

Hebrews

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 01 January 1900

Preacher: Delves, Stanley (1897-1978)

[0 : 00] It is in the Epistle to the Hebrews, the fourth chapter, and the eleventh verse.

Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

Fourth chapter of the Hebrews, the eleventh verse. Thinking over what I said this morning, I thought there is a poll, though, that may be drawn between the case of the children of Israel, who had so many privileges to the Lord's favour towards them in the ways in which we have considered.

And the case of those who have the benefit of gospel privileges in different ways in their own circumstances.

And the solemn consideration that there is no salvation in external privileges in religion.

[1 : 30] There was no salvation spiritually to the children of Israel in all those wonderful interventions of God on their behalf in their times of need, for they perished in the wilderness.

Of course, we cannot pronounce upon the spiritual condition of some of them. The word of God doesn't refer to them.

It may well have been that there were those who perished in the wilderness, in a sense that they died in the wilderness, who yet were saved with regard to their eternal salvation.

But that's the point we must leave. But anyway, there was no salvation inherent in their privileges. They were, as we have considered, they were redeemed from the oppression of Egypt.

But there was no spiritual redemption in that. And they were brought through the Red Sea, in which there is a reference to baptism.

[2 : 46] For they were baptized unto Moses in the sea and in the clouds. But there was no salvation in that. And though they did eat of that spiritual meat, that is, of that manner, that was so typical in its spiritual significance, that there was no salvation in eating of that, and so on.

It is a solemn consideration, and one that should exercise our minds, if we are really concerned about it, that it is possible to have the benefit of many privileges in religion, appointed privileges, to have the benefit of many privileges, and yet for all that, never to enter into the heavenly rest.

To go so far outwardly, and yet inwardly, to fall to unbelief. For I think there's a tendency, to which we all have some sad inclination, to rest in the formal and external practices in religion.

And especially because, of course, they are to be adhered to. I cannot think it is any remedy against a formal attendance upon the ordinances of religion, not to attend upon them at all.

Oh, no. That is no remedy. I don't believe anybody is any more spiritually minded for not attending a spiritual ministry.

- [4 : 35] Because they might say, I seem to get so little, and I seem so formal in it. External principles and appointments in religion are not to be undervalued.
- We are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together as a manner of Samis. But the danger is in being content with them.
- And especially, of course, is that sad where people having all these benefits in external ways still do not enter in because unbelief still prevails under it all in their heart.
- Oh, brethren, it's that unbelief in our heart that is the root of all the troubles. All trouble comes from it. All trouble comes from it.
- All rebellion, all backsliding, all murmuring, all comes from that bitter root of unbelief in our heart.
- [5 : 49] Just as all obedience, all walking in grace, all enjoying the spiritual things, all acceptable obedience in the sight of God, all entering into gospel rest, and all entering into heaven itself, comes from the principle of living faith.
- and another thing struck my mind. Well, I do think I will leave these things after I've delivered them. I thought the case is very sad where the Lord has intervened sometimes to help in times of great necessity and perhaps inferior illness.
- When human is speaking, death might have ended everything. But the Lord has appeared granted healing and restoration to health and strength and perhaps where there's been difficulties in other ways for there are many ways in which difficulties come and the Lord has appeared and helped and delivered and provided just as he'd helped the Israelites.
- Then after all such helps of the Lord appearing to answer prayer in times of necessity and then after all not to enter in because of unbelief.
- Now, I do think we should lay these things to heart. It would be very profitable to us to set the force in the word of God. They intended to maintain a healthy exercise in our hearts exercise is healthy.
- [7 : 48] Mere doubting, mere fearing and mere responding is not healthy but the spiritual, prayerful, self-examination is healthy in our spiritual lives.
- These passages of Scripture are intended to stir up such a healthy exercise in our hearts is that. However, I mustn't spend time on these general remarks this afternoon, but they seem to hang around the meaning and spirit and impression of this text today.
- let us labor therefore to enter into that rest. Let any man pause or the meaning is the same as in the previous word let us therefore fear that the promise being left is of entering into his rest.
- Any of you should seem to come short of it. That expression seem is not very clear. Perhaps it may mean that we may seem to come short of it and yet not really come short of it.
- We may seem to ourselves as though we do not enter fully and deeply and distinctly into this rest. And yet all the time we may be resting in Jesus Christ.
- [9 : 20] Really? And yet to ourselves we only seem to be. but there's another meaning around this word which is very different.
- If any of you should appear to come short of it at the last that's another point of view. And the original meaning will bear that out.
- If any of you should appear should be seen to come short at the last. I would like to say before I go into the text any further on this point a word or two about the rest itself.
- I only just hinted at that this morning but I tried to crowd something more in it because I knew that many wouldn't tell me this afternoon. So now I go back a little bit on what I said this morning.

now there's a promise we read being left us of entering into his rest. That is to say there's a promise of rest and the promise is left us of entering into it and the promise is made to believers in Jesus Christ.

[10 : 46] It is not made to unbelievers, it is not made to the ungodly, there's no promise made to them at all, but there's a promise directed to all who in their hearts believe in Jesus of entering into rest.

Now the exhortation is then seen there is this promise, let us labour to enter into it. Now what constitutes rest?

Now two things really constitute rest, mainly, and one is cessation from that which is burdensome and toilsome to us, especially if that which is burdensome and the toil to us doesn't give us any relief or satisfaction.

temptation. And so we read that God has entered into his rest.

for he spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise, and God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

[12 : 09] And in this place again if they shall enter into my rest. of course we are not the one moment, no one would suppose that to mean that the work of God in creation was in any way a work that imposed toil and wearisomly.

the idea is not that at all. The idea is the temptation. God ceased when the work was done. And so of course that applies to Jesus Christ.

Some writers on this passage see the Lord Jesus Christ in it, that he has entered, he that has entered into his rest, he also has ceased from his own works as God did from his.

I don't note that personally I see Jesus Christ in that, but still others do, and take it in this sense that when the Lord Jesus Christ had finished all that work that was given him to do, as he said, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do, and now come I to thee.

Oh heavenly Father, I finished, now I come to thee to rest from it all. His work was done, his obedient work, his suffering work, his atoning work, was done, now he entered into his heavenly rest.

[13 : 46] But however that may be, the point is that rest means cessation from that which is toilsome and wear them.

In that way of course, it is very expressive of the gospel rest, as I said this morning. The gospel rest is a cessation when we enter into it.

It's a cessation of course from all legal toils to work out of righteousness, from all labour to save ourselves, small attempts to so control and overcome sin in ourselves, and always feeling that sin is the stronger.

Now, to enter into rest is to find in Jesus Christ and enter all that. No more righteousness to have to work out, no salvation to have to accomplish, no work to be done, to keep God's law in order to be justified.

Jesus has done it. He is the rest, the perfect, sweet, heavenly rest. Rest is in Jesus. And then again, the principle and feeling of rest implies satisfaction.

[15 : 17] for if one is not satisfied, they cannot rest. There's something in them that keeps continually stirring up a sense of want and need and dissatisfaction.

Now, the expression rest in this text means not only that in Jesus Christ there is cessation but there is perfect satisfaction.

You know, it is naturally in our experience of these things. If we're not satisfied, we're restless. There's a want that isn't being made or a need that isn't being supplied or a longing that isn't being satisfied, isn't being met.

Something that keeps us short of what we really want to feel and to possess and to enjoy. Now, my friends, next to enjoying Jesus Christ in our religion, the best thing is to be dissatisfied in ourselves.

The very best thing is to feel that somehow nothing affords my spirit, true and real comfort and rest.

[16 : 43] I can't find any rest in myself. There's nothing in my own heart to satisfy me. Things are not with me as I wish they were. I'm dissatisfied in myself.

I'm dissatisfied with the world in regard to anything to meet my soul's needs. And I seem dissatisfied with my religion because I don't enjoy what I want to feel.

And I'm certainly dissatisfied with my own righteousness. I feel that there's nothing in it that's worth my best disdained and died with sin.

All very true, brethren. All very true. But if we enter into this rest, all that vanishes. Jesus Christ satisfies his righteousness.

Who can want a better? His atonement. Who can trust a more perfect sacrifice to put away sin?

[17 : 52] his grace? Where can we look for a richer blessing? His love? Where can anything be so certain and sure?

Why? The least feeling of it. Bring satisfaction into our heart. Not perhaps satisfaction with regard to the extent and clearness and depth of our experience.

The satisfaction with regard to Jesus Christ himself. That's a great thing. Brethren, no one that knows anything of Jesus Christ looks for another saviour.

No one that has a glimpse believing of his righteousness looks for another robe. And no one that has sent to the precious gift of his atoning blood looks for richer fountains.

No one receives the satisfaction. There's perfect rest. Well, rest, then, means relief of mind from anxiety and fear and pain and labour and it means satisfaction of spirit.

[19 : 21] And, of course, this enters into it. There's a sense of complete trust and reliance. You can never feel satisfied in anything that you cannot really trust.

If there's any shade or possibility of that letting you down as we say, or not proven to be what you hope and believe it will be, you can't rest in it.

There's an annoying feeling, there's uncertainty. But now where there's certainty, you can rely implicitly and completely.

You lean on Jesus Christ alone. It's just trusting in him completely, unreservedly, trusting in him because he satisfies you, he meets every need, and, well, he's a complete and perfect rest so that the gospel rest is in Jesus.

And to you, it's all very simple and very sweet words, and how often this has been a good word to poor, weary people, come unto me all ye that are weary, you'll never get rest unless you come to me.

[20 : 49] You're heavy laden, you'll never get released from that weight unless you come to me. You who are unsatisfied, you'll never find rest unless you come to me.

Mary said, come to me. I've all you want, I'm all you need, and you're more welcome than words can say to come to me, and trust in me, and let everything else go.

Let us therefore labour to enter into that rest. For, as I have said, there's a promise left within this matter.

there's a promise to all coming, seeking, believing people that they should find that rest. It's there for them, and it's promised to them.

It is left to us, a promise of entering into this rest, a promise to all who believe in Jesus. us. And, little as we can understand about it now, all this is wonderful in heaven.

[22 : 07] Heaven is rest. They rest from their labours. They rest not from serving the Lord, from worshipping him, in that they rest not day nor night, but it's a service that is a rest to them, not a labourer.

They rest in all their labours that are weary of sin. They've reached full satisfaction, every wish out full supplies in that heaven of taste.

They're beyond all reach of sin, sorrow, grief, or pain. Death is behind them. no clear shadows without the future, no rising doubt pains their spirit, all its rest and worship, and love, and joy, and peace.

And there's a promise left us of entering into it. It really is. May I open just a word or two more.

let us therefore labour to enter into that rest. There must be labour before the rest.

[23 : 30] Labour first, then rest. And the labour is not to produce a rest in ourselves. to labour, to work out of righteousness, to rest in, nor to offer that to God, which is acceptable in his sight, to rest in.

There's a labour to enter into the rest that's already there to enter into. There's labour to enter into it. What then is the labour?

Well, the labour, then, is the exercise of heart and soul that believers feel with regard to these things.

That's their labour, the exercise of their soul with regard to it. Now, as far as it seems to me, the desire to be as charitable as I can, rightly, that people's religion is so easy and so much assumed without any exercise, any labour, any prayer, I cannot pity to this at all.

Let us labour. Well, first of all, then, of course, there's a labour of believing itself. Believing is not a legal labour, it's not a legal beauty.

[25 : 04] Believing is that exercise of heart in response to the word and proof of the gospel. Now, I did mention that word this morning as I closed the sermon in this context.

Today, if you will hear his voice, voice, now, the labour of faith is a response to that voice.

It is a mixing of faith with it. In fact, very much of the labour of faith is exactly expressed in that way of mixing with the word.

The word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it. The expression, the word, is very suitable.

It is very suitable in this way. The nature of faith, which is the gift of God in the heart, and the nature of the word, which is the word of God in the gospel, are identical in their nature.

[26 : 24] They mix because they're the same spiritual nature. you know the idea very simply.

If you put two elements in a bottle that are contrary to their nature, oil and water, nothing will make them mix.

If you shake the bottle up, you'll get confusion. They'll all sort of mix together in a way of confusion. But as soon as you let the death will stand still, they'll immediately separate.

Because, not being of the same nature, they haven't blended. The oil hasn't made the water into oil. The water hasn't made the oil into water. You see, the two elements don't mix.

Now, when the unbelievers hear the word of the gospel, and they do come under it, of course, and especially perhaps the word of its time, have some effects upon their conscience, we will say the preacher speaks in such a solemn way, perhaps some things of mind, some feeling of guilt, and so on, and perhaps they may resolve that they'll be different about these things, and not be so careless and unconcerned and prayerless.

[27 : 54] You see? that after a little while, they're right back where they were, as the two elements, the word and their unbelief, have never missed, of course. Their unbelief separates from the word, the word loses all effect upon their heart.

It seems for a little while a contingent with no blending. believing. Now, whether it's a believing in the heart, and that the word of the gospel is heard with some measure of power, and life, and unction, there's no confusion whatever.

Faith enters into the word, receives it, embraces it, enjoys it, responds to it, and so the word is made profitable.

And immediately after, when the sermon is over, and the voice is died away, there's no immediate separation again at all.

There's an effect left upon the heart. Well, that's the first thing. Let us labour to believe. Labour not to do so much as to believe.

[29 : 17] But then, as I said this morning, that may present a difficulty. Some may say, and I can quite understand it, oh, that's my difficulty. If only I could believe.

Now, it isn't a question, really, of trying to believe. It's looking to the Lord to inspire that faith and enlighten it in our hearts.

remember that we have a great high priest who is touched with our infirmity, knows our weakness. Look to him. He's our great helper.

He really is. But with regard to the exercise you labour, oh, you pray to believe. You ask for faith. You long to believe more.

If you believe at all, you wish you could believe more, with a more clear, deep, effectual faith in Jesus. Now, this is labouring to enter into rest, to believe in that exercise of faith that you are really entering into the enjoyment of what you believe.

[30 : 32] You believe in Jesus, that's a good start. then you want to enjoy Jesus. You believe there is rest in him, then you want to enter into it.

You believe his redeeming blood answers every guilty question, every guilty feeling in your soul, then you want to enter into the relief of experiencing the efficacy of that atoning blood.

now that's faith labouring to enter into rest. And this goes on, I feel, all our spiritual life, for there is a continuity in faith, faith labourers to enter into rest by the continuity of its exercise.

And time proves these things, you know. Jesus said to those who professed their faith, too readily professed, too easily professed, then said Jesus to those Jews that believed on him, if you continue in my word, then are you my disciples indeed, and you shall know the truth, the truth of the gospel, and the truth will make you free, that is, you will find the truth brings rest into your heart.

rest, well, there's that. Then let us labour to enter into that rest, let us labour in prayer to enter into it.

[32 : 16] God's blessings come freely, sometimes unexpectedly. There are times when we may not be actually engaged in prayer, the Lord is pleased to cause gracious word, perhaps, to come upon our hearts, faith, sweetly and effectively, but still, we are not too looked in that way to enter into rest, but to pray to enter into it.

And so the whole subject in this part of the epistle ends in that way. Let us therefore come boldly down to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Let us labour prayerfully to enter into this rest. For the Lord hears prayer, his Holy Spirit inspires it, his gracious ear hears it, and his gracious hand answers it.

Labour to enter into that rest. so heaven itself, labouring prayer to enter into heaven. Even if you and I feel, and I'm sure some of us do feel, the Lord has given us a good hope of heaven.

Perhaps sometimes sweet foretastes of it, but we're not there yet. We're not there yet. Let us labour to enter at last, into the heavenly rest.

[33 : 54] it implies that there are difficulties. Well, there are difficulties, and mainly difficulties from within ourselves.

Sometimes you may feel, oh, my unbelief is too great for me, I can never get over it, never get over it. Well, no, you must not reason by that.

that's just there they read those children of Israel with regard to the difficulties in the land of Canaan. Oh, they said we shall never get over them.

You see, think of the faithful believing testimony of Canaan. Canaan tried to encourage the people.

He said, no, we are well able to overcome these things. Let us go up. Our God will help us. He is almighty, all his good luck above unbelief and all our difficulties and beliefs, notwithstanding all.

[35 : 00] God is able to bring me into this rest. He is able. Sometimes one may feel the besetting sins are too strong.

And so I'm really afraid after all these sins of mine will keep me out of heaven. Oh, then why should you look at your sins like that?

They're bad enough in all conscience as everyone knows who feels them. They're bad enough. You might feel for me to overcome sin would be that the children of Israel overcoming the sons of Aenus.

Oh, but God is able to bring you into that land. He's able to bring you into that rest. He's able to subdue all this and more still.

unbelief looks at difficulty. Faith looks at God. Unbelief says, I'm afraid I shall never overcome.

[36 : 07] Faith says that God will make me more than a conqueror through his grace and his love. Unbelief may sometimes say, oh, I'm afraid after all my pilgrimage and my professions I shall come short of heaven.

But faith says, oh, but God is able, abundantly able to bring you into heaven, into that eternal rest. Only trust him and pray and seek to believe God will do all the rest.

Hell's is a weakness, his is a power. Hell's is an unfaithfulness, his is a faithfulness, ours is a weak sinfulness, his is a mercy to forgive all, and Jesus is there in heaven, Jesus is there.

He has overcome for us and he will overcome in us, I feel sure he will. And we who are so weak as the fields, we can be overcome with anything, we can like us more than conquerors over everything to his love and his grace.

Let us labor therefore, let us pray on, hope on, believe on, that we may enter into that rest that we shall fall after the same example of unbelief.

[37 : 43] Amen. Amen. Amen. marriage woo algumas ■■■i todo HOW ■ nos