

Entering God's Rest

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Lately we've been looking about these individuals led by Moses, who were not able to enter into God's rest. But the goal of the book of Hebrews is not to tell us who could not enter God's rest, but to give you and I as people the practical understanding it takes to enter God's rest. The goal is not just to say, ah, those idiots, they're so dumb. They didn't get it right. Those bad people or those people.

No, the goal here, I think was should give us some hope. This is a Bible, a book written to the Hebrew people. Yes, it was encouraging them to leave the impact of the law of Moses on their lives and enter into God's rest. But it also, by extension, written to you and I as people today, you and I have the ability to enter into God's rest. And this is a practical understanding, a practical book of how that can happen.

You and I also are wandering in the desert. At times we've been invited to enter into something that is greater than we have ever experienced. Most people, it says, do not enter. They turn their back on God and return to desert. God wandering years until their flesh and their body are consumed in the desert.

But to you and I, we've been given an opportunity, a call. It calls out clearly, strongly, repeatedly, enter into the rest. I've provided something for you. We looked last week that there's three characteristics of individuals who do not enter the God's rest. Those who are led by the law, rebel.

They don't enter into God's rest. In chapter 3, verse 16, those who participate and continue in sin do not enter into God's rest. The anger of God is upon them. Those who

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do not obey do not enter into God's rest. Don't expect something special, something beautiful, if you hold within your own life the characteristics of those who always do not enter.

We were talking last night in John it says, those do not continue in sin, those who are part of God's family do not continue in sin. That does not mean necessarily they do not sin, but they don't continue in sin. We see that these are characteristics of people who enter in. If those characteristics are seen in us, it should cause something in us. And that's what we talked about last week, or started to.

In chapter four, verse one, there is a kind of characteristics which facilitates a person entering into God's rest. In chapter four, verse one, it says, therefore, since a promise remains of entering his rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it. My understanding is, if you are anything like me or people that I have known. That all of these kind of characteristics are present within you and I. That even though we should not continue in sin, that sometimes we do sin.

No excuse for it, it's just wrong. We sin that we return to following the law, even though we're given the encouragement by Paul in Galatians, who has bewitched you, my brethren. At times we return to the law. At times we exercise unbelief in and will refuse the voice of God calling us to enter in. My thought is, if you're anyone like me, that you have experienced these things, that they're.

I'm sorry, but a part of everyday life that should cause us to fear. That fear is not something to reject, but is actually a platform for entering interest. It is not necessarily the thing that we need to focus on all the time. It is not the main focus of Christianity, but it is a good place to step off from into God's rest. A godly fear is a good position to be in, to enter in that God by nature holds authority.

And that authority should be feared by people who are under that authority. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. He is an austere man. He expects. He gathers where he has not sown.

He expects something from his creation. He doesn't just throw out seed and does not care whether anything grows. He throws seeds because he expects fruit. We should fear. This invitation to enter in is not just for your personal enjoyment.

It's a commandment. Enter in. Godly fear is a good starting place. And when we feel like we're coming short of it, we should fear. We should fear.

But let's continue in chapter four. More to go to, I think, two through four. All right. In verse two it says, for indeed the Gospel was preached to us as well as to them. But the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it.

For we who have believed do enter that rest as he has said. So I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest. Although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. For he has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way. And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.

We're invited to join something which God has been experiencing from the termination of creation on that sixth day. He has been enjoying that ever since. Now, you and I, I think, at times think of rest in a different way than God does. We were working together with people, and some people are retired. Right.

And some people view retirement as a certain way. Like, finally, I get to do nothing. Right? I'm not sure if that's an accurate biblical picture of retirement. Just sitting down and letting your wife serve you until you die, right?

No, there is a kind of rest in retirement, but it doesn't mean it's a place of doing nothing. It's entering into that position which God entered in upon the termination of his creation. I hope there is a desire in you and I, at least incipient of this message. I want to enter into that rest. I hope you're not discouraged to a degree that you say, you know, I want no part of what he is experiencing.

When you hear God's voice saying, come, take my yoke upon you, come with me, my yoke, my burden is easy and my load is light, I hope there's at least a sliver of

something saying, you know, I would at least like to try it. I wonder what it's like being yoked up with Christ just to tell you he's probably not going to be in his easy chair.

Okay, so let's go in. Chapter four, verse two. For indeed, the Gospel was preached to us as well as to them. But the word which they heard did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in those who heard it. Now, it's interesting, we're oftentimes confronted with the viewpoint of skeptics, basically saying, well, if individuals have not heard of Jesus, how can they call upon Jesus and therefore it is unfair for God to send them to hell?

I think that's probably something we've already heard, but here we're given a viewpoint from Hebrews that the Gospel was preached to these individuals in the desert. The gospel was preached there. We see also in Romans that Paul started off reading that the whole nature itself is a witness that cries out consistently of the nature of God calling people to repentance. We see that all throughout Scripture. We see people who do not have as clear of an understanding of the nature of Jesus Christ, because coming to God through faith.

Now, they don't exactly know the way we do or the mechanics of it, how Christ died on the cross, but they had some picture that I need to make a step of obedience through faith in coming to God. We see that this gospel, it says in Hebrews, was given to those people. Also. Also, I believe that in some way God provides a way of escape to individuals somehow that they have to exercise faith. It says, but this word, this gospel, this invitation, didn't benefit them because they did not have faith.

It did not have the fuel inside of it to bring them to a place of entering in. This is saying that it is necessary. The only way to be able to accept this invitation and enter in is to have faith in your life. Without faith, it is impossible to please God. There is no way that a carnal person can enter in.

They may strive, they may, they may dig, they may do whatever they can. But faith is the ingredient that is absolutely necessary to enter in. Without faith, you cannot please God. Everyone thinks that they're pleasing God.

They think that they buy someone a hamburger at McDonald's and God is just like radiant that day. They expect that the next day the clouds are going to go away and the sun's going to start shining again. And they're confused. Wait a minute, Lord, I don't understand this. I bought him a hamburger yesterday at McDonald's and all my problems haven't disappeared.

God's wondering also, who is this person? Where did they get their rationale from? It is necessary for an individual have faith. You cannot enter into that God. It says that flesh and blood cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

They can't inherit it. It is impossible for our natural being, our eyes, our ears, our feelings. It cannot comprehend the things of God. It takes faith to comprehend the things of God. If he opened a door wide open so that the glories of heaven were shining through.

An individual could not enter in without faith.

You and I are given opportunities to enter in. But the faith that is necessary to enter in is not all, always there faith. A little bit later, in Hebrews, in chapter 11 and 12, we see it says, now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. You and I's physical being cannot comprehend the things of faith. They reject the things of faith.

They run from the things of faith. They see an open door into, through faith into God's kingdom. And they run the other way as fast as they can. They don't recognize it's an open door. For by it the elders obtained a good testimony.

You can't walk into the kingdom of God, work in the kingdom of God without it says in verse 6 of the same chapter. But without faith it is impossible to please him. For he who comes to God must believe that he is and that he is a rewarder of those who diligently seek him. And you say, I believe God's a good God. I believe that he rewards people.

But I have to say that those open doors are not always what our flesh expects. Our Flesh likes open doors where we smell something good. You know, you go by the restaurants and, you know, on top of, you know, a restaurant, they have these big fans right on top of their, you know, their grills and they're blowing this stuff up into the air.

Yeah, hamburgers, right? And we're just like, well, stop, honey, let's. Let's just stop here for a minute. And you open the door and you come in and it's appealing to our flesh. But the open doors that God has for us are not appealing to the flesh.

The open doors that God has for us are repulsive to the flesh. The flesh runs at the open doors of God, and unrestrained flesh departs as quickly as possible. When the open door is made apparent, you're an eyes flesh, we become like Elijah in the wilderness, right? And he basically says, you know, I am the only one left.

He complains, I am all by myself. I don't want to go in because I don't want to be the only individual serving God. That's not what faith says. He had to be taken on a journey through the desert to the mountain to understand what a privilege it is to serve God solely. The only one left.

What an open door when everyone forsakes you, he says, like Paul, everyone has abandoned me. I'm the only one left. There's no one to share the burden with. The full brunt of the responsibility falls on me. And our flesh screams and cries.

It's not fair. But faith cries out with a voice and saying, yes, this is that open door. Let it fall on me. If no one else will do it, then thank God I get to ha. He stood alone on the cross.

Everyone abandoned him, naked and nothing to suspend. And with joy he endured the cross, saying, yes, thank God for open doors alone rejected my men. But it was an open door into the kingdom of God. Oh, financial things sometimes stop us and we're saying, no, I can't. These are my finances.

But the truth is, as Paul, he says, with my own hands, I have provided for myself and the needs of my companions. When it said, you shouldn't be using your own resources

to support God's ministry, Paul said, thank God for an open door. Thank God for the opportunity to use what God has given me to support his ministry. Where flesh runs and screams and say, no, these finances belong to me. I, the voice of faith, says, lord, everything I have is a gift from you, and it is a privilege to use it in your kingdom.

At that moment, we see an open door before people where finances Become something. So much more than the selfish ability to please our carnal nature. It accomplishes something. You and I, this whole world was changed by one person who was willing to use his hands to provide resources so that the gospel would be spread. And you and I are direct descendants of that man.

An open door set before him. I am not saying I am not a prosperity preacher. I am not necessarily saying that you should give to this church. But what I am saying, you've been entrusted with something by God Almighty for the purpose of entering into an open door. For you to refuse that ministry that God has invested you with is running from an opportunity.

So many other ways. Open doors are set before us. Trials and tribulations, Individuals attacking us, saying wrong things against us, calling us evil. Our flesh wants to rule, run from that position. But what it really is, is an open door.

It is an open door to enter into something that your flesh cannot see, cannot perceive, cannot understand, could not even possibly imagine. While this thing should be welcome into your life, it will run. But faith has a different perspective. It sees something that your flesh cannot.

There's been a lot of people who dug in the ground for gold, right? Or some other precious metal. And you and I would just look and we're just like, it's just dirt. It's just dirt. But they saw something in the dirt and they pursued it and entered in and received something from it.

So you and I are given an opportunity to embrace the difficulties. Trials, tribulations, persecutions, being undermined, undercut and ridiculed in every way as an open door in your life to receive something that the natural man cannot. Some of us know that

you don't have to go to a Muslim country to receive persecution. You just got to wake up in your own house.

Women are not the only problems in houses. Okay? I'm not trying to say that, but there are scriptures that say, you know, like a drippy faucet on a very rainy day is a contentious woman. Well, I'm not. Men are also that from the very first thing in the morning, they begin to drip in their house.

But it gives every people, people in the house the opportunity to experience grace. To enter by faith, it is a blessing. It is an opportunity. These steps take faith. Your flesh cannot see it.

We cannot enter. In verse three, we're going to continue. For we who have believed do enter that rest. Here is an absolute promise that those who make a step by faith will enter in. There is and remains a promise of entering his rest.

For those who will walk in obedience Our flesh said, there's no way out. You'll be swallowed alive. You'll never get out of this fish. You will digest here and die if you continue walking in faith. Our flesh tells us you will never overcome.

The position you are in will always be the same. You are going to be ruined. But the Bible speaks to us in languages of promise. You will enter that rest. Continuing in verse three, it says, I swore in my wrath, they shall never enter in.

The idea that they would not enter in reminds us there is a remaining position of entering in. Just because some didn't enter in is actually more of an encouragement because we see that there is the possibility to enter in. Because there is a door, some people could not go through it. We had doors here on church. I went to open it this morning and it was stuck.

But being stuck actually shows you that there's a door there, that there's the possibility of entering in. That there being a door. Just because others have not gone in does not mean that no one can go in. On the other hand, it should tell us, being a door, it must be that some do enter in. God wouldn't have provided a door otherwise.

Remember that famous door on the temple, I believe is the eastern gates are all blocked off, right? And you say, why are they there, all blocked off? Well, no one else can enter in, but when the Messiah comes, he's going to enter in. There is a door there. And so in a similar way, being a door should be an encouragement.

I want to enter in. Okay, let's continue in verse three.

I want to move from here into what does that rest look like? It says, although the works were finished from the foundation of the world, God rested on on the seventh day. As a result of him working, creating the expanse and the trees and the animals and the humans, all in the six day period. But he rested on the seventh day. This rest he has continued in from that time.

But we see what that rest looks like. Jesus says, my Father has been working until now and I have been working. This rest that Jesus is that Hebrews is talking about is not a period of inactivity. Some of us men like to think that we work during our eight hour shift and when we're done with work, we sit on the couch and have our wife serve us things, right? And that's the kind of like this is great, right?

I worked all day and now I should be able to rest. But this is not the kind of rest that Jesus is that Hebrews is talking about. This rest. Jesus was a part of this rest. And yet as an individual, he worked harder than anybody else.

Paul says that I worked harder than anyone. And yet we believe that he also entered that rest. There is a place, place like we talked earlier of rest, which is actually being yoked. An animal is yoked for the purpose of work. Yet in this position of yoking is the place of rest.

That working with Christ is actually the place, excuse me, of a soul's rest. It is the place where a person can lay down their burdens and be at rest. Now we do know it is not physical spiritual inactivity that is rest. Sometimes I'm worked to such a degree that, like, I just want to go and lay and do nothing. Well, that's not what this is talking about, this place of rest.

Jesus gave either the Pharisees tremendous examples to be frustrated with him, or the writers of the Gospels chose those instances to write about. But Jesus oftentimes was performing miracles on the Sabbath, he thought, or the Pharisees thought, excuse me, that these miracles should not be done on the Sabbath because for to them they were examples of work. Jesus says, I have been working until now. What he was saying is that which he was doing on the Sabbath was not an example of work. It was actually an example of rest.

To walk with the Father is a place of rest. To walk in a nature contrary to the Father is labor. Even though a person is working hard, being yoked up with the Father gives rest to a person's soul. They are not concerned with the amount of stuff that's before them. They are not made afraid of the difficulties or the dangers in front of them because they know with whom they walk.

A mountain may seem a lot, but to a person who walks with the Father, they rest, knowing that he accomplishes that work. Jesus says, my Father has been working till now and I have been working. That labor which you and I engage in in the Christian faith is not the same as that labor you do for an employer.

So many people want to get done with work, waiting for their eight hour shift to be done because they're working. But that which we do with the Savior is different. It is a place of resting that we engage in it because of what we receive from it. In verse four, it says, for he has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way. And God rested on the seventh day from all of his works.

And again in this place they shall not enter his rest. Jesus had compassion on the multitude. They were harried by religion, all the expectations on their life. And he had compassion on them. And he invited them to enter into a place of rest.

Come, take up your yoke and follow me. You and I, I believe, are given that same opportunity. But it's an opportunity that has to be received by faith. It has to be a spiritually perceived thing that causes us to act willingly with our mouth and our feet. Whoever confesses with their mouth, Jesus is Lord will be saved and believes in his

heart will be saved.

An opportunity. When you're presented with this, I want to go in. I'm going to leave you with this one last encouragement. There is place of rest for the people of God, but it is not a place of inactivity. It's a place where God carries your burdens and supplies your needs.

It's a place where things are accomplished in a tremendous way and the soul is satisfied by what the Father is accomplishing. My hope is for you is that you would take up your staff, you would put on your sandals, your cloak, and you'd make present yourself to the commanding officer as one who is ready to enter that service. A beautiful place of rest, A place of freedom from financial obligations. A place of freedom from the decisions that are swirling around us, from the persecutions of people. And just to trust it, Lord, I've entered in, I give it to you.

Thank you. Thank you for letting me be at rest. Amen. Let's pray. Oh, Father, thank you for that opportunity.

Though we don't understand it in fullness, we recognize in our souls that you presented it to us. Lord, give us a place of faith to say, yes, Lord. Nothing else. No religious obligations, no things you got to say or duties to perform. Just yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord, in my soul crying out, yes, Lord, Lord, and that you bring people in, we thank you in Jesus name, Amen.

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