sacrifice to God.

Jesus invite us in Matthew 11, come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your soul, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

What is Jesus' yoke? What did he come to do? Jesus answered that in Luke 19, he said, for the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

When you live your life as a light in the darkness for others to find God, if your primary concern of your life is the salvation of others, you will have rest in your life.

Use every moment of your interaction with others to show them Christ. for believers and unbelievers. In repentance and rest is your salvation.

[23 : 25] In quietness and trust is your strength. Come to Jesus today. He will give you rest. He is a resting place with true foundation.

All this also comes from the Lord Almighty, whose plan is wonderful, whose wisdom is magnificent. Come to Jesus today to get God's rest for your soul.

All right.