

The Believers Everlasting Rest

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[0 : 00] Let's turn just for a little to the chapter we read in Hebrews, Hebrews chapter 4, and reading at verse 3, Hebrews chapter 4, and at verse 3, For we who have believed enter that rest. For we who have believed enter that rest.

And one of the things that we enjoy in life, particularly after a time of, I suppose, heightened activity or a time where we are involved in so many things, we really enjoy a time where we can switch off, a time of rest and a time of recharging the batteries.

It's vital, particularly in the day that we're living in, where the pace of life is becoming ever more frantic, and the demands upon our time are becoming ever greater, that we have a time of rest. Even the Bible makes it clear to us the importance of rest. You take, for example, the likes of Elijah, that overworked prophet, and there came this particular point.

Although there were various factors in it, you find that Elijah really faced a complete breakdown. And the Lord had to take Elijah aside, and he had to be rested, and he had to be fed in order to be restored and given his work to do again.

[1 : 33] We find the Lord Jesus Christ saying to us, saying to his disciples, come ye apart and rest for a while.

So we know that rest is absolutely vital in this world. But there's an even greater rest than the rest that we need and get for our bodies and need and get for our minds, and that is the rest for our soul.

And that is a rest that is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. Nowhere else this particular rest is found in the Lord Jesus Christ.

And the rest that a passion receives in Jesus Christ in this world is what we would say the foretaste, the first fruit of the rest that they will enjoy, the saint's everlasting rest.

The moment a passion comes into union with Christ, the moment a passion comes to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, they receive eternal life.

[2 : 41] And that life that they receive goes on eternally. But the rest that they begin to enjoy in Jesus, in this world, is a rest that will be fully realized in glory forever.

Now, as we know, in this particular chapter, I remember looking at the warning about coming short, the promise of entering his rest, let us fear lest any should seem to have failed to reach it, because we're commanded to labor to enter that rest.

Now, that's not the particular emphasis I'm looking upon tonight. But just to say in passing the importance of striving and laboring to enter this rest, because in this world we give our time and our attention and our abilities and whatever talents or gifts people have, we give of our life to many, many things.

We involve ourselves in many things, things that we enjoy, sometimes things we don't particularly enjoy. And that is good. That's part of what life is.

But you know, there are times when we stop and we reflect, and we say to ourselves, am I spending all my energies, all my resources, all that I have on something or on things that are not going to last?

[4 : 14] Because as the Bible says, that so much of the things of life, that they pass with the using, as we use it or as we're involved in it or whatever, it's over, it's past, it's gone.

And that's it. And that's really one of the things the Bible warns us about, not to give ourselves entirely and totally to these things that are just going to come and they're going to go.

You see, we all have precious, never-dying souls. And that's one of the things that the Bible emphasizes over and over and over again. Give the first priority to your soul.

And you know, if we do that, the Lord will see to it that all the other things are sorted out as well. Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness and all the other things will be added unto you. So you see the importance of the priority of seeking first the Lord. So let us remember this, that our soul lasts forever, that our soul continues forever.

[5 : 19] And even if tonight that these words are sufficient to make you, we were this morning just reflecting upon the importance of stopping with God's Word.

that every single day that we give a little time, not just to reading a little, but to reflecting on it, we've lost the art of sitting down and thinking.

And that is vital in the day that we live in. Vital to stop and to think. Just to stop. And as I said, if you walk into a room, you go, maybe if you go to some of the homes and you see the elderly and you see them and they're sitting in chairs and they're looking and you say to yourself, oh, well, sometimes maybe when you're younger, you go through this in your head and you say, well, that's what old people do.

But you know, all people should, all people should stop and reflect and think. And I believe that it's part of the strategy, even the devil's strategy, is to keep us away from stopping and pondering and reflecting and thinking.

Where am I going? Have I got things? Have I got my soul right with God? That's the important question. If I were to die tonight, am I ready to meet with the Lord?

[6 : 44] God who has filled my life with so many good things. Yes, there may have been painful things, things I didn't particularly want, things that went in a different direction to what I anticipated and expected, but by and large, my life has been filled with so many good things.

And if I am going to be ushered out of time tonight into eternity, am I ready to meet with the Lord? Or have I wasted all the opportunities he's given me on other things?

Have I neglected and relegated all the spiritual things way down the list of priorities? So that's one of the things that is being emphasized in this particular epistle.

Now, as the apostle, you see, writing about the Christian's rest, he uses two examples from the Bible. And the first is the rest that God himself enjoyed.

When God finished creating this world, he rested. His Sabbath. This is the one day that God had set aside. And from the very beginning, he set it apart.

[7 : 51] He sanctified it. And it is a day that has been handed on to us, a day where we also enjoy this particular rest, just as God himself did.

And you can see how it's inevitable, but that Satan will try and take this day away from us. because if you remove this day that the Lord has given to us, you see, it's taking away what is our focus upon God.

That's what this day is. It's our focus upon God, upon who God is, upon what God did. It's reminding us that this world that we live in was created by God.

It is reminding us that God has a claim upon us. It is reminding us that we were created in order to worship God. So if you take away this day, it is taking away all these things which are really at the very center of our life.

And that is why we will lose so much when we lose God's day. God has given us this day as a blessing. It's a privilege. It's a day where we're able to draw aside from all the normal pursuits, from the normal activities of the week.

[9 : 15] It is a day where our bodies are rested, our minds are rested, but it is a day when our souls are nourished. And even if we are not spiritually alive in Christ, it is a day where we come to worship God and where we're given the great offer of the gospel.

Do you know, it's a wonderful thing. That's one of the great things for people, people who have not yet come to faith in Jesus Christ, to come to church.

It's a great thing because you're under the word. And that's where faith is born. Faith comes by hearing and hearing comes by the word of God.

So putting yourself in the place where God's word is read and preached is one of the most wonderful things you can do because it's God's appointed means of blessing, of reaching people. And this is where so many people come to faith in Jesus Christ, where they're awakened, where they're convicted, where they're shown the need of a Savior. And so this is one of the wonderful privileges and blessings.

[10 : 25] And you can see why there's such an attack upon the Lord's Day is to keep people away from the house of God so that they won't hear God's word and they won't come to faith in Jesus Christ, where even God's people will be kept away and where they won't be built up in the faith.

And the Lord is showing us here as one example of this rest, his own rest. And the other rest that is spoken of here is, of course, the rest of Canaan, the land of promise.

And again, we have this example of where Israel, remember, came out of Egypt. They were led to the borders of the promised land. But all along in that journey, they were grumbling, they were complaining, they were rebelling, and everything was wrong.

It wasn't fair. They didn't have this. They didn't have that. Their whole journey was ruined and marred with complaint and grumbling against God. And again, we've said this, there are times when you read the history of Israel in that journey and you say to yourself, what a bunch of complainers. If I had been there, I wouldn't have been one of them. But then when you look at your own life, when I look at my own life, so often we see that that very same spirit is there.

[11 : 48] We're so often grumbling before God, complaining before God, finding fault with God, wondering what God is doing. If Israel could have seen the great land that God had prepared, if Israel could have been taken on 40 years to see the next generation that arrived into the land of promise and seen what God had prepared, they would have stopped their grumbling.

But they couldn't see that far. And their faith wasn't sufficient to lay hold upon God's word. And they grumbled and they disobeyed. And of course, there was their great rebellion at Kadesh Barnea. And that generation that came out of Egypt with the exception of Joshua and Caleb were forbidden to enter the land of promise. It was the following generation or the generation that was growing up, the young generation that went on in after.

Unbelief is a huge hindrance to enjoying God's rest. And that was the problem with that particular generation.

Unbelief and disobedience. Unbelief. And my dear friend, may I say to anybody in here tonight who's without Jesus Christ as Savior, do you know part of your problem? It's unbelief.

[13 : 13] Unbelief. That you're not yet prepared. Now, maybe you don't feel comfortable. Maybe you don't like hearing it. But this is the bottom line. That you are not prepared to believe, to take God absolutely at His word.

There's something in you or about you that is reacting to and somehow you're pushing away what God is saying. You have not come to this place where you will believe what God's word is saying. So unbelief is a big problem. And it is a huge problem, let me say, not only for the unbeliever, but it's even a problem for the believer.

Because there is still an evil heart within us. Even when we come to faith in Jesus Christ, there is still a heart of unbelief. And that's one of the great battles.

And maybe there are young Christians in here tonight or older Christians in here tonight and you're going through a terrible problem because of unbelief. You're struggling in believing God's word.

[14 : 16] You know it's true but somehow there are these terrible temptations that are overcoming you and overwhelming you and you're saying, is this true? And maybe you're doubting that you could ever be a Christian because tonight your temptation is, is God real?

And you're saying to yourself, no Christian can think like that. But you know, Satan can come up on us and he can, his darts and his arrows can be so powerful and so strong and so convincing that there are times that he will shake to the core the Christian.

You will be taken over that. You will be delivered from it. But you know, there is no temptation that may not come upon you. And Satan is a master at fitting the temptation to the way that you are.

Now as we said, this rest that the Lord holds out before us, as we said, is really twofold in nature in the sense that there is this rest offered to us in Jesus Christ and once we come into that rest, then there is the rest of heaven.

Now we see that in order to enjoy this rest, there has to be belief. All who accept the Lord Jesus Christ experience his rest.

[15 : 46] And I would go as far as to say that those who are without Christ do not have rest in this world. Now you may be saying to yourself, you know, that's a very bold statement to make.

Well, maybe it is, but I believe it to be true. Now I am not saying for one moment, and I wouldn't be silly enough to say, that every single person who is without Christ tonight is unhappy in this world.

I wouldn't say that for one moment. Because it's quite possible that in here at this very moment in time that there might be some who are out with Christ, who feel in themselves far happier than some who are tonight believers.

Maybe the circumstances you're going in, the particular stage you are in life, the experiences that you're going through, maybe they are so good that you are really enjoying life and you're saying to yourself, you know, life for me tonight is really good.

I'm enjoying life. life. And so, we've got to admit and recognize that there are many people who enjoy life outside the Lord Jesus Christ.

[17 : 02] As things are at the moment, but it can change, it can change like that. And that is why it is so important that we come to embrace the Lord Jesus Christ.

Because you see, the thing is that while life may be good at this particular moment and juncture in your experience, one day things will change.

Life, that's what happens in life. Life is full of change. change. We are often powerless to alter these things. Sometimes we can, but often we can't.

But I believe that there's a restlessness in the heart of all people that cannot be cured apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And one of the things that cause restlessness, there are many things, but one of them, for instance, is guilt. guilt is an incredible power within our heart and within our life.

[18 : 11] And we often don't recognize or realize just how devastating guilt is until we come to a place or a point where we deal with the particular issues that are causing that guilt.

And there are many people tonight who are riddled with guilt. They might not know it. Maybe they've never sat down and analyzed it. But there are issues, there are things going on in their life.

There are many people who are drinking themselves into oblivion to get rid of guilt. There are many people who are doing different things in life to try and remove the guilt that is there.

There are many people who are throwing themselves into projects, throwing themselves full on into life so that they don't stop and so that they'll try and drown out the guilt that is there.

Guilt is an incredible burden upon people's hearts and lives. And out with the Lord Jesus Christ, it is inevitable that people are carrying guilt.

[19 : 16] I'm not saying that the Christian never feels guilty. Of course they do. But one of the things that Jesus has come to do in his sacrifice and in his death is to deal with our guilt.

Isn't that wonderful? He has taken our guilt upon himself. And so that is why I am saying that it is impossible for a person out with Christ not to have an element of restlessness brought about simply by guilt.

I believe it's one of the problems of our nation today. It's one of the reasons why our nation is the way that it is. is our nation a nation of peace and tranquility and calmness?

Not at all. There's a restlessness. There's sometimes you feel like Britain. You know sometimes when you lift a stone and there's maybe piles of little creepy crawlies or ants and they're all scurrying about running this way and that.

Sometimes you think if you were to look down on our nation today it's like that. Everybody running this way and that. there is so much unrest. There is so much anger.

[20 : 33] There's so much frustration. There's so many issues and there's so much squabbling, so much fighting, so much deceit, so much corruption. You look around and it seems to be bang, bang, bang.

Part of the reason is that people have pushed God out of the equation. And it's inevitable if we push God out of the equation that this is what the result will be. And so we need to come back to the Lord who has promised rest.

The Lord who invites us to come to himself. He says, come unto me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest if you're in here tonight, my dear friend, and you're burdened. I don't know what it may be in life. But the Lord is saying, look, he said, don't try and go through this on your own. Because we do try to.

He says, you come to me, cast your burden upon me, pour out your heart to me, listen to what I will say to you.

[21 : 41] Because remember this, God's dealings with us are two way. We come and we pour out our shells to him. He will tell you from the word. He will show you from the word what to do and the way to go.

Because God is interested in your life personally. And whatever the issues, whatever the difficulties, whatever it may be, the Lord wants to guide you and show you, even although you have to face up to really difficult things, his word is there to show you.

you and I and everyone needs the Lord Jesus Christ. And let us also remember, as I was saying, even if tonight everything is going well for you and you're here without Christ, remember that one day you're going to have to leave this world.

And that is an awesome thought, leaving this world without Christ. because you see, in this world right now, we feel an element of security.

Because we have people around us. What's the expression? There's strength in numbers. And even just now, even thinking about that thought for a moment, thinking about death, we tend to put it away from us.

[23 : 00] Particularly if we're feeling well or strong. But even if we're not, the fact is that death is approaching. And what's going to happen when our soul launches out into the great eternity if we do not have Jesus Christ?

Well, I believe that souls that launch out into eternity, that they cry if they're without the Lord Jesus Christ. I'm sure that they're saying, oh, if only I could get one more opportunity, if only I could sit under the gospel one more time, if only I was given the one last opportunity to have my Bible and could have one last prayer, I would seek to get right with God.

But it's too late. It's too late. The door is closed. Life is over. That is why this day of opportunity is given to us. And that is why Jesus has come to give us life.

It is during our life here in this world that we must receive this eternal life. oh, my dear friend who's under the gospel, do not be cast away from every light and opportunity of love and privilege into the great eternity without the Lord Jesus Christ.

But we see here that in order for us to receive this salvation, then we are to believe. That's what it says. for we who have believed enter that rest.

[24 : 39] So the way to this rest or the way of entry into this rest is believing. That is accepting the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Faith views Christ as the only one who is sufficient for salvation. That's what faith does. Looks upon Christ alone.

Faith takes its eyes off anything and everything else. As long as we in any way cling to another hope, we won't look to Jesus.

As long as we may be thinking that our attempts at religion will be enough, as long as we hold to the hope that we may be decent enough as a citizen, as long as we cling to the hope that we may think that our background or our privileges will see as all right, as long as we cling to the hope that it won't be as bad as we think, you know the expression it will be all right in the night, and you know there are people who sit under the gospel all their lives who somehow through unbelief deceive themselves into thinking that it will still be all right on the night it won't.

It can't be. God can't go back on his word. So you see this is what faith does. Faith looks away from all the other things that at one time we ourselves may have clung to or exercised an element of hope and sort of said oh well I'm going to see to it one day.

[26 : 23] That's another one. But faith gets rid of all these things and looks to Jesus Christ alone as the only hope of salvation.

And faith clings to God's word personally. In other words faith sees what God is saying in his word and believes it and says yeah this is for me.

The Lord is saying him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out well Lord here I am I'm coming. That's what faith does. Faith says Lord here I am.

This is what your word says. There's loads I don't understand. There's loads I can't get my head round. But this one thing I do know. God's word is saying to me that if I come that the Lord will not cast me out.

And that's what faith does. It takes God at his word. That's believing. You know there are people and you'd say to yourself if somebody says something to you you'll say to yourself why that's true.

[27 : 36] What you know about that person is that this is a true person a person who speaks the truth. And when that person speaks you'll believe it because of what you know about that person is this person is genuine true and he won't tell you something that's untrue.

And so if he says it you believe it because you know he's true. Well here's the Lord speaking and you know he's true. His words are true.

And that's what faith does. Faith is accepting the word of the Lord to be true and believing it and resting upon it for time and for eternity.

and if you tonight don't have that faith then you go to the Lord and ask the Lord for it. Because maybe you're saying to yourself hold on a second you're asking me to exercise faith and maybe there might even be somebody here who's this very moment is trying to believe and they're saying Lord I believe I'm trying I'm trying my hardest Lord to believe and I can't.

you go to the Lord and say Lord I'm serious about this. I want to believe. Tonight give me the faith to believe.

[28 : 58] You know the Lord will. If this is what you really want. If this is what you desperately decide. If this is your heart's desire. The Lord will give it to you.

But he knows your heart. You can't fool with the Lord. You can't fool him. You can't pull the wool. I say that reverently over his eyes. He knows exactly how you're thinking.

And if he sees this is a heart that is really wanting me, then the Lord will hear and he will answer your prayer. And you will be given that rest.

As we said, one of the things is that your guilt is taken away. And a peace will come into your heart. And my dear friend, you won't realize how much that guilt was causing you unrest until you find peace in Christ.

It's then that you discover. That's one of the things that people say when they're converted. People will say, what have you got as a Christian? Well, one thing people will say is, I've got peace. I've got peace.

[30 : 07] Peace. Real peace. Of course you have. Because Jesus says, my peace I give you. Not as the world gives, give I unto you. Another thing you will get is a sense of identity.

You will have a sense of purpose in this world. Tonight, there's an awful lot of people around and about in our land and they don't know why they're here. They don't seem to have any aim or any purpose in life and they don't know where they're going.

well, you know, when you come to Jesus, all that's sorted out. Because you're given this identity of belonging to the Lord.

And you know why you're here. You're here to glorify him. And you know where you're going.

You're going to be with him. See, it's incredible how it changes. And the Lord gives you new desires and new appetites.

That doesn't mean that they all go. No, they don't. And that's often a huge area of conflict. That is often the big battle, the head-on collision. But there are new appetites.

[31 : 15] Maybe you're saying to yourself tonight, ah, you know this, I would like to be a Christian, but you know, as things stand right now, I don't see how I could do this church thing all the time.

It's all very well maybe coming on a Sunday morning or coming on a Sunday night, but I couldn't get too worked up or too serious about it. I don't know how there are people who get so involved in it.

I couldn't do that. But that's because the Lord hasn't given you that new appetite yet. You see, when you come to faith in Jesus Christ, he gives you that.

As I said this morning, sometimes people are afraid of being converted. they want to be Christians, but they're afraid of what is beyond.

Here they are, here's a comfort zone, even although they know they're not right with God, they're comfortable because this is what they're familiar with. It's how I've always been, but I don't know what's over there.

[32 : 18] And I don't know if I could cope with it or handle it or how would I be? Lots of questions. These are real questions. But this is where you've got to trust the Lord and say, right, Lord, here I am.

There's loads I don't know, there's loads I don't understand, but I need to get this sorted. Lord, please take me tonight. Lord, please take me tonight.

And if we come like that, he will take you. And you will discover, and you will know this rest. Yes, begin here and now, and our rest with himself forever and ever.

Let us pray. Oh, Lord, our God, we pray tonight that we may all in here come to know and to experience the rest that we've spoken about and thought about.

that we may come to enjoy the peace that is found in Jesus Christ, that we may look to him and not look to any other, and that we may grasp the gospel opportunities that are given to us.

[33 : 24] Oh, Lord, bless us and keep us. Shine thy face upon us. Do us good. Lead us in the way of truth. Have mercy on us and forgive us all our sin. For Jesus' sake.

Amen.