

Heb 4:9

9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God.

Rest, “Sabbatismos” points to the spiritual and eternal rest in God.

Heb 4:10

10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.

Have you entered God’s rest and you’re no longer relying on your own efforts for salvation.

Heb 4:11

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience.

- do your best or
- to make every effort
- to enter God’s rest.

Remember the example of Israel’s failure

- to enter the “rest” which awaited them
- in the Promise land.

Rom 15:4

4 For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

Paul was saying, “hey, take some lessons from history and learn.”

We’ve learned and we’ve been reading about

- the disobedience of the Jews.

So, how can we guard against falling?

Col 3:16

16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

- read the word and sing praises to the Lord!

“dwell” is to take up permanent residence.

- Store it in your heart and in your mind.

teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

Eph 5:19 says something similar, it says to sing and make melody in your heart to God.

Col 3:17

17 And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

Heb 4:12-13

12 For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discernor of the thoughts and intents of the heart. 13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

The author has built a case for the rest

- which God has for the believers
- according to the scriptures.

Have you ever read something in the bible and thought to yourself,

- “wow, that’s exactly what I needed to hear!”

I’m gonna give two examples, one from the OT and from the NT

- of God’s word coming to someone
- and meeting their needs at the right moment.

Elijah in 1 Kings 19 was standing

- against the prophets of Baal on Mt Carmel,
- he was drained and afraid and very discouraged
- after Jezebel threatened his life.

Scriptures tell us that he sat down under a broom tree

- and there he prayed that he might die.

Elijah was feeling lonely thinking he was the only faithful person left.

He’d had enough. Then an angel touched him and said to him, “Arise and eat.”

That provision came from the Lord when he least expected it.

Then Elijah was told to go and stand on the mountain before the Lord and as he stood there

- a strong wind tore into the mountains
- and broke the rocks in pieces before the Lord,
- but He was not in the wind.

Then after an earthquake and fire,

- the Lord finally spoke to Elijah
- in a still small voice thus providing
- spiritual comfort to Elijah

Finally, the Lord assured Elijah that there were 7,000 in Israel

- that had not bowed down to Baal
- and the Lord gave him a mission.

In this we see the Lord providing emotional support for Elijah,

In the NT we see in Acts 18 Paul was in Corinth and facing opposition

- and he was probably discouraged.

But the Lord provided for Paul's physical needs

- by providing work and provision
- by him partnering with Aquila and Priscilla.

Then the Lord surrounded Paul with other believers

- hence providing emotional support for him.

And finally the Lord lifted his spirits:

Acts 18:9-11

9 Now the Lord spoke to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid, but speak, and do not keep silent; 10 for I am with you, and no one will attack you to hurt you; for I have many people in this city." 11 And he continued there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them.

The author has been talking about rest in this chapter.

- Then he suddenly switches
- to speaking about a sword.

Keeping this in context, we know that Israel disobeyed God's word

- and they missed His rest because of disobedience
- which resulted in God saying that none of them
- will ever see the land.

When some realized their tragic mistake, we're told in:

Num 14:40-45

40 And they rose early in the morning and went up to the top of the mountain, saying, "Here we are, and we will go up to the place which the Lord has promised, for we have sinned!"

41 And Moses said, "Now why do you transgress the command of the Lord? For this will not succeed. 42 Do not go up, lest you be defeated by your enemies, for the Lord is not among you. 43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and you shall fall by the sword; because you have turned away from the Lord, the Lord will not be with you."

44 But they presumed to go up to the mountaintop. Nevertheless, neither the ark of the covenant of the Lord nor Moses departed from the camp. 45 Then the Amalekites and the Canaanites who dwelt in that mountain came down and attacked them, and drove them back as far as Hormah.

I believe Hebrews 4:12 is there as a reminder to us

- not to disregard God's word as Israel did in the wilderness

The word of God is living and it's powerful -

God's word is "living."

- This means to have life or to be alive.

The next word we see in verse 12 is the word "Powerful."

God's word is powerful. It's active.

God gave a description of the effective power of His revealed word in Isaiah 55.

Isa 55:10-11

10 "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from heaven,
And do not return there,
But water the earth,
And make it bring forth and bud,
That it may give seed to the sower
And bread to the eater,
11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth;
It shall not return to Me void,
But it shall accomplish what I please,
And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

To say that God's word is powerful is to say that it is effective and active.

- In the life of the believer His word is not idle.

Paul said to the Thessalonians,

1 Thess 2:13

13 For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.

God's word is so powerful that it gives life to people.

- But it's also a warning to those
- who would ignore it or purposely neglect it

Jer 23:29

29 "Is not My word like a fire?" says the Lord,
"And like a hammer that breaks the rock in pieces?"

- His word holds us accountable for what we know.

James 1:23-25

23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man observing his natural face in a mirror; 24 for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. 25 But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.

God's word teaches us and equips us for doing good works.

2 Tim 3:16-17

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Not only is the word of God living and active, it's sharper than any double-edged sword,

During war, a double-edged sword was preferred

- over a single edged sword.

If a soldier were to drop his sword in battle,

- he wouldn't have to reposition the direction of the blade

A sword when used correctly was meant for good by defending

- and it could also be used to cause harm to an individual.

When referring to a double-edged sword biblically,

- it shows the Word's ability to penetrate
- the inward motives of an individual
- as well as his outward actions.

Ultimately, the sword cuts thru every layer of the human life.

God knows the intent and He knows the motives of the heart.

I read an illustration earlier this week speaking of The Mark of Sin (Hebrews 4:12)

As the powerful chain saw cut its way through the oak tree, it uncovered an object foreign to a tree. There, embedded in the tree was a 22-bullet, once hidden from view, now made visible by the cutting asunder of the tree. From the outside, the point of entry was no longer visible, but on the inside, the path of the bullet had clearly left its mark in the wood.

Compared to the size of the tree, it was an extremely small mark, yet by its presence, had caused the area surrounding it to turn black with rot. Had one been present when the bullet entered the tree, it would have been possible not only to see the mark, but to dig the bullet out. However, with the passing of time, the tree grew larger and stronger. The bark had grown thicker, and the bullet remained hidden, a part of the tree.

Just as the bullet penetrated into the tree, so sin penetrates us. The point of entry may not be visible to anyone else, but the sin becomes embedded in our lives, and unless it is removed, causes a growing spot to rot.¹

As the bullet pierced thru the tree, so does God's word pierce the division of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow.

God's word is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

If you were to read Psalm 119 you'd notice the contrast between two kinds of people?

- It speaks of those who reject God's word
- and those who delight in God's word.

Those rejecting God's word are the proud, the insensitive and the unfaithful.

And those who delight in God's word are the humble and the obedient.

The Psalmist was facing a lot of persecution and afflictions when he wrote this Psalm.

In the Psalm, the author uses some choice words for his enemies.

Ps 119:70

70 Their heart is as fat as grease,
But I delight in Your law.

This suggests that the heart of the wicked are thick and impenetrable

- thus preventing God's word from reaching them.

¹ AMG Bible Illustrations (2000). Chattanooga: AMG Publishers (Bible Illustrations Series).

We often see the wicked manifest their evil by attacking the righteous.

- And since they can't attack with truthful accusations,
- they turn to lies.

That's what happened to Jesus and His crucifixion.

The Sanhedrin couldn't find any witnesses

- who could with truth condemn Him, so what did they do?
- They sought false witnesses to condemn Christ by lies (Matt 26:59).
- As we all know, lying is a favorite tactic of the devil.

Listen, if you always tell the truth, you'll never have to remember a lie.

God's word is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

His word exposes the inner life of an individual.

I mentioned the mirror earlier in James.

- The mirror shows our outward appearance,
- but God's word reveals the inner man.

Heb 4:13

13 And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are naked and open to the eyes of Him to whom we must give account.

Many have tried in the past to hide from God, but they can't, we can't!

Sin makes us want to hide, Adam and Eve are a great example of that.

Cain tried covering his guilt after killing his brother.

When God told Jonah to go to Ninevah he went the opposite direction. God sent a storm and a big fish to bring him back.

David knew it was impossible to hide. He said, "Where shall I go from Your Spirit? Or where shall I flee from Your presence?"

God exposed Israel's hypocrisy in Isa 29 and Eze 8.

People can run but they can't hide.

All things are naked and open to the eyes to whom we must give account.

Isn't it interesting that we may not feel very well

- Yet we neglect to go to the doctor
- because he may give us bad news.

Maybe you know it will cause you some pain or discomfort

- and you'd rather deal with the issue at hand
- hoping it will go away.

- some resist placing themselves under the care
- of the very person who could help them most.

The same is true for our spiritual health.

- Some resist placing their trust
- in the one who can help them most, the Lord!

The author closes verse 13 by stating that we will give an account to God!