

STUDIES IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS

STUDY NUMBER SIX - Hebrews 4:1-10

TEXT:

v. 1 Therefore, let us fear lest, a promise that is still open of entering into His rest, any one of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

v. 2 For indeed we are having had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word of the preaching did not profit them, because it had not been mixed together with faith in those who heard.

v. 3 For we are entering into this rest, we who believed; just as He has said, "As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest," and yet His works came into being from the foundation of the world.

v. 4 For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day in this manner: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works";

v. 5 and again in this passage, "They shall not enter into my rest."

v. 6 Since therefore it is remaining for some to enter into it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them did not enter because of disobedience,

v. 7 He again is designating a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

v. 8 For if Joshua brought them to rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.

v. 9 There is remaining therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

v.10 For the one who entered into His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

INTRODUCTION:

(Encyclopedia of Good Clean Jokes by Bob Phillips)

Deacon Johnson seemed to always fall asleep during the sermon on Sunday morning. His wife grew very tired of his behavior and she decided to deal with the embarrassing situation. The next Sunday when her husband fell asleep, she quietly removed some Limburger cheese from her purse and carefully passed it beneath his nose. Whereupon Deacon Johnson was heard to murmur, "No, Helen, no--don't kiss me now."
p. 56

(First Things First by Stephen R. Covey, A. Roger Merrill, & Rebecca R. Merrill)

In the words of C. S. Lewis:

Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man. . . . It is the comparison that makes you proud; the pleasure of being above the rest.
p. 290

Pride is the ultimate emotional parasite. There is no deep joy, no satisfaction, no peace in it because there's always the possibility that someone else is better-looking or has more money, more friends, a bigger house, or a newer car.

Pride is insidious because it pollutes meaning and purpose. It dulls, ignores, and even dethrones conscience. As C. S. Lewis observed, "Pride is a spiritual cancer: it eats up the very possibility of love, or contentment, or even common sense." It eventually leads to hate, envy, and war.
p. 290

In the words of former U. S. Secretary of Agriculture and religious leader Ezra Taft Benson:

Most of us consider pride to be a sin of those on the top, such as the rich and the learned, looking down at the rest of us. There is, however, a far more common ailment among us--and that is pride from the bottom looking up. It is manifest in so many ways, such as fault-finding, gossiping, backbiting, murmuring, living beyond our means, envying, coveting, withholding gratitude and praise that might lift another, and being unforgiving and jealous.

(Carpe Diem by Tony Campolo)

The Blackwood Brothers sang about some of the things I am describing when they recorded Don and Harold Reid's song called "The Class of '57":

Tommy's sellin' used cars,
Nancy's fixin' hair,
Harvey runs a groc'ry store
And Marg'ret doesn't care;
Jerry drives a truck for Sears
And Charlotte's on the make,
And Paul sells life insurance
And part-time real estate.

And the Class of Fifty-Seven had its dreams.
But we all thought we'd change the world
With our great works and deeds;
Or maybe we just thought
The world would change to fit our needs.
The Class of Fifty-Seven had its dreams.

Betty runs a trailer park,
Jan sells Tupperware,
Randy's in an insane ward,
And Mary's on welfare;
Charley took a job with Ford,
Joe took Freddy's wife,
Charlotte took a millionaire,
And Freddy took his life.

And the Class of Fifty-Seven had its dreams.
But livin' life from day to day
Is never like it seems.
Things get complicated
When you get past eighteen,
But the Class of Fifty-Seven had its dreams.
Ah, the Class of Fifty-Seven had its dreams.

pp. 184-5

Matthew 11:28-30

"Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, 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 shall find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My load is light."

The BIG QUESTION that we ask ourselves today as we deal with these 1st 10 verses in chapter 4 is:

ARE WE RESTING IN THE TOTAL ADEQUACY OF JESUS CHRIST?

Living in vital union with our Savior brings about a rest whereby we are increasingly deepening our relationship with Him, depending more fully upon His strength, disciplining our desires to do His will. The rest that results is the inner rest of wellbeing.

Isaiah 32:17

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness, quietness and assurance forever.

Lightfoot points out:

No break in thought comes between chapters 3 and 4. Drawing on the unfavorable example of the Israelites who failed to enter God's rest, the author shows that the divine rest is still left open. This new section goes back to the words, "Today, when you hear His voice"--words to which the author implies that God is still making His rest available in the Christian era.

Hughes points out:

As Christians, we understand there is no rest for the soul apart from Christ. St. Augustine, in the fourth century, gave this truth its eloquent, classic expression in his Confessions: "Thou movest us to delight in praising Thee; for Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee" (Book I.1.1.). Blaise Pascal, perhaps the greatest of French minds, wrote even more explicitly in his Pensées:

What is it, then, that this desire and this inability proclaim to us, but that there was once in man a true happiness of which there now remain to him only the mark and empty trace, which he in vain tries to fill from all his surroundings, seeking from things absent the help he does not obtain in things present? But these are all inadequate, because the infinite abyss can only be filled by an infinite and immutable object, that is to say, only by God Himself. (VII, para. 425)

How our souls answer to the words of Augustine and Pascal! When we came to God in Christ, it was like pulling into a snug harbor from a stormy sea. There is no rest for the heart apart from Christ.

However, if we are candid we will admit that the initial rest has not always been our lot, because there is a difference between the primary experience of rest and living a life of rest on life's uneven seas. Certainly this was true of those the writer of Hebrews was addressing. Their experience of Christ was not living up to expectations. Instead of rest, there was turmoil. They had given up their ancient religion but were suffering for their new faith. To some it seemed that the initial experience of rest was a cruel delusion.

It is to these endangered hearts that the writer now focuses his remarks in chapter 4 as he instructs and exhorts them on participation in the rest of God. This theme has always been contemporary and will find a responsive chord in every believer's heart--especially if he or she is sailing into the contrary winds of the world.

pp. 107-8

Larry Richards says:

This section of Hebrews is complicated by a multiple use of the word "rest" and by a complex argument. We can best follow the thought if we sort out some of the elements, rather than attempt to analyze the passage verse by verse.

The promise stands. This is the thought with which the chapter begins (v. 1). Even though a later, obedient generation did enter the Promised Land, that entry did not completely fulfill the promise of the rest for God's people. In fact, much later, in the time of David, the promise and the warning were repeated: "Today, if you hear His voice . . ." (v. 7). If God's full blessing for His people had been granted when Joshua led Israel into Palestine (v. 8), then the promise of rest would not have been repeated much later to the people of David's day, or by the writer of Hebrews to Christians then and now.
p. 34

Wiersbe says:

His rest (1-10). Three different "rests" are in view: God's Sabbath rest after creation (v. 4; Gen. 2:2); Israel's rest of victory in Canaan (v. 3; Josh. 21:44); and the believer's rest of faith today (vv. 1, 9-10). Israel was delivered from Egypt, but a whole generation failed to enter Canaan and claim their promised inheritance. Why? Because of their unbelief. "Let us fear!" (v. 1).
p. 815

J. Vernon McGee says:

In the first two verses of chapter 4 we have a continuation of the warning concerning doubting which was given in chapter 3.
p. 531

M. R. DeHaan says:

It is possible for a person to be saved and destined for heaven, yet lead a miserable, defeated life here below. The Bible is perfectly clear that there are two distinct possibilities of Christian experience: defeat or victory. Paul recognizes this fact and speaks of carnal believers and spiritual believers; perpetual babes in Christ never growing up, and mature, grown-up spiritual men. The burden of the Book of Hebrews is to induce the Hebrew Christians addressed to grow into maturity and not remain spiritual infants by failing to obey the Lord. His plea is summed up in the words:

For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again which be the first principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk [baby food], and not of strong meat [solid food] (Heb. 5:12).

The tragedy is that many believers are perpetual infants, suffering from undernourishment and arrested development and malnutrition, lacking joy and victory and reward. It is no use denying the fact that too many believers are no farther along today than they were five years ago. This is not God's will, for He has something better. It is possible to know an undisturbed rest and peace, an attainment of victory over self and the world, which passeth all understanding. Why then go on defeated and discouraged, when the fullness of the abundant life can be yours?
p. 64

It is then possible to be saved and never come to the fullness of the joy of our salvation here below. As a striking example of, and solemn warning against this tragedy, the author of Hebrews calls our attention to the experience of Israel, quoting from the ninety-fifth Psalm. Israel was a redeemed people, delivered by God from Egypt. It was all of grace, by the death of a lamb and the shedding of the blood. They were now out of Egypt, but their goal was Canaan and victory.
p. 65

Draper observes:

The word "rest" occurs nine times in Hebrews 4:1-11. In each instance there is something to look forward to, to anticipate. There is something that is not mere history but is still available to the Jews to whom the author of Hebrews is writing. We need to back off and look at this, because many of us live as if all that really mattered was for us to be saved. We have all heard testimonies from Christians who were saved and nothing has happened since. They joined the church, were baptized, and had an experience of some sort, but nothing more has happened. This passage tells us that something ought to be happening all the time. There is still more for us than we have experienced with the Lord.

p. 86

Christ has entered into his rest. He has completed his task and he has ceased from his work of redemption, just as God ceased from his works of creation. "Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (4:11).

pp. 86-87

Lane says:

In 4:1-11 the writer advances the interpretation of Ps 95 to a new stage. The focus of 3:12-19 was upon the exclusion of the desert generation from God's rest because of blatant unbelief and rebellion. The tragic aftermath of death in the desert as the result of failing to believe God constituted the basis of warning for the hearers. In 4:1-11 the accent falls upon the Christian community as heir to the promise of entrance into God's rest. The writer's task in this section is to pose in sharp terms the alternatives of rest and peril that now confront the new people of God.

p. 97

Bruce titles this section:

THE TRUE REST OF GOD MAY BE FORFEITED (4:1-10)

p. 103

Wescott says:

It follows from the consideration of the history of Israel that the promise of God to His people was not fulfilled by the entrance into Canaan.

p. 92

The writer takes for granted throughout that whatever God in His love has ever designed for man is brought within man's reach by Christ, 'the heir of all things,' the fulfiller of human destiny.

p. 92

Macaulay says:

The way of rest, then, is turning from ourselves, with our imperfect works and our uncertain plans, and looking to God in all trust and obedience.

That was the way for the Israel that went out of Egypt with Moses, but, not accepting the way, they fell in the wilderness. The same way of rest was offered the Israel that entered Canaan with Joshua, but they too failed, and instead of rest found constant strife, as the book of the Judges testifies. The same way of rest was offered to Israel under David, but despite many mercies they plunged into the ways of disobedience and apostasy.

Such failure after failure to enter into rest is enough to make us wonder if the way of rest is now closed. "No," urges our apostolic writer, "it is more open than ever, but the danger of missing it is just as great as ever."

p. 57

Phillips points out:

The true believer in the Lord Jesus can fail as sadly as Israel failed in the wilderness. We are living in a world which is as barren of spiritual things as the Sinai Desert was of the things needed to sustain the Israelites on their way to Canaan. God planned the wilderness experience for Israel as a necessary stage on the way to the promised land. The journey from Sinai to Kadesh-barnea was to be brief and each step a maturing process. Canaan could then be subdued quickly by a people ready for conquest. The Hebrews failed to profit from the wilderness experiences and as a result were condemned to know nothing better than the wilderness.

pp. 72-73

Wiersbe says:

Believers today may enter and enjoy their spiritual inheritance in Christ. We must be careful lest we fail to believe God's Word, for it is only as the Word is "mixed with faith" that it can accomplish its purposes. The argument in this section is given in several propositions: (1) God finished His work and rested, so that His rest has been available since Creation. (2) The Jews failed to enter into their rest. (3) Many years later (Ps. 95), God said that a rest was still available. That "Today" is still here! This means that Joshua did not lead Israel into the true rest, because a rest still remains. [Note that the name "Jesus" in Heb. 4:8, KJV, ought to be "Joshua." "Jesus" is the Greek form of "Joshua."]

p. 43

Hession in his little book From Shadow to Substance points out:

To explain the wilderness experience we have had to go outside the Epistle to the Hebrews to other of Paul's writings. While we are doing this, there is one important passage we cannot ignore--1 Corinthians 10:1-12. There Paul makes the point that whereas all the Israelites came out of Egypt and all were under the cloud and all passed through the sea and did all eat of the manna and drink of the rock that was smitten for them, with the great majority God was not well pleased, and they were overthrown in the wilderness.

p. 39

v. 1 Therefore, let us fear lest, a promise that is still open of entering into His rest, any one of you should seem to have failed to reach it.

In these 1st 3 verses the AUTHOR IDENTIFIES WITH THE READER:

1. He says here in verse 1:

"THEREFORE, LET US . . ."

2. In verse 2:

"FOR INDEED WE ARE HAVING HAD GOOD NEWS PREACHED TO US . . ."

3. And in verse 3:

"FOR WE ARE ENTERING INTO THIS REST, WE WHO BELIEVED; . . ."

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

"Let us fear" sets the key. It is an exhortation. The Jews, marked by a desire for Egypt's pleasures and a despair of Canaan's testings.

It follows from the tragic example of Israel that Christians should also take warning. This is true because **the promise of entering His rest still stands.**

The writer's concept of "rest" must not be separated from its Old Testament roots.

The promise is still available to those who want it. The purpose of Hebrews is to lead to the fullness of rest.

It is a time to PERSEVERE AND PRESS ON, not a time to quit.

The 1st mention of "REST" occurs in chapter 3. Therefore, chapter 3 must have some import to the concept of rest. The chief concern of chapter 3 is to encourage the readers to hold on to their Christian profession until the end. This is a form of endurance. Therefore, rest must be closely related to the activity of endurance. God's Sabbath rest occurred when He finished His works. In this manner also are we to rest. The Israelites in the desert did not finish the task God set before them. They turned back and forfeited the rest. Likewise, Christians ought to be careful not to leave their task unfinished.

The greatest oak was once just a little nut that held its ground.

The ideas of

REST,

INHERITANCE,

SABBATH

and KINGDOM

are all concepts that revolve in the OLD TESTAMENT CONTEXT.

By way of application, to rest at the wrong time is not to enjoy it. Trying to relax when one ought to be working takes all the pleasure out of it. If we fail to finish the task God has given us, we will miss the satisfaction which the completion of those tasks will bring. It is a real, deep enjoyment of rest.

Dunham points out:

The chapter division is unfortunate, for the sense of the passage in no way indicates a break here. Rather, the inference to be drawn from the practical lesson of the historical situation cited in chapter 3 is set forth for the readers of the epistle here in chapter 4.

Phillips says:

Many believers have the idea that the failure to enter into all that God has for them in Christ is regrettable but not very serious. God says we should fear it. "Let us fear therefore, lest haply, a promise being left of entering into his rest, any one of you should seem to have come short of it" (4:1). We must not even seem to come short of it. A little girl fell out of bed one night. When asked about it the next morning, she replied, "I must have stayed too close to where I got in!" It is a serious thing not to go on in the Christian life; that is the chief burden of the whole epistle. It is true that a Christian, truly saved, cannot lose his salvation, but he can certainly lose his reward.

p. 73

Westcott says:

The position of privilege is the discipline of faith. To have been brought to Christ is a beginning and not an end. In such a case 'fear' is a motive for strenuous exertion.

p. 92

Bruce comments:

The promise of entering the "rest" of God remains open. The meaning of that "rest" was not exhausted by the earthly Canaan which was entered by the Israelites of the generation which had grown up to manhood in the wilderness; the spiritual counterpart of the earthly Canaan is the goal of the people of God today. Our author therefore urges his readers again to press on and attain that goal. It will not be reached automatically; they will do well to fear the possibility of missing it, just as the generation of Israelites which died in the wilderness missed the earthly Canaan, although that was the goal which they had before them when they set out from Egypt.

p. 105

Lane translates this open admonishment:

. . . "let us begin to fear," at the beginning of the paragraph implies that the attitude toward the word of God in Scripture within the community has not been acceptable. The appeal for a more sensitive attitude was motivated by earnest pastoral concern for every individual within the house-church ("that even one among you would seem to be excluded"; cf. 3:12, 13; 4:11). The fact that a promise of entering God's rest remains open explains the urgency expressed in the exhortation.

p. 97

The price they were asked to pay was too high for them, however. COMPLETE OBEDIENCE to God and SIMPLE TRUST of God to drive out the inhabitants of the land was a step they were unwilling to take. The Scriptures do not tell precisely why they rebelled at the border, nor all of the attendant details. The crucial issue was the conflict between trusting God and trusting experience.

This is most definitely not a "heaven rest," for then all things will be complete; and even in God's creative rest it is necessary for Him actively to keep the universe functioning. As F. B. Meyer so aptly puts it, "We are not summoned to the heavy slumber which follows overtaxing toil nor to inaction or indolence, but to the rest which is possible amid swift activity and strenuous work, to perfect equilibrium between the outgoings and incomings of the life, to a contented heart, to peace that passes all understanding."

Jensen comments:

Such rest is the heart rest which comes only by implicit CONFIDENCE IN GOD and ENTIRE SATISFACTION in all that He does. This rest we can enter into here and now in this life, although, of course, we shall not come into the full enjoyment of it until a future time when our bodies are redeemed and we are forever with the Lord. Since the historical example chosen by the writer is one in which rest is used, expositors have taken one of the following views as the main reference:

- 1.It is the Christian life in general.
- 2.It is heavenly rest for believers, or
- 3.It is complete surrender to the will of God.

If it is the Christian life in general, then the exhortation to enter into rest in 4:11 seems out of place in light of this description of the readers in 3:1 as "holy brethren, partakers of the heavenly calling." If it is the rest of heaven, then the historical example would indicate that all those who fail to enter Canaan also fail to enter heaven. This would mean that only Caleb and Joshua of the group leaders, including Moses, that came out of Egypt entered heaven. The view that best fits the historical context as well as the logic of this portion of Hebrews is that it refers to a rest of total surrender by believers to the will of God. It is a failure to enter into the rest which God provides for those who trust Him fully. A restless, dissatisfied, homeless spiritual condition like that which characterized those who wandered forty years in the wilderness will be the judgment upon any reader who fails in the same manner of unbelief.

DeHaan points out:

The prominent word in this chapter is REST. It is the subject of this entire section, and occurs no less than eleven times from Hebrews 3:11 to Hebrews 4:11. There are three kinds of rest mentioned: a past rest, a present rest and a future rest. The past rest is the rest of salvation; the present rest is the rest of victory over sin; and the future rest is the eternal rest in heaven when all our labors and trials will be over.

p. 65

There is a rest which is the result of receiving Christ by faith, another rest which comes only as we walk obediently according to His Word, and a future rest which awaits all God's people after this life is over. The first and the third rest are God's past gift and future promise. They do not depend on our works, but upon His work, and so cannot be lost. But the second "rest," the rest of service and the peace of victory, is a present possibility and depends upon our labors, and our faithfulness; and because it depends upon our faithfulness it can be lost, and hence the warning, "lest any of you should seem to come short of it."

p. 66

Lange says:

--O how deep is our concern, not only in the eternal rest itself, but also in that constant faith and obedience, without which that rest can never be attained (Starke).

p. 90

Delitzsch says:

Thus here: Let us be on our guard (subjunctive of exhortation, . . .), lest any of you shall seem to have remained behind.

P. 186

. . . to remain behind something, so as not to attain to what is striven for, to fail or come short of it. The goal thus missed, which is here to be supplied in the genitive, is the rest of God. When a man's life of faith, endeavour after holiness, and perseverance in his Christian profession, begin to grow languid, he seems to be husterekos, that is, one who has let pass by the proper time for entering in with others into the rest of God.

p. 186

A. T. Robertson says:

There is no break in the argument on Psa. 95. This is a poor chapter division. The Israelites perished because of disbelief. We today face a real peril.

p. 360

Wuest observes:

These persecuted Jews had expected to find the fulfilment of all promise in Messiah, including freedom from stress and strain such as they were experiencing in the persecutions (10:32-34). The Old Testament Jews were taught to believe that tribulation was a mark of God's displeasure with Israel. They did not understand that that which was a mark of God's displeasure with His own in Old Testament times, was a mark of His blessing and a means of purging and refining the lives of saints in New Testament times. Thus, they found it hard to believe that rest was attainable in Messiah. Their professed faith was being sorely tried by the adverse circumstances in which they found themselves. Thus, they were in danger of renouncing their professed faith and of returning to the First Testament sacrifices under the stress of their persecution.
p. 83

Griffith Thomas says:

Now comes the application. We too are to "fear," lest like Israel we shall fall short of the fulness of divine blessing. God's promises are still open to faith. As we shall see, true rest is available for those who are ready to "trust and obey." We are not to treat Christ as Israel treated Moses, or else we shall suffer in like manner. Indeed, it will be worse for us, because the good tidings which we have received are infinitely more valuable than theirs.
pp. 46-47

Barclay says:

The writer of the Hebrews is really using the word rest (katapausis) in three different senses in this passage.
(i) He is using it as we would use the phrase the peace of God. It is the greatest and the most precious thing in the world to enter into the peace of God. (ii) He is using it, as we already saw that he used it in 3:12, to mean The Promised Land. To the children of Israel who had wandered so long in the desert The Promised Land was indeed the rest of God after their long wanderings. (iii) He is using it of the rest of God after the sixth day of creation, when all God's work was completed and done. This way of using a word in two or three different ways, of teasing at it until the last drop of meaning was extracted from it, was typical of cultured, academic thought in the days when the writer to the Hebrews wrote his letter.
p. 30

Barclay says further:

There is one very interesting question of meaning in verse 1. We have taken the translation: "Beware lest any of you be adjudged to have missed the rest of God." That is to say: "Beware lest your disobedience and your lack of faith and response may mean that you have shut yourselves out from the rest and the peace that God offers you. Beware lest by your disobedience and lack of trust you show yourself unworthy ever to enter into the rest and the peace of God." That is a perfectly possible translation, and it may very well be the correct one. But there is another and most interesting possibility. The phrase may mean: "Beware lest you think that you have come too late to enter into the rest of God. Beware lest you get the idea that you have arrived too late in history ever to enjoy the rest and the peace of God." In that second translation there is a warning. It is very easy to think that the great days of religion are past; that the great eras of the Church's life lie behind. It is told that a child, on being told some of the great Old Testament stories, said wistfully: "God was much more exciting then." There is a continual tendency in the Church to look back; to think that the great manifestations of God are past; to believe, if we were honest enough to say so, that God's arm is shortened and that God's power is grown less, that the golden days lie behind. The writer to the Hebrews sounds forth a trumpet call. "Never think," he says, "that you have arrived too late in history; never think that the days of great promise and great achievement lie behind. This is still God's 'to-day.' There is a blessedness for you as great as the blessedness of the saints; there is an adventure for you as great as the adventure of the martyrs. God is as great to-day as ever He was." pp. 32-33

Lenski makes this observation:

The imperative is an aorist which is perhaps ingressive: "let us get this fear"; it may also be constative: "let us fear," taking the whole course of fear together; in any case, the aorist is stronger than the present would be. p. 125

Pink points out:

Would, then these whom the apostle had addressed as "holy brethren" fail, finally, to enter into God's rest? So it is with Christians now. Heaven is set before them as their goal: toward it they are to daily press forward, running with perseverance the race that is set before them. But the incentive of our hope only has power over the heart so long as faith is in exercise.
p. 196

Owen says:

In this word "fear," two things are intended; first, An apprehension of the holiness and greatness of God, with His severity against sin; second, A careful diligence in the use of means to avoid the evil threatened unto unbelief and disobedience.
p. 62

The rest here intended is that rest which believers have an entrance into by Jesus Christ in this world.
p. 63

Montefiore says:

For the verses which follow are not concerned with the disaster of having failed to obtain the divine promise, but with the danger of thinking that the promise is no longer operative.
p. 82

MacArthur says:

The English **rest** and the Greek word (katapausis) that it translates here have similar meanings. The basic idea is that of ceasing from work or from any kind of action. You stop doing what you are doing. Action, labor, or exertion is over. Applied to God's rest, it means no more self-effort as far as salvation is concerned. It means the end of trying to please God by our feeble, fleshly works. God's perfect rest is a rest in free grace.

Rest also means freedom from whatever worries or disturbs you. Some people cannot rest mentally and emotionally because they are so easily annoyed. Every little nuisance upsets them and they always feel hassled. Rest does not mean freedom from all nuisances and hassles; it means freedom from being so easily bothered by them. It means to be inwardly quiet, composed, peaceful. To enter God's rest means to be at peace with God, to possess the perfect peace He gives. It means to be free from guilt and even unnecessary feelings of guilt. It means freedom from worry about sin, because sin is forgiven. God's rest is the end of legalistic works and the experience of peace in the total forgiveness of God.

Rest can mean to lie down, be settled, fixed, secure. There is no more shifting about in frustration from one thing to another, no more running in circles. In God's rest we are forever established in Christ.
p. 96

MacArthur speaking on the word "THEREFORE" says:

Therefore refers, of course, to Israel's unbelief and consequent failure to enter God's Canaan rest. As illustrated by her experience, not trusting in God is something to be feared.
p. 97

(Even Eagles Need A Push by David McNally)

My life has no purpose, no direction, no aim, no meaning, and yet I'm happy. I can't figure it out. What am I doing right?

--Charles M. Schulz

p. 92

(Final Call by Steven J. Lawson)

Whenever God opens the door of heaven to bless us, Satan will open the gates of hell to blast us. Whenever a church moves forward by faith, it is sure to meet the Devil head-on.
p. 177

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging
by Brennan Manning)

Whenever we place blame, we are looking for a scapegoat for a real dislocation in which we ourselves are implicated. Blame is a defensive substitute for an honest examination of life that seeks personal growth in failure and self-knowledge in mistakes. Thomas Moore stated, "Fundamentally, it is a way of averting consciousness of error."
p. 85

The great lesson for us today--What is it? Compare our state with that of the believers of the early church. It is true that many Christians are wilderness Christians and will be so to the end.

As for this experience of the "REST" of faith, this is a most solemn question. Victory in the risen Christ, the infilling of the Spirit, the power for service, unselfish love toward everybody, especially toward all Christians--if this is your yearning desire, if you thirst after these things, thank God.

William R. Newell points out:

Yes, God, being infinitely loving and longsuffering, constantly leaves for the believer some promise which he may lay hold of by faith if he will. The warning here, however, is that such a gracious promise may be neglected, overlooked or come short of. Now you may have failed to lay hold of one promise after another and your life may have become more and more perplexed. But do not despair, for it is God's habit to leave a promise. There is such a one for me. Search for it prayerfully, carefully, humbly. And when you find your heart drawn out to any Scripture, thank God for that, praying that there may be in your heart a mixture of faith graciously given by Him.

Pettingill points out:

This rest of God, then, is something worth having, and so well worth having that we ought to labor for it. We ought to give all diligence to enter into it. It may seem paradoxical to exhort a man to labor to enter into rest, but it is not paradoxical. Nobody really knows rest except the man who has labored. The case is somewhat parallel to that of the man who said, I will have peace in this house, even if I have to fight for it. Sometimes the only way to get peace is to fight for it, and sometimes the only way to get rest is to labor for it. We are not to be laboring to be saved, nor are we to labor to keep saved. But we are to labor to enter into this rest where we shall know that we are eternally saved and eternally kept through the blood of Christ and by the power of God.

Erma Bombeck in her book I Lost Everything in the Post-Natal Depression says:

. . . Paul Newman to a tired housewife is like finding a plate of bourbon cookies at a PTA open house. It's putting on a girdle and having it hang loose. It's having a car that you don't have to park on a hill for it to start. It's matched luggage, dishes that aren't plastic and evenings when there's something better to do than pick off your old nail polish.
p. 23

The total adequacy of Jesus Christ to a worn-out Christian is like a HOT TUB AND GATORADE AFTER A MARATHON.

Gary Inrig in his book Quality Friendship: The Risks and Rewards says:

Irritability is rooted in two things: selfishness and a lack of rest in God. We become irritated because others do not fit into our schedules or our plans or our ideas. We are annoyed when others do not treat us with the respect and thoughtfulness we clearly deserve. "Why is she taking so long to wait on that person? I was here first." "Who does he think he is, cutting into my space in traffic?" "Not now. Can't you see I'm busy?" At its root is self-centeredness that demands that I be considered first, that I be served, that I be listened to.

The other source of irritability is a lack of rest in God's sovereign plans and purposes. When I am not at peace with myself, I am easily frustrated by others or by circumstances beyond my control. I can fret in frustration when my plane is delayed on the way to a conference or when a snowstorm snarls the traffic and I have an appointment to keep. But what a difference it makes when anxiety is replaced by a confidence in the sovereignty of God as I prayerfully entrust the details to my loving Father, who is able to do beyond all that I can ask or think, and as I choose to give thanks whatever the circumstances. Anxiety increases irritability and causes me to think even more about myself. But a confident trust in the Father liberates me to meet the needs of others.

p. 182

Andrew Murray points out:

Entering the rest of God is a personal, practical experience of the soul that receives the word in living faith because in it it receives Jesus on the throne. Let us do what Israel did in crossing Jordan. They followed Joshua to bring them in. They followed him. Let us follow Jesus in the path He trod. In heaven God's will is all. On earth Jesus made that will all. He lived in the will of God, in suffering and doing, in meeting trial, in waiting for the Father's guidance, in giving up everything to it. He proved that God's will was his path. Follow Him. Yield thyself in the death to self to the will of God. Have faith in Jesus on the throne as thy head in life, that He has brought thee in and will make it true in thy experience.

First, settle it in your mind. Believe with your whole heart that there is such a rest and that today it is God's rest, in which He lives, into which Jesus as your Joshua has entered. It is your rest, prepared for you, your land of promise. The spiritual state of life, which is as surely yours as Jesus is, into which Jesus will bring you and where He will keep you. It is the rest in which you can live life every hour, free from care and anxiety, free from weariness and wanderings, always resting in the rest that trusts God for all. Believe this. Israel passed in one day through Jordan into Canaan, but did not in one day come to the perfect rest. It is at the end of the life of Joshua, we read, "The Lord gave them rest roundabout." Enter today into the rest, though all may not be bright at once. Look to Jesus your Joshua and leave all in His hands. Come away out of self and live in Him. Rest in God whatever happens. Think of His rest and Jesus, who has entered it in your name and out of it fills you with His spirit, and fear not. Today, if you hear His voice, enter in.

F. B. Meyer points out:

This chapter states that such a rest is possible. Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest. Rest, what rest?

1. "HIS REST" says the first verse,
2. "MY REST" says the third verse,
3. "GOD'S REST" says the fourth verse.

And this last verse is a quotation from the earliest page of the Bible, which tells how God rested from all the works that He had made.

Into the calm of the depths of nature, which are undisturbed by the hurricanes which sweep the surface and urge forward the mighty waves, this rest is holding out both its hands to the weary souls of men throughout the ages, offering its shelter as a harbor from the storms of life.

How may we practically realize and enjoy the rest of God?

--(1) We must will the will of God. So long as the will of God, whether in the Bible or in providence is going in one direction and our will in another, rest is impossible. Can there be rest in an earthly household when the children are ever chafing against the regulations and control of their parents? How much less can we be at rest if we harbor an incessant spirit of insubordination and questioning, contradicting and resisting the will of God? That will must be done on earth as it is in heaven.

p. 21

--(2) We must accept the finished work of Christ. He has ceased from the work of our redemption because there was no more to do. Our sins and the sins of the world were put away. The power of the adversary was annulled. The gate of heaven was opened to all that believe. All was finished and was very good. Let us then cease from our works. Let us no longer feel as if we have to do ought by our tears or our prayers or works to make ourselves acceptable to God. Why should we try to add one stitch to a finished garment or pen one stroke to the signed and sealed warrant of pardon placed within our hands?

--(3) We must trust our Father's care, casting all your care upon Him for He careth for you. Sometimes, like a wild deluge, sweeping all before it, and sometimes like the continual dropping of water, so does care mar our peace. That we shall someday fall by the hand of Saul, that we shall be left to starve or pine away our days in a respectable workhouse, that we shall never be able to get through the difficulties of the coming days or weeks; household cares, family cares, business cares, cares about servants, children, money, crushing cares and cares that buzz around the soul like a swarm of gnats on a summer's day--what rest can there be for a soul thus beset? But when we once learn to live by faith, believing that our Father loves us and will not forget or forsake us, but is pledged to supply all our needs, when we acquire the holy habit of talking to Him about all and handing over all to Him, at the moment that the tiniest shadow is cast upon the soul, when we accept insult and annoyance and interruption, coming to us from whatever quarter as being His permission; and therefore as part of His dear will for us, then we have learned the secret of the gospel of rest.

--(4) We must follow our shepherd's lead. The way is dark. The mountain track is often hidden from our sight by the heavy mists that hang over hill and dale. We can hardly discern a step in front but our divine guide knows. He who trod earth's pathway is going unseen at our side. The shield of His environing protection is all around, and His voice, in its clear, sweet accents, is whispering peace. Why should we fear? He who touches us touches His bride, his purchased possession, the apple of His eye. We may therefore trust and not be afraid, though the mountains should depart or the hills be removed. Yet will His loving-kindness not depart from us. Neither will the covenant of His peace be removed; and amid the storm and darkness and the onsets of our foes, we shall hear Him soothing us with the sweet refrain of His own lullaby of rest, "My peace I give unto you. In the world you shall have tribulation but in me you shall have peace."

E. F. Scott points out:

What has been given of Israel's history in chapter 3 is now applied with emphasis on two facts:

1. That Israel failed to enter into rest through unbelief.
2. That rest was yet assured and that believers who are not seeking rest here but who accept the present world as a wilderness should enter God's rest now.

God has provided a means of judging unbelief and everything that would hinder a believer from entering into the rest of God and enabling Him to do so. That means is the Word of God and its power to penetrate the heart, for we all have to do with God, from whom nothing is hidden.

Jenson points out:

This is the wonderful rest which God wants His children to enjoy. Notice a few things which are said about this rest:

1. It is called "His" rest (God's rest)--His call to His rest because it is that which He Himself enjoys and which He alone can confer.
2. This rest is not, of course, physical rest. It is the kind of rest or satisfaction which God enjoyed in His finished work of creation. And so resting, God no more put forth creative energy but calmly contemplated His own works and their beauty and grandeur. God's rest or satisfaction in His finished work of creation was such as He now has in His Son's finished work of redemption.
3. This rest of God is intended for the people of God, and God desires all of His people to enter into it. He wants His people to enjoy the same rest and satisfaction in the finished work of Christ which He Himself enjoys.
4. He who has entered into God's rest is that one who has ceased from his own works and is satisfied with the work that God did for him in the person of Jesus Christ.
5. Faith enables us to enter into this rest of God. Unbelief and disobedience prevent us from entering into it.
6. The rest which God is speaking of in this chapter is a rest far beyond Israel's Canaan rest. Although the Canaan rest was a type of the reality, (this is evident from 4:8, 9) such rest is the heart rest which comes only by implicit confidence in God and in dire satisfaction in all that He does. This rest we can enter into here and now in this life, although of course we shall not come into the full enjoyment of it until a future time when our bodies are redeemed and we are forever with the Lord.

John Brown points out:

Both believers and unbelievers have their fears but they arise from different sources and have quite opposite effects. They both arise from unworthy thoughts of God, a distrust of His power, faithfulness and goodness, a prevailing love of the present evil world and its enjoyments, which makes them more afraid of worldly losses and sufferings for righteousness' sake than of forfeiting divine favor. Such fears not only indispose the mind for obedience but lead directly to sin. But that godly fear which is peculiar to believers, which arises from a just view, reverence, and esteem of the divine character, a supreme desire of His favor as their chief happiness, is a fear lest they should offend Him and incur His just displeasure. Such a fear of Him outweighs all the allurements of sin on the one hand, and all the terrors of suffering for righteousness' sake on the other.

Psalm 37:7

Rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him;
fret not yourself because of him who prospers in his way,

Philippians 4:6, 7

Don't worry over anything whatever, tell God every detail of your needs in earnest and thankful prayer. And the peace of God, which transcends human understanding will keep constant guard over your hearts and minds as they rest in Christ Jesus.

Bob Thieme in his pamphlet called "Christian at Ease" says:

We are so busy seeking happiness, so busy hustling around to find satisfaction and fulfillment of our desires, that we overlook one of the great principles in the Word of God. There is a place of perfect peace and rest, a place of inner joy and strength, a place of stability, a place of power and of impact within the grasp of every Christian. No matter what happens, no matter how difficult the circumstances, no matter how great the pressures, testings or problems of life, we can have the peace of God which passes all understanding.

You haven't lived until you have been in a situation where the brook is dried up, where there is nothing you can say or do, where you are so stunned from the onslaught of catastrophe, that you cannot even pray. Sooner or later, God brings every person to the end of his own human resources. Yet Jesus said, "These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world you shall have tribulation. But be of good cheer, I have overcome the world."

The Lord wants you to claim His promises by faith and move into this moment-by-moment Sabbath.

I am reminded of the hymn writer who wrote:

Near to the Heart of God

There is a place of quiet rest,
Near to the heart of God,
A place where sin cannot molest,
Near to the heart of God.

Refrain:

O Jesus, blest Redeemer,
Sent from the heart of God,
Hold us, who wait before Thee,
Near to the heart of God.

("Near to the Heart of God" by C. B. McAfee. The New Church Hymnal, Lexicon Music, Inc., 1976. #243)

Whatever kind of week you have had, if it were the normal week, you have had:

IRRITATIONS,

FRUSTRATIONS,

DISAPPOINTMENTS,

and possibly even:

HEARTBREAKS,

TRIALS,
and DISASTERS.

Perhaps you have been depressed, disturbed and emotionally upset or have hit the panic button over some catastrophe. Under such conditions you have 2 ALTERNATIVES:

1. Believe God's word and enter the faith-rest life, or
2. Doubt God's word and be totally miserable until the day you die.

Human solutions just don't cut it. On the other hand, God says to you:

"Believer, lean on Me. Trust in Me. I have given you My word, the promises and doctrines from the Bible."

The combination of your faith on the inside, plus God's promises and teachings on the outside, produces rest. Complete freedom from worry, and therefore, perfect peace and happiness. These promises and doctrines of the Word are profitable only when they are mixed with your faith.

Faith involves 2 PRINCIPLES:

1. Knowing the promises
2. Believing them.

"THEREFORE, LET US FEAR LEST, A PROMISE THAT IS STILL OPEN OF ENTERING INTO HIS REST, ANY ONE OF YOU SHOULD SEEM TO HAVE FAILED TO REACH IT."

The author knows that he has not failed to reach it, so he changes from:

"US" in the first part of the verse to

"YOU" in the last part of the verse.

You know you did fail to reach it if you failed to press on to the acquisition of it.

M. R. DeHaan says:

These are two distinct possibilities of Christian experience. They are clearly given by Jesus in Matthew 11:28, 29:

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.
Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

As we have pointed out before, this is not one and the same invitation, but two distinct calls. The first word in verse twenty-eight is come, while the first word in verse twenty-nine is take. The invitation to come is for the sinner. It is to them who labor in vain and are heavy laden. To those who thus come to Christ, having nothing to offer or to bring, He gives rest. It is a gift; it is free; it costs the sinner nothing; it is all of grace. This is the "rest" of salvation and peace with God. It is obtained by coming to Christ.

The next verse, however, is quite a different thing. It is now addressed to those who have already come and received the free gift. But He does not want the believer to stop with this rest, for there is more. And so to those who have come and are saved, He says now: "Take my yoke upon you."

The believer who already has salvation without working for it, is now invited to take something and go to work for Him. A yoke is the symbol of subjection, obedience, labor and service. We are forever free from the yoke of sin and the law which was hard and cruel, and in gratitude for this deliverance we now are to take His yoke which is easy because He carries the heavy end. The result of carrying His yoke, subjecting yourself to His will, surrendering all and yielding your whole life to Him is "rest for your souls." This is not the rest of verse twenty-eight. That rest is "given" to us. Jesus says, "I will give you rest." But this other rest by carrying the yoke must be worked for and be diligently sought, for we read, "ye shall find rest unto your souls."

p. 68

v. 2 For indeed we are having had good news preached to us, just as they also; but the word of the preaching did not profit them, because it had not been mixed together with faith in those who heard.

The last part of this verse could be translated:

"Because they were not united by faith with them that heard,"

that is, the body of believers, or in the Old Testament illustration Joshua and Caleb.

The "REST" we are talking about in this passage is 3-FOLD:

1. in the finished work of Christ
2. from the activity of self-life
3. the final rest of every believer.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The message they heard (about rest) **was of no value because** of their lack of **faith**. That is to say, through unbelief they failed to take advantage of God's offer of rest. So it follows that for the readers to profit from the invitation to rest, they had to exercise faith.

2 Corinthians 6:1, 2

And working together with Him, we also urge you not to receive the grace of God in vain--for He says, "At the acceptable time I listened to you, And on the day of salvation I helped you;" behold, now is "the acceptable time," behold, now is "the day of salvation"--

William R. Newell points out:

I remember a meeting many years ago where presents were being given out to poor children. From a great heap of presents on the table the leader would read out names of those who were to receive gifts. And such ones were expected to come forward and receive them thankfully. There came the reading of a certain boy and no one came forward. Someone sitting beside me said, "There is that boy over there by the aisle." I watched him. His name was repeated several times. At first he looked forward at the announcer. Then as his name was repeated, he looked to the right and to the left and then stood half up and looked all around over the back part of the building, expecting to see the favored one. But someone near him called out, "He means you, Jimmy." Jimmy kept his seat, clutching the chair in front of him. He was not used to receiving presents. Not until the speaker looked right at him, reading his name and asked, "Is that your name?" did he tremblingly get up and go forward and accept his present. Thus we act toward God. We quote promises, never really claiming them. Do not forget that the last word in chapter 3 is unbelief. We have seen that Israel lost their promised land through simply not believing. Just as they fell short of Canaan, so many professing Christians today, though a promise is left them of entering into His rest, fail of it, of that spiritual rest which belongs to all who hear and believe that Christ has borne their sin and He has made peace by the blood of His cross.

We can be guilty of quoting promises without claiming them.

Romans 10:17

So faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

Acts 26:28

"Much more of this, Paul," returned Agrippa, "and you'll be making me a Christian."

Wuest says:

To understand this verse we must identify the pronouns. "Us" refers to the first-century Jewish readers of this letter, "them" to the generation which came out of Egypt. The words "the gospel was preached" are the translation of a verb which means "to announce good news." The character of the good news must be defined by the context. The good news which was announced to the first-century readers of this epistle was that of a spiritual rest in Messiah. The good news given to the generation which came out of Egypt was that of a temporal, physical rest in a land flowing with milk and honey, offered to a people who had been reduced to abject slavery for 400 years and who had lived on a diet of leeks, garlic, and onions during that time.
p. 83-84

Wuest translates this second verse in the following way:

For to us (first-century Jews) was the good news (of rest in Messiah) thoroughly announced, with the present result that we have it indelibly impressed in our minds, as well as the good news (of rest in Canaan) thoroughly proclaimed to them (the generation which came out of Egypt), good news that was indelibly impressed on their minds. But the word of the report did not profit them, not having become united by faith to those who heard.
pp. 84-85

Bruce points out:

The good news which was proclaimed to them, summarized in such Old Testament passages as Ex. 19:3-6; 23:20-33, told them how the God of their fathers, who had delivered them from Egypt, would bring them safely to the promised land and give them possession of it, and would make them "a kingdom of priests, and a holy nation" to himself, if only they would obey his voice and keep his covenant. The reason why this message did not do them as much good as it was designed to do was that, in spite of their serious undertaking, they did not obey his voice or keep his covenant: "they brought no admixture of faith to the hearing of it" (NEB).
p. 105

Phillips says:

The Hebrews at Kadesh-barnea did not identify themselves with Caleb and Joshua, so the good report these faithful men brought did them no good. We can fail in a similar way.

The land, which was passed through to search it, is an exceeding good land. If the Lord delight in us, then he will bring us into this land, and give it us; a land which floweth with milk and honey. Only rebel not ye against the Lord, neither fear ye the people of the land; for they are bread for us: their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us: fear them not (Num 14:7-9, KJV).

These were the words of the two witnesses. Good tidings indeed! Of course there were battles in Canaan, but the blessings far outweigh the battles and, in any case, the foe had been stripped of all his power. Of course we today have to wrestle against principalities and powers, against the rulers of this world's darkness, and against wicked spirits in high places (Eph 6:12), but that is nothing compared with "every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" (1:3) and with the "exceeding riches of his grace" (2:7). Besides, the adversaries we face have all been stripped of their power, . . . pp. 73-74

Hughes says:

Israel had heard "the gospel preached" (that is, the good news brought by Caleb and Joshua that the land was theirs for the taking, the Nephilim notwithstanding).

So confident were Caleb and Joshua in heralding the good news that they said, "We will swallow them up" (Numbers 14:9), or literally, "they will be bread for us"--or in today's language, "It's a piece of cake!" Virile chaps, these two--with a virile faith!

p. 108

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging
by Brennan Manning)

Whatever is denied cannot be healed. To acknowledge humbly that I often inhabit an unreal world, that I have trivialized my relationship with God, and that I am driven by vain ambition is the first blow in dismantling my glittering image. The honesty and willingness to stare down the false self dynamites the steel trapdoor of self-deception.

p. 40

(Signs of Warning, Signs of Hope by J. Kerby Anderson)

They were born into a world ripe for the plucking. A chosen generation, they raced toward a promised land flowing with entertainment and experience. Abstinence and moderation were not the bywords of this generation; hedonism and narcissism were.

Their world was typified by affluence, optimism, and opportunity. Hedonism was in vogue by the early 1960s, so they pursued pleasure with headlong abandon. Impetuous and impatient, boomers developed what sociologists would later describe as a "psychology of entitlement." What previous generations saw as privileges, this generation saw as rights.
p. 124

(A Dance With Deception: Revealing the Truth Behind the Headlines by Charles Colson with Nancy R. Pearcey)

The entitlement mentality is threatening the fundamental freedoms that were once the whole point of human rights.

What a sad irony: As Americans demand more and more rights, we enjoy fewer and fewer freedoms.

Christians should be calling their neighbors away from a selfish preoccupation with rights--reminding them that they also have responsibilities.
p. 73

(The Complete Book of Zingers by Croft M. Pentz)

Too many people not only think the world owes them a living, but expect the government to collect it for them.
p. 175

(The Pancake Man & Friends by Richard Speight)

I don't have any fear of flying. None at all. I have a considerable fear of not flying, however, especially when I am in an airplane and we are up in the air.

To my great misfortune, I once read an article that stated that most air crashes happen in the first thirteen seconds after takeoff. People who fly ought to avoid articles like that. Since the day I read it, I have gritted my teeth and counted to thirteen after every takeoff. After that, I'm okay.

Nervous, but okay.
p. 68

v. 3 For we are entering into this rest, we who believed;
just as He has said, "As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter into my rest,"
and yet His works came into being from the foundation of the world.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary points out:

This "rest" was established as far back as creation itself.

MacArthur says:

Belief and unbelief are very serious things. From the human side, belief with nothing else will save us; unbelief with everything else will condemn us. These are the two equally true sides of the gospel, which is good news only for those who accept it with all their hearts.
p. 100

Montefiore says:

The Christian pilgrimage is not an aimless wandering, like that of the Israelites in the desert. It is a deliberate, straight course on a well-mapped route. Every step brings the company of Christians nearer their destination.
p. 83

Lenski says:

God calls it "my rest," and it is his indeed, established by him with all infinite blessedness, peace, and calm. The human mind is unable to fathom all that this word contains.
p. 131

Griffith Thomas says:

But in this passage the predominant thought is not rest of conscience through redemption, but rest of heart through surrender and obedience. The believer is regarded as already out of Egypt and journeying toward Canaan. "The danger is not lest the blood shall not be on the lintel, but lest we should break down by the way, as thousands did in the wilderness . . . When he speaks of rest, it is the

rest of the kingdom he talks of, not the rest of the conscience" (Musings on Hebrews, by J. G. Bellett).
p. 48

Westcott says:

The present experience of Christians confirms the privilege of faith (3); The fact that the rest itself is already realised is witnessed by the record of creation (4); The fact that the promise of the rest still remains is implied by the exclusion of the unfaithful from it (5); And a fresh word of God points to the end not yet reached (6, 7).
pp. 94-95

DONE OR JUST DONE IN?

The father came home exhausted, hoping to get some rest. But little Bobby kept asking questions.

"What do you do all day at your job, Daddy?"

"Nothing!" shouted the father.

After a long pause, Bobby finally asked, "Then how do you know when you are through, Daddy?"

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

Only when a man is at peace with himself can he find the inclination to relax.

--Unknown

The time to relax is when you don't have time for it.

Sydney Harris

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

Hughes says:

We must keep this subtle distinction between belief and trust clear if we are to understand what kind of faith is necessary to have rest in this life. New Testament scholar Leon Morris says that faith here in Hebrews 4:2 is "the attitude of trusting God wholeheartedly." So we must understand that the opening line of verse 3, which says, "Now we who have believed enter

that rest," specifically means, "We who have wholeheartedly trusted enter that rest." Thus, it is spelled out in no uncertain terms that faith that pleases God is belief plus trust.
pp. 108-9

Few have lived as stressful and frenetic a life as Hudson Taylor, founder of China Inland Mission. But Taylor lived in God's rest, as his son beautifully attests:

Day and night this was his secret, "just to roll the burden on the Lord." Frequently those who were wakeful in the little house at Chinkiang might hear, at two or three in the morning, the soft refrain of Mr. Taylor's favorite hymn ["Jesus, I am resting, resting in the joy of what Thou art"]. He had learned that for him, only one life was possible--just that blessed life of resting and rejoicing in the Lord under all circumstances, while He dealt with the difficulties, inward and outward, great and small.

p. 109

(Active Spiritually by Charles R. Swindoll)

This chapter is dedicated to all of you who have worried in the past . . . all of you who are now worried . . . and all who are making plans to worry soon! That might sound amusing, but worry is no laughing matter. Quite frankly, it is a sin. It is, however, one of the "acceptable" sins in the Christian life. We would never smile at a Christian who staggered into his home night after night drunk and abusive. But we often smile at a Christian friend who worries. We would not joke about a brother or sister in God's family who stole someone's car, but we regularly joke about our worrying over some detail in life.

Worry is serious business. It can drain our lives of joy day after day. And there is not one of us who doesn't desire to replace it with peace of mind. In the following study we will look at Solomon's answer to this age-old habit unique to humanity.

p. 24

(Even Eagles Need A Push by David McNally)

Half our life is spent trying to find something to do with the time we have rushed through life trying to save.

--Will Rogers

p. 140

(When God Whispers Your Name by Max Lucado)

My wife loves antiques. I don't. (I find them a bit old.) But because I love my wife, I occasionally find myself guiding three children through an antique store while Denalyn shops.

Such is the price of love.

The secret to survival in a shop of relics is to find a chair and an old book and settle down for the long haul. That's what I did yesterday. After cautioning the kids to look with their eyes and not with their hands, I sat down in an overstuffed rocker with some Life magazines from the fifties.

That's when I heard the music. Piano music. Beautiful music. Vintage Rogers and Hammerstein. The hills were alive with the sound of someone's skill at the keyboard.

I turned to see who was playing, but couldn't see anyone. I stood and walked closer. A small group of listeners had gathered at the old upright piano. Between the furniture I could see the small back of the pianist. Why, it's only a child! With a few more steps I could see her hair. Short, blonde, and cute like . . . My heart, it's Andrea!

Our seven-year-old was at the piano, her hands racing up and down the keyboard. I was stunned. What gift of heaven is this that she can play in such a way? Must be a time-released gene she got from my side of the family. But as I drew closer, I saw the real reason. Andrea was "playing" a player piano. She wasn't making the music; she was following it. She wasn't commanding the keyboard; she was trying to keep up with it. Though it appeared she was playing the song, in reality, she was only trying to keep up with one already written. When a key would dip, her hands would dash.

Oh, but if you could have seen her little face, delighted with laughter! Eyes dancing as would her feet had she been able to stand and play at the same time.

I could see why she was so happy. She sat down to attempt "Chopsticks" but instead played "The Sound of Music." What's more, she couldn't fail. One greater than she was dictating the sound. Andrea was free to play as much as she wanted, knowing the music would never suffer.

It's no wonder she rejoiced. She had every reason to. And so do we.

Hasn't God promised the same to us? We sit at the keyboard, willing to play the only song we know, only to discover a new song. A sublime song. And nobody is more surprised than we are when our meager efforts are converted into melodious moments.

You have one, you know, a song all your own. Each of us does. The only question is, will you play it?

By the way, as I watched Andrea "play" that day in the antique store I observed a couple of things.

I noticed the piano got all the credit. The gathered crowd appreciated Andrea's efforts, but they knew the real source of the music. When God works, the same is true. We may applaud the disciple, but no one knows better than the disciple who really deserves the praise.

But that doesn't keep the disciple from sitting at the bench. It sure didn't keep Andrea from sitting at the piano. Why? Because she knew she couldn't fail. Even though she didn't understand how it worked, she knew it did.

So she sat at the keyboard--and had the time of her life.

Even though you may not understand how God works, you know he does.

So go ahead. Pull up a bench, take your seat at the piano, and play.
pp. 7-9

v. 4 For He has said somewhere concerning the seventh day in this manner: "And God rested on the seventh day from all His works";

Here the author, according to The Bible Knowledge Commentary, links "Sabbath-rest" with what Israel missed in the desert.

Phillips says:

Two artists once attempted to paint a picture of peace. The first drew an idyllic scene. He painted an ocean, still as a pond, mirroring in its depths every line and curve of a sailboat floating quietly by. Overhead the sky was blue, flecked with light, fluffy clouds. And on the shore children played in the shallows and made castles in the sand. It was a picture of peace.

The second artist's picture was nearer to the truth. He depicted a wild and rocky shore against which angry billows burst in towering clouds of spray. The sky was black with the storm, and the surging waves towered and heaved. But far up on a rocky crag, hidden in a cleft of the rock and sheltered from the wind, sat a bird, safe and secure in her nest, looking out with a serene and untroubled eye at all the turmoil beneath. It was a picture of peace indeed.

p. 75

I find myself flying a lot with the teaching schedule that I try to keep. It is always so much fun to see people who are afraid of flying--how they help the pilot get the plane off the ground and how they sit with great anxiety and eyes as wide as saucers during the whole trip, and ears very attentive to any noise that might sound out of the ordinary. To look around the cabin, however, you would find many businessmen buried in their work or getting a real good snooze before they get home.

LET'S TAKE A BREAK!

According to tradition, when the apostle John was overseer in Ephesus, his hobby was raising pigeons. It is said that on one occasion an elder passed his house as he returned from hunting. When he saw John playing with one of his birds, he gently chided him for spending his time so frivolously. John looked at the man's bow and remarked that the string was loose. "Yes," said the elder, "I always loosen the string of my bow when it's not in use. If it stayed tight, it would lose its rebounding quality and fail me in the hunt." "And I," said John, "am now relaxing the bow of my mind so that I may be better able to shoot the arrows of divine truth."

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

MacArthur says:

Sabbath rest was instituted as a symbol of the true rest to come in Christ. This is why the Sabbath could be violated by Jesus, and completely set aside in the New Testament. When the true Rest Land came, the symbol was useless. "Therefore let no one act as your judge in regard to food or drink or in respect to a festival or a new moon or a Sabbath day--things which are a mere shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ" (Col. 2:16-17).

p. 101

v. 5 and again in this passage, "They shall not enter into my rest."

Richards points out:

Strikingly, it is His rest (v. 5) that believers are invited to enter! We are to come to the place where we appropriate fully what He has done, and while never becoming inactive, we do stop laboring. The load of a Christian life that some experience as a struggle is lifted. The pressure of trying harder is gone.

p. 36

Pink says:

Here it is obvious, almost at first glance, that two distinct "rests" are before us. The first may be designated rest of conscience, which the convicted sinner, groaning beneath the intolerable load of his conscious sins, obtains when he casts himself on the mercy of Christ. The second is rest of soul, which alas, many professing Christians know very little, if anything, about. It is obtained by taking Christ's "yoke" upon us and "learning" of Him.

p. 206

Andrew Murray points out:

We speak with Scripture of the "rest of faith." Faith, however, only gives rest because it rests in God. It rests because it allows God to do all. The rest is in God Himself. It is in His own divine rest into which we enter by faith. When the Holy Ghost says, "My rest, His rest, God rested," it teaches us that it is God's own rest into which we enter and which we partake of. It is as faith sees that the creature was destined to find its rest nowhere but in the Creator and that in the entire surrender to Him, to His will and His working, it may have perfect rest. That it dares to cast itself upon God and have no care. It sees that God, because of all movement and change, is Himself the immovable and unchangeable one, and that His blessed rest can never be disturbed by what is done, either by himself or by others.

Lightfoot points out:

These passages prove, says the author, that God's rest has long been in existence. He began His rest on the seventh day of the creation week and continues in that rest. That rest has been available ever since the world began, and though the Israelites excluded themselves from it, God still desires to share it with men. The disobedience of some does not void His generous intentions.

(Downscaling: Simplify and Enrich Your Lifestyle
by Dave and Kathy Babbitt)

When we lived in Alaska the kids bought a pair of female hamsters. It wasn't long before we found out they were not both females. Soon the original hamsters became grandparents and their large cage was becoming crowded. As generation after generation of hamsters multiplied, their living quarters had to be continually adapted. Kathy drew the line one day when she went to take a bath and found that twenty-six fluffy creatures had overtaken the tub. One or two hamsters, or even a few are cute and make satisfactory pets. But when they become prolific to the point of the ridiculous, they become a nuisance and an irritation. It is the same way with activities. Overcrowding detracts from the specialness of each activity until our schedules reach an absurd state. What about it? Do you and your family need to get rid of some hamsters?

p. 180

Fenelon in his book Let Go, speaking on the subject of peace, says:

Learn to cultivate peace. And you can do this by learning to turn a deaf ear to your own ambitious thoughts. Or haven't you yet learned that the strivings of the human mind not only impair the health of your body but also bring dryness to the soul. You can actually consume yourself by too much inner striving and to no purpose at all. Your peace and inner sweetness can be destroyed by a restless mind. Satan is the one who torments us with trivialities. And he often transforms himself into an angel of light and bothers us with endless self-examinations and an oversensitive conscience which allows us no peace. Live in continued peace but understand that peace does not depend upon the fervor of your devotion. The only thing you need to be concerned about is the direction of your will.

v. 6 Since therefore it is remaining for some to enter into it, and those who formerly had good news preached to them did not enter because of disobedience,

This takes us back to chapter 3:18, 19:

And to whom did He swear that they should not enter into His rest, but to those who were disobedient? And so we are seeing that they were not able to enter because of unbelief.

Westcott says:

But when we recognise failure it is not that we acquiesce in it. The promise once made will have a fulfilment. Some must enter into the rest: those who were formerly called did not enter through disobedience; therefore another time was afterwards fixed when believers might gain by ready self-surrender that which God still offered.
p. 96

Lenski says:

Epei draws the conclusion and sums up v. 3-5. The first point is the fact that God wants people to enter into his rest.
p. 133

Owen says:

The substance of this verse is that besides the rest of God from the foundation of the world, and the institution of the seventh day--Sabbath--as a pledge thereof, there was another rest for men to enter into, namely, the rest of God and His worship in the land of Canaan. This being proposed unto the people of old, they entered not into it, by reason of their unbelief.
p. 69

Bruce observes:

It was disobedience, as we have seen, that kept the generation of the Exodus out of God's promised rest, in spite of the good news which was announced to them. But that same promised rest was still open for the people of God centuries after the wilderness period, for the writer of Ps. 95 urges his contemporaries to listen to the voice of God "today," instead of hardening their hearts in obstinacy like their ancestors and being debarred from entering into the rest of God as they had been.
p. 107

Delitzsch observes:

The intrinsic force of the conclusion which our author draws, is not therefore in the least affected by a reference to what had happened under Joshua. When separated from the incomplete and merely natural side of its fulfilment, the promise still continued, and awaited a far nobler fulfilment in the future. With this in view, the author continues:
...
p. 195

Lange says:

--If God works in thee, thou art in rest; but if thou workest thyself, and in selfishness, thou hast nothing but disquietude (Berlenburger Bible).
p. 91

J. Vernon McGee says:

It is unbelief that robs you of the rest of salvation, that robs you of the rest of satisfaction and blessing which God can give to you. Oh, the wonderful rest that He wants to give to us!
p. 532

(The Pleasures of God by John Piper)

Why are rebellion and disobedience like the sin of divination? Divination is seeking to know what to do in a way that ignores the word and counsel of God. It discounts the guidance and revelation of God, or regards them as wrong or insufficient. And that is exactly what disobedience is based on. God says one thing, and we say, "I think that I will consult another source of wisdom." In the case of divination the added source of wisdom is a medium of some sort. But most often in the case of disobedience the added source of wisdom is simply oneself! Disobedience of God's word puts my own wisdom in the place of God's and thus insults God as the only sure and reliable source of wisdom. What does it say about your doctor if he writes the prescription for three pills a day and you decide to take them once a day? It says that you put yourself above your doctor. You distrust his skill and competence and good will. It is a great insult, and he could not take pleasure i[n] that--and you won't get well.
p. 247

(Even Eagles Need A Push by David McNally)

Commitment is the willingness to do whatever it takes to get what you want. A true commitment is a heartfelt promise to yourself from which you will not back down. Many people have dreams and many have good intentions but few are willing to make the commitment necessary for their attainment.
p. 150

(Broken in the Right Place by Alan E. Nelson)

Our inclination is to achieve, produce, and do. The common result is that we are human thinkings and human doings, but God has called us to be human beings.
p. 17

(Broken in the Right Place by Alan E. Nelson)

A story from Indian folklore illustrates how a servant can be like Jesus. There was once an old man who meditated early every evening under a large tree on the bank of the Ganges River in India. One morning he saw a scorpion floating helplessly in the current of the river. As the scorpion was pulled closer to the tree, it was caught by long tree roots that branched far into the river. The scorpion struggled frantically to free itself, but only became more entangled.

When the old man saw this, he immediately stretched himself onto the extended roots and reached out to rescue the drowning animal. The scorpion jerked wildly and stung him and the man withdrew his hand. After regaining his balance, he once again stretched to save the panicked animal. The scorpion struck again. Every time the old man came within reach, the scorpion stung him, so often that his hands became swollen and bloody and his face distorted by pain.

At that moment, a passerby saw the old man stretched out on the roots, struggling with the scorpion. He shouted, "Hey, stupid old man, what's wrong with you? Only a fool risks his life for the sake of an ugly, useless creature. Don't you know that you could be killed trying to save that ungrateful animal?"

Slowly the old man turned his head, and looking calmly in the stranger's eyes, said, "Friend, just because it is the nature of the scorpion to sting, why should I ignore my own nature to save?"
pp. 200-201

v. 7 He again is designating a certain day, "Today," saying through David after so long a time just as has been said before, "Today if you hear His voice, do not harden your hearts."

This is the 4TH and 5TH use of the word "TODAY," helping us to see the URGENCY OF THE MATTER.

OBEY TODAY

The advertisement was for Ford cars. It was a cartoon of two men standing on a busy street corner, each holding a large sign in front of him. One man's sign carried this sobering message: "The world will end tomorrow." The other man was standing just around the corner of a building. His sign read: "That still gives you all day today to shop your Ford dealer's year-end clearance."

This calls to mind a spiritual principle: We must obey Christ now, while there is time.

If we knew that today were our last day on earth, is there anything we would do differently? Maybe no major adjustments in our lifestyle would be necessary. But most of us could probably think of a letter we had intended to write, a visit we had hoped to make, or a broken relationship we were going to try to mend.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

MOODY'S MISTAKE

Evangelist D. L. Moody said that his "greatest mistake" occurred October 8, 1871. On that night in his career, his message was about the Lord's trial and was based on Pilate's question, "What shall I do then with Jesus?" (Matt. 27:22).

As Moody concluded, he said, "I wish you would seriously consider this subject, for next Sunday we will speak about the cross, and at that time I'll inquire, 'What will YOU do with Jesus?'" Ira Sankey then sang the closing hymn, which included the lines, "Today the Savior calls; for refuge fly. The storm of justice falls, and death is nigh."

Little did anyone know that these words would be the last ever heard in that huge hall. Even as they were being sung, the soloist's voice was nearly drowned out by the sound of clanging bells in the street. That was the night of the great Chicago fire which almost destroyed the entire city. Among the hundreds who died were some who earlier had been in Moody's audience. The evangelist was greatly distressed by this and lamented his tragic error in not asking those men and women to receive the Lord that evening. "Now, whenever I preach," he said later, "I press for a definite decision. I would rather lose my right hand than give people even a day to decide for Christ, for I don't know if I'll ever see them again." The Gospel invitation is a "today only" offer!

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

J. Vernon McGee says:

He is not saying tomorrow, but today. Today is the day for you and me. Today, right now, wherever you are, look at your watch or clock. What time is it? Well, this is the time of salvation. Now, right now you can trust Christ to save you. "To-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts."
p. 532

Wiersbe has a little section in his brief commentary called "A Sensitive Heart":

Hebrews is a book of exhortation (13:22). The word means "encouragement" and is a title for the Holy Spirit, the "Comforter, Helper" (John 14:16, 26). The writer encourages us not to neglect the Word (2:1-4), harden our hearts to the Word (3:7-19), become deaf to the Word (5:11-14), defy the Word (10:26-39) or disobey the Word deliberately (12:14-19). God deals in love with His people when they will not listen and obey (12:3ff.), so it pays to have a heart sensitive to God's voice.
p. 814

The verse concludes with a PRESENT NEGATIVE COMMAND and we could literally translate the last phrase:

"Stop hardening your hearts."

Barclay says:

There are many different kinds of hearing in this world. There is indifferent hearing; there is disinterested hearing; there is critical hearing; there is sceptical hearing; there is cynical and mocking hearing. The hearing that matters is the hearing that listens eagerly, and then believes and then acts.
p. 33

MacArthur says:

The third element of rest is immediate action. God fixes **a certain day, "Today."** Opportunity for God's rest remains, but it will not remain indefinitely. For each individual it will end before or with death; and for all mankind it will end in the Last Day. The age of grace is not forever. This is why immediate action is a basis of entering God's rest, of being saved. This is why Paul said, "Now is 'the acceptable time,' behold, now is 'the day of salvation'" (2 Cor. 6:2). When God looked down on the civilization He was ready to drown, He said, "My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, because he also is flesh; nevertheless his days shall be one hundred and twenty years" (Gen. 6:3). In other words, a person has no more than his lifetime to believe God.
p. 103

(Credibility by James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner)

Really believe in your heart of hearts that your
fundamental purpose, the reason for being, is to enlarge
the lives of others. Your life will be enlarged also. And all of the
other things we have been taught to concentrate
on will take care of themselves.

Pete Thigpen
Executive Reserves

p. 218

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging
by Brennan Manning)

At every moment of our existence God offers us this good news. Sadly, many of us continue to cultivate such an artificial identity that the liberating truth of our belovedness fails to break through. So we become grim, fearful, and legalistic. We hide our pettiness and wallow in guilt. We huff and puff to impress God, scramble for brownie points, thrash about trying to fix ourselves, and live the gospel in such a joyless fashion that it has little appeal to nominal Christians and unbelievers searching for truth.

From hound-dog disciples and sour-faced saints, spare us, oh Lord!
p. 58

(Acts of Love: The Power of Encouragement by David Jeremiah)

Dr. Richard Swenson recalls one night when the focus and fear and hopelessness of this generation became clearer to him.

A few years ago, I attended a late-night delivery by a very young-looking twenty-two-year-old mother. As I was the faculty member "on call" and was simply assisting the resident with the case, I had not met the family before.

This was Brenda's first baby. She was acting bravely despite her obvious discomfort. An occasional cry escaped as the contraction peaked. Then she would close her eyes in exhaustion and await the next wave of pain.

The nurse who both coached and comforted Brenda would occasionally glance over to the window ledge where the husband sat watching television. Brenda had a long second stage of labor, and we were in the

room for over two hours. But I never heard him utter a sound.

The resident and nurse were doing most of the work with the patient, so I just stood back and watched. Then I leaned against the wall and watched. Then I sat down and watched. I was tired. But despite my tiredness, I was also fascinated by the increasingly bizarre social event that was unfolding in the room.

It was around midnight. Brenda's labor happened to coincide with the end of one slasher-type movie and the beginning of another. The final hour of the first movie was filled with violence. I counted at least ten different extended sequences of knifings, bloody machine gun fights, and exploding cars and boats.

The nurse and I looked at each other and rolled our eyes in disgust. Should I use my authority to demand that the set be turned off? I thought about it for a while and then decided the husband might pull out his own submachine gun and blow me away. Anyway, the first movie was mercifully wrapping up, body bags all over the place. By this time, the baby's head was crowning. Brenda was still fairly well controlled, but her cries were getting louder and lasting longer. Another ten minutes, I figured.

Still no response from the husband, who was settling in for the beginning of the next movie. On the television screen, a mother, father, and small child were strolling down a big-city street when they stopped to watch a clown act. Suddenly, one of the clowns grabbed the little boy by the hand and took off running across the street. With the boy yelling "Daddy, Daddy!" the clown leaped into the back of a waiting van, the father in pursuit. Just as the vehicle started to pull away, the father tore open the back door. The clown inside shot the father point-blank in the face. Blood was everywhere.

Just then--exactly then--Brenda screamed and the baby was born.

Go back inside, little one, I thought. You really don't know what kind of world awaits you.

pp. 31-32

(Amazing Grace: 366 Inspiring Hymn Stories for Daily Devotions by Kenneth W. Osbeck)

Fanny Crosby wrote this consecration hymn while visiting in the home of the composer of the music, William H. Doane, in Cincinnati. The family's conversation that night centered around the blessedness of enjoying the nearness of God. Suddenly in a moment of inspiration, Fanny started giving the words of the hymn--line by line, verse by verse, and then the chorus. Soon after Doane supplied the music, and another of the more than 8,000 Fanny Crosby hymns was born. Since that day in 1875, these moving lines have ministered to and challenged countless numbers of God's people to keep their lives dedicated to their Lord:

I am Thine, O Lord--I have heard Thy voice, and it told Thy love to me; but I long to rise in the arms of faith and be closer drawn to Thee.

Consecrate me now to Thy service, Lord, by the pow'r of grace divine; let my soul look up with a steadfast hope and my will be lost in Thine.

O the pure delight of a single hour that before Thy throne I spend, when I kneel in pray'r and with Thee, my God, I commune as friend with friend.

There are depths of love that I cannot know till I cross the narrow sea; there are heights of joy that I may not reach till I rest in peace with Thee.

Chorus: Draw me nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, to the cross where Thou hast died; draw me nearer, nearer, nearer, blessed Lord, to Thy precious, bleeding side.

p. 232

v. 8 For if Joshua brought them to rest, He would not have spoken of another day after that.

Joshua 21:43-45

So the Lord gave Israel all the land he had sworn to give their forefathers, and they took possession of it and settled there. The Lord gave them rest on every side, just as he had sworn to their forefathers. Not one of their enemies withstood them; the Lord handed all their enemies over to them. Not one of all the Lord's good promises to the house of Israel failed; every one was fulfilled.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

The psalm which forms his text disproves the notion that the rest had already been entered and was no longer open.

Here then is a STATEMENT OF REASON as to why there is a present experience of rest available.

J. Vernon McGee says:

Joshua is the Old Testament or Hebrew word for "savior"; Jesus is the Greek or New Testament word, meaning "savior." In the verse before us--Joshua: "For if Joshua had given them rest, then would he not afterward have spoken of another day." When Joshua was old and stricken in years, there was yet very much land to conquer. The people of Israel had not entered into all the blessing God had in store for them. Joshua wasn't able to secure it for them. But, my friend, if you trust Christ, Christ can let you enter into the Canaan of the present day, in which there will be fruit and blessing and joy in your life. Oh, how we need this today! What robs us of it? Unbelief.
p. 532

Bruce says:

It is plain (our author implies) that the "rest spoken of in Ps. 95:11) is not the earthly Canaan. For that land of rest was occupied by the Israelites of the second generation, who entered it under the command of Joshua. The people addressed in the ninety-fifth psalm were already living in the land of Canaan, as their ancestors had been for generations now. Likewise, the "rest" which they were in danger of forfeiting through stubbornness of heart must have been something different from the "rest . . . from all their enemies round about" which God had given to Israel in Joshua's day (Josh. 23:1; cf. 21:44).
p. 108

Barclay says:

No; the promise is not fulfilled, because in Psalm 95:7 David hears God's voice saying to the people that if they do not harden their hearts they can enter into His rest. That is to say, hundreds of years after Joshua had led the people into the rest of The Promised Land, God is still appealing to them to enter into His rest. There is more to this rest than merely entry into The Promised Land.
p. 32

Montefiore points out:

Joshua went at the head of the tribes of Israel as their earthly commander, but Jesus is the spiritual commander who pioneered the way for his brothers to their eternal destiny. Jesus accomplished under the new dispensation something better than Joshua could achieve under the old dispensation. Joshua could only lead his people to their earthly inheritance, while Jesus is the leader who opened the way for his people to their abiding and eternal rest.
p. 85

English says:

This is confirmation of what has been submitted. It is the epistle's drawstring to close up the argument that there is still a rest for the people of God.
p. 117

G. Campbell Morgan says:

Moses had rendered his service faithfully, and had passed on. The purpose of God must move forward, and the man was found. Joshua then led them in, but was not able to give them rest. This further movement in the historic background is employed to reveal the glory of the Son, who not only leads out of slavery and into the place of possession, but is able to give perfect rest.
p. 53

The Book of Joshua is followed by the Book of Judges, throughout which the restlessness of the people is evident. The lowering of their moral conceptions prevented them finding rest. The story of that book may be summarized by repeating three words seven times over: disobedience, discipline, deliverance. God is seen ruling; the people disobeying, as a result being disciplined, and then delivered. It is a history of constant restlessness. Joshua could not give them rest.
p. 56

v. 9 There is remaining therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

TOO TIRED TO REST

"No one can become an authentic Christian on a steady diet of activity. Power comes out of solitude."

--Bill Hybels

Gordon MacDonald tells about some people in Florida who looked out their window one morning only to find that the ground in front of their building had collapsed into a sinkhole. As the pit got deeper and deeper, pavement, sidewalks, lawn furniture, and even cars went tumbling in. Sinkholes form when drought causes underground streams to dry up. Without its underlying support, the ground at the surface collapses.

A pastor who neglects his inner life may experience this sinkhole syndrome when a hectic pace and incessant pressures make him feel that his world is caving in. Rest is an important theme all through the Bible. In the Old Testament God established the Sabbath as a time for His people to be free from work and the everyday duties of life in order to enjoy their wonderful relationship with Him. In the New Testament Jesus taught that the Sabbath was not a burden for us to bear but a gift. No longer just a day, it became a way of life. By His own life, Jesus modeled how we can use the Sabbath concept to balance the demands of ministry and a rich private life.

Personally ministering to large numbers of people like Jesus did results in fatigue, but Jesus knew when to pull away and replenish His strength of spirit. Since He had accepted the human limitations of time and space, He could not heal every person or meet every need. Times of solitude help restore perspective and provide an opportunity for God to speak.

Measuring Jesus' life by modern standards of productivity might lead some to conclude that He didn't manage his time that well. After all, He spent an awful lot of it trying to train a dozen men who didn't have very good track records. Yet, Jesus' ministry ultimately had a universal impact. The selection of those 12 was crucial so Jesus spent a whole night in prayer about it. If it would have been presumptuous for Christ to choose The Twelve without consulting His Father, "it is gross presumption for us to operate without a divine connection."

Anderson schedules a two- to four-hour block of time each week as a sabbath rest. After beginning with an extended time of silence, he prays about all the things that concern him and then asks God to show him where he needs to make changes in his life. He concludes with a time of praise. Having practiced this discipline for nine years, Anderson testifies that it is not an escape from reality but a well from which flows joy and creativity.

"Too tired to rest: remember the Sabbath" by James Anderson.
Evangelical Beacon, Feb 1994 (Vol 67, No 4).

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

THE LESSON OF THE TREE

From nature we can learn a lesson about the importance of rest. Built into the life of every tree are stages of dormancy. In his book As a Tree Grows, W. Phillip Keller points out that in northern climates the dormant phase is in the winter, and in the tropical regions it is during the hot, dry season. "It is important to understand," says Keller, "that dormancy is not death. A tree may appear to be dead, it is true. The leaves of deciduous trees will be all stripped off in the fall, leaving a stark skeleton. The tree is nevertheless very much alive--but at rest." He added that this dormancy is immediately followed by a period of active growth. The dormant phase is a rebuilding and reconditioning for the upsurge of vigorous activity ahead.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

J. Vernon McGee says:

Here the writer is projecting into the future when all the people of God are going to find a heavenly rest. Heaven will be a place of deep satisfaction, of real joy, and real blessing. "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God."

p. 532

Here we are now talking about that FUTURE REST.

Revelation 14:13

And I heard a voice from heaven, saying, "Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" "Yes," says the Spirit, "that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them."

English points out:

It is used here then because, the case having been proved that there is another rest beyond God's creation-rest and the Canaan-rest, declaration is thus made that a different and better rest, a heavenly rest, is forthcoming.

p. 119

Wuest observes:

The writer uses here a different Greek word for "rest." In his previous references to the idea of rest, he had used katapausis, meaning "a cessation from activity," thus "a rest," a general word for the idea of rest. Now, he uses sabbatismos, the word used of the Sabbath rest. The word points back to God's original rest, and speaks of the ideal rest. It is a Sabbath rest because the believer reaches a definite stage of attainment and has satisfactorily accomplished a purpose, as God did when He finished the work of creation. It is not the believer's rest into which he enters and in which he participates, but in God's unique, personal rest in which the believer shares.

p. 87

Pink points out:

"Thus it is evident there is a rest for the people of God." These words were designed to re-assure the hearts of the Hebrews. In turning their backs on Judaism the "rest" of Canaan was relinquished, but this did not mean that they had, because of their faith in Christ, ceased to be "the people of God," nor did it involve the forfeiture of all privileges and blessings. Nay, the apostle had warned them in 3:6, 12, 14 that it was impossible to retain the privilege of belonging to the people of God except through faith in Christ. Now he assures them that only for such people was there a rest of God remaining.
p. 209

It needs to be most carefully observed that in this verse the Holy Spirit employs an entirely different word for "rest" than what he had used in vv. 1, 3, 4, 5 and 8. There the Greek word is rightly rendered "rest," but here it is "sabbatismos" and its meaning has been properly given by the translators in the margin--"keeping of the Sabbath." The R.V. gives the text itself, "There remaineth therefore a sabbath rest for the people of God."
p. 209

Griffith Thomas makes this observation:

The word "rest" is suddenly and it would seem significantly changed, and instead of the ordinary word, it means "Sabbath rest"; but the primary idea is concerned with the present and not with the future, with the believer's life here and now, and only with Heaven as the completing and culminating point, the thought of "the Sabbath of the soul" in fellowship with God. No doubt the future cannot be excluded, but we must take great care to concentrate attention on the present. It is a rest from striving, a rest through believing, and refers to the attitude of the soul toward God. "This resting place shall be glorious" (Isa. 11:10). This means not the absence of activity, but that harmony of soul within which produces loyalty of character and conduct; and just as God ceased working after Creation, so also, when we enter into spiritual rest, we cease from our striving, because, as our attitude is one of confidence in God, we are in harmony with His will. This is the Christian life, which we ought to enjoy, and it is this which, under the form of rest in this passage, is the great theme of the entire Epistle.
pp. 49-50

Hewitt says:

The change here from katapausis, which has been used throughout the Epistle for 'rest', to sabbatismos, 'sabbath rest', is very significant. The word is found only here in biblical Greek and the possibility exists that it may have been coined by the author. It echoes Genesis ii. 2. Rendall suggests that the use of the term in a spiritual sense, without comment or explanation, seems to point to a decay in the observance of the Jewish Sabbath amongst the Hebrew Christians. Moses and the law failed to give the people rest. The same to a large extent could be said of Joshua and the promised land. The old covenant had come to an end and a new covenant had been made. A new people of God through this new covenant had taken the place of the old. These were the believers who were entering into God's sabbath rest.
p. 88

Macaulay tells the story:

John Barridge, a close friend of George Whitefield in the days of the great awakening, was a vicar in the Church of England, deeply devoted to his church and to his parishioners. He strove to live an exemplary life, and tirelessly exhorted his people to the same. But for all his preaching and labor, his congregation continued in a most unsanctified state. In his discouragement he began to wonder if he were right himself, so he gave himself to prayer, on this order: "Lord, if I am all right, keep me so; if I am not right, make me so." One day as he meditated and prayed, the voice of the Spirit spoke within his mind: "Cease from thy works and believe only." The failure of his life and ministry was immediately spread before him. From that hour, restless striving gave place to trustful rest, and he went forth in the strength of the Lord to new victory and usefulness.
p. 58

Draper says:

The writer of Hebrews says, "There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God" (4:9). He is speaking of those who have received Christ, those who have been saved. For them, there is still more. The Greek word here translated "rest" is entirely different from the other eight "rests" in this passage. In fact, it is the only time this word appears in the Bible. It is almost as if the writer of Hebrews coined it himself. He made up a word to describe this experience of sanctification rest.
p. 90

There is a contented rest, a satisfied rest, a wonderful creation rest for the people of God.
p. 91

(The Pancake Man & Friends by Richard Speight)

I am a chronic worrier. For me, nothing is ever "enough." I am constantly anxious about what will happen when "enough" is gone. I can read Jesus' words and understand them, but I can't stop worrying. I'm getting better about it, but I can't seem to stop.

My anxiety is an affront to God. I know that. It delivers an offensive message. It says "I don't believe what your son Jesus said. I don't believe you will take care of me." It denies the existence of his miraculous power. Yet anxiety all too often has had me in its grip.
p. 95

(From "You Only Go Around Once!" by Ken Davis at the Gathering of Men. Copyright Dynamic Communications International, 1988.)

You see, the apostle Paul said, "I press toward the mark of the high calling of Jesus Christ." I believe, men, we are not here by accident, we were created with purpose. And when we live toward that purpose we live with nothing to lose.

I told you I laid my family on the block for a career. A career for which there was no guarantee. I laid my ministry on the block for a career for which there was no guarantee.

Mike O'Hara, a twenty-one-year-old boy who is dying from bone cancer, taught me more in this regard than anybody else ever has. He was totally bald. He had the greatest sense of humor I have ever seen. He was bald from chemotherapy. He had come to terms with the fact that he was prepared to die and prepared to meet God.

Two weeks after he lost his hair from chemotherapy he went to a Halloween party dressed as a can of Ban Roll-on. We were walking down a high school corridor. This man devoted his life to talking to young people and reaching them with the greatest news on the face of the earth. Some kid leaned out the door and yelled, "Hey you! Baldy! What happened to your hair?" Now I'll tell you gentlemen, my tendency would be to turn around and go, (Click, click, POOOOHHWW!) "Nothin'."

Not Mike. Mike turned around and he said, "It's no big deal. I'm dying. This is from chemotherapy." And that kid just about died. And then he walked back to him and started poking him in the shoulder. He said, "It really is no big deal. I'm not afraid to die, I'm prepared."

The kid stood flattened against the wall. This young man took me to dinner. We're sitting in the restaurant, he leans across the table, got his face that far from my face and he said, "You're nervous, aren't you?"

I said, "Yes, I am."

He said, "You think it's contagious?"

I said, "I don't know."

He rubbed his hands over that bald head and then went, "It is contagious."

Some of you knew Mike. He said, "You're still nervous. It's cause I'm dying, isn't it?"

I said, "Yes, Mike, I'm nervous because you're dying."

And he said these words, "Ken, that's one thing we have in common. We're both dying. The only difference is that God has chosen to let me know when."

He said, "And anyway, we could walk out of this room, you get hit by a truck and beat me to it." He said, "And we're both ready. So relax and eat your meal."

Men, the only way to live is with nothing to lose.

v.10 For the one who entered into His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His.

The Bible Knowledge Commentary says:

This statement is both a reassurance and an admonition. On the one hand it follows up the writer's conclusion (Heb. 4:9) that there is such a rest to be entered. But on the other, it reminds the readers that this is only done by their getting to the end of their task just as did God in His creative activity. In the phrase "rests from His own work," the author employed a kind of word play, since the verb for "rest" also signifies "cease" which, against the backdrop of God's own work, clearly suggests successful completion. This thrust is what the writer has had in mind from the beginning of the section. The readers need to model their lives after Jesus Christ who "was faithful to the One who appointed Him" (3:2) and must be careful to "hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first" (3:14, cf. 3:6). Only thus would they be able to rest from their works in the joyful possession of their inheritance in the messianic kingdom.

Revelation 3:10, 11

"Because you have kept the word of My perseverance, I also will keep you from the hour of testing, that hour which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell upon the earth. I am coming quickly; hold fast what you have, in order that no one take your crown."

PLAN YOUR DEPARTURE!

All of us need to make specific plans for our departure from this life. If we don't we can be left in a predicament similar to that of a young man who became stranded in an Alaskan wilderness. His adventure began in the spring of 1981 when he was flown into the desolate north country to photograph the natural beauty and mysteries of the tundra. He had photo equipment, 500 rolls of film, several firearms, and 1400 pounds of provisions. As the months passed, the entries in his diary, which at first detailed his wonder and fascination with the wildlife around him, turned into a pathetic record of a nightmare. In August he wrote, "I think I should have used more foresight about arranging my departure. I'll soon find out." He waited and waited, but no one came to his rescue. In November he died in a nameless valley, by a nameless lake, 225 miles northeast of Fairbanks. An investigation revealed that he had carefully mapped out his venture, but had made no provision to be flown out of the area.

(From InfoSearch 3.5)

Bruce says:

One way or the other, this blissful rest in unbroken fellowship with God is the goal to which his people are urged to press forward; this is the final perfection which has been prepared for them by the sacrifice of their heavenly high priest. "It is for you," our author might well have told them (in the words of a younger contemporary of his), "that paradise is opened, the tree of life is planted, the age to come is prepared, plenty is provided, a city is built, rest is appointed, goodness is established and wisdom perfected beforehand" (4 Ezra 8:52).
p. 110

Delitzsch says:

"Mankind has received a call to enter into the rest of God; Joshua did not bring it into that rest; the final Sabbath is to be still looked for; for Jesus, who has entered Himself into God's rest, rests there sabbatically now, as God had done before."
p. 198

MacArthur observes:

God's **rest** is also future. In his vision on Patmos the apostle John heard these beautiful words from heaven: "'Write, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on!'" 'Yes,' says the Spirit, 'that they may rest from their labors, for their deeds follow with them'" (Rev. 14:13). I believe Hebrews 4:10 anticipates that final day when we cease from all effort and all work and enter into the presence of Jesus Christ. It includes the promised rest to Israel, the ultimate rest when she and all of God's other people will cease from work and rest as God did when He finished His creation. That is the reality of Sabbath rest.
p. 104

Owen says:

It appears to me that it is the rest of another that is spoken of, even the rest of Christ from His works, which is compared with the rest of God from His works in creation. This gives an account of the connection in the word "for." "There remaineth therefore a rest for the people of God, 'for' Christ is entered into His rest." The "works" from which Christ "ceased" include all that He did and suffered from His incarnation to His resurrection, as the Mediator of the new covenant. Christ's rest consists in an entire cessation from all these works, and an entire satisfaction in them and their results. His entrance into this rest was upon His resurrection "on the morning of the first day of the week," when He arose from the dead, the foundation of the new creation being laid and perfected.
pp. 70-71

Macaulay concludes this section in his commentary with this prayer:

I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou has kept
 The best in store.
 We have enough, yet not too much
 To long for more,
 A yearning for a deeper peace
 Not known before.

I thank Thee, Lord, that here our souls,
 Though amply blessed,
 Can never find, although they seek,
 A perfect rest,
 Nor ever shall, until they lean

On Jesus' breast.

pp. 58-59

Lange says:

--Labor, works and suffering belong to the divine arrangement, or to the way upon which we enter into rest. But it is faith alone, which lays hold of Christ, and in Him already here, and thus also yonder, finds eternal rest.
p. 91

J. Vernon McGee says:

God has promised a heavenly rest, but, my friend, He wants us to enjoy ourselves even now. As someone has said, "All the way to heaven is heaven." We ought to enjoy this life. That is what the writer is talking about here: God rested, He ceased from His labors, and He is finished. Therefore, you do not have to lift your little finger to do something toward your salvation. Isn't it really a matter of conceit on our part to think that you and I as sinners could do anything that would cause God to say, "Oh my, what a nice little fellow you are! I'm so happy to have you in heaven because you are going to add a great deal to it."? Well, my friend, that is not the picture at all. He did it all for us. Even our righteousness is filthy rags in His sight. He cannot accept our righteousness, because we really do not have any. "There is none righteous, no, not one" (Rom. 3:10). Therefore He offers a finished salvation to us, and when we trust Christ we become new creations in Him.
p. 533

A. T. Robertson says:

The writer pictures salvation as God's rest which man is to share and God will have perfect satisfaction when man is in harmony with him (Dods).
p. 362

Phillips says:

As far as the believer's standing is concerned, he has already entered into rest. His salvation is based upon a finished work.

But often our state does not correspond to our standing. Many genuine believers lack assurance of salvation. Many occupy lower ground than God intends, by confusing the dispensations or imposing Galatian bondage upon the soul.

The child of God must deliberately appropriate for himself the rest the Lord has wrought. "Let us therefore give diligence to enter into that rest, that no man fall after the same example of disobedience" (4:11).

A missionary in Africa offered a ride in the back of his pickup truck to a national who was walking along, struggling beneath the weight of a very heavy load. The African gladly accepted the ride. After a few miles the missionary glanced in his rear-view mirror and was astonished to see the Black man standing stiffly upright in the back of the truck, still holding his load on his shoulders. The missionary stopped the truck to see why the man was still carrying the load. "I didn't know the truck could carry both me and my load," was the man's reply!

Calvary rest frees us from the burden of our sin. We can rest it all on Christ along with all the other heartaches and problems of life. The writer wants to see this accomplished in his readers. He wants their state to be in keeping with their standing in Christ.
pp. 77-78

Larry Richards says:

Faith in God, expressed in an obedient response to His voice, is the critical principle which sums up the life-style of God's children. What you and I are to concentrate on in our Christian lives is entering God's rest by making faith's response whenever we hear His voice (v. 11).
p. 37

It's hard to grasp, but it's true. Whatever your problem, God has foreseen it from the time of creation, and the solution is already prepared. The only thing that can make you miss that solution is an attitude of unbelief that leads you to substitute your own labor for obedience to God. If you will trust God and obey His voice, you will experience His rest and find the solution He has prepared for you.
pp. 39-40

(The Seeking Heart by Fenelon)

Here is a way to know if you've actually trusted God with something--you will not think about the matter any longer, nor will you feel a lack of peace.
p. 66

(Abba's Child: The Cry of the Heart for Intimate Belonging
by Brennan Manning)

From the first moment of our existence our most powerful yearning is to fulfill the original purpose of our lives--"to see Him more clearly, love Him more dearly, follow Him more nearly." We are made for God, and nothing less will really satisfy us. C. S. Lewis could say that he was "surprised by joy," gripped by a desire that made "everything else that had ever happened . . . insignificant in comparison." Our hearts will ever be restless until they rest in Him.
pp. 38-39

Wiersbe sums it up by saying:

All of this is possible because of the finished work of Jesus Christ. (The two "He's" in v. 10 refer to Jesus Christ.) God rested when He finished the work of Creation. God's Son rested when He completed the work of the new creation. We may enter into His rest by trusting His Word and obeying His will. We can do this as we listen to His Word, understand it, trust it, and obey it. Only in this way can we claim our inheritance in Christ.

Before Joshua conquered Jericho, he went out to survey the situation; and he met the Lord Jesus Christ (Josh. 5:13-15). Joshua discovered that he was second in command! The Lord had a sword in His hand, and Joshua fell at His feet in complete submission. It was this action in private that gave Joshua his public victory.

We too claim our spiritual inheritance by surrendering to Him and trusting His Word. We must beware of an evil heart of unbelief.
pp. 44-45

Let us wrap up our exposition by hearing from Ray Stedman:

Here is a revolutionary new principle of human behavior on which God intends man to operate. That was His intention from the beginning. It is from this that man fell and it is to this now, in Jesus Christ, he is to be restored. Unless this principle is operative in our life we can have no assurance that we belong to the body of Christ. This is the clear declaration of this writer throughout the whole of the book.
pp. 51-52

We all have been brainwashed since birth with a false concept of the basis of human activity. We have been sold on the satanic lie that we have in ourselves what it takes to be what we want to be, to be a man, to be a woman, to achieve whatever we desire. We are sure we have what it takes or, if we do not have it now, we know where we can get it. We can educate ourselves, we can acquire more information, we can develop new skills, and when we get this done we shall have what it takes to be what we want to be.

For three and a half years the apostle Peter tried his level best to please the Lord Jesus by dedicated, earnest, sincere efforts to serve Him out of his own will. He failed dismally, because he could not be convinced that he did not have what it takes. When the Lord Jesus told him, "You will never have what it takes until the cross comes into your life," he would not receive it. He said, "Lord, don't talk to me about a cross. I don't want to hear anything about that."

And the Lord Jesus said, "Get behind Me, Satan, you are an offense unto Me. You do not understand the things of God, but only the things of men." It was not until that wonderful day, the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit opened his eyes to the full meaning of the cross, that he realized what the Lord had meant. Not till then did he realize what it took to be a Christian.

We repeat, it takes Christ to be a Christian, and it takes God to be a man. When we put Christ back in the Christian, you put God back in the man. This is God's design for living. This is the new principle of human activity--to stop our own efforts. We do not have what it takes, and we never did have. The only One who can live the Christian life is Jesus Christ. He proposes to reproduce His life in us.
pp. 52-53

Now Paul says in Colossians, As therefore you received Christ Jesus the Lord, so live in him (Col. 2:6). "As . . . so," in the same way. As you have received Him, so live in dependence upon Him to do all things through you. Step out upon that, and what is the result? Rest! Wonderful rest! Relief, release, no longer worrying, fretting, straining, for you are resting upon One who is wholly adequate to do through you everything that needs to be done.
p. 53

CONCLUSION:

What are some of the lessons that we can learn from this particular study?

LESSON #1: The command is to "fear lest you fail to enter into His rest."

LESSON #2: This is time to persevere and press on, not a time to quit.

LESSON #3: You know you have failed to reach His rest if you fail to press on to the acquisition of it.

LESSON #4: The condition for entering into this rest is believing. "For we are entering into this rest, we who believed" (Heb. 4:3).

LESSON #5: The store is not closed, and you have not come too late to enter into His rest.

LESSON #6: The reason the Israelites did not enter into the rest that was provided for them was because of disobedience.

LESSON #7: All we really have is today and so it is incumbent upon us to act now on what we know.

LESSON #8: The command is "Today, if you hear His voice, stop hardening your hearts."

LESSON #9: There is a PAST, PRESENT and FUTURE rest for the children of God. The past rest comes at salvation, the present rest comes as we yield to His will and the future rest will be our eternal inheritance.

LESSON #10: "There is remaining therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God."

Roy Hession in his book From Shadow to Substance says:

As we close the theme of going on from the wilderness into the Promised Land, let us use the same urgent words that Paul uses in closing this aspect.

Here we have two other verses that begin with "Let us." "Let us therefore fear lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it" (4:1). How pathetic it would be if we stopped short of that which is so greatly needed and so clearly promised--entering into His rest, or, as alternatively phrased, being made a partaker of Christ. It is the pathos of a situation in which a valuable inheritance is left a beneficiary in a will, but that beneficiary never comes forward to claim it. Efforts are made to trace him, advertisements are inserted in newspapers, saying that if he will apply to a certain firm of solicitors, "he will hear something to his advantage." But he never shows up in order to partake of his inheritance. Oh, the sadness of the promise being left us of entering into His rest and we never claiming it and entering in.
pp. 47-48

(The Essential Abraham Lincoln by John Gabriel Hunt)

With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

(Abraham Lincoln in his Second Inaugural Address, March 4, 1865)
p. 331

(When God Whispers Your Name by Max Lucado)

We are not happy here because we are not at home here. We are not happy here because we are not supposed to be happy here. We are "like foreigners and strangers in this world" (1 Pet. 2:11).

Take a fish and place him on the beach. Watch his gills gasp and scales dry. Is he happy? No! How do you make him happy? Do you cover him with a mountain of cash? Do you get him a beach chair and sunglasses? Do you bring him a Playfish magazine and martini? Do you wardrobe him in double-breasted fins and people-skinned shoes?

Of course not. Then how do you make him happy? You put him back in his element. You put him back in the water. He will never be happy on the beach simply because he was not made for the beach.

And you will never be completely happy on earth simply because you were not made for earth. Oh, you will have your moments of joy. You will catch glimpses of light. You will know moments or even days of peace. But they simply do not compare with the happiness that lies ahead.

p. 173

(From Our Daily Bread, October 20, 1994)

A LOUD FIZZLE

Choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve. . . . But as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord (Joshua 24:15).

Abe Lincoln told the story of a blacksmith who heated a piece of iron in the forge, not knowing what he was going to make. At first he thought of shaping it into a horseshoe but changed his mind. After hammering on the iron for a while, he decided to try to make it into something else. By this time the metal was no longer malleable. Holding it up with his tongs and looking at it with disgust, the blacksmith tossed it into a vat of water. "Well," he shrugged, "at least I can make a fizzle out of it!"

Joshua would have been an important lesson in that story. He knew that a meaningful life must have a clear purpose. "Choose!" he urged his followers. If you're not going to live for God, then decide against Him. If you are going to live for God, then let your life reflect that decision. But whatever you do, decide! Joshua made it clear that he and his family had made their choice to serve the Lord (24:15). For him, life was not an amusement park but an arena where important decisions had to be made.

What about you? If you don't choose to trust Christ and serve Him, all you will have to show for the living of your days will be a loud fizzle. --HWR

Joyfully enlisting
By Thy grace divine,
We are on the Lord's side,
Savior, we are Thine.

--Havergal

IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO CHOOSE,
YOU'VE ALREADY MADE THE WRONG CHOICE.

I want us to take just a few moments of reflection with regard to the experience of "REST" for us as believers.

It seems to me that there are 4 S's and 4 P's that bring about a rest in our relationship with our Savior.

First, the 4 S's:

1.GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY -

This is humble recognition of the fact that God does in fact control all the events that surround us.

2.SUFFERING -

This is the understanding that God uses suffering in the divine curriculum to accomplish His purposes in our lives.

3.SONSHIP -

I am a son or a daughter in His family and He loves me unconditionally.

4.SUBMISSION -

I am learning to live comfortably under divine authority.

Let us see "REST" as the fruitage of the 4 P's:

1.THE PROMISE OF HIS PRESENCE -

Hebrews 13:5, 6

Let your way of life be free from the love of money, being content with what you are having; for He Himself has said: "I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you," so that we confidently say: "The Lord is my helper, I will not be afraid. What shall man do to me?"

2.PEACE

Isaiah 32:17

And the work of righteousness shall be peace; and the effect of righteousness quietness and assurance forever.

3. POWER

Isaiah 40:31

They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength. They shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run and not be weary, they will walk and not faint.

4. PURPOSE

Hebrews 4:9

There is remaining therefore a Sabbath rest for the people of God.

(31 Days of Praise: Enjoying God Anew by Ruth Myers)

Thank You that Christ is my Life . . . that I am a member of His body and a dwelling place of His Spirit. How privileged I am to be indwelt by Your glorious presence (by the whole Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit!) so that you can display Your excellence to those around me.

Thank You for the day when I let go of the whole burden of my sins and rested on the atoning work of Christ--on the total payment He made for me on the cross . . . And thank You that today, in that same simple way, I can let go of the whole burden of my life and service . . . of my marriage, children, and all my relationships (past, present, and future), of my inadequacies and my self-dependence, and rest on Your present working in me through the Holy Spirit. How good it is to transfer these burdens from my shoulders to Yours, and to rest on You to work in me and for me and through me! I praise You for the gracious way You infuse me with inner strength through Christ . . . and so I'm ready for anything You want me to do, and I'm equal to anything You allow to happen in my life.

Thank You that I can give my self up to be led by You . . . that I can go forth praising and at rest, letting You manage me and my day . . . that I can joyfully depend on You throughout the day, expecting You to guide, to enlighten, to reprove, to teach, to use, and to do in me and with me what You desire . . . that I can count upon Your working in me and through me as a fact, totally apart from sight or feeling . . . that I can go forth praising and at rest, believing You and obeying You and ceasing from the burden of trying to manage myself without Your wisdom and power (adapted from Dr. John Hubbard).

Thank You that I can throw the whole weight of my anxieties on You, for I am Your personal concern.
pp. 106-7