

# A Greater Rest

JESUS IS GREATER: An Exposition of Hebrews #6 - Pastor Gary Combs - November 5, 2023 - Hebrews 4:1-13

**VISION:** Good morning church! Before we dive into Hebrews today, I want to share how we're doing as a church in responding to Christ's command to make disciples. We have a process for making disciples that we call Life On Life Discipleship. To date, 256 people have begun the process and 106 have completed our 21-session process. We had 3 New Disciple-makers in October: Dwayne Raper, Tyler Dean and Jacky Adkins and 4 new people started the process in October. If you see Dwayne, Tyler, or Jacky today, congratulate them on partnering together with us in answering Christ's call to be disciple-makers! And if you want to know more about Life On Life Discipleship, check the box on your Connection Card.



**INTRO:** Now, let's get started with part 6 of our series, "**JESUS IS GREATER: An Exposition of Hebrews.**" Our theme verse is:

Hebrews 1:4 (NLT) This shows that the Son is far **greater than** the angels, just as the name God gave him is **greater than** their names.

Today, we'll be looking at Hebrews 4:1-13 in a sermon entitled, "**A Greater Rest.**" Remember Christ's invitation?

Matthew 11:28 (NLT) Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."

**Need:** Are you weary and heavy with burdens today? Are you struggling with an aching kind of exhaustion that no amount of napping can cure? No vacation spot can alleviate?

**ILL:** Have you heard the new name for today's generation? They're called "The Tired Generation." In a recent article entitled: "The Tired Generation: Why Gen Z and Millennials Are So Exhausted All the Time," they offered 4 reasons:

**1) Technology takeover.** "More than 8 in 10 millennials say they sleep with a cell phone glowing by the bed, poised to disgorge texts, phone calls, emails, songs, news, videos, games and wake-up jingles," reports a *Pew Research study*.

**2) Hustle culture.** Martin Reed, a certified clinical sleep health expert, says, "If we constantly check our email when we get home in the evening, we make it harder to unwind and prepare for sleep. We may even be tempted to take our work home with us and finish projects in bed at night."

**3) Money worries.** Student loans, inflation, medical insurance costs, saving to purchase a home... the average 25-34 year old has \$42K in unsecured debt. That's why they've also been called "The Anxious Generation."

**4) Poor coping behaviors.** Fast food, little to no exercise, overly dependent on medications, overconsumption of alcohol and caffeine to get by.

And it's not just the younger generations experiencing this need for rest. I hear it from people of all ages. I suppose that might be the name of every generation these days. We're all the Tired Generation.

**Trans:** So let us consider two questions today: what is this rest that Jesus offers? And how do we enter into this rest?

**BODY:** In the book of Hebrews chapter 4:1-13, the author encouraged Hebrew background believers to strive to enter God's rest. We can strive to enter God's rest. How can we strive to enter God's rest? The text gives **three ways** we can strive to enter God's rest.

**Read text:** Hebrews 4:1-13 (ESV) <sup>1</sup> Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. <sup>2</sup> For 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. <sup>3</sup> For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. <sup>4</sup> For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." <sup>5</sup> And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest." <sup>6</sup> Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, <sup>7</sup> again he appoints a certain day, "Today," saying through David so long afterward, in the words already quoted, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." <sup>8</sup> For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. <sup>9</sup> So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, <sup>10</sup> for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his. <sup>11</sup> Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. <sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup> And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

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## HOW TO ENTER INTO GOD'S REST:

### 1. Understand the urgent necessity of entering by faith.

**EXP:** (1-3) The preacher continued his sermon from Psalm 95, but this time he moves from warning about hard hearts to the urgency of believing in the Good News about Christ in order to enter God's rest now.

**"Promise" (1)** (ἐπαγγελία, *epangelia*) - announcement, promise, a promised good or blessing.

**"Entering/enter" (1,3,5,10,11 - 6x)** (εἰσέρχομαι, *eiserchomai*) - to enter, go in, as to a place. Metaph. To enter into a condition or state of things, of thoughts that come into the mind.

**"Rest" (1,3,4,5,8,9,10,11 - 10x)** (κατάπαυσις, *katapausis*) - a putting to rest as in cessation from labor and activity, a resting place; metaph. the heavenly blessedness in which God dwells, heavenly rest. "Rest" is an important word found throughout the OT and NT. Whether it's found in the Hebrew, the Greek, or the English, it has several layers of meaning. According to the Oxford dictionary it can mean: 1) to cease from work or activity, 2) to be placed or supported so as to stay in a specific position, 3) to be based on or grounded in; depending on, 4) to relax, refreshing oneself, sleep, 5) to conclude a legal case, ie. "the prosecution rests." It is a worthy study to see how resting in Jesus contains all of these elements.

**"While...still stands" (1)** (καταλείπω, *kataleipō*) - to cause to be left over, to reserve, to leave remaining

**"Fear" (1)** (φοβέω, *phobeō*) - to put to flight, to flee, to fear, be afraid

**"Failed to reach it" (1)** (ὑστερέω, *hustereō*) - come late, left behind in a race and so fail to reach the goal.

**"Good news" (2)** (εὐαγγελίζω, *euangelizō*) - good news, gospel. There was a gospel message to be believed in both the OT and the NT. Neither were by works, but by obedient faith.

**"Message" (2)** (λόγος, *logos*) - Lit., "word." The good news that was preached and heard.

**"Benefit" (2)** (ὠφελέω, *ōphelēō*) - to assist, to be useful or advantageous, to profit.

**"United by faith" (2)** (συγκεράννυμι, *sugkerannumi*) - Lit., "mixed together with." Better translation KJV: "but the word preached did not profit them, not being **mixed with faith** in them that heard *it*."

**"Have believed" (3)** (πιστεύσαντες, *pisteusantes*) - Lit., "having believed." Active participle. Those who have believed have already entered the rest of God. This is the already/not yet of God's rest.

**ARG:** **Hearing the Good News about Christ is the prerequisite for believing, obedient faith.**

Romans 10:14, 17 (NLT) But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him? And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him? And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them? ... So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.

**Faith is not earning this rest, but receiving the "grace" of Christ's finished work.**

Ephesians 2:8-9 (ESV) <sup>8</sup> For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, <sup>9</sup> not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

**ILL:** You can say you believe in air travel, but you can't fly until you actually come aboard the plane.

**APP:** Let us fear not entering this rest. I know what some are thinking. Isn't this a contradiction? Doesn't God's Word teach us that fear is the opposite of faith? Yes it does. But that's now how the word "fear" is used here. The idea seems to be that we should fear unbelief because it is actually unbelief that is faith's opposite. You should fear missing the urgent necessity of entering God's rest because of unbelief.

### 2. Recognize the ultimate fulfillment found only in Jesus.

**EXP:** (3b-10) The preacher of Hebrews has already shown us how Jesus is greater than the prophets, the angels, than Moses. How He is the ultimate fulfillment of them all. Now he will show us that Jesus is greater than Joshua and that His rest is greater than the Sabbath because He is the ultimate fulfillment of it.

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“**Works were finished**” (3) (γίνομαι, *ginomai*) - to be made, God finished His creation.

“**Foundation**” (3) (καταβολή, *katabolē*) - a founding (laying down a foundation) “From creation.”

“**Seventh day**” (4) - The preacher quotes Gen. 2:2

Genesis 2:2-3 (ESV) <sup>2</sup> And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. <sup>3</sup> So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.

“**Disobedience**” (6) (ἀπειθεία, *apeitheia*) - obstinacy, obstinate opposition to the divine will, unbelief.

“**Appoints**” (7) (ὀρίζω, *horizō*) - to define, to mark out the boundaries, to determine, appoint

“**Saying through David**” (7) - in Heb.3:7 he wrote, “as the Holy Spirit says.” Now he quotes David. Hebrews gives us the explanation for Scripture. It is both Divine and human.

“**Joshua**” (8) (Ἰησοῦς, *iēsous*) - Same as Greek for Jesus. Joshua, Moses’ successor. Jesus is greater than Joshua because although he led Israel into the Promised Land, he was unable to give them rest.

“**Sabbath rest**” (9) (σαββατισμός, *sabbatismos*) - “The man who has believed in Christ Jesus has entered into his rest; the state of happiness which he has provided, and which is the forerunner of eternal glory” (Clarke).

“**Rested from his works**” (10) (αὐτός ἔργον, *autos ergon*) - own deeds, doings, labors, work.

## **ARG:** Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath and its fulfillment

Mark 2:27-28 (ESV) <sup>27</sup> And he said to them, “The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. <sup>28</sup> So the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath.”

Matthew 5:17 (ESV) “Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.”

## **Therefore, let us find our rest in the Lord Jesus.**

Psalms 37:7 (NKJV) Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for Him...

**ILL:** Consider how the preacher of Hebrews has shown the ultimate meaning of Sabbath throughout the four ages of God’s economy, which may be summarized as the times of Creation, Fall, Redemption and Glory.

CREATION: God rested on the 7th day, inviting Adam to fellowship with Him in complete dependence and devotion. Adam lived in fellowship with God in perpetual Sabbath rest.

FALL: This new context helps us to understand the significance of the fourth commandment. It was given to fallen man—that is why it contains a “thou shalt not.” Man was not to work, but to rest. Externally, that meant ceasing from his ordinary tasks in order to meet with God. Internally, it involved ceasing from all self-sufficiency in order to rest in dependence upon God’s grace and provision.

REDEMPTION: Christ completes His work of redemption and rests on the 7th day in the tomb, rising to life on the first day, inviting us to a restored fellowship with God and complete rest in Himself, who has become our Sabbath Rest. The lost treasures of the Sabbath are restored! And whatever was temporary about the Mosaic Sabbath is left behind as the reality of intimate communion of the Sabbath is again experienced in our worship of the risen Savior on the first day of the week—the Lord’s Day. Now every day is Sabbath!

GLORY: This speaks of our future estate of perpetual Sabbath Rest in the presence of God. This is more than a return to the Garden. For in the garden, Adam and Eve had never known any trouble, suffering, or worry. They had never known such weariness and heaviness of the soul. But we have. In this future time of glorious Sabbath rest, we will know an even greater rest for Jesus will wipe away every tear and we will live in eternal fellowship and perfect dependence on Him.

**APP:** Jesus is our Sabbath Rest. As Augustine said, “Thou hast made us for Thyself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless till they find their rest in Thee.” Will you find your rest in Jesus?

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## 3. Give unblinking diligence to applying God's Word.

**EXP:** (11-13) Notice the co

“**Let us strive**” (11) (σπουδάσωμεν, *spoudasomen*) (AorActSubj) - Lit., “to use speed or make haste.” i.e. to make effort, be prompt or earnest:—to be diligent, endeavor, labor, study, to exert one's self.

“**Same sort of disobedience**” (11) - same disobedience as defined in Heb.3:19, namely “unbelief.”

“**Word of God**” (12) - both the Scriptures and the Son.

“**Living**” (12) ζάω, *zaō*) - living, alive, breathing, quick, quickening. It speaks afresh today.

“**Active** (12) (ἐνεργής, *energēs*) - Lit., “energetic.” active, operative:—effectual, powerful. It works.

“**Piercing and discerning**” (12) - both penetrating to that which is hidden and judging and discerning where unbelief still dwells in the thoughts and heart.

“**Thoughts and intentions of the heart**” (12) - both the thoughts and motivations. The Word of God as applied by the Spirit of Christ pierces and discerns our deepest thoughts and motivations, helping us to persevere in finding our rest in Jesus.

“**All are naked and exposed**” (13) - The Spirit of Christ uses the Word of God like a surgeon with his scalpel, so that nothing is hidden from Him.

**ARG:** It may seem strange to say that we are to “strive” or work at finding rest. Yet this “work” is the new easy and light work of taking on the yoke of Jesus! For He has already done the heavy lifting!

Matthew 11:28-30 (NKJV) <sup>28</sup> Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup> Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup> For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

**ILL:**

**APP:** Left to ourselves we tend to fall into unrestful habits, anxious thoughts, and doubtful intentions. We must continually give unblinking diligence to applying God's Word to our hearts. Will you strive to let Jesus use His spiritual scalpel on your heart, so that every trace of unbelief is excised and only rest remains?

**CONCLUSION:** There are many voices promising rest today, but only One who is able. He's calling you now. Will you come to Jesus and rest in Him? The last couple of weeks I've closed with an old hymn. Here's a new one. I love the lyrics:

**COME TO JESUS (REST IN HIM)** - Jordan Kauffin and Matt Merker ©2021

Are you weary, heavy laden?  
Come and lay your burdens down  
Jesus calls you, Jesus draws you; rest in him.  
He is gentle, he is lowly  
He delights to bring us peace  
Tender shepherd, mighty Savior, rest in him.

Are you hopeless, are you guilty,  
Caught in shame for all your sin?  
He pursues you, to forgive you; rest in him.  
He has paid for every failure,  
Mercy flows in endless streams;  
Come and follow, freedom calls you: rest in him.

Are you waiting in your sorrows  
For this broken world to heal?  
He is coming, soon returning; rest in him.  
We will see him, we will know him,  
O what heights of grace revealed:  
Trust in Jesus, he will keep us, rest in him.

Now let us strive to enter that rest found only in Jesus. Let's pray.