

October 28, 2018 -

Hebrews 4: 1-11

- “Jesus Provides us His Rest”

Introduction

In 1884, James Wells in his book *The Parables of Jesus* tells the story of a little girl carrying a big baby boy. Seeing her struggling, someone asked if she wasn't tired. With surprise she replied: "No, he's not heavy; he's my brother. Years later because of a Ralph Waldo Trine publication the tale became popular and still years later in the 1940s, the words, adapted as "He ain't heavy, Father, he's my brother", were taken as a slogan from BoysTown Children's Home by its founder Father Flanagan. However, it was the Hollys' that made the anecdote famous with a worldwide hit song in the late 60s entitled; as you might recall “He’s ain’t heavy, he’s my brother”. The ballad was written by Bobby Scott and Bob Russell and the song was redone in 1970 by Neil Diamond. I personally think Simon and Garfunkel made the best rendition. The song reinforces the truth that a burden which is given in love and carried in love is always lighter than one carried out of obligation. Let’s not forget it started as a truth of Jesus and this truth is amplified for us in our passage this morning.

I don’t know what burdens you are carrying today, but Jesus wants to lighten your load. He wants to provide you His rest. How many of you are weary in your souls and want rest?

All too often, we forget the importance of rest. We usually treat it as a commodity that we can exchange for something that will give us more value, like working more to get ahead. With the hustle and bustle we face each day, rest is one of the first things that we compromise. However, experts don’t think it is a good idea. According to Eric J. Olson who is an M.D. at the Mayo Clinic has stated, “for an adult to function properly the proper amount of rest is pertinent. It is equally important that we get the spiritual rest that Jesus provides for us. So...

I Enter into His Rest (4:1-3)

1. The rest that Jesus promises isn’t based on the premise that the burdens will go away. There will always be that family commitments, work commitments and church commitments. Note in verse one the writer is saying, “because of the Hebrews unbelief they could not enjoy the rest God offered them. However, God’s promise of entering his rest still stands; fear should stir the hearts of those who would fail to accept it.

2. Our text uses the word rest eight times and it compellingly presents the wonderful truth of God's eternal rest in Jesus Christ and His salvation. Verse two is indicative of this truth. The latter section of verse two relates that Israel never experienced the ultimate rest God had for them because they had not given themselves to Him in faithful obedience. This is a biblical example to help us understand how unbelief can do permanent damage to our spiritual lives. The author of Hebrews referred to Israel in the wilderness. The Israelites were already out of Egypt. Their unbelief did not drive them back to Egypt but forced them to live and die in the wilderness because they would not *look in verse 5 “enter into my rest”*.

3. Verse three the word that he uses for rest suggests renewal and refreshment. It’s when he gives us a chance to breathe, a drink of cold water. He didn’t promise that we would never be weary ever again instead he is offering us a chance at renewal and refreshment on the journey. The Greek word conveys, “The heavenly blessedness in which God dwells, and of which he

has promised to make persevering believers in Christ partakers after the toils and trials of life are ended.

4. Unbelief can leave us believers in the wilderness too, just wandering around and not really doing much for Christ. In such a condition, we will never experience the green pastures and still waters of rest. Hebrews was written to encourage believers to continue in their faithfulness to God. Faithfulness is especially needed in difficult times. There is great encouragement and strength to be found among -fellow believers. When the going gets tough, we should find strength in other believers. The antidote for a hard, unbelieving heart is a caring community of fellow believers. This is how God provides His rest in the here and now! We also need to personally turn to God and trust that He has the best answer for us. For tells us...

II His Yoke is Light.

Come unto me, all [ye] that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. --- **Matthew 11:28-30**

1. Yokes aren't a whole lot different now than there were 2000 years ago. In Jesus day, they were made out of wood, just as they are now. And the very best yokes were custom made for individual animals and were adjusted so it wouldn't hurt the animal and would spread the load to make it more efficient. They were shaped just right to fit just right. And we are told that when a yoke fit an animal well that it was an "easy fit". Like a good custom made suit wears.

2. It is a yoke of grace that he offers. Remember Ephesians 2:8-9 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

3. Jesus' invitation is two-fold if you are burdened he invites you to come. And then he says that he wants to help you with your burden. He says, "I have a new custom-made yoke for you to help you with your life." Do you believe that I mean really believe that with all your heart?

III The Cure for unbelief (4:3-11)

1. **Enter into His rest.** The promise remains of entering His rest, and we can enter into that rest by faith. Verses three to nine are proof that a "rest" remains for the people of God beyond its original fulfillment under Joshua. Unbelief will make us fall short of the rest God has for us. We as believers rest from all attempts to merit Gods' favor, we are eternally saved. Now verse 4&5 speak of God resting from his creative work. So in some sort God has rested. He desires humankind to join Him in that rest that continues in perpetuity.

Even though God's offer of rest exists today, it is of no value to some to those that refuse to believe. All of the Jews were given the same offer of God's rest. But it was of no value unless it is combined with faith. Note verse #7...the appeal is from Psalm 95:7-8 that there is a rest that remains for God's people to enter beyond the fulfillment under Joshua. If Joshua had completely fulfilled the promise of rest, God's appeal through David, saying "Today" would make no sense.

2. **Perceive God's rest.** God's rest refers to much more than physical or emotional rest. To clarify the word, the writer explains: (4:8). After the disobedient, hard-hearted, Jews died in the

wilderness, Joshua led their children into the Promised Land and gave them rest. They no longer had to wander in the wilderness. However, the rest offered by Joshua was not permanent because rest in this world never is likened to the rest that God gives.

3. *There remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God* (4:9). This is the rest we as believers enter into when we faithfully finish God's will on earth. When we enter God's rest, we will cease from our own works, as God did from his work of creation (4:10, Gen. 2:2). God did not rest because He was tired, but because He was finished. The rest given to us by Jesus is permanent and will never end because it is eternal. Revelation 14:13b reveal his truth saying, “Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.”

We do enjoy a measure of God's rest in this present life, but we will not fully experience rest until we arrive in heaven.

3. **Receive God's Word.** Once God's Word is believed and understood, it must be obeyed. *Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief* (4:11). The **rest** is there, but God does not force it upon us. We must enter that rest. Clearly, the rest is entered by *faith*; but it takes diligent faith. This shows us that faith is not passive; it takes *diligence* to trust in, rely on, and cling to the Lord Jesus and His work for us.

Conclusion:

We have eternal souls they can exist forever with no rest, no peace, no joy or we can except Christ and enter when we died eternal peace and rest. Christ offers to us rest in the work while we yet serve him. We are physical people with a need for rest in the work.

Communion:

The Lord's miraculous provision for people's physical needs pointed to the greater truth—that He was the Bread of Life and that His body would be “broken” for them and for us. Every time we eat the bread and drink the cup during the Lord's Supper, we are reminded of our Lord's great love and provision for us.