

Entering into God's Rest

Heb 4:1-11

Bernard Bell



Background

Summer is almost over and, with it, the end of R&R, rest and relaxation. Soon we'll be back to work, whether in the classroom or office, real or virtual, or in some other space doing "real" work with our hands. What is rest? Is it a state of mind, or a place, or a particular day? Technically, it's the complete lack of motion, but that doesn't sound very attractive. In this week's passage from Hebrews the phrase "enter into God's rest" occurs eight times. What is this rest? Where, when, and how do we enter it? And what is this rest like when we are there?

Sermon Text: Heb 4:1-11 (NIV)

¹ Therefore, since the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us be careful that none of you be found to have fallen short of it. ² For we also have had the good news proclaimed to us, just as they did; but the message they heard was of no value to them, because they did not share the faith of those who obeyed. ³ Now we who have believed enter that rest, just as God has said,

*"So I declared on oath in my anger,
'They shall never enter my rest.'"*

And yet his works have been finished since the creation of the world. ⁴ For somewhere he has spoken about the seventh day in these words: "On the seventh day God rested from all his works." ⁵ And again in the passage above he says, "They shall never enter my rest."

⁶ Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, ⁷ God again set a certain day, calling it "Today." This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage 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 later about another day. ⁹ There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; ¹⁰ for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. ¹¹ Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- b. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

2. Sunday questions (pick 3?)

- a. What was the best thing you heard during the service this week?
- b. When you think of rest, what do you think of? Explain.
- c. When you look at your life right now, when and where do you feel like you are resting? Has that changed over the years for you? Explain.
- d. Even though good news had been proclaimed to the wilderness generation, their anxious fears kept them from trusting God. What would you say are your anxious fears as you walk about your days right now?
- e. Do you keep a Sabbath or “rest time”? Why or why not? Do you typically think of it as a dour time or a celebratory time? Explain.
- f. Verse 11 encourages us to “make every effort to enter rest.” Bernard said there are particularly two places to put forth effort:
 - Keep our gaze on Jesus.
 - Encourage one another to follow Jesus.
 - Explain how you are practically doing these two actions.