

Enter into God's Rest.

10th of October 2021

Hebrews 4:1-13

Opening Prayer:

May the words of my mouth and the meditations of all our hearts be pleasing in your sight, O'Lord our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

As you spend time reading the letter to the Hebrews, you will notice that the author repeatedly encourages the reader to have Faith. Faith is the key response to God. His character, His plans and His works.

1. God's rest (4:1-5)
2. Entering God's rest (4:6-11)
3. God's sharp sword (4:12-23)

The Rest That God Promised

4 Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest is still open, let us take care that none of you should seem to have failed to reach it.² For indeed the good news came to us just as to them; but the message they heard did not benefit them because they were not united by Faith with those who listened.

Again and again, the author of Hebrews will encourage his readers to have Faith. Faith is the key response to the character, plan and works of God. Here the people of the Old Testament are shown to have been lacking in Faith, but in chapter eleven, we will see a long list of the old testament heroes of Faith.

The author quotes Psalm 95:

When God calls people to enter into rest, it is not a call to enter into the Promise Land. God's rest is open to all believers of every age, including ourselves.

[a] ³ For we who have believed enter that rest, just as God^[b] has said,

**"As in my anger I swore,
'They shall not enter my rest,'"**

But what then is God's rest? God's rest means far more than the gift of the promised land to the people of Israel. The text reveals:

- a) God's rest existed before the promised land
- b) God's rest remained after the promised land
- c) God's rest is open for us today

God's judgement of his people in the desert during the exodus was swift and sure. How could anyone hope to escape from him? So we should choose to enter God's rest because now as then, God judges people accurately and effectively.

¹²Indeed, the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing until it divides soul from spirit, joints from marrow; it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. ¹³And before him no creature is hidden, but all are naked and laid bare to the eyes of the one to whom we must render an account.

God knows all. There is nothing we can conceal from God. He discerns whether we respond with Faith or unbelief, even before our thoughts find expression in our actions.

There is a temptation for the Priest as the preacher to ignore what are unpalatable passages: such as

it is able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Yet if the preacher does this, the flock misses out, and the Priest is unfaithful in his duties: yet the realisation that God can judge the thoughts and intentions of our hearts shouldn't cause us to panic:

God's call to enter into his rest is a call to turn and follow him.

- It is a call of repentance.
- It is a call for obedience.
- It is a call out of His faithful love.
- It is an expression of His grace.

Here is a picture of what it means to enter the rest of God:

Revelation 7: 17

for the Lamb at the centre of the throne will be their shepherd,
and he will guide them to springs of the water of life,
and God will wipe away every tear from their eyes

You and I also know that God is with us. We have been given the spirit of God.

The apostle Paul wrote

For all who are led by the **Spirit of God** are children **of God**.

Romans 8:14

As Children of God, we are secure in the love of God. The reality is that we have been forgiven because of the atoning sacrifice of the His Son Jesus.

Entering into the rest of God allows you and I to express our love and adoration for God, not built on fear, but as a response to the love of God.

Logically, the next step is to teach on sanctification. One of the mysteries is that we are both sanctified, and at the same time, being sanctified.

We can enter into that glorious rest, that loving relationship with the living Lord, and as we grow as the children of God, we continue to amend our lives to reflect od's love for us.

We have times of confession – continually drawing closer to God, asking him not only to forgive us but asking him to change us. It helps each of us to live lives that are giving glory to God.

To God be glory forever.

Resources

F. F. Bruce; The Epistle to the Hebrews. The New International Commentary on the New Testament.

Dr Peter Adam; The Majestic Son; reading Hebrews Today.