

Hebrews 4:6-11 “Getting Intentional about Entering God’s Rest” **

Main Idea: In Hebrews 4:6-11 we learn two vital implications concerning God’s rest.

Some working definitions to keep in mind...

-*Faith* is believing what God did and said, trusting in what God did and said, and submitting one’s life to Him.

-*Rest* is the satisfaction that comes from accomplishment.

- I. The promise of God’s rest remains (6-8).
 - A. Some will enter it (6a).
 - B. Some missed it (6b-7).
 1. The Jews in the wilderness heard the good news.
 2. The Jews in the wilderness refused to obey it.
 - C. Some experienced a taste of it (8).
 1. Joshua gave God’s people Canaan-rest.
 2. God said there was something better coming.
- II. The experience of God’s rest involves responsibility (9-11).
 - A. To enter God’s rest, we must believe that it exists (9).
 1. It’s available because of what God did.
 2. It’s available for the people of God.
 - B. To enter God’s rest, we must *rest* (10).
 1. We cannot work our way to God.
 2. We must enter into the satisfaction of His accomplishment.
 - C. To enter God’s rest, we must exhibit grace-enabled obedience (11).
 1. Our obedience requires effort.
 2. Our obedience is the fruit of His rest.

Make It Personal: Ponder three bottom line realities.

1. If we really believe in Jesus, we will experience His rest.
2. If we are resting in Jesus, we will stop searching for something else.
3. If we are experiencing God’s rest, we won’t want to keep it to ourselves.

Have you entered God’s rest? God’s rest is an amazing reality, yet sadly many, even professing Christians, are missing it and for various reasons. Some don’t know what it is, while others seek to obtain it in unfounded ways. Rather than define it, let me describe it by sharing from one of our greatest resources, our hymnbook.

Lidie Edmunds (1851-1920) experienced it. This dear woman developed a spinal malady which cut short her career and made her a shut-in for many years. Yet she wrote:

*My faith has found a **resting place**,*

Not in device nor creed.

I trust the ever-living One;

His wounds for me shall plead.

William Walsham How (1864) was called both the “poor man’s bishop” and worked among the destitute in the London slums and among the factory workers in west Yorkshire. What sustains a man as he is confronted daily with need and suffering?

Listen to William How.

*For all the saints who from their labors **rest**,*

who Thee by faith before the world confessed;

Thy name, O Jesus, be forever blest.

Alleluia, Alleluia!

Entering God’s rest is not Sunday talk. It’s the key to eternal life as well as to joy when this present life is hard. And it’s available to each of us. As we return today to Hebrews 4, we’re going to learn more about the wonderful privilege of entering God’s

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

rest.¹ What is God’s rest and how do we enter it? As we prepare to come later to the Lord’s table together, let’s read and ponder carefully today’s text.

Scripture Reading: Hebrews 4:6-11

I’m convinced that one of the great barriers to experiencing God’s rest is a *feeling*-based rather than a *faith*-based approach to God. It’s not a new problem either. Back in the mid 1800s, Ichabod Spencer faced it as he pastored in Brooklyn, New York (1832-1854). Pastor Spencer led many to Christ under his ministry, often as a result of his home visits. He made it his practice to visit each church member every year and did so for 22 years. These visits weren’t for social purposes, but spiritual ones. As a doctor of the soul, he went to talk with people about the condition of their *soul*. He also took time to write down what was said in these conversations, and his notes which were later published are a goldmine.²

I’d like us to reflect on one of his visits. A young woman from his church asked him if he would visit her sister who “was in a very anxious state of mind.” When Spencer learned that the woman attended another church, he declined because he didn’t want to appear to be stealing sheep. But the sister’s plea was so urgent, he finally consented. In his own words here’s what happened:

She lived in a neighborhood some miles distant...I immediately rode to her house. She entered the room where I was, and her sister, after introducing her to me, left us alone, that she might speak freely to me. I perceived that she was very much agitated, trembling and sighing. I said to her, “You seem to be very much troubled. What is it that distresses you?”

She said, “I have been converted three times, and I feel as if I needed it again!”

“Take care,” said I, “that you do not get converted again *in the same way*. All that has done you no good. Has it?”

“No,” said she; “not at all!”

“Then, do not get converted *so* again. You want a religion that shall last,—a religion to die with; and I advise you to get an entirely new kind.”

I conversed with her for some time, aiming to teach her the nature of religion, and to quell the excitement of her mind, which appeared to me to arise more from an agitation of her sensibilities than from real conviction of sin. Her affections, more than her understanding and conscience, were excited. I visited her afterwards; and for some time her impressions appeared to me to become more scriptural and deep, and to promise a good result. But she was drawn away again among her old associates, at an exciting assemblage in the evening, where she professed to have become converted again. She was as joyful and happy as she had been before, and her religion lasted this time about six months.

The heart that has once been drunk with fanaticism, is ever afterwards exposed to the same evil. It will mistake excitement—any fancy, for true religion. Fanaticism is not faith.

When the affections, or mere sensibilities of the heart are excited, and the understanding and conscience are but little employed, there is a sad preparation for false hope—for some wild delusion or fanatical faith. The judgment and conscience should take the lead of the affections; but when the affections take the lead, they will be very apt to monopolize the whole soul, —judgment and conscience will be overpowered, or flung into the background; and then, the deluded mortal will have a

¹ The word “rest” appears ten times in verses 1-13 and the word “enter” appears eight times.

² His two volume book is entitled, *A Pastor’s Sketches: Conversations with Anxious Souls Concerning the Way of Salvation*.

religion of *mere impressions*—more feeling than truth—more sensitiveness than faith—more fancy and fanaticism than holiness. Emotions, agitations, or sensibilities of any sort, which do not arise from clear and conscientious perception of truth, will be likely to be pernicious³. The most clear perception of truth, the deepest conviction, is seldom accompanied by any great excitement of the sensibilities. Under such conviction, feeling may be deep and strong, but will not be fitful, capricious, and blind. To a religion of *mere impressions* one may be “converted three times,” or three times more; to a religion of truth, one conversion will suffice. In my opinion, my young friend was all along misled by the idea that religion consisted very much in a wave of feeling. Her instructors ought to have taught her better.⁴

I’ll say it again. One of the great barriers to experiencing God’s rest is a *feeling*-based rather than a *faith*-based approach to God. Many lack assurance because they’re trusting in their feelings. Worse yet, many have a false assurance because they’re trusting in their feelings.

Just what is a faith-based approach to God and what does it have to do with God’s rest? We find the answer in Hebrews 4. Like a powerful spotlight, this text can help us find our way through the fog of confusion.

Last week, we looked at Hebrews 4:1-5. We pondered first the *exhortation* concerning God’s rest in verse 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.” Then we considered the *experience* of God’s rest in verse 2, and learned that it requires two essentials: the gospel and faith. In verses 3-5 we looked carefully at the *explanation* of God’s rest, and found out that to understand God’s rest we must grasp what God did, namely, that He worked, then He rested, then He offered mankind the fruit of His rest. He did this at *creation*—He worked six days, then rested on the seventh day, then offered mankind the fruit of His rest. He followed the same pattern in *redemption*—God the Son completed the work His Father assigned Him by dying for sinners on the cross, then rested from His work, and now offers mankind the fruit of His rest.

Now in Hebrews 4:6-11, we move from explanation to implications. Specifically, we’ll learn two vital implications concerning God’s rest. It will be helpful to recall a couple of working definitions from last week.

-Faith is believing what God did and said, trusting in what God did and said, and submitting one’s life to Him. Please note that faith is not based on feelings, but on the unchanging truth of who God is, what God did, and what God said. And those who exhibit saving faith experience God’s rest.

-Rest is the satisfaction that comes from accomplishment. I borrowed that phrase from commentator Leon Morris. We’ll return to it momentarily. Now the implications.

I. The promise of God’s rest remains (6-8).

II. The experience of God’s rest involves responsibility (9-11).

I. The promise of God’s rest remains (6-8).

Listen to verses 6-8 (ESV), “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.”

When we study the Bible, it’s important to notice repetition. Notice how the writer

³ Pernicious means “destructive, harmful, deadly.”

⁴ Ichabod Spencer, *A Pastor’s Sketches*, pp. 174-5.

repeats the word “remains.” Verse 6 says, “It still remains that some will enter that rest...” He says it again in verse 9, “There remains then a Sabbath-rest for the people of God.” The writer wants his readers to know that the promise of God’s rest remains. The door is open. The invitation stands.

He’s emphasizing this because some of his dear friends were pondering turning away from Christ and going back to their old ways in Judaism. For over three chapters now, he’s been showing them the supremacy of Christ. And now he’s pointing out the connection between Christ and God’s rest.

The writer knows his history, and once again he’s going to use Jewish history to teach about God’s rest, namely that the promise of God’s rest remains. He talks about three groups of people and their relationship to God’s rest in verses 6-8.

A. Some will enter it (6a). “Seeing therefore it remaineth that some must enter therein,” says the KJV. See God’s astounding grace here. Some, not all, yet some undeserving sinners will enter His rest.

B. Some missed it (6b-7). Beginning in the middle of verse 6, “...and those who formerly had the gospel preached to them did not go in, because of their disobedience.” Who’s he talking about? He’s referring again to the Jews in Moses’ day around 1440 BC and points out two actions that they committed.

1. *The Jews in the wilderness heard the good news.* They “had the gospel preached to them,” says verse 6 in the NIV. The word “gospel” simply means “good news.” Here’s it’s a participle (we saw the same word earlier in verse 2) and literally means they were “the evangelized ones.” That’s because God had told them this incredibly good news. “I’m giving you the promised land! Just believe Me, trust Me, follow Me, and Canaan-rest will be yours.”

But they “did not enter,” says verse 6. Although they *heard* the good news...

2. *The Jews in the wilderness refused to obey it.* They missed God’s rest “because of their disobedience.” It happened at Kadesh Barnea. The spies returned from their surveillance trip, and two said, “The land is flowing with milk and honey. Let’s take it!” But the other ten spies moaned, “No, we can’t! There are giants there!” And so instead of believing God, the people disobeyed God. Consequently, as a result of a *feeling*-based rather a *faith*-based approach to life, that entire generation died wandering in the wilderness and missed God’s rest.

They missed it. Did that mean that God shut the door for good on His offer of rest? No. He once again demonstrated His mercy, as verse 7 explains (NIV), “Therefore God again set a certain day [AV ‘He limiteth a certain day’], calling it Today, when a long time later he spoke through David, as was said before: ‘Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.’”

That second generation made it into the Promised Land. In time God turned them into a great nation and gave them a great king, David. And in David’s day, “a long time later” says verse 7 (about four hundred years later than the Jews who died in the wilderness), God did something incredibly merciful. He “set a certain day, calling it Today.” In other words, He offered Himself to yet another generation. This time it was David’s generation. And He spoke through David these words, “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.”

Sound familiar? They come from Psalm 95:7-8, and it’s the third time the writer of Hebrews has quoted these same words (first in 3:7, then in 3:15, and now here). One commentator suggests that this repetition is like a bell constantly tolling: “Today, harden not; today, harden not.”⁵

⁵ Donald Guthrie, p. 114.

His point is that the promise of God's rest remains. Today is a new day, and with every Today a new generation faces the same decision that the Jews faced in the Sinai desert. David faced it. The readers of this letter faced it. You and I are facing it right now. "If you hear God's voice, if you hear His offer of rest, *what will you do?*"

"Well, that rules out me," you say. "I've never heard God's voice."

Neither have I if you mean "heard" in the same sense that Moses and the other prophets *heard* God's voice. Moses was a prophet and God spoke with Moses "face to face, as a man speaks to his friend" (Exodus 33:11). God didn't speak with Aaron that way, or Joshua, just Moses.

Centuries later, on the island of Patmos, the apostle John had a similar experience which he describes in Revelation 1:10, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet, saying, 'Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches.'" John heard that voice because he was an apostle, and just like Moses, John and some of the other apostles who heard the voice wrote down what they heard.

This now is how we hear His voice. Take another look at the first two verses of Hebrews, "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days *he has spoken to us by his Son* (Heb 1:1-2)."

God spoke to the world by sending His Son, Jesus the Messiah. Have you heard the message of Jesus? Then you've heard the voice of God offering you His rest. And here's a piece of God-inspired counsel for you. *If you hear His voice, do not harden your heart.*

Friends, we are hearing God's voice right now, for we are hearing His Word proclaimed. But it's not enough just to hear with our *ears*. It's not even enough to engage our *fingers* and take notes. The question is, what's happening in our *heart*?

The Jews heard God's offer with their ears, but they hardened their hearts and gave in to their feelings of fear. Do not do that, says God to us this morning through His Word. Do not harden your hearts to My voice, for if you do, you will miss My rest.

You say, "I don't want to miss God's rest! What should I do?" We'll find out shorting in verse 9, but first the writer of Hebrews wants us to think about a third group. When it comes to God's rest, some will enter it. Some, like the Jews in the wilderness, will miss it.

C. Some experienced a taste of it (8). "For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day." The writer apparently is responding to the would-be objector who says at this point, "You say the Jews missed God's rest. But what about Joshua and that second generation? They experienced it, didn't they?" And to that objection, the writer acknowledges in verse 8, yes.

1. *Joshua gave God's people rest.* He gave them *Canaan* rest, the promised land, a piece of geography in the Middle East. But was Canaan rest the full experience of God's rest? No, it was just a taste of it.

2. *God said there was something better coming.* In fact, Canaan rest was a necessary means to something far better, something verse 9 calls *Sabbath-rest*.

If you have a KJV you're likely thinking, "Wait a minute. My Bible says 'Jesus' in verse 8, not 'Joshua.' Why the difference?" There is no difference. Both 'Jesus' and 'Joshua' are English names, and in English they are different. Not so in Greek. *Iesous* is the name in the Greek text of verse 8, and to the Greek reader 'Jesus' and 'Joshua' are one and the same name. 'Jesus' is the Greek form of the Hebrew name 'Joshua.'

There may typology here. A type is defined as "a divinely ordained prefiguration in the Old Testament of some New Testament reality."⁶

⁶ P. S. Karleen, *Handbook to Bible Study*

F. F. Bruce comments, “The parallel between the Old Testament ‘Jesus’, who led his followers into the earthly Canaan, and Jesus the Son of God, who leads the heirs of the new covenant into their heavenly inheritance, is a prominent theme of early Christian typology, and could scarcely have been absent from our author’s mind.”

So here is the first implication. The promise of entering God’s rest remains. It is available to us beloved. Not just to someone else. But to you and me. It’s personal.

Jean Sophia Pigott experienced it. Her brother was a missionary to China who was murdered in the Boxer rebellion of 1901. Listen to the third stanza of her testimony.

*Yes, 'tis sweet to trust in Jesus,
just from sin and self to cease;
just from Jesus simply taking
life and **rest**, and joy and peace.*

II. The experience of God’s rest involves responsibility (9-11).

This takes us back to our question from a moment ago, “What must I do?” It’s not enough merely *not* to harden your heart to God’s Word. What positively must a person *do* to enter God’s rest? According to verses 9-11, we have a three-fold responsibility.

A. To enter God’s rest, we must believe that it exists (9). “So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God.” This is a new word in Hebrews, *sabbatismos*. It’s translated ‘rest’ in the KJV and NKJV, but it’s actually a different Greek word from the one translated ‘rest’ elsewhere in Hebrews (*katapausis*, used in verses 1, 3, 5, 10, etc). It contains the root word “Sabbath” which is why it’s translated ‘Sabbath-rest’ in the ESV and NIV. You won’t find it anywhere else in the Bible. Some feel the author actually coined the word himself.

What are we told about this Sabbath-rest? Two things initially, with more to follow.

1. *It’s available because of what God did.* Remember the sequence: God worked, then God rested, and in so doing God offered to people the fruit of His rest. We can’t manufacture rest. It must come from God Himself.

2. *It’s available for the people of God.* “There remains a Sabbath-rest *for the people of God.*” Which raises a vital question. *Who* are God’s people? For fifteen centuries the answer to that question was *Israel*. The Israelites were the people of God. If you were a Gentile, a non-Jew, you were *not* part of the people of God.

We who are Gentiles tend to forget the precarious situation we were in. We would do well to meditate regularly on Ephesians 2:11-12. “Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (that done in the body by the hands of men)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world.”

That’s what we *were*. We were *without God*. We were *not* the people of God. And this makes the following words astounding. Ephesians 2:13 says, “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ.”

Yes! God did something to make it possible for even Gentiles to become His people. Verse 13 says He brings those who were once far away from Himself near to Himself. And how does He do it? “Through the blood of Christ.” It’s by means of the work Jesus accomplished on His cross that sinners, even Gentile sinners, can become God’s people, and as God’s people they too can experience God’s rest.

Answer this question. Why did Jesus die? “He died for *me*, for *my* sins,” you say. And if you have trusted in Him, that’s true, for by shedding His blood He took care of your sin problem. But that’s not *all* He accomplished. He didn’t just shed His blood to

save individual sinners. He shed His blood to form a new people, a new entity that He calls “the church.”

Ephesians 2:14-20 explains it this way: “For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.”

This is our identity, beloved. We are the people of God and as such we can experience God’s rest.

Several years ago a vicious storm went through our area. The same system caused a lot of damage and even loss of life a couple of states south of us. I heard a loud clap of thunder around 3:00 in the morning, opened my eyes momentarily, and saw the flash of lightning. Then I closed my eyes and went back to sleep.

Answer this. Why was I able to rest in the middle of that storm? You might attribute it to my folly and suggest I ought to get up and check for tornados on the radio. You may be right. On the other hand, there’s a principle at work. When our *shelter* is secure, we can experience *rest*. If I’d been in a pup tent, there would have been no rest for sure. But I wasn’t in a pup tent. I was in a house with a solid roof over my head and six-inch walls around me. So, there was rest.

My friends, there is a shelter for storm-battered travelers. There’s a rest available to those who become a part of the people of God, the church that Christ shed His blood to bring into existence. And to enter God’s rest, here’s where we must begin. We must believe that it exists.

Let me clarify something. There’s a difference between coming to a church building and truly experiencing God’s rest. The *potential* for rest is found here this morning because the message of Christ is going forth from this church. But the church itself isn’t the source of rest. Christ alone can give rest and this brings us to a second responsibility.

B. To enter God’s rest, we must *rest* (10). Verse 10 says, “for whoever has entered God’s rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.” Sounds like double talk, but it’s not. I’ll say it again. To enter God’s rest, we must *rest*. That’s not a play on words. It’s an essential. It means *we cannot work our way to God*. Our “good works” are as filthy rags to a holy God, says Isaiah 64:6. “Not by works, lest anyone should boast,” says Ephesians 2:9. Many people think they’re entitled to God’s rest because they are good people doing good things. But they’re fooling themselves, says the writer of Hebrews, “for anyone who enters God’s rest also rests from his own work.”

To rest from your own work means you stop entering into the satisfaction of your own accomplishments. Remember our definition? ***Rest is the satisfaction that comes from accomplishment.*** Think about the feeling you’ve had when you’ve completed an important task, like finishing a big project at work. There was a good feeling, wasn’t there? Yes, a satisfaction that comes from accomplishment. “Look what I just did!” you thought to yourself.

Listen now. That’s a thought a person *will not think in heaven*. If you expect to say, “Look what I did, God. Look at the good things I did for you. They are at least part of the reason why I am now entering Your rest,” you will *not* enter His rest. No, if we want to enter His rest, then this is what must happen.

2. *We must enter into the satisfaction of His accomplishment.* Let that sink in. It's *His* accomplishment, not *ours* that must be the object of our faith.

"You died for us, Lord Jesus. You rose again for our justification. It's what *You* did that I'm trusting in." That's what we'll be saying in heaven. In fact, they're already saying it there! Listen to the words recorded by the apostle John in Revelation 5:9-10. "*You* are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because *you* were slain, and with *your* blood *you* purchased men for God from every tribe and language and people and nation. *You* have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth."

Now that's the testimony of heaven! "Look what *You* did!" they're saying. And if that's your testimony, my friend, then you have a wonderful eternal rest to look forward to. We are looking forward, says Hebrews 11:10, "to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." In the words of 11:16, "to a better country, a heavenly one."

But wait. Verse 9 doesn't say this rest is *future*. It says it's a present experience. "There *remains* a Sabbath-rest." And verse 10, "Anyone who *enters* God's rest *rests* from his own work." F. F. Bruce explains, "Of this city of God men and women of faith are citizens already, although the full exercise of their civic privileges in it is reserved for the future."⁷

Think of it this way. To enter God's rest, we must enter into the satisfaction of what He has accomplished for us—justification, forgiveness, adoption into God's family, and so much more, all accomplishments of His for us. But there is a sense in which He is still working on something. Remember His words in John 14:2? "I am going to prepare a place for you," He said. And one day soon, He will come again to earth, and those who have entered His rest *will enter His rest!*

Yet there's more. There's another aspect to this responsibility. It's a package deal. To enter God's rest, first, we must believe that it exists (verse 9), and second, we must rest from our own work (verse 10). But there's a third element.

C. To enter God's rest, we must exhibit grace-enabled obedience (11). Notice verse 11, "Let us therefore strive [NIV 'make every effort'] to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience."

That's ironic, isn't it? Verse 10 said we must *rest* to enter God's rest, but verse 11 says we must exert *effort* to enter His rest. Is that a contradiction? Not at all. God's Word never contradicts itself. Whenever I see an apparent contradiction, it's because I'm not seeing the whole picture. God cannot lie which means His Word cannot contain contradictions. So when I see what *appears* to be a contradiction, I need to take the posture, not of a judge, but of a teachable servant. And instead of looking *down* on the text, I need to get down on my knees and put myself *under* the text, and ask the Spirit of God for wisdom. So let's do that. Let's look again at this text, and as we do so we're going to observe two realities that actually work together.

1. *Our obedience requires effort.* "Let us make every effort to enter that rest." The verb means "to strive earnestly," "to give haste." It's the opposite of what the Israelites in the desert did when in their spiritual apathy they refused to trust and obey God. And consequently, instead of entering the promised Canaan rest, they forfeited God's rest.

"Don't let that happen to you!" the writer of Hebrews says. In fact, he doesn't say "*you*," but changes the pronoun to "*us*." He includes himself in this exhortation. "Let's not squander the opportunity God is giving us today to enter His rest."

⁷ F. F. Bruce, p. 78.

Keep in mind the context. Some of the original readers of this letter were considering turning from Christ and going back to their old beliefs and practices. “Let’s not do that!” the writer of Hebrews pleads. “Let’s put everything we have into entering His rest.” Which means, “Let’s put all our confidence in Christ who is our rest. And let’s refuse to allow anything (like family, government hostility) to turn our attention away from Him!”

It takes effort, brothers and sisters in Christ. Entering into Christ’s Sabbath-rest doesn’t mean we enter into a life of passive inactivity. To use the language of Ephesians 2:8-10, we’re not saved by our works, but we are saved unto good works.

But if that’s true, won’t we be able to claim to have had some part (even if it’s a small part) in our entrance into His eternal rest? No. And that’s because our obedience isn’t ultimately *our* obedience.

2. *Our obedience is the fruit of His rest.* We don’t have the innate ability to render pleasing obedience to God, which means we can’t do anything to save ourselves or even to keep ourselves saved. But what we lacked God graciously provided for us in Christ. The ability to believe in Him is His gracious gift. So is the ability to obey Him after He’s saved us. When we enter into the satisfaction of His accomplishment, He gives us everything we need. His accomplishment makes our obedience possible.

John shows us this connection between *rest* and *works* in the Revelation 14:13. “Then I heard a voice from heaven say, “Write: Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on.’ ‘Yes,’ says the Spirit, ‘they will **rest** from their labor, for their **deeds** will follow them.””

Remember the woman at the beginning who was worried she wasn’t going to heaven? Remember her problem? She went to a church that worked up her emotions, and consequently she took a feeling-based rather than a faith-based approach to God. Perhaps you can relate. If so, please know that the promise of entering God’s rest still stands, but to enter God’s rest you must do the following. You must *believe* that His rest exists. And you must rest in the accomplishment of Christ—enter into the satisfaction that comes from His accomplishment. And then you must exhibit grace-enabled obedience.

Horatius Bonar (1846) described it this way in his hymn.⁸

*I heard the voice of Jesus say,
“Come unto Me and **rest**;
Lay down, O weary one, lay down
Thy head upon My breast.”
I came to Jesus as I was,
Weary, and worn, and sad;
I found in him a **resting-place**,
And he has made me glad.*

Make It Personal: Ponder three bottom line realities.

1. *If we really believe in Jesus, we will experience His rest.*
2. *If we are resting in Jesus, we will stop searching for something else.*
3. *If we are experiencing God’s rest, we won’t want to keep it to ourselves.*

Closing Song: #350 “’Tis So Sweet to Trust in Jesus” (all four verses)

Communion

Benevolent Offering

⁸ Horatius Bonar, *I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say*.