

Hebrews 4 1-13

Good morning and thank you so much for joining us! Would you please turn in your bibles to Hebrews 4?

Well as you know Christmas is quickly approaching. And what should be a season of joy, and celebration has become for so many a time of stress. **SHOW PIC** In fact, surveys show nearly 90% of people experiencing heightened stress levels around Christmas. **CLOSE PIC**

The surveys reveal the most common sources of stress during the Christmas holiday season include managing budgets, shopping, travel, social obligations, and feelings of isolation or loneliness.

Of course some of these stressors are self-inflicted, but the majority of those stressors are simply the result of the culture in which we live.

But praise God, it doesn't have to be this way. There is a better path that God has provided.

We're gonna study v1-13 of chapter 4, and the title of this mornings message is Entering God's Rest
Let's pray

1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

This is fascinating because most of the time, when the Bible talks about fear to God's people, we're told not to be afraid. 2 Tim 1:7 For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.

and

Psalm 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death,
I will fear no evil;
For You are with me;
Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

By the way, that's always the reason in Scripture that we're to not fear is because we realize God is with us and He is for us. We recognize His presence. There's over 300 places that exhort God's sons and daughters not to live in fear,

But here in v1 we have this unique instruction where he says, let us therefore fear. He actually says this is something we need to be wary about.

Now the verse starts with therefore, so clearly the author of Hebrews is building on the last verses in chapter 3. 16 For who, having heard, rebelled? Indeed, was it not all who came out of Egypt, led by Moses? 17 Now with whom was He angry forty years? Was it not with those who sinned, whose corpses fell in the wilderness? 18 And to whom did He swear that they would not enter His rest, but to those who did not obey? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of unbelief.

We studied last week that the children of Israel could not enter into God's rest because of unbelief. Now there was no chapter break when this was written, so verse 1 says in contrast to those who were ruled by unbelief, let us therefore fear.

Fear is not in short supply today. We live in a world of turmoil.

SHOW PIC We live in a world where we worry about mass shootings. We worry about war.

SHOW PIC About the economy or about the stock market. We worry about what's happening in the Middle East.

SHOW PIC What's happening with AI? **CLOSE PIC**

Yet despite all of that we see there's an exhortation. There's a rest for God's people, that is above and beyond all of that.

Tragically people in this world think, 'well, if we could just get this mortgage, then we could rest. If we could just get this car, then we'd rest. If we could just get our hands on this, or if I could get away from this person, if I could get near this person there'd be rest. There's all kinds of things we think would satisfy. But none of those provide the rest for the soul that only the Lord can give.

1-2

1 Therefore, since a promise remains of entering His rest, let us fear lest any of you seem to have come short of it.

2 For indeed the gospel was preached to us as well as to them; but the word which they heard did not profit them,[fn] not being

mixed with faith in those who heard it. The Israelites of Moses' and Joshua's day heard great messages from God, but they still did not respond in faith.

Many people in churches today have the same problem. They have heard lots of sermons, they may even read the Bible, but they haven't responded in faith.

It's one thing to know about Christ, but we must know Him personally. We have to apply what we hear. Hearing lots of sermons and not responding only makes us indifferent to the word of God. The danger is in hearing the word, and not obeying in faith.

3 For we who have believed do enter that rest, pause here. We saw last week that the OT Jews had failed to enter God's "rest". But notice this promise of rest still stands (4:1). The promise is for those who have believed.

...3 as He has said:

**"So I swore in My wrath,
'They shall not enter My rest,' "[fn]**

although the works were finished from the foundation of the world. Because God is merciful, He has this standard for those who refuse to believe and trust Him- He does not give them rest. That's how He disciplines if you refuse to believe God and to trust God, He will not let you have rest.

And some may say ‘well that’s not very loving.’ It wouldn’t be loving if God let you find a false rest in this present world that was separate and distinct from Him and then die and go to hell or die with no rewards. That would be no love on his part.

v3 is a big deal. God swears by His own name that those who refuse to believe and trust Him, they’re not going to experience rest.

See God’s rest has been available to his people since the dawn of time. The “rest” offered in the Promised Land merely pictured the true and final rest for those who believe.

4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works”;^[fn]
The certain place where God spoke these words is Genesis 2:2.

God rested on the seventh day after creating the universe, not because He was tired, but to indicate the completion of creation. The world was perfect, and God was satisfied with it, so he rested.

Which also tells us that the drama of redemption was already enacted. God knew that Adam and Eve were going to fall. Which reminds us the Lamb was slain before the foundation of the world.
4-5

4 For He has spoken in a certain place of the seventh day in this way: “And God rested on the seventh day from all His works” 5

and again in this place: “They shall not enter My rest.”[fn] notice the end of v5 it says My rest.

But to those who don’t believe, the author repeats his warning taken from Psalm 95

God’s people who had seen great miracles in the Exodus from Egypt never entered God’s rest. Having great leaders like Moses, Joshua, and Caleb didn’t cover for the people’s unbelief and rebellion.

6-7

6 Since therefore it remains that some must enter it, and those to whom it was first preached did not enter because of disobedience, 7 again He designates a certain day, saying in David, “Today,” after such a long time, as it has been said:

“Today, if you will hear His voice,
Do not harden your hearts.”[fn] Even though David wrote psalm 95 nearly 3k years ago. God is still saying this today, don’t harden your hearts. To all of us in this room God is speaking to His people in the present tense ‘hear My voice, don’t harden your heart’

8-9

8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. The appeal in Psalm 95 proves that there is a rest remaining for God’s people to enter beyond the fulfillment of Joshua bringing the Israelites into the promised land of Israel.

If that was the rest, then there wouldn't have been a further instruction to enter into rest.

Why does all of this matter for us? Because it proves God's rest is not a specific day, it's not a specific place, it's not vacation or location.

It's the very rest of God, that God experienced in His own heart on the 7th day when He looked around and understood His works were done. He didn't cease activity then, but His works in regards to our salvation were done. The system was in place, it was going to happen.

10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His. Here's the whole point to the original Jewish audience and to you and I. It says if we've entered into God's rest, which was not a day, it was not a place. It was a completed work relative to Christ and the cross and redemption and the payment of sin.

If we enter into that rest, we cease from our own works-there is no longer any place for works as a basis for our own righteousness of trying to get right with God.

You remember on the cross **John 19:30 So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit.**

Jesus didn't say we are finished, He said it is. Just look around the room, you can see we aren't finished. None of us have arrived yet, right? **Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;**

So what is it then that's finished? The work of redemption, the work of salvation is finished. And how much did we contribute to God's work of salvation-nothing. It was all Him.

To enter that rest, we have to cease from our own effort of trying to earn that which was freely given. There's no work there.

I know Christians, and you do too, that are tortured. They're saved but they're just miserable. They have no joy. They don't understand God's grace.

They are afraid of everything in this world, but what they should be afraid of is not going to enter into His rest.

How many of us either through some religious upbringing, or through some condemning behavior in the past, or one thing or another we're still trying to work our way into God's presence and God's rest, God's good graces.

Then on top of having to struggle with our own flesh, then the devil comes along and throws in his condemnation on top of that. He'll say stuff like 'you think God wants you? He saw what you were doing last night. He heard your language. He saw that. You think Jesus wants you?

Those are lies the enemy is always trying to sell. We say I know, I can't go to God now with what I did.

That's condemnation. It comes from the devil, and condemnation drives us away from Jesus.

But remember **Romans 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus,[fn] who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.**

That's different from conviction. Conviction from the Holy Spirit tells us, run to the Lord right now. Confess this today. Get right to Jesus.

See that's the difference between condemnation and conviction. Condemnation drives us away from Christ. That's how we know it's from the devil. Conviction drives us to Christ. That's how we know it's from the Holy Spirit.

The older I get I realize I've never felt so free to run to Jesus as fast as I can. When my heart is wrong or my attitude is stinky, or I blow it in one way or another. I run to Him, and He's there and I get there and I say, Lord, he says, I know. But Lord, I know. But I said I heard.

I run to Him because there's rest there.

But we have a responsibility when it comes to obtaining that rest

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. What's the example of disobedience? It's what we studied last week in chapter 3, the example of unbelief.

When it says be diligent it's describing work, and effort, and labor. We need to be diligent about entering this rest.

We need to take hold of this. We need to be diligent, we need to labor, therefore to enter into that rest. We need to push our own merits aside. We need to stop listening to the condemnation of the devil. There are things we need to do. It doesn't just happen.

Now we know v12 and we love it but the truth is it's in a negative context here.

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 discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. The word of God is alive. Powerful is from the word energy. The word of God is active. It's alive, it is sharper than any 2 edged sword in its ability to pierce and to penetrate.

Piercing even to the division of soul and spirit and of joints and marrow. that's the deepest part of a human being.

The Bible isn't a collection of old stories and myths. The word of God has inherent life and power.

Notice these two things, it's a discerner of the thoughts and the intents of the heart.

You know, you can't win an argument with the Bible. Now folks try-I see people torture the Bible. If you torture a text long enough, it will confess to whatever you want it to. But you're wrong. You're supposed to confess to it. It's not supposed to confess to you. Just let it say what it says.

Not look, we could take a week on this verse, but please notice the context. Let's read 8-12 **8 For if Joshua had given them rest, then He would not afterward have spoken of another day. 9 There remains therefore a rest for the people of God. 10 For he who has entered His rest has himself also ceased from his works as God did from His.**

11 Let us therefore be diligent to enter that rest, lest anyone fall according to the same example of disobedience. 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 discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart. Look at the context of the verse. The Word pierces the heart as it recounts the examples of people who missed out on God's rest because they just didn't believe how good God is.

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. No matter what we try, we can't fool God.

Spurgeon said. I know I'm not what I'm supposed to be. But I'm not what I used to be, and I'm not what I'm going to be. That's a good process to be in right?.

God says everything's naked before Him, and everything is exposed. The most vulnerable part of everything is exposed.

And yet this God who knows you and knows me down to the fibers of our being, He knows our thoughts and intents of our heart. He knows what we are, He knows all of our failings, all of the things in our lives that are not yet Christlike.

And yet our God beckons us and says, I want you to trust me, and if you trust me, you will find rest unto your soul.

Do you remember Jesus' invitation in **Matt 11:29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**

We go to Him and we find rest. Even though He knows what we are, He knows our failing, but he also knows this, that we're washed in the blood of his Son.

So He beckons us to come to Him. And these verses are pleading with us: don't be like the children of Israel of old who refused to believe, who refused to trust, who refused to respond to God's word, and they lost out on God's rest.

God had offered His rest to them. They had good news preached, but they didn't trust it. You and I have the good news offered to us

in Christ. We need to trust that. It's a rest that the world can't find, because it's God's rest.

Don't we want that? Look, some of us have never rested because of the families we've been raised in. Some of us have never rested because of the abuse we've gone through. Some of us have never rested because we can't forgive the people who have injured us.

Some of us have never rested because we're covetous and all we want is more. Some of us have never rested because our health has never been good and we think, God, if you loved me, why won't you heal me?

But God's rest says you're justified, you're sanctified, and you're glorified by Jesus' work on the cross. **1 Peter 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you,**

And one day that will be the reality. And you can find rest there. God will never abuse you. He will never hurt you. He will never let you down. He's made you His own, and we need to trust His word. It's alive, it's powerful, it penetrates down into the deepest part of our being.

God knows who we are. He knows our struggles. He knows our shortcomings. And yet God offers us a rest in Him in spite of the fact that He knows who we are.

Parents we all know what it's like to have a needy child who keeps badgering you every 5 seconds. And we're like just give me 5 mins. God isn't like that!