

ENTERING HIS REST – Part 4

Sermon Handout

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INTRODUCTION

Matthew 11:28–29

Notice how Jesus offers us *rest* in exchange for His **service** (i.e. “take MY **yoke** upon you”). This is a reminder that *entering His rest* is not about *ceasing from ALL activity*. Entering His rest is about *ceasing from OUR activity*.

Hebrews 4:10

The invitation to enter His rest is not just an invitation to *stop* doing our works, it’s also an invitation to *start* doing His works. In fact, one way we enter His rest (i.e. keep His Sabbath) is by doing His works and performing His service!

Matthew 12:1–6

The Pharisees assumed that the disciples were violating the Sabbath (not entering the rest) because they were ‘working’ on the Sabbath. However, Jesus points out in this passage that it’s possible to *work* on the Sabbath and still remain in the rest!

Jesus gives two examples. The first example is taken from the time when David and his men received ‘holy’ bread from the priests. This was permitted because it was an act of mercy. The second example is taken from the priests who did work on the Sabbath. They also were not guilty of violating the Sabbath because their work was in honor to God (offering sacrifices, etc.).

These examples reveal that it is possible to work and still remain in the rest, *so long as* our work involves showing mercy to men or bringing honor (worship) to God! Besides, the law is clear on what *kind* of work that was forbidden on the Sabbath.

Leviticus 23:8

The word **servile** refers to *ordinary work* or *any work that conflicts with what is to be done on a holy day*. Again, the only work that's appropriate on a *holy day* is that work which serves men or honors God!

Therefore, we are violating the Sabbath (not entering His rest) anytime we choose to serve ourselves rather than God or others! In fact, if we look closely at the 3 things we said would keep us from the rest (arguments, unbelief and disobedience), we notice that they all represent selfish acts.

Listen believer, if you do not *learn* to trust (rest) in God, you will eventually forsake Him!

2 Chronicles 12:1

Notice how the Bible links *forsaking* God with *establishing* and *strengthening* oneself. Thus, our attempts to secure and protect ourselves is what's bringing about our spiritual decline, both individually and collectively!

2 Chronicles 12:2

God brought armies against Israel because they sought to establish their own security or rest! Therefore, we get into trouble whenever we seek security or rest apart from God.

2 Chronicles 12:5

Notice how the prophet brought a *rebuke* against the people because of their sins. (Rarely do we see prophets today rebuking the Church. They're too busy trying to win our favor!)

2 Chronicles 12:6–8

Just because the people *humbled themselves* and acknowledged their sin, didn't change the fact that there was still a *lesson* for them to learn!

What was the lesson that God wanted the Children of Israel to learn? The lesson God wanted them to learn was, first of all, that *true* rest comes from the service of God!

Matthew 11:29

A 'yoke' is a symbol that represents *service*. According to Jesus, His service (or His *yoke*) brings *rest* to our souls!

The second lesson Israel needed to learn was that riches (or material things) do not bring rest. We sometimes think, "When I reach this level or obtain this goal, I'll be able to exhale and rest." However, rest is not the result of the accumulation of riches or success.

Luke 12:16-20

The words "take thine ease" is translated from the same Greek word that is translated "give you rest" in Matthew 11:28! Notice that this rest does NOT come with the accumulation of wealth. In fact, the abundance of things tends to bring with it sleeplessness and anxiety.

Ecclesiastes 5:12

But, how do you teach people who do not understand that true rest comes from serving and trusting God? You must subject them to hard labor. It's only after a person is subjected to 'hard labor' that they will desire rest!

Matthew 11:28

In this verse, the word ***labor*** means 'extreme toil' or 'hard work.' The implication is that unless we are tired from labor, we won't come to Him for rest!

It's sad to say, but some people may have to experience 'hard times' before they are ready to receive His rest! If you've been going through hard times, then it's probably because God is trying to humble you to the place where you desire His rest.