

Make Sure Of Heaven's Rest

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Date: 10 March 2019

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[0 : 00] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 4, and reading at the beginning, verses 1 to 3. Therefore, while the promise of entering is rest, still stands. Let us fear, lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

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. For we who have believed enter that rest.

Rest is a beautiful word, and it's one of the things that we enjoy in this world. There are many, many blessings in this world, but there's also so much weariness in this world.

It's part of what sin has brought into the world. Indeed, there's a picture given to us in the Bible of the example of sin is that it's a place where there is no rest.

It's part of the fruit of sin, part of the fruit of the fall, just the restlessness that is part and partial of this world. And rest, particularly if we've been busy, after a hard day's work, there's nothing better than to enjoy rest.

[1 : 25] Don't enjoy rest nearly so much if you don't work hard, but when you have a hard day's work, you really enjoy the rest. And the Bible speaks to us so much about the whole idea of toil and labors and struggles and also rest.

And what we're looking at today is that there is the rest that is held out in Jesus and the rest of heaven, and the one is tied into the other.

Because the moment we enter into the rest of heaven, it's a beginning for us of entering into the rest of heaven. One leads into the other. You cannot enter the rest of heaven without entering first through the rest that Jesus gives.

And once you have entered the rest that Jesus gives, inevitably you enter into heaven. The two cannot be separated at all. Now, as we say, the impact of the fall has brought a weariness into this world.

And even our Lord Jesus, in our nature, experienced that weariness. Jesus didn't have sin. He was free from sin, any taint of sin within him.

[2 : 37] And yet the body he took was subject to the toils and the weariness of this life. He couldn't be our representative were it to be any other way.

And Jesus, we find times when he was tired, when he was exhausted, times he was thirsty, times he was hungry, times we can hear that when he said, The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place where to lay his head.

You can almost hear an element of exhaustion in that. We find him taking the disciples apart into the wilderness to rest for a while. They needed to get apart from things.

We find Elijah, who was one of the greatest men in the Old Testament, a man who was filled with a burning passion and zeal for the Lord, who seemed to be a tireless worker.

We find him collapsing, both physically and mentally, under the stresses and the exhaustion of serving the Lord.

[3 : 42] And we find how the Lord had to deal with him and refresh him and rest him and refresh him and to enable him to get back to the work. So that's the nature of the world that we live in.

And even the Christian is subject to all these things. Sometimes people have this idea, oh, if a person's a Christian, then that's the end of any of the problems, any of the difficulties.

Well, it's not. But this is the world that we live in. It's a world of struggles, a world of pressures. And we're human. And even although God's grace is sufficient for us and we discover the sufficiency of his grace day by day, yet there is a natural aspect to our being that we're subject to these things and we know all about it.

But as the scripture shows us in this world that the only place of supreme rest is in the Lord Jesus Christ. Do you remember Jesus' great invitation?

Come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. It's a beautiful invitation. And Jesus is looking out at all the people and he knows that they're struggling.

[4 : 54] Life is problematic. There are pressures in body, pressures in mind. And he can feel the weariness. Jesus, at times, he would look at the crowds and he would see the restlessness of them.

And they were like sheep without a shepherd. And it tells us his heart was moved with compassion. It was like his whole being stirred up as he saw the restlessness and the emptiness of all the people.

And he said, look, I'll give you rest. Come to me, all you who labor and are heavy laden. And that is one of the greatest invitations because any person who feels burdened, who feels heavy, who feels down, who feels that life is too much, the invitation is there.

Come to me, Jesus, and I will give you rest. And that's the word of the Lord Jesus. Now, this chapter tells us great things about the rest of the people of God.

But it also comes with warnings as well. Because while there's the great promise of rest and the great encouragement to find that rest, the great invitation to enter that rest, there is also the warning that a person can fall short, a person can come short.

[6 : 09] And so there is the great warning against the sin of unbelief. And unbelief is an incredibly serious sin. We sometimes don't think it and we say, oh, well, it's not a great big deal.

I haven't done this and I haven't done that. I've just, maybe I've been guilty of unbelief. But when you strip it down and you think about it, unbelief is refusing to believe the word of a person.

You would find it, you wouldn't like it if people would say every time you said anything, oh, I don't believe that. I don't believe any word you say. That would really get to you. Because it's casting aspersions against your character.

And yet we do that with the Lord. So often we don't believe. We actually don't believe his word. We say at one level, oh, yes, that's it.

But we don't, we don't actually believe it. If we did, we would act differently. We would live differently. We would accept his word. We would live in it. We would trust it, trust him.

[7 : 15] So this is one of the great warnings here is a warning against unbelief. And we see here that unbelief is really no little sin.

And the great example of unbelief was the Israelites. And it was unbelief that brought disaster upon them because God had taken them out of Egypt.

He had displayed his power, his might. Awesome time. And he took them through the Red Sea.

And right through the wilderness journey, they saw miracle after miracle after miracle.

And performing all the time on their behalf. And yet every single time they came to a crisis. Whether all of a sudden there was no food or there was no water. And these were, let's not underestimate, these were real crisis.

Because if you put yourself in that situation and all of a sudden there's no food. You're in a wilderness and there's no shop you can go to. There's no, that is a crisis. But the thing is, having seen God's hand perform one mighty miracle after another.

[8 : 24] You would say to yourself, they would say, oh well there's no food right. What do we do? Lord, will you provide? Or there's no water. Lord, will you provide? But that wasn't their reaction.

They grumbled. They grumbled against Moses. They grumbled against God. And over and over God was showing them again and again and again. And he was delivering them every time.

Every single time. But then it came to a point where God said, enough is enough. And that was a great rebellion against him in Kadesh Barnea.

When, remember when Joshua and Caleb came back with a good report, the spies. And the others came back with a bad report. And they said, oh it's true. The land is a wonderful land.

It is literally flowing with milk and honey. There's riches there. There's just, it's so fertile. There's just, it's wonderful. But we haven't a hope. They've got great walled cities and fenced places.

[9 : 24] And the people are big. They're bigger than us. We haven't a chance. And the ten spies who came back demoralized the whole nation. And they were so angry that they wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb.

Who tried to encourage them and say, listen, God has taken us from Egypt to here. He's promised to go with us. Let's get up and go. And they wanted to stone Joshua and Caleb.

And they said, we're not. We want to go back to Egypt. And they refused God. They turned their back upon God. And they said, that's it. And God said, right, that's it. Over and over and over and over and over again. I have helped you. I have promised. I have fulfilled what I said I would do. And you're constantly refusing to believe. But now you don't want me.

And then he said, I'm going to give you what you want. I'm going to hand you over. And of course, then they realized that maybe that wasn't such a good idea after all.

[10:25] But the Lord said, this generation, the older generation that have come out of Egypt will not inherit the land. The younger generation will. And so that's what this is all about.

This warning. That we can come short of that great promise that is given to us.

And so the apostle is warning against us losing, just as that generation of Israel lost the rest of heaven, the rest of Canaan, that we too can come short.

And this chapter is dealing with the whole idea of work and rest and struggle and rest and journeying and rest.

It's this contrast. And in fact, in speaking of rest, he brings before us in verse 4 of about the Lord's resting on the seventh day from his works.

[11:25] And we've always got to remember that God is the one who has set a pattern in life for work and for rest.

Rest was a very essential part of Israel's history right throughout the land. God, even the land had to have rest.

He didn't work the same land all the time. The land had to have rest. The people had to have rest. There were certain times people. It's very interesting the way God establishes. There was a time for celebration.

They had to take celebration seriously. And sometimes we forget these things. God sets out particular times for us. And rest was important. And he was the one, even by his own creation, established the pattern of rest.

And of course, that's what we have, what we have today. The Lord's day. And of course, that is why it is so under attack. That is why people don't want the Lord's day. Because it reminds us of God.

[12:30] It reminds us of his creative work. And it reminds us of what he has done and given to us. And this one day is one of his great gifts to us.

And we remove this day at our peril. Because he has given it to us for the nourishment of our soul. And for the refreshing of our bodies and our minds.

Where we are able to come away from all our normal duties and pressures. And be able to unwind. And to focus upon himself.

And to enjoy life as we are able to. And you know, it's one of the worst things. And part of the reason why people have tried to remove today, this day, is because it makes us think of God.

The silence of the day makes us think of God. And we live in a world where it's becoming increasingly difficult to find silence. Because all the time there's noise in our ears.

[13:36] And there's things going on before us. It's hard to get time. To be alone. To stop. To think. But this one day as it's meant to be is a day that stops us to think.

And there's something about the silence. I remember when I was young there was a song. Sunday morning coming down. And I remember before I was a Christian.

And wasn't living the way that I should be. And that song used to echo in my mind. We would talk about the loneliness of that Sunday. The bleakness. Because there's something about a Sunday that makes that person feel alone.

And it's part of the silence of it. And I used to, in fact I remember that song, it used to haunt me. And I was saying that person who wrote this song understands exactly the way I'm thinking.

Because God made this day for us to find him. And when we don't, there's something in that silence that it just, we find it difficult.

[14:41] And that's why we try to block it out. Because we don't want it. We don't want God. But God says, this is one of my blessings. This is a blessing that I'm actually giving you. Now, as we say, the rest that God holds out is twofold.

And as we said, one rest is but the beginning of the other. Now, verse three that we have here really talks about the gospel. For we who have believed enter that rest.

And that's what happens when we come to faith in Jesus Christ. Verse two tells us about the good news of the gospel. For good news came to us just as to them.

And that good news, of course, is the good news of Jesus Christ. And whenever we accept the good news of Jesus Christ, we then enter that rest.

But the great problem, of course, is still unbelief. And maybe there are some here today, I don't know. But you know of that rest. You know the way to enter that rest is in and through Jesus.

[15:45] And yet, unbelief is holding you back. You can have all sorts of things and say, it's not this, it's not that, it's not that. Remember this, that your heart, your inner being is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked.

Who can know it? You can't, I can't. And one of the things is that it operates at different levels. And sometimes you think what is holding you back. And you say, well, that's what's holding me back. But actually it's not, it's something deeper. Something much more subtle. And the bottom line is it's unbelief. That's what's right down at the bottom there.

It's unbelief that's holding you back. And that's why we've got to go to the Lord and say, Lord, please take me over that unbelief. Break the power of unbelief that's gripping me. Because it's deep down.

Unbelief doesn't want God. Unbelief runs away from God. And belief won't accept God. And the Lord is saying, no, no, you have to believe in me.

[16:50] And as long as a person turns that back upon the Lord, they do not know the peace of Jesus Christ. Now, I'm not for one moment foolish enough to say that every person today who is not a Christian doesn't have peace in their heart.

I believe there will be many people, many people rounding about and they feel as happy and content. And they feel fine within themselves. And they're not Christians. But, you know, all it takes is for circumstances to change.

For their world to be turned upside down. And the peace that they have and the contentment that they might know, it can vanish very, very quickly.

Because the world can never ultimately satisfy. It was Augustine who said, Thou hast made us for thyself, O Lord.

And our hearts are restless until they find rest in thee. And that is so true. God made us for himself.

And our hearts are restless until we find that rest in himself.

[18:02] And that's why people, so many people today, who don't know anything about God, there's a restlessness over our whole nation.

When you, if you were just to lift the lid and to look down, there is a restlessness, there's an unhappiness. That's national.

And part of it is because we have rejected the ultimate social peace. Jesus said when he left, he said, You know what I'm offering you? His legacy, we've said it so often before, My peace I give you.

Not as a world gives, give I unto you. You see, the world gives a form of peace. But it's never deep-rooted. It's never lasting. It's not eternal. The peace the world gives can only last as long as the world, as long as you're in this world.

And if a person dies without the peace of Jesus, then they've got nothing to look forward to. But Jesus' peace is eternal. It is forever. Even death cannot sever it.

[19:07] And so, this is what we have here. So, this is the good news. And we have to focus upon this good news. That Jesus Christ, on the cross, took the wrath of God due for our sin upon himself.

And if we accept him, then that wrath is removed. Jesus Christ has taken all our guilt upon himself. So that if we receive Jesus Christ, then our guilt is taken away.

There's just so many things. You think about it just for a moment. Faith focuses upon Jesus and upon nothing else.

And I think that's one of the most difficult things to grasp. That salvation is a gift. Because there's something within us that always wants to do that wee bit, so that God will accept us.

If I could just reform myself, if I could make myself a little better, then God would accept me. We have this idea that somehow, salvation, there is works involved in it.

[20:16] It's got to be. I've got to be a wee bit better than I am. I've got to try, I've got to stop doing this, and I start doing that, and then God will accept me, and I'll be a Christian.

That's not how it works. We have nothing. Not a thing can we bring to the Lord and say, Lord, because of this, because of my background, because of my heritage, because of my parents, because I've read the Bible, because I've prayed, because I give to the church, because of all these things.

Surely, Lord, Lord, I'm a good person. As you know, I look at my life, and I look at other people's lives, and you know something, Lord? I live a lot better.

My lifestyle is better than theirs. Surely. Lord says, no. Works aren't in it. It's by grace you're saved. By faith you're saved.

By looking to Jesus and Him alone. Works flow out from salvation, from grace. Works, that's what happens once we become Christians.

[21 : 25] So, that is why faith is at the very heart of it all. And as we said, your guilt is taken away. Do you notice, you can't put a price on that. I believe part of the problem with so many people today is, that there's a deep-rooted sense of guilt.

They might not know it. But you know, if you've wronged somebody, it gnaws away within you. And we have wronged God.

And the list is growing bigger all the time. And it's only Jesus who can take it away. And He uses beautiful expressions like, I have washed away your sins.

I have cleansed you. It's like you've bathed. I have, it's like obliterated. I have blotted out all your iniquities.

Like, as if you're writing on a board and just coming and washing everything away. There's not a trace, not a sign. Where's all the stuff you wrote?

[22 : 27] It's gone. You know, on the beach, if you're down there, you can write things on the beach, in the sand. You can draw things. Then the tide comes in and washes over. And then you look for what you've written.

It's gone. The water just smooths it all over again. No trace, no sign. Well, that's what the Lord does with our sins. He removes them. He casts them into the depths of the sea.

Your sins and your iniquities, I will remember no more. They're gone. I have cast your sins behind my back. Gone. Not interested in them anymore.

Why? Because Jesus has borne them. I'll never deal with you again because of your sin. Jesus has done all that. And that's why there is, that's why there's peace.

Because, the evil one will, every so often will come along and he'll try and bring back your sins and say, oh, yeah, what about this? What about that?

[23 : 27] You did this, you did that. And you have to say to him, it is written, the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin. That's what Jesus wants us to do is to take his word and say to the evil one, look, I know I did that.

I know I have wronged. Oh, there's loads of things in my life. You can bring that, you can bring everything before me. And I know, I know, I know I've done all that. but the blood of Jesus Christ cleanses from all sin.

On the great day, not one sin is going to stick to me. Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It's gone. And that is part of the wonder, that is part of why the Lord is saying, I will give you rest, freedom from that.

The Lord also gives us a sense of identity, who we are in this world. So many people are wondering, who am I? Why am I here? There's lots of people with all these kind of puzzles where the Lord shows us why we're here.

Our chief purpose in this world is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever. And the Lord says, I'm putting you, I've got to set out a course for you and you will follow that course.

[24 : 41] Sometimes it won't be the road you wanted to go down. But you know, when we have the Lord in our focus and we're looking to him, we say, well Lord, I don't know what you're doing but I'm following you.

And I know that in this path that you're going to take glory to your name. Although it doesn't make sense to me right now. But you see, you have an identity. You know where you're going.

That's a great thing. You know, if you're just going through this world, if people just live for the day, now at one level we should live every day as if it's our last and live for that day.

Don't get me wrong. Put everything you have into that one day. Great. But, there's so many people who just, they never look beyond today.

And so often they get up, they live and they go to bed and they get up and they live and they go to bed and their thoughts never go higher than this world. But the Christian is looking ahead because the Christian knows that yes, we're in this world.

[25 : 47] We're in this world only for a wee while. And then there's an eternity with the Lord and that's where we're going. And there's an excitement, there's a growing anticipation, there's a growing excitement within our heart about that.

And the Lord gives you a sense of belonging. And again, that is so important. So many people feel isolated and lonely and lost in this world. They think I, they feel I've got nobody.

Well, when you have the Lord, you have. You're able to speak to Him at any time and share with Him. Now, of course, having said all that, there are battles, there are struggles.

I'm not, am I not suggesting for one moment that every single day of your life that you're full of the Lord every single day of your life you have this absolute persuasion that your sins are forgiven, that you're at total peace.

Don't get me wrong, sometimes a Christian struggles and struggles and struggles. But you will always be brought through it. Doesn't mean that you'll be brought through it that day, but you will.

[26 : 51] The Lord will always bring you through. And, of course, then, we can look forward to the ultimate rest, the rest of heaven. Heaven is the rest after our long, weary battle and journey here.

Now, as we know, there are so many things to look forward to with regard to heaven. And heaven is pictured as a place of rest.

And we understand a wee bit better when we just, for two or three minutes, as we come to conclude. It's often, by the way, of negatives. Because rest is an end to suffering.

Because through this world, there's always been suffering. There's been physical suffering. There's been the bumps and the knocks and the pains and the illnesses and the disease. And all these things, part and partial of life, in heaven, that will be no more.

No need of doctors or nurses in heaven. There will be no more sickness. There'll be no more mental oppressions.

[27 : 58] Nobody plunged anymore into darkness or depression. There'll be no sense of helplessness. There'll be no despair. These things that sometimes cripple people in this world, that'll be removed forever.

All the spiritual sufferings of this world, all the struggles, all the battles, the groans, the sighs, the sense of unworthiness, a sense of failure that is so often part and partial of our life, it'll be gone.

Our service in glory will be perfect. Rest from all temptation. Never again tempted. It's not an amazing thought. Satan and his legion of demons will never be able to reach you again.

You know, sometimes you try and think. You put your mind and say, yeah, I'm trying to think about that. We can't because we hit a wall because it's into realms that are beyond our comprehension.

A world where there is no pain, no sorrow, where there's no temptation, where there is no sound or sight or sense of evil in any shape or form.

[29 : 16] There's no death. Isn't that amazing? Death, no more. Jesus has won final victory over death.

And when we are taken to glory, we're waiting something. When we're taken to glory, we're waiting the redemption of the body. Our body, which we will leave behind, which will rest in the grave till the resurrection.

That body is going to be raised and reunited with our soul into a completeness in glory. But death will be no more. Never ever in the great vast multitude of heaven will the question be asked, where is so and so?

I heard he died. I heard she died. No. That language will be spoken about. Death will be no more.

That's what Jesus says in Revelation, that great picture that God will wipe away all tears from their eyes.

Remember what it says? God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain.

[30 : 31] for the former things have passed away. What a rest has promised us. But then we have to conclude and just say, well, is there not a note of warning in all this?

And there is, there is that note of warning because it says, lest you come short. And then you say to yourself, well, I thought the Bible says that once a person is in Jesus Christ then they're secure forever.

Absolutely. Absolutely. Nothing can separate the believer from Jesus Christ. Go to Romans 8 and you run through that list of things. Nothing can separate.

So what are you saying? Well, I'm saying very simply this. The proof of the work of grace going on in your heart is you're continuing to follow the Lord Jesus.

That's the evidence. And it is the evidence because I'll tell you, throughout your lifetime there have been loads of things if you weren't united to Christ that have taken you away.

[31 : 37] If your feet weren't truly on the rock, if you weren't truly united to Christ, there have been so many things that have shaken you that you would have said, oh, that's a dumb way. Or you would have drifted back or you would be gone because the history of the church, if you look at the history of the church, the number of people who maybe started out brightly and then they just faded away, they're gone.

Some will come back because they were the Lord's, but some, it was like in the stony ground here. But you're still following and you've been knocked and bruised and battered many times.

But you're still following. Why? Because he has a hold of you in his hand. You have entered that rest already and you will enter the complete rest that is to come.

Let us pray. Lord, our God, we pray that this beautiful rest which is found for us in Jesus, that this rest may be for each and every one of us today.

Help us, oh Lord, to know the security that is found in Jesus, to know the safety that is found with your arm around us. grant us the faith to see because sometimes we can struggle.

[32 : 51] We can struggle to see even the best of us in this world, the best of your people in this world, we're told we see but through a glass darkly. But then there'll come the day when we will see you face to face.

We pray, Lord, that you will open every eye to be able to see sufficient of you to lay hold upon you. Grant us your grace. Take each one of us to our home safely. Part us with your blessing and take away sin in Jesus' name.

Amen. Psalm 80, 80 in conclusion, the 80th Psalm. And we're going to sing the last two verses of the Psalm.

Psalm number 80. Verse 18. Psalm 80, Psalm 80, the last two verses.

Psalm 80, the last two verses. y'all and Whip■, Gal baix ciel Light. mmm male usually Amen.

[34 : 58] Thank you.

every person striving for before there hunger It's Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.