

Hebrews

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Preacher: Dawson, Herbert (1890-1969)

[0 : 00] As the Lord shall be pleased to help me, I shall call your attention to a subject you will find in the Epistle to the Hebrews, chapter 4, 11th verse.

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

Chapter 4, the Epistle to the Hebrews, and the 11th verse.

This is a word which the Apostle Paul was inspired of God to pen to these godly Hebrews making up the church of Christ in Judea long ago.

But it is a word also which is addressed to every sinner born again down through the ages.

[1 : 09] And it is a word for which there is a very solemn, a very necessary needs be.

It is an equivalent word to that of the Apostle Peter's, wherefore brethren, give diligence to make your calling and your election sure.

As though the Apostle Paul said to these godly Hebrews, and the Spirit of God says it through the Apostle Paul to you and me.

Let it be our chief concern to know that matters are right between our souls and God. Let us follow on to know the Lord and not let him go till that blessing he bestow that deep down in our hearts we have the sweet realization, my Lord and my God.

Let us look and look and look and look again at Calvary's cross, at what was done thereon for poor sinners like you and me.

[2 : 32] And keep looking till you and I can say for me, O miracle of grace for me, the Saviour bled. And now that is the line of things in this subject that I want, as the Lord should help me, to look at a little and work out.

And I would like to say something, as grace is given, that shall encourage you to hope in God. Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief.

And now, looking at the setting of the subject, which is very striking and very searching too, and very solemn to contemplate, the Apostle Paul uses the illustration of Israel of old in the wilderness.

How? They were brought out of Egyptian bondage. God wrote that mighty miracle and brought them out. God said, in coming out, they set out in the wilderness, in their journeys, to enter the land of promise.

And in that land of promise, they were promised that they would be able to rest in all that the land of promise afforded.

[4 : 11] For it was a land abounding in good things, a land flowing with milk and honey. And so, they left Egypt behind and set end.

But, alas, we find that there were tens of thousands who did set out, who never did enter into the land of promise.

And the Apostle Paul uses that argument. Do listen. Follow it along. The Apostle Paul, I say, uses that argument to encourage these godly Hebrews, who were passing through a time of severe persecution for the truth's sake, and because they were followers of the meek and lowly Jesus, some of them were hard put to it to endure in their profession, and some of them, alas, did not endure, but they turned back and walked no more with Jesus.

And now, the Apostle Paul uses that illustration to emphasize and enforce his argument. And it says, So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

Go back in your minds and picture when the twelve spies came back from the land of promise. Ten bringing an evil report.

[5 : 52] Joshua and Caleb bringing a good report. And speaking on God's behalf. And you remember what happened?

How the majority of the Israelites, when they heard about walled cities, and giants, and sons of Anak, and the difficulties that would be encountered in possessing the land of promise, then they lifted up their voices and wept, and actually consulted about making a captain over them to return to Egypt.

How sad our state by nature is. To think there is such a picture as that recorded in the word of God. And now the Lord dealt with them and he said that they should wander in the wilderness forty years, a year for each of the forty days, the twelve spies had taken in spying out the land of promise.

Until all those who were for making a captain to return to Egypt and whose unbelieving heart said they would never be able to possess the land of promise until all that vast horse had died in the wilderness and their bones were bleaching white thereon.

And now the Apostle Paul works out his argument from that illustration. Let us, and that means you and me, let us, therefore, fear.

[7 : 38] Lest the promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. And he says, for unto us was the gospel preached as well as unto them.

But the word preached did not profit them, not being mixed with faith with them that heard it. And now, I want to look at the subject as grace is given from three viewpoints of it.

there is, first of all, what I will call the exercise. And remember, you and I must know something about exercise.

It is a word derived from the soldiers when they leave civilian life and put on uniform to serve their king and country.

and from that time on, they have to do drill and they have to learn varied matters to do with warfare, all of which is to prepare them for going to war when the need shall arise.

[8 : 58] And now, the apostle Paul said to his son Timothy, exercise thyself unto godliness, for godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is and that which is to come.

And here, there is the exercise. And that exercise is set forth in the word labor. It is a very suitable word, speaking with great reverence, the spirit of god inspired it, and it says elsewhere, in all labor, there is profit, but the talk of the lip tendeth only to penury.

Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest. Then there is also the experience, which is to enter into that rest.

And very sweet and beautiful it is. But I must show you, as the Lord shall help me, what that rest really is. for Israel of old, it was that when their wilderness wanderings were ended, they should cross Jordan and dwell in the land of promise as God had ordained.

And now often, you will find that preachers use the land of promise from that viewpoint as being a type of heaven.

[10 : 33] And so it can be used. But that is an accommodation of it. It is not the primary meaning of the land of promise coming at the end of the wilderness wanderings to use it as a type of heaven.

No. You have only to think about it, as the word of God records it, when they dwelt in the land of promise they also said, the Canaanites still in the land to harass perplex and dismay.

And they had many benefits and blessings showered upon them, but the Canaanites still dwelt among them. Therefore, you will see, it is not first of all to be used as an illustration of heaven itself, although it can be accommodated like that.

But in my long ministry, I have grown rather hesitant to preach from texts where you have to use accommodation. Because, turning aside a moment, you will usually find, if you look elsewhere in the word of God, you will see the same truth set forth from a straightforward text without any accommodation being necessary to show the meaning of it.

what then is this rest? It is just this. It is to rest in the Lord. It is a gospel rest.

[12 : 12] It is, I say, to rest in the Lord with a sweet blessed consciousness that it is well with your soul, living and dying, and especially to enter into the blessedness of the forgiveness of sins.

And now, dear friends, you have only to look into your own hearts and recall to your minds how you have been following on to know the Lord.

some of you have been doing that a long, long while. And now, if you were put through an examination, you might answer a question or two in your own consciences.

How many of you listening to the preacher this Sabbath afternoon have tasted the unutterable bliss of forgiveness of sins and been enabled to feel, O my Jesus, thou art mine, with all thy grace and power.

I am now and shall be thine when time shall be no more. I venture to suggest that only a minimum among you have known and felt that blessed experience and it may have been long ago that you tasted the joy of it and the Lord bless you.

[13 : 54] It is a way mark you set up and which will avail you when you come down to die. But most of you, since you were born again, you were being following on to know the Lord.

And the Lord has condescended here a little, there a little, line upon line, precept upon precept, to encourage you.

You are not without helps by the way, tokens for good, evidences that his good work is indeed begun in you.

But I will guarantee this, that the majority of you following on to know the Lord, under Union Chapel roof, if you told the truth, which you would do, you would say, I do hope, I am laboring, like the text says, to enter into that rest.

But as yet, I must honestly confess, the great question is not put out of question. I cannot yet feel that I have had the unutterable bliss to see Jesus and see in him all my salvation, all my desire, and appeal to him as my Lord and my God.

[15 : 27] And now listen, that is what that rest is that the text tells us about. And that is what you want to enter into.

And as you come up to worship, you may hope, well, now, every Sabbath day that you come along, I hope you do, that it might be the day that God has ordained that you shall realize that rest in the Lord, regarding your soul's eternal welfare, and be helped to feel it is well with my soul, living and dying.

And now, that is the rest that the text tells us about. And you can see that, I just look at the context, for it is very instructive, there remaineth therefore a rest to the people of God.

For he that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works as God did from his.

And now, the word of God tells us very early on, thus, the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.

[16 : 53] And on the seventh day, God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.

And God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.

And now, the margin reading is, there remaineth therefore a keeping of the Sabbath for the people of God. And now, you may say, you dear young people, oh, but that refers to the seventh day, and it speaks of it in the context, and God did rest the seventh day from all his works.

And now, let us look at what this word says in the immediate context. He that is entered into his rest, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his.

Who is he that is referred to? the word of God tells us, oh, how often do I quote this word to you?

[18 : 19] When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his own son, made of a woman, made under the law.

And he came down into this poor sin-cursed earth, and was seeing a dear holy babe, cradled in the manger, sheltered in the stable at Bethlehem, and he lived his wondrous life as verily man under the law.

What work was it that was given him to do? He came down into this world to keep that law on behalf of all that vast host, a number which no man can number, God had ordained to life eternal.

And he did it. He did love's redeeming work. He lived his holy life, he fulfilled every jot and tittle of the law in all its demands, and he did it in the stead of poor sinners like you and me.

And then, because the law saith, the soul that sinneth it shall die, Jesus Christ went up Calvary's hill and died in the stead of poor sinners like you and me, and he was laid in the grave.

[19 : 55] His life work was done, and he said, ere he died, I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.

And God the Father said, this is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. Love's redeeming work was done, fought the fight, the battle won.

What was the evidence that the battle was won? On that resurrection morn, there came down from heaven an angel and rolled away the stone.

Yes, signifying indeed, God the Father was well pleased with that wondrous work, love's redeeming work, which his dear Son had done, and Jesus Christ rose from the dead, triumphant over sin and death and hell in the ascended upon high.

And he is there this Sabbath afternoon at God the Father's right hand. And it is said, he shall see of the travail of his soul and shall be satisfied.

[21 : 19] And it says this also in this same epistle, which will help you to see what is indeed the meaning of the context.

It says that this man, after he had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down on the right hand of God, from henceforth expecting till his enemies be made his footstool, for by one offering he hath perfected forever them that are sanctified.

You see, for Jesus is entered into his rest. He also hath ceased from his own works, as God, as the Creator, did from his.

When creation's work was done in six days, and God rested on the seventh. And now, dear young people, do remember this. You will read in the Gospels, I have no doubt you have read it many a time.

Now, upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning they came unto the sepulcher, bringing the spices which they had prepared and certain others with them, and they found the stone rolled away from the sepulcher.

[22 : 51] Now, upon the first day of the week, and since the Saviour rose from the dead, the first day of the week is kept under the Gospel in remembrance of it, and that has become our Sabbath day.

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

And there is just one more viewpoint of this subject I make a comment on before I come to open it up as I suggested earlier on, I would do.

In my long ministerial life, I have come in contact with hundreds and hundreds and hundreds more of people taught of God, up and down in our denominational life.

And, it has very much surprised me, as the years have gone by, to see how the sovereignty of God is made manifest to the people of God regarding when they do receive forgiveness of sins.

[24 : 14] And now I remember in my early ministry, some very godly people, up and down the country, telling me of the dealings of God with their souls. And they were like the hymn writer, when he says, their pardon, some receive at first.

And then compelled to fight, they feel their later stages worse, and travel much by night. But the great majority with whom I have had sweet fellowship at times, when speaking one to another on the things of God, are like that same hymn writer says, some long repent, and late believe, and then their sins forgiven, a clearer passport, they receive, and walk with joy to heaven.

But there are many who journey on through life, and glad to get help by the way, and encouragement in God for their souls, but they find it to be indeed a labour to enter into this rest, whereby you can feel, as I have said, matters are indeed right, for time and eternity, between your soul and God.

Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest. And remember, God is a sovereign in all this, and I might just make a further comment of what I have observed, and I'm not fitting any caps on, and making any reflections on any of you.

You will find, as a rule, that those who long repent, and late believe, who are following on, and sometimes following hard after God, if so be, they can enter into that rest, they do it, you're in, you're out.

[26 : 22] You will not find any of those folk, as a rule, become open backsliders. But sometimes, when you do see people, who become open backsliders, you will find, that they had, a great beginning, in their soul's experience.

Yes, and they have, behaved, oh so ill, toward God, in turning their backs upon what he wrought in their soul, for a while, turning aside, either into error, or evil.

You might think that over, and it might help you to get a right understanding of things, in their denominational life, as you journey on, through life.

But the great thing is, coming right down to bedrock in the text, says the apostle Paul, says the Holy Spirit, through him, let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest.

You see, until you do enter into it, you will have that feeling our hymn writer speaks about, and he says, my heart is faint, nor can it be at rest, rest, till I find rest in thee.

[28 : 01] Oh, you do want to rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him. And while you have got these evidences, as you look back over the years, you have followed on to know the Lord, do say thank you to God for them, because in looking upon them, you can argue like Manoah's wife, if the Lord were pleased to kill us, would he have shown us all these things?

No, those feeble desires and wishes so weak, tis Jesus inspires and bids you still seek. And now let us look at what I said was the exercise, shut up in this word labor.

And now when you think of labor, you must not in any way couple it with laziness. No. And there is such a thing as spiritual sloth.

Yea, in this epistle to the Hebrews, you read that you be not slothful, lazy, dilatory, indiligent regarding your souls' eternal good, but followers of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises.

And now when God began to deal with you, what did you begin to do? let your consciences tell you, you began to enter into what this labor really means.

[29 : 48] You felt something that lived and moved within you, and it was an incentive so that you desired to be after the spirit, the things of the spirit.

You wanted to know to begin with that you were a sinner born again. You really were in wanting to know it, but that did not satisfy you, nor did you understand it from that viewpoint either.

You were born again, but you wanted God to assure you, assure my conscience of her part in the Redeemer's blood, and bear the witness with my heart that I am born of God.

And now that means labor, a labor to enter into that rest, but I must make this plain, if you are assured that you were born again, you will not be content with that knowledge any more than the baby's content with being a babe.

it will grow and become a child, a youth, a man, and so in the spiritual life there is a growth along that line of thought, but it denotes labor.

[31 : 19] Yes. You see this labor set forth in that illustration I have often used, and as the Savior used it, it is a beautiful illustration of the wise builder and how he did his work.

His labor was to dig deep and he got down to bedrock. He made sure there was a good foundation for his house to be built on.

And he wanted the structure built on it to be of the same nature as the foundation. He wanted the foundation good, he wanted the superstructure good, and so he dig deep.

And you and I as grace is given must labor like that. You must dig down through all that is superficial. Yes, and all that is sentimental.

You must get right down into that which is spiritual. Then matters will go well as it did with the wise builder.

[32 : 35] The rain descended, the winds blew, and the floods came and beat upon that house, but it fell not, for it was founded on a rock.

And now there you see what that rest is. On Christ, the solid rock, I stand, all other ground is sinking sand.

How many of you can say that before God this Sabbath afternoon? How many of you are laboring to enter into that sweet, blessed experience?

the Lord bless you and help you, grant you his divine aid to labor on. Yes, and let this encourage you, wait on the Lord, be of good courage, he shall strengthen thine heart, wait I say, on the Lord, blessed are all they that wait for him.

And so, you can sum it up like this, it is a labor to be right before God with whom you have to do. But then, this labor means soul trouble, soul travail, as I said, exercise of mind.

[34 : 05] For every day you awake, you are soon made aware, what you are by nature, and that you are traveling through the wilderness, and that there is no help to be found, regarding your soul's eternal welfare, from any earthly source whatever.

labor, therefore, you have got to labor against wind and toad. Much might be said, from that viewpoint, the apostle Paul speaks in the epistle to the Romans, of what that labor is, and he sets it forth beautifully, as he would do, because he was inspired of God, and he says, I find then a law, that when I would do good, evil is present with me, for I delight in the law of God after the inward man, but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members, O wretched man that

I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death, I thank God, through Jesus Christ our Lord, so then, with the mind, I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh, the law of sin.

And now that labor known and felt every day, will bring you at the end of every day to say, I would do good, but evil is present with me.

And you want to be found before God, putting your mouth in the dust of self abasement, if so be, there may be hope, and there is. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

[36 : 27] And every day this word looks at you to encourage you, let us labor therefore to enter into that rest. And remember, every token for good, all the help by the way that you get, is an earnest that sooner or later you will enter into that rest as your soul desires.

It may not be with some of you till you go down into Jordan's swelling. I nearly said it will not be with some of you till you go down into Jordan's swelling.

But I must leave that before God, who is a sovereign in how he deals. But I can tell you on God's behalf that you will not miss it.

In this same epistle it is recorded, and deliver them who through fear of death were subject all their lifetime unto bondage, yes, laboring on and never seeming to gain much ground in the things of God, yet living upright lives before God and man, and it can be said, and he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord.

But as yet, not knowing that blessed rest whereby every if and but and how is chased afar off, and yet the time of love will come when each shall clearly see not only that Christ shed his blood, but each shall say for me, let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest.

[38 : 23] There is every encouragement for you to endure hardness as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. You will also have to labor if you know what the labor is under a constant sense of how far, far short you come in all that you desire to be, in living the life of the righteous.

You might say that you labor day by day to be a real Christian, and yet oft times you are cast down because there seems to be such little reality in your Christianity as it is viewed by you, and yet thou doest well to have it in thy heart to be a real Christian.

Thou doest well to have that concern within, that I may know him and the power of his resurrection, the fellowship of his sufferings, and be made conformable to his death.

let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest. It means you will have to labor against the world as regards the spirit of it.

Endure quite a deal of mocking it may be, and scorn and scoffing heaped upon you, but oh, when you think of eternity, what does it matter if the world opposes you for the little while that you are journeying through it, if on my face for thy dear name, shame and reproaches be, all hail reproach and welcome shame, if thou remember me.

[40 : 18] Let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest. It will be a laborer to do that which is right before God with whom you have to do.

Realizing godly fear within is an unctuous light to what is right, and a bar to what is wrong. Much might be said under that heading, but I must just look at this other viewpoint of it.

let us labor, therefore, to enter into that rest. And now, I said there was the exercise which is shut up in the word labor.

Then there was the experience, and that is in entering into that rest. And now, you do get some foretastes of what that rest is.

As you journey on, before you get the fullness of it, and you can, as you do desire, see Jesus. See that word fulfilled.

[41 : 32] Thine eyes shall see the king in his beauty. But, there is somewhat known of this rest as you journey on. You are not altogether a stranger to it.

And I might say if the time allowed, when you are helped to remember the Sabbath day, and keep it holy. Oh, you know, dear friends, if you tell the truth, you have had quite a little of this rest known and felt, when in the attitude of worship, the world has receded, and time things have been in the background, and you have said, Lord, it is good for us to be here.

Although, as yet, you have not got that crowning mercy, forgiveness of sins, you have got that encouragement, you have been shown tokens for good.

Yes, there is this rest to be known, as you can rest in the Lord and wait patiently for Him.

And, just giving a hint or two as to what that experience is, it is, as I said earlier on, to rest in the finished work of Jesus Christ, in all that He is, all that He has done, all that He still is doing as the sinner's friend.

[43 : 02] But, there are some characteristics of that rest. And now, there is such a thing to be known and felt, and I hope I have known it, so have you, some of you, to rest in the will of God.

Oh, you know, sometimes, you are like the hymn writer, Father, thy will be done in words we oft express, for in our hearts we want our own, and wish our sufferings less.

Well, now and again along life's way, there comes a time when you feel so quiet in your mind, so much like clay in the hands of the heavenly potter, that you can say, thy will, not mine, be done, and you can rest in the will of God, in the unfolding of it, although it may be in the unfolding of it, against the flesh, you can humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and feel it is the Lord.

Let him do what seemeth him good, let but my fainting heart be blessed with thy sweet spirit for its guest. O God, to thee I leave the rest, thy will be done.

There is that rest that you enter into. There is also a rest in the providence of God. I have no time to work that out as I should like to, but that means when all created streams are dried, thy fullness is the same.

[44 : 50] With this I would be satisfied, our glory in thy name. To rest in the Lord when you scrape the bottom of the barrel and there is just a handful for today and you may be tempted as to whether you will find a handful for tomorrow when tomorrow dawns.

To rest in the providence of God, knowing his name is Jehovah Jireh, the Lord will provide and his word will not fail.

They that seek the Lord shall not want any good thing. Much might be said along that line of thought. And then there is a beautiful experience to be known when you can rest in the love of God.

When you can view his dealings and although you have said about some of them earlier on, all these things are against me, then when you see them working together, dovetailing in to a perfect plan, you realize who so is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.

And you can see that whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. Aye, but there is another rest that you enter into.

[46 : 26] And that is the rest that the word of God affords as regards its exceeding great and precious promises. You see, some of you have been following on to know the Lord till you are now old and grey headed.

But, along life's way, God has given you a word. And you say sometimes, although it may not yet be fulfilled, remember the word unto thy servant upon which thou hast caused me to hope.

you rest in that word as the word of the Lord. And you rest in a sweet assurance that it cannot fail in what it promises to you, for he is faithful that promised.

Rest in the promise God hath spoke in all things ordered well for thee, his sacred word he will ne'er revoke, nor alter his divine decree.

This is a beautiful life to live, dear friends, as grace is given. Let us labour, therefore, to enter into that rest.

[47 : 41] Lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. Go back to what I said was the Apostle Paul's argument.

He was encouraging these godly Hebrews to endure in their profession, not to be like the Israelites of old with their unbelief, whose bones bleached white in the wilderness waste, because they turned their backs on the land of promise.

He was encouraging them not to be like those disciples of whom the word of God tells. From that, many of his disciples went back and walked no more with him.

there is just one other word to say as I come to the Amen. Let us labor therefore to enter into that rest.

Lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief. And now, what would be the outcome of all this? If you and I, by the grace of God, know what this labor is, and here a little, there a little, we get an earnest of what the rest is, and ultimately the fullness of it.

[49 : 02] This will be the end of it. And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from hence forth, Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them.

And as they are laid in the grave, the preacher says, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, ensuring certain hope of a joyful resurrection to the life everlasting.

Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.