

In Tune

word - worship - lifestyle

God's Rest

1. Introduction:

What does rest mean to you?

- The Friday afternoon feeling?
- The Sunday afternoon rest?
- Our yearly vacation?

Is there a rest that won't fade away?

A rest that will make us feel rested even if our bodies are tired?

What would our Maker suggest about rest?

2. Several meanings of rest in the Bible

God's rest have several meanings in scripture:

- It can mean the seventh day of creation and the weekly Sabbath commemorating it. (It is interesting to note that the New Testament Christians did not use the seventh day as a rest day, like the Jewish tradition, but the first day as it was the day of Jesus' resurrection. Hand 20:7 and 1 Cor 16:2)
- The promise land of Canaan
- Peace with God now because of our relationship with Christ through faith
- Our future eternal life with Christ.

The Strong's explains rest as to settle down (to stay/inhabit).

3. God's rest

Let's look at the word. Especially Hebrews 3, 4 (NET translation)

Heb 3:1 we read, "Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, partners in a heavenly calling, **take note** of Jesus,"

The Greek of "take note" is given here as a verb, It means

- To perceive, remark, observe, understand
- To consider attentively, **fix one's eyes** or mind upon

Fix your mind on Jesus, fix your thoughts on Jesus – this is the main place where we struggle and usually fall, in our thought life. If you have fallen in your mind, your body is going to follow.

So here the Hebrew writer gives good advice – take note/consider Jesus attentively/fix your eyes, your mind upon him.

You can start by learning what the word says about him and start thinking about that, and then rest/stay/inhabit the completed work of Jesus Christ on the cross.

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In the second part of Hebrews 3:1 we see Jesus is “the **apostle and high priest** whom we confess,” “not a mere envoy, but an ambassador or representative sent with powers.” (Robertson’s word Pictures)

In the Old Testament the highest authority was the High Priest and in the New Testament the highest authority was the Apostles of Jesus. The Hebrew writer brings both together in Jesus as he calls him our high priest and apostle. Jesus is thus the highest authority.

Heb 3:2 who is faithful to the one who appointed him, as Moses was also in God’s house.

Heb 3:3 for he has come to deserve greater glory than Moses, just as the builder of a house deserves greater honour than the house itself!

Heb 3:4 for every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God.

Heb 3:5 Now Moses was *faithful in all God’s house* as a servant, to testify to the things that would be spoken.

Heb 3:6 But Christ is **faithful as a son over God’s house. We are of his house**, if in fact we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope we take pride in.

Verse 6 - Christ is faithful over God’s house and we are his house. This means Christ is faithful over us He will not leave you or forsake you – he will complete the good work he started in you (Phil 1:6)

Heb 3:7 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, “*Oh, that today you would listen as he speaks!*”

Heb 3:8 “*Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, in the day of testing in the wilderness.*”

Heb 3:9 “*There your fathers tested me and tried me, and they saw my works for forty years.*”

Heb 3:10 “*Therefore, I became provoked at that generation and said, ‘Their hearts are always wandering and they have not known my ways.’*”

Heb 3:11 “*As I swore in my anger, ‘They will never enter my rest!’*”

Heb 3:12 See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has an evil, unbelieving heart that forsakes the living God.

Heb 3:13 But exhort one another each day, as long as it is called “Today,” that none of you may become hardened by sin’s deception.

The day set out to enter into this promise of rest is today

Heb 3:14 for we have become partners with Christ, if in fact we hold our initial confidence firm until the end.

Heb 3:15 as it says, “*Oh, that today you would listen as he speaks! Do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.*”

Heb 3:16 for which ones heard and rebelled? Was it not all who came out of Egypt under Moses’ leadership?

Heb 3:17 And against whom was God provoked for forty years? Was it not those who sinned, *whose dead bodies fell in the wilderness?*

Heb 3:18 And to whom did he swear they would never enter into his rest, except those who were disobedient?

Heb 3:19 So we see that they could not enter because of unbelief.

Heb 4:1 Therefore we must be wary that, while the promise of entering his rest remains open, none of you may seem to have come short of it.

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So there is a promise of rest, God gives us *his* rest

Heb 4:2 “For we had good news proclaimed to us just as they did. But the message they heard did them no good, since they did not join in with those who heard it in faith.”

The Israelites...

- knew about God for they saw the miracles and Moses’ conversations with God.
- But they did not know him personally and intimately. They stand at their tent entrances while Moses was in the presence of God –they did not run to the presence and stay there like Joshua.
- They were seeking the miracles (the provision) instead of the relationship, God’s presence.

Me and you...

- Are you seeking God for the fulfilment of your list, all the things you need done in life, for what he can do for you.
- Seek his presence, because you love him. That is why the Israelites did not find rest, they did not trust him out of relationship, they had miracle encounters with God – which was soon forgotten – just until they needed the next one. Their entire focus was on themselves and their needs. They believed the miracle when they saw it – but they did not have faith/trust in God. They did not focus on God.

Heb 4:3 For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, “*As I swore in my anger, ‘They will never enter my rest!’*” And yet God’s works were accomplished from the foundation of the world.

Heb 4:4 For he has spoken somewhere about the seventh day in this way: “*And God rested on the seventh day from all his works,*”

God did not rest on the 7th day because He was tired, but because his work was complete. It indicates the completion of creation. This rest is a forecast of our eternal joy when creation will be restored and every mark of sin will be removed – and the world will be made perfect again.

Heb 4:5 but to repeat the text cited earlier: “*They will never enter my rest!*”

Heb 4:6 Therefore it remains for some to enter it, yet those to whom it was previously proclaimed did not enter because of disobedience.

Heb 4:7 So God again ordains a certain day, “Today,” speaking through David after so long a time, as in the words quoted before, “*O, that today you would listen as he speaks! Do not harden your hearts.*”

Heb 4:8 For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken afterward about another day.

Heb 4:9 Consequently a Sabbath rest remains for the people of God.

Heb 4:10 For the *one who enters God’s rest has also rested from his works*, just as God did from his own works.

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4. On the other side of God's rest

So what is on the other side?

Heb 4:10 For the *one who enters God's rest* has also rested from his works, just as God did from his own works.

- We don't have to strive and perform anymore
- For Jesus has provided for us rest through faith
- Our rest in Christ is to trust him to complete his good and perfect work in us (phil 1:6).

This trust does not mean that we sit back in the lazy boy and don't do anything – we stay at our daily tasks/out calling – but we don't strive anymore to please God

Because we believe he will complete the good work he started in us – we do not need to be weary in our spirits – I don't have to try to be good anymore

For the one who enters God's rest also rested from his works.

Our Sabbath rest in Christ begins when we trust him to complete his good and perfect work in us.

We all know the scripture that says that we must fix our eyes on Christ – but Hebrews 3 says we must fix our thoughts on Jesus. He is described as our apostle (meaning one sent), our High priest that give us access to God, and He is the son that is over God's house. We are his house and He is faithful over his house.

5. God's rest and faith

Heb 4:11 Thus we must make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by following the same pattern of disobedience.

We must combine this message with faith.

Message + Faith = Rest.

The Israelites in the desert heard the message /the gospel but they did not combine it with faith and because of their disobedience (their disobedience was the fact that they had unbelief) and because of that they did not enter God's rest.

Only when we believe the message of good news we can enter into God's place of rest. What is the Good News?

- **It is finished – done, Christ paid the price and will complete the good work he started in you.**

Heb 4:12 For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any double-edged sword, piercing even to the point of dividing soul from spirit, and joints from marrow; it is able to judge the desires and thoughts of the heart.

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Verse 12 - You don't have to do anything but believe

This is the key

It was the key in the Old Testament and it is for sure the key in the New Testament

John says the works that we must do (we love doing works, don't we) is to believe in Jesus who was sent by God (Joh 6:29).

This was the Israelites problem, they did not believe and because of that they did not enter into the rest.

They saw the miracles of God for 40 years but they never believed

Believe – to trust in God, to trust in the completed work of Christ

After all these years God's promise of rest still stands

The key to go into that promise, the key to open the door is to believe

Heb 4:13 And no creature is hidden from God, but everything is naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must render an account.

Heb 4:14 Therefore since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast to our confession.

Heb 4:15 For we do not have a high priest incapable of sympathizing with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way just as we are, yet without sin.

Heb 4:16 Therefore let us confidently approach the throne of grace to receive mercy and find grace whenever we need help.

6. Conclusion

We can be strengthened because we know when we believe in him we rest from perfecting and completing ourselves for he as the builder of the house will complete the good work in us that he have started (Phil 1:6).

Go in to the Rest of God through believing in Jesus Christ.