

YOU WON'T HAVE A FUTURE REST—UNLESS YOU CEASE FROM YOUR WORKS NOW!

Here we are—the day before Labor Day. **What** is Labor Day? My apologies ahead of time to the history buffs that might be offended, but I searched “Labor Day” on-line and it was so **boring**, I’m not going to bother sharing it with you! Instead, let’s think about what Labor Day **means to us** here in the Midwest.

- 1) For **vacationers**, it is the unofficial end of summer—and the beginning of cooler weather—although that’s not true this year being today, tomorrow, and Tuesday are all forecasted to be over 90 degrees!
- 2) For parents with **school-age children**, it is the last day of summer break for many of them—although I think more and more schools are beginning to start school **before** Labor Day weekend instead of **after**.
- 3) And for those who **have jobs**, it is a break from their **regular** work to do a different **kind of work** on Monday—their “extra” day off!

Due to it being Labor Day weekend...and me doing a little more manual labor this week than most... and feeling **you need** a break from hearing about giving, this morning I felt led to bring a message on **rest!**

God is not against rest, is He? How do we know? Because **God rested** on the 7th day! His rest was not out of tiredness, though. He rested because His work of creating the heavens and earth **was done**.

Jesus spoke of rest. Probably His most familiar words regarding rest are found in **Matthew 11:28-29** “Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you **rest**. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find **rest** unto your souls.”

Physical rest is good—but rest for **our souls** is even better, isn’t it?

Jesus not only **spoke about rest**, He pulled His disciples aside so **they could rest!** **Mark 6:31-32** “And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and **rest a while**: for there were many coming and going, and **they had no leisure** so much as to eat. ³² And they departed into a desert place by ship **privately**.” They went off by themselves—away from the crowds—so they could rest.

I can’t remember where I first heard or read this, but here is a good reminder: **Pharaoh** was the hard task-master in Egypt—**not God!** God knows we need rest—and the Bible talks quite a bit about rest.

Please take your Bibles and turn to Hebrews 4. I’m going to read verses 1-11 and as I do, my guess is that you will notice that the word “rest” appears quite a bit in this passage. How many times is the word “rest” used? **Nine!** Nine times—in eleven verses—is a lot!

But eleven verses are way too many to cover, so we are going to focus our attention on just two verses this morning—verses 9 and 10. One comment about verse 8, though, because it can be a bit confusing.

The name “Jesus” is the Greek form of the Hebrew name “Yehoshua” which can also be translated “Joshua.” **Joshua** would be the better translation in this verse because he was the one who failed to bring some of God’s people into the Promised Land—**not Jesus!**

1. There is a future, heavenly rest for the people of God

We see that in vs 9 “There remaineth therefore a rest unto the people of God.”

If there is a rest that **remains**—that God’s people **don’t have yet**—it is obviously a **future** rest.

A. What is the future rest?

Pretty safe to say that the future rest being referred to is our **heavenly** rest. How **restful** will heaven be?

I don’t believe we are capable of fully comprehending the blissfulness of heaven while **still here on earth**. God says as much in **Ephesians 2:7** “That in the **ages to come** He might shew the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.”

In the ages to come—in the future—God will **show us** the exceeding riches of His grace...”

--Will God just **show** us? No; we will **experience** it!

--**What** will we experience? The exceeding riches of His grace; the abundance and **overflow of blessings**.

--**How** will He do that? We will experience—for ever and ever and ever—God’s **kindness to us** through Christ.

And that kindness **will include**—but not be limited to—**eternal rest!** **What** will that rest be like?

1) We will have eternal rest for **our bodies!** How do we know?

Phil 3:20 “Who shall change **our vile body**, that it may be fashioned **like unto His** glorious body, “

I John 3:2 “Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, **we shall be like Him**; for we shall see Him as He is.”

Revelation 21:4 “...neither shall there be any more pain...”

Imagine that—being pain free...always—and forever!

--No back aches... or headaches...or stomach aches...or tooth aches.

--No afib...or cancer...or COPD. No cough...or cold...or Covid. No ringing in the ears.

--No glasses or hearing aids. No canes or wheelchairs.

--No medications...no nausea...no seizures. No high or low blood pressure.

--No dementia...or memory problems...or fluid retention. No scars...no pacemakers...no limp.

--Lost toes will be added **back on**—and missing teeth will be added **back in!**

--The effects of cancer...and disease...and heart attacks...and strokes—will be reversed.

--No weakness in any muscle; no pain in any joint. Old age—including wrinkles—will be no more!

--Bodily suffering—of any and every kind—will cease to exist!

--And we will never **need bodily rest** because we will always be in **a state of rest!** Hard to fathom, isn't it?

It won't just be eternal rest for **the body**, though, 2) It will also be eternal rest for **heart and the mind**.

I'm using “heart” here in the sense that the Bible usually does. **Heart** carries the idea of our **innermost being** and includes not only what **we think**—but also how **we feel**.

Does the Bible say we will have that kind of rest? Yes, it does!

Revelation 21:4 “And God **shall wipe away all tears** from their eyes; and there shall be **no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying**, neither shall there be any more pain: for **the former things are passed away.**”

What will it be like to have rest in our “heart of hearts”?

--No anxiety—no worry—about **even one** thing...ever!

--No depression or despair

--No fear—and no feeling of giving up

--No guilt...and no sense of failure

--No rejection by others—and no sense of regret in ourselves

--And no more death!

Imagine, no sense of helplessness when death knocks on your loved one's door because there is no more death to come knocking! --No saying “good-bye!” --No tears of sorrow—or pain of loss

The rest doesn't end there, though. We will have eternal rest for our **bodies**...and eternal rest for our **heart and mind**...and... 3) Eternal rest **from corruption** in both ourselves and in others. Does the Bible say that?

Again, yes it does! In Revelation 21:4 it says, “...the **former things are passed away.**”

Revelation 21:5 “And He that sat upon the throne said, “Behold, I **make all things new...**”

Revelation 22:3 “And there shall be **no more curse...**”

What will it be like to have rest from our **corrupt, sinful nature?**

--Never being angry...or frustrated...or wanting to curse at someone or something

--No unkind words—or unkind thoughts—to anyone...ever!

--No complaining... or ingratitude...or jealousy...or longing for something that belongs to someone else

--No struggles with addictions, like alcohol...cigarettes...drugs...or pornography

--No evil, sinful, selfish desire—not even one—ever; for all eternity!

What will it be like to have rest from **corruption in others?**

--Never being abused—or taken advantage of

--Never being cheated—or deceived—by anyone...ever!

--Never being gossiped about...or lied about...or made fun of

--Never being judged...or mistreated...or misunderstood

What will our eternal, heavenly rest be like? Rest for our bodies...rest for our hearts and minds...rest from corruption in ourselves and others, and... 4) Rest from **our enemies**—especially the devil!

Let's consider **human** enemies first. Here in the U.S., we have experienced very little in the way of **persecution**. That's not true in other parts of the world, though. There are countries where the **churches—and homes**—of God's people are burned to the ground.

That's not the worst of it, though. These enemies of Christians are not content with just destroying **buildings**—they want to destroy **the believers** themselves! Christians in many countries are hunted down and dragged off to prison—or killed. These believers **long for rest** from persecution—and in heaven they will have that rest—**forever!**

Although we do not face that kind of persecution—yet—we still have an enemy that **hates us and wants to destroy us**. I'm speaking, of course, of the devil! **1 Peter 5:8** "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, **seeking whom he may devour.**"

Satan doesn't try to **physically** "gobble us up"—but he certainly wants to **destroy us spiritually** by **tempting us to sin**. He also **accuses us!** **Revelation 12:10** "And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of His Christ: **for the accuser of our brethren** is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night."

What does it mean to be "accused before God?" Two things.

First, I believe Satan goes before God and says to God similar things he said about Job—"So and so only serves you because you are good to him. Take away something that is precious to him—like his health...or his house...or his job...or his spouse—and he will curse you to your face!"

God allowed Satan—He gave Satan permission—to take **all** of Job's **children**—and **all** of Job's **wealth**—**in one day!** But Job hung on and trusted God! **Job 13:15** "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him: but I will maintain mine own ways before Him."

What about you? **Are you** going to continue to trust God—even if He takes something precious **from you?** **Second**, not only does Satan accuse us before God—he accuses **us of our unworthiness** and sows seeds of doubt in **our minds!** He whispers things like, 'Are you **sure** you're a child of God? Would a **real** child of God **act** the way you do...and **say** the things you say...or **think** the horrible thoughts you think?'

Praise the Lord, **we will have rest** from those accusations in heaven! Why? Because the devil is cast into the lake of fire! **Revelation 20:10** "And the devil that deceived them was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and false prophet are, and shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever."

What a wonderful rest we have to look forward to! Eternal rest for our bodies...and our hearts and minds...and from sinfulness in ourselves and others...and from all our enemies. And I hope you realize that I focused **on the bad that we won't have** and barely mentioned **the good** that **we will have!**

Psalms 16:11 "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in **thy presence is fulness of joy**; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Back to our text in Hebrews 4. **B. Who is the future rest for?**

Is it for **everyone?** No, it's not! Verse 9 **does not say**, "There remaineth therefore a rest **to everyone in the world.**" What does it say? "There remaineth therefore a rest to the **people of God.**"

Although everyone is **created** by God, not everyone is a **child of God**. Stated a different way, **not all people are people of God!** We're in Hebrews; let's turn toward the back of your Bibles to 1 Peter 2.

--1 Peter 2:6 refers to the chief corner stone who is obviously not a literal, physical stone. "If we believe on Him we will not be confounded"—meaning disappointed. Who is the chief corner stone? Christ!

--vs 7 "Unto you therefore which believe He"—Christ—"is precious..."

Does everyone **believe?** No; they do not! Is Jesus **precious** to everyone? He **should be**—but sadly **He is not!**

--Vs 7 continues: "...but unto them which be disobedient," Jesus is **not precious**. Instead, we see in vs 8 that **to the disobedient**, Jesus is a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence.

--Now vs 9. "But ye"—you who have believed on Christ—"are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, **a peculiar people...**" **Why** are you peculiar; **what** makes you different?

Because God has "called us out of darkness into His marvellous light!"

--Now vs 10. "Which in time past were not a people, but are **now the people of God**: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy."

The people of God, then, are the ones who believe on Christ—and only on Christ—for the forgiveness of sins. They are the ones who obtain mercy—and they are the ones who become the people of God!

Let's go back to Hebrews 4. Not only is there a **future rest** for the people of God as seen in vs 9,

2. There is also a present, salvation rest for the people of God

We see that in verse 10. "For he that is entered into His rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from His." Why am I calling this salvation rest? And how is this rest different from the rest in verse 9?

First... A. The characteristics of salvation rest

1) It is a currently-available rest. We see that in the phrase "he that **is entered into**..." It is not the heavenly rest that remains—that **will be entered into in the future**. Instead, it is a rest that God's people have **already entered into**. Verse 3 refers to the same kind of rest: "For we which **have believed** do enter into rest..."

Do enter—now; **not will enter**—in the future. It is a rest that God's people have **already entered**—and is available to those who want to enter.

2) It is a God-given rest. We see that in the phrase "entered into His rest." The "His" is not the rest of the individual—it is the rest that God gives.

3) It is a knowable rest. I don't think I'm going out on a limb to suggest that most people know whether or not they are **resting**—or **working**! They may not know if they are **awake** or not, but they usually know if they are **working** or not! But how can you tell if **someone else** is working—or resting?

Look at the shovel, right? If the shovel is moving, they are working! If it's not moving, they are resting! If it is getting washed off and being put in the back of the truck, you really know the work is done!

Sticking with the verse—instead of the cement project—we know we are "entered into His rest"—God's salvation rest—when we **cease from our own works**. We'll come back to that thought in a little bit.

4) It is a comforting rest. It is difficult to put into words the calm...and peace... and rest that comes into your soul when you finally realize that your works won't save you—but that Jesus' death on the cross will! No more wondering...or worrying...or working to get to heaven. Instead, a release—and a relief—to learn that Jesus wants us to come to Him empty-handed with the mindset "Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling." Do **you have** that kind of rest? **Have you** entered into God's salvation rest?

B. The conditions of salvation rest

How can you personally enter into this salvation rest if you never have?

1) First, recognize that salvation is the rest that **God gives**. That means God decides the conditions—not you!

2) Second, you are sinful—and God is holy! Your sin disqualifies you from heaven. To get to heaven, you need to not only repent of your sin—you need to get rid of your sin!

3) Third—as already mentioned—you need to come to the point where you realize you **cannot get rid** of your sin! **Rom 3:20** "Therefore by the deeds of the law there **shall no flesh be justified** in His sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Simply put, this verse is saying that **doing good deeds** does not take away your sin.

If you insist on trying to "do good" to get to heaven, you are trying to prove this verse—and God—wrong! That's why we need to "cease from our own works."

4) Fourth, you need to believe that although you **can't save yourself**, Jesus **can save you**—and wants to! That is why He came...that is why He wanted to die in your place as your substitute.

5) Fifth, you need to put your trust in Christ—and Christ alone—to save you from the penalty of your sins. It is not Christ **plus**—it is Christ **only**!

Look at vs 2. Some people hear the gospel preached but it does not profit them; it does not help them. Why? Because it is not "mixed with faith." In other words, they believed not!

What happens when **we do believe**—when we do put our faith and trust in Jesus and Jesus alone?

Vs 3. "For we which **have believed do enter** into rest..." It is a **certainty**—not just a mere hope or possibility!

Rom 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Have you done that?

What would God have us do in light of what we have heard this morning?

1. First and foremost, are you saved...are you born again...are you a child of God? Not everyone is heaven-bound; not everyone will enjoy the heavenly rest that we looked at this morning.

Who will enjoy that rest? Only the people of God!

How do you know if you are one of God's people?

Here's a simple question to ask yourself—have you ceased from trying to work your way to heaven?

You will not have a future heavenly rest unless you cease from your works now!

2. How much do you think about heaven? We need to do that more, don't we? It is not selfish to do that—it is Biblical! Col 3:2 "Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth."

3. Are you sharing your faith? We need to do that, don't we? We need to be bolder—and more burdened—to share the salvation rest that we enjoy with others.