

# 3 – “Finding Inner Rest” // Hebrews 4:1–13 //

## *Christ is Better*

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**Hebrews 4:1–13** 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.

[2] 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.

[3] 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. [4] For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all his works.” [5] And again in this passage he said, “They shall not enter my rest.”

[6] Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, [7] 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.”

[8] For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. [9] So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, [10] for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

[11] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. [12] 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. [13] 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.

Hebrews, chapter 4: The writer's concern is about these people going all the way with Jesus, and he introduces a very important concept that is absolutely crucial in making it spiritually, and that is learning to REST in Jesus.

- The irony. You'd think that he'd tell those who are struggling in their faith to work harder; but that is the irony of the gospel: our strength comes not from how hard we work but how well we learn to rest.
- **Isaiah 30:15**, “In quietness and confidence shall be your strength.”

Write this down: **Learning to rest in Jesus supplies the strength to thrive.**

It's hard to think of a more relevant concept for our culture. Many of you are really tired people, and we have a culture that chronically overworks.

- Healthcare professionals have traced this to billions of dollars of medical conditions: *heart disease, cancer, lung ailments, accidental injuries, cirrhosis of the liver;*

- A CNN study released earlier this year showed that those who work 11-hour days are (get this) 250% more likely to become depressed than those who work 8-hour days.<sup>1</sup>
- Of course overwork leads to the destruction of our families. Many of you men are bad fathers not because you are bad people or you don't care about your children—it's that you don't have the time or energy to devote to your family. Even when you do get home before they go to bed you've used everything you've got at work, and all they know of their dad is a stressed-out, zombie-like figure. You gave your best to your job.
- **Missionary:** *"The Swahili have a term for Anglos and Americans ~ mazungu. 'One who spins around.'*<sup>2</sup>

There is a reason why we are so pressed to work:

- *One is that work is how we provide for ourselves.* So, we work hard to we can have a lot. So you put in long hours to make the extra sale; get the promotion; you take on a 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> job to give you that little cash bump that makes life easier.
- *But there's more to it than that.* Work, for most of us, is a source of identity. We determine our worth by our work.
  - *The 2<sup>nd</sup> question we ask people when we meet them: what do you do?*
    - And because we know people sometimes judge us based on what we do, we are always trying to beef up how important we are. You want to sound important... you ever see these people come up with a ridiculously long job title? How many Vice-Presidents is a 15-person organization allowed to have?
    - You can see this as early as college: you ask any student coming into Carolina what their major is and you'll get one of two answers: pre-med; pre-law.
    - You say, "J.D., what was your major in college?" Pre-law, naturally.
  - Because our work is one of the primary sources of our identity, that produces constant striving because we're always striving to prove ourselves.
    - Saw a *Wall Street Journal* article this week that said that most of us inflate the number of hours we work because it makes us feel important to tell others how long we work. *"Yeah, I work 70 hours a week because I'm so dang important that my job can't just have me for 40 hours; I drip with so much awesomeness the world requires 70 hours from me!"*<sup>3</sup>
- And sometimes we overwork because we're trying to please other people. Those of you fellow type-A-ers, firstborns... Don't want to let people down, so you've got to answer the email. Got to return the phone call. Got to get the job done. So you are attached to your phone like it's an IV. You've checked it 6 times since I started this message (what I saw: a bunch of women just punched their husbands)

The gospel offers a rest from all of these things.

- According to this chapter, the proof that we've found the gospel is that our lives are characterized by a kind of profound rest. **Vs. 3, "For we who have believed have entered that rest."**
- On the flip side, an inability to find rest is proof that we haven't experienced the gospel and that we are still under the wrath of God. Again, **vs. 3, "As I swore in my wrath, they shall not enter my rest."**

So, I've got 2 things I want to do in this message.

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/25/health/working-overtime-doubles-depression/index.html>. See also Gordon MacDonald, *Ordering Your Private World*.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Buchanan, *The Rest of God*

<sup>3</sup> <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB124355233998464405.html>

- First, I want to explain to you what this concept of Sabbath (that the writer builds off of in this chapter) is and why it is the source of rest and how it points us to Jesus.
- Second, I want to explain to you how you can enter that Sabbath rest.

Don't get confused. The Sabbath is a command about a specific day of the week that you take off. But it also points us to Jesus.

The command is important... It's one of the big 10!

- To not get this is the same category as not getting the stuff about adultery and murder.
- Some of you regularly, and callously, violate it. This conversation is commonly heard around the Summit Church: "How you doing?" "Fine. Just tired, haven't had a day off in a long time." Like that's ok. Imagine this conversation: "How you doing?" "Fine, just sleeping with my neighbor's wife."

So, the practice of Sabbath is important, but the Christological fulfillment of the Sabbath is even more important! The point of this message is not to convince you to take one day off a week; the point of this message is to how you to rest in Jesus.

**So, FIRST: Let's build this concept of the Sabbath through the Bible:**

**First time we see the Sabbath instituted is at CREATION. God created the world in 6 days, and rests on the 7<sup>th</sup>.**

- Through Moses, God commands that we do the same: <sup>9</sup> *Six days you shall labor, and do all your work,* <sup>10</sup> *but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God...* <sup>11</sup> *For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy. Exodus 20:9-11*
- Now, why? A couple of reasons.
  - One: **a. Sabbath remind them that God was the point.** We were created for God and everything we do is to be for Him. Sometimes we get ahead of ourselves and we forget that—we get consumed in paying bills and raising children and getting ahead. So, one day a week that God commands us to cease from our labor and think about why we are here in the first place. Sabbath is not a rest from our primary pursuits in life; Sabbath is ultimately why we are alive. **We weren't created for a job; we were created for God.**
  - So, Sabbath reminded them that God was the point; **b. Sabbath also reminded them that God was the provider.**
    - When God commanded them to take one day off, I'm sure people objected... Crops had to be harvested daily. Water had to be obtained daily. Times were tight; providing for yourself and your family was hard. To cut your productivity by 1/7 was not prudent.
    - But God commanded them to do it because He wanted them to leave space for Him to provide for them. He promised them that if they would work 6 days and take off the 7<sup>th</sup>, He would multiply their effectiveness on the other 6 days to make up for what they gave up on the 7<sup>th</sup>!
    - God never wants us to forget that ultimately we depend on Him for provision.
    - You see, God usually provides for us through natural means. We work; we earn money; we place it in our account. Money typically doesn't just magically appear (if it does that is usually called a bank error and you should tell them about it). God's typical MO is not to place money directly in our account: "Why is my bank account so high this month? Oh, I got a direct deposit from God!" No, God's design is that typically we provide for ourselves through natural means.

- But very easily, we can begin to assume that we are the ones who bear the responsibility of taking care of ourselves (As in, the weight of providing and raising our children rests upon us and we are all by ourselves in that).
- And God doesn't want us thinking that! He wants us to be faithful, yes, to use the strengths and opportunities He has given us, but He doesn't want us to bear the weight of responsibility.
- So He commands us to work 6 days to provide ourselves by natural means but also to take 1 day off and let Him work; to take 1 day off and do nothing—nothing when we could be doing something and sometimes feel like we ought to be doing something! And on that day we say, *“God, I'm doing less than I'm able to do because you commanded me to and ultimately providing for me your responsibility and I'm giving you space to provide!”*
- **That was Sabbath. At Creation, God appointed one day a week to stop and remember that God is the point and God is the provider.**

**But in the book of Deuteronomy, God revealed a 2<sup>nd</sup> purpose for the Sabbath:**

- **Deuteronomy 5:12–15** <sup>12</sup> *“Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy...”* <sup>15</sup> *You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.*
- **Here, the Sabbath was to give them space to reflect on their salvation.**
  - First, that God accomplished it all by Himself. *“He brought them out by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.”* How much did they contribute?
    - Did they contribute to any of the plagues? Was He like, *“Go turn the Nile into blood. Go knock off all the cows. Go collect all the frogs and release them in Pharaoh's palace...”* That would have been like the “10 practical jokes.” No, He did it all by Himself.
    - At the ultimate act of deliverance, the Red Sea, did they contribute? *“You people stand on this side and blow that way, and the rest of you that way...”* No, He did it all by Himself.
    - So they stopped for a day to reflect on it. God accomplishes salvation alone.
  - You can also see from that **verse** that they were to reflect on their new identity:
    - Vs. 15, *You were a slave, now you are a son.* You were under the cruel reign of the Pharaoh; now you are under the tender care of the Father.
    - Of course you can trust me to provide for you.
  - So, on that day they were supposed to think about how good God was and what He had done for them... That He had saved them for Himself and they could trust Him.

**But there was a 3<sup>rd</sup> purpose for the Sabbath... (Back to our text in Hebrews).**

[9] So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, [10] for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

- The rest that He talks about here is Jesus. The Sabbath ultimately pointed forward to Jesus. ***Jesus is the ultimate rest.***

I'm going to give you 4 statements about Christ that signify your rest in Him:

- Here's what I'll tell you. Until you get this, all the other vacations and hobbies will not ultimately do you any good.

**1. “Christ is my righteousness”**

- Vs. 9, *“Whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.”* **Jesus accomplished our salvation and sat down.** We no longer have to work to earn a place before God.

- See vs. 13? [4:13] 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.
  - Nakedness/previously they had been naked but didn't feel it, because they were clothed in the love and acceptance of God. Now stripped of that nakedness they began to look for covering. For you: Walmart. That is a picture of the human condition.
- We're always trying to justify. We feel guilty; we feel unimportant. The gospel is that Christ has given you gift righteousness by living the life and dying the death...
- He is our righteousness: *"There is nothing I could do that makes you love me more; nothing I have done that makes you love me less."*

## 2. "Christ is my identity"

- God back to that nakedness in the Garden of Eden. As I explained at the beginning, one of the primary ways that we try to cover ourselves; make ourselves feel significant and worth something is through our work! That's one of the reasons we strive so hard to get ahead. We're constantly fighting to prove ourselves and feel good about ourselves and establish our identity.
- **Example I've used: Rocky Balboa**
- All of your life trying to prove yourself; justify yourself; establish your worth. That gets TIRING.
- The gospel speaks differently. It says: **"You are held in highest regard by the highest Being."**
- **Gospel prayer:**
  - *"There is nothing I could do that makes you love me more; nothing I have done that makes you love me less."*
  - *"You are all I need for everlasting joy."*
    - If God is on my side, who cares about the rest of the world?
    - Christ is better!

**Psychologists say that three of our biggest needs are to feel clean (morally) safe, and significant.** 1 Cor 6:11, *"You are washed, justified, sanctified."* Washed: morally clean. Justified: morally safe. Sanctified: set apart in God's eyes, thus significant.

Christ is my identity. This inner turmoil, this lack of inner rest; this inner nakedness, is what causes most of your anxiety... and until you get that, vacations are not really going to work for you. Your body might be resting, but your soul is in turmoil, and that is what is causing most of your anxiety and stress.

- Example: I take my day off on Monday.
  - For a long time, I found my identity in how well the sermon was. How big the church was.
  - Unplugging from pressure didn't unplug me from the game.
  - Even when I was resting, my soul was at work.
- When your soul is not at rest, vacations and days off are not rest; they are just distractions. An escape. They are like a drug. The inner anxiety, dissatisfaction and nakedness doesn't go away, you just cover it up for a while.
- **Christ can provide you with the inner rest.** He gives your soul its righteousness, safety and identity.
- **Without Christ, you will work even while you are resting. With Christ, you can rest even while you are working.**

## 3. Christ is my security

- **Romans 8:30, He who did not spare His own Son for us, will He not freely give us all things...** This is like what we saw God said to the Israelites in Deut 5... If I cared enough about you to deliver you from slavery all by myself, don't you think I'll take care of you?
- So you can rest because you know that there is a Father who bears the weight of responsibility to meeting your needs.

- And that brings us back around to the Sabbath command, to take one day off a week.
- **The way you can tell if you believe that God is your Father is demonstrated by whether you take a Sabbath day.**
  - Of course you can't afford to take off the time. That's why God tells you to do it. So you can give Him a space to provide for you. He'll multiply your work on the other 6 days.
- Another place this principle plays itself out... **Tithing.**
  - **People say, "I can't afford it!"** That's kind of the point! **You don't tithe because you can afford it; you tithe out of faithfulness to God.**
  - And God promises to make up the difference. For most of you, what He'll do is bless the other 90%.
- It's actually a pretty good deal
  - Take a day off, and I'll pay you for it anyway by multiplying your work on the other 6 days!
  - Give money away to things as a believer you love, and I'll pay you back by multiplying that money back to you
  - What kind of idiot would turn down that deal? (Yeah... Then explain to me why 40% of you that don't honor the Sabbath and the 70% of you don't tithe. Boom roasted.)
- Now, I'm not trying to imply this is some kind of manipulation tool. No. Sometimes the fullness that God gives back to you is not financial because He knows the bigger need you have is not financial.
- And I used to not even tell people about the promises that God gives about multiplying the time and money you give back to you, because I felt like one of those crazy TV preachers... But folks, there are too many verses that promise it!<sup>4</sup>
  - God and me have played a game...
    - When I go back and look at the times that have most financially difficult, they have been tied to this!
    - Or, with time: My story...heavier load; higher GPA
  - So, if you are trying to manipulate God, that's a heart issue. But if you are giving in faith, saying, "God, I'll honor you as you commanded with my time and money and let you be my security," well, that's exactly what God wants.
- **Can I tell you one of the reasons some of you are stressed? Because you carry a weight of security upon yourself that God never intended you to carry.**

**Psalm 127:1** *Unless the LORD builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the LORD watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain. [2] It is in vain that you rise up early and go late to rest, eating the bread of anxious toil; for he gives to his beloved sleep.*

- What's the sign in this verse that you know God? Vs. 2. Sleep. Rest.
- God intended sleep to be a time where you remind yourself you're not God.
  - I've told you about my desires to not sleep...
  - Furthermore, I had trouble sleeping always being worried about something.
  - But here's the thing. God wants me to lay down each night (it's kind of like a daily Sabbath) just to remind myself that I'm not God. God never sleeps or get tired. So, when I lie down to sleep I say, "God, I am turning myself off, even though there is a ton to do... and lots to worry about... but you are staying on and you designed me to turn off, so I can trust you to handle what I can't."
- It is not your responsibility to guard the city or build the house or pay the bills; that's God's job. It's your job to be faithful, and after you've been faithful you can lie down to sleep and leave it in His hand.

<sup>4</sup> Prov 11:24–25; Prov. 22:9; Mal. 3:10; 2 Chron 31:10; Luke 6:38; 2 Cor 9:6–9

- God designed you so that you needed sleep, and Sabbath, so you could remind yourself daily and weekly that YOU ARE NOT GOD.
- Again, until you get this principle, vacations won't work for you. Even when you're on vacation you'll be worried about what you are NOT getting done, the money you are not making!
- You might be unplugging from the activity, but you are not unplugging from the STRAIN.

#### 4. Christ is my priority

- Remember, Sabbath taught them that Christ was the point of it all.
  - You have to stop every once in a while and ask why you are doing what you do?
  - It is amazing how many times we don't... the most fundamental questions. Where is the car going?
  - I love my GPS with my little inner British woman:
    - Because she knows where I'm going, she can tell me which turns are wrong.
    - You've got to stop every once in a while and ask where exactly you are going, because that will help you evaluate which turns that you are making are the wrong ones in your life.
    - One of worst moments in my marriage is when my wife and I were in some kind of tussle in the car and the little British woman came on to give some instruction... "Why can't you be more like her? When I don't do what she wants, she doesn't nag. She just patiently says, "Recalculating." She just adjusts herself patiently to my new plans. Why can't you be like that?" Not good marriage advice...
  - If you know life is about God; that God's glory and God's purposes are the point of it all; it will help give you a compass for decisions. Maybe that extra job will give you a little more cash, but it's going to hurt your family and that's God's more important purpose. Maybe the move and the job will give you more money and a better career future, but it's not good for the kingdom or your kids, and that's God's bigger priority.
- Sabbath: it reminds you that God is your priority. You do that through **Sabbath** and you do that through **tithing**.
- For many of you, this is where your faith will become real, because it's where the rubber of your faith hits the road.
  - Testimony: "Real money"; real time
- There is REST in having Christ as your priority. I know that if I'm honoring Christ as my priority, He promises to provide for everything else.
- One of my favorite promises: **Matthew 6:33, "But seek first the kingdom of God... and all these things will be added to you."**
  - All these things: everything else you care about in life. Money. Relationships. Whatever.
  - Christ is the priority. When He is first, you'll get everything else. Put other things first, and not only will you lose Him; you'll probably lose them too.
  - Lewis: first things and 2<sup>nd</sup> things
  - We love to talk about "priorities" (plural): By definition, there can only be one priority. Prior means "first." There can only be one first. He's in a class all by Himself. When you honor Him, all the rest of the things will be added to you.
- There is REST in having Christ as your priority. In all things I just worry about faithfulness to God. He worries about the rest.

[1] 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.

[11] Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience.

Israel failed. They would not believe. Will you? Christ offers you rest: He will be your righteousness; identity; security and priority.

[7] "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts."

Will you enter into His REST?

# Bullpen:

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- 76% of Americans name money and work as their primary sources of stress.<sup>5</sup>
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- Nakedness in the garden. Walmart: If you are naked...? Life is spent covering.
- Smart, good, successful
  - Even our good works can be a way of justifying ourself.
  - [4:13] 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.
- He not only knows what you are doing; He knows why you are doing it.
- If you are repenting of your sin, but doing it so that you can justify yourself, then you are not doing it from love for God you are doing it to justify yourself.
- Nakedness (Heb 4:12–13). Genesis 2. What we sought in the garden.
  - there's where we see who God is, how glorious He is to us and we need nothing else for eternal joy;
  - we see how perfect He has made us in Christ, and because of the position of importance He has given us we don't need a bunch of other things to establish our importance.
  - We see how well He will take care of us. Romans 8:29, if he did not withhold his own son, will he not freely give us all things?
- Reference in Hebrews, Psalm 95:11. Because the children of Israel were disobedient, and wouldn't believe God, and served idols, "*They shall not enter my rest.*"

The author says this was all a picture of Calvary. At Calvary is our ultimate rest:

- Whether or not you have entered into Sabbath rest shows whether or not you really get, or believe the gospel!
- So the writer is like press on into rest!
- Kind of ironic. You'd expect him to tell you that the proof of the gospel is that press forward to strive; here he says the proof you get the gospel is that you've pressed forward into rest.

That we don't rest is the biggest indicator that our society, American society, has lost the gospel.

- We have no concept of this. We never Sabbath, either physically or spiritually, and it shows how far we've lost it!
- Think about it: to honor the Sabbath is one of the big 10! For a society to break this commandment is as bad as a society that glorifies stealing or adultery
- As a type-A workaholic I need to hear this message!

[14] Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. [15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/key-findings.aspx>

weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:14-16 ESV)