

REST IN GOD ABOVE ALL                      HEB 4:1-16  
21ST SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST      SUN OCT 18, '15

<sup>1</sup>Therefore, while the promise of entering his rest still stands, let us fear lest any of you should seem to have failed to reach it. <sup>2</sup>For good news came to us just as to them, but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened. <sup>3</sup>For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said, "As I swore in my wrath, "They shall not enter my rest,"" although his works were finished from the foundation of the world. <sup>4</sup>For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And God rested on the seventh day from all his works." <sup>5</sup>And again in this passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest."

<sup>6</sup>Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who formerly received the good news failed to enter because of disobedience, <sup>7</sup>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."

<sup>8</sup>For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of another day later on. <sup>9</sup>So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God, <sup>10</sup>for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested from his works as God did from his.

<sup>11</sup>Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall by the same sort of disobedience. <sup>12</sup>For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup>And no creature is hidden from his sight, but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must give account.

<sup>14</sup>Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

What does it take to get some rest?

Greek word for rest used here means come to full stop.

Man in hurry was pulled over by police who told him  
he failed to stop at last stop sign.

He said he slowed way down, what is difference?

Policeman started beating on him and asked,

"Do you want me to stop or slow down?"

We may be always in such a hurry, even when we rest,  
to not really stop & rest. We are always doing something.

What does it take to get some rest?

Past week I saw article noting that

45% of world population said to be sleep deprived.

Once predicted that by today,  
modern technology & labor saving devices would mean  
most people would not have to spend much time working.

But we find people are busier now than ever.

So a study was done to look at other end of spectrum.

three very remote, primitive tribes were studied and found  
not to get any more sleep than busy modern people.

What does it take to get some rest?

Text shows it will not come from anything we do or don't do,  
but from what God does for us through Jesus.

GOD GIVES US TIME TO RECEIVE REST  
GOD GIVES REST THROUGH FAITH IN HIS WORD  
GOD GIVES FAITH IN JESUS HELP BY GRACE

GOD GIVES US TIME TO RECEIVE REST

<sup>4</sup> For he has somewhere spoken of the seventh day in this way: "And  
God rested on the seventh day from all his works." <sup>5</sup> And again in this  
passage he said, "They shall not enter my rest."

<sup>6</sup> Since therefore it remains for some to enter it, and those who  
formerly received the good news failed to enter because of  
disobedience, <sup>7</sup> 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."

<sup>8</sup> For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken of  
another day later on. <sup>9</sup> So then, there remains a Sabbath rest for the  
people of God, <sup>10</sup> for whoever has entered God's rest has also rested  
from his works as God did from his.

This sermon is part of series about what some call stewardship.

If you knew you were going to hear stewardship sermon  
and listened to O.T. and Gospel lesson today  
you might think we will hear sermon about money.

O.T. and Gospel are not so much about how we should  
give money to God and for his work

but about danger of trusting money for what we need  
in a way that keeps us away from full faith in God.

But this text is about something more valuable & precious  
than money: time.

Overall theme of sermon series is "Worship God above all"

We have to understand worship is not so much about  
what we do for God but receiving what he does for us.

So also, proper use and stewardship of time is not just giving our time to do things for God and others but taking time for what God does for us.

This is why God gave the Sabbath day.

Word Sabbath simply means rest.

v. 4 quotes Gen. 1: God rested on the seventh day from all his works.”

Reason he rested was not because he was tired or out of ideas of things to make but he was done. Everything was complete & good.

This is why God told Israel in 10 commandments they also were to rest on 7<sup>th</sup> day from all their work, to remind them they had all they needed not because they worked so hard but because God had provided it for them.

To teach them this, God provided manna 6 days a week but on 7<sup>th</sup> day there wasn't any because they were to rest and not even go pick it up but instead what they had from day before would be enough.

But, text says, they didn't receive that rest.

On first Saturday this happened they went out frantically searching for manna anyway because they didn't trust what God had said.

Even when Joshua led them into the promised land, where they could finally rest from their long travels, v. 8 says they didn't really receive that rest.

because they didn't obey God because they didn't trust him.

And so they kept working on Sabbath day.

So, text quotes Psalm 95 where God angrily says, “They shall never enter my rest.”

that is, not until they finally stop trusting in themselves and what they do to provide everything they need and start trusting in God, their creator.

Solomon reflects on this in O.T. reading from Ecclesiastes.

He notes rich with full stomach can't relax & sleep any more than the hungry common laborer because of concerns about preserving all he has.

He says people need to recognize wealth & possessions and work itself - and the ability to enjoy them all - is a gift from God.

Same kind of thing can happen to us today.

Employer can think success of business depends on  
how hard he and his employees work.

Pastor can think success of church depends on how hard  
he and the members work.

We can think our retirement depends on how hard  
our investments are working for us.

Rather than seeing how everything depends on God  
and things only he can control.

But even our ways of relaxing can be not truly restful.

Being hooked on all sorts of entertainment media  
is one thing that keeps people from full night's sleep.

Ways of enjoying weekend causes some to be  
more tired than ever come Monday morning.

So, if even trying to relax & enjoy selves isn't necessarily restful  
What does it take to get some rest?

### GOD GIVES REST THROUGH FAITH IN HIS WORD

<sup>11</sup> Let us therefore strive to enter that rest, so that no one may fall  
by the same sort of disobedience. <sup>12</sup> For the word of God is living and  
active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of  
soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts  
and intentions of the heart. <sup>13</sup> And no creature is hidden from his sight,  
but all are naked and exposed to the eyes of him to whom we must  
give account.

v. 7 says it is not too late to get some rest.

There is a day not called Sabbath day but just "today"  
every today is a gift provided by God himself  
and any day can be a day of rest.

so v. 11 says, let's be eager to get that rest.

Then v. 12 seems to change the subject:

"For the word of God is living and active."

But the point is, how do we get the rest we need?

It is through God's word.

It is doesn't depend on our working

but on the working of God's word & trust in is word.

This is why, Luther's explanation of 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment,

"Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy" is

We should fear and love God that we do not despise

preaching and the word of God but gladly hear & learn it.

Despite all God did for people text refers to, they had no rest

because they didn't trust & obeying God's word.

The way to finally rest and relax is to trust God's word,  
that what he tells us to do is truly best for us  
and what he promises to do is truly best for us.  
It is easy for us who wearily plod along in our daily work  
to think of our worship also as a burdensome duty  
But reason we want to us time on this Today and every today  
to expose ourselves to God's word  
is not just because it is what he says we are to do  
but because of what he says he will do through it.  
v. 12 says his word pierces to our soul and spirit & inner self.  
God's word works inside us to cause faith  
and give peace and hope and joy.  
Now, God's word is pictured as a two edged sword.  
One side of God's word is the law which cuts us open  
to expose our hearts to God, including our weaknesses.  
Word for "exposed" in v. 13 is used for stretched out neck  
of sacrificial animal.  
God's word tells us we are vulnerable & exposed to death.  
Now what? That is not the main message of God's word.  
As v. 12 goes from Sabbath, when people stopped work  
to rest and worship  
to God's word, which God gives us in worship  
and which is the source of our true rest  
Next, v. 14 goes from sacrifice for those exposed by God's word  
to the great high priest who offers the sacrifice  
by taking our place.

### GOD GIVES FAITH IN JESUS HELP BY GRACE

<sup>14</sup>Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through  
the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. <sup>15</sup>  
For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our  
weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are,  
yet without sin. <sup>16</sup>Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne  
of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of  
need.

v. 3 said, "For we who have believed enter that rest, as he has said,  
"As I swore in my wrath, 'They shall not enter my rest,'"  
although his works were finished from the foundation of the world.  
Reason people could stop working & rest  
is that God's work was finished from creation of world.

but they didn't truly rest because something was missing,  
their faith and obedience always fell short.

But Jesus spoke a new and final "It is finished" on the cross  
when he completed all that needed to be done in our place  
for our new creation

He was tempted in every way as we are,  
but never sinned and was obedient in our place.

Then the priest took the place of the sacrifice.

He suffered on the cross to pay for our sins in our place  
& rose again to make place for us with him in heaven.

Finally in heaven we will have the complete rest God gives us  
completely by grace because of Jesus' work in our place  
but v. 16 says already now heaven is open for us  
so in our worship we can draw near to throne of grace.  
so we can find help in time of need, which is every day.

This is why today and every day we want to receive  
God's gifts of grace: faith and forgiveness  
which he gives us through his word and sacraments.

How often do you need to stop and rest? Every single day.  
When we are busy & focused on all that needs to get done  
it can seem like stopping to rest & sleep is a bother  
but stopping to rest and sleep is a blessing.

This is what our worship today  
and our daily time in God's word is:  
a blessing by which God gives us rest  
from concern about what we have to do  
and from burden of our failure to do it all.

There is a rest remaining for us in heaven  
but already today there is rest for us  
when we find it not in finishing all we have to do  
but in faith in God's word about all Jesus has done for us.

What does it take to get some rest?

**GOD GIVES US TIME TO RECEIVE REST**

so we eagerly spend time not just in work but in worship  
because **GOD GIVES REST THROUGH FAITH IN HIS WORD**

Without faith in what God does there is no real rest.

**GOD GIVES FAITH IN JESUS HELP BY GRACE**

The work Jesus has done for us is reason for God's grace  
and the gift God gives us by grace  
so we can have daily rest now and eternal rest in heaven.