

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 Chinking 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 songs. 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.

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, POOOHHWW!) "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 myself 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